Embracing Imminence:
Landscapes and the peculiar distance

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

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July, 2017
Embracing Imminence

land ... scapes & the peculiar distance
Embracing Imminence

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Declaration

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

Name: Kate Church

Date: March, 2017
Notes to the Reader

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This document has been professionally edited by Robert Sheehan, who provided copyediting and proofreading services, in accordance with the guidelines laid out in the university-endorsed national ‘Guidelines for editing research theses’.
Acknowledgments

With thanks and sincere gratitude to my supervisory team: Dr Mick Douglas who has deftly encouraged, extended my thinking, guided and inspired. And Professor Peter Downton who initially offered to supervise this research for the first six months of my candidature and then could not escape - not even in retirement. Thank you for staying alongside this endeavor - while much has changed you have been a constant, and your knowledge, wisdom, and indomitable patience has been a very great asset indeed.

Thanks also ...
... to the Landscape Architecture staff at RMIT - particularly fellow travellers in PhD land Dr Bridget Keane, Jock Gilbert, Craig Douglas and Fiona Harrisson - for their support, advice and encouragement.

... to the students I have taught and learnt from.

... to Alice Lewis, Louisa King, Saskia Schut, Dr Caroline Vains and Amaara Raheem for sharing the journey, and for contributing a litany of stimulating conversations, shared ideas and generosity of spirit.

... to my mother, for her support, inspiration and the space to escape; to Oscar and Sasha for infusing the days with wonder, anticipation, and a healthy dose of perspective; and to Stu with whom it remains a privilege and a joy to share the vastness and brevity of this time together in our very own constellation of tiny moments and momentus occasions that have occurred alongside this PhD. Thank you for providing all the encouragement and support for this to happen and for maintaining our parallel universe of small children with such grace, humour and good will.
For my dad and my brother
... dust to dust.
... we shall traverse
this play of motion...
this encounter
and its tremors ...
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Fig 1: Gutter in front of building site, Altona (Kate Church, 2015)
**Abstract**

*Embracing Imminence* casts a realigned landscape practice into the temporal lag immediately preceding the Anthropocene’s official ratification, anticipating the conceptual and disciplinary implications of this epoch. ‘Imminence’ is a temporal condition which is simultaneously anticipatory and deferred. This research articulates three modes of landscape practice that intensify what James Corner calls the ‘peculiar distance’ of landscape architecture’s mediated agency, foregrounding a durational understanding of the landscape as an imminent condition. Geologic signifiers of perpetual and serial change are apprehended through the research as harbingers of a likely near-future landscape condition. Through the modes of plotting, gleaning and fabricating, I explore the mobility and flux of the land in relation to the geological agency of the body. Each mode ‘grasps for’ and suspends the dynamic, entangled conditions of the restless body and the shifting ground as an expanded practice of making. Collectively, these modes of practice modulate, waylay and ‘hold open’ a relation to imminence.

Just before the last bastion of the ground’s metaphoric stability is jettisoned, it must shed its associations of solidity, homogeneity and stasis. We are, as Tim Ingold (2015) foretells, cast adrift unable to cling to the customary narrative of the material ground as a natural foundation separate from our own human agency. The research encounters, forecasts and obfuscates the co-composed conditions of this rapid acceleration, and the increasing instability of the geologic, through three scapes: *Siltscape*, *Sandscape*, and *Saltscape*. By running counter to Cartesian renditions of the ground as immobile or inert, the scapes reveal the ground’s volatility and mobility. They capture shifts that are perceivable in a human lifetime, as opposed to the geological epochs by which most geomorphological changes are registered. This augurs a research terrain simultaneously horizontal, geologic and durational... a terrain that trembles a processual latency between the now and the just before. *Embracing Imminence* demonstrates an orientation for speculative landscape praxis that accrues and amplifies the mediated conditions of landscape architectural practice, and engages the preoccupation with uncertainty that is heralded by this epoch.
[nothing happens]

“Let’s go. Yes, let’s go.”

[They do not move]

“I don’t seem to be able...

[long hesitation]

... to depart.”

‘I also have a flower,’ [says the little prince]

‘We do not record flowers,’ [responds the cartographer]

‘Why is that? The flower is the most beautiful thing on my planet!’

‘We do not record them,’ [says the Geographer]

‘because they are ephemeral’ [ ... ]

‘What does ‘ephemeral’ mean...’

‘It means ‘that which is menaced by imminent disappearance’

the ellipse
Fig 2: Harbinger, Franklin St, Melbourne (Kate Church, 2016)
The gaps and tensions propagated by the Cartesian project, in its division of the world into discrete hierarchies and embedded dualisms, pervade the conceptualisation of the landscape and the modes through which we communicate ‘landscape thinking’. Language structures and visual projections are embedded in this ontological vantage and align to privilege a vertical, static, permanent and visible perception of the world. Thus, the upright human figure – animate and sentient – is conveyed as separate from, and looking down upon, the inert and horizontal land.

Arguably the schism between the ‘as lived’ experience of the world, and its re-presentation in visual and written communication, is more evident in the discipline of landscape architecture than in other design and creative fields. This is due to the nature of the landscape practitioner’s engagement with the landscape medium itself, which is required to be simultaneously direct and mediated. The nature of this simultaneity reveals an incongruity between direct landscape experience and its representation. Direct engagement perceives a material landscape condition that is diffused and horizontal. Furthermore, the landscape is apprehended as intrinsically temporal, resulting in human perceptual attunement to qualities of relationality, ephemerality and intangibility. Tasked with designing these direct experiences as future states, landscape architects have representational tools and conventions which mediate the landscape in a way that renders this dynamism susceptible to subordination or erasure by the proclivities of object- or outcome-oriented conventions.

Landscape architect James Corner articulates this schism as a ‘peculiar distance’ that landscape architects are caught at in relation to the medium of the landscape. He attributes the ‘peculiarity’ of this distance to unique landscape phenomena: its spatiality, temporality and materiality. These, according to Corner, evade reproduction through conventional landscape architectural drawing practices. In this context, the drawing set conveys the orthographic ambition of producing a singular, precise reading of a future landscape state. The ability to precisely read these drawings enables others to interpret and change the landscape in a manner that is as close as possible to an exact manifestation of the designer’s vision as conveyed through the drawings. Through this process of drawing, the landscape architect must repeatedly confront the mismatch between the Cartesian construction of the landscape (upon which these representational conventions are based), and the embodied experience of it that encounters a condition of dynamism and flux.
The title of this PhD, *Embracing Imminence*, forms a rejoinder to the Geographer’s warning to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s protagonist in *The Little Prince* (1946). No, he could not record part of the landscape on the Prince’s planet because it was ephemeral and therefore ‘menaced by its imminent disappearance.’ In this response lies a microcosm for the larger problematic of the fleetingness and dynamism of the landscape condition, and the desire for stasis and durability in our reconstructions of it. The notion that imminence is ‘embraced’ within this research denotes an ambition to explore and register the ground and its bodily experience as durational conditions: impermanent, uncertain, intermediate.

‘Embracing’ imminence requires change and the passing of time to be ‘grasped for.’ This problematises the dominant representational conventions of design drawing which necessarily represents the passing of time in a static or highly abstracted manner. Examples of this include... a prehension, a continuum of moments – perceiving the same ‘thing’ in different states, a becoming which never arrives...


There are a number of potential intersections between this body of research and Deleuzian-Guattarian philosophy, particularly as articulated in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (trans. Brian Massumi, Impact Series edition, London: A&C Black, 2004). These include their articulations of ‘becoming’, ‘lines of flight’, and ‘plane of immanence’. Deleuze is well-trodden ground within design discourse and difficult to briefly reference without inviting an entirely Deleuzian re-reading of the research - which I am trying to deflect in order to foreground key notions of Derridean difference, a Certeau-ean sense of the tactical, and Eco’s semiotic reading of openness. With this in mind, I respectfully doff my hat to Deleuze and Guattari, and leave this space for other design scholars to traverse.

common disciplinary practices that render time’s passage as spliced into a before/after landscape state, first popularised by Humphry Repton’s *Red Books*. Other more contemporary examples dissect temporality, presenting a series of discrete, temporally-equidistant phasing diagrams, regularly deployed in Landscape Urbanism projects. Similarly overlaid, highly abstracted notational drawings may be broadly indicative of a serialised understanding of time, but rarely become operative drawings as they cannot capture the entanglement of landscape’s temporality, its processes and its matter.

... a prehension, a continuum of moments – perceiving the same ‘thing’ in different states, a becoming which never arrives...

Harbinger: a forerunner of something

Fig 3: Harbinger, (Kate Church, 2017)
The Latin origins of *imminence* imply a sense of threatened stability – of containment about to be transgressed. What is imminent is coming but has not yet come into presence itself. Within the research, this notion of imminence frames the material landscape as a continuum of flux, a shifting ground across which perpetual conditions of change are constantly evolving to subsequent states. This confers the research focus as simultaneously horizontal, geologic and temporal.

Imminence is also perceptual, an anticipatory state arising from deciphering in the existing landscape harbingers of a likely near-future condition. This is a human sense of awareness that something is *just about* to happen. A prehensive or pre-emptive state occurring in the instant immediately before cognition.

As both the temporal framing of geologic conditions and the human anticipatory perception of the ‘just before,’ *Embracing Imminence* engages with the dissonance arising from a durational interplay between the continuum, the present, and the projection towards the almost-now. Thus, from the outset, to embrace imminence is to eschew a sense of permanence, dispel tropes of landscape’s benign harmony, and resist the metaphorical deployment of ‘ground’ as a stable foundation.

**In the Between**

There are two clear manifestations of the research intersecting with a New Materialist agenda. First, the geologic is framed as active. Second, the flattened hierarchies deployed throughout the research challenge the Man/nature separation. Both approaches, in common with New Materialism, see the nonhuman as vital or (to borrow Jane Bennett’s term) ‘vibrant.’ But in order to focus on the mediated nature of landscape architectural practice, I have sought to preserve the problematique of this separation through amplifying Corner’s notion of the peculiar distance. So, unlike New Materialist practices, this research approaches Cartesian dualisms as coordinates for the research that provoke and reveal in-between proximities – between experience and its re-presentation, between the idea and the act of its manifestation.

Across the peculiar distances of this ‘between’ space, I explore performative ways of speculating, attuning to, and engaging with, the ground as a temporal record of shifting nonhuman and human geological agency. This exploratory orientation enables me to decipher and generate signifiers of possible near-future change. This dissertation document aligns to this exploratory approach, forming a structure that is simultaneously layered and lateral. Across this structure you, the reader, can perceive the serial nature of the research’s horizontal, geologic and temporal focus. This affords an alternative vantage that challenges the conventional orientation of scholarship which typically ‘drills down’ into the vertical depths of knowledge. Instead, *Embracing Imminence* pursues its contribution laterally, constructing a breadth and multiplicity that foregrounds serial durations to decipher human and nonhuman geologic
forces of change. This approach takes what Walter Benjamin would call a ‘transversal cut’ across the work, allowing it to retain a sense of ‘betweenness’ whereby the research material preserves the portents of irresolvability, incommensurability and the unfinished.

A set of philosophical influences and conceptual devices assists this enterprise. These include Jacques Derrida’s dissection of the term *différance* to stimulate ‘a play of motion’ that trembles performativity and deferral, Umberto Eco’s semiotic theorising of *openness*, and Michel de Certeau’s *tactical* reading of the figure moving through space. Alongside this transversal exploration, a set of paradoxical impetuses are identified. These serve to galvanise three modes of practice, and are revealed through the development of a research lexicon that deploys the oscillations of meaning contained in metaphorical language. Each mode of practice utilises these influences and devices as mechanisms to ‘hold open’ the dynamic, entangled conditions of the restless body and the shifting ground.

This between space is also of its time, with the preparation of this document occurring between the Working Group of the Anthropocene’s recommendation to formally designate a new geological epoch and its official ratification as a recognised subdivision of geological time. The dates and durations of geological divisions are scientifically determined according to specific boundaries between layers of rock. The geologic is therefore the material registration of time, and as a proposed geologic epoch the Anthropocene is characterised by its rapid acceleration of irreversible change. Thus, at the time of writing, the Anthropocene is a geologic concept, a proposition, a speculative space.

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Setting things in motion

Performative, practice-led research that seeks to construct experiences, bend time, and explore dynamic conditions is confronted by particular challenges when it is reconstituted or synthesised through a different modality. Thus, in the spirit of the travelogue or guide book – the advent of which has enabled people a vicarious and compelling mobility – I hope to evoke and immerse you in three geotemporal terrains.

These comprise three methodological trajectories which are framed as modes of practice, whereby each mode practices a relation to imminence. As trajectories across the research, the modes of practice offer an agile vantage from which to negotiate the contents of this document as fabrications, plottings and gleanings. Each serve to encounter the landscape as an imminent condition. Collectively, they contribute theoretical approaches and tactical acts that cultivate an expanded practice of making, through making other, making visible and making sense.

These modes each foreground the mediated nature of landscape architectural practice. They also constitute a recalibration of my practice to more closely align to an understanding of the landscape as a durational condition. As they are presented in this document, these three modes of practice are artificially separated, though in reality they operate as far more interwoven processes. But prising them apart has enabled a more in-depth consideration of different aspects of the research. As trajectories that cast horizontally across the work, each mode tethers an open structure to a key aspect of Corner’s notion of the peculiar distance in order to construct a paradoxical or contradictory territory that the research attunes and attends to.

Cumulatively these form the three ongoing scapes. As presented here, each scape is defined by a geologic material through which the dynamics of the shifting ground and human geological agency are focused. The scapes provide a framework through which to discuss the work and methods. Each scape will foreground a key exploration, and selectively incorporate an auxiliary collection of smaller aligned investigations completed across the candidature.

Each time we alight, you will first be guided across a series of strata that characterise the scape. These layers describe the geomorphic conditions and expose the research intent. You will then traverse descriptions and framings of the developmental process of the scape and its associated geotemporal states. The text zooms in and out of each scape so that discrete aspects of the work can be described and discussed alongside sections which cast across the research to identify broader developments and findings.

To do this, in this context of embracing imminence, I will necessarily have to practice a certain circumspection. Through providing hints, fragments or fleeting signs of things to come, I will endeavour to invoke moments where the anticipatory experience of imminence is somehow
brought forth, however briefly. There is, of course, a certain challenge for me as your guide: an art of withholding - which attempts to demonstrate scholarly coherence and new knowledge on the one hand, while simultaneously allowing the necessary and perpetual forestalling of arrival in order for this text itself may ‘perform’ or elicit imminence at particular moments. Consequently, through the process of preparing this written document, I have unravelled and reworked the original projects to evade a sense of singular resolution or unequivocal meaning.

To this end, the scapes are re-presented through a ‘stratigraphic’ narrative structure which layers different voicings of the work\textsuperscript{11} to evoke an extended preface to their respective chapter. The visual and tangible traces of *Siltscape* (2012- ), *Sandscape* (2013- ), and *Saltscape* (2015- ) are hinted at throughout the document. These are traces and ephemeral artefacts that have catalysed, manipulated or otherwise offered insight into the perception of the durational landscape, or provoked a sense of imminence. The document’s stratifications have allowed aspects of the research work to be separated without implying a singular hierarchy. The distributed conditions of this research plane have resulted in a document which does not progress point-to-point to enable a linear progression across space or through time. Instead, together we must navigate a layered and dispersed field of conditions where things occur in an altogether more serial manner.

Our course through these stacked and shuffled strata sees the exposition of practice methodologies, projects, findings and communities of practice distributed across the body of this document. Accordingly, we will be required to hold in suspension a tension between sensation and measure, and to traverse territory that blurs traditional distinctions between fact-fiction, past-present-future, self-other and Man-nature separations.

**Structure**

The sense of unfinishedness is evoked in this chapter’s title, *The Ellipse*. Assigned as chapter 0 it indicates a less-linear sense of time’s passage. This ‘Prelude’ section is followed by five chapters. *In the Peculiar Distance*, Chapter 1, sets up the key conditions that characterise the research: situating the landscape as dynamic and temporal; establishing the notion of the restless body and the shifting ground through tectonic and corporeal theories of drift; and introducing the anthropocentric collapse of distinct human and nonhuman geological processes.

Chapter 2, *Towards the Strangely Familiar*, explores ‘fabricating’ as a mode of practice that, in ‘making other’, negotiates the peculiar distance that occurs when ubiquity is rendered momentarily strange. This mode of practice amplifies the paradoxical notion of otherness in relation to the narratives we enlist to construct and evade the everydayness of familiar landscapes. Fabrication proposes narrative devices to reveal and enact imminent moments within the everyday. In this chapter we explore *Siltscape* (2012- ), aligning the method of fabrication to a framing of the

\textsuperscript{11} This layered structure was already in place when I discovered Peta Mitchell’s excellent paper. Peta Mitchell, “‘The stratified record upon which we set our feet’ – The Spatial Turn and the Multilayering of History, Geography and Geology,” in GeoHumanities: Art, History, Text at the Edge of Place, ed. Michael Dear et al. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 71-83. In it she describes the notion of stratigraphic narrative (71).
fabricated material of this artificial island. A garment and the process of
its making is discussed as an open structure that enables a multiplicity
of narrative vantages to emerge through processes of defamiliarisation.
The final part of the chapter explores a broader disciplinary thread and
considers the relationship between speculation and narrative in revealing
and conjuring experiences of the imminent moment.

The Chart and the Wayfarer (Chapter 3) navigates the peculiar distance
between landscape and its representation through reconsidering the
cartographic line. It discusses the development of ‘plotting’ as an approach
for registering or ‘making visible’ the imminent condition of the ground.
Sandscape (2013-) is discussed through the development of techniques
and instruments devised to register bodily experience, human geologic
disturbance, and the landscape forces that contribute to the geologic
volatility of this ground.

Chapter 3 also foregrounds the dissonance that emerges from cartographic
limitations in mediating the performative qualities of the landscape, and
considers what these alternative modalities may augur for a landscape
architectural practice. A revised notion of field work is proposed,
canvassing a spatiotemporal registration practice developed for expansive
horizontal, vast conditions which are rendered empty on traditional maps.

Chapter 4, Across the Plains, spans the peculiarities of the distance between
curiosity and knowledge. It posits that, as an imminent condition,
landscape resists being totally knowable through our knowledge
constructs as these do not easily allow for the characteristic instability
and incompleteness of the changing landscape. ‘Gleaning’ is described as
a praxis founded on acts of collecting, classifying and curating undertaken
in order to ‘make sense’. This is conferred as an approach through which
the tension between a desire for the landscape to be known/ordered/
complete plays out alongside the recognition of this impossibility, and is
further reflected on through an emerging installation practice.

In this chapter we encounter Saltscape (2015-) as contested ground that
registers multiple and incommensurable value systems. Across this
ground we traverse alternative narratives of landscape significance and
forecast roles of human geoagency.

Chapter 5, For the Time Being, establishes the temporal contingency of our
vantage across the research. It reflects on the contribution of this realigned
practice alongside the progressions, adjacencies and future potential of this
endeavour ... all the while forestalling a sense of completion.

The final pages of this version of the document have been left unfinished.
A live exposition of the work is occurring in June 2017. This event will
involve appropriate means of continuing the elaboration and forestallment
of the work. Traces of this upcoming event will be included in the final
archival version of this document.
it cracks, it erodes, it flashes by,
it sprouts, it combusts, it decays,
it floods, it glimmers, it transmits,
it rustles, it bursts, it performs,
it freezes, it slumps, it redistributes,
it tremors, it ruptures, it multiplies,
it refracts, it burns, it diffuses,
it erupts, it rips, it disorients,
it blooms, it fragments, it endures,

it fractures, it suspends, it gathers,
it brews, it dislocates, it morphs,
it decays, it transitions, it multiplies,
it fissures, it intensifies, it distorts,
it seeps, it slices, through, it flows,

...it continues...
Thus the living being essentially has duration; it has duration precisely because it is continuously elaborating what is new and because there is no elaboration without searching, no searching without groping. Time is this very hesitation, or it is nothing. [...]

Why, then, the unrolling? Why does reality unfurl? Why is it not spread out? [...]

[Time is something. Therefore it acts.

in the peculiar distance
Fig 4: Inland sandbar re-mapping (detail), Ryan, Western Australia, (Kate Church, 2015)
Distance and paradox

In running counter to Cartesian renditions of the ground as immobile or inert, the research engages the schisms and tensions that exist between what landscape architect James Corner calls the ‘as lived’ experience of the landscape, and the abstracted conceptions and representations of it. In his characterisation of this as a ‘peculiar distance’ he acknowledges that while other disciplines, such as cartography and landscape painting, also have a mediated relationship with the landscape, landscape architects are in a uniquely ‘peculiar’ situation as what they draw and record is then manifested back into the landscape as a built project. As heralded in the previous chapter, Corner’s notion of the peculiar distance is agitated and amplified across this research to form a paradoxical momentum for three modes of practice. This approach offers a dialectical departure point for each mode and enables alternative vantages to a problem/solution paradigm. That is, it recognises and attempts to ‘hold open’ the irresolvability and incommensurabilities inherent in this entangled geologic context.

Characterised by exception and its unprecedented conditions, the Anthropocene lays bare some of the limitations of the scientific methodologies. These approaches traditionally articulate the effects of anthropocentric change as either existing outside the ‘official’ scope of Geology, or as a problem to be solved. In developing performative modes of practice that embrace imminence, the research has sought to engage a ‘lyric geology’ and a light-footed opportunism that traverses this geologic context of rapid change in agile and creative ways. Part of the contribution this research makes within a landscape architectural context are ways of registering, attuning and developing a geologic sensibility that more closely aligns to this understanding of the ground as a made and rapidly accelerating condition of change.

1 ‘The difficulty with landscape architecture [...] is that the actual work of building and construction is usually done by people other than the landscape architect [...] although landscapists ultimately make places out of plants, earth, water, stone and light, they are caught at a peculiar distance from these same elements, working instead with a completely different medium, an intermediary and translatory medium that we call drawing. Creative access to the actual landscape is therefore remote and indirect, masked by a two-dimensional screen [...].’ James Corner, “Representation and landscape: Drawing and making in the landscape medium,” Word and Image 8, no. 3 (1992), 245.

2 This ‘medium’ is simultaneously physical (‘the land’ - physical ground matter/ growing medium), experiential (as embodied, ‘as lived’) and conceptual.

3 The notion of landscape and paradox is more broadly contextualised by Allen Weiss’ book Unnatural Horizons: Paradox and Contradiction in Landscape Architecture (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), a selective reconstruction of a five-hundred year lineage of landscape architecture. Within this, Weiss charts the shifting notion of nature through to the intersections of poetics and science, to articulate a series of paradoxes that stem from ‘the inherent contradiction between sensation and cognition’(9) which has pervaded Western thinking since Descartes.
Performativity and deferral

Performative research characterises a practice-led research paradigm. Barbara Bolt situates performativity in relation to creative practice as depicted through the *doing* as opposed to describing or reporting something. Judith Butler distinguishes between performance and performativity by defining performance as a deliberate act by a subject or subjects, while performativity comprises the iterative and citational practice that brings into being that which it names. The practice of embracing imminence shares these iterative and citational aspects. This is foregrounded through an alliance with the multiplicity inherent in Umberto Eco’s concept of the open work (see page 23), and evidenced in the layout of these pages which sees notes and citations alongside (and in dialogue with) the body of the text.

The broader citational aspects of this practice are also signalled through the physical dimensions of this document which, when printed and bound, mimic those of a set of notebooks I’ve been using throughout the process of writing this document. These dimensions constitute a personal reminder or a referring back ‘out’ to the processes and thinking from which the dissertation emerged. In doing this, my relationship with this document is situated not as a finished or contained ‘thing’ but as capturing a moment within a larger and ongoing process.

This unfinishedness and irresolvability is also acceded through an alignment to Derrida’s dissection of the term *différance* which describes a continual play of movement that trembles ‘to differ’ and ‘to defer.’ The misspelling belies a deliberate obfuscation of any singular or concrete meaning. This obfuscation aligns to Derrida’s articulation of linguistic meaning as inherently multiple.

It is worth noting that *différance* – ‘neither a word nor a concept’ according to the man who coined it – performatively enacts two of Derrida’s key arguments pertaining to linguistics and semiotics. First, it gestures towards the notion that words and signs can never totally encapsulate a singular meaning (given language is understood as an endless chain of signifiers). And second, the vowel substitution, which is only identifiable in written contexts, executes a direct disruption of the privileging of spoken language over the written, thereby supporting a central tenet of metaphysical thought which Derrida (among other post-structuralists) sought to redress. So the term itself performs the very disruptions it seeks to articulate.

The conditions of imminence are temporally aligned to the ‘just before’. This situates the performative ‘doing’ of this practice as preparatory: anticipatory, catalytic, choreographic actions that are understood as preceding that which is ‘about to happen’. A practice of embracing imminence thereby must tremble the performative ‘doing’ of the research and the forestalling of arrival. From a Cartesian perspective, this is messy territory where knowledge, as an ‘arrival’, is not easily located or articulated.
**Geology in time and motion**

The Earth’s geological strata offer a material archive of forces and effects that have occurred through the passing of deep geological time. These strata each confer a tangible record of duration, a materialisation of time’s passage.\(^9\) Jedediah Purdy metaphorically reprises the notion of the ground as a temporal material measure. He states that with the advent of the Anthropocene the geological clock has ticked,\(^10\) conflating the ‘deep’ time of geological duration and the passing moment. The clock is a familiar signifier regularly deployed to support the perception of accelerated rates of change.\(^11\) While the clock provides an efficient symbol to convey temporal measure, it encapsulates an approach that pervades many aspects of environmental discourse by framing ‘solutions’ to the ‘problem’ of change through the auspices of ‘turning back the clock’.

Henri Bergson determined that the incapability of scientific rationality to understand time as duration resulted in classical science failing to account for nature’s perpetual elaboration of the new. Instead, science — according to Bergson — reduces dynamic conditions to a temporality seen as sheer juxtaposition of instants.\(^12\) The contemporary environmental trope of ‘turning back the clock’, aside from being a temporal impossibility, encapsulates similar restrictions of Western ontological framings of the broader relationship between the body, duration and the land.

A temporal reading of the Earth’s skin sees the acceleration of rates of change. The topmost layers of its crust now reveal human activity occurring at a planetary scale, which geologists confirm has created its own discernible strata with unique biological, chemical and nuclear geologic indicators. Geologists empirically characterise the Anthropocene through the acceleration and abruptness of change evident across many geological processes.\(^13\)

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11. The Atomic Scientists’ Doomsday Clock, as well as Earth Hour, are two other well known examples that employ the clock as signifier.


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Fig 5: Culpra Station, area of the ground used for a smoking ceremony, (Kate Church, 2015)
This research occurred just before – and then in the immediate wake of – the geological detective work that procured the official recommendation to include the Anthropocene as a recognised subdivision of geological time.\textsuperscript{14} Three key implications arise from this context.

First, the scientific framing of the land’s surface – the ground – as a ‘made’ condition. No longer natural, the earth’s topmost stratum is the geological expression of industrial emissions, agricultural fertilizers, pesticides, disposable plastic,\textsuperscript{15} and radioactive fallout from nuclear testing. The ground also provides a comparative material register that allows global shifts in weather patterns and bioregion extents to be read across time and space. It is widely acknowledged that an exponential spike in the impact of human activity on the earth has occurred since the 1950s. This spike indicates that humans have become the earth system’s primary geophysical force. Humans now move more rocks and sediment annually than all natural processes combined\textsuperscript{16} - we literally make and remake the ground.

The second implication is the broader ontological paradox that is revealed in the Working Group’s recommendation.\textsuperscript{17} In order to recommend this as a new geological epoch, a group of geologists\textsuperscript{18} undertook ‘hard’, data-driven scientific research, known as chronosтратigraphy.\textsuperscript{19} So while their ‘official’ recommendation presents comprehensive and conclusive evidence that denies the separation between ‘Man’ and ‘nature’, the scientific methodology for accruing this evidence assumes a paradigm \textit{predicated} on the assumption of this separation.

The third point is nested within the previous one, and relates to the characteristically rapid acceleration of this proposed epoch. Some geologists contest the proposition of the Anthropocene on the basis that these rates of acceleration are unprecedented and therefore lie outside the scientific mores of geological classification. Geology is a discipline that is both theoretically and technically calibrated to measure and record change that is incredibly slow, ‘events lasting tens of millions of years, not just hundreds’.\textsuperscript{20} The upward spikes of The Great Acceleration graphs, produced by William Steffen and his colleagues at the former International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, indicate the exponential rates of change since 1950. Some geologists believe that because these changes are so rapid they cannot be measured or acknowledged as officially geological. That is, the characteristics of the Anthropocene challenge the very foundation of how Geology is conceptualised. The refusal to acknowledge the empirical evidence reveals a mindset that returns us to Saint-Exupéry’s Geographer (see page 6) who similarly did not make a record of things, regardless of relevance, if they did not match the assumptions of permanence and predictability underpinning his existing process.

Artist Robert Smithson’s oeuvre explored and juxtaposed the disparity between bodily and geologic scales of duration. He argued that the concept of the present must emerge from explorations across ‘the pre-
and post-historic mind; it must go into the places where remote futures meet remote pasts as manifested through spatial and material activities of ‘caveman’ and ‘space man’. In doing so he provoked alternative relationships between the geologic as registration of time’s passage and the body’s geological agency. Rosalind Krauss identifies the central thematic of entropy in Smithson’s work. Entropy made the creative enterprise ‘temporal rather than spatial, which is why [Smithson] liked the geological metaphor, the idea of a spatial site ravaged by billions of years of upheaval registered through geologic matter and perceived by the body.

**Drifting**

The ‘principle of original horizontality’ underpins the relative dating techniques deployed by geologists. It presumes gravity guides sediment to settle on the surface of the land, sea floor or river bed, depositing it horizontally. In this manner, horizontal layers of sediment form sequentially over time and get gradually compressed by the stacked weight of more recent depositions. Deposition, settling and compression processes combine to form a distinct ‘sheet’, or geological stratum, of relatively homogenous material.

In reality, the playing out of these processes, is not always so orderly nor so horizontal … for depositions can be inclined, as with dunal structures, or draped such that the strata conforms to a pre-existing topographical surface. Horizontality may also be disfigured by tilted and inclined stacks of strata. Observing these deformations led observers in the fifteenth century to conclude that collisions were occurring deep underground that could be observed through traces upon the surface. They deduced that the crust of the Earth was not static but responsive to deep subterranean forces in the Earth’s mantle. By the early twentieth century, Alfred Wegener’s theory of drift had developed these ideas into what we now know as plate tectonics or continental drift.

Wegener, a geophysicist and astronomer, kept finding rocks at distant locations that matched, fossils that were shared, and jigsaw pieces of coastline on different continents that he could envisage slotting together. This caused him to surmise that:

‘[T]his is the starting point of displacement or drift theory, the basic ‘obvious’ supposition common to […] permanence theory – that the relevant position of the continents […] has never altered – must be wrong. The continents must have shifted.’

When, in the early years of the twentieth century, he presented his theory that the world once consisted of a single landmass which over time had drifted apart, it was ridiculed and almost dismissed. It was a radically speculative proposition, one which demanded the ‘forget[ting] of everything which has been learned in the past 70 years and start[ing] all over again.’
It was not until the late 1950s that continental drift was widely embraced by the scientific community. This represented an acceptance that, at a global scale, the boundaries of the continents and the ocean floor are not fixed but gradually and constantly moving.

At about the same time that this new and far-reaching way of looking at the world was emerging, Guy Debord, as part of the Situationists Internationale (1957-1972), was articulating his own theories which also engaged with ideas of ‘drift’. In his notion of dérive (drift) ‘one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action ... and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there ... But the dérive includes both this letting go and its necessary contradiction’. For Debord, drifting operated at the scale of the body and its ceaseless interaction with urban space. With its meandering encounters, drifting offered a speculative mode of embodied practice founded on a corporeal restlessness.

These two theories describe drift in very different ways: as a scientifically-established tectonic condition and as an experimental bodily endeavour which operates within an altogether different epistemological paradigm. Though utterly disparate in terms of scale, critical intent, and discipline, these two modes of drift share a speculative examination of the centrality of motion and the resulting impermanence of any one state. Together, these notions destabilize both the very matter of the land and the body’s passage across it.

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Fig 6: Culpra Station, traces of vegetation embedded in dry river bed, (Kate Church, 2015)
Openings

Openness describes both a spatial quality of vastness and an epistemological stance that has informed the realignment of this practice. It infers the foregrounding of qualities of heterogeneity, pluralism, responsiveness and receptiveness. And, if we again return to the notion of peculiar distance, we might consider this notion of gaps and proximities as offering speculative spaces which may be further opened out to reveal and expose the irresolvable and unrepresentable, as opposed to being bridged, reduced or flattened.

‘Open structures’ is a term deployed within this research to infer an ‘opening out’ through generating a range of possible outcomes that do not necessarily coexist easily or harmoniously. Within the research garments, particular mapping processes, a set of narrative structures and the Wunderkammer are examples of key open structures. These are not posited as a definitive set, but rather they represent what emerged from the particularities of this landscape practice.

The notion of open structures is informed by Umberto Eco’s book *The Open Work*. He posits the open work as a distinctly modern phenomenon, founded on a deliberate and systematic ambiguity which emerges as a result of the ‘contraventions of expression’. The characteristic ambiguity of an open work exists alongside the qualities of ‘multiplicity, plurality or polysemy’, situating openness as an alternative ontological stance to the quest for certainty which underpins the Cartesian project. A broader perspective sees the emergence of this notion of openness reflected in shifts in scientific thinking as well as denoting a more pluralistic societal worldview.

While Eco identifies every artistic work as being more or less open, he distinguishes open works by their explicit acknowledgement of complexity and the authorial intent to generate multiple readings. He cites Henri Pousseur’s compositional intent with his piece *Scambi* (1954) which was to compose ‘a field of possibilities, an explicit invitation to exercise choice’. That is to say, the work is deliberately conceived as a structure that generates a set of options, enabling multiple appropriate interpretations as opposed to a definitive scope or singular ‘correct’ interpretation. Importantly, this inherent multiplicity is oriented through a formative intention, a ‘field of relations’ that are dictated by the work’s author. This sets up multiple but finite possible versions of a work. Therefore, an open work produces a system in which the creator, the interlocutor and the work form interconnected parts of a relational system. A research methodology that uses open structures offers an approach that further avoids singular outcomes or ‘solutions’ and interferes with the false dichotomies of Man/nature.

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28 Indeed, according to David Robey, it served as an explanation or justification of the apparently radical difference between modern and traditional artistic paradigms. David Robey, introduction to *The Open Work*, trans. Anna Cancogni, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), viii.
29 Ibid., vii.
30 ‘A [traditional] work of art, therefore, is a complete and closed form in its uniqueness as a balanced whole, while at the same time constituting an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations which do not impinge on its unadulterable specificity.’ Eco, *The Open Work*, 1989, 4.
33 This notion directly contrasts the intent of professional landscape architectural drawing sets which seek to convey a singular, ‘exact’ reading of design vision in order that it be exactly manifested by a third party in the world.
Plot (n): a narrative device that establishes the order of events, a measured parcel of land

Plot (v): the activity of making by drawing to come up with a strategy (often secretly)

Fig 7: The duplicitous key terms of the practice (Kate Church, 2014)
Finding the words

Within the practice, the notion of openness and Derrida’s understanding of language as a ‘play of motion’ characterises a research lexicon comprising metaphors, traces and portmanteaus34 that render language pliable and relational.

Eco’s notion of openness emerged from his early theorising on literature and semiotics. He describes James Joyce’s use of puns and portmanteau words in *Finnegans Wake* (1939) as ‘a multiformity of language’35 that is induced through the deliberate plays on the multiple meanings of particular words. He discusses the extent of Joyce’s etymological layering such ‘that a single word can set up a knot of different sub-meanings, each of which coincides and interrelates with other local illusions, which are themselves ‘open’ to new configurations and probabilities of interpretation.’36

Aristotle defined metaphor as consisting of ‘giving the thing a name that belongs to something else.’37 Thus a metaphor, like both Derrida’s and Eco’s notions on language and meaning, constructs multiple correspondences between signifier and signified. Eco identifies the relational nature of a metaphor as emerging from and referencing a ‘field of connoted meanings’,38 interrelating the un-alike to bring forth new and previously unseen correlations.

Paul Carter similarly acknowledges a metaphor’s ability to simultaneously differentiate and connect.39 He notes the potential for a certain disjuncture or uneasiness between the signifier and the signified that can occur through this lateral referencing. From this disjuncture arises the Derridean notion of the trace – the non-meaning that is evoked through the process of signification. Traces manifest a temporal deferral of bringing to perception the already-absent nature of presence. The promiscuous significations that infuse puns, portmanteaus, metaphors and traces reveal multiple meanings simultaneously. This serves to ‘hold open’ the gaps and overlaps of language. Metaphors allow relational understanding to be formed, ‘a kind of border-crossing that exposes disciplinary and linguistic striations even as [they] traverse them.’40

These cross-fertilised meanings infuse a number of aspects of this research, including the multiple voicings and the deliberately duplicity that embeds the naming of each mode of practice with a double meaning. Collectively, the development of this lexicon is an attempt to engage language as a perceptual instrument that can ‘hold open’ the paradoxical and leverage new relationships between things.

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36 Ibid., 10.
40 Mitchell, “‘The stratified record upon which we set our feet’”, 77.
a cusp
a subtle shift
a prickle of prehension

your whole attention
on the almost-present

compelled
entangled
in this instant
its very next moment

the visceral willing-into-being

a circumstance which
slows down ... reveals ... distorts ...

the suppleness of time.

[held in
suspension]

[a temporal
sleight-of-
hand]

[this
suspended
moment]
An island offers a stage: everything that happens on it is practically forced to turn into a story, into a chamber piece in the middle of nowhere, into the stuff of literature. What is unique about these tales is that fact and fiction can no longer be separated: fact is fictionalized and fiction is turned into fact.’

towards the strangely familiar
Fig 8: Flour experiments (Kate Church, 2012)
**The Island**

*episode 02*

*She can pinpoint the precise moment that this all began.*  
*For it descended upon her ... as almost a madness...*

[...]

The last few weeks had seen the Yarra’s catastrophic transgression turn much of Melbourne into a lake. Remarkably it did not affect her apartment. The building’s slightly elevated location (and her apartment being as it was, on the third floor) meant she evaded the water. But only just. It licked at the steps of the stairwell and her neighbours on the lower floors were not so lucky. Her bakery too was sodden, her bread not rising properly for weeks afterwards, with the smell of damp threatening to override the aromatic lure of freshly baked bread that enticed the passing customers.

And so it was, in the early hours of December 4, in the wake of two days and nights of heavy rain, she was preparing to leave the building for her commute through the inky pre-dawn streets. She made her way down the stairs, negotiating the raised boards the superintendent had placed to help residents avoid the residual flood water and she almost stepped on it. A curious item. Almost without thinking, she picked it up and closeted it away in a pocket. Though she did not inspect it until later, it was at that moment, as her fingers opened to release the specimen into her pocket, that she knew. She had found something.

The following weeks passed in a frenzy - cleaning and repairing the bakery in the midst of the lead up to Christmas. Her routine had a new rhythm, her commute adopting a highly circuitous route owing to the swollen river. Then there were the extra hours each day spent mopping, and the already familiar ritual of placing out towels, old newspapers and rags to soak up the damp each night, of sweeping the debris washed in by the floodwater, and of wondering what to do with the ruined stockpile of flour. The specimen remained in her pocket throughout.

[...]

Over the remainder of this unusually wet summer and its stately decline into Autumn, her re-mapped commute had become fused with another activity – a foraging, a searching out. And a certain urgency now prevails over her usually calm demeanour. Though the flood waters have by now long abated, and the city’s cleanup nears completion, there is this new, slightly harried element to April’s countenance that threatens to unmask her composed poise behind the bakery’s counter.

Had her customers looked closely, they may even have spotted the changes to the stitching of her apron, or the strange bulging areas, or even the odd way it hung, its peculiar heaviness. She has done her best to disguise it, but her apron has transformed. Hidden pockets house any specimen she chances upon on her way to or from work, small tools she had fashioned are ensconced in the apron’s folds, and hidden catches sewn into the fabric allow the apron’s shape to be altered.

But neither her slight distractedness nor her apron’s oddities have roused any suspicion in her customers. That smell of fresh bread creating the perfect sensory diversion.
The upside-down river

The Yarra River has been a significant force shaping the city since Melbourne’s inception. Settlement practices of land clearing disturbed and mobilised the ground, resulting in increased runoff high in particulate matter. Quickly, the clear river water turned brown from tiny suspended particles of silt which washed into the river during rain events. Although in contemporary Melbourne much has been done to stabilise the catchment, the ground continues to be washed into the river. Particles of silt remain suspended in the turbulent parts giving the river its characteristic muddy colour and fuelling the myth that the river’s name is an indigenous term which translates to ‘upside down river’.\(^1\) Despite its dirty appearance the contemporary Yarra River is regarded as one of the cleanest capital city rivers in the world.\(^2\)

Where the fresh water of the river meets the saline water from the bay, the suspended particles clump together and sink.\(^3\) As the particles settle, they ‘silt up’ the river near its mouth, exacerbating the propensity of the lower Yarra to flood. This process of silting up, coupled with the area’s relatively flat topography, meant that early Melbourne was regularly devastated by floods. Over the ensuing years, the river has been radically re-engineered. Much of the lower river has been realigned, straightened and widened to ‘control’ its notoriously unpredictable flows. These changes have utterly transformed the river: tributaries have been entirely covered over, bends ironed out and waterfalls dismantled. The orderly and sedate river we know today is unrecognisable in John Helder Wedge’s description of the Yarra as ‘[a] twisted cantankerous river... so choked [...] that it renders its navigation a matter of difficulty and delay to even the smallest coasters.’\(^4\)

One of the initial acts of this research was to construct a mapping that recreated and overlaid these changes to the Yarra River and its tributaries that had occurred since White settlement.\(^5\) Utilising historic maps, reports by the Metropolitan Board of Works and other public documents, the map projects the river’s different alignments over time, its current state sitting alongside ghosts of its former self, revealing creeks now channelised and hidden from view, billabongs and swamps drained, and the appearance of the visionary Coode Canal which heralded the creation of Victoria Dock and Victoria Harbor. The process of drawing this map required overlaying and redrawing historical cartographic information, and translating written accounts and data into line work. The map was initially drawn digitally to align the scales of the source material. This digital synthesis enabled me to locate the changes to the river, temporally as well as geographically, with information from different sources populating the relevant temporal layer. The map was then redrawn by hand, effectively compressing and flattening time. This version does not distinguish between the
contemporary alignment of the river and the abstract daylighting of its previous states.

Gary Presland notes that the cumulative scope of the Yarra’s so-called improvement works renders the lower part of the river ‘as artificial as the high rise buildings that currently line its banks.’ Construction began on the island in 1928 as part of the ‘improvement works’. Siltscape (2012–) emerged from this mapping and the historical research which revealed the extent of the lower Yarra River’s fabricated condition. Siltscape occurs on Herring Island, the Yarra’s only island – albeit an artificial one – coopting this artificiality for its speculative premise. So the creation of the ground for this scape is interlinked with the geoengineering narrative of the ‘successfully tamed’ river.

6 Presland, The Place For a Village, 218.
**A Fabrication: The artificial Island**

As a landscape typology, an island symbolises a particular kind of other-worldliness. It is both conceptualised and perceived as a physically discrete entity that easily caufoles it into acting as a microcosm for the broader world. The reverse is arguably also true: the world-as-island metaphor has been popular since at least 1972 when NASA released the iconic ‘Blue Marble’ photograph taken from space during the Apollo 17 mission. This famous portrait exposed the Earth’s isolated condition and framed it once-and-for-all as a finite system, a fertile ‘island’ surrounded by the inhospitable emptiness of space. This image, coopted by a burgeoning environmental movement, helped to augment the capitalist, democratic narrative of the Earth’s limitless bounty, with a counter-narrative of islandness: vulnerable, novel and finite.

Fig 10: ‘Blue Marble’, detail, NASA/Apollo 17 crew; image taken by either Harrison Schmitt or Ron Evans, 1972

Island landscapes are places of otherness, where natural forces intersect with the proclivities of time to produce differentiation. While these processes also occur on the mainland, on islands change plays out in unique ways. Such was Charles Darwin’s encounters with the finches on the Galapagos Islands, which eventually led him to deduce that far from being an even progression, evolution – itself a process of ‘othering’ – was capricious and highly opportunistic. His observations revealed the interconnectedness of the forces of time, environment and biology. As an idea, the island may therefore be understood as a locale which is both ‘a part of the world and a world of its own,’ a world within a world –

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the playing out of its own specialised order. This is an order which is influenced by large scale forces of perpetual change which unfold locally in subtly nuanced and differentiated ways.

Initially called Como Island, Herring Island is the Yarra River’s only island. It lies just three kilometres from the bustle of Southgate in Melbourne’s CBD. From the road and tow path it looks overgrown and banal, yet once on the island you feel removed from this inner city context. The island currently operates as an environmental sculpture park set among mature native trees and scrub. The visitor material produced by the site’s current manager, Parks Victoria, describes the island as ‘tranquil’, a ‘haven’ for nature lovers that offers an opportunity for city dwellers to enjoy a ‘taste of the bush’.

Despite, or perhaps because of, its close proximity to the city, the island effectively offers an other-worldly experience; a rambunctious bushlike landscape tantalisingly close to the high rises. Accessible only by boat, this otherness is enhanced by the island’s exaggerated edge condition. It looks, to the casual observer, like a fragment from a bygone time, forgotten and secluded. This narrative is supported by Parks Victoria which describes the landscape as consisting of ‘indigenous forest remains and grassland communities’. Yet the island is a relatively recent and entirely artificial landform, and the ‘remains’ of indigenous forest and grasslands are a simulacrum. The artifice of both its landform and vegetation became a key driver for *Silscape*.
There are spatial and conceptual alignments of Siltscape to Derborence Island (1995) in Euralille, France; an artificial island by landscapist Gilles Clément. Clément’s broader experimental practice conceives a horticultural laboratory founded on rendering biotic and biological materials ‘fascinating’. Thus, Derborence Island shares a similarly simulated conceit of ‘a fragment of nature left to itself in the heart of the city.’ Although entirely surrounded by land, it is perceived as island-like – and typecast as such. Spatially similar to Herring Island, it too contains a simulated ecology and an exaggerated edge condition. Clément’s island consists of a raised plateau constructed from the excavated debris of a nearby underground railway project, and is encased in a huge concrete wall. It was originally planted with a mixture of plants and trees and then left ‘untouched’. As with many of Clément’s projects, Derborence Island is founded on revealing the dynamics of change that occurs through experimenting with the negotiation and interdependency between landscape processes and human maintenance. Now an established ecosystem, this island is inaccessible to all but the Park’s head gardener who visits it biannually to record the biodiversity within the walls.

The construction of Herring Island occurred as part of a larger flood mitigation strategy designed to stabilise the Yarra River, enabling it to flow more ‘efficiently’. This strategy, designed to ‘solve the problem’ of flooding sought to artificially regulate the river’s flow. The river was duly straightened, and its course diverted through an abandoned basalt quarry. This uncoiled version of the Yarra incorporates a secondary flow which bifurcates to pass around the leftover land. The chunk of land was then used to deposit dredged silt from further downstream where the river mouth was being widened. This formed Como Island, renamed Herring Island 1952. Despite these large scale measures to tame the river, the island and its fledgling vegetation was completely washed away in the flood of 1934, requiring it to be entirely rebuilt. This flood has since been dubbed...
the city’s worst flood of the twentieth century, the Yarra River broke its banks and continued rising. It peaked at 12 metres above its usual height, transforming Melbourne into ‘a single lake from South Yarra to Warrandyte.’ The island’s second iteration – higher, more fortified and its ground more intensely compacted – has withstood subsequent floods. It retains a levee which sits approximately five metres above the high water line.

The rebuilt island has been revegetated and maintained by a range of parties over its short history. It is, for all intents, a stage – designed and constructed to withstand Acts of God, and well dressed with vegetation to simulate ideals of The Bush. ‘Como Island’ is the historical state in which Siltscape takes place. So while a physical island landscape still exists today, Siltscape occurs on a landscape which has effectively already been rewritten both physically, with the 1934 flood washing away the island, and symbolically though its renaming. Thus, the scape’s speculative conceit resides in this slippage between the actual, the absent and the potential.

It is the six-year duration between the island’s initial construction in 1928, and the time that immediately followed the destructive 1934 flood, that Siltscape ‘rewrites’. Siltscape enhances the fabricated nature of this landform, aligning it with a fabricated protagonist, a collection which blends authentic and fake artefacts, and a written facto-critical narrative based on historical research and embroidered with fiction. This scape, which commenced early in the development of this research, operates as a testing ground for various fabrications. It has metamorphosed significantly along the way.
Fig 14: Gaiters and gloves, (Kate Church, 2013)
Fabrication - Encounters with otherness

Fabricate (v): to make or build
Fabricate (v): to invent a story or lie, a fiction

These dual definitions of fabrication directly inform a mode of landscape practice. This mode constructs bodily and cognitive experiences that temporarily rupture the perception of the everyday. To date, fabrication has entailed exploring narrative tactics that reassemble chronoperception – the body-sense of duration – in ways that enable a shuttling between subject and object, cognition and sensation, the highly familiar and the novel, in order to briefly rearrange normative sensations of the passage of time. Fabrication has developed tactics to shift durational experience to reveal, as Tim Edensor notes, that ‘everyday practices are not solely robotic but possess multiple other potentialities.’

This mode adapts techniques from live performance and literary practices that manipulate duration to amplify an experience of otherness. ‘Otherness’ in this context describes the perception of something as intrinsically different, or somehow separate, from the everyday. This notion of the other has not been explored to bolster a dichotomous outlook. Rather, it describes a temporary and unstable state where the perceptions of the Self or status quo are unsettled. Such interruptions may have the effect of creating a brief slowing down of temporal perception, a kind of mental ‘double-take’ that enables things previously overlooked to be noticed. In disrupting the everyday, these tactical acts of othering enable new understandings, sensations and experiences of the body moving across familiar ground. Edensor, in articulating this relationship between highly familiar landscapes and their potential for strangeness, surmises that it is ‘precisely the routinized journey that opens up such possibilities. The piling up of repetitive events, sights, and iterations offer opportunities for prolonged speculation, imaginative interpretation, and complex relationships to evolve.’


17 Ibid., 155.
Through exploring and developing acts which deliberately shift the ubiquitous vantage of the body/Self and the landscape, a temporal sleight of hand occurs as the familiar is subtly dislodged and rendered strange. This is briefly experienced as an *imminent moment*; a duration whereby the passage of time is simultaneously stretched (as perception is temporarily slowed) and compressed (as the logical and conscious mind rapidly recalibrates). Through unsettling routine and assumptions, these acts destabilise the everyday temporal state of *chronus*, characterised by stability and predictability. This serves to reorient perception and offer insight into aspects of ubiquitous body-landscape experiences that usually go unnoticed.

The mode continues to develop and foreground tactical acts of othering that create small obstructions, alternate scenarios and brief disruptions in routine, everyday behaviour. These temporarily amplify the peculiar qualities of the distance at which we find ourselves perceiving the everyday landscape, such that it is rendered momentarily strange.

*Making Strange – the garment as open structure*

It is well documented that activities we regularly undertake become highly familiar, almost automatic. The habitual repetition that constitutes routine is characterised by a dulling of perception. This can often mean we occupy and move through the spaces in which we undertake repetitive activities without really seeing or noticing – without being ‘present’. Designing garments and simple wearable devices that alter the architecture of the body has the effect of shifting corporeal experience and disrupting routine activities. This can destabilise ubiquitous experiences of landscape. Within the research it has provided the impetus for exploring possibilities to unsettle how we apprehend, reflect upon...
and activate the unexpected which often lies within our bodily and temporal experience of the everyday. The development of this mode of practice draws on the body extensions of Rebecca Horn and Danielle Wilde, and the relational devices of Lygia Clark. It also draws on ‘body architect’ Lucy McRae’s work, and Gabi Schillig’s use of garments and textiles as catalysts to inform and be informed by alternative relationships between the body and space.

During the research, a set of acts which focus on the body were explored. Initial acts involved making simple worn devices that restrict or extend the body’s limits and interrupt its movement in order to force a conscious reconception and a relearning of an activity. Through disrupting the usual way of doing things, new possibilities and potentials were revealed. This was explored with students through an undergraduate elective Disorientation (2010), and a postgraduate design research seminar Re:Orientation (2012). In these courses, students used their own bodies and their perceptions of space as a site for intervention. They each selected and carefully studied a routine activity (such as brushing teeth, or checking your watch), breaking it down into a repeatable sequence of steps. Students then designed garments and wearable devices for their own bodies that disrupted their experience of undertaking their chosen activity. Projects included an arm extension with an operable ‘hand’ that extended the boundaries of the body. This in turn made the simple act of taking the lid off a bottle a slow and considered activity, requiring extra steps to be inserted into the original sequence and revealing the physical adaptation needed to successfully complete the process.

Despite being customised for a specific activity, students discovered that their garment impacted on a range of other movements and activities – restricting some movements and enhancing others. Through the process of exploring and testing their
designs, they became accustomed to these new sequences, abilities and restrictions – their bodies adapted and reconstructed familiarity. These activities became ‘extra-normal’ as the body’s augmentation became incorporated. This process of incorporation gradually re-establishes the ‘known points’ for the moving body, so diminishing, if not ending, the period of intermediacy. Yet while inhabiting this fleeting intermediate state, the students described encountering both their bodies and space in an intensified manner.

The research explorations undertaken early in the candidature catalysed a series of wearable devices and garments that evolved beyond physically restricting or extending the body. These considered other, more expanded, roles that used this method of making to reconsider the relationship between the body in motion and the shifting ground.

*Carrier* (2013) transforms from a kit to an article of clothing which can be worn once a fieldwork kit is deployed. Constructed as part of *Sandscape*, it has been used in multiple ways across subsequent work. *Carrier* catalysed three other kits. One was designed to undertake fieldwork at Culpra Station during the *Interpretative Wonderings Workshop*. Two more were designed for participants in audio walks *Sandscape’s Shifting Terrains* (2016) and *Saltscape’s Mourquong Salinity Reserve* (2016). These are customised wearable kits that contain visual material and small instruments, as well as the audio equipment. Putting on these kits renders them actively performative, formalising the start of the walk, and signifying a shift for the participant to a state of readiness.

*Collect* (2013) saw an important shift in the role that this method of garment-making played, evolving to explore the relationship between the moving body and the shifting ground more explicitly. *Collect* enabled the registration and physical collection of ground matter. In its first iteration, a set of gaiters and gloves operated as prototypes to be worn...
while walking a weed infested coastal area. The gaiters collect burrs, seeds and other site material as they are brushed past during a walk. With their semiotic associations to archivist practices and forensic procedures, the gloves amplify the distance between the body and the landscape, heightening its otherness.

They suggest a fragility and preciousness of the landscape, while also operating as a collection surface. Their light colour registers dirt, and the nature of the bamboo batting material means that they wear quickly. Consequently they quickly look used and imperfect. The gaiters gather whatever sticks to them and offer a material registration of the walked ground. They render the body in motion as a collection and dispersal agent of the landscape. The bamboo batting is also a growth medium that enables the collection to be propagated.

This garment typology was also adapted and developed for two other walks: a set of gaiters was made for each of the four walks undertaken across the Culpra country of Saltscape. Here it started to become obvious how they collected plant material and also registered particular ground conditions, including the ubiquitous brown dust of the Murray Plains and the darker river mud. These were exhibited as a set as part of an installation *Ground Work (from there to here)* (2016) in the group exhibition *Interpretative Wonderings* at the Mildura Arts Centre in 2016.

I made another pair of gaiters out of black felt for a walk across Lake Crosbie, a salt lake. Here I was interested in adapting the garment to register the salt. The wicking action of the felt drew up the saline water and the blackness of the material allowed it to be seen as it dried.
Introducing April

April Thrippingston. Baker. Assigning a name is a curatorial act, enabling an entity, previously vague and formless, to assume an identity, constructing coordinates which locate it within a larger system of meaning. Providing my protagonist for Siltscape with these coordinates gives her form, and a certain authority through an implied identity.

Her name had to be appropriate to the mental image of her that had begun to form in my mind. But her name has also been, and continues to be, generative. It suggests certain characteristics and resists others. She has gradually grown familiar and my mental image of her is now quite distinct: I know exactly how she wears her hair, for instance, and that her handwriting has a slightly uncertain, spidery quality to it. I am familiar with her embedded physical grace which I assume many women of her era had unconsciously acquired. I have a sense of how the physicality of handling dough imprints itself upon her other gestures. I know her bakery’s layout and its atmosphere – down to the thin layer of flour dust that settles on all surfaces over the course of a day, a short-lived palimpsest, registering traces of transaction before being swept up.

The generation of an alter ego at the outset of Siltscape shifted and rendered unfamiliar my normative design practices. Initially I needed to carefully consider how to draw and design through her. As a defamiliarised creative space, this offered a number of affordances as well as constraints. Bell and Blythe observe that defamiliarisation24 is a useful tool for creating space for critical reflection and allowing for new insights and understandings, thereby opening up new design possibilities.25 As the alias, April generates the work, offering a mechanism through which to creatively explore the historical research I have accumulated on the Yarra River. I have not yet embodied or acted out April;

Fig 27: Developing pattern for April’s apron, (Kate Church, 2012)

Indeed, April owes her ‘existence’ to my desire to explore mechanisms that would problematise and forestall the embedded autoethnographic processes that are necessary in disseminating practice-led research.

I have never presented this work ‘in character’. Rather, having this alias allows me to take a cognitive step back – a deferral that makes strange the entanglement of the self, the practice and the traces of its outputs. So it is as though I work alongside her – at a peculiar distance – and therefore feel somehow qualified to comment and reflect on her behalf. And it is the me-but-not-me of the role April plays in the work that has been useful, and where the experience of the strangely familiar is most discernible.

Creating the work as though it is done by someone else allows a productive dissonance between myself and this scape. It opens up a space that enables speculation and allows testing of new modes of making and drawing.

Having April as an interface between the historical data and the speculative drawings also creates a context which explicitly requires me to do things differently and to find alternative approaches.

I created a garment which ostensibly acts to signify April as other to myself. Her apron was the first of a series of garments made over the duration of the candidature. Its making occurred in parallel with writing and drawing the scape and was embarked upon as a way to develop and manifest her as the scape’s protagonist.

Within Siltscape the apron performs a mnemonic role. It ‘stands in’ for April’s absence, as well as being a device within the project narrative that enables her transformation and acts as a portent that signifies imminent change. The apron garners its signifying power through drawing on the theatrical convention of costume to both indicate and manifest the transformation of the actor into the character. But the apron has not been worn so far within the making of Siltscape, nor for its various disseminations to date. It does not allow me to ‘become April’. Instead it manifests her absence, amplifying her status as other. In particular, it was the process of designing and making...
the garment that enabled and supported the development of these ideas around otherness and imminence. That is, it was the process of making the apron that constituted the ‘act of othering’ to become more than it represents semiotically.

In making it I began with a mock up, stitching by hand. The slow immersiveness of this process allowed a certain form of time travel so that, as I sat there figuring out how to make it, (having had very minimal prior sewing experience), I was also digesting the historical research. The mock up required designing and cutting a paper pattern. I approached it as a 1:1 model. The garment-as-model then needed to respond to the qualities and characteristics of April as they were emerging through the writing and drawing. So, while my body offered a nominally ‘physical’ site, the garment’s design and performativity were both generative and responsive to April’s developing narrative trajectory.

Similarly, the qualities that characterise the apron also inflected the narrative that was being written, roughly in parallel. For example, the garment’s reversibility spatialised, inflected and signified changes that occurred in the narrative development of the written text. There was April: The Baker with her utilitarian baker’s uniform (the dark brown fabric enabling a surface which clearly registered smears and sprinkles of flour), contrasted by ‘April’s subterfuge’ which played out on the apron’s reverse side (a heavy duty fabric of a much lighter colour and able to register the dark silt of the island).

The reverse side was populated with pockets that nestle between the two fabric layers of the apron. They are shaped and scaled to enable her to safely sequester artefacts she comes across. This side of the apron therefore also became a wearable archive as various artefacts were sorted and stored in the pockets. This ‘underside’ of the apron is
active but hidden when she is in the bakery. The third state of the apron sees it change form as it is reversed, folded and clipped into a set of pouches. This sees it respond to her transformation when on the island, its change in form being similarly played out through the island’s ground plane. Its folded state allows her to kneel and squat to work the ground over. The larger pouches formed through folding and clipping are also designed to enable her temporarily to house and carry her tools.

... And yet there is a strangeness to this apron, a normally unremarkable and utilitarian garment. Its production has not been entirely faithful to her historic setting: the fabric does not seem quite old or weathered enough, the sewing on the finished garment was done with a modern machine, and style of the fasteners and press studs are historically incongruous. These oddities serve to add another layer of semiotic complexity for the observant viewer, who must wrestle with these oddities and the contradictions of its artifice.

Fig 30: Apron - ‘reversed’ state, detail, (Kate Church, 2012)

Fig 31: Apron - pouch state, detail, (Kate Church, 2012)
Making Up – narrative as open structure

Narratives gather multiple temporalities and actants which cohere into context and action. Etymologically, narrate comes from Latin gnarus ‘to know’. It is widely cited as a foundational means of knowing and representing the world. Narrative, then, describes a form of knowledge emerging through action and the contingencies of lived experience. Postmodern author Neil Gaiman observes that ‘human beings like things to be story shaped. The universe does not hand over beginnings, middles, endings; stories cut and shape the world.’ Jerome Bruner posits that narrative is a fundamental way of thinking which differs from logico-scientific ways of knowing. Whereas scientific thinking seeks knowledge through universal truth conditions, narrative knowledge requires paying attention to particular connections, coincidences and chance encounters.

Designers CJ Lim and Ed Liu consider the value and role of writing in relation to speculative design practice, positing that text is underrated; it is overlooked as a tool for both describing and generating design projects. They identify the written word in professional practice as usually limited to specification or justification of design decisions, rather than contributing to creative or conceptual process.

Disciplines based on creative storytelling, such as cinema, live performance, and literature, have conventions that enable the unfolding of time to be crafted. This can both foreground, and create an experience of, imminence. Narrative structure also allows multiple temporal states to be straddled, such as in Siltscape where the present and past intersect through the writing of a ficto-critical narrative.

Within the research, narrative devices form a key part of how each scape has been conceived, and how each emerged. In particular, Siltscape’s episodic narrative

\^[27] A term widely used (and generally attributed to Bruno Latour) to describe both human and nonhuman agency.


was a key creative driver for the work and reinvigorated my writing practice. I explored narrative form in order to both produce the work and to reflect back on the work.32 These pieces enable text of the scape to have a dialogic relationship with text about the scape. Each tries to retain the expressiveness of storytelling as opposed to so-called objective, non-narrative descriptions. At the same time, text about the scape still adheres to the explicative requirements of situating and discussing the findings from the works. For example, a piece I wrote about Siltscape33 was structured as a series of beginnings, each arguing a case for being the true ‘initiator’ of the scape.

Within landscape architectural practice, narrative is a term often used in the context of retelling the story of a site. In their book Landscape Narratives (1998), authors Potteiger and Purinton discuss landscape as a location that ‘configures’ narratives; as a ‘background setting for stories’ as well as identifying ‘the landscape’s dynamic nature engendering stories.’34 Whether as the background to stories, or catalyst for them, forms of narrative in the built landscape are usually a re-presentation of a past condition. They may be used to bolster significant cultural narratives or present an alternative, marginal ‘other’ voice of history. As built projects, these narratives are typically signified through wayfinding devices and interpretative signage. They aim to impart to visitors a particular type of site knowledge which allows them to interpret the landscape around them in the desired way.

This approach to landscape narrative is broadly utilised and practical as a didactic mode to impart knowledge. However, I have become interested in the potential of narrative as a speculative tool that can contribute to a practice that embraces imminence. Imminence implies a near-future state, and this research has explored narrative as a way of projecting both backward and forward through time to anticipate, conceive, develop

32 There are two key pieces. The first is Kate Church, “Plotting an unfinishable landscape architectural project: by way of beginning,” New American Notes Online 6, 2014, 1-10, http://www.nanocrit.com/issues/6-2014/plotting-unnecessary-landscape-architectural-project (accessed November 6, 2014). This was an article about the process of creating Siltscape which was structured as a series of beginnings. The second key piece is a performative paper, Kate Church, In_land Time, unpublished manuscript, 2016. This was presented at Performance Studies International conference, Performing Climates (2016), and discussed Saltscape and the landscape of the Mallee in inland Victoria through two walks.


34 Potteiger and Purinton, Landscape Narratives, 3.
and produce outcomes. This both departs from and adds to the usual disciplinary approach to narrative. Through deploying it as a disruptive and suspense-full medium, alongside ficto-critical blending, narrative within this practice of embracing imminence also offers a tactical rereading of William Cronin’s vivid portrayal of the agency of narrative form. For Cronin posits that: ‘[i]n the act of separating story from non-story, we wield the most powerful yet dangerous tool of the narrative form [...] A powerful narrative reconstructs common sense to make the contingent seem determined and the artificial seem natural.’

Broader contemporary post-truth discourse notwithstanding, Cronin’s words infer that while narratives create connections and meaning, they also offer alternative vantages from which we can apprehend and operate from within the peculiarity of the distance at which we find ourselves in relation to the world. Narrative, therefore, is a mode of knowing through which strangeness, otherness and contradiction may be foregrounded. Since narrative form is built around the destabilisation of the status quo and the return to a new equilibrium, the ‘moment of destabilisation’ has formed a primary focus through which narrative operates across the practice.

David Turnbull cites the ability of narrative structures to allow incommensurable knowledges to be held productively in tension. He posits that narrative enables a ‘bothness’, which contrasts multiple narratives rather than trying to render them commensurable or requiring a choice to be made between them. This has been useful for the broader research agenda which seeks to engage the paradoxical, to hold open the condition of imminence, as opposed to considering change in the landscape as a problem to be resolved, stabilised or reduced. Across this research, narrative form is explored through a writing practice which speculatively informs each of the scapes.
In each case, text-based narrative is used in various ways to hold open an imminent moment or to create the conditions for imminence. For Siltscape, the narrative device of an alter ego was deployed to catalyse and resequence the temporal dimensions. The scape includes a written episodic narrative: a serialised narrative structure with each instalment ending in a somewhat suspenseful way as a hook or set up for the next episode. April’s narrative exists in and chronicles her ‘present’, through which she enacts the speculative near-future state of the island.

In this scape, narrative has offered a way in, enabling a spanning of different temporal and physical states. While the written episodes are relatively linear, the text forms only one reading of the broader narrative. It operates in conjunction with the constellation of material, and it is within this state that it forms multiple (but finite) versions of itself which play out across the assemblage.

Whereas the written narrative for Siltscape was singular, episodic and written in the third person, for Sandscape a set of text-based ‘narrative mappings’ established the site itself as multiple protagonists. Influenced by Jane Rendall’s theorising of site writing, and borrowing from Italo Calvino’s famous novella Invisible Cities, Sandscape’s site narratives rewrite, and thereby reconceive, the ground as multiple versions of itself through a range of narrative lenses. These are discussed further in “Uncharted Territory” (page 82). In Saltscape, the narrative unfolds in future tense as a journey undertaken across remote inland Victoria during which a wasteland is reimagined as a significant landscape. Here the narrative structure and style are creative provocations which establish the scape’s agenda.

While the narratives across each scape deliberately explore different roles, styles, tenses and influences, in each case the narrative structure has constructed a generative proximity between myself and the ground, enabling the work to be ‘voiced’ from other vantages.

Fig 41: Detail of overlaid temporal layers of Yarra River (Kate Church, 2012)

Fig 42: Herring Island, handling instructions, detail, (April Trippingston/Kate Church, 2012)

Fig 43: Herring Island, handling instructions, detail, (April Trippingston/Kate Church, 2012)

Georges Perec created a fictional Parisian apartment block to both generate and organise the narrative for his novel *Life: A User's Manual* (1978). Here the imagined building provides the impetus, plot generation and protagonist for the story. However fictional, the building is situated in a real location: Paris. This enables Perec to leverage off the ‘realness’ of Paris and the ‘made-upness’ of the apartment building to construct a sophisticated interplay – a sort of locational shorthand for the scarring specificity of his fabricated characters and events.

The narrative of *Siltscape*, while very different in intent, tone and structure, shares with Perec’s creation a similar combination of reality and fiction. Having the real physical site of Como/Herring Island and the historical facts of the flood enables a reality that provides April’s narrative trajectory. From this tension the narrative modulates the peculiar distance between the fiction and the sense of the real, which is a key characteristic of ‘making up’ within this mode of fabrication.

The writing for this scape offers the reader one way to link the material together. It is a four-part episodic narrative which presents one version of events and essentially provides a chronology for both the protagonist and her reimagining of the artificial landscape of Como/Herring Island. Other smaller, linguistic and literary tactics were deployed in *Siltscape* to explore this tension between expectation, believability and defamiliarisation – such as the material analogy between flour and silt that April’s profession as baker enabled. This material analogy ultimately adapts the processes...
of baking (such as mixing, kneading, pinching, folding, and proving) as propositional moves that reimagine the ground condition, form and role of the island.

Fiction, while still loaded with convention, allows a particular openness of structure; it can morph temporal flow, and the process of writing can enable a certain cohabitation with another. In Siltscape moving between fact and fiction, this openness was both constricted and released by the historical research. The fictional narrative was designed to operate within an open structure, so that while creative reinterpretation and imagination has been employed, they do not construct a totally fictional outcome (if such a thing exists). Instead they work within the parameters emerging from the site and the historical research.

When writing April’s narrative and making the apron in parallel, I noticed that the time spent puzzling over the garment was when a literary sense of April developed. Gradually, those small telltale eccentricities which seemed to swiftly transform the generic to the highly particular began to emerge. But this was a disrupted and divergent osmosis. For she too absorbed influences from me – books I was reading, conversations I was having, knowledge I was gaining about the island. Her story had to wrangle with the emerging facts of the events between 1928 and 1934. Fiction and non-fiction were sometimes combative, like boxers, eyeing each other off. These were tense moments when the fragile structure of the story, suspended between the concrete and the imagined, threatened to dissolve. Facts, statistics and third party historical analysis simultaneously had to provide the plot’s foundation and April’s point of departure.
Fig 45: Siltscape artefacts (Kate Church, 2012)
Other ways of seeing other

This chapter has situated fabrication as a mode of a practice that embraces imminence through two interlinked approaches that are evident across all three scapes. One approach uses garments and wearables to construct direct experiences of otherness, often in banal and highly familiar landscapes. The other approach uses text-based narrative form in a manner which allows multiple narratives to coexist without rendering them commensurable. These approaches both heighten and construct a corporeal sensation of the otherness of landscapes. The garment does this through subtly intercepting direct experiences of familiar ground. And the written narratives enable a mediated reconstruction of ground. Both rupture the assumed ubiquity of corporeal experiences of the everyday to elicit the sensation of expanded and compressed duration – the imminent moment.

The discussion has focussed on key acts of othering that have allowed, shifted and reflected upon the peculiar distance between the self, the physical body in motion, and the shifting ground. A set of acts that foreground otherness offer ways to ‘enter into’ this distance and disrupt it in order to see and act differently. These acts temporarily make strange and make other. They amplify the peculiar characteristics of this distance, and in doing so allow a brief sense of strangeness to surface in order to challenge a perception of the everyday as stable and dependable. In becoming unsettled, habits are dislodged and the distance expanded and perceived anew. Through revealing the potential for the unexpected to be revealed or ‘written into’ the everyday, conditions for imminence are briefly amplified.

The acts of othering described in this chapter have had the effect of defamiliarising my own practice and my relationship to undertaking the work. The approach to Siltscape catalysed a range of new modalities which continued to evolve and inform teaching and project work. I suspect that without straying from previous modes of operating – a process that itself was occasionally confronting, uncertain and unsettling – I would not have explored a range of things which have since come to characterise this practice. For example, the exploration of language and text in Siltscape as a mode to merge fact and fiction served to generate many aspects of the work, as well as heralding different narrative processes in future work. And the initial foray into garment-making offered a way to focus on the body which began with ideas of costume and signification and, in later work, developed to explore ideas of the body as a registration agent.

Siltscape, as the first of the scapes to be initiated, bears witness to the metamorphosis of early ideas that underpin the broader research agenda. A number of things were tested and discarded for the time being. A set of resin-cast artefacts, made to form part of the protagonist’s collection, are not yet resolved. For now, they seem contrived, as do a set of drawings for invented contraptions which do not yet seem to have a bona fide role in the scape. I have come to see the initial ventures of this scape as processes which themselves form more valuable findings than what they produced. I see now that my discomfort, and the feeling that I did not really know what I was doing, is symptomatic of encountering imminence.
Fig 46: Exploration of water effects - rice paper experiments, Siltscape, detail, (Kate Church, 2012)
Paradoxically, it is this very state of not knowing which generated knowledge and knowhow in ways which have proved valuable to research processes beyond this work. So I regard *Siltscape* as something of a testing ground for the initial acts which continue to evolve throughout the research.

*Siltscape* in its current form assembles a set of tangible artefacts which establish the island as a botanical Wunderkammer, as though it could have once existed but was washed away in the subsequent 1934 flood. If we reflect on Certeau’s framing of everyday practices, we understand April’s approach as tactical and see that it offers an alternative to the strategy governed by the Board of Work’s engineering improvements. It is therefore also pertinent that she is an alias, a non-expert who sees the botanical and geomorphic potential of the island afresh and makes it her own through informally occupying and transforming the ground.

As a narratively-informed speculative design, this represents a fairly uncommon way of practicing in design disciplines beyond ideas competitions. Architecture has a few well known practitioners of this style of ‘paper architecture’ – CJ Lim, Douglas Dardin, Neil Spiller, Thomas Hillier and Clarke Thenhaus are among the more well known. But narrative practices informing ‘paper landscape architecture’ appear to be particularly rare.

Speculation is by its nature something of an imminent state, characterised by inhabiting a cusp between the compelling provocation and reality. As itself a fabrication, the material traces of *Siltscape* foray into a culture of narratively-informed paper landscape architecture. But perhaps the wider reach of this approach from a disciplinary perspective lies in the expanded scope for the role of narrative within the landscape project. This would see the generative capacity of narrative deployed propositionally and multiply, rather than through a singular retelling. It would draw on Turnbull’s identification of narrative as a way to enable incommensurability to be both preserved and engaged with. This suggests the agency of narrative can be an act of othering through which to directly engage with the complexity and dynamism of the landscape as an imminent condition. It offers one approach to a practice of embracing imminence that frames change in the landscape in a manner that goes beyond change being considered a ‘problem’ to be ‘solved’.
a trace
a clue

'an
apparition'

examining the evidence
confronting the absent other
a footprint.
(just one)

'Thunderstruck'

Robinson Crusoe stood

He walked on

'not
feeling...the
ground'

looking behind him every two or three steps...

Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, first published in 1719
‘A map says to you, “Read me carefully, follow me closely, doubt me not.” It says, “I am the earth in the palm of your hand. Without me you are alone and lost.” [...] Yet looking at it, feeling it, running a finger along its lines, it is a cold thing, a map, humourless and dull, born of calipers and a draughtsman’s board. That coastline there, that ragged serawl of scarlet ink, shows neither sand nor sea nor rock; it speaks of no mariner, blundering full sail in wakeless seas, to bequeath, on sheepskin or a slab of wood, a priceless scribble to posterity.

the Chart &
the Wayfarer
Fig 47: Runoff from building site, Altona, (Kate Church, 2016)
Here, at this junction, it’s all in motion.

It’s where a river meets a bay, where the very matter of the ground is volatile, slipping from beneath you as you walk beside the path. Here the river bends, or perhaps is bent – as if swerving to avoid some unseen obstacle – and empties into the sea. I was told that its mouth had been artificially widened, not a cosmetic procedure but an operational one. For previously this flat and expansive world invited floods, with water seeping and spreading its tendrils far and wide across this uninterrupted horizontality. Such porosity wreaks havoc on the cul-de-sac mindset of Progress and must be remedied. And so, in its widening, it was confined.

But here, at this junction, it’s all in motion.

The water flows in both directions and an alchemy of brackishness oscillates alongside an ecosystem which blends natural and eternal change with industrial effluent and contaminated runoff.

Here, at this junction, the water is shallow for long distances.

Currents course through its modest depths stirring up its underside and creating suspended animation as, all the while, the seabed is quietly dislodged and deposited in wobbly lines left behind in the tide’s ebb.

Here, at this junction, it’s all in motion, and this shifting, pouring edge collects detritus, gathering its treasure and discarded flotsam.

Gathering too, just slightly out to sea, and in a few brief years new land has been formed. The coast has been hastily rewritten. So quickly in fact, that Google Earth’s image of this space is out of date. A rare act of geomorphology outpacing digital technology. A lagoon is materialising and a wide sandy finger now projects across this junction, with small crescents and subtle windscaped peaks.

And if we ‘once-upon-a-time’, if we cast back and peek over that tall rusty fence ahead of us, the earthen bunkers bear witness to another manifestation of this landscape’s transitory predisposition – this time responding to different forces of drift – those of industry and prospecting.

Here at this junction, the ground’s associated flows of capital and its accompanying infrastructure once served to link gelignite factories in Maribyrnong, Footscray, and Deer Park to a nation’s war effort, to outback fossicking and to providing construction materials for an expanding city. Those artificial mounds you see peeking above the fence line once temporarily housed explosives, catalysts for progress, for setting things in motion. A temporary holding bay for mountains of explosive that later would blast and reshape the land. And the thin high fence manifests the fragile line between production and destruction.

Here at this junction, it’s all in motion. A palimpsest of attempts to stabilise unstable matter.

A landscape waiting to exhale.
The delta and the drift

As a landscape typology, deltas occur when sediment carried by river water falls out of suspension as the river flow intersects with a slower moving water body, such as the sea. A similar ‘settling’ occurs in longshore drift whereby sediment is carried by ocean currents and deposited in areas where the current slows or eddies.

The coastal landscape along the western edge of Victoria’s Port Phillip Bay is decidedly different to that of the eastern side. This variation is the result of the overall shape of the bay and an interplay between the water movement, longshore drift, prevailing seasonal wind conditions and geomorphology. While there are cyclical shifts and disturbances, the predominant processes of erosion and deposition result in the Bay’s inner west coast having an expanding beachfront, while much of the east coast recesses.

The sand ridges and sandbars along the western shores comprise one of the major sand bodies of the bay.\(^1\) Human intervention such as beach rejuvenation and the dredging of the bay’s central shipping channel amplify the existing load of migrating particulate matter, carried by the current despite shore walls, boulder ramparts, groynes and sandbagging.

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The Truganina Coastal Parklands hugs the inner western edge of Port Phillip Bay. Adjacent to one of the bay’s major sand ‘sinks’, it falls within an area where both directions of longshore drift intersect. This convergence results in significant rates of deposition. Consequently, the water here is shallow for long distances, and the beaches are transformed at low tide as sand ridges and long sand bars are revealed. Here, the edge between land and water is constantly rewritten with land gradually expanding upwards and outwards above the high waterline into subtle ridges that change and reform in acquiescence to currents and weather events.

Just inland from the shore, the sand spits and ridges continue, creating an unusual and highly mobile geomorphology deemed to be of state significance. These inland sand ridges remain dynamic though vegetation acts to temporarily ‘anchor’ or slow their progress. Nonetheless they move approximately 10-15cm northeast each year, rippling and folding the topography, continuing to be shaped by aeolian flows and storm forces. This creates an unusual geomorphological condition across the Parklands whereby the ground is not experienced as a stable foundation but is perceptibly mobile. Beyond the Parklands, these once-dynamic sand ridges extend over one kilometre inland but have been almost entirely built over and stabilised.
Within these Parklands is Truganina Explosives Reserve, a 17 hectare site located on the former floodplains of a small delta that has formed at the mouth of Laverton Creek at Altona Beach. As a result of being surrounded by a high fence for over 100 years, it constitutes one of the only remnant active inland sand ridges from what was once an extensive tract along the coast of eastern Australia. The shape of the ridge-and-swale topography within the Reserve suggests the ridges originated as sea floor bars from a time when the sea level was three metres higher than present. Geologists and volcanologists come here to look through deep time and understand the ancient sea floor. Through its continued movement the ground reveals a geological record of shell strata deposited tens of thousands of years ago. So to walk across this surface is to traverse the sedimentary history of the bay, and witness past and present geological states simultaneously.

This active ground plane inside the fence is both a conservation area and contamination zone. Its geomorphological significance protects it from development, yet so does its soil contamination. Although partially decontaminated and capped, toxicity levels nevertheless limit public access to the Reserve to two hours per month. The ground is the site for unique indigenous vegetation no longer found outside the fence. It is also a former storage depot for gelignite so the same ground is heavily disturbed through the creation of earth bunkers, and contains arsenic along with other toxic chemicals. This ground condition thereby embodies the entanglement of human and nonhuman geologic processes in very particular ways.

Fig X: Forecasting sand bar movement, work in progress, (Kate Church, 2016)

4 Neville Rosengren, Sites of Geological and Geomorphological Significance on the Coast of Port Phillip Bay, 69.

5 Libby Rigby, from my field notes.

6 Ibid.
Visible from the perimeter of this fenced-off landscape, just beyond the shore is a rapidly forming sand spit. It occurs as the expanding tip of the bay’s sand sink, comprising a system of sand bars and coastal wetlands that stretch from Point Cook to Seaholme. Over the past twenty years, this extending ‘tip’ has produced a beach 80-100 metres wide just south of the creek mouth,7 and over the course of the six years I have observed the spit, it has extended northwards approximately 800 metres. This indicates a sustained and rapid rate of geomorphological change.


Here the earth moves: the sea bed rises, the sand bars drift, the shore is reshaped, and the land flows within the confines of a fence. The geology of Sandscape, a factor usually discussed in temporal epochs of deep time, veritably ripples and reforms before your eyes.

A few months ago, I participated in a group walk8 across the Explosives Reserve and out along the spit. As I walked, I heard the man in front of me say to the person beside him, ‘Wow, there’s nothing here.’

Fig 51: Sand spit charts indicating expansion and flux (Kate Church, 2015)

7 years of expansion

Distal Fragments, (live performance/walk), The Environmental Performance Authority as an initiative of The Centre for Theatre and Performance, Monash Academy of Performing Arts, 8 Nov, 2014.
Shifting Ground

Sandscape (2013-) emerged from my ongoing intrigue, initially piqued by a huge old rusting fence I regularly walk and drive past. About 2.5 metres high, it is made from corrugated iron. Its height and materiality means passers-by cannot see into most of the site. Vegetation, however, transgresses the visual barrier; mottled tops of peppercorn trees and climbing plants peek over the sheets of corrugated iron, proffering the tantalisation of an overgrown wonderland on the other side. Much further along, areas of the fence have been replaced with cyclone mesh, allowing glimpses into the interior from the road. But these glimpses are only of the western end which is a sparsely-treed grassland... and a different world from the wildness hidden by the metal parts of the fence. A walking track passes along the other side of this site. At one point the external topography rises just enough to place the pedestrian above the fenceline, looking in. The tree canopy continues to hide the promise of a Burnett-inspired Secret Garden, but from here large crescent-shaped landforms and earth bunkers are visible.

Both the area which is hidden and the bunker landforms suggest a very different landscape to the exposed coastal flatness which constitutes the surrounding context. What did this fence ‘contain’? Passing this fence multiple times while I was working on the Siltscape project, I was struck by the notion that this too was an encased landscape, a similarly bounded condition to the island April, the Siltscape protagonist, was reworking. Perhaps the interior landscape this fence contained offered an island-like experience? Did it constitute an ‘island-effect’ – visually separate and removed from its context and replete with island-like metaphors of...
otherworldliness? And was this relevant to my research? That is, could the qualities constituting islandness somehow provide useful conditions through which to explore imminence?

I became fascinated by this fence.

Constructed in 1901, the fence preserves a unique ecology and has encircled this unusual geomorphology for over 100 years.10 I initially regarded it as a monolithic and impenetrable boundary – the main contributor to this island-effect that acted to keep things out and trap things in. And, in many ways, the fence sets up and signifies what is materialised through the bodily experience of moving across this landscape: distinctly different inside and outside conditions.

But this is a place where drift is writ large... it is vast, flat and on the move.

Fig 53: Truganina Explosive Reserve fence, southern side, (Kate Church 2015)
Fig 54: Wind mapping, *Urban [Di]Versions*, (Kate Church, 2009)
Maps and mapping processes are key disciplinary modes of practice that mediate landscape architectural agency. A map of a landscape is always an abstracted and partial representation. As Alfred Korzybski famously stated, ‘the map is not the territory.’11 Jorge Borges’s parables of the 1:1 map which lay crumpled over the kingdom, or the poet who so evocatively describes the emperor’s palace as to be regarded by the emperor as a thief,12 also underscore the necessary distance and abstraction between the representation of the territory and the territory itself.

In many ways plotting is a mode of this practice that most directly reprises James Corner’s original discussion of the peculiar distance between landscape architectural representational conventions and the medium itself, albeit with a more explicit focus on the durational and mobile aspects of the land. In his discussion, Corner frames the temporal experience and conventions of representation as ‘radically dissimilar’ mediums.13 This peculiarity is tackled through plotting, a paradoxical undertaking that attempts to register a medium which resists figuration. The development of this mode of practice emerged from, and at times exacerbated, a frustration with my existing drawing practice and the gap between the dynamic qualities of the landscape and how these qualities were translating onto the page/screen. I was interested in finding alternative cartographically-informed approaches that would foreground motion and duration, in order to register this landscape as a shifting and imminent condition.

The broader focus of plotting is the effect of maps and cartographic methods on how we ‘see’ and present dynamic and unstable qualities of landscape. Lines on maps operate to precisely orient, measure and fix elements in space. In normative practice these are intended to produce a straightforward, stable and comprehensive reading of land. Plotting has sought to coopt these conventions, such that the line remains imbued with broader assumptions of accuracy, measurability and reliability, but is deployed to document processes of flux unfolding over time, as opposed to locating fixed points or ‘things’ in space.


13 Corner himself ostensibly revisits the notion of the peculiar ‘cartographic’ distance in an essay written subsequent to “Representation and Landscape.” This latter essay is entitled “The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique, Invention”, in Mappings ed. Denis Cosgrove, (London: Reaktion, 1999), 215-52. In it he establishes a lineage of landscape architectural mapping which posits a range of examples and techniques that indicate the then burgeoning Landscape Urbanist paradigm.
The cartographic line – a landscape architectural conundrum

To plot a line is to precisely connect two or more discrete points in space. The trajectory of this type of line is predetermined; it connects adjacent points in a sequence. Such lines are, according to Tim Ingold, not ‘the trace of the gesture but an assembly of point to point connectors.’ This is how charts or maps are generally constructed, requiring fixed ‘points’ in the landscape to be found and connected. Paul Carter identifies this abstraction as the process that produces the outcome of the coastline, a linear reconceptualisation of the land as having a discrete edge finessed in the early days of colonial exploration, where the charting of a terra nullius required a generalisation of the sweep of the land that lay between ‘fixed’ navigational points. This generalisation is manifested in an interpolated line which joined the dots and was effectively ‘the trace of a repeated hand-eye passage’ between these fixed landscape elements.

Global Positioning Systems (GPS) enable contemporary technology to locate and triangulate motion through space and in ‘real’ time. Installed on our phones and in our cars, like an all-seeing fairy godmother, delays are predicted, durations estimated and future arrival forecasted. But do these lines and maps tell us new things about the world? Are they all that far removed from the mariner’s interpolated coastlines? Through a system of orbiting satellites the distant ‘all-seeing’ cartographic vantage is ostensibly manifested as a system that is still reliant on the same fixedness of landscape elements, the same imaginary lines of an overlaid Cartesian grid, and (though visualised in real time) the same point-to-point connections. With ‘live’ data feeds and rapid recalibration the digitisation of cartographic processes enables us to deploy these maps in new ways. But though the satellites orbit and the device that houses the map is mobile, the landscape is still

conceptualised as unchanging. Both the analogue and digital versions of this process rely on the conception of static geographic coordinates, preferably vertical elements that are visible and locatable on the land.\(^{16}\) Commonly referred to as landmarks, they operate to assist the mapmaker in abstracting the landscape into the format of the map, and enabling the map reader to correlate the map to the landscape in order to orient themselves. The cartographic lines that transform the blank space of a page into a map do so by delineating and laying claim to the paper’s – and by inference the landscape’s – ‘emptiness’. By their nature these lines express elements as outlines and symbols, and define boundaries in binary terms. The solid homogenous cartographic line is definite and locatable, and thereby indicates a certain fixedness or stability. Paul Klee refers to these as ‘the quintessence of the static.’\(^{17}\)

As with any drawn representation of the landscape, to construct a map is to abstract and compress ‘thick’ multidimensional space onto a ‘thin’ two-dimensional planar page. For this compression to occur, maps must be highly flattened and reductive versions of the context they seek to represent in order to operate coherently as adequate simulacra for material conditions and ideas. Yet, despite the venerated rational authority bestowed on maps,\(^{18}\) the abstraction of the dynamic medium of the landscape onto the page – particularly along a coast – requires a plethora of generalised, imaginary, and interpolated lines to achieve this relational illusion.

The grid, a conceptual projection that casts a system of imaginary lines onto the landscape, facilitates this compression by providing a stable and repeatable geometric framework. This enables vast conceptual and formal abstractions to occur. The combination of the imaginary grid and its coordinates enables the cartographic line to be plotted and embedded with information that directly

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\(^{16}\) While this is slightly more complex for GPS (as they use orbiting satellites and can triangulate location on the moving ‘target’ of a phone) the resultant line which registers the motion still relies on the static coordinates of the Cartesian grid.


\(^{18}\) Critical cartography is a cartographic subdiscipline which has emerged through the scholarship of Kenneth Frampton, J. B. Harley and Denis Cosgrove, among others. It critiques and subverts the assumed authority of the map.
relates to data from the physical landscape. The map can transmit layers of information through establishing measure, hierarchy and nuance from accepted taxonomies of icons, lineweight and line type. These conventions embrace a certain straightforwardness and finitude. They rely on a suite of techniques that privilege the capacity of line work to reduce and stabilise inexhaustible possibility in order to achieve a more singular clarity of intent. These qualities of the cartographic line contribute to a generalised reading of the mapped landscape as benign, timeless and motionless.

The authority of the cartographic line traditionally relies on the conception that the page can hold information which directly refers to the space of the landscape itself. As Certeau has shown, part of the virility of this illusion is that the cartographic output expunges any trace of the practices that produced it, creating the impression that the structure of the map springs directly from the structure of the world. This world-to-page abstraction assumes lines on paper be understood as analogous to actual ground conditions. Thereby, as Corner points out, a framework is established ‘upon which real material conditions are isolated, indexed and placed within an assortment of relational structures,’ imposing a spatial order through orienting and precisely situating static things in empty space.

Early in the research I became interested in developing approaches to registering dynamic and spatiotemporal qualities of the landscape. I was interested in the particular agency of the cartographic line with its assumptions of accuracy and direct correspondence to the world. As the outline of elements in the landscape, how could the cartographic line register qualities of duration and motion?
How could the disembodied aerial vantage of conventional maps be interrupted through processes that explored different relationships between the body, empiricism and the ground? I began experimenting with alternative cartographically-informed approaches to gathering and recording information from the landscape. This included creating instruments and devices that surveyed and provided relative measures to qualify landscape data, but which also attempted to consider the expressive and performative qualities of these registrations.

My early explorations were influenced by the drawing machines of Melbourne-based artist Cameron Robbins. He describes his drawing machines as instruments but states they are ‘[m]ore like clarinets and pianos than compasses or setsquares, they must be maintained, practiced, and performed [...].’ 21

Similarly, the teaching and conceptual design aspects of Smout Allen’s practice foreground the invention of various ‘envirographic instruments.’ 22 These range from small ballistic instruments 23 designed to ‘momentarily occupy the space between sky and ground,’ 24 to projects like LA Recalculated (2015) which conceived of Greater Los Angeles as an ‘archipelago of scientific instruments often realized at the scale of urban infrastructure.’ 25 Collectively, these instruments served to explore the dynamic relationship between the natural and Man-made.

Foregrounding the expressive potential of these machines and instruments, and the interaction between the cartographer and the calibrated device, explicitly responds to Certeau’s observation by reinserting the ‘practices of map’s production’ into the drawn artefact of the map. In so doing, it broadens the scope of the device beyond pure measure to consider qualitative and performative modes of cartographic expression.

Gradually, I developed my own plotting


24 Ibid., 44.

devices – a set of simple drawing machines and registration tools. As customised cartographic instruments, they were designed and calibrated to collect specific spatiotemporal data occurring across the landscape. The flow of data is captured, often on a micro scale, and mediated through the notation of the machine which translates them into lines and marks. Devices such as wind- and body-motion drawing machines were constructed, each using the medium of the data being collected to generate the linework. These simple drawing machines enable the landscape to literally transcribe itself.

As the machine’s designer, I have made a number of decisions which impact on what is revealed and excluded, much as a conventional cartographer would do. But at the same time I have relinquished a level of control by enabling processes occurring in the landscape to determine the outcome. Being one degree removed from creating each mapping, there is the opportunity to stand back and witness the performance of the drawing’s construction. Unlike a conventional map, I do not control the linework or composition of the drawing beyond determining the spatial conditions (locating/setting up the machine), defining the temporal constraints (deciding the duration of the drawing), and determining the responsiveness of the machine itself (the sensitivity of the machine’s reception and recording capabilities).

As part of a collaborative design research project, Urban [Di]Versions (2009),26 I constructed and installed a simple drawing machine designed to ‘make visible’ air movement in a confined urban laneway. As a means of leveraging the authority invested in normative maps, this machine attempted to marry the qualities of precision and selection with the incompleteness of the process of mapping. A new mapping was constructed every 24 hours and each one was unique, with

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26 This was part of a larger collaborative project as part of State of Design Festival, 2009. Collaborators included Roger Kemp, Mick Douglas, Malte Wagenfeld, Suzie Attiwill, Rochus Hinkel, and students Alice Kohler, Alex Brown, Joyce Ho, Schuyler Lin, Sarah Jamieson.
the linework capturing subtle changes as well as overall or broader shifts. As durational mappings, they tracked data, translating and ‘making visible’ the behaviour and movement of the air.

This machine was later reconfigured in a gallery space as part of a collaborative work with Roger Kemp for Urban Interior Occupation: Berlin/Brighton/Melbourne a group exhibition at Guilford Lane Gallery. This saw the combination of conventional maps that had been spliced and collaged by Kemp and overlaid by the mappings being produced by the machine in ‘real time’. The mappings produced in this second site were constructed from the air movement as people moved through the space, thereby registering significantly different qualities to the mappings the components of the same machine had created in the laneway.

A prototype for a wearable drawing machine translated the body’s movement through space into linework. This machine enables a more direct documentation of the body and its movement through space than the reconfigured wind drawing machine in the gallery. Again, the drawings produced are strangely evocative of the qualities of each short journey. The mapping registers the interaction between the landscape and the body in motion – speed, swerves, pauses and so on are visually registered, yet without any of the traditional ‘landmarks’ of a conventional map.

The ground of Saltscape was a hypersaline material condition which I had observed changing states between liquid and solid over the span of a day as saline ground water evaporated in the sun, leaving a thickening layer of salt. I was interested in capturing this and further considering the line. Initially this device was conceived as a floating device, but due to low water levels this was adapted to a series of anchors with string lines which allowed the salt to be registered as the saline water evaporated. The wicking action of the
string registered the salt crystals forming. The Sandscape project experimented with a simple, floating, grid-like registration device which could pivot two-dimensionally at each join and register the underwater motion of this littoral zone. Unlike the previous drawing machines, this did not draw per se but the distortions of the grid created by the motion of the water offered a durational and highly localised cartographic registration.

This exploration coincided with a series of short films I was creating of the Truganina spit (see page 87), and I began to consider the relationship between the cartographic and the cartographer more explicitly.

Was this what I was trying to ‘plot’? And if so, did a different concept of the line need to be explored to enact a performative cartography?

For me, perhaps the most interesting finding from creating these machines and devices was not the drawn, filmed or photographed artefact but witnessing the real time performativity of each plot as temporal flows were made visible. As a research tool, the drawing machines and registration devices offer insights into the complex behaviour and interconnectedness of landscape processes through making visible select, dynamic landscape phenomena. In each case, within this process subtle changes and singularities, as well as overall or broader shifts, are registered. Collectively these explorations capture and render perceptible qualities of motion and duration to register particular aspects of the imminent condition of the landscape.

Fig 73-75: Grid - water motion registration device, (Kate Church, 2013)
Fig 76-79: *Lines and Edges*: stills from short film (Kate Church, 2015)
The text below comprises excerpts from one of three Sandscape site narratives. The opening to this chapter, ‘Junction’, is another. To convey that these texts form multiple representational vantages of the same landscape, occasional overlaps in content between these two narratives have been retained, alongside some of the geomorphic information in the early strata sections of this chapter. The following, taken from a longer piece, was originally written to be read aloud.

Site lines

On the page, the cadastral map shows the site slightly inset, teetering between two converging lines - lines which represent the river and the coast. (Lines which, in fact, represent very little in this landscape that seems to doggedly resist the pen’s capture.)

Near this convergence is the fence, a containment line which looks like it is working very hard to appear enduring, solid and unmovable. Whoever decided they needed this fence seemed to want it embedded into the ground, as though it had risen up out of the sand. But erosion has prised open gaps all along its base. In the mornings, on one side of the site, these allow corridors of light to escape – only intensifying the effect that the fence is insubstantial... hovering... a levitation with companion shadows that amplify the wind’s tremor of the rusted corrugated sheets. A quivering line.

[...]

And the fence accompanies you – for hundreds of metres – so that its persistence, its sheer rickety repetition, seems to stretch time, and to slow it down.

And in this slowness... you notice your steps. With the fence blocking out the white noise of the traffic, and the eucalypts on the other side of the creek deadening the gale, your feet are suddenly tap, tapity, tapping loudly on the path. And if you climbed that hillock too fast before you’d feel a pounding breathlessness and be reminded of your internal machinations. And the surrounding expansiveness will suddenly contract to the instant of your heartbeat.

And in this impure silence... the fence continues to makes its presence felt. On the page, it’s a line forming a huge lurching ellipse. A crude geometry borne of utility. But standing next to it, the line is vertically extruded for two-and-a-half metres, its metallic ripples creating an island of sorts that keeps things out and traps things in. On the outside, where you are now, the line has seemingly been teased wider by maintenance. Herbicide sprayed along the perimeter creates a rim, a ribbon of barren soil. When you look closely at this strip of earth you can see black sand filled with shell fragments and calcified shards, like an upended jar of broken beads... a constellation of tiny trinkets from the ancient sea bed.

And even this line, this fence line... isn’t really a line at all. It’s layered, ruptured, perforated, encrusted. There are the low lying crumpled mesh additions which sit in front of the fence. Hitched up to star-peg and bending into the ground in an apparent attempt to curb rabbit incursions. Dishevelled and pock-marked with burrows, they are unworthy adversaries.

[...]

As you round the next corner you are released from the narrow compression of the creek and the fence. As the path clutches close to the river it bends away from the fence. You meet the asphalt stripe of road and, in turning your head to check for oncoming traffic, you see two mesh fences, dashed lines that submit an image of the interior.
Uncharted territory

The landscape which constitutes Sandscape epitomises the evasive qualities Corner identifies through its horizontal vastness, its intermingled and overlaid durations, and the mobility of its matter which continually transforms the ground plane. The set of maps I had sourced for Sandscape, including the Truganina Parklands and Reserve, and the various other areas of inland Victoria I was exploring in preparation for the next project, were overwhelmingly empty, save for some tentative tracks and massive undifferentiated blobs of colour fill. The qualities and experience of these landscapes were emphatically horizontal. Their conditions seemingly eluded traditional Cartesian and cadastral survey techniques. I was interested in furthering the work I had done with the drawing machines and registration devices, to develop a cartographically-informed approach that registered more of the qualities of these landscapes I was exploring. The virtually empty areas on existing maps invited a different approach to surveying and data collection.

The cadastral (CAD) plan I have for Truganina Explosives Reserve and its nearby spits and wetlands is virtually empty (fig 80). Dismayed by the lack of information on this base drawing, I began walking the site and trying to draw the information back onto the CAD plan. Despite it now being more detailed – that is, there were more lines on the page – the process only seemed to enhance the disjunction between the drawing and the landscape. There had been few ‘fixed’ points to measure or set out from, so the lines seemed both incongruous and inaccurate – registering neither the intensive nor extensive landscape qualities.

I tried again, this time inverting the method. The resultant map (fig 81: 1:5000 map) shows the coastal and riverine edges as zones rather than outlines. Aware of Carter’s description,
and the sense of inadequacy of the interpolated line to represent this intermediate coast condition, I abandoned the continuous line and instead used tiny flecks and dots. In hindsight, I could have made these marks work harder and convey more – shifting pen weight or the length of the fleck to indicate prevailing wave and current movements more accurately. But the marks did begin to become expressive of the sand granules falling in and out of suspension – and a fullness or liveness is registered in the same spaces that the cadastral lines rendered blank. But really, this mapping remains almost pictorial – perhaps evoking something of the convergence and indecipherability of this zone where water ends and land begins it, but not an operative register for this landscape.

My fascination with the Reserve’s fence provided something of a ‘fixed point’ for my next attempt. Circumnavigating the inside and outside of the 17-hectare circumference, I charted representative sections as well as moments or singularities. In this plan the continuous line that locates the fence on the original cadastral drawing becomes filigreed; ruptured, notated and drawn over. By the end of this process the fence line is no longer a discrete or homogenous boundary line, and its effect can be read in relation to its context. I also photographed the many different conditions of the fence. A number of these images became the datum for a hand drawn 1:10 sectional fence taxonomy (figs 82-84) that overlays a longitudinal section and a cross section of the same portion of fence. These drawings veered away from planometric mapping but remain highly abstracted, the overlaid sectional cuts provoking an unusual spatiality. These too failed to capture key characteristics of the landscape I was looking to reinstate into its representation. However, this process did provide insight into the multiple roles that fence performs: it hides, it shields, it prevents, it preserves, it shadows, it collects, it leaks, and it disturbs.
As the fence revealed its permeability, the distinction between inside and outside lessened. The fence came to be viewed less as an element that constituted a bounded, island-like condition and more as a gnomon – a sedentary vertical landscape element that registers material flows, as the raised point of a sundial registers and measures the passing of time on a horizontal surface. Flows are registered through its stasis and this fence is a boundary which both gathers and leaks.

In reflecting on these sectional drawings, it is not really the fence that is the focus but its effect, registered as disturbance, both in terms of the flows which transgress its boundary and the effects it catalyses on the ground plane. Again, there is no continuous ‘outline’ or section line; the ground plane comprises dots, squiggles and flecks depicting it as friable and mobile. Thus, the second realisation emerging from this process was the porosity of the fence – there are numerous breaches caused by rabbit incursions, plants oozing between and over the corrugated sheets, places where the ground is moving and eroding producing significant gaps, vegetation and landscape matter which is transported over the fence, and so on.

The two scales of mapping undertaken up to this point – 1:5000 and 1:10 – are indicative of how this landscape is experienced: through the vast and the granular. This lack of a compositional ‘middle ground’ shifts the spatial sensibility. It is a familiar characteristic of expansive spaces. Rebecca Solnit describes a similar condition in a desert context as being ‘... as though [her] own scale had been eliminated along with the middle ground.’

While I felt I had gained some insight into this landscape, these two sets of mappings as cartographic re-presentations seemed to smooth over and reduce the qualities of the landscape I wanted to foreground. After the discovery of the active sand ridges inside the

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fence I turned my attention to the Reserve’s interior. I produced a number of mappings which tried to understand the aeolian forces and predict the movement and future morphology of the ridges (figs 85-87). Similar to traditional wind maps, the linework on these are encoded with both direction and speed. This allowed me to continue avoiding continuous lines. Instead, I used stipples and dashes, but in a more quantifiably accurate manner. This drawing set was digitally produced, and in the point-to-point drawing process of the CAD drawing environment, the materiality of the ground was rendered somehow even more static and abstracted than the hand drawings – further removed from the imminent condition I was trying to register.

I tried an altogether different approach which attempted to adapt the text-based practice undertaken in Siltscape. This time the texts offered a form of spatial writing intended to provide a descriptive counterpoint to cadastral mappings. In many respects the three texts produced so far feel like the closest and most useful in capturing the site’s characteristics. In conjuring up this landscape, the imminent conditions and the landscape’s spatial expansiveness can be made visible and ‘seen’. The text sidestepped the Cartesian stasis I confronted in the visual mapping processes. While the impetus and intent are slightly different, these texts are indebted to Jane Rendell’s dissemination of her critical spatial writing practice. Rendell’s practice is one of critically situating and interpreting the object of criticism, and Slandscape’s site narratives borrow from her positioning of material space as a cipher for the unsettled and unsettling ‘emptiness’. The initial piece (Site Lines, 81) descriptively maps the site through grappling with the concept of the line in relation to this landscape’s evasiveness. It drew on the knowledge I had gained about the fence and the changes the ground constantly underwent from the initial mappings. Which is to say, I could not have produced this piece without having first spent so long dwelling with the ineffectual lines of my drawings.

Fig 88: Still from *Lines and Edges*, short film, (Kate Church, 2015)
Lost in translation
[... an aside]

Not dissimilarly to Perec, fellow OULIPIOlian30 Italo Calvino evokes multiple reimaginings of Venice in his novella *Invisible Cities* (1972) by drawing on reader’s knowledge of the ‘real’ icon of Venice. He reinvents the city many times over by focussing on different facets presented through a combination of semiotic lenses and recurring thematics that create multiple recreations. I wondered if I could make a series of cinematic remakings of the Truganina landscape that would again unsettle a singular or authoritative representation. The idea was appealing as it would re-map the site through particular landscape conditions and offer a durational mode to register and document. The medium would also enable time, motion and sequencing to be manipulated.

Similar to undertaking the task of tailoring for April’s apron, it was the first time I had made a film. And perhaps it was the grappling with new equipment and software, or perhaps it was a desire to somehow ‘contain’ the project’s scope by folding the modalities into each other... but somewhere in the process – and without quite recognising it at the time – I stepped away from my Calvinoesque ambitions. Instead, I made a series of short films that aligned to the site-writings. This was a mistake – the usefulness of the text as a registration mode was that it mapped the site without visually re-presenting it. In tethering the films to the text, they too lost much of their ability to reframe the landscape. The impetus for the text-based work was cartographic, so the thematics it explored were not necessarily appropriate for creating the cinematic retellings. And the initial reason for using the medium of film was to take advantage of the camera’s framing and, post-production, to resequence and retemporalise the footage to produce altogether different narratives. Instead, the films effectively ‘illustrate’ the text and, in doing so, the potential of each of these modalities and techniques was lessened.

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30 OULIPO is an anagram for *Ouvroir de littérature potentielle*, roughly translated as ‘workshop of potential literature.’ This was a group of writers and mathematicians whose writing practice explores generative constraints. Within the research, the concept and deployment of open structures – structures which enable multiple outcomes inflected with a degree of the unexpected – shares a similar sentiment.
In grappling with the conditions of the ground plane, Landscape had, up until this point, focused on exploring a range of modalities to register the shifting ground. This sat as an exploratory suite of plotting modes forming a trajectory which began with normative landscape architectural modes of practice, namely mapping and orthographic drawing, but then moved to use modes of registration that are less common in disciplinary practice, such as site-writing and short films.

Earlier, we considered the particular conundrums of the line in landscape architectural representation. Tim Ingold would attribute many of these issues to the tension between lines which specify and articulate – which orthographic conventions convey – and drawings which ‘tell’, expressed, according to Ingold, in the trace of the gesture which creates the line. Within the drawn medium I continuously confronted the cartographic line’s timelessness and the cartographer’s desire to fix and locate; the Cartesian basis of which this landscape seemed to defy.

The landscape had dodged the drawn cartographic line. Nevertheless, it was no longer rendered empty or static. And the long stretches of time spent on site to gather timelapse footage and document particular changes did prompt the practice to shift in an important way.

Walking plots lines across the land. Richard Long’s early oeuvre frequently combined walking and cartography, including seminal works such as A Line Made by Walking (1967) and A Walk of Four Hours and Four Circles (1972). Both directly explore the Euclidean and cartographic line through the body. Jane Rendell posits walking as a way of understanding sites in flux in a manner that
questions the logic of measuring, surveying and drawing a location from a series of fixed and static viewpoints.\textsuperscript{31} Rebecca Solnit situates walking as an intrinsically cartographic activity; it is how the body measures itself against the Earth.\textsuperscript{32} Theorist Frederic Gros describes our feet as ‘a compass that has no useful function, apart from evaluating distance. The legs survey.’\textsuperscript{33}

Paul Carter describes the notion of ‘bipedal thinking’ as a different approach to the line:

\[
\text{[...]} \text{to think bipedally is inevitably to construe the line in terms of a succession of strides or paces. Bipedal thinking is not a matter of placing one foot in front of another. It depends on a counterpoint of small leaps and small landings, the intervals between steps as well as the imprint of the steps in the sand.}\textsuperscript{35}
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His description of this counterpoint shifts the focus from the visual to the temporal, marked by the intervals between steps. His notion responds to Certeau’s identification of the concealment of process in the cartographic. Carter argues for a reinvigoration of the cartographic through materialising and revealing its geographical process, in order to ‘reconnect mapping to drawing, and drawing to running – the primary act of moving across ground.’\textsuperscript{36}

This echoes Paul Klee’s famous definition of a line as a point which has been taken ‘for a walk.’\textsuperscript{37} And taking this quote quite literally, I began to revisit how I moved through this landscape. This started by interrogating how I walked and gradually developed to a more cultivated sensitivity to moving across the ground and reading signals, clues and traces of geotemporal processes. Later, the walking practice incorporated mobile documentation methods using lenses and microphones. I gradually became more attuned, attentive and deliberate about how I was moving through

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31} Jane Rendall, \textit{Art and Architecture: A Place Between}, (London, IB Tauris) 2006, cited in Ingold, Lines, 48.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Tim Ingold, \textit{Making: Anthropology, Archeology, Art and Architecture}, (London and New York: Routledge, 2013) 125-129.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Carter, \textit{Dark Writing}, 37.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Carter, \textit{Dark Writing}, 21.
\end{itemize}
the landscape and what I was registering, both through my body and the equipment.

I also explored a walking method, inspired by Hamish Fulton’s slow walks, through developing a set of duration- and speed-based protocols to alter the routine experience of being in and moving through a familiar landscape. This method shifts the attunement to the bodily experience of the ground and the processes playing out in the surrounding landscape.

As a mechanism for exploring the relationship between the body and the ground this modality requires new relationships to be formed that interrupt the usual ways of moving across surfaces. I have organised and been involved in two group slow walks (City Square, 2015, Melbourne Jail Courtyard, 2016) and solo slow walks (Performing Mobilities 2015, Lake Crosbie 2015, Sand spit walk, 2015). The simple act of slow motion utterly transforms the process of walking. It requires dogged concentration... and makes you reevaluate balance, how your foot touches the ground, what you look at, how you navigate. You feel as though you inhabit time and space differently, and your sense of spatial proximity shifts.

On foot, everything stays connected, as Rebecca Solnit points out. This foregrounds and aligns the walked line of the path and the ground as continuous conditions eschewing cartographic boundary lines that divide the land into pieces. To walk can take many forms: one may strut, traipse, clomp, stagger, toddle, trudge, stride, and so on. Each confers a different type of walking with its own combination of speed, carriage and impetus. ‘To roam’ best describes the type of walking that I developed across this flat open terrain. Roaming suggests a tactical way of walking that is semi-structured and exploratory; it is suggestive of a certain expansiveness. One may roam in large, open spaces.

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40 Ibid., 162.
As a form of walking, roaming returns us to the dérive (see page 22), Guy Debord’s theorising on this mode of moving through dense urban space that famously activated the act of walking. Roaming on the other hand, while connoting a similar slowness and attending to ‘the dropping of [...] usual motives for movement and actions’ is a practice developed for vast, flat, exposed spaces in order to discover, register and document this ground plane as an imminent condition.

Roaming then may be understood as a tactical premise for walking that re-maps the landscape through movement. Roaming is sedate, careful and recognises the importance of pausing. Whereas the cartographic line is technically accurate and may encode instructions as to how to move, it contains no movement in itself. This assumes a relationship with the landscape which, as Tim Ingold identifies, is optical rather than haptic and instils the mapped land with a sense of timelessness. As this method of roaming developed, I undertook a series of works which have led me to ever more expansive ground planes.

Beyond Sandscape, other roamings have been based in the Mallee, Victoria’s northern interior where I roamed areas of Culpra Station, Murray-Sunset National Park and the perimeter of Mourquong Dispersal Basin. These later roamings formed the basis of Saltscape, described in the following chapter. These are all landscapes where the base maps are bare, and aerial images indicate very little about the profound spatial experience and dynamism of the ground. Photos too are rendered empty by the lens’s frame and the refrain that there is ‘no-thing’ to photograph. These are landscapes that can only be attuned to through being on the ground, walking across this horizontal expansiveness.

The roamings I undertake are generally long walks that simultaneously immerse me in,
and expose me to, the openness, the emphatic horizontality of the land and the omnipotent horizon. As spatiotemporal acts of registration, these walks demand significant periods of time spent physically being on the ground. This enables a kinaesthetic registration of lines carved from space and time that occur at the interface of the body and the ground.

As a mode of embracing imminence, plotting combines roaming with a set of techniques that digitally document the landscape. This documentation occurs during the walks and is later used as source material, edited and reformed to produce digital artefacts that re-map the ground condition. Initially, this documentation occurred through a combination of HD video camera, GoPro and smartphone. But gradually this has whittled down to just the smartphone. The potential of smartphones as registration devices is widely known.\(^4^3\) While a multitude of apps allow the phone to measure and quantify, I have approached my use of this device tactically, ‘making do’ with the phone’s existing software capabilities primarily to capture images, footage and audio. The phone’s size, its multimodal functionality and ubiquitous presence enables the immediacy required to document the fleeting conditions through modes which can later be manipulated precisely. Importantly, it mediates the
collecting and sampling in a manner which allows the collected artefacts to retain their motion and durational qualities. As a set of registration modalities and techniques, these facilitate a ‘way of being’ that itself registers and mediates the peculiar distance constructed through the conceptualisation of the vertical body as ‘other’ to the horizontal condition of the ground. As both walking and the phone are ‘ready-to-hand’, there are no special preparations required to plot. There are designated times when I go to a place as a deliberate act of plotting – indeed this had become something of a routine for Sandscape as I try to document the ground under different tidal and wind conditions or following storm events. However, I also incorporate these acts of registering in my everyday life. Consequently, this has changed both how I move through the landscape and how I perceive it as an imminent condition.

Roaming thereby describes a spatiotemporal fieldwork practice of registration which is uniquely landscape in scope. It requires being in and moving through the landscape. It is characterised via the immediacy of this experience. As a ‘live’ mode, roaming offers an intensification of the relationship between the body, ground, duration and motion, and as such, heightens the registration of shifting conditions.
Roaming Truganina

In 2015, well into the Sandscape project, Hobsons Bay City Council released a masterplan for the Truganina Explosives Reserve. The masterplan is thorough, conservative and proposes a series of small interventions designed to preserve and protect areas of historical or conservation interest. After the extensive fieldwork I had undertaken on the site up to this point, and the richness of its perpetual shifts, this approach seemed implausible. Like the fence, the masterplan represented a series of propositions to ‘hold back’ and contain the condition of flux that my research had revealed, and that had characterised my experience of this landscape.

In response, I created Shifting Terrains (2016). This performative walking event drew on these itinerant and peripatetic practices in combination with a kit that contained equipment and visual material that formed the basis for participants to undertake a solo walk through the Reserve and its immediate context. Each participant received instructions to locate their kit: a specially-designed bag that contains headphones, an iPod and various ‘instruments’, and visual material, along with the initial instructions and a map of how to access the Reserve.

The work sits somewhere between a solo ‘tour’ and a derivé, as a form of performative cartography. It aimed to extract and synthesise elements of the knowledge and knowhow I have so far developed about this landscape, while also adapting a number of fieldwork techniques. The audio included brief spoken narratives that exposed multiple voicings to reimagine the different states of this landscape as the participant passed through it.
For each participant, the event lasted approximately 40 minutes. Eight audio tracks combined sound, with image and narrative to both plot and choreograph various visual and experiential aspects of the Explosives Reserve and its surrounding context for the participant. This form of mixed media audio walk provided a mode through which the temporal entanglement could be synthesised and experienced. Aural vignettes are supplemented with the kit’s visual material. The vignettes are told through different voicings, from the wife of the first magazine keeper who lived on site, to a geologist, to a kiteboarder, to a former explosives worker.

The accompanying kit for *Shifting Terrains* has alignments to the work by Writes & Sites, a group of artist-researchers who undertake ‘disruptive walking strategies’ to explore relationships between the body, landscape and sense of place. They have produced a series of published works called *Mis-Guides* (2003-2006) which incorporate a tactical ‘score’, mythogeography and urban commentary.

The *Shifting Terrains* kit material enables comparisons across time, for measures to be understood as spanning the vast and the 1:1, and for the cartographic, the durational and the experiential to be interwoven through the geologic.

The starting time for each participant was staggered with only one person on the Reserve at a time, which amplified both the emptiness of this landscape and the immersiveness of the experience. The participant encounters various parts of this landscape in serial temporal states. These encounters use historic visual material, in conjunction with the kinaesthetic experience,
to present different temporal states of the landscape simultaneously.

The narrative aspect of the journey plays between the fictional and the historical and deliberately uses the landscape’s expansiveness to distort the sense of time.

This mode of audio walk allowed the seriality of this landscape and the multimodal practice to be curated and combined. The work relied on and loosely choreographed the body in motion and allowed different times, states and voices to re-map the site. The ground is the central protagonist and its shifting conditions are explored throughout the journey.

Fig 103-106: Shifting Terrains audio walk, track 3 (Kate Church, 2016)
Fig 107: Shifting Terrains audio walk, (Kate Church, 2016)
Bill posters, Urban [D]Versions, (Kate Church, 2009)
**Field Conditions**

Exploring the distance between drawn representation and the conditions of the physical landscape occurs within a broader landscape architectural lineage that borrows conventions from other spatial disciplines. These disciplines register landscape as space to be treated compositionally, territorially or as an ‘empty’ backdrop for the object.\(^4\) Within the context of landscape architectural practice, these borrowed grids and frames are accompanied by inherited ‘problems’ that the originating disciplines had with registering duration, motion and the horizontal condition. Plotting is mode of practice that, through cartographically-informed explorations, ‘makes visible’ the horizontal as an active and mobile condition. These have focused on 1:1 durational modes of registering and experiencing the ‘empty’ ground.

This chapter’s discussion commenced with Korzybski’s famous statement that ‘[a] map is not the territory.’ The full statement reads:

> A map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness.\(^4\)

With traditional maps, this similarity of structure relies on the overlaid and abstracted Cartesian device of the grid to mediate the translation of the territory onto the page. The points and coordinates of the grid serve to wrest motion and duration from these representations. The explorations undertaken to develop plotting have reoriented the relationship between the cartographer, the landscape and the line.

\(^4\) In particular, landscape architecture’s western lineage adopts perspectival composition from landscape painting; the layered, omnipotent vantage taken from cartography and orthographic projection from architecture.


Sandscape emerged through the confrontation with a vast and volatile terrain. As the project progressed it shifted scope considerably. The circuitous nature of this approach enabled a range of experiments and modalities that explored mapping and other registration processes to be enabled for the expansive, horizontal, mobile landscape condition. This has extended the notion of mapping beyond traditional drawn paper artefacts to consider ways that the ground itself could be kinaesthetically registered and ‘read’. It is difficult to resist discussing the Sandscape’s progression so far, as though it occurred in a linear and mannerly arc whereby each part built on the findings of the previous work, producing a logical continuum. The reality was they were simultaneously disjointed and overlapping, they pilfered from and bled into each other, and the findings often did not stutter into focus until a long time later.

Sandscape has been a hinge for the broader research agenda, where the key interests of horizontality and rapid geological change have come into focus. It is also a landscape which began to articulate the qualities of a Scape, which subsequently formed the suffix to each of these propositions as a lateral, serial, disturbed and distributed set of geologic conditions.

A key discovery made through Sandscape was an approach to fieldwork practices tailored for the horizontal condition which now seems integral to a practice of embracing imminence. This fieldwork was hands-on and
Fig 109-112: Truganina Explosive Reserve fence, southern side, (Kate Church 2015)
visceral, and as a result I feel I really know this landscape and can discuss it with an authority which goes beyond empirical description. Indeed, upon reflection I think a deep familiarity with a locale is necessary to operate tactically, to understand the systems playing out, and to find ways to engage them which are characterised by agility, opportunism and using what is to hand.

Importantly, being in the field developed from an analytical to generative mode through the *Shifting Terrains* audio walk. This synthesised the fieldwork and offered a mode of operation that invited a performative cartography whereby the imminent conditions of the landscape were experienced and amplified through revealing serial processes and durations.

In summary, the contribution of plotting to a practice of embracing imminence has been threefold. First, the customised cartographic ‘instrument’ and its recording of invisible landscape flows/phenomena enabled a reconsideration of surveying processes by effectively reinserting cartographic processes into the mapped artefact, as identified by Certeau. The foregrounding of the real time transcription/mapping process also underscores the direct relationship to motion and duration. Second, the development of a tactical approach founded on walking and documenting the ground conditions allowed an expanded cartographic method for surveying conditions in the field. It has enabled the landscape to be understood through flows of time, matter and bodies, captured and reconstituted in multiple ways. Finally, although the films themselves did not achieve what I had intended, many of the post-production acts of slowing down, juxtaposing shots, leapfrogging through time and so on, were reworked to inform the *Shifting Terrains* audio walk. As a site-specific and temporally-specific immersive mode, this represents a key discovery signifying a processual deferral of arrival and enabling a synthesis of the textual, cinematic and narrative modes. This is translatable to other landscapes.
colonial otherness
a persistent, unfulfilled anticipation
an infinitely slow unfolding

...of fragility
...of resilience

terrestrial riddles
evolve to form Settler myths
- touristic clichés

...of long
droughts
...of sudden
floods

an inland landscape
elusive
fickle
sometimes reticent

unusual interdependencies
borne out across vast spaces

a prehistory
etched
into arid soils

the promiscuous extremes
a sheer immensity
leaving you breathless at your own insignificance

...and yet all
the while it
changes

more a galaxy than a terrain
‘The plains were so immense that no plainsman was ever surprised to hear of their encompassing some region he had never seen. Besides many places far inland were subject to dispute – were they part of the plains or not? The true extent of the plains had never been agreed on.’

across the plains
Fig 113: On Lake Crosbie, (Kate Church, 2015)
Crust
walking a Saltscape

You will arrive by car after a long drive, for this saltscape is far away from anywhere.

Turning away from the smooth slipstream of a gun-barrel highway, you reach a wide gravel road – flanked by orderly paddocks. A clumsy turn sees the cleared surface of the road shrink to a narrow track pockmarked with holes and ruts. A dust plume will follow you and catch up when you slow right down to marvel at the lunette shapes of the spinifex. Though it is quite flat, stunted vegetation blocks the view of the lake. Instead you will see the splayed mallee trees and shrubs peppering low relief dunes. Then the reveal: the huge, pinky-white vastness of Lake Crosbie.

Once you are on the lake bed the surrounding dunes and their scribbled vegetation will hardly register. Across the relentless horizontality you will notice the salt granules crunch at your feet and you will squint to make out limitless sky and horizon. Here there will be no middle ground, no rugged ranges or picturesque framing. Here the Mallee resists composition as the very great and the very small congregate on the same plane.

You may walk across it, tousled by the wind. Your crunching footsteps will break through the thinner new surface of the salt crust at the edge, sinking in and stirring up impossibly black sediment that defaces the whiteness. Then, as you continue to walk across, the surface of the lake bed thickens to withstand your weight. Away from the edge, the salt base will be covered by a sky-mirror of shallow water that you will interrupt and splash through in the mornings, but which will be dried rock hard by the late afternoon. It will seem so flat, so white and exposed, that the other side of the lake will appear to remain just as distant, no matter how long you have walked towards it. And you will find there are moments near the centre of the lake when you have to pause and recalibrate as the space around you becomes disorienting, vast and undifferentiated, with no vertical elements to measure your progress.

And this naturally hypersaline ground plane will seem utterly mercurial, able to transform states – and often hovering between liquid and solid. Below the surface, things remain adrift as a natural peristalsis coaxes salt to the surface, for evaporation to solidify. The ground plane thickens yet remains unstable. It cracks and fissures, its sediments flung about by the wind. These are the arid residues borne of the wild oscillations between long, dry desiccation and abrupt submersion.

Anything that stays still becomes fused to the surface. You walk past the strange stalagmite forms of salt-basted grass seeds and small branches thickened to ten times their width, distorted, unrecognisable, and strangely beautiful.

Salt is everywhere – you too are a conduit for the salt. So that by the time you return to the car, your face will be stretched taut with granular residue, your pants cardboard stiff and polkadotted with splash marks now dried white, your shoes encrusted, and your hands heavily speckled with grittiness that grinds to fine powder on the steering wheel.
InLand

To reach this Saltscape we will traverse a north-western transect across south-eastern Australia. This route crosses the Western Plains of Victoria, a ground famous for its former volatility. Commonly mooted as the third largest volcanic plains in the world,1 made up of over 400 volcano sites whose flows gradually filled valleys and inclines over geological time to create the characteristic flatness of the plains.

Eventually we will arrive just north of the Murray River where our journey intersects with one taken by the early explorer, Charles Sturt. In 1829-1830 Sturt was the first non-Indigenous person to discover and name the Murray River.2 His journey westward from Sydney was driven by a deep conviction that an inland sea existed. He followed several large rivers west, convinced they drained from a massive inland waterbody. When his retracing of the Murray returned him to the coast he was disappointed to have disproved its existence. Had he been more attuned to the geomorphology around him he may have realised he was traversing an extinct sea bed for much of his journey.3 Ample signs of this are everywhere: the sand lunettes, the porous soils, the shell middens and gentle dunal topography. For the Mallee, according to Paul Carter, retains its oceanic appearance – it looks as if it could be wet.4 Indeed this ocean ostensibly remains, albeit underground, in the vast quantities of subterranean salt water flows.


3 Historian Denise Schuman, quoted in Lock, “On this day”.

4 Paul Carter, Ground Truthing: Explorations in a Creative Region, (Crawley: UWA publishing, 2010), 12.
Contested ground

The Mallee, an ‘ill-defined district,’\(^5\) is a remote and horizontal condition. Paul Carter describes it as:

\[
\text{... a doubled place: the physical region is shadowed by dreams of a destination never reached and fears of an unsustainable future on the ‘horizon’. It is a global region, an indexical environment in which the conditions of place-making and place-loss can be studied with unusual clarity. The Mallee, in short, is also the world.}\(^6\)
\]

Technically-speaking, the extents of the Mallee are governed by the


Fig 115: The branches of a Mallee Eucalypt protrude from the ground and connect to an underground lignotuber giving the trees their distinctive ‘multi-trunked’ appearance (Kate Church, 2015)

The aridity of many areas of the Mallee is contributed to by the massive volumes of saline groundwater which flow just below the surface. Where the water table is perched – that is, where this underground water is close to the surface – the deep-rooted Mallee vegetation serves to keep it in check, performing a complex subterranean process that regulates
the subsurface salt levels. This is assisted by the ingenious adaptation of Mallee eucalypts to the extreme conditions of the climate whereby only their branches remain above ground and trunks lie beneath the surface, with tap roots protruding deeper still. So these trees not only determine a nominal cartographic boundary across the horizontal plane, but also regulate the soil chemistry and flow of groundwater along its vertical axis.

However, with land clearing and agricultural practices removing vast tracts of Mallee vegetation, the already high watertable continues to rise, and the salt concentration on and just below the surface increases. This is commonly referred to as the mobilisation of salt.8 Without the vegetation’s deep root zone, capillary action draws the saline water up through the soil profile concentrating it at the surface, where evaporation leaves a thickening and expanding crust of salt. Salt levels become too intense for crops and most other vegetation, causing salinity.

Salinity is identified by some as the biggest environmental threat to Australia in the twenty-first century,9 and dryland salinity is the most visible and expensive salinity problem10 threatening the Mallee’s multibillion dollar agricultural and tourism industries. As a geologic material, salt’s ability to straddle liquid and solid states, and its corrosive, abrasive force, accelerates geological processes and rates of change. As hypersaline landscapes, these areas of the Mallee therefore undergo perpetual and rapid geomorphological change.

As a large-scale technical response to widespread and increasing dryland salinity, salt levels are artificially rechoreographed along the Murray River through a Salt Interception Scheme. The Murray-Darling Basin Authority is responsible for regulating the water across the three Australian

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states the river flows through. It manages and maintains the many Salt Interception Scheme ‘assets’. These include a dispersed infrastructure of underground bores, pipes and pumps that intervene in the already disturbed groundwater system along the Murray River. Designed to extract the salt before it reaches the river, the Scheme artificially lowers the river’s salinity level, ensuring its suitability for irrigation. This operates in tandem with a series of weirs, dams, transfer tunnels, pumping stations and water storage areas to artificially regulate the river’s flow so that the region has a reliable irrigation source. Prior to these large scale interventions, the Murray’s water flow was highly variable. It now maintains a regular flow throughout the year – a far more predictable and consistent river.

The development and official release the Murray Darling Basin Plan in 2012 was particularly contentious and dubbed one of the most controversial pieces of public policy in recent history. Billed as a coordinated approach to water management, the Plan determines caps for the quantities of water extracted for urban, industrial and agricultural use in relation to the amount required for environmental flows. ‘Environmental flow’ is the category of water designated to stay in the river to support ephemeral wetlands, billabongs and riparian landscapes. Through this approach, the Basin Plan has effectively also set up and regulated a water market where irrigation rights can be traded and the government can buy back water to increase the environmental flows.

The irrigation of shallow-rooted crops with the semi-desalinated water from the Murray continues and accelerates the mobilisation of salt. When excess irrigation water applied to crops travels past the root zone into
the groundwater system, capillary action further raises the watertable, bringing more salt to the surface. As salt levels rise the ground becomes unsuitable for crops, erosion is increased, and costly damage occurs to civil and agricultural infrastructure.

As entangled human/nonhuman processes, the hydrology and geomorphology of the Murray River and its alluvial plains have been reconfigured in a manner which materialises a set of cultural, economic and political values. And whereas *Sandscape* focused on the ground as a material registration of landscape processes, *Saltscape* seeks to expand a reading of the imminent condition of the land to include the cultural and social values as they impact and are registered through the ground. And so we now acknowledge we are on ground which is highly charged – politically, environmentally and culturally contested.

Within this context, *Saltscape* comprises a series of activities and explorations undertaken across the Mallee region which are clustered across three Mallee plains. These terrains, aside from being geographically linked, are also materially linked through their saline ground conditions and temporally linked through my activities being undertaken at more or less the same time. Dispersed across inland NSW and Victoria, each terrain also has a relationship to a National Park, either occurring within a National Park (Lake Crosbie), sharing a border with a National Park (Culpra Station), or operating as a provocation to consider an alternative notion of a National Park (Mourquong Disposal Basin).

As a landscape typology National Parks denote significant landscapes, preserving and showcasing what we value about the ‘natural
environment’. The perceived natural significance of National Parks is juxtaposed with the typology of the plains as flat, open, landmark-deficient, and sparsely treed – a landscape typology not traditionally valued for its wilderness aesthetic. This juxtaposition is enhanced and coopted towards the end of the chapter through a speculative brief for Mourquong Basin.
Fig 119: Selection of physical samples, (Kate Church, 2015)
Gleaning – gathering significance and ‘making’ sense

Jean-François Millet’s famous painting The Gleaners (1857) indicates the bodily act of gleaning in relation to the land. Stooped bodies are hunched over, intently focused on the ground, searching for leftovers – things which may be unwanted or have gone unnoticed.

In her film The Gleaners and I (2000), Agnès Varda looks at contemporary forms of gleaning as an alternative to prevailing cultural attitudes towards consumption and waste. She comes to the conclusion that, through making the film she has, herself, performed an artistic gleaning:

‘You pick ideas, you pick images, you pick emotions from other people, and then you make it into a film.’\(^{14}\)

Extrapolated from these two examples, gleaning may be characterised through the collection of artefacts and fragments which may be later recombined, added to and transformed. The process of gleaning is one of seeking and searching out, and is pervaded by a corporeal sense of anticipation as the gleaner picks their way across the ground, with heightened awareness. The process of gleaning attunes bodily perception to the conditions of the ground as a material registration of movement. It is a peripatetic undertaking, an imminent state in which the gleaner searches for and actively awaits the land to yield ‘something’. These may be whole objects or fragments of ‘some thing’. The fragment is particularly interesting for our purposes as it offers hints that invite imagined or speculative completeness to be entertained. Indeed, the idea of completeness defines the very notion of a fragment as an incomplete part of something else.

Understanding or knowledge that is ‘gleaned’ refers to a cognitive process that gradually pieces together fragments of information and experience to glean a fuller understanding of the world. This describes a process of constructing meaning; ‘making sense’ from disparate sets of information and experience through gathering and recombining fragments to form temporary and contingent understandings.

These two meanings of ‘gleaning’ together constitute a third mode of practice which has emerged from this research. Gleaning offers a ‘way of being’ in the landscape through foregrounding a relational understanding of the land. This relationality situates knowledge as something that emerges from a fragmentary and disjointed process of experiencing, collecting and reconstituting through which the gleaner

produces perpetually unfinished versions of their collection. The characteristics of unfinishedness and multiplicity ‘hold open’ meaning and significance, allowing these to change and be overwritten – as singular items are placed within a constellation of other items. Through adjacency and juxtaposition, the curation of the collection constructs an open context allowing sense to be made through a piecing together of disparate things that imply various relationships.

Susan Sontag, in her book *The Volcano Lover* (1992), defines truly great collections as being ‘vast not complete. Incomplete – but motivated by the desire for completeness. There is always one more.’15 This describes the underlying paradox of gleaning as a mode of the practice. The desired-but-impossible completion contributes an epistemological model which productively situates the unfinishable, unknowable and unstable in relation the desire to make sense.

As sense-making endeavours Renaissance Wunderkammers (also known as cabinets of curiosities) are manifestations of an approach to ‘finding out’ founded on the curiosity and wonder that can be engendered by tangible items collected by moving through world. This suggests the Wunderkammer as a site of convergence for both definitions of ‘glean’, and within the research has informed an approach to a multimodal installation practice. Emerging from these historical collection practices, the Wunderkammer countenanced curiosity and wonder. Curiosity describes a strong desire to find out or learn something16 – Michel Foucault recognises that curiosity ‘evokes “care”; it evokes the care one takes of what exists and what might exist.’17 Wonder, according to Lawrence Weschler, defines a form of learning that is ‘an intermediate, highly particular state akin to a sort of suspension of the mind between ignorance and enlightenment that marks the end of unknowing and the beginning of knowing.’18 Operating as a precursors...

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15 Susan Sontag, *The Volcano Lover: A Romance*, (New York: Picador, 2004), 72. This book is an intricate study of the obsessive collection practices of her protagonist, The Cavaliere, using historic events (namely Horatio Nelson’s affair with Emma Hamilton) as a prism through which curiosity and obsession are viewed.


18 [see over page]
to knowledge, curiosity and wonder are embodied imminent states which form in response to the not-yet-known. These are temporary states that become fragile or expunged by knowledge and reason.  

Wunderkammers, as containers for curiosities and wonder-full things, negotiated new and old ways of understanding the world. They operated allegorically, visualising and spatialising the relationships between objects, inscribing meaning, and in doing so constructing alternative knowledge systems. As a pre-scientific forerunner to the contemporary knowledge institutions of museums and galleries, Wunderkammers negotiated the initial steps that were occurring in the Renaissance towards what we now accept as our contemporary scientific paradigm. Many contemporary thinkers, artists and creative practitioners have sought inspiration from reviving this as a mode through which to consider, construct and critique an understanding of the material world.

Within a landscape architectural context, the Wunderkammer has directly influenced a small number of landscape practices, including Günthur Vogt’s whose projects and teaching practice routinely gathers then spatialises his collections as exhibitions in his hybridised studio-exhibition space. He describes items in his collection as ‘sensual, memory charged, empirical references’ that operate as a ‘concentrate or surrogate of real experienced landscapes.’

The fervent desire of the Renaissance collector to make sense of the universe resulted in vast collections being amassed. The way this understanding was organised and structured often seems, to the contemporary eye, unruly or utterly haphazard. Much as Jorge Luis Borges’ famous fictitious taxonomy unsettles the authority of how we classify our collective experience of the world, Renaissance

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19 Suzie Attiwill, “The Reposing Box: The reinvention of the archive,” (research by practice masters thesis, RMIT, 1994). Attiwill states: ‘In relation to knowledge curiosity occupies a point between obscurity and clarity, darkness and light, imaginative and rational, fictive and factual... the process of transformation from unknown to known does not always lead to enlightenment but has a dimension of fatality for the investigating subject.’ 37.


collectors developed a cultivated disorder based on idiosyncratic logics and rarely settled on a singular or assumed ‘correct’ way to organise their collections. Physics and metaphysics collided, and the slippage between genuine scientific artefact and faked specimen characterised many of these collections.

In displaying these specimens in cabinets or rooms, spatial juxtaposition of vastly disparate objects encouraged comparison, analogy and conjecture, thus enabling a propositional happenstance to occur. That is to say, the suggestive power of serendipitous co-location transformed the objects, suggesting new combinations, hybrid meanings and alternative possibilities. As an open structure, the Wunderkammer precedes the modern scientific paradigm. It operated as a mode of knowledge generation which privileged the development of multiple orders of contingent knowledge. The famed collection of John Soane furthered the potential of this through the addition of concave mirrors. As a device, the mirrors provided a mechanism which brought into association things that would otherwise appear spatially and curatorially distinct. To the viewer, the reflected object is suddenly recast in relation to a different category or context, enabling multiple orders to reside in a single version of the collection’s curation.

Constant reorganising, though often undertaken with the desire to construct a stable order, has the effect of ‘holding open’ the instability of knowledge. The presence of miscellany manifests these curatorial gaps. Historically, even the most renowned Wunderkammers contained gleaned objects whose categorial boundaries remained ‘yet to be defined’ – misfit objects that could not be classified within that particular iteration of the curatorial logic but were deemed necessary to the collection nonetheless. Even custom-made ‘kammers’, such as Macquarie’s Chest, an early piece of Australiana.
commissioned for Governor Macquarie’s trip to Scotland in 1822, contained a dedicated space for miscellany. So although curated to construct a cohesive narrative of colonial success, there were items which did not fit the narrative logic but were deemed significant and worthwhile of inclusion nevertheless.

Patrick Mauries identifies the tension that resulted between the collector’s intention to ‘exhaust to the full every aspect of the real world,’ the necessity to order and contain it within a finite space, and the ‘increasingly clear impossibility of such an undertaking,’ as the motivating tension that lies at the heart of the cult of curiosities. This tension underpins gleaning as a paradoxical interplay between the impetus for the individual collector to continually glean in the hope of constructing a total understanding of the world, and the acknowledged impossibility of this ambition. Historically-speaking, as a mode of making sense, Wunderkammers occurred on the cusp of two epistemological regimes. Thus, the knowledge systems they encompass reside on the brink of ancient beliefs and burgeoning Modernity – two world views with fundamentally different attitudes toward what constitutes knowledge and how it emerges.
Gleaning practice

Gleaning as a mode of this landscape practice deploys gathering and curatorial acts to ‘make sense’ of geologic fragments as the material manifestation of entangled human and nonhuman temporal forces. These are collected and variously recombined to produce immersive and multimodal installations which attempt to ‘make sense’ of different ground conditions. Through acts of juxtaposition, scientific and museological conventions that establish ‘common sense’ operate alongside less settled approaches to constructing knowledge through conveying items from the world as wonder-full.

Having young children has improved my gleaning practice. They slow my progress, infusing walks with a multitude of pauses, circlings back and waiting in oddly banal places. The children are natural gleaners – opportunistic, inquisitive, deeply fascinated by everyday things, and highly original in their invented explanations of what an unknown thing might be. Both of them fill the many pockets of their cargo pants with small treasures.

A typical jaunt to a nearby park (a 4-minute walk on my own, often a 15-or-more-minute walk with children in tow) may yield: run-over bottle caps, a crumpled Tattslotto card, a set of dementedly-shaped pebbles, gumnuts that have been ‘icecreams’ in their recent game, the Biggest Ever piece of tanbark, an almost-intact cicada wing, a pencil stub, a discarded shopping docket. These are clustered on bedside tables, or reemerge in the various receptacles for miscellany we have dotted around our house. These items are the tokens of their outing, props for playacting, and devices through which they are making sense of the world and their place within it. For each of them, the outside world is constantly transformed to become Wunderkammeresque as they careen through it and subjectively gather curiosities.

Fig 130: Oscar’s collection from a fortnight’s worth of trips to the park, (Kate Church, 2017)
Gleaning typically yields two types of artefact: the sample and the singularity. The sample represents a correspondence to a broader condition. Samples are collected methodically with consistent sample sizes and regular distances between collection points, and they are labelled.

The singularity on the other hand is the item or phenomena that piques a more subjective interest: the unexpected, the strangely beautiful, the unusual, the thing you have to grasp or somehow capture. Initially, singularities tend to be discovered serendipitously. But though they are less able to be methodically collected, experience attunes the gleaner to identify (and even construct) the conditions likely to yield particular singularities.

This notion of collecting as a means to reveal and unsettle the signifiers of value and significance is regularly explored within conceptual art practices. This arguably began with Marcel Duchamp’s *Fountain* (1917) and his coining of the Found Art movement, and continued to Claes Oldenburg’s *Ray Gun Wing* (1972-77) and other contemporary practices. These works and practices deliberately sought to augment notions of value and, in doing so, question ideas of significance and preciousness within an art context. Contemporary artist Mark Dion similarly engages with processes of classification, curation and symbolisation in gallery contexts. Dion performs this curation and classification over the duration of the exhibition to constitute the work. The live event of temporary installations, such as *The Academy of Things* (2014), brings together the collector, the collection and an audience into the same space and activates the collected items. Through the process of witnessing, curatorial processes (and associated signification of value) play out.

For early projects such as *Siltscape* the idea of the collection shaped an exploration that
deliberately facilitated a problematic between the sample and singularity to be revealed. This provided a means to consider the subjective nature of collections and what we – both as individuals and societies – value and deem significant. April’s subjective attribution of significance and value to the artefacts of her collection is very different to how someone with expertise, such as a botanist, might organise and understand these items.

Yet within the chronological trajectory of developing the scapes, my collection methods were beginning to make me uneasy. As the project work increasingly overlapped, the spatial containment of Siltscape’s island with Sandscape’s rapid horizontal expansion, the ‘thing-ness’ of what and how I was collecting became mismatched with the focus on the horizontal continuum of the ground, and the distributed and temporal phenomenon of drift. A gleaning practice that only seeks out and gathers physical artefacts assumes durable material objects to be the focus of the collection. The volatility and temporal qualities of Sandscape were not able to be engaged with through these relatively static traces. Akin to the butterfly specimen which, pinned down and taken out of the flux of time, loses its quintessential ‘butterfly-ness’, I felt I needed to adapt and expand my gleaning methods to avoid similarly evading the thing I wished to foreground. I therefore began developing methods that used film footage which I then recomposited as a collection. This mediated modality exacerbates the peculiar distances that play out, enabling the ‘flux of time’ to be both apprehended and manipulated.

The method developed to rely on the mobile phone as a collection tool. This represents both an evolution and a shift from the role of the phone as a documentation device outlined in the previous chapter. As a device for collecting, the phone’s ubiquity is leveraged to privilege the collection of singularities by allowing the collection process to be subtle,
tactical, and ready-to-hand. Importantly, the audio and film capabilities of the phone allow the contextual and temporal information to be captured, framed and mediated by the device. Thus, gleaning in this manner allows not only tangible objects to be collected, but also captures duration and motion. This allows a collection practice to extend and become less concerned with static, durable, tangible artefacts than the fleeting and mediated specimen.

I experimented with recompositing these mediated specimens into filmic collections. Initial versions of these films were somewhat constrained by the temporal linearity of the sequence and the strong narrative assumptions I brought to viewing this medium. I explored techniques such as split screens, time lapse and montaging. These post-production processes enabled an enhanced form of gleaning, allowing me to apprehend geologic change that had evaded perception in real time. As an extension of this mode of practice, collecting and editing digital footage has helped to develop a heightened sensitivity and attunement to the landscape. However, my limited cinematic skills, and the inevitable sequential unfurling of the medium itself, limits the experience of the collection. I have experimented with multiple screens and their spatialisation in relation to their broader context, yet I still found film to be a much more tightly curated and choreographed experience than perusing a spatialised unfolding of a more disparate and tangible collection. The latter allows a viewer to get a sense of the whole, even if they are aware that part of the collection is out of sight, while also being able to perceive individual things. The installations produced later in the candidature attempt to combine the temporal choreography and immersion of the cinematic with other forms and types of specimen. As the viewer moved through the space, these installations had their contexts and relations continually reconstructed, and specimens became read and understood as

Fig 134: Samples of Saltscape displayed for an in-progress review, (Kate Church, 2016)

Fig 135: Culpra Station soil samples collected for Ground Work (from here to there), (Kate Church, 2016)

Fig 136: Oratunga collection, Bowerbird, with Caitlin Perry, (Kate Church, 2010)
nested within a collection that operated across multiple scales. As a mode of practice, both collection and its reciprocal knowledges are characterised as fragmentary – gathered ‘bit by bit’, gradually accrued, and repeatedly reorganised in an impossible bid for total coherence. As an ongoing process of selection, curation and synthesis, ‘the ground’ is expanded beyond its geomorphological and programmatic properties to reveal and reconstruct physical and immaterial manifestations of value systems to bestow ‘significance’.

Across the candidature I have undertaken a number of installations, many of which have been collaborative or have occurred in the context of a group exhibition. The impetus for each collection was not usually to demonstrate explicitly or test a particular mode of gleaning. In this respect, each offers a different foregrounding of the relationship between the moving body, the shifting landscape and the collection itself. As outputs, these do not constitute a comprehensive survey of collection modes in a design or landscape architectural context, nor are they intended to operate as exemplars of any one particular approach. Rather, they seek to operate as an idiosyncratic suite that enables us to further consider the scope and potential of this praxis in how knowledge may emerge and be encountered in relation to the imminent condition of the landscape.

A small project, _Bowerbird_ (2010), undertaken in collaboration with Caitlin Perry, was sited in open woodland near the homestead of a large property, Oratunga, Flinders Ranges, South Australia.23 The work emerged from a discussion about a set of images of Australian bowerbird nests. We were struck by how these birds collect and shape their nests in a manner that seems to capture the material particularities of the birds’ habitats. We also discovered that Oratunga’s homestead had a generous verandah surrounded by a low brick
wall which was neatly lined with diverse artefacts and specimens, presumably collected by the owner (who was absent) and other visitors on their walks around the property. In the spirit of these ornithological and human gleaning activities, we produced a similarly site-responsive work. Over an afternoon we first collected a series of artefacts we found between the sheds and outhouses, clustering them in simple colour and size-based arrangements on the ground in front of a large abstracted nest-like form of sticks and branches. While the images (see fig. 137 -138) depict the finished installation, it was the act of searching for items that was perhaps the richest part of the experience and process which revealed our understanding this remote property.

QRioCity (2009) was a collaborative project comprising a series of small installations around Melbourne’s CBD. The project used QR codes crafted using various materials and installed throughout the city – and once decoded, the codes offered additional information, clues and alternative readings of urban space. The staggered installation, transitory codes, and the lack of any single or prescribed journey, meant these coordinates shifted over the lifespan of the project. Participants encountered the project in a manner which invited curiosity, mobility and multiplicity. For this project, I produced a small series of works framed around ideas of impermanence and dispersal. These included an ephemeral QR code that gradually dissolves and disappears, a wearable code that was stamped onto the body and once decoded provided clues to another part of the project, and a simple kit that used biological dispersal in conjunction with human intervention to dissipate through the city. The idea of a kit has been used in a number of the scape projects. This early incarnation included water- and windborne seeds which enabled them to spread via natural and urban processes, and a postcard on which users could record the location of their gardening.
‘act’ and send back to me, to form a repository that located the initial microgardens.

A Restless Ground (2015) was an installation I created for Performing Mobilities, a symposium hosted by Performance Studies International. It operated as a multimodal and spatialised collection, curated as an immersive experience that reflected on the conditions of this ground. The work curated the films, garments, material samples, site writings, geological maps and close-up images of the ground condition from Sandscape. I also did a series of small ‘pourings’ of the soil samples into lines on the floor. These became a form of registration as participants either carefully picked their way around it or, unnoticingly, walked across and through it. Collectively, the installation conveyed the mobility of the ground condition and the simultaneity of the visual information and audio from the Site Lines film. The installation required the participant to move through the space, and the smaller screens incorporated other visual footage and narratives.

This assemblage did not seek to ‘recreate’ the spatial experience of being in this landscape but did augment and amplify the participant’s sense of the scalar disparities and spatial idiosyncrasies that characterise Sandscape. In particular, the small screens showing footage juxtaposed the intimacy of a voice heard through headphones and the small screen size. This required standing in close proximity while, at the same time, witnessing vast and ancient processes. Moving around the installation, the participant dips in and out of these immersive spaces. I also undertook a live mapping (fig 142) for much of the duration of the installation, manifesting me within the collection’s production and unfolding.

Ground Work (from there to here) (2016) was an installation which emanated from Interpretative Wonderings (2015), a workshop held at Culpra Station, 50 kilometres south of Mildura on the Murray plains. Ground Work,
was installed as part of a group exhibition, *Interpretative Wonderings: Remapping Culpra*, at the Mildura Arts Centre. *Ground Work* was curated to evoke an immersive experience for the viewer/participant as they moved through the multimodal collection. Emerging from a series of walks alongside the river and across the Murray plains, the installation operated as an unfinished (and unfinishable) mapping of the ground of Culpra Station.

Through the workshop’s Expression of Interest process I had predetermined a gleaning methodology to undertake during the workshop. The collection process occurred in concert with the group workshop activities and discussions. This included a group walk and a solo walk. On an additional visit to Culpra I undertook four solo walks each with a pair of gators I had made which provided a recording of the burrs, prickles and river mud (see fig 141). Cumulatively, this produced a rich and complex reading of the ground. Both the legacy of settler attitudes to land that considered it to be primarily owned and managed as a resource, and Indigenous systems of kinship, identity and cultural heritage, were experienced and embedded within and across this ground.

But the collection process itself was rendered problematic in two ways. First, I was conscious that taking physical samples of the land and displaying them museologically potentially invoked historic acts of cultural trespass. Additionally, the physical and digital artefacts themselves failed to register the important sociocultural role that the ground had enabled in our collective immersion in an Indigenous sense of Country. So when logistics prevented an accompanying audio piece from being included in the installation, I converted excerpts of the script into expanded labels. The audio script articulated an alternative immaterial collection of events and experiences that expressed this immersion as a heightened sense of unknowingness. As labels (a museological
convention) these were hung in relation/juxtaposition to various items in the installation. This enabled a productive tension between the colonial scenography of the overall installation and the explanatory labels which offered alternative accounts of the assemblage. The installation thereby begins to reveal the multiple narratives of the ground as the material registration of phenomena, occupation, encounter and disturbance. Ground Work (from there to here) registers the unfolding of different knowledge systems and the cross-cultural endeavours that are borne out through the land.

These installations also informed a progression of this practice into a broader curatorial approach for experiencing the Mourquong Disposal Basin which reimagined the landscape as a dynamic installation and proposes new choreographies of human and nonhuman agencies (see pages 130 and 132).
In the twenty-first century, the typologies of the Nature Reserve and the National Park still connote landscapes highly valued for their scenic beauty and biodiversity. Cited as places of wilderness, ‘untrammeled by [white] man,’\footnote{Part of the legal definition of ‘wilderness’ in America, as stipulated in The Wilderness Act of 1964, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilderness_Act (accessed September 10, 2016. (It is notable that, in order to enact this definition, Native Americans were displaced.)} they represent the exception within the milieu of global urbanity. The National Parks movement as it is known today originated in America in 1872 when Yellowstone was legislated as the world’s first official National Park. Australia’s Royal National Park, south of Sydney, is the second oldest in existence.\footnote{Ironically, as this predated Federation, all but six of Australia’s ‘National’ Parks are run by state governments.} As two ‘new world’ countries, the invention and enthusiastic uptake of this concept spans ideals of conservation, recreation and nation-building. The notion of legislating for the protection of wild landscapes was a radical idea when it first surfaced in the nineteenth century and represented a broad ideological shift in the relationship between Man and Nature. It manifested an evolution of earlier pioneering ideals that sought to wrest control of the wild through activities of land clearing, industrial agricultural practices, and other commercial endeavours. This notion of ‘preserving’ nature signified an acknowledgement of wilderness successfully conquered, and now much-diminished, in need of Man’s protection.

As the first official National Park, Yellowstone has been embraced as a representation of the wilderness ideal. Yet its appeal has meant it is now riddled with roads, hotels and souvenir shops; and visitor circulation is so highly managed and choreographed that most people see it ‘as if through a plexiglass window. [...]’, experiencing the park as a diorama.\footnote{David Quammen, “The Paradox of the Park”, National Geographic, May 2016, 56.} Both National Parks and Nature Reserves exist as contradictions, wilderness contained, value-managed, preserved as wild yet within human-imposed limits.

As protected and idealised landscape, National Parks and Nature Reserves are commonly understood as significant sites, ‘natural capital’ that represent and chart the shifting ideals of nature as a Western construct. Notably though, National Park and Nature Reserves, while today performing a series of research, conservation, cultural and community roles, have always assumed this preservation is for human visitation, albeit with strict behavioural protocols. They are carefully managed to preserve a high state of biodiversity and exploit the mis-en-scène of ‘pristine wilderness’. This allows visitors to witness a rarefied natural environment, a destination with special rules, a nature that is other, that exists ‘over there’.

The 2016 Anthropocene Working Group recommendation to officially acknowledge that a new geological epoch has begun, brought into focus a necessary reorientation of the significance of ‘untouched’ nature as the ideal upon which National Parks are founded and managed. This ideal entails a necessary contradiction; the Anthropocene positions human activity as the major planetary force shaping the former ‘natural world’, and yet in the calls to ‘save’ nature, still asks us to preserve an idea of nature as untouched – that is untouched by humans.
Fig 150: Mourquong Salinity Reserve proposal, reworked transcript from audio tour, part 1 of 2, (Kate Church, 2016)
**Detour: a proposal**

The Mourquong Basin, 7 kilometres away from the Murray River in New South Wales, is a 6 kilometre-long natural depression. Since 1979, the site has formed one of the original parts of the Murray’s Salt Interception Scheme. Over the lifetime of the Scheme this site has received over 1 million tonnes of extra salt. The Basin operates as a disturbed natural system linked to the ‘environmental health’ of the Murray, but its appearance is also inextricably tied to the region’s economic and political climate. Mourquong is also strangely beautiful. Though it is a highly disturbed site, it is the amplification of the landscape qualities caused by this disturbance which makes Mourquong so scenically compelling. It does not present an overtly ‘disturbed’ ground condition – rather, as a unique and established landscape, it looks ‘natural’.

This circumstance prompted a number of questions around the notion of how we collectively assign significance and value to ‘natural’ landscapes. What is the ‘nature’ that gets valued and protected in the Anthropocene, an age where the notions of wildness and naturalness have shifted to recognise human geoagency? What if we reimagined Mourquong Basin in this context as a significant landscape rather than a wasteland? What could a National Park or Nature Reserve be like if we accept the anthropocentric premise of ground as a constructed condition? And in this scenario, what might be the generative and creative potential of our role as geoagents?

If we accept the Nature Reserve as a landscape typology that broadly signifies what we value as ‘nature’, it therefore follows that, as our definition of the natural world shifts (and it must if we accept the premise of the Anthropocene), then what we value and the landscape qualities we consider to be natural will also shift. If we embrace our role as the planet’s dominant geological force, what might our valuable remote landscapes look like? Must they only include carefully managed simulations of an ‘untouched’ nature with hotspots of artificially-maintained levels of biodiversity? And, perhaps controversially, what are the implications of signifying ‘natural’ value on a highly disturbed site through conventions previously aligned to landscapes with a wilderness aesthetic?

The *Mourquong Salinity Reserve* proposal confers new significance on coproduced ‘naturalness’ by appropriating the value signification of the traditional notion of ‘Nature Reserve’. The proposal poses the idea of transforming a wasteland – or more particularly, transforming our ideas about the significance of this landscape. It is predicated on the notion that salt, an everyday item and an unwelcome presence in the Mallee, has the potential to be recast as wonder-full. As both a project in formation, and an as yet unrealised speculative scenario, the intent is not to convince stakeholders to realise the project as a built outcome, nor to ignore or downplay the significant implications of dryland salinity by brandishing a vision of the ‘aestheticised ruin.’ Rather it is a speculation that has been provoked by a desire for a different type of conversation, one that disrupts and reorganises ‘the usual suspects.’ The proposal foregrounds working with the existing landscape conditions, moving them towards a different future state which does not ascribe to ‘turning back the clock’ to a former, pre-settlement state. Rather, it considers the potentials and challenges of the ground as a made condition, and our role in its construction.

We cannot get in; the site is totally fenced off. The proposal, therefore, is for an immersive event in the near future whereby participants engage in a daylong walk from Rio Vista House, adjoining the Mildura Art.
Fig 151: Mourquong Salinity Reserve proposal, reworked transcript from audio tour, part 2 of 2, (Kate Church, 2016)
Gallery on the banks of the Murray River and following the existing Chaffey Historic Walk, through the existing Inland Botanic Gardens, and along the fenceline of Mourquong Basin to the northern end. This proposed event operates tactically, leveraging off the institution of the Gallery, the conventions of the National Park, and the existing signage and paraphernalia of the Chaffey Trail, to establish the speculative conceit of the proposed vision. The walk takes participants on a journey ‘through’ the reimagined Basin as a new type of natural asset – one that nevertheless remains doubly deferred as both an unrealised future condition and sited on an inaccessible part of the otherwise open and remote landscape.

Participants would commence by signing-in at Rio Vista House, as one does when commencing a hike in a National Park, then collect a kit. The kit would contain a map, an addendum to the existing tourist booklet for the Chaffey Historic Walk, instructions of how to download the audio podcast onto their phone, a set of postcards containing photo-montages that realistically envision the proposition, and a groundwater sample. The participant is invited to keep the last two items as souvenirs, echoing the touristic agenda of National Parks. I would also be manning a provisions station next to the sign-in desk where the participant can collect bottled drinking water and some lightly salted snacks.

This proposed walk is intended to operate as an extension of the existing Chaffey Historic Walk which celebrates the legacy of local heroes George and William Chaffey, American businessmen who introduced industrial irrigation to the region. The podcast would commence when the participant reaches the end of the Chaffey Trail. It would combine directions for the new section of the walk, and present the Mourquong Salinity Reserve as voiced by a series of geoagents.

The proposal has been informed by Enroute (2009-2013), a set of ‘solo’ tours by performance-makers OneStepAtATimeLikethis. Initially created for the Melbourne CBD, it has since been adapted and exported to other cities such as Edinburgh, London and Chicago. The accounts by participants speak of the flip-flopping between the event experience and their internalised thoughts. A number cite this as making the journey feel both intensely personal and providing the sense of being immersed in a parallel and slightly fantastical version of highly familiar parts of their city. The Mourquong proposal adapts and redeploy this to a remote context and a speculative envisioning of a future state. It also borrows and augments the existing notion of various regional salinity tours to reconsider the Chaffey Trail’s triumphant narrative of Mildura as ‘Australia’s first irrigation colony.’

Drawing on the speculative agency explored initially in the Siltscape project, the Mourquong proposal offers a parallel state of play. The narrative which constructs the envisioned future state enacts deferral in two ways. First, through the medium of audio soundscapes which immaterially manifests the project, and second, the propositional status of the project offers an extended and imminent time-space between the proposed idea and the act of its manifestation.


Fig 152: Hypersaline surface of Lake Crosbie shifting states, (Kate Church, 2015)
States of transition

Landscape is not incomplete, but as a material condition it is unfinishable, and somehow antithetical to the notion of completion or wholeness, much like the Wunderkammer. The gleaner’s quest to make sense is founded on curiosity and wonder, and underpinned by the paradox of seeking the completion of something acknowledged as unable to be completed. This is the paradoxical impetus that productively unsettles the landscape-as-Wunderkammer as the basis for this mode of landscape practice. As a flexible microcosm, the Wunderkammer, and its alignment to curiosity and wonder, offers an open structure through which to explore the ground in a contemporary context. It serves as a plane through which the human/nonhuman dichotomy is collapsed and reassembled in multiple ways. These acts of gleaning have enabled us to consider our geologic agency, both as individuals and collectives, through how we ‘make sense’ of the geologic and our role in its construction.

The research into prescientific collection and display practices revealed subjective and idiosyncratic constructions of order that, deployed in a contemporary context, problematise and intercept traditionally held notions of value and significance. In preceding knowledge, curiosity and wonder are generative and anticipatory states that ‘hold open’ the not-yet-known. In this context, the process of making sense is characterised by subjective contingencies. This returns us to Certeau’s notion of a tactical approach to knowledge generation which operates both in conjunction with, and as an alternative to, more strategic, institutionalised knowledges which render common sense.

Across these inland Mallee plains, the peculiar distances are manifestly experienced and amplified in the tremble of the heat haze which conjures the ground ahead as a mirage. These are the strange proximities of the upright body (Caucasian, female) and the inland emptiness encircled by the omnipotent horizon. The emphatic horizontality of the plains, their remoteness and aridity, elicited in me a very particular sense of colonial otherness. As when I walked the Murray plains of Culpra Station in a group led by indigenous custodian Barry Pearce, I experienced a deep and prevailing sense of unknowingness. Along this walk, and in the ensuing discussions, Uncle Barry described how this ground bears witness to ‘the problem of straight line farming,’ 35 framed in altogether different terms to those which underpin the Salt Interception Scheme as a ‘solution’ to the salinity exacerbated by this form of irrigated agriculture. Barry’s expressions of Country hint at the implications of overarching policy frameworks upon the Indigenous vantage of the ground. The Murray-Darling Basin Plan, in conceptualising and classifying water in commercial terms, allocates predetermined volumes of ‘environmental water’ which are released in a poor simulation of a vastly more complex natural system. From the geometric layering of the ground in preparation for the smoking ceremony, to middens, an ochre quarry, ancient fire sites and burial sites, the distinction between the ground and the body was periodically blurred, collapsed and inverted during my time at Culpra.

Like the latter part of Saltscapes, the Mourquong Salinity Reserve proposal forecasts some of the broader implications and potentials of rapid geologic acceleration and the infrastructural scale of the existing human geoagency.

35 Barry Pearce, group walk, Interpretative Wonderings workshop, Culpra Station, September 2015. My notes.
Fig 153: Walking across the crust of Lake Crosbie, (Kate Church, 2015)
It considers how the ground registers dominant Western cultural values and notions of significance. The provocation and problematisation of the geologic ‘waste’ generated by the Scheme and the Murray-Darling Basin policy framework, is juxtaposed by a proposition that explicitly acknowledges the destabilisation of ‘Nature’ to explore other values that this ground could enable.

If we return for a moment to Gilles Clément, particularly his theorising on Third Landscapes, we may contextualise the Mourquong Salinity Reserve proposal as a provocation which, in a broader context, reveals tensions between the aesthetic and scientific significance of so-called ‘waste spaces’. The various roles of the Mourquong’s proposed geoagents represents an expansion and adaption of Clément’s notion of the Wise Gardener (see page 36), into a set of ‘salinity gardeners’. This offers an expanded scope for a generative maintenance strategy for the Salinity Reserve which explicitly positions human activity within the construction of ‘nature’. Clément’s Wise Gardener suggests a particular mode of horticultural stewardship through installing himself in the landscape, and collapsing and stretching the distance between himself and his terrain, directly engaging with its processes and forces. His geoagency is borne out through a number of projects, in particular the aforementioned Deborence Island (1995), as well as La Valee (1977- ). The sensitivity of Clément’s approach, and his allowance for space to be held open for unanticipated events or undetermined phenomenon, also shares a broader affinity with the gleaning. It does so through foregrounding a role for the geoagent. That role is not predicated on the control and maintenance of an aestheticised nature – rather it that of the Gardener ‘who produces lasting fascination.’

Saltscape currently consists of a constellation of traces, hints and forecasts. A quantitative audit of this scape as a collection of things sees it comprising two registration devices, sets of gators which each collect the traces of five walks across two Mallee plains, approximately 100 material samples of the ground, five short films, a series of table salt experiments, and three texts which each describe a walk across a Mallee plain. These represent the tangible endeavours of a collection practice. But the other meaning of gleaning – that of gaining understanding – has not occurred as a simple piecing together of informational fragments. Rather is has required unsettling and occasionally confronting encounters with my own levels of unknowingness. These represent moments of imminence/immanence: a confrontation with a particular otherness that realigns the coordinates of your own knowledge. It reveals the multiplicity of ways in which people and groups of people make sense, confer significance and render meaningful (and wonder-full) the world in relation to themselves.

In discussing Günther Vogt’s practice, Bornhauser and Kissling consider that:

‘... [if] there is no such thing as nature as a whole – perhaps there is landscape as a cabinet of curiosities. Thereby, in the best of cases, this lack of wholeness seems to be a gain rather than a loss.’

They posit that what is required for this are attentive observers who ‘collect various phenomena as individual elements, relate them to each other, and rearrange them – not in a single universal order of nature, but as an individual cosmos of diversity.’
... tenor of forestalled arrival

... three modes
that practice a relation to imminence

horizontal ••• temporal ••• geologic

rapid acceleration ••• abrupt change ••• instability

encountering
harbingers ••• signals ••• portents ••• cusps

signalling
the imminent moment

... the trifucated peculiar distance is
rendered paradoxical

... narrative tactics agitate the everyday
a speculative practice is invited

[Siltscape]
unknowingness ... and wonder

...we shall traverse this play of motion...
and encounter its tremors...

imminent condition of the ground
briefly captured

an embodied anticipatory state

... durational registration an alternative cartography for the proximities of the vast and the 1:1

[Sandscape]

geomorphic agents making sense ....a contested and reimagined ground

[Saltcape]
’... the notion of the adequate step, a momentary congruence between the culture one bears and the ground that bears one, eventually shatters against reality into uncountable fragments, the endless variety of steps that are more or less good enough for one or two aspects of the here and now. These splinters might be put together into a more serviceable whole by paying more heed to their cumulative nature, to the steps’ repeatability, variability, reversibility and expendability. The step, so mobile, so labile, so nimbly coupling place and person [...] It is a momentary proposition put by the individual to the non-individual, an instant of trust which may not be well-founded, a not-quite-infallible catching of oneself in the art of falling.

being for the time
Fig 154: Bill posters for Urban [Di]Versions (Kate Church, 2010)
Tremulous... a practice for the ‘just before’

The initial scope of this research was to initiate a realignment of my practice to bring it into closer proximity to a conception of the landscape as a dynamic and temporal condition. Embracing Imminence has examined the durations, modes and languages that mediate my geoagency as a landscape architect. More particularly, the research impetus engaged the schism between my understanding of the land as a continuum of change, and my re-presentations of it that persistently rendered it ‘empty’, static, pictorial or highly abstracted. With its tactical, multimodal, itinerant traits, this landscape practice of Embracing Imminence permits a closer proximity between my creative agency and a durational, dynamic conception of the land. This is articulated through modes of fabricating, plotting and gleaning a relation to imminence.

Whereas problem-led research engages with the world as a set of questions to be framed and answered, practice-led research often initiates and is led by something that ‘may be unruly, or indeed just becoming possible’ though it is characterised by that which the researcher ‘can’t be certain.’ Fabricating, plotting and gleaning a relation to imminence further suspends this uncertainty and brings it to the forefront of my practice, enabling geologic instability to be engaged with in a manner that goes beyond confronting this condition as a problem to be solved. This approach has invited an attunement to the imminent condition of the land which emerges across the tremors, multiplicities and dispersal of the horizontal plane. Articulated through this dissertation, these modes of my practice continually shuttle between the theoretical, analytical and generative to contribute an expanded approach to making. Thus the anthropocentric ground as a ‘made’ condition aligns to a practice engaged with making other, making visible and making sense of its constructedness.

This process of realigning my practice has been conveyed as occurring within a context that extends beyond the candidature, and the practice will continue its endeavour through future scholarship and teaching. The project work necessarily remains unfinished and I envisage ongoing work – that nonetheless postpones completion – occurring with each scape, alongside which new scapes will emerge. And while my personal circumstances that ran in parallel to the PhD (namely the onset of motherhood) often encouraged the project work to be an individual pursuit, the lateral nature of the practice seeks greater transdisciplinary and collaborative opportunities. This is attested to by the constellated community of practice that has informed this realignment.

Laced throughout the document, this community comprises creative practitioners from multiple fields, alongside philosophers, geologists, literary writers, anthropologists, and disciplinary luminaries.

This practice realignment has enabled the following discoveries and developments:

- A cultivation of sensitivity and attunement to the geotemporal.
- The articulation of key notions of imminence which have emerged from the artefacts of the research.
- The development of a research approach that ‘holds open’ the condition of the just before.
- The elucidation of three modes that collectively instigate a landscape practice of embracing imminence.
- The coopting of ‘scape’ and ‘geoagency’ as concepts that serve to articulate the horizontal entanglement and temporal acceleration of the landscape condition that the research attends to.

These points represent a snapshot of the research. They capture a moment within an ongoing process, a glancing back to see what has been detected, construed and unearthed across the doctoral research. The remainder of the chapter is dedicated to further articulating these progressions to indicate and position their contribution within a broader research context.
Becoming geotemporally sensitive

This research has ‘turned over’ the mediated nature of landscape architectural geoagency multiple times, confronting the gaps, possibilities and peculiar distances. These have been discussed through each mode of practice in previous chapters and responded to through tactical interventions that amplify, intercept and reveal geological forces and flows. As an overall process, this has yielded a durational attunement to the geologic – a certain knowhow that is embodied and has emerged from many hours spent on the ground, walking, sensing, capturing and describing back the geotemporal conditions.

The initial identification of geological conditions which were changing at a perceptible rate allowed a temporal-material palette of processes to be observed, registered and contemplated. This required an overall slowing, particularly in terms of how I was moving across the ground. I needed to find ways to see and move differently in order to perceive and make palpable phenomena I generally overlooked. It also necessitated finding ways to decipher traces of change and occupation. While I often found the instantaneousness of digital footage, photography and audio recording useful with respect to developing a geotemporal sensitivity, these nonetheless came between my experience and what I was trying to ‘grasp for’. It was the analogue, embodied, frequently repeated, and interconnected habits of walking, pausing, hand drawing and note taking, where the attunement emerged.

Through developing and demonstrating this attunement towards perceiving geological flux, I have improvised a set of aligned ‘voicings’ through which to capture and negotiate the qualities of the geotemporal. These have sought to preserve the unsettled conditions which often feign stasis in scientific, geological and geographical descriptions. These voicings also decipher the difference between the conditions for anticipation and the actual existing conditions of the landscape – that is, the prehended (the datum) is never identical to the prehending. My expression of this needed to be inflected with different qualities, to produce enlivenment and poesis, a lyric geology, through blending unembellished, quasi-scientific language with more temporally evocative and metaphorical expression.

I did not set out with a specifically geologic or ground-based agenda through which to test and position my practice. Nor was the notion of everydayness and the tactical within my initial purview. Indeed, I don’t think I had ever really looked at the ground and its processes with any intent before undertaking this research. Much less had I considered how to penetrate the ubiquity of being in and moving through the landscape. So, much of this journey has been about studying and struggling to re-present and re-presence what is at my feet and in front of my nose. This process of becoming geotemporally attuned is ongoing and has engendered a persistent and restless curiosity, such that these scapes remain to me utterly compelling and seem to still have much to reveal.

2 Mitchell, “‘The stratified record upon which we set our feet,’” 71-83.
Fig 155: Relations between passage of time, the present and experience of an imminent moment, (Kate Church, 2013)
Imminence

Through the research, the notion of imminence has inﬂected the practice in a number of ways. These are described and framed throughout the document. The following represents a summary compilation.

Framing the land as an imminent condition. This condition is understood to emerge from two theories of drift that attest to tectonic and corporeal forces which articulate the dynamic landscape paradigm the research attends to.

The imminent moment: an embodied experience of a distended instant where time is perceived as simultaneously expanding and contracting (see Fig 155).

As an extension of my existing practice ‘tool kit’, the research borrows and adapts techniques and tactics from a former life as a theatre director and set designer, a perennial interest in literature, and an appreciation for the temporal distortions of cinema. Each of these disciplines have conventions that amplify and concoct the anticipatory experience of imminence, and which the research selectively borrows from and hybridises to foreground and manipulate conditions of imminence.

A desire to foreground the imminent space-time that mediates the idea and the act of its manifestation which is inherent in any speculative undertaking. Aligned to this is Allen Weiss’s invocation of Karl Jasper’s statement that ‘speculative thinking must preserve an unresolvable tension.’ So imminence here describes a desire to explore the peculiarities of this distance and preserve the tension – the tremble – as opposed to seeking its resolution. This trembling contributes to a research dialectic: the philosophic medium ‘that helps us comprehend a world that is racked by paradox.’

These have assisted two overall research approaches: (i) enabling landscape conditions to be deciphered as portents or harbingers of imminence, then (ii) applying this understanding towards the making of signs for anticipation.


4 Theories of Media, Keywords Glossary, The Chicago School of Media Theory, University of Chicago, csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary 2004/dialectic.htm (accessed September 5, 2013).
Fig 156: Near Truganina Explosives Reserve, Altona, (Kate Church, 2017)
The articulation of a horizontal research disposition reduces the salience of dualisms and fixed hierarchies. Finding ways to articulate and activate this ‘flattened’ research context has necessitated reviewing the language and structures I have traditionally relied on to communicate ‘landscape thinking’. This sometimes-uneasy process has nonetheless uncovered a set of broad mechanisms that collectively ‘hold open’ the plurality, dissonance and instability this endeavour seeks to retain. Three guiding perspectives ‘hold open’ a space for imminence through particular processual latencies: Derrida’s dissection of the term *différance* (see page 18) establishes a tremble between performativity and deferral as a play of motion; a research lexicon deploys the oscillations of meaning perpetuated by metaphorical language (see page 25); and the tripartite magnification of Corner’s peculiar distance (see pages 5 and 17). This space held open has elicited practice-led research that preserves these indications of irresolvability, incommensurability and incompleteness.

A broader and more direct notion of openness also pervades the research plane and has been directly informed by Eco’s framing of the *Open Work*. Openness, a familiar term in landscape architecture, usually correlates to scientific principles of quantum mechanics and indeterminacy. However within this research framework, openness infers Eco’s reading of its semiotic and creative pedigree, its poetics and its invocation of ‘a field of possibilities, [its] explicit invitation to exercise choice.’ From this understanding a series of open structures have been initiated and support a horizontal multiplicity. These include Wunderkammers, mapping processes, narrative structures, and garments. These are by no means a comprehensive survey of open structures. Rather they have emerged in relation to idiosyncratic influences and in response to the terrains across which the research was occurring. Within the research, open structures contribute a mechanism for imminence to be encountered through the work. As such they offer closer and more generative alignments with a conceptualisation of the landscape as contingent, heterogeneous and unfinishable.

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Fig 157: Installing drawing machine, Urban [Di]Versions, (Kate Church, 2009, photo: Ben Landau)
An Expanded Practice of Making

Embracing Imminence, as an expanded practice of making, initiates an alignment between a landscape practice and an anthropocentric vantage which situates the land as a made condition. The practice establishes geologic agency through modes of practice that ‘make strange, ‘make visible’ and ‘make sense’ of this ground condition. The practice engages with the moving body and the shifting ground in a manner that extends beyond the physical manipulation of the Earth to induce a more diffuse agency of landscape practice that renders its mediated nature performatively revealing, instigating and perceiving the ground as a temporal and mobile medium.

Making other: [counter] narratives and the imminent moment

Reworked excerpts and alternative voicings have been interspersed throughout this dissertation and bear witness to the cultivation of a narratively-informed mode of making. The narrative device of an alias and fictocritical episodes generated the ground conditions in Siltscape. Spatial and durational site narratives registered and charted Sandscape’s terrain, inflected by Jane Rendell’s site writing and the place-based writing of Tim Robinson. And later, a script, recorded for an audio walk (Shifting Terrains), constructed and overlaid serial durations and temporal scales to reveal the rapid and entangled human/nonhuman geomorphological processes. Saltscape evidences a further development that saw a shift from voicing the dynamism of existing or prior geologic conditions for a reader who was not ‘on the ground’, to instead generating counter-narratives. These intercept the established narrative arc and challenge the perception of the existing conditions for a participant who is present ‘on the ground’.

Examples of this development include the museological transcriptions that problematised an installation’s mise-en-scène (Ground Work), and the script for an audio walk (Mourquong Salinity Reserve) which suspends the mirage of an alternative set of values and conditions as a parallel state of play.

Viewed collectively, narratives and counter-narratives have served to construct immersive rereadings of the land to render its durations pliable and, as David Turnbull reminds us, to enable serial knowledges that retain their dissonance and incommensurability. This approach also has a wider disciplinary reach, contributing an expanded speculative and generative scope for narrative within landscape architecture, a modality which otherwise remains didactic, descriptive or reflective.

Re-engaging with text-based practices has been personally valuable as a tool through which to grapple with conveying imminence and geologic entanglement, and exploring how language can waylay, unsettle, twist and play with meaning. That said, preparing this dissertation has heightened a discordance that has been tapping my shoulder throughout the candidature. How can the dissertation content enact and negotiate the exposition of the research through various ruses of deferral? Wrestling with this has stretched the writing practice, expanding it from its attempts, in earlier projects of the candidature, to conjure and express the temporality and volatility of the geologic. It has become one that obfuscates the work’s progression by summoning the processual latency that characterises imminence. Thus, the dissertation, in being formulated to forestall arrival, has required going beyond simply ‘writing up’ the research or describing the unfolding of a project. Rather, the projects have been unravalled and reworked to operate as ploys that hint at a condition that lies somehow beyond what is presented.

By continually having to parse the exposition of the work through these hindrances and interceptions, the perpetual incompleteness of the research enterprise is enacted. For the reader it means confronting a persistent anticipatory state that frustrates expectations of a research journey that ultimately ‘arrives’ somewhere. Through the project reworkings, cues of the things that lie beyond what is presented serve to remind you and I that this undertaking has sought to preserve the tension inherent in understanding the landscape as an imminent condition. There is, therefore, no ‘arrival’ per se. There is more a series of detours and adjournments that deflect the Cartesian determinism of language structures and orthographic conventions. In doing so we lean towards, and grasp for, a condition which teeters in the ‘just before’.

This approach enables the positioning and voicing of a landscape practice which has had its mediated agency enhanced through its circumvented exposition. Overall this vantage conveys a disciplinary alternative to disablement in the face of eschatological hand-wringer, or the unsatisfying mismatch of complex interconnected systems reduced and compartmentalised into relatively simple problems that can be solved. It has reinvigorated my belief in the discipline’s creative agency and technical scope to resituate the predominant narratives around the discourse of change and respond to the key twenty-first century preoccupation with uncertainty.
Making visible: an alternative cartographic register [for the imminent
conditions of the ground]

A set of field devices and registration protocols have been developed and
tailored to register motion and duration across open, flat terrain rendered
‘empty’ by traditional cartographic approaches. A set of simple analogue
instruments ‘make visible’ the portents and forces of change for each
scape. Through presencing invisible geologic forces (such as the wind
drawing machine), or amplifying geologic change (such as the gridded
wicking device that registers the formation of salt crystals), these devices
function as geologic gnomons. These instruments transcribe and render
perceptible the dynamics of landscape processes in real time. They do
not present a static or synoptic view of the land, rather they are produced
through landscape forces and motion, and represent only the duration
of their making. As mappings, these are co-produced transcriptions,
with various constraints and protocols predetermined by the device but
which landscape forces activate to produce a trace of their flow. These
collectively contribute an alternative cartographic register that foregrounds
temporal and dynamic variables.

Another register – Roaming – borrows from and recalibrates Debord’s
derivé (see pages 22 and 91) for vast, open, horizontal spaces. Roamings
are undertaken across ostensibly blank areas of maps. Inflected by a
heightened sense of colonial otherness, and embodying the tension
between the vertical and horizontal, roaming makes visible the peculiar
otherness of encountering and documenting vast spatiotemporal
scales through the 1:1. This peripatetic register has developed over the
candidature to incorporate the smartphone, a ubiquitous device that can
capture and document processes of change.

The kits for Shifting Terrains, the Culpra Station fieldwork, and the
Mourquong Salinity Reserve proposal represent an evolution, synthesis,
and embodied mode of dissemination for this alternative cartographic
register. Across the research, the kits have facilitated the collection of
ephemera, as well as offering a way for others to experience and inhabit
the work as a remapping of conditions back onto the landscape. The latter
is achieved through the kits’ contents which variously include: simple
devices that render quantitative measures relative to the material context;
visual documentation that overlays evidence of past geologic disturbances
and aligns this to the material traces occurring as real time conditions;
and multiple descriptions of the same locale that reveal different ways of
seeing and registering. These destabilise the singular, objective authority
of conventional cartographic work. The kits also constitute the beginnings
of a performative cartography that trembles the figure and the ground.

As peripatetic fieldwork practices, these collectively serve to expand the
disciplinary tool kit through contributing registration approaches that
establish an alternative vantage to surveying the ground. Calibrated for
the 1:1 experience of expansive, horizontal, mobile conditions they each
‘make visible’ signs of the imminent conditions of the ground as a material
registration of drift. This challenges Cartesian fixedness, registering unstable
and ephemeral conditions that other surveying practices fail to detect.
Fig 158: modelling topography and surface, (Kate Church, 2010)
Making sense: curiosity and attunement to geologic indicators of imminence

Acts of collecting rely on operating selectively — a few items are gathered, many more are not — to seed a curatorial sensibility. Making sense of things, particularly those things that are literally under your nose and beneath your feet, is not an effortless undertaking. It requires a persistence and a carefulness. Curiosity and curation share Latin origins, cura, taking care. As a reflective manifestation of this carefulness and selectivity, a series of installations that occurred across the candidature convey and enhance shifting geological conditions. These works are not intended as dioramas or recreations of the ground. Informed by the characteristic heterogeneity of the Wunderkammer, they foster an unsettling interlocutory immersion in the geologic imbroglio of human-nonhuman agency. As such, both the curation process and the collection methods that contribute to it are understood to generate knowledge as a process of making sense. This knowledge is not stable, conclusive or singular, but is ‘held open’ by the inevitability of miscellany. Each iteration is poised as only one of a number of possible assemblages which each may bestow perceptions of meaning or significance differently.

Through acts of juxtaposition, and the tweaking of scientific and museological convention, these are spatialisations of multimodal and relational systems of signifiers, traces and fragments. This curatorial process does not inscribe meaning on a singular item but rather meaning emerges relationally across the collection. Sense is made and remade by destabilising classifications that construct perceived hierarchies of landscape significance through rendering common materials, everyday things, banal conditions and wastelands curious and wonder-full.

My collection practice is a particular one; it is opportunistic, tactical and operates as an alternative transversal mode of being in and moving across the ground. In seeking out the leftovers of the main enterprise, I have needed to develop a certain knack of sourcing, identifying and perceiving things that are usually peripheral or overlooked. This requires curiosity, which Michel Foucault defines as combining the ability ‘to look at the same things in a different way; a passion for seizing what is happening now and what is disappearing; a lack of respect for the traditional hierarchies of what is important and fundamental.’

Throughout the research, collection activities have yielded an attunement to the horizontal vantage and a sensitivity to the variances of geologic flows. These have been valuable processes of physically seeking out and awaiting the ground to disclose harbingers of change. This collection method fosters a heightened anticipatory state that tangles time, with the embodied present comprising a temporal collision of the fossilised past, the now, and the almost-but-not-yet.


8 Foucault, “The Masked Philosopher,” 325.
Fig 159: Spill, RMIT Building 8, (Kate Church, 2016)
Scape and geoagency

Scape and geoagency are two key concepts the research contributes to landscape architectural practice. But both terms also represent a linguistic attitude which has been courted throughout the research. Though neither term is a ‘proper’ word that would be found in a dictionary, say, they nevertheless do not require immediate definition for a reader to construe a sense of their meaning. These terms operate relationally, tactically leveraging other language structures to imply meaning. This occurs in opposite ways for each term: ‘scape’ is a severed syllable and ‘geoagency’ is a frankenword, a portmanteau that collides a common prefix with another term allowing meaning to be conferred from reading across both.

When it appears as the suffix of ‘landscape’, scape confers the expression of human activity on the land. Untethering it and elevating it to a noun unfastens it from the topographic imaginary to exploit its connotations of flat expansiveness and porosity. This serves to largely avoid terms such as ‘site’ which infer containment and boundary, or ‘landscape project’ which suggests a built outcome. A scape is simultaneously a spatial, durational and conceptual plane across which the interplay between the shifting ground and the restless body may be serially perceived and mediated. Across the research, scape operates as a term that percolates the speculative, lateral, imminent, performative nature of this practice-led research to coax an apprehension of the research terrain.

Scape also forms the suffix for the three constellations of the practice-led research, gathering traces, explorations, ideas and experiments to reveal geotemporal conditions dominated by silt, sand or salt. Materially and durationally, the conditions that constitute these scapes offer enhanced and accelerated examples of geological change that, though widespread, generally occur in slower, or more constrained ways. The rapidity of geologic change revealed across the scapes effectively enables an unusual geologic temporality to be witnessed that is normally too ‘deep’ to be perceived. Real-time human perception of geologic change is a relatively unusual vantage from which to perform geologically-based research. And yet, as the volatile ground of each scape, and the rapid and abrupt geologic acceleration that characterises this epoch attests, this is a necessary and valid temporal lens.

Within the context of this research ‘geoagency’ has been coined to identify and artificially separate out human geological capacity. So while the ground is understood as manifesting utterly intertwined human and non-human geological forces, geoagency refers to the distinctly human interventions and processes which directly shape activity, or the perception of activity, across the ground. In casting the body within the perception of geologic conditions, its agency is most recognisable through direct physical intervention. A number of pre-existing traces of human activities that directly shape the ground have been exposed in the existing conditions of each scape. These include industrial-scale terraforming, land capping, and geodata simulation manifested as subterranean.

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9 I note that ‘scape’ does have an entirely different biological definition relating to insect anatomy.

Fig 160: Back beach, Bendalong, NSW, (Kate Church, 2015)
infrastructure. These have each sought to stabilise the ground. Undertaken with a view to ‘solving’ a ‘problem’ these interventions may be regarded on their own terms as unsuccessful. Occurring in the wake of these interventions, the propositions and speculations that have so far emerged from this research practice impart alternative, mediated and speculative forms of geo-agency.

These traces of my own geoagency through this practice do not necessarily mark the ground, but each scape comprises acts and deferrals that reassemble the ground in a manner that does not seek to stabilise or ameliorate its unpredictability. Rather, these speculative, durational geologic reassemblages embrace the imminence of continual flux. Later in the research, I formalised the notion of the geoagent as a set of roles that others could ‘take on’. Each role had behaviours, tendencies and protocols attributed to it. For example, a set of geoagent roles was developed and proposed for the Mourquong Salinity Reserve. This notion of undertaking the role of geoagent reprises and further evolves both the influence of April Thrippingston, the alias developed for Siltscape, and alignments to landscapist Gilles Clément’s work in conceptualising the role of Wise Gardener. Within Siltscape, these roles challenge traditional horticultural, landscape architectural, conservation and maintenance approaches, enabling a nuanced interplay of human activity and geologic processes.

The role of the geoagent is supported by the garments and wearable kits. These offer material traces that are activated by and directly signify this human activity. Included in this document as artefacts, they initially operated only as a narrative device signifying the ‘taking on’ of a role (as per April’s apron). This was later expanded through the kits created for the Sandscape and Saltscape audio walks which saw them become both utilitarian and speculative. Similar to April’s apron, this ‘taking on’ of the role of a geoagent allows others the experience of a temporary transgression of habitual ways of being in and moving through the landscape, and the garment supports this through signifying a state of otherness. More broadly, the garments serve the notion of geoagency as performed through 1:1, analogue, real time encounters and readings of geologic time.
Fig 16: Mourquong Disposal Basin, (photo: Jock Gilbert, 2016)
Geologically speaking, ‘horizon’ is a specific layer of geologic matter. Stratigraphy therefore assumes a stack of lateral horizons, comprising solid, hard material that can be conceptualised as discretely classified layers. Through the scientific descriptions of these layers, depth is perceived spatiotemporally as the ‘deep’ time of long ago. We, however, have been travelling much closer to the surface where conditions are considerably less settled. Across these surfaces of oscillating sediment, far-flung granules and porous crusts we confront a different horizon: the horizontal threshold is between the surface of the land and the sky. This horizon, perceived as a line, manifests the perceptual limit of what is ‘up ahead’ while perpetually forestalling its own arrival. The practice of *Embracing Imminence* is one that looks between these two horizons to engage a recurring tension between two geotemporal perceptions: the measurable solidity of deep time, and imminence as a momentary projection towards the almost now.

Cumulatively, the research contribution operates alongside a range of other disciplinary practices to engage in a broader discourse of acceleration, instability and interconnectivity. It constructs a reading of the landscape as an architecture of flows, an anticipated near-future condition within the continuum of drift. While I join an expanding group of researchers and creative practitioners exploring various aspects of this domain, *Embracing Imminence* proffers the agency of a landscape practice that repositions narratives and metaphors of change in ways that go beyond casting it as a ‘problem’ to be ‘solved’. This supports the central tenet of this research: that the land itself is a performative, durational medium which, through its perpetual change, operates as a condition of imminence.

Bruno Latour posits that in recognising the ground as a made condition we are thrust ‘back to a time of the Great Discoveries [...] for the discovery of a new earth trembling beneath [our] feet’. He argues that in the context of the Anthropocene, the twentieth century seems much further away than the sixteenth century cusp that preceded Enlightenment. As a result, concerns that seemed archaic are now, according to Latour, ‘utterly contemporary.’ This practice of *Embracing Imminence* is broadly characterised by qualities that declare a certain allegiance to a similarly less certain approach to the land. As modes of practice, fabricating, plotting and gleaning revive notions of exploration and discovery that try to contend with and respond to these paradoxical conditions. In doing so, they speak to a research effort that develops ways of becoming sensitive to the ground in this new paradigm which, as Latour observes, trembles beneath our feet.

Practicescape occurred June 1, 2017 at RMIT University in the Design Hub Gallery. The project offered a parallel journey that circumnavigated the gallery space and traversed three modes of practice and the new knowledge these invite.

The following selected documentation indicates various phases of the exposition.
Fig 163: Practicescape, second transition, (Kate Church, 2017)

Fig 164: Practicescape, third transition, (Kate Church, 2017)
Fig 165: Practiscapce, forth transition, (Kate Church, 2017)
Fig 166: Practicescape, (Kate Church, 2017)

Fig 167: Practicescape, trace (Kate Church, 2017)
Fig 168: Practicescape, trace (Kate Church, 2017)

Fig 169: Practicescape, trace (Kate Church, 2017)
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*Chapter divides*

Cover - Church, K. (Photographer). 2015. Lake Crosbie. [Photograph].

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Fig 4: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Drift. [Photograph of hand drawing].

Fig 5: Church, K. (Photographer). 2015. Culpra Station, ground of smoking ceremony. [Photograph].

Fig 6: Church, K. (Photographer). 2015. Culpra Station, ground of dried river bed. [Photograph].

Fig 7: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). Plot. [Photograph of text excerpt].

Fig 8: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Flour experiments. [Photograph of model detail].

Fig 9: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Yarra River mapping. [Photograph of hand drawing detail].


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Fig 12: Velvet. Gilles Clément, Derborence Island. Retrieved March 6, 2017, from [GFDL (http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html) or CC BY-SA 3.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0)], via Wikimedia Commons. [Digital Image].


Fig 14: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2013. Gaiters and gloves - Truganina. [Photograph of trace detail].

Fig 15: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Garment prototype. [Photograph of garment detail].

Fig 16: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2013. Gaiters and gloves - Truganina. [Photograph of garment detail].

Fig 17: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Gaiters and gloves – Culpra Station. [Photograph of garment detail].

Fig 18: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Field kit – Culpra Station. [Photograph of garment detail].

Fig 19: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2013. Gaiters prototype. [Photograph of trace detail].

Fig 20: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Gaters – Lake Crosbie. [Photograph of trace detail].

Fig 21: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2013. Gaiters prototype – reverse side. [Photograph of trace detail].

Fig 22: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Carrier garment – carry state. [Photograph of garment detail].

Fig 23: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Gaiter – Culpra Station. [Photograph of trace detail].

Fig 24: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Gaiter – Culpra Station. [Photograph of trace detail].

Fig 25: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Carrier garment – worn state. [Photograph of garment detail].

Fig 26: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Gaiter – Lake Crosbie. [Photograph of trace detail].

Fig 27: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Apron process. [Photograph of trace detail].

Fig 28: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Apron – baker state. [Photograph of garment detail].

Fig 29: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Apron process. [Photograph of trace detail].

Fig 30: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Apron – reverse/collection state. [Photograph of garment detail].

Fig 31: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Apron – island state. [Photograph of garment detail].

Fig 32: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Mallee booklet. [Photograph of booklet detail].

Fig 33: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Siltscape booklet. [Photograph of booklet detail].

Fig 34: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Siltscape booklet. [Photograph of booklet detail].

Fig 35: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Flour experiments. [Photograph of model detail].

Fig 36: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Specimen drawings. [Photograph of hand drawing].

Fig 37: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Specimen drawings. [Photograph of hand drawing].
Fig 38: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Herring Island – Sectional detail of proposed condition. [Photograph of hand drawing detail].

Fig 39: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Herring Island – Sectional detail of proposed condition. [Photograph of hand drawing detail].

Fig 40: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Herring Island – Plan. [Photograph of hand drawing detail].

Fig 41: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Yarra River mapping. [Photograph of hand drawing detail].

Fig 42: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Herring Island – Proposed Plan. [Photograph of hand drawing detail].

Fig 43: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Herring Island – Proposed Plan. [Photograph of hand drawing detail].

Fig 44: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2013. prelude : interloper : interval. [Photograph of publication].

Fig 45: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Silscape. [Photograph of project artefacts].

Fig 46: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2012. Rice paper experiments. [Photograph of traces].

Fig 47: Church, K. (Photographer). 2016. Building site. [Photograph].

Fig 48: Church, K. (Creative Practitioner). 2016. Long shore drift map. [Map].

Fig 49: Church, K. (Photographer). 2015. Altona Bay – low tide. [Photograph].

Fig 50: Church, K. (Creative Practitioner). 2016. Sand bar movement mapping. [Map- detail].

Fig 51: Church, K. (Creative Practitioner). 2015. Sand spit change over seven years. [Map].

Fig 52: Church, K. (Photographer). 2016. Truganina fence – northern side. [Photograph].

Fig 53: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Truganina fence – southern side. [Film still].


Fig 58: Church, K. (Photographer). 2014. Survey point. [Photograph].


Fig 67: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). Photograph by Landau, B. 2009. Wind drawing machine. [Photo of installed device].

Fig 68: Church, K. and Kemp, R. (Creative practitioners). Photograph by Landau, B. 2009. Reconfigured drawing machine. [Photo of installed device].

Fig 69: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Encrust registration device. [Photo of installed device].

Fig 70: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2013. Process of constructing Grid: registration. [Photo of unfinished device].

Fig 71: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2009. Motion machine prototype. [Photo of prototype].

Fig 72: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Wick: registration device. [Photo-detail].

Fig 73-75: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2013. Grid - water motion registration device. [Photo of installed device].

Fig 76-79: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Lines and Edges. [Film stills].

Fig 80: Unknown. Original cadastral information. [Digital drawing].

Fig 81: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2013. Sandscape remapping. [photo of map – detail].

Fig 82-84: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2013. Samples of fence taxonomy. [photo of drawing – details].

Fig 85-87: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2014. Drift maps. [Digital map].

Fig 88: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Shifting Ground. [Film still].

Fig 89-94: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2014-2015. Walking Culpra Station and Truganina, [Photograph].

Fig 95-100: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). Disc-course slow walk. [Film stills].

Fig 101: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). Historic aerial photograph in the field. [Photograph].

Fig 102-106: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). Shifting Terrains walk. [Event photograph].

Fig 107: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). Shifting Terrains Map. [Aerial Photograph and digital drawing].

Fig 109-112: Church, K. (Photographer). 2015. Truganina Reserve fence. [Photograph].

Fig 113: Church, K. (Photographer). 2015. Lake Crosbie. [Photograph].


Fig 115: Church, K. (Photographer). Multi-stemmed Mallee Eucalypt. [Photograph].


Fig 117: Church, K. (Photographer). 2016. Evidence of salinity. [Photograph].

Fig 118: Church, K. (Photographer). 2015. Murray River at Cupra Station. [Photograph].

Fig 119: Church, K. (Photographer). 2015. Collected samples. [Photograph].


Fig 130: Church, K. (Photographer). 2017. Oscar’s collection. [Photo].

Fig 131-133: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Saltscape collection. [Photograph of traces].

Fig 134: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2016. Saltscape display. [Photograph of traces].

Fig 135: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2016. Culpra soil samples. [Photograph – detail].

Fig 139-140: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2009. QRioCity works. [Photograph of work].

Fig 141: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2017. Culpra gaiters. [Photograph – detail].

Fig 142-144: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. A Restless Ground installation. [Photograph – details].

Fig 145-147: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2016. Ground Work installation. [Photograph – detail].

Fig 148-149: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2015. Salt samples. [Photograph].

Fig 150-151: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2016. Mourquong proposal. [text].

Fig 152-153: Church, K. (Photographer). 2015. Lake Crosbie surface. [Photograph].


Fig 155: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2013. Imminent moment. [Diagram].

Fig 156: Church, K. (Photographer). 2017. Watch your step – near Truganina fence. [Photo].


Fig 158: Church, K. (Creative practitioner). 2010. Topographic surface. [Photograph of model].

Fig 159: Church, K. (Photographer). 2016. Spill. [Photo].

Fig 160: Church, K. (Photographer). 2015. Bendalong back beach. [Photo].

Fig 161: Gilbert, J. (Photographer). 2016. Mourquong Disposal Basin. [Photo].


Fig 164: Church, K. (Creative Practitioner). 2017. Practicescape. Documentation of exposition event. [Photo].


Fig 164: Church, K. (Creative Practitioner). 2017. Practicescape. Documentation of exposition event. [Photo].