The Practice of Feeling for Place:

a compendium for an expanded architecture

A Thesis submitted in (partial) fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the 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.

Kathy E. Waghorn

March, 2017
Part 2: The Work

Kathy E. Waghorn
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Introduction:
The work of practising a feeling for place
Part two of The Practice of Feeling for Place: a compendium for an expanded architecture (the Compendium) gives a record of the works undertaken ‘in the world’ on which the reflective endeavour of this PhD has meditated.

‘Feeling for place’ is pursued through encounters with, and in, place assemblages, and is motivated by the transformation of place, however minor or gradual. Picking up one definition of a compendium as ‘a book containing useful hints’, and acknowledging the partiality (in both senses of the word) that is inevitable in the documentation of works at times centred on intangible social interaction, the work here is ‘hinted’ at through image, text and ephemera.

Compendium Part Two acts therefore as a kind of notebook, accumulating material fragments to convey a trace of the textures of the work and the assemblies convened through the work, as well as the differing contexts in which practising place has found fertile grounds. This part contains texts, written by myself, or co-authored with others. Some of these were written specifically for this compendium while other passages have been collated and edited from prior sources—from conference papers, book chapters, funding applications, a recorded conversation and from an arts festival newspaper.
The practice of feeling for place

Compendium Part Two also includes numerous photographs, sketches, diagrams, tables, to-do lists, lists of useful words, notes, diary pages, newspaper cuttings, and ephemera from projects including invitations, maps, signs, health and safety plans, emails, recipes and itineraries. Rejecting the how-to manual, a format with some currency in exemplifying the actions of temporal urban-place work, Ferreri and Lang propose the notebook as a way to give “equal weight to observations, conversations, fantasies, photos, documents, drawings, maps, gossip, media imaginaries and other fragments, in order to explore the multiple competing values, power relations and everyday negotiations of a ‘temporary city’ in the making” (Ferreri & Lang 2016, p. 11). In so doing they draw attention to minor details of execution and aesthetics as significant indicators of different values and practices. In the same vein Compendium Part Two aims to place the reader in the midst of the work through the inclusion of this ephemera and miscellany. Items such as meeting agendas, to-do lists and emails signal labour and time spent. Documents such as these trace different registers of language, the assemblies and networks convened (and the practices and allegiances of such groups), and the material and spatial undertakings, that in confederacy form the work of the practice of feeling for place.

In this part of the Compendium the practice work is arranged in three clusters to help orient you, the reader, given that in some cases boundaries between individual ‘projects’ and/or roles are not necessarily distinct, as one thing led to another in an opportunistic fashion.

The first cluster of projects concerns the place I live, the city of Tamaki Makaurau Auckland. A number of these ‘projects’ overlap in coalescing around the Whau River that crosses through my neighbourhood, and through my activities with the local collective Hoopla: Projects for the Whau. The two-year-long project Make Believe included in this cluster, was concerned with the development of a public park, also in my own home suburb. Each project in this cluster is directly tuned towards a wide and generous activation of place knowledge and transformation.

1 See for example Lydon, M & Garcia, A 2015.

2 Note: personal names have been deleted in these documents, institutional names remain to give a sense of the networks engaged.
Above: Flotilla Whau photos passed hand to hand at The River Talks, 2014.
Below: Notebook, testing the doctorate title.
The next cluster sees two quite discrete projects classed as ‘Insiders’. Each of these have place assemblages as their subject matter but taken up through an exhibition format, and through a different aesthetic sensibility, situated as they are, inside an institutional setting. One of these projects is concerned with Tamaki Makaurau Auckland, how it has been envisaged and recorded through maps and mapping. The other project in this section simultaneously takes on and resists the registration of a ‘national place’, given its context of a ‘national pavilion’ at an international architecture biennale. In both these projects there is an attention to practice both in the specific sense of my expanded practice as a curator/designer/researcher, but also in foregrounding the practices that are used. The practising of place through mapping (in the first) and through making architecture (in the second) form the subject matter of these exhibitions and research projects. In these institutional settings attributes of my tactical know-how developed in practice (and discussed at length in Compendium Part One, chapter three) is certainly in play, as is the impetus for place transformation, although through a more curatorial undertaking, at one-remove from the day-to-day inflection of a specific locale that is prioritised in the first cluster of projects.

The final selection titled ‘Outliers’ includes two projects that have taken place in locations physically distant from my regular locale. Each also lies ‘out on the edge’ in the way they operated simply to overcome a tourist gaze and bring to the surface aspects of a particular place assemblage, without the underlying impetus of prompting place transformation, an aim embedded in my work closer to home. These ‘outliers’ as I’ve called them, are included here as they trace the development of some processes and actions I’ve developed for ‘feeling out’ the constituent ingredients and attributes of a place.
Compendium Part Two is intended to act as a companion to Compendium Part One, the exegetical text, in order that the narrative account of the meta-research might be indexed against the documentation given here. In this doctorate value is given to both forms of explication, to that which is presented, crafted and argued in the exegetical text, and equally, to that which can be gleaned from the textures captured in this part. Both are available to you, the reader, in order that a synthetic reading is enacted between and across these two ways of sharing this practice of feeling for place.
Practising Place in Tāmaki
Makaurau Auckland
This first cluster of projects concerns the place I live, the city of Tamaki Makaurau Auckland. This city is perched on a volcanic field, strung across an isthmus between two harbours, threaded across by lava flows, streams and creeks. Much of the work clustered in this section engages with the specificities of this city, including its geography and contemporary urban forms.

Some of the projects overlap in coalescing around the Whau River, an estuarine water-body that crosses through my neighbourhood. This section also introduces Hoopla: projects for the Whau, the small local collective I work with in relation to the river. Another group of projects in this cluster are concerned with the development of a public park in my own home suburb of New Lynn. Each project in this cluster is tuned towards a wide and generous activation of place knowledge and transformation.
Fluid City
“Once upon a time a tiny and transient city named Fluid City was created by an urban planner, an architect, two choreographers, a microbiologist, a geomorphologist, and a critical educator who wanted to find a way to connect the people of their city with academic research on critical water issues through an arts–science–education collaboration comprising research on water ecology in the city of Auckland, New Zealand.” (Longley et al. 2013, p. 736)
Fluid City was an anchorless mobile architecture—three strange, translucent cupboard-like structures each towed along the streets by bicycle. Once stilled, each cupboard, with its yellow-aproned attendant, invited the passer-by into a tapestry of water stories—to press against the rubber lip of a diver’s mask and view the passage of water through the city; to don a lab coat and, guided by a microbiologist, peer into the usually invisible microbial and biotic universe of the city’s waterways; to put on headphones and follow a site-specific dance performance of watery history and reclaimed harbour; to sit on an upturned bucket and listen to different voices sharing stories and knowledge of the city’s fluid states; to write on a card your own water story and peg it up to gently flap on a washing line strung across city space. Then, with the contents neatly packed away, Fluid City, like a puddle in the sun, disappeared.

Fluid City playfully garnered the unsuspecting public as interlocutor as it generated and transmitted knowledge through activating a sense of inquiry and transaction. Visually and materially strange, poised between the utilitarian and the extraordinary, temporally occupying and disrupting the city, it borrowed its curious operations from the itinerant circus sideshow. By inviting the addition of stories and commentary from the public, and by allowing for a free-ranging conversation with a ‘travelling scientist’, an empirical way of knowing a place was set free from its academic and laboratory confines to became part of a live and local discussion—evolving, messy and open-ended.

Above: All images of Fluid City in action. Photos: James Hutchinson.
**Fluid City** was an arts–science–education collaboration that aimed to foster awareness and understanding of water issues in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. The intention was to devise a series of urban installation/performance works in the city of Auckland that animated elements of the material, technical, social, cultural, spiritual, and economic dimensions of urban waters and waterways in the Auckland region. First launched at Auckland’s marine-side Wynyard Quarter for the United Nations World Water Day in March 2012, parts of **Fluid City** were later adapted for the Rosebank Project. In this iteration it roamed the light industrial spaces of the Rosebank Peninsula where it was tuned to explore the particular health and ecology of the neighbouring Whau River allowing for the testing and sensing of pH levels, phosphates and heavy metals. **Fluid City** has subsequently been used as part of an expanded science curriculum in an Auckland secondary school.

Credits, collaborators and further publication:

Fluid City was funded by a grant from the University of Auckland to promote inter-disciplinary research. The Fluid City project members were: Charlotte Šunde, Alys Longley, Carol Brown, Kathy Waghorn, Clark Ehlers, Katie Fitzpatrick, Gary Brierley and Rose Martin, all from the University of Auckland.


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4 For further introduction to the Whau river see the next section, ‘The Whau River and Hoopla: projects for the Whau’.
Introducing the Whau River

The Whau River (pronounced as in the English word ‘foe’) bisects the inner west of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Its path provides a portage, connecting two harbours and permitting movement between the east and west coasts of New Zealand’s North Island. This route, known as Waitahurangi, has seen over one thousand years of occupation and use. Sea birds use this route to move between the harbours. For iwi (Māori tribes) Waitahurangi provided a natural infrastructure of food, connection and economic production. In the colonial economy the river and portage played a crucial role in the urbanisation of Auckland, as both a transport route for food grown in the fertile land to the south, and as a source of clay. Along the riverbanks numerous brick and pipe works produced an astonishing array of goods, all shipped by barge along the waterway to the building sites of the inner city. Bounded by the Rosebank Peninsula and the suburbs of Avondale and New Lynn, the river increasingly acted to drain away by-product materials from factories situated on the river banks.

Map shows the location of Auckland’s Whau River.
In latter decades however, the Whau, like many other waterways, has lost this ‘mobilising’ significance. Superseded by rail then road, for much of the recent past the river inscribed the boundary between municipalities, and it has increasingly become the site of multiple conflicts across jurisdictional, economic, land-use and natural systems. Never valued much in a scenographic sense, the Whau River basin hosts the network of pylons that transmit electrical power to the north, while the waters below move as a muddy tide carrying heavy metals and other toxins through the mangroves and out to the Waitematā Harbour. With recent municipal boundary changes however, the river is now sits at the geographical center of the Whau Local Board area, and this new municipal authority has started to embrace the opportunities a reconnection with the waterway might offer.
Introducing Hoopla: Projects for the Whau

Initiated in 2013, *Hoopla: Projects for the Whau* is an independent collective consisting of myself and my friend, neighbour and urban designer Nina Patel. A bit like a band there has been a previous, larger line-up, but we have operated as a duo for some time now. Together, and in collaboration with other groups and individuals, Hoopla develop public-realm initiatives to reconnect the Whau River, in our neighbourhood in west Auckland, with its urban environment, thereby prompting new opportunities for its rejuvenation and use.
The name Hoopla is not an acronym, it is a word meaning an excited activity, a commotion or hullabaloo. This is what our collective work aims for, the generation of a little bit of a commotion... that just might prompt further action. Hoopla specialise in the use of opportunistic tactics, tailoring our work to our means and seeking available resources and allies to support what we do. Hoopla resist any more formal identification or structure; as such we are not incorporated or registered in any way, although we have gained some kind of ‘official status’ in terms of our recognition at a local political level. At times the work of Hoopla intersects with aspects of our respective day jobs, but it also provides an avenue to operate outside the norms of our more institutional or commercial settings. Hoopla has been actively engaged in initiating the three projects described in the following pages.
Muddy Urbanism
In Tāmaki Makaurau

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, the largest city in Aotearoa New Zealand, sits in a volcanic field held between two harbours, the Manukau and Waitematā. Poised on this fragile isthmus, our urban areas jostle up against an extensive and convoluted coast, where earth and ocean co-mingle. While architects, urban planners and politicians often discuss the importance of ‘the waterfront’, this view of an ill-defined ‘front’ is frequently restricted to the inner city and wealthy beach suburbs. However Tāmaki Makaurau fronts and backs the water in many different ways and spaces. One such space is the Whau River estuary.

*Muddy Urbanism* is an ongoing urban-research workshop focussed on the neighbourhoods of the Whau river. Led by Hoopla and involving guests, post-graduate students and independent researchers, *Muddy Urbanism* was initiated for the urban research lab which was part of *If You Were To Live Here* the 5th Auckland Triennial (2013). The Whau River research commenced by producing an archive and a series of critical mappings of the river and its environs, which uncovered both the conflicts inherent to this space and the potential that might be generated through re-establishing a spatial, social and economic relationship to the waterway.

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6 The Whau river is introduced in the previous section, see page 16.
From this a series of speculative urban proposals have been generated, leveraging the powerful nature of utopian thought in imagining possible futures for this river and its neighbourhoods. The *Muddy Urbanism* proposals to date range across scale and programme including the proposition of collective river housing type (in the vein of southeast Asian waterway dwellings) that draws on and makes connections to the spatial and material properties of the river; a proposition to re-imagine the network of power pylons (that uses the river as a corridor) as a multifunctional resources for locals, able to contribute at the micro scale of the neighbourhood while still supporting the national grid; a proposal to devise an active river edge, re-integrating the marginal, disconnected reserves of post-industrial ‘waste’ land on this coastal edge into a linear pathway, re-connecting neighbourhoods cut off by arterial traffic routes and thereby reinstating the mobility of the portage under new urban conditions. Each proposal in *Muddy Urbanism* responds to the particular conditions and conflicts identified in the Whau, rethinking existing land use, public and environmental infrastructure, and neighbourhood-based socio-economic development, while also proposing strategies and tactics that might be employed for rethinking urban policy and modes of urban intervention in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland more broadly.
In Tāmaki Makaurau

Muddy Urbanism

The Muddy Urbanism research has, quite intentionally, been widely exhibited, distributed and published in non-academic settings. This is to follow a deliberate strategy to circulate these ‘productive fictions’ of the river and its neighbourhoods, with the anticipation that these new ways of seeing the neighbourhood might enter the public imaginary. This has been a fruitful strategy with the linear pathway ‘catching on’ and now a live project in the first stages of construction. There is wide public support for Te Whau Pathway (as it is called), a shared cycling and walking path, championed and funded by municipal government with support from charitable trusts.

Muddy Urbanism has therefore generated both new urban proposals for this muddy, coastal-edge environment and a ‘muddy’-ing and radical mixing of categories and roles: national infrastructure reconceived as local amenity, degenerated landscape as active edge for the locals to use, and architect acting as a speculative and critical designer of relationships, networks and conversations as well as spaces, objects and landscapes.

7 This term is borrowed from Kenneth Bailey and Lori Lobenstine who employ ‘productive fictions’ to “create glimpses into what might be in the world we want, and build micro-spaces where that world already exists. These productive fictions create room for people to jump off our ideas and imagine new possibilities”. (Bailey & Lobestine 2016)

The practice of feeling for place

Above left: Whau River pathway, proposed in *Muddy Urbanism*, taken up in the public domain.

Above right: Whau River scenes and sounds in *Muddy Urbanism*.

Right: *Muddy Urbanism* in Los Angeles, reported in Auckland community newspaper, Western Leader.
In Tāmaki Makaurau

16 October 2013

Kathy Waghorn
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School of Architecture and Planning
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland 1143

Dear Kathy,

Thank you for your letter received on 22 September 2012 and enclosed copy of Muddy Urbanism. As a member of Parliament for Te Atatu, I really appreciate receiving a copy of this book and the proposal enclosed. I look forward to meeting you in the future to discuss these proposals further.

Please continue to keep me informed.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Print-Taihika
Member of Parliament for Te Atatu

[Letter from Local Member of Parliament.]

Muddy Urbanism

Credits, collaborators and further publication:

Muddy Urbanism is an ongoing project by Hoopla: Projects for the Whau. https://muddyurbanismlab.wordpress.com

The Muddy Urbanism book, edited by Kathy Waghorn, designed by Zee Shake Lee and published by the University of Auckland is available by print on demand from lulu.com

Muddy Urbanism was instigated as part of ‘If you were to live here . . . ’ the 5th Auckland Triennial (Auckland Art Gallery 10 May—11 August 2013) with architect/activist Teddy Cruz, co-founder of the Center for Urban Ecologies at University of California, San Diego; Esther Mecredy and University of Auckland post-graduate students Herman Haringa, Raimana Jones, Chia Venn Khoo (KCV), Sophia Whoi Seung Kim, Antonia Lapwood, Zee Shake Lee, Steven Lin, Vinni Paget, Hannah Ryan and Angela Yoo. The public programme included discussions with guests Robyn Mason (historian), Marcus Williams (curator of the Rosebank Project), staff from Auckland Council and from the following NGOs: the Whau River Catchment Trust, Sustaining Our Streams, Ecomatters and the Keep Waitakere Beautiful Trust.

A selection of work from Muddy Urbanism was exhibited at WUHO, Woodbury University Gallery, Los Angeles, 7–23 November 2014, with support from Angela Yoo and Esther Mecredy. http://cargocollective.com/muddyurbanism

Muddy Urbanism has been presented at various conferences, symposia and meetings.

Above: letter from Local Member of Parliament.
Below: Muddy Urbanism website.
Flotilla Whau

The launch of the 2016 Flotilla Whau.
Photo: Brian Marsom.
My feet and bum are wet, the water running up my forearms has a certain smell and I can feel the pressure of the tide against the paddle. The wind is stronger out here, sounds are louder and travel further, the hum of the power cables above mix with a droney rhythm from a large factory on the peninsula. I’m low down in my kayak and the land seems flat and distant. A shag perched on a submerged shopping trolley eyes me as I paddle by, another dives below the surface and I really can’t imagine its marine world as in one swift movement aerial becomes aquatic. I imagine other beings below the surface too, but they are likely scared off by this sudden and noisy invasion of kids, dogs, kayaks, scouts in cutters, paddle boards, skippers, politicians, sailors, dinghies, fiddle players, photographers, oars, historic vessels, surf life savers, flags and banners...
The Flotilla Whau operates as both an art work and community event. Producing a memorable image of the potential of this waterway, evoking both past and future conditions, the event brings Whau users together, stimulating connection and ongoing discussion. The Flotilla Whau offers an opportunity for more people to experience the waterway from on the river, generating a deepened sense of connection to and respect for it.\(^8\)

8 Hoopla: projects for the Whau, 2015, *Funding Expenditure Report to the Whau Local Board.*

The *Flotilla Whau* instigates a temporal engagement with the Whau River. For the last five years, on a day in late summer when the tide is right and weather allows, Hoopla: Projects for the Whau facilitate a horde of people to take to the water in a melange of craft. Open to all comers the flotilla’s constituency shifts from year to year, one year it was led by masters rowing-eights\(^9\) behind carnival masks, another year 150 sea scouts took to the water as part of their jamboree.

9 Where all rowers are over the age of 65.
Above: 2017 Flotilla Whau site map for permit application.
Below left: Flotilla Whau notes.
Below right: A Flotilla Whau participant’s banner, 2015.
This is not crossing the river in the hermetic temperature-controlled space of the crawling traffic, as many here do most days. Instead the Flotilla Whau is a more fulsome undertaking. It is tactile, to the dismay of some who come under-prepared; you cannot avoid getting your feet muddy here, or feeling the humidity and wind, smelling the mangroves and salt, drifting with the tide or paddling with force and effort. As well as a haptic experience, the Flotilla is also a social undertaking in which local individuals and groups—sea scouts, the rowing club, members of the environmental restoration trust, surf life savers—are together cast as experts, those who know the place and can show it to others who are less familiar or new to this place. These river locals demonstrate their knowledge, not through talk but through their actions: deftly backing trailers and launching boats, rigging, paddling, rowing, sailing, swimming, chatting—even singing—in and on the water. Sometimes local politicians turn up and we place them in boats with those who are not shy of airing their views.

Above: Producing Flotilla Whau signage.
Below: Installing Flotilla Whau banners on lead kayaks.
What did you like?
Encouraged people to get in the river in new ways
Getting people in boats/honouring Whau’s history
Being active outdoors with other members of the community
The mixture of different boats + the fun atmosphere
First time on boat on Whau—different perspective
The water and paddling

What could be improved?
Working microphone
Better advertising, school newsletters, prizes? Some competition
More encouragement to connect with each other, small races, prizes for costumes maybe?
Parking for cars with no boats a bit closer to the river
More such events, so those who miss a day have similar opportunities

10 A small sample of responses from Flotilla Whau participants gathered in 2016 by Colmar Brunton NZ, on behalf of Auckland Council.

Above: Giving the 2015 Flotilla Whau safety briefing.
The first Flotilla Whau was intended as a one-off, a fleeting spectacle, drawing attention to the river that sits concealed behind factories and warehouses, below a road transport-oriented, everyday horizon. Initially developed by Hoopla for Rosebank, in which artists were invited to collaborate with businesses situated on the Rosebank Peninsula, this first flotilla was intended to draw attention away from a suburb of light industry and towards the adjacent body of water. Co-hosted by the West End Rowing Club this first flotilla was more a spectator event, with only a small group of craft taking to the river to follow a course marked by a series of signal flags mapping out the long-gone sites of production. For most this flotilla was viewed from the rowing-club pontoon and sites along the peninsula, and was followed by a restorative ‘fundraiser’ afternoon tea in the club’s rooms.

Since then, through subsequent annual iterations, the Flotilla Whau has grown in participation and all are welcome on the water—so long as the craft is seaworthy, adequate ‘flotation devices’ are provided and speed is kept to less than five knots! This growth is a mixed blessing. Prompted by the desires of those involved to become more visible, audible and festival-like, the local arm of the city Council has funded the last three iterations. We recognise the paradoxical double bind that comes with this as we now require health and safety plans, project management, insurance and post-evaluative reporting against KPI’s.

Navigating this on-going conundrum—the ‘light touch’ of a temporal performance of place and the more heavy-handed structure of the funding arrangement—is distracting from the sensitive performative or material work that Hoopla might enjoy undertaking as part of the flotilla, such as by night marking out invisible genealogies of the river (as we did for the first flotilla). However the semi-official status the Flotilla Whau has garnered over the last few years offers a certain agency, and in light of this we are committed to consistently positioning the flotilla as an open-access, non-commercial undertaking that prioritises local knowledge and participation, and facilitated as far as possible by local, less formal economies of exchange.

11 Rosebank, curated by Marcus Williams, was part of the 2013 Auckland Arts Festival. The Rosebank Peninsula is situated along the eastern banks of the Whau River. See https://rosebankartwalk.wordpress.com [17 January 2017].

12 Reporting against Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) is a requirement of the funding the Flotilla Whau has received from Auckland Council since 2015. These include reaching targets of 150 participants in the flotilla, two ‘positive mentions’ in the media and developing a minimum of three partnerships with other local community groups. The agreement also allows Council to commission independent research to evaluate the project.
Now in its fifth year the Flotilla Whau is developed by Hoopla: Projects for the Whau. It has been supported by Emily Harris, Myrthe Braam and Verena Jonkers for project management, through funding from Auckland Council and with the ongoing and valued participation of many groups and individuals. With special thanks to the New Lynn Sea Scouts, the New Zealand Maritime Museum and Martin Ball. Photography of the Flotilla Whau is by Brian Marsom.

www.flotilla-whau.blogspot.co.nz
www.facebook.com/flotillawhau


Local newspaper coverage:

http://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/local-news/western-leader/9688731/Floating-parade-for-Whau


A participant’s home video. Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPNDfbgk3G8
Field Day, 2015
Left: Club Boom Boom at the Western Suburbs Radio Club for Field Day.
Right: Tea, inside the Western Suburbs Radio Club for Field Day.
The practice of feeling for place

The text here was written by Hoopla for Localise, a temporary newspaper accompanying the 2015 Whau Arts Festival. Produced by Ioana Gordon-Smith and Lana Lopesi, each daily issue of Localise focussed on the subject of community art, exploring how art can meaningfully engage with local residents.

All five issues of Localise can be found at www.localisethenewspaper.wordpress.com

Hoopla wrote this piece (published on Friday, 16 October 2015) in the style of a commercial community newspaper, to alert the festival audience to our collaborative event happening the next day.
No, it’s not the words of a crazy hot new rap but a trio of events for the Whau Arts Festival, mapping the sonic and physical space of an area surrounding the Whau River.

Field Day is a collaborative project between HOOPLA and the Western Suburbs Radio Club (ZL1AC). A local group who generate events connecting the Whau river to the neighbourhoods that surround it, HOOPLA is most well known for the Flotilla Whau, an annual summer event based at Kelston’s Archibald Park. Further along the river members of HOOPLA have long been fascinated by a small building that sits next to the Great North Road bridge, on a sliver of land tucked between a power pylon and a huge red balloon.
This diminutive building has been the home of the Western Suburbs Radio Club for more than 50 years, in fact the building was relocated there when it was moved to make way for the construction of Lynn Mall in 1963. The Western Suburbs Radio Club is a group of enthusiasts who have an interest in radio communications. The appeal of amateur radio (sometimes known as ham radio) is the ability to communicate far and wide, across the country, around the globe, and even with astronauts in outer space. The Western Suburbs club is sometimes involved in outdoor sports and endurance events, using radio transmission to keep track of competitors in the field. For the Field Day project the clubrooms at 3000 Great North Road will be open to all, memorabilia and archival material will be on display, and club members will be on hand to demonstrate radio communications in operation. Afternoon tea will be available for a koha (donation) and if the weather is good it will be served on the lawn between the clubrooms and the river.

The other two events in this suite for the Whau Arts Festival will transport people to the Radio Clubrooms, although at quite different speeds and volume levels! For Walkie Talkie join artist Christina Houghton and The Friends of the Whau on an urban bush bash. Setting off from the Whau Arts Festival Plantation in the Avondale shops and circumnavigating the Avondale Racecourse to traverse the banks of the Whau River, this walking tour of little-known or as yet undiscovered routes will end up at the Radio Club for a refreshing afternoon tea.

Christina is a choreographer and artist who is interested in risk and survival in relation to climate change [. . .] To channel your inner Indiana Jones and join the Walkie Talkie urban bush bash meet at the Plantation site on Saturday at 1pm, wear sturdy shoes or gumboots and outdoor wear. The walk is suitable for older children but not for smaller legs, prams or buggies.

For a complete change of pace join artist Aniwaniwa at Club Boom Boom. This tribute to aural graffiti is a chance for anyone and everyone to discover what it's like to ride in one of those cantankerous cars with pumping stereos. Yes it's a short tour of the Whau with a boy racer. Aniwaniwa, a producer of time-based experiences traversing the va/wha between the club, the concert hall, the street, the gallery and te irirangi says, “think of it as a vibrational discotheque… a slowly lapping motion master… an urban promenade”. Entry to Club Boom Boom is totally free with the performance car and driver generously sponsored by Rockford Fosgate car-audio specialists. The collection points for Club Boom Boom are the Whau Arts Festival Plantation site and at the Western Suburbs Radio Clubrooms.
Walkie Talkie, Club Boom Boom and Field Day all take place as part of the Whau Arts Festival on Saturday 17 October. *Field Day* is open at the Western Suburbs Radio Clubroom, 300 Great North Road from 1–4pm. To join *Walkie Talkie* meet at the Plantation, Great North Road at the Avondale shops at 1pm. *Club Boom Boom* leaves periodically from the Plantation and Radio Club sites between 1 and 4pm.

*Left:* Looking at Hoopla’s Whau River archive at *Field Day.*
*Right:* Tea, inside the Western Suburbs Radio Club for *Field Day.*
Make Believe:
Imagining a new park
for New Lynn, 2012–14
[The] Crown Lynn precinct is envisaged as a residential-led, mixed-use neighbourhood built around a stunning new park for New Lynn (the jewel in the crown of the Power of 10 spaces) ... The centrepiece new park will be reasonably formal comprising a beautifully integrated storm-water pond; extraordinary mass structural planting of trees and shrubs (ideally an edible landscape), a contoured landscape for picnicking, art trails, play parks and a cafe kiosk. (Auckland Council, 2010)
A Make Believe
Introduction

**Background:**

In 2012 I made contact with the Community Development Arts and Culture team (CDAC) in Auckland Council regarding the establishment of a new park in New Lynn, the suburb where I live. I had heard that there were plans afoot and I wanted to find out what stage this project was at, as I was (and remain!) interested in its design. CDAC were charged with consulting with community on significant park projects. Through our discussion it emerged that:

—there had previously been a park design commissioned but it had been rejected. The reason that it was rejected was not quite clear but it was generally felt that it did not meet the expectations set out in the briefing document.

—a change in governance over this period meant that Council were able to start the consultation and design process over again.

—CDAC were not completely satisfied with their normative processes of community consultation and were interested in working with me to develop new methods for this.

My proposal was that we generate a series of live, public-realm events on the park site that would make it visible, make it known by residents as a space of potential through producing transformative experiences of it and in it, and, in a transient and culturally diverse neighbourhood, create personal and collective experiences of the place, connecting the past with the future. In so doing we posited that Make Believe “presented a co-ordinated and strategic approach to stitching together community consultation with identity building in New Lynn”. (Waghorn and Community Development Arts and Culture Auckland Council 2012)

I produced a diagram of our shared intent, showing how events would take place over time, with each event engaging different groups and establishing different connections. After my presentation to the Local Board (commissioners and funders) we received endorsement and were able to proceed.
Intention:

The intention of Make Believe: imagining a new park for New Lynn (Make Believe) was to generate novel approaches for the public’s engagement in the design of an urban park. Located in New Lynn, a suburb of west Auckland, the park will be situated within a medium-density housing development occupying a site that once contained the factory for Crown Lynn, a ceramics manufacturer widely known in New Zealand for its iconic table and decorative ware. Crown Lynn was a large employer from the 1940s until the factory closure in 1989.

To initiate this public engagement Make Believe adopted a spatial, material and performative approach to imagining a novel condition—a future ‘urban park’, a term not previously used in Council planning documents. Many conventional design consultation methods are constrained by a discourse framing the ‘already known’. The survey questionnaire for example presumes a pre-conceived range of possibilities: Should we provide space for dogs? Should we include a playground? In Make Believe the potential of the unknown was instead approached through a series of episodic live events curated for the town centre, each allowing for a fleeting and propositional manifestation of this future park to emerge, with each iteration drawing together a different group of constituents.

In so doing Make Believe accepted the limits of discourse and in response applied performative means to generate exchanges of knowledge, in this case knowledge of public urban space—how it might be shaped and used, what importance and meaning it might hold for specific communities in a suburb where the demographics are rapidly shifting.

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16 This was pointed out to me in a meeting with Council community and parks development staff. I have not completed an exhaustive search of Council documents to confirm this.

17 The initial proposal was to hold events on the park site, but this proved impossible as the land was not yet in Council ownership and the owner at the time would not grant access.
I see some potted citrus trees have appeared overnight in the raw concrete volume of a new but vacant shop; in the morning some children summon a buried stream, using sticks they paddle an imaginary waka (canoe) down the street while chanting “tahi, rua, tahi, rua” (one, two, one, two); another day a group of performers occupied a peculiar cage by the train station, where they hung about and hooted like monkeys; as dusk falls the facade of a nearby building is illuminated through movie projection and a crowd settle in beanbags to watch, in the night I find a disused car showroom filled with giant billowing smoke rings...

18 As noted previously, this is a term borrowed from Kenneth Bailey and Lori Lobenstine who employ ‘productive fictions’ to “create glimpses into what might be in the world we want...” (Bailey & Lobenstine 2016).

Make Believe, as the name suggests, draws on our playful capacity to ‘make things up’, to pretend and to imagine places differently. In so doing such ‘productive fictions’ are an attempt to access the potential of a place ahead of its instrumental definition and reduction to site through an architectural brief. Make Believe grew out of the frustration by those commissioning this park that the designs produced to this point did not fully grasp or respond in imaginative ways to the specific spatial and social potential of New Lynn and the heritage of this particular site.

Alongside the event programme a Make Believe headquarters (MBHQ) was established in a vacant shop. Open for almost one year the MBHQ operated as a drop-in centre where information and documentation from Make Believe projects were accumulated and displayed, and where informal conversations with residents were held. In response to the circulation of a series of somewhat misleading ‘artist’s impressions’ of the proposed park, a series of to-scale maps of well-known city and local parks were also displayed in the MBHQ so that the size of the proposed park could be visibly measured against shared points of reference.
While the actual implementation of the park has been on hold\textsuperscript{19} the outcomes of \textit{Make Believe} have been encapsulated in visual and textual documents, as well as in a kind of local folklore. The events of \textit{Make Believe} have also contributed to the impetus for establishing other, more durable arts-led programmes with a local emphasis. Operating as a critique of the top-down perspective of master-planning, in which the park is already conceived as a flat, bounded, green rectangle set on the ground plane between buildings, \textit{Make Believe} used the temporary as a testing of potential. The sequence of \textit{Make Believe} projects, through accessing the imagination of a wider client body, offered insights as to the spatial, material, temporal and programmatic directions this new park might take. This has led to the development of a more informed and articulate client body, a more nuanced design brief, and attention to the ways in which Council-wide procurement procedures might be made more amenable to processes that include a wider client body in conceiving new public facilities.

\textsuperscript{19}Delay has been caused by some legal issues that arose around the acquisition of the land for the park.
Above: Map showing the Make Believe HQ location.
The Make Believe projects included:

_Here Now: re-imagining New Lynn_: a three-day festival of place-based installation, produced by architecture students as part of the Auckland Heritage Festival.

_Bird in Hand_: A one-day-only newspaper produced by Hoopla: projects for the Whau as part of the Auckland Heritage Festival.

_Come Join the Circus_: A performance walk developed with students from New Lynn Primary School and performed for their school peers and on-lookers.

_Park for a Day_: a day-long installation and social gathering produced by the Suburban Floral Association with the Auckland Environmental Protection Association (Eco Elders)—a group of elderly new migrants from China who maintain a local garden.

These Make Believe projects are documented on the following pages.
Here Now: Re-imagining New Lynn, 10–13 October 2013

Above: The mobile cinema made by students in the Here Now studio for the Auckland Heritage Festival, 2013. Photo: Amy Yalland.
In Here Now, the largest Make Believe event, 120 architecture students designed and fabricated fifteen installations that made aspects of the suburb’s past or future visible and experiential. Tapping into the ready-made promotional vehicle of a city-wide heritage festival, the installations occupied the vast, persistently vacant, retail spaces on the ground floor of the new, lone, high-rise apartment building in the town centre and other shops vacated as high-street retail gives way to the centrifugal pull of the nearby shopping mall. Here Now opened a space of conjecture—how might this ‘ground’ be considered not only as a space of commodification but, perhaps like an urban park, be conceived as a space affording an expanded capacity for social exchange.

Noting the shift from suburban to more urban forms of dwelling in this area, one group of students proposed a ‘back yard’ for the residents of the new apartments above. Installing lawn, plants, timber deck, sun umbrella, BBQ, paddling pool, playhouse and washing line, the students imagined an urban park that provides a social back yard for apartment dwellers to share with other publics. Another student group developed a mobile cinema. Responding to a land-sale legacy in which a covenant prohibited the development of a cinema in the town centre, their roving cinema projected directly onto building facades, challenging the spatial domination of the covenant by turning the entire town centre into a potential cinema, distributing elements of an urban park programme on every building facade, and settling audiences into any available ground plane.
A third student group fabricated a mysterious contraption that blew huge smoke rings horizontally across the large, empty, display floor of a vacated car showroom. Lit by pulsing lights this mesmerising space evoked the underlying combustible nature of the Auckland volcanic field, the smoking kiln chimney stacks of the suburb’s industrial past, and the traffic exhaust of the neighbouring arterial road, while proposing that an urban park might be generated through atmospheres as much as infrastructure.

With over 3000 visitors the installations and events in Here Now demonstrated a capacity to use the temporal nature of event to transform a place and imagine it differently. These projects prompted the public use of space in surprising temporal and social ways, and in so doing they opened a conversation beyond that of the technical, which had dominated the design brief for the park thus far.
Here Now was part of the Auckland Heritage Festival, 10–14 October 2013. http://here-now2013-blog.tumblr.com

Projects for Here Now were developed by students in the second-year studio of the Bachelor of Architectural Studies at the University of Auckland.

Here Now was financially supported by the Whau Local Board and was project-managed by Esther Mecredy. Photo documentation is by Amy Yalland (Index).
Bird in Hand: a one-day-only newspaper
Hoopla’s fleeting *Bird in Hand* project, also for the city’s Heritage Festival, collated local events from the past into a newspaper produced for one edition only. The *Bird in Hand* newspaper took its name from the first pub to be opened in this part of the city. Hoopla chose this proverb for use as the title not only for its little-known association with local history but also because of its encapsulation of the opportunistic orientation that we are guided by, the encouragement to take up the immediate opportunity that you have right now over that which is possibly greater but less certain. The title also alludes to the way the paper was distributed—passing from hand to hand as it was delivered by a ‘paperboy’ to commuters heading towards their morning trains.
The practice of feeling for place

A number of passengers resident on Portage Road communicated with the Town Board last evening in respect to the condition of the Whau Creek. It was stated that the contaminated pollution of the Whau River had become a nuisance and a menace to the district. During the last ten years this pollution had become steadily worse, and the smell arising from the creek at present, particularly at low water, was such that boats had to be shut against it. In addition to this fact, a number of people bathed in the water between the railway bridge at New Lynn and Point Chevalier and it was contended that the board should erect notice boards warning the public against bathing in these waters. Combined action was suggested by the local bodies interested viz., Auckland City Council, Avondale Borough Council, and the New Lynn Board. A letter was also received from Dr. Cheesman, medical officer of health, on the same subject, who stated: “Complaint was made to me by a deputation from local residents in regard to the offensive condition of the Whau Creek, due to discharge from the tannery. That nuisance exists in the Whau Creek is verified by a personal knowledge of officers of this Department. The whole of the contents of the various vats are discharging through an open trench into the headwaters of the Whau Creek. There are four water closets on the premises and these also discharge into the open trench directly. There is no purification process, and at present there is no dilution, and about 40,000 gallons of the fluid is discharged daily into the creek. I should be glad therefore if your board will serve an urgent notice upon Messrs. Astley, Ltd., to forthwith cease the discharge of any offensive material into the Whau Creek, and to make immediate provision for the purification and disposal, in such manner as will not cause nuisance, of the waste material from the tannery. Also to disconnect the present water closets and to substitute therefore the pan system used in other parts of your district.”

Mr. Hughes stated that the smell had awakened him sometimes in the early hours of the morning. The chairman remarked that there undoubtedly was a nuisance; if the ratepayers approved of the sewerage proposal no doubt the trouble could be removed.

The board’s sanitary inspector stated that Messrs. Astley and Sons were prepared to install septic tanks and would adopt any reasonable suggestion in dealing with the fluid from the works.

It was resolved to notify the owners in the terms of the letter from the Health Department.

Explorers in Egypt recently unearthed the fossil remains of a horse at the depth of fifty feet. Doubtless centuries hence delivered after ancient relics may be paralyzed to classify the rusty remnants of a “rover.”

Issued for Friday, 11 October 2013, all material in the newspaper, including advertising and public notices, was sourced from local newspaper archives. The front page led with the visit of a circus from Australia, a way to make use of a photograph from 1962 showing circus elephants grazing on the verge of what is now a major arterial road with the circus tent behind taking up the site now occupied by the shopping mall. The main front-page story however is of an accident on the rail network. Train passengers in 2013 read about the 1913 train crash as they crossed the very same bridge on which it occurred, bringing their own commuters’ local knowledge of place into an abrupt collision with past events. Other stories highlighted pollution of the local Whau river and the opening of new commercial buildings. The real estate section showed ‘modern’ office and warehouse space available for 70 cents per square foot. The situations vacant section advertised roles to ‘girls and mothers’ for work in the ceramics factory (long since closed down), and in the ‘for sale’ column you could find baby budgies (suitable for talking) among other household items.

The *Bird in Hand* used the vehicle of a common-place object to bring a local spatial and social history into temporary public circulation through a spatially dynamic means, a newspaper that circulated with commuters as they in turn circulated in the spaces it chronicled. In the context of *Make Believe* the *Bird in Hand* acted to unsettle a static view of the everyday spaces of New Lynn, allowing them to be read for different trajectories and possibilities.

Credits, collaborators and further publication

*Bird in Hand* was produced by Hoopla: projects for the Whau as part of the Auckland Heritage Festival 2013 and *Make Believe: imagining a new park for New Lynn*. It was printed with the kind support of Horton Media and was distributed at the New Lynn train station on Friday, 11 October, 2013. Photo documentation is by Amy Yalland.

*Left: Bird in Hand* front page.
*Right: Bird in Hand* readers, photos by Amy Yalland.
Come Join the Circus

24—26 March 2014
Below is a lightly edited series of extracts from a presentation delivered by Christina Houghton and Kathy Waghorn at Interstices (Under Construction) The Urban Thing Symposium, AUT University, Auckland, 10–12 April 2015.

Come Join the Circus was a choreographic work devised and performed in the New Lynn town centre by ten local primary school students. This work took the form of a site-specific ‘performance walk’ developed in response to the historic, social and physical ecologies of the area, and using the spatial potential of the contemporary urbanscape. The audience (peers, parents and teachers, plus those who chanced upon it) followed the students along a planned route as they performed choreographed movement and spatial patterns at selected sites, supported with sound (both live vocals and recorded music) and a few props.

To the school, Come Join the Circus was framed as an opportunity to engage students in an intersection of urban ecology and local history through site-specific-devised performance. It would, we suggested, generate for the students a ‘deep topography’. The students were encouraged to approach the public realm as a place in which improvised performance is allowed. As such we likened the activities we were undertaking to other emergent forms of urban performance such as parkour (free running) and flash mobs. Using improvisation tasks and games the students responded to the physical nature and spatial qualities of the town centre with their own physicality—posing on jutting concrete curbs, vaulting benches, hanging off glass walls by their fingertips, placing wet hand-prints to mark hot concrete columns—generating a kinaesthetic dialogue with the complex material, spatial and social attributes of this urban field.

20 The performance walk is a form developed by choreographer/artist Christina Houghton.
Each day of the workshop was loosely structured around a series of spaces and a theme. The first day we focussed on New Lynn’s industrial heritage. The second day was shaped by a consideration of this suburb’s historic and future position on a transit network, and the third day focussed on the War Memorial Square. By the fourth day we began devising how each site could be brought together through the structure of a performance. The figure of the travelling circus, which had in the past periodically occupied the town centre, was used as an appropriately performative structure to bring the differing pieces of performance together and to traverse the walk between the sequence of spaces. This overlay of the circus brought the underlying concept of the ‘magic of performance’ to the fore as a strategy through which to see place as mutable, as open to transformation in imaginative ways.

On arrival in each site the students were given the opportunity for open exploration. Near the last remaining brick-making kiln the students found an industrial relic, a rusty clay churn which initiated actions of winding and stirring, kiln-stoking and cart movements. Other sequences were developed from social history cues, such as from a small plaque commemorating a local woman’s famous garden, and from a carved waka (canoe) prow sculpture that hinted at a hidden water geography, no longer visible on the urban surface.
Each student brought their own culturally and socially formed sense of propriety to the project—some preferred to remain always in an upright position, while others would roll, with full body contact, across the ground. The students responded to the sloped bank in Gardner Reserve. This grassy bank generates both a closed, intimate space in the reserve itself but also a feeling of expansion as it generates a horizon, concealing buildings to make a direct relationship between grassy ground and blue sky. The students relished the opportunity to be raised above those in the lower part of the reserve, they responded physically to the slope, running up it, lining up along the apex, then running or rolling down it.

From this exploration of the existing urban realm in New Lynn we are developing a ‘Make Believe Children’s Design Kit’ to inform the generation of the new urban park. Illustrated with photography of the children, the design kit will make a series of specific spatial and material suggestions. As just one example, from the response to the sloped, grass bank we recommended that the new urban park also employ such contoured landscapes, producing immediate adjacencies between Rangi and Papa (sky and land).21

Credits, collaborators and further publication:

Come Join the Circus (24–28 March 2014), part of Make Believe, was a week-long workshop with ten year-six students from New Lynn Primary School. It was initiated and facilitated by Kathy Waghorn in collaboration with choreographer/artist Christina Houghton. Christina’s engagement was supported by the Whau Local Board.

Come Join the Circus was presented in a paper at the Interstices (Under Construction) The Urban Thing Symposium, AUT University, April 2015 and at Applied Collaborations, the 8th Conference of the Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia, CPIT Christchurch, October 2015.

21 In Maori cosmology Rangi-nui is the god of the sky, husband of the earth mother Papa-tūā-nuku. From their union all living things originate. See http://maoridictionary.co.nz

Left: Students in Come Join the Circus test the New Lynn urban realm.
Right: Collating Come Join the Circus materials in the Make Believe HQ.
Park for a Day

*Park for a Day* photos by the Suburban Floral Association.
Some Make Believe projects were generated with the specific intention to extend this performative, spatial and material conversation to publics not usually reached by the council through conventional consultation methods such as ‘public’ meetings. In Park for a Day, on my invitation, the Suburban Floral Association (artists Monique Redmond and Tanya Eccleston, hereafter ‘the SFA’) generated a day-long installation that both responded to and made space for an ongoing conversation with the Eco Elders, a group of elderly new migrants from China. 

This group had come together through their formation of a small community garden in New Lynn, on a sliver of land left over from a car-park development, and they were already known to Council staff from this project. I was interested in the work of the SFA which for sometime had been concerned with plants and the botanical as forms of expression in the suburban realm. I felt that the botanical aspects of this proposed new urban park needed closer attention.

After a series of meetings between these two groups, the SFA installed a temporary ‘landscape’ in a large new vacant shop space. Fabricated from stretched tarpaulins, rope, huge cable reels, concrete blocks, timber planks, many potted plants, pieces of furniture and large-scale photographic prints, this Park for a Day responded to a series of conversations with the Elders. The ‘park’ installation was an abstraction, a ‘not-to-scale’ test of possibility where provisional materials were used to make spaces and shelters in which to eat, move, exercise, relax, gather and converse. The provisional nature of the materials used was important in communicating that the installation wasn’t a design for the actual park per se, but was instead a finely tuned setting for an extended conversation that had already picked up on cues from previous meetings. As an example, the stretched-canvas ‘floating’ roof under which we gathered to eat provided a dry space where one might exercise daily outdoors despite the long wet Auckland spring—an activity noted as desirable by the Elders who often live with extended family and lack their own social meeting spaces.

22 The formal title of this group is the Auckland Environmental Protection Association, but they are known to Council as the Eco Elders.

Above: The Suburban Floral Association and the Eco Elders meet for the first time.
Right: Notes for Park for a Day.
...with PfaD everyone who was there was invited, but in a public park that invitation is not explicit, but it’s implicit in that it’s a public place, so how you actually carry that sense of invitation so that it’s genuine and expressed in ways that are non-verbal is really interesting—and obviously it’s to do with the genesis of the park itself...

The SFA had invited the Eco Elders to bring their own recreational objects and items along for inhabiting this park for a day, and we had imagined games of mahjong, ping-pong or perhaps some calligraphy. This invitation was either lost in translation or simply didn’t take hold. Instead the Elders and their friends followed the artists’ leads and used the spaces and objects provided as they rose to the occasion to demonstrate how they might use aspects of a public park. While this at times perhaps felt a little awkward for all, by the end of the day the Elders were using the space as their own, convening a meeting around one of the tables to discuss their own on-going matters, while demonstrating the way a park might be used for such gatherings. Documented through photography, Park for a Day ‘staged’ multiple enactings of the potential use of public space in New Lynn.
... so to chart that difference between an installation that people come to look at and something else... here the documentation is not a secondary thing, it’s a primary part of it. I was quite enamoured with the idea that people would bring their own cameras and take their own photos of it and circulate these, and that this might show us something, but this didn’t really happen...

*Park for a Day* demonstrated the importance of conceiving a park not as a pictorial or scenicographic space, but by asking how it might be inhabited. What emerged is that this park should not be considered a fixed landscape but instead as a dynamic space that shifts with the seasons and with seasonal programmes, and that the landscape itself is full of cues to our inhabitation.

To me it confirmed an idea that had been emerging over our discussions and through other *Make Believe* projects—there is this idea that this park will somehow be different—though there has never been a sense of what this difference is...

Credits, collaborators and further publication:

*Park for a Day* took place at the Merchant Quarter in New Lynn on 3 May 2014. It was hosted by the Suburban Floral Association (artists Monique Redmond and Tanya Eccleston) with Kathy Waghorn, the Chinese Eco Elders of New Lynn, volunteer translators and staff from the Auckland Council community development team. It was supported by Auckland Council.
In Tamaki Makaurau

Park for a Day

Above: Recipe for pikelets, a key ingredient of Park for a Day.
"The challenge, for practitioners and urban inhabitants, is not to be disingenuous about the seductions of a ‘temporary city’, its ‘forgotten vacant spaces’ and ‘pop-up people’, and to find ways to ask which values are promoted and which city is imagined, and by whom, through temporary use." (Ferreri 2014)
In Tāmaki Makaurau


In Make Believe: imagining a new park for New Lynn knowledge of this specific urban realm and its spatial and social potential was generated and shared. Improvisational and experimental performance and installation, through allowing the slippage into ‘pretend’ imaginary place-making, opened a space for this collective and individual agency to emerge.

In some of the Make Believe performances, events and installations, place was performed into new meanings and these new meanings allowed novel ways of projecting the potential of this public urban realm. Joining up the ‘here and now’ with the future, and taken singularly at the level of detail and collectively in terms of the overall idea of an urban park, the Make Believe projects offered insights as to the formal, spatial, material, temporal and programmatic directions this new park might take. Make Believe has helped the team in Council conceive the new. The idea of an urban park in this specific place has begun to take shape and, as a result of this, the Council client will now work with an expanded sense of what they want to achieve in this project, not so constrained by pre-conceived notions of what a park is and does. Make Believe presents a strategic approach to stitching together community consultation, design and identity building in New Lynn as the sequence of projects have initiated local relationships and helped to unearth a much wider range of stakeholders.

67
As the *Make Believe* projects ended, the last phase of my collaboration with the Council included a review of the project, as well as scoping out a continuing trajectory, mapping out how the Council’s strictly enforced infrastructure procurement process could embrace this fine-grained local knowledge. This posed an interesting dilemma as the ‘just tangible’ outcomes of the *Make Believe* projects met the requirements of a legal tender process. The diagram on page 66 shows the way this was proposed at the time the project was halted. The ongoing development of the Crown Lynn Urban Park has been delayed for over a year due to issues around the acquisition of the land.

From a recent conversation (December 2016) I understand that this has been resolved and that work will now progress, however in the meantime the project team in Council has been re-structured and individual staff have moved on. The knowledge gained in *Make Believe* towards the park design and of these experimental modes of engagement is now dispersed. This points to a challenge for the longevity of outcome with such temporal projects, and it remains to be seen now if any of the *Make Believe* imaginings will in fact find their way into this next phase, maybe we will have to *Make Believe* all over again!

Above: A student from *Come Join the Circus* records ideas for a new park.
Right: *Make Believe*, agenda for team meeting.
Update 13 February, 2013

Presentation to Whau Local Board
MB presented to new board on November 27th to general approval.

Completed projects
- Here Now: re-imagining New Lynn (Oct 2013) Supported by Whau Local Board Discretionary Grant of $15,000
- Make Believe Head Quarters (MBHQ) set up and 1 Week school holiday programme carried out (Jan 2014) Matt Gruliers hours supported by Warren Trust Summer Scholarship (materials $500)

Forthcoming projects

Confirmed
- Project by Suburban Floral Association (artists Monique Redmond and Tanya Eccleston). This project will be centered around ideas of gardens, landscapes and uncovering the meaning and relevance of the botanical to people in New Lynn. It will make connections to gardening groups and individuals and will include events in the MB HQ. Budget $5000

Proposed
- What do you do and where do you do it? (Woking title). Documentary photography project and exhibition, local high school students. (Invitations to college HOOD’s sent) Budgeted at $4000
- Performing in public space, Pacific Institute of Performing Arts (contact yet to be made)

Issues
Access to actual Crown Lynn park site
Access to park site is at this stage not possible. One of the original intentions of MB was to make the site known and create experiences of it (through events, picnics, bike jams etc). Not being able to access the site changes the shape of the project a little – it asks us to 1). be more attentive to existing spaces in New Lynn, how they are used, might be used (mis-used, not used, who by, when) and what this might tell us and 2). Make more use of the MBHQ as an event space in and of itself as a venue for catalyzing the imagination of residents in relation to the park and for testing ideas.
Insiders
These two discrete projects each have ‘feeling about’ for place assemblages as their subject matter, taken up through an exhibition format and tuned to an institutional setting. In contrast to the previous projects, here the impetus for place transformation takes a critically distant lens through a curatorial and exhibition design practice, at one-remove from the particular or everyday inflection of a specific locale.
Kei Konei Koe: ō tapuwae ki Tāmaki Makaurau You Are Here: mapping Auckland

Pictorial Gallery, Auckland War Memorial Museum, 30 September 2011 to 12 August 2012.

Produced by Cris de Groot (Unitec Institute of Technology), Kathy Waghorn (University of Auckland) and the Auckland War Memorial Museum, in partnership with a team of Unitec computing and product design students.
You Are Here: mapping Auckland was a public exhibition marking the first anniversary of the so-called ‘Super City’. In October 2010 the governance and administration of greater Auckland was re-conceived, moving from four separate cities to one single territorial authority. This exhibition presented a curated selection of historical and contemporary maps of Auckland arranged thematically, in order to draw out certain ideological and epistemological trajectories in the actions of mapping. Our intention was to show that while this spatial and political re-arrangement of Auckland at the time seemed inevitable, the displayed maps documented differing versions of the past and projected, from different points in time, many possible futures.
Cris de Groot and I collaborated closely on the conceptual design phase, asking how we could use the Auckland War Memorial Museum map collection to frame a conversation about the constitution and representation of place generally, and Auckland specifically. In so doing we were interested in how maps and the actions of mapping activate place knowledge, power and agency, and how the potency of mapping, (in this specific museum context) might be opened out to a broad visiting public.

We wanted to make a connection between the carefully selected maps hung on the walls, which, as objects and representations of certain conceptual positions, have acted instrumentally, generating actual spatial and material action in their milieu, and an experience of mapping that generates a form of agency, however small, literally in the visitors hands. In so doing we were looking to centralise the visitor’s own experiential knowledge of place as something active and valuable, and that could contribute to a broader understanding of Auckland.

At the centre of the exhibition we positioned a large, luminous, interactive map where visitors could explore and contribute to a live, shared mapping of Auckland. This map drew on the idiom of the online world, where user contributions to a cumulative database see knowledge traded and built upon. The content contributed to this map was rich in lived detail, taking on unexpected contours.

Above: Place stories recorded on the mapping table in You Are Here.
From our design research we had expected differences in contribution based on age, and we knew that visitors would be likely to pinpoint where they currently live. Unexpectedly however, the shared map was also taken up as a kind of immaterial memorial, with stories tagged to specific places, simply stating a name and “R.I.P.” Thousands of personal stories and pieces of information were added to this map over the year-long exhibition.

Below is a series of short excerpts from a longer review of Kei Konei Koe authored by Jeanette Budgett for the publication *Fabrications*.

Timed to coincide with the first anniversary of the ‘Super City’ (the overt boosterism of our new name troubling enough), the exhibition implicitly questions this large reorganisation of territory under one governing structure that takes in three immense harbours, two coastlines and four cities. The catalogue essays reveal the mechanisms by which mapping, under the mantle of science, has served interest groups, colonising powers, land developers, political governing structures and so on. Debunking their pretence of neutrality maps are revealed as instruments of control. The exhibition indirectly asks us to consider the possible omissions, occlusions, misrepresentations and disenfranchisements of Auckland’s new map [...] Transmission of knowledge via song in oral cultures, or the casual pedestrian’s unconstrained movement through the city constitute complex and subjective forms of mapping, sustaining culture while undergoing revision. It is this view of mapping that informs the digitally projected map in the middle of the exhibition with interactive touch screens. Researched and devised by students of Computing, and Design and Visual Arts from Unitec the glowing folded surface invites participatory map-making by the telling of stories [...] The exhibition not only provokes questions at the local level of Auckland but asks them of epistemology in general. It highlights the provisional and negotiated nature of states of knowledge. Traditional methodologies for finding knowledge are increasingly opened up by creative acts, personal impulses, political agendas. This stimulating exhibition shows map-making is one such area where a rich history of this practice already exists. (Budgett 2002, p. 132–134)
Future Islands

The New Zealand exhibition at the 15th Venice Biennale of Architecture
25 May—25 November 2016
Below is an extract from the *Future Islands* press release, authored and issued by the New Zealand Institute of Architects, May 2016.

*Future Islands*—just New Zealand’s second national exhibition at a Venice Architecture Biennale—is lyrical and evocative. By presenting New Zealand architecture as a grouping of metaphorical islands, an imagined archipelago encompassing a variety of approaches and responses to the fluid and uncertain conditions of contemporary practice, it establishes New Zealand as innovative, creative, forward-thinking and bold.

The exhibition explores some of the opportunities available to architects working in one of the world’s smallest, most open, informal and diverse societies. It acknowledges and encourages speculative work because architects—forever optimistic, as they are obliged to be—have a responsibility to develop new ways to help different people live together in changing social and natural environments.
Future Islands is a collection of objects delicately suspended in a luminous white-cube gallery. These ambiguous floating forms are reminiscent of islands, clouds or the bodies of sea creatures. Above, below and alongside these an array of architectural models are suspended, some represent built projects, others are in the process of being imagined, while some are simply desired. A few are atmospherically animated through subtle projections of sky, light and water. In an adjoining darker room the projected animations are more vivid and dynamic, the floating island is rapidly urbanizing, traced over with roads and blanketed with building, then engulfed with rising seas. In this same room a singular project hangs in the corner. It’s a strange scaled-down barge holding a swimming pool on its deck, with a glowing pink neon sign above—the restaurant at the end of the world. 23

23 The Restaurant at the End of the World is a project by IMPORT_EXPORT

Left: Future Islands early sketch. Right: Future Islands conceptual collage.
As a curatorial project our desire in *Future Islands* was to make a move beyond the narrow remit of architecture as refined object construction to include projects and practices (by students and collectives as well as by professionally inscribed architects) that are concerned with the social and political aspects of place in Aotearoa New Zealand. We also sought out practices that explore trajectories of collaboration and of new possibilities opened through digital construction and communication tools. Within the overarching Biennale theme of ‘Reporting from the Front’ we wished to tell a story of architecture in Aotearoa New Zealand as already expanded.

Visitors entered the exhibition by climbing the palazzo staircase around which singing, talking and laughter echoed. This is *He Wai: A Song*, a project by the collective Architecture+Women•NZ. Grounded in the oral traditions of Oceania, this non-tangible architectural work reinvigorates song and sound as a transmitter of place knowledge. The audio recording is of the collective’s members learning a song in Te Reo Maori (Maori language). This work documents a simple first step for this group, singing towards the hope that bicultural practices such as waiata (song) become the norm, a part of the everyday architectural community. Including *He Wai* at Venice, as the visitor’s first encounter with the architecture of Aotearoa New Zealand, is to place this agenda at the forefront of *Future Islands*, while also allowing the laughter of my friends and colleagues from home to keep me company, drifting out across the palazzo courtyards.
Projects in *Future Islands* include some that champion alternative procurement models, utilising non-commercial community resources and labour, or that use digital tools to finely craft building elements from demolition waste. Others test new manufacturing processes that can speed up post-disaster house construction, while some facilitate the temporal re-imagining and public re-inhabitation of a city demolished by earthquake. Some act as polemical projects that critique the very idea of place as ‘national identity’, as is entrenched in the Biennale structure of national pavilions.24

As a curatorial project *Future Islands* required us to look hard at architecture in New Zealand, to see if this desire to expand the understanding of what constitutes architectural practice might be present. For others it’s not usually a correspondence between art and architecture that activates this expansion, instead its produced through an impetus to rethink their own role as a professional in relation to contemporary circumstances, such as the urge towards ‘normalising’ bi-culturalism in the everyday of practice. The professional body is a venerable concept instigated when architects, by and large, were gentlemen working for other gentlemen, and their professional organisations were designed to protect their interests from competitors in the building industry. Now, in a more diverse population and economy, the profession has so far been able to protect the use of the title *Architect*, but finds it difficult to define or limit architectural practice. A rethinking of models of practice and what it is that architecture can offer lies behind the curatorial intent of *Future Islands*. 

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24 Tricky issues of nationhood are delicately navigated by the Biennale organisers with Hong Kong, Taiwan and Scotland all presenting ‘exhibitions’ rather than ‘national pavilions’.

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*Above: Future Islands* signage in Venice. Photo: David St George.

*Right: Arranging Future Islands.*
FUTURE ISLANDS
PROJECT (MODEL) PLACEMENT AND PROJECTION SUNDAY 16 AUGUST 2015

- Marsden Cross Cheshire (on / needs topography)
- Stonefields Crosson (on / needs topography)
- Len Lye Patterson (lollipop or above) (
- Vanshing Acts Holly Xie (on small models flat edge)

- Thomason House (on / needs topography)
- House of Tahu Athfield (TBC)
- Te Uru Taumatua (on)

- Prospect and Refuge
- Auckland City Mission Stevens Lawson (Center)
- House on Island Bossley (on / needs topography)
- Castle Rock Herbst (on / needs topography)
- Dune Omaha Fearon Hay (lollipop off edge)
- Barrier Island House Bureaux (on edge)
- Langs House ARK Mike Davis (on edge)
- Dune Pavillon Cheshire (lollipop off edge)
- Tent House Irving Jack Smith (on needs topography)
- Rawthit Beach House Stud Pac (on edge needs topography)

- UoA Science Building
- Architectus
- 3D print iterations (lollipop)

- Suburban Projection
- and / or milled surface needs to match island O at wall
- NB check island size against projector throw

- MIT Manukau Warren and Mahoney
- Sectional model across end of island
- island needs cut end for model and to match island O at wall

- Lego School WHAT Architecture (model TBC)
- New Market Campus Sacha Millojovic (model made / requires rebate in island)
- Whare in the Bush Elisapeta Heta et al. (on / small)
- VUW Campus Athfield & Architectus TBC

- FUTURE ISLANDS
- PROJECT (MODEL) PLACEMENT AND PROJECTION SUNDAY 16 AUGUST 2015

- Maori Time project x 6
- suspended island
- projection

- model TBC above
- no model - seat - holds catalogues
This expanded view was echoed in the spatial tactics of *Future Islands*, which resisted a didactic approach or singular narration, instead opting for the provision of a field, an intentionally loose and ambiguous choreography of spatial experience. This was intended to encourage encounters, not just of visitors with the ‘islands’ but with each other, so that visitors simultaneously became the audience and the exhibit, producing a subtly relational space of connection, rather than insular, sequential viewing. Visitors were given an unreliable map to help prompt this disordered wandering.

In the context of an international biennale *Future Islands* celebrated difference rather than homogeneity. However, as some noted, our aversion to a didactic approach leaves the door wide open to interpretation. In the context of a project such as this, commissioned by the professional body to ‘represent’ a national view, the scene is set for tension and ambivalence as this reviewer attests:

*Future Islands* is a thoughtful, poetic contribution that stands out—for better or worse—in a Biennale characterised by a focus on more pragmatic concerns. By ambitiously challenging the paradigm of an architectural exhibition, the pavilion has made our presence felt on the Biennale scene. To then respond critically to a theme, whilst carrying the expectations of sponsors and a close-knit architectural community—one that dedicated a significant amount of time and resources to enable it to happen—is admittedly, a lot to ask of one exhibition. Perhaps, as this report suggests, the shortcoming of the pavilion is that it tries to respond on too many fronts and in doing so foregoes an opportunity to provide a clear statement of intent. (Winwood, 2016).

Rather than a ‘clear statement’ what we have sought in curating and designing *Future Islands* is the places, moments or instances when architecture in Aotearoa New Zealand tests and blurs its disciplinary edges.
Credits, collaborators and further publication:


Following an initial process of open competition, *Future Islands* was commissioned by the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

Creative Director Charles Walker, Associate Creative Director Kathy Waghorn, Creative Team: Jessica Barter and Maggie Carroll (Bureaux Architects), Jon Rennie (Athfield Architects), Rewi Thompson, Stephen Brookbanks, Bruce Ferguson and Minka Ip. Creative team project management and support Maximus Smitheram, Will Brookes and Brooke Bardell-Monroe. Installation Sean Duxfield.

Documentation:

Google Arts and Culture: www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/exhibit/vQljW3DjKhMKw


Outliers
This final cluster of projects, titled ‘Outliers’, includes two projects that have taken place in locations quite distant from my regular locale. Each also lies ‘out on the edge’ of the practice in the way they operate simply to overcome a tourist gaze without the underlying impetus of prompting place transformation, an aim embedded in my work closer to home. These ‘outliers’ are included here as they trace the development of some processes, tactics and actions I’ve developed in the practice of feeling for place.
Place as Assemblage: Montreal garden mapping

In 2010, as part of the International Cartographic Association (ICA) Arts and Cartography Workshop: *Mapping Environmental Issues in the City*, I bicycled around the community gardens of Ville Marie, an older suburb of Montreal, Canada. [...] 

The given dataset for the workshop presented a paradox. While it was the air (quality) and soil (toxicity) of Montreal data that was provided to the participants, we see evidence of neither in the maps themselves. In order to ‘see’ the environmental issues of Montreal not as a tourist, and not only through the environmental data, I decided to seek out and locate things that straddle these realms of air and soil, which led me to gardening. Plants, with their roots in the ground and leaves in the air do just this.
In mapping the municipal community gardens of Ville Marie, I hoped to unfold some of the component parts and contingent relations of the Montreal place assemblage. The project took three phases; firstly the remote gathering of data via the web, secondly a visit to each garden, photographing their context, use and occupation while recording my own geo-spatial position and physical data, and finally the charting of this found material against Manuel De Landa’s assemblage model, with its material/expressive—stabilising/de-stabilising matrix.

Montreal has 8,200 six by three meter garden plots, available to residents in ninety-eight community gardens. I located Montreal city government documents that describe the functioning and administration of the gardens; the procedures and processes for access, the activities permitted in gardens and those that are not, and the policies guiding the requisitioning of land for urban gardening.

Online versions of maps, produced by many groups (with varying scale and accuracy) helped to spatially locate the gardens. While the satellite images from Google Maps began to position the gardens in order to plan an itinerary for my visit, the seasonal disjunction between the satellite and street view images in Google Maps led to confusion, with the summer/satellite and winter/street view versions of the gardens presenting a vastly different image in a city that is blanketed by snow for some months. [...]
James Corner advocates for mapping as a creative act, one that can allow places to be seen and registered differently, for their potential to unfold. This mapping project disrupted the tourist view of Montreal that I was more likely to engage, it allowed me to see the complexity of place emerging. The mapping project promoted a reading of place at multiple scales, macro and micro viewings, from the large scale of city policy, to the small scale of basil, broccoli and beans. (Waghorn K, 2011, pp. 205–208)
Rue des Islettes

My recollection of an unofficial installation for *Nuit Blanche*, Paris, 4 October 2014.
Outliers

27 Nuit Blanche is a free festival, held annually in Paris from 7pm—7am on the first Saturday in October. This was not part of the curated programme but was simply timed to coincide with this city-wide night of art, music and performance.
Bonjour,

Je suis une artiste néo-zélandaise vivant à Paris pendant quelques mois dans le cadre d’un échange universitaire avec résidence. Durant cette période je suis installée au : 10 Rue des Islettes avec mon mari et ma fille de 13 ans.

Si vous souhaitez en savoir plus veuillez consulter mon site : http://tinyurl.com/mu9jw64

Pendant mon séjour à Paris, j’aimerais installer une œuvre artistique - qui se déroulera la nuit du 4 Octobre (la Nuit Blanche - festival d’art parisienne).


En Nouvelle Zélande, notre vie est plutôt séparée - nous vivons individuellement dans nos propres maisons, chacune sur son propre terrain. Un effet important de notre expérience parisienne a été la vie dans cet appartement et l’espace partagé de tous les habitants et les voisins. J’aimerais célébrer cet espace et le rendre visible et vivant pour une nuit.

Si vous êtes d'accord d'accrocher un fil de drapeaux blancs à votre fenêtre, laissez-moi savoir. Je commencerai à les fabriquer mercredi le 24 Septembre. Vous pourriez me contacter un peu avant pour que je puisse savoir combien je devrais en faire. Vous pouvez me contacter soit par téléphone (422 363 60), ou en laissant un mot devant ma porte (je laisserai un drapeau devant la porte), ou bien entendu vous serez les bienvenus de nous visiter.

Je m'excuse de ne pas parler français (c’est une amie qui a traduit ce texte) mais j’espère de pouvoir vous comprendre d’une façon ou une autre.

Merci pour votre aide - Kathy Waghorn.

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For three months in 2014 we live at Rue des Islettes, Paris. Sophie rents us her apartment and goes to stay with family. We live among her belongings (clothes, books, dishes, a bureau drawer full of odd and ends) and her neighbours.

When we arrive it is midsummer. Our building, six stories high, with four apartments per floor and three around a courtyard in the converted stables below, is quiet; people are away on holiday, their shutters closed. But the streets of the neighbourhood are noisy, full from mid morning to late in the night with men, mostly young, passing the time, and, with one eye out for the frequent presence of the police, offering black-market cigarettes for sale (a chant under the breath that takes me a while to decipher: “marlboro, marlboro, marlboro”). Returning to the house from each excursion requires passing through these crowds, brandishing our electronic key at the sensor, pushing open the green door to enter the cool and quiet of the courtyard that sits behind the entry to our building.

This space, though not ours to occupy just to pass through, offers relief. Looking across and down into it from our apartment four stories above allows space for my curiosity to swell. This courtyard space seems to gather inward, the sky pressing into the lives circulating around the perimeter of the void, across which snatches of sound float. From our bedroom window, looking up to the left, I spy a small metal flag poking above the chimney pots at the lip of this void; a frozen flutter set on a jaunty angle against the blue sky.

Our apartment windows open to both sides of the building, to the courtyard and the street. On the street side the facade of the public-housing apartments opposite, across Rue des Islettes, presses towards us too. The curtains of these apartments mostly remain closed and while the roof-top terrace holds signs of occupation, I’ve never seen a single soul out there.

Who lives here in our building and across the street, with proximity that I’m unused to from the Auckland suburbs? Snatches of conversation are overheard but impenetrable—music, a dog’s bark and a child’s footsteps heard from above. I begin to concoct a way to gather these glimpses of the neighbourhood, to stitch together my curiosity of it.
Left: My letter to residents at Rue des Islettes.
Right: Notes received from the residents at Rue des Islettes.
Three weeks before:

I begin with a letter to my neighbours in our building, a hesitant invitation first in English then, with help, in French... *I am an artist from New Zealand* (use the appeal of the exotic!) I would like to make an artwork here, in our building, for la Nuit Blanche. *In New Zealand we live in separate houses, on the ground—dans nos propres maisons, chacune sur son propre terrain... living in proximity to you all, across this courtyard, has become important to me—* I think this space that both separates and connects is important to you all as well. (I can’t say all of this—it’s too confusing—could I show this in some way instead?) Could I attach a string of flags to your window? If this is ok with you please leave a note on my door. Please excuse that I do not speak French—but maybe we can still find some way to communicate? I post photocopies of my letter in each mail box and I tape one copy to the inside of the street door, where everyone passing through will see it.

We go away to London for the weekend. When we come back there are notes in the pocket I’ve left on the door—Eric and his girlfriend, Voisin and Andrei, Aurelie and Jeremy, Conrain, Juliette and Camille and the families 🇳🇿 and 🇫🇷 all want to help.

Suddenly our neighbours are real, they have names and have left me their phone numbers. Our anonymity at Rue des Islettes has gone, vanished in this first flutter of connection... now I’m obliged to continue.

Two weeks before:

**Materials and equipment**
- White fabric—cotton/linen table cloths, sheets and curtains, purchased from second-hand stores, washed, dried and ironed flat.
- A flag template, (matching the metal one I can see from my bedroom window) cut from a cardboard box
- 500 metres of one-inch-wide satin ribbon, various colours
- Scissors
- Tape measure
- Pearl-head shirt pins
- A tailor
- A weight made from a sock containing some heavy chain (found in the bureau drawer) and tied with string
- A ball of string
- Assistant
- Refreshments

**Method:**

Trace around the template on the fabric, and cut out approximately 425 flags. Set up a homemade rig to help spool out and measure the ribbon. (I used a colander and wooden spoon). At one-metre intervals pin a flag to the ribbon, pointed ends out. Repeat with all of the flags along 60m lengths of ribbon. Carefully wind each string of flags into a bundle and stack in bags to deliver to the tailor, who will sew the flags to the ribbon.

Meanwhile, call all the neighbours who have left a note, as well as others who they have put me in contact with. Enjoy the garbled phone conversations, making a time to enter each apartment. *Bonjour, this is Kathy, the artist from Nouvelle Zealand. Is morning or afternoon better? Who will be at home? Just one string of flags or more? In the evening, when the flags are up, we will have a small party in the courtyard—would you like to come?* (Wince at sounding like a child).

Collect the sewn-up strings of flags from the tailor’s shop. Coerce family members into helping with the installation.
Outliers

Above: Notes received from the residents at Rue des Islettes.
Day of Installation:

In the morning, over several hours, enter all of the apartments and (sometimes using gestures) agree what can be hung and from where. Gradually start interlacing flags across the courtyard, first draping them, then pulling them taut, high in the air. (Try not to feel conspicuous at the centre of this panopticon.) Late in the day, for the very first time I notice a woman on the terrace of the apartment building across the street. I wave at her, show her the flags and mime them swinging out across the street. The woman agrees (sign language) to receive one end of the string of flags. I attempt to throw her the sock-weight (attached to the string of flags), but each time it misses and instead arcs downwards landing in the street. (The man who always stands outside the international phone call place below is watching me). I signal to the woman to come down and meet in the street. I race down the stairs with string of flags, meet her, smile, give her the string of flags—she seems to know what to do next. I climb the stairs again (out-of-breath) then watch as the woman across the street ties the ribbon to the railing of her terrace and drops the flags over the side where they unfurl to the street. I drop the sock weight out my own window, unreeling the attached string till the weight meets the ground. I tie the string to the railing and go down the stairs again. I untie the weight and re-tie the end of the string to the flags. I go up the stairs again (really-out-of-breath) and use the string to pull the end of the flags up to the railing of my apartment window, where I tie it off. One tentative string of flags now flies high up crossing *Rue Des Islettes*, (the woman has by now disappeared). On the other side of the building, many strings of flags criss-cross the courtyard, animating the space as they move in the breeze.

*Rue des Islettes* kept faith with a kind of domestic technology and allowed a means of practising place beyond the remit of the visitor or tourist. In a tactical manner, it made use of what was at hand (washing machine and iron, the kitchen table, my knowledge of sewing), providing an excuse to venture inside the fabric suppliers and second-hand stores of the neighbourhood and a reason to approach a tailor in his shop. While the impetus was curiosity of an unfamiliar place rather than transformation of this place, the installation and gathering did in small ways prompt transactions between the neighbours in our apartment building, while the string of flags crossing the street to the social housing beyond offered a very small gesture of connection in a neighbourhood opaque to me through language and yet so clearly demarcated by ethnicity, financial status and cultural background.
Above: Notes received from the residents at Rue des Islettes.
Part 2

The practice of feeling for place
Part 2  The practice of feeling for place