The Site Re-presented: Everyday Civic Landscapes
A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Tanya Court
Bachelor of Applied Science (Landscape Architecture) RMIT University
Bachelor of Arts Crafts Curtin University

School of Architecture and Urban Design
College of Design and Social Context
RMIT University

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One Sunday morning I was walking our dog Pip before my daughter Eloise’s soccer match started. It began to gently rain so I headed under some large trees in the South Adelaide Park Lands. You are always looking out when walking by yourself in these surprisingly isolated city parks. All of sudden I noticed – perhaps in anticipation of the rain – that homeless people who inhabit this area had hung up their woollen blankets in the crooks of the trees. They had this spooky effect on me. It was like an art installation highlighting the issues around homelessness including their comfort and my unfounded fear. Despite not being designed it appeared to me to be a thoughtfully created Everyday Civic Landscape.
The Site Re-presented: Everyday Civic Landscapes
Declarations

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.

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This document is divided into three parts. Part 1, *Noticing the Civic*, discusses the main themes of the dissertation that argues for a reconsideration of civic landscape. Part 2, *Designing Everyday Civic Landscapes*, discusses design strategies utilised for a reconsidered everyday civic landscape. Part 3 is the *Contribution to Knowledge*. This is followed by the appendices, the *Project Archive, Bibliography* and *Image Credits*.

The *Introduction* firstly summarises the concerns of the dissertation and introduces the research themes, particularly my attitude to the idea of the civic. The second chapter, *Amalgamated: Practising across Art and Landscape*, situates the emergence and importance of my amalgamated practice across art and landscape architecture, and identifies the sources for the main themes that have emerged from the research. The third chapter, *Unpacking the Civic*, discusses the overarching significance of the civic and articulates the process of discovery throughout the research. This is exampled in the featured project *The Lead Pedestrian* (1989). The fourth chapter, *Civic and Site: The Site Re-presented for the Everyday*, discusses approaches to site-specificity and characteristics of my approaches. The featured project *Helmet* (2009) illustrates the issue of dealing with specific/contextualised sites. The fifth chapter, *Discursive Civic Involvement*, outlines my investigations into the theme of involvement and how these can contribute to reinventing the civic for our times.

Part 2, *Design Procedures for an Everyday Civic*, describes, in four chapters, the design manoeuvres and tactics identified in the practice that contribute to Everyday Civic Landscapes. Chapter 6, *Site Tactics: Responding to Context*, defines planning for phenomenological effects and incorporating contextual concerns. I illustrate this with the featured projects *Old Royal Adelaide Hospital* (2014), *Mrs Robinson* (2013) and *The Route Followed* (2009). The seventh chapter, *Nuanced Referencing*, discusses the explicit and sometimes more subtle, implicit use of referencing to expand on the discursive nature of site-oriented practices. Again, the project *Mrs Robinson* (2013) is used to demonstrate this technique. The seventh chapter, *Material Selections*, defines how particular use and selection of materials operate in my practice. The featured project *Gordon Tafe* (2001) illustrates the ways in which materials selection and use can be utilised for their associations and effects. The last chapter, Chapter 8, *Devices for Humour*, describes the various ways humour is used to increase the possibilities for the involvement of the public.

Part 3 is the *Contribution to Knowledge*, which articulates the importance of the research, future trajectories in the practice and its significance to other practices.

The Appendix includes the *Project Archive* which provides additional information on the projects mentioned throughout the text. Finally, the *Bibliography* and *Image Credits* are provided.

While the dissertation can be read in a linear way, links are incorporated into the document to allow for its digital version to be processed in a non-linear way. This replicates, in the digital mode, a more structured version of the way paper-based documents can be “flicked” backwards and forwards. The *Project Archive* can then be read when the projects are discussed in the thematic texts, treated as an appendix, or both.

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Part 1: Noticing Civic Landscapes
01: Introduction
This PhD, undertaken within the invitational Design Practice research stream of the School of Architecture and Design at RMIT, emerges from a reflection on my practice encompassing the design of projects from 1984 to 2016. This practice has been characterised by diverse approaches and contexts. I began the PhD in 2013 with the aim of reviewing this diversity in order to understand in greater detail the motivations influencing and shaping the design work and to suggest ways forward for the practice in my current context as a practitioner-academic. It has been an examination that also initially identified the importance of civic projects over other types. This has been a process of clarification, where I came to recognise that I have valued – and now more consciously do value – particular ways of working over others. These became the focus of the PhD. The research has resulted in a proposal for what might constitute civic spaces more relevant to the contemporary condition.

I grew up in Perth, Western Australia and trained as an artist at WA Institute of Technology (now Curtin University) majoring in Jewellery (1983-5). I subsequently practised as a jeweller, sculptor, community artist and public artist in Perth. I later moved to Melbourne in 1991 and studied Landscape Architecture at RMIT (1994-1998). After working in landscape architectural practice (at Taylor Cullity Lethlean 1993-95, Paterson Pettus 1995-2001 and EDAW 2001-2002) I left commercial practice and began my academic career, first as a lecturer at the University of Melbourne (2002-2005). In 2005 I moved to Adelaide to take up a position at the University of Adelaide, where I am currently the Program Director of Landscape Architecture. While my arts training has definitely influenced my landscape architectural practice, I now place little importance on disciplinary distinctions. I have discovered the importance of my amalgamated practice to the conceptual approach to the work. This research is situated in relation to landscape architecture, urbanism and public art practice and makes a contribution to all three fields of enquiry.

Through this research, I have reflected on over 20 years of amalgamated practice as an artist and landscape architect working on public art and landscape architecture projects in the civic realm. I originally recognised public space and the shared spaces of institutional and commercial projects as those where I felt most comfortable working. I discovered that I work at the edge of the conventions of landscape architectural practice, but importantly, no longer seek the outsider status of the artist. I seek out “real” projects with a high possibility of being built. I then approach the design task of meeting the brief and its functional requirements, but bring additional ambitions to the project, to offer further opportunities for everyday involvement and engagement with other people, the work and the site context. I have also identified that the projects I value highly across disciplines are linked through a concern with people and the qualities of their everyday, ordinary experiences in the landscape. My work aims to enhance people’s experience of landscapes through raising the consciousness of their occupation of the designed space.

Through the projects, the research reconsiders civic landscapes which are not characterised by certain traditional formal qualities or ceremonial programming, but by particular visitor responses to the site and an emphasis on the open-ended involvement of the public. This research explores how my projects, with these qualities and effects, constitute Everyday Civic Landscapes.

The practice is characterised by a diversity of genres, approaches and contexts, changing emphasis over time. This is due, in part, to new opportunities arising, but also because of dissatisfaction...
with the outcomes of some projects or with the way the project was structured and undertaken. In particular, it was disappointing when work did not operate in the community as hoped, or meet the intended political or social aims. On reflection, I have identified across the work a strong concern with social, political and/or cultural contexts. However, rather than meeting set goals, I now value projects where the work is designed to be open to many interpretations and ways to involve people. Accordingly, the work aims to engage with social, political and cultural contexts but not in dogmatic or didactic ways. I have identified that this openendedness is critical to my work performing civic duties.

I have also identified that the projects I value most are not only publicly accessible but have a particular focus on site specificity. They challenge the usual expectations of public spaces as neutral areas to be freely and easily occupied and activated. Sites, like “publics”, are particular and not static.

This research has employed the less-used term “civic” for its nuanced political connotations and associations with conditions for effective democracy. It is not really possible to define civic space in singular terms. Expressions of the civic have long, changing and diverse histories in the political, cultural, economic and social life of democratic societies. Today there is a large body of work contributing to contemporary understandings of civic space, qualified by ever-shifting conditions and perspectives. Regardless, civic space is associated with sites where common values such as good citizenship, civic responsibility, and social cohesion are simultaneously encouraged, sanctioned and confronted. There is general agreement on the importance of civic space for the good operation of society (Arendt 1958;...
Civic Landscapes can, for me, transform any public open space. This research suggests that more can be done for everyday public spaces to perform civic duties and enrich civic life. If civic spaces are a special type of public space, they should have the qualities that Maniscalco (2015) describes including “openness and accessibility to users; support for community practice; visibility and revelation; diversity, tolerance and accommodation and authenticity and unexpectedness.” While I agree with these indicators, the question in relation to design practice is how designs might help deliver the best conditions to achieve them.

There are designable pre-requisites that make merely public landscapes civic, including interventions that goad occupiers to greater self-consciousness, expressly invite varied publics, and encourage the consideration of particular sites and an individual’s or group’s relationship to them.

The following unravels and organises techniques for the creation of civic landscapes through examination of themed approaches identified in past projects, successful and less successful. It is hoped that the documented examination and the resulting propositions for future practice are of use to others working in the increasingly fraught arena of the constructed civic.

Packing was a temporary public artwork in collaboration with landscape architect and artist Jess Miley. It was part of the Felt Natural exhibition, consisting of various artworks along Adelaide’s Torrens River/Karra wirra-parri lake for one weekend. Packing worked directly with the banks of the river, inscribing a line from one bank to the other, creating an optical illusion of continuity under and across the river, which was deliberately humorous. The public was invited to be involved in the site in different and multiple ways. The felt surface of this temporary installation could be rolled upon, picnicked on, gingerly crossed or slept on. In a phenomenological sense it brought attention to the constructed and smoothed banks of the River Torrens.

1. “I look to erect a working idea of public space... it is not really possible to define public space singularly. Notions of public and space are frequently clustered and contradictory. Instead I offer five signposts... openness and accessibility to users; support for community practice; visibility and revelation; diversity, tolerance and accommodation and authenticity and unexpectedness... They are meant to elicit an ongoing discussion of public functionality within modern, unconventional gathering spaces, as well as to evoke ideas about individual and collective participation in open political discourses.” Maniscalco, 2015, p. 6
02: Amalgamated Practice
In this chapter, I document the emergence of my amalgamated practice across art and landscape architecture. I reveal and extract, through reflection on my background and practice history, the sources of my interests in the everyday, approaches to and engagement with sites, the use of references, meaningful material selection, the use of humour and the involvement of people that I now identify as important to the practice. These are the elements I have come to understand as aspects of Everyday Civic Landscapes.

I grew up in Boya, Western Australia (WA), in the hills on the suburban outskirts of Perth. I attended the local Darlington Primary School. Darlington at this time in the late sixties/early seventies was known for its counter-culture artistic community. It was a time when there was an emphasis on making things, so I learnt traditional sewing, crochet and knitting skills. It was also the time of a craft revival, so I attended pottery classes, made macramé and participated in arts festivals. This interest in art and craft led me to study at art school and it underpins an artistic sensibility in my practice. I also see now that an emphasis on art traditions which value process and materiality has influenced my subsequent interest in a considered material selection. Being part of a strong, alternative artistic community, even as a child, has played an important part in my later concerns with involvement and civic engagement and fostered a questioning of conventions seen in my practice.

When growing up, our house was opposite the John Forrest National Park. My interest in the park was not ecological but cultural. The park included what I would now call post-industrial elements: an old railway line and several dangerous old quarries where we played. I did not think of the landscape as “special”, just part of the everyday background of my childhood. There were threats of bushfires, and I enjoyed undertaking controlled fires, back-burning the area behind our house. We often made failed attempts to dam creeks. There was also a spot that at certain rainy times of the year we could make into a mud “skating rink”. We tore around on our bikes along the old railway tracks and quarry roads. In this way, the landscape for me was primarily cultural, a setting for social and recreational activities. As children, we programmed the bush. These attitudes to the site as places for involvement, not merely an aesthetic or ecological appreciation, persist in my practice. This has informed my attitudes to sites as everyday, open-ended places that change over time yet are always occupied in a here and now. Later I came to associate this type of engagement with sites as a civic undertaking.

Humour was important in my family; my siblings and I were exposed to my father’s affection for British humour, including The Goon Show, Spike Milligan and later Monty Python. Their anti-establishment sentiments resonated with me and gave me an appreciation of parody and the absurd. As a family, we also saw Barry Humphries, the Australian satirist, perform in Perth. SueAnne Ware identified the use of humour in my work, “the wry twist”, in the earliest stages of the research. This was previously unknown to me and suggests this is deeply ingrained. I learnt that humour is a tool of critique as well as pleasure in my work. The use of humour I discovered is evident across most projects. This includes both a ludic playfulness and wry commentary. People noticing the joke is also a type of everyday involvement. This is significant to...
The practice of landscape architecture as I have discovered that while artists often use humour, this is less seen in architecture and very rarely in landscape architectural practice. This is discussed further in Chapter 9 “Devices for Humour”.

I continued my high school education in the relatively conservative environment of Methodist Ladies’ College, Claremont, travelling a long way each day to school from the hills to the river. This was quite a shocking shift. I remember being acutely aware of class issues within the school. I did not like the pretension and demonstrable privilege. This was the late seventies/early eighties; in Perth, it was the time of “bottom of the harbour” tax evasion schemes and the excess of the economic boom. I remember my school friend's doctor uncle going to jail for defrauding the public health system, Medicare. This was both scandalous and just. It was the beginning of Margaret Thatcher's conservative reign in Britain. The war in the Falklands was yet to come, but the tensions around the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan were very topical. As an adolescent, I was very worried about both nuclear issues and the apparent increasing conservatism of society. I gravitated towards the more open-minded enclaves at the school, the art room and my teacher artist Jill Smith, the music department, and my Jewish, socialist, feminist, history teacher, Mrs Glenister. My later interest in the civic as having open-ended qualities with anti-establishment undertones also stems from this early political awakening and built on the earlier counter-culture experiences in Darlington.

I went on to study art at WAIT majoring in Jewellery. For my graduating exhibition, I presented two series of works. The first, New Works (1985-7) was made of rubbish, mainly black rubber elements collaged into jewellery with stainless steel dental wire. In the second series, the works were stitched out of scrap fabrics, deconstructed feather dusters or human hair. This work embraced contemporary movements in jewellery, coming out of Britain, the Netherlands and Germany that were seeking to redefine the discipline. (Larsen 1984; Ward and Heron 1983). The selection and use of materials in my work were in reaction to the typical use of so-called precious materials with their pretensions and associations with wealth and privilege. The work's simple construction was in contrast to the emphasis in traditional jewellery on demonstrations of technical prowess. The work was sometimes assigned by others as making comment on waste or the environment, but this was not its intention. Instead, the ironic, Dadaist-influenced use of everyday, non-precious elements and the collage-like technique are what was important to this earlier work. In later projects, I now see how the use of materials can carry meaning about the site or bring additional associations to the project that an activated spectatorship can interact with. The materials’ meanings are not set but nuanced. This is discussed further in Chapter 8 “Material Selections”.

As a recent graduate, I was successful in several group shows and one solo exhibition at the University of Tasmania gallery but I was beginning to reject a traditional arts practice as I could not see myself continuing to participate in gallery contexts, particularly with a career trajectory that fed the commercial gallery culture.
I began working on community art projects not long after graduating from WA Institute of Technology. Clockwise from top left: Sunflower Project, Western District Psychiatric Hospital; Fire Brigade Employees Union Banner; MLC school workshop; Domestic Violence Awareness Project, Kensington Health Centre.

and having greater impact. I started working on community arts projects, running workshops at several high schools, including the dedicated art school, Applecross Senior High School. I worked for three trade unions and was sympathetic to their political values. I made banners that were used for parades, protests and pickets. There was federal and state funding for these collaborations between unions and artists, including the “Art and Working Life” program of the Australia Council which proposed a solidarity between workers that included artists as workers themselves. These were values I could align with. However, what I did not like was the way the work was used by the union leadership for their own personal political purposes in promoting themselves. ¹

There was also the problem that I was not trained in the pictorial, realist traditions that the work seemed to require, although I also think now that many of the artists in the Art and Working Life program limited themselves and resorted to Central American and Russian revolutionary artistic precedents. The banners were celebrations of both the unions’ histories and the current membership. The designs built on the history of union banners, but this also limited the contemporary expression possible in both my work and the work of others at this time (Layman et al., 1988; Stephen and Reeves 1985). The use of realism did not suit my preference for a nonrepresentational aesthetic seen in the majority of my work. This work appealed to my political orientation, but on reflection, the later significant aspect of the importance of the site is missing here. Although banners are temporarily part of a site when being carried during parades, marches and pickets, they are not designed with a particular site in mind. Alternatively, an expanded definition of site can, in fact, accommodate a

¹. This approach worked for them, however, with Jim McGinty rising to Leader of the Opposition and Chris Evans elected to the Senate, serving as a minister in the Gillard/Rudd governments.
changing and temporal component to the concept of site. More importantly, this early work with communities presages what I have now identified as the important role of involvement in both the conception and use of the banner as civic design. For me, the civic is a lived experience with an emphasis on involvement. Its site can be fixed as an actual place or have temporal and changing locations for the different functions of, in this case, the banners. This relates to the discussion of a discursive site in Chapter 5 “Discursive Civic Involvement”. “Civicness” is associated with democratic rights, freedom of speech, and the congregation qualities also inherent in the trade union movement, including the right to organise.

The work began to increase in scale, which is a characteristic of the practice enlarging over time from the scale of the body to the scale of the landscape. I had always thought this trajectory was significant. I now see that I learnt skills to work at a range of scales and that this can be applied as projects or sites require, from the smaller scale of the bike rack for Mrs Robinson (2013) to master planning the old hospital site for oRAH (2015).

Through undertaking this research, I also now believe what is more important is not changing scale, but moving from the context of the body (jewellery) or the gallery, where messages are communicated in a one-sided way, to civic sites where a dialogue is established through not only reading messages but participating directly in everyday sites external to the gallery context. One of the last gallery exhibitions, Raids on the Abyss (1989), utilised materials collected from the demolition site of the Boans Department store. The demolition of the department store made way for a new commercial development, Forrest Chase, which had a negative impact on Perth’s most historically important civic space, Forrest Place. I could see and hear the demolition occurring from my studio.

The materials, mainly concrete, scrap metal and reinforcing steel, were still rubbish but assembled into larger, people-sized structures grouped together. I assembled them either using simple pop rivets or bound them together using strips of rubber inner tyres and washers. While the earlier jewellery projects collected rubbish from the landscape, especially roadsides, this was the first project that I now think of as site responsive. It was also the first that worked with a field of items, as an installation in a gallery space rather than a display of individual objects albeit in collections or series. I now think this presages my landscape architectural interests in terms of a specifically critical response to the site. The materials from the demolition site were reconfigured in the gallery. The site was visible from the gallery window but the actual site was not re-presented as seen in later work. The following year The Lead Pedestrian (1989) commented on the same development and specifically on the negative impacts of the development, including the increased surveillance and control of the actual site, Forrest Place. This public art project was the first to use the meaning inherent in the actual site as part of the work. As such this project is an important precursor to my later interest in the civic and the site where the site is re-presented.

I moved to Melbourne and while continuing to work on community arts projects I was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with projects not meeting their stated aims whether they be social, artistic or political. I still valued projects which were event-based,
PART 1: AMALGAMATED PRACTICE

short-lived and encouraged unscripted participation. In festival projects, such as the Kwinana Festival of Imagining (1992) and the Collingwood Footprints Project (1993), where the community arts project was one element of a larger event with various social, cultural and political agendas. These projects signal a future trajectory in the practice of provoking engagement and participation rather than having set aims that were unlikely to be met and/or an emphasis on enduring products that were often of dubious artistic merit. Significantly, I now regard the temporary nature of the festival installations as important as a temporary disruption to the everyday, in the everyday. These projects encourage noticing in a way that can be difficult for more permanent projects to sustain. The works are also props within a bigger event where the participation of people is more important than the aesthetic outcomes of the project. If the aesthetics are weak, there is the consolation that they are not permanently disfiguring the environment. The events themselves were both coordinated by local government organisations with the aim of facilitating celebratory community events. In these instances, the most important site issue is not conceptual but its context as the location of the festival. In reviewing these projects, I have a deeper understanding of site as many-sided including the historical, cultural, spatial and contextual. The project for the Collingwood Festival involved pre-festival workshops where school children each made a decorated footprint. These were laminated and on the day formed a trail around the festival. People could follow the trail around in playful ways. Students could also engage in a footprint hunt to find their small contribution to the larger artwork. People’s involvement with the footprints at Collingwood Festival

At Quarries Playspace the site becomes crucial to the projects themes. The recycled brick-edged platform was decorated with concrete and recycled glass tiles made by local school children. After its life as a quarry the site was used for landfill. What lies below was “excavated” though the tiles. The project offers an opportunity to reveal the perhaps unknown site history.
PART 1: AMALGAMATED PRACTICE

been largely limited to embellishing the work of the landscape architects. I then undertook a single subject at university, The Rise of the Modern, with Jane Shepherd to test the waters, and the following year returned to study Landscape Architecture at RMIT. I now see my training as both an artist and landscape architect as significant to my practice. This is discussed further in Chapter 7 “Nuanced Referencing”.

Later, in landscape architectural practice at Paterson Pettus, I preferred working on what I have called institutional civic projects. These are projects with particular programmatic requirements for a specific demographic, including schools, TAFE colleges and hospitals. The practice worked with architectural firms also committed to an ambition for civic buildings including Lyons, ARM, Eli Giannini at MGS and Julian Scanlan at SKM. Several of these projects won Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture (AILA) Awards.

Newmarket (2001) was a modest project that attempted to reconsider the role of the carpark and to elevate it to a civic space for the residents. At Sunshine Hospital (1999) the courtyard was the only outdoor space available to long-term residents, and so the design response demanded a high degree of variety in the designs and a diversity of programming. In these projects, it is the programmatic requirements that become the more significant site issue. I now associate civic qualities with the diversity and the provision of amenity to allow for participation, especially in providing the maximum diversity with limited economic resources.

While at Paterson Pettus, the staff often entered competitions in their own time. The most significant was winning the Banksia Gateway project with colleague Cassandra Chilton. Our project Helmet (2009) I now regard as one of the most important to my...
PART 1: AMALGAMATED PRACTICE

I completed many institutional civic projects while working at Paterson Pettus, many with an activated grundplane to create optical effects.

practice for the range of design procedures it utilises, the effects it makes, and the ways it involves the audience.

The process of reflection also revealed what I did not like. I did not enjoy undertaking private residential work, which seemed indulgent and extravagant. Likewise, I strongly disliked the residential and high-end commercial projects, with their emphasis on the pretentious display of affluence or branding. While I understand that businesses have to be viable, working for the big corporate office EDAW, with its emphasis on billable hours and margins, meant that accepting smaller public jobs which I felt were important was no longer an option. Even though I left EDAW after the birth of my daughter, my days in commercial practice were likely ending regardless.

I made the move to academia, working for three years at the University of Melbourne, and during this time worked on commissions through my own practice, including Balaclava Walk (2003) with MGS. The landscape design for the Balaclava train station upgrade proposed a re-presentation of the site using elements of the Port Phillip urban design materials palette. Rather than the orthogonal arrangements typically seen in a streetscape layout, in the design response I used an organising, “crinking” line that meandered through the site in three dimensions, both unifying and providing variety and diversity.

Subsequently, I moved to Adelaide to further my academic career at the University of Adelaide. The practice shifted to primarily public art commissions, architectural competitions and small landscape architectural commissions. Projects as diverse as the Mrs Robinson (2013) bike rack commission, the dispersed...
sculptural elements of *The Route Followed* (2007), the temporary installation *Packing* (2013) or the open space design for the *Old Royal Adelaide Hospital* (2015) site have allowed me to explore the nature of civic design.

Through this description of my background, I have identified themes of an Everyday Civic Landscape, including the importance of involvement and responding to site contexts. Soon after graduation as an artist, I was drawn to participatory projects with a political orientation. I now consider that working with communities was the beginning of a civic focus in my practice. Unconsciously, at this time I was increasingly drawn to ordinary, everyday sites, with a preference for public projects. This is a further development of a concern with civic space. Through reflection, I have noticed that I prefer to work on “real” projects and real-world contexts. I have a need for the work to have an effect on people’s experience of place that is engaging and enriching. This also presages a more specific interest in civic space. Through the research, I have discovered that there is no simple line separating my work as either artist or landscape architect, but that civic concerns slice across the entire practice, regardless of type or scale of the project.

During my time at Paterson Pettus, the staff often entered competitions in our own time. The most significant was winning the Banksia Gateway project with colleague Cassandra Chilton. Our project *Helmet* (2001-9) I now regard as one of the most important to my practice for the range of design procedures it utilises, the effects it makes, and the ways it involves the audience.
After moving to Adelaide, my practice shifted primarily to public art commissions including the *Mrs Robinson* bike rack commission (above), the dispersed sculptural elements of *The Route Followed* (top) and the temporary installation *Packing* (right). These projects have allowed me to explore the nature of civic design.
03:
Unpacking the Civic
This chapter focuses on the research process, in which I explore my attitudes to the civic and why it is valuable to my practice. At the outset of the research I had a hunch that there would be a focus on civic spaces, my work in the public realm, and a reconsideration of what might constitute civic spaces more relevant to the contemporary condition. The first task, however, was to sort through, after many years of practice, the hundreds of projects across different categories. Initially, I surveyed the body of work and identified a range of types across my practice as an artist and landscape architect. This also comprised text-based work including reviews, report writing and scholarly papers. The landscape architectural work covered a variety of types of work including residential, commercial, master planning, civic and institutional projects. Although I majored in jewellery, my arts practice has included community arts, trade union banners, sculpture and public art. The process was initially unwieldy as I surveyed my education, arts practice, teaching and landscape practice. The first breakthrough, after reviewing this diverse practice, was confirmation of the importance of projects with a public or civic focus. Importantly, this included not only the obvious categorisation of projects literally in the public realm, but others that encompassed the civic theme that cuts across categories and types. These came from the expected public landscape architecture categories, but also included the jewellery works made from rubbish and found objects, sculpture projects, and public art and community art projects. I identified that civic concerns thread through all the categories and are the overarching consideration of this research. I also considered whether the perceived diversity of activities and project types was important because perhaps they nourished one another. I found that this is not a characteristic of the practice and the arts projects are not tests for “proper” landscape practice. I no longer see these distinctions as important to the practice.

Early on in the research, I recorded the activities of the practice over time. The use of the timeline suggested the trajectory of a practice that changed emphasis over time. This was an important discovery, as I had previously thought my practice had changed dramatically from artist to landscape architect to academic. However, although career definitions have changed, a civic sensibility persists. At this time I did not value some past projects and practices because they did not typologically work with how I defined myself. For example, I no longer valued gallery-based work because of the limited audience and commercialisation, or community artwork because it was not effective enough. As the research progressed, I identified important beginnings of a civic focus in these earlier practices and projects. In particular, early projects such as The Lead Pedestrian (1989) and Raids on the Abyss (1989) began a focus on sites, and all the community art projects showed an emphasis on participation and involvement.

The next activity of the research was to prepare a large table with 21 projects to be considered in greater depth. Rather than reviewing the work by type, I reviewed the common themes across the categories. In addition to the work having civic concerns, I appraised the projects through various themes including the form of commissions, the use of humour, influences, the design process, amenity, economy and the nature of each project’s “civics”. I also recorded if projects were undertaken at Paterson...
Early on in the research I recorded the activities of the practice over time. The use of the timeline suggested the trajectory of a practice that changed emphasis over time. This was an important discovery, as I had previously thought my practice had changed dramatically from artist to landscape architect to academic.
The table also identified and mapped the qualities and tendencies that the projects displayed. These included “who are you working for” where I recognised the tensions between the client who is commissioning the work and the importance I placed on the “real” client, providing for the ultimate users of the project. This emphasis on people’s involvement I now value as being a civic quality. In institutional projects such as Sunshine Hospital (1994) for example, the point of contact through the design process was the Health Department project managers, rather than the future and unknown patients and families and staff who would occupy the courtyards in this secure psychiatric facility.

The table categorised types of humour including jokes, ludic/playful qualities, absurdity and pointlessness, with all projects having various humorous design sources and outcomes. This has become a strong interest throughout the research process. Other categories identified in this table have persisted and morphed into Part 2 of this dissertation, “Design Procedures”. The Design Tactics category included what later became Nuanced Referencing, and Economic Strategies became Material Selections. Conceptual underpinnings are now identified with a concern with the everyday and the civic, which at this stage I merely identified by type: public park, park furniture, street furniture, the commercial or institutional, public gallery exhibition or jewellery. Over time, however, it became the overarching concern of this dissertation.

At this stage I still had many topics and themes under consideration. When I intuitively sought to rank which projects were most important according to my values, they were the ones that utilised a diverse range of design approaches, themes and effects. They were dense with meaning, connotations and programs. Later, I sought to explore if these qualities can be explained as making a valuable contribution, or even defining a necessary one, to Everyday Civic Landscapes.

The dissertation has been concerned with the theme of participation. My earlier reading of Bois (2000) and my later reading of Bishop (2005, 2012) have enlarged my understanding of the need for a more open-ended participation (refer Chapter 5 “Discursive Civic Involvement” for further detail). I have broadened the term “participation” to now use the terms “involve” and “involvement” as this can encompass more forms of interaction, suggesting a diversity in the ways the work engages and thereby more fully describing the ambitions and qualities I want my work to have.

I tried to identify trajectories in the work using the many definitions of the word “shift”, which was the working title of the dissertation. I tried to find equivalence with definitions and the categories from the earlier table. Consequently, “shift”, a “movement to do something, a beginning”, was associated with reconfiguring the site or the tensions with existing conditions. “Makeshift” was linked with the use of economical materials and processes. “Shifty”, a device of evasion or subterfuge or a resistance to good taste, was associated with the provocative, subversive and ironic qualities of some projects. Ultimately, this thread was abandoned, as the design procedures and themes were further clarified reinforcing the importance of site response, material use, referencing and humour. The title “Shift” with its references to

PART 1: UNPACKING THE CIVIC

Richard Serra Shift (1972-3)
Rather than reviewing the work by types, for the third review I evaluated the common themes across the categories in addition to the work having a concern with the civic. I appraised 21 projects through various themes including the form of commissions, the use of humour, influences, the design process, amenity, economy and the nature of the projects’ “civleness”. I also recorded if projects were undertaken at Paterson Pettus or as part of my own independent practice. I highlighted aspects of the projects that I felt intuitively more important. Those with the most “grey” I thought deserved greater interrogation in the next presentation. What I learnt even at this stage was that projects I thought important did not seem as significant as they had previously.
Serra's work of the same name had too much of an emphasis on the site theme at the expense of the other emerging interests. I realised that using “civic” in the title is more relevant and all encompassing. The research then focuses on the civic as the main concern and explored how civic landscapes might be constituted in my work.

I then went on to clarify what the civic is for me. The civic is underpinned by a strong sense of social justice, socialist leanings and anti-establishment sentiments. There is also anti-capitalist and anti-consumerist concerns underlying many projects, especially in the practice of using economical materials and conventional building techniques in novel ways to make more vital and critical civic spaces. There is an attempt in the work, no matter what the context, to both challenge typical ways of working and question ways of thinking about site and context. I began to consider that the relationship to the site might be a key to ways of thinking about civic landscapes.

Importantly, I identified the coming together of the civic and site through the exploration of my approaches to site-specificity. Integral to this is a consideration of my work through the application of Kwon’s 2002 framework of approaches to site-specificity in arts practices. In relation to this, specific approaches I use in my practice include drawing attention to the existing context using phenomenological techniques, considering the context in more complex ways, and the encouragement of involvement. In this way, the design responses can keep open a dialogue with the site contexts. This is discussed further in Chapter 4 “Civic and Site” and Chapter 6, “Site Tactics”. This results in the site being re-presented by viewing it anew through lenses created by tactical design operations.

A number of projects that have these desirable qualities has finally emerged and these are the ones primarily discussed in the remainder of the document. This is supported by projects that I still value not only for their own qualities, but for the purposes of this dissertation, which are now considered as background projects important for some, but not all, the qualities I have identified as important to Everyday Civic Landscapes.

I identified the design procedures, the tactics and manoeuvres that I effectively use to achieve these qualities. These are discussed in Part 2. I identified four procedures: Site Tactics; Nuanced Referencing; Material Selections; and Devices for Humour. I discovered that the uses of a diverse array of design procedures are in those projects I most value for a richness that makes them engaging, open to interpretation and invites diverse involvements.

Finally, the research suggested that some ways of working are more productive than others and equally suggests a way to limit the practice to make it more effective and targeted in meeting its aims for a more engaging and participatory civic landscape. The conclusion discusses how the interrelationship of themes and tactics makes the most original contribution to knowledge, and that it is the use of these tactics in combination that is the most successful. The resulting qualities of an Everyday Civic Landscape have also been articulated.

Everyday Civic Landscapes are a product of my attitude and response to sites, using particular design tactics and including the necessity for involvement and engagement. This is discussed in the next two chapters.
Six projects became the focus of the research. 
Bottom Row: Helmet (2009), Mrs Robinson (2013), and Packing (2013).
The Lead Pedestrian was a temporary installation project highlighting the diminishing role for the citizen within an increasingly privatised public open space. This was quite literally a civic public project, located in Perth’s premier civic space, Forrest Place. This was a collaborative project with myself (artist), Libby Guj (architect) and, David Martin (landscape architect). This installation was part of the innovative public art organisation Urban Threshold’s series of interventions in the city associated with the 1989 Art meets Architecture in the City conference.

The project makes a political comment but is also open to other interpretations. The project was installed in Forrest Place; historically the civic heart of Perth but, at the time of the installation, compromised by the adjacent and then recently constructed retail development, ‘Forrest Chase’. The sculpture consisted of a horizontal figure that looked as if it had been unfortunate enough to be flattened by falling lead sheeting. Over the course of the installation, through the unexpected interaction with the public, the plaster figure, shrouded in lead sheeting, was slowly crushed even further into the pavement. While this was a form of vandalism, the work seemed enhanced by its disintegration into the pavement, developing even more shroud-like qualities. I now see this as an early example where it might be possible to paradoxically design for unexpected, spontaneous and ludic interactions. The work was humorous in that it looked as if a pedestrian had literally been flattened. Getting the joke was also a form of engagement. I have identified that this kind of involvement and participation are important civic qualities to my practice.

The use of lead as a material was an important part of the project, for both its softness and its associations. While it was selected for
its malleability, it was the other qualities of the lead that allowed for the sculpture to take on a more, shroud-like appearance. The lead also took on the texture of the stone pavement, an unintended example of responding to the existing site conditions. This was also an example of interacting with the existing conditions inviting a reconsideration of the current conditions of the public plaza especially concerns about its increasing privatisation and the pressure that the heightened commercial context was causing authorities to kerb ‘unsociable’ behaviour. Perth already had laws, and perhaps still does, restricting congregating in groups in public. The work is a critique of all this and uses materials in a symbolic way, with lead associated with heaviness and death. Through reviewing this project, I identified emerging concerns in my practice. This was my first public artwork and although it predates my landscape architecture studies and practice, can be read in landscape architectural terms. The installation responded to the particular political conditions of the site. In later work, I identify that it is not necessary to be so overtly political to consider the work civic in nature. My later projects have a welcome redemption of the site as one of the responses to the site. This project focuses on a new layer for interpretation, but does nothing to improve amenity. It highlights the emergence of unexpected interactions, perhaps ones that could in future be more thoughtfully designed into the projects.
04: Civic and Site
This chapter discusses the coming together of civic qualities and site through the exploration of my approaches to site-specificity and how these approaches aim to create Everyday Civic Landscapes. Integral to this is a consideration of my work through the application of Kwon’s 2002 framework of approaches to site-specificity in arts practices. In relation to this, specific approaches I use in my practice include drawing attention to the existing context using phenomenological techniques, considering the context in more complex ways, and the encouragement of involvement. In this way, the design responses can keep open a dialogue with the site contexts. The particular design procedures I use to achieve this are covered in Chapter 6, “Site Tactics”.

I have identified that there are three main approaches to site response in my work, and that these contribute to civicness. Firstly, while approaches based on an idea of genius loci are now employed with some caution, I have identified that there can still be an approach to the site that attempts to engage with the found condition in a variety of ways. Secondly, the brief, the research for the design and the act of designing necessarily bring additional material to the site. Thirdly, some design responses result in welcome opportunities for involvement of an activated spectatorship in the site. This re-presentation of the site results in what I have termed Everyday Civic Landscapes.

**LANDSCAPE AND SITE SPECIFICITY**

I had always considered my work site-specific, and, in a general way, of course, it is a disciplinary requirement to be sensitive to ecological, spatial and cultural contexts within a profession that makes claims to have a special relationship and sensitivity to site. There is a long history around the concept of the ‘genius of the place’, or genius loci, that has informed the development of the profession (Dixon Hunt 1992, 1988). In landscape architecture, the response to site can take the form of re-establishing earlier ecological conditions; an abstraction of those ecologies; a hybrid approach using palimpsest; or the unearthing and restoration of earlier layers as a homage. With even some ecologists now agreeing that the idea of nature is a culturally constructed concept, notions of a return to an earlier ecological condition lack authority of scientists and environmentalists (Demeritt 2002). Human activity has shaped landscapes to such an extent for so many thousands of years that managing landscapes is now a given. Weller (Weller 2006) discusses this in landscape terms, whereby if the landscape only represents itself, through acts of mimicry and contextualism, then there is nothing for the landscape to say. Weller also often quotes Sylvia Crow’s maxim that the best landscape designs are invisible. This idea still underlies much landscape work and is part of a problem for the profession (Weller 2001, p.174), in that site-specificity can often limit the conceptual reach of landscape architectural practice. Importantly, I have identified that in my work, a response to the site in multiple ways is crucial to meeting the aims of an Everyday Civic Landscape involving people in open-ended ways.

Further insights into my practice have been gained through the application of Kwon’s 2002 framework of approaches to site-specificity. Kwon charts three paradigms of site-specificity in arts practices, initially emerging out of minimalism: phenomenological or experiential; social/institutional; and discursive (Kwon 2002). I have found these have parallels to my work and are relevant to my practice.
The first paradigm that emerges out of minimalism is one where the experience of the work ‘whether interruptive or assimilative, gave itself up to its environmental context, being formally determined or directed by it.’ (Kwon 2002, p.3). The emphasis here is on the phenomenological qualities of sites and the lived bodily experiences of the audience.

In my work, I learnt this lesson from Serra. Bois’s commentary about Serra’s sculpture Shift (1972) alerted me to the possibilities of sculptural works that reconfigure the existing conditions and re-present them (Bois 2000). The task for me is not to design or substantially change the landscape itself; instead it needs to be noticed and responded to. Bois said of Serra’s work Shift “the site is redefined not represented… The placement of all structural elements in the open field draws the viewer’s attention to the topography of the landscape as the field is walked.” (Bois 2000, p. 344). Serra’s Spin out, for Robert Smithson (1972-73) also does this, using walls to highlight the existing topographic conditions. Richard Serra references can be seen in the project Helmet (2009) in the use of large steel planes. Helmet is a fusion of landscape and sculpture that engages with its site and context. It functions simultaneously as a gateway, faceted landform, sculpture, screen and viewing device. Helmet was a collaborative project with landscape architect and artist Cassandra Chilton. We won the commission in an open competition. It is located in Banksia Park adjacent to Heide Gallery in Melbourne. We responded both to the sites physical qualities and its historical and cultural importance as the site where Sidney Nolan painted his famous Ned Kelly Series. Serra seeks to redefine site through phenomenological means, and Helmet (2009) also does this with its unfolding triangular retaining walls and the large framing screen set within the undulating park environment.

Kwon also uses Richard Serra’s Tilted Arc (1981) to illustrate this point, but identifies a crisis for site-specificity ‘that would prioritize the physical inseparability between a work and its site of installation’ (Kwon 2002, p.13). Tilted Arc was hugely controversial. Its 120 foot length and 12 foot height transformed the plaza in New York, but many local people detested the work and eventually brought a lawsuit to have it removed. Kwon’s argument alerted me to the limitations of this way of approaching site specificity; in particular, a lack of social considerations.

Kwon’s second paradigm reflects the concerns of artists who conceive of the site not only in the physical and spatial ways of the phenomenological model, but considers the cultural and institutional framework of the exhibition of artworks in galleries and museums. These artists ‘implicitly challenged the “innocence” of space and the accompanying presumption of a universal viewing subject (albeit one in possession of a corporeal body) as espoused in the phenomenological model’ (Kwon 2002, p.13). For me, this model also has relevance for my own works created in the outdoors. Landscapes like the museum are never neutral, and the nature of commissions are also culturally conditioned.

‘The “work” no longer seeks to be a noun/object but a verb/process, provoking the viewers’ critical (not just physical) acuity regarding the ideological conditions of their viewing.’ (Kwon 2002, p. 24). While my work includes the creation of objects, this idea alerted me to aspects in my work around the reception and...
effects of my works. Kwon discusses Mierle Laderman Ukeles’ Maintenance Art Performance Series (1973-4), including the way in which Ukeles cleans the floor of the gallery to expose the institutional structure with ‘its perfectly immaculate white spaces as emblematic of its “neutrality,” … structurally dependent on the hidden and devalued labor of daily maintenance and upkeep’ (Kwon 2002, p.19).

While my work is not concerned with the institutional contexts of museums or galleries, the emphasis on context is important, as my projects usually respond to many aspects of the site context including social, cultural, historical, and even functional parameters and influences. It may be easy to see how an internal museum or gallery setting is a controlled or deliberately structured one, but externalised settings and environments are equally controlled and equally able to be the subject of critique. While the literature of civic space habitually discusses the democratic function of interactions between citizens, (Crawford, 2008, Habermas, 1989, Mumford, 1961, Rowe, 1997) my practice suggests that such democratic function is itself something to examine closely, articulate and critique. The designed site itself can have a role beyond providing amenity and passive opportunity for desirable social interaction, by provoking unintended interactions and confronting typical expectations of public space use and value. One of my early projects, The Lead Pedestrian (1989), with its prostrate lead-shrouded figure, questioned the privatisation of Forrest Place’s public space. The installation is site context specific. A later work, Packing (2013) draws attention to the site with its use of a felt carpet running down, and seemingly under, the River Torrens. From direct questions about public rights and ownership, to more subtle uncertainties, I offer messages about how civic space might be more than it initially seems, and for or against more than those we initially imagine.

The questions and motivations behind several of my projects aligns with changes in attitudes to public art and also supports this theme of a site-specific approach that is open to interpretation and engagement. My work engages with both the public and the place itself. Locations for public art may be understood not only for their specificity, but also in ‘relational terms as parts of larger networks, systems and processes, physically, and ideologically’ (Rendell, 2008 p.36).

Hajer and Reijndorp (2001) in the Search for the New Public Domain call for more diversity, allowing for tension and friction to be maintained in everyday open spaces. The philosopher Chantal Mouffe’s concept of agonistic democracy is also a useful framework, with its identification of the importance of opposing forces in maintaining a democracy’s vibrancy (Mouffe, 2009, 2013). The tensions and conditions of the site are often the content of my work. This aligns with Mouffe’s ‘agonism’ and Maarten and Reijndorp’s ‘friction’, where the dialogue is not only between citizens but with the site itself.

Kwon’s third paradigm, the discursive, lies in ‘the pursuit of a more intense engagement with the outside world and everyday’ (Kwon 2002, p. 26). This aligns with my interest in involvement that has an open-endedness, which is not neutral but has “manysidedness”. This is discussed in the following chapter, Discursive Civic Involvement.

Kwon (2002) identifies that artists do not work in a singular way and may approach site-specificity using all three models, or in
various combinations, depending on the work. I agree with this
evaluation.

[The three paradigms of site specificity I have
schematized here — phenomenological, social/
institutional, and discursive — although presented
somewhat chronologically, are not stages in a neat linear
trajectory of historical development. Rather, they are
competing definitions, overlapping with one another and
operating simultaneously in various cultural practices
today (or even within a single artist’s single project).
(Kwon 2002, p.30)

To expand on this, for me the minimalist phenomenological
concerns of Serra are not enough to establish an Everyday Civic
Landscape. In reviewing my own projects, I am aware that in
each there needs to be a consideration of the cultural, historical,
and social context as well as the necessary amenity. I have
an expectation of greater relational and contextual concerns,
in addition to the minimalist phenomenological concerns. By
incorporating additional and multiple aspects, there are then more
opportunities and more varied involvements. There is an openness
and diversity to the work and this is also a type of involvement. As
an example my project Helmet (2009) utilises the Ned Kelly armour
and Nolan’s abstraction of the helmet in its conception. So while
Helmet can be compared formally with Serra’s steel sculpture,
Helmet brings the additional historic imagery from Nolan that Serra
would never permit.

REDEEMING SITE

Part of the civness in my work comes from an ambition to
redeem the site of poor amenity or go beyond the often minimal
treatment and expectations of councils and developers. The
Route Followed was a shortlisted, unbuilt public art project
commissioned to enhance the public open spaces of Lightsview, a
new residential development in Adelaide’s north-east. The design
responds to the historical associations of the site, the weak public
open space amenity and the suburban context, with the need to
provide additional play opportunities.

The Route Followed (2007) responded to the existing, standard
avenue and lawn treatment that lacks possibilities for engagement
and richness, instead proposing as series of sculptural
interventions that both recall the history of the site and double
as an informal play element. In this case, the initial site analysis
revealed a weak, unprogrammed, unengaging and typical
municipal space, and the design aimed to respond to this in
ways that make the site more open to involvement from people.
The project did this by using the cultural and historical aspects
of the site, which were abstracted to generate the inserted steel
elements, but importantly did not attempt to redesign the found
condition. There is a parallel here with all three paradigms in
Kwon’s framework: it dealt with the site’s spatial conditions; the
context of the work; and the anticipated involvement.

My projects do not attempt to smooth over all existing conditions
but instead, there is a noticing, a drawing of attention to conditions
that are identified as valuable, which creates a dialogue with the
site that allows for the friction to be maintained. I do this through the use of contrast and meaningful insertions that demand the wider site be noticed. In my project Helmet, the formal qualities of the intervention allow for a framing of the landscape, one that changes dramatically from the various vantage points. You can see the sky and the adjacent pine windbreak. The steel element creates the gateway through its pairing with the adjacent service station, drawing attention to this everyday occurrence. The faceted lawn draws attention to the context, through contrast with the triangular geometry of the insertion with the undulating topography of the picturesque park. The design of the gateway works by drawing attention, formally and through neon lighting, to the service station and the significant river red gum. It meets the needs of the brief while also drawing attention to the opposite side of the road, creating the gateway. In the early stages of my research, I called this approach of insertions into the site ‘parasitic’. However, there are negative connotations associated with the term ‘parasitic’ and what I have focused on retaining is the importance of the existing conditions as assets for its positive development and change. So I have subsequently been using a modification of Serra’s term ‘the site is redefined’ with ‘the site is reconfigured’, finally settling on ‘the site is re-presented’.

In my work, this re-presenting of site avoids the problem of style, as discussed by Weller in his critique of the Australian landscape profession of bringing a ‘manicured beauty’ approach to the site, to ‘tidy up the mess’ (Weller 2011, pp.175-176). I want to engage with the ‘mess’ of the site as the content and aim of the work, so that this can be communicated to others involved in the dialogue. The civic qualities come not from designing the site for civic activities to take place, but from the site-specificity designing the interaction. It is the nature of this involvement as discussed in the next chapter that I have identified as ‘Discursive Civic Involvement’.
Helmet

Helmet is a fusion of landscape and sculpture that engages with its site and context. It functions simultaneously as a gateway, faceted landform, sculpture, screen and viewing device. *Helmet* was a collaborative project with landscape architect and artist Cassandra Chilton. We won the commission in an open competition. It is the final of three works commissioned by the City of Manningham as part of The Gateway Project, developed through the council’s Urban Design Strategy as part of the Streetscape Program. The others are Inge King Sentinel 2000 and Cat Bellomo River Peel 2001.

The site contexts, including the physical and historical, were important to the conception of *Helmet*. It re-presents the site in several ways. It is an object in the field, a device for seeing and to be seen as a billboard and gateway. The most important reference for the conception of *Helmet* is the imagery from arguably Australia’s most important twentieth century paintings, the Ned Kelly series, by Sidney Nolan. Kelly, a notorious bushranger from the late nineteenth century, was famous from his homemade steel armour. Sidney Nolan, encouraged by John Reed, painted the Kelly series on the dining room table in John and Sunday Reed’s home in Heide (now Heide Gallery, adjacent to Helmet’s site in Banksia Park).

Like Nolan, we were interested in finding a contemporary relevance for the historical material, both the Nolan paintings and the Ned Kelly mythologisation. *Helmet* re-presents the site’s cultural legacy; consequently, the site is re-presented. Very rarely do I use recognisable representational imagery, the only other example being the use of the figure in *The Lead Pedestrian*. This is a useful technique for enabling people to engage with the narrative quality of the work alongside that important engagement with the site itself.

The use of the Ned Kelly myth is widespread in Australia including in films, books, graffiti, tattoos and art. In architecture, the helmet is referenced in examples such as Aston Raggatt McDougall’s *Westernport House* (2005), which may have been influenced by the Nolan helmet imagery, and definitely in Lyon’s *Sunshine Hospital* (2000). At the National Museum of Australia, in their *Garden of Australian Dreams* (2001), Room 4.1.3 uses an abstracted black cube with a helmet-like slot to locate their camera obscura (Weller 2005 p.234).

Accordingly, this is a historical idea brought to life on the site by Helmet. The formal qualities of the intervention allow for a framing of the landscape, one that changes dramatically from the various vantage points. Both the sky and the adjacent pine windbreak can be seen through the frame. Similar to influences on my later work, *The Route Followed*, I was interested in the curated views and movement as discussed by Appleyard, Lynch and Myer (1964) with their ideas of choreographed movement and Bois’s (2000) insights on Stourhead. At Stourhead, he discusses the “fictive movement of the eye” across the lake versus the contrasting experience of the tangible movement of the body strolling around the lake. *Helmet* uses a variety of formal devices with the forms unfolding and contracting as the viewer moves past. It is also possible to climb onto *Helmet*, poking one’s head through the slot and becoming Ned.

We also analysed the physical features of Banksia Park, with its well-known qualities on a minimally maintained undulating lawn.

The most important reference for the conception of *Helmet* is the imagery from what are arguably Australia’s most important twentieth century paintings, the Ned Kelly Series, by Sidney Nolan (above). Like Nolan, we were interested in finding a contemporary relevance for the historical material, the bushranger’s armour (below).
Our initial photographic studies alerted us to the potential of the varied views into the site as a key concern. We noticed that the adjacent service station and the ancient river red gum, together with the sculptural element, could form the gateway, a requirement of the brief.
and its areas of indigenous and weedy vegetation. Of some interest was a historic pine windbreak and an ancient river red gum opposite the site. As a sculptural project, we had the opportunity to create a faceted lawn to contrast with, and encourage the viewer to notice the undulating context. The project’s strength is in inserting the sculptural elements into the existing condition, drawing attention to the site without major physical change to that existing condition. For Helmet this included the ability of the shiny surface to reflect the context back onto itself, with the horizon behind reflected and also seen through the slot and on either side of the screen. They are elements in a wider landscape, and rather than a totalising scheme, contrast and juxtaposition are used. This is an ‘object in the field’ quality that is also seen in Mrs Robinson (2013), Coburg Special Development School (1992), The Route Followed, and other community arts project that are located in parks, gardens or playgrounds. This is a strategy I now value in drawing attention to the site. This is in line with well-known sculptural practices (Tiberghien, 1994), but it is the connection of the site information at its source that is significant for my practice.

The Helmet sculpture functions as a gateway but establishes a new formal, ‘object in the field’, landscape solution as the triumphal arch is no longer an appropriate model for gateways. We were influenced by the imagery in Learning from Las Vegas (1972) where Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour describe a bureaucracy being located in a box with a sign on top that says ‘I am a monument’. Their interest in billboards was also influential, with the vertical element of Helmet functioning as a billboard and its focus on the view from the car. The helmet has no single vantage point; as it is approached from all directions the dynamic form unfolds.
Helmet addresses the need for the vehicular passenger to ‘speed read’. The sculpture was proposed to align more closely with Bridge Road, but unaware of an existing road easement, the steel elements were subsequently located further into the park. This allowed the sculpture to be not only read from passing cars but also to be experienced in-the-round by park users.

The original scheme proposed weathering steel, constructed using multiple panels. With escalating steel and construction costs, we changed to a more monolithic welded construction of painted mild steel. We did not consider this a compromise but an opportunity to reflect and improve the scheme, with the black gloss-painted steel more closely and carefully referencing Sidney Nolan’s Ned Kelly; and more Modernist rather than the rural rusty steel references. There was never an intention to mimic the home-made riveted plough shears of the original Kelly armour.

The use of black steel is a well-worn modernist trope for public sculpture. The shiny black steel was also reflective, which resulted in some unexpected but welcome effects at the time, reflecting the sky and the horizon behind. We also changed the triangular steel plane of the “plinth” from steel to a more economical rubber playground surfacing. This change in materials allowed the ground plane to now be accessed by pedestrians, and unexpectedly, bike riders. The rubber also had textural qualities similar to the adjacent lawn and seemed a better match. The materiality of the project was important to the ability of the work to engage people, from being able to read the referencing, to the optical effects of the shiny steel, or the ability to access and bounce on the rubber surfacing.
The sculpture is lit at night and mimics the fluorescent lighting of the adjacent service station. Thus, the device of literally copying elements from the context is used. The project has different effects between day and night with the void of the slot lit at night. At night the service station and helmet lighting creates a strong effect of passing through a threshold.

For those familiar with his work, Richard Serra references can be seen in Helmet in the use of large steel planes. Serra (Bois 2000) seeks to redefine site through phenomenological means and Helmet also does this, with its unfolding triangular retaining walls and the large framing screen not dissimilar to Serra’s Spin out, for Robert Smithson (1972-3).

However, Serra’s sculptures would never have included the pop culture references of the Kelly armour and legend in the Nolan painting, nor the pop art tactic of Rauschenberg’s oversized objects as designed in Helmet. Chilton and I brought the Pop Art techniques of oversizing to the minimalist trope to redefine the park, create the gateway, and send up Heide’s obsession with its foundation story. There is humour and engagement for those that recognise the reference to the popular and well-known Ned Kelly story; but the joke only works if the imagery is recognised. After being initially bewildered, when the imagery is recognised, the viewers are illuminated and get the joke. RMIT Professor Vivian Mitsogianni stated at an earlier presentation of this research that she previously read the work in purely formal terms, until I told her otherwise. What does it mean when viewers do not get the joke? Helmet is layered and nuanced enough to not be dependent on the one-liner. There is a richness in the use of multiple references and many opportunities for the public to engage with the work.
Plan diagram above shows the relations of the steel elements, faceted lawns and proposed and existing windbreaks.

Collages created for the second stage of the competition show the importance of the relationship to the undulating topography (top) with the middle and bottom images focusing on the service station, river red gum and the pine windbreak.
regardless of whether the references are able to be read or not. No matter what the type, the viewer’s response and engagement are critical to Helmet’s civic qualities.

Serra remarks of his project *Shift* (1972) that:

The site is redefined not represented...The placement of all structural elements in the open field draws the viewer’s attention to the topography of the landscape as the landscape is walked (...) The dialectic of walking and looking into the landscape establishes the sculptural experience. (Bois 2000, p. 344)

The experiential is an important notion for Helmet. There is no front or back. At one point the sculpture is reduced to a thin blade. The form draws attention to its surroundings. Landscape Architect Jo Russell-Clarke’s reading identified analogous forms from the context.

Viewed from one side the slim blade mimics telecommunications towers, light and electricity poles, from another the slanted strata of dark cypress branches, then the peaked and saw-tooth roofs of sheds from another, and distant cones of hills from yet another. A small courageous hop and you are on a tilted and
Since the completion of the sculpture, we have observed that it has a presence on social media. These images come from a Flickr user, Clement Tang. He says “This was taken in my car while waiting for the red light to turn green. Here the dark blue sky is about to turn bright while the street lights impart an orangish colour on the pavement. The overall effect is intriguing: you almost feel as if Ned Kelly is peeping through the long slit of the Helmet” This is a new type of engagement not considered at the time, but one we have welcomed.

yielding rubber plane, suddenly sensitised to fleshiness that might hold a pulse, a Lilliputian on the armour of a half-buried colossus. (Russell-Clarke 2009b).

The importance of movement and time in experiencing Helmet is an important consideration. (This is also important in Packing in rolling down the hill and The Route Followed where people can follow the dots.)

The experience of views is important, but people can also engage with the physical elements of the sculpture. An activated spectatorship that is involved not only with the sculptural element, but also the contextual site, and with some knowledge of the cultural history of the site, the Nolan reference can also be noticed. People viewing Helmet might be seeing it in conjunction with their visit to Heide and thus be extra aware of the references having just heard all about the Reeds & Nolan at the gallery. Interestingly, without this knowledge, the sculpture is experienced in Serra-like phenomenological terms. Landscape architect, Jo Russell-Clarke, described her experience: ‘Helmet suddenly looms, its confronting angularity animating dark wedges of steel against the undulation of steep mounds viewed from a moving car’ (Russell-Clarke 2009b).

Overall, the work uses multiple tactics to engage people with the site. It is open to interpretation, aims to be accessible on a variety of levels, and draws attention to its context. Without the installation, the site might not be noticed. This engagement with the site, its context, its openness to interpretation and participation is, I consider, a civic experience. It is an everyday experience of a diverse demographic, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, gallery visitors, children and others.
05: Discursive Civic Involvement
This chapter discusses my investigations into the theme of involvement and how this can contribute to reinventing the civic for our times. I had an intuition that in contrast to ceremonial, special occasion civic space, new models would reside in the daily experience of users and be more informal, open to interpretation, and engaging. Therefore, firstly I discuss mine and others’ concerns with the everyday. Secondly, I describe the nuanced differences of various participatory approaches in order to better highlight what I value in terms of involvement. In this regard, I also explore whether the designed experience of particular places can be framed or circumscribed while still allowing for chance encounters and spontaneity. This is also discussed in the chapter ‘Site Tactics’.

Both these concerns of the everyday and involvement are prevalent in Kwon’s third paradigm of site specificity, where she describes a move from phenomenological and institutional concerns to ones focused on discursive qualities with an emphasis on the everyday and the social over spatial considerations (Kwon 2002, p.24). For me this is a setting up of discussions perhaps, or the parameters of things that might be discussed or understood.

In addition, current forms of site-oriented art, which readily take up social issues (often inspired by them), and which routinely engage the collaborative participation of audience groups for the conceptualization and production of the work, are seen as a means to strengthen art’s capacity to penetrate the sociopolitical organization of contemporary life with greater impact and meaning. In this sense the chance to conceive the site as something more than a place—as repressed ethnic history, a political cause, a disenfranchised social group—is an important conceptual leap in redefining the public role of art and artists. (Kwon 2002, p.30).

She discusses that these art practices have also been influenced and interested in other disciplines, including developments at the time in architecture and urbanism. This has been reciprocated with mutual development and influence. Since the publication of Kwon’s book there have been a proliferation of movements and practices developed by artists, landscape architects and urbanists amongst others who are working with the everyday and the discursive, including Everyday Urbanism (Chase, Crawford, and Kaliski 2008) and Space, Place, Site: Critical Spatial Practices (Rendell 2008), and artists celebrated by Bishop in her 2012 book Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship. These movements are explained by a desire for greater conviviality and social encounter but are also moving to excite more varied types of interaction, engagement and consultation with the public, including sometimes the explicitly political. This resonates with my interest in what I have termed ‘involvement’. For me this includes physical, spatial engagement, alongside an emphasis on the effects and reception of design interventions comparable to Kwon’s penetration ‘of contemporary life with greater impact and meaning’ (Kwon 2002, p.30).

Beyond these dual expansions of art into culture, which obviously diversify the site, the distinguishing characteristic of today’s site-oriented art is the way in which the art work’s relationship to the actuality of a location (as site) and the social conditions of the institutional frame (as site) are both subordinate to a
discursively determined site that is delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, or cultural debate. Furthermore, unlike in the previous models, this site is not defined as a precondition. Rather, it is generated by the work (often as “content”), and then verified by its convergence with an existing discursive formation. (Kwon 2002, p.26)

CONSIDERATIONS OF PARTICIPATION

My earlier community art projects, the Kwinana Festival of Imagining (1992) and the Collingwood Footprint Project (1992) encouraged direct community interaction and participation but were weak in their capacity for an open-ended, discursive engagement. They aimed simply to enhance a community celebratory occasion. This is still necessarily political, but I now consider that this type of work did not go far enough. There was a missed opportunity, and I now agree with Bishop’s ‘appeals for more bold, affective and troubling forms of participatory art’ (Bishop 2012, pp. 6-7). Earlier projects such as The Lead Pedestrian (1989) made political comments about the privatisation and increased surveillance and control of public space, but its didactic message-delivery system also lacked a many-sided openness I now value. Still, I regard these earlier projects as important indicators of an ever-deepening interest in involvement. These qualities which I now relate with the civic are achieved through a phenomenological response to site, allowing for a bodily response, along with design interventions whereby ambiguous meanings are open to interpretation and spontaneous ludic responses are anticipated yet not prescribed. Everyday Civic
Lunchtime walkers. The agonistic or contested aspect of literal frictions is visible. Engagements are encouraged by the open-ended interpretations and multiple programs and set up by the physical intervention. I am interested in design that does not aim for neutrality but has built-in ambiguity and openness more aligned with the pluralistic nature of the contingent condition of the world.

Margaret Crawford is recognised for her contribution to Everyday Urbanism, a movement that advocates a close examination and empathetic understanding of the specifics of everyday life as the basis for urban theory and design. In her research, she identifies Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord and Michel de Certeau as pioneers in investigating everyday ignored spaces. ‘While acknowledging the oppression of daily life, each discovered its potential as a site of creative resistance and liberatory power’ (Crawford 2008, p.9).

Given this understanding, everyday landscapes are not without meaning, histories and power structures that can and must be responded to by designers. These writers focus on the theoretical considerations of lived experience. Time becomes an important consideration too, with not just ‘special occasions’ deserving attention, but also everyday actions including the spontaneous activities that might occur rather than only the predictable rituals of daily life. There is a liberating effect when spontaneity and unintended responses are anticipated in some respect by design.

As an example, the use of soft felt for Packing allowed for rolling and sitting. The use of ladders allowed for climbing on Helmet. This is what contributes to an Everyday Civic Landscape.

My projects aim to provide for both individual reactions to the designed site and any other encounters that may spontaneously unfold. In my project Packing (2013), people experience the work as a pedestrian moving from one place to another, crossing the felt surface. Others, especially children, can roll down the felt or perhaps picnic on its soft surface. Many were observed negotiating the felt and each other as rolling children collided with lunchtime walkers. The agonistic or contested aspect of literal frictions is visible. Engagements are encouraged by the open-ended interpretations and multiple programs and set up by the physical intervention. I am interested in design that does not aim for neutrality but has built-in ambiguity and openness more aligned with the pluralistic nature of the contingent condition of the world.

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This ambition is also in line with Bakhtin’s important concept of ‘dialogism’. ‘Bakhtin defined dialogism as the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by “heteroglossia”’
PART 1: DISCURSIVE CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

Coburg Special Development School was my last project to work with the direct participation of the community. While there was some improvement in the amenity and an enjoyable process for the participants, the end results were weak aesthetically and functionally.

– the constant interaction between meanings, all of which can potentially influence the others’ (Crawford 2008, p. 8). While Bakhtin’s interest is in literature, my concern is in the constant interactions between people, sites and each other. For me, it is the role of civic design to contribute to these ongoing interactions – this spatial dialogism – rather than imposing or presupposing fixed meanings. The value is in the potentials of the design for driving or inciting ongoing responses, readings and interpretations. In our project Helmet (2009), the originating genesis was in the painting of Nolan’s Ned Kelly series at the adjacent Heide Museum of Modern Art and its intention was to communicate this, but there was an intention for ongoing responses. I have since been surprised by its potential for new and ongoing readings. A recent press image shows the sculpture’s black surface marked by raindrops. Additionally, a Flicker user has taken dramatic photos of the work at dawn with the red traffic lights casting glowing reflections. People’s involvement should ideally change in different instances or activities. The work is designed to have a many-sidedness, open to multiple interpretations. It is important to note that this is different to the stated goals of place-making practitioners, with their focus on vibrancy and liveability. My projects have not been interested in this easily orchestrated conviviality.

THE PROBLEM OF PARTICIPATION

Interestingly, some of these more recent participatory practices recall the techniques and ideals of the earlier Community Art movement which I was involved in. I suspect that these projects also share some of the limitations I experienced. Specifically, I have identified a frustration when my projects did not sufficiently meet their stated social and political aims. At Coburg Special Development School, I attempted to design participation activities to achieve the best outcomes for the improved amenity of the school’s courtyard, but the design fell short in part because of the skills of the participants and the weak aesthetic outcomes. In this project, having ambition for a larger space was new to me, and I now see that the scale and form of the interventions were too physically small and the elements lacked the necessary verticality. I abandoned this way of working directly with members of a community and now strive for the involvement that comes subsequently in response to the designed landscape. While an examination of the projects shows a variety of ways and points of effective engagement depending on the site, context or specific project requirements, I have discovered that I gain the most satisfaction from the enjoyment of the public on completion of the built work. I have since chosen commissions where direct early participation through consultation is not required or has already been completed and has resulted in the subsequent brief. I now believe that the engagement should be anticipated in the design and the most effective engagement for the viewer and community is with the built outcomes.

The development of my practice has raised and explored questions about the efficacy of participatory processes in terms of blurring activism and art, the nature of managing opposed viewpoints, the material effects on communities and audiences, and the relationships with institutions that may support or promote this work. Sometimes participation exercises can be a naïve approach that too neatly appears to resolve complexity, difference, contradiction and ambiguity. In other words, there is a...
creates a place with multiple meanings, one that underscores many neighbourhood practices at odds with normative societal values and attitudes.‘ (Hood 2008 p. 162). Potentially, this emphasis on difference sets up a discursive landscape. It is this role of the designer that results in projects of greater complexity, open-endedness and nuance. Landscape Urbanism also includes attitudes and approaches that value inputs that guide the design beyond the designer. This includes the site as a responsive and determining ecology and the city itself as a collective of peoples and infrastructures with agency.

In addition, given the perceived limitations of public space to be more civic, there have been a variety of responses and movements from within architecture, planning and urbanism disciplines more broadly, as well as from artists and the humanities in general, that privilege participation and engagement. Most recently, the concern with the everyday has resulted in a range of participatory urbanism models including **Placemaking** (Project for Public Space 2017), **Everyday Urbanism** (Crawford 2008), **Guerrilla Gardening** (Spatial Agency 2017), **Tactical Urbanism** (Lydon & Garcia 2015), and **Co-design** (Sanders and Stappers 2008). There are also many community-initiated efforts to improve urban and other environments that may or may not involve designers. Similarly to socially engaged art, the architectural design disciplines have also seen an increased interest in bottom-up, participatory design that may or may not be state-sponsored, including more legally subversive activities that are community-initiated without state support. For me, much of this type of work relies on a single message and a heavy-handed political perspective that is based on the certainty of the right process,

There are many design practices working in this territory, looking to redefine commitments to public involvement through the architectural and landscape architectural design of public space. As an example, muf architecture/art, based in London, was set up as a cross-disciplinary practice to challenge the conventional practice of architecture. They typically work on participatory and public realm projects, with an emphasis on consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. (Dodd 2011; MUF 2017). Dodd (2011, p.8) states this is a ‘model of collaborative working, both between practitioners and stakeholders but especially with the public, which shifts the notion of authorship and questions the neutrality of our professional role as architects’. Similarly, Hood Design in California works across landscape art and urbanism with a focus on community development and citizen participation. In his essay on West Oakland, Walter Hood argues that through careful observation and then design the social and cultural conditions can incorporate ‘the human condition into the design process’ (Hood 2008 p. 153). This is more important than the spatial conditions. The program is not predetermined, but emerges from an ideology of accepting difference. ‘No single programmatic piece dominates the space – the ethos of difference and inclusion smoothing in order to satisfy the need to reach a pre-fabricated social consensus. While they can be valuable practices in some important respects, for me, the participatory imperative often compromises aesthetic aims, as they can shut down open-ended interpretations and the joy and surprise of an unexpected experience. The efficacy and power of designed space itself to foster engagement is underestimated or forgotten entirely in separating it from participatory processes.

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rather than the more desirable and forgiving qualities of ambiguity and openness. The budding self-righteousness bottom-up risks becoming the new top-down.

In particular, the art world has seen a resurgence of socially engaging art with an emphasis on participation and action in a range of situations to change social dynamics such as Rick Lowe’s Project Row Houses (1993-) project which restored abandoned houses to provide low-cost housing and other social services (Thompson 2012, p.256) or the Yes Men’s media stunts, pranks and parodies to raise awareness of social issues (Thompson 2012, p.243). In this work, the aim is primarily a political activist one, where artists ‘create forms of living that activate communities and advance public awareness of pressing social issues’ (Thompson 2012, p.8). The works are attached to social and political movements and use tactics not always associated with art, neglecting the very efficacy that art and aesthetic experience has in persuading new understandings. The emphasis is on using artistic and other practices as communication tools. There is some criticism of this work in that it is not, in fact, art and may not even be politically effective (Bishop 2012). While I empathise with the importance of participation and reaction, the missing emotional and aesthetic immersion – a skill of design crafting – can, in the pursuit of the mere activity of participation, unfortunately, be forgotten as a persuasive tool for new thought and meaning through new feeling. Socially-conscious landscape architecture and participation or engagement processes can also forget that the landscape itself can do this – and be designed to do this.

Further to this, Bishop (2012) has criticised work associated with relational aesthetics and more self-professed socially engaged projects for not being as democratic as they claim. She suggests that they rely on an undifferentiated, homogeneous audience, and instead, she proposes more politically charged, less patronising responses (Bishop 2005, 2012). I believe this critique can also be applied to architectural, urbanism and landscape architectural practices working in this territory and my own earlier community arts practice. Bishop (2005, 2012) celebrates instead artists working with communities in ways that are neither patronising nor simple. Taking Hirschhorn’s Monument series, including the Bataille Monument where the artist located his work for the Documenta festival outside the usual sites in Kassel, Germany and instead located the work in a low socioeconomic housing estate. The work, constructed and staffed by residents, consists of a makeshift construction that includes a library, Bataille exhibition, the tree formed monument, web cameras, a public TV studio and a bar. Documenta visitors are required to travel to the monument using a taxi company contracted to transport them. It is the intention that it is they, the viewers, who are made to feel uncomfortable. Bishop explains how the work is not intended to be redemptive (although it may have this effect on some participants) but aims to expose power structures in society. These points are illustrated in the following description of the Bataille Monument 2002:

In a social-housing estate in the heart of Kassel’s Nordstadt, a socially deprived area of the city, Thomas Hirschhorn erected his Bataille Monument (2002). Built with cheap materials in cooperation with local youth, this archive devoted to the French thinker, an advocate of unrestricted consumption and a critic of utilitarianism,
University Square (2000) was undertaken as part of a larger building program to expand the University of Melbourne with the addition of three new buildings. The plaza and associated underground carpark were on the north end of the City of Melbourne owned park. The new plaza links the new Law, Business and Management Schools and provides a meeting place, a transition zone from street to historic park, a setting for various buildings on the university campus, a thoroughfare and a strong identity for the new development. A black and white diamond pattern, the central graphic of the design was used to create an optical illusion stretching the plaza into the historic park. The graphic creates a strong identity for the space, which is visible at both the pedestrian scale and from the elevated views of the surrounding buildings. It is also very distinctive vis satellite maps as a visual ‘landmark’ in that flat 2D space. That might be a more common way of seeing it than from the buildings.

The project required the resolution of complex technical issues, particularly relating to grade changes from the street level to accommodate the subterranean carpark, and the planting of advanced tree species over the car park structure. The grade changes were addressed through in-situ concrete stairs, which create an easy and inconspicuous grade transition between the street level and the plaza. The steel arbours, which extend from the street level to the plaza, contribute to this transition and create a distinctive edge to the plaza. Throughout the design process, there was a requirement to liaise with a number of stakeholders including the Department of Infrastructure, the University of Melbourne and the City of Melbourne.

The project was not as successful as I would have liked as it relies too heavily on programming for its activation and was never programmed by the University of Melbourne in the way that was discussed. It may be that the sloping surface makes it difficult to install temporary marquees to provide the necessary infrastructure to activate the space. In addition, the ratio of shady to intimate space to the open plaza is not in the correct balance with the open central area being too large. The tree species were eventually selected after much consultation and research and were significant trees from the university campus: Cedrus atlantica ‘glauca’ (Blue Atlas Cedar); Malus ioensis ‘Plena’ (Bechtel Crab Apple); and Metasequoia glyptostroboides (Dawn Redwood). The project was completed at the beginning of the drought and many of the trees, which were planted over the car park structure, did not grow as well as expected.

Despite having shady spaces, well-planned circulation, and stairs designed for perching on, this type of space – designed for no particular demographic, as a neutral space for potential activation – does not have enough content for the necessary engagement.

This work has a lineage in the ‘activated spectatorship’ of Brecht, Jean-Luc Godard, and in minimalist sculpture’s emphasis on the viewer’s reception/perception, and with socially engaged performance work such as that by Mierle Laderman Ukeles. In another sense, art movements which engaged in new ideas about spectatorship and performative relations with their audience spoke...
to the idea that all and any art can and does have this capacity to realign our thinking anyway. This is the defining value of art – and design.

It is no longer enough to say that activating the viewer tout court is democratic, for every artwork – even the most “open-ended” – determines in advance the type of participation that the viewer may have within it. Hirschhorn would argue that such pretences are no longer necessary; all art – whether immersive or not – can be a critical force that appropriates and reassigns value, decentralising our thoughts from the predominant and pre-existing consensus (Bishop 2005, p. 127).

The work is site specific but is a model that has been replicated with 4 different “monuments” enacted in different parts of the world. Hirschhorn is at pains to set up a discursive environment but one that is also making institutional and societal critiques. The work falls under both Kwon’s categories of a process of institutional and societal critiques. I find this admirable in this work, and see its model as a challenge for my practice. While I may have an ‘activated spectatorship’, there is still an emphasis that may render my work less politically nuanced than I would like. While it is intrinsically political when working within the structures of briefs and commissioning requirements, sometimes the projects fall short of Bishop’s required ‘decentring’ that comes from an apprehended politicisation of the content rather than the structure.

There is also an approach that designs public spaces as a neutral site allegedly for the activities of a democratic civil society to occur. Perhaps this is a misreading of the influential Terrain Vague essay by Solà-Morales Rubio (1995). Terrain Vague was a term that interrogated our blindness regarding ‘unproductive’ land or wasteland, noting how its uncanny productivity was located in an undocumented richness of experiences, emotions and unsanctioned uses. It was not a richness awaiting incorporation into a dominant culture – a neutral blank slate – but a field of many alternative cultural appreciations and immanent uses. This was subsequently misinterpreted that public space should be created with a blank space, apolitical approach for unplanned activities to occur in. Many projects subsequently used this approach, including my own project University Square (2001) with its large central paved plaza with no particular programing in mind or suggested by the design. Hajer and Reijndorp’s argument in Search for the New Public Domain (2001) suggests that it is not neutrality, but a variety of spaces that is required to suit varying demographics. Cuuff comments that they argue that ‘…failures of the public domain stem not from the standard excuses but from a lack of “friction”’ (Cuuff 2009, p.2). Their work continues interest in the importance of everyday landscapes, embracing the chaos, but additionally does not seek a homogenous public. Their concept of ‘friction’ is similar to my definition of ‘involvement’, which allows for a diversity of responses that may encompass friction.

In my practice, I also want to provoke the public into responding to the site. With Packing (2013) there are a variety of ways to respond to the context and community and its multiple aspects and associations, including the Aboriginal and other recreational park users; the site’s artificiality; its historic links with the police box; the formal qualities of paths crossing over paths; and its adjacency to the River Torrens.
My open-ended and discursive response to this site very much forms part of the discourses in Landscape Architecture from the 1900s onward (Corner 1999; Czerniak 2012; Mathur 1999; Waldheim 2012). Openness and inviting participation (or appropriation) is essential to this discussion, and include considerations of indeterminacy and multivalence that resonate with my ideas of an open-endedness characterised by a many-sidedness that encourages involvement.

Julia Czerniak’s writings about site also emphasise landscape’s discursive capacity: ‘Landscape’s emergent and temporal nature here is not evidenced by the medium itself but by the fluid and collective relationships with the land’ (Czerniak 2012, p.120) where it is the interactions that are most important. Echoing Kwon, she also notes that the ‘generative capacity of a site – variously construed as a spatial location, a physical and cultural context, and a discursive position which is value-driven – can inform landscape’s representational content all the while addressing it ever-shifting emergent and temporal nature’. (Czerniak 2012, p.109)

In terms of open-endedness, I have taken Mathur’s lessons from The Indian Maidan, as a model that could respond to changes in city landscapes that ‘are being increasingly commodified, monitored, and constructed in ways that discourage spontaneous appropriation and unplanned transformation’. She goes on to advise, ‘In resistance to this over-determinism, a few contemporary landscape architects and urbanists are seeking to promote qualities of indeterminacy, open-endedness and temporarily in their work. Their aim is to engender and support engagement rather than objectification’ (Mathur 1999, p.216).

Despite some similarities with my approach, I have been wary of these and similar ideas, such as Sola-Morales Rubio’s Terrain Vague (Solà-Morales Rubio 1995) as ultimately, for me, open-endedness is not a ‘nothing’ to be populated with programs. Rather it is a complex design attitude seeking to maintain space that can be responded to in multiple ways, not merely a blank canvas for chance encounters. Therefore, a neutral open-endedness is not enough. In my work, I develop a multisided approach to civic space that elicits all manner of involvements.

CIVIC FOR ITS TIME

My projects are relatively small and often temporary, so what I am arguing for is a new form of project and allowance for different types of location that extend our understanding of civic spaces beyond plazas and squares with their attendant ceremonial, communal and overtly political functions. A range of intellectual positions suggests this is necessary. (Habermas 1989; Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001; Mitchell 2003) Twenty years ago Peter G Rowe (1997) used Sienna’s Piazza del Campo as an historic exemplar of a space with strong civil characteristics but also an open-endedness of interpretation and activity. He also focused on its robustness over a long time to support the city’s civic needs. He admired its ability to be able to accommodate an assorted range of activities including political and symbolic display, but also a horse race, celebrations and markets (Rowe 1997). The space is understood and valued by people in this complex and diverse way. Rowe (1997, p.210) uses this and other case studies to develop his thesis of Civic Realism which ‘is conceptually defined by the four dimensions of appearance, experience, effect, and sponsorship’.
My practice considers the development of civic space as an opportunity for design to perform as a redeeming force that goes beyond the mere celebration of the everyday. It is a practice that acknowledges others working in the public realm that is nuanced politically and encourages involvement rather than a smoothing, politically neutral approach. It allows for a greater diversity of people and activities, invites spontaneity and encourages noticing and aligns with Rowe’s suggestion for civic spaces that are valued in diverse ways I believe my everyday projects constitute a form of civic landscape or an aspiration for civic dialogue where the first task is to alert users to a different potential appreciation and occupation of the space than what is typically sanctioned. Alertness brings self-consciousness into space, which encourages exactly this reflection: an awareness of oneself and of others. My work explores and continues the necessary task of reinventing the ‘civic’ for our time.

Over the duration of the PhD, my understanding of the civic has deepened. If the conventional definition of civic space is to foster an engaged and collective civic life, I am suggesting some additional ways to do this in everyday spaces not normally considered civic. I believe my everyday projects constitute a form of civic landscape or an aspiration for civic dialogue where the first task is to alert users to a different potential appreciation and occupation of the space than what is typically sanctioned. Alertness brings self-consciousness in a space which encourages exactly this reflection: an awareness of oneself and of others. My work explores and continues the necessary task of reinventing the ‘civic’ for our time. The civic still meets its social needs for conviviality and encounter, but it can do more. The civic realm is thus expanded into other typically less-considered everyday spaces. This dissertation explores if such activated involvement can be considered civic, or is part of a vital sensibility essential to the ongoing health of ever-evolving civic life.

The following featured project, *Packing* (2013) a temporary installation on the River Torrens illustrates some of these points.
Packing (2013) worked directly with the banks of the river, inscribing a line from one bank to the other, creating an optical illusion of continuity under and across the river, which was deliberately humorous. One member of the public even asked “How did we do it? Scuba?”
Packing was a temporary public artwork in collaboration with Jess Miley. It was part of an exhibition called Felt Natural consisting of various artworks along the Torrens River for one weekend. Packing worked directly with the banks of the river, inscribing a line from one bank to the other, creating an optical illusion of continuity under and across the river, which was deliberately humorous. One member of the public even asked ‘How did we do it? Scuba?’ The felt starts at the historic Police Box, ‘rolls’ into the lake and emerges out the other side, similar to a line on a map reconstructed in the landscape. This geometric element draws attention to the existing landscape including typography and other more temporal characteristics including light and shadows. The felt surface could be rolled upon, picnicked on, gingerly crossed or slept on in addition to the phenomenological sensibility where attention was drawn to the constructed and smoothed banks of the River Torrens/Karra wirra-parri lake.

Packing used furniture removalists’ felt, which is partially made from recycled milk bottles. The felt was attached to the lawn with pins typically used for geotextile weed mats, another site reference to restoration, weed suppression. Over the 4 days of the installation the felt did affect the lawn underneath, and for a short time afterwards, there was a pleasing yellowed-lawn after image. Another unintended effect was a provocation of the council whereby their custodianship of the park was temporarily subverted. These aspects are all open to speculation and interpretation.

Packing references Joseph Beuys materially through the use of felt. Beuys first used felt in 1960 in smaller objects and in combination with fat, and he liked to play with both the negative and positive psychological character of felt. For example, in his piece Infiltration-Homogen for Grand Piano (1966), a piano was wrapped with a felt ‘skin’, which trapped the sound inside, alluding to powerlessness and an inability to communicate. In contrast, Beuys evokes images of protection, insulation, and spiritual warmth with his Felt Suit (1970). In Packing, while the felt was texturally different, it was tonally similar to the asphalt paths it crossed. People walking on the asphalt path gingerly crossed the felt installation not quite sure if this was ‘allowed’, at times also negotiating rolling children. I argue that this everyday involvement and noticing is civic.

Packing also references Michael Heizer’s earthwork Double Negative (1969-70, Mormon Mesa, Overton, Nevada). We appreciated Heizer’s concerns, including drawing attention to the context, ambiguity, and the expressive potential of simple materials, in this case, the earth of the site itself. While Double Negative created a void, Packing inscribes a line. However, similar to Double Negative, it is the relations with the site that are the real concern. Other so-called land artists have also been interested in inscribing lines on the landscape, including Robert Smithson, Richard Serra, Richard Hamilton and Carl Andre. What I appreciate and borrowed from these precedents is that the site is largely left unchanged and the interventions are somewhat interesting in their own right, but more importantly for the way they draw attention to the site. The site is re-presented. With Packing, there are a variety of ways to respond to the context, including the Aboriginal context, the site’s artificiality, and the associations of the now historic police box, the formal qualities of...
paths crossing over paths, and its adjacency to the River Torrens. The design solution was to prescribe a line that draws attention to these elements. This is also humorous to those that pick up the references, the in-joke about a line on a map reconstructed in the landscape, and also a redundant new path in a park with many paths. While the engagement of the public was anticipated, an unexpected aspect was the interaction of Aboriginal people, particularly during installation. A group of Aboriginal people nearby asked questions about the work and also told us about their lives. Later on during the installation, three aboriginal children returning from their adventures, immediately engaged with the work, rolling down the hill along the felt. Interactions between strangers in public spaces are often limited, but during the installation of Pack we had several people come up and ask what we were doing including the staff of the Popeye ferries that provide tourist cruises on the River Torrens. Returning to the site later, a man, perhaps homeless, perhaps intoxicated, was sleeping on the felt. It seemed the soft felt was preferable to the adjacent lawn. In modest ways Pack brought different demographics into proximity with each other. Aboriginal children rolling down the hill over the existing path literally ran into pedestrians who seemed unsure how to react to the felt. Were they allowed to step on it? What other choice did they have though? They were forced to ‘break the rule’. People were drawn to the felt and interacted with the installation by lying on it, touching it, picnicking on it, sleeping or looking on with bemused curiosity. The nuanced referencing generated a design that provoked a diversity of interpretations and responses in a non-didactic way. What I learnt from this project was the importance of the unexpected and the ludic. While unintentional, the minimalist gesture of the soft felt provided diverse opportunities for engagement. The responses to the work, while anticipated, were also open-ended. This aspect of the project seemed more important than the earlier stated aims about noticing the site’s physical characteristics. The public was invited to be involved in the site in different and multiple ways. In a phenomenological sense it brought attention to the constructed and smoothed banks of the River Torrens/Karra wirra-parri lake. In Pack, the choice and location of the felt are inseparable from the rolling and sitting activities and the encounter between the work and the existing path. The visceral experience – the aesthetic encounter – is the participatory moment, the way that a public can shape and re-see the place. This activated involvement I now consider a quality of Everyday Civic Landscapes; part of a vital sensibility essential to the ongoing health of ever-evolving civic life.
PART 2
DESIGNING EVERYDAY CIVIC LANDSCAPES
Reflection on the project work has uncovered a variety of tactics and manoeuvres I typically access to respond to the site and encourage involvement creating an Everyday Civic Landscape characterised by open-endedness. Part 2 consists of 4 chapters on each procedure describing them in detail, including others who work in this way. I follow each chapter with a featured project except the final chapter on “Humorous Devices” which draws on the previously featured projects. The key procedures are termed: “Site Tactics”, “Nuanced Referencing”, “Material Selections” and “Devices for Humor”.

“Site Tactics” initially involves a necessary “unpacking the site” that involves site research informing the further design activity. This material is “mined and processed” using a variety of typical tactical operations to reveal site potentials for enhanced, different and new appreciations. This is not at the service of then finding contextually “appropriate” design propositions that are nonetheless not visible or accessible to viewers and users, but to make the research evident in and through the design. I have identified there are two further possible designing activities that are related to responding to the site: planning for phenomenological effects and incorporating contextual concerns. The site is not redesigned but rather, the design results in the site being re-presented. It is my way to make insertions into the existing fabric and suggests that the various tactics that make up this method, which could be used for future insertions to continue the process of enriching. The Everyday Civic Landscape has greater significance and involvement than the much of the banal treatment in public open space.

“Nuanced Referencing” is a post-modern manoeuvre that stimulates ways to conceptually approach projects but also provides graphic tools to animate the work visually and formally. This design approach rejects the still widely held view of totalising schemes and masterplans being essential to design work. It is an approach that avoids the problem of design generation which relies on rote, site analysis, case study and precedent use which often can result in normative and unengaging places. In describing this approach I identified that its critical, tactical value can also be humorous or suggest material selection. And importantly that projects which are most open to varied interpretations use multiple tactical tools across different approaches and at different stages of the project. It characterises landscapes that are open to interpretation and can be engaged in multiple and open-ended ways.

I select materials for their associated meanings, their humbleness, and a metaphor for everydayness. The use of typical landscape materials in novel arrangements, patterning and juxtapositions provokes inquisitiveness and can generate humour. Accordingly, the material use supports civic aspirations in a number of ways by disrupting expectations of what is typically presented as the goal of responsible design of normative landscapes and by being open to interpretation. The public is involved in the site with their reactions to the familiar re-presented.

The use of “Devices for Humour” is not intended to be redemptive. This is in line with Zupancic’s position that humour is not an antidote to the difficulties of the human condition – it is part of the condition of being human. Humour can be at once despairing and hilarious. In Everyday Civic Landscapes humour can be deployed ironically or sardonically for critical propose but also playfully for ludic qualities to invite participation.
06: Site Tactics
Site Tactics: Responding to Context

This chapter discusses site tactics, procedures and manoeuvres applied in my practice when approaching a new project. I have identified that there are two designing activities that are related to responding to the site: planning for phenomenological effects and incorporating contextual concerns.

Before these occur, however, there is the necessary ‘unpacking the site’ that typically involves initial site research informing the further design activity. This site research includes a review of historical texts and contextual re-readings, site data collection and interpretive analysis along with the client and brief review. This material is ‘mined and processed’ using a variety of typical tactical operations to reveal site potentials for enhanced, different and new appreciations. Phenomenological effects are created by tactical design operations such as framing, weaving, mirroring, layering, folding, inserting, curating and other actions. The unearthed contextual concerns often form the conceptual underpinnings for the project’s design response. Communicating this requires degrees of legibility in the work using abstraction and representational techniques. To read these messages may be desirable but not essential. In other words, noticing them can enrich the viewer’s experience or even startle them from their expectations, but at the same time through the use of tactics, the work remains open to interpretation, resulting in varied experiences.

The site tactics can be developed to work in two ways: phenomenologically or directly on the senses; and responding to cultural concerns appealing to intellect or learnt associations. What I now also appreciate is that a site’s physical qualities, while being a necessary precondition to the experience of the project, are only one consideration, with additional contextual concerns always a part of the reception and perception of a site’s design. The work is dependent on all. As a result, there is an involvement with site that is complex including spatial experiences and intellectual engagement with imagery and messages. It is this dual, interlinked manner of engagement that contributes to Everyday Civic Landscapes.

DESIGNING FOR PHENOMENOLOGICAL EFFECTS

Patterned ground planes

One tactic to create phenomenological effects includes the use of patterned ground planes. Firbank Courtyard (2000), an installation at Firbank Grammar School in Melbourne’s east, responded to the campus environment of many, varied brick buildings from different eras of the school’s development. Three different coloured bricks were selected and arranged in a tartan-like, woven pattern the effect of which has different optical effects depending on the angle at which it is viewed and which of the three colours the viewer’s eyes are focused on.

This is not unlike the optical effects of some minimalist paintings. Gordon Tafe (2001) with its highly patterned groundplane used as its design source and enlargement of the minimalist paintings of Melinda Harper to generate a non-orthogonal geometry which also engages the eye.

Mirroring

The use of mirroring can have different effects. The use of mirrors is deliberate and extends a long fascination, historically, with the mirror’s unique qualities but also its more recent use, particularly...
in minimalist and conceptual art from the 1960s and early 1970s. These qualities were surveyed in Ann Stephen’s curated exhibition *Mirror Mirror: Then and Now* (Stephens 2010). With mirrors, there is an instability to the representation through the movement of the viewer and the changing conditions of the real. With *Helmet* (2009) the shiny black surface reflects the horizon and there is a doubling of the horizon in front with that being reflected behind. Up close the viewer is reflected with the landscape behind. *Glance* (2010) used a QR code laser cut in mirrored adhesive vinyl applied to external surfaces around Melbourne. When installed *Glance* attempts to evocatively place back into the landscape a quote from Janet Frame’s autobiographical *An Angel at My Table* (1985). The quote, ‘We’d glance at each other, close as skin and distant as horizons’ has been converted into QR Code. The code’s graphic black and white conditions are converted to silver and void, with laser cut “Bright Chrome” mirrored vinyl stencils. These stencils have then been placed in locations where their mirrored surfaces will reflect the view of the horizon behind the viewer.

**Insertions**

Interestingly, my earlier community art projects that are located in parks, gardens or playgrounds such as *Quarries Playspace, Dunstan Reserve, Coburg* and other community arts projects use additions or insertions. This use of insertions alerted me that this is a long-term fascination. At Coburg, additions to the existing garden using rocks, paving elements and seats respond to the poor, banal condition of fences, paths and lawn. In this regard, the engagement with the context is also one of intended amelioration of a weak condition. This is also an ongoing theme in my practice.
PART 2: SITE TACTICS

Through the initial sifting of my projects, I found I generally value projects that are insertions into the qualities of an existing landscape, where these insertions are objects into an existing landscape rather than a totalising landscape design. This includes *Helmet’s* (2009) steel elements on its earthwork plinth in the undulating parklands, the *Mrs Robinson* (2013) series of bike racks in the streetscape, *The Route Followed* (2009) with its 25 circular additions, the QR code stickers of *Glance* (2010), the felt line of *Packing* (2013) and even the *New Work* (1985-7) jewellery is an attachment on the site of the body. What I noticed was that these objects in the landscape more readily set up discursive opportunities with the already established site, including a literal open-ness with context.

CULTURAL CONCERNS: ABSTRACTION OF SITE INFORMATION

I was surprised to discover that I do use recognisable imagery. An example is the use of the figure in *The Lead Pedestrian* (1989) or the helmet in *Helmet* (2009). These are also particular types of insertions similar to the phenomenological ones discussed above. This is in line with well-known sculptural practices for the public realm, but it is the connection of the site information at its source, that is significant in these projects. Sometimes as in these examples, it is important that the references are legible. This is discussed in the earlier Chapter 4 “Civic and Site”.

Typically in my projects, narrative, historical content is abstracted. For example, *The Route Followed* (2009) uses a miniaturised map. In combination with other tactics, this creates a layered intervention (refer to the section ‘Featured Projects’ below.

The landscape treatment proposed vegetated rooftops, arbours (inspired by the image of an overgrown gutter, middle right) planted banks and integrated pavement treatments. These elements were unified using a linear graphic, originally abstracted from a photo of railway ballast (bottom right). Rather than the orthogonal arrangements typically seen in the streetscape layout in the design response I used an organising, “crinking” line that meandered through the site in three-dimensions both unifying and providing variety and diversity (sketches and model view left).
PART 2: SITE TACTICS

The use of tactics in specific response to complex site concerns allows for certain phenomenological effects to be experienced and certain appreciations of context, culture and history to be highlighted. These sensory and intellectual experiences are forms of discursive civic involvement. In the following section, discussions and illustrations of three projects, oRAH (2014), Mrs Robinson (2013) and The Route Followed (2009), provide an in-depth analysis of the site tactics employed to re-present the landscape and stimulate civic involvement.

For another project, Balaclava Walk (2003), I chose to reinterpret the City of Port Phillip’s Urban Design Guidelines as they included specified paving selection and arrangement, preferred plant selections and furniture for the adjacent street which would have resulted in a lacklustre context. The landscape design I created for the Balaclava train station upgrade proposed a re-presentation of the site using elements from the Port Phillip urban design materials palette in new formation. Rather than the orthogonal arrangements often seen in a streetscape layout, the design response I used was an organising, ‘crinking’ line that meandered through the site in three dimensions both unifying and providing variety and diversity. This was another form of visual and spatial abstraction of often used and common materials. The project did not proceed, it was never funded for a second stage. Although unbuilt, it was anticipated that through contrast and juxtaposition there would be a questioning of the typical streetscape design that could be apprehended by a thoughtful viewer.

Another project which illustrates the use of abstraction in response to cultural concerns is the oRAH (2013). The proposal for the old Royal Adelaide Hospital site retains as much as possible of the existing condition but “surgically” removes some buildings to allow us to propose highly programmed outdoor spaces and themed gardens.

The proposal (above) for the old Royal Adelaide Hospital site (below) retains as much as possible of the existing condition but “surgically” removes some buildings to allow us to propose highly programmed outdoor spaces and themed gardens. The design uses water and water features in a myriad of ways to activate the space and encourage involvement. At oRAH (2013), the history of the site was given a high priority and thus the design in plan is a literal palimpsest of the previous building footprints.
The main ideas established by architectural duo Sarah Lake and Stuart Harrison’s Slash in the first stage of this project were to adapt the historically listed and modernist buildings while ‘surgically’ removing remaining buildings and decreasing congestion to creating a new area of public space. In the subsequent second stage, Phillips/Pilkington and myself joined the team and advanced the concept.

The landscape design extends the metaphors of the hospital, health and the healing process as a strategy for the redevelopment of the Royal Adelaide Hospital site. Landscape shares many terms in common with the health professions, including ‘transplanting’ and ‘grafting’. There are also strong links between landscape and the development of pharmaceuticals, including traditional Aboriginal remedies, herbal medicine and plants whose synthetic derivatives have been used for conventional medicines. These practices and plants are celebrated in the species selection for Royal Adelaide. As with early botanic gardens, display gardens are both ornamental and educational. The site will also encourage active recreation in contrast to the Botanic Gardens’ ‘no bikes, no balls’ policies.

The developed landscape is a contemporary pleasure garden with venues for entertainment; having fun is good for you. The civic is expressed as a strategy that embraces the city as a place for children, with educational, entertainment and recreation opportunities including a children’s botanic garden and a large playground. This project also reprises historic landscape ideas, including the botanic garden and the pleasure ground. The approach is also contextual with the adjacent botanic gardens, also providing themes for the scheme. The site is reconsidered through both its adjacencies (botanic gardens) and the past land use (hospital).

The proposal for oRAH retains as much as possible of the existing condition and refashions it into highly programmed spaces and gardens. Medical metaphors are used, including references for design forms and especially plant selection. There is a literal kidney-shaped pool on the roof of the old nurses’ quarters. Plants such as the foxgloves, famous as the source of heart medication digitalis, or more humorously poppies as the source of pharmaceutical and illegal drugs are also proposed. This continues the function of the botanic gardens next door as a didactic garden and is one way the public would be both involved in the site, learning the story of medicinal plants and remembering the history of the site. The public is also engaged through the multiple programs of the garden rooms. The design uses water and water features in myriad ways to activate the space and encourage involvement, especially of children with the bamboo mist garden and interactive bubblers. I divided this large site using the well-worn device of themed gardens and plazas influenced by the adjacent context of the nineteenth century layout of the adjacent Adelaide Botanic Gardens. Context is important to my practice, not to be contextually subservient but as a rich source for design concepts. It is the idea of the botanic garden as a collection of diverse gardens that is borrowed, not its historical forms. The forms, a palimpsest of the footprints of the former hospital building which are demolished to create the public space creating multiple spaces that can be occupied, programmed and activated in diverse and both expected and unexpected ways.
This project was one in a series of bike rack commissions of several artists by Adelaide City Council aiming to encourage bike riding. I was allocated a site in O’Connell Street North Adelaide. Research revealed that the site context of North Adelaide was once known in colonial times for its many pubs, predominantly with distinctive English-styled names such as ‘The Old Lion’. I was keen to find pub names that included decorative animals such as cougars, leopards, giraffes or zebras. At this stage, I thought I would transform the bike racks into creatures or animals. I was already playing with the idea of the Duchampian modified readymade where I would start with the standard bike rack and make some form of modification. (See also Chapter 7 ‘Nuanced Referencing’). I performed one-to-one on-site experiments with tape and rubber pipe, but decided this idea seemed too cute and whimsical. Having had a long fascination with women wearing exotic animal prints, early on during site visits I noticed how prevalent this was as a current trend. This was the moment when the assisted readymade idea and the transformative qualities of women wearing animal prints, becoming representations of the animals themselves, came together. These are the cultural and contextual issues abstracted into the bike racks. The designing of the forms was the next activity.

At the same time, I was undertaking a variety of other research activities including photographing the site trying to understand its physical and spatial properties and reviewing the Adelaide City Council standards for bike racks. The available location of the bike racks was the typical thin corridor adjacent to the kerb. The council had guidelines for the set-out, but I pushed these to their limit, through consultation with the council’s traffic engineers, to have the series of racks as close as possible to each other and at a more acute angle. This tactic allowed for the phenomenological effect of the racks, at a certain angle, to be read as more chaotic and congested than the typical set-out.

Involvement with bike racks generally only occurs when cyclists are securing their bikes. In this case, while the aim is for them to be legible as bike racks, the design is also asking questions about the banality of streetscape design and the use of generic furniture. Thus, this provocation to think is an additional involvement not only for bike users but also for any passer-by. Even though the site itself is not changed, the insertions made in response to context re-present the site.
Investigations of historic photos revealed images with bicycles casually leaning against poles and fences. The contemporary bike rack is only a requirement due to the need to secure one’s bike. I was also struck by how pleasingly uncluttered the streets were.

Spatial investigations included testing the angles, number and spacing of the bike racks, aiming to create maximum complexity.

Early ideas to anthropomorphize the bike rack were tested with scale models, sketches and one-to-one testing on existing bike racks. These ideas seemed too whimsical, and so were developed into ideas using animal patterns.

Other animals patterns (dalmatian below and leopard above), were also explored in the first stage of the commission. The leopard spot was eventually chosen but the colour was deleted, mainly due to technical and maintenance issues.
The Route Followed

The Route Followed was a shortlisted, unbuilt public art project commissioned to enhance the public open spaces of Lightsview, a new residential development in Adelaide's north-east. The design responds to the historical associations of the site, the weak public open space amenity and the suburban context, with the need to provide additional play opportunities.

In 1919, the Australian Government offered £10,000 for the first successful aviators to fly from England to Australia in less than 30 days. An all-Australian crew (Sir Keith Smith, Sir Ross Smith, Sergeant Jim Bennett, and Sergeant Wally Shiers) completed the journey to Darwin on 10 December 1919. Their aircraft, G-EAOU, is preserved in a purpose-built museum at Adelaide Airport. The registration, G-EAOU, is whimsically said to stand for ‘God ‘elp all of us’. Lightsview is the site of the former airfield, in Adelaide's Northfield, where the successful aviators landed on 23 March 1920 to celebrate winning the competition as part of a national tour. 20,000 Adelaideans came to celebrate.

The Australians completed the journey in 27 days and 20 hours. They made 25 stops on the way from London to Darwin. The design uses the historic context of the site as its starting point, particularly the historic map of the journey, including the many stops along the way. The sculptural response uses steel circular forms to locate each of the 25 stop locations on the plan. The map is abstracted, the locational dots representing each place the plane stopped becoming a sculptural response. The dots of the map are extruded and manipulated, using Grasshopper software, into angular doughnut forms. The map of the route is then used to locate the elements back on the site as a record of the historic journey and the site’s connection to the former.

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PART 2: SITE TACTICS

The site, Lightsview, is the location of the former airfield, Northfield, where the successful aviators landed on 23 March 1920 to celebrate winning the competition. 20,000 Adelaidians came to celebrate.

The historical plan of the route showing the stops along the way was abstracted and miniaturised to locate the sculptural elements into the existing park.

Airfield. This is a narrative response to site history. It is also a miniaturisation of the plan along the linear park. The built map and the use of miniaturisation are historical and well-known landscape design tactics. Perhaps the most famous design tradition of miniaturisation is the Japanese garden, but there is also the picturesque tradition seen at Stourhead estate in the UK, where the lake is a miniaturisation of the Mediterranean Sea, and those strolling around the garden are re-enacting Aeneas’s journey from the Aeneid. The narrative at Stourhead is brought to the site in a theatrical way, however, whereas The Route Followed sources the narrative from the site’s own history.

Movement and curated views are important considerations for this project. I was influenced by Appleyard, Lynch and Myer’s (1964) discussion on choreographed movement and Bois’s (2000) insights on Stourhead, where he discusses the ‘fictive movement of the eye’ versus the actual movement of the body. In this case, the direct view down the allée of trees is in contrast to the indirect ‘dot to dot’ movement of the body. This is another type of involvement in addition to knowing the narrative content. I have identified that it is this rich layering of narrative, bodily and lucid interactions that are key components of Everyday Civic Landscapes.

The site adjacent to the main road in the suburb was a simple, uninspiring lawn area with an avenue of zelkovas. My first response was that one object was not enough and I quickly established the need to use the map as an organising device for the multiple elements that would redeem the site. Materially, the sculptures use the same materials as a nearby playground:
A sketch of the dot from the historical plan was further abstracted using Grasshopper to create a suite of forms that could take on different functions for play, seating, planters and tree surrounds.

Painted steel and rubber surfacing, hybridised with the black steel traditions of Modernism, including the works of Clement Meadmore and Inge King whose public art works bring another layer of intellectual reference and critique to this project. The sculptural elements are designed to meet the Australian Standards for playground construction. It was envisaged that as well as travelling ‘dot-to-dot’ to follow the route, children could interact and climb on the forms. Some of the dots become seats or tree guards. There is a welcome playful ambiguity in that it could be a sculpture, landscape furniture or playground. It was anticipated that there would be phenomenological effects as children, visitors and residents engage with the various elements.

The project sets up a dialogue with the site and attempts to redeem the poorly designed civic landscape through sculptural intervention. The design responds in a number of ways to the landscape including: to the physical qualities of the designed landscape; to the movement of both pedestrians and motorists; to the significant views into the site and of the city beyond, as well as celebrating the significant links of the site with the historic flight from England to Australia of some South Australians. The landscape is re-presented.

In my work, civicness comes in part from an ambition to redeem the site of poor amenity or go beyond the often minimal treatment of councils and developers. Overall, The Route Followed responds to the existing standard avenue treatment that lacks possibilities for engagement and richness, and instead proposes interventions that both recall the history of the site and double as an informal play element. In this case, the initial site analysis revealed a weak...
The designed insertions aimed to improve the weak and normative existing conditions of Zelkovas in the lawn (top). The nearby playgrounds provided the material palette of steel and granulated rubber (middle and bottom).

space and the design responded to this in ways that make the site more engaging. The project used the cultural and historical history of the site to abstract and generate the inserted steel elements but importantly did not erase or replace the found site conditions.

The project proposed a multitude of site and other tactics, both phenomenological and cultural, to establish an Everyday Civic Landscape.

The response to site uses both phenomenological and cultural concerns and results in the viewer having the possibility to both appreciate the phenomenological effects or read the abstracted content of a particular historical event. These are new discursive conditions, which are a condition of Everyday Civic landscapes are established.
07: Nuanced Referencing
This chapter discusses the explicit and sometimes more subtle, implicit use of referencing. It expands on the discursive nature of site-oriented practices discussed in the previous chapter. This procedure can also create the amusing, as discussed in Chapter 9 ‘Devices for Humour’. The selection of references can also be in response to the site context as discussed in the Chapter 7 ‘Site Tactics’. Counterintuitively or paradoxically, this tactic is a way to generate design responses that are not based on typical landscape architecture precedent studies or professional best practice. They are rather an acknowledgement and exploration of conceptual, material, and other partial and lateral linkages between ideas for the design of the site and ideas from a wide variety of other sites, projects and practices. Referencing is a way to comment on the site and a lens through which to (re)view the site. Importantly, I am using the term ‘reference’ rather than ‘precedent’, as precedent studies can often result in unoriginal designs that are an adapted copy of another similarly identifiable project.

MODERNISM VS POSTMODERNISM

In all the arts a war is being waged between modernists and postmodernists. Radicals have tended to side with the modernists against the forces of conservatism. Postmodern Culture is a break with this tendency. Its contributors propose a postmodernism of resistance - an aesthetic that rejects hierarchy and celebrates diversity. Ranging from architecture, sculpture and painting to music, photography and film, this collection is now recognised as a seminal text on the postmodernism debate. (Foster 1983, back cover).

The ‘Nuanced Referencing’ I have identified comes primarily from my training as an artist at Curtin University, where post-modernist theory and practice was dominant (1983-85); and my training in Landscape Architecture at RMIT (1994-98) when modernism and landscape modernism was being retrieved. At WAIT (Western Australian Institute of Technology) we were reading postmodern texts such as Suzi Gablik’s Has Modernism Failed? (1984) and Hal Foster’s edited The Anti-Aesthetic: essays on postmodern culture (1983). At that time, I agreed with Gablik’s assertions that Modernism had failed to meet its idealist and utopian aims and had become complicit with capitalism and consumerism. She argued that artists had lost touch with their audiences and called for work that was more engaged. This sentiment informed my decision after graduation to often work with communities, school children and trade unions on participatory and community art projects. The Anti-Aesthetic included essays by Hal Foster, Jürgen Habermas, Kenneth Frampton, Rosalind Krauss1, Douglas Crimp, Craig Owens, Gregory L. Ulmer, Fredric Jameson, Jean Baudrillard, and Edward W. Said. I was taken with Jameson’s discussion on pastiche, a dead parody:

[P]astiche: in a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum. But this means that contemporary or postmodernist art is going to be about art itself is a new kind of way; even more, it means that one of its essential messages will involve the necessary failure of art and the aesthetic, the failure of the new, the imprisonment in the past (Jameson 1983, pp.115-6).

1.Interestingly the anthology included Krauss’s seminal “Sculpture in the Expanded Field” which I was influenced by later on through Elizabeth Meyer’s “Landscape Architecture as Modern other and Postmodern ground” republished in The Culture of Landscape Architecture (1994).
When I attended RMIT a decade later, a re-evaluation of modernism was underway, with a celebration of American and French Landscape Modernism. This was assisted by the publication of *Denatured Visions: Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Wrede & Adams 1991), *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review* (Treib, 1993), and in 1993 of Dorothee Imbert’s *The Modernist Garden in France*. Imbert and Treib visited RMIT to promote her book in 1994. The impetus was, ‘to review and assess the tenets, accomplishments, and limits of modernism in landscape architecture and, as a result, formulate ideas about possible directions for the discipline’ (Treib 1983, rear cover). At the time this seemed reasonable enough, but I now see this work as just another influence to be mined. The use of these landscape modernism references is seen in projects like *Sunshine Hospital* with its use of biomorphic form, feature planting, and continuous in situ concrete. As students we were also exposed to other landscape architects who were sourcing earlier art movements for their own purposes, including *Land Art* by George Hargraves, *Minimalism* by Peter Walker, and *Pop and Minimalism* by Martha Schwartz. I now see that even this interest in land art and minimalism was in light of modernist simplicity and monumental abstract forms. Whenever there was a modernist interest being cultivated, my prior exposure to postmodernism in Western Australia primed me to interpret the more postmodern qualities of such projects. Of course, Schwartz is the exception, in that like myself, she had postmodern training and she brought much irony with her own use of referencing. This is discussed further in Chapter 9 ‘Devices for Humour’.

Within my peer group there were also others who had a bent for the absurd and subversive play, including Anna Bradbury Little, Cassandra Chilton, and Jo Russell-Clarke. At the same time, this was when the ARM Architecture’s Storey Hall was opened and the Landscape School had just moved into Edmond and Corrigan’s Building 8. Both practices used postmodern tactics of referencing including architectural, historical and local cultural references. I was already sympathetic to their use of multiple references in both buildings. These practices also shared with me an ambition for civic outcomes that I still admire.

As a result of these varied influences from both Modernist and Post-Modern agendas, my work has referenced a variety of artists and movements with their charged mix of agendas. Generally, the selected artists or movements to be referenced also have a dedication to mind opening difference and novelty, despite being stylistically diverse. There is a vigour of contentedness in the Dadaists (Duchamp), Minimalists (Serra, Judd), Beuys, the US Landscape Modernists (Dan Kiley), Land Artists (Smithson, Andre, Heizer), Biomorphic Surrealism (Miro, itself influencing the US-LA modernists and Burle-Marx), and Australian Modernism (Nolan). I use the referencing technique to generate form, but there is also a playful, witty, subversive take on the work of the twentieth century artists and movements.

This is different to the admiration I have for contemporary artists and landscape architects, including the use of materials and metaphor in the work of British sculptors Tony Cragg and Bill Woodrow, the disparate group of European jewellers who were redefining the field in the 1980s through their irreverent attitudes and focus on the body, and later the art-based landscape practices of Martha Schwartz, with her use of humour and atypical materials, or the work of Dutch agency West 8, with their interest...
I can see now that I was influenced by the proposal for a ‘postmodernism of resistance – an aesthetic that rejects hierarchy and celebrates diversity’. In my work I am often disturbing the existing conditions or hierarchy. The insertions I make can be ambiguous, and while celebrating diversity, allow for open-ended interpretations.

Packing (2013) used dual references: Michael Heizer’s earthwork *Double Negative* (1969-70) and Joseph Beuys’ ubiquitous use of felt.

My use of nuanced references can be from the cultural context, such as in the use of the Ned Kelly imagery for *Helmet* (2009) or external references can be brought to the site, as seen in the use of Heizer’s *Double Negative* (1969-70) in my project *Packing* (2013). Both approaches in different ways set up opportunities for discursive involvement. Sometimes the references are used to generate novel ground planes seen most clearly my use of Melinda Harper’s *Untitled* (1999) painting at Gordon TAFE. George Hargraves also does this with *Harlequin Plaza* (1982) very literally bringing Bridget Riley’s Op Art graphic effects into the landscape for the creation of a dynamic shopping centre plaza. In this case, the optical effect dominates all other concerns for the site.

**CONTEXTUAL REFERENCES**

I collaborated with Cassandra Chilton for *Helmet* (2009), a project which uses contextual site references. In her streetscape project *Afghan Bazaar Cultural Precinct* (2015) Chilton again uses site references to develop a response to the particular demographic of a retail strip in Melbourne’s Dandenong dominated by Afghan business, and was an exercise in reaffirming the place of recent
Afghan migrants. The project consulted extensively with the local Afghan community to develop themes for the streetscape design.

A very small project, just a small suburban streetscape, but it’s a unique and vibrant community that occupies a particular social space in our city and has very particular needs. The process of consulting with them and evolving a design that could really be a community space and showcase their culture and identity to the citizens of Dandenong was really great. (Chilton 2016)

These have been abstracted by Chilton into paving patterns, furniture and lighting elements. The project draws attention to and celebrates its context. There is an ambition for the streetscape that can be particular rather than generic. It uses generic elements to do so (the City of Dandenong’s ‘Revitalising Central Dandenong Technical Notes’ mandated the material selections) but the repetitive banded paving patterns mandated in this streetscape manual were transmuted into the geometries recognisable to the Afghan community, and the seat materials employed to form new plinths reminiscent of the Persian sufa or charpoy, a woven mat or bed. Beyond the celebratory are questions of identity and migration, even discrimination, in the context of Melbourne’s suburban Frankston.

EXTERNAL REFERENCES BROUGHT TO THE SITE

An artist whose work in the public realm brings external information to the site is Callum Morton. He also parodies modernist traditions as the basis for much of his work, drawing attention to the modernist legacy. In a review of Morton’s work for a survey show at the Heide Museum of Modern Art, Michael (2011, p.3) notes: ‘The highly ambivalent objects that result animate the tensions between art and life, history and the present, and make us look again at the ubiquitous structures we see but rarely notice.’ In the reworking of modernist icons there is both a critique and homage. Models of key works are present in the museum gallery, but in sculptures such as In the Pines (2008), the recognisable signage of Le Pine funeral parlour is faithfully reproduced and installed in the grounds of the museum. It is a joke working in juxtaposition to its contents and its context and represents the entire Heide site as a museum but one that ‘counters the common fear that the museum survey consigns an artist’s work to the past’ (Michael 2011, p.57).

As an example, many have been influenced by Serra’s work but have used this influence in different ways. Anton James in his dissertation describes the influence of imagined mentors, not through quotation but as lessons learnt. ‘Mentors are used to discover something new in my own work, or to suggest a way of working rather than to emulate the physicality of their work’ (James 2013, p. 170). These lessons are Serra’s ‘reading of scale… his engagement with space and movement…and his insistence on the peripatetic…mass and groundedness’ (James 2013, p. 39). Aspect’s installation, The Meeting Place (2009-10), references the form of Serra’s Clara Clara (1983) but changes its colour to yellow and the material to a stretchy taut fabric that bodies can bounce against. As with Clara Clara, pedestrians are forced to squeeze through the narrowed space of the almost touching arcs. Serra’s seriousness is transformed into a playful and ludic exercise. The reference itself, though, is not important or even acknowledged (Aspect, 2017). I appreciate the playful aspects that are also present in some of my projects. However,
this project only responds to the physical conditions of the site and
does not respond to any other aspect or generate other means
beyond the interaction. For me, this is a lost opportunity to enrich
this type of project. In the project Helmet, both lessons are learnt
about a phenomenological approach but there are also formal
similarities quoted in a postmodern way.

There is a long tradition of the copy in architecture, which is
illustrated in ‘Our international history of the copies’, a chapter
in ARM’s book Mongrel Rapture (Raggatt et al. 2015, p.42) One
example of this is the use of copying by ‘J J Clarke in imitating
Sansovino’s Villa Garzoni at Pontecasale in his Melbourne Treasury
Building’ (Raggatt et al. 2015, p.42), arguing that the copy is a
way cultures are disseminated. However, ARM do more than this,
having long been involved with copying and literalism as a way
into the project that avoids precedent, especially in their early
works such as Not the Vanna Venturi House or Kronborg Clinic
(1993), the St Kilda Library and Town Hall (1994) and many others
(Raggatt et al. 2015).

In a small gesture, ARM appear to have appropriated the form of
Serra’s arc-based sculptures for the ramp at St Kilda Town Hall,
also painting it a playful green rather than the sombre minimalist
black. (Later developments by others re-painted it a more neutral
tone.) I like the way the high-brow, minimalist, phenomenological
Serra has been appropriated to meet the pragmatic requirements
of disability access into the building. The perfection of the steel
arc is also disfigured with the requisite handrail. Whether the
reference is recognised or even intended is perhaps not important,
as this also illustrates that, like a viewer, I bring my baggage to the
viewing and interpretation of the work. Any viewer is interpreting
the work according to their existing ideas and experience. The
technique for both ARM and my work is that it is not so literal as to
be obvious, but has other motivations and readings.

I began to understand that in projects such as Helmet (2009),
The Route Followed (2007), Mrs Robinson (2013) and Packing
(2013), the references also sometimes inform material selection,
including the use of black steel (a modernist trope) or the use of
felt, with the unavoidable comparison with Joseph Beuys. For
those familiar with his work, Richard Serra references can be
seen in Helmet (2009) in the use of large steel planes. Serra seeks
to redefine site through phenomenological means (Bois 2000),
and Helmet also does this with its unfolding triangular retaining
walls and the large framing screen, not dissimilar to Serra’s Spin
out, for Robert Smithson (1972-3). However, Serra’s sculptures
would never have included the pop culture references of the Kelly
armour and legend in the Nolan painting, nor the pop art tactic
of Oldenburg’s oversized objects as designed in Helmet (2009).
Chilton and I brought the Pop Art techniques of oversizing to the
minimalist trope to redefine the park, create the gateway, and
send up Heide’s obsession with its founding. There is humour
and engagement for those that recognise the reference to the
popular and well-known Ned Kelly story. There is a richness in the
use of multiple references and many opportunities for the public
to engage with the work regardless of whether the references are
able to be read or not.

NOVEL GROUNDPLANES

The third way my work uses references to generate novel ground
planes is the use of optical, colour and graphic effects to create
drama, in contrast to the polite expectations for a typically civil

Richard Serra Titled Arc 1981 (above) influenced both Asepct’s Meeting Place 2009-10 (middle) and our project Helmet (below).
PART 2: NUANCED REFERENCING

Packing references Joseph Beuys materially through the use of felt. “Beuys first used felt in 1960 in smaller objects and in combination with fat, and he liked to play with both the negative and positive psychological character of felt. For example, in his piece *Infiltration-homogen for Grand Piano* (1966) (top right), a piano was wrapped with a felt “skin”, which trapped the sound inside, alluding to powerlessness and an inability to communicate. In contrast, Beuys evokes images of protection, insulation, and spiritual warmth with his *Felt Suit* (1970)” (Walker 2018). In Packing while the felt is texturally different, it was tonally similar to the asphalt paths it crossed. People walking on the asphalt path gingerly crossed the felt installation, not quite sure if this was “allowed”, at times also negotiating rolling children. I argue that this is everyday involvement and noticing is civic.

Packing also references Michael Heizer’s earthwork *Double Negative* (1969-70) (below right). We appreciated Heizer’s concerns, including drawing attention to the context, ambiguity, and the expressive potential of simple materials, in this case, the earth of the site itself. While *Double Negative* created a void, Packing inscribes a line. However, similar to *Double Negative*, it is the relations with the site that are the real concern.

public space. Examples include Gordon TAFE (2001), Firbank Courtyard (1994) and University Square (2001). This can be seen most clearly in my use of Melinda Harper’s *Untitled* (1999) painting in my work at Gordon TAFE. This method I also mainly use to generate optical effects that disrupt expectations of what institutional courtyards can be. At oRAH, the plan is generated not from external references, but rather a palimpsest approach uses the footprints of demolished building to generate the various themed gardens.

Other artists’ works are sometimes abstracted graphically to generate the ground plane patternation and activate the space in novel, dynamic ways. In the same way, a project such as George Hargreaves’s *Harlequin Plaza* very literally brought Bridget Riley’s Op Art graphic effects into the landscape for the creation of a dynamic shopping centre plaza. In this case, the optical effect dominates all other concerns for the site. (This is also discussed further in Chapter 8 on ‘Unremarkable Materials’.)

CONCLUSION

The results of this art-based approach are that it embraces ambiguous interpretations over dogmatic certainties. This was at the core of the internal tensions and arguments of the various branches of the emerging and still-contested ideas of the picturesque. Hunt (1994) identified that in eighteenth century landscape design, a point was the narrowing of valid experience and appreciation to those who could decipher the coding in the design. This ‘simple’ picturesque was in contrast to Knight’s ‘reading’ of the garden that permitted broad and unambiguous appreciations, rich though these may be with possible classical,
political and other associations (Russell-Clarke 2017). For me, the use of referencing is not intended to be elitist or mere simple coding to be read, but is in line with Knight’s call for expansive experiences and experience-based encounters. This does not deny that a ‘literate’ or liberally educated audience – one with an art-based appreciation – would appreciate nuanced and multiple references, however. Trieb (1995) also discuss this issue of deciphering intended meanings in his seminal ‘Must Landscapes Mean?’

Nuanced referencing is a design tactic that can contribute to the reconfiguration of the civic, enhance people’s engagement with the context and be humorous or critical. It is not essential that the references are able to be precisely ‘read’ in ways that link them to learned understandings of their specific referents. They carry a raft of subtler hints and clues – stylistic and experiential – to complex layered interpretations of those histories, adding their own interpretative gloss. The aim is an effect that encourages viewers to look at their surroundings thoughtfully. Claire Bishop (2005, p127) discusses the artist Thomas Hirschhorn’s installation work in these terms: ‘the viewer is no longer required to fulfil a literally participatory role, but instead to be a thoughtful and reflective viewer.’ As discussed in Chapter 5, ‘Discursive Civic Involvement’, the aim is not about the designer generating engagement activities but about designing the engagement possibilities. The use of nuanced references can contribute to this, through engaging with the reference if it is legible, or engaging in other unspecified ways with the novel outcomes of this design tactic.

In the following section, I discuss Mrs Robinson in greater detail highlighting how nuanced references are utilised to respond to site and encourage involvement, resulting in the creation of open-ended works that make multiple interpretations possible.

‘Nuanced referencing’ stimulates ways to conceptually approach the projects but also provides the graphic tools to animate the project visually and formally. The tactic can also be critical, humorous or suggest material selection. Particularly in my installation and sculpture projects, it is a way to make insertions into the existing fabric and suggests that this method could be used for future insertions even by others, as landscapes are in a constant process of change over time. This is a design tactic that rejects the widely held view of totalising schemes and masterplans being essential to design work. It is a tactic that can avoid the problem of design approaches which rely on site analysis, case study and precedent approaches resulting in normative responses. It results in landscapes that are open to interpretation and can be engaged with in multiple and open-ended ways. I argue that this is what makes them Everyday Civic Landscapes.
This bike rack commission referenced Bicycle Wheel (1913)’s assisted ready-mades. I was particularly drawn to Bicycle Wheel (1913) for its associations with the bike rack, not that this was a concern of Duchamp’s. Interestingly, Duchamp said, ‘I enjoyed looking at it, just as I enjoy looking at the flames dancing in a fireplace’ (MONA 2016) and encouraged viewers to spin the wheel. This also accords with my interest in participation and involvement.

When initiating a project there is a period of spatial, cultural and historical site research until I find a ‘hook or hooks’ for the project. Typically, when designing I undertake detailed research of the site conditions, including the physical conditions, the history of the site and the nature of the commissioning. This is not at the service of then finding contextually ‘appropriate’ but invisible design propositions, but to make this research evident in the design. This conversation with the site is what makes the work site responsive. Sometimes this comes easily, but sometimes not. Mrs Robinson was an example of a difficult process. This included researching the history of the site, finding historical photos, considering the names of nearby and historic hotels, identifying the qualities of standard bike racks, and considering the need and function of bike racks. The design emerged when I made the link with Duchamp’s precedents of the assisted readymade, resulting in my crossing the standard bike rack with the fashionable leopard print. The results are sculptural elements that alter and disrupt expectations of the streetscape, send up the recurring fashion trend that sees women impersonating wild African animals, but are also legible and functional as bike racks. The Mrs Robinson bike racks can be considered standalone sculptures with or without bikes. That the sculptures function, or are performative, as

Duchamp Bicycle Wheel (1913).
bikes racks are also intriguing and ambiguous. There is an open-endedness with the opportunity for interpretation. They function as multiple bike racks but push the formal possibilities within the limitations of the project. The bike rack is also re-presented.

Early in the design process I found many historic photos of streets with bikes leant against fences and poles. In the photos the streets were so clear of the clutter of the contemporary street with its furniture signage and infrastructure. It also occurred to me that the only reason we need bike racks is for security, a sad indictment that it is no longer possible to casually leave your bike leaning against a fence and expect to find it on your return.

In *Mrs Robinson*, the transformation comes about through using the readymade bike rack and modifying its form with additional stainless steel elements while the original form is still legible. In this way, it references Duchamp’s assisted readymades. The current resurgence of the animal print trend is also captured in Mrs Robinson. Animal skins have long been worn for warmth and protection. Wearing animal skins may even have been perceived as a way of conferring the strength of animals to humans. With modern textile technologies as well as objections to the use of real fur, simulated animal prints have become widely available. This may, however, be further evidence of what John Berger (2008) identifies as our impoverished relationships with animals in the modern era. The use of animal print is always transformative. The cougar animal print transforms everyday street furniture, in our impoverished urban realm, with the most exotic of animal simulations. This is used as a decorative surface pattern, but also in the deliberately oversized tubular stainless steel additions. The use of the leopard print comments on the perennial use by the fashion industry of animal prints for women’s clothes, albeit one that may have its roots in the historic use of animal hides to keep warm. I was also interested in other pop culture activities such as wearing masks or Mickey Mouse ears, whereby people can take on another character. Other popular expressions are car tyres turned into Christmas trees, or Loch Ness monsters. This is often funny; a simple, populist joke where ‘this’ becomes ‘that’.

Stainless steel is the material of choice for bike racks, for its durability and minimal maintenance requirements. The project’s use of the appropriated idea of the Duchamp’s assisted readymade means that stainless steel is retained for its associations with bike racks. Thoughtful consideration of materials enhances the opportunities for interpretation.

The approach is intended to be playful, ironic, humorous and ambiguous, and it is this quality and the resulting involvement that I now consider a quality of Everyday Civic Landscapes. The assisted readymade gave me a way into the project conceptually through the use of transformation. This resulted in forms that are obviously bike racks but not like other bike racks. This sets up both the humour and makes comment on street furniture, including its banality and its clutter. Importantly, I did this without compromising the functional requirements. Bike racks are not normally funny but largely invisible. It is also open to interpretation, as others have asked me if the design is the bike chain abstracted and enlarged. Even though this was not the intention, it is significant that multiple interpretations have been generated. The work made them think. Perhaps others just wonder, ‘What is going on here? Is it art?’
08: Material Selections
The vernacular glance doesn’t recognise categories of the beautiful and ugly. It just deals with what’s there. Easily satiated, cynical about big occasions, the vernacular glance develops a taste for anything, often notices or creates the momentarily humorous, but doesn’t follow it up…Nor does it pause to remark on unusual juxtapositions, because the unusual is what it is geared to recognise, without thinking about it. It dispenses with hierarchies of importance since they are constantly changing to where you are and what you need (O’Doherty 1973, p.197)

Particular use and selection of materials contributes to Everyday Civic Landscapes. Materials are the substance of the designed public landscape and have histories, associations and symbolic meanings. They can have effects. The materials can be sourced from or respond to the site context. The connotations and symbolism of material selections intersect across the other design procedures including a site-specific response, nuanced referencing and humour. Sometimes the use of materials is funny, references other artists, or is sourced from site investigations. My selections of ordinary, economical materials are also often utilised in novel arrangements to create an engaging intervention and disrupt expectations. When everyday, economical materials are used, I am able to more easily avoid pretentious or exclusionary associations and this contributes to the Everyday Civic. This interest in material began with my use of rubbish in the New Work (1985-7) series and was influenced by my arts training and exposure to the Dadaist use of found materials and collage, the later reprisal seen in Rauschenberg’s ‘vernacular glance’ (O’Doherty 1973, p.197), and the work of British artists, Tony Cragg and Bill Woodrow, with the alchemical transformation of junk materials into powerful assemblages (Bond & Wright 1985).

In landscape architecture the material selection is often driven by pragmatic concerns such as robustness or price. While bluestone does have historical associations and geologic relevance, Melbourne City Council mandates it for its strength and longevity. The Council’s ‘bluestoning’ policy, where all footpaths must use a regulation material, dimension and detailing, leaves the landscape of the streets mute. At best, the symbolism which connects the use of stone to ideas of stability and longevity now seems largely irrelevant and was, at any rate, always politically conservative. The focus of material choice on only pragmatic concerns limits other expressive potential and association. Stainless steel is the material of choice for bike racks and handrails, selected for its durability and minimal maintenance requirements. In my project Mrs Robinson (2013), using the appropriated idea of Duchamp’s assisted readymade means that the stainless steel is retained for its parody of generic bike racks. More thoughtful consideration of materials is a key way to enhance opportunities for interpretation. In my practice I identify two approaches to material selection and arrangement that contribute to Everyday Civic Landscapes. Firstly, the arrangement and patterning of modest materials that disrupt expectations. Both at Gordon Tafe (2001) and Firbank Courtyard (2000), this is the case with their highly patterned ground planes. Secondly, materials can be selected because of their capacity to
draw out or signify aspects of the site context and history. This presents new conditions prompting new perspectives for users to respond to. For *Helmet* (2009) we used steel – the material of the Kelly helmet – but painted it black using Dulux black referencing Nolan. Nolan famously used ordinary house paint including for his Ned Kelly Series. *Firbank Courtyard* (2000) also responds to the existing site by utilising a ‘woven’ brick pattern referencing the three main brick hues that have been used throughout the school, literally weaving the courtyard into the school fabric. Alternatively, projects such as *Packing* (2013) use felt which is a material brought into the site for its association with Beuys, landscape restoration and comfort. Therefore, the material selection is at the service of a varied and deliberate range of engagements and involvements, across the projects but also within each project.

**DISTURPING EXPECTATIONS**

Many of the projects have small budgets and my work demonstrates that all projects, no matter what the construction budget, have the potential to do and say more. In fact, smaller budgets may make this even more likely. Unremarkable, often suburban landscape materials are used in *Gordon TAFE* (2001) and *Firbank Courtyard* (2000) to disrupt expectations of courtyard use and create unexpected effects. A range of design moves, precise with messiness, non-orthogonal geometry at *Gordon TAFE*, and woven ground planes at *Firbank Courtyard*, achieves this disruption. The arrangement and patterning upsets expectations of the typical use of pavement materials which are usually uncomplicated, monolithic, and clean with clear ground planes privileging orderliness, clarity, wayfinding and safety. Instead this is an expression where both my courtyards aim to have stimulating visual and spatial phenomenological effects on people, make links with the cultural aspects of both school and TAFE, in addition to providing a necessary and welcome amenity for sitting, educational activities and socialising.

*Firbank Courtyard* (2000), an installation at Firbank Grammar School in Melbourne’s east, responded to the campus environment of many, varied brick buildings from different eras of the school’s development. I selected three of these, found their contemporary product equivalent in colour, finish and size and used an optical illusion that makes the bricks look woven together. The courtyard is designed as an important linking space between the older areas of the school and a new science wing. The courtyard retains two large existing elm trees, framing them with elliptical concrete edged forms carved out of the patterned ground plane. This enhances them as the focus of the space. Two large ovoid planes of grass allow for root aeration and shaded seating areas for the students. This plan graphic is visible to hundreds of students from the busy balconies of the new science wing. The pattern was sourced from Peter Spooner’s Readers Digest home gardening manual, *Practical Guide to Home Landscaping* (1973). At Gordon TAFE (2001), a selection of patterns was also utilised, but here, the three colours of common bricks are used for a vibrant pattern that establishes different optical effects as people move through the courtyard.

**ASSOCIATIONS**

The *New Work* (1985-7) series rejected traditional and pretentious material choices, instead using found materials, mainly from
roadsides. These included rubber washers, shoe heels, rubber from tyres and also broken indicator and brake light covers. Some of the materials had easily comprehended associations with their former use, while other materials were less obvious. Mainly materials were assembled as found using stainless steel wire. In some works, precious elements including pearls and gold leaf gilding were combined with the rubbish. The material selection is critical to the work and makes comment on the typical use of so-called precious metals and jewels. People’s involvement comes from recognising the objects, identifying them as recycled and reading the critique of much traditional jewellery. In *The Lead Pedestrian* (1989), the lead sheeting is used for its associations with heaviness and toxicity can be understood by attentive audiences. That material selection is not neutral or pragmatic but carries associations that can be useful to designs. In *Packing* (2013) the felt was selected for its associations as well as its softness and asphalt-like colour. A thoughtful viewer can read these associations.

Another strategy I use is to redeem the poorly designed everyday site with new interventions. In *The Route Followed* (2009) this includes using the materials of the nearby playground landscape to construct the interventions. Powder-coated steel and granulated rubber inscribe the historic plane route into the landscape using typical landscape elements: seats and tree guards. The material selection has both associations with modernist sculpture and the nearby playground’s palette. In this case, the associations are both site-specific, but other ideas parodying modernist sculpture are also brought to the site. Community members can also notice these connections beyond the literal site of the projects.

The use of material selections is to disrupt expectations or to make associations. The selection and arrangement of materials contribute to the response to site and the involvement of people that I have identified with Everyday Civic Landscapes.
This courtyard design was undertaken with architect Julian Scanlan from SKM1 to provide a new facility for the teaching of carpentry, plumbing and landscape construction at the Gordon Institute of TAFE in Geelong.

The initial landscape concept was to reflect what happens inside the building on the outside, rather than the usual condition where the courtyard is merely a respite from the internal. This is a version of the well-worn modernist trope of blurring the inside and the outside. This then reminded me of the first botanic garden at Padua, a didactic garden for the teaching of herbal medicine. Also the local version, the Systems Garden at the University of Melbourne. At Gordon Tafe the courtyard is able to be utilised for demonstration purposes by teaching staff, with its pavement a mosaic of brick patterns, concrete finishes, timber decking, a catalogue of steel sections and a display of drainage pit lids. The courtyard is a contemporary version of a historic didactic model but also a parody of the original being used for a trade school, not a university garden, which makes comment though juxtaposing high and so-called low culture.

The set-out uses contemporary Australian artist, Melinda Harper’s Untitled (1999) to generate the organising plan. Her disruption to pictorial space resonated with my requirement to distort the orthogonal qualities of the architecture. This is also a disruption of the usual expectation for the landscape design to be sympathetic with the architecture rather than continue its orthogonal logic into the landscape. This use of nuanced referencing of the painting to organise the ground plan has an aesthetic function but also provides a way to organise the disparate elements that allow for the social occupation and other functions of the space. Schwartz also discusses the ‘visual potential of the flat plane’, as also seen at Newmarket in its ‘crink’ and ‘crank’ geometric layout. The BBQ and seated area and planting are elements that are extruded from the plan. Designed for the trees to form an oblique alée to enter the building from the adjacent carpark the trees, Eucalyptus pauciflora (snow gum) were selected for their shedding stripy bark that has orange (red-brown), light grey to white tones to correlate with the colour palette selected. Unfortunately they were at the extreme of their climactic habitat requirements and thus these trees did not survive establishment and the additional drought at this time. The client substituted flowering cherries that also failed to establish. Regrettably, the courtyard has never achieved the designed spatial qualities and remains largely planar, paradoxically resembling more its planar genesis.

The courtyard employs inexpensive materials. In this case, an excessive of contested materials are juxtaposed where conventionally the palette is more limited. Again it used Spooner’s catalogue of brick paving patterns. (Spooner 1973 p. 54-5) It is both this excess and the parody of the typical design response that makes the courtyard humorous. I selected colours that correspond to, but are yet paler than, the architect’s brighter palette of orange, black and white with the use of salmon bricks, glazed black bricks, timber decking, galvanised steel and salmon, grey and white in situ concrete. The courtyard design both ‘fits in’ with the architecture, and provides dramatic interest through contrast.

The courtyard is the formal entry to the building but not the only entry. It is also a gathering space for students and staff, especially

1. SKM Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) was a global multidisciplinary firm.
2. Melinda Harper is a Melbourne based abstract artist. She claims the works are her responses to observations of looking at the world around her alongside her interest in disrupting of pictorial space. It is this disruption that I have borrowed for the courtyard geometries. (Cramer 2015, McGregor and Zimmer 2007)
Brick patterns (above) and bollard details showing the catalogue of steel sections approach (below left). A variety of pit lid styles were also incorporated (bottom right).
smokers. There is a BBQ, and while it may be little-used, this signals the possibility of inhabiting the space in more social way rather than using it as a mere thoroughfare. It is designed to be engaging, aesthetically, functionally and amenity-wise, making it a civic space. Although it has a limited demographic, the students and staff now understand that civic space is possible in these more unlikely location.

PART 2: MATERIAL SELECTIONS

A few years after construction the lomandra has grown, an informal hedge of plants extruded into the third dimension. In the background, you can see a construction system prototype has been installed, pleasingly continuing the didactic functions of the space.
09: Devices for Humour
Professor SueAnne Ware pointed out early on during the research for this thesis that humour is a tactic in my work. My use of devices for humour is aimed at increasing the possibilities for the involvement of the public. In reflecting on my projects, I have discovered that the use of humour is a common aspect of all significant civic projects. I use humour in different forms including irony, parody, in-jokes, ‘making strange’ and the more absurdist, playful, participatory ludic tactics. This section discusses how humour can contribute to Everyday Civic Landscapes, mainly through the discursive involvement of people in the site. I use humour with three aims: to disrupt expectations of what is expected in public space; to comment on the site context with a wry twist; and to encourage ludic activity. I have recognised that humour also often links the other tactics and concerns in that the use of referencing can be amusing, the selections of materials can be witty, and the response to the site’s historical, spatial and cultural contexts can be ironic. Many of the references in the earlier chapter ‘Nuanced Referencing’ are also amusing to those that get the joke. The ‘weaving’ of bricks might provoke a smile, or the abstraction of Nolan’s helmet is read as ironic by some. No one project is highlighted in this chapter, as humour permeates all projects and might even be a defining characteristic of my practice. An outcome of the humorous devices is that particular types of involvement with the work result, including physical playfulness and getting the joke or reading the message.

Perhaps unlike other text-based art forms where satire and humour can be readily seen, landscape and ‘nature’ are perceived as serious and important, and difficult to interpret or react to frivolously. While nature is rarely funny, neither are most designed landscapes, as they often appeal to nature as their source. As an example, the emphasis on preservation or mimicry as practised by the Sydney Bush School with its focus on ecology and ‘spirit of place’ (MacKenzie 2011), and the problems of naturalism as discussed by Richard Weller (2006, 2011a), are serious concerns which would seem disrespectful to imagine as jokes. Specifically, Weller (2006, p. 7) discusses how the focus on these concerns limits landscape architectural design’s capacity to convey meaning, saying that ‘most Australian design work since… 1965 has limited its representational reach to the immediate physical context. It has either sought to recreate qualities of the natural landscape (naturalism) or merge seamlessly with or crystallise a particular place’s essence (contextualism)’. This limitation also prevents much work from being funny or exploring humour. There are exceptions, however, including Weller’s own work in Australia, and globally, many of the projects of Martha Schwartz and West 8. As an example, in West 8’s Carrasco Square (1998), nature is ‘immortalised in the mould of the artificial landscape’ (Geuze 2000, p. 120). As part of this project, tree stumps cast in iron were used to stand for the trees that were removed as part of an elevated rail infrastructure project (Geuze 2000). They emit light to further emphasise their artificiality. This deliberate ironic gesture unusually appeals to nature as the source of its irony.

Text based humour often works due to a sudden linguistic shift in meaning. Such shifts in expectation are difficult to achieve spatially or materially as we move through the world. They need to be set up as a sudden noticing, entering through a threshold, coming around a corner, perhaps not initially noticing and then something becomes apparent: the ‘Ah-ha!’ moment. This is similar to sight...
gags in movies where the ‘amusement is generated by the play of alternative interpretations projected by the image or image series’ (Carroll 2010, p.146). The use of objects with alternate or even conflicting associations can operate similarly. In Weller’s 2011 work, *The National Museum and its Garden of Australian Dreams*, visual jokes are used to parody objects and notions of both suburbia and national identity. Examples include comment on the central role of the swimming pool in Australian culture, which is replicated as a kidney-shaped miniature. The controversies around the $1.3 million purchase of Jackson Pollock’s *Blue Poles* (1952) in 1973 are referenced and parodied through the abstraction of the painting as eight literal blue poles. These and many other unexpected amusing shocks – or jokes – are relevant in the context of Australia’s National Museum. The humour works by using a range of techniques which have some parallels with written and spoken language. Unexpected juxtapositions, exaggerations, slippages of meaning and double and alternate meanings, as well as cruder slapstick cruelty and simple physical peculiarity, all play a role in the ways Weller likely intended the garden to be understood.

It is not just the landscape which is generally taken so seriously and with reverence. The civic is also usually discussed in serious tones, with its associations with politics and democracy and therefore together, civic landscapes face a formidable resistance to being funny places. What is significant for my work is that humour is something used to cloak the seriousness of comments or observations being made. It is not just a sugar-coating for a bitter pill, but a way to get away with critique that would not be tolerated in any other form. It undermines authority and defuses some tensions while redirecting others. Civic spaces are highly politised spaces but in my practice other public spaces are afforded civic qualities, including through the use of humour. Comedians and satirists prick the conscience of power and society, and the would-be comedian of civic landscapes can play with this potential too.

The higher purpose of a joke is the visceral repositioning and vivid rethinking it affords.

**CHANGING EXPECTATIONS**

Humour in landscape architecture can be created by changing expectations of a designed landscape. While all humour is somehow about the unexpected and surprise, I have identified the types of surprise and different techniques used in the designed landscape which can disarm the viewer. Trick fountains are a type of slapstick where people both get wet as much as get a surprise. Landscapes can be funny and ironic if they change expectations using techniques such as quotations of Japanese and French garden traditions rendered in monotone green paint and artificial turf repetition, as seen in Schwartz’s *Splice Garden* (1986). Another technique is the use of non-typical unexpected landscape material, as seen most notoriously with the use of bagels in Schwartz’s *Bagel Garden* (1979).

Expectations can be changed when the work challenges accepted aesthetics in a resistance to good taste. In a different way, I do not use non-typical landscape materials but instead use ordinary materials in novel ways. These graphic ground planes can challenge expectations and their graphic qualities may raise a smile. Martha Schwartz’s early works challenged the conservative approaches of the profession at that time.
Schwartz’s criticism of the profession derided a perceived lack of originality and intellectual vigour. She uses humour in her work as a method for design and a critique of the profession. The Bagel Garden is well known for its place in redefining the field, with its gridded arrangement of bagels and purple aquarium gravel inserted into an existing landscape. Published on the cover of the professional landscape architectural magazine, Landscape Architecture (January 1980) the garden was a built critique of much staid landscape practice at that time. Schwartz is utilising the minimalist grid, the pop artist’s use of popular items in novel ways and the Dadaist technique of juxtaposing the familiar in a new setting. It is humorous. The bagels and the aquarium gravel, not typical exterior landscape materials, are contrasted with the hedges and flowers characteristic of garden design. She was also critiquing her then husband, Peter Walker, for his modernist and minimalist aesthetic and celebrating her Jewishness. Her works also challenge the profession’s idea of its physical, intellectual and political scope (Schwartz 1997, 2004). Schwartz also uses the post-modern technique of quotation. In the Rio Shopping Centre (1988), Atlanta, Georgia, Schwartz employs, again paradoxically, both the pop art tactic of using populist concrete frog garden ornaments, and then arranges them in a minimalist grid. Meyer (1997, p. 9) sees this element as open to interpretation, in that those who know Versailles might interpret the reference to its gold frogs at Latona Fountain, whereas others without such knowledge are likely to interpret the frogs through their own cultural lens. Schwartz also cultivates kudzu, a notorious weed in the southern regions of North America, into topiary balls. Again this is a wicked play on high culture, garden history and the profane. Thus, Schwartz is not only changing expectations of shopping malls, but making comment on the profession’s history and pretentions through the use of material jokes. Her work stands out above all other landscape architects for its use of comedic devices (Schwartz 1997, 2004).

Other humorous devices including the use of oversizing, such as in the public sculptures of Claus Oldenburg or Jeff Koon’s Puppy (1992), or miniaturisation as seen in the Fitzroy Gardens Fairy Tree are amusing. Helmet (2009) uses oversizing, particularly of elements from the Nolan paintings, but also the original Kelly helmet. The joke only works if the association is recognised. After being initially bewildered when the imagery is unrecognised, the viewer is then illuminated on reflection and gets the joke. As Vivian Mitsogianni said, she previously read the work in purely formal terms until I told her of the other layers of ‘reading’ that relate those forms to non-formal references. One might question – what are the consequences for the value of the project if viewers do not get the joke? I have identified that a good work needs to be layered and nuanced enough to not be dependent on one single reading or a one-liner. It is best that a work can be read in different ways and ideally across many levels. Helmet (2009) has many ways it can be engaged with and multiple readings for the viewer. Humour can be generated when expectations are changed, or thwarted altogether. In landscape this can be achieved in interventions such as the Mrs Robinson (2013) bike racks that juxtapose the modified objects with their context. The sculptures can be read as bike racks but are not typical examples or typically sited. Tension is also created when the design is not master planned or a cohesive recognisable whole. Additionally, Dadaist and Pop Art techniques also carry absurdist and ambiguous...
messages. Colin Rowe, referencing Picasso’s *Bull’s Head* (1942) constructed of a bicycle seat and handlebars simply rearranged, has suggested that the ‘alternative and predominant tradition of modernity has always made a virtue of irony, obliquity and multiple reference’ (Rowe 1983, p.138). *Mrs Robinson* (2013) is influenced by Duchamp’s Assisted Readymades, where the bicycle wheel and stool are joined together in new associations. With *Mrs Robinson* (2013) the standard bike rack is modified with insertions and decorations, yet its source as a commercial stainless steel bike rack is recognisable. If the aim of the civic is to keep open a dialogue with contexts, then using these techniques allows this. The civic is defined by a rereading of the bike rack as well as the street. The technique juxtaposes the interventions with the context. There is no predictable aspiration of a smoothing, cohesive whole. The name of the work, *Mrs Robinson* is also meant to be ironic. While the personification of bike racks is funny, additionally *Mrs Robinson* was the fur coat wearing co-star in the film *The Graduate*.

In *The Route Followed* (2009) there is a challenging of what public art can be, especially the modernist steel varieties of Clement Meadmore and Inge King. I also propose the use of black steel but the expectations of monolithic objects are parodies, with a dispersal of objects. Additionally, rather than merely objects for viewing, the interventions have different functions as benches, tree surrounds and climbable elements. I think this is both funny and proper.

My project *Relaid* (2014) was a photographic study that collected examples of road pavements that had been re-laid with the original line markings having become a chance-generated abstract graphic. ‘Designed’ through a process of lack of care, the pavement pattern is funny because it does not follow the usual rules. While not a designed project, this suggested to me a way of working that could use chance tactics to re-present an existing paved condition that would alert people to the banality of, in this case, road infrastructure. In this regard, changing expectations also makes comment on existing conditions. My own noticing of this condition alerted me to thinking about the dominance in the urban condition of this type of control, in this case car parking restrictions and movements that this simple graphic device usually communicates. The changed, random condition surprised me.

**THE WRY TWISTS**

An important part of the conceptual underpinning of the use of humour in my projects is that they are visual jokes to make some larger comment on some aspect of the site or context. The wry twists raise questions and make comments about the actual place such as the commercialisation of Forrest Place with *The Lead Pedestrian* (1989) or Heide Museum’s obsession with the era of its founding, including as the site of the painting of Nolan’s iconic works. The intention is for these to be read and interpreted by the audience. *The Lead Pedestrian* (1989) uses figurative imagery in that the plaster pedestrian has been flattened with sheets of lead. It uses the same device as the ‘slipped on the banana peel’ joke, where our conscience is pricked by laughing at misfortune. You can initially laugh at the flattened figure for its own sake, but it is more the wry smile than the guffaw. The aim, however, is that the messages about privatisation of public space cut through.
In the \textit{New Work} (1985/7) jewellery series, the humour works through bewilderment and illumination. At first, the neckpieces, bracelets and earrings have a strong graphic quality, but then the unusual and untypical materials of, say, shoe heels and gaskets are recognised. The jewellery still works as body adornment, even if further curiosity and connection are not made. To work best, however, the humour of objects need to be legible: helmet, figure, old comb. \textit{New Work} challenges expectations of what jewellery is. The wry twist is in the recycling of junk to create jewellery, a product so often crafted from precious metals and a status symbol. In this way, \textit{New Work} challenges expectations of what jewellery is.

Another example of designing with ironic intent is the project, \textit{Mrs Robinson} (2013) which reframes the street using generic streetscape design approaches that clutter the pedestrian pavement with furniture and signage, thereby re-presenting the street and street furniture with playful bike racks patterned with the endlessly fashionable leopard print. By using the technique of the Duchampian modified readymade, the associations with the standard bike rack are retained while still juxtaposed and parodied. Dialogue is essential to create the humour. The humour is created through the dialogue between the elements, materials and/or concepts. At Gordon TAFE (2001), a range of techniques for humour are used. The materials have resonances and meanings that are discernible and amusing. For example materials are selected to also be a catalogue of construction techniques and patterns including brick, timer, steel grating and in situ concrete. Likewise the pit lids and concrete finish show a diversity of approaches not typically seen, where cohesiveness and a limited palette is preferred. This more chaotic approach is funny. Additionally using a steel supply catalogue to specify an excess of various steel sections creates a built catalogue of bollards. Through this excess, there is a parody not only of bollards themselves but also the generic way they are often included in landscape architectural projects where typically they are used in a minimalist repetition of the same object. They may even have taken on another layer of satirical reference with the realisation of more recent urban defensive architecture policies and the emergence of anti-terrorist streetscape furniture. This is a temporal element of the ongoing dialogue with viewers, there can be a different message interpretation or reading now than at the time of the design. This is a re-presentation of the site through humorous devices and discursive civic involvement. The courtyard can be read and interpreted by an active spectator or used as a teaching space by staff for students.

Earlier in Chapter 4 ‘Civic and Site’, I discussed phenomenological and bodily effects which are not conventionally funny but are linked to the physical playfulness of ludic responses. The carefully considered physical and material design drives these responses through anticipating bodily responses and the reactions they engender.

If the effect of humour is laughter, then this physical response of the audience to a work can be an outcome of the use of humour. Children rolling down the hill on the \textit{Packing} (2013) installation and climbing on \textit{Helmet} (2009), or a viewer poking their head through the slot and becoming Ned are both examples.
of physical response that can produce laughter and joy. While *The Lead Pedestrian* (1998) was intended to make comments about the privatisation of public open space, the interaction of the audience, jumping on the installation, actually improved the work in that over the duration of the installation, the figure was flattened even further, becoming more emaciated, the lead taking on a shroud-like quality. In this regard, the humour can be both in the conception of the project, but can also be brought to it through the enjoyment and interaction of the public after installation.

Humour is an important tactic to engage with the site context, to select materials and to engage an audience. There are diverse techniques for humour utilised through the projects, including the wry comment, the ludic impulse, the dumb joke, the parody and the ironic aside. There are differences between the design techniques and how they are received, in that jokes rely on an audience to “get the joke”, whereas the ludic has an openendedness to potential involvement. Tactics for humour are present through all the significant projects and are a critical component in re-presenting the site and contributing to Everyday Civic Landscapes through their power to incite involvement through joy and laughter and sometimes with a wry smile of comprehension.

As originally installed, people could climb the ladders and look through the slot. In this image my sister Natasha Court is “becoming Ned”. In Nolan’s Ned Kelly series, often only the eyeballs and landscape are visible through the slot, not the whole head. When two people climb the dual ladders and look through the slot, their heads become these eyeballs.
Part 3: Redefining the Civic
The PhD commenced with a question about the nature of civic landscape designs and an intuition that this was the foremost preoccupation of my work. My practice has been characterised by diverse approaches and contexts and through the process of reviewing this diversity I now understand in greater detail the motivations influencing and shaping the design work that suggest ways forward for the practice in my current context as a practitioner-academic. I identified these motivations as an overarching interest in civic or public space and an ongoing interest in the participation of people. This continued on to be a process of clarification, where I came to recognise that I have – and now more consciously do – value particular ways of working in civic contexts over others. The research deepened and finally I have identified that the contribution to knowledge has two aspects: firstly a redefinition of how I understand civic landscapes as both specifically located sites that encourages discursive involvement; and secondly the design procedures, tools and tactics I have discovered I use to achieve this.

Originally, I reviewed both my history and the projects themselves to uncover interests and motivations in myself and the projects. These included the consideration of the everyday, the nature of peoples’ involvement and a reconsideration of site specificity. I considered the work of others and a theoretical review. Later, I appraised, ‘What does the civic mean to me?’ Initially, this was summarised as an interest in the everyday but as the research continued the idea that the everyday might also be civic emerged, a sense that a civic orientation with its political significations and connotations might reside in the daily or everyday experience of my designed projects. For me this is less engaging directly with political content than about setting up the ‘noticing’ that helps others engage. This is done by providing a sort of commentary or position or odd take on something from the site context as a provocation. I began to consider this engagement as a civil act.

I reviewed the nature of participation in my projects. I investigated my disillusionment with the effectiveness of the structure and the direct participation of people in my earlier community arts projects. I agree with Kwon’s suggestion that often these types of projects are ‘too well managed to have any contestational power’ (Kwon 2002 p. 152). What I discovered I now value are other types of participation I have preferred to call involvement. This focus on involvement includes a conventional understanding of the need for conviviality, but goes deeper with the design anticipating all manner of involvements including playful interaction. Additionally, these involvements go beyond a simple focus and restriction to particular social or political issues.

Through the research I discovered that I value projects where there are maintained degrees of openness in various ways that are both formally fluid and programmatically diverse. In this sense projects are designed to provoke new thinking in people. The openness in the works allows for various types of participation in civic places including being both engaging and encouragingly open to interpretation. This openness is different to Hajer and Reijndorp’s call for more ‘friction’ or ‘exchange’ between different demographic groups. While I agree this may occur it is not a prerequisite. Instead I agree with Kwon’s critiques that when communities are described as either homogenous or as ‘discrete social formations’ (Kwon p. 148),
PART 3: CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

this is a problematic simplification. Kwon’s assertion is that the very idea of “community” is problematised. She argues that what is required is a “[r]ecognition with the impossibility of community” (Kwon p. 155). In my work there are certain ambiguities in the work which allow for a multiplicity of interpretations and involvements challenging the simple reading by a presumed homogeneous public. This openendedness allows for engagements with this ‘impossibility’.

I considered the qualities of site specificity using Kwon’s framework of phenomenological, institutional critique and discursive approaches. I discovered that my projects typically resonate with all three approaches. But in the conclusion Kwon laid down a challenge. Kwon says it seems ‘we will leave behind the nostalgic notion of site and identity as essentially bound to place. Such a notion, if not ideologically suspect, is at least out of sync with the prevalent description of contemporary life as a network of unanchored flows.’ (Kwon 2002 p. 164). She goes on to describe this as a “… task of demarcating the relational specificity that can hold in dialectical tension the distant poles of spatial experience” (Kwon 2002 p. 166). This confirms, once again, the importance of openendedness.

Throughout the research, the possibility of a reconsidered civic landscape deepened and I discovered that civic proposals are an opportunity for design to perform as a redeeming force that goes beyond mere celebration of the everyday or ceremonial and formal functions. I discovered that the projects examined for the PhD represent work at the edge of the conventions of landscape architecture practice but which, importantly, do not seek outsider status. They come from a hybrid approach that is an amalgam of art and landscape architectural practice. While other landscape architects also have an artistic background that influences their practice, I have discovered that I use mine at the service of responding to the site and encouraging discursive involvements as discussed by Kwon. Kwon asserts that we think not of oppositions but hold in dialectical tension ‘seeming oppositions as sustaining relations’ (Kwon 2002, p. 166).

This research discovered an expanded or stretched definition of the civic that includes an ambition for the everyday sites of what are typically called mere ‘open space’ or ‘public realm’. If civic space is appreciated in three broad ways: as largely unused ceremonial space; as a broadest common denominator neutral safe space; or as artfully-planned aspirational intervention, then I am arguing that appropriate, thoughtfully designed landscape interventions can encourage additional varied involvements of multiple users. This contributes more to civil society by connecting people with the life of the place including numerous potential user involvements with the site, which encourages a noticing of the site and a self-consciousness in people viewing or interacting with it.

I called these Everyday Civic Landscapes. This is conceived in two parts, which together form the contribution to knowledge of this work. Firstly there is a design response to an understanding of a complex and nuanced relationship to site, with an emphasis on discursive involvement. This approach results in the qualities of openendedness that I seek in my work that supports civic space. There is a necessary focus on site, including both its physical characteristics and other contextual aspects, including the cultural
or historical; Kwon’s ‘relational specificity’. The resulting landscape is one that can engage, involve, enrich and provoke a new self-consciousness and responsibility for creating what is civic for its time. It is the nature of these direct, discursive interactions with the site and these subtle and actively creative qualities of involvement that I now associate with Everyday Civic Landscapes.

The second contribution is the articulation of the design tactics, manoeuvres and strategies that could and did contribute to civicness in the projects that I use to achieve Everyday Civic Landscape. Throughout the dissertation, I have been able to more consciously identify the multiple procedures of a flexible design process effectively utilised in my practice. The model of design process proposed here is for the creation of suggestive interventions, provocation, inquisitive occupation and curious encounters that encourage a critical, discursive reception of site, noticing and appreciation by an activated and invested spectatorship. The physical outcomes have as diverse programming as the project space, budget and timing allow. They are insertions into the site that redeem weak places without resorting to totalising masterplans.

While responding to site contexts, utilising diverse references, making considered material selections, and employing humour are not manoeuvres unique to me, when I use them they are purposely combined in order to admit diversity, disrupt expectations and alert spectators to the world as it seems to be and as it might be. Many of the projects discussed in this dissertation are characterised by insertions into an existing condition. This suggests a model where insertions are made and the possibility is kept open for potential future insertions. This is literally an open-ended approach that is useful to other designers attempting to avoid totalising masterplans. This is similar to Rowe and Koetter’s (1978) idea of a Collage City with their multivalent understanding of city form making over time. I have identified that it is the range, combination and variation of design procedures and tactics that might be employed in any particular project to engage and involve people in ways that make their involvement an empowering and responsible experience linked to ongoing challenges to our ideas of an inclusive, just civic life.

Through this research I have gained greater clarity about why the civic is important to me, why I believe it is important to others, and why it will continue to be at the centre of my practice. Likewise, I have clarified my focus and working methods, which as a practising academic means I have reaffirmed approaches to designing that can be documented to show they are both pragmatic and effective. The research has clarified the focus and working method of the practice but also suggests that more could be done to not only comment on, but also expose power relations and engage more deeply – and even more humorously – with a broadening and undermining of accepted, normative outcomes, and of accepted engagement practices. This would make the work even more effectively civic. This is the lesson I learnt from Bishop (2012) of an activated spectatorship. I will continue to explore this in both public art commissions and conventional landscape architectural competitions and tenders.

In my work as an academic I can bring these themes to the design studio for students to explore both my suggested design
procedures but also develop their own. In my collaborative design projects there are opportunities to develop these ideas with the entire team to consider more deeply the creation of civic space in places and types of commissions not normally considered with this civic potential. This appreciation can also enrich my work at times as a juror and on design review panels.

I assert that the tools and tactics I use can be applied by other practitioners to any public realm projects from the modest to the grand. This does not necessarily diminish the ceremonial, convivial or other requirements of conventionally defined civic space, but potentially adds another discursive layer. The most important aspect is that designers have this aspiration. Designers potentially already have or could adapt their own design tools and tactics to apply to this task. Importantly, my projects met the pragmatic requirements of briefs and clients, where they exist, while some of my other sculptural commissions have more freedom to provoke.

There is an inherent critique of the way some engagement practices are carried out in landscape architectural practice, planning consultation and the ‘placemaking’ movement. This research suggests ways that can add to these conventional methods or provide alternatives to them. There are implications for the education of practitioners and students who will be working the public realm and have a desire to enhance its civics.

Together these two aspects of the contribution, the discursive formation and the design procedures, form a model for the formation of Everyday Civic Landscapes to address the paucity of design in the public spaces. Many public spaces are minimally maintained by local government to meet their obligation to keep them clean and safe, but have more potential than current urban upgrades programs allow. It is a response to the failure of planning strategies and urban design guidelines with their aims and objectives that have resulted in normative landscapes that end up being for no one or exclude many (Hajer and Reijndorp 2001) or the overly aesthetic, artfully planned (Crawford 2008) and paradoxically alienating. Importantly, the civic landscape still meets its social needs of conviviality and encounter, but not at the expense of erasing all friction or potential for it.

From this consciousness of reconsideration, questions about and challenges to typically accepted procedures and built outcomes can emerge. This contribution is important for those whose ongoing suspicion, vigilance and redefining activities mean that the civic definition can and should never be pinned down, trapped or tamed by the formalities of professional practice or the bureaucracy of contemporary administrative procedures.
Part 4: Project Archive
This section includes projects mentioned in the text. There is some repetition with the projects highlighted in the body of the thesis but this appendix brings together all the projects discussed in one place.
New Work
(1985-7)
During my final year at WA Institute of Technology, now Curtin University, I began making work out of rubbish I found. This series was ironically called *New Work* and was exhibited in my graduating exhibition in 1985 and later at the School of Art and Design, University of Tasmania. This series of brooches, neckpieces, earrings and bracelets uses material collected from roadsides and building sites, harping back to Dadaist assemblage and Arte Povera practices. The use of rubbish, collected in the landscape, some of it the debris of car accidents, is then treated as a precious material and used for body ornamentation. The juxtaposition challenges the traditional notions of jewellery, with its ostentatious use of precious materials, while also commenting on consumerism and waste. In the research, I have identified that the use of juxtaposition is an ongoing technique in the practice. There is an inbuilt critique of the way things are usually done and an invitation to notice all this. This is a quality I now associate in my later work with civic landscapes. *New Work* is a precursor for these later concerns with inviting or even demanding a response to design interventions in sites.

It’s amusing and humorous having people wear ‘rubbish’. There is an ambiguity when the work is read initially as ‘graphic and then the identity of the materials is noticed; that it is made up of used combs and lost shoe heels. The work is open to interpretation. Materials have an everyday rather than a precious quality. The everyday emerges in a different way in my later work as the actual site of design activity.

The work is put together precisely, using multiple elements. It is low-tech, using stainless steel dental wire to thread objects onto. Often the rubber elements are pieced to attach metal objects. The work does not use a highly-skilled technique, which is another aspect of traditional jewellery that is highly valued. In this work, the use of low-tech processes is a critique of traditional jewellery practices that highly values technical prowess. In the dissertation, the material selection and associations are considered significant but the construction, if not low tech for most landscape architectural projects, uses conventional construction techniques including the layer of masonry pavements or pouring in situ concrete.

I now regard the *New Work* series of works as a significant background project, now important as my earliest example where the material selection, use of humour and the importance of participation in the work though wearing presage some of the overarching themes of the dissertation including participation; involvement and engagement with people; the expressive qualities and associations of everyday materials; the subversive critical aspects; and low-tech construction techniques. This was also an early demonstration of a critique of the discipline that permeates the later work.

Jewellery, by definition, is typically worn in public. People participate through the wearing of the works. While there is a passive engagement when the work is viewed in the gallery, the work is animated through wearing and moving. The possibility for other people to notice and read the work is an intriguing one. I now understand that while this project is not a civic landscape, it holds clues for an interest in participation and involvement where a greater level of engagement is invited. These are qualities I later associate with civic landscape.
I now regard this exhibition as significant for making an important shift from not merely collecting rubbish to make jewellery but to make comments about sites. Responding to the site is a major theme of the dissertation. The installation expanded from the scale of jewellery to a larger sculptural and installation practice. Initially, I identified the increasing scale of the work over time as important. I now think having done this, what is more interesting is that I began learning how to work at a range of scales as the project requires. This exhibition was my first installation project and while still located in the gallery, treats the gallery as a site to be inhabited. There are very few photos, as I was not happy with the way the installation worked aesthetically: both the scale of the installation (it was too small to impact the space) and the lack of consideration with the ugly, brown carpet tiles.

What I have subsequently discovered, through the research, to be important about *Raids on the Abyss* is that the material was collected from the demolition site of the Boans department store that was adjacent to my studio and the gallery. I now regard this collecting of materials from a particular site, not just anywhere, and then reassembling the material in the gallery as a form of site re-presentation. This work made comment in response to the demolition which was undertaken to establish a new elevated circulation system that improved connections to the Perth Railway station. Many people, however, including myself, had a sense that this would diminish the public realm, including Forrest Place at street level. This theme was taken up a year later with a subsequent project *The Lead Pedestrian*. 
The Lead Pedestrian (1989)
The project makes a political comment but is also open to other interpretations. The project was installed in Forrest Place, historically the civic heart of Perth but at the time of the installation it was compromised by the adjacent recently constructed retail development, ‘Forrest Chase’. The sculpture consisted of a horizontal figure that looked as if it had been unfortunate enough to be flattened by falling lead sheeting. Over the course of the installation, through the unexpected interaction with the public, the plaster figure, shrouded in lead sheeting, was slowly crushed even further into the pavement. While this was a form of vandalism, the work seemed enhanced by its disintegration into the pavement, developing even more shroud-like qualities. I now see this as an early example where it might be possible to paradoxically design for unexpected, spontaneous and ludic interactions. The work was humorous, in that it looked as if a pedestrian had literally been flattened. Getting the joke was also a form of engagement. I have identified that involvement and participation are important civic qualities to my practice.

The use of lead as a material was an important part of the project for both its softness and its associations. While it was selected for its malleability it was the qualities of the lead that allowed for the sculpture to take on more, shroud-like appearance. The lead also took on the texture of the stone pavement, an unintended example of responding to the existing site conditions. This was also an example of interacting with the existing conditions, inviting a reconsideration of the current conditions of the public plaza, especially concerns about its increasing privatisation and the pressure that the heightened commercial context was causing authorities to curb ‘unsociable’ behaviour. Perth already had laws restricting congregating in groups in public. The work is a critique of all this, and uses materials in a symbolic way with lead associated with heaviness and death.

Through this reviewing this project, I identified emerging concerns in my practice. This was my first public artwork and although it predates my landscape architecture studies and practice, can be read in landscape architectural terms. The installation responded to the particular political conditions of the site. In later work, I identify that it is not necessary to be so overtly political to consider work civic in nature. My later projects have a welcome redemption of the site as one of the responses to the site. This project focuses on a new layer for interpretation but does nothing to improve amenity. It highlights the emergence of unexpected interactions, perhaps ones that could in future be more thoughtfully designed into the projects.
Coburg Special Development School (1992)
This project was part of a Victorian education department artist-in-residence scheme designed to enrich the curriculum. I worked with students and teachers on a variety of workshops. This was typical of this type of project, in that participation was direct. Rocks were covered with mosaics of creatures designed by the students. Concrete tiles of snakes and snails were also created and installed in the lawn adjacent to the bike path. Mosaics are a low-tech, economical process to make reasonably enduring outdoor elements. This was also a send-up of this popular community art technique. The glass was sourced as scraps from a stained glass artist. The glass was smashed into smaller pieces and then tumbled in a concrete mixer to soften the edges, similar to glass you find at the beach. Other tiles were recycled from an earlier City of Melbourne project. Like other community art projects, I would often set up a structure where individual elements are then incorporated into a larger design. In this case, students completed a drawing of a creature. This drawing would then be interpreted by students using water-soluble glue to adhere the glass and tiles could then later set these elements onto the rocks and complete an informal frame to ‘finish’ the mosaic. While I attempted to design the participation activities to get the best outcomes, the aesthetic outcomes are weak. (I abandoned this way of working and I now value more the engagement and involvement that comes subsequently in response to the designed landscape.)

Early on in the project, I established that the elements produced by students could be put together, enhancing the existing barren and inadequate outdoor spaces. The existing yard was not redesigned but new elements added still allowing for more things to be added or taken away. The stones provided an informal seating amenity. This is the first project that involves the redemption of a weak site and this I have now identified as an important theme in my practice. Redemption of the poor or weak site is a civic act by designers that can result in more engaging spaces for people. The method of adding to an existing condition is also a feature of my work as it maintains a dialogue with the existing.

Unfortunately, while the project achieved its aims of enhancing curriculum, the results of the project were not substantial enough to transform the space, with the scale of the elements too small in relation to the overall site. The area needed additional vertical elements, perhaps either trees or structures, to respond to the unrelenting fence and lawn. Perhaps at this stage I was inexperienced at working at this scale.
Sunshine Hospital
Sunshine Hospital is an early Paterson Pettus project with Lyons Architects. It consists of the entrance areas and three courtyards of a new psychiatric wing. This project is one I have categorised as ‘institutional civic’ as it is not publicly accessible in a conventional way. This was the only outdoor space available to these long-term residents, and so the design response demanded a high degree of variety in the designs and a diversity of programming. There were also demanding technical requirements, as it was a high-security facility. The largest courtyard is highly programmed around a lawn oval with its goal-post Lombardy poplars, a simple joke. The plans use ellipses and figure-of-eight paths to create the maximum number of pathways through the courtyard, while also maintaining visibility for the surveillance of patients by medical staff. The terrace included a BBQ for ward functions. Bench seating was augmented with seating walls and lawns were sloped to create open-ended possibilities for patients and staff to engage with the space. The project is informed by Garrett Eckbo’s Landscapes for Living (1950) and Church’s strong geomantic plans and continuous pavements. The plan for Sunshine Hospital is, unusually for me, symmetrical, creating a clear legibility for this particular demographic. The planting is also very open to accommodate the need for surveillance of this vulnerable and sometimes dangerous patient cohort. If there is any mystery, it comes from the variety of movement paths and directions that can be taken.

The surrounding suburban context informs the variety of planting, including contrasting indigenous plants with highly domestic plants. The concept was for an everyday feel to the planting, with a diversity of planting themes and species. These plants could also cope with the difficult cracking clay soils and provide a high degree of seasonal variation for patient interest. A secondary and less used courtyard had a more serene floral theme for the planting, with two elliptical lawns. The project uses common plants, not the overused and limited planting palette usual for landscape architects. The materials were also modest, with coloured concrete paving and grey institutional walls both predominating.

The project’s diversity and the provision of amenity allows for a high level of participation and involvement, providing the maximum diversity with limited economic resources to patients for whom this is their only outdoor space. It responds to its context and site and has many of the qualities of a civic landscape. On reflection, its spatial symmetry and geometry lack the openendedness seen in later projects.
Firbank Courtyard
The courtyard is designed as an important linking space between the older quadrant of a Melbourne school and its new science wing. The courtyard engages with two large existing elm trees and makes them the focus of the space. Perhaps this is not such an unusual strategy, but the ground plan and the elliptical concept edging create a strong figure/ground relationship. Two large ovoid planes of grass allow for root aeration and shaded seating areas for the students. This plan graphic is visible from the busy balconies of the new science wing by hundreds of students. More interestingly, the plan responds to the existing site by utilising a ‘woven’ brick pattern that builds upon the three main brick hues that have been used throughout the school, literally weaving the courtyard into the school fabric. The site is re-presented. The pattern was sourced from Peter Spooner’s Readers Digest book Practical guide to home landscaping (1973). Common bricks are used for the vibrant pattern that establishes different optical effects as people move through the courtyard. Reflecting the adjacent science wing, two omega-shaped benches provided seating areas for the students and control movement patterns onto the main oval of the school. It was intended that additional loose chairs could complement this seating, so that girls could arrange them to suit their social needs or for use as outdoor teaching spaces. I now think this attempt to encourage participation and engage with a particular demographic is an important quality of these institutional civic projects that could be developed further.

The four gingko trees were intended to initiate an avenue that would encircle the adjacent oval, future linking the courtyard to the context. The courtyards were not to be read in isolation but connected to the campus. While some plants were selected for the botanical stories that might be able to be incorporated into the science curriculum, most were chosen as contextual ‘Brighton’ plants, including crab apples and hellebores.

This attempt at incorporating elements from the curriculum alongside the use of contextual planting I now regard as an early attempt to encourage various sorts of engagement and involvement. The idea of a didactic garden was better handled a year later in the Gordon TAFE project.
Newmarket (2001)
This project attempts to reconsider what a carpark can be and tries to ‘claw out’ civic space in what is essentially a landscape dominated by a large surface carpark for the residents of a public housing project and their visitors. The design critiques the fact that there is no real opportunity to establish common areas in this public housing project. The idea is that cars could be temporarily banished to allow for other activities. The project articulates the carpark not only as a piece of civil engineering but also removes kerbs, articulating the ground plan with a graphic that sets up a hierarchy of pedestrian areas, suggested linkage pathways, and areas for car-parking.

Specifically, the low-level soil pollution was sufficient that a concrete cap was required for the majority of the site. This provided a design opportunity to use a patterned, coloured concrete ground plane instead of the usual asphalt surface with its associations with cars, roads and car parking. The design creates a plaza out of the carpark using a hierarchy of pedestrian circulation to generate the geometry. The carpark ‘crinks and cranks’ its way around, avoiding the typical ‘gun barrel’ effect of most car park layouts. This also created some residual triangular spaces, and into these interstitial spaces as much planting as possible was inserted to create a civic/garden feel. The eucalyptus species, originally planted to ‘break up’ the car park dominance, were later removed, perhaps because they were too messy or for fear of future limb drop. However, this removal has detracted from the desired effect. Near the site are several large, historical Phoenix canariensis (Canary Island date palms), probably established at the earlier time of the development of the train line and station. These were chosen as signature plantings in the small corner park, reinforcing and drawing attention to the wider site context.

I remembered a carpark project by Peter Walker that did not use kerbs but large boulders to demarcate the edge of the carpark. However here, more humorously, I used the tram stop barrier, reconfigured in red. Another example of the ready-made is seen later in Mrs Robinson (2013). The use of these barriers instead of kerb and channel moves the collection of all water to drain to the centre of the pavement, and avoids the language of road and carpark engineering, instead privileging the ease of pedestrian movement. Many project examples from both Walker and Schwartz attempt to accommodate the car in more aesthetic ways and provide an aesthetic experience that includes the car park design with the articulation of the ground plan and significant vegetation.

The opportunity existed for the car park to sometimes be reclaimed by residents, perhaps for community gatherings and celebrations. The custom designed BBQ, typical of many Paterson Pettus projects, is there to at least suggest the possibility of communal activity. The project tries hard with limited means to redeem, with an ambition for the residents to have the best possible public space, providing more opportunities for encounters. Civic space is not simply the provision of convivial open space, but the encouragement of encounter and engagement.
This courtyard design was undertaken with architect Julian Scanlan from SKM to provide a new facility for the teaching of carpentry, plumbing and landscape construction at the Gordon Institute of TAFE in Geelong.

The initial landscape concept was to reflect what happens inside the building on the outside, rather than the usual condition where the courtyard is merely a respite from the internal. This is a version of the well-worn modernist trope of blurring the inside and the outside. This then reminded me of the first botanic garden at Padua, a didactic garden for the teaching of herbal medicine; as well as the local version, the Systems Garden at The University of Melbourne. At Gordon Tafe the courtyard is able to be utilised for demonstration purposes by teaching staff, with its pavement a mosaic of brick patterns, concrete finishes, timber decking, a catalogue of steel sections and a display of drainage pit lids. The courtyard is a contemporary version of a historic didactic model but also a parody of the original being used for a trade school, not a university garden. The work makes comment by juxtaposing high and so-called low culture.

The set-out uses contemporary Australian artist, Melinda Harper’s Untitled (1999) to generate the organising plan. Her disruption to pictorial space resonated with my requirement to distort the orthogonal qualities of the architecture. This is also a disruption of the usual expectation for the landscape design to be sympathetic with the architecture rather than continue its orthogonal logic into the landscape. This use of nuanced referencing of the painting to organise the ground plan has an aesthetic function but also provides a way to organise the disparate elements that allow for the social occupation and other functions of the space. Schwartz also discusses the ‘visual potential of the flat plane’, as also seen at Newmarket in its ‘crink and crank’ geometric layout. The BBQ and seated area, and planting are elements that are extruded from the plan. Designed for the trees to form an oblique allée to enter the building from the adjacent carpark the trees, Eucalyptus pauciflora (snow gum) were selected for their shedding stripy bark that has orange (red-brown), light grey to white tones to correlate with the colour palette selected. Unfortunately they were at the extreme of their climactic habitat requirements and thus these trees did not survive establishment and the additional drought at this time. The client substituted flowering cherries that also failed to establish. Regrettably, the courtyard has never had the designed spatial qualities and remains largely planar, paradoxically resembling more its planar, painterly genesis.

The courtyard employs inexpensive materials. In this case, an excessive of contested materials are juxtaposed, where conventionally the palette is more limited. Again it used Spooner’s catalogue of brick paving patterns (Spooners 1973 p. 54-5). It is both this excess and the parody of the typical design response that makes the courtyard humorous. I selected colours that correspond to, but are yet paler than, the architect’s brighter palette of orange, black and white, with the use of salmon bricks, glazed black bricks, timber decking, galvanised steel and salmon, grey and white in situ concrete. The courtyard design both ‘fits in’ with the architecture and provides dramatic interest through contrast.

The courtyard is the formal entry to the building but it is also

1. SKM Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) was a global multidisciplinary firm.
2. Melinda Harper is a Melbourne based abstract artist. She claims the works are her responses to observations of looking at the world around her alongside her interest in disrupting of pictorial space. It is this disruption that I have borrowed for the courtyard geometries. (Cramer 2015, McGregor and Zimmer 2007)
Brick patterns (above) and bollard details (below left) showing the catalogue of steel sections approach. A variety of pit lid styles were also incorporated (bottom right).
a gathering space for students and staff, especially smokers. There is a BBQ, and while it may be little-used, signals the possibility of inhabiting the space in more social way, rather than a mere thoroughfare. It is designed to be engaging, aesthetically, functionally and amenity-wise, making it a civic space. Although it has a limited demographic, the students and staff, I now understand that civic space is possible in these more unlikely locations.
Pickles Street
(2001)
Designed in the same week as Gordon TAFE courtyard, using the same Melinda Harper painting to design the set-out, was the Pickles Street residential project in Port Melbourne. (The project was then marketed as ID Apartments and was undertaken with SJB architects). The plan has a similar graphic layout but is differently executed into the third dimensions with plants instead of the dominance of hardscape at Gordon. This was a commercial residential apartment project, so not one that I have focused on in the dissertation, but I think it is interesting for the different outcomes that the same design tactic generated. In reviewing this project, I see that the tactic of using the painting’s geometry did generate an engaging common area for residents of this apartment complex, particularly with the creation of ‘garden rooms’ and diverse planted garden beds, some of which screen the courtyard level private outdoor spaces of adjacent apartments.

Lines of palms use the planting technique of mounding, which I borrowed for those seen at Gordon Park (next to Treasury Building). The swimming pool is also an important element that encourages interactions between residents. So while this project has some of the qualities that I also associate with Everyday Civic Landscapes, it is missing the important engagement with the site and does not have the deeper associations and meanings that I value now. For me civic landscapes still have to reside in the public realm but reflection on this project suggests that these techniques are still useful to provide contexts to create engaging and interesting landscapes and gardens.
University Square (2001)

Optical effects change from the east/west to north/south orientation.
University Square was undertaken as part of a larger building program to expand the University of Melbourne with the addition of three new buildings. The plaza and associated underground carpark were on the north end of the City of Melbourne-owned park. The new plaza links the new Law, Business and Management Schools and provides a meeting place, a transition zone from street to historic park, a setting for various buildings on the university campus, a thoroughfare and a strong identity for the new development. A black and white diamond pattern, the central graphic of the design was used to create an optical illusion stretching the plaza into the historic park. The graphic creates a strong identity for the space, which is visible at both the pedestrian scale and from the elevated views of the surrounding buildings.

The project required the resolution of complex technical issues, particularly relating to grade changes from the street level to accommodate the subterranean car park, and the planting of advanced tree species over the car park structure. The grade changes were addressed through in situ concrete stairs, which create an easy and inconspicuous grade transition between the street level and the plaza. The steel arbours, which extend from the street level to the plaza, contribute to this transition and create a distinctive edge to the plaza. Throughout the design process, there was a requirement to liaise with a number of stakeholders including the Department of Infrastructure, the University of Melbourne and the City of Melbourne.

The project was not as successful as I would have liked as it relies too heavily on programming for its activation and was never programmed by the University of Melbourne in the way that was
discussed. It may be that the sloping surface makes it difficult to install temporary marquees to provide the necessary infrastructure to activate the space. In addition, the ratio of shady to intimate space to the open plaza is not in the correct balance with the open central area being too large. The tree species were eventually selected after much consultation and research and were significant trees from the university campus: Cedrus atlantica ‘glauca‘ (Blue Atlas Cedar); Malus ioensis ‘Plena’ (Bechtel Crab Apple); and Metasequoia glyptostroboides (Dawn Redwood). The project was completed at the beginning of the drought and many of the trees, which were planted over the car park structure, did not grow as well as expected. For various technical and cost reasons it was not possible to increase the areas of planting resulting in a too large and exposed open central area. Perhaps if the trees had grown larger this would have helped with this problem.

Despite having shady spaces, well-planned circulation, stairs designed for perching on, this type of space, which is designed for no particular demographic, as a neutral space for potential activation, does not have enough content for the necessary engagement.
Paterson Pettus was commissioned to design four gardens incorporated into the upper level of a Lyons designed tower with the architects Woods Bagot undertaking the interiors. These ‘gardens in the sky’ are entirely for the enjoyment of the office workers in this new corporate headquarters located in the centre of Melbourne.

The design ideas include the joke, at BHP’s expense, of using various gravels and rocks to represent minerals and slag heaps yet also borrow from Japanese garden traditions. There were also references to the courtyards of the Roy Grounds National Gallery, including large circular stone disks. Grounds was similarly influenced by Japanese traditions. The rocks and mounding also solve the problem of the shallow soil profile. A series of fountains were used in the various winter gardens to help ameliorate the often dry air created by air conditioning and to sustain a healthier human and plant environment. The main fountain structure was clad in Carrara marble ‘off cuts’ sourced from unwanted pieces from the main lobbies within the building. Interestingly, these references to mining and its attendant destruction are perhaps too subtle to be read.

Various bamboos, Rhapis palms, figs and other low-level light-loving species were selected to create green oases in key locations throughout the building. At night, the gardens are a green lantern from the street, as they glow from within the building. Humorously, the species are typical indoor pot plant species, but in this instance were able to grow to much larger dimensions with Ficus lyrata (Fiddle Leaf Fig) and the bamboo species in particular able to grow to a great height over the three levels. Important views were established not only from the lobby, but also from staff break-out spaces and meeting rooms above, with unusual views looking straight through the vegetation to the views of the city beyond. At the time of our appointment, it had already been determined that the garden would not be accessible to people but a visual amenity. Initially in the research, I wondered if projects in the private realm could be considered as civic landscapes. The design tactics and visual qualities make the projects engaging, and they have many of the qualities discussed in the dissertation, including a response to site and context, with a meaningful use of materials, references and humour. This suggested to me that it is not the tactics that make it intrinsically civic, but that it is the work in its context in the public realm that makes it so. These are tactics I tend to use in all projects, and I find them more satisfying and effective when there is a larger audience in the public realm. This dissertation is limited to how I use the tactics in these public realm situations and the civic effects they can have through encouraging involvement. While I previously thought that there was a problem with the inability to inhabit the space, I now think that this is not the correct assumption. If the work can have certain effects through viewing it from the outside looking in, then this can be valued in a similar way to the effects generated from being within or moving through the work. The spatial configuration is merely different.

1. Lyons is a Melbourne based, design focused architectural firm. “Lyons creative team is committed to extending the local and international architectural discourse through ongoing design research, studio teaching, writing and lecturing about architecture and design.” http://www.lyonsarch.com.au/what-we-do/. Accessed 14 January 2018
Balaclava Walk
(2003)
This project was undertaken in association with MGS Architects for the City of Port Phillip. This urban design project considered the revitalisation of interstitial spaces behind Carlisle Street, Balaclava, an important retail and commercial precinct. The first stage saw the provision of low-cost housing on a previously council-owned car park. This second stage proposed an upgrade to the important public transport node where the tram and tram lines intersect, establishing Balaclava Walk. Improvement to the public infrastructure including the installation of a lift was seen as critical to increased patronage of the station.

The landscape treatment proposed vegetated rooftops, arbours, planted banks, a sculptural information board and integrated pavement treatments. These elements were unified using a linear graphic, originally abstracted from a photo of railway ballast. The landscape design for the Balaclava train station upgrade proposed a re-presentation of the site using elements of the Port Phillip urban design materials palette. Rather than the orthogonal arrangements typically seen in the streetscape layout, in the design response I used an organising, ‘crinking’ line that meandered through the site in three-dimensions both unifying and providing variety and diversity.

While its unbuilt status limits my ability to access its effectiveness, the design did use the site context for inspiration and selected materials in meaningful and humorous ways. The interventions would have been engaging but lacking opportunities for deeper interpretation or meanings that are seen in more content-rich projects. At its core though, was the ambition to create a higher quality urban realm for the everyday and repetitive experiences of commuters. These are the redeeming qualities of the Everyday Civic Landscape.
The Route
Followed (2009)

The elements perform multiple functions, with some sculptures to be played on and through, while others form seats, planters and tree surrounds. All elements meet the Australian Standards for playgrounds.
The Route Followed was a shortlisted, unbuilt public art project commissioned to enhance the public open spaces of Lightsview, a new residential development in Adelaide’s north-east. The design responds to the historical associations of the site, the weak public open space amenity and the suburban context, with the need to provide additional play opportunities.

In 1919, the Australian Government offered £10,000 for aviators to fly from England to Australia. The all-Australian crew (Sir Keith Smith, Sir Ross Smith, Sergeant Jim Bennett, and Sergeant Wally Shiers) completed the journey to Darwin on 10 December 1919. Their aircraft, G-EAOU is preserved in a purpose-built museum at Adelaide Airport. The registration, G-EAOU, is whimsically said to stand for ‘God ‘elp all of us’. The site, Lightsview, is the site of the former airfield, Northfield, where the successful aviators landed on 23 March 1920 to celebrate winning the competition. 20,000 Adelaidians came to celebrate. The Australians completed the journey in 27 days and 20 hours. They made 25 stops on the way from London to Darwin. The design uses the historic context of the site as its starting point, particularly the historic map of the journey including the many stops along the way. The sculptural response uses steel circular forms to locate each of the 25 stop locations on the plan. These forms were extruded and manipulated formally in Grasshopper. The map of the route is used to locate the elements back on the site as a record of the historic journey and the site’s connection to the former airfield. This is a narrative response to site history. The built map and the use of miniaturisation are historical and well-known landscape design tactics. Perhaps the most famous design tradition of miniaturisation is the Japanese garden, but there is also the
picturesque tradition seen at Stourhead in the UK, where the lake is a miniaturisation of the Mediterranean Sea, and those strolling around the garden are re-enacting Aeneas’s journey from The Aeneid. The narrative at Stourhead is brought to the site in a theatrical way, whereas The Route Followed sources the narrative from the site’s own history.

Movement and curated views are an important consideration in this project. I was influenced by Appleyard, Lynch and Myer’s (1964) discussion on choreographed movement and Bois’s (2000) insights on Stourhead where he discusses the ‘fictive movement of the eye’ versus the actual movement of the body. In this case, the direct view down the allée of trees is in contrast to the indirect ‘dot to dot’ movement of the body. This is another type of involvement in addition to knowing the narrative content. I have identified that it is this rich layering of narrative, bodily and lucid interactions that are key components of Everyday Civic Landscapes.

The site adjacent to a main road in the suburb was a simple, uninspiring lawn area with an avenue of zelkovas. My first response was that one object was not enough and I quickly established the need to use the map as an organising device for the multiple elements that would redeem the site. Materially, the sculptures use the same materials as a nearby playground, painted steel and rubber surfacing, hybridised with the black steel traditions of modernism including the works of Clement Meadmore and Inge King whose public art works bring another layer of intellectual reference and critique to this project. The sculptural elements are designed to meet the Australian Standards for playground construction. It was envisaged that as well as travelling ‘dot-to-dot’ to follow the route, children could interact...
and climb on the forms. Some of the dots become seats or tree guards. There is a welcome playful ambiguity in that it could be a sculpture, landscape furniture or playground. It was anticipated that there would be phenomenological effects as children, visitors and residents engage with the various elements. The project sets up a dialogue with the site and attempts to redeem the poorly designed civic landscapes through sculptural intervention. The design responds to the landscape in a number of ways, including to: the physical qualities of the designed landscape; the movement of both pedestrians and motorists; the significant views into the site and of the city beyond as well as a celebration of the significant links of the site with the historic flight from England to Australia for some South Australians. The landscape is represented.

In my work, civicness comes in part from an ambition to redeem the site of poor amenity or go beyond the often minimal treatment of councils and developers.

The Route Followed responds to the existing standard avenue treatment that lacks possibilities for engagement and richness, and instead proposes interventions that both recall the history of the site and double as an informal play element. In this case, the initial site analysis revealed a weak space and the design responded to this to make the site more engaging. The project used the cultural and historical history to abstract and generate the inserted steel elements, but importantly, did not erase or replace the found site conditions. The project proposed a multitude of site and other tactics, both phenomenological and cultural to establish an Everyday Civic Landscape.
Helmet (2009)
Helmet is a fusion of landscape and sculpture that engages with its site and context. It functions simultaneously as a gateway, faceted landform, sculpture, screen and viewing device. Helmet was a collaborative project with landscape architect and artist Cassandra Chilton. We won an open competition. It is the final of three works commissioned by the City of Manningham as part of The Gateway Project, developed through the council’s Urban Design Strategy as part of the Streetscape Program. The others are Inge King’s Sentinel (2000) and Cat and Bellemo’s River Peel (2001).

The site contexts, including the physical and historical, were important to the conception of Helmet. It re-presents the site in several ways. It is an object in the field, a device for seeing and to be seen as a billboard and gateway. The most important reference for the conception of Helmet is the imagery from arguably Australia’s most important twentieth century paintings, the Ned Kelly series, by Sidney Nolan. Kelly was a notorious bushranger in the late nineteenth century, additionally famous from his homemade steel armour. Sidney Nolan, encouraged by John Reed, painted the Kelly series on the dining room table on Sunday and Reed’s home in Heide (now Heide Gallery, adjacent to Helmet’s site in Banksia Park). Like Nolan, we were interested in finding a contemporary relevance for the historical material, both the Nolan paintings and the Ned Kelly myth. Helmet re-presents the site’s cultural legacy; consequently, the site is re-presented. Very rarely do I use recognisable representational imagery, the only other example being the use of the figure in The Lead Pedestrian. This is a useful technique for enabling people to engage with the narrative quality of the work, alongside that important engagement with the site itself.

The use of the Ned Kelly myth is widespread in Australia including in films, books, graffiti, tattoos and art. In architecture, the helmet is referenced in examples such as Aston Raggatt McDougall’s Westernport House (2005), which may have been influenced by the Nolan helmet imagery, and definitely in Lyon’s Sunshine Hospital (2000). At the National Museum of Australia, in their Garden of Australian Dreams (2001), Room 4.1.3 uses an abstracted black cube with a helmet-like slot to locate their camera obscura (Weller 2005 p.234). Accordingly, this is a historical idea made actual on the site. The formal qualities of the intervention allow for a framing of the landscape, one that changes dramatically from the various vantage points. Both the sky and the adjacent pine windbreak can be seen. The steel element creates a gateway through its pairing with the adjacent service station, drawing attention to this everyday occurrence. The faceted lawn draws attention to the context through contrast between the triangular geometry of the insertion with the undulating topography of the picturesque park. The gateway is designed by drawing attention, formally and through neon lighting, to the service station and the significant river red gum. It meets the needs of the brief while also drawing attention to the opposite side of the road, creating the gateway. Similar to inspirations for The Route Followed, we were interested in the curated views and movement as discussed by Appleyard, Lynch and Myer (1964) with their ideas of choreographed movement and Bois’s (2000) insights on Stourhead. At Stourhead he discusses the “fictive movement of the eye” across the lake versus the experience of the actual movement of the body walking around the lake. Helmet uses a variety of formal devices with the
Our initial photographic studies alerted us to the potential of the varied views into the site as a key concern. We noticed that adjacent service station and the ancient river red gum, together with the sculptural element could form the gateway, a requirement of the brief.
forms unfolding and contracting as the viewer moves past. It is also possible to climb onto Helmet, poking one’s head through the slot and becoming Ned.

We also analysed the physical features of Banksia Park, with its well-known qualities on a minimally maintained undulating lawn and its areas of indigenous and weedy vegetation. Of some interest was a historic pine windbreak and an ancient river red gum opposite the site. As a sculptural project, we had the opportunity to create a faceted lawn to contrast with and encourage noticing of the undulating context. The project’s strength is in inserting the sculptural elements into the existing condition, drawing attention to the site without major physical change to that existing condition. For Helmet this included the ability of the shiny surface to reflect the context back onto itself with the horizon behind reflected and also seen through the slot and on either side of the screen. They are elements in a wider landscape, and rather than a totalising scheme, contrast and juxtaposition are used. This is an object in the field quality that is also seen in Mrs Robinson (2013), Coburg, The Route Followed, and other community arts projects that are located in parks, gardens or playgrounds. This is a strategy I now value in drawing attention to the site. This is in line with well-known sculptural practices, but it is the connection of the site information at its source that is significant for my practice.

The sculpture functions as a gateway but establishes a new formal, landscape solution, as the triumphal arch is no longer an appropriate model for gateways. We were influenced by the imagery in Learning from Las Vegas (1972) where Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour describe a bureaucracy being located in a box...
with a sign on top that says ‘I am a monument’. Their interest in billboards was also influential, with the vertical element of Helmet functioning as a billboard and its focus on the view from the car. The helmet has no single vantage point; as it is approached from all directions the dynamic form unfolds. Helmet also addresses the need for the vehicular passenger to ‘speed read’. The sculpture was proposed to align more closely with Bridge Road, but unaware of an existing road easement, the steel elements were subsequently located further into the park. This allowed the sculpture to be not only read from passing cars but also to be experienced in-the-round by park users.

The original scheme proposed weathering steel, constructed using multiple panels. With escalating steel and construction costs, we changed to a more monolithic welded construction of painted mild steel. We did not consider this a compromise but an opportunity to reflect and improve the scheme, the black gloss-painted steel, more closely and carefully referencing Sidney Nolan’s Ned Kelly and more modernist, rather than the rural rusty steel references. There was never an intention to mimic the home-made riveted plough shears of the original Kelly armour. The use of black steel is a well-worn modernist trope for public sculpture. The shiny black steel was also reflective, which resulted in some unexpected but welcome effects at the time, reflecting the sky and the horizon behind. We also changed the triangular steel plane of the ‘plinth’ from steel to a more economical rubber playground surfacing. This change in materials allowed the ground plane to now be accessed by pedestrians and, unexpectedly, bike riders. The rubber also had textural qualities similar to the adjacent lawn and seemed a better match. The materiality of the project was important to the ability
of the work to engage with people, from being able to read the referencing to the optical effects of the shiny steel or the ability to access and bounce on the rubber surfacing.

The sculpture is lit at night and mimics the fluorescent lighting of the adjacent service station. Thus, the device of literally copying elements from the context is used. The project has different effects between day and night, with the void of the slot lit at night. At night the service station and helmet lighting create a strong effect of passing through a threshold.

For those familiar with his work, Richard Serra references can be seen in Helmet, in the use of large steel planes. Serra (Bois 2000) seeks to redefine site through phenomenological means and Helmet also does this with its unfolding triangular retaining walls and the large framing screen not dissimilar to Serra’s Spinout for Bob Smithson (1972-3).

However, Serra’s sculptures would never have included the pop culture references of the Kelly armour and legend in the Nolan painting, nor the pop art tactic of Rauschenberg’s oversized objects as designed in Helmet. Chilton and I brought the Pop Art techniques of oversizing to the minimalist trope to redefine the park, create the gateway, and send up Heide’s obsession with its founding. There is humour and engagement for those that recognise the reference to the popular and well-known Ned Kelly story. The joke only works if the imagery is recognised. After being initially bewildered, when the imagery is recognised, the viewers are illuminated and get the joke. As Vivian Mitsogianni stated at an earlier presentation of this research that she previously read the work in purely formal terms until I told her otherwise. What
does it mean then when viewers do not get the joke? *Helmet* is layered and nuanced enough to not be dependent on the one-liner. There is a richness in the use of multiple references and many opportunities for the public to engage with the work regardless of whether the references are able to be read or not. No matter what the type, the viewer’s response and engagement are critical to *Helmet*’s civic qualities.

Serra remarks of his project *Shift* (1972) that

*The site is redefined not represented...The placement of all structural elements in the open field draws the viewer’s attention to the topography of the landscape as the landscape is walked (...) The dialectic of walking and looking into the landscape establishes the sculptural experience.*

The experiential is an important notion for *Helmet*. There is no front or back. At one point the sculpture is reduced to a thin blade. The form draws attention to its surroundings. Landscape architect Jo Russell-Clarke’s reading identified analogous forms from the context. ‘Viewed from one side the slim blade mimics telecommunications towers, light and electricity poles, from another the slanted strata of dark cypress branches, then the peaked and saw-tooth roofs of sheds from another, and distant cones of hills from yet another. A small courageous hop and you are on a tilted and yielding rubber plane, suddenly sensitised to fleshiness that might hold a pulse, a Lilliputian on the armour of a half-buried colossus.’ (Russell-Clarke 2009b). The importance of movement and time in experiencing *Helmet* is an important consideration. (This is also important in *Packing* in rolling down the

Unfolding and dynamic forms viewed from various angles was imporant to allow for varied experiences.
Since the completion of the sculpture, we have observed that it has a presence on social media. These images come from a Flickr user, Clement Tang. He says “This was taken in my car while waiting for the red light to turn green. Here the dark blue sky is about to turn bright while the street lights impart an “orangish” colour on the pavement. The overall effect is intriguing; you almost feel as if Ned Kelly is peeping through the long slit of the Helmet.” This is a new type of engagement not considered at the time, but one we have welcomed.

The experience of views is important but people can also engage with the physical elements of the sculpture. An activated spectatorship that is involved not only with the sculptural element, but also the contextual site, and with some knowledge the cultural history of the site, the Nolan reference can also be noticed. Interestingly, without this knowledge, the sculpture is experienced in Serra-like phenomenological terms. Landscape architect, Jo Russell-Clarke, described her experience thus: ‘Helmet suddenly looms, its confronting angularity animating dark wedges of steel against the undulation of steep mounds viewed from a moving car’ (Russell-Clarke 2009b).

Overall, the work uses multiple tactics to engage people with the site. It is open to interpretation, aims to be accessible on a variety of levels, and draws attention to its context. Without the installation, the site might not be noticed. This engagement with the site, its context, its openness to interpretation and participation I consider is a civic experience. It is an everyday experience of a diverse demographic, including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, gallery visitors and others.
Packing worked directly with the banks of the river, inscribing a line from one bank to the other, creating an optical illusion of continuity under and across the river.
Packing was a temporary public artwork in collaboration with Jess Miley. It was part of an exhibition Felt Natural consisting of various artworks along Adelaide’s Torrens River for one weekend. Packing worked directly with the banks of the river, inscribing a line from one bank to the other, creating an optical illusion of continuity under and across the river, which was deliberately humorous. One member of the public even asked: ‘How did we do it? Scuba?’ The felt starts at the historic Police Box, ‘rolls’ into the lake and emerges out the other side, similar to a line on a map reconstructed in the landscape. This geometric element draws attention to the existing landscape, including typography and other more temporal characteristics including light and shadows. Packing used furniture removalists felt, which is partially made from recycled milk bottles. The felt was attached to the lawn with pins typically used for geotextile weed mats, another site reference to restoration, weed suppression. Over the four days of the installation, the felt did affect the lawn underneath, and for a short time afterwards, there was a pleasing yellowed-lawn after image. Another unintended effect was a provocation of the council, whereby their custodianship of the park was temporarily subverted. We attempted to leave the felt installed for longer that the three days but were contacted to remove the felt immediately. These aspects are all open to speculation and interpretation.

Packing references Joseph Beuys’ materially through the use of felt. Beuys first used felt in 1960 in smaller objects and in combination with fat, and he liked to play with both the negative and positive psychological character of felt. For example, in his piece Infiltration-homogen for Grand Piano (1966), a piano was wrapped with a felt ‘skin’, which trapped the sound inside, alluding to powerlessness and an inability to communicate. In contrast, Beuys evokes images of protection, insulation, and spiritual warmth with his Felt Suit (1970). In Packing while the felt is texturally different, it was tonally similar to the asphalt paths it crossed. People walking on the asphalt path gingerly crossed the felt installation not quite sure if this was ‘allowed’, at times also negotiating rolling children. I argue that this everyday involvement and noticing is civic.

Packing also references Michael Heizer’s earthwork Double Negative 1969-70 (Mormon Mesa, Overton, Nevada). We appreciated Heizer’s concerns, including drawing attention to the context, ambiguity, and the expressive potential of simple materials; in this case, the earth of the site itself. While Double Negative created a void, Packing inscribes a line. However, similar to Double Negative, it is the relations with the site that are the real concern. Other so-called land artists have also been interested in inscribing lines on the landscape, including Robert Smithson, Richard Serra, Richard Hamilton and Carl Andre. What I appreciated and borrowed from these precedents is that the site is largely left unchanged and the interventions are somewhat interesting in their own right, but more importantly, for the way they draw attention to the site. The site is re-presented. With Packing there are a variety of ways to respond to the context, including the Aboriginal community, the site’s artificiality, and the associations of the now historic police box, the formal qualities of paths crossing over paths and its adjacency to the River Torrens. The design solution was to prescribe a line that draws attention to these elements. This is also humorous to those that pick up the references, the in-joke about a line on a map reconstructed in the
landscape, and also a redundant new path in a park with many paths.

While the engagement of the public was anticipated, an unexpected aspect was the interaction of Aboriginal people, particularly during installation. A group of people nearby asked questions about the work and also told us about their lives. Later on, during the installation, three children returning from their adventures immediately engaged with the work, rolling down the hill along the felt. Interactions between strangers in public spaces are often limited but during the installation of Packing we had several people come up and ask what we were doing, including the staff of the local Popeye ferries. Returning to the site later, a man, perhaps homeless, perhaps intoxicated, was sleeping on the felt. It seemed the soft felt was preferable to the adjacent lawn. In modest ways Packing brought different demographics into proximity. Aboriginal children rolling down the hill over the existing path literally ran into pedestrians who seemed unsure how to react to the felt. Were they allowed to step on it? What other choice did they have though? They were forced to ‘break the rule’. People were drawn to the felt and interacted with the installation by lying on it, touching it, picnicking or looking on with bemused curiosity.

The nuanced referencing generated a design that provoked a diversity of interpretations and responses in a non-didactic way.

What I learnt from this project was the importance of the unexpected and the ludic. While unintentional, the minimalist gesture of the soft felt provided diverse opportunities for engagement. The response to the work, while anticipated, was also open-ended. This aspect of the project seemed more important than the earlier stated aims about noticing the site's physical characteristics.

The public was invited to be involved in the site in different and multiple ways. The felt surface of the temporary installation Packing could be rolled upon, picnicked on, gingerly crossed or slept on. In a phenomenological sense it brought attention to the constructed and smoothed banks of the River Torrens/Karra wirra-parri lake. In Packing the choice and location of the felt are inseparable from the rolling and sitting activities and the encounter between the work and the existing path. The visceral experience – the aesthetic encounter – is the participatory moment, the way that a public can shape and re-see the place. This activated involvement I now consider a quality of Everyday Civic Landscapes as part of a vital sensibility essential to the ongoing health of ever-evolving civic life.

**PART 4: PROJECT ARCHIVE**

Packing (below) references Joseph Beuys materially through the use of felt, as seen in Infiltration-homogen for Grand Piano (1966) (above). In Packing while the felt is texturally different, it was tonally similar to the asphalt paths it crossed. People walking on the asphalt path gingerly crossed the felt installation, not quite sure if this was "allowed", at times also negotiating rolling children.

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*Packing* (below) references Joseph Beuys materially through the use of felt, as seen in *Infiltration-homogen for Grand Piano* (1966) (above). In *Packing* while the felt is texturally different, it was tonally similar to the asphalt paths it crossed. People walking on the asphalt path gingerly crossed the felt installation, not quite sure if this was "allowed", at times also negotiating rolling children.
Mrs. Robinson (2013)
This bike rack commission referenced Duchamp’s assisted ready-mades. I was particularly drawn to Bicycle Wheel (1913) for its associations with the bike rack, not that this was a concern of Duchamp’s. Interestingly, Duchamp said ‘I enjoyed looking at it, just as I enjoy looking at the flames dancing in a fireplace’ (MONA 2016) and encouraged viewers to spin the wheel. This also accords with my interest in participation and involvement.

When initiating a project there is a period of spatial, cultural and historical site research until I find a ‘hook or hooks’ for the project. Typically, when designing, I undertake detailed research of the site conditions including the physical conditions, the history of the site and the nature of the commissioning. This is not at the service of then finding contextually ‘appropriate’ but invisible design propositions, but to make this research evident in the design. This conversation with the site is what makes the work site responsive. Sometimes this comes easily, but sometimes not.

Mrs Robinson was an example of a difficult process. This included researching the history of the site, finding historical photos, considering the names of nearby and historic hotels, identifying the qualities of standard bike racks, and considering the need and function of bike racks. The design emerged when I made the link with Duchamp’s precedents of the assisted readymade, resulting in my crossing the standard bike rack with the fashionable leopard print. The results are sculptural elements that alter and disrupt expectations of the streetscape, send up the recurring fashion trend that sees women impersonating wild African animals, but are also legible and functional as bike racks. The Mrs Robinson bike racks can be considered standalone sculptures, with or without bikes. That the sculptures function, or are performative, as bike racks are also intriguing and ambiguous. There is an open-endedness with the opportunity for interpretation. They function as multiple bike racks but push the formal possibilities within the limitations of the project. The bike rack is re-presented.

Early in the design process I found many historic photos of streets with bikes leant against fences and poles. In the photos the streets were so clear of the clutter of the contemporary street with furniture signage and infrastructure. It also occurred to me that the only reason we need bike racks is for security, a sad indictment that it is no longer possible to casually leave your bike and expect to find it on your return.

In Mrs Robinson, the transformation comes about through using the readymade bike rack and modifying its form with additional stainless steel elements while the original form is still legible. In this way, it references Duchamp’s assisted readymades. The current resurgence of the animal print trend is also captured in Mrs Robinson. Animal skins have long been worn for warmth and protection. Wearing animal skins may even have been perceived as a way of conferring the strength of animals to humans. With modern textile technologies as well as objections to the use of real fur, simulated animal prints have become widely available. This may, however, be further evidence of what John Berger (2008) identifies as our impoverished relationships with animals in the modern era. The use of animal print is always transformative. The cougar animal print transforms everyday street furniture, in our impoverished urban realm, with the most exotic of animal simulations. This is used as a decorative surface pattern, but also in the deliberately oversized tubular stainless steel additions. The use of the leopard print comments on the perennial use by the
fashion industry of animal prints, a ridiculous motif for women’s clothes, albeit one that may have its roots in the historic use of animal hides to keep warm. I was also interested in other pop culture activities such as wearing masks or Mickey Mouse ears whereby people can then take on another character. Other popular expressions are car tyres turned into Christmas trees, or Loch Ness monsters. This is often funny; a simple, populist joke where ‘this’ becomes ‘that’.

The approach is intended to be playful, ironic, humorous and ambiguous, and it is this quality and the resulting engagement that I now consider a quality of Everyday Civic Landscapes. The assisted readymade gave me a way into the project conceptually, through the use of transformation. This resulted in forms that are obviously bike racks but not like other bike racks. This sets up both the humour and makes comment on street furniture, including its banality and its clutter. Importantly, this is done without compromising the functional requirements. Humour disturbs the existing condition. Bike racks are not normally funny but largely invisible. It is also open to interpretation as others have asked me if the design is the bike chain abstracted and enlarged. Even though this was not the intention, it is significant that multiple interpretations have been generated. The work made them think. Perhaps others just wonder, ‘What is going on here? Is it art?’

Stainless steel is the material of choice for bike racks and handrails for its durability and minimal maintenance requirements. But for my project Mrs Robinson, using the appropriated idea of the Duchamp’s assisted readymade means that stainless steel is retained for its associations with bike racks. More thoughtfully consideration of materials can be an opportunity to enhance the opportunities for interpretation.

Humour can be generated when expectations are changed. In the landscape these can be interventions such as the Mrs Robinson bike racks that juxtapose the interventions with the context. The sculptures can be read as bike racks but are not typical. This tension is created when the design is not master planned or a cohesive whole. These Dadaist and Pop Art techniques are more able to carry absurdist and ambiguous messages. Colin Rowe, referencing Picasso’s Bull’s Head constructed of a bicycle seat and handlebars simply rearranged, has suggested that ‘[t]he alternative and predominant tradition of modernity has always made a virtue of irony, obliquity and multiple reference’. (Rowe 1983, p.138). Mrs Robinson is influenced by Duchamp’s Assisted Ready-mades where the bicycle wheel and stool are joined together in new associations. With Mrs Robinson the standard bike rack is modified with insertions and decorations, yet its source as a commercial stainless steel bike rack is recognisable.

If the aim of the civic is to keep open a dialogue with the contexts, then using these techniques allows this. The civic is defined by a rereading of the bike rack and the street. The collage technique juxtaposes the interventions with the context. There is no predictable aspiration of a smoothing and soothing cohesive whole.

Mrs Robinson reframes the street through using the usual process of junking up the street with furniture and signage but with ironic intent. The work re-presents the street and street furniture with playful bike racks patterned with the endlessly fashionable leopard print. In using the technique of the Duchampian modified readymade, the associations with the standard bike rack are retained while still juxtaposed. This is open to interpretation.
This was a winning competition entry for the future redevelopment of the old Royal Adelaide Hospital site. The project was won in competition with Slash+PP. The project team included Sarah Lake, Stuart Harrison, Sue Phillips, Michael Pilkington and Tanya Court. Text from the submission:

The main ideas established by Slash in the first stage were to adapt the historically listed and modernist buildings while “surgically” removing remaining buildings and decreasing congestion to creating a new area of public space. In the subsequent second stage Phillips Pilkington and myself joined the team and advanced the concept.

We seek to reintegrate the surrounding city and parklands. In removing accreted parts of building that have clogged the site, we open up the buildings to be part of an urban system, with their own identity and program. The proposal makes a proposition of retention and therefore reduces energy that would be required in new building construction. The primacy of adaptive re-use is supported by several key initiatives including on-site waste treatment, water retention and on-site power generation that can be extended to service beyond the site. (2015, unpublished)

The landscape design extends the metaphors of the hospital, health and the healing process as a strategy for the redevelopment of the Royal Adelaide Hospital site. Landscape shares many terms in common with the health professions including “transplanting”
and ‘grafting’. There are also strong links between landscape and the development of pharmaceuticals, including traditional Aboriginal remedies, herbal medicine and plants whose synthetic derivatives have been used for conventional medicines. These practices and plants are celebrated in the species selection and display for Royal Adelaide. As with early botanic gardens, display gardens are both ornamental and educational. The site will also encourage active recreation, in contrast to the Botanic Gardens’ ‘no bikes, no balls’ policies. The scheme also embraces the health benefits of a diverse landscape that includes passive and active recreational opportunities.

The developed landscape is a contemporary pleasure garden with venues for entertainment; having fun is good for you. The civic is expressed as a strategy that embraces the city as a place for children with educational, entertainment and recreation opportunities including for a children’s botanic garden and a large playground. This project also reprises historic landscape ideas, including the botanic garden and the pleasure ground.

The approach is also contextual with the adjacent botanic gardens also providing themes for the scheme. The site is reconsidered through both its adjacencies (ABG) and the past land use (hospital).

The proposal for oRAH retains as much as possible of the existing condition and refashions it into highly programmed outdoor spaces and gardens. The design uses medical metaphors and references for design forms and especially plant selection. There is a literal kidney-shaped pool on the roof of the old nurse’s quarters. Plants such as the foxgloves, famous as the source of heart medication digitalis, or more humorously poppies as the source of pharmaceutical and illegal drugs, are also proposed. This continues the function of the botanic gardens next door as a didactic garden and is one way the public would be both involved in the site to learn the story of medicinal plants and remembering the history of the site. The public is also engaged through the multiple programs of the garden rooms. The design uses water and water features in a myriad of ways to activate the space and encourage involvement, especially of children, with a bamboo mist garden and interactive bubblers. I divided this large site using the well-worn device of themed gardens and plazas influenced by the adjacent context of the nineteenth century layout of the adjacent Adelaide Botanic Gardens. Context is important to my practice, not to be contextually subservient but as a rich source for design concepts. It is the idea of the botanic garden as a collection of diverse gardens that is borrowed, not its historical forms. The forms are mainly devised as a palimpsest of the footprints of the former hospital buildings which are demolished to create the public space. These create multiple spaces that can be occupied, programmed and activated in diverse and both expected and unexpected ways.


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Relaid (2014) was a photographic study of mine that collected examples of road pavements that had been re-laid, with the original line markings having become a chance-generated abstract graphic. “Designed” through a process of lack of care, the pavement pattern is funny because it does not follow the usual rules. While not a designed project, this suggested to me a way of working that could use chance tactics to reconfigure an existing paved condition that would alert people to the banality of, in this case, road infrastructure. In this regard, changing expectations also comments on existing conditions.