Triggers: craft objects in space and time

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

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Declaration

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

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Abstract

Triggers: craft objects in space and time is a practice-led doctoral project that investigates how craft objects exist, extend and pertain to space and time. It examines the craft object in the context of exhibition practice, and in terms of how the relationships between object, space and time can be activated, and how the significance of the object itself can shift. The project focuses on thinking about, and experimenting with, possible new significations beyond traditional notions of the craft object as a self-contained entity. From a background in jewellery and object-making, the research seeks to locate the activation or ‘triggering’ of meaning through forming and situating the craft object in a given context. It also seeks to explore how and when such placements can activate understandings of time and space through experience.

The project stems from the genealogy of my practice work and is influenced by my interest in architecture, where issues of site, function, material processes, use and occupation are taken for granted as considerations in accepted practice. This, coupled with my experience in craft practice as an exhibiting artist in gold and silversmithing, provided the impetus for this research. In particular I am interested in the ways form, detail, location, presentation, material production and encounter can activate meanings for the craft object through its relationship to the exhibition space. To focus this enquiry, my research involves the making of a series of works centred on the exhibition and commission of rails as craft objects, leading to a series of ‘domestic rails’ in which the works connect with, function within and influence domestic architectural spaces. These ‘domestic rail’ works involve rail forms and secondary objects, such as vessels, mounted on them.

Extending the notion of the rail as container, the research asks how different vessels and containers might be located physically in relation to one another within defined spaces, and how these relationships may influence perceptions of the work. The focus extends to how an understanding of spatial and temporal contexts can be triggered through the craft object’s form and presentation and, in turn, how this can affect possible readings of the craft object.

The overall aim is to establish new knowledge about how exhibited craft works can activate experiences and perceptions that enable alternative ways of understanding craft objects and, in particular, their bringing together of meaningfulness and usefulness, beyond traditional connotations, through finding new ways to consider the relationships between object, space and time.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introductory discussion

Triggers: craft objects in space and time focuses on possible new significations of the craft object through its creation for and active engagement with particular environments. The research seeks to understand how particular forms, placements and settings for an exhibited craft object may activate, or trigger, relationships between the object, space and time, and how experience of these relationships in time may activate new perceptions, understandings and meanings of the craft object.

This interest in how we perceive, understand and respond to craft objects has developed through my craft practice, and this research draws from my experience as a craft object maker. It seeks to study and highlight specific research questions through making and exhibiting a series of craft objects. Accompanying the final exhibition, this exegesis provides a framework for practical, theoretical and philosophical questions raised by the research, thereby communicating how I have addressed the research questions through my craft practice. It encompasses questions and decisions relating to processes, materials, final products and their exhibition. Additionally, it documents the contexts of craft object making in my own and other artists’ practice, as well as positioning the way the craft object has been perceived and valued in a specifically Western cultural genealogy.

The motivation to address questions of the exhibited object as situated in time and space arose from recognising how the dominant discourse surrounding the craft object as a self-contained entity has been continually reinforced in exhibition practice. This reinforcement acts as a separation of subject and object, with the object of view (the craft object) being separated from the viewer (the viewing subject). Philosophically speaking, the viewing subject has held a longstanding and dominant position in Western thinking as the ‘one who knows’ or the ‘knowing subject’, who makes meaning of the external world or the world ‘out there’ beyond that subject (who views, thinks, uses and knows). My research addresses ways the craft object can shift the Cartesian dichotomy between object and subject.¹

Today much of current practice in craft object making is focused on the object as presented and encountered via exhibitions. The craft object is typically displayed on a pedestal or in a glass showcase.² These presentation methods draw attention to the object’s physical or material condition as well as its perceived status as an isolated aesthetic object, thereby bestowing it with value as an object, contributing to and protecting its preciousness and objecthood as such, and also highlighting its separation from the ‘viewing subject’.

Notwithstanding any appreciation of this mode of display, my research considers the scope and capacity of the craft object, in
its particular context of display, to intervene in the discourse of subject–object separations. This is explored by moving beyond traditional notions of the craft object as a singular, isolated entity, presenting itself outwards to the world of ‘knowing subjects’. Through this research, I have experimented with the craft object’s connections to us, as makers and viewers, within the wider context of its (and our) surroundings in an exhibition site. Thus my research became concerned with the object and its associated environment, as well as with the way object and environment can interact to create new subjective and objective experiences. This took me towards a consideration of the nature of space and how we perceive and interact with it, including focusing on how we engage with objects within spaces, in both the exhibition context and the world of objects in daily life. In understanding the movement, or relationship, between object and environment, I also became concerned with temporal qualities of spaces and of craft objects, i.e. their presentation and location in space and time, and how that is experienced; hence ‘Craft objects in space and time’ became the focus of my research subject.

In order to access an understanding of the craft object in its spatial context, I needed to isolate, explore and articulate certain ‘triggers’ that would bring this understanding to the fore. Thus my research became concerned with identifying and understanding those triggers – investigating the object’s relationship to, interaction with and influence on wider perceptions of the exhibition space, and the viewer’s experience of the object in space and time. I also became concerned with how these interactions can effect and create meaning in and of the craft object: in other words, what the craft object can ‘say’ and how it may resonate or connect with us as potential viewers or users.

Speaking position
My interest in making has been longstanding. An early introduction into the working methods of panel-beating rendered a particular skill set that enabled me to work with metal. This skill included, importantly, the knowledge and understanding of how to build material form from sheet metal. This particular skill and acquired knowledge, extended by a strong foundation in the traditional practice of silversmithing through art school training, have forged the working methods I continue to use in the production of craft objects and are fundamental to this research project.

Coming from the position of a ‘mechanic (pre-automotive)’, the material and processes involved in the making are central to the decision-making processes in researching through practice. It is the qualities and processes associated with materials and making, and keeping the idea of utility in mind, that activate early ideas about form as the work develops. At the same time, a questioning, solution-orientated conceptual approach to investigation and experimentation is in operation as a consistent mode of practice and reflection. Described as a heuristic methodology (see Section 2.1 for further explanation), the emphasis on, and desire for, making and
material to be central to the process are combined with a trial-by-error, solution-orientated process of discovery. This has drawn me to adopt the phrase ‘heuristic mechanic’ as a way of describing my speaking position or standpoint in this research. Accordingly, this exegesis discusses my experience as a practising gold and silversmith, encompassing my approach to making and materials and the genealogy of my practice and practice-led research. It is intended that an understanding of my experience as a ‘heuristic mechanic’ will assist in framing the research conceptually.

As questions have arisen throughout this practice-led research, I have continued to identify with the working methodology of a mechanic. This is relevant to both my process and the idea of ‘usefulness’ in my work, which is discussed further in Sections 1.3.3 and 3.3. The Macquarie Dictionary (2009) definition of ‘mechanic (pre-automotive)’ is:

full of resources, inventive, ingenious. One who is employed in manual labour, a handicraft worker, an artisan. Having to do with tools.

This experience with tools and metal provided a foundational approach to my practice when I entered the field of gold and silversmithing, which since the late 1980s has been the site of my professional work.

In this field, both nationally and internationally, contemporary jewelers are increasingly interested in creating specific environments to display their work, in order to influence how their work may be perceived and to intervene and engage in the dominant discourses of craft object presentation. However, in contemporary silversmithing and craft object practice, which is somewhat distinct from jewellery practice, there is less evidence of such intervention: this is where my research identifies and claims a new position, thus adding to the body of knowledge in the field.

The ambition of the research is to test and extend awareness of the craft object as a trigger for shifts in perception and resonance for the viewer, and thus in the activation of meaning. What is the scope for this to occur? The proposition is that such triggers occur when the craft object’s form is varied and when it is placed and mounted within varying contexts of, and relationships to, its immediate and surrounding environments. The outcome of such triggered effects is to question the dominant discourses of subject–object relations in the making of meaning of a craft object. This will be further discussed in Section 4.1. Thus the research seeks to identify the kinds of conditions that come into play in the making of knowledge in and of the craft object. It looks at how such different forms, carefully located in particular environments, can activate perceptions and awareness of time and space in relation to the viewer. The research also notes the role of the craft object and how it can be experienced through these activations. The specific environments under consideration are the exhibition space and domestic settings.
Craft, architecture
My interest in architecture provides a means of interpreting the craft object in a context that can take it beyond the binary order of subject–object that is more typically present in contemporary exhibition practice. This is allowed by focusing not only on the object itself but on its relationship to and ability to influence the exhibition space, and the viewer's potential experience of object and space at the time, or times, of viewing. This research suggests that in the practice of contemporary craft object making, the relationship between object, space and viewer is relevant in the production of meaning through its phenomenological potential.6

‘Phenomenological’ here refers to the ‘knowing subject’ perceptions of the external world through sensory properties and relationships. As the viewer (subject) experiences the craft object, so the relations between object, space and time can become activated. In this way, networks of relationships can enhance recognition of new meanings and new ways to consider these relationships.

By adopting considerations more akin to those of architectural practice, alternative strategies to craft object form, placement and display have allowed closer exploration of, and finer insight into, the interactions between an object and its specific setting. In addition to material processes, issues such as site, function, use and occupation are fundamental considerations within accepted architectural design practice and theory.7 Extending from such aesthetic considerations of form, surface, material and tectonics as contributing significantly to the creation and expression of architectural expression and meaning, I have been particularly interested in the spatial and experiential aspects of architecture as I work through my own craft practice. This has involved reflective consideration of how specific environments might affect readings of architectural form and use, and of how form and use can affect readings of space and the viewer’s relationship to it. I have then translated these reflections to my craft practice.

In addition, I have focused on the ways our perceptions and understandings of architectural spaces can be activated by, understood through and responsive to constant environmental change, such as the variables of habitation and movement through architectural space over time, and the perpetual shifts associated with changes of light and shadow within a space. As discussed in this exegesis, these concerns have informed my research in terms of the ways the craft object occupies space and the ways time is revealed through shifts of light and shadow which activate new perceptions and meanings for the viewer. This is also central to differences in how craft objects operate in both exhibition and domestic spaces.

I have been drawn to the idea that while craft practice and architectural practice are distinct practices, what they can share is the potential to operate conceptually, spatially and with useful purpose. While other shared values may include location, presentation, encounter and material production, the value that perhaps most
characterises the relationship between craft and architecture, as opposed to other art practices, is a shared value of its usefulness and ways in which perceptions of ‘usefulness’ can shift in response to context. For example, a table within architecture may define use while also suggesting or delineating a ‘sub-space’ (for example, for dining). In craft practice, a table might read as a platform for objects for making or for display (as well as being a potentially interesting object itself). In both architecture and craft, the shared value of usefulness can bring people to the work, highlighting the subject’s active role as viewer/user. The presence and valuing of usefulness here shift the subject–object relationship to a more active engagement, which is distinct from, for instance, the more binary separation of passive viewing subject from isolated object more typically experienced with fine art.

As within architecture, this research identifies the craft object as fundamentally about its active resonance for, and connection to, the viewer, including its ability to be useful or to suggest usefulness, and to provoke reactions, invite play, jog memory or inspire intrigue, wonder or other emotions. It may be said that the craft object is fundamentally about meaning and use, and that these are values that are tied together and that ultimately give it life.

This research accepts that underlying each craft object there are ideas and conceptual considerations of a vast array of materials and processes relating to the nature of use, and of how we see and live with craft objects. Sentesy notes that in The origin of the work of art, Martin Heidegger articulates the notion of “giving life” to inanimate objects:

> talking with friends and family around the dinner table makes my house feel actually like a home: it brings the world into the home, and relates the home to the wider world. From the other direction we can see that the house expresses or articulates who its occupants are, and what they think of themselves, and it determines in part how they fit in the rest of the natural and social world. Heidegger takes both to be a kind of disclosing of the world. To oversimplify the meaning of this phrase: they both reveal, limit, and shape the possibilities of action and understanding that are available to us.

Heidegger discusses the object and our engagement with it as a way of disclosing meaning in both the object itself and the world. Thus there is a relational aspect to this way of thinking about the craft object. It is this relationality that is of primary concern in my work as a way of breaking down the traditional separation of viewing subject from object.

By approaching the making of craft objects against a background of an architectural spatial context, I began to consider the craft object in more synergistic terms that combine function, use, form, aesthetics, perception and habitat. As a craft practitioner, I was concerned not only with making objects, but with the variety of contexts in
which craft objects are experienced and understood, including the processes and materials used in their formation and the ways in which these contribute to how we see them.

**My craft practice and this project**

This research is concerned with reorientation of the craft object in the context of spatial and temporal experience, and how the form, detail and physical positioning of craft objects in relation to one another within defined spaces can influence overall perceptions of the work and its environment. These factors plus the role played by the viewer in this encounter – how the viewer’s movement through a space can affect the way the work is experienced and appreciated – are also relevant to an overall understanding of the triggering effects of moments of change in the search for new meanings in and of the craft object.

Thus the research has involved the making of a series of craft objects whose genesis lay in their ability to ‘create space’ in the exhibition context and which developed as works characterised by a fundamental dependency on, responsiveness to and belonging within a spatial setting. This derived from my earlier practice, which had involved an exploration of more traditionally self-contained objects arranged and fixed in relation to one another, for example, an assembly of stacked forms. These studies led to works involving objects arranged together to create localised space, such as repeated forms arranged in a circle.9

These ideas extended further to the creation of more abstract spaces through significant shifts in the form of craft objects, designed to undermine their reading as self-contained, ‘complete’ forms and their placement within, and relationship to the exhibition space, as well as to one another. This involved the creation of larger scale, occupiable, localised spaces within the main exhibition area through the exhibition and commissioning of rail works fixed within exhibition spaces. Finally, within this research, a series of ‘domestic rails’ as craft objects were developed, where rail objects were made for and mounted in domestic settings. By their very nature, these ‘rail’ works are physically connected to the exhibition space and can be displayed neither on pedestals nor in display cases as isolated objects. By their very nature as ‘rails’ they are attached to, or related to, the space they occupy and cannot be viewed in the round. Their viewing point and the viewer’s ability to engage with them are defined by the space they occupy and their location in that space. The development of this series of exhibited rail works that interact with and explore ideas about space and time, and that also incorporate ‘secondary’ craft objects as material elements along and attached to the rails, became a focused way of exploring, investigating and addressing my research questions through practice.

In summary, key considerations in the making of the components of the practice-led research include:
- the relationship of the rail to the exhibition space, including the nature of the surface on which it was mounted
- the scaling, proportions and details of the rail and of objects connected to it
- the relationship of objects connected to the rail, including how they were mounted
- the nature, form and usefulness (or non-usefulness) of objects connected to the rail, and of the rail itself
- the materials and techniques, their selections and evidence in the final work.

Why rail?
In this research, the term ‘rail’ makes reference to architectural and functional handrails. The rail is an iconic architectural element, not only as a functional piece of design, but also as an unconscious and prosaic symbol of contemporary times. In part, the prevalence of handrails in our daily environment is due to building codes and regulations that require rails to be installed to meet statutory occupational health and safety requirements in architectural spaces and the larger built environment.

Becoming aware of the pervasiveness of rails, we begin to see them in a multitude of places, be it in homes, offices, factories, airports and building sites, as balustrades, barriers and handrails. Once we, as users, become conscious of the rail, we begin to comprehend how much rails are part of everyday life. Paradoxically, with familiarity we begin to filter our perception and understanding of rails and their potential until they are understood as predominantly or solely functional. They are ‘ready-to-hand’ and have the character of “handiness” in the sense used by Heidegger. But, as Heidegger also observes, the more an object is sought, the more objectively present it becomes “such that it seems to lose the character of handiness”.10

In this research project, I aim to bring the rail as craft object to the viewer’s consciousness and to lift perceptions of its presence and its potential role and meaning.

Lifting the rail beyond an architectural framework, the research places the rail within the contexts of the craft object, and by doing so it reorientates its role and meaning and its potential to engage the viewer. Such placement into the realm of craft objects opens the rail’s potential for meanings beyond the pragmatics of functional use, while not denying the substance of use-value. In other words, the origins of functionality remain in the genealogy of meaning of the rail in its newly formed context of craft object. In addition, this research explores alternative uses, or combinations of uses, for the rail that might not be expected of a typical architectural rail. These reinvigorate awareness of and engagement with the rail as ‘useful’, while also enriching it as an aesthetically and conceptually ‘meaningful’ object.
The relationship between architecture and the craft object also brings an intimacy of connection that differs from that more likely to be associated with an architectural rail. In architecture, one touches or holds the rail and thus makes contact with the architecture itself. This can be a prosaic or nuanced experience, depending on the rail's aesthetic and sensual qualities, which may be more or less developed, although usually in a limited way, with function as the primary consideration. As a craft object, the rail has the potential to associate with different experiential and conceptual possibilities. By integrating variation and detail in the rail by mounting it at varied and specific heights, and by mounting secondary objects as part of the rail, it can, for example, move the viewer/user into the realm of play, ideas and memory. This shifts it beyond the somewhat more limited possibilities of a functional tactile engagement within the built environment.

In the practice-based aspects of this research, the rail as craft object therefore sits conceptually between any binary separations, such as those of subject–object, use–perception or cognitive–haptic engagement. The rail is meaningful for its use-values and for its aesthetic values at the same time. The way meaning is made lies in the perceptual and aesthetic recognition and engagement by the user/viewer of and with the rail as craft object.

In terms of use and habitation, the rail can provide a pathway to exploring how people live in and relate to living spaces. This consideration led me to explore the notion of the rail as an object in a domestic setting as different to a dedicated exhibition space. In this way, it could talk about daily living and could contribute to a ‘sense of place’ within that setting. By ‘sense of place’, I mean the phenomenological qualities of the domestic space, including its meaning as ‘home’. This exploration led to the rail’s elaboration through a sequence of purposeful, aesthetic, secondary objects mounted on it. This introduced the notion of a rail that bridges craft, art and architecture and offered, for example, somewhere to put the keys or mobile phone as you enter the house, somewhere to hang an umbrella, somewhere to leave a note or prop a photograph. Here I found potential for opening the meaning of the rail as both architectural and craft-based object.

In Chapter 6 of this exegesis, I expand on the aesthetic, functional, experiential and conceptual possibilities of the ‘rail’ in more detail.

1.2 Research questions

Developing from the preceding concerns, my research project focuses on answering the following research questions. Each question arises out of the practice-based methodologies of making and together they call for both a practical and a theoretical way of addressing the research.
- What is the potential for new understandings of the relationships between craft objects and the spaces they inhabit?
- How can an understanding of temporal context be triggered through the making, appearance and presentation of craft objects? How does this understanding impact on possible readings of craft objects?
- How can a series of works activate experiences and perceptions of time and space to create meaning and to enable alternative ways of experiencing craft objects?

1.3 Key terms

Following the previous introductory discussion, this sub-section outlines some key terms used throughout the exegesis. Key terms requiring some interpretation include: craft object, trigger, usefulness, community of practice, rail, space and time.

1.3.1 Craft object

Viewed independently, the terms ‘craft’ and ‘object’ suggest distinct categories or groups for identifying objects. Relevant definitions of each are broad and do not offer immediate clarity for interpreting the symbiotic term ‘craft object’. A relevant definition of the word ‘object’ is:

Something placed before the eyes, or presented to the sight or other sense; an individual thing seen or perceived, or that may be seen or perceived; a material thing (OED)\textsuperscript{11}

‘Craft’ is defined as:

A pastime or a profession that requires some particular kind of skilled work (OED), or ... a calling requiring special skill and knowledge; especially a manual art, a handicraft.\textsuperscript{12}

This research specifically asks: under what conditions are objects declared to be craft objects?

For the purposes of this research, in considering the term ‘craft object’ I draw from studio jeweller and writer Bruce Metcalf’s definition of ‘craft’ and extend it through consideration of notions of ‘objecthood’. Most craft theory has been written by critical theorists and rarely by craft makers. An exception to this is the writing of the American studio jeweller and writer Bruce Metcalf, who has offered insights into the practice of craft with the acumen and experience of a maker. Metcalf comes from a position in which his experience in making and critical thinking feed one another.\textsuperscript{13}

Metcalf in *Replacing the myth of modernism* (1993) asserts that “craft” exists under a “different set of values and a separate historical consciousness” from “art”. He makes this distinction through
four coexisting characteristics: craft must be made substantially by hand; it is medium-specific and therefore always identified with a particular material and the technologies invented for its manipulation; it is defined by use; and it is defined by its past.  

In considering the term ‘craft object’ in this research, I also include the aesthetic and experiential aspects of how one engages with objects, their presentation and the spaces they occupy.

In Chapter 3 of this exegesis, I discuss such questions and further background pertaining to the meaning of the term ‘craft object’ in more detail.

1.3.2 Trigger

A key term in my research is ‘trigger’. Encyclopaedic and dictionary definitions of ‘trigger’ refer to devices, mechanisms, levers, switches, events, factors and so on that have some sort of significant impact or that set off, or cause, a transformative reaction or change.

For example, squeezing the mechanical trigger of a power tool allows you to make, to control the making or to activate the making of something, usually by forming connections.

This relationship between the tool trigger and its consequences is characteristic of all handmade works, but my particular interest in this relationship derives from my experience as a mechanic. I am also interested in this in the sense that the object being made is also a trigger for further development of ideas, which arise in the process of making. The object is the trigger, which impacts on both the making and its expression. The industrial materials also act as triggers in the production of my work in terms both of their mechanical properties having a direct bearing on structural and aesthetic outcomes in the making of my craft objects, as well as the cultural associations with certain materials and how they are used and valued (see Section 5.4).

An example of object as trigger can be seen in my work *Rail as vessel*. Through the manipulation of light, the work creates a shadow, which then triggers perceptions and changing experiences of space and time. The passing of time throughout a day may be experienced through the movement of natural light and the visible, tangible and dynamic manifestation of shadow.

In *Camera Lucida* (1980) Roland Barthes puts forward a theory of viewing a photographic image, discussing a way of looking and finding meaning. Barthes’ theory defines the “punctum” in a photograph, where a single point activates the field of the photograph or the “studium”. The punctum holds the viewer’s attention: it could be by light or a facial feature or object form, for example. The studium refers to the overall visual field which gives a range of meanings available in a general sense. Taken together, these trigger, or activate, meaning for the viewer. Such a process, which describes the relationship between the focus point and the whole, can be
translated to a similar process in my work, i.e. the relationship between a trigger point and its consequences for the overall context or composition activates an aesthetic property, which can give rise to new meanings and understandings of the object overall or as a singular whole. This can be seen particularly in terms of my interest in how a craft object in space can have an impact on that space. Thus a craft object can operate as equivalent to a punctum in the overall spatial environment in which it is situated, as in Barthes’ concept of studium. Extending this idea, a key element within a craft object can act as ‘punctum’ within the overall composition.

Following Barthes’ theory of the punctum, I have adopted the term ‘trigger’ as a conceptually suggestive and rich means of identifying and delineating agents of change in our engagement with craft objects. It is a term I also use in the discussion of the genealogy of the craft object in Section 3.2 to show moments of social and cultural change which demonstrably identify changes in value and attitude towards the craft object.

My particular focus is on the ways in which our perceptual experience of craft objects, in the contexts of space and time, can trigger certain responses. For instance, in the circumstance of an exhibition, the trigger for changing perceptions can be the craft object itself: it has the inherent capacity to stimulate perception and thought in terms of time and space, in respect to the making of the craft object and in relation to how it is ultimately experienced and understood. Similarly, our perception of the craft object can trigger aspects of our experience and understanding of the exhibition space.

1.3.3 Usefulness
The salient characteristic that frequently differentiates craft from art lies in its use-value. However, in craft’s own terms, the ‘condition’ of use is defined in different ways, starting from the purely functional and moving towards implied function. For some makers, the idea of an object lies solely in its use. Wayne Guest, for example, exploits his distinctive traditional silversmithing ideas and techniques to make functional silverware. This can include the valuing of usefulness as embodied, or at least implied, in the object itself.

For some, the use is the inspiration for the idea expressed in a craft object, rather than the objective in making it. Katherine Wheeler explores the unlimited potential she perceives in the utilitarian aspects of an aesthetic object.

For some, exploiting the idea of use, and sometimes negating its usefulness altogether, is a way of exploring concepts and potentials for the craft object. Robert Baines, living treasure: Master of Australian Craft, plays with this tension through his methodology of making objects with a concern for authenticity and attribution, coupled with a sense of play in the object’s title.

For others, a maker has the ability to play across the entire range of ideas and opportunities that come with usefulness and
non-usefulness. The English silversmith David Clarke challenges the tradition of silversmithing, playing with the notion of function and dysfunction with humour and wit, as well as challenging the ‘dos and don’ts’ conventions of the material and making processes of a silversmith.

Through this research, I have noted that practice-led methodologies related to the use-value of the crafted object may be closely aligned with those of architectural practice. These practices, i.e. craft and architecture, combine genesis and resolution that are both simultaneously conceptually and functionally orientated. Contemporary craft covers an increasingly broad range of practices and positions and goes beyond classifications as the lines between art, craft and design become progressively blurred. A parallel can be seen in the field of sculpture, as discussed by Rosalind Krauss in her text *Sculpture in the expanded field*.

For this research, the suggestion or reference to ‘usefulness’ is an essential quality of the genesis and resolution of craft objects. This is further discussed in Section 3.3.

### 1.3.4 Community of practice

This research is based within a broad community of practice. It crosses numerous fields of craft practice and other disciplines, and perhaps resists categorisation within established boundaries in relation to discipline, technology, material and purpose. The dismantling of discipline-based practice opens up possibilities.

Within the contexts of jewellery, object making, sculpture, industrial design and architecture, my practice mixes elements of play with function and non-function, and with scale, material, detail, mechanics, spatial occupation and temporal engagement. All of these cross over the abovementioned disciplines and offer relevant fields of reference for craft practice and are therefore relevant methods for my practice-led research, which enters the domain of interdisciplinary practice.

In particular, as mentioned above, the field of architecture has provided methodologies for interpreting the craft object in a broader context, focusing not only on the object itself but also on how it is perceived, used and engaged with in specific environments and on the possibilities for influencing our perceptions of those environments.

Thus, drawing from architectural concerns coupled with my experience in mechanical use of metal and background in jewellery and silversmithing, this practice-based research is situated in a broad community of practice. It extends and consolidates previously worked concepts drawn from these interdisciplinary practices and both incorporates and extends some concerns of these disciplines to find new ways to consider intersecting relationships and possibilities.
Practitioners within my community of practice include some of those mentioned above such as Wayne Guest, Katherine Wheeler, Robert Baines and David Clarke. Others who will be discussed include David Huycke and Siegfried Kreitner. As a group, these form a community for my practice in the sense that their work has significance for me, providing insights and understanding of potentials for craft objects, their production and exhibition.

A jewellery artist with a strong material practice drawing on relationships to the body while referencing domestic interior through the use of a handrail is Swiss artist Christoph Zellweger. In his exhibition *Rituals of self design* at the Overbeck-Gesellschaft, Lübeck 17 November 2013–2 February 2014, Zellweger references domestic interiors and explores the relationship between enhancing domestic interiors and enhancing the human body, in response to issues of conformity and ageing.

David Huycke is a Belgian silversmith, whose meticulous practice involves a highly skilled approach. His interest in employing traditional techniques for contemporary conceptual work is notable, demonstrating that traditional silversmithing techniques have currency and contemporary relevance when used in an innovative way.

1.3.5 Rail

My craft practice has, over 30 years, involved an exploration of craft objects as individual elements, as elements in relation to one another and as elements in relation to the spaces they occupy or in which they are presented (see Section 2.2). As discussed, this has culminated in the development of a series of ‘rail’ works for display, and sometimes for use, in exhibition and domestic settings.

These rails are connected to their exhibition or domestic space and each has a sequence of purposeful and secondary aesthetic objects mounted onto it, offering useful places (somewhere to put the keys) or places with implied usefulness, as well as personal places (somewhere to leave a letter or prop a photograph).

So, on the one hand the rail seems almost pragmatic or architectural. It could be a handrail, a coat rail or maybe a kitchen rail for hanging trays and supporting bowls. In the domestic context, the scale, size and form of the rail suggest such pragmatic solutions, but on closer inspection the detailed nature of the rail is revealed. The scale of each part, the particularity of each connection, alongside the aesthetic punctuations of each component and their consequences to the overall composition, all suggest that this is not exactly a rail in the commonly used sense, but a sequence or stack or ‘line-up’ of precious objects. Which is it? Could it be either, neither or both? Is there any certainty?

Perhaps in these questions lies a crucial focus of the research. The rail, as identified in this research, is becoming something more than an architectural feature and more than a traditional craft object, yet it is combining concepts and potentials from these categories and
their histories as quickly as it is displacing them. The rail is linear, yet, as with most lines, the rail is incomplete. It is both a fragment and a fragmented whole. It has a beginning and an end, but these fixed points might be incidental to its reading and potential meaning: it could continue infinitely in either direction by connecting more parts, yet at the same time it has a finite scope and form. As a rail attached to a wall, it cannot be viewed in the round as a discrete object, and as a fragment, it belies reading as a singular entity. Perhaps the multiple possibilities of fragmented form can trigger responses that a ‘whole’ work cannot. A fragment can attract attention and provoke intrigue, allowing the viewer a space in which to exercise his or her own imagination, to contemplate, experience, and find meaning in the work which could be regarded as giving the work completion.

My childhood experience of Meccano, which was first known as “mechanics made easy”, has been an influence in my work as a heuristic mechanic. This early experience may have informed my interest in the fragmented nature of form as assembled components and the innate potential of such forms to extend physically, and conceptually, one’s thinking and imagination. Do the rail segments pull apart? Could the interconnecting titanium segments connect to make something different? The work exhibited at eye and hand level on the wall, and not behind glass, tempts the mechanic, as the child, to fiddle, to invent, to experiment, to construct inspiration in a physical and mental engagement not usually allowed by the traditional, ‘complete’ and stand-alone craft object.

1.3.6 Space

Temporality relates to the space in which the ‘moments’ of meaning occur. The research references ‘space’ as a defined, created space as defined, occupied or inhabited by humans. It does not conceptualise space as ‘boundless, infinite outer space’ or even outdoor space within Earth’s atmosphere, which may seem uncontained.

The research is concerned here with the ‘interior’ space relative to an exterior. The primary reference is, as mentioned above, to occupiable space. However, it can also include fluid, void spaces such as the interior of a vessel or of a building and, by implication, suggested or semi-contained or localised spaces. Translating this idea to the realm of contemporary jewellery and the crafted object, there may be a reference to the circular void created by a ring, or a space within a room that might be invoked by a rail. Such spaces can be discrete, bringing other references to bear on them, such as a place that is distinguished from the larger space, but that may invite occupation or suggest use.

The idea of space thus described is phenomenological in that it rests on the idea of the viewer’s habitation, relationship or perceptual experience with an object and the space it inhabits or activates. This is a key point for my work in understanding how the subject-object relationship is affected for different craft objects in different spatial contexts.
In *The poetics of space* (1969), Gaston Bachelard focuses on inhabiting and experiencing architectural objects and spaces, such as attics, basements, drawers and hallways, relating the human imagination to the poetics of architectural space. By so doing, Bachelard activates meaning in and of the sensations and cognitions of experience, and can be referenced in terms of the way space is investigated in this research.

### 1.3.7 Time
The use of the term ‘time’ in the research is focused on two distinctly different notions of time. One is the ‘temporal context’, by which I mean our understanding of craft objects, including their relationship to exhibition, and their meanings and usefulness, in the context of history as a series of temporal events and changes. This refers to time passing at the scale of years, and to our collective understandings of craft objects through time, including as influenced by the varying sociopolitical and technological changes that have occurred through time, as recorded in history. Note that discussion of this is limited to Western history over the past 500 hundred years, for the purposes of this research.

The second notion of time refers to the more infinite concept of time, for example as experienced through the cyclic passing of minutes and hours throughout the day and throughout the seasons of the year. While time is a measured concept, with the 24 hour day first delineated by the ancient Egyptians, and time and motion observed and measured empirically by Galileo, the concept of temporality is also experienced through the senses with changes in light, temperature and environment. While this has clear associations with natural light and the movement of the Earth around the Sun, and the ways human beings adapt or otherwise to levels of light and darkness particularly in the outdoors environment, temporality can also be experienced acutely in association with the routines of daily living, such as getting up, leaving the house, going to work, exchanging ritual messages with loved ones, coming home and settling in for the evening. It is these qualities of what could be described as ‘domestic time’ that are particularly applicable to the series of rail works in this research and the potential concerns that the rail can activate.

A further concept of time is that of ‘temporality’ as used by Martin Heidegger, where “temporality” describes any given moment in which past, present and future are momentarily embodied. This is relevant to my research and the rail works in the sense that the attention is on the fragments of the craft object through which the viewer finds a temporal meaning. To understand or ‘know’ the rail involves some sort of temporal process of moments, which are indicated in this research by ‘triggers’. This idea of time is distinct from linear readings of time.

### 1.3.8 Key terms summary
In outlining my use of the above key terms, I have also aimed to establish important conceptual threads that persist in my practice and to articulate central points that are fleshed out in the following
pages. The central focus is the development of the domestic rail works, through my practice as a heuristic mechanic, and on the study that has accompanied and flown from that practice-led development in terms of the possible human experience of craft objects as viewer/user.

1.4 Chapter summaries

Having outlined my research position, questions and intentions, and introduced some key terms that are foundational for the research in Chapter 1, this sub-section provides summaries of the following chapters.

Chapter 2, Methodology, outlines my research methodologies. It focuses on a discussion of my craft practice through which the research finds form and includes a description of key work produced through the research project. This has developed through a heuristic, reflexive process led by the act of making, identifying the key methodology of 'practice-led' research.

Phenomenological experience of the rail works is identified as a methodology in that it provides an approach to understanding the relationships between the rail works and the viewer, bringing subject and object together.

The concept of genealogy is another theoretical device through which to methodologically sustain a way of accessing history in the discussion of my craft object practice and also in constructing a narrative of the craft object in Western cultural history. The notion of genealogy comes from Michel Foucault, who provides a way of reading or accessing history in other than progressive and linear terms.

Chapter 3, Craft object, presents some background to understandings of the craft object that is fundamental to my research, in that to know where one is going, one must know where one has come from. The chapter briefly identifies and explains what is meant by the term ‘craft object’ and how this has shifted over time through constructing a genealogy of the craft object (in a Western context). This research seeks to identify some triggers over time that have created new meanings and values for the craft object. Thus the concept of trigger is sustained in my research as not only a practical device in the practice itself, but also a methodological device in the way the research is written up. This enables the research to account for changing identifications of craft through the temporal contexts of changing social, economic and political times, to assist in identifying key elements of craft today.

Chapter 4, Space triggers, brings the focus to the first research question: What is the potential for new understandings of the relationships between craft objects and the spaces they inhabit?
This chapter focuses on how craft objects can appear, inhabit, infuse and affect the exhibition space and the viewer. The chapter discusses my interest in experimenting with possible new significations for the craft object that may emerge from studies of its form, materials, detail and placement within a particular environment inhabited by the craft.

The research seeks to broaden viewers’ perceptions beyond prevalent contemporary notions of the exhibited craft object as a self-contained entity. This necessarily involves me as maker and researcher, to reflect on my own perceptions and assumptions.

Chapter 5, Time triggers, focuses on the second research question: How can an understanding of temporal context be triggered through the making, appearance and presentation of craft objects? How does this understanding affect possible readings of craft objects?

The chapter discusses issues of temporal context, including looking at how understandings of temporal context, and of time, are and can be triggered through the making and presentation of craft objects. This chapter also considers abstract time and its importance in craft practice as a necessity to allow development of ideas and perceptions that occur through material and making. Further, it considers ways in which temporal context can influence understandings and possible readings of craft objects.

Chapter 6, Experience triggers, gives specific attention to the third research question: How can a series of works activate experiences and perceptions of time and space to create meaning and to enable alternative ways of experiencing craft objects?

The discussion examines the role the viewer plays in encounters with the craft object and how the viewer’s movement through a space can change the way the work may be experienced. This process involves a reorientation of a viewer’s experience of the craft object, which can affect the viewer’s understanding of the object, the space in which the object exists and the interrelationships between the two.

This examines how a series of works might activate experiences and perceptions of space and time, thereby enabling, or suggesting an enablement of, alternative ways of experiencing craft objects. If experience, in a phenomenological sense, has the potential to shift perceptions, the new considerations of meaning might be found through the object’s activation of space and time, and this in turn suggests new insights for viewers. In this way the polarisation between subject and object is interrupted, as subject defers to object and object defers to subject, allowing new identifications.

Chapter 7, Conclusions, summarises the conclusions of my findings in response to the research questions to show how the research has contributed new knowledge to the field. In doing so, it also outlines
changes of focus and position that have occurred through the research process and provides a brief outline of my intentions for ongoing considerations and new developments in my practice-led research that are expected to flow as a result of this doctoral project.

The remaining sections within this exegesis include a bibliography and appendices.
“Cartesian dichotomy” is a term originating from 17th century French philosopher, René Descartes, who refused perceptual understandings of the world and relied on mathematical and analytical reasoning.

Cross-reference to Figure 9, Chapter 4, Containment: Cicely & Colin Rigg. Contemporary Design Award 2012, The Ian Potter Centre: National Gallery of Victoria at Federation Square, 23 November 2012–21 July 2013.

The key concept in “standpoint theory” is the elucidation of an inter-subjective position coming from one’s own experience.

With a strong foundation in the traditional practice of craft, the subsequent introduction to non-traditional materials and processes (and their abundant use and appropriation) has seen the field of contemporary jewellery expand and develop. The social meaning of jewellery has shifted from value or prestige to self-expression and comment. Cross-reference to Section 4.1.

The origins of silversmithing in Australia lie in the status-conscious work of the 19th century makers of centrepieces, presentation objects, goldfields commemorations and commissions from churches and private patrons. Silversmithing was invigorated during the 1950s and 1960s by a small group of European migrants who reintroduced and revitalised the skills and traditions of silversmithing practices. Silversmiths since the 1990s have in some way redefined the term ‘Silversmith’. Their work indicates a primary concern with the making of one-off functional hollowware (hollowware production is closely associated with silversmithing, usually involving the construction of hollow and bowl-shaped forms, and is a term that is more associated with a European context).


Reference to phenomenological, Section 2.1, Genealogy of this research: exhibition practice.

In the context of modern architectural theory, genius loci has profound implications for place making. This field of architectural discourse is explored most notably by the theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz.


See Section 2.2, Genealogy of this research: exhibition practice.


Oxford English Dictionary.


Publications include:

METCALF, B. The hand at the heart of craft (use of the hand in craftwork). American Craft, Vol. 60, p.54.


17 BAINES, R. 2009. *Melbourne Hollow Ware: More Snakes Than You Can Poke a Stick At!*, School of Art, RMIT University Gold and Silversmithing, pp.9, 23.


19 Susan Cohn (1993) discusses in ‘The crafts: on their own terms’, how craft practice can operate both conceptually and functionally and, interestingly, how this same framework may be closely aligned to the methodologies of architecture, i.e., the content of the work can be reviewed in terms of technique, medium, type, culture and usefulness.


21 Meccano was conceived by Frank Hornby in 1898. He developed and patented the construction kit as ‘Mechanics made easy’ in 1901. The name was later changed to ‘Meccano’ and manufactured by the British company Meccano Ltd. between 1908 and 1980. Meccano consists of reusable metal strips, plates, angle girders, wheels, axles and gears, with nuts and bolts to connect the pieces. It enables the building of working models and mechanical devices. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meccano [Accessed 10 April 2013].


Galileo’s Pendulum, early 1600, a working model of the application to time-keeping. The clock had its origin in the Benedictine monasteries of the 12th and 13th centuries. The impetus behind the invention was to provide a more or less precise regularity to the routines of monastic life, which required, among other things, seven periods of devotion during the course of the hours. The mechanical clock was the technology that could provide precision to these rituals of devotion. But what the monks did not foresee was that the clock is a means not merely of keeping track of the hours but also of synchronising and controlling the actions of men. By the mid-14th century, the clock had moved beyond the monastery, bringing a new and precise regularity to the life of the worker and the merchant.

23 In his major work, *Being and time* (1927), MARTIN HEIDEGGER conceives of time as a present reference in which past, present and future come together in a temporal notion of time. Thus he distinguishes between time and eternity, yet his notion of time does not stem from this distinction. He dismantles the notion that time or temporality could exist as a forever condition for an idealised human mapped in a transcendental sense of being, but nor does time exist in a linear sequence of ‘now’ events. Thus it is not made complete in the propositional ideal of progress. For Heidegger, death provides the measure for time, a limit affirming its and our temporal existence. The metaphysics of presence, as a dominant Western way of understanding self in the world, is thus disrupted, or at least the potential for disruption exists.
In Foucault’s 1971 essay ‘Nietzsche, genealogy, history’, Foucault spells out his adaptation of the genealogical method in his historical studies. First and foremost, he says, genealogy “opposes itself to the search for ‘origins’” (Foucault 1977, p.141). That is, genealogy studies the accidents and contingencies that converge at crucial moments, giving rise to new epochs, concepts and institutions.

2. METHODOLOGY

The fundamental methodology for this project employs a practice-based research approach. Through my practice I have come to understand heuristic and reflexive, phenomenological and genealogical modes of enquiry, and have continually and consistently related them back to my practice. This chapter focuses on discussion of my research methodologies in relation to the production of my craft practice research, which is centred on making and exhibiting a series of 'domestic rails', including describing the works and their development. This series of rail works draws on, develops and extends my preceding craft practice, integrating the working methodologies associated with art, craft and architecture practices while informing a sustained research practice to answer the defined research questions.

2.1 Current practice-led research

In terms of how I practise, my understanding of practice-led research and its place within a specific ‘community of practice’ has become more critical and reflexive throughout the time of this sustained research project. I identify as a craftsperson, one who works through the material practices of making crafted objects, principally in metal. This provides me with an authentic speaking position, my standpoint.26

Craft is my medium in both a material and a cognitive sense, in that my thinking, conceptualising, development of ideas and creation of objects come about through the process of making. This includes all of the action, inaction, planning, spontaneity, skill, error, responsiveness, originality, questioning and repetition embodied in creative craft object production. The primacy of this methodology is evident in my entire research project, through the work itself and this exegetical text with its inclusion of images of previous work and possibilities for future work in the field. Creative practice provides the vehicle for not only imaginative processes, but also critical thinking, which informs my research decisions to extend the knowledge in and of the field.

A heuristic approach

Taking its meaning from the Greek words *heuretikos* ‘inventive’ and *heuriskein* ‘to find’, the term ‘heuristic’ refers to development that is characterised by a cyclic, commonsense, solution-orientated, trial-by-error approach to learning and discovery through encouragement of experimentation. A heuristic methodology involves a questioning, investigative approach, allowing a reflexive way of working which stimulates questions, review, analyses, further making, reworking and new works. In the essay ‘The pillars of motion’, in Siegfried Kreitner’s *Minimalist kinetic objects*, Klaus Honnel refers to German artist Siegfried Kreitner’s minimalist kinetic objects as being guided by the principles of trial and error.
The principle of ‘trial and error’ guides their design. Kreitner eschews detailed sketches. The possibility of failure is inscribed in the artist's work process. But to no lesser extent the possibility of discovering something even more unimaginable.27

Reflexivity
In this context, the term ‘reflexivity’ suggests thinking through experience. It involves a process of exposing or questioning ways of doing. A reflexive practice that is reflective, open to critique and discourse, that is questioning and recursive,28 is of particular relevance to research practices that stem from the act of making. Such practices are investigative, multilayered and inclusive of diverse approaches, concepts and theories. They open the terrain of research to new possibilities in a way that is similar to the way the triggers operate in my craft objects and in the processes of constructing narratives and genealogies. There is a process of meaning-making surrounding the object as much as ourselves. On this point, art academic Elizabeth Grierson (2009) cites the educational theorist Frederick Steier:

‘If we begin to examine how we as researchers are reflexively part of those systems we study, we can also develop an awareness of how reflexivity becomes a useful way for us to understand what others are doing.’ Further, he claims that reflexivity is a way that ‘we contextually recognise the various mutual relationships in which our knowing activities are embedded.’29

‘Reflexivity’ is different from ‘reflection’. Characterised by self-observation and self-examination in terms of ways of doing, reflection is experienced when we become observers of our own practice, thus separating ourselves from the practice as though it is external to us. On the other hand, reflexive practice engages both reflective and recursive characteristics through questioning the basis of our interpretations; thus as makers and researchers, we are actively involved and engaged with the objects. At one and the same time, there is an active process of both self-awareness and also a questioning of the foundations of practice.

Sometimes this heuristic reflexivity can be quite spontaneous and responsive. This is so in my material practice, which provides a familiar way of working and thinking that is intrinsically centred on the process of making. In this sense I am ‘thinking through practising’, yet the critically reflexive aspects are a crucial aspect of this.

This mode of thought or practice is explored in a publication, Thinking through practice: art as research in the academy,30 in which creative art practice is discussed in its capacity as a research method. Australian artist Lesley Duxbury and her co-authors discuss how this approach involves the generation of new knowledge through the combination of a making and material approach with a reflexive practice that reveals the thinking and processes underpinning material manifestations and outcomes. The argument makes the case for and legitimises this approach as a valid research methodology.
In this approach to research through practice, materials and processes are manipulated by hand. As a practice-based researcher, I am aware of ‘thinking through practice’ in that my whole being, through making, is engaged in and constitutes the heuristic, reflexive research process. In this sense, there is a bodily imprint of material practice in my knowing and being as both an epistemological and an ontological process at work.

Through experience of making craft, I engage in a reflexive process, although not necessarily consciously. Questions raised or responses felt spark further questions and in this, the experience opens up a space for possibilities where the activities of making and thinking can activate responses, perceptions and understandings of the viewer. In the words of Duxbury, who works with walking as a temporal methodology:

I attest that research is not complete until it involves someone to experience it and one of the main concerns of my project was to include the viewer as an active participant in the work rather than a passive observer.

It is this relationship between object and subject, craft object as artwork as experienced by the viewer, that is crucial to my research, as is the relationship between myself as maker and myself as researcher. With the connotations of my being a heuristic mechanic already residing in the genealogy of my work, the recursive, reflexive and temporal nature of my practice becomes evident through the sustained process of researching through practice.

**Phenomenology**

The phenomenological methodology in this research project is informed by ontological, spatial and temporal ideas and issues. In setting out a phenomenological approach to space, the French writer Gaston Bachelard distinguishes “abstract space” from “lived space”. While abstract or Euclidean space is characterised by the definition of boundaries between inside and outside, which in architecture can translate as conceiving of the ‘building’ as object, Bachelard gives preeminence to the idea of space for habitation. The focus is on the experience of spaces made or influenced by the architecture – the void elements and on the idea that each internal or external space is part of a continuous, connected, spatial experience within the world.

In his seminal work, *The poetics of space* (1969), Bachelard places emphasis on intimate spaces such as a house, a drawer, other domestic spaces and in particular the room with which the reader, or one who experiences the space, may have both emotional and cognitive associations. Such spaces are simultaneously contained and open, embodying a connected and participatory understanding of the world. The room is understood and experienced as part of a sequence of spaces, including the exterior of the building, and the experience of all of these spaces involves journey and memory and therefore time.
Following Bachelard, my aim is to trigger a ‘lived’ experience in order to engage the imaginations and activities of the viewer, centred around and through the work with ‘domestic rail’. Such triggers bring past time and future time to the present through the memory and knowledge of the viewer. This resonance and connection to the viewer are central to the potentiality of meaning of the rail works. In this sense, I see the rail as an element that inhabits and extends space, both exhibition and domestic. Extrapolating from that, the rail has the potential to extend and inhabit our greater living spaces, in physical, perceptual, emotional and psychological senses.

**Genealogy**

In examining aspects of the discourse of craft objects, the research draws on the methodology of genealogy from Michel Foucault. This approach, which Foucault derived from Frederic Nietzsche, is referenced to enable a focus on the understanding of craft through changing social, economic and political times and, in particular, to focus on significant moments of change rather than on a progressive narrative of history. For Foucault, genealogy refutes the notions of linear regularity and the “consistency” of history and may reveal the more networked, discontinuous and sometimes contradictory truths of the past. Drawing on Foucault, my research into my physical and material craft practice identifies moments of change or disruption where certain ‘triggers’ have had significant consequences and impacts on my work. Foucault shows how moments of change, identified here as triggers, can be identified through the discourses in which they are situated.

An example of this kind of trigger in the genealogy of my practice is the work *Mezuzah and rail*, Figure 24 (2007); the rail is mounted directly on to the wall and, through the manipulation of light, the work creates a shadow, triggering further awareness of the dimensions and detail of the work. Although the aesthetic considerations of form and details of fixtures and fittings were well considered, the exact manifestation of the shadow and its scope to reveal more about the work came to me as a maker as a somewhat unexpected outcome. The shadow acted as a trigger and its potential to activate the experience of time and space has had a significant impact on the aesthetic and conceptual development of my work giving rise to other shifts and moments of change considered in this and other works.

As outlined in the following discussion, there is a chronological development from my early works, involving autonomous objects assembled in relation to one another, to the domestic rails works, where craft objects are made and arranged in relation to the exhibition or domestic space. However, this linear chronology is continually transgressed by recurrent, developing and dynamic themes and aspects that are important in my work. Together, the linear development and the networked recurrence of themes provide a genealogy of my exhibition practice.
2.2 Genealogy of this research: exhibition practice

In this research, the development of ideas through making has ultimately extended to the exploration of abstract, implied and semi-contained spaces within the overall exhibition space, through the form, detail and placement of the exhibition and domestic rail works and their elements, *Rail as vessel*, Figure 1 (2012). This can be seen in the ways in which the rail, in a given space, exists, extends, connects and impacts on that space. The rail can operate as equivalent to a “punctum” in the overall spatial environment in which it is situated, as in Barthes’ concepts of “punctum” and “studium” discussed previously.

As outlined in the introduction, the making of a series of craft objects that could ‘create space’ in the exhibition context, and which are fundamentally dependent on, responsive to and belong within a spatial setting, derived from my earlier craft practice. This had involved a series of more traditional, autonomous craft objects and was followed by the investigation and construction of objects operating in relation to one another, *Stack x 4* (stacked), Figure 2 (1995). These then opened up the potential for works where the objects were arranged together to create localised space, such as repeated forms arranged in a circle, *Circle*, Figure 3 (2001).

As mentioned above, this chronological development has been marked by several themes that have recurred, shifted or emerged through my practice in a non-linear way. Themes consistent through all of my work, and which I have pursued in various ways to varying degrees, include an interest in the mechanical, playfulness and movement; the idea of usefulness and tensions that can be created in craft objects around ambiguity as to usefulness and materiality and the ways in which the properties of the material – primarily titanium – can enable particular forms and expression, for instance through colour. Other themes that have emerged and grown through my practice include studies in form and space; ideas of containment, habitation and scale; the notion of journey; and an investigation of the experience of time, through light and shadow. These themes have overlapped and influenced one another, forming a network of development in the sense described by Foucault.

For instance, the shift in direction to explore spatial and habitation aspects of the work, which are key elements of this current research, has been in part triggered by the interactive and playful qualities of earlier work. An example is the stacking of parts to create a whole, which originally sprang from ideas of play and a desire to articulate the parts to suggest or create movement, and which in turn led to greater exploration of the idea of relationship and the making of localised space.

The following discussion traces the chronology of the development of the ideas of space, time and experience that are the subject of this research, and highlights the recurrent and enduring network of
themes that also characterise this development. It is written in two sections, the early works and the shift from autonomous objects to the current research, and the current research, including developments within it.

2.3 Genealogy: from autonomous objects to the current research

Relationships
The underlying themes explored consistently in my earlier single or autonomous objects (1995–2000) were ideas of relationship and containment, where enclosure of space and expression of form were investigated through the creation of negative gaps and apertures within the series of work titled Stack x 4 (stacked), Figure 2 (1995). Ideas of repetition, connection and functional ambiguity have been preoccupations in varying degrees in all my earlier works.

Through the making process, I experimented with separate containers and assembled the stacked objects in various arrangements. This exploration suggested possible interactive and playful qualities for the repeated autonomous object. This was relevant to me as a maker, inspiring further ideas and play in the process of making, and also relevant to the final expression, affecting the viewer’s experience, and to the development of later works. For the viewer, the possible readings of the work opened up to provoke questions: Do the stacked segments pull apart? Could the titanium boxes connect to make something different? The work tempts the viewer to fiddle, to invent, to experiment, and even to construct – inspiring a physical and mental engagement not usually allowed by the traditional, ‘complete’ and stand-alone craft object.

Over time, further shifts in my work were activated by my growing interest in modernist architecture and were informed by the use of a limited and consistent range of materials, which allowed me to focus on aspects of form, assembly, relationship and detail. The work became increasingly refined and reduced to simplify form and detail through the elimination of surface decoration. This simplification allowed me to explore ideas more intent on containment and volume. The stripping of detail also drew attention away from the elements as precious objects and helped emphasise their role as parts of a whole that could possibly move in some way in relation to one another. This focus on relationship also invited the viewer/user to touch and participate, to engage with the work rather than merely observing it as a passive viewer. This was the beginning of my development of ideas about the subject–object relationship and about how that relationship could be influenced through the form and expression of the craft object itself.

Containment
Central to my practice has been the idea of works which are about containment and which essentially have to engage the viewer/user.
Participation between user and object, even if only notional, is an important theme that has developed over many years of practice.

Circles recur in my work as a primary form and as an expression of and reference to the idea of containment. In the work titled *Circle*, Figure 3 (2001), the space within the circle is contained, made up of small hand-sized boxes which are stacked and inclined in an endless progression. The boxes are connected by mechanical-looking, almost knuckle-like hinges. Each rests on brushes, further articulating the parts and also adding to the sense of impetus created by the inclination and to the suggestion of movement: do the boxes twist? do they open? (what's inside?), can the circle turn? The circle is the ultimate symbol of purity, continuity and wholeness. Nothing can be added or taken away from a circle and the space it contains is possibly magical. The work activates these thoughts and questions.

In itself, the circle creates a void space at its centre, almost suggesting usefulness as a vessel (a tray or bowl), although obviously unable to physically hold or contain any object. The suggestion or reference to use is an essential ingredient and tension in my work and during the course of this research project has triggered a range of resolutions, from exploiting the idea of use through to orientating towards something that could be useful, but is clearly not.

**Materials**

Materials such as titanium and nylon are inextricably linked to my aesthetic and conceptual concerns and they are constants in my work. The plain, waxed, mute surfaces offered by titanium give the work a translucent delicacy and convey a sense of depth and volume. In *Circle* (2001), the elementary shapes arranged (or stacked) together suggest and invite movement and articulate scale. The viewer/user is tempted to touch and contribute to the object's performance. Over time, as the objects are used (or played with), marks of manufacture may be revealed and marks of use may demystify the objects, breaking down the preciousness conveyed by perfection of finish and locating them in place, time and personal context.

**Localised space**

In the exhibition titled ‘*Circle/Rail*’ (2001), Object Gallery, Sydney, the objects – a simple rail located on a constructed wall and a ‘circle’ of inclined boxes on brushes displayed on a pedestal – were located within a larger gallery space, placed in careful relation to each other. As the viewer moved through this exhibition, the work was encountered in different ways.

The viewer had to move to see the rail and to interact with it by walking into the space it created by its form. This space was the area between the wall-mounted rail and the pedestal-mounted circle. Its scale and the separation of the pieces required the viewer to move and turn, rather than just standing observing from a relatively static perspective. By moving through the space, the viewer might
experience the work, as discussed earlier in how Duxbury works with walking as a temporal methodology. It is this relationship between object and subject, between exhibited craft object and viewer, that activates the space.

The circle, sitting as a singular entity on a pedestal, becomes part of the encounter. It is implicitly embraced by the other piece, the rail, and they have a relationship, which changes how we experience them. The objects’ relationship is more than spatial, as the differences between the two expose differences in how we relate to each. The circle is an autonomous object, self-contained, hermetic and resting on a pedestal, while the rail is attached to the wall, fragmented, and cannot be viewed as a singular object, and appears to have scope to continue in either direction by adding more parts.

In ‘Circle/Rail’, (2001), the space, habitation and scale aspects of the work represented a shift in direction through the development of greater spatial concerns and possibilities associated with architectural space, including how objects connect with and perform in space and how they affect surrounding spaces. Themes such as relationship and containment were still present and they were extended to include the viewer – to relate to the viewer’s range of movement, and to suggest possible containment of the viewer. The key materials and ideas about mechanisms and playfulness persisted.

‘Circle/Rail’ (2001), extended and consolidated previous concepts (circle as autonomous object) and contributed to future projects (domestic rail) by serving as an experiment with form, manufacture, scale, technique and material. The use of rails as a spatial device, as well as the combinations of materials, forms and relationships in ‘Circle/Rail’ (2001), relates to my present practice. This was the precursor and springboard for the current doctoral research project.

2.4 Genealogy of the current research

The following works were completed as part of this research project and demonstrate the development of ideas and works to address the potential for objects to ‘create’ space, to influence the exhibition space and thereby to activate shifts in consideration of the object in space, time and experience.

Usefulness

The ongoing speculative investigation of the relationship between objects has been a major interest from the initial stages of the research. In Table rail, Figure 6 (2006), the exploration centred on the connections and associations between the object’s parts and the use of simple mechanisms to connect or hang the object’s parts on the rail section. In this work, I was particularly interested in usefulness as essential to the form and expression of the craft object.
Table rail (2006) was part of a touring exhibition *Beyond metal: contemporary australian jewellery and hollowware*, which travelled to India, Asia and Australia during 2007 and 2008. In this work, the use of titanium is consistent with earlier works and the silver is used to accentuate the articulated, mechanical, removable elements and to express their difference from the core ‘rail’. I was also further exploring the development of form, space and containment through the more traditional vessels and trays in silver, in contrast with the titanium rail element, which offers more subtle, ambiguous and incidental space contained within its edges.

This work also displays recurring themes such as the mechanical and functional as preoccupations that are a key focus in this research. I was intent on playing with ideas about the integration of complex functions and their expression, as derived from pure mechanical objects and their expression. This idea is captured by French philosopher Gilbert Simondon in his text on the internal combustion engine:

> the point at which specific structures emerge, which, relative to each component, one might call defence mechanisms: for instance, the cylinder head of the internal-combustion heat engine starts to bristle with cooling fins. These were at first simply an extraneous element, as it were, added to the cylinder and the cylinder head for the sole purpose of cooling. In more recent engines, however, these fins have come to play a mechanical role as well as providing a ribbing that serves to inhibit the distortion of the cylinder head under the pressure of gases. Now the two functions are no longer distinguishable; a unique structure has thus evolved, one which is not a compromise but a concomitance, a convergence [that] integrates the two functions and transcends them.37

This statement on how engines have developed expresses an abiding interest for me as manifest in early works such as *Table rail*, where multiple functions have been combined and are no longer distinguishable from one another, resulting in a convergence of functions and expression in a single, integrated whole.

**Extending the notion of home**

In the group exhibition titled *Melbourne hollowware* (2009), Galerie Marzee, Nijmegen, The Netherlands, *Tea service no. 1*, Figure 5 (2009) may be considered as providing a study on and platform from which to explore relationships between objects; between object and space, and between object and viewer.

Here, the emphasis was on the relationship of the viewer to the ensemble – inviting the viewer to pick up the teapot and to put it back precisely in the space indicated – engaging the viewer with the particularities of the object and also suggesting ideas of belonging, hospitality and comfort associated with the ritual of tea drinking and of home:
The reductive piece captures a different ‘sense of wonder’ and rendering the arrival of vessels onto an existing plane in the Mark Edgoose *Tea service no. 1*. There is a dwelling that brings a geometry and cohabitive script of pondering and understanding. Departure of the vessels leaving an absence conjures memory of what once was.38

In this work, the recurring and developing themes are evident – the use of materials, the arrangement of objects in relation to one another, the mechanical parts and details suggesting movement and defining location and so on. The rail fragments in this work delineate space, thereby creating articulated places for the objects to reside. The fragments also inform and determine the relationship between the objects that comprise the tea service. This relationship is further reinforced, for example, when the teapot is removed. I was interested in how absence might also activate the work, suggesting questions about what might have been and of where the missing form might be. These questions also raise the possibility of another subject (who took the object?), thus activating further subject–object associations, including ideas of usefulness and an engaged relationship between the viewer/user and the work.

The ideas of presence and absence or of arrival and departure that were explored in this work have also recurred and been developed in the ‘domestic rail’ works, contributing to the idea of a ‘sense of place’.39 The domestic rails are connected to their exhibition or domestic space and each has a sequence of purposeful and aesthetic objects mounted onto it that, in themselves, can be removed or separately adjusted. In addition, the objects offer places for domestic objects that are useful (somewhere to put the keys), as well as personally meaningful (somewhere to leave a letter or prop a photograph). In this way, the domestic rail works extend the idea of presence/absence beyond the craft object itself to include objects brought by the viewer/user and to imply other subjects/viewers/users.

The idea of creating objects with a housing has also been explicitly studied in the *Ring and box* series, no. 1 – no. 18. In this ongoing series of work, Figures 8 a, 8 b and 8 c (2010–2013), I have raised the notion of ‘home’ as the place of safekeeping, the place to return to, the base position for habitation or for ‘living’, through a series of rings, each accompanied by a ring box. These represent a focused study of my interest in the relationships between objects and between solid and void, object and space, and containment and habitation.

In these works, I have chosen the ring as a traditional and well recognised craft object which has been known and employed as a highly symbolic, spiritually significant and also generally decorative jewellery item for centuries. This research project (my craft practice) has not focused on jewellery making; however, I have always made rings. A ring fits directly onto the body and is activated by the hand, and together they form a strong relationship. This is quite different
from other forms of jewellery such as brooches, which are usually attachments to clothing, or necklaces, which adorn rather than ‘fit’. The ring and the hand are mutually dependent and there is also special significance in that the hand itself is usually in constant use and therefore a highly ‘engaged’ part of the body and has had, in itself, an important symbolism since ancient times.

So I am interested in the ring on the hand, but also in the ring as an object. What is a ring when it is off the hand? I have strong childhood memories of rings and ring boxes, and of the most special rings being presented and kept in special boxes. The box always seemed to be both a safe place for the ring and a means of presenting the ring.

Accordingly, in the Ring and box series, each work involves a ring as an object of considered form and detail, housed within a ‘box’ which is both display setting and carefully constructed place for the ring to reside – where it is held in place and where it belongs when not being worn. In this sense, the work is about fundamentals of habitation, and perhaps the seed of architectural space as captured by Bachelard in his writing:

> every corner in a house, every angle in a room, every inch of secluded space in which we like to hide, or withdraw into ourselves, is a symbol of solitude for the imagination … it is the germ of a room, or a house.

The works explore relationships between objects, between object and space, and between object and viewer/wearer, by offering the ring in a range of contexts. They emphasise the relationship of the viewer/wearer to the ensemble – inviting the viewer to pick up and try the ring on and to put it back, ensuring it fits within its precise housing – engaging the viewer in the precision of the work and its detail and suggesting ideas of belonging (home). The belonging on the finger or in the box creates a relationship, or bond between the viewer/wearer and the box. At the same time, the aspects of the work such as how it fits together and its form and expression illustrate those other recurrent themes of mechanism and movement while the almost overwrought forms make their usefulness and wearability appear ambiguous: are they tiny sculptures or rings in boxes?

**Colour**

Another work that explores the relationship between objects and begins to develop the rail as a ‘free’ armature for disparate objects is Coloured rail, Figure 4 (2007). This work includes an unadorned, straight-plane rail of minimal detail with three vessels attached to it. The key focus, in terms of this genealogy of ideas, is the exploration of colour.

Coloured rail (2007) is primarily about exploring colour in the work and looks at how colour can affect the reading of the object by drawing attention to certain elements or aspects of it to accentuate form, line or relationship. The ability to colour the material titanium through electrochemical processes was one of my early interests.
in the material and an aspect I have experimented with over years of practice.

In this work, I focused on colouring the edges of the titanium sheet. The plainness of the titanium surfaces and its mute finish give the planes an almost translucent quality. From a distance, the colour along the edges is barely visible, if at all, but as the viewer approaches, the coloured edges and planes become more apparent. I wanted to create a level of detail while maintaining simplicity of form and to draw the viewer in to close inspection through attention to detail. I pursued the addition of colour to augment details of fixings, edge thicknesses, gaps, slots and apertures. Connections, for instance, are accentuated by delicate contrasts in colour and shade. The coloured edges and planes emphasise lines – continuous or broken – and are employed to suggest interior as distinct from exterior. Equally, the coloured planes emphasise form and voids.

The focus on colour brought together my developing concern with spatial and formal relationships and the potential for the detail of the work to extend or accentuate aspects of these. The scope and process associated with my preferred material and its particular properties further contributed to the strategic placement and creation of superb colours of varying intensities to selected components and elements.

The technique of colouring titanium is a fascinating and intriguing process that also prompts and poses outcomes and ideas that arise through the process of making. The process requires the preparation of an electrochemical anodising bath, employing an electrolyte, into which the object is immersed. Prior to immersion anodising, the selected edges or elements are treated, providing a clean and oxide-free surface. The object (anode) and the anodising bath (cathode) are connected to a transformer and a electrical current is passed through the electrolyte via electrodes. Oxygen formed on the anode creates an oxide film on the surface of the object. It is the thickness of this film that determines colour; no dyes or pigments are involved and the colours are an optical effect known as ‘optical interference’.

My interest in colour and its potential for my work was inspired by the use of colour in artworks and architectural projects. Examples include Melbourne architect Peter Elliott’s water treatment facility at the Melbourne Zoo and the cover of the 2007 RMIT Gold and silversmithing graduating student catalogue, *Topos Nochos*, designed by Dr Neal Haslem. In both cases, the use of colour is strategic and selective, drawing attention to linear elements within the works and conveying a sense of craft and precision which resonates for me:

The water recycling building is small and industrial … at night it glows through its shimmering skin … revealing the interior as a working machine … it is that approach to seeking opportunity out of the ordinary that sets this building apart … each individual small piece of this jigsaw is designed and considered, treated with respect, even though the architectural budget was small.41
Although my focus here was on detail and, in particular, the use of colour on titanium, this work also revealed the potential of the very simple rail to perform as an armature for disparate objects and of a linear relationship, or sequence, that commenced my thinking on the potential of journey – an idea that is pursued in the domestic rail works.

**Entering domestic space**

In *Corner rail*, Figures 13, 14 (2009), I translated and extended themes and ideas in the making of a rail work explicitly for a domestic setting. This work brought together thoughts on localised space, containment and relationship, and development of detail including the extension of colour to the attached object. This was the first rail work that was made for a particular, given domestic space.

*Corner rail* (2009) comprises two main elements, a rail and a tray. The rail is a simple but carefully constructed form that defines and is located in a corner space, and that supports a brightly coloured, polished timber disk tray. A strong feature of this work is the detail of the fixtures and fittings, which use simple, low-technology manufacturing techniques suitable to a domestic environment where the work will not be ‘protected’, as in the gallery setting, but will be used. In the case of *Corner rail* (2009), the wall-mounted rail is variable in length and capable of supporting a range of accessories or objects that can hang off and clip to the rail, including practical objects such as phones and keys. The orange tray is offered as a defined place to prop family notes, photographs or mementos. The potential of secondary objects like the tray is to suggest ways we might use the rail and potentially challenges the way we define the rail as object.

In addition, the placement of this work in a corner space within a home and the extension of the rail beyond the end of one corner wall pursue the idea of making localised space, and highlight the potential for ‘place-making’ offered by the rail’s form, scale, detail and mounting height. In its actual setting, the rail is placed within the entry to the home and plays a key role in the literal homecoming process for its inhabitants – both physically and psychologically.

**Journey**

In the series *Rail and vessel no. 1*, Figure 11 (2011) and *Rail and vessel no. 2*, Figure 12 (2013), I explored an elaboration of the rail, drawing on *Coloured rail*, Figure 4 (2007) and *Corner rail*, Figure 13 (2009), to bring complexity to the linear nature of the rail. This was done to develop and accentuate the idea of journey through a sequence of more pronounced shifts and changes in the rail itself, as well as in the objects attached to the rail.

These works also return to ideas of domesticity conveyed by the vessels and draw on *Tea service no. 1*, Figure 5 (2009) and its suggestion of communal, shared, table-based ritual or function.

*Rail and vessel no. 2* (2013) was included in an exhibition titled *Words and works from a world away*, 2013. The exhibition brought
together works of jewellery and object artists from Australia and Estonia. Statements were collected from residents of each country about their knowledge and opinions of the other country. Each artist then chose a statement that had been made about their own country. The piece they made was their response to this statement.

In my case, therefore, I chose a statement made by an Estonian person about Australia. The statement I chose was “Australians, they are not our neighbours, so there is not much to say”. My responsive statement was ‘Something so far away can actually sit alongside’, and my responsive work was Rail and vessel no. 2 (2013).

In Heidegger’s discussion of space, in his essay Building, dwelling, thinking, he posits the idea of a bridge which connects different places or elements and enables journey. This is discussed further in Chapter 4. Inspired by his writing on the “bridge”, my own interpretation explores the rail as a bridging element connecting and building relationships between a series of detailed craft objects, or ‘locales’. These are fixed or mounted directly to the rail, which contributes to the relationship to journey. This is distinct from my earlier work, where the rail was more ‘passive’ as an armature for disparate objects. Here it becomes more active, dynamic and object-like in itself, through variations in its form and detail. In the case of Rail and vessel no. 2 (2009), the vessels punctuate the rail and rely on the rail for their form. In doing so, they reveal space while combining to build form and initiate more complex and intertwined relationships between rail and vessel.

In the work Rail and vessel no. 1 (2011), the rail is also more intimately related to the vessels. Rather than simply providing a support, it extends ideas developed in Tea service no. 1 (2009) and the rail embraces the vessels, creating specific localised spaces for them. In this way, the rail provides a ‘home’ for each vessel.

In Rail as vessel, Figure 1 (2012) many of the themes outlined above come together in a larger and more complex work. In this case, the rail is more elaborate, varied and intricate, following the Rail and vessel series and developing the role of the rail as a much more extensive and active element. Here, it is fixed and mounted in an exhibition space and it holds several more richly varied objects along its length.

The work is of a scale that could almost suggest it is an architectural rail – a functional part of the building. However, through the placement of the rail and through its height, form and detail, the rail as a craft object is both connected to the exhibition space and distinctly different from a prosaic, functional rail such as those more usually found in architectural space. Even in a domestic setting, where the formal exhibition context is absent, the fine materials and level of crafted, intricate detail in the rail work clearly distinguish it from a purely utilitarian element. This is also partly evidenced by the degree of variation along the rail. The detail of the rail itself – its changes in form, heights, connections and the selective use of
colour – combine with the attached objects to create a distinctive sequence of punctuating elements. These suggest a journey and create a rhythm, demanding the viewer/user to walk along, to pause and step in closely to observe detail, to pull back again and continue. Equally, these sharply detailed variations accentuate the play of light and shadow which, in changing light, conveys the movement of time. These details and effects heighten awareness of the objects arranged along the rail and their relationships to one another. At the same time, they physically engage the viewer and create a dynamic relationship between object and subject/viewer, affecting their experience of the craft object and their experience of the exhibition space.

Conclusion

These final works developed within and through this research project extend the somewhat chronological progression from autonomous object to objects in relation to one another and to their exhibition space and time while also exploring transgressive themes including ideas of mechanism, movement and play, usefulness, containment, habitation and journey that recur and resonate in my work, as outlined in the discussion of genealogy above. In Domestic rail (2014), Section 6.6, these ideas are investigated in a specific domestic context.

Through these qualities, the domestic rails link craft, art and architecture and draw attention to the relationship of the craft object to, and its placement within, the ‘exhibition’ space.

The development of this series of exhibited rail works that interact with and explore relationships with space has derived from my earlier craft practice and has provided a means of interrogating and addressing my research questions through practice.
As noted in Chapter 1, I have adopted the phrase ‘heuristic mechanic’ as a way of describing my speaking position or standpoint in this research, where “standpoint theory” involves the elucidation of an inter-subjective position coming from one’s own experience.


a process of defining in terms of itself.


ibid.


NIETZCHE, F. (1844–1900). In 1887 Nietzsche wrote the polemic On the Genealogy of Morals.


BAINES, R. 2009. Melbourne Hollow Ware: More Snakes Than You Can Poke a Stick At!, School of Art, RMIT University Gold and Silversmithing. Quoted from Mark Edgoose, personal notes, p.28, 2008.

See Section1.1, Why rail?


2.5 Methodology: images

Figure 1. *Rail as vessel*, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2012

Figure 2. *Stack x 4* (stacked), titanium, aluminium, titanium nitride, 22ct gold, Mark Edgoose, 1995

Figure 3. *Circle*, titanium, aluminium, nylon brush, Mark Edgoose, 2001
(Collection of NGA, Canberra, Australia)

Figure 4. *Coloured rail*, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2007

Figure 5. *Tea service no. I*, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2009

Figure 6. *Table rail*, titanium, silver, Mark Edgoose, 2006

Figure 7. *Rail and vessel no. I* (detail), titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2011
(Collection of NGA, Canberra, Australia)

Figure 8 a. *Ring and box no. I*, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2010

Figure 8 b. *Ring and box no. II*, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2010

Figure 8 c. *Ring and box no. 7*, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2010
Figure 2.
Figure 6.
Figure 8 a, Figure 8 b, Figure 8 c.
3. CRAFT OBJECT

3.1 What is the ‘craft object’?  
3.2 Genealogy of the ‘craft object’  
3.3 Something useful
3. CRAFT OBJECT

Section 1.3.1 articulated what is meant by the ‘craft object’, for the purposes of this research. This warrants further consideration. This chapter expands on Section 1.3.1 by constructing a genealogy of the meaning and history of craft objects, including application of the notion of usefulness. This will include discussion of the craft object in the context of some key shifts in time through social, political and economic changes that may be identified as significant points of change in understanding craft objects and their value. Such points of change are conceptualised as triggers in keeping with my overall concern for activating subject–object relations in and around the crafted object.

3.1 What is the ‘craft object’?

This research looks at how the meaning of a craft object lies in the distinctions, similarities and opportunities inherent within the discursive relationships between object, space, time, viewer and experience. These can be understood in terms of how people have used, valued and defined craft objects through history. In terms of history, this research project is limited to consideration of the past 500 years of Western craft object practice. These distinctions, similarities and opportunities are, to some extent, exemplified in the continual expansion of ideas generated by the vast and changing array of materials and processes available to produce them, within their socio-economic and cultural contexts.

More specifically, the research asks how does the craft object situate a way of engaging with, living in and inhabiting space? Can the viewer’s relationships with craft objects activate the objects or bring them to life in a cognitive and creative sense? By ‘bringing them to life’, can viewers create meaning for objects through an engagement with them? In order to gain some understanding of these questions, the question of the nature of the craft object itself needs unravelling. This involves our individual and collective histories and consideration of commonly shared meanings for ‘craft’.

The key characteristic of craft that emerges for this research from writings on craft is the characteristic of usefulness. The one ingredient common to all craft is usefulness; however, this is discussed, explored and interpreted in different ways and from different points of view. As noted earlier, Metcalf categorises craft as existing under a set of values fundamentally different from those associated with art. He identifies these as being handmade, medium-specific, use of technology, defined by its past and, most importantly, having inherent use-value.

A parallel insight into the understanding of the craft object is elaborated on by the writer Paul Carter. He suggests that users define the meaning of craft objects. He describes craft objects as a “language
of poses”, an active part of our environment in a constant state of ‘becoming’. For Carter, the object is not complete when it leaves the hand of the creator; it is complete when it leaves the hand of the user. He asserts that the strength of craft lies in its relationship with the body – upsetting the values underlying the dualities of mind versus body and art versus craft. Art, he says, “confines and tricks the eye” whereas craft “inhabits a non-linear space of exchange” which works “against the hegemony of the eye, or at least the claims of the imperializing gaze.” Carter describes the material world as a “wealth of physical poses habitual to the conduct of social life.” In this sense, the craft object “mediates between ourselves and our surroundings; it is a vocabulary of concreted poses.”

Confining the meaning of the craft object to a narrow ‘categorisation’ is an increasingly difficult task, as contemporary craft covers an increasingly broad range of practices, positions and outcomes. The danger for the term ‘craft’ is that it can be used as a catch-all, representing all things to all people, as discussed by Erik Scollon in Craft in the expanded field. Scollon states, “But collecting a diversity of objects and practices underneath a familiar and all-purpose term runs the risk of obscuring their differences and causing confusion.”

Although Carter and Scollon offer insights into possible meanings for the term ‘craft object’, these are not exhaustive. They do, however, succinctly identify a genre of craft objects that is relevant and applicable in this practice-led research. These include works that are made by hand, made from explicit materials, have a relationship with function and activate subject–object relations for the subject/viewer and the craft object.

In addition to these characteristics, aesthetic considerations are critical. Form and material are activated through making. As a maker, the key ingredients for me are: material, how it appears, connects and varies; making, from simple hand-stitching to complex, industrial processes; and use. Each of these ingredients is critical in the production of the craft object and contributes to its meaning. The following genealogy of the craft object will identify and situate some of these considerations.

To gain a better understanding of how these particular meanings for the term ‘craft object’ have come into being, it is relevant to unpack and examine what has come before. Certain historical moments of change in the social, political and economic conditions of the past triggered shifts in how craft objects operated and were understood. Examining these assists in establishing a genealogy for the craft object.

3.2 Genealogy of the ‘craft object’

A Western genealogy of craft, in context of this research project, can be constructed via the discursive practices of craft in social and cultural times, which stretch from today, when craft is in an uneasy position in a digital age, backwards to medieval times and the rise
of the craft guilds. A lineage of contemporary craft practice can be traced through shifts in traditions and techniques that are discussed in the following narrative, in which I attempt to identify key moments of change as ‘trigger points’ in ideological, social, economic and cultural contexts. In discussing such threads, the aim is to note changes in the way craft is and has been positioned, viewed and valued over time. The overall aim is to throw light on prevailing ideas about craft practice today, which lends strength to the positioning of my particular research in craft practice.

In the 21st century, craft practice is redefining itself in the context of digital and communications technologies, where there is a distinction made between crafted or handmade objects and those made through digital practices. This adjustment provides another methodology within which to consider the making of craft objects. There is an ongoing tendency to define craft practice as marginal and this is currently reinforced by the offset of traditional craft techniques and values against burgeoning digital technologies. However, in reality many craft practitioners are engaging with digital technologies to advance their work, for instance using 3D computer modelling and rapid manufacturing processes, while integrating traditional technologies including the slower pace required for making by hand. Jewellery artist Cinnamon Lee is open to and actively engaged in new opportunities for craft objects that arise by exploring the intersection between digital technology and the handmade.

Other artists such as Nicole Jacquard (PhD RMIT University 2003) and Belinda Dixon Ward (PhD RMIT University 2013) use digital technologies to directly design and build work using rapid prototyping processes. Jacquard and Dixon Ward are interested in articulating contemporary concerns through this process of making and offer major contributions to current debate.

While digital practices are continually unfolding, in *Technopoly: The surrender of culture to technology*, Neil Postman argues how the predominance of computer technology also highlights the importance of ‘hands-on’ making and understanding meaning, which is a uniquely human endeavour.

> We have devalued the singular human capacity to see things whole in all their psychic, emotional and moral dimension … we have replaced that … with faith in the powers of technical calculation.

Both Postman and Heidegger are interested in the ways technologies orient our behaviour, sometimes with us totally unaware. The discussion around technology as just another tool and as something to be used at our will fails to recognise the ability of tools, and therefore technologies, to direct, influence and inform our ideas, actions and decision-making processes.

My research is concerned with technology and its aesthetic qualities, placing it at the intersection of technology and the handmade.
Unlike the work produced by Lee, this research is less concerned with what level or type of technology is applied and more orientated towards the perception that technology is engaged. Through the combination of precision making and its expression through using ‘high-tech’ material to produce and as an expressive element in the work, a tension is activated between manual craftmanship and technology. In simple terms, the apparent precision and ‘perfection’ suggest the work is made by machine, but in reality the works are crafted by hand, and there are clues to this in small variations and imperfections. The outcome, for this research, is the evidence of a tension between perceptions about technology and ‘handmadeness’ in the works that can draw attention to the handmade qualities and the presence of the maker.

While the expression of ‘handmadeness’ was somewhat secondary when compared to the advancement of conceptual approaches in the fine art of the early 20th century, the threads of craft and the value of handmadeness persisting from the 19th century occupied an important position and were certainly evident in the decorative arts and in architectural design at the beginning of the 20th century.

In response to the industrialisation and mechanisation of processes once thought to be the realm of the artisan, the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th century battled an alienation of object from subject that was seen to have arisen through mass production. Meanwhile, the term ‘craft’ was applied to the decorative arts. The term ‘craft’ came to stand for more than skill and stood for a resistance to the ‘dehumanising’ forces of industrialisation.

Through the following outline, it can be seen that craft practice has changed in terms of how we think of and value craft – not only through reflecting the impetus of these changing times, but also in response to changing attitudes about what constituted art in the past two centuries. Shifts in social, political, economic and cultural values have similarly corresponded with changes to both the practice of craft and the rationales informing craft object production.

**The Renaissance**

The division in value between ‘craft’ and ‘art’ became apparent in the Renaissance around the 15th and 16th centuries, resulting in art acquiring a position of higher status centred on intellectual activities. Craft, on the other hand, with its predilection for the useful, was relegated to the realm of manual labour and considered to be of a lower order, and thus granted a lower status.

In the early Renaissance, art was still a craft and a painting was a utilitarian object. Shared cultural beliefs within an integrated society saw the work of both artisans and artists carried out in collectives through the guild system. Concepts such as intellectual originality and spontaneity were given no value. Guilds were responsible for passing on knowledge, skills and traditions, as well as providing guidance and serving as gatekeepers for quality and standards. Craft guilds were at their strongest in the Middle Ages and had
grown to a high status from their earlier origins as associations of master craftspeople.

By the 15th century, artisans were articulating demands for new ideas and new knowledge, along with accruing business skills and a commission base broader than the church. Artists were orientating towards individual expression and the social status of the artist was changing. Artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael enjoyed papal commissions, resulting in exceptional artworks and heightened status due to their closeness to social and religious leaders:

Public respect for artists had increased immeasurably: by the sixteenth century, when the adjective ‘divine’ was applied to Michelangelo, it could amount almost to adulation.51

The pursuit of individuality, the concept of artist as genius and the increase in patronage of art was linked to political interests and changing values throughout the Renaissance, with enduring consequences. Meanwhile, through the Enlightenment and rise of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, artisans like the furniture-maker Chippendale reacted to the rise of fine art and its artists, responding with a strong work ethic that consciously demonstrated skill and technical prowess.52 This contributed to distinctions between art and craft, and to understandings of craft as being essentially useful, handmade and associated with the technologies of its time.

**Industrial Revolution**

A well-recognised trigger of change was the 19th century Industrial Revolution in Western Europe and Britain, with its widespread mechanisation and the mass production of what were previously handmade craft objects. This set apart handmade craft practice from machine-orientated production, and set them at odds, as discussed by Edward Lucie-Smith in *The story of craft*.53 During this period, an ever-increasing number of objects were mechanically produced. While this meant more objects were available to more people, the emergence of mass-produced objects also involved a decline in qualities that had previously been central to objects – the evident quality of ‘the handmade’ in objects, the value placed on the importance of touch and on craft skills were in decline. Nottingham lace, Manchester textiles and Birmingham ironworks are major examples of the shift from village-based crafted objects to factory-made mass production and the endurance of their names as synonymous with their products is testament to the force of the change that occurred.

Early Industrial advancements were made possible by technological innovation such as electroplating, the mechanised Jacquard loom and spinning machines. The spinning machines of Hargreaves and Crompton (1760s), later patented as the water frame by cotton entrepreneur Richard Arkwright, technically replaced human fingers in their ability to draw out a continuous thread in the spinning process. The advent of steam power was a
defining moment in the Industrial Revolution. Iron ore, although technically well advanced, could now be more readily produced, coal could be turned into coke and higher smelting temperatures in the furnace could be reached safely.

With this advancement, innovation and variety in machinery and technologies came unprecedented levels of productivity. New forms of production led to the flourishing of ironwork and ceramics, including products such as Wedgwood ceramics:

Some idea of the scale of the transformation can be had from the way the cotton industry progressed in Britain. In 1760 (generally regarded as the beginning of the industrial revolution), Britain imported around 2.5 million pounds of raw cotton. In 1787 that had risen to 22 million pounds and by 1837 to 366 million pounds.54

While these advances in technology were highly significant, the sustainable increase in productivity is largely attributed to the profound transformation in industrial organisation and the development of the factory that came to symbolise industrial life. New production techniques in metalwork, ceramics and textiles identified the first craft-based activities that combined factory organisation and technical innovation. These changes had dramatic consequences for settlement patterns, employment patterns and access to goods, all of which were part of shifting understandings and values in relation to the craft object.

Another consequence of industrialisation was increased divisions of labour. As Watson writes:

The essence of the factory was that it gave the owner control over materials and over working hours, enabling him to rationalise operations which needed several steps, or several people.55

New machines were introduced that could be used by people with little or no training – women and children included. The new worker had no means of owning or providing a means of production: “he or she had become no more than a hired hand.”56

The impact the factory system was having on workers and the quality of manufactured goods did not go unnoticed. Henry Cole, head of school of design and founder of what was to become the Victoria and Albert Museum, despaired at what he felt was the poor quality and lack of design in mass-produced objects and saw the solution in education. Supported by publications, training schools were established, including the National Art Training School (later to become the Royal College of Arts) in South Kensington. Robert Owen, in his Observations on the effect of the manufacturing system, was convinced “that the long labouring shifts in factories took an appalling toll on the health and dignity of workers.”57

John Ruskin, Augustus Pugin and William Morris also shared
concerns with aesthetic and social outcomes of the Industrial Revolution. All were dissatisfied with the design quality of industrial manufacture, but perhaps more importantly they made their assessments in the context of social concerns.

Nevertheless, the rise of industrialisation was a flourishing time that did not exclude the handmade. Although some saw it as a loss, many industrious craftspeople realised the benefits that mechanical production could bring to their working processes and their lives, choosing to work with new technologies to pursue their craft interests and to extend their practices. This offers an interesting parallel with contemporary jeweller Cinnamon Lee and her approach, as noted earlier. A huge increase in global trade followed, including the booming trade in machine-made textiles in Manchester. The craft object, changes in its production and how it is valued are therefore an integral part of the industrialisation story.

In Australia, things were different, largely due to the vast distances travelled both to/from Europe and within Australia. Long delays in communication and the slow transportation of goods were exacerbated by Australia’s sparse population. Little experience of the Australian environment and an extremely limited understanding of its Indigenous people contributed to an experience of isolation and also nostalgia. However, this experience also awakened a certain resourcefulness and ingenuity in that goods and tools were innovatively made or adapted using whatever means available. This resonates for me as an Australian craftsperson and in the context of my speaking position as a heuristic mechanic. Examples of inventive and ‘making do’ craft practice from this period in Australia are held in the Lord McAlpine of West Green collection of early Australian furniture.

Arts and Crafts
As mentioned, artisans, craftspeople and writers such as Ruskin, Pugin and Morris were concerned about the social impacts of industrialisation, with a focus on the implications for craft objects. The decorative and applied art movement gave voice to the idea of marrying skilled craftsmanship with artistic endeavour. Consequently, from the mid-19th century onwards, there was an emphasis on producing objects that were utilitarian, artistically beautiful and expressive of the handmade while providing a living for the makers. During this time, studio production became more common and was associated with expensive, high-end craft and materials.

In reaction to the Renaissance tradition of distinguishing between ‘art’ and ‘craft’ and in the context of a practice in high-end craft associated with patronage from museums and the wealthy, a broader-based craft movement began to boom towards the beginning of the 20th century. This was largely inspired by the British Arts and Crafts movement, opposed to the expressions of modernism and the machine-made works of industrial production, and taking medieval craft traditions as its ideal, the key principles of this important movement centred on:
honesty, simplicity and usefulness ... its impact has been so huge that it still lives on and manifests itself in ideals, such as letting the material speak for itself.61

Reacting against specialised divisions of labour as a consequence of industrialisation, this new movement comprised studio-based craftspeople and designers who began to engage in various forms of serial production.62 This newfound professionalism fostered a renewed sense of pride and control in producing quality work and further advanced the establishment of studio-based craft practice that, in turn, brought together artist and craftsperson: craftspeople were beginning to be recognised as artists in their own right.

In the terrain of the 20th century, specifically around the 1970s, these circumstances were again to gain strength this time supported by government funding and renewed interest in museum acquisition. Once again, this development altered perceptions and contributed to the continuing diversity of craft, art and design processes.

As art and craft practices became further interwoven, flowing from the Arts and Crafts movement, the utilitarian role of objects became less central. Craft practice was freed, to some extent, from its original and primary purpose of creating useful objects. Andrew King states in his paper, The lost continent of craft:

the 19th century Arts and Crafts movement, in its self consciously political opposition to industrialism created not a 'revival', but a new type of productive practice, radically different in meaning and content from the practices labeled ‘craft’ in the pre-industrial era.63

In the early 20th century and during the intervening war years, there seems to have been a greater emphasis on utility, high-quality materials and skilled techniques. Designers and industrial processes were coming to the fore with a growing interest in the development of models suitable for mass production that would be affordable and accessible to the many, as distinct from ‘one-off’ items created for an elite minority.64 This aligned with the emergence of modernist values and an emphasis on broader social outcomes led to the production of higher quality machine-made objects. This shift in the previously stark distinction between one-off handmade items and quality manufactured objects involved the ‘making’ of craft objects by both craftspeople and designers. This was another key shift and an example of constant change and flux for the craft object: “It has always had an unstable and complex identity and status.”65

The 1970s witnessed a realignment between craft and art, with countercultures and political radicalism of the era reflected in the values of craft makers. In some ways, this mirrored the Arts and Crafts reaction to industrialisation, but in this case the reaction followed the surge in availability of goods that followed World War II in the 1950s again a product of changing economic times and
the emergence of new materials and technologies. The late 1960s and 1970s brought a reinvigorated interest in things rural, natural and ostensibly humane, including a revaluing of the handmade, with roots dating back to the Arts and Crafts movement and, for some practitioners, of enduring relevance today. Also during this time, craft and design disciplines were dissociating themselves from one another, each adopting different ideals and work strategies and both intent on distinctly identifying their practices as art forms. This closer affiliation with the fine arts was strengthened by government support schemes, which included Australia Council for the Arts funding and a more flexible museum acquisition policy that included craft. Publications during this time also embraced the concept of art-orientated craft and included, for instance, *The new jewelry: trends and traditions* by Peter Dormer and Ralph Turner.

**Craft, art, architecture**

In the late 20th century and contemporary times, there has been a growing assertion of the value, diversity and complexity of craft practice in its own right, and in the context of and as distinct from art and design practices. Jeweller and curator Dr Susan Cohn, in *The crafts: on their own terms*, discusses the need for craft practice to build a framework in order to legitimise itself on its own historical, critical and curatorial terms and not rely on the long-established discourses and methodologies defined by and attached to the fine arts. Cohn argues that, in their quest for cultural legitimacy, craftspeople have attempted to compete with fine artists on the latter’s terms and, in so doing, have abandoned the very qualities that define craft:

> They abandon the popular culture of the everyday object and the processes of serial production and turn their backs on the purpose and nature of craft, which is to produce useful objects.66

Cohn goes on to argue how craftspeople can do all the things artists do through their work: explore technique, medium, typologies within art objects and, importantly, explore concepts, expression and contribution to culture:

> And not only can they [craftspeople] explore the culture in which they live [cultural critique and cultural values], but also the direct cultural significance of the craft object itself. By this I mean craft objects possess specific cultural significance by the virtue of the fact that they are made to be used.67

Cohn discusses how craft practice can operate both conceptually and functionally and observes that the conceptual work produced locates work within the higher realms of fine art practice, while also reinforcing the very essence of craft — that it be useful. These two operating methodologies are different to those of the fine arts. This resonates for me and is relevant to my craft practice, as these are central concerns in my work.

Interestingly, it may be that craft methodologies are more closely aligned to those of architecture. Architecture, like craft, can be both
conceptually and functionally orientated: both explore and critique values of technique, medium, type and culture. Again, the importance of usefulness and scope for conceptual exploration and value are central to my work, as both contemporary contexts in which my work is located and key interests I investigate. Fine art criticism can also deal with these values and often does.

But the craftsperson, like the architect, must consider an additional question that has no relevance to the artist: how can this work lead to something useful? 68

Jane Rendell in *Art and architecture, a place between*, discusses the attraction that one has for the other, i.e. art for architecture:

Art and architecture are frequently differentiated in terms of their relationship to ‘function’. Artists value architecture for its social function, whereas architects value art as an unfettered form of creativity.69

Traditionally, craft is more akin to architecture in this sense, but in contemporary craft exhibition practice, craft has been more strongly aligned to art, primarily through its exhibition and display, which situate the object as precious and untouchable in the gallery setting. A key springing point for this research project has been the exploration of how the exhibition space and the location, form and detail of the craft object can shift and change our perceptions and understandings of it.

In addition to usefulness, for my research, the qualities of materials and craftsmanship are also values that are intrinsic to the identity of craft objects. Although these topics are not so prevalent in contemporary art discourse, they are certainly debated in contemporary craft and in relation to architecture. Understanding the consequences of technique as being integral to the value of the craft object and the presence of the craftsperson as both the originator of the idea and the maker of the finished or built object is also critical:

Technique is no longer a mechanical activity; people can feel fully and think deeply about what they are doing once you do it well … [Ten thousand hours is] … how long researchers estimate it takes for complex skills to become so deeply ingrained that these have become readily available, tacit knowledge.70

The investment of time in the making is evident in craft objects, and is part of what is perceived and valued about them. At the same time, craft covers an increasingly broad range of practices and positions and the lines between art, craft and design have become more blurred. As noted, this is partly due to ways in which craft objects are exhibited, whereby the gallery setting can demarcate exhibited craft objects as one-off and more precious than other objects that are of a high quality but mass-produced, and whereby the way the work is exhibited can influence how it is read. Issues around these distinctions remain heavily debated and are rarely agreed on. In
terms of this research, my studies in and of the craft object are focused on meaning and use for the exhibited craft object in contemporary practice, which I see as key characteristics that, along with other qualities, ultimately give them life.

3.3 Something useful

In Section 1.3.3, I outlined the term ‘usefulness’ as I refer to it in this exegesis. In any discussion of the craft object, whether about its history or about the daily practice of a maker, the question of usefulness is always present. Often, the use of a craft object becomes its first definition. For instance, a teapot is for pouring, a tray must be balanced, a teacup must be able to held while hot, and so on.

In my own work, the question of the object’s usefulness has played a key role in drawing attention to the different ways in which to experience the work. Usefulness may be highlighted in the form, the details, the way the object has been made or its aesthetic qualities, and these trigger the way the viewer may experience the object through interacting with the rail. Usefulness is important in my research because I am centrally interested in ways in which the viewer/user might perceive and engage with the craft object, and in how their relationship to the object in exhibition and domestic settings can influence their readings of the object, space and time.

Here, I elaborate briefly on the background and value of usefulness, and in particular the idea of making ‘something useful’, as this informs my research and is fundamental to my craft object practice.

Craft objects have a long history as elements that play a role within social engagement and that are central to social activities as purposeful objects used repeatedly by people in their everyday lives. However, a hierarchy of use and non-use is at play, whereby the treatment of art characterised in exhibiting institutions has been adopted and applied to contemporary craft objects perhaps more powerfully than ever before. The exhibition of contemporary craft objects in the gallery setting, typically on pedestals or under glass, ultimately distances the craft object from people by emphasising the separation of subject from object. This is quite a different relationship from that of the everyday teapot or cup, even if that teapot or cup is handmade and one-off. Although many consider this a loss, it can also be seen as part of a richer and broader range of possibilities for craft objects. In this context, it is interesting to note that the utilitarian aspect of the object is what consistently anchors the debate about what artistic status the craft object should have.

In a broader popular cultural context, the craft object has been understood primarily in utilitarian terms through its everyday purpose and use; for example, a teapot is typically seen as being primarily for pouring tea. In craft’s own terms,71 the ‘condition’ of utility provokes several different positions, including those who consider it irrelevant, or at best marginal, distancing themselves from functions
constraints and limitations, as discussed in Section 1.3.3. Although the craft object has long since broken away from the imperative to be useful, many craft makers nonetheless make works that have a central relationship with the idea or reality of function, and often this is expressed or explored through the forms they use, which reference familiar and purposeful objects.

Utility may be “interpreted as representations of well known utility functions.”

The concept of usefulness is important for my research because I see it as a core characteristic of craft objects. However, I am also interested in playing with this aspect through ambiguity. My works include objects that suggest use but are clearly not useable and others that are clearly useful but whose detail suggests a preciousness that can deter use. This ambiguity is relevant because the work produced through this research project is focused on shifts in relationships between objects, space and time. Issues of usefulness and engagement, and their mode of exhibition, are critical in influencing how objects are perceived and understood.

ibid pp.10–13, 18.


LEE, C. 2010, Precious Light, MA Philosophy exegesis, Australian National University, Canberra.


ibid.


ibid, p.394.

ibid.


ibid.

ibid, p.554.

ibid, p.563.


ibid, p.18.

ibid.


ibid.

ibid, p.24.

By craft's own terms I am referring to a group of makers, craft organisations and craft publications that situate craft within an arts context, identifying a type of objects that are usually made by hand, usually related to function, and usually made from a set of medium materials.

4. SPACE TRIGGERS

4.1 Objecthood

4.2 Beyond the self-contained

4.3 Interior/exterior

4.4 Space triggers: conclusions

4.5 Space triggers: images
4. SPACE TRIGGERS

This chapter addresses concerns that are specific to my first research question: What is the potential for new understandings of the relationships between craft objects and the spaces they inhabit? The following discussion examines how craft objects may appear in, inhabit, infuse and affect an exhibition space and the viewer’s perceptions of, and relationship with, both object and space.

My domestic rail projects are influenced by my interests in installation art and architecture. In particular, I explore aspects of architectural space and I engage with the architectural rail to lead to new craft objects developed through the research. My research aims to elevate the rail out of a traditional architectural framework through placement within the context of the craft object and to bring the exhibited craft object to a domestic setting, to reposition the craft object and thereby bridge the two in terms of use and meaning.

The chapter discusses my interest in experimenting with possible new significations for the craft object that may emerge from studies of its form, materials, detail and placement within a particular environment. The aim is to broaden viewers’ perceptions beyond accepted notions of the exhibited craft object as a self-contained entity and to heighten awareness of its role in the relationships people have with spaces they inhabit and objects they encounter; and for me as maker, my aim is to reflect on my own perceptions and assumptions about the object and its contextual space.

For the purposes of this research, in considering the term ‘space’ I have been particularly interested in Heidegger’s definition of space in his essay ‘Building, dwelling, thinking’. My initial engagement was sparked by links between ‘rail’ and ‘bridge’, as objects that can physically and conceptually connect different points or elements and can engender journey. I had been exploring and thinking about these ideas, as discussed in Chapter 2 on the genealogy of my practice, and they are key ideas explored through the making of my rail works.

For Heidegger, a space is made possible by what he calls the locale, which is brought into being by the bridge. The locale only comes into existence by virtue of the bridge, as the linking pathway or space to which it connects and which exposes or reveals it. For Heidegger, the bridge is an object activating the site and allowing all things around it to become part of the site. Heidegger draws our attention to what the bridge does by intervening in the site and connecting distinct locales and, in doing so, building relationships. He writes:

Bridges initiate in many ways. The city bridge leads from the precincts of the castle to the cathedral square; the river near the country town brings wagons and horse teams to the surrounding villages ... Always and ever differently the bridge initiates the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro, so that they may get to the banks and in the end, as mortals, to the other side.
Triggered by the particular place the bridge occupies in Heidegger’s spatial thinking, my own interpretation explores ideas about the craft object in the exhibition space and the detail of the craft object in itself. In exhibition, the space can form a bridge between the locales of individual craft objects. In the rail works developed through this research, it is the rail that has a role in connecting and building relationships between a series of detailed craft objects, or ‘locales’, fixed or mounted to the rail. In the case of Rail and vessel no. 2, Figure 12 (2013) the vessels punctuate the rail, coming into existence by virtue of the rail, and thereby revealing space between and around them. At the same time, they combine to build form and initiate nuanced relationships between rail and vessel, thus opening up further possibilities for interpretation.

Extending from these propositions, I will discuss them in the context of notions of objecthood, self-containment, interior and exterior.

4.1 Objecthood

Current practice in handmade craft continues the tradition of making objects that explore the condition of use. In contemporary craft practice, such works are often first, or only, shown in an exhibition setting, where any usefulness is not able to be tested because the nature of the display signifies, often literally, that the work is not be touched.

In comparison, contemporary jewellery, has exploited the use-value of jewellery objects and its role as wearable, in the development of ideas and aesthetics for the works and their display. In the exhibition context, the wearability and use of the work are often portrayed clearly, or at least are usually apparent. Jewellery artists like Otto Kunzli (Germany), Manon van Kouswijk (Netherlands/Australia) and Dr Susan Cohn (Australia) have constantly devised ways to show jewellery outside of the showcase, often drawing on its wearability for inspiration. For example, the Manon van Kouswijk exhibition ‘Wash (and stay for a while)’ at Gallery Funaki, Melbourne, in 1999 involved display of the work on ‘forms and objects’ that made reference to the domestic context and everyday objects such as the ring you might wear or the soap you wash your hands with. Students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich (2004) infamously exhibited their jewellery pieces by engaging viewers to wear the work and to ‘become’ the display.

These different modes of display in jewellery practice influence how the work is understood, for instance as useable or non-useable, and create different levels of engagement for the subject-viewer. This, in turn, can affect how meaning in the work is developed.

As previously discussed in Section 1.1, the craft object presented in exhibition is frequently displayed either on a pedestal or in a glass showcase and these are presentation methods that signify the role and status of the object, and that affect its perceived preciousness.
Why is it that such dedicated methods of display accentuate the ‘objecthood’ of the craft object and seem to infuse the work with special significance?

**The exhibition setting**
The modern, artificially lit, white-walled gallery is described by Brian O'Doherty as providing an important context for viewing art, with particular reference to the influence the ‘white cube’ has on the viewing subject–object dichotomy. The white-walled gallery space draws attention to the object’s physical condition as well as its perceived status, providing a space within which a viewer’s particular perceptions and values may be brought to the work and framed. In similar circumstances, the craft object displayed in a showcase conveys the craft object’s status as a significant object of artistic expression. This is enhanced by the conditions of the surrounding space and our perceptions of that space, which, as a ‘white cube’ gallery, serves to protect and communicate the displayed object’s preciousness and objecthood.

In relation to fine art, there has been significant scholarly and practice-led research on the nature of display and its impact on perceptions of art works. The 20th century works of Marcel Duchamp and, later, Joseph Beuys are frequently referenced as the products of artists who challenged and deconstructed the value of objecthood through their use of found objects and the ‘readymade’. Duchamp’s use of the readymade in *Fountain* (1917), for instance, challenged the value of objecthood and it also brought into play the importance of the artist as creator of a concept and artistic action. This was as distinct from the idea of the artist as the ‘maker’ of an artwork. “Duchamp was the first artist but certainly not the last, to present a ‘deconstruction’ of art that called into question the premises of all preceding art.” In the case of Beuys, his work similarly challenged the idea of objecthood and its associations of preciousness by using found objects, including fragments and scraps, and by using performance as central to his work.

This challenging of objecthood and its traditional associations is relevant because it exposes shifts that can occur through the detail of the art work as exhibited, and also because this approach has been notably absent from craft object exhibition practice despite its emergence in fine art through the likes of Duchamp almost a century ago.

A number of questions that have been central to this research project derive from observations of objecthood and how it is reinforced through exhibition practice, and from an interest in the reading and role of craft objects and how these have changed over time. Specifically, can the nature and function of the exhibition space affect our perception of craft objects displayed within it? Or do the significance and interpretation of the object alter when displayed in different arrangements and in different settings? This research demonstrates that the form and detail of the craft object, and its setting within an exhibition space, can affect perceptions of the space
and the object, and offer new considerations of meaning for craft objects, in doing so.

The traditional exhibition setting is usually fixed and static. An exhibited craft object is contained by the gallery, typically behind glass, on a pedestal and amongst other objects in their own display arrangements, and the whole arrangement is imbued with the meaning of ‘gallery’ – a place where things are ‘on show’ and where the viewer goes ‘to look’. The fact that the craft object cannot be touched tells the viewer implicitly how to respond to it. A clear separation of subject and object is thus established. The display arrangement and the gallery setting impart a sense of preciousness and they encourage the viewer to look with care.

A recent example is seen in an exhibition titled Containment: Cicely & Colin Rigg Contemporary Design Award 2012 at the National Gallery of Victoria in 2012. The exhibition consisted of objects representing three of the key craft disciplines – ceramics, glass and metal. Almost all works were displayed in large glass cases, with controlled, static lighting to facilitate observation. The separation created between the subject-viewer and the object is established. In the ceramic vessels of Garry Bish in this exhibition, for instance, we were drawn to observe the attention to detail, to the intricate geometric patterns glazed on the objects’ surfaces. The whole arrangement limited our sensory engagement to observation and bestowed the works with value as an aesthetic object, as opposed to useful or tactile objects. The dominance in the subject–object dichotomy was maintained, the glass showcased focuses the eye on the detail of the craft object or, to repeat Paul Carter’s observation, it reinforced “the claims of the imperializing gaze.”

This arrangement accentuates the viewer’s sense of themselves as separate from the object, ensuring the ‘objecthood’ of the work remains self-contained and intact. Furthermore, in the case of craft objects, where usefulness or implicit usefulness is fundamental, this setting can mean that even the object’s apparent or actual functionality becomes secondary or notional, and divorced from its conferred symbolic value.

The earlier cited Bruce Metcalf, a metal craftsman and one of the few critical writers focusing on contemporary jewellery and object making, asserts that ‘craft’ exists under a “different set of values and a separate historical consciousness.” He draws attention to the relationship of the viewer to the craft object as fundamentally different from that of the viewer to the fine art work. This difference lies in the genealogy of the craft object (in this case jewellery) as made for use or bodily adornment, and as therefore intimately connected to the viewer through bodily engagement. The distinction he makes is important as it illustrates that the observations about fine art exhibition, and the ways these have been explored by artists such as Duchamp, only go so far in assisting with studies of prevailing craft exhibition practice and the ways it may be challenged.
The meaning of craft operates in humble places, but it is as site-specific as a Richard Serra sculpture. The coded language of craft speaks from the body – with jewelry and clothing – and the home – with furniture, pottery, fabric, lighting and decoration. Once the craft object is isolated on a pedestal like autonomous art, it loses most of its power to be invested with intimate and ongoing personal meaning.82

In the context of traditional display within a gallery setting, there are further subtleties that affect how we read craft objects. The gallery space provides a powerful context for the work. But in addition, the nature of the space immediately surrounding the object indicates and can contribute to its status. For example, if a showcase or exhibition itself holds only a few objects, these objects invite higher, or longer reflection and assume an increased status.

The work by English artist Gavin Turk83 titled Floater (1993) is relevant here. Turk used the showcase to heighten the status of the chewing gum that constituted the work, in this case as if it was a relic, a cast of the artist’s mouth. The work consisted of pieces of chewed gum stuck to the inner top of a glass showcase. Otherwise the showcase was empty. In this work, I was struck by the aura of the empty space inside the showcase and the heightened value it bestowed on the pieces of chewed gum. Both elements conspired and collaborated in giving the ideas of objecthood, value and authenticity to the artwork.

This discussion focuses on the impact of the setting of the exhibition space on the perceived value of the object. More specifically, the nature of the exhibition space itself – its function and presentation – affects how we perceive objects. Imagine a ring mounted on a pedestal, alone under glass in a fine art gallery, in contrast to the same ring lying in a cardboard tray along with many others in a retail jewellery store. The ring’s perceived value, and potentially its symbolic and monetary value, are powerfully affected by the nature of the exhibition space and the detail of the display setting.

Installation
In the rail works developed through this research, such as Rail as vessel, Figure 10 (2012), the subject–object dichotomy is being broken down, as the work brings viewer and object closer together in several ways. The works are displayed as fixed to the exhibition space and are not behind glass. Their form and detail suggest incompleteness, as though they could be extended, and they invite close inspection. In addition, the works involve secondary objects, which strengthens awareness of the bridging elements such as the spaces between objects and the spaces between elements along the rail. This is achieved by creating a dynamic relationship between the parts, and between object and space, where space is triggered to become an active ingredient. As the viewer can also occupy the space, they also become more active and engaged.
Also of interest is the use of ‘props’ in exhibitions to help house and conceptually frame the work. Examples discussed earlier, within jewellery practice, include exhibitions by Manon van Kouswijk at Gallery Funaki, Melbourne, in 1999 and by Students of the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich in 2004. The idea of using props led me to show work that is more embedded in the exhibition space or, in the case of the domestic rail works, embedded in the daily life of the inhabitants. This is closer to approaches found in installation art and in architecture, where there is a greater interaction between objects and space and where the viewer’s role is more active, as a participant in the spatial relationships at play.

In the context of notions of usefulness and of craft objects as being historically strongly embedded in domestic life, I have applied the use of props to suggest domestic surroundings, for display of my domestic rail works in the gallery setting.

This has led to the making and exhibition of a series of works that progressively shift perceptions of objecthood by accentuating relationships between objects, between object and space, and between objects in space. By then connecting the object to the space, this takes the relationship further, to bind them and the viewer in a different kind of association. This sequential study was described and illustrated in Section 2.2.

The key works developed through this research are rails mounted on the walls of exhibition spaces or of domestic environments. These are of a scale, form and placement that affect the reading of the scale and proportion of the spaces they occupy. Further, they can affect how the viewer moves within or uses the space, by inviting scrutiny and touch and by suggesting movement and journey. The wall also becomes activated as part of the exhibition, rather than being merely a neutral backdrop. As soon as the work is attached closely to the room’s bounding surface, attention is drawn to that spatial boundary, an effect extended by the form of the work – the rail. The scale and form of the rail work also enables the suggestion or creation of localised space or ‘sub-space’ within the greater gallery.

4.2 Beyond the self-contained

To take the work out of the showcase and, as in the case of Rail as vessel (2012) for instance, to mount it to a wall, immediately changes its objecthood status, as this raises some ambiguity about whether the work is on display or is part of the gallery space. This shift also affects the perceived scale and proportions of the space and has an impact on the potential use and role of object and space. Just as the object becomes part of the gallery space, equally the wall becomes part of the exhibition, rather than serving as passive backdrop. Through this research, I wanted to investigate whether the interaction between objects and space could be extended through observation of opportunities found in installation art and
architecture, which inherently afford greater interaction between objects and space, and where the installation and object are usually more synergistic.

I previously discussed my interest in moving from the pure gallery space to working with ‘props’ in the gallery in order to evoke domestic fragments for fixing and mounting of the rail works. From this, I have made works which relinquish the gallery altogether and move into actual domestic settings.

In contrast to the pure gallery space, a domestic space is more dynamic and layered with meaning. Its possible meanings are the subject of much research and debate, which is beyond the scope of this project. For my purposes, domestic space refers to the ‘home’ in a contemporary, Western sense of home – a dwelling place. It is a functional space, but also of emotional, psychological and symbolic importance to its inhabitants. It is a place in which to live and which is inhabited and ‘owned’, if not literally then emotionally or psychologically; Corner rail, Figure 14 (2009).

For an understanding of what I mean by domestic space, I turn to Bachelard in setting out a phenomenological approach to space. Bachelard’s concept of “lived space” makes a significant contribution to an understanding of the connections between emotion and space, providing a relational alternative to the common understanding of space as ‘Euclidean’, as an empty space, distanced from the world and self by the desire to ‘know’ it as an separate entity or object.

In contrast, ‘lived’ or inhabited space is known through one’s participation or inhabitation of it. It can also be a place where memories are formed, and where fundamental images and attitudes to the larger world are embedded or framed for its inhabitants.

In his novel, 12 Edmonstone Street, author David Malouf talks about the resonance objects in the domestic setting can have:

crawling around room by room we discover laws that we will apply later to the world at large ... Each house has its own topography, its own lore: negotiable borders, spaces open or closed, the salient features – not capes and bays in this case, but the Side Door, the Brass Jardiniere – whose names make up a daily litany. A complex history comes down to us ... Its spirit resides in ordinary objects that become, beyond the fact of presence and usefulness, the characters in a private language – characters too in the story we are living ... The house is a field of dense affinities, laid down, each one, with an almost physical power, in the life we share with all that, in being ‘familiar’ has become essential to us, inseparable from what we are.

In considering how craft objects create or affect space, this research is also about a broader idea of habitation, involving the viewer’s being within a space as a sentient inhabitant. Here, their relationship
to the object and their awareness of their own scale and perceptions can be affected by the object within the space. In this sense, the research explores the idea that a craft object can also evoke notions of home through its suggested or actual usefulness and its aesthetic connection or reference to domestic objects.

In *The architecture of happiness*, Alain de Botton poetically describes our connection to space and specifically to the idea of ‘home’ as a ‘place’ that can be felt or evoked outside the more traditional sense of ‘home’:

In turn, those places whose outlook matches and legitimates our own, we tend to honour with the term ‘home’. Our homes do not have to offer us permanent occupancy or store our clothes to merit the name. To speak of home in relation to a building is simply to recognize its harmony with our own prized internal song. Home can be an airport or a library, a garden or a motorway diner. Our love of home is in turn an acknowledgement of the degree to which our identity is not self-determined. We need a home in the psychological sense as much as we need one in the physical: to compensate for our vulnerability. We need a refuge to shore up our states of mind, because so much of the world is opposed to our allegiances. We need our rooms to align us to desirable versions of ourselves and to keep alive the important, evanescent sides of us.

The series *Rail and vessel* (2011, 2012) completed through this research and presented in a range of local physical environments draws on the more evocative, less literal idea of home that is suggested by de Botton above. Both these works and the work included in *Corner rail*, Figure 13 (2009) explore how the object’s specific relationship to a given site can give rise to particular modes of encounter that mark a moment and create a place. In the case of *Corner rail* (2009), located in literal domestic settings, the aim is not to didactically influence the inhabitant’s views, but to investigate the potential for richness in the domestic context through engagement with resonant objects. Through considering relationships of the works to the space of ‘home’, the aim is for the practice to ‘re-route’ fine craft objects as framing elements experienced in human daily life. This places them somewhere between well-designed objects that people enjoy and use in daily life, and finely crafted autonomous objects generally seen in exhibition.

Considering possible ritual tasks or actions associated with home – such as ‘coming home’ – there can be a suggestion of sequence and journey that provides an opportunity for the object to ‘participate’ in the associated rituals, for instance the dropping of keys and phone, the hanging of umbrella and hat and so on. This can activate or reflect a physical journey as well as potentially evoking significant emotional or spiritual experiences and contributing to resonant, durable moments that become associated with the object. I discuss this further in Chapter 6, Experience triggers.
4.3 Interior/exterior

The vessel
Mould clay into a vessel from its not being arises the utility of the vessel. Inherent in all craft objects is the notion, if not the purpose, of usefulness. Equally there is the more subtle, but no less essential, relationship of object to space. At the most fundamental level, this can be understood as solid as distinct from void. In this research, I have worked with the vessel as a traditional craft object that is already imbued with historical meaning. The conventions of the vessel historically represented by a form creating an interior volume – a hollow bowl or cup, for example – evoke ideas of containment that provide fertile ground for eliciting human memory and experience.

But, by denying the ‘representational’ form of the vessel as a singular self-contained entity and by extending the craft object to include a series of vessels, or by developing the vessel to coalesce with a rail segment, the work begins to expand the concept of containment and ‘space’ in relation to the traditionally autonomous, exhibited craft object. My work aims to build on, and shift, the traditional and well-understood nature of craft object as vessel.

In Rail and vessel no. 1, Figure 11 (2011) and Rail and vessel no. 2, Figure 12 (2013), the vessel interacts with a segment of rail. It is displayed as an assembled object attached to the rail, which is, itself, perhaps ambiguously, also an object. In addition, the rail defines the space in which the vessel sits, thereby containing, embracing or even becoming a vessel itself. Further, the rail also becomes a vessel by splitting, opening out and creating small spaces where items can be held. This is important as a trigger for alternative considerations of the idea of vessel. By creating smaller vessels as subtle or apparently incidental deviations of the rail itself, traditional notions of ‘vessel’ are challenged.

The interaction of the independent vessel with a containing segment of rail also works on another level. When I make a vessel that aims to be clearly understood as a vessel, I work with circles or occasionally elliptical forms. Circles have longstanding symbolic associations with notions of continuity and wholeness. The space within a circle is contained and its limits are defined. In contrast, the rail is linear and open. As with most lines, the rail has a sense of being incomplete, with end-points at once arbitrary and ambiguous. The rail appears to be a fragment. It has a beginning and an end, but it could go on in either direction if more parts were connected to it.

The implication that more parts or more length could be added to the rail is reinforced by the arrangement of different objects along its length. Each connected part extends the possibilities of the rail and the spaces between are activated in the links, joins and crossovers, or bridges, between them. The intention is that the rail serves as home for the vessels, thereby integrating or extending the notion of
‘vessel as home’, but also challenging the perception that the work is complete and autonomous.

**Rail, vessel and home**

On first viewing the rail work, the predominant reading from a distance is of a relatively large object attached within the exhibition space. Its placement and variation in form and finish, as illuminated by careful gallery lighting, indicate it is not a prosaic architectural rail. Nonetheless, from a distance, it can appear ambiguous and not obviously a work on display.

On closer inspection, however, the detail of the rail is revealed. The rail itself expands and contracts with its range of vessels and containers. The vessels are housed by the rail; they hang, clip or perch on the rail and the rail also serves as a ‘vessel’ as described above. The detail of the rail, the objects (vessels) and their relationships to one another affect the way the viewer defines and regards the object in the process of experiencing it. Is it a purposeful architectural rail or is it an art object? Is the rail just for supporting the vessels? Or is it also of interest as an object in itself?

In the literal domestic setting, the converse could be true. The setting and the inclusion of useable and used elements (a place to hang a hat, drop the keys, for instance), implies the rail is primarily functional. In this case though, the precise finish, fine detail and level of craft that are evident suggest it is also precious as an aesthetic object for display. The difference between the domestic rail as a gallery object, (with the possibility of use) and as a domestic object (with the possibility of aesthetic significance) in some ways equates to and bridges the notions of exterior as distinct from interior. This is so in the sense of exterior as meaning ‘out in the world’ in public, as against the suggestion of interior as meaning ‘at home’, private and intimate. The experience of the works in the different spatial settings of the gallery (exterior) and the home (interior), Domestic rail, Figure 22 (2014), changes our attitude and approach to the work, affecting how we perceive and respond to the rail.

In addition, the ideas of exterior and interior are inherent in the form and purpose of vessels, and the potential for the distinction between the exterior and interior to be more subtle is revealed in **Rail and vessel no. 2** (2012), with its almost incidental folds and gaps.

The elements of interior and exterior can combine to build form and create or influence space, within the object and within the exhibition space. The relationship between the elements is crucial and can take place or be interpreted on different scales. “The corner is a sort of half-box, part walls, part door. It will serve as an illustration for the dialectics of inside and outside.”

In the series of works titled **Rail as vessel** (2012) and **Rail and vessel no. 2** (2011), my intention has been to move away from objects as singular, individual or self-contained entities, and to pursue an interest in the relationships between spaces, exhibited objects and their parts.
As you walk alongside *Rail as vessel* (2012), you gain a better knowledge and understanding of the spaces created within the object and how the whole object is an open-ended sum of the parts. This is a different encounter to the more traditional focusing on an object of singular, individual or hermetic identity. This is also due to the scale of the work; it is not possible to read the work from a single viewpoint, but you need to move along the work in order to gain a more complete and richer understanding:

Research is not complete until it involves someone to experience it … to include the viewer as an active participant in the work, rather than a passive observer.89

### 4.4 Space triggers: conclusions

Through my research I have addressed the potential for new understandings of relationships between craft objects and the spaces they inhabit, through considering the potential of the craft object’s connections to us, as makers and viewers, within the wider context of its (and our) surroundings, in an exhibition site. I have focused on the gallery space and the domestic environment as two alternative exhibition sites. Thus my research has become concerned with the object and its associated environment, as well as with the way object and environment can interact to create new subjective experiences and interpretations of meaning.

This has taken the research towards a consideration of the nature of space and how we perceive and interact with it, including consideration of how we engage with objects within spaces in both the exhibition context and in a world of objects in daily life, keeping in mind the genealogy of craft objects through history as discussed in Chapter 3.

In considering the gallery as opposed to the domestic setting, I have also investigated distinctions that arise through the connection of the rail to the exhibition space, and through the ability of the rail's detail to distinguish it from the more prosaic architectural precedent.

Many of the differences become apparent in the evidence of making. The formal variation, smaller scale and intricate detail speak of the hand of a skilled craftsperson and convey the preciousness in the work. At the same time, the domestic rail is functional. My domestic rail works bridge the categories of precious, autonomous craft object for display and the everyday, functional object for use, through their development for purposeful placement in the domestic environment.

One can discover inhabitable spaces in the slight recesses … The independence and interdependence of certain areas are mutually compatible. Expansion and stability co-exist. Something far is actually alongside.90
The domestic rails also consider and challenge narrow interpretations of containment for craft objects through exploring traditional, well-known vessel forms and setting them against alternative, incidental and more subtle vessels, such as the gaps and openings in the rails themselves. In addition, they address the idea of containment as ‘home’, both conceptually in the detail of the work, and literally whereby the domestic rail becomes active in the rituals of home life, such as those associated with ‘homecoming’.
Both silversmithing and jewellery are co-taught in a number of institutions around the world, including Belgium, the UK and Australia. It is perhaps interesting to note that silversmithing is mostly displayed as objects on a pedestal while contemporary jewellery has been more avant-guard in its mode of presentation.

The modernist, artificially lit white-wall gallery is described by Brian O’Doherty as by far the most important context for art with reference to the power the ‘white cube’ has over us. Cited in VEITEBERG, J. & FERGUSON, D. 2005. Craft in transition, Bergen, Kunsthøgskolen i Bergen, p.63.


Gaston Bachelard, was a leading philosopher of science of the 20th century and influenced philosophers such as Foucault, Derrida and Serres. During his career he moved his thinking from a rationalist to a phenomenological approach.


Tao Te Ching chapter 11, circa 6th century BC.


4.5 Space triggers: images

Figure 9. *Containment: Cicely & Colin Rigg Contemporary Design Award 2012*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2013, detail of installation.

Figure 10. *Rail as vessel* (detail), titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2012

Figure 11. *Rail and vessel no.1* (detail), titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2011

Figure 12. *Rail and vessel no.2*, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2013

Figure 13. *Corner rail*, titanium, aluminium, painted timber, Mark Edgoose, 2009

Figure 14. *Corner rail*, titanium, aluminium, painted timber, Mark Edgoose, 2009
Figure 10.
Figure 13.
# TIME TRIGGERS

5.1 Temporal context: the process of making  
5.2 Temporal context: the handmade  
5.3 Temporal context: materials and technologies  
5.3.1 Titanium and other materials  
5.3.2 The weld  
5.4 Time triggers: conclusions  
5.5 Time triggers: images
5. TIME TRIGGERS

This chapter addresses my second research question: How can an understanding of temporal context be triggered through the making, appearance and presentation of craft objects? And how does this understanding impact on possible readings of craft objects?

Key points include consideration of the temporal context of making – the need for and expression of time required for the making of craft objects, in terms of the work’s value for the maker, for the object and for the viewer, and consideration of the temporal context of a craft object – how it tells us about its location in the genealogy of craft objects, particularly through its materials and technologies.

Other allusions to time that have been introduced or discussed in this exegesis, but which are not central to this chapter, include Heidegger’s notion of temporality as touched on in Chapter 1. This notion is more relevant in my work on the experience of objects and it is further discussed in Chapter 6, Experience triggers. That chapter also addresses the impact of time passing as felt through local changes that can occur in an exhibition environment, such as changes in light during the day and from day to day.

5.1 Temporal context: the process of making

The process of making requires time. It is not merely the time required to pick up a tool and apply it, for instance, but the time required to observe, perceive, reflect and develop further ideas. In craft making, in my practice, the mental, material and physical processes occur synergistically. Together, they constitute the time required to make a craft object. One product of this, and to some extent inherent in the nature of making by hand, is that the time taken is evident in the final work: this is the temporal quality of the work in the sense used by Heidegger. The fact that skillful human endeavour, physical labour and conceptual and aesthetic judgement have been applied is revealed by the work and communicated to the viewer through its detail.

The imprint of human endeavour and the evidence of the investment of time and skill have an impact on how the work is perceived, understood and valued, especially in our neoliberal age of market values. Such values of human labour equated to time and to capital value contribute to a work’s resonance and meaning for the viewer. In this sense, the evident handmade qualities of the work can operate as a ‘trigger’ for the awareness of time and the nature of craft objects as handmade.

Alongside this discourse, there is the reality that for many makers there exists a deep commitment to and vocational passion for craft making by hand, even though, or perhaps partly because, it may be labour-intensive. In this way, the physical and mental act of making,
as described above, has agency in the creation and reading of craft objects. They are what they are, partly or largely, because of the making process.

The development and production of my work have always involved robust investigation through making. My engagement in making and interest in the process and expression of making are central to my practice as a heuristic mechanic, and have opened up possibilities and exposed potentials to which my work has then responded and developed. The actual time involved in making has been instrumental in allowing new ideas and directions in my work to advance, where time is required to experiment, test technique and develop ideas.

In addition, the act of making and making again, its repetitive nature as ‘practice’, is central to the outcome. The slowness of making allows practice to ‘bed in’; it allows time for reflexive engagement and for the heuristic enquiry to take shape. Every time an action is repeated, the skills are honed, the application of tools becomes seamless, the mental and physical muscles ‘remember’ and the whole act and outcome are together refined. Ten thousand hours is “how long researchers estimate it takes for complex skills to become so deeply ingrained that these have become readily available, tacit knowledge.”

There is a relationship between the time spent in making (as expressed and felt in the finished work) and the time of viewing in the sense used by Heidegger. The temporal ‘moment’ of viewing is marked by the viewer’s awareness of the qualities of the object, including evidence of the handmade. In this sense, the object is a trigger for awareness of the temporal context of making, and the temporality of the viewing moment informs the viewer’s perceptions of the work. The experience of the craft object through temporal moments is discussed further in Chapter 6.

5.2 Temporal context: the handmade

The expression of the handmade nature of craft objects is central to much traditional craft practice and to how it is understood. The ‘expression’ of the handmade in the craft object can be overt and conscious, or it can be much more discreet, obscured or unintentional in works that aim for ‘perfection’ in the craft skill set. In the latter case, it can be very hard to discern that a piece is handmade: Table rail, Figure 18 (2006). The fact that it is handmade might be revealed through close observation and handling, rather than as an overt or obvious aspect of the made work. The handmade qualities as evident in the work can say much about the process of making and the interests of the maker, and can imbue the craft object with value associated with the time spent and level of skill that is evident.
In my work, I aim for precision and finesse in detail that could suggest the work is machine-made. However, I also convey the fact that it is handmade through careful detail that is revealed on close inspection. An example of this is the weld, which I will discuss further. In doing so, my intention is to heighten the ambiguity of the work in order to trigger awareness of these characteristics.

In my opening comments for the exhibition, *In the landscape*, showing work by Vito Bila (2005), I noted:

The singular vessels are all round; use one of two materials; the process is of hand and tool; a simple process of hammering repeatedly time after time until the walls of the vessels become metal shim. The vessels share a simplicity and practicality (by that I mean – an efficiency in thought and process) that speaks directly about Bila’s approach. However, a closer inspection reveals the subtle and sensitive textured surfaces of the vessels. There is a sense of ease with which this is done, due to the freedom and stability of focus with which the vessels are made. Here exists an undeniable intimacy between the material and the maker. In respecting and following the disciplines of nature, Bila gains insights into the meanings of its processes, which are ultimately reflected and exist in the work itself.94

This process is also characteristic of my work. Through the process of making, an unintentional mark may suddenly appear or a connection may be broken, and a decision needs to be made. Do I attempt a repair? Or perhaps create a new element from the error? It is the openness to these subtleties and surprises that can lead to unexpected discoveries and creative developments in the work. This is another key value of the handmade and the process of making, where time spent triggers, or allows space for aspects of the process to trigger, new ideas and solutions.

The object crafted by the hand is furnished not only with the intentions of the maker, but with the unintended, inadvertent and sometimes accidental effects inherent in the process of making by hand. This is something David Pye, in his book *The nature and art of workmanship*, calls “the workmanship of risk”. The idea of risk is relevant in the sense that judgements are always being made in the making process – sometimes about aesthetic aspects, sometimes about functional or technological aspects. The decision points often triggered at moments of risk are fundamental to the process of reflexively crafting an object:

> [W]orkmanship using any kind of technique or apparatus in which the quality of the result is not predetermined, but depends on the judgment, dexterity and care which the maker exercises as he works. The quality of the result is continually at risk during the process of making.95
Making is an intelligent act of self-control and application of skill; the maker relishes the challenge, the risk of it all ending in a puddle of molten metal, the risk of imperfection as the hand mediates between idea and material, and can experience a sense of victory or relief when it does not.

In an age of mechanical duplication, the hand should never be seen as a replacement for technological or industrial processes. Rather, its power comes from its symbolic state, as a sign of the individual, of idiosyncrasy, of personal identity and spiritual power. In an age dominated by linear, cerebral and linguistic analysis, the hand also stands for human understanding based on experiential qualities and sensation, a kind of rich ecology of feeling. The hand stands for an existential, being-centred quality in art of perception filtered through multidimensional sites in the body as well as the mind.96

The evidence of the handmade is central to the identity and essential qualities of craft objects, and by extrapolation so is the maker, who is present through evidence of their skill and time. The craftsperson is both the originator of the idea and the maker of the finished or built object. The handmade qualities reveal the time, attention and skill invested in the making, and enrich the viewer’s awareness of the maker as both the generator of the idea and the skilled craftsperson who delivered it. As Metcalf says:

Because craft objects are substantially handmade, traces of the maker’s body and its movements often remain in the object: the potter’s fingerprint; the silversmith’s planishing mark; the stitches of the needle-worker; the irregular form of the glassblower’s vase. Such marks record the presence of a living person who exists at one ‘degree of separation’ from the user. Ordinary people recognize this intuitively, and they read a craft object as a symbol of human presence.97

Engaging the viewer

An important aspect of craft objects that arises from the process of making by hand is its expression in the craft object and the viewer’s perception and awareness of these qualities, which demonstrate the endeavour embodied in the work. But apart from the evidence of time taken in making, the ‘handmadeness’ of a craft object also creates an association with the body of the viewer. The awareness of the human maker, the evidence of their skill and application, bring awareness of the viewer’s own hands and of their own skills and abilities.

The evidence of the handmade in craft objects expresses and connects the objects to human experience and to aspects of living. These qualities might convey function, or a reminder of our need for function. In their aesthetic or conceptual richness, they may remind the viewer of the human power to make and to create. In their ‘handmadeness’, they can remind the viewer of our primal, fundamental capabilities (such as using our hands) and of human
endeavour, knowledge, skill and ingenuity. Their qualities suggest relationships and can create engagement between subject-viewer and crafted object.

With the rail works developed through this research project, the viewer may initially ‘interact’ with the rail by moving within the localised space the form creates or suggests or by walking along beside it – engaging more with the suggested space than with the detail. But in stepping into its ‘sphere’, so to speak, the viewer is quickly drawn into closer observation of the work, when the details of fixings, edge thicknesses, mute surfaces and gaps, slots and apertures and colours become apparent. Through the making process a combination of sharp precision and elements demonstrate almost ‘perfect’ skill. With quirks of angle and selection of form and detail revealing its handmade quality, the presence of time is embodied in the craft object.

As discussed, with this work the viewer is physically, perceptually, emotionally and psychologically engaged with the craft object through the evidence of making by hand, but is also physically engaged, with their body, through the form and placement of the work, as it influences the exhibition space itself and requires the viewer to walk along the rail – to move their body – in order to view it. The viewer experiences the suggested space made by the rail within the greater exhibition space. This is a temporal experience.

In addition, the objects located along the rail are intended to provoke engagement through touch. Some have moving parts or appear playful, while others suggest usefulness or are functional in the domestic rail works. These elements convey the ‘handmadeness’ of the work on close inspection and each invites response and connection with the viewer. Such aspects of experience are discussed further in Chapter 6.

5.3 Temporal context: materials and technologies

The location of my craft practice in the temporal context associated with the process of making, and specifically of the handmade and its expression in craft objects, is centred on the materials and technologies I employ and how I employ them to create expression in the work. The materials and technologies used also place the work in a historical temporal context within the genealogy of the craft object and of Western craft practice.

Peter Watson in Ideas. A history from fire to Freud writes that some palaeontologists suggest humankind’s first abstract idea occurred with the standardisation of stone axes. If true, then the association of abstract ideas with craft techniques existed before language was developed. As a heuristic mechanic, this proposition rings true for me. Through working with materials and employing, testing and developing new technologies, I find that new conceptual and aesthetic ideas emerge in my work.
Peter Bauhuis is an artist who is engaged with contemporary object practice and whose work is founded in techniques of making for the development of ideas. An example is his vessels, which are formed from an intervention which exploits the essential nature of the casting process, something he understands very well. By casting a second layer of metal on the inside of the vessel in production, he allows the second, internal layer to also penetrate the base of the vessel in order to become the vessel's feet. There is a high degree of metallurgical precision in the development of the work. Quoting from Monica Gaspar in her catalogue essay *My table is a palimpsest or, The secret life of objects*:

> When Bauhuis carried out a performance that entailed melting a chocolate rabbit with the heat from a photocopier, which in turn documented the successive states of transformation, copy by copy, he was already demonstrating his interest in ‘fusion’ processes.

Now time: making, materials and technologies in my craft practice

The use of key materials and technologies is central to my approach to this research. They locate the work in a historical temporal context; they allow for the paradigm of ‘perfection/imperfection’ that comes with the handmade and therefore a sensual, intuitive connection with the viewer; and, critically, they enable me to pursue the making of forms of craft objects relevant to my research.

This relates specifically to the rail, where the use of metal and the combination of welding and mechanical fixing to make connections enable a linear, tensile form – a rail – as well as extending the association with architectural rails and the spatial relationships of habitation and usefulness. In particular, the use of titanium, niobium and similar metals that are distinguished by their high strength, lightness, inertia and beauty allows me to achieve the fineness, precision and delicacy associated with more precious craft objects and to play with perceptions of the machine-made as opposed to the handmade in the work. In this sense, the materials are essential to the work’s ability to link craft, art and architecture, and to the exploration of triggers for space, time and experience.

### 5.3.1 Titanium and other materials

Titanium is a material of our time. It is commonly used in all manner of things, from spectacle frames, to spacecraft fuselage, to body implants, to bicycle frames. It is known as a high-strength, inert, lightweight material. It has a refined aesthetic and a place in current popular cultural awareness and perceptions of materials, and their value. *Rail as vessel, Figure 16 (2012).*

The material is part of ‘the now’ and that has allowed me to think about how it activates the reading and meaning of the work, including the aesthetic activation, within the genealogy of the craft object. Time becomes materialised through the making and embodied in the final work. Titanium also has a mechanical quality
that relates to ideas of function and mechanisms, and enables elements suggestive of play associated with play construction systems such as Meccano.

In this research, the work is predominantly made from thin sheet niobium\textsuperscript{102} and titanium, which are assembled, connected and given form by welding. The welds are sometimes expressed, signalling technique, ‘handmadeness’ and process, and sometimes drawing attention to form and line in the objects. At other times, the welds are ground back and polished. The contrast of ‘perfect’ polished joints against exposed ‘imperfect’ welds is an example of the controlled expression of making and a device that may engage the viewer through intrigue.

Titanium can also be coloured, as outlined in Chapter 2. This is a condition not true of all metals traditionally used in craft object making. In \textit{Rail as vessel}, Figure 17 (2012), edges are coloured to emphasise lines, thinness and relationships between elements. Sometimes the colours are continuous, sometimes broken, sometimes exuberant, other times subdued. For instance, the rail might be coloured to reinforce its continuity while the objects are not, which separates them from the rail and suggests they are more contained elements.

Titanium can be joined by fusion, brazing and resistance or spot welding and, with adequate control of welding techniques, is among the easiest metals to join. The most appropriate welding systems used in welding titanium are plasma arc, tungsten arc, electron beam and laser welding. The most common welding system used in industry is tungsten inert gas (TIG) welding. This is also known as gas tungsten arc welding (GTA), heliarc, heliwick or argon arc welding.

5.3.2 The weld

It is not my intention to detail the process of TIG or laser welding, as considerable technical information is available on the subject.\textsuperscript{103} However, it is useful to understand that I have utilised and adapted industrial and technological processes in building this research, and that they are integral to the ideas that have developed and to the final expression and detail of the work, which has an important role in engaging the viewer: \textit{Vessel}, Figure 15 (2013).

The reframing/adapting of the TIG welding process to add versatility in its use by the artist/craftsperson applicable to a small studio practice started in the 1990s. At that time, no one to my knowledge was utilising this process to weld titanium to make vessels in a craft context. This new welding application was central to my masters research,\textsuperscript{104} and was recognised for its contribution to object making. It remains a foundation for this current research:

The lack of any legalistic restraint on the mixing of metals and the freedom to explore form and materials has let Mark Edgoose develop his own vocabulary. His creation of hollowware forms
in titanium is without precedent and has involved considerable experimentation to get to its current sophisticated state of development. Mark’s forms are not immediately appealing to the eye but their originality and functionality progressively win over the viewer. When it is realised how innovative his use of a radically new material is, these works assume considerable significance in introducing a new element to the tradition of hollowware production and represent a major breakthrough for Australian metalwork.105

The TIG welding system is also the most appropriate welding system for use by the artist/craftsperson, as it is the system that offers the most versatility and affordability for use in studio art/craft practice. For these reasons, as well as its relative ease of use, it is the system predominantly utilised to manufacture the work in this research.

Through this research, I have been able to further develop and refine welding techniques and am now able to join thinner gauge materials, such as sheet titanium as thin as 0.2 mm. This has had a significant influence on the aesthetic and structural considerations when designing and making the work in this research. I am now able to produce work with greater opportunity to explore lightness, which is relevant structurally as well as in visual and tactile senses. The use of the weld as a key aesthetic device and as a technology central to my work illustrates the further integration between structure and aesthetics as one of interdependence, which is central to my work as a heuristic mechanic.

Access to welding technologies has also enabled me to explore niobium as an alternative material, and in conjunction with titanium, in fabricating my objects. Establishing a flexible and pragmatic approach in manufacturing with niobium, a thin gauge material is best used. The current welding systems adopted have enabled the successful joining of niobium, through a process similar to that applied to titanium. I have also had success in welding these two materials together.

Of relevance to this research is the creation of welds that are far smaller and more refined, and the way this allows me to form welds that can contribute to a fine finish, sometimes expressed to signal technique and process, as well as for aesthetic purposes. In this, the welds play a role in drawing the eye of the viewer to the detail and in emphasising line and form, as done in other ways such as through the use of colour. In the context of this discussion of time triggers, the welds also contribute to the placement of my work as being ‘of our time’ in a temporal context of the genealogy of the craft object.

5.4 Time triggers: conclusions

An understanding of temporal context can be triggered through the making, appearance and presentation of craft objects in several ways, each of which has an impact on possible readings of craft objects.
The time required for the making of craft objects is part of its value to the maker, in the finished object itself and to the viewer, and is embodied and expressed to varying degrees within handmade craft objects. In my research, this is important because I am interested in the engagement of the subject-viewer with the crafted object, and its potential to inspire an intuitive or intellectual appreciation of aspects of human life and experience. These include aspects related to the connections between the everyday acts of living and usefulness, the skillful, laboured endeavour of the craftsperson, and moments of contemplative ‘temporal’ time as embodied or evoked in the domestic rails in this research.

Materials and techniques are important aspects of my process as a heuristic mechanic and they play an important role in the form, expression and detail of the practice-based research. At the same time, my materials and techniques locate my craft practice and the work produced as being of our time, in the context of the genealogy of craft objects discussed in Chapter 3. The following chapter, addresses temporality in the sense used by Heidegger as it relates to experience of the craft object.
Titanium (Ti) is lightweight, has excellent corrosion resistance and high strength. Known as a refractory metal, titanium has a melting temperature of 1670 degrees centigrade and a specific gravity of 4.5. Found in 2 ores, ilmenite (FeTiO_3) and rutile (TiO_2), significant ore bodies are found in Quebec (Canada), California (USA), Australia and Brazil. Titanium is four times harder than stainless steel, ductile and inert, non-irritating to body tissue and bones. Titanium and its alloys are commercially available in all common mill forms, such as billets, sheet and rod shaped extrusions, as well as tubing and wire.

Niobium (Nb), also known as columbium, is named after Niobe, a daughter of Tantalus (Greek mythology). Also known as a refractory metal (tantalum being another), niobium has a melting temperature of 2467 degrees C and a specific gravity of 8.57. Used in nuclear reactors, rocket engines and in superconducting alloys, niobium is found in the pyrochlore mineral. Brazil is the major producer of niobium. With a specific gravity close to sterling silver, Niobium is malleable, good low temperature ductility and work hardens at a slow rate. Common mill forms of niobium are sheet, rod, tubing and wire.
5.5  Time triggers: images

Figure 15.  *Vessel*, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2013

Figure 16.  *Rail as vessel* (detail), titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2012

Figure 17.  *Rail as vessel* (detail), titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2012

Figure 18.  Table rail, titanium (detail), silver, Mark Edgoose, 2006

Figure 19.  *Rail as vessel* (detail), titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2012
6. EXPERIENCE TRIGGERS

6.1 The rail in architecture
6.2 The everyday
6.3 Journey/sequence
6.4 Temporal context: process of moments
6.5 Shadow and time
6.6 Domestic rail
6.7 Experience triggers: conclusions
6.8 Experience triggers: images
6. EXPERIENCE TRIGGERS

This chapter addresses my third research question and brings together considerations raised in the preceding Chapters 4 and 5. The discussion looks in more detail at the role and importance of the viewer, or user, in their encounter with the craft object. This includes consideration of the viewer’s movement through a space, their experience of the craft object and how their perception of the exhibition space may be affected. In terms of this research project, it is essentially about the reorientation of the viewer’s experience of the craft object. This affects the viewer’s understanding of the object, the space in which the object exists and the interrelationship between the two. It is also the central point explored in the series of craft objects made through this project.

The ultimate piece entitled *Domestic rail* (2014) investigates and expresses the dual values of meaningfulness and usefulness that I see as essential to the craft object, and which are brought together in this work as a bridge between and combination of the craft object as precious display piece and the craft object as useful in everyday life. The research looks at how a series of works might activate alternative experiences of craft objects, with a focus on shifts enabled through perceptions of space and time, including temporal contexts and temporal moments.

The discussion addresses these issues through building on Chapters 4 and 5 to provide commentary on the rail in architecture, ideas about ‘the everyday’ and ‘journey’, through consideration of moment, sequence and shadow, and through temporal context and the process of moments.

6.1 The rail in architecture

This research has addressed the viewer’s role within and relationship to an exhibited craft object in the gallery space and in domestic space, and their possible observations of and relationship to the object in these contexts. Considerations include the effects of the viewer/user’s own (human) scale and actions, and the craft object’s role in affecting the viewer. The role the viewer plays in this encounter, the nature of the exhibition space and how movement through a space can change the way the work is experienced are of vital interest.

Using the architectural rail as a starting point for considering the viewer’s experience, this is usually a highly functional fixture associated with journey, whether it facilitates (as in a handrail) or prevents (as in a balustrade or barrier) that journey through a space. For a person moving through an architectural space, a handrail usually signifies a pathway. Our instinctive action is to move towards and possibly to hold the rail en route to wherever we are going; to hold on, or steady ourselves, for example, as we climb or descend a flight of stairs. This involves privileging of the ‘use’ value of the rail, but
the rail is also performing an aesthetic role to signify journey and also safety. It can signal 'pathway' and can attract a person into a space, and guide them through it. It can also signal 'barrier', often when flanked by open space and can suggest the need for caution. The role as a signifier is relevant to this research, as an aspect of the rail form serves to initially attract the viewer to the rail and to create some ambiguity as to its status as craft object or functional fixture.

The relationship between rail and hand is also important. This interest derives from the role and expression of the handmade in craft object making, as discussed in Chapter 5, and from the functional association of the hand with architectural rails. In terms of the way a rail is experienced, the architectural rail usually operates as a continuous line set at a comfortable height and engages with the human body through the hand (for instance, as one walks down a staircase, one is engaged on a journey and holding the rail). The rail is associated with the journey in an integral if subliminal way, as both a sensual and an aesthetic object.

In the context of the concepts of domesticity, inhabitation and journey, this research has prompted consideration of other familiar hand-related activities associated with domestic life, occupation and home. Examples include opening a letter or putting down keys. Further contemplation of the rail as a useful and meaningful craft object with a strong relationship to the hand and domestic tasks led to exploration of the potential for the rail as craft object to play an active role in the ritual acts associated with coming home.

In architecture, the ‘rail’ can serve many purposes – most commonly it appears as a handrail to offer support and safety, such as on a staircase or at the edge of a change in floor level. As such it is typically a robust, functional element – it must be strong to support human weight, set at the appropriate height, made in the correct dimensions to enable it to be grasped and so on. Often in contemporary architecture the handrail is merely functional; however, historically it has also been employed as a decorative element. Frequently it combines both aesthetic and functional roles, but the functional is almost always paramount.

In this project, by elevating the rail out of a traditional architectural framework, the research has demonstrated how the role and meaning of the rail can be reconsidered, as can the craft object. This shift places a more significant emphasis on the aesthetic role and changes the functional reading of the rail. While still drawing on the common understanding of the idea of a functional rail and while still serving in a functional way, the rail is formed, positioned and detailed to belie its reading as a typical architectural rail and to heighten its role in bridging architectural fixture and craft object for display. In addition, it encompasses and expresses a more complex and varied range of functions than an architectural rail usually would. This positions the work somewhere between architecture and craft in terms of use and meaning, and opens up possibilities for expectations and perceptions.
For example, the apparent scale of the exhibition space is affected by the craft object because the rail is of a scale itself to engage with the room rather than to be read as a diminutive object within it. It is also of a scale similar to that of architectural handrails, although it is mounted at a height for viewing rather than for ‘using’ as a handrail. At the same time, the detail of the object is painstaking and very fine in scale, creating a shift for the viewer from large-scale movement (walking towards or along the rail) to fine-scale observation and scrutiny.

Sequence, and journey, are considered through the linear nature of the rail and the location of a series of detailed craft objects fixed or mounted or suspended along the rail. These are also activated through twists and changes in the body of the rail itself.

The work is ‘fully’ revealed as the viewer interacts and connects closely with it, as is an understanding of the spaces created within and by the rail, and exposing the object (rail) as an open-ended series of parts related to one another: Rail as vessel, Figure 26 (2012).

At the same time, the work reflects on the genealogy of the craft object and historical shifts from roles as purely functional, to notionally functional, to primarily or wholly aesthetic. The research considers whether a highly aesthetic, refined and crafted object can also be highly functional and can play a central functional role in everyday domestic life. In this scenario, function and meaning are intimately bound through human experience.

In this research project, I have drawn on and extended conceptual possibilities associated with an architectural rail including journey, touch and function in the context of domesticity. I have explored these through the making of a series of rail works that involve concepts such as scale, sequence, movement, space, time and the qualities of the handmade craft object.

The work aims to engage the viewer in a sequential and sometimes punctuated experience, Domestic rail, Figure 23 (2014). For the viewer, a curiosity is potentially activated which might extend to considerations about how different elements of the rail combine to produce form, suggesting relationship, containment, connection and, possibly, belonging. This reflects another aspect of my interest in the notion of the rail as ‘home’, including the scope of the rail to ‘house’ or contain objects and the scope of the rail to perform as an active element within the setting of a home.

6.2 The everyday

Throughout this research, I have extended an interest in the tension between the ‘everyday’, ubiquitous, useful architectural rail that we almost do not see but use all the time, and the refined, precious exhibited craft object that we rarely use but we now ‘see’ in a heightened way, and on which we might carefully pause to
enable the focused viewing of its aesthetic detail.

In *Being and time*, (1996) Heidegger considers the everyday tool, observing that everyday usage of things determines a particular type of knowledge. Heidegger suggests that as long as things remain in use, they remain undiscovered because, being intent on using them, we filter our awareness of their other qualities. But when lifted out of their common situation, we notice them and the aspects of detail we previously took for granted.

This is important for my research because I am shifting the architectural rail out of its usual context, and shifting the context of the exhibited craft object, in order to draw out potentials of both, in creating new craft objects. The everyday is also central to my work in several ways. As discussed previously, I am interested in the usefulness of objects and in shifts that have occurred in the making and understanding of usefulness and objecthood for craft objects. I am also interested in concepts associated with inhabitation and domesticity. All of these rely on the idea of the everyday. Ultimately, through this research I have considered the everyday as a trigger for ideas developed in my work and as an impetus for usefulness in my work. This has also enabled the bridging of architectural rail and craft object to address my research questions about the relationship of craft object to the exhibition space and the viewer’s experience of both. I have used the domestic setting – the home – where functional, prosaic, daily life is intimately intermingled with meaningful, emotional and symbolic interactions and experiences. In this context, the development of the series of rail works and of ideas about sequence and journey has involved the making of specific works in response to specific scenarios associated with homecoming.

The work *Domestic rail* (2014) investigates junctions between architecture and the craft object. Relevant aspects of this relationship are materiality and tactility. Much of how we experience architecture is shaped by our experience of materiality and our intuitive, emotional responses to materials. These relationships are strongly influenced by sensory experience or embodied knowledge developed throughout life. Even the mundane act of opening a door has the potential to be evocative:

> The everyday act of pressing a door handle and opening into a light-washed room can become profound when experienced through sensitized consciousness. To see, to feel these physical- ities is to become the subject of the senses.¹⁰⁰

While architecture and the craft object differ in many ways, there are potentially questions relevant to both: How will people experience this work or space? Are connections and details approached in a considered way? How do the materials respond to location? What do they offer to human experience and to daily life?

These ideas are played out in a specific rail work I developed for a Jewish household, titled *Mezuzah and rail*, Figure 24 (2007).
A mezuzah is a container that houses the Hebrew verses of the Torah, often placed on the entrance/doorpost of the home. The flexibility of Judaism is particularly relevant in how it reflects, responds to and celebrates contemporary life with all its variations. It is the connectedness and inclusive nature of Judaism in relation to the everyday that I responded to in the work.

Beginning with the mezuzah on the outside of the home, the rail passes through the front door frame and connects the outside of the home to the inside. The wall mounted rail supports a range of accessories that hang and clip to the rail which determine and potentially challenge the way we define the object, from religious object (mezuzah and scull cap) to art object or perhaps something very useful (phone and keys):

The unique message of the mezuzah is that in addition to having the word of God inscribed in your heart and mind, and written in the volumes of your library, you should also place it on the entrance of your residence to emphasize that your home and everything that enters through its doors, are imbued with a spirit of divinity.101

In making this work, I considered that it would be useful to explore the idea of connectedness and the potency of the everyday object for highly meaningful ritual by running the rail through the home. The concept was for a series of mezuzahs made for and mounted on door frames throughout the home (excluding those for bathrooms and kitchens) and connected by a rail. The interior mezuzahs could become more ‘open’, as protection from the weather and security issues would no longer need to be considered.

The relationship with the everyday, combined with a deep tradition, meaning and ritual, inspired me to think about other possible work that balanced usefulness and meaningfulness as being equally rich in their embodiment in the craft object, in the domestic setting. The trigger and central concept for these aspects of usefulness and meaningfulness is the experience of the object by a purposeful and sentient subject-viewer-user. As the mezuzah was tied to tradition and religion, and to a ritual of homecoming, this triggered the development of concepts and works that might address alternative or more abstract iterations of entering and leaving a home.

Mezuzah and rail (2007) within this research project triggered a series of key shifts and developments, leading to the later domestic rail works discussed in this exegesis.

6.3 Journey/sequence

As discussed above, the Mezuzah and rail (2007) explored a specific example of a key moment in a homecoming journey and the situation of threshold. The linear nature of the rail, the refined detail and relative intensity of the object (the mezuzah), the turns and
bends in the rail and the localized space itself – the doorway – all contribute to the experience of journey and sequence. The research has developed a number of rail works that consider sequence, frequency, intensity and openness of objects fixed to the rail, and of the detail of the rail itself as a means of modulating the viewer’s engagement with the work.

In this sense there is an activation of time through pace and movement and a connection with the viewer’s body as a spatial entity through the same means. Viewing the work involves striding or walking towards the rail while observing it as an element in the space, slowing down on approach, stopping and starting, and moving along the rail to observe individual elements, leaning in carefully, squinting to see a detail or a hint of colour, leaning back, resisting the desire to touch (in a gallery) or touching, adjusting (in the home) and so on. This is a different experience than that involved in viewing an autonomous craft object in a traditional display.

Either consciously or subconsciously, the viewer may think, ‘what’s next?’. The objects within the work punctuate the viewer’s journey, breaking the flow. The work ‘unravels’, its scale and detail requiring the viewer to engage step by step. If the viewer was to walk away before completing the journey, it might prompt a sense of incompleteness, having left something unfinished.

In addition, the works often involve moving parts that operate to fulfil functional objectives. This has also been an area of interest to me, particularly in relation to mechanics and from my speaking position as a heuristic mechanic, and it is aligned with my objective of human engagement with the craft object as operable.

The ability to stop and play, or to move elements, slows the viewer down, perhaps to a standstill, again punctuating their journey and engaging them with the detail of the craft object: *Rail as vessel*, Figure 25, (2012).

The sequential, punctuated experience has a temporal effect for the viewer in the sense used by Heidegger in *Being and time.* The moment of viewing becomes resonant, partly because of the viewer’s engagement with the detail, including the ability to touch and move the work.

As previously discussed in Chapter 2, functional objects are often defined by their usefulness and perhaps by changes associated with their technical development, but they are rarely defined by how the objects are experienced. When considering the way we experience objects, our relationship with them is more complex than the merely practical, and it usually involves, to some degree, social, cultural or political meaning.

With this in mind, the research has explored a more abstract and lived system where the user is engaged, active and responsible and has a bearing on the outcome of the work.
6.4 Temporal context: process of moments

Another type of journey addressed through the work, in different ways, is that of time. In Chapter 5, I outlined my use of the term ‘time’ in terms of ‘temporal context’ and in terms of our understanding of craft objects in the context of history, and in terms of the time required for making. I also touched on the idea of ‘temporality’.

This research project has explored the relationships between craft objects and their exhibition settings, with a focus on the experience of craft objects. That is closely related to the capacity of craft objects to inform and express moments and meaning. In this sense, Heidegger’s notion of temporality, as referred to above, is relevant, where the past, present and future are always present in any given moment.

These concepts of time are mentioned because they have in common the idea of time as moment. This is important for my work in terms of how the viewer experiences the craft object, which involves being drawn in from somewhat distant appraisal to closer scrutiny of detail. Time, in terms of moments, can ‘expand or contract’ through the viewer-user’s engagement with the craft object. By making craft objects that engage more fully with the viewer and that become literally useful in the domestic setting, I aim to enrich the temporal moments experienced by the viewer-user.

The final work developed through the research is Domestic rail (2014), which involves an extended and potentially ongoing series of rails fixed within a home, and where each element balances usefulness with meaning and together construct a journey associated with inhabitation. It is hoped that this will also inspire a sequence of moments of resonant experience for the inhabitants.

6.5 Shadow and time

The passing of abstract time, as marked by the clock and as opposed to historical time, is often experienced in terms of cyclic changes that occur across the day, the month and through the seasons. This is experienced through the senses with changes in light, temperature and environment, for example. In a domestic setting, this is also experienced with routines associated with living: getting up, leaving the house, exchanging messages with loved ones, coming home.

In discussing the concept of time as a fundamental aspect of experience, in particular, as suggested above, is an important aspect of inhabitation – of home life – due to the associations of everyday activities with ritual, habit and the ways we inhabit or use our home spaces for these activities, usually in alignment with certain times of day.

Time in this sense is experienced through our sensory awareness, including our awareness of light and its partner, shadow, see Rail as vessel, Figure 21 (2012). For this research, I use the form, detail
and placement of the craft object to heighten awareness of the passing of time, including considering how this experience varies with different settings. Being placed on a wall, the work is set against an immediate backdrop that creates a shadow that changes constantly as the sun moves. In the gallery setting, the light is typically artificial and fixed, unchanging, so there is no experience of time passing through the movement of shadow, nor, usually, through changes of temperature. But in a domestic setting, the light changes as the day progresses, as the sun and moon orbit, as the seasons pass and as people move through and use spaces within the home – turning lights on and off, casting their own shadows as they move. These changes in light create constant changes in the shadows made by the work and these shadows communicate that time is passing. Perhaps more importantly, however, the changing shadows also reveal details and aspects of the craft object that might not be obvious at first.

The shadows also convey information that can be intuitively understood about distance through the relationship of the object to the wall and to the greater surrounding space. In *Rail as vessel*, Figure 20 (2012), the shadows also echo form and detail, with interesting distortions. A precise, sharp-edged form close to the wall creates a precise-sharp-edged shadow under a certain light, and this can change to a softer shadow or none at all at certain times of the day or year or with changes of weather.

Lighting and shadow are also keys to the performative quality of the work and relate to the moving parts, which in turn further activate shadows.

### 6.6 Domestic rail

The final work produced through this research was *Domestic rail*, see *Domestic rail*, Figure 27 (2014). This was commissioned for a house, with a requirement to fulfil functional needs as well as to serve as fine craft work ‘on display’. Necessary functions were associated with homecoming, with the work to be located as a rail extending from just inside the front door to the other end of a long passageway and with scope to extend to other parts of the home. Required functions included a place to put the keys, a place to hang an umbrella, a hanging rail for a painting, a shallow tray for small craft objects to be placed into and a tray for mail and messages. See *Domestic rail* (detail), Figures 28, 29 and 30 (2014).

When exhibited, painted ‘props’ were used to suggest a domestic setting. Ultimately, it will be relocated to the home for which it was made.

This work aims to bring together the threads and themes explored and developed in the research. These include ideas of containment, spatial relationship and engagement; a bridging of the useful and the meaningful and an attempt to elevate both; the experience of resonant moments in time and of abstract time.
passing as experienced through changes in shadow; a sense of the work’s place in time and the genealogy of craft objects; and the experience of the work as an object that is both rich and precious and a part of the ‘everyday’.

6.7 Experience triggers: conclusions

This research poses questions in relation to how craft objects produce/create or affect space, extend into space and pertain to space. As such, it is about the viewer’s experience of the craft object through an experience of space and time, and about ways in which the craft object can trigger, activate or be activated by space, time and experience.

In considering this underpinning concept, the research has also investigated the idea of inhabitation. This includes ideas of ‘home’, housing, occupation, belonging and domesticity – concepts that are addressed through the series of works and shifts that have occurred as the works have progressed. These include a chronology and a transgressive genealogy, from *Ring and box* (2010) where a ring is ‘housed’ in and ‘belongs’ to a ring box, to *Domestic rail* (2014) where the rail and objects connected to it are active participants in rituals of homecoming.

This research aims to engage the viewer’s senses through triggering or activating time and space in their experience of craft objects, in order to draw attention simultaneously to the importance and potential of everyday, prosaic, domestic rituals and to memories and meanings associated with place and time.


6.8 Experience triggers: images

Figure 20. *Rail as vessel* (detail), titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2012

Figure 21. *Rail as vessel* (detail), titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2012

Figure 22. *Domestic rail*, titanium, niobium, steel, nylon, Mark Edgoose, 2014

Figure 23. *Domestic rail*, titanium, niobium, steel, nylon, Mark Edgoose, 2014

Figure 24. *Mezuzah and rail*, steel, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2007

Figure 25. *Rail as vessel* (detail), titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2012

Figure 26. *Rail as vessel*, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2012

Figure 27. *Domestic rail*, titanium, niobium, steel, nylon, Mark Edgoose, 2014

Figure 28. *Domestic rail* (detail), titanium, niobium, steel, nylon, Mark Edgoose, 2014

Figure 29. *Domestic rail* (detail), titanium, niobium, steel, nylon, Mark Edgoose, 2014

Figure 30. *Domestic rail*, titanium, niobium, steel, nylon, Mark Edgoose, 2014
Figure 21.
7. CONCLUSIONS

One of the purposes behind this practice-led doctorate was to investigate how the placement of the craft object in particular environments could activate new perceptions and experiences of the craft object. The primary intention has been to understand how time and space have impact in my own work and how this may change not only my perception and experience as a crafts-person but also how others may perceive the work.

At its fundamental level, the organisation of the exegesis reflects an exploration of three key triggers – space, time and experience – as it researches the craft object. The research consciously asks questions about how a series of craft objects can activate experiences and perceptions of the relationships between objects, space and time.

The exegesis began with a brief discussion of the methodologies that presented the context and a practical, theoretical and philosophical framework for the exploration of how time, space, experience have informed my ideas and might contribute to discourse, forming a place in the research field. The significance of the ideas addressed in each of these three chapters is viewed in light of my practice as an object maker. The perspective of a craft-maker comes from the speaking position of a ‘heuristic mechanic’.

I contend that a reflexive, solution-orientated process of discovery, combined with a material and making approach, has been central to the decision-making processes throughout this research. Through this process of material practice, new knowledge has been generated in my field.

Chapter by chapter, this exegesis advances a discourse of subject–object relations to question the binary dualism of subject and object through the craft object’s activation of time and space in exhibition and domestic settings. From a traditional view of the craft object as a self-contained entity, the research seeks to reorientate the viewer’s experience to new understandings of the relationship between craft objects, and to connect us, as viewers and makers, to the spaces the objects inhabit.

The research considers the nature of space, and how we might engage with objects in both an exhibition context and a domestic setting orientated to daily life, by using the form of the rail as a platform to explore ways in which architectural space may be experienced through use of the rail as an active participant in everyday habitation.
It considers the value of usefulness as essential to the understanding of the craft object through establishing a genealogy of the craft object. Usefulness plays a key role in drawing attention to how one might experience the rail work, triggering shifts in subject–object relationships to create new interpretations of meaning.

The research demonstrates that the role played by the viewer in the encounter with the work is central to the potential overall understanding of the rail works. Moving through the space in which the rail works are located can activate and reorientate the viewer’s experience, triggering a moment of change in the experience. Potentially new meanings may be found through the object’s activation of time and space, which triggers a ‘lived experience’ for the viewer.

Questions sprang from an ongoing interest in revealing the essential nature of the craft object and how such characteristics might be exploited in particular architectural environments to develop multiple readings for the contemporary craft object. For example, precision in the making of the craft object can be experienced differently in an exhibition environment to that of a domestic setting. In questioning how the craft object is experienced, and might be experienced, the aim of the research has been to extend the ways in which the craft object is understood.

The overall aim has been to establish new knowledge about how craft works carefully located in the particular environments of exhibition space and domestic settings can activate experiences and perceptions that enable alternative ways of understanding craft objects and, in particular, their bringing together of meaningfulness and usefulness, beyond traditional connotations, through finding new ways to consider the relationships between object, space and time.

**Implications for further research**
For me, as the researcher, the value of my research work lies in its potential to enable me to move beyond the limitations of my existing practice. This research, in both its practical exhibition work and this accompanying exegesis, has opened a space of reflection on the many possibilities to experience and position the crafted object in its space and time, with the stark realisation that there is a lifetime of work ahead of me. The research will also inform my role as an educator, and I see future challenges involving the development of relevant ways of communicating the research findings to others through that role.

Ultimately this research, in exploring the way craft objects can trigger experiences through perceptions and understandings time and space, is concerned with interconnectedness and relationship. I have discussed the nature of the craft object, including its genealogy, usefulness and the significance of the handmade, and have developed a series of works that lead to
a heightened appreciation of the dual values of meaningfulness and usefulness in the craft object and the influence specific architectural settings. In *Domestic rail* (2014), as in earlier works completed through this research, use and meaning are intimately interconnected. It is the notion of interconnectedness that is the springboard for further research that I intend to pursue beyond this project.
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY


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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Notes on the weld

The following provides a short outline of the systems and processes of welding developed through my masters research project in 1997 and further extended through this current research project.

TIG welding is an arc-welding process where infusion is produced with an arc between a single tungsten (non-consumable) electrode and the work. Critical to the welding process is the shielding of the arc from atmospheric gases. Protection to the weld is normally achieved by the supply of argon gas to the heated surfaces or by operating in a totally enclosed argon-filled vacuum welding cabinet. This is particularly important when welding titanium. It is in this area of shielding the weld pool from atmospheric gases that I conducted considerable research and experimentation took place, adapting industrial systems to allow flexible and accessible welding systems suited to a craft studio practice.

Welding systems

To keep contaminating gases away from the surface of the weld, two common welding techniques are applicable. Chamber welding is carried out in a welding cabinet, filled with argon gas. The cabinet is fitted with a vacuum capable of evacuation of 2um Hg before filling with argon. Observation and glove ports must be situated to allow maximum flexibility.

Open air-welding techniques are restricted to manual welding, as automatic or semi-automatic welding techniques, (although often superior in weld quality and reduced weld time) have severe limitations in design flexibility and are more appropriate for production work.

Welding procedures

Welding procedures are much the same as when welding materials like stainless steel. What is of importance and particular to titanium is the need to continually feed the weld pool with argon gas to avoid oxidation and weld contamination.

The upper surface of the weld is protected by argon gas supplied via the welding torch. The flow of shielding gas is determined by the size and shape of the nozzle and the distance of the nozzle from the work piece.

Although standard ceramic nozzles can be used successfully, the extent of argon coverage is not always adequate. Heat-resistant glass shrouds give excellent visibility, while annular shields with wire-gauze baffles give improved laminar flow of shielding gas and permit the electrode to protrude further. However, this does not always provide adequate argon coverage, as weld speeds can leave welds unprotected from the argon gas flowing from the torch and susceptible to contamination.
By fitting elongated purging shrouds (simply fabricated and attached to the torch), long trailing shields are employed and supply the necessary argon onto the weld surface until the weld is no longer prone to contamination. The trailing shields are fitted with a fine mesh baffle to improve laminar flow, as well as a separate gas line.

As argon is heavier than air, improved shielding can be achieved by forming ‘troughs’ made from aluminium flashing or copper foil. These are simply fixed to either side of the welding seam by adhesive tape. This reduces the risk of entrainment of air in the argon flow from the torch. As well as trapping the argon (particularly important when welding acute angles), the troughs protect the weld from unexpected draughts of air that may cause turbulence. Use of such baffles is essential for corner or edge welds where geometry makes shielding difficult.

Protection to the underside of the weld is equally important. Although some success can be gained by clamping backing bars and thereby restricting the access of oxygen to the weld, this may not always be successful. Therefore it is preferable to also feed argon to the underside of the weld. The most successful and flexible method is by means of a small diameter copper tube suitably drilled with small 1.2 mm diameter holes that purge gas onto the weld joint.

The tube is attached and held in position by aluminium or copper foil, forming a reservoir to trap the argon. The foil is sealed by taping it to the article being welded at a sufficient distance to avoid it heating up and giving off contaminating fumes.

Correct shielding of upper and lower surfaces, welding currents, speeds and gas flows all contribute to satisfactory fusion welds in titanium. Titanium welds should have bright surfaces – a straw colour indicates slight contamination but is unlikely to affect mechanical properties. Dark-blue films are evidence of more serious contamination and indicate urgent revision of welding procedures.

As a result of the research, development and adaptation of open-air TIG welding using shrouds and troughs to protect welds from atmospheric gases, it has become evident that the supply of inert shielding gases such as argon produces an extremely clean welding process that produces welds which are strong and corrosion-resistant, and this type of welding is particularly well suited in manufacturing objects in the smaller studio practice.

Other advantages are:

- the high concentrated arc permits pinpoint control, allowing a narrow affected heat zone (causing less distortion) and producing precision welds

- argon gas does not burn or react with the welding material or other gases, possesses no odour and is transparent; virtually no fumes are produced during the welding process, making TIG welding safe compared to other welding methods
- there is no requirement for flux with this process, hence no cleaning of welding slag

- the use of the correct welding or filler rod (parent metal can even be used) provides a join similar to parent metal, hence joins can be undetected.

Significant technological advancements have occurred over the last decade to assist smaller studio production utilising specific welding processes and equipment. PUK (pulse arc welding) and laser welding equipment is now available specifically designed for the manufacture of jewellery. While early examples of this equipment were expensive and orientated towards particular tasks, with the production of a high volume in mind, recent equipment is more flexible and straightforward in its operation as well as affordable.

These developments in welding processes have provided a more accessible means of joining metals that have been inherently difficult to join by more traditional methods including silver soldering. Metals like mild steel and stainless steel can now be fabricated in increasingly complex forms with relative ease. The welding of these metals also assists in the development of other techniques like enamelling, where the heat required for the firing on the enamel surface does not deteriorate the welded join.

As discussed in Section 5.4.2, utilising PUK and laser welding technology has enabled me to produce finer welds, use thinner gauge material and allowed me to explore the use of niobium in the fabrication of my work. These discoveries have had a significant impact on the structural and aesthetic outcomes of this research.
Appendix B: Curriculum vitae

Mark Edgoose, 30 May 2014

Education

2005– PhD by research, RMIT University, Melbourne [pending successful completion].

1997 Masters by Research, RMIT University, Melbourne.

1998 Post Graduate Diploma of Gold and Silversmithing, RMIT University, Melbourne.

1984 Diploma of Gold and Silversmithing, RMIT University, Melbourne.

Solo exhibitions

2014 Triggers: Craft Object in Space and Time, Project Space, RMIT School of Art Gallery, Melbourne, AUS.

2001 Circle/Rail, Object Galleries, Sydney.


1997 Untitled, RMIT University, Masters Exhibition.


Selected group exhibitions

2013 Melbourne Now, NGV International, Melbourne, AUS.


2012–13 Containment: Cicely & Colin Rigg Contemporary Design Award 2012, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, AUS.

2013 Contemporary Australian Silver and Metalwork Award 2013, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo, AUS.

2012 Unexpected Pleasures, NGV International, Melbourne AUS.

2012 Bilk on Tour, Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne, Sydney, AUS.

2011 Melbourne Boys, Bilk Gallery, Canberra, AUS.

2011 Contemporary Australian Silver and Metalwork Award 2011, Buda, Castlemaine, The Arts Centre, Melbourne, AUS.
2011  *Pieces of Fate*, Pieces of Eight Gallery, Melbourne, AUS.
2010  *Teawares*, Gallery 1, Jam Factory, Adelaide, AUS.
2010  *Treasure room – Australia*, Galerie Handwerk, Munich, DEU.
2010  *by example*, Museum of Arts & Crafts, Itami, JP.
2009  *Melbourne Hollow ware*, Galerie Marzee, NLD, RMIT University School of Art Gallery, Melbourne, AUS.
2008  *Wonderlust*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, AUS.
2008  *it's got legs*, RMIT University School of Art Gallery, Melbourne, AUS.
2007  *Australian Vessels*, Galerie Ra, Amsterdam, NLD.
2007  *New Under the Sun*, Australian Contemporary Design in Jewish Ceremony III, touring exhibition, AUS.
2007  *Beyond Metal*, touring exhibition, India, Asia, Perth, & Hamilton, AUS.
2006  *it's got legs*, RMIT University School of Art Gallery, Melbourne, AUS.
2005  *Contemporary Australian Silver and Metalwork Award 2005*, Buda, Castlemaine, touring exhibition, Hamilton, Ballarat, Melbourne, AUS.
2004  *Heresy*, Craft Victoria, Melbourne, AUS.
2004  *3 way*, Project Space/Spare Room, RMIT School of Art Gallery, Melbourne, AUS.
2003  *Melbourne International Mokume Gane Symposium and Exhibition*, RMIT University, Melbourne, AUS.
2002  *Material Culture*, Contemporary Australian Craft, NGA, Canberra, AUS.
2001  *Untitled*, Makers Mark Gallery, Sydney, AUS.
2000  *St.Etienne Design Biennale*, St Etienne, FRA.

**Residencies**

1997  Deacons Graham & James / Arts 21 Award, residency, Tokyo, JPN.
Awards

1996  *Deacons Graham & James / Arts 21 Award*, Melbourne, AUS.

1995  *National Craft Award*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, AUS.

1994  *Ernest Levy Commemorative Silver Award*, Buda, Castlemaine, AUS.

Grants

2008  Arts Victoria International Grant, AUS.

2006  Artists Development Project Grant, Visual Arts/Craft Board, Australia Council, *prototypes of wall mounted rails and accessories*, AUS.

2001  Artists Development Project Grant, Visual Arts/Craft Board, Australia Council for exhibition, Object Gallery, Sydney, AUS.

2000  Travel grant, Sydney University. Travel to France for Design Biennale, Saint-Étienne, FRA.


1997  Travel grant, Monash University. Tokyo, JPN

Acquisitions

Jewish Museum of Australia, Melbourne, AUS.

Art Gallery of Queensland, Brisbane, AUS.

Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney, AUS.

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, AUS.

Eltham Shire Art Collection, Eltham, AUS.

State Craft collection of Victoria (with assistance from the Coles-Myer Fund), Melbourne, AUS.

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, AUS.

Hamilton Art Gallery, Hamilton, AUS.

Amcor Corporation, Melbourne, AUS.

Deacons Graham & James, Melbourne, AUS.

Commissions

2003  Trinity Grammar School Centenary Sculpture, Melbourne, AUS.

2001–02  Silver Commission, Towards the Future, Government House, NSW Historic Houses Trust, Sydney, AUS.

2001  Amrad Post Doctoral Awards, Melbourne, AUS.
Recent lectures
2012  *Craft as a Career* moderator, Craft Victoria, NGV, Melbourne, AUS.
2008  *New Under the Sun – Australian Contemporary Design in Jewish Ceremony*, Jewish Museum, Melbourne, AUS.

Relevant experience
2012– Coordinator B.FA, Object based Practice, Gold and Silversmithing and Ceramics, RMIT University, Melbourne, AUS.
2008–12 Coordinator undergraduate studies, B.FA, Gold and Silversmithing, RMIT University, Melbourne, AUS.
1999–01 Coordinator, Object, Art and Design, Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney, Sydney, AUS.
1990–97 Coordinator, Metal Studies (Jewellery and Silversmithing), Peninsula School of Art, Monash University, Melbourne, AUS.
### Appendix C: List of publications

#### Catalogues of exhibitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Title and Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>NEEDHAM, C.</td>
<td><em>Contemporary Australian Silver and Metalwork Award 2013</em>, Bendigo, Bendigo Art Gallery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>BAINES, R.</td>
<td><em>Melbourne Hollow Ware: More Snakes Than You Can Poke a Stick At!</em>, Melbourne, School of Art, RMIT University Gold and Silversmithing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Written paper, refereed

Publications


Appendix D: Installation images

Figure 31. *Rail as vessel*, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2012

Figure 32. *Rail as vessel*, titanium, niobium, Mark Edgoose, 2012

Figure 33. *Domestic rail*, titanium, niobium, steel, nylon, Mark Edgoose, 2014

Figure 34. *Domestic rail*, titanium, niobium, steel, nylon, Mark Edgoose, 2014