Identifying the value of the local through site-specific contemporary art projects in New Zealand

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Abstract

This research identifies a number of tensions arising from historic and contemporary experiences of living in New Zealand. It engages with creative methodologies that fall within contemporary site-specific and socially engaged fields of artistic practice to investigate these tensions.

Through writing and participating in three art projects set in Dunedin, New Zealand as case studies, this thesis reflects on ways in which these projects contribute to understandings of a particular experience of the local. Each case has involved specific sites, narratives and mediated experiences. Through undertaking practice-based and practice-led research the thesis argues that these art practices are able to contribute to our understanding of the local through the connections they make between lands, landscapes, sociality and techno-sociality.

The research is predicated on an acceptance of what I have chosen to term a methodological ‘andness’: a neologism coined to highlight the connectivity between different types of information systems as they operate ecologically and in co-location with landscapes, local cultures, the internet and mobile communication. Throughout the project, metaphors pertaining to land and sea and shore are used to identify and reflect andness as it is experienced when one lives on an unstable island where boundaries are porous and movement between systems is both inevitable and fecund.
Declaration of authorship

I declare that this work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.
Table of contents

Abstract 3
Declaration of authorship 5
List of figures 11
Acknowledgements 15

Chapter 1  Introduction
  Introduction 16
  Map of Otago Harbour 23

Chapter 2  The New Zealand and Pacific context 24
  2.1  A background to this land 25
  2.2  Land and people 28
      2.2.1  Bicultural landscapes 29
      2.2.2  Dual histories: migration and contradiction 30
      2.2.3  European arrivals 31
      2.2.4  The Treaty of Waitangi 32
  2.3  Landscapes, art practices and difference 34
      2.3.1  Landscape traditions in European art 34
      2.3.2  As far as the eye can see 37
      2.3.3  Irresolvable contradictions 40
  2.4  Distance and nearness 45
      2.4.1  Horizons that we carry about 45
      2.4.2  The nation state 46
      2.4.3  Antipodes as a trope of distance 49
      2.4.4  Alternatives to distance 50
  2.5  Media, mobility and technosociality 53
      2.5.1  Spatiality, media and co-presence 53
      2.5.2  Spatiality and sociality 56
      2.5.3  Technosociality 64
  2.6  Requiring andness 68
  2.7  Return to our shaky islands 70
      2.7.1  Research proposition 71
Chapter 3  
Theoretical fields:  
Frameworks and strategies for andness  
3.1 Technologies of looking  
3.1.1 The beach  
3.1.2 Looking at landscapes  
3.1.3 Political locations  
3.1.4 The beach as metaphor  
3.2 Location, co-location and heterotopia  
3.2.1 Coastal wetlands  
3.2.2 Heterotopia, urban contexts and practices  
3.2.3 Contemporary heterotopia, urban spaces  
3.2.4 Coastal wetlands as heterotopia  
3.3 Networks, ecologies and assemblages  
3.3.1 Estuaries  
3.3.2 Relations, shared values  
3.3.3 Networks  
3.3.4 Media ecologies  
3.3.5 Assemblages  
3.3.6 The Toitū stream as a useful meeting point  
3.4 Looking forward, looking back  
3.4.1 The research context  
3.4.2 Frameworks and practices  

Chapter 4  
Fields of practice, proposing the local  
4.1 Site-specific art  
4.1.1 From the gallery into public space  
4.1.2 An expansive relationship to site  
4.1.3 Intertextual and transitive experiences of site  
4.1.4 A shift from space to place  
4.1.5 Documentation, image and experience  
4.2 Socially engaged art practices  
4.2.1 Expanded audiences, dialogic practices  
4.2.2 Past practices, histories and connections  
4.2.3 Community and its conversations  
4.3 New media and locative media art practices  
4.3.1 New media art - histories and practices  
4.3.2 Locative media - abstract and grounded
4.4 Connecting themes, relevant theories and useful gaps 141
  4.4.1 Site 141
  4.4.2 Distance 142
  4.4.3 Engagement 142
  4.4.4 Useful gaps and additional questions, a summary 143

Chapter 5 Research Methods 144
  5.1 Research objectives 145
    5.1.1 Development of objectives 146
  5.2 Research design 146
    5.2.1 Collaborative, creative and expanded fieldwork 146
    5.2.2 Practice-based and practice-led conversations 147
    5.2.3 Identifying case studies 150
    5.2.4 Planning, collecting, documenting, reflecting 152
    5.2.5 Collaborative re-placing, participation and ethical considerations 153
  5.3 Situating myself 155
  5.4 The following case studies 157

Chapter 6 Case Study 1: One Day Sculpture Dunedin 158
  6.1 Background to the project 159
  6.2 Connections to research themes 160
  6.3 The project’s development 164
  6.4 The journey 165
  6.5 The site 167
  6.6 The artworks 169
  6.7 The island experience 173
  6.8 Analysis and discussion 176

Chapter 7 Case Study 2: Rachael Rakena’s Haka Peepshow 182
  7.1 Background to the project 183
  7.2 Connections to the research themes 185
  7.3 Rugby, haka and New Zealand identity 187
| 7.4 | The journey and my involvement | 191 |
| 7.5 | The project’s development | 192 |
| 7.6 | The artwork – project launch | 203 |
| 7.7 | The Dunedin mediated experience | 204 |
| 7.8 | Analysis and discussion | 207 |

**Chapter 8  Case Study 3: Awash**

| 8.1 | Background to the project | 216 |
| 8.2 | Connections to the research themes | 217 |
| 8.3 | Background to this practice | 219 |
| 8.4 | The artwork experience | 220 |
| 8.5 | Analysis and discussion | 223 |
| 8.6 | Social and relational art: more than meets the eye | 226 |
| 8.7 | Extending a community of practice | 230 |
| 8.8.1 | *The God Particle* | 230 |
| 8.8.2 | *The Central City Minigolf Challenge* | 232 |
| 8.8.3 | Common Ground | 236 |
| 8.8.4 | Deveron Arts | 237 |
| 8.8.5 | Sean Starowitz, *Byproduct: the laundromat* | 239 |
| 8.8.6 | A local dialect? | 241 |

**Chapter 9  Results and evaluation**

| 9.1 | Visualizing technologies | 244 |
| 9.2 | Art and technosocial engagement | 245 |
| 9.3 | Seeking andness | 247 |
| 9.4 | At the edge – drawn together | 248 |

**Bibliography**

**Glossary**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Visitors of One Day Sculpture Dunedin, Quarantine Island, Otago Harbour 2008 (photograph Mark Currie).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Tame Iti (performer) and Rachael Rakena (artist) at the filming of Haka Peepshow, 2011 (photograph Justin Spiers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Audience members using their cell phones to augment the performance of a wave, Awash, Port Chalmers 2012, (photograph Caroline McCaw).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Map of Otago Harbour showing the sites of the three case studies, (graphic by Martin Kean).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>A map of the ocean floor surrounding New Zealand shows a very large roughly triangular continent known as Zealandia. The protruding islands known as New Zealand form around one twentieth of the total of this mainly submerged landmass. Retrieved from GNS New Zealand government research institute website 4 August 2013 <a href="http://www.gns.cri.nz/Home/Learning/Science-Topics/Landforms/Ocean-Underworld/Creating-Zealandia">www.gns.cri.nz/Home/Learning/Science-Topics/Landforms/Ocean-Underworld/Creating-Zealandia</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Sea cadets row to Quarantine Island, Kamau Taurua where the forest meets the sea, (photograph Charlotte Parallel).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Rat eating birds eggs, (photograph C14255: copyright Nga Manu images). Retrieved from: <a href="http://www.ngamanu.co.nz">www.ngamanu.co.nz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Pastoral farming, (photograph courtesy of David J. Lowe), retrieved from <a href="http://www.sci.waikato.ac.nz">www.sci.waikato.ac.nz</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Railway Station and Law Courts are examples of Renaissance revival architecture in central Dunedin, (photograph Wikimedia Commons). Retrieved from <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunedin_Railway_Station">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunedin_Railway_Station</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>The cover of a recently published book that celebrates Otago landscapes through the art and writing of three New Zealanders: Grahame Sydney, Brian Turner and Owen Marshall. Timeless Land (photograph Longacre Press, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Screenshot from Tourism New Zealand’s homepage <a href="http://www.newzealand.com/int/">http://www.newzealand.com/int/</a>. Retrieved 30 September 2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>Kirsten Parkinson (née Kemp) E KORE E WAREWARE, thread, light. Exhibited at Kā Honoka – Kai Tahu Alumni Exhibition exhibition, Dunedin School of Art Gallery, September 10 – 26, 2013, (photograph courtesy of Simon Kaan).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16</td>
<td>John Pule, Tukulagi tukumuitae (Forever and Ever) (detail) 2005, oil on canvas Triptych: 199.9 x 199.9cm (each panel) Collection: Queensland Art Gallery. Represented by Karen Woodbury gallery, photograph retrieved from <a href="https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/learn/collection/pacific">https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/learn/collection/pacific</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17</td>
<td>Social media makes connections between spatial and socially separated contexts, (photograph Caroline McCaw).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 19  Headland, sand and surf at Big Beach, Aramoana, at the mouth of Otago Harbour, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 20  Map detail showing Aramoana, (graphic Martin Kean).

Figure 21  Surf, unstable intertidal activity, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 22  The horizon as seen from Big Beach, Aramoana (photograph Leyton Glen).

Figure 23  Children searching for treasures, Big Beach, Aramoana, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 24  Close up of shells, Big Beach, Aramoana, (photograph Leyton Glen).

Figure 25  My eyes are on the waves as they constantly threaten to relocate me, (photograph Leyton Glen).


Figure 27  Heterotopia in urban Dunedin, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 28  Co-located phone users at a cafe, (photograph Martin Kean).

Figure 29  Toitū Stream, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 30  The Speights well, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 31  A matrix of relations: the visual/representational is employed in assemblages with other processes, developed from Matthew Fuller’s Media Ecologies (graphic Caroline McCaw).


Figure 33  Heather and Ivan Morison (2006 I Lost Her Near Fantasy Island. Life Has Not Been the Same (photograph Wig Worland), retrieved from http://www.morison.info/ilosthernearfant.html

Figure 34  Heather and Ivan Morison (2006 I Lost Her Near Fantasy Island. Life Has Not Been the Same: (photograph Wig Worland), retrieved from http://www.morison.info/ilosthernearfant.html

Figure 35  The Roof is on Fire, 1994, Oakland, CA. Performance by Suzanne Lacy, Annice Jacoby, Chris Johnson, (photograph Nathan Bennet). Retrieved from https://theoaklandprojects.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/roof21.jpg

Figure 36  The Roof is on Fire, 1994, Oakland, CA. Performance by Suzanne Lacy, Annice Jacoby, and Chris Johnson, (photograph Maggie Silverman). Retrieved from https://theoaklandprojects.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/roof06.jpg


Figure 38  Sherrie Rabinowitz (1950-2013), and Kit Galloway’s (1977) Satellite Arts Project performing A Space With No Geographical Boundaries. (Both photographs retrieved from http://www.ecafe.com/museum/history/ksoverview2.html).

Figure 39  Quarantine Island, Kamau Taurua and the intertidal zone, midway between tides (photograph Charlotte Parallel).

Figure 40  Quarantine Island, Kamau Taurua, in Otago Harbour. (graphic Martin Kean).

Figure 41  The Cave Walker & Bromwich, (photograph by Charlotte Parallel).

Figure 42  Visitors engage in looking, drawing and discussion around the collected seaweed from this cove in Douglas Bagnall and Adam Hyde’s work Discovery. Pictured from Left: Leyton Glen, Sandra Muller, Beckford, Kim Pieters, Forbes Williams, Kerensa Stephens, Katrina Thomson, Heindrich Koch, Sally Ann McIntyre, Adam Levine, (photograph by Charlotte Parallel).
Figure 43  Journey to the Island, (photograph Charlotte Parallel).

Figure 44  Carmen Norgate (facing forward), project volunteer, as visitors explore the island (photograph Mark Currie).

Figure 45  Documentation from the One Day Sculpture website, (photograph Steve Rowe). Retrieved from http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Intertidal/Intertidal3507i_567wide.jpg?size=108166

Figure 46  Documentation from the One Day Sculpture website, (photograph Steve Rowe). Retrieved from http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Intertidal/Intertidal3481g_567wide.jpg?size=124776

Figure 47  Motoko Kikkawa and friends enjoy social engagement at the island’s cemetery, (photograph Mark Currie).

Figure 48  Visitor Sally Ann McIntyre took time for close for close inspection of seaweed samples (photograph Tim Bishop).

Figure 49  Technologies of looking: two photographs taken of the same boat showing a group of people returning from the island, (photograph by Charlotte Parallel).


Figure 51  Haka performer Tame Iti and 38 Pictures’ Director of Photography Jon Wilson checking light on set, (photograph Justin Spiers).

Figure 52  A Rexona brand deodorant bottle (image from Rexona website). Retrieved from agradecleaningsupplies.com.au

Figure 53  Filming of the haka. Performer Wetini Ngāitai-Metini talks with director and artist Rachael Rakena, (photograph Justin Spiers).

Figure 54  Filming of the haka. Performer Tame Iti wearing 3D glasses inspects footage on camera, (photograph Justin Spiers).

Figure 55  Still from Ko Uhia mai, showing members of the Black Ferns, New Zealand’s womens rugby team, performing for the sister exhibition to Haka Peepshow, (photograph by Justin Spiers, screenshot from www.hakapeepshow.co.nz).

Figure 56  Selwyn Parata performs Rūaumoko in the rain, (photograph by Justin Spiers).

Figure 57  Tame Iti performs a local haka from – and about – his home, the Ruatahuna valley, (photograph by Justin Spiers).

Figure 58  Wetini Mitai-Ngatai performs an original composition, a peruperu (haka using a weapon), (photograph by Justin Spiers).

Figure 59  Waiairiki Parata Taiapa (front) and Taikawa Tamati-Elliffe (rear) perform Tenei te Ruru in the snow, (photograph by Justin Spiers).

Figure 60  Teams of informal haka performers at the Haka Off following the official launch of Haka Peepshow, the Octagon, Dunedin 9 September 2011, (photograph Justin Spiers).

Figure 61  Teams of informal haka performers at the Haka Off following the official launch of Haka Peepshow, the Octagon, Dunedin 9 September 2011, (photograph Justin Spiers).

Figure 62  The final stand-off between two teams at the ‘Haka Off’ following the official launch of Haka Peepshow (pictured in the background) in the Octagon, Dunedin 9 September 2011, (photograph Justin Spiers).

Figures 63  Haka Peepshow attracting visitors, (photograph Justin Spiers).
Figure 64  *Haka Peepshow* attracting evening visitors, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 65 Bicultural negotiations: Ōtākou tribal leader Edward Ellison and Dunedin Mayor David Cull come face to face for the launch of Rachael Rakena's *Haka Peepshow*, The Octagon, Dunedin, 9 Sept 2011, (photograph Justin Spiers).

Figure 66 *Haka Peepshow* created a large scale spectacle in the city’s centre, while allowing for personal viewing experiences, provoking many lively and emotional discussions, (photograph Justin Spiers).

Figure 67 *Haka Peepshow* created a large scale spectacle in the city’s centre, while allowing for personal viewing experiences, provoking many lively and emotional discussions, (photograph Justin Spiers).

Figure 68 Participants gather for *Awash*, on the former shoreline, Albertson Avenue in Port Chalmers, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 69 Photograph of Port Chalmers and Mussel Bay, late 1870s, reproduced in (Church, I.) *Port Chalmers and Its People*, (photograph David De Maus, courtesy Port Chalmers Maritime Museum, De Maus Collection).

Figure 70 *Awash*, Audience gather to perform the high tide, crossing Albertson Avenue ie in Port Chalmers, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 71 *Awash*, Audience perform the tide together, listening to a sound track on their cell phones, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 72 *Awash*, While crossing the road performers became successively asynchronous, mimicking the effects that wind may have on water, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 73 *Awash*, A child peeks from behind a curtain in a nearby house, (photograph Caroline McCaw).

Figure 74 *The God Particle*, Armstrong Vaughan and Katrina Thomson, July 7 2012, as part of *Waterlines*, Back Beach, Port Chalmers, (photograph by Alan Halstead).

Figure 75 *The God Particle*, Armstrong Vaughan and Katrina Thomson, July 7 2012, as part of *Waterlines*, Back Beach, Port Chalmers, (photograph by Alan Halstead).

Figure 76 *The Central City Mini-Golf Challenge event* 4/5/13. The temporary golf course was designed to encourage players to walk or cycle around the inner the city in its transitional form. Putters and balls were available at each hole. In return for a small entry fee on the day entrants received a scorecard and potential spot prizes. The holes will remain in place for as long as landowners are happy for Gap Filler to use their sites, and can be holes used by anyone at any time, (Photograph retrieved from http://www.gapfiller.org.nz/gap-golf/challenge, 14 January 2014).


Figure 78 From *The Hielan’ Ways* series, retrieved from the Deveron Arts website  http://www.deveron-arts.com/alec-finlay/ accessed 16 August 2014.

Figure 79 Scenes from an event in Starowitz’s 2014 project *Byproduct: The Laundromat*, This event shows Local Pig & Tallgrass Brewing Company conducting a cooking demonstration at the Walnut Place Laundromat, one of the many workshops produced for the project in Kansas City, documented by artist Sean M. Starowitz on his project blog, “The Laundromat” (Matt Kleinmann Photography). Image retrieved http://rocketgrants.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/laundromat-local-pig-40.jpg April 2013

Figure 80 Scenes from an event in Starowitz’s 2014 project *Byproduct: The Laundromat*, This event shows Local Pig & Tallgrass Brewing Company conducting a cooking demonstration at the Walnut Place Laundromat, one of the many workshops produced for the project in Kansas City, documented by artist Sean M. Starowitz on his project blog, “The Laundromat” (Matt Kleinmann Photography). Image retrieved http://rocketgrants.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/laundromat-local-pig-40.jpg April 2013
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Chapter 1.

Introduction

My research project is situated in New Zealand: islands that have geographic, social, cultural, and political significance for the kinds of thinking and practices that the research employs. My own art practice may be broadly defined within the bounds of site-specific and socially engaged art. This research will consider the implications for these practices when they employ the internet, new media and mobile communication. Through three projects the research creates a frame and focus for gaining a better understanding of what ‘the local’ means.

This research identifies a number of tensions.

**Seismic islands:** The geography of the islands themselves, and their position in the South Pacific, is the site of the first research tension. Living in New Zealand, we are continually affected by ongoing pressures and movement of the earth’s tectonic plates, as well as global oceanic and weather patterns. We experience this tension of the land through seismic and volcanic activity, through weather events, and through the changes that can be experienced at our shifting shorelines. In this tension ‘andness’ can be recognized and experienced corporeally in New Zealand through tangible flow between land, water and air-based systems.

**Bicultural landscapes:** A second tension is identified in the landscapes of New Zealand. In these complex personal, cultural and political perceptions, experiences and values surrounding the land are found in the bicultural histories of arrival and ongoing negotiations between the two main cultural groups in New Zealand: indigenous Māori and European settlers. One way that we experience this tension is through representational landscape art
practices. Picturing land as landscape in New Zealand tended to reproduce stable and static images embodying dominant narratives, reflecting to a large extent the concerns of 19th-Century Britain, which have for the most part tended to be universalizing and not particularly engaged with the local. This representation is at odds with Māori perceptions of landscapes, which can be described as profoundly social. A successful understanding of the complexities of living in bicultural New Zealand requires the embrace of andness, and an acceptance of more than one way of understanding the notion of ‘land’. Alternative creative practices and relationships to land are considered as relevant to this tension.

Along with these tensions additional realities and tropes relevant to New Zealand are considered such as the themes of distance, the antipodes and the nation state.

**Technosocial situations:** A third tension can be found in the contemporary, heterotopic spaces produced when we engage in forms of online and mobile communication. Assemblages are formed when local and global communication connect in ways which both emphasize and disregard local experiences and traditional, regional values. Mitsuko Ito and Daisuke Okabe’s (2005) definition of “technosocial” is relevant here, as it makes room for technologies to both destabilize and participate in local social orders.

Each tension proposes a type of andness that makes room for more than one form of experience, or understanding. This research seeks to identify andness within situated and participatory art practices. It draws upon the constantly shifting intertidal activity at the shores to provide a productive metaphor for andness.

This research considers how others from a range of disciplines have theorized strategies for thinking through different forms of inclusivity, to help define andness. Three key strategies are examined as potentially able to help with the task of engaging politically with the local.
Three key strategies are examined to assist with the task of engaging politically with the local.

The first strategy will consider the role of visual interpretation to produce meaning, and will examine both the process of simply ‘looking’ as well as the use of technologies other than those of our own eyes. I draw on feminist writers Donna Haraway (1988) and Elspeth Probyn (1990) to reconsider relationships between looking, embodied practices, and local knowledge in contemporary New Zealand conditions. There is a gap identified between practices and traditions of ‘seeing here’ and ‘being here’. Haraway suggests that we engage in a kind of conversation with things (in our case people, places, lands) as a way of bridging this gap. Probyn redefines ‘local’ terminology in order to separate political strategies of knowing from socially engaged ones.

The second strategy is identified through the employment of explicitly spatial metaphors to define different types of adjacent political arrangements. Michel Foucault’s (1967) model of heterotopia was first used to define the arrangement of adjacent spaces, in urban contexts. Foucault identified colonization as one form of heterotopia, and used the ship as an ultimate example of a kind of container of values moving between places. More recently heterotopia has been used by Mark Poster (2006) to describe our layered experiences of both consuming media (such as television, and the internet) and also our engagement with mobile communication.

The third strategy is identified through considering mobility and distance, and the effects mobility has had on the world and its people. Networks, ecologies and assemblages are each identified, drawing upon a variety of traditions generally outside of art. Bruno Latour’s (1998) model of Actor Network Theory, like Haraway’s ‘conversations’, draws together people, places and things so that dominant narratives become destabilized. Often understood as relational tactics, these also align to theories of ecologies (Félix Guttari (2000), Matthew Fuller (2005), Nigel Clark (2011)) that incorporate material and non-material things that necessarily affect each other and do so in unpredictable ways.
The research considers fields of art practice that avoid representational approaches, and that critique universalizing practices. Emphasis is placed on art experiences that occur outside of a gallery context, involve audiences in active participatory ways, incorporate sociality and conversation and make room for diverse forms of engagement.

I propose that these site-specific and socially engaged art practices as they manifest in three case studies offer ways of both problematizing and socializing the local.

The art practices exemplify the strategies identified and contribute to an envisioning of ourselves as situated in late colonial technosociality.

Site-specific art practices emerge from both a criticality of the gallery as a privileged site, and from concerns with the social and natural world as potential (and more relevant) loci for art to communicate from, and participate within. Socially engaged art practices explicitly seek a relationship with art audiences as active participants with the artwork, and sometimes the site of the art practice itself. New media arts practices are also identified as sharing some of the same values and histories with site-specific and socially engaged art. A connection is made between art practices and technosocial practices.

Together, these theories and practices lead to the following research question:

How are site-specific and socially engaged art practices, in the context of contemporary New Zealand, able to contribute to our understanding of the local through the connections they make between lands, landscapes, sociality and technosociality?
Three case studies are considered in terms of practice-based and practice-led research.

1. One Day Sculpture Dunedin (2008) In this project I took part as a co-curator within a national series that considered site-specific sculptural practices through a temporal framework. In this case study, four artists with varying levels of knowledge of Dunedin were invited to collaborate using a variety of internet platforms. Our curatorial focus was to consciously investigate and use the internet as a site of research about place for the formation of site-specific art through collaborative processes. Distance, storytelling and engagement became key concerns for this project.

The artists’ inability to work at a distance, and the subsequent development and presentation of their work in socially engaged contexts, becomes the focus of this case study. Set on an island in Dunedin’s Otago harbour, the journey became a necessary connection for the artists and audience alike. The intertidal metaphor is first considered in this event, both as site and trope. Ideas of liminality immanent in this shifting zone (sometimes land and sometimes sea) led me to consider the intertidal zone as a metaphor for andness in the larger research project.

Figure 1: Visitors of One Day Sculpture Dunedin, Quarantine Island, Otago Harbour 2008, (photograph Mark Currie).
2. **Haka Peepshow (2011)** This project considers the production and reception of a public artwork produced by contemporary Māori artist Rachael Rakena for the event of the Rugby World Cup hosted in New Zealand in 2011. My role in this work was as a project manager and producer. Issues of dominant mass media narratives and local cultural specificity collided in the story of this work, highlighting New Zealand’s biculturalism as provisional, both historically and through continuing narrative forms. The development of four 3D digital videos depicting five Māori performers and their public exhibition in Dunedin through a large-scale ‘peepshow’ booth created local, national and international controversy. In this work the intertidal metaphor relates to cultural dynamics, overlapping and yet distinct.

![Figure 2: Tame Iti (performer) and Rachael Rakena (artist) at the filming of Haka Peepshow, 2011 (photograph Justin Spiers).](image)
3. Awash (2012) The third case study was a response to the themes of this research, developed as an artist-coordinator for a performance art festival in Port Chalmers, a small port village on the edge of Otago harbour. Personal cell phones augmented a short walking experience, and drew attention to the former shoreline in this now urban environment. Layers of history aligned with a multi-dimensional, socially engaged experience, in a brief performance in which the participatory audience and their portable media combined with the land. The intertidal metaphor in this work drew together time and place, and was literally performed in situ.

![Figure 3: Audience members using their cell phones to augment the performance of a wave, Awash, Port Chalmers 2012, (photograph Caroline McCaw).](image)

In each case study the research tensions identified are deployed in site-specific and socially engaged art forms. Each project included local and specific storytelling, and used digital, networked and mobile communication to assist with this storytelling. In each case a critique of looking, an engagement with heterotopic experiences and a proposal for relational and ecological strategies were employed. The results are considered, and the potential contribution of this research to our understanding of land, landscapes and technosociality in the context of contemporary bicultural New Zealand is reviewed. The relevance of andness and the appropriateness of the intertidal metaphor as a way of understanding this proposition are considered in the assessment of each of the case studies.
Based on the South Island’s south-eastern coast, the Dunedin urban area surrounds the head of the Otago Harbour. The harbour and hills around Dunedin are remnants of an extinct volcano. (wikipedia ‘Dunedin’ entry, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunedin, August 22, 2015)

There is a strong historic connection between Dunedin and Edinburgh. Dunedin is often referred to as the Edinburgh of the South, and the connections are both visible and practiced.

Figure 4: Map of Otago Harbour showing the sites of the three case studies (Graphic by Martin Kean).
Chapter 2.

The New Zealand and Pacific context

In Section 2.1 I provide background on New Zealand, its land and landscapes.

Section 2.2 outlines New Zealand’s history of migration and peoples. Culturally imported knowledge about these lands and their histories continue to affect our experiences of this place. Political and cultural positions are considered, and connections are made with both historical and continuing bicultural negotiations. These knowledges persist both through material experiences and through social connection. Like waves that crash on our beach, they are formed in – and create links with – other places and other times in history. The colonial project can be seen as a continued current of this sort, and continues to frame my contemporary experience of living here in late colonial times.

Stories of arrival continue to inform contemporary cultural experience. On the one hand, dual histories of migration and arrival allow us to develop an understanding of how we came to belong in New Zealand. On the other hand, continuing global movements of information and people disrupt these understandings and histories. The problematic contradictions of two worldviews are considered in Section 2.3 Ways in which these tensions are revealed through historic and contemporary art practices are used to illustrate these differences, and demonstrate how andness is necessary, pervasive and disruptive.

Section 2.4 considers other tropes of distance that persist in New Zealand, as well as alternative ways of considering these tenacious themes.

Section 2.5 considers the added complexity of living in New Zealand in an age of high-speed travel, hypermedia and mobile communication. ‘Technosociality’ is considered as a useful neologism, that may contribute to a contemporary understanding of the research tensions.

In Section 2.6 a need for methodological andness is identified and positioned.
2.1 A background to this land

I live in Dunedin, a small city located in the South Island of New Zealand, a landmass also known by Māori as Te Wai Pounamu. There are three main islands that form this nation state (and hundreds of outlying islands). Located in the south of the Pacific Ocean, situated some 2250 kilometers east of Australia, our nearest neighbour, the two countries have very different geographic (and cultural) histories and landforms. Dunedin is situated 46° south of the equator and 9° west of the International Date Line.

The earliest record of New Zealand is probably found in Chinese and Roman historic documents around 186 AD, when the massive volcanic eruption that formed New Zealand’s largest lake (Taupō) left its visual imprint on their horizons (King, 2003). Dunedin’s harbour and hills were also formed through volcanic activity.

![Figure 5: A map of the ocean floor surrounding New Zealand shows a very large roughly triangular continent known as Zealandia. The protruding islands known as New Zealand form around one twentieth of the total of this mainly submerged landmass. Retrieved from GNS New Zealand government research institute website 4 August 2013.](image-url)
New Zealand’s geography is unique: 93% of it is submerged, with huge areas of relatively shallow seas. Described as “dramatic and dynamic,” New Zealand’s sea floor is studded with active volcanoes, and is constantly moving (Keith Lewis, Scott D. Nodder and Lionel Carter, www.teara.govt.nz/en/sea-floor-geology/1). Indeed New Zealand’s separation from the ancient supercontinent Gondwana 50 to 100 million years ago saw organisms develop and endure in isolation, evolving into rare and diverse forms (Fleming 1977).

Our shores are fertile sites for both research and practice, good places to contest understandings of location and the local.

The islands of New Zealand continue to sustain many dynamic wetland ecologies, combining the attributes of both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Wetlands, shores and coastlines in many and various forms “...inhabit a space between the disciplines of terrestrial and aquatic ecology. Consequently, their unique properties are not adequately addressed by present ecological paradigms” (William J. Mitsch, www.britannica.com). In this thesis I consider these shores as fertile sites for both research and practice, and good places to contest understandings of location and the local.

Figure 6: Sea cadets row to Kamau Taurua or Quarantine Island, where the forest meets the sea, (photograph Charlotte Parallel).

The landmass of New Zealand remains unstable, prone to both seismic and volcanic activity. Seismic fault lines lace the two larger islands, rooted in the juncture of the Pacific and Indo-Australian tectonic plates (Clark 2011). Earthquakes challenge and reshape the land and the people living on it, with major earthquakes damaging much of the nearby city of Christchurch (New Zealand’s second largest city) during the writing of this document. From the field of cultural studies, Nigel Clark writes of New Zealand’s shaky islands as providing a useful context for movement as well as placement (Clark 2004). For Clark the metaphor of the earthquake is a handy way of thinking about the collision of cultures, both natural and social, that shape and reshape New Zealand. The presence of earthquakes – and particularly for those who have experienced them – literally brings the land into our daily spaces and physical experiences.
Unlike Australia, New Zealand was uninhabited by any mammals other than a small native bat until relatively recently. Polynesian vessels are understood to have arrived in these islands around 2000 years ago, with settlement by Māori beginning in earnest around 800 years ago (King, 2003). Arriving with a few foods as well as dogs, rats and pigs, they introduced and diversified the islands’ flora and fauna.

Abel Tasman was the earliest European to have seen (and named) New Zealand in 1642, and Captain James Cook the first European to map the main islands, in the late 18th Century. Cook's ships also delivered Norwegian rats to every bay he stopped at. From the 1790s whalers and traders began to visit. European settlers began to arrive in 1815, some 200 years ago. Two ships of settlers landed in Dunedin harbour in 1847, and by 1850 Dunedin was New Zealand’s first city.

As a result of the lack of mammalian predators prior to human settlement, plant and bird life had thrived. Early European settlers described the cacophony of bird calls and the appearance of the rich lowland ecosystem, the bush-clad hills, where the forest met the sea at the beach (Park 1995). However, since humans entered their ecosystem, many of the birds — often flightless ground nesters — did not manage to adapt at the speed at which their habitat was being changed.4 Towards half of New Zealand’s native birds have become extinct since humans and their domesticated and pest animals arrived. It was in the “...patchwork of swamps and forests blanketing the coastal plains...” (Clark 2004) that these birds mostly thrived, rich flat land that also appealed to early European pastoral farmers.


3. Along with a unique local population of birds, many migratory birds include New Zealand as a southern stopping point, and nest here over the northern winter, locating the islands in a network of avian relations. Here in Dunedin the Royal Albatross or Toroa nests on the Taiaroa Peninsula, at the mouth of Otago harbour. The world’s only mainland nesting site for these magnificent large sea birds has predictably been developed into a popular tourist destination.

4. Captain Cook first arrived in 1769, the first of three voyages. Rats were inadvertent voyagers that nevertheless dramatically affected local ecologies, feasting on flightless birds, lizards and their eggs.

New Zealand’s shaky isles provide “... a useful context for movement as well as placement” (Clark 2004).
2.2 Land and people

The landscapes of New Zealand are constituted by a mutual engagement between people and place in an evolving and iterative conversation.

The land itself undeniably exists as a dynamic physical set of relations, and our occupation of it has been both very brief and highly destructive in terms of its natural ecologies. On the other hand, landscapes represent a range of complex personal, social, cultural, ideological and political meanings, produced from the rules and expectations of societies (Cosgrove 1998, Schein 1997, Olwig 2002).

To understand the New Zealand context it is necessary to recognise the bicultural conditions of living here. This research next considers the diverse and at times contradictory meanings of lands as landscapes practiced by New Zealand’s two main cultural groups (Māori5 and Pākehā6,7, and the implications of this for artists. This section begins by defining both ‘landscapes’ and ‘biculturalism’, as key terms. Immersive, social and specific, this research identifies landscapes both within the tradition of painting and looking, and as the site where space, time and stories merge (Stephenson et al, 2010). These – at times contradictory – cultural discourses surrounding landscapes are first identified through histories of migration and tropes of nationhood, and later identified through conflicting ideas and experiences of landscapes as they are reconfigured through art, tourism and contemporary media.

5. “Tangata Māori” translates to mean "ordinary people".
6. At the time of Captain Cook’s visits Māori named the settlers Pākehā, now generally used to refer to New Zealanders of European descent. The name referred to the “soft and loud sounds of the language of Captain Cook and his sailors”. (www.Māori dictionary.co.nz) The word can also refer to other exotic plants and introduced species, but in this document is employed in its common usage.
7. Terms from the Māori language will be indicated through the use of italics. The first time they are used a translation will be included in brackets. A glossary of Māori terms used in this thesis is also included at the end of the document.

Landscapes are performed: constant and iterative practices (Butler 2002).8

8. Judith Butler suggests that landscapes are “… performed places only operate through constant and iterative practice” (Butler, quoted in Cresswell, 2002: 23).
2.2.1 Bicultural landscapes

**BICULTURAL:** The word ‘bicultural’ in New Zealand connotes an enculturation process that is two-way (Darder 1991). In New Zealand it relates specifically to Māori and Pākehā cultures. It has been said that in early settler times biculturalism was practiced because “both peoples were able to operate within their own cultures” and that monoculturalism followed as settler culture dominated national interests (www.teara.govt.nz/en/biculturalism). Renewal of bicultural values on a national scale began in earnest in the 1980s, as government agencies began to recognise the languages, cultures and traditions of both Pākehā and Māori in both documents and practices. This has been built upon by a number of sectors and institutions, such as social policy and education. Biculturalism has been criticised by some for not going far enough (restricting more extensive forms of Māori self-determination), while others argue that New Zealand is now a multi-cultural society (www.teara.govt.nz/en/biculturalism). In New Zealand biculturalism has emerged as a viable – though frequently contested – ideology that participates with national identity (Sibley & Liu 2004). Bicultural values underpin the context of this research.

**LANDSCAPE:** The word ‘landscape’, first recorded in 1598 originated in the Dutch language. The Dutch word ‘landschap’ had been used to define a ‘region’ or ‘tract of cultivated land’. It was applied to Dutch painting during the seventeenth Century when Dutch artists were pioneering the landscape genre, and was quite quickly adopted into the English language with its artistic sense intact and used to denote “... a picture of natural (esp. inland) scenery” (Oxford Dictionary 2007, Corner 1999, Casey 2002, WJT Mitchell 2002). Through this historical conjunction James Corner identifies that “Landscape and image are inseparable.” (Corner 1999, 153).

Contemporary geographers and multidisciplinary writers consider an expanded notion of landscape seeking to counter the ocular-centric tradition that tends to see lands as landscapes. Denis Cosgrove (1992) considered landscapes as a discursive field, and suggested that in order to understand a landscape we need to consider the textual context within which landscapes are produced and read. W.J.T. Mitchell argues that landscape should be considered as a verb, not a noun, and that we should ask “... not only what a landscape ‘is’, or ‘means’ but what it ‘does’, how it works as a cultural practice” (Mitchell 2004, 1). It is within these contemporary traditions that my expanded use of the term ‘landscape’ is to be read.
Historian Michael King describes the feats of early Pacific voyagers (as early as 5000 years ago), using stars as celestial pointers for oceanic navigation along with winds, clouds, migratory bird flight patterns, ocean currents and weather systems, as prodigious and “…analogous in daring and accomplishment to the later exploration of space.” (King 2003, 31).

Evidence of early migration to New Zealand indicates confident, extensive and widespread voyaging throughout the Pacific up until around the 14th or 15th century AD. Certainly up until this point in history New Zealand was a node in a network of islands for Pacific navigators and populations, particularly from East Polynesia. King identifies major migratory settlement in New Zealand, by ancestors of the people now collectively known as Māori, in the early 13th Century Māori waka (canoe) traditions, together with historical and archeological accounts, elucidate connections between specific places, resources and people around the islands of New Zealand.

Along with some foods and a common language, Māori brought cosmologies from Eastern Polynesia. Left to develop in isolation, the imported Polynesian culture became an indigenous one – te Ao Māori (the Māori worldview) – which connects personal identity to both ancestry and place. Particular concepts – emotional, spiritual and communal – deeply connect Māori to land. Land-based concepts such as tūrangawaewae (“a place to stand” where one has undisputed rights and governorship through ancestral delegation) and whenua (the word for both land and placenta) saw Māori develop ideological and ontological relationships unique to New Zealand (Greenland 1991, Smith 2010). This anthropomorphic connection with the land is practiced through continuing ancestral rights and relationships. Whakapapa (genealogies) and tribal cosmologies create a network of relations, through tribally relevant names and values, connected directly with particular natural features of the local landscape. Andness may be found in these connections.

By the 19th Century the term mana whenua was employed to describe the customary authority exercised by an iwi (tribe) or hapu (sub-tribe) towards an area of land (Magallanes, 2011). Today the term indicates the general acceptance by most New Zealanders that Māori relationships to land are bound: deeply felt, continuous and involving spiritual guardianship properties.
2.2.3 European arrivals

Land, pastoralism and value

By the time of European settler arrival in the 18th century, the Māori population was thriving at around 100,000. These settlers brought with them very different ideologies and this is particularly evident in their different attitudes towards and experiences of land as landscapes.

Rob Steven writes of the predominant forces that forged settler society in New Zealand in the mid-19th century, noting that many of these forces still exert very distinctive influences on us today. He identifies the very different circumstances that surrounded the annexation of New Zealand in contrast to initial European settlement of Australia. Most settlers moving to New Zealand fell into the categories of either adventurers looking for opportunity, or very poor pastoral labourers seeking work. They sought new beginnings, and shaped these opportunities in terms of their own cultural familiarity, despite the unfamiliar lands and people they were amongst. In this sense andness might be identified in these settlers’ desire to find or make what is already known, and to form resemblance in the face of difference.

High quality land in a climate that allows year-round pasture growth quickly became identified as the easiest way to facilitate the development of viable trade, raising sheep for wool and meat, and later cattle and dairy. Even today, profitable pastoralism remains at the core of the New Zealand economy. European settlers’ need for land, and the negotiation and acquisition of land from Māori – in many cases through unscrupulous means – are well documented.

In comparison to Māori values European settlers valued land as real estate in which private enterprise could take place. European settlers’ need for land was underpinned by concepts of private property, employing an economic system for personal gain. This was clearly contradictory to the perception and value of land by Māori, and this contradiction lies at the heart of much historic and ongoing grievance. This is examined further in section 2.3.2.

By the late 1840s and early 1850s settlers began to arrive in the South Island in large numbers, taking up big tracts of land mainly for the production of wool. Towards the end of the century a second influx of immigrants arrived after the discovery of gold, and many of Dunedin’s highly decorative historical buildings were constructed from the profits of gold trading. Indeed, this period was probably apogee of Dunedin’s economic history, its one genuine ‘boom’.

Figure 8: Pastoral farming, (photograph courtesy of David J. Lowe www.sci.waikato.ac.nz)

Figure 9: Railway Station (left) and Law Courts (right) are examples of Renaissance revival architecture in central Dunedin, (photograph Wikimedia Commons).

9. Steven outlines a theory that supports the need for a system to support the settlers’ interests, found in better wages and working conditions for the ‘laboring man’. (Steven 1990, 25).
The Treaty of Waitangi, then and now

The Treaty of Waitangi is a broad statement of principles on which the British Crown and some Māori chiefs based a political contract to found a dominion and build a government in New Zealand. It can in the first instance be seen as an attempt by the British to form necessary relationships with Māori that would enable and nurture ongoing productive relationships. Based upon three articles the Treaty was signed in 1840 between Lieutenant-Governor William Hobson on behalf of the British monarch and originally around 40 Māori chiefs. The Treaty of Waitangi was eventually translated and signed by over 500 Māori chiefs.

Different understandings of what was being agreed to, have been the subject of debate since the Treaty’s signing, with many continuing and various forms of protest. Jo Smith (2008, 46) suggests that...

...the spirit of the Treaty has been repeatedly breached, from the overt practices of land alienation to the more covert modes of subordination enacted through the institutionalization of colonial, legal, juridical, economic, religious, educational and cultural modes of organisation. As such the power-sharing principle of biculturalism as set out in the Treaty of 1840 remains an incomplete project.

From the 1920s and in new ways from the 1970s, many Māori have called for the terms of the Treaty to be honoured. Protests, land occupation, and the development of the Tino Rangatiratanga movement, aligned with the Māori Renaissance and the Māori Protest Movement, have seen a strong revival of Māori cultural forms and many formal and informal examples of self-governance.

10. The translation of the Treaty from English to Māori generated tensions in shades of meaning. The website NZhistory.net (published by the New Zealand government’s Ministry of Culture and Heritage) outlines these: “Most significantly, the word ‘sovereignty’ was translated as ‘kāwanatanga’ (governance). Some Māori believed they were giving up government over their lands but retaining the right to manage their own affairs. The English version guaranteed ‘undisturbed possession’ of all their ‘properties’, but the Māori version guaranteed ‘tino rangatiratanga’ (full authority) over ‘taonga’ (treasures, which may be intangible). Māori understanding was at odds with the understanding of those negotiating the Treaty for the Crown, and as Māori society valued the spoken word, explanations given at the time were probably as important as the wording of the document.”


12. This includes alliance with other international Indigenous peoples and movements, where some Māori scholars and activists have made significant contributions.

32
It is common now to refer to the intention, spirit or principles of the Treaty. Despite the repeated – and ongoing – breaches identified by Smith and others, aspiration towards biculturalism (and honoring the “spirit of the Treaty”) persists in areas of New Zealand culture.\(^\text{14}\)\(^\text{15}\)

A local example of this spirit becoming embedded as strategy and in practice can be found at Otago Polytechnic, where I work, which has recently implemented a Māori Strategic Framework, the first of four key frameworks recognizing core values and commitments of the institution. The framework, developed in close partnership with local rūnaka (tribal councils) and a kaitohutohu (senior Māori advisor) actively seeks to include aspects of Māori language and culture in every course taught, and in all work environments (both physical and digital) at the institution. Not only does the framework aim to articulate local tribal as well as Māori aspirations for tertiary education, where Māori students are encouraged and supported to succeed, but also represents a contemporary example of a Treaty-based model established on the basis of partnership. Based on frameworks developed by Māori academics (Durie 1998, 2003, 2005, Tuhiri-Smith 1999, Bishop 1999) culturally safe strategies are employed to ensure Māori learners’ needs are at the centre of their experience, and not further colonized. This contemporary experience of negotiation and inclusion of Māori language, cultural practices and values, in all levels of formal education and in some areas of popular culture, forms the basis of much of my experience of New Zealand as a bicultural society. Further experiences as a researcher, educator\(^\text{16}\) and practicing artist and designer continue to develop my understanding of bicultural learning and practices. This constitutes a dynamic, consistently changing set of values, practices and processes.

To avoid maintaining processes of colonization, andness requires acknowledging historical and continuing cultural differences, inequalities, poly-vocality and irresolvable social contradictions.

\(^{13}\) An example of the success of these efforts can be seen in the revival of te reo Māori (Māori language) with the passing of the Māori Language Act in 1987 recognizing te reo Māori as an official language of New Zealand. Many forms of Māori culture such as waiata (songs) and kapa haka (dance) are practiced and celebrated at schools and festivals. There is more about the history and practice of haka in Chapter 7.

\(^{14}\) The Treaty and its continuing and iterative practices can also be considered a landscape if we employ the term as a discursive field (Cosgrove 1992), one filled with poly-vocality and irresolvable social contradictions (Barnes and Duncan 1992). Understanding New Zealand requires an empathetic awareness of bi-culturalism, as both historical necessity and as embedded in continuing dynamic relations.

\(^{15}\) The Treaty of Waitangi is not considered part of New Zealand domestic law, except where its principles are referred to in Acts of Parliament. The exclusive right to determine the meaning of the Treaty rests with the Waitangi Tribunal, a commission of inquiry created in 1975 to investigate alleged breaches of the Treaty by the Crown.  


\(^{16}\) See collaborative research project co-authored by McCaw, Wakes and Gardner 2012, ‘Māori Design and Tertiary Education’  
http://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/ako-hub/ako-aotearoa-southern-hub/resources/pages/maori-design
2.3 Landscapes, art practices and difference

This section returns to the relationship between landscapes and art, drawing upon examples from New Zealand. It then considers Danny Butt’s three aporias surrounding colonial and Indigenous landscapes, outlined in his 2008 essay “Local Knowledge and New Media”. Analysis of Butt’s three irresolvable contradictions will further draw on examples of New Zealand landscape images, both historic and contemporary.

2.3.1 Landscape traditions in European art

As described in Section 2.2, the first use of the term ‘landscape’ related to art and to framed scenes in Dutch paintings. Images continue to both shape and limit our experiences of the physical world, and images of our lands provide content for many visual representations of New Zealand. These images form one site where colonial values are often unconsciously reproduced, reflecting European traditions.

The Greek critic Longinus explored the idea of the ‘sublime’ in the 1st century AD. Later, the term became one of three (along with ‘the picturesque’, and ‘beautiful’) used to classify landscapes and its representations in European art in the 1700s. British philosopher Edmund Burke (1757) developed the characteristics of both the sublime and the beautiful, adding emotional responses to aesthetic ones. Recognising the sublime in art and in nature was to submit to the emotions of awe and terror, both compelling and destructive. In contrast beauty brought about emotions of love. “By beauty, I mean that quality, or those qualities in bodies, by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it” (Burke 1757, Section 1, part 3).

Towards the end of the 18th century, the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1790) added to Burke’s ideas on the sublime and the beautiful, describing a viewer’s emotional responses to the sublime as the result of infinite, dynamic, and fearsome qualities of nature, while a viewer projects beauty onto natural objects, creating universal feelings of satisfaction and delight.

Gilpin defined qualities of the picturesque, including texture, composition and, where possible, the inclusion of an architectural ruin.

The term ‘picturesque’ was added to ‘the sublime’ and ‘the beautiful’ by William Gilpin, an English artist and cleric, who travelled during his summer holidays. He used the term to describe “... that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture” (Gilpin 1768, x). Gilpin’s writing coincided with the emergence of a mobile middle class and British domestic tourism, and his works became ideal companions for this new activity.
Images of the landscapes created by early visitors to New Zealand can be seen in this context, bringing these new practices of seeing and representing land in art. Primarily aimed at enticing settlers to New Zealand, these early painting traditions have been preserved, and remain today as a popular form of narrative in contemporary national visual discourse, both internally and through external tourism branding (Bell, 2004). Above (figure 10) we can see an early depiction of the maunga (mountain) Taranaki, (renamed Mount Egmont by early European settlers). This painting was produced by Charles Heaphy (a draughtsman and surveyor) while he was in the service of the New Zealand Company in 1840. But Heaphy’s beautifully tidied up landscape is topographically inaccurate. His idealisation of the volcanic cone of the mountain and removal of foreground forest aimed to attract settlers to the New Zealand Company’s ‘beautiful’ New Plymouth settlement, and has been described as an early form of real estate spin. The symmetrical composition of the painting adds ‘picturesque’ qualities and the mountain’s peak has been extended to create the emotional values recognized in ‘the sublime’ landscape. This painting provides a good example of the importing of European values, reflecting both the economic and cultural values of England at this time through depicting New Zealand as beautiful, picturesque and sublime.

Figure 10: Charles Heaphy, *Mt Egmont from the southward*. [September 1840]. Ref: C-025-008. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.
New Zealand settler artists have long engaged in traditions of landscape painting, ranging from images of land developed for colonial documentation purposes, through to twentieth-century translations of international styles, with representations of the local environment considered in an international art context. For many artists of European descent painting in New Zealand in the twentieth century, the landscape became iconic – a way of recognizing something unique about New Zealand. Francis Pound identifies this tradition of New Zealand landscape painting in his book *The Invention of New Zealand* (Pound 2009). He quotes Allan Curnow in the *First Yearbook of the Arts in New Zealand* (Curnow 1945, 2):

> [S]trictly speaking New Zealand doesn’t exist yet, though some possible New Zealands glimmer in some poems and in some canvases. It remains to be created – should I say invented – by writers, musicians, artists, architects, publishers.

This trope of ‘invention’ was also adopted by renowned landscape painter Colin McCahon, whose idiomatic and abstract landscapes reflected the artistic movements of Europe and America, particularly Cubism and Abstract Expressionism (Pound 2009, xix). McCahon’s landscape paintings have been identified as part of those by a group of painters responsible for developing a national New Zealand art, beginning in earnest from 1930 (Brasch 1950, Tomory 1964). Pound describes this time “... as if (painting) onto a *tabula rasa*; and in so doing, creating themselves as New Zealand artists *ex nihilo* – out of nothing” (Pound 2009, 5). Closely related to the trope of invention, claims Pound, is that of ‘discovery’. By the 1940s he notes: “New Zealand landforms have hardened yet into further emblems of the real and the ‘raw’” (Pound 2009, 90). There is no doubt that in the art of New Zealand in the 20th century an urgency to self-define settler culture prevailed, and many artists turned to landscapes as a starting point towards articulating bigger cultural issues. The language associated with these efforts are colonial in character, as if starting with a blank page, rather than seeing the land as already lived in and already filled with stories and relationships. These traditions of landscape painting and its baggage of (again European) critique perpetuate a narrative, connecting New Zealand identity with a way of seeing land as landscapes that remains related to the arrival of European settlers, whether to explicitly reproduce European values or ‘invent’ and ‘discover’ a unique New Zealand identity.
However, as the curator of a recent exhibition of New Zealand landscape painting surmises: “In a contemporary age that is increasingly defined by multiculturalism, online search engines and artists working in new media, it is timely to consider whether the idea of a geographically distinct New Zealand art form is valid” (from the catalogue, Place Makers: Artists & Iconic Landscapes, Hocken Gallery, Dunedin, 17 August 2013 – 7 February 2014). My research considers this question in more depth in section 2.5.

2.3.2 As far as the eye can see

The employment of landscape images in nationalistic narratives, may also be recognized as part of a larger issue associated with ocular representation. Martin Jay (1993) identified the dependent relationship of Western philosophy on the visual. It is the visual field (as opposed to the visual world) that positions us culturally. “There is no ‘view from nowhere’ for even the most scrupulously ‘detached’ observer.” (Jay 1993, 18) Jay traces the connection between looking and language further back to ancient Greek art, religion and philosophy, aligning Greek art with theatre (and the perfection of idealized visible form), and through etymological links between the words theatre and theory. The visual bias of subsequent Western philosophy began, claims Jay, with the ability of sight to survey a field with a sense of simultaneity, as opposed to the temporality of other senses, thus “…it…tends to elevate static Being over dynamic Becoming” (Jay 1993, 24).

Drawing upon the writings of Hans Jonas (1982) Jay asserts that sight also allows the observer to avoid direct contact or engagement with the object of their gaze.

The gain is the concept of objectivity, of the thing as it is in itself as distinct from the thing as it affects me, and from this distinction arises that whole idea of theoria and theoretical truth (Jonas 1982, 147).

This separation or distance between the seen and the known, remains a political tool, in both representational art and in many forms of Western knowledge and political practice.
In the painting below (figure 11), reproduced here on the cover of a book containing many paintings by contemporary New Zealand artist Grahame Sydney, we can see the continuation of the landscape painting tradition, celebrated over 170 years after Heaphy’s earlier work. Sydney’s perspective is supported in this case by poetry and writing, aimed at preserving a primarily scopic relationship with the land, considered pristine and untouched, a preservation of values brought by early settlers to New Zealand. The book’s title *Timeless Land* supports a colonial perspective of an untouched nature whose virtue is preserved in its ‘natural’ beauty. Beautiful, picturesque and sublime qualities remain core to the landscape’s timelessness. Sydney’s landscapes often include (rural) architectural ruins (as per Gilpen’s 1768 suggestion).

In a further contemporary example we see the perpetuation of this iconic depiction of New Zealand’s landscapes through Eurocentric eyes. To the right (in figure 12) although travelling by bicycle, these visitors’ re-enact earlier journeys, as they travel through the picturesque landscape.

*Figure 11:* The cover of a recently published book *Timeless Land* that celebrates Otago landscapes through the art and writing of three New Zealanders: Grahame Sydney, Brian Turner and Owen Marshall (photograph Longacre Press, 2010).
The ‘100% PURE New Zealand’ campaign first launched in 1999 has endured as one of the world’s most successful place brand strategies.

This research identifies representational art practices that perpetuate colonial attitudes. Drawing a relationship with the emergence of landscape painting in 16th Century Europe, where people learned to see landscapes in paintings, and in turn recognized ‘landscapes’ in the world, this thesis identifies a strong connection in New Zealand landscape paintings and a developing sense of Pākehā national identity, at least in part ‘discovered’ through landscape paintings of the 20th Century and reproduced in many contemporary images of New Zealand’s lands.

Colonial tropes of invention and discovery are aligned with this Pākehā sense of national identity, a form of identity production that does not engage in bicultural conversation. Thus problems identified with representational practices include the production of forms of knowledge that are universalizing, and not politically engaged with the local, or with more than one cultural experience.

Representational practices of picturing lands in New Zealand have long reproduced stable and static images and dominant narratives. These began as explicitly colonial communication tools, and reflected the political and cultural concerns of 19th Century Britain. However, these once imported narratives have led to sustained and dominant descriptions of lands in New Zealand. Jay alerts us that the visual field positions us culturally. His analysis offers a critique of visuality reminding us that sight separates subject and object, unlike the temporality of our other senses. Further critique of visual forms of knowing are investigated in Chapter 3. Alternatives to visual forms of knowing in contemporary art are examined in Chapter 4.
Danny Butt (2008) considers the incommensurability of Indigenous and settler versions of knowledge of land, identifying three aporias, or irresolvable internal contradictions that continue to occlude common ground. These involve the different ways that Māori and Pākehā measure and value geography, time and the function of knowledge (Butt, Bywater and Paul 2008). I will use these aporias first to consider conflicting models and practices and secondly in each case to consider articulations of these contradictions as they are investigated through art practices.

The first contradiction described by Butt involves the roles of cartography and the map, (Butt 2008, 3).

The turning of land into data through surveying, mapping and renaming is the most basic function of the colonial process. In many colonial projects, the surveyor was hated and more feared than the soldier.

When land is recorded as data, it becomes appropriable at a distance. This approach to understanding land as knowledge is in radical opposition to the “… non-transferable yet profoundly social relationship with land that is characteristic of indigenous epistemology” (Butt 2008, 3). The appropriation of Māori land for settler freehold title led to continuing cultural conflict, through major differences in the conceptualization of land between New Zealand’s two main cultures.

Art plays a functional role in colonial methods too. Art historian Eric Fernie defines art histories in terms of methods, which he claims are in turn defined by their historical and social contexts (Fernie, 1995, Cosgrove 1984, 1988). He argues that habits of perception of societies (or the ‘ways of seeing’) can be constructed by various combinations of social, cultural and economic circumstances. In the earlier painting of Charles Heaphy we saw colonial art defining land as real estate. In this sense the artist enacted a kind of cultural mapping of data, a mapping that has been reproduced many times since. Subsequent Pacific art writer Nicholas Thomas claims that the way to include a presence of indigenous art in the contemporary art world is to refocus on meanings which are examined from a distinctive, local vantage point. Colonial
relationships emerged not only from governorship from afar, but also through local interactions. Thomas claims that the settler relationship constitutes a particular discourse, claiming both utopian visions and antagonistic intimacy (Thomas 1999). Materiality and sociality become forms of knowledge in this matrix. These forms of knowledge – as ways of thinking and methods of knowing – are further examined in Chapter 5.

The way time is understood is identified as the second contradiction of Butt’s three aporia (2008). Interdisciplinary scholar James Clifford (2001, 482) outlines this tension:

The historical, tangled sense of changing places doesn’t capture the identity of ancestors with a mountain, for as long as anyone remembers and plausibly far beyond that. Old myths and genealogies change, connect and reach out, but always in relationship to this enduring spatial nexus...thus indigenous cultures must transcend colonial interruptions ...claiming: we were here before all that, we are still here, we will make a future here.

For settler culture the reproduction of European values supported an understanding of forward thinking progress. However, for Māori “looking backwards” or referencing the past is to honour and respect history, ancestors and relationships that are alive and present. Attempts to ‘standardize’ time are typical of colonization, and are accomplished through the establishment of an homogenous, empty, and apolitical notion of so-called ‘national identity’. In contrast, Māori perspectives contain multiple time zones in conversation together. Traditionally carved pou (a pole or support post, depicting notable ancestors) found in Māori meeting houses are examples of former generations who listen and speak back, across time.

These traditional forms of depicting ancestors in present time are reproduced in the large format photographs of contemporary Māori artist Lisa Reihana (see figure 13). Ranging across a number of series, but often collectively identified as her Digital Marae works, these portraits explore the layered and multiple subjectivities negotiated by Reihana’s iwi (tribe) in the 21st Century (Wright 2003). As a contemporary
Māori artist, Reihana is drawing on and activating the *taonga* (treasures) embedded in the ancient world through her photography.

New Zealand media academic Jo Smith considers different perspectives of time communicated through contemporary Māori film-making. She notes that while New Zealand proposes bicultural relations as separate but equal sharing of power, in practice this is more likely to be experienced as institutional accommodation by incorporation of Māori elements into state practices (Smith 2008). Smith argues that Treaty injustices can be read through temporal terms too. This is regularly cited by the current National Government, through official party statements such as “… we must put this behind us if all of us – and Māori in particular – are to stop looking backward and start moving forward.”

New media art and film-making are able to form potentially different relationships in regards to depicting time, ones that may allow access to multiple temporal spaces simultaneously.

Jo Smith (2008), Allen Meek (2008) and others identify that such Indigenous perspectives can be communicated through filmic narrative and associated techniques, both of which are elucidated by contemporary Māori new media artists. Writing about bicultural temporalities exhibited in the work of film-maker Taika Waititi, Smith suggests: “Three planes of time provide a glimpse of the postcolonial dimensions of Aotearoa/New Zealand which involves a continual splitting between past, present and future concerns” (Smith 2008, 53). Candice Hopkins suggests that storytelling of all sorts engage time in this multidimensional way: “Stories straddle past and present, as each enactment is original but also layered with voices of the past” (Hopkins 2008, 96). Finnish architect Juhani Pallasmaa concurs. He claims that techniques such as collage and assemblage are contemporary methods of art and film-making that invigorate the experience of time (Pallasmaa 1999). These writers suggest that new media art and film-making are able to form potentially different relationships in regards to depicting time, ones that may allow access to multiple temporal spaces simultaneously in order to evoke – among other things – a more Indigenous experience of temporality. In this sense, narrative duration may be developed into more complex forms and models, affecting not only the art works that they were developed for, but also other experiences of time.
The third aporias identified by Butt is the nature of knowledge itself, its concept in settler culture being considered as primarily functional. From a Western cultural perspective knowledge is usually considered as ahistorical. Knowledge is useful for what it can do in the here and now. In contrast, Butt notes that Indigenous epistemologies exhibit different values, and are often protected for the continuing maintenance of the entire knowledge system, for the past and future as well as the present. Here, the Māori concept of ‘taonga tuku iho’ (a gift from one’s ancestors) is concerned with a broader social good, and is recognized as a treasure to be protected. This concept of knowledge as treasure is connected to the broader concept of kaitiakitanga (guardianship). In contrast, land and other cultural treasures (including knowledge) in Western culture and legal systems are generally bound and protected by individuals as private property. However, for Māori, ownership is traditionally collective.  

Some contemporary Māori artists work to integrate this form of knowledge in their practice. One recent and local example is found above in Kirsten Parkinson’s work, exhibited in a group show of contemporary Māori artists and graduates of the Dunedin School of Art (Figure 14). In these fine thread works, *(E KORE E WAREWARE, 2000)* the woven objects and their shadows play with time and meaning. The artist draws  

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21. A tension between ownership and cultural property is further outlined in Chapter 7.  

upon *ta moko* (traditional facial tattoos) of her ancestors, and makes connection with their signatures on the *Tiriti o Waitangi* (Treaty of Waitangi). These two forms of mark-making and visual languages (Māori and Pākehā) have been literally stitched together by Parkinson’s entwining identities, histories and futures in delicate but visually engaging forms.

The work was a response to a land sale agreement known as “Kemp’s Purchase”. This sectioned off around one third of *Te Wai Pounamu* [the South Island], selected entirely inadequate “reserves” for the Ngai Tahu sellers, and provided colonial European New Zealand with its patrimony. “Kemp’s Purchase” was a complex and elaborately constructed strategy and its underlying intent revealed itself over time.

(Kirsten Parkinson, *Scope: Kaupapa Kai Tahu 2*, October 2013, 21)

Butt’s three impassable contradictions help us to consider some of the deeply problematic differences and values held between New Zealand’s two main cultures. Some examples drawn from Indigenous art practices in this section allow us to glimpse Māori alternatives to the scopic regime embodied in landscape painting from Charles Heaphy to Grahame Sydney, in these cases through the use of storytelling, film-making, photography, thread and light. Further fields of practice and their political implications will be explored in more depth in Chapter 4.
2.4 Distance and nearness

Alongside bicultural values, a number of other conditions and tropes are identified as contributing significantly to identity in New Zealand. This section considers several different models that frame our experiences of living in New Zealand in what were once described as the ‘distant’ islands of the South Pacific, denoting the long journey from England (or Scotland). Traditional concepts of remoteness and separation compete with new models of connection with and through networks such as mass media, the internet and mobile communication. These models are outlined, and each is considered in terms of its relevance to the experience of living in New Zealand today.

2.4.1 Horizons that we carry about

New Zealand is surrounded by three bodies of water: the South Pacific Ocean to the north and east, the Tasman Sea to the west, and the great Southern Ocean to the south. The oceans set the islands of New Zealand apart, and this distance isolates the islands and its peoples from others. Nick Perry writes that ‘distance’ in New Zealand has not only been invested with generic meaning, but also with a culturally specific one, and forms part of our collective imaginations and identity. Perry suggests that the macro picture of New Zealand, as a location at the end of the earth, tied with our environmental and cultural histories, continues to shape our experiences.

“Nature and distance both construct us and we it” (Perry 2004, 76)

In both mythical and historical accounts settlers arriving in New Zealand are often described as looking for a better life and New Zealand offered a land rich in resources. Both Māori and European travellers found these islands through feats of navigation and arrived by sea, following arduous journeys. And with their journey, each traveller brought a worldview, culture, language and practices with them, starting with the conceptualization of a cosmos. Philosopher Holmes Ralston suggests that: “Environments are horizons that we carry about and reconstitute as we move here and there” (Rolston 1997, 39).
However distant we may once have been from European or Pacific centres of origin, New Zealand is now connected through travel and communication technologies, and both information and bodies change place at high speed, and in the virtual world simultaneously. These technologies disconnect images from places and our bodies from their original locations. As with earlier travellers, cultural conceptions become part of the flow of information and spaces. These technologies effect radically new ways of conceiving distance for those of us in traditionally remote locations. As the journey loses its arduous physical conditions, so too a generalist approach to all travel and communication in the 21st Century asks us to reconceive our place in the world.

Despite our contemporary connectivity, two key tropes, that of the nation state – which grew out of the earlier dominion – and that of the antipodes, continue to structure our sense of experience in New Zealand. I suggest that they both interfere with and result in a sense of andness relevant to this research.

2.4.2 The nation state and its perpetuation via mass media

The first trope, that of the nation state, competes with other collective nouns that contribute to our definition of living in New Zealand. Benedict Anderson’s theorization of nations as imagined communities has been usefully employed since 1983, both to describe national identity and later online communities. According to Anderson a nation “… is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 1983, 224). Writing prior the internet, in this analysis Anderson identifies print media and vernacular forms of language as some of the mechanisms used to develop communities. Connections are later made with online communities as individuals who may never meet, but who share an understanding of togetherness. Anderson does not define the nation as an ideal community but as a structure of connections requiring a level of imagination:

...regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship (Anderson 1983, 224).
Reflecting on New Zealand as a nation state, cultural theorist Claudia Bell draws a connection between the terms ‘nature’ and ‘nation’, suggesting that the implied relationship allows policy-makers to present ideas as ‘common sense’ – while their intentions are politically motivated – and to foster an orchestrated sense of unity (Bell, 1996).

Normative structures such as nationhood ascribe group membership to a diverse population in ways that “renders powerless” cultural difference (Bell 1996, 9).

Indigenous cultures such as Māori, as well as peripheral or marginal groups, claims Bell, are not adequately acknowledged in the term ‘nation’.

However, some postcolonial writers have proposed alternatives. Akhil Gupta (2003) suggests that we need to pay attention to the structures of feeling that bind people to geographical units larger or smaller than nations. He also draws attention to cross-national boundaries as a decolonizing process, or as a way of denaturalizing the nation as a hegemonic form of organizing space. The pervasiveness of nationalism, Gupta suggests, is largely a system of practices. “Whether a hegemonic master narrative of the nation succeeds ... depends a great deal on the practices of the state” (Gupta 2003, 330). National sports teams could be considered as such a practice, and in New Zealand one that also dominates many media narratives. Interestingly, sport (in particular rugby) has offered a form of national identity that crosses into both Māori and Pākehā senses of nationhood through primarily masculine forms. Rugby traditions and nationalist narratives are a subject of the case study covered in Chapter 7.

Edward Said uses a related term ‘imagined geographies’ to denote the objectification of the Other as a means of controlling and subordinating areas or regions, a process exacerbated through globalized media. “One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of stereotypes ... Television has forced information into a more and more standardized mould” (Said 1978, 28).

The media in New Zealand also performs a standardizing role of affirming the nation state of New Zealand, and of reproducing a dominant cultural perspective of New Zealand as a mainly Pākehā culture. This affects not only the way that media is consumed, but more generally contributes to pervasive social attitudes.
New Zealand media academics Cluny MacPherson and Paul Spoonley concur: “The mass media have become increasingly significant influences on the way ethnic groups in cosmopolitan urban settings come to see and relate to one another” (Spoonley & MacPherson 2004, 221). They cite key factors that influence the production of media-borne images: the production of texts, logical frameworks and terms and the way that information is filtered, re-constructed and reacted to as contributing to the monocultural media framework. Common narrative techniques include identifying people and groups as “…threats to social solidarity and to ‘New Zealand Society’” and shaping the ways in which people think about social distance and the nature of boundaries between various groups (Spoonley & MacPherson 2004, 225-6).

Contemporary mass media continues a tradition which began with New Zealand’s newspapers, suggests historian Angela Ballara, arguing that they reproduced a form of racism that justified colonization (Ballara 1986). Global media further perpetuates an homogenous perspective, continuing Marshall McLuhan’s 1962 observation: “The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of a global village” (McLuhan 1964, 31). The village, however, is based on an urban model of Western cities. At best in New Zealand, contemporary media represents New Zealand as a cultural “melting pot” with a suppression of cultural difference and experience iterated through political and mediated stories. The notable exception to this narrative is found in the case of Māori Television, where Māori cultural norms are presented in a range of television genres, from news to sitcoms, children’s shows, films and documentaries.

As an island nation, New Zealand’s borders are both a political structure and defined by bodies of water. However nationalist discourse provides a framework for how we see ourselves as ‘New Zealanders’. These narratives (although not unique to New Zealand) tend to gloss over the cultural aporias identified earlier in this chapter. While travel and communication technologies have ensured a greater connection to other places, mass media tends to provide generalized and standardized images of nations and people, counter to the andness proposed by this research.

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24. Don Brash’s 2004 speech at the Orewa Rotary club has been identified as a recent key iteration of this ‘melting pot sentiment’. Brash was the leader of the New Zealand National Party at the time. His controversial speech addressed the theme of race relations in New Zealand, advocating “one rule for all” and ending what he saw as Māori special privileges. It saw a surge of popularity among New Zealand’s conservatives, and received major criticism for its political intent from the left. In can be found on the National Party website. (Brash, D. (2004, March 26). Orewa speech - Nationhood., www.national.org.nz/article.aspx?articleid=1614) A similar rhetoric has emerged during the writing of this thesis. In 2014 the Conservative Party leader introduced a debate about eradicating “race-based laws”, that were seen to privilege Māori, and this was picked up by national media.
While our physical separation from other countries and cultures has been overcome through new technologies, Nick Perry writes of the persistence of the antipodes as a trope that continues to affect contemporary New Zealand identity, and provides another example of rhetoric that binds and yet removes us from our historical associations with European centres.

While a geographic term used to identify a polar opposite position (parts of New Zealand when mapped onto the opposite side of the globe cover parts of Spain and Portugal), the term ‘antipodes’ has been used to connote the colonial shadow of England cast upon both Australia and New Zealand. Perry writes of the ‘West’ as both “…close to hand and far away – both immediately familiar and spatially remote, both locally grounded and critically distant” (Perry 2004, 21). In a similar sense, Australian cultural theorist Tara Brabazon agrees that the trope of the antipodes is persistent for both Australia and New Zealand. She identifies the antipodes as a representational matrix or way of seeing the world, and a mental space as much as it is the terrain underfoot, with “…configurations of distance, isolation and insularity manifested differently in each of the antipodean nations” (Brabazon 2000, 9).

Perry claims that the term ‘distance’ has both universal meaning and specific cultural significance for New Zealanders. It is at once located and materially significant, as well as a local and social myth, albeit one shifting with the effects of global networks and processes. The work of contemporary artist Michael Stevenson addresses this ongoing trope of distance as is evidenced in the image (figure 15) depicted below:

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**Figure 15:** Michael Stevenson, *The Gift (from ‘Argonauts of the Timor Sea’) 2004-05*, aluminium, wood, rope, bamboo, tar, WW2 parachute and National Geographic magazines, 400 x 600 x 300 cm. Collection: Queensland Art Gallery. Represented by Darren Knight gallery.
Stevenson, a New Zealand artist, currently lives and works in Berlin. His work *The Gift (from ‘Argonauts of the Timor Sea’)* is based on detailed research of Australian artist Ian Fairweather’s ill-fated 1952 raft journey from Darwin to Timor. Stevenson, by referring the earlier artist’s desire for adventure, reiterates a tradition of Western attributes relating to the sea, and the distanced Other inhabiting islands beyond the horizon. With his journey on his hand-built craft, and his life full of journeys, Fairweather re-imagined faraway landscapes in tune with his self-imposed isolation, which was “…symptomatic of an intense desire to escape any constraints of the creative life he single-mindedly sought” (Allison 2012, 44).

While Stevenson’s work replays the role of an iconic Australian modernist painter, he also “…alludes to migration debates and the recent perilous and politicised boat journeys by asylum seekers to Australian shores” (www.qagoma.qld.gov.au). In each case, crossing the treacherous sea is considered through tropes of distance that are both physical and cultural.

In spite of our increasing connectivity, artists from New Zealand and elsewhere continue to produce works that promote a sense of distance and remoteness, finding a romantic allure in the treacherous journey towards a new and promised land. In this case Stevenson reproduces Fairweather’s longing, by reproducing his vessel, iterating antipodal attitudes towards distance. Like earlier settler artists both Stevenson and Fairweather cast a colonial shadow through their work, countering andness through their picturing of the artist on a journey alone.

### 2.4.4 Alternatives to distance

Another and contrasting way of conceiving distance from Europe as the centre, can be found in the writings of Tongan academic Epeli Hau’ofa who offers a critique of the Western perspective of the Pacific as distant and empty. Hau’ofa describes the predominant European view of the Pacific region as an ocean “…marked by absence…beyond memory and identity, empty of meaning” (Hamilton-Paterson 1993, 5). Hau’ofa offers in contrast a local cultural perspective of Oceania. For seafaring Pacific Island cultures Hau’ofa asserts, the sea is not an empty signifier, but rather “full of islands”.
Prior to the colonization of the islands and the imported narratives of the islands as small, isolated and short of economic resources, Pacific Island cultures did not see the beach as a border. “Their universe comprised not only land surfaces, but the surrounding ocean as far as they could traverse and exploit it...” (Hau'ofa 1993, 7). Hau'ofa claims the term ‘Oceania’, over the ‘Pacific’, to denote the active and generative properties of the ocean itself as part of an indigenous cultural perspective. This perspective acknowledges both navigators and the ocean as part of a living dynamic entity.

A contemporary artist whose work illustrates this different perspective is John Pule. This New Zealand-Nuiean artist works with traditional hiapo (beaten and painted mulberry bark cloth) as well as using paint. Pule makes expansive works that include elements of connection and detail, in contrast to Michael Stevenson’s focus on the horizon. Pule’s canvasses suggest a narrative approach, busy with social detail. The interconnectedness of each element in the detail of Pule’s 2005 work below *Tukulagi tukumuitea (Forever and Ever)* narrates concepts of movement and social placement in Pacific life. Pule’s art is one of connection amidst the Pacific he navigates.

![Figure 16: John Pule, Tukulagi tukumuitea (Forever and Ever) (detail) 2005, oil on canvas Triptych: 199.9 x 199.9cm (each panel) Collection: Queensland Art Gallery. Represented by Karen Woodbury gallery.](image-url)
Australian media theorist, McKenzie Wark puts forward another perspective involving media and distance. While Wark affirms a sense of place and cultural embodiment that is antipodal, he proposes a vectorial engagement with world events through media. Writing of the power of received media events in Sydney, Australia, Wark claims that: “The crisis the event reveals is the crisis of the vector, not the site” (Wark 1994, 28). The term ‘vector’ describes a connective action between the terrain or geography of first-hand experience, and the equally familiar terrain of the mediated or received event, through both personal and mass media communication. Vectorial metaphors draw on geographically remote sources, instantaneous global dialogue and virtual narrative spaces, through a matrix of possible trajectories, and respect neither geographic nor cultural boundaries. Wark (writing at the cusp of the internet’s extension into our daily lives) claimed that the effect was one of telesthesia, experience at a distance (Wark 1994, 1). Furthermore, he writes that media expands the terrain from which experience may be instantly drawn. As a result neither ‘here’ nor ‘there’ are what they once were, but are bound in a vectorial relationship. Writing to locate himself in Sydney, Australia, however, Wark wanted to create “…a particular understanding of the global, as seen from the antipodes” (Wark 1994, xiv). Citing Dipesh Chakrabarty, Wark writes: “It is only by ‘provincializing’ the metropolitan...that an intellectual practice up to the task of thinking the emergent form of virtual geography can emerge”:

“...the challenge is to write critically in organic connection with the emergent forms of virtual perception, community and geography” (Wark, 1994, xiv).

In contrast, the nation state produces a false sense of wholeness, in a geographically dispersed and culturally diverse population. The concept is affirmed both as a political structure, as well as reproduced culturally and via the media. It is structured in terms of Elspeth Probyn’s definition of “location”, that is, as an imperial form of power, discussed further in Chapter 3. However, as islands, our national borders are also natural ones, constituted in the intertidal zones of the islands that form New Zealand. The nation is both empirical and conceptual (Perry 2005). Also, contributing to our understanding as antipodal, is our familiarity as receivers
of media and information, rather than producers or senders of information, although we are increasingly able to do this. Here Wark and Hau'ofa provide examples of local reimagining as a form of academic resistance. The re-thinking of distance put forward by both writers in different ways can be read as a reconception of the local as relevant and full of information. Their tropes, the ever-moving ocean and the dynamics of media, suggest both alternative frameworks as well as practices that will be examined further in this thesis.

2.5 media, mobility and technosociality
navigating new configurations of place

New technology contributed to new ways of defining space and location outside of the national imaginary, changing some of the conditions that shape how we see ourselves in New Zealand. Initially through high speed travel and massive migration major change continued through the development of networked and mobile communication during the last century.

Utopian rhetoric – persuasive language incorporating ideals of a perfect place – initially framed popular understanding of communication technology and the new connectivity offered between formerly separate places. Common figures of speech employed by this rhetoric include ‘disembodiment’, ‘placelessness’ and the subordination of physical proximity to network connectivity (Castells 1996). This section takes a closer look at such rhetoric in order to identify and retrieve useful terms with which to consider the contemporary conditions of living in New Zealand.

2.5.1 Spatiality, media and co-presence

Our enhanced engagement with communication technology can be aligned with a renewed interest in space. An abundance of spatial metaphors in a wide variety of communication, academic and cultural practices may be found, despite the apparent suppression of spatial experience mediated by our engagement with networked and mobile communication.

As identified in the New Zealand context, spatial questions about nations and their boundaries, private property, and perceptions of lands, all underwent significant change during the 19th and 20th Centuries.
In the latter half of the twentieth century, French writers such as Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, and Michel de Certeau newly emphasized the power relations implicit in landscapes with a particular focus on European urban spaces and experiences. Spatial experience became aligned with social relationships, recognizing that personal experience is produced in, and sometimes in conflict with, spatial experience.

New configurations of spatiality and sociality emerged in the latter years of the 20th Century and the early 21st Century. At first enabled through mass media, these were later mobilized through networked computers, and most recently mobile communication systems. In 1985 Joshua Meyrowitz began to evaluate the ways in which electronic media (largely television at that time) had redefined the notions of social position and social place. He claimed that “... our culture is becoming essentially placeless” (Meyrowitz 1985, 317). One of Meyrowitz’s key interests lies in the separation of social place from physical place. “Electronic media...play with place in a strange way. They violate its boundaries and change its social significance, yet they also use place as a backdrop for social events” (Meyrowitz 1985, 123).

Manuel Castells (1989, 2000) considers “the space of flows” and “timeless time”. He describes a shift between the importance of the meaning of a place, towards the patterns of the de-sequenced, networked interactions that happen in that place. Castell’s theories consider the shift away from geographically shared communities towards communities of shared interests and shared needs for information. In his space of flows, cities become decentralized, flexible, network nodes, in a new spatio-temporal order that is at once relational, psychological and political. Castells considers the space of flows as the most dominant of the spaces we inhabit, and more powerful than the role of global cities.

Meyrowitz’ concerns regarding the impact of television, were echoed and developed in regard to mobile communication technologies by media theorist Mark Poster (2004, 8) twenty years later:

The spaces of mobile communication then are put into place in the context of a world already filled with designated spaces, coming into conflict with these loci. Mobile communications upset, destabilize, make accommodations with, and transgress the features of space so carefully drawn by the nation. Instead of
an individual fixed in space, mobile communications enable and promote a more fluid, multiple and fragmented relation to space, very much in line with the emergence of postmodern forms of identity construction.

Poster and Castells describe a world that is no longer framed by the models of nation and community outlined by earlier writers of mass media, such as Anderson, Ballara and Bell, where the nation formed a master narrative that suited colonial imperatives. Rather, as these later writers suggest, the contemporary individual has the autonomy to move independently and think independently, beyond predefined roles such as those perpetuated by national identity. These potentially multiple and fluid relations suggest that identity and loci were formerly attached, and that through their detachment both fixed identity and fixed places are perhaps best abandoned as grounds of identity construction.

The concept of ‘co-presence’ is key to these and subsequent writers. Co-presence describes a sense of being in more than one place or situation simultaneously. The ill-defined ‘context’ of communication was first considered with the advent of telephony. In 1981 Erving Goffman suggested that we “booth” ourselves when making a phone call (Goffman 1981, 86), identifying a negotiation with physical space when concentrating on a communication event. This juxtaposition between communication space and physical space creates new forms of spatial assemblages that are generally negotiated using strategic social tools. ‘Assemblage’ is a term drawn upon by Gilles Deleuze (1987) to describe the ways that through recombination (of spaces, objects and processes) both aesthetic and political shifts occur. The dynamics of their inter-relations affect their meanings too. Assemblage is also a term used by artists (along with collage) to describe artworks that reuse images, objects and materials in new combinations. In the words of media theorist, Matthew Fuller “… a dynamic relationship is composed” (Fuller 2005, 101). In the visual arts the assembly of formerly unrelated objects and images in a new composition allows them to be reconsidered. The individual objects and images are disconnected from their original use value, and new connections are formed with other objects, images and forms they are placed with. Through the incorporation of sociality, communication media and landscapes as elements of an assemblage, new associative relationships can also be considered. This is further investigated in Chapter 3.

Figure 17. Social media makes connections between spatially and socially separated contexts, (photograph Caroline McCaw).
2.5.2 Spatiality and sociality – flows that go both ways?

Co-presence, with the accompanying emerging tensions between sociality, communication spaces and physical spaces, tends to elevate social orders over physical ones. In fact, co-presence as such can be identified with all portable media and communication events, so for example the imaginative space of a book can be considered alongside the explorative travel of earlier European ships. In one sense, the capacity for information to shift from context to context is not new.

However, since Meyrowitz wrote about television in the 1980s, reconsiderations of the terms and frameworks for thinking about social and physical spaces have been prompted by developments such as the internet and mobile communication systems. As mobile phones have become more complex portable computer systems, with increased live media and site-responsive functionality, they enable new social and physical spatial assemblages. This section looks at a number of writers who consider the effects of some of these assemblages. They are organized around themes of:

[A] time and co-presence (Varnelis and Friedberg),

[B] cartographies (Ling and Campbell, de Nicola),

[C] the need for new frameworks (Poster, Arminen, Dourish and Bell), and

[D] culturally-centred or ethnographic approaches to understandings of the various mixtures of physical and social spaces (Ito, Okabe and Anderson).

The tensions identified between communication media and physical spaces similarly affect our perception of time. Time enables us to sequence and compare events (Navratil 2009). Kazys Varnelis and Anne Friedberg suggest that the:

“...always-on, always accessible network also contributes to changes to our concept of place” (Varnelis and Friedberg, 2008, 15).

Our specific experience of the local is linked to a global continuum of local places, transforming our sense of proximity and distance that results in a mobile sense of place. Varnelis and Friedberg emphasize that the always-accessible nature of the network destabilizes sequential time too. Histories and presences are aligned as retrievable data. They emphasize the important interconnected relations of culture with technology as key to retrieving a grounded sense of time.
Phones, laptops and tablets (with cameras, audio, video and GPS functionality) become used for a wide variety of socially expressive interaction, with wayfinding and instrumental co-ordination replacing traditional navigational connections with stars, winds and ocean currents. Unlike a ship, a book or a television, mobile communication allows much more complex interaction between people in and across places, that may be two-way, multi-directional or involve multiple users. Rich Ling and Scott W. Campbell (2009, 1) suggest that “…(t)he proliferation of wireless and mobile communication technologies gives rise to important changes in how people experience space and time”. Individuals are able to communicate directly with others, rather than communicating from a fixed particular place or at a pre-arranged time.

Similarly, cartographic traditions of measuring spaces are both further enabled and further challenged by new technological assemblages. Mobile communication technology increasingly includes tools of mobile geographic systems, now available, for example, on smart phones, or as stand-alone devices. These tools, and their growing data sets, accessed via satellites connected to Global Positioning Systems, are collectively identified as ‘geomedia’. These ge媒体 forms and data sets are considered to be accurate information and measuring systems. In this regard they participate in traditions of cartography. Lane DeNicola takes an anthropological perspective of space through his analysis of gemedia. Aligning gemedia with Butt’s first aporia, DeNicola reminds us of the “...extensive production and circulation of cartographic techniques and apparatus, (that has) long (been) employed for colonial exploitation” (DeNicola 2012, 81). De Nicola suggests that:

“... mass media are considered as cultural phenomena, and cartographic techniques are considered scientific domains, and these subjects have traditionally remained distinct” (DeNicola 2012, 81).

He calls upon the discipline of anthropology, where he claims space has always been recognized as socially constructed.
In order to keep sight of the values of the bicultural conversation identified earlier in this chapter, it seems prudent to proceed carefully with this negotiation between geographically bound and mediated contexts.

Concurring with Bell, Said and others, Poster identifies the nation state as a political index of space and place employed by Western culture. He identifies that historically the town or regional district had a direct relationship to lived experience, a notion that draws upon phenomenology, which emphasized lived experience as a primary source of knowledge. In contrast the spatial imaginary of the nation and of global cities was established through a political process that sought to produce a stable and unitary subject.

Poster (2004, 7) seeks to redefine the local, which he sees as neither having meaning in relation to the body nor simply in models of placeless communication systems. The body and the information machine are not to be understood as in opposition but as contributing partners in the great project of constructing new local and distant spaces of mobile communications.

The local and the global themselves are not fixed or pre-given but arise through practices and information exchanges (Poster 2004).

Not only are mobile communications changing through the invention of new media and the creation of new uses and practices that deploy them; so also are the definitions of space, of the local and the global.

...we need new metaphors to describe these hybrid practices...

Poster calls for new definitions. He focuses on the local in times of increasing distribution and retrieval of information. Ilkka Arminen, a contemporary media writer (2009, 95-96), suggests that:

“...(m)obile communication does not ‘free’ us from places, spaces and practices, but makes them communicationally available to
other mobile-networked parties”

This reconception, he claims, leads to a “… new enriched symbolic texture of everyday life” (ibid). Further, Arminen suggests that we may need new metaphors to describe these hybrid practices. He employs metaphors drawn from chemistry speaking of ‘solid’ practices “melting down” (Arminen 2009, 100) and suggests that “… perhaps it is best to see these new hybrids as complements to old practices, not their replacements” (ibid).

Paul Dourish and Genevieve Bell also consider the need to better understand emergent structures. They suggest that mobile technology does not simply operate in specific environments but that “… it is implicated in the production of spatiality and spatial experience” (Dourish and Bell 2011, 120).

The internet has enabled the connection and the development of communities of geographically dispersed people with greater ease and at a lower cost than other forms of communication. First documented by Howard Rheingold in his book Virtual Communities (1993) the practice of online community building has become common and widespread. Almost always this engages people who are widely dispersed geographically or physically. Along with social connectivity, cultural patterns of belonging and behaviour can be reproduced through online communities (MacPherson et al 2003).

Spoonley, Bedford and MacPherson (2003) have described the experience of ‘fractured citizenship’ to describe this sense of belonging to multiple places and communities simultaneously.

An example of artwork that explores the culturally-specific uses of the internet, can be found in the early video work of New Zealand artist Rachael Rakena. Of Ngai Tahu descent, Rakena’s work Rerehiko (digital video, 2003) documents the maintenance of her disenfranchised iwi through group email (Figure 18, next page).

*Rerehiko* is composed of footage of traditional Māori dancers from Kai Tahu Whānau (a local Māori performing arts group) moving together underwater over a flow of text extracted from emails between the group’s members. The two fluid...
movements, of scrolling text and swimming dancers, both mobile and without fixed positions, create a powerful and evocative image. As email travels through the network it produces and supports a collective culture and identity. Rakena suggests that the connection experienced by group members replicates more traditional forms of both communication and meeting house protocols.

The digital text of the email and its aesthetic of pixellated patterns create the new *tukutuku*\(^{28}\) for the *wharenui (ātea)* in cyberspace in which a community often meets” (Rakena, R. Unpublished Masters Dissertation “Toi Rerehiko”, 2003, 23).

For Rakena the flickering surface of the screen helps to form and embellish a new meeting place, where traditional forms of greeting and discussion take place, connecting and maintaining tribal community. Like the expansive notion of cyberspace, the watery realm is not land-based. Rakena’s fluid metaphor evokes freedom from constraint and references travel and migration, and the oceanic context of her cultural inheritance, but it also can be seen to suggest a loss. She states, “I decided that immersion in water space would create a question, ‘who are we without land?’”.

*Whakapapa,* the genealogical foundation of Māori identity and belonging, has been undermined by Māori separation from the land through colonization and later urbanization. Rakena’s art work explores how contemporary *Ngai Tahu* tribal identity is maintained both through the revival of traditional art forms and through the flows of electronic online communication.
Rakena’s video explores the negotiations and superimpositions of being in specific and located geographic and cultural spaces, while being simultaneously immersed in mediated spaces.

The work is located between traditional knowledge of place and belonging, and contemporary Māori communities where she finds an online space actively generated and ‘populated’ by its participants.

Like Pule’s work, Rakena negotiates co-presence across two cultural places. However, Rakena’s work asserts her Indigenous right to belong here. She elevates her iwi’s use of social online media as a meeting place, as a way of practicing traditional forms of communication, despite the dispersal of the participants. She draws upon water as a metaphor and an alternative framework for thinking about traditional Māori land, not entirely unlike Arminen’s ‘liquid forms’.

In ethnographic research conducted by Japanese and American anthropologists, relationships between social and physical places are considered through observing behaviours. In contrast to Rakena’s culturally specific and locally assertive art practices, Mitsuko Ito, Daisuke Okabe and Ken Anderson (2009) studied the ways patterns of behaviour in public spaces have been mediated as a result of mobile communication usage. Focusing on behaviors in large cities (Tokyo, Los Angeles and London), the group developed three terms to reflect their observed interactions. ‘Cocooning’ describes how various devices are used to colonize a small portion of otherwise public space. The use of music players, reading material and mobile screens on public transport is a good example of this. ‘Camping’ is a term used to describe the appropriation of public places as temporary work environments, and ‘footprinting’ describes the leaving of transactional traces, integrating an individual’s trajectory in public space.

Their research demonstrates that through creating a focus on specific practices a more integrated (and less abstract) understanding of co-presence and social and spatial dynamics can be made.
As ethnographic research methods are increasingly employed to understand this social-spatial nexus, projects in various communities and places are often used to gauge how these features are common or particular to different cultural settings. From studies in major global cities, to Bengali villages, and to uses by Filipino migrant workers, these results have been found to significantly vary, affecting friends, family and business contexts in specific ways (Ling and Campbell 2011).

In his later work Castells (2008) suggests that systems of communication can 'go both ways'. Culturally specific forms of communication may take place in online media; where they reflect and respond to the organization of the media themselves (Castells 2008, n.p):

Social movements are a permanent feature of society. But they adopt values and take up organizational forms that are specific to the kind of society where they take place. So, there is a great deal of cultural and political diversity around the world. At the same time, because power relations are structured nowadays in a global network and played out in the realm of socialized communication, social movements also act on this global network structure and enter the battle over the minds by intervening in the global communication process. They think local, rooted in their society, and act global, confronting the power where the power holders are, in the global networks of power and in the communication sphere.

In summary, through the themes identified in this section attention is drawn towards local contexts as active and relevant as we try and make sense of our expanded, hybrid and mediated temporal and spatial experiences. However as identified in sections 2.2-2.4 my local context is not coherent but is maintained by diverse histories and practices.

Our experience of the local has been further divided as a result of travel and communication media and its entanglement with traditional Western divisions of space. The local may be made manifest through mediated, fragmentary, social and physical experiences. While this is not necessarily new, the acceleration of technology allows ‘local’ transactions to be experienced in a wider
variety of ways. The images of New Zealand landscapes identified earlier in this chapter, from Heaphy’s Mount Egmont to the 100% PURE NEW ZEALAND website, provide examples of local places that are represented and distributed, instrumental in particular narratives. For people who experience these places in physical and embodied ways, the depiction and narratives of these places extends them in time and across spaces. Whether near or afar, circulated images and stories also contribute to the social life of these places. As Poster suggests, new practices are altering the definitions of the local, as well as the global. These are flows that go both ways.

In some respects the perception of data mapping (land as information) remains segregated from the mediation of landscapes via other forms of consumer technology (photography, painting, tourism media) and from personal social media, underlining De Nicola’s identification of separated scientific and cultural domains. This is despite widespread access to detailed cartographic data sets, and the mobilization of digital technology that is being increasingly made ‘personal, portable and pedestrian’ (Ito, Okabe and Matsuda 2005). There is an emphasis on access, through ‘personal’ retrieval of information.

Arminen (2009) suggests that we should find ways of identifying these new hybrid methods of thinking about media practices as complements to old practices, not as their replacements. Arminen’s metaphor however relied on ‘melting down’ solid forms into liquid ones where some features remain, but this model feels too closely aligned with ‘melting pot’ policies of cultural blending to be useful for this research. In short the predominant frameworks and metaphors used by many writing about the intersection of spatial and communication media practices appear to retain universalizing, urban and Eurocentric understandings. They fall short of making room for the specific contemporary bicultural conditions of New Zealand.
One thread of thinking about these issues that offers a more appropriate model for my research can be found in the relatively recent term ‘technosocial’ coined by Mitsuko Ito and Daisuke Okabe (2006). Ito and Okabe draw upon Meyrowitz’s key insight that social situations are structured by influences that are outside the boundaries of physically co-present and interpersonal encounters.

Meyrowitz (1985) identified flows that go both ways, between media and materiality, but in ways that do not conflate the two. Meyrowitz sees the work of Goffman and other psychologists as presenting the essential insight that social identity and practice are embedded in and contingent on particular social situations. He suggests, however, that these theories fail to take into account how electronic media cross boundaries between situations previously held to be distinct. Like Meyrowitz, Ito and Okabe (2006, 259-60) assert that:

“... social orders are built through the hybrid relation between physically co-located and electronically mediated information systems”

Ito and Okabe (2005) examine interpersonal communication, interactions and situations rather than the mass communication, information and identity that provide the focus for Meyrowitz, and claim that mobile communication tools require very different frameworks for analysis than those provided by internet studies. They pick up on works such as Michel Callon’s sociology of translation (1986), Paul Dourish’s embodied interaction (2001) and Christine Hine’s virtual ethnography (2000), the social constructivist approaches of which posit that technologies are both constructive of, and constructed by historical, social and cultural contexts. Ito and Okabe agree that the internet and mobile communication messages “... extend the prior and present parameters of social contact (and) extend the possibilities for gathering” (Ito and Okabe 2006, 260) in new assemblages. In these arrangements both spatial and temporal boundaries change.

29. In his review of Erving Goffman’s theories of social situation, Meyrowitz (1985) suggests that the presumed isomorphism between physical space and social situation needs to be questioned when we take into account the influence of electronic media.
Ito argues these boundaries (and existing places, and social identities) become extended, not eroded, in a contiguous rather than disjunctive relationship with physical co-presence.

Furthermore, there is a consistency in the integrity of social norms and expectations found in these new forms. Ito and Okabe believe that it is “... crucial to remain attentive to the local particulars of setting, context and situation in the face of translocal flows” (2006, 260) in order to avoid the techno-determinist argument that social and spatial boundaries are necessarily blurred. They base their claims on a number of ethnographic studies undertaken, at first in Tokyo, and later (with Ken Anderson) in Los Angeles and London. They concur that “(t)he construction of new technosocial settings and situations have clear expectations for interactions and role performances” (Ito and Okabe 2006, 20).

Ito and Okabe suggest that it is necessary to examine these intersections of technology, social practice and place using an integrated ‘technosocial’ framework. The phrase ‘technosocial situations’ was adopted by Ito and Okabe to further develop Meyrowitz’s assertion that social orders are increasingly built through the hybrid (but not integrated) relation between physically co-located and electronically mediated information systems. Research in this area, they argue, needs to be attentive to emergent technosocial places as well as a prior sense of place, and not just focus on the erosion of social boundaries and place integrity (Ito and Okabe 2006, 28).

The phrase ‘technosocial situations’ therefore relies on an understanding of place that is still grounded in physical architectures and structuring social orders, but makes room for the architectures and social orders of electronic media too.
It is this intersection of technology, physical place and social practice that interests me most.

Rakena’s video work _Rerehiko_ (2003) discussed in the previous section proposes a question: What do we keep and what do we leave behind when we travel through the mediated spaces of the digital? Rakena’s work is both aesthetic and political. For Rakena this technosocial situation places emphasis on social practice under the colonial conditions where place as a land-based concept is full of conflict. Technosocial practices refer to land-based connections, but do not rely on them. The watery metaphor employed by Rakena allows her to draw upon traditions of place, and to reproduce her culturally-specific traditions without writing over them, extending the boundaries of these traditions, not eroding them. Along with this attentiveness and loyalty to place, Rakena’s work maintains and emphasizes the integrity of traditional social norms. Time and space are extended through this practice, and documented through this artwork. Rakena’s dealer Allison Bartley concurs:

(Rakena) employs a new language and new tools derived from digital media and video to invoke a contemporary Māori identity as timeless and fluid. Notions of Māori culture and identity flow from the past, through the present and into the future.

(www.bartleyandcompanyart.co.nz/artist.php?artistID=1567)

Land participates in our social imaginary. It plays a part in the systems of meanings that we collectively identify as being New Zealanders, both Māori and Pākehā.

The challenge Ito identifies is to consider how to theorize culture and social lives as distributed – and places as unbounded and dynamic – without losing the strengths of grounded ethnography, situated practice and cultural specificity and difference.

Ito insists on the grounded and physical ‘techno-local’ as the appropriate position from which to consider connections, affiliations and exclusions. For Ito technology is the materialization of social processes, produced as a result of negotiations between diverse social groups.
Rather than blurring spatial and social boundaries, the phrase ‘technosocial situations’ allows a crucial attentiveness to the local particulars of setting, context, and situation in the face of translocal flows.

Ito and Okabe recognize that technologies alter patterns of social life, and disrupt existing norms and social behaviours. But through their analysis they suggest that technosocial situations participate in the constitution of social order as much as they participate in its destabilization. This is a critical insight, and one that I will deploy together with critical art practices later in this thesis.

Despite the fact that Ito and Okabe’s research mainly focuses on the experiences of mobile phone users in major global cities, there is an attentiveness to particular social settings – one that makes room for different cultural perspectives – that I have found to be rare in other writers in this discipline or on this topic. For this reason I use their phrase ‘technosocial situations’ in this thesis as a way of capturing both the elements of socio-spatial tensions identified in this section (2.5) by a range of writers, but also in order to enable space for cultural and local particulars. The conditions of living in New Zealand are considerably different from those in London or Tokyo where much of their research is undertaken, so in this sense I will be testing Ito and Okabe’s definitions in less mega-urban contexts.
2.6 Requiring andness

For anyone who works with art – as maker or viewer – it is necessary both to remain loyal to oneself and to dare to live the lives of others – temporarily, briefly – so that change is no longer bracketed by indifference but felt as necessary (Bal 2013, 16).

Each of the tensions identified as relevant to this locale (Dunedin, New Zealand) – incorporated in the lands, landscapes, bicultural and technosocial encounters – are in a state of flux. Hence the research requires a *modus operandi* that accepts and makes room for more than one place or position, and a methodological approach that accepts this state of change as necessary. This kind of acceptance is defined throughout the thesis by the term ‘andness.’ I use it to describe a certain way of living in New Zealand that requires not an either/or mentality but an assertive and empathetic and/and way of working, living and socializing, thinking and practicing. Throughout this research I have imagined this concept ‘andness’ as a necessary part of living here and it remains a term that holds open a need for conversation.

Although the term was adopted relatively early in the research process, more recently Mieke Bal, has used this same term to include both the visual and embodied aspects of an artist’s practice her book *Endless Andness* (Bal, 2013). While my own commissioned use of the word was coincidental, Bal’s concept shares affinity with the research in this thesis, particularly in regards to the potential in art to perform ideas, and art as an event that can slow things down and to draw attention to the context of both the artwork/event, and our own position within it.

Bal’s use of the term ‘andness’ draws upon two literary terms: ‘parataxis’, a structure of elements in which difference does not allow for subordination, and ‘deixis’, where meaning is context dependent. Both terms are political, but Bal is careful to point out that to be effective, art should not resort to propaganda. Both terms, as identified by Bal, are relevant to this research. Bal’s ‘andness’ presents a conception of embodied perception, one that is both democratic and empowering, seeking room for more than one viewing position.
While Bal is not specifically referring to cultural difference or the experience of living on distant islands, I find affinity with her ideas. I adopt the term andness to locate the use of the term in my own context. The following chapter seeks to identify theories from a range of disciplines that help to consider and define andness in my own terms.

The intertidal zone assembles land, water and air together, in a way that provides a place to experience andness physically. Through tides and other environmental factors like winds, these combinations of land and water and air (including sea mists) converge in a continual flow – a dynamic suspension – both rhythmic and in many different and changing combinations. The tides, mainly governed by global shifts (the moon, the sun and the rotation of the earth) are also affected by other more local conditions, such as weather, oceanic currents, distance from tidal nodes, and seismic events.

All intertidal zones provide a fluid metaphor of constant movement and change, of challenging and changing ecologies, and of rich diversity, adaptability and activity, political and poetic too. My fascination with these tidal spaces began, as with Bal’s identification, through visceral experience. I am most happy when swimming in the sea, always reluctant to return to shore. Perhaps there is another tension within the research too, found at the shores of these islands, between my personal and social art practices and academic authoring.

Chapter 3 arranges theoretical strategies that align to the idea of andness, around three intertidal metaphors.

performativity', Bal suggests that the most crucial aspect of performance is that it happens in time. Performativity is the ongoing repercussion of that performance and “... necessarily occurs in the wake of that duration” (Bal 2013, 13). In the mist room, Bal’s experience of the visual was slowed down. It forced her to stop, look and in the process of looking to see things differently. She saw her own body, the bodies of others and the spaces themselves as a process, one that is thoroughly context-dependent. In this way, Bal performed the ideas of the artist through her experience of the exhibition.

All intertidal zones provide a fluid metaphor of constant movement and change, of challenging and changing ecologies, and of rich diversity, adaptability and activity, political and poetic too. My fascination with these tidal spaces began, as with Bal’s identification, through visceral experience. I am most happy when swimming in the sea, always reluctant to return to shore. Perhaps there is another tension within the research too, found at the shores of these islands, between my personal and social art practices and academic authoring.

Chapter 3 arranges theoretical strategies that align to the idea of andness, around three intertidal metaphors.
Digital anthropologist De Nicola suggests that we are living in times that require a reconception of the local that makes room for new relationships with both physical and communication landscapes. Three research tensions are considered from a local perspective, and as forces that affect my experience of living in New Zealand as the context for this research. In this chapter I have illustrated the tensions using examples drawn from New Zealand artists.

As established, this research takes place in New Zealand, unstable islands that provide a metaphor for movement as well as placement (Clark 2011). The lands are identified as having different kinds of significance for the two main cultures who live here. In this way our physical geographic tensions have been aligned with continuing bicultural negotiations, identified in sections 2.1 and 2.2.

I suggest that the particular geographic historic and cultural conditions found in these islands make New Zealand a productive place to focus the investigation. These tensions keep dynamic relationships central to the research.

Alongside these tensions, other histories, languages and practices contribute to our understanding of living here. Some identified in this chapter are the picturing of landscapes by European settlers (2.3) and the cultural rhetoric, practices and physical conditions arising when we live at a distance from other lands and populations (2.4). Colonisation and languages of distance are also central to the experience of living in New Zealand. These historic, ongoing and adapting ideologies are identified through this research.

A further tension is identified through the shifting landscapes of global socio-spatial configurations produced through networked media and mobile communication. Some relevant themes relating to these tensions have been outlined (in section 2.5), with a preference identified for Ito and Okabe’s term ‘technosocial’.

Contemporary travel and communication technologies have radically altered some aspects of living in New Zealand. This research has identified that we require ways of engaging with these technologies that don’t discard local perspectives.
2.7.1 Research proposition

- My review of tensions in this chapter has identified that both our conceptions and picturing of land and our languages of media co-presence need to adapt to better reflect a contemporary experience of the local. Several writers in this chapter consider the local as an important starting place to consider these tensions, in order to ground knowledge, to situate practice, and ensure that room is made for cultural specificity and difference. My research takes local places, people and stories in Dunedin, New Zealand as a starting ground from which to examine these identified research tensions.

- These efforts are not unique to art, nor to New Zealand. In the following chapter I will consider a range of theoretical strategies that may be helpful in identifying a contemporary New Zealand experience of the local, that respond to and incorporate ways of thinking about the tensions identified but may be relevant outside of New Zealand too. These strategies are organized through metaphors of the intertidal zone: the beach, coastal wetlands and river mouth estuary. They are employed in an effort to ground theory in movement, as I consider our island shores as fertile, multiple and unstable. Andness is considered in different ways in this chapter, forming connections between these strategies and metaphors.

- This research proposes that through engaging in practice-based and practice-led art research, ways of knowing the local can contribute to an understanding of these research tensions. Chapter 4 will review and consider art practices appropriate to this research problem, including site-specific, socially engaged work and artists that engage with media practices. Chapter 5 will identify practice-based research methodologies appropriate to the research tasks.

- It is proposed that moments of a contemporary local are able to be revealed through these art events. In Chapters 6, 7 and 8 relevant art practices find deployment in three case studies. These case studies describe the development, realization and to some extent the reception of these public art events. Additional information is provided to give context to the places, works and events. Analysis of these projects will help to better understand the research tensions, and will draw together different types of knowledge as they are assembled through these situated art events.
This chapter identifies theoretical frameworks involving poststructuralist strategies, relevant to multiple perspectives, contemporary technosocial conditions and a drive towards andness, identified in the previous chapter.

Along with a theoretical review, this chapter will employ three metaphors drawn from the intertidal zone, in different coastal conditions with examples found in the Otago Harbour. By employing metaphors of tides and repetition, I add to some of the ideas identified in Chapter 2. Like tidal boundaries the chapter identifies moments where differing theoretical frameworks meet and overlap. Ideas ebb and flow in this chapter, and sometimes leave useful material washed up on the beach.

At the conclusion of this chapter some productive overlaps and relationships are identified. These will be employed later in the thesis to support analysis of the case studies.
The line between beach and dune is difficult to define in the field. Over any significant period of time, sediment is always being exchanged between them. The drift line (the high point of material deposited by waves) is one potential demarcation.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surf_beach#Beach_formation, retrieved August 2015

The fundamental characteristics of shoreline ecosystems are determined by the amount of energy in the water available to move sediments. This energy is supplied by wind-driven currents, tidal currents, and wave action ... On a coastline consisting of alternating headlands and embayments, the headlands are most likely to be exposed to strong wave action and to be inhabited by seaweed communities, while the sheltered embayments are more likely to have soft sediments with rooted plant communities.

The first coastal metaphor employed in this chapter is that of the beach. The image on the previous page of Aramoana Beach, shows the sandy embayment of an ocean facing beach. Aramoana is at the mouth of the Otago Harbour, at the head of which is located Dunedin. Aramoana is opposite the albatross colony mentioned in Chapter 2.

One of the tasks required of research is to identify how localized information, examined in detail, can be contextualized in order to contribute to global understandings. It is also expected that knowledge produced and circulated in international contexts will have local effects and that the researcher will be able to articulate this. These tasks live in a state of movement, a dynamic suspension that can be likened to the actions of waves as they activate sea and sand at the beach. Hence the metaphor of the beach is a useful starting point to explore the aims of my research; namely to develop an analysis of new ways of experiencing the local, in light of our changing roles and relationships to lands and landscapes, suggested by contemporary technosocial engagement. While generally used as a noun to define a particular place, I suggest that a ‘beach’ is more usefully considered as a verb, denoting a continual rhythmic activity of this place in process.

Figure 20: Map detail showing Aramoana (graphic Martin Kean).

Aramoana marks the entrance to Otago Harbour. It includes two harbour facing beaches or embayments (locally known as Big Beach, and Shelly Beach), and a naturally formed small sand dune peninsula or ‘spit’ (Shelly Beach faces east from the spit). Between the two beaches there is an artificially made ‘mole’ or breakwater, designed to reduce the shifting sands and to protect a navigable entrance to the harbor for large shipping. A small village was established at Aramoana in the 1880s as a pilot station, to support navigation around the mouth of the Otago Harbour.
Archeological evidence also supports the area as a site of dwelling for very early Māori. This settlement is now home to around 150 residents.

Despite the efforts to contain the shifting of sands, the natural reshaping of these lands continues, and the beaches at Aramoana are unstable and changeable. The surf and waves, created by atmospheric conditions offshore, are oceanic in nature. While a cycle of tides regulates some of the flow between sea and land, the oceans’ bigger patterns also effect wave action on the shore, and are particularly experienced at the beach as surf.

The powerful action of waves moves sand and constantly changes the physical shape and form of the shoreline. The beach is formed of land and water, particles held in a dynamic suspension. I propose that this metaphor provides one way to consider the effects of technosocial engagement for those living on southern islands. The instability and ever-moving status of the beach creates a place for thinking about changeability and shifting perspectives.

To understand how this idea might operate, this chapter section asks the question ‘How do some frameworks for the local align with this metaphor of the beach as a set of dynamic conditions’? It takes a closer look at the critique of images provided by Roland Barthes (1973) and Martin Jay (1993) and their theorization of looking. Two further essays by feminist theorists Elspeth Probyn (1990) and Donna Haraway (1988) are then considered, as they focus on connections between location and looking.
3.1.2

Looking at landscapes image and rhetoric

Research tensions in Chapter 2 identify friction between the rhetoric of national or place-based identity and its dominant Eurocentric assumptions, and the rhetoric of technological mediation, and in particular displaced and mobile communication.

The first framework considered in this section surrounds the conditions of looking and locating, and considers writers who propose a critical unpairing of the roles and function of sight and site. The employment of the term ‘rhetoric’ is used in Roland Barthes’ 1961 essay “Rhetoric of the Image” where he considers the relationship between the content, form and composition of image-messages (both intentional and persuasive). Put simply, the visual forms that a message may take will affect the meaning of that message. These visual forms draw upon visual conventions and contexts. In his analysis of advertising images Barthes identified the coded (connotative), non-coded (denotative) and linguistic messages as three ways that images operate. The connotation and denotation of an image may be considered separately, just as text and meaning are connected but separate in the linguistic message. By separating these message systems we see how the values of the image as message (its connotation) are crafted, and become readable according to the particular historic and cultural conditions of the reader (Barthes, 1964).

To apply an understanding of Barthes’ framework to this research, we can refer back to the landscape images of New Zealand in section 2.3.1 (Landscape traditions in European art). While only one of these images (figure 12) is designed as an advertising image, all four images present a variety of New Zealand pictorial landscapes in ways that associate the image of the lands with scenic values consistent with a European cultural frame. In Barthes’ terms, the landscape images are both material (have denotation, and represent particular lands) as well as being full of connotation, reflecting persuasive European values such as natural beauty (including the sublime and picturesque). These landscape images were not intended to be viewed from the site of the painter or the photographer however, but were going to travel. Whether the audience was an intended tourist, colonial property speculator, or poetry reader each image presents an idealized natural experience, and the narratives communicated
carry particular cultural connotations. In each case the context of
the viewer would have been different from that of the image-maker.
However, the tools of visual rhetoric were employed in order to
share a framework within which the same story was told and seen.
The four images also span historical contexts. We might read a
nineteenth-century painting in a different way to a photograph found
on a contemporary website. And yet a rhetoric surrounding the ways
that New Zealand landscapes are depicted connects these images
across time. The lack of direct human presence evades connection
to a human sense of time (reflected, for example, in the title This
Timeless Land), and yet the tidied-up landscapes in Heaphy’s earlier
painting offer the promise of domestication, and an opportunity to
recognize the land in terms of human effort. Despite the fast-paced
technological change we are experiencing, in this sense at least, the
rhetoric surrounding images of New Zealand landscapes do not seem
to have changed much within this trope. 34

John Berger’s book Ways of Seeing (1973) and later, Berger and Jean
Mohr’s (1982) Another Way of Telling, both identify the structures
of rhetoric through a gap, or ‘abyss’ that exists in the photographic
image in particular. They define this gap as found “… between the
moment recorded and the moment of looking” (Berger and Mohr
1982, 89). We might recall Barthes and Berger were looking towards
photography as an increasingly powerful form of image-making and
circulation of ideas in their historical context of late modernism.
The increasingly dominant nature and circulation of images in
contemporary times, as well as framed acts of looking are both
relevant to my research.

I would like to suggest here that the act of looking is still a primary and
pervasive form of linking meaning to experience, mediated by a wide
range of messages, both online and off.

Meaning is not stored in an image but in the relationships
and connections between that image and the context in
which it is seen and read. This context is both a physical
location and a cultural one, including the personal, social
and cultural conditions of the embodied viewer.

34. As Berger and Mohr put it “There is nothing except a
coded message” (Berger and Mohr 1982, 116).
Martin Jay (1993, 187) considers the entanglement of visuality, language and knowledge as ubiquitous in Western cultural and social practices, and he claims that since antiquity (as identified in section 2.3):

The development of Western philosophy cannot be understood it bears repeating, without attending to its habitual dependence on visual metaphors of one sort or another. From the shadows playing on the wall of Plato's cave and Augustine's praise of the divine light to Descartes’ ideas available to a ‘steadfast mental gaze’ and the Enlightenment’s faith in the data of our senses, the ocularcentric underpinnings of our philosophical tradition have been undeniably pervasive. Whether in terms of speculation, observation, or revelatory illumination, Western philosophy has tended to accept without question the traditional sensual hierarchy.

Jay’s analysis outlines the history of Western art, and its political effects, as a radical imperialism. It was not until the advent of Impressionist painting, suggests Jay, that the dominant scopic regime became questioned, initially through Manet’s ‘shocking’ subjects returning our gaze (Jay 1993, 155). Subsequent Western art history and thought provides moments of critique of the uncomplicated collapse of the visual experience with the visual field. For example, Marcel Duchamp’s assemblages “… self consciously undermined the primacy of the visual form itself” (Jay 1993, 164), employing discontinuous visual objects as puns and metaphors in order to critique the purely “retinal”.

Jay outlines a range of literary traditions refuting ocular-centricism, tracing a trajectory from Henri Bergson (1896) through to twentieth-century thinkers actively seeking anti-visual models, exemplified by Henri Lefebvre’s socially produced spaces (1960-90’s) and Guy Debord’s Situationist politics of the 1960s.

Henri Bergson is one writer who is regularly cited by twenty-first century theorists as one of the first modern philosophers to “…dispute the nobility of sight” (Jay 1993, 186). In Matter and Memory (1896, 46-47) Bergson asserted that the body could be considered as the ground of all our perceptions.

As my body moves in space, all the other images vary, while that image, my body, remains invariable. I must, therefore, make it a centre, to which I refer all other images … My body is that which stands out as the centre of these perceptions.
Bergson asserted that our body is the ground of our acting in the world, an instrument of action, and the source of our knowledge through durée or “experienced time” which prioritizes knowledge gained from lived action, rather than representations. Furthermore, memory for Bergson consisted of a range of sensorial embodied experiences—tastes, smells, feelings—thus not limited to sights.

These traditions of thought, which reduce the importance of the visual in favour of other forms of knowledge—corporeal; sensorial; social and material—offer us some frameworks for considering the research tensions identified in visual rhetoric. They also potentially offer an alternative to the Eurocentric bias identified in depictions of New Zealand landscapes.

A comparison can be made with the cultures and imaginaries of internet studies. While clearly a more recent tradition, much early internet research grew out of theoretical interests in virtual reality and cyberspace, and a focus on spaces and places that seem to be constituted apart from the rest of social life. This has been identified as a strongly North American cultural interest with concomitant bias (Christine Hine 2000, Daniel Miller and Don Slater 2000, Misuko Ito 2005) and compared to exotic armchair travel “... creating virtual culture as authentic culture” (Tuhiwai-Smith 199, 102). In contrast Ito’s notion of technosocial practices, and Miller and Slater’s (2000) critique of these emerging internet histories, together propose that “…we need to treat internet media as continuous with and embedded in other social spaces...” (Miller and Slater 2000, 5).

Useful connections can be made between the primacy of visual senses (mainly text and image constitute early internet media) and the unspoken cultural imperialism of early internet studies with the primacy of visuality in European culture, and its implications for colonial art and attitudes.
Writing in the 1980s, some feminist and activist groups were attempting to deconstruct forms of power encoded in visual messages and their frameworks. Two essays are considered here, as they provide useful definitions for the terms ‘local’ (Probyn 1990) and ‘situated knowledge’ (Haraway 1988).

The need to ‘locate’ experience is regularly cited in a number of postmodern feminist writers, and this challenge has become overlooked in more recent configurations of the local, in times of networked media.

Feminist writers Elspeth Probyn and Donna Haraway were writing around the same time, amid a group of feminist writers who were critical of universalizing scholarship, which they considered was representing a limited range of perspectives. “The scholarship of modern Western culture has been marked by the attempt to reveal general, all-encompassing principles which can lay bare the basic features of natural and social reality” (Nicholson 1990, 2). This tendency to seek generalizable truths transcends the local and the specific, and has been referred to as ‘a God’s eye view’ or ‘a view from nowhere’. Feminist concerns ranged from a critique of epistemologies (Sandra Harding, 1986) to the politics of representation (Radha Hedge 1998, Michael Shapiro 1988, Judith Butler 1998). For some, the gendered body became a metaphor for our located-ness in space and time, requiring personal and specific rather than general forms of knowledge. In this sense our bodies are always located.

Elspeth Probyn (in her 1990 essay “Travels in the Postmodern, Making Sense of the Local”) suggests that locality is experienced not as a pure state but “... only [as] a fragmented set of possibilities that can be articulated into a momentary politics of time and place” (Probyn 1990, 197). She argues that the local is not an end point, but a starting point, and a place from which analyses can be made.

Three terms are claimed: ‘location’, ‘local’ and ‘locale’ and Probyn argues that each articulates different levels of abstraction. “The triad of local, locale and location raises epistemological questions of what constitutes knowledge: of where we speak from, and which voices are sanctioned” (Probyn 1990, 178).
Of the three terms, it is Probyn’s use of the term ‘location’, which Probyn defines as “…the methods by which one comes to locate our sites of research” (ibid) that I initially found useful. Location connotes a political position, connecting the position of the knower and what is able to be knowable (and) “… renders certain experience ‘true’ and ‘scientific’ while excluding others” (Probyn 1990, 178). Probyn requests that the knower acknowledge where they speak from, and who they are speaking on behalf of. Drawing upon Gayatri Spivak’s (1988) question around ‘whether the subaltern can speak’, Probyn considers her definition of location as a process that renders the “…place of the investigator transparent” (Spivak 1988, 284). Probyn draws upon Spivak to remind us that “The researcher… is never outside the cultural, political, and economic conditions that allow for only certain questions to be formulated” (Probyn 1990, 183). Probyn recasts Spivak’s question, from ‘whether the subaltern can speak’, to ‘where does the subaltern speak from’?

**Location determines the processes of sites.**

Location determines the processes of sites, their orders, and sequences that become established (and hence fixed) ways of knowing. “[Location] is also that process which determines what we experience as knowledge and what we know as experience” (Probyn 1990, 184).

**‘Locale’ is the articulation of place and event.**

Probyn describes ‘locale’ as the articulation of place and event. Locale recognizes a struggle between ”being positioned” and the everyday pleasures of living. She suggests that “…we are always negotiating various locales…” which may be multiple and contradictory. This definition makes room for the many contemporary communication spaces that we find ourselves participating in. We are never fixed in locale, but this definition offers an opportunity to separate place and event and to consider these as movable definitions and redefinitions working within other political structures.

**‘The local’ directly relates to a specific time and place, embodied practices.**

Probyn’s third term, the ‘local’ – is identified as directly related to a particular time and place. I am particularly keen to adopt this term. For Probyn, the local never exists as a pure state but rather the local is a collection of embodied practices “… a fragmented set of possibilities that can be articulated into a momentary politics of time and place” (Probyn 1990, 187).

35. Probyn cites the home as an example of ‘locale’ where we may enjoy the pleasures of everyday living while recognizing the patriarchal forces implied in the domestic relations of maintaining the home create multiple and contradictory pressures among these everyday pleasures.
Using Probyn’s terms, the local offers a strategy, it helps us to see how ‘locale’ (place + event) and ‘location’ (exclusory ways of knowing) are inscribed upon us, at this time and in this place. Rather than being abstract, the local, when defined in this way, encompasses many particular experiences, “… directly stitched into the place and time which give rise to them” (Probyn 1990, 178). My research develops this definition of the local as a strategic approach, able to help with the work of defining my context as integral to the research project.

Probyn’s critique of the researcher position is echoed in Māori academic Linda Tuhiwai-Smith’s book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999). Tuhiwai-Smith calls for research methods that do not cast away Māori subjects in the name of research.

**Tuhiwai-Smith articulates a methodical critique of the Western paradigm of research and knowledge.**

From the position of an Indigenous and ‘colonized’ woman, Tuhiwai-Smith outlines the cultural assumptions, motivations and values that inform Western research practices, and the positivist traditions in which research is viewed as a scientific, ‘objective’ process. For Tuhiwai-Smith it is the Western alignment of research and representation that forms the four cornerstones of Western knowledge: imperialism, history, writing and theory. These forms of imperialism are delivered and administered through colonialism: “Colonialism became imperialism’s outpost, the fort and port of imperial outreach”(Tuhiwai-Smith 1999, 23). Tuhiwai-Smith rejects the term “post-colonialism” as it implies the end of colonialism which, Tuhiwai-Smith claims, continues to have a profound impact on Indigenous people. Tuhiwai-Smith articulates the need for researchers to critique their own “gaze” for a radical reformulation of what constitutes knowledge: proposing a de-colonizing process.

In the second half of her book, Tuhiwai-Smith provides a framework for self-determination, for conducting research by and with Indigenous communities, through the development of Indigenous research agendas. She articulates a transition from Māori as researched, to Māori as researcher. Her “Indigenous Research Agenda” puts self-determination at the centre of what becomes a political goal “… necessarily involving the processes of transformation, of decolonization, of healing and of mobilization
as peoples” (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999, 116). Interestingly, like Hau’ofa’s (1993) invocation of the ocean as a better metaphor for understanding the Pacific, Tuhiwai-Smith employs the metaphor of ocean tides in the development of a chart to articulate her “Indigenous Research Agenda” (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999, 116):

From a Pacific peoples’ perspective the sea is a giver of life, it sets time and conveys movement...the tides represent movement, change, process, life, inward and outward flows of ideas, reflections and actions. The four directions named here – decolonization, healing, transformation and mobilization – represent processes. They are not goals or ends in themselves. They are processes which connect, inform and clarify the tensions between the local, the regional and the global. They are processes which can be incorporated into practices and methodologies.

In this sense Tuhiwai-Smith is localizing research processes within embodied practices. Butt’s three aporias (outlined in Chapter 2) are examples of Probyn’s location and Tuhiwai-Smith’s colonizing, positivist traditions operating in the New Zealand context, when research becomes data. And as Butt points out, the data-centric notion of new media fits neatly within colonial epistemologies. “The formation of objective, storyless data via, for example, GPS – even for the purposes of developing narrative media practices through ‘locative’ works – is difficult to reconcile with the non-transferable yet profoundly social relationship with land that is characteristic of indigenous epistemology” (Butt 2005, 3). However, for Butt, and others identified in Chapter 2, Indigenous new media art practices can provide ways of presenting non-Western experience, consistent with Tuhiwai-Smith’s localizing processes.

Through Probyn’s definition of location as a necessarily political positioning, Tuhiwai-Smith’s call for Indigenous methodologies for researching the non-Western subject, and alongside Butt’s identification of the limitations and opportunities provided through new media art practices, a picture emerges of landscapes as social, cultural and political processes, rather than fixed places, consistent with W.J.T. Mitchell’s definition of landscapes as cultural practices (described in Section 2.2). This emphasis on landscapes as processes and practices aligns with my thoughts about the beach as a continual rhythmic activity and a set of dynamic conditions.
In contrast to the political frameworks that surround location, the local emerges as a term that is bound to a particular time and place, fettered to personal, social and cultural experience. This helps us to recognize the affects of location and to develop strategies that resist hegemony and allow a rewriting of place.

A second important essay that makes room for the local is Donna Haraway’s “Situated Knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspectives” (Haraway 1988, in Nicholson ed. 1990). Haraway is also troubled by rhetoric, in this case the rhetoric of science as a series of persuasive efforts. Seeking to deconstruct the universality of scientific truth claims, Haraway proposes that we value ‘embodied’ accounts of knowing and that we consider all we know as mediated through specific and historic contexts. Haraway’s proposition does not dismiss scientific forms outright, nor does she see all Western truth as necessarily caught up in power moves. She seeks a two-fold recognition that historically contingent knowledge be always considered alongside a critical practice that recognizes the semiotic technologies for making meanings. She describes the rhetoric of science and the making of sciences as “…a very loose fit” (Haraway 1988, 576), identifying her own ambivalence in relation to this rhetoric.

As with Berger and Barthes and later Tuhiwai-Smith, Haraway also considers the problem of vision and visualizing technologies as separating us from the knowable, and as supporting binary oppositions of seer and seen, object and subject. Once we consider these technologies through the purposes they serve, Haraway suggests that it is possible to uncover the conventions of looking, and through this uncovering to also make room for “a postmodern insistence on irreducible difference and radical multiplicity of local knowledges” (Haraway 1988, 579) found, for example, in the bicultural experiences in New Zealand and described in Chapter 2. Haraway does not dismiss vision as an important sense and tool for accessing knowledge. Rather she seeks to reclaim vision through insisting upon a particular and embodied vision, always accepting

Haraway urges us to consider polyvocal knowledges as both contradictory and necessary, claiming that we need to “… partially translate knowledges among very different – and power differentiated – communities” (Haraway 1988, 580).
that all visualizing technologies are active perceptual systems, participa-
ing in other systems: technical, social and psychological.

**Haraway argues that visualizing technologies “... should not be allegories of infinite mobility and interchangeability but of elaborate specificity and difference...”** (Haraway 1988, 583).

Such a view emphasizes the particular and not the universal, a view from somewhere rather than a view from above or from nowhere. Beyond this located position, however, Haraway (1988, 592) contends that neither this view, nor this location, can be reduced to a form or representation that we can control:

Situated knowledges require that the object of knowledge be pictured as an actor and agent, not as a screen or ground, never finally as a slave to the master that closes off the dialectic in his unique agency and his authorship of ‘objective’ knowledge.

Haraway's proposal eradicates the ‘logic of discovery’ that relates to people as well as objects and places, in favour of a renewed emphasis on “... the power-charged social relation of conversation” (Haraway 1988, 593). This acknowledges the agency of the world in knowledge, including, as Haraway puts it, making room for the world to have an independent sense of humour. A conversation requires us to position ourselves, to speak as well as to listen, to accept in order to respond.

Thirty years after it was written, there is much in Haraway’s essay that connects to the experience of living and practicing art in Dunedin. Looking back, we can match the multiple contrasting and contradictory stories of arrival by settlers in New Zealand, both Māori and Pākehā, with Haraway's *making room for difference*, in particular in the effort to accept radical multiplicity of local knowledges. The need to attempt the partial translation of these knowledges is also evident in the continued efforts in some facets of the bicultural project, albeit “… among very different – and power differentiated – communities” (Haraway 1988, 580). Similarly, the notion of being involved in a conversation, with and between people and place, offers a socially engaged and site-specific method that appeals to me, both socially and politically. Haraway urges us to recognize difference, not by aggrandizing the other, nor by pretending that we are able to occupy the other’s perspective, but to *engage in empathetic conversation.*
Aside from useful grounds that we may share, however, there are three particular strategies within Haraway’s proposal that I will test in this research:

1. Firstly Haraway’s situated knower is specifically an individual. I am interested in how a temporary collective or framed community engagement may respond to the bounds of situated knowledge. Haraway’s position requires that we politically locate ourselves but with empathy for others. Her metaphor of conversation requires the speaker to also listen: situated and embodied. A conversation is always a politically charged experience, and we ought to own our position. However, a conversation is made between individuals. I am interested in extending these ideas to consider communities or groups of people, living in a shared time and place. By what means can we be actively localised together?

2. Secondly, while Haraway is interested in science, I am activating her ideas in the fields of contemporary art practices. The art practices considered in this research are consciously situated in Dunedin, spanning the years 2008-2012. My interest lies in forms of art that do not only present or represent coded forms of knowledge visually, but that also encourage other forms of engagement. Experiences of the local are designed to take place through situated events and each enlists social engagement, networked media and particular sites as tools for knowledge co-production. These art practices are conveyed within social, collaborative and site-specific events, where collectively an audience engage in situating practices. Set outside of gallery contexts – where we often enter and engage as individuals who are primarily using our visual sense – these art practices require social engagement, often collectively (relating to the first concern above). How these are negotiated through on- and offline media, personal and inter-personal relationships with people, place and mediated forms of knowledge will be considered in Chapters 6-8.

3. Thirdly, I hope to shift Haraway’s situated knowledge into a definition of situated practices. Haraway’s recasting suggests that we reconsider location as an agent, not as a resource. Her model offers new ways to consider the landscape (and multiple natural beings and objects within) as part of an ongoing and power-charged “social relation of conversation”.

For my research Haraway’s boundaries offer a different conception of place, one that is material, semiotic and generative. This conception accepts that New Zealand’s far-flung oceanic environment is relevant (we are always situated, embodied, particular) but also that we produce knowledge as active participants in a conversation, within and between our own and other local places. It is through these conversations that we recognize boundaries – our own and others’.

Although her essay was written well before the popular use of the internet, Haraway’s proposition – that boundaries materialise in social interaction – nevertheless has a direct connection to and implications for globally networked contexts. The pervasive nature of images and visualizing technologies has accelerated exponentially since the writing and initial distribution of her essay. And while Haraway’s claim to reorganize objects of knowledge in a network of relations may have been realized technologically, it has by no means been adopted with its social, psychological, epistemological or political implications intact.

There is a connection too, between Haraway’s insights, and Mieke Bal’s analysis of Ann Veronica Janssens’ work. Finding herself and her vision obscured by a room full of mist, Bal attempts to realize how an art practice – abstract and indeterminate – may challenge particular ways of seeing, and force another kind of viewing activity, and hence another way of knowing ourselves. The slow unfolding access to seeing provides for Bal an instance of participatory seeing. In this way Bal identifies with Haraway’s situated knower: “I aim to analyze and understand how such experiments in passing from one reality to another constitute the conditions of possibility for political effectiveness” (Bal 2013 n.p).

The beach and its dynamic conditions also create an ambivalence, a haziness (or kind of mist) where sea, land and horizon merge, contained in contradiction: situated and in movement. Such conditions appeal to me, as both metaphors for andness, and instances of situated practices. In Haraway’s terms these are “insistent ambiguities” (591).
So we find ourselves back on the beach. Earlier in this chapter I asked the question: ‘how can some frameworks for the local be recognized in this metaphor of the beach as a dynamic set of conditions?’ That chapter section focused on the politics of location, as a process of political positioning, and one with a history of looking and objectifying knowledge. Now, I have brought my swimming clothes with me and will change into them and immerse myself in the environment we began with, in order to connect the metaphor to actual situations.

• I am standing in the waves on the beach at Aramoana, and identify three types of looking. For a start, looking from my position knee-deep in the cool waves, I see the horizon. It is hazy and a little difficult to see where the sea and the sky meet. It is far in the distance. It occurs to me that Haraway’s critique of objectification, of knowledge from a distance, recognizes that such knowledge can only be hazy. Is that a passing ship? Or perhaps it is a cloud? I can’t separate this kind of looking from the scenic traditions of landscape in European painting. This kind of looking has been stained with connotations of natural beauty, of inhuman scale and of longing and distance, experienced by those early settlers for whom arrival by sea meant a vast separation from home.

• I turn around. My children have their shoes off and are searching for treasures in the sand. One son already has his pockets full, heavy with shells. This is a detailed investigation of flotsam, a kind of looking FOR, an investigative type of looking, perhaps the start of a scientific enquiry. Debris of all sorts – mostly natural, with some odd forms of plastic and rope discarded by sailors – is exhibited.
on the beach for this kind of looking. My children’s eyes collect and organize, discard or wonder. This beach has many colonies of shellfish, and spiral seashells cover much of the sand, small cones and flatter spirals, washed up on the beach according to the patterns of the tide. We try and make sense of our looking, by making connections with that which we already know. Is this how a conversation begins?

I turn back and walk further into the sea, until my body is suspended in, and inevitably moving with the waves. Here, looking is presencing (swimming in this surf, I must keep my eyes on the waves, they are powerful and insistent and force me to give them my attention). Here my normally terrestrial body must work with the rules of the sea; or submit to its own energy and dynamics. I am invigorated by this urgent movement, by my body’s relative weightlessness, working with and resisting the sea’s force. It is here where I become. I am a part of the rhythmic to-and-fro, the tidal pull at the edge of land and the edge of the sea. Not one place but both places, and never still. Under these conditions my looking is only towards the next wave, to see where and with what force I will resist or submit. The local is a continual negotiation.

Figure 23: Children searching for treasures, Big Beach, Aramoana, (photograph Caroline McCaw).
Figure 24: Close up of shells, Big Beach, Aramoana, (photograph Leyton Glen).

Figure 25: My eyes are on the waves as they constantly threaten to relocate me, (photograph Leyton Glen).
3.2 Location, co-location and heterotopia

3.2.1 Coastal wetlands

**Boundary systems between water and land**

The New Zealand Government’s Resource Management Act 1991 defines wetland as ‘permanently or intermittently wet areas, shallow water, and land water margins that support a natural ecosystem of plants and animals that are adapted to wet conditions.’


**Wetland ecology**: Combining the attributes of both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, but falling outside each category, wetlands inhabit a space betwixt and between the disciplines of terrestrial and aquatic ecology. Consequently, their unique properties are not adequately addressed by present ecological paradigms. With their unique characteristics of standing water or waterlogged soils, anoxic conditions, and plant and animal adaptations, wetlands serve as testing grounds for ‘universal’ ecological theories and principles such as succession and energy flow, concepts developed primarily with aquatic or terrestrial ecosystems in mind. These boundary ecosystems also provide an excellent laboratory for the study of principles related to transition zones, ecological interfaces, and ecotones. In order for wetlands to be protected or restored in the best possible manner, a multidisciplinary approach to their study is required.

To the southwestern side of the Aramoana township extends expansive salty mudflats from the head of the Aramoana Spit around the habourside to the small village of Te Ngaru. (See map page 74). This area is a protected wildlife sanctuary, which hosts a range of plant and animal life, both native and exotic. These protected wetlands are an example of many areas of the Otago Harbour that differ greatly in depth and exposure to variable conditions, according to the tide. In some areas of the harbour the wetlands have been drained to make dry land for roads and houses. In other areas they have been excavated to create shipping channels. In a few areas they remain as mudflats at low tide, and shallow waters at high tide, usually hosting a wide variety of sea life, including tuaki, or cockles (the small-necked clam) - a traditional local delicacy.

In this section a second relevant framework sympathetic to andness is identified through the employment of explicitly spatial metaphors to define different types of adjacent political arrangements. Michel Foucault’s (1967) conception of ‘heterotopia’ was first used to define the arrangements of adjacent spaces in urban contexts. More recently heterotopia has been used to describe our layered experiences of both consuming media (such as television, and the internet) and also our engagement with mobile communication. The metaphor of coastal wetlands seeks to make connections between different types of coinciding practices. In the case of coastal wetlands these are places of both land and sea, and in this research the local is considered from a perspective of both location and co-location.

3.2.2 Heterotopia, urban contexts and practices

Foucault (like Probyn and Haraway) considers the power relationship associated with looking. Relevant to this research is Foucault’s interest in the ways that these visual and spatial power relationships, embodied in architecture, may be co-located and performed in everyday spaces. Foucault outlined his concept of heterotopia in a lecture (d’ Autre Espaces) given in 1967, identifying space as the central anxiety of the 20th Century:

We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at the moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersections with its own skein (Foucault 1967, trans J. Miskowiec 1986).
Speaking at least twenty-five years before the widespread and public use of the internet Foucault’s metaphors draw upon mirrors, (and the original meaning of virtual), and analogue media – such as radio – as well as early experiences of travel technologies, to reflect upon the significant impact that locational dispersal has upon our experience of the world.

As has been explained, heterotopia (multiple spaces) is Foucault’s term to describe the imposition of several, real and imagined spaces in and at one time. Heterotopia often appear to be public spaces, and are in fact carefully controlled and controlling spaces, which are penetrable by publics. Museums, shopping malls and cemeteries – for example – are each governed by carefully contrived rules and regulations, permissions and behaviours required for entry and exit.

Each heterotopia has an originally distinct function but this can change with the needs of societies. Articulated by Foucault through six principles, heterotopia are constituted in every human culture in various forms. They range from ‘crisis heterotopia’ (the first principle) identified in privileged or restricted places, such as boarding schools, through to ‘heterotopias of deviation’ such as prisons (Foucault’s second principle). Heterotopia can be a single real place that juxtaposes several spaces, such as a botanical garden (the third principle) collecting and representing specimens from different places in one real place. ‘Heterotopias of time’ such as museums (Foucault’s fourth principle) enclose in one place objects from all times and styles. They exist in time but also exist outside of time. ‘Heterotopias of ritual or purification’ are Foucault’s fifth principle, spaces that are isolated and penetrable yet not freely accessible like a public place, a church being an example. These examples of heterotopia are co-located in society, adjacent to other urban sites with very different functions. The last (sixth) trait of heterotopia identifies their function in relation to all other available spaces, an imaginary order, an example being the Google search engine.

Heterotopia either create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, or create a space that is meticulously like another real space. The colonization process would be a good example of the latter:

Brothels and colonies are two extreme types of heterotopia, and if we think, after all, that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as
far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until present, the greatest instrument of economic development ... but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilization without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes that place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates (Foucault 1967, trans J. Miskowiec 1986).

Here, in his lecture’s closing statement Foucault identifies colonization, and even the ship itself, as models of heterotopia. His identification of colonies with brothels aligns pleasure, risk, temporary and self-identifying practices.

While conceptually theorized in 1967, forms of heterotopia stretch back in history and continue today, and though they may take different forms, Foucault’s model with its six traits, provides a useful tool for understanding my research problem from a local perspective.

Across the road from my house there is another home, a primary school that two of my children attend, a secondary boys boarding school and a park. These are four very different types of spaces, where different activities are all practiced behind a kerbside no longer than 100 meters. Generally fences divide the boundaries, but more than this, the boundaries between different types of experiences are governed by the different expectations and practices of the people who work, visit and live there. Heterotopia describes not just a series of different and adjacent spaces, but more importantly the contexts and practices of being in those spaces.
Similarly, in relation to our contemporary experiences of media, Foucault’s notion of heterotopia has been employed by numerous recent writers, as it provides a useful way to explore “... the multiplicity and dispersion of mediatized and non-mediatized spaces” (Poster 2004, 4). Poster is not the first to recognize the parallels between Foucault’s observation of adjacent urban institutional spaces as practices akin to our contemporary media experiences, where we may simultaneously engage in several different spatial and cultural contexts and practices. However, some caution needs to be exercised in terms of identifying the contexts and practices of these different experiences, not simply overlaying one type of heterotopic experience onto another, as the colonizer would, nor seeing the internet as a boat, floating in space that is no place. This research considers heterotopia alongside other frameworks, providing an understanding of andness that contributes to an appreciation of being in New Zealand, amid the identified research tensions.

3.2.3 Contemporary heterotopia, urban spaces, public spaces and communication in coffee shops

Foucault’s original focus on heterotopia as experienced in urban contexts is also relevant. Many parallels have been drawn between the internet and the city as a form of public space or public sphere (agora) both in terms of an exchange system and as a space of information sharing. A tension is identified here between models of open communication, embraced by the internet, and the writings of earlier feminist thinkers, who recognized the need for situated and historical specificity.

Jurgen Habermas (1962) framed ideas of the public sphere as an open model of communication and participation. Drawing from the café, learned society and the salon as early eighteenth-century examples, Habermas noted that concepts of public opinion and conversations that occur between people in public space emerged at the same time as democracy. The notion that a physical place can be a discursive site is connected to and dependent upon open models of communication, and a sense of place in urban environments that is both familiar and yet disconnected and that enables certain types of critical debate. For Habermas, these debates occur in physical face-to-face meetings as well as through mass media and through art, literature and drama.

By ‘public sphere,’ we mean first of all a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed. Access to the public sphere is open in principle to all citizens (Habermas 1962, 231).
While subject to criticism, this model of the public sphere still forms the basis of a connected audience as defined by our consumption and critique of mass media narratives, and has also been used to describe communication within online communities. While Habermas’ model proposes more open forms of communication and participation, his urban model and his general rather than particular definitions of the public also overlook the particular power differentials affecting individual access to conversations.  

Habermas’ model also proposes a geographic closeness. Café conversations are enabled through and between urban neighbours, and this calls upon the city as the model of public space.

The phrase “a view from nowhere”, also referred to by Probyn in Section 3.1.3 is used by both philosopher Thomas Nagel (1986) and more generally in journalism. Nagel identifies our ability to have both particular and general perspectives and provides both a defense and a critique of objectivity. Writing around the same time as Haraway, Nagel spoke to a different audience, and yet his views share some of the same concerns. His challenge that we “…transcend our particular viewpoint and develop an expanded consciousness that takes in the world more fully” (Nagel 1986, 5) has been adopted in journalism as a goal for those who seek objective reporting. However, it is also used to describe a passive act of omission that seeks legitimacy through claims of universality. These concepts are clearly in opposition to claims for the importance of located and situated knowledge argued by Probyn and Haraway.

Early conceptions of the internet such as Howard Rheingold’s (1993) model of a ‘virtual community’ drew initially on Habermas’ definitions in order to describe the communication space of the internet as a form of public space.

There is an intimate connection between informal conversations, the kind that take place in communities and virtual communities, in the coffee shops and computer conferences, and the ability of large social groups to govern themselves without monarchs or dictators. This social-political connection shares a metaphor with the idea of cyberspace, for it takes place in a kind of virtual space that has come to be known by specialists as the public sphere (Rheingold 1993, Rheingold.com, Virtual community 2nd edition, ch 10).

37. The salon, for example, was by no means a space that ‘all’ citizens had access to; instead it represented a specific class, a gendered and educated sub-category of public life.

38. While I do live in a small city, it is only a ten-minute drive from any point in this city to reach rural pasture. The next closest city is a five-hour drive away. There is no doubt that the internet and mobile forms of communication have radically reduced the sense of isolation for many New Zealanders living in both cities and in rural areas. By writing this thesis from Dunedin, outside of a main global centre, I am seeking to form and reflect upon open communication as it is relevant to this locale, as a place and event.
Although Rheingold draws upon the metaphor of coffee shops proposed by Habermas, the question about the extent to which coffee shops have changed in our time affects the interpretation of this metaphor. Interestingly, contemporary writers are identifying the convergence of digital and public spaces such as networked communication and cafés. Kazys Varnelis and Anne Friedberg (2008) suggest that cafés are now places where individuals share their proximity with others. However, even though they are ‘co-located’, there is a tendency to prefer to communicate via mobile media rather than engage in Habermas-style debate. Typically we see people texting on mobile phones while sitting at adjacent tables. Members of this public are co-located with others who are similarly in a place that is networked and elsewhere. As Kazys Varnelis and Anne Friedberg put it “... being online in the presence of others …eases the disconnect with the local that the network creates” (Varnelis and Friedberg 2008, 8).

Similarly, Mark Poster’s employment of a heterotopic framework articulates globalization as an assemblage of dislocated humans and networked digital information. As a decentralized network of machines, the internet does not lend itself to control by the nation-state in the same ways as offline media do, and hence offers potentially destabilizing alternatives.

Media becomes a site that may transform the way that people engage with language, cultural objects, as well as with location. Poster argues that new media produces a specific materiality:

In these postmodern geographies or virtual geographies one is simultaneously in several places, with perhaps a different identity in each location, seeing what appears before one in the street, but listening to a distant, telephonic voice or engaged in online gaming with participants from all over the globe. Space is now at once nearby and distant, local and global, but also multiple and fragmented, morphing the urban body not only into diverse shapes but also into several incarnations. Spaces, identities and information machines now combine into new forms of practice that seriously shift the cultural landscape away from its familiar modern parameters. These locations are neither non-places nor nowhere but actual spaces of mobile communications. And who is to say if the remote intimacy they afford is not equal or superior to its proximate forms (Poster 2004, 9).

39. Poster is drawing upon Edward Soja’s definitions of postmodern geographies (Soja 1989) and McKenzie Wark’s (1994) proposition of virtual geography already mentioned above.
Poster’s invocation of Foucault’s notion of heterotopia is interesting within the scope of this research for at least two reasons.

Firstly, attention is drawn to Foucault’s recognition of the role of mediated and parallel spaces as they are performed through institutions. There is a recognition of the role of media, and the mixed reality experiences offered in single places and times. While the museum for Foucault, is conceived as a model heterotopic space, explicitly layering objects with stories, separated in time and space from their original locations, in many senses our contemporary media-saturated experience of everyday life continues to coalesce many more topoi in our everyday spaces.

Secondly, a model such as this, that accepts that several topoi can exist simultaneously, offers an opportunity through which New Zealand’s bicultural experiences of place can be realized. Foucault’s model of heterotopia has been employed on occasion by indigenous writers to describe their experience of mixed cultural heritage, and to validate experience that is multiply engaged in several cultural perspectives. Although these are neither equal in voice nor power, the model does allow for several layers to be acknowledged.

Poster argues for the need to pay careful attention to new forms of identity emerging in relation to heterotopic spatial practices, and to frameworks that are enabling rather than threatening to earlier configurations of the local as human.

This includes careful examination of the shifting that occurs among specific users of technologies, and as they alternate between media and embodied forms of perception, such as spoken language, sight and smell. Further, Poster urges for an understanding of how mediated communications mix with pre-existing social and cultural practices and asks the question: “...how do individuals combine their more historical beliefs and relations with those they discover in mobile communications?” (Poster 2005 n.p.)

Curators Claire Doherty and David Cross ask a similar question in relation to contemporary site-specific practices in a large-scale art project set in New Zealand in 2008, considered later in this research. These artists, through the deployment of contemporary artworks:

...intentionally fractured site through the production or invocation of what Michel Foucault termed ‘heterotopias’, both real and imagined spaces. They did so within a context in which place has been famously contested and exchanged, and where place continues as both a significant mythic presence and the subject of ongoing bicultural negotiation (Doherty and Cross 2010, 7).
Drawing upon Poster’s call for the development of frameworks that support an understanding of the heterotopic practices enabled through the use of mobile communication media, this research aims to develop an analysis of new ways of experiencing the local in light of this media, and particularly through site-specific and socially engaged art practices (see Chapter 4).

Ito writes of a further reconceptualization of heterotopic digital experiences in terms of “networked publics” (Ito, in Varnelis, 2008). She recognizes the massive transformation made to places and cultures via digital and networked media, describing the internet and mobile phone technology as ubiquitous, aspects that form the backbone of an increasing amount of our everyday communications, commerce and content delivery. As such networked media are taken for granted, a process she describes as “domestication”.

Ito recognizes that technologies do not stand apart as an external force that impacts on society and culture but rather are embodiments of social and cultural structures that in turn get taken up in new ways by existing social groups and cultural categories (Ito, in Varnelis 2008, 4).

The portable nature of networked technologies connected to location-based identification systems have prompted a convergence of information systems that link physically diverse societies, cultures, places and objects. This provides a new role for the local in material, social and cultural terms. Ito suggests: “The issue of pervasive networked connectivity involves the politics of objects and infrastructure as well as interpersonal social negotiations” (Ito 2008, 8). However, just as there is no “view from nowhere” when considering location, our bodies and identities are formed through local interactions as well as through the multiple online and mobile forms of communication we engage with every day. The grounded experience of our historically distanced nation-state has provided both the context and ‘ways of thinking’ for this research. These local experiences meet with international texts and contexts through the research process accessed via mainly online media. The fertile wetlands become a useful metaphor for thinking through this place where research occurs.
Currently land-based metaphors tend to be employed to conceive of engagements with media. These include aligning the general spaces of communication with urban and public spaces, making connection with the geographic locations of individual users, conceptions based on distance, or the redefinition of geographies in terms of non-space. These are complicated further by the experience of living in New Zealand, a colonial and culturally contested country and, furthermore ‘off the map’ in terms of not taking place in a large urban centre.

Living at the edge of a naturally formed harbour, the sea frames my horizon. My gaze returns to this horizon, an expanse of blue touching the land and sea. Here, there are always at least two environments: sand and sea, overlapping and mixing together through the rhythms of nature. Neither land, nor sea, this border is always both. Along the extended shorelines of the harbour, are found coastal wetlands. The boundaries of these ecosystems are always in a state of movement – tidal shifts constantly occur here, lapping lightly at the shore. Wetland systems don’t overwrite laws of land or sea but exist in, and maintain, a state of flow. And while it is possible to shift these boundaries through acts of engineering, on a personal scale our traces will be eradicated at least twice every day.

Foucault’s definition of heterotopia provides a framework through which my own position as a researcher can be described as academically co-located: I have one foot on an heterotopic boat, slipping between academic theories and traditions based elsewhere and am obedient to these contexts. My other foot is bare, and leaves its print on the sand. It treads the boundary between land and sea, and is necessarily temporary, locating me on these shores in New Zealand.

I concur with Poster that our ubiquitous engagement with global and networked media form similar heterotopic engagements and remote intimacies. However, as Bergson, Haraway and Ito have suggested, our embodied and situated selves are at the centre of our perception, and will always leave footprints on the sand.
Coastal wetlands as heterotopia

Coastal wetlands are intertidal spaces that require adaptation to a state of constant flow. Although ocean waves do not affect the wetlands very much, these constantly changing areas are demanding environments where the laws of both land and seawater combine to create a place full of constant activity and fertility. Coastal wetlands have been a site of cultural contestation throughout New Zealand’s bicultural history. For traditional Māori these areas of intermittently shallow water were rich with food – fish, shellfish, seabirds and sea mammals gather in these interfaces. In contrast Pākehā settlers saw wetlands as swamps or bogs with little economic value, and frequently ‘reclaimed’ these areas to create arable pasture. Today more wetlands are becoming protected, for environmental reasons. We are learning to see them in new ways.

The large area of foreshore or intertidal lands became a hotly debated political topic in 2003 when the New Zealand government proposed and later passed a law (November 2004) that deemed the title of all New Zealand’s foreshore and seabeds to be held by the Crown. Major controversy and protest ensued. For Māori, land does not begin and end at the beach, but extends as a shellfish gathering and food resource into the seabed. This source of traditional food gathering is a taonga or treasure, to be protected for future generations. In comparison, for Pākehā New Zealanders, the beach is a site of leisure, and also considered a site of national identity, strongly connected to summer holidays and sharing of leisure time with family and friends. Both groups saw the debate in terms of potential restricted access, and both felt strong emotional and traditional entitlement to full access.

In this sense wetlands (as a subset of the more general foreshore) become a metaphor for physical and cultural heterotopia. Heterotopia, while allowing for difference and acknowledging political approaches and behaviours, do not easily make room for the dynamic and ecological relationships that develop in a wetland environment. Complex and unpredictable, wetlands sustain many forms of life that co-relate with each other. It is in relation to the detailed and complex connections manifest in coastal wetlands that I consider the spatial terms identified in this section – heterotopia, and public space – to form hybrid and hopeful connections relevant to my local environment.
3.3 Networks, ecologies and assemblages

3.3.1 Estuaries

Estuaries are places where rivers meet the sea; regions where salt water is diluted with fresh water. On average, estuaries are biologically more productive than either the adjacent river or the sea because they have a special kind of water circulation that traps plant nutrients and stimulates primary production. Fresh water, being lighter than salt water, tends to form a distinct layer that floats at the surface of the estuary. At the boundary between fresh and salt water, there is a certain amount of mixing caused by the flow of fresh water over salt and by the ebb and flow of tides. Additional mixing may be caused from time to time by strong winds and by internal waves propagated along the interface between fresh and salt water. Because estuaries are located at the mouths of rivers, they have been favoured sites for the development of human settlements.

The estuary provides a useful metaphor for the third and final framework and strategy considered in this chapter. It sits alongside the beach as a metaphor for understanding knowledge as always local, positioned and political, and fertile wetlands as a metaphor for heterotopia, aligning practices with places. At the river mouth, waters from different sources mix. Although this difference may appear incompatible from a human perspective the environment created in estuarine conditions is transitional and rich with life forms, each coexisting in a dynamic ecology, but protected from the harsh conditions of the beach.

The estuary is useful as a metaphor for dynamic relations, networks, ecologies and assemblages that may be useful in the task of forging connections between the local and distributed. This section begins by considering a recent lecture by Dame Anne Salmond who draws connections between water systems and our bicultural communication and management of these systems. This is followed by a review of concepts and literature surrounding networks, media ecologies and assemblages and analysis of how these ideas may be helpful to this research.

3.3.2 Relations, shared values and mutual dependency

On 18 August 2012, Auckland academic Dame Anne Salmond delivered the inaugural Sir Paul Reeves Memorial Lecture. Salmond’s lecture considered the at times complex and contradictory histories of New Zealand’s bicultural relations. She acknowledged the genuine differences between Māori and Pākehā, but also the networks of interlocking relations, shared values and mutual dependency. “Rather than excluding the middle ground, the challenge is to get the networks of relations across it working in ways that are mutually positive and creative, not hostile and destructive” (Salmond 2012 n.p.). Salmond considers New Zealand’s contemporary bicultural situation as advantageous, having developed outside of the focus and ways of older European societies, who, she claimed “… remain trapped in non-adaptive rigidities”. In contrast, she suggests that “… we can organize ourselves flexibly and quickly, and in ways that give us joy, contributing to greater equity and prosperity” (Salmond 2012, n.p.). She questions ‘European societies’ as exemplifying a form of Probyn’s epistemological location, and offers our relative distance from traditional sites of knowledge-formation as advantageous and potentially transformative.

Salmond draws upon analogies with the recent science of complex networks and self-organizing systems, and proposes a resonance between the complementary dyads of Pacific philosophies, and the generative
pairs involved in many aspects of contemporary science. She cites The Complementary Nature (2008) by scientists Scott Kelso and David Engstrøm who contend that ubiquitous contraries are in fact complementary. They propose a comprehensive, empirically-based scientific theory of how the polarized world and the world in between can be recontextualized as complementarity – both/and – in addition to binary opposition – either/or. Here, like Haraway earlier, Salmond is trying to find a contemporary location in science, in this case to inform her proposal for biculturalism. This crossing of boundaries is also an attempt to reconcile (again, like Probyn) a struggle between being positioned and the everyday pleasures of living. Different places (contemporary science, Pacific philosophies) are reconceived through the practice of dyadic thinking. Salmond recognizes this andness as an opportunity to design a new form of location, a system of thought that allows several co-existing worldviews.

Salmond proposed that a current example of this was evident in the recent Land and Water Forum, where stakeholders included local and national government, industry and iwi (tribal groups) in an effective intercultural collaboration around the use and protection of fresh water in New Zealand. This smart, flexible and collaborative decision-making, Salmond argues, is much more likely to support actions that succeed. It proposes that several locations or epistemological frameworks, operate together. The forum becomes a model for relational thinking, where individuals are configured in multiple participatory relationships, turning from one network to another. These networks include the non-human, the eco-systems in which we dwell, in mutual dependencies as living systems. “The illusion that human beings are in charge of the cosmos is given up for more adaptive ways of thinking” (Salmond 2012 n.p.).

While Probyn was writing prior to the practices of the internet and mobile communication, her remit was to carefully consider and contrast the lived experiences of women with framing discourses perpetuated by the media. Along with a shift in our technological environment, there is a new emphasis upon working with urgent environmental concerns. With a sense of hope and purpose, and looking for methodological approaches to include bicultural negotiation, Salmond is articulating the opportunity to rewrite our relationships to the land, and to water, through rewriting our relationships with each other.

This represents a seismological shift, where lands, landscapes (including waterscapes), locale and locations are all open to change. At this specific time in history in New Zealand, Salmond is able to articulate fissures in forms of knowledge (location) enabled by particular events. And while it may be aspirational, the tone is a familiar one, echoed in a variety of contexts around New Zealand at this time.

41. The Land and Water Forum’s objectives are to bring together a range of stakeholders: industry groups, environmental and recreational NGOs, iwi, scientists and other organisations with a stake in freshwater management, in order to develop a shared vision and common way forward. This is a stakeholder collaborative process documented at www.landandwater.org.nz
Originally from New Zealand, cultural geographer Nigel Clark identifies a tension around conceptions of both the earth and the social, arising in contemporary philosophy, and known variously as speculative materialism, and post-object ontology. Clark notes that there is a radical asymmetry between the natural and social worlds. This asymmetry has been called to our attention through times of natural disasters and through global warming rhetoric. Clark refers to the Actor-Network theory of Bruno Latour (1993), and his proposal for a “parliament of things”, an imaginary forum for bringing together processes of political representation. Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is a material-semiotic method that has been developed from the sociology of scientific knowledge. This branch of sociology is most concerned with how social, political and cultural values affect scientific research and similarly how scientific research affects society, politics and culture. First developed in the early 1980s (around the same time as Haraway’s essay), with a broader range of disciplines later adopting the ideas, ANT draws on the model of networks, and particularly the relational ties within a network.

Networks are a model invoked by a number of disciplines, ranging from computer science to sociology to describe the connective relationships enabled between multiple things or people. Network theories tend to focus on the structure of these relationships rather than the effects or qualities within, or developing from them. Emerging from the need to understand connections in representational ways, these networks tend to focus on network qualities such as access and links.

Latour’s use of the term ‘network’ differs from the traditional definition and expectations. Latour’s networks are composed of heterogeneous assemblages of diverse objects acting and reacting to one another. As Latour writes in Reassembling the Social (2005, 129), the term ‘network’:

...does not designate a thing out there that would have roughly the shape of interconnected points, much like a telephone, a freeway, or a sewage ‘network’... It qualifies [rather] its objectivity, that is, the ability of each actor to make other actors do unexpected things.

42. In these situations Clark identifies that humans are utterly overwhelmend by nature, and this is different from how we think about nature.
This model of a network is more closely aligned with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1980) model of a rhizome. The rhizome draws on an organic system of interconnections activating more complex and multidimensional dynamics. In their own words “… [a] rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo” (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 27).

This re-definition of the term network is not a stable place, and is often considered as a motion or flow, a dynamic system. There is a sense of ‘stickiness’ in these definitions where one thing is always affecting another, and each is caught up in a relationship with the ability to both affect and effect. More than a formation, these kinds of networks assume that all elements are actants in assembly. As such they refuse to grant a passive status to elements within the assembly. In a later clarification Latour describes these relationships as a plaiting, a bringing together: “Strength does not come from concentration, purity and unity but from dissemination, heterogeneity and the careful plaiting of weak ties” (Latour, www.nettime.org 1998).

This definition of network is helpful to my research, in recognising the local as a practice, as a dynamic flow of processes.

Deleuze and Guattari’s reflections upon dynamic systems through the use of oceanic metaphors are particularly applicable as they demonstrate a sensitivity to emplacement. Edward Casey, reflecting on Deleuze and Guattari, describes these dynamic systems as reflecting a “… conviction that where something is situated has everything to do with how it is structured… the role of place is pervasive and not to be ignored” (Casey 1997, 302). This is illustrated through bodies of water. “How water moves is a direct reflection of where it is: it makes a difference whether water is on dry land or on the high seas…hydraulic motion is vectorial, projective and most especially topological – thus a function of the place it is in” (Casey 1997, 302-3). While similar to Haraway’s situated knowledges, this idea extends to become an active process, a dynamic and interrelated system where the local is always important, and never static. Salmond provides an example of these dynamic interrelated systems, considering nature, culture and society in a particular place at a particular time. Her example also includes water as a site of negotiation.
For Latour, *the interactions* among actors and the perpetual transformations that occur among one another through these interactions define a network:

A good ANT (Actor-Network Theory) account is a narrative or a description or a proposition where all the actors do something and don’t just sit there. Instead of simply transporting effects without transforming them, each of the points [in the network] may become a bifurcation, an event, or the origin of a new translation (2005, 128).

This emphasis on active involvement in the network also relies on ‘translations’. No ‘information’ is objective or neutral – whether between people, places or objects – but is always involved in an active translation. This may be compared to Barthes’ earlier ideas of actively ‘reading’ a text. Critical also to understanding Latour’s theory is his definition of ‘actors’ who may be human or non-human. In Salmond’s lecture land and water both become actors in a relationship connecting cultures and places. Their concept and value have quite different meanings to each culture, with articulated translations becoming crucial to a productive forum. Salmond also identifies New Zealand’s locality in space and time as advantageous in this debate: flexible and quick, able to respond to local needs.

The ongoing amassing of everyday knowledge grounded in the local contributes to tangled networks of information that Latour would suggest are erroneously compartmentalised. Latour draws our attention to the need to remake knowledge in connected ways. He outlines a set of tools to make everyday knowledge not only valuable, but also a device for working with the global. Briefly summarized, this requires a three-step process: the first step is ‘localizing the global’, a process Latour describes as “…flattening the landscape” (Latour 2005, 174). Recognizing the “tyranny of distance”, this flattening must ensure the global sits beside the local, not outside, above or encompassing it. Knowledge, whether macro or micro, is always produced in local and practical ways, and Latour wants to call these places equivalent, so that macro “… no longer describes a wider or larger site in which the micro would be embedded like some Russian Matryoshka doll, but another equally local, equally micro place, which is connected to many others…” (Latour 2005, 176).

Latour’s emphasis on the local clearly connects to Haraway’s call for situated knowledges, and he asks a similar question: “… through which optics is it [the Big Picture/panorama] projected? To which audience is it addressed?” (Latour 2005, 187). In this sense both writers see the act of looking as a technology, and processes of ‘representation’ as urgently requiring deconstruction and repurposing.
The experiences we incur in the local and everyday have their own ontology.

Reflecting back on Bergson’s assertion that our body’s materiality is a primary source of knowledge through first hand experience, it is no longer enough to say that we are ‘embodied’. Through online and mobile communication our social selves extend well beyond our local connections. Latour’s critique of the social is that it limits our vision and separates us from our local and material contexts, and is used by sociologists to justify entrenched behaviors. The social, he suggests, needs to be reconceived as short-lived, and not as durable. Geographers Nigel Clark and Doreen Massey (2008) see material connections in which people are connected with others, near and far, through everyday items such as coffee, with its geographically dispersed production and consumption networks. These connections are often manifested in architectures that are called upon to incorporate both human and non-human processes. Acknowledging that everyday acts – such as drinking coffee – are able to have profound consequences for other people and other things, forms part of their message.

Latour, Massey and Clark ask us to reconceive the local as always connected.

For them andness is achieved through recognizing these connections. Often small, creative and personal actions can intervene with the flows and territorializations that both shape the local and connect each local to other places distant in time or space, a confluence of shifting elements that we may consider like the river mouth estuaries used as a metaphor at the start of this section.

The method and metaphor of thinking through material connections described here may be a useful way to make conceptual links between the local (in New Zealand) and a world rapidly changing through mobile communications. It may help to ameliorate an abstracted sense of isolation, and help us to recognize the long, complex and multiple chains of geographies and histories, peoples and places, that we are a part of.

Geographies become expanded, performed and inter-related, rather than fixed, immobile, defined or defining.

While such models open up ways of thinking about connected-ness, any option for abandoning the ‘social’ in specific New Zealand contexts, and particularly around issues of biculturalism, (where cultural difference does
Latour’s definition of the ‘social’ relates to ‘associations’, in perhaps its broadest sense, and returns to the Latin *socius*, meaning ‘companion’, with the root *sequi* meaning ‘to follow’ (*The Shorter Oxford Dictionary* 2007). He leaves the concept open to include anything (people, objects, places) that can be associated together. He is critical particularly of the use of ‘the social’ by sociologists, who he claims, use the term to describe human structures in a way that limits human scope, and reduces the world into two separate halves: the natural-material and the social. As a result the natural-material world is reduced to its symbolic representation, which understates its own capacity for action.

However, Latour’s model also simplifies the experience of the social in a way that is for me uncomfortably a-cultural. The very local experiences of most Māori do not reduce landscapes to representations, but include features of landscape as *whakapapa* (genealogies) where people and histories are embodied in landscapes and in social relations that are more than human. As Salmond suggests, effective intercultural collaboration needs to be part of an ecological approach.

**This collaboration requires active and participatory communication between and about people, places and things.**

I propose that ‘social’ relations are an important tool in these negotiations and collaborations and need to be retrieved and employed in networks. I am interested in how socially engaged art practices may contribute to this understanding of network relations, through and with local landscapes, connected through mobile media. Such an approach is consistent with Ito’s notion of the technosocial: social identity and practices are embedded in local physical and social situations, in hybrid – but not integrated – flows that go both ways.

### 3.3.4 Media ecologies

Another discipline considering ‘ecologies’ can be found in media studies. Matthew Fuller’s (2005) book *Media Ecologies: Materialist Energies in Art and Technoculture* draws on texts by Guattari and Deleuze, Friedrich Nietzsche, McLuhan and Haraway, to define and extend the idea of ‘media ecology.’ The term has a number of discontinuous traditions, but Fuller’s appropriation is a conscious employment that ignores previous definitions, re-using it for a new
purpose. In terms of media Fuller is interested in materiality and mediality. The term ‘media’ suggests to Fuller the notion of the middle, closely aligned to Haraway’s ‘situated’ and Probyn’s ‘local’, in the center of experience and as a political place. The term ‘ecology’ is employed by Fuller because of its ability to express the nature of extremely complex systems. However, Fuller is more concerned with the relations between informational systems and their layering, seeing their processes and compositions as most relevant (rather than their originary contexts) and operating in non-linear and complex dynamics. Fuller’s use of the term acknowledges that media ecologies emerge in new structures of political, material and aesthetic combination (Slayton, in Fuller 2005).

Fuller draws upon the three ecologies noted by Guattari, including not just physical (or environmental) ecologies, but an ecology of social relations, and a mental ecology (Guattari 2000).

**Media (and media subversion) not only form ecologies with social, mental and physical things, but may be a key site of struggle between these forces.**

According to Guattari (2000, 45), media are vectors of subjectification:

- Rather than remaining subject, in periphery, to the seductive efficiency of economy competition, we must reappropriate universes of value...
- We need new social and aesthetic practices, new practices of the Self in relation to the other, to the foreign, the strange – a whole programme that seems far removed from current concerns. And yet, ultimately, we will only escape from the major crises of our era through the articulation of:
  - A nascent subjectivity
  - A constantly mutating socius
  - An environment in the process of being reinvented

Guattari and Fuller are both interested in the anarchic use of radio. Pirate radio (incorporating offshore radio and free radio movements) entails the unlicensed broadcast of a radio station, using the licensed frequency of another group. Guattari and Fuller are neither interested in community micro-politics nor the presentation of alternative political messages. Rather Guattari (in particular) focuses on the use of radio as an open system, a post-media ecology produced through a particular radio station and a community of users, producers and receivers. Guattari sees this as a form of conversation, amplified through technical means. This open conversation is activating; short-circuiting ‘representation’ in favour of ‘direct communication’.
Guattari proposes a post-media era “... potentially emerging from the rubble of the mass media society” (Guattari 2000). Here I see a connection where mobile communication media may be deployed in art contexts to extend our understanding of the local, and to create networks between time, place and people. These are not distinct territories but are formed relationally and transversally, like water mixing at river mouth estuaries.

Fuller develops three key concepts: the “standard object”, “affordance” and “perspectivalism”. The standard object refers to material things that are designed for particular purposes, and are combined in assemblages. Affordance is a quality of an object or environment that allows particular purposes or actions to occur, and for which they were intentionally designed. But standard objects can be recombined and used for different purposes, in new ecological formations. “Perspectival” refers to the particular perspective or viewpoint that frames contexts and uses. Perspectivalism is inevitable but it can also be exploited, twisted and patiently refined (Fuller 2005, 174).

Of these three, the idea of the standard object is most useful to my research, and is employed in application to the case studies of art practices in Chapters 6-8. By employing standard objects in new ways artists can introduce their messages in familiar terms. “The standard object is the concrete shadow of the potentiality of which it embodies and mobilizes a part” (Fuller 2005, 170). However, its relative stability allows standard objects to be mobilized and included in new compositions, or as Fuller puts it “... new affinities of objects and processes” (ibid). In this sense radio frequencies may be conceived as standard objects when they are borrowed or hijacked and repurposed (in the case of pirate radio), enlisted for alternative communicative means.43

The media – and particularly digital media – risk being assigned the same indifference as ‘nature’, and perceived as existing within an a-historic patternless flux.

Fuller helps us to recognize firstly that digital media are constructed out of ‘standard objects’, and secondly that digital media are always intersected by and composed with other dimensions (political, economic, aesthetic etc.) that come with perspectives that are closely linked to their media forms. Just as they have been (apparently seamlessly) arranged, they can be rearranged, layered and reused, in new and vibrant communicating compositions, and for different purposes.

43. Whereas using a radio frequency to broadcast a public radio station employs standard objects for standard uses.
Lying beneath this concept of the standard object is Fuller’s interest in Alfred North Whitehead’s notion of “misplaced concreteness” (Whitehead 1929). Like Whitehead before him, Fuller sees objects as solidifications of processes. He describes objects as “… processes embodied in objects, as elements in a composition” (Fuller 2005, 1). The assemblage here becomes more than accidental connections of meaning but becomes a flow, a collection of processes and elements held together in a composition.

Along with these intersections of interest Fuller has a useful way of considering art. Fuller sees art as a system that “… condenses and spews out moments of relationality”:

All objects have poetics; they make the world and they take part in it and at the same time synthesize, block, or make possible other worlds. It is one of the powers of art or of invention more generally to cross the planned relations of dimensionality (Fuller 2008 1-2).

For Fuller, creativity (art or invention) is implicitly transgressive; and can show us things that are otherwise difficult to see.

Particularly important to my research is Fuller’s insistence that art is a compositional dynamic that insists on reinventing any part (or all) of objects and processes. Art asks questions (persistently, like a child, suggests Fuller) such as: What is it? Whose is it? Why is it? Art localizes and draws attention to the elements and dynamics of the assemblage, and Fuller draws upon examples of new media art practice to illustrate his model of media ecologies.

Art may be presented as a radical subversion or a gentle intervention but in both cases art provides an element that renders relations temporarily visible.

Fuller’s use and redefinition of the term ‘media’ makes connections with the network theories outlined in Section 3.3.3 by Latour, Clark and Massey. He opens a discussion around the ontological and political dimensions of material culture that produce effects and limitations. But more than this, Fuller (and Guattari) focus on the operations and effects of media, not by examining their conventional uses, but by the subversive remaking of media processes through art interventions.

44. Assemblages are explained in more depth in Section 3.3.5
Through analysis of selected social-media-art interventions Fuller provides a way of looking at objects and events as aggregate systems in ways that help us to see that their invention, combination and affordances have been constructed, and so can be deconstructed and repurposed. Using an ecological approach, Fuller’s model helps us to see that media effects exist only as a temporary ‘settlement’.

Fuller’s use of this term is useful to my research in the extent to which it can be helpful to consider New Zealand as a settler culture embedded in a system of powers, affordances and interpretations. But it also opens up the possibility that tools of media could contribute to extending these perceptions; to help to realize the local as an event particular to this time and place. Media too have material as well as immaterial qualities, and these are not separate from other ecological combinations. Together with Latour, Clark and Massey’s accounts of landscapes as material, generative and social actors, Fuller’s use of an ecological model maps onto the concerns of my research project. It can help me investigate and activate relationships between local lands, landscapes and technosocial situations.

Fuller’s reflection on art processes as able to articulate, unmake and remake these ecologies is particularly useful: his insistence that the representational is fused with the material, and the aesthetic is conjugated with the political (Fuller 2005) forms an appropriate matrix. By understanding representation to be like Fuller’s materiality, a process that is in movement (in Whitehead’s sense), the representational can be employed in other processes including those of the social, political and generative. Through the pairing of aesthetic with political definitions, the visual can be employed in powerful and conscious ways within material, medial and social assemblages. The diagram below helps to visualize these relations.

![Figure 31: A matrix of relations: the visual/representational is employed in assemblages with other processes, developed from Matthew Fuller’s Media Ecologies (graphic Caroline McCaw).](image-url)
“Assemblage” is a term featured by a number of writers already mentioned. The term is a useful one and has connotations separate from networks and ecologies. Simply defined as “a collection or gathering of things or people” (*The Oxford Dictionary* 2007), an assemblage is able to incorporate discontinuous and dislocated objects, images, people and places. Through their re-combination, new associations are made between these objects, images, places and people.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) are also interested in assemblages, and introduce the notion of “relations of exteriority” that resists wholeness when referred to as assemblages. Their assemblages are social processes, emergent systems that join together radically different bodies, but systems in which each part can be ‘unplugged’ from one system and used elsewhere. The components in these systems include both material things and meaningful expressions, and have their own characteristics and dynamics. Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of assemblages is further developed by Manuel de Landa (*A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* 2006), in which the author identifies material and expressive roles of component parts of an assemblage to help explain the different types of actions and reactions that may occur in micro as well as macro systems.

Within art history an assemblage consists of three-dimensional or two-dimensional artistic compositions created by putting together found objects. These assemblages were employed throughout the 20th Century by artists such as Picasso, Duchamp, Rauschenberg and Man Ray, and reflected concerns of art movements from Cubism to Dada to Proto-pop and Pop Art. As contemporary art finds new contexts and relations between spaces, times and experiences the term “assemblage” continues to make room for these associations. Connotations are brought with each participating element, but new connotations and meanings are formed through the juxtaposition of these elements.

The term is useful to my research in that it enables a connection between the material and the social, through art practices. It enables us to take new arrangements at face value, and to interpret these arrangements in relation to new connections and associations. In this way New Zealand, the internet and an art project may all be understood as forms of assemblage that are each able to be assembled together in new ways in response to a particular time or event.

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45. i.e., collages
At the start of this section I considered the metaphorical appropriateness of river mouth estuaries to my research. These biological assemblages were described as having a special kind of water circulation that traps nutrients and facilitates fertility, as well as being a trajectory that forms landforms and topographies. In the case of Dunedin these topographies have been renamed and ascribed new values by the city.

The estuary forms a metaphor for the kinds of networks, ecologies and assemblages discussed in this section. This metaphor is one that highlights the fecund possibilities of the mixing of categories usually considered distinct. As a result of this mixing new conditions occur.

3.3.6 The Toitū stream as a useful meeting point

The Toitū stream is now a small stream, mainly running under the roads in central Dunedin. It once fed into the harbour at the original landing place of Otēpōti/Dunedin, at the top of Water Street in the old city centre. It was at that point an important source supplying pure drinking water, and remains of cultural importance to local Māori. Here waka (Māori canoes) and European ships landed, and people worked and traded, and together drank from the stream. A public tap still gives access to this fresh water, now on the site of the Speights Beer Brewery, another early settler institution. The point at which the Toitū stream ran into the sea is now covered by reclaimed land. Early colonial efforts required a port close to the city, and feats of colonial engineering saw the once tidal wetlands and river mouth estuary become a bed of more solid land and later roading asphalt, known as the Exchange, created to permit access to a deeper port.

An interesting contradiction is established between the two terms, ‘exchange’ and ‘toitū’, denoting both change and permanence. If we return to Mann’s earlier definition of a river estuary, we are reminded that a special type of mixing occurs, where fresh and salt waters combine to enable productive biological conditions. These are further affected by the ebb and flow of tides.

Through tracing the theories identified in this Chapter, from Clark’s nesting of Latour’s Actor Network Theory within New Zealand’s seismic conditions, to Guattari’s three ecologies, and Fuller’s identification of media ecologies and art interventions as tactical and dynamic, the thesis has traced ways in which instability and contradiction may be usefully and productively employed. Via the imagery of a buried river mouth, overwritten with urban processes and once valued for its pure drinking water, we can see the effects of change. However, through the ongoing
telling of the story, a certain permanence is evoked. The river mouth, now only pictured, remembered or imagined in this place, can still be realized as an important relational device in this network of place. And through its invocation, the river mouth can also be conceived of as a fertile site for ongoing cultural conditions that nevertheless continue to be affected by the ebb and flow of tides.

We can still drink from the waters of the Toitū spring, albeit from a public tap. And a special type of mixing of times and tides occurs when we do. In this radical asymmetry between natural and social activities, this place where I live reveals the complex network that continues to transform and be transformed by changing inter-relationships.

3.4 Looking *forward*, looking *back*

3.4.1 The research context

In Chapter 2 the research problem and context was identified. New Zealand’s land and landscapes and our occupation of them as a dynamic set of relations including a range of complex geographies, as well as personal, social, cultural, ideological and political histories and meanings are recognized as research tensions. Lands and landscapes are particularly connected to two main cultural identities.

The massive migrations of the last century, and this century’s widespread growth of the internet and mobile communications, have contributed to a need to re-think distance and re-evaluate some of the core ways we have come to think about ourselves in New Zealand. While local spaces affect mobile communication, the reverse influences are also in play; new kinds of interactions, both local and through networked media, form and maintain local knowledge.

This research considers how we might better articulate our landscapes and media co-presence to better reflect this.
In Chapter 3 theoretical frameworks from a range of disciplines have been examined, with the aim of finding methods and models that recognize the value of emplaced knowledges, and the extent to which these may be suitable for the task of thinking through the dynamic relations (geographic, cultural and political) identified in a New Zealand context. This examination identified some key ideas as summarized below:

1. Visual rhetoric and art beyond representation

The tools and effects of representation and technologies of looking have been identified as problematic by a number of writers. They propose that meaning is relative, contingent and contextual. Meaning is not stored in an image or object or landscape, but in the relationships and connections between that image and the context in which it is seen. Conventions of looking and visualizing technologies are active perceptual systems and participate in other systems that include the technical, social and political.

Haraway and others celebrate the coexistence of multiple contradictory accounts of knowledge. To avoid representation Haraway asserted that we must be critical of tendencies to universalize knowledge. Differing accounts for what and how we know can be negotiated through the “... power-charged social relations of conversation.” (Haraway 1988, 580).

A number of writers including Fuller and Guattari support the practice of conversation as one that can bring together seemingly disparate elements, and produce insights. Poster reminds us that the convergence of information systems must take care not to co-opt and universalize these polyvalent sources. However, in making these claims, these writers are not calling for allegories of infinite mobility but rather for a sense of elaborate specificity and difference. By taking a technosocial approach, we can retain the local as contiguous physical and social sites at the centre of these conversations.

Bal, Guattari and Fuller refer to the potential of art and media to work beyond representational methods. Fuller considers art as a system that “condenses and spews out moments of relationality” (Fuller, 2008, 45), which both performs and communicates media ecologies. Such open forms of conversation short-circuit ‘representation’ in favour of a space of ‘direct communication’.
Art can be called to action to create temporary assemblages, incorporating operations and effects of media through subversion and remaking. Specifically, I am interested in forms of art that produce conversations between people, and between people, places and things that in either case help us to understand the local as physical, semiotic and connected.

2. Activating the local with other systems: conceiving places as processes

Extending beyond embodied, contextual forms of knowing, place is conceived of by a number of writers as an ongoing process. While Haraway and Probyn’s accounts set up a model of the local that resists the politics of closure through an engaged, accountable positioning, others take this further by proposing we reconceive the local as an ongoing process.

Probyn, Tuhiai-Smith and Butt each define landscapes as social, cultural and political processes, with ongoing affects. This approach can be connected to Whitehead’s notion of ‘misplaced concreteness’, where materiality is defined through process.

Foucault’s heterotopia provides a useful way to explore the multiplicity and dispersion of sites of knowledge. From adjacent incompatible locations (such as bicultural experiences of the same sites in New Zealand) to simultaneous and synchronous experiences of spaces of the internet, heterotopia defines these co-existing places as the temporary solidification of processes. Although Foucault’s heterotopia are more or less closed and imposing accounts of spaces as worldviews that co-exist among others, Poster urges an understanding of the way mediated communications mix with pre-existing social and cultural practices when he asks the question: “How do individuals combine their more historical beliefs and relations with those they discover in mobile communications?”

Latour, Clark and Massey offer a definition of the network also useful to this consideration of the local as a process. The local when considered in this way becomes connected to other dynamic systems that are non-hierarchical and resist representation, where each node in the network is connected in multiple ways, and is in the process of active translation.
Geographies become expanded, performed and inter-related, rather than fixed, immobile, defined or defining, making room for local specificities.

Alongside these ideas, Guattari and Fuller explore ecologies to reconsider dynamic compositions that allow for a reconception of what constitutes the local, one in which all local and media affects are considered as temporary settlements. Both definitions of networks and ecologies have an active sense of emplacement in which the local is embedded in a process, in a dynamic system.

3. Working from the local, andness and self-determination

Although popular digital rhetoric positions us as ‘global citizens’ who are increasingly homogenized or subsumed by the global, a number of writers have proposed flipping this model, and reconceiving the local as grounding the global.

Arminen asserts that we are never in no-place and that communication across distance is always grounded and emplaced as a sense of placeness is reestablished through a sense of being informationally accessible to others in the network. In this way Ito’s technosocial approach confirms that ‘where we are’ communicates with and through us, and is not overwritten by global rhetoric. Latour’s definition similarly creates a network that activates the connections between many local places; “flattening the landscape”.

Probyn is critical of ‘location’, a process she claims positions Western tradition as central. Haraway’s model of “situated knowledges” activates things, and demands that they are examined as always arising from particular contexts. Tuhiai-Smith is highly critical of research practices that objectify the known and proposes that research be designed by the subject, for the subject’s purposes, as central to self-determination. She establishes that recognition of the location and perspective of context, and the agency of our objects of knowledge, are fundamental before embarking on research towards further understanding. Honoring the Treaty of Waitangi requires careful reflection and positioning of subjects and objects of research, and my research respects this perspective.
In summary, my review of theoretical frameworks provide:

- strategic thinking tools for this research

- frameworks for making connections between differing systems. These frameworks recognize flows and territorializations that both shape the local and connect to other times and spaces.

- models for thinking about andness as a methodology that can assemble people, places and things in dynamic relationships, make room for more than one place or position, and accept a state of change as necessary.

The various intertidal spaces used as metaphors throughout this chapter attempt to assemble land and water together with ideas and throughout the research extends to include practices.

I am choosing the shores, the tidal spaces of perpetual motion, as a metaphor for connectedness.
Drawing upon Bal and Fuller’s assertion (Sections 2.6 and 3.3.4) that art is a system that can transgress other systems, and usefully show us things that are otherwise difficult to see, this research now considers art practices relevant to my project.

This chapter reviews literature and examples from creative fields of practice, as they address site-specificity and mediated or embodied social engagement. In each case the history and foundational principles of a distinct field of practice are outlined, and illustrated with examples. In Brad Haseman’s terms, this section is an “artistic audit” (Haseman 2006). The practices propose a way of understanding the local that helps to contextualize land and landscapes and contemporary engagement with media (identified in Chapter 2), and frameworks for andness (identified in Chapter 3). Each practice collects people and places together through performative events. These events I propose, enable us to glimpse an assemblage of the local as a momentary politics of time and place.

Three fields of practice identified as relevant to this research are:

a) site-specificity in contemporary art
b) social engagement in contemporary art
b) new media art
Site-specific art

4.1

Miwon Kwon (2002) identifies a genealogy of site-specific and socially engaged art practices that emerged during the late 1960s and 1970s in the USA and “... which incorporated the physical conditions of a particular location as integral to the production, presentation and reception of art” (Kwon, 2002, 1). Kwon contributes to this history by offering a problematization of the term ‘site-specific’, introducing ideas such as context; debate; audience; community and project-specificity (along with and inseparable from issues of location). Kwon’s terms politicize location as part of a broader cultural discourse, in line with Probyn’s critique of location identified in Chapter 3. Nick Kaye (2000) also provides a useful analysis of spatial tactics realized through contemporary art practices. Four locations are identified through his analysis; locations where art may intervene and identify a political or philosophical tension. For Kaye, the gallery, the city, architecture, and place are each performed through art practices, or constituted as an event in the context of an artwork.

Three directions can be traced through the documented histories of these art practices. Firstly, by considering an overview of contemporary art practice as it shifted from the gallery and into public space (drawing largely on Miwon Kwon’s genealogy of site-specificity), and its trajectory towards a critical position of site some relationships enabled by creative practice are identified. Following this, an emphasis on the differentiation of place and space traces a process of visual representation of experience in and of sites. Thirdly, a focus on artwork concerned with reception and social practices when working in particular locations – at times conceived of as community-building – offers another emphasis on practices of site-specificity.

4.1.1 From the gallery into public space

Site-specific art begins with a particular and material location as its frame, being formally determined by this environmental context (Kwon 2002, 11). The physical location of the work’s site implies a physically present viewing subject. Through her analysis of art concerned with site Kwon identifies three types of site responsiveness which compete and overlap: phenomenological, social-institutional, and discursive.

To some extent, particularly since the late 1960s this genre of work can be traced as having been developed in response to modernist values. Kwon identifies this as an epistemological shift, where meaning is relocated from the object of art to the contingencies of the context. The shift results in restructuring the subject, from reflecting a Cartesian model of a viewing
subject to a phenomenological one of lived bodily experience (Kwon 2002,12). In the 1970s new forms of art practices, ranging from earth art to installation practices, and conceptual art to performance art emerged in a number of locations. Artists sought to use site not only in physical and spatial terms, but as a cultural framework too, in line with definitions of landscapes as culturally produced (identified in Chapter 2). Two early examples regularly cited as identifying this transition of concerns, are Daniel Buren’s *Within and Beyond the Frame* (1973), and Mierle Laderman Ukeles’ *maintenance art performances* (1973-4).

Buren’s work sought to expose the physical condition of the gallery, and by doing so exposed the gallery as a cultural frame. Extending flags from the gallery to the street outside, Buren’s work broke the architectural boundaries of the white cube, in turn drawing attention to its conventions. Buren addressed the material limits of the space of art, and reconstituted them as restless and moving between the inside and outside of the limitations of the “gallery as frame” (Kaye 2000). Ukeles’ performance series drew attention to the socio-economic relations that enable gallery practices. Informed by Marxist and feminist critiques, the artist engaged, among a range of performances, in washing the gallery’s ground, first the steps and entry plaza of the art museum, and then the gallery floor. In doing so her work drew attention to the labour required in maintaining a pristine white viewing space. By making this labour visible, Ukeles reconfigured the value placed on maintenance (Molesworth 2006, in Alberro and Buchman 2006).

![Figure 32: Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Washing, June 13, 1974. In front of the A.I.R gallery on Wooster Street Soho, Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York.](image-url)
In different ways both works identify the gallery as a site framed by spatially and culturally specific rules that generate particular expectations and narratives. Kwon (2002) notes that concurrently with the dematerialization of the gallery as site, came the de-aesthetization of the artwork (a withdrawal from visual pleasure) and the de-materialization of the work. “The ‘work’ no longer seeks to be a noun/object but a verb/process, provoking the viewers’ critical (not just physical) acuity regarding the ideological conditions of their viewing” (Kwon 2002, 24).

Kwon notes that contemporary site-specific art has a more intense focus on, and engagement with the outside world and everyday life; that it involves a critique of culture that includes many sites and communities.

The concern to integrate art more closely into the realm of the social was developed both as a way of addressing urgent social issues, or as a drive to relativize art as one of many forms of cultural work.

4.1.2 An expansive relationship to site

In terms of site, many contemporary artworks develop a more expansive relationship to a particular place. In this model site is not a particular and predetermined space, but may be generated by the work and then verified by its convergence with an existing discursive formation (Kwon 2002, 26). In this way cultural debates, theoretical concepts, and political problems may all become sites for art. James Meyer describes this trend in terms of a “functional site”:

[The functional site] is a process, an operation occurring between sites, a mapping of institutional and discursive filiations and the bodies that move between them (the artist’s above all). It is an informational site, the locus of overlap of text, photographs and video recordings, physical places and things...It is a temporary thing; a movement; a chain of meaning devoid of a particular focus (Meyer 1995, cited in Kwon 2002, 29).

This definition considers material and social aspects of site as becoming constituted in an iterative and ongoing conversation between places and experiences, reflecting some of Haraway’s suggestions identified in Chapter 3.
4.1.3 **Intertextual and transitive experiences of site**

Kwon’s definition of site relates to discursive properties regularly found in contemporary site-specific art practices. Site, Kwon claims, is now structured intertextually rather than spatially, and its model is ... “not a map but an itinerary, a fragmentary sequence of events and actions through spaces, that is, a nomadic narrative whose path is articulated by the passage of the artist” (Kwon 2002, 29). Kwon sees this shift as corresponding to the models of movement found when engaging with the internet, “… which are likewise structured as transitive experiences, one after another and not in synchronic simultaneity...the transformation of the site textualizes spaces and spatializes discourses” (Kwon 2002, 29).

The relationship identified between the internet and its adoption of multiple spatial metaphors, and the works of artists responding to contemporary ideas of materially located sites, are foci for this research.

Kwon is wary of a critical unhinging from site. We can see that contemporary conditions differ to those of Buren and Ukeles’ forty years ago, and that globally mediated experiences have led to more fractured and networked experiences of site. Questions arising from this field of practice may be: How are intertextual and transitive experiences of site reflected in or crafted by the work of contemporary artists? And does this potentially change the role of the artist? Is there a prevailing relegation of authorship to the conditions of site, including collaborators, readers and viewers? Or rather, is it a recasting of the artist as a ‘silent’ manager or director of performative events? A contemporary artwork that activates some of these concerns is Heather and Ivan Morison’s 2006 Bristol project *I Lost Her Near Fantasy Island. Life Has Not Been the Same.*

*Figure 33 and 34: Heather and Ivan Morison, 2006, I Lost Her Near Fantasy Island. Life Has Not Been the Same, (photograph Wig Worland). Retrieved from http://www.morison.info/ilothestnearfant.html*
In this work performed on one day (Friday 14th July 2006) a large white lorry apparently has an accident in the early hours of the morning, jack-knifing and spilling its load of 25,000 flowers around in the centre of Bristol. The work creates an unusual but large-scale spectacle for the duration of the day. However, at 6pm, passers-by were permitted to take the flowers away. Word spread quickly and by 7pm the installation was entirely dispersed across Bristol, as people walked and biked home carrying armfuls of flowers. In a review of the work Olivia and Dan Hicks describe the fleeting large-scale performance as having a dream-like quality that captured (and prolonged) a moment:

The split-seconds of a traffic accident were still present in its material consequences: the long refrigerated trunk of the articulated lorry discharging 25,000 bunched flowers across the street. The cut flowers were in transit, ephemeral, crossing continents, but the courses of their short lives were now shifted (Hicks and Hicks 2006, n.p.).

Hicks and Hicks recall the work as evocative, everyday and social. They suggest that the work proposes an ecology of hope, living in and through the storytelling and evocative narratives of this unlikely event, the city as site and the people that encounter it. “Looking for big ideas in everyday surprises. We know the feeling” (Hicks and Hicks 2006, n.p.). And perhaps its most social success – the flowers and their dispersal – became small material gifts to the audience. “The work reminds us that Ecologies of Hope can be built with many materials” (Hicks and Hicks 2006, n.p.).

The work is an example of a publically sited sculpture that affected a large range of people not all of whom would consider themselves part of an art audience. It engaged non-art materials and processes, and encouraged dialogue. The work led to many staged and unstaged photographs and stories, living on through the interactive activity of dispersal of the flowers in a network uncontrolled by the artists. The work was activated through social networks in a way that constituted fractured and networked experiences of site.

Analysis of this performance begs the question whether all large-scale and photographed performances provoke intertextual and transitive experiences of site. There are some uncanny parallels between the destructive events of 9/11 and this art event, albeit with a more positive message in the latter. In both cases, the distribution of messages regarding events carry the most important and ongoing value. The question about whether the media in the case of the Morison’s work (flowers, cell phone photographs, oral story telling) rather than the message (or site) facilitated the work’s being in the world is left as a point of interesting conjecture. At the very least this work demonstrated an intertextual experience of site at play, and helps us to reconsider the roles of artists working with site responsiveness.
4.1.4 A shift from space to place

One of the prevailing concerns of site-responsive work relates to spatial negotiation (Kaye 2000, O’Docherty 1986). This negotiation, through the work of art, recognizes a shift from space to place; the work of the artist enabling the audience’s reconception of a public site as a place full of meaning; one able to be read through experience of the work. Here the work is not only defined by its site, but is able to contribute to a definition of the site itself.

Paul Domela asks:

How does one translate the local? Let there be no mistake, the local has no objective existence. The local emerges as a dynamic pattern of relations with a palpable density of affect, which is produced and continuously regenerated. As a concept it exists only within the domain of the observer in order to distinguish and describe within a discursive field and not as a property of the observed domain (Domela, 2004 in Doherty).

Here Domela is concurring with the earlier sentiments of theorists cited in Chapter 3, when they considered place as a process. Kaye similarly connects the relationship of work to site as a ‘reading’, reflecting ideas of semiotic theory: “…reading implies ‘location’. To ‘read’ a sign is to have located the signifier, to have recognized its place within a semiotic system” (Kaye 2000, 1). While this semiotic location can be helpful, it also suggests a particular cultural text, and also a particular historical perspective. In the case of Heather and Ivan Morison’s 2006 Bristol project the ‘site’ is not specific to Bristol. However, in order to attract wide enough attention and a distributing audience, the work did need to be located in a large urban centre. Of course a truck accident could happen anywhere, with or without people to witness it, but as a crafted art experience this work needed to be located within a busy urban environment in order to be ‘read’, and ‘retold’ within the course of the day. The local was redistributed, through storytelling – as Domela suggests – as a dynamic pattern of relations. In terms of Foucault’s definition of heterotopia, in this project a heterotopic space that relied on an urban context was created, albeit temporarily.
Art performed or placed in public places will contribute to, and to some varying extent disrupt, the ‘established’ semiotic systems of those places. However when site-specific and public art is photographed textual-experiential tensions are amplified. Documentation is a key method of recording experiences of site-specific work, and of further communicating and disseminating these experiences to audiences, viewers and readers in other places.

Writing of performance art, Philip Auslander suggests that there is an initial audience to which the performer assumes responsibility, as well as a second audience that experiences the performance only through its documentation. He suggests that: “The connection between performance and documentation is thus thought to be ontological, with the event preceding and authorizing its documentation” (Auslander 2006, 1). Here the power of photography enables the image to be both representationally accurate and ontologically connected to the real world and this affects the meaning of the original work as event (Barthes 1961, 1985, Jones 1997).

The ideas of J. L. Austin (1961), and Haseman (2006) relating to performative actions are relevant. Photographic documentation may enable more than the description of the event, but also has the potential to perform concepts as actions, to which we are witnesses from a distance. Auslander proposes that documentation itself is a performance with more ongoing relevance to distributed audiences than those witnessing the original event.

These concerns are amplified when we consider site-specific artwork and its documentation. Not only is there the risk of missing the significance of experience in site-specific work, but Auslander’s proposition trivializes the local community as audience, who are often integral to the constitution of site for the art worker. Location and distance then also become concerns for the site-specific artist, not only in relation to their own relationship with the site, but also regarding the subsequent distribution of documentation, its ongoing framing and narratives. Travel and communication technologies disconnect the image from its original location, potentially shifting the re-presentation and potential readings of the work far from its original context.
These concerns are not new to art, but are inherent in and also tools of the wider colonial project, originally through, for example, landscape painting and mapping, identified in Chapter 2. Edward Said (1994) considers geography as always socially constructed and maintained, caught in a struggle between memory and invention. For Said and other postcolonial writers, the conflicting texts of cultural imagination and representation cannot be captured by the camera alone, and the production and circulation of images and texts must be carefully regulated. These sentiments are directly in contrast with the expectation of socially distributed photography in Heather and Ivan Morison’s 2006 Bristol project. In their project, the temporary art installation was designed to be photographed, in order to reach an expanded urban audience through audience-driven use of mobile communication networks distributing images and narratives. Personal experiences were tagged to these photographs, rewriting the artists’ texts in informal and distributed reviews.

4.2 Socially engaged art practices

A prevailing concern with site-responsive work relates to ‘social practices’, and two types of engagement are encompassed by this overarching term. The first type is identified through situated art and its effects on publics and situated audiences. The second type looks at the work itself as a form of community development, and is often more generally identified as a form of cultural work. The two strands frequently overlap.

Claire Doherty identifies a distinction between the activities of the activist and the trickster, accepting that their intentions may be similar, and that both may be employed in the process of engaging works with audiences. Doherty also suggests the importance of developing a language for engagement, identifying gaps between current rhetoric and actual experience that may create confusion between different types of contemporary engagements with social art practices (Doherty 2004).

Socially engaged public art has been given various titles, ranging from Tom Finkelpearl’s “dialogue-based art”, Nicolas Bourriaud’s “relational aesthetics”, Suzanne Lacy’s “new genre public art”
4.2.1 Expanded audiences, dialogic practices

One kind of art practice involves the relationship between art and its expanded audience outside of a gallery setting. Doherty cites Irit Rogoff’s critical analysis of fieldwork, identifying on the one hand a "mode of rapport (of proximity and a sense of having a rapport with a place)" and on the other hand "fieldwork that is done through an understanding of one’s complicity with the work" (Doherty 2004, 11). The former begins with the site and its community as the primary context for the production of new work. Doherty suggests the latter is identified by the artist project that starts with concerns relevant to their own practice, that are then taken to a site and its audiences.

Compared with the work of some earlier public sculptors (such as Henry Moore) and their ambivalence towards the works’ reception in situ, some contemporary public art is designed specifically to activate community engagement. Curator Maria Lind, using Vienna-based critic Christian Kravagna’s four models, identifies four types of engagement by artists: working with others; interactive activities; collective action; and participatory practice (Doherty 2004, 12). The difference between them, Doherty suggests, is whether a dialogical relationship is established. Grant Kester employs the term "dialogical", suggesting that the work of art can be viewed as a kind of conversation; as a locus of different and contesting meanings. Socially engaged and productive artworks, Kester argues, require a dramatic paradigm shift and redefinition of aesthetic experience, one that must incorporate durational rather than immediate effects. He draws on Habermas’ definition of the “public sphere” (Habermas 1991), mentioned in Chapter 3. Bruce Barber also draws upon Habermas’ theory of communicative action: “Communicative actions attempt to lessen provocation and encourage dialogue. They are the result of the conjoining of theory and practice into a political praxis” (Barber 1998, www.imageandtext.org.nz accessed 23. 01. 13).

Both writers are suggesting that a self-critical awareness can lead to social practices in art that are consensual, processural and subject
to creative transformation. However, Kester’s dialogical aesthetic suggests a very different role for artists, based on their ability to work in an environment of consensual knowledge that is always located and contextual. In dialogical art, the artist too is affected and changed by the relationship of the work to the audience. This second, dialogic approach to socially engaged art practice is more interesting to me, and is perhaps more carefully theorized for both its challenge to aesthetic tradition and its problematic engagement with audiences. While Kester’s definition of dialogic art practices is relatively new, forms of socially engaged, site – or context – specific art practices have a longer history.

4.2.2 Past practices, histories and connections

Suzanne Lacy coined the phrase “New Genre Public Art” in the 1980s to describe her form of socially engaged public art practice that sought to use art processes to create explicit connections to social activity (Lacy, in Raven 1993). She quoted Allan Kaprow (co-initiator of the Fluxus group of artists in 1959 and Lacy’s mentor): “Art is a weaving of meaning making activity with any or all parts of our lives” (Lacy, in Raven 1993, 300). Reflecting further on the work of Kaprow as a precursor to socially engaged art practices, she draws attention to Kaprow’s identification of site as crucial to the staging of Happenings. “To my way of thinking, Happenings possess some crucial qualities that distinguish them from the usual theatrical works, even the experimental ones of today. First, there is the context, the place of conception and enactment” (Kaprow in Kelley 1993, 17). Kaprow’s Happenings, a form of interactive and participatory art experience with an emphasis on play, have also been identified as pre-cursors of new media art (Wardrip-Fruin & Montfort 2003). Crucially, Kaprow’s Happenings identified a new kind of relationship between artist and audience. “He spoke of increasing the ‘responsibility of the observer’ and finally eliminating the audience altogether as each individual present would become part of the event organized by an artist” (Wardrip-Fruin & Montfort 2003, 83).

Lacy’s practice involves an art whose public strategies of engagement are an important part of its aesthetic language (Lacy 1993, 19). She claims that this opportunity is always implicit in the term “public art”, the space between these two words offering “… an unknown relationship between artist and audience...that may itself be the artwork” (Lacy 1993, 19).
Her definition of ‘New Genre Public Art’ “… calls for an integrative critical language through which values, ethics and social responsibility can be discussed in terms of art” (Lacy 1993, 43).

Arlene Raven is another artist adding to these histories. She identifies an explosion of radically new forms of public art in the 1980s “… as diverse as street art, guerilla theatre, video, page art, billboards, protest actions and demonstrations, oral histories, dances, environments, posters, murals, paintings and sculpture” (Raven 1993, 1). For Raven such options culminated in a large-scale public art project (*Culture in Action*, 1993) presented in partnership with a number of communities based in Chicago.

### 4.2.3 Community and its conversations

Both Lacy and Raven associate such diversely engaged art with social and political activist histories rather than with art histories, celebrating the particular realities of ordinary people, and their everyday experiences (Kwon 2002, 107). Site is reconceived in New Genre Public Art as a peopled place, as an intimate and particular cultural location bound to a geographic region. Kwon suggests that such redefinitions of the term “site” is displaced by notions of audience, by a particular social issue, or most commonly by a specific community. The term “community”, Kwon and others warn us, has slippery political histories of use, and requires careful analysis. Communities can be both an invocation of inclusion, as well as a way of identifying those outside a particular group or social formation, and remains an ambiguous and problematic concept in public art. Kwon’s analysis of Raven’s *Culture in Action* project led to the proposition of four distinct types of community: community of mythic unity; sited communities; invented communities (temporary); and invented communities (permanent).

Kester also identifies forms of performative and process-based art, where he adds that artists radically departing from object making have become “context-makers” rather than “content providers” (Kester 2005). In his book *Conversation Pieces* (2005) Kester discusses two artworks produced in 1994. The first was a project by Austrian arts collective Wochenklauser. The second was produced by Lacy with Annice Jacoby and Chris Johnson in Oakland, USA. The two projects organized continuing conversations between local socially marginalized groups and people with roles of
institutional power (various legislators, police, journalists, politicians). Personally connected through shared issues, although disconnected from their ordinary sites of enacted power, and relocated to new sites such as parked cars, or on a boat, the various groups of people were asked to contribute to a series of continuing conversations. The choice of new sites intentionally displaced people from their usual social architectures and allowed an out-of-context focus on an issue, debated through shared conversation. In this sense, location as always political (identified in Chapter 3) is articulated, and relocation as a deliberate and political action by the artists is brought into the frame of the project.

Kester identifies that projects such as these provide opportunities for potentially emancipatory forms of conversation:

What unites this seemingly disparate network of artists and arts collectives is a series of provocative assumptions about the relationship between art and the broader social and political world, and about the kinds of knowledge that aesthetic experience is capable of producing (2005, 9).

Kester’s ‘dialogical aesthetic’ suggests a very different role for artists, based on their ability to work in an environment of local and consensual knowledge that is always contextual. Kester looks towards a term defined by a 1986 study conducted by Mary Field Blenky et al, who identified the term “connected knowing”, a conversational model. Two characteristics of connected knowing are identified by Kester: conversation in order to identify with others; and conversation as a way of redefining the self through listening. Listening, he suggests, is itself as active, productive and complex as speaking. For this reason

empathetic insight is a necessary component of a dialogical aesthetic. This insight occurs both within the rapport built between the artist and their collaborators, and among the collaborators themselves (with or without the mediating figure of the artist), as well as between the collaborators and other communities of viewers. Kester suggests that: “Dialogic works can challenge dominant representations of a given community, and create a more complex understanding of, and empathy for, that community among a broader public” (Kester 2005, 158). Like Kwon, Kester identifies the risk of using the term “community”, and the need to avoid essentialist models of community, rather considering the term as providing a provisional sense of collectivity. Kester’s comment aligns closely with Fuller’s as identified in Chapter 3, where the aesthetic is closely related to the political.

Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) discusses the possibility of art as social interstice. Art is the place that produces a specific sociability, or as Bourriaud puts it “…it tightens the space of relations, unlike TV” (Bourriaud 2002, 18). His term “relational aesthetics” draws upon the “materialism of encounter” or random materialism proposed by Louis Althusser “So, the essence of humankind is purely trans-individual, made up of the bonds that link individuals together in social forms which are invariably historical…” (Bourriaud 2002, 18). Bourriaud repositions the role of artworks (away from representational and imaginary and utopian realities) towards ways of living and models of action.

Bourriaud sees ‘relational aesthetics’ as functioning outside the capitalist structure, and suggests that it is a reclamation of social spaces as “… it encourages an inter-human commerce that differs from the ‘communication zones’ that are imposed upon us” (Bourriaud, 2002,16). In his 2004 essay “Berlin Letter about Relational Aesthetics” he suggests that we are witnessing the emergence of a new vocabulary, one “…that takes the socius as its base” (Bourriaud 2004). This vocabulary is not a pretext, or useful only for producing conviviality, but is a cognitive tool. Art can be used as a means for creating and recreating new relations between people. Artists, he claims, seek interlocutors, people who take part in a conversation. Such interlocutors become part of the production process itself. The aim of relational aesthetics is for people (artist and audience) to ask “What is it for?” implying the constitution of temporary subject groups, or micro-communities, and the modelling of alternative modes of sociality. While this may be the case, Bourriaud’s critics claim that his conception of the social is overly harmonistic (Bishop 2004, Martin
2007) and does not differentiate between engagement in the social realm and transformational change (Bishop 2004). Claire Bishop’s critique of relational art focuses on the emphasis given to the creative rewards of collaboration over aesthetics. The urgency of the political task, Bishop claims, has led to a largely uncritical set of practices. The emphasis to date has been placed on ethical terms, and the role that artists take or don’t take in relationship to their community, and on levels of authorial renunciation. Bishop is also critical of writers such as Kester and Lippard, who advocate a renunciation of the artists’ pedagogical and creative mastery. They also Bishop suggests, rely on an absence of a commitment to the aesthetic, and fall into the same trap as “intellectual trends inaugurated by identity politics” (Bishop 2006, 25), which she sees as inflexible.

Bishop proposes that socially engaged art should look more towards avant-garde theatre, performance or architecture rather than align with social activist histories. In this way the artist may start to think of the social and political together rather than subsuming both within the ethical. Intersubjective relations, Bishop suggests, should not be seen as an end in themselves, but rather serve “…to unfold a more complex knot of concerns about pleasure, visibility, engagement, and the conventions of social interaction” (Bishop in Roche, 2008, 203).

In summary: the analysis of site provided through these various creative practices and engagements provides a rich field of enquiry relevant to my research. Particular places, communities and discourses are connected through creative practices that have ongoing implications through their connections. Although not explicitly addressed, the works are usually performed within temporal frameworks, with an interest in the continuing effect of art as event. In this sense the awareness of the place, community and discourse as performed through the work becomes a story that is told and retold through documentation: aural, written and visual. Site is emphasized as a peopled place, and social issues are activated through types of creative engagement. Political questions around who can speak and how they can be heard are considered and are introduced as ethico-aesthetic concerns of the artist, albeit with the challenges of striking a balance between ethics and aesthetics. Conversation is identified as a site of social negotiation between particular places and community engagement, reflecting interests by a number of writers identified in Chapter 3.
4.3 New media and locative media art practices

Among the conditions informing writing about social art practices, is the contemporary environment of hypermedia (Kaye 2000, Bourriaud 2002, Kwon 2002, Kester 2000, 2005, Bishop 2006). The high-speed flow of dislocated images and narratives facilitated initially by globally distributed media via film, magazines and television and subsequently by the internet and mobile communication have affected both our social interaction and our understandings of the local.

“New media art” is the name given to a set of practices that identify media as their site, and reflect a shifting relationship between viewer and artwork as a result of and through the use of new media tools, practices and cultures. There are some similarities and many differences between social, site-specific practices and the concerns and practices of new media artists, with the largest overlap to be found in the specific field of locative media. I will briefly outline a general history and the key concerns of new media art, and identify intersections with social and site-specific themes and practices already discussed. Locative media will be identified as a particular form of new media practice specifically focusing on the relationship between media and site, and some examples of projects are discussed.

4.3.1 New media art – histories and practices

New media art practices have a short history, emerging in the late 1980s and 90s initially in Europe and Japan (Wardrip-Fruin & Montford 2003). Lev Manovich describes the resistance to new media art by art institutions and curators at that time, particularly in the USA, as a clash of ideologies. The ideals of art institutions at that time tended to reflect the idea of single authorship, the unique art object and controlled distribution through an exclusive system. In contrast, the ideals of new media artists privilege the existence of potentially numerous copies, multiple states of a given work, collective authorship including author-user symbiosis (where the user can change the work through interactivity) and network distribution systems that bypass the traditional art distribution system. On a more pragmatic note the exhibition of new media works requires a level of technical sophistication and specialized equipment that galleries were neither prepared nor equipped for in the 1980s-90s (Manovich 2002).
By 2001 Manovich accepted that although the field began as a cultural underground, new media art had become an established artistic field which had acquired a large degree of institutional support. The risk then, he claimed, was that as technology had become pervasive, many artists used technology in their practices and the focus of the field was becoming dispersed (Manovich 2002). UK curators Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook suggest that there are certain behaviours that define the use of new media by artists. They defined new media art as: “...art that is made using electronic media technology and that display any or all of the three behaviours of interactivity, connectivity, computability in any combination” (Graham and Cook 2010, 22).

Some connections with prior art movements are recognized. Manovich drew connections with the 1920s art and design avant-garde. It was in this period (1915-28) he claims, that many radically new aesthetic and communication techniques were prototyped by artists with socially provocative aims. He identifies Dada and Constructivist techniques of collage with the computer commands CUT and PASTE (Manovich 1999). A number of writers (Dinkla 1996, Paul 2003, Wardip-Fruin & Montford 2003) drew connections with the Happenings and performances by groups such as Fluxus in the 1960s as precursors to new media art. Here, the active participation of the audience, the artwork as a temporal process rather than a fixed object, and the artwork as an open system are shared values and form an intersection for both new media artists and the socially engaged art practices reviewed. There are also direct connections between the work of artists such as Nam June Paik and Jeffrey Shaw, whose work has spanned both 1960s performance art and later new media art movements.

![Figure 37: Jeffrey Shaw 1995, Place: A User’s Manual, Computer graphic/photo installation, photograph retrieved from http://www.jeffrey-shaw.net/html_main/show_work.php?record_id=96#](image-url)
Throughout the 1970s and 80s painters, sculptors, architects, photographers, video and performance artists began to experiment with computer imaging techniques, with more technical work completed in collaborations between artist and engineers (Paul 2003). Kit Galloway and Sherrie Rabinowitz’ work *Satellite Arts performing A Space With No Geographical Boundaries.* (1977), is an early example of this kind of collaboration. Comprised of a three-location, two-way, interactive satellite transmission involving performers on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the USA, it was realised in collaboration with NASA and the Educational Television Centre in Menlo Park, California. This dance performance used satellite technology to create a composite space, where performers’ images were transposed onto images of the remote place, initiating a new form of ‘virtual space’. The artists coined the phrase “image as place” to describe their networked performance (Paul 2003).

**Figure 38:** Sherrie Rabinowitz (1950-2013), and Kit Galloway’s (1977) *Satellite Arts Project performing A Space With No Geographical Boundaries.* (Photograph retrieved from http://www.ecafe.com/museum/history/ksoverview2.html).

Returning to Graham and Cook’s definition of new media art exhibiting particular behaviours (interactivity, connectivity, computability), we can identify new rules of engagement that have grown out of the context of the internet. Some new media art has grown out of artists’ own practices in adoption of new tools, while others reflect the inherent ontologies of the internet and emerging technologies. An example of the former practice can be recognized in *Biophilia*, a 2011 album and associated applications for ipad and iphone, released by musician and artist Bjork in conjunction with Apple computers. *Biophilia* enables listeners to interact with the music by recombining elements and reorganizing musical elements of the work but not changing or contributing their own content. In this way listeners can edit pre-selected material into new assemblages, but do not become co-authors.
In contrast an example of new media art reflecting the inherent ontologies of the internet, can be found within the Open Source movement emerging in the early 1990’s. Through employing multi-authoring processes associated with software engineering, many people share the development of a project in a recurrent cycle of improvement and modification. The Open Source movement has developed strategies and tools beyond software development and is now a term used more generally for free and shared access projects, ranging from music and filmmaking developed or remixed via many online contributors, to community-based initiatives. An example of open source art activity is Julian Priest and James Steven’s project *Wireless in Clink Street* (2000) that enabled a local free internet routing service within a small geographic location in London. Local people shared conversations and simple technologies in order to enable this free network, and share it with neighbours. Framed as an art project, the work can be likened to Heather and Ivan Morison’s (2006) work ‘I Lost Her Near Fantasy Island’ (described in section 4.1.3). Despite the two works reflecting very different politics and aesthetics they both activate public space for a particular activity and draw upon informal social networks to enable their work. Claire Doherty (2000) draws connections between this kind of collective authorship and community-engagement in terms of social art practices. She quotes artist and researcher Saul Albert’s proposition that the Open Source movement constitutes “…a complex gift economy of programmers that is inspiring a burgeoning sociology” (Doherty 2000 n.p.). Open Source work differs in political intention from interactive work, although they share some methods.

In 2012 an essay by Claire Bishop published in *Art Forum*, entitled the “Digital Divide” highlighted that divisions between commercial, academic, and museum settings persist, and in many regards are unchanged from the attitudes described by Manovich eleven years earlier. Bishop writes:

So why do I have a sense that the appearance and content of contemporary art have been curiously unresponsive to the total upheaval in our labor and leisure inaugurated by the digital revolution? While many artists use digital technology, how many really confront the question of what it means to think, see, and filter affect through the digital? How many thematize this, or reflect deeply on how we experience, and are altered by, the digitization of our existence? I find it strange that I can count on one hand the works of art that do seem to undertake this task [...] There is, of course, an entire sphere of ‘new media’ art, but this is a specialized field of its own: It rarely overlaps with the mainstream art world (commercial galleries, the Turner Prize, national pavilions at Venice) (Claire Bishop, *Art Forum*, September 2012, 1).
While Bishop’s article received serious critique in new media art circles, the article identified that at least for some, new media art had not effectively been accepted by the academy, and its art histories continue to remain outside it. Bishop also identified that while many artists undoubtedly employed new media tools, they sometimes did so without critically engaging with the transformative effects these and other digital tools have had upon the context and culture of contemporary life. My case studies in Chapters 6-8 attempt to show other perspectives.

4.3.2 Locative media – abstract and grounded

The field of locative media is a form of new media art concerned with creating connections between digital content and geographic location. Marc Tuters and Kazys Varnelis describe the form’s inception:

Initially coined as a title for a workshop hosted by RIXC, an electronic art and media center in Latvia during 2002, the term is derived from the ‘locative’ noun case in the Latvian language [that] indicates location and vaguely corresponds to the English prepositions ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘at’, and ‘by’ (Tuters & Varnelis, networkedpublics.org, 2006, n.p.).

A report produced during the workshop outlined the scope for locative media:

Inexpensive receivers for global positioning satellites have given amateurs the means to produce their own cartographic information with military precision... As opposed to the World Wide Web the focus here is spatially localized, and centred on the individual user; a collaborative cartography of space and mind, places and the connections between them (networkedpublics.org, 2006).

Tuters and Varnelis propose that locative media offers a conceptual framework by which to examine certain technological assemblages and their potential social impacts. Two types of mapping generally occur in locative media projects: the first is annotative, where virtual data annotates or ‘tags’ the world; the second is phenomenological, whereby the action of the subject is traced upon a map. Tuters and Varnelis make connections between these two types of locative media and the twin Situationist practices of détournement and the dérive (Tuters & Varnelis, networkedpublics.org 2006). UK arts collective Blast Theory provide an example of an arts practice that aims to connect the digital visualization of geographies with the social experience of them through playful...
strategies. Critics of locative media, however, draw connections with surveillance technologies, and cite the use of mapping and its Cartesian framework as colonialist (Broekman metamute.org 2004, Fusco 2004, Holmes 2006). These concerns echo those of Butt, Tuhiwai-Smith and Probyn as discussed in Chapter 3.

Media and performance artist Coco Fusco is an explicit critic:

It is as if more than four decades of postmodern critique of the Cartesian subject had suddenly evaporated...In the name of a politics of global connectedness, artists and activists too often substitute an abstract ‘connectedness’ for any real engagement with people in other places or even in their own locale (Fusco, ‘Questioning the frame’ www.inthesetimes.com, 2004, n.p.).

Instead, Fusco draws attention to the processes of socially engaged artists and activists:

“...rather than embracing tactics that rely on dreams of omniscience, [locative media artists] would do well to examine the history of globalism, networks, dissent and collective actions in order to understand that they are rooted in the geopolitical and cultural margins” (Fusco ‘Questioning the frame’ 2004, n.p.).

While some aspects of new media art practices are synchronous with some of the values of site-specific and socially engaged art, such as engagement with non-art audiences outside of galleries and incorporating participatory aspects that de-emphasize the artist as author, other aspects of new media art have developed without the criticality of the socially engaged art context. Advocates of new media art celebrate the opportunity for collective art activities, connecting artistic practice across borders and through technology. At times these practices converge with local contexts, and at other times they create environments for interactivity and engagement. However, the employment of new media technologies in support of more grounded practices is a strategy argued for in the next part of this thesis.
4.4 Connecting themes, relevant theories and useful gaps

Several connecting themes can be identified between the fields of practice relating to site-specific and socially engaged art, and new media art practices.

4.4.1 Site

It can be said that the model of cartography that defines fixed relations between abstracted notions of site has been replaced by a more relational, social definition. This is conceived of as a process rather than a product, and describes a social and cultural engagement that has relationships with sites. Sites are often considered in relation to other sites, they can be located geographically. But site can also exist in transitory experience, in socio-political debate and in the discursive relationship itself. However, site-specificity in art and locative media tends to refer to a particular geographic location and imply a located audience. The audience may be conceived of as enacting embodied or data-based relations to the site.

Much discourse relating to site seems to be focused on the alienating context of urban experience. These urban contexts are generally sited in Europe or the USA, and this reminds us of centrist (rather than provincial, local or regional) perspectives. When site-specific art is described outside of these continents, it is often in a biennale context. Kwon’s (2002) resolve is to address site as “the wrong place”, acknowledging the effects of migration on place, and the effects of travel upon artists.

Site is generally understood as heterogenous, layered and unstable. Similarly, we accept our heterotopic and transitive experience of spaces in everyday life, and move between several spaces with ease. Site is also frequently articulated in terms of an event (historically and contextually specific). Kwon, de Certeau, Wark and Hau’ofa are examples of writers using space tactically; they politicize space and valorize particular sites as disharmonious with and critically
responsive to global perspectives. Ito’s technosocial considers space and sociality as connected, identified through technological engagement.

While for postcolonial writers all sites are culturally and historically inscribed, this is not articulated clearly by many artists working with site-specificity.

### 4.4.2 Distance

Travel, the internet and mobile communication have fostered the high-speed recontextualization of images (and other forms of local information) and a de-contextualization of bodies (and work) from sites.

While some claim that new technologies have enhanced the ‘elimination of distance’, the opposite can also be true. The photographic image as a decontextualizing instrument of representation illustrates the emphasis of distance. Documentation of site-specific and socially engaged art may be a way of articulating this separation of art as image from art as social context. Locative media enacts both separation and connection through a conceptualization of site that is both data and storytelling. However Wark’s model of vectorial engagement highlights that decontextualized information leaves intricate traces, evidenced in our everyday lives.

### 4.4.3 Engagement

Models of interaction and participation have developed for site-specific and socially engaged art, and for new media practices. The idea of interactivity as ‘doing something’ to a work has become popularly accepted through the use of interactive media. Open Source, dialogic and relational engagement both describe models of involvement where the work, the artist and communities of engagement are all able to be transformed by the process. They imply possibility and change to the (art) object or process in a way that is socially transformative, as opposed to individually informative or purely receptive. They also imply that both individual and collective identity is unstable, transitory and open to transformation. Fuller’s media ecologies (identified in Chapter 3) similarly draw on the dynamic relations between systems to reconnect political, material and aesthetic elements.

Social engagement implies a group of people. The social formation of communities, pre-existing, temporary or otherwise formed or bound, is a theme identified by both site-specific socially engaged art and new
media practices. As has been discussed, some art critics have described the socialization of practice as overly concerned with the ethical and argue that there is a lack of aesthetic criticality when the emphasis is placed on working with communities. Critics identify ethical and political risks in the valorization of community as a model, and as a term that can equally be used to connect and separate people. However both site-specificity and social engagement can be seen as methods of reconnecting people to site, and people to each other.

Kwon, de Certeau and Foster highlight the importance of recognizing people not as homogenous groups (or communities) but in relation to dominant forms of culture. A tendency to cluster and gloss over the particular differences posed by different people in different places remains problematic. Heather and Ivan Morison’s Bristol 2006 work may be an example of site-specific work that could be transferred to another city, and where the artists themselves were not affected by the social engagement processes of their work. In contrast Wochenklauser’s 1994 work, brought together socially and power-differentiated groups for potentially transformative and ongoing conversations and placed importance on the particular sites and social effects on each community that engaged through their process. Placed alongside these two works, Rachael Rakena’s 2001-03 video work, Rerehiko, discussed in Chapter 2, could not have occurred without the people and places to which she belongs.

In this regard the persistent Euro-USA-centric and urban approaches driving the theories reviewed also remain problematic. Wark’s (and Chakrabarty’s) proposal of “provincializing the metropolitan” seems as yet to have been unrealized. Similarly, the criticism by Foster and Bishop that social art practices lend too much emphasis to the ethical, without due acknowledgement of the aesthetic, retains currency as a problem for work of this nature. However, such difficulties also provide a useful gap, one that prompts research into projects that do seem to balance the ethical, aesthetic and political, while also seemingly “provincializing the metropolitan”. Three such projects are discussed in Chapters 6-8.

4.4.4 Useful gaps and additional questions

a summary
Chapter 5.

Research Methods

This chapter describes my research objectives and how they were developed. It then describes the development of specific and relevant vocabularies used in the research. Following this, the design of the research is then described, drawing upon appropriate practice-based and practice-led methodologies that make room for collaboration and participation in unpredictable contexts. The process of developing case studies and operationalization of research variables are then outlined. I complete this chapter by attempting to situate myself.
5.1. Research objectives

As proposed in Chapter 2 (section 2.7.1) a number of tensions have been identified through this research relating to both our conceptions and picturing of land and our languages of media co-presence. It was identified that we need to adapt the ways that we conceptualise, picture and practice ideas surrounding land and media co-presence, and that New Zealand was a good place to consider this.

In Chapters 2 and 3 the local was identified as an important starting place to consider these tensions, in order to ground knowledge, to situate practice, and ensure that room is made for cultural specificity and difference to remain central. A technosocial approach was identified as a way to consider media co-presence that is consistent with a local approach.

My research seeks to better understand contemporary instances of the local, as it is assembled – and experienced – in new ways. It draws upon places, people and stories in my local: Dunedin, New Zealand, in order to articulate the local in Probyn’s terms “...a fragmented set of possibilities that can be articulated into a momentary politics of time and place” (Probyn 1990, 187).

I draw upon Fuller’s assertion that art “… condenses and spews out moments of relationality” and “renders relations temporarily visible” (Fuller 2008 1-2). In Bal’s terms art may coerce us into embodied looking, which can help us to see differently, and intervene with other conventions of looking. Through designing and producing three art projects as case studies, reflection and analysis focus on ways in which these projects contribute to an understanding of a particular instance of the local, and may offer insights into ways of reconceiving the research tensions.

Each case involves specific sites, narratives and mediated experiences. It is proposed that these art projects are able to contribute to our understanding of the local through the connections they make between lands, landscapes, sociality and techno-sociality.

The intertidal zone or foreshore is constantly shifting and changing, repetitions of uncertainty and un-placeability and provides both locale and metaphor for the research.
5.1.1 Development of objectives

These research objectives were developed through identifying tensions (in Chapter 2), and a review of literature and art practices, and theoretical approaches. Together with an examination of local histories these resources have helped me to consider the intersection of languages and practices that have produced the specific contexts of Dunedin in which this research takes place. The research objectives are ‘placed’ in site – practiced physical sites and culturally produced landscapes.

In Chapters 2 to 4 I have identified specific vocabularies (both terms and practices) that I believe are relevant and useful to this research task. I have selected and employed certain terms, identifying their heritage of use within political traditions. ‘Landscape’ and ‘local’ are examples of two key terms in this collected vocabulary. Another term – ‘technosocial’ – can be seen as a neologism that I aim to nuance through the research, by considering its usefulness in a new context. Richard Rorty describes this process as a “metaphorical redescription” (1989, 18) and a method of producing new descriptions and new vocabularies that enable us to think about things differently and potentially able to contribute to a conversation. The tensions, themes and practices identified through this research, and brought together through the research events, aim to contribute to this type of conversation.

5.2 Research design

5.2.1 Collaborative, creative and expanded fieldwork

The design of this research enlists collaborative and creative interventions as a method for generating research materials. In this sense – consistent with the theories and practices identified – I have not planned an investigation in which my participation is one of a remote observer, nor am I seeking to analyze passive objects of study. The tactics I have employed for generating materials through research design are more closely aligned with the work of Isabelle Stengers, Bruno Latour and Félix Guattari, incorporating myself into a network of relationships.

This form of research falls under the broad category of qualitative research methods that embrace the perspectives of both researcher and participants. This approach may be aligned with the ethnographic methods of anthropologists and social scientists, employed when studying human social and cultural practices. Ethnography is a distinctive approach to gathering data, including what people ‘do’ as much as what they ‘say’.
Latour expands ethnographic spaces of fieldwork (emphasizing networks of associations that connect several sites) and makes room for ‘nonhuman’ sites, devices and instruments in the research process. Such an approach is relevant to this project as the research identifies more than human dimensions, and is able to bring into consideration as actants lands, landscapes and technologies, as well as cultural tensions, capable of playing active roles in the research narrative. It also allows us to consider other times and places that continue to affect our experience here in New Zealand.

However, as a creative, participating team member in various collaborative art projects I do use some of the strategies deployed by ethnographers, including a focus on situated knowledge and practice. Research material is generated through these situated projects and processes, and made manifest through three case studies.

5.2.2 Practice-based and practice-led conversations

This research considers more than languages and locations; it takes the position that knowledge always exists in lived social worlds, and is demonstrated through practice. Through considering and making art as an aspect of the research event, practice became integral to the research design.

Disillusioned with a problematic division between research methods, Brad Haseman describes a “… radical push to not only place practice within the research process, but to lead research through practice” (Haseman 2006, 100). This approach, part of a broader definition of qualitative methods, is often labeled practice-based and practice-led research.

Linda Candy (2006) describes the difference between practice-based and practice-led research as domain differences: “If a creative artifact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge, the research is practice-based. If the research leads primarily to new understandings about practice, it is practice-led” (Candy 2006, 1). My research enlists both practice-based and practice-led methods in order to fulfill my research objectives.

Haseman identifies that many practice-led researchers do not begin with a clearly defined problem, or domain. Instead they are led, in an
enthusiasm of practice, or perhaps an unruly curiosity. “They tend to ‘dive in’, to commence practicing to see what emerges” (Haseman 2006, 101). One of the benefits Mary Gergen and Kenneth Gergen have identified in working in this way is the potential expansion of communities in which the work can stimulate dialogue (Gergen and Gergen 2003).

An unruly curiosity, a socially connective personality, and a desire to make things happen combine to drive and define my research practice as messy, contemporary and intertextual. As Gergen and Gergen (2003) suggest, this type of research is able to include a wide variety of art and non-art audiences, in communities that are not easily documented, but which form part of the conversational locus of the research.

Early accounts of research undertaken through practice-based enquiry were outlined by Donald Schön (1983). Schön recognized an epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic intuitive processes that were born out of situations of uncertainty and instability. Schön put epistemological trust in these processes, and developed a structured account for “reflection-in-action”, which can be subjected to a kind of rigour that is both like and unlike “the rigor of scholarly research and controlled experiment” (Schön 1983, ix).

He described this approach as “a reflective conversation with the situation” (Schön 1983, 76-104). Each situation is unique, complex and uncertain, and the problem must be reframed, requiring reflective action, which is the basis of a conversation. In this conversation, the situation “talks back” (Schön 1983, 132).

Drawing upon Schön’s framework, Steven Scrivener (2000) develops a rigorous account of doctoral research processes that he defines as “creative-production” projects in art and design. In my practice this includes the role of creative producer as well as practitioner. He develops his account from experience as a doctoral supervisor and examiner in the UK, where he observed a significant difference between traditional problem-solving design research projects and creative-production research enquiries. Employing a creative-production approach does not aim to solve a problem, but rather uses self-conscious, reflective and systematic means to better understand defined issues.
My research project can be best described as using creative-production research enquiry processes as outlined by Scrivener's (2000, 4) list of the norms of creative-production research projects:

1. The aims and outcomes will be original, but not necessarily “new”.
2. The work can be described as a response to a set of ongoing issues, concerns and interests, expressed through one or more artifacts.
3. The research issues are usually rooted in a cultural context, i.e. they reflect culture.
4. The work makes a contribution to human experience.
5. The creative production, as an object of human experience, is more important than any knowledge embodied in it.

Scrivener maps these norms onto Schön’s framework of reflective practice in order to characterize his creative-production process (Scrivener 2000, 7). He notes that there is a dialectic that occurs between the situation and the creative practitioner’s conception of the task in hand, which stimulates a parallel dialectic between problem setting and problem solving. Reflection is the primary conceptual tool for handling the unexpected, and creative action is a way of “keeping things moving”, recognizing that past experience provides examples, rather than generalized theories or tools.

As a creative researcher and producer I am interested in better understanding the situation in order to make something with it, in a process that is subjective, and able to be embodied in action. I am seeking affirmation, not confirmation, in and through a process that demands rigour. In terms of practice-led processes, a number of ideas embraced by Scrivener’s creative-production research projects and developing notions by Schön match neatly with the research issues identified in Chapters 2 and 3. Hence for this research project the following methods are adopted in Chapters 6-8:

- The research issues are developed for analysis through three case studies involving art practices using specific sites and new media.

- These case studies are developed as forms of conversation with the situation, both the local and cultural contexts, and the research issues identified.

- The reported case studies provide relevant background information about the practices, and their production and reception.
• The case studies are identified as able to respond to the established research issues.

• Self-conscious, and systematic reflection leads to the identification of connections, gaps, successes and failures within the projects, the fields of practice and the particular conversations with and between situations.

• Projects are evaluated on their performativity of particular identified issues, but also on unexpected and surprising outcomes, which may lead to the identification of further issues. They resist reduction to a single problem and its solution, but can be understood as processes of engagement that may lead to more questions. These will help to reframe the research questions and issues, and “keep things moving”.

• The case studies are intended to create better understanding of the identified research issues, through transforming the situation, rather than testing an established understanding. It is recognized that this involves active, subjective, embodied and social processes.

5.2.3 Identifying case studies

Case studies were identified as a suitable way to frame the practice-based component of this research and its practice-led reflection and documentation. In each case I sought collaborative art opportunities that were able to resonate with the research tensions. I allowed for local and contemporary circumstances to drive the selection of research projects. All of the projects were integrated into the social context of Dunedin, and not developed solely for the aims of the research, as they involved many other people.

Each case study identified as suitable for the research was a discrete event in which elements of the research were produced or considered in collaboration with others: artists, producers, curators, specific communities, participant audiences, and specific sites and processes. This is a process Stengers calls “mapping on to knowledge” (Stengers 1997, 117). Rather than a predefined set of expectations, the process is one of co-fabrication between researcher and researched. The case studies, crafted as research events in collaboration with others, allowed for surprising and contingent results to emerge.
As collaborative research events, each case study was also framed by the demands of bigger events: a national art series, an international sporting occasion and a local art festival. For Stengers it is necessary for researchers to place themselves “at risk” (Stengers 1997, 111), inviting non-compliance with those they are researching with, and being open to the research proposition being redefined by the research activity. Employing this approach required saying ‘yes’ to opportunities as they came to me, with the hope of being able to consider research through these exchanges with the world, rather than devising stand-alone and research-led events that could be more carefully controlled. As a result, the case studies themselves include outcomes that are often partial and open-ended. Stengers asks us to identify and take particular note of frictions and gaps generated through research as we consider the research event as a conversation that inevitably includes more than what is explicitly said.

Each project shared some of the same research tensions, and employed them in different combinations, sharing some variables, and yet exhibiting idiosyncratic and novel elements too. In particular, all the projects were presented in public spaces, involving active audience engagement.

**In case study 1:** *One Day Sculpture Dunedin*, I worked collaboratively with another curator to pitch a project concept to a Dunedin artist-run gallery in 2008. After successfully being selected as the Dunedin project, the gallery curator then submitted the project concept to an international curatorial panel. This project was selected and produced as part of a national art series. Working with four artists *One Day Sculpture Dunedin* intentionally included the use of the internet in relation to a specific site in Dunedin, as both a curatorial brief and collaborative methodology.

**In case study 2:** *Haka Peepshow*, I worked as a project manager and executive producer for artist Rachael Rakena. This work emerged as a public art commission, employing digital media, for the event of the 2011 Rugby World Cup. The case study documents and considers the development, production and reception of this artwork.

**Case study 3:** *Awash*, was a collaborative artwork, developed in 2012 with sound artist Leyton Glen, in response to an invitation to participate in a performance art festival in Port Chalmers, a nearby harbourside village, where the city’s main port is situated. The work assembled histories, sites and cell phones with participant audiences.

*Map of Dunedin and Otago Harbour see figure 4 page 23.*

*For a more detailed map of the sites for case studies 1 & 3 see map (figure 40) page 168.*
Over a four-year period these projects (as case studies) were researched, co-produced, documented and reviewed. Learning from one project informed the next, but indirectly, as each project employed different participants, artists and contexts.

I took on multiple and diverse roles in these projects. At best these roles can be encompassed by the disciplines of public art and performance, advocacy, project management and curatorship, but they extend in multiple and connected ways to include other practices too. In each case as a contributing team member my involvement helped to enable the realization of the projects.

The distribution of control in the research event was thoroughly collaborative. Stengers (1997) uses the term “cosmopolitics” to describe types of “encounter and conviviality as new political practices” (Stengers 2011, 112). Again the metaphor of conversation is enabled through this collaborative approach.

The siting of each project in public spaces was not accidental; by choosing sites of contested histories and presences, we enabled experts and non-experts, experiences and technologies, and bicultural frameworks to mix in “hybrid forums” (another term invoked by Stengers, 1997). Each event involved planning, consultation, fundraising, encouraging participation and support. I was part of a team focused on these tasks, both responsive and responsible.

The collection of material used to compile these case studies was also a shared activity, necessarily multiple and partial, describing parts or fragments, and including more often reported experiences alongside my own. I share and juxtapose my own experience (employing self-reflection) with the stories and experiences of others, in order to try and present an assemblage of experiences, concepts and materials. This includes photographic documentation (by myself and others), conversations with participants, artists and audiences, at the time and later upon further reflection. Official reviews of the events are considered alongside anecdotal opinions, both favourable and critical.

In the process of writing these case studies, I drew upon further research, pre- and post-event, in order to develop a better understanding of their contexts. In this sense these case studies are not a linear narrative of events developed out of a pre-defined set of research conditions, but are able to be described as an example.
of Schön’s reflective conversation with the situation. Bingham (2003) describes a double sense of representation implied by the reflexivity of ‘writing up’, that requires (self) interrogation of the relationship between what one is writing and the way one writes it. I accept that these analytical approaches are activities of the research practice, and sought to keep my story as open as I could, approaching the work with modesty, self-awareness and non-innocence (Bingham 2003, 153). This required – throughout the process of research, project-management and writing up – that I abandon preconceptions in order to be surprised by the relations that emerged, including serendipitous discoveries and ill-fitting elements in a complex weave.

5.2.5 Collaborative re-placing, participation and ethical considerations

Paul Carter (2004) outlines a method he defines as “material thinking”; echoing the work of Schön and Scrivener he adds his own distinctive perspective to practice-led research that is particularly useful when considering the local. Carter (2004, xii) suggests that

... the process of material thinking enables us to think differently about our human situation, and, by displaying a tangible but non-reductive form, its inevitable complexity, to demonstrate the great role works of art can play in the ethical project of becoming (collectively and individually) oneself in a particular place.

In this statement Carter suggests four useful ideas:

1. **Collaboration is a process of material thinking.** People, places, material and media are, in each project, asked to work together. Though particular artists, designers and media-makers are credited as authors, each work results out of collaborative situations, involving many un-named people. Sometimes, I am one of these. Immersed in each situation, and taking up tools as required, my roles and work on projects were both more and less than those of a typical researcher.

2. **Material thinking, as a collaborative process, involves inevitable complexity.** This is true for each of the case studies included in my research. This complexity is not easily mapped by processes of representation, as it is a result of making connections between people, places and histories, material and mediated, that do not routinely converse. In order to ease the
complexity each case study shares similar subheadings, and connections are made where possible between practices and cases.

3. Carter considers the ethical dimensions of collaboration. A feature of collaborative and participatory work is the need for a public or viewer to engage with these practices as processes. This is a problem for the many ethnographic methodologies emerging in contemporary art as practices that evolve spontaneously and often engage audiences that do not enter the conversation in pre-arranged ways. This is in stark contrast with research subjects taking part in predetermined processes. Hal Foster (1996) criticizes site-specific artists as potentially falling into the trap of anthropologists whereby an effort intended to undermine authority (in this case art institutions) may actually reinforce this authority by positioning the artist as the expert reader of culture-as-text. Foster examines a variety of problems that may arise when art tries to imitate ethnographic practices, suggesting that reflexivity is essential for the artist to avoid alienating and compromising the collaborating and participating public.

Be that as it may, my case studies evolved “as a conversation with the given situation”, and as a result some formal aspects usually associated with research participation were by-passed. Where possible, and with the named authors of projects, verbal permission was gained to consider these projects as case studies for my research. As projects however, they grew out of local opportunities that were not in the first instance driven by my doctoral research but were embedded in the contexts of my practice in and of Dunedin and New Zealand, and my general involvement with arts communities here. The purpose of each project was not to provide research fodder, but to engage in creative practice on professional terms. However, through the interplay between practice-based and practice-led the events became central to reflection in this thesis, and became framed as case studies.

I have been careful to name and acknowledge ownership of works, ideas and outcomes. Throughout my research I have been careful to let key participants know that I am engaged as a doctorate scholar. However, as a method of materializing ideas, this research project has not followed a prescribed trajectory, and as such, many people involved in these projects at numerous points and levels would be surprised to find mention of themselves or their activities in this document. This is a risk of both collaborative and participatory practices, and of the process of a creative-producer, and results in an ethical dilemma that I have attempted to reconcile through careful attribution.
The descriptions of engagement do not focus on the individual, nor on individual concerns. The works themselves all appeared in public, were free to attend and were intended for public engagement. There are, however, many people who appear in photographs that I do not know, and this is the case for some of the conversations too, reported in the third person.

4. The fourth element identified in Carter’s short sentence, is the role that creative production can play in the “project of becoming (collectively and individually) oneself in a particular place”. This refers to a broader ontological and epistemological project of knowing performed through creative-production research. Carter here connects the creative processes outlined with processes of knowing and of becoming, and these are positioned clearly as an event, in and of a particular place. Carter outlines the process of collaboration as having a special kind of contribution to make in the broader field of creative production. This involves first a dismembering; “bringing into questioning the ‘natural’ places of ideas, images and materials” (Carter 2004, 11).

New patterns emerge in the collaborative re-placing where acts of local invention ‘become’ that which escapes predetermined representation. “Local invention is the consequence of moving beyond nostalgia” (Carter 2004, 10). W.T.J. Mitchell (1994) in his book *Picture Theory* describes a form of collaborative praxis, and asks us to think differently about representation. To do this “… makes materially visible the structure of representation as a trace of temporality and exchange…it leads us to ask not merely what these forms ‘mean’, but what they do in a network of social relations” (Mitchell 1994, 423). In this way the methodologies chosen to undertake this research work with creative-production in ways that it is my hope to move beyond easily defined categories of practice, and work together in conversation.

5.3 Situating myself

I live in Dunedin New Zealand, and have lived here for over half my life now, among the daily tidal wash of this harbour-bound city. While distant from other centres, this small city has a vibrant, creative and intelligent community that continues to engage me in multiple ways, and to which I feel I belong. My creative practice is diverse, social and busy. Participating in flows of activities, always moving and shifting, this practice forms and informs my knowing. This thesis aligns my experience of living in Dunedin with my research interests, investigations and analysis.
As a conscious adoption of messy engagement, I have chosen to situate myself in the centre of this writing, and in the research more generally. Locating myself here is not intended to be interpreted as being in a geographic centre, but rather to find myself in the centre of a crowd, shifting with the social movement, not driving it, and able to take up different tools and roles as required.

As a brief summary, I live with my partner and three sons, necessary islands in my seas of activities. Their shores ground me, and we depend greatly on each other. The youngest was born in the early stages of this research project, and all my family have joined me for parts of the projects discussed. Similarly, I have joined them in their projects, and enjoy their energy and love.

I have a creative practice as well as academic curiosity. I find ways to engage both of these through my work, as well as in my local and regional community of practice. I regularly speak and listen at conferences, nationally and internationally, in order to peer review my ideas and practices. I initiate and collaborate with temporary subject groups, around a specific site, and story, in a project. I listen and talk, assist, facilitate resources, and connect people around projects in particular places, both in a specific location, and involving digital media. This takes a wide variety of forms, identified as follows:

**At times I am a project co-ordinator.** This can be appreciated as being a type of creative director or executive producer, or even a community co-ordinator rather than being an artist. I work ecologically, with multiple relations between people and their physical surroundings. (See Case Studies 1, 2 and 3.)

**At other times I recommend processes to others.** I mix with a large number of creative professionals, across a wide variety of ages and experiences. I have experiences in making things, and making things happen, but more importantly, I can connect people who have a creative project to others that can help make it happen. (See Case Study 2.)

**Sometimes I take a more formal role as a curator.** At times I work more directly with galleries, projects and artist-run spaces, to identify and work directly with other artists in the presentation of group aims and themes. My role as curator, however, crosses boundaries and as an artist-curatorial may become more involved in processes than a traditional gallery-based curator might be. In this sense my interest in curatorial practices is more of a facilitator, with a particular interest in social engagement and expanded audiences. (See Case Study 1.)
At times I share my own creative practice. Ideas, practices and processes also come together in ways that may best be defined as my own art practice (see Case Study 3). My own projects again align closely with a site-specific and socially engaged model of art practice. Projects are event-based, participatory and social, involving site and digital media such as mobile phones.

These projects are all situated on the shores or former tidelines of Otago Harbour. The metaphor of the intertidal zone has become an increasingly significant way for me to think about the cultural and political implications of living in New Zealand. It also proposes a way of conceiving our heterotopic co-location at once in material and digitally mediated spaces. It accounts for my multiple and shifting involvement in these projects, both as researcher and practitioner living amidst tidal zones.

5.4 The following case studies

In summary, the three case studies that follow (Chapters 6-8) are best considered as responses to opportunities, each presented through my involvement in different communities of practice in Dunedin, New Zealand. Each will employ a similar structure for ease of reading: outlining the background, processes and outcomes of the projects, as well as key connections to the research parameters. Subsequent analysis and evaluation will consider the contribution of the case study to the research project; its resonance with various aspects of the research tensions and background theory. Connections, gaps and insights gained from the case studies will be considered in Chapter 9.
Chapter 6. **Case Study 1**

**One Day Sculpture**

**Dunedin**

A number of the photographs, sentences and paragraphs in this chapter have been co-authored with my colleague and co-curator Rachel Gilles, and published in part, across four sites:

- The project’s development was presented as a paper at ISEA, Singapore 2008. The paper (McCaw C. and Gillies R., ‘Dunedin does not exist’) can be found here: isea-web.org/archives/docs/2008/proceedings/ISEA2008_proceedings.pdf.


- Doherty, C. and Cross D. (2010) *One Day Sculpture*, Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, includes a curatorial statement, and a partial version of Bramwell’s critical response.

*Figure 39:* Quarantine Island Kamau Taurua and the intertidal zone, midway between tides (photograph Charlotte Parallel).
This first case study provides an example of site-specific and socially engaged art. I was involved as a co-curator and co-facilitator of this project. As an artist curator however, my experience and analysis of the work, its development, execution and analysis of audience engagement was different from a more traditional curatorial analysis, as the project relied on collaboration, and a hands-on approach. This case provides an opportunity to consider a number of the frameworks identified in Chapters 2-4 through an art project, and establishes a practice-based introduction to the intertidal metaphor. Foucault’s heterotopia, the role of images compared with other forms of knowledge in technosocial assemblages, and reoccurring colonial practices are each considered through a series of failures, or slippages.

In late 2008 I was selected first locally and subsequently nationally, to co-curate a Dunedin project as a part of the One Day Sculpture series, with my colleague and collaborator Rachel Gillies.

Curator and initiator of the series, Claire Doherty was at the time the Director of the Situations Research Centre at the University of West England, in Bristol, and had an interest in the shift of public art practices and their relationships to communities, seen through the lens of a reconsideration of the model of biennale art events as a framing device for public art practices. Encompassing performance, installation, object-based sculpture and social events, One Day Sculpture set out to challenge conventional ideas about public sculpture, acknowledging that temporary artworks have the capacity to excite and engage people’s imaginations in a unique way – and to live on in collective memory. The project website explains: “...our interest [is] in challenging conventional associations of public sculpture (permanently sited, monumental and commemorative) to propose new definitions (critical, spatial, performative, interventionist).” (http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS_programme_cstatement.html)

One Day Sculpture was New Zealand’s first nationwide commissioning series of temporary, place-based public artworks. The series involved New Zealand-based and international artists – each of whom were commissioned to produce a new work that occurred during a discrete 24-hour period. Led by the Litmus Research Initiative at Massey University (Wellington) and Claire Doherty, One Day Sculpture was produced in partnership with arts institutions and curators across New Zealand and realized in Auckland, Wellington, New Plymouth, Christchurch and Dunedin from June 2008 to June 2009.
Doherty proposed the series with a number of initial parameters. Firstly, each project was a new commission, in response to the specific context of a host location. The artist’s response was first established through a research visit or residency. Secondly, each work in the series would occur within its own 24-hour period, although the duration, medium and location of each work was left open to interpretation. Artists were encouraged to consider the durational aspect of this commission through the work. Thirdly, the works were to be placed in public space:

Each artist should be encouraged to consider the nature of public sculpture, particularly its placement in and scripting of public space and the potential for artworks to engage with new publics through the transient spaces of the everyday. All artists should be encouraged to site, perform or initiate their projects in public space, outside institutional or conventional art or museum spaces (www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS_programme_cstatement.html).

The parameters closely align with Miwon Kwon’s identification of site, where it is no longer considered solely as a geographic location or architectural setting, but is reconceived as a network of social relations or situations. The resulting series was an expansive art event, involving twenty-seven works, over the period of one year, and a large collection of both international and New Zealand artists were commissioned to produce new works.

### 6.2 Connections to research themes

**Public art as situation narratives in and of New Zealand**

The popularity of site-specific work included in contemporary biennale art festivals was being drawn upon, and further developed in this unique set of parameters. In her first tour of New Zealand, seeking interest from artists and sponsorship from art institutions for the planned series, Doherty drew upon work such as the Morison’s (2006) Bristol project *I Lost Her Near Fantasy Island. Life Has Not Been the Same* to help define her field. In the work of the Morison’s we, along with the present audience as public, are encouraged to abandon disbelief and accept the suggestive power of art established ‘out of place’, and through its temporary placement, accept the public space it occupies as a site for many possible stories. This in turn suggests that public urban space can become a site for
any number of possible narratives. Stories such as these are a part of the urban flow, and variable props and characters seem no more ‘out of place’ than we ourselves feel in these urban non-spaces.

**Locational un-specificity?**

Careful to acknowledge Kwon’s “wrong place” – a model for “belonging in transience” – Doherty posed questions around the mobilization and commodification of site-specificity by introducing the additional element of duration and the temporary event. She did not however, address the potential issue of reproducing colonizing approaches and attitudes by connecting landscapes and art practices through the series, or through her drawing on international artists with biennale practices.

**Investigating place from a distance**

**the internet as site**

My interest in this project opportunity lay in the relationships between knowing a location from afar and being in that location, representation versus experience and the explicit and implicit use of digital and networked media in our knowing. I was also curious as to how we might test these ideas in a public art project from Dunedin, as part of a bigger series, but from a distance, and somewhat remote from the ‘art’ centres of New Zealand. As identified in Chapter 2, traditional concepts of remoteness compete with new models of connection. I was keen to test how well local experiences and the production and circulation of local texts – locally, nationally and internationally – would work when we consciously used the internet to facilitate this. Questions that were central to this aspect of the research included whether the occasion of this national art series could adequately support this circulation and whether the internet might help to include or exclude locally produced knowledges.

**Collaborative practices as conversational**

**local and distributed**

As identified, Dunedin is an early Scottish settlement and this work began as a collaboration with Rachel Gillies, a recently emigrated Scottish colleague. We were interested in exploring possible connections between these two locations, particularly via electronic media, and had started to discuss possible ways to develop an art project that made these connections explicit. This project opportunity coincided with our interest and so we decided to set up our explorations as a frame for this
From the start collaboration was a key concept for this project, beginning with our curatorial collaboration. Rachel had recently arrived in Dunedin from Edinburgh, and I had lived in Dunedin for the last 20 years, so we began by considering our own different relationships to Dunedin through both our experience of this place and through our media practices. Collaboration requires productive conversations. This, we believed was a chance to begin a conversation between local and distributed people, places and artworks.

A place is experienced differently depending on one’s level of intimacy with it. This is not only a concern for artists, but underpins our sense of belonging as humans wherever we are. When we consider knowing a place, there is always a continuum of possible nearness or distance, stretching from tangata whenua47 (people of the land) through to visitors passing by and barely touching the surface of a new place. Aspects of familiarity are troubled, challenged, or shifted by other technologies, such as the internet, travel technologies and media stories. The kinds of relationships we wanted to explore were not ones based primarily on looking, but on social connections between artists. Rachel and I were local, embodied and situated and wanted to make ‘Dunedin’ communicationally available to those collaborating artists in our temporary network, activating the site and drawing upon the technosocial terms later to be articulated more fully by Ito and Okabe.

Working with the artist-run Blue Oyster Art Project Space as One Day Sculpture Dunedin we commissioned four geographically separated artists to work collaboratively to create one piece of work for One Day Sculpture in Dunedin. The artists included two Scottish and two New Zealand artists who all provided different examples of both located and mediated art practices. Each of the project artists offered a different perspective and set of knowledges of the project site: Dunedin, New Zealand. Douglas Bagnall had lived in Dunedin as a student. Ex-pat Adam Hyde, while never having lived in Dunedin, had been a regular visitor, and continued to maintain connections with communities in Dunedin. Zoë Walker and Neil Bromich, while having visited New Zealand on one previous occasion, had never visited Dunedin. Aside from Walker and Bromich (a collaborating couple) the artists had never met, and the project did not require them to meet. We aimed to create a rich social fabric through which the collaborating artists could engage with research about Dunedin in conversation. Furthermore, as artist-curators we proposed that we could act as ‘artists-at-a-distance’ capable of
carrying out on-site tasks, ranging from communication, reflection, and development tasks, through to the presentation of any artwork for the collaborative team.

On a macro scale the project website www.onedaysculpture.org.nz allowed remote viewers and project followers to keep abreast of the latest artwork developments, critical writing, public events and other information about the series. Particularly prevalent in the tourism industry, online research about site from a distance is also an underlying process that was integral to the One Day Sculpture series in New Zealand. Our project aimed to question how such digital mediation could create, affect and contest ideas about place, using the One Day Sculpture Dunedin project as a case study. We asked: How do different perspectives and local knowledges affect site-specific art, and how could the internet act as a site of connection for geographically disparate artists; and whether the internet would include or exclude locally produced knowledges.

The internet became a tool for connecting our various locals (and terms surrounding site-specificity) and the internationality of the artists’ practices promised by the project. To some degree we were hoping to use the project as a way of critiquing site-specificity. We wanted to produce art in order to question the extent to which actively facilitated conversations, documented online, could ‘thicken’ our relationship with a distant and physical location.

Claire Doherty suggests that the role of site-specific commissioning may be to “… reimagine place as a situation, a set of circumstances, geographical location, historical narrative, group of people or social agenda to which the artist might respond” (Doherty 2004 n.p). Through the explicit use of the internet, One Day Sculpture Dunedin proposed that engaging with content via facilitated networked media can contribute to ideas of ‘site as situation’, considering the internet as both another site or context that artists need to respond to in their negotiation with physical site, as well as the communication tools employed in this negotiation. The physical site in terms of direct relation to the artists becomes informational and immaterial, a process rather than an object or representation, while for the audience or visitor it appears situated, local and embodied. The situation reconfigures the circumstances as an explicit and spatially-conceived gap between the experience of the artists and audiences. Rather than making the artists communicationally available to the audience, the local site was becoming communicationally available to the artists. We were intentionally flipping the model and we were curious to find out how these circumstances would unfold and become manifest in an artwork.
Our research period was proposed as an online exploration, and with none of the artists based in Dunedin, Rachel and I as curators were to act as the eyes and ears of the local, feeding the artists with relevant information and supporting information with social conversation. Our shared project brief proposed that the internet could be used effectively by artists and curators to bridge distance and create a meaningful experience of Dunedin. To enable this, our initial conversations began via email and subsequently involved blogs, a wiki, e-mails, Skype, and shared Google maps, which helped the artists engage with both the lived place and Dunedin at a distance, prior to the conception of a work. As a result digital communication was integral to, and framed the work.

As noted by Massey and Clark (2008) place shifts and folds, operating between practice and memory, and Rachel and I made and facilitated many connections between people through the research for this project, both locally and remotely. This aspect of curatorial practice was enlightening. Through our research many relationships were developed between local people who had never previously met, and who were not normally involved in art projects. From local iwi, sea scouts and island caretakers to marine biologists many local conversations were had, with many ongoing relationships and practices developed as a result. These conversations between people and about the chosen site, were for me, the most successful and enduring aspect of the work. We became the eyes and the ears of Dunedin, beginning conversations and filling in the gaps that Google Maps and other online sources could not. Working on behalf of these distant artists, we sought poly-vocal knowledges, activating the local and following leads to meet new people, recording our conversations to share with the artists.

Initially we had planned for the artists never to meet in Dunedin, but for us to be their on-site and tele-present project facilitators, but it turned out that the artists wanted, or perhaps needed to make the journey.
While full of successful engagements, the project was unsuccessful in a number of regards. Firstly, despite our wishes for the project to perform an examination of site-specific art remotely and through online practices, for a number of reasons the four artists required a journey to this place, and journey subsequently became a feature of the experience of the work.

The project developed in two ways: firstly as an online research and development period, and latterly as a site-specific project. Our original plan was to use a wiki to share an active research space, and as a precursor for everything up to the actual work itself, but in reality we found it difficult enough to even get email responses from artists. We began a shared but private email discussion list as a conversational space, and the wiki became an archival space for material that we found, not a shared ‘canvas’ for the artists to record ideas as we had initially imagined. Eventually Skype phone calls and video conferences became a more effective means of communication, but while these were frequent, we never managed to get all six of us (curators and artists) to contribute simultaneously.

Many artists and designers work intuitively in an iterative process that includes application, experience and reflection. As discussed by Haseman (2006) in Chapter 5, this form of research often begins with making as a form of creative curiosity, followed by research, and not the other way round. Haseman identified that many practice-led researchers do not begin with a clearly defined problem, or domain. Instead they are led, in an enthusiasm of practice, or perhaps an unruly curiosity. This research combines this kind of practice-led curiosity (curators and artists together), with a practice-based reflection. As curators we were asking how such a project might contribute to a broader understanding of site-specific public art. However, as a practice-led project it became apparent that our online research process did not provide suitable conditions for this ‘reflection through making’, nor for a clear or open enough communication for individual processes about making to be adequately shared.
Our expanded communication (through our distributed locations) enabled the use of a shared electronic space (such as email) across several time zones and continents, and we thought this would facilitate a process of reflection. However, we identified that in this online model, artists’ reflection, and the communication of that reflection are two separate processes. Expecting people in separate locations, and who had never met, to communicate meaningfully about their own creative processes and reflections proved to be difficult. It seemed that the iterative cycle could not be completed without an application phase. While we could provide (mediated) experiences, and (mediated) communication adding another layer of reflection, progress was not being made in the application stages, (Haseman’s ‘enthusiasm of practice’) and this resulted in a lack of any agreed project proposal.

Paul Carter reflects on collaboration as the “... project of becoming (collectively and individually) oneself in a particular place”, considering a broader project of knowing performed through creative-production research and he outlines the process of collaboration as having a special kind of contribution to make in the broader field of creative production, involving first a dismembering, “... bringing into questioning the ‘natural’ places of ideas, images and materials” (Carter 2004, 11).

The One Day Sculpture Dunedin wiki started as a centralized repository with the aim of actively creating a conversation involving social and geographic traces of Dunedin. However we discovered that executive management was required. In the process of curatorial ‘research-on-behalf’, the artists themselves did not manage to contribute collaboratively to Carter’s “project of becoming” (ibid). We had considered the focus on ‘a particular place’ – its online dismemberment and social re-establishment – sufficient ground for collaboration. However, the project of knowing was clearly more complex than we had anticipated. Situated knowledge activates things, and demands context, but situated ‘practices’ would require more than shared knowledges.

Some months earlier Adam Hyde presented a keynote address at a New Zealand Digital Art symposium. He commented that “...a technical platform is not an automatic community” (www.ada.net.nz/symposia/tending-networks/2008). We realized that we had assumed too much: we had assumed that the artists were members
of a community as actively involved as we (the curators) were from an early stage of the project. While all the artists were able to read and reply to emails, the geographic gap became a social distance where many personal matters remained unspoken. This in turn reflected a difficult creative process. In this instance the use of a wiki did articulate a shift in the collaborative process, but a paradigm shift was required for the wiki to become an effective platform for a collaborative arts model. In this sense our online research period failed and all artists agreed that they needed to meet together in New Zealand. This required fundraising and planning from all parties to develop what was to be a very different project than the one we had initially proposed.

6.5 The site

The site chosen (during our online research period) was Quarantine Island in Otago Harbour, also known by local iwi as Kamau Taurua, referring to the channel between the island and another nearby island as a good place for fishing and hence the need to share the setting of nets. This original name provides an interesting precedent for the collaborative processes required of the artists. As net setting was once shared, we can reconceive the island in Hau’ofa’s terms as embraced by rich and resourceful oceans, rather than by separate and isolating channels. With the event taking place on an island, the ocean and its flows also became a defining parameter for this project.

The temporal framework for One Day Sculpture Dunedin, was realized to dovetail with the time between the shifting of tides, during the four hours surrounding the low tide. It is during this time that the liminal zone, also known as the intertidal zone or foreshore, is revealed. This liminal zone is a fertile space from which new life emerges. Liminality has political connotations when attached to place, often referring to disputed territories, and in this case has cultural connotations in terms of a contested contemporary Māori claim for the foreshore to be counted in Treaty settlements.

“Littoral art”, is New Zealand ex-patriot Bruce Barber’s term for art that references the liminal zone – works between the institution and the public sphere, which he aligns with social art practices, also identified in Chapter 4. And it is perhaps another kind of liminal zone that became the focus for this project, a space between site, a specific location, and our space of communication using the internet.

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49. see section 3.2.4 regarding foreshore and seabed disputes.
Located between Port Chalmers and Portobello, in Otago Harbour, the island was once used as a quarantine station for arriving settler ships. The relationship between Scotland and Dunedin is unavoidably colonial, and the site as well as the resulting art works clearly reflected these colonial connections. The island is now owned by the New Zealand Government’s Department of Conservation, but managed by the Saint Martin’s Island Community, an inter-denominational group who are slowly restoring historic buildings and who welcome and ferry visitors to the island. It was the island experience that first drew strong connections between the artists when they finally travelled to Dunedin, and that formed the true site for conversations to develop. The rich experience of travel by sea, even the short trip from the New Zealand Marine Studies Centre on nearby Otago Peninsula, frames a visit to the island. It is this physical journey – with the necessary help of others – that provides a rich contrast to the online communication that first framed the idea for the artwork. Our connection through personal experience ‘on site’ really brought the collaborating artists together to navigate their initial concepts, and made very real connections between their own stories and the stories of the island and the communities that work there.
Resulting artworks incorporated a sense of 19th-Century colonial knowledge, and were like open systems, requiring visitor participation. Through conversation and collection, visitors revealed or completed the artworks. The notion of ‘public’ was carefully framed. As with those earlier colonial visitors to the island, arrival by sea in a controlled and orderly fashion, was the entry point for art visitors to the island, addressing and reflecting the artists’ own ideas of this place as a geographical destination.

The island is residence for a few sheep and a donkey, tended by the island’s two caretakers. The caretakers’ house and cottage garden, the resident’s cottage and a woolshed account for the several buildings. The remaining ruins of the quarantine Shared Quarters were under renovation, and an inter-denominational chapel built from rammed earth in the 1970s set up the hill and facing north was also open to visitors.

Aside from these relics of other times, and a small cemetery of mostly unmarked graves of those who died while in quarantine, in sight of the shore, the small island is mostly covered with paddock and some regenerating bush. The trails are steep and grassy; the fences have stiles to climb over. Around 800 meters in length, the island covers around 17 hectares and it takes about an hour to walk all the paths.

6.6 The artworks

While it had been our intention for the artists to work together to create a single collaborative response to the curatorial brief, in the end allegiances were divided and the artists arrived with separate intentions. Efforts were made in Dunedin to reconcile these preconceptions, to create a collaborative process, and to work as one team. These efforts were unsuccessful and eventually the outcome was the production of two separate works, united under the title *Intertidal*.

The Scottish artists were fascinated by the connections between Edinburgh and Dunedin, and this formed a central theme in the development of their collaborative work. Unbeknown to us however, the pair had formed their own response to the location from afar. Taking as a starting point the story of Robert the Bruce’s epiphanic encounter with a spider, Walker and Bromwich set out to discover new histories created through the exchange of stories on Quarantine Island in the Dunedin Harbour.
After a short period of testing and reconception on site, Walker and Bromwich produced a new work entitled *The Cave*. Located in a real cave, discovered on the north-eastern banks of the island, perched on the edge of the intertidal zone, created through time and tides and somewhere between fact and fiction, the artists reignited a historical notion of adventuring in relation to Dunedin’s past. In a theatrical scenario played out with the audience (Walker dressed as a spider) the artists invited visitors to the cave to actively exchange an epiphanic story, or a personal history. In return, Walker as spider recounted the story of Robert the Bruce. The artists recorded these exchanges – as visitors often do – on video to take back as evidence of their travels. In doing so the artists established their role as visitors, collecting and capturing ‘authentic’ moments of cultural exchange to take away. Art visitors became both contributors and witnesses of the artists’ experiences in another land. While a social encounter, requiring shared storytelling, the experience was not a genuine conversation. The staged context, use of video cameras and structured approach to the dialogue between spider and guest all limited candid social engagement. Rather, it was probably the long queue, as audience members waited for their turn in the cave, which created the more social environment of the work.

The work’s documentation was in fact a very integral part of the work and its siting. In order to collect footage of the event, Walker and Bromwich installed a generator, lights and microphone alongside the video camera. The staging of the cave became integral to the way the artists considered and employed specific elements of the site. This remote cave on this small island was repositioned as a kind of film set, engaging in the kinds of representation and distancing looking that we had tried to avoid. All props, costumes, equipment and technical support were sourced locally, extending the site as a set of tangible Scottish-New Zealand relations.

In comparison, and on the opposite (western) side of the island, the New Zealand artists Adam Hyde and Douglas Bagnall collaborated on a separate work (*Discovery*), which drew upon knowledge gained through discussion with scientists at the nearby New Zealand Marine Studies Centre. Bagnall had recently heard a radio programme which outlined the field of marine species discovery. As a result of a shift in emphasis from taxonomy to ecology in marine systems, species discovery had fallen out of fashion, despite the existence of many unidentified species of marine life on the shores of New Zealand. Fascinated by both the potential for discovery, and the relatively unchanged methods for discovering new species, the artists created a set of tools and experiences to engage in this scientific process. Together with the art audience, the work set out to discover a new species in the intertidal zone, throwing into focus the ever-present potential for new knowledge. Drawing upon 19th-Century methods of species discovery, involving collecting, identifying and drawing, their work formed questions around what we don’t
know. The artists employed some expertise from the local University’s New Zealand Marine Studies Centre and a marine botanist was on site during the work’s execution. Several copies of a local book, *Common Seaweeds of New Zealand*, by local botanical artist Nancy Adams (1997), aided identification.

![Figure 41](image-url):
*The Cave* Walker & Bromwich, (photograph by Charlotte Parallel).

![Figure 42](image-url):
Visitors engage in looking, drawing and discussion around the collected seaweed from this cove in *Discovery*, Douglas Bagnall and Adam Hyde’s work, (photograph Charlotte Parallel).
By engaging the audience in their activity the artists facilitated an opportunity for each participant to create their own experience, to share and then to take away – both personal moments, and moments as part of a collective whole. This work, set on a tidal beach, did foster social engagement while groups of visitors negotiated the slippery track to and from the beach. Each visitor was encouraged to engage in the taxonomic collection, examination and drawing of all available species of seaweed found in the bay, a process that apparently had not occurred in that site before. While the discovery of a new species was an ever-present opportunity – that Bagnall continued to research with the collected drawings after the event – the discovery of an invasive species was more likely. Like our colonial predecessors these seaweeds are likely to have arrived by boat.

In contrast to Walker and Bromwich’s *The Cave*, this work did encourage more dialogic participation, reflection and conversation. Visitors also engaged in processes of looking and representation, but of seaweed, not of each other. Each seaweed species was recorded in the context in which they were found, as a way of discovering more about that particular context, this forged a sense of connection between that place and other places and times.

Figure 43: Journey to the Island, (Photograph Charlotte Parallel).
Over 100 people travelled to Quarantine Island in a cool grey drizzle on the last Saturday before Christmas 2008. Advertised through event posters and through local radio and newspaper advertising as well as social media posts, the event was open to all interested people and free of charge.

The Port Chalmers Sea Scouts provided a boat and sailors to ferry visitors, which could carry around twelve people at a time. Leaving from the jetty behind the Marine Centre, itself a half hour drive from town along the winding peninsula road, the journey required intention and planning. The extended notion of a journey that had to be chosen in order for one to arrive connected both the artists’ and audiences’ experiences, which became at times arduous. The visitors enacted an expedition as both ethnographers and enablers of new stories, the island becoming a ‘ground’ for this experience.

Upon arrival at the island’s rickety wharf, visitors needed to climb a steep path to a clearing in front of one of several remaining buildings. Here they were welcomed, offered a cup of tea and a biscuit, and given a map identifying the locations of the two events and the few key landmarks on the island. Visitors set off on their own expeditions, in pairs or small groups, usually in the direction of one of the events.
As groups of people set upon their island journey, they crossed paths with others. Conversations marked the paths of these journeyers. Along with sharing experiences of the artworks, visitors pointed out landmarks and stories for each other’s benefit. The cool and damp conditions meant that the journey required extra care.

Most island visitors first engaged with *Discovery*, the work of Bagnall and Hyde. The track was steep and slippery but clearly visible, and the artwork and its engagement was ongoing through the four hours of the event.

![Images of people on the island](image1.png)

**Figures 45 and 46**: Documentation from the One Day Sculpture website, (photographs Steve Rowe).

Those who began with *The Cave* (Walker and Bromwich) were faced with a long queue that only the determined stuck out. Again, the track was arduous but in this case the artwork was mainly hidden by trees. As people returned from the cave they relayed their tales, fuelling intrigue and further conversation.

After the first hour many people wandered off from the artworks and explored the island. Picnics and story sharing refashioned the island from a quiet and reclusive location to one full of social life. The island became a ground for this social experience. Stories shared and told, connecting people and place, were drawn out of the event, reframing artist and audience for the period of the journey. An extended process became a third artwork: *The Island Experience*. Evocative, and with layered colonial histories, the island itself was full of pathos, and the promise of new beginnings. Its layered histories, a visual rhetoric able to be roughly read, imagined and discussed, spoke more than the artworks about the processes of stories transported across time and continents. And just as conversation skews truth to fill social gaps, the two works contributed to the distortion of histories that may or may not have happened, taking on a different form in different lands. Through the distortion
of history new meanings were created. The event’s success lay in these more subtle social engagements with site.

From the time that they got off the boat and climbed the hill to be offered their first cup of tea, visitors became a part of the artwork, whether intentionally or simply through their presence on this living island museum. The extended notion of a journey that had to be chosen in order for one to arrive was explicit in both the experience of the artists and the audience. In all instances, conversation connected people and ideas in this place. Whether satiated by art or the picnics and gossip with new and old friends, people were connected for the four hours of their journey and the site was a constant reminder of the journey, and the journeys of settlers before them. In the small graveyard with mostly unmarked graves of children, buried under grassy mounds of earth,

Figure 47: Motoko Kikkawa and friends enjoy social engagement at the island’s cemetery (photograph Mark Currie).

Figure 48: Visitor Sally Ann McIntyre took time for close for close inspection of seaweed samples (photograph Tim Bishop).
only one gravestone is named. Like the intertidal processes the event was named for, such and other knowledge was periodically and temporarily revealed. And overall, it was shared. The artworks provided a context and catalyst for the sharing, exploring and provocation of ideas, formed in time by these people in this particular place.

As an event nested in the *One Day Sculpture* series of work, *Intertidal* was one of a kind. Only two people actually saw all the works in the *One Day Sculpture* series: David Cross, Director of the Litmus Research Centre and Steve Rowe, the project photographer. In some ironic sense it dawned on me that most visitors to most of the 27 artworks in the series gained access to the works via the project website...do all our actions ultimately end up as content on a website? From the start I was a little suspicious of *One Day Sculpture* as a re-colonizing of New Zealand by European artists and curators. This relationship was awkwardly presented by Walker and Bromwich, fresh off the plane, with art concepts in their luggage, while being ill-equipped for the kinds of collaborative interactions we were asking of them. It was not only the artists, however, who were perhaps ill-equipped. A year later perhaps, through general conversation, I had heard that the project team based at Massey University in Wellington also considered the project as a “weak” part of the series. But my careful reflection of the experience did not see weakness in the audience’s situated participation, which appeared to be a rich response and a rewarding engagement with the chosen site. At the end of the event, tired and a little damp, visitors had socially-engaged with site-specificity in personal and practical ways. This caused ongoing reflection about the site and its stories, a process that is contemporaneous with dialogical art practices.

6.8 Analysis and discussion

On the one hand, *One Day Sculpture Dunedin* can be seen as marked by failures. I use the term ‘failure’ here not to denote a mistake, but rather a slippage, where deficiency helps to articulate and clarify (often) unspoken expectations. The first was the failure of our original curatorial brief to be realized solely through remote communication. The second was the inability of the project artists to collaborate on one work. The third was the failure of the series’ visitors (Wellington-based curator and photographer) to identify the work as able to be captured through social engagement rather than the camera. I will briefly consider these three failures and propose a fourth.
1. The first perceived failure – germane to our original curatorial brief – was our inability to use the internet as a potential site for research and co-production of a site-specific work. Was the lure of a trip to the far ends of the country or earth too tempting? Or were the tools of the internet inappropriate for the task? It seemed that the sense of distance, from the site of examination, and between collaborators, affirmed a local-global tension. Sometimes I have noticed communication technology can affirm distance while approximating closeness.

The sources of information provided by Rachel and I as curators, while regular, multiple and at times social and varied, did not seem to ‘make sense’ to the artists, and remained an incomplete map of fragments. While we thought we were making our local experiences communicationally available, this was incomplete. A sense remained that despite our efforts to present our content socially, the information we were providing remained at the representational level, without any real reciprocation required for a conversation to occur. Haraway describes “objects of knowledge” with which we can “act on”, “act out”, and “act through” (1990, 198). It appeared that the information we provided did not properly form objects of knowledge, through which the artists could act on, together.

The island itself offered histories of isolation and cultural displacement (Cross and Doherty 2010), and through our retelling – like disease itself – these experiences were contagious. The lure of a journey had rich experiences to promise, and in this sense the digital forms of communicating site at a distance were a poor replacement. This appeared to affect not only communication from researching curators to the artists, but also between the artists themselves, with no reflexive practice-based research or propositions evident through our online research period. It was Douglas Bagnall, the artist living in New Zealand, who proposed the site of Quarantine Island. His original proposal of siting the works on a research ship was rejected by the other artists.

2. The second failure was that of the artists’ collaboration. While it was intended that the artists would work together on one work, this too became a fracture, with the UK and New Zealand artists unable to work together. When these problems first became apparent, Rachel and I worked hard to break down preconceptions and workshopped many different options for collaboration between the four artists. At the end of the day, these attempts failed, and the artists resolved to make two separate works.
This was in some part due to Walker and Bromwich’s prior proposal to their various employers and their compulsion to deliver to their funded proposal. In this sense their work was less ‘site-specific’ although fortunately found itself a home in the island’s cave. While at times this appeared to be stubborn attachment to a pre-conceived idea of site, in many ways this approach was in line with their colonial forebears. So too was the recording of stories – to be re-presented in another context – a repetition of earlier British colonial visitors trading moral tales in return for the collection of exotic specimens. In Massey’s terms Walker and Bromwich were acting as ‘agents in globalization’ (Massey, 2005). Their work created a moment in a cave perched on the edge of an island in which the global was constituted. While the retelling of a familiar story by a woman in a spider suit may be a small-scale spectacle, it was connected more generally to processes of mass media, reproducing stories from another place and time. The capturing of traded stories too has historic connotations. The artwork tried to position the artists as colonial, through both the deal of a trade and the framed act of looking through a viewfinder. The artists encouraged us to speak back, but in controlled ways. The work was not poly-vocal, nor did it reflect on situated knowledges.

The connections between the two artworks were perhaps most evident in the ways that both insisted on a taxonomy of experience that rendered Western tradition as central. In Bagnall and Hyde’s Discovery this carried a note of irony as the detailed close-up examination opened our eyes to what was local as well as potentially an invasive species of seaweed. We live in close proximity with seaweed and yet rarely regard it with such attention, despite its importance in our coastal ecosystems. In Walker and Bromwich’s The Cave, as those fresh off the boat before them, the artists appeared

Figures 49 and 50: Technologies of looking: two photographs taken of the same boat showing a group of people returning from the island. (Left hand photograph by Charlotte Parallel, Right Hand photograph by Steve Rowe).
unaware of their colonial viewpoint, and unwilling to adapt it. This means of framing the site suggested reviewer Ali Bramwell, focused on history as a contemporary construction of shared knowledge “… in which more conventional ideas of scientific fact finding and oral histories were combined with personal epiphany, nostalgia, rumour, folk tales, error and fiction” (Bramwell, in Doherty and Cross 2010). Here Bramwell concludes that the physical nature of experience, negotiating the topography, and the tangible evidence of the past, contributed greatly to the experience of the projects.

3. The third failure was that of the series curator and the One Day Sculpture series photographer to ‘capture’ the event. The official photographs were often panoramic, taking a wide view of the island, rather than focusing on the rich experiences of people engaged in sociality. The photographs that best communicate the event are not the official ones, but rather those taken by project co-ordinator Charlotte Parallel, along with the volunteered images sent to us after the event, capturing conversations or shared moments, rich expressions of people in touch with one another. The island too offered spectacles of its own, but as noted by Bramwell, the works did not mine the history of the site, therefore allowing the experiences presented on the island to act on us, as adjacent “objects of knowledge” (Bramwell, in Doherty and Cross 2010).

Were the One Day Sculpture visitors from Wellington (series curator and photographer) also acting out a colonial relationship towards the event? More than mining the island for its stories, there was a need to impose an urban imperialism, an authored rather than engaged response, on a place where only a very few people maintain social presence. These technologies of looking, earlier critiqued by Haraway, infected the experience for these visitors. In contrast, it was the social experience that revived and enlivened local visitors.

The fourth failure – upon reflection – can be identified in the inability of these works, and artists and series curators, to overcome colonization. Doherty’s initial proposition and process (of travelling to select New Zealand artists, who were to work alongside flown-in biennale artists) provided an aura of colonization that smothered this series. Her approach to siting the series in New Zealand – like Cook’s botanists before her – imagined these islands as a remote garden, to be tended, organized, picked over and recorded, with new knowledge taken home as a result. And a curious outcome was the obedience of artists and local curators in her care, sharing (and practicing) her vision in which ultimately the works’ documentation prioritized how and which
stories were told. With time as a framing device, these short-lived works provided holiday snapshots, for curator, artist and audience alike. Colonization reveals itself as ongoing and pervasive, and in this series it was part of the process of engaging with site.

The role of images also became a common theme in the works. Were the coded images obscured by coded landscapes? Was it the lack of spectacle, that ultimately drove the One Day Sculpture project to build a narrative out of clearly recognizable iconic images that could connect with the safety of the viewer, at home and online? Did these images become the story itself? If we compare these works with the Bristol project of Heather and Ivan Morison, we can see that the Bristol work was visually intact; a whole narrative could be deducted from the elements photographed. Without having to be there, each picture described the same complete narrative. On Quarantine Island Kamau Taurua that day, conversation was the art connecting people, place, and performative visual art ideas. Photographs were able to assemble people, place and art, but the narratives lived in interpersonal conversations, rather than in photographic images. Herein probably lies the Wellington response to the project as “weak”, as it overlooked the importance of sociality.

Neil Bromwich remarked that the event was marked by “… the long slow process of arrival”. This process of a journey requiring personal effort in which arrival was continually deferred, is ultimately not like the internet, whose rapid and dislocated transferal of information does not so easily allow us to trace the connections to the source of those images, ideas and practices. From New Zealand we could see the problems of Walker and Bromwich’s colonial reenactment, while recognizing that some processes, such as species identification, remain unchanged from an earlier era of discovery. The project did contribute to stories of place, but time and again it was in local face-to-face encounters that the richness of experience was most rewarding.

Foucault’s notion of heterotopia was very relevant and recognizable in this context. The island’s uncluttered histories were tangibly evident in the quarantine station and graveyard. The two artworks reflected the values of colonial times, while avoiding repetition of particular island stories. These ‘art stories’ were in contrast to more recent narratives of the island’s caretakers whose efforts are in crafting more contemporary ideas of natural sustainability. The island’s Māori history, retold through the story of the island’s
original name, signified the need for strategic sharing. This was only encountered in the development of the artworks, but unfortunately not in their execution.

It was Foucault’s use of the boat as an analogy for the greatest reserve of the imagination that captured my attention however as it was only by boat that arrival to the island was available. As with the travellers to the island before us, the boat marked the journey with difference, and the thin passage of water was the element that enforced this. Visitors were in effect playing the role of Foucault’s gardeners, seeking revelation through the experience of the journey. And what were these revelations? The remains of each narrative were able to be picked through and mixed with the contemporary social framework provided when friends take a journey together. The presence of others, a temporarily sited community, framed the experience and can contribute to a model of andness. We were not alone, but exploring together.

This project provided an opportunity to examine historical references to ways in which New Zealand has been imagined as a place that is both located and involved in a network of imperial processes that are ongoing and embedded in our everyday mythology, as much as they may be in scientific processes. History eclipses experiences of the present. The momentary politics – of the local as a layered and heterotopic experience assembling times and spaces – were glimpsed through this project, despite its multiple failures.
Rachael Rakena’s Haka Peepshow and the event of the Rugby World Cup

Figure 51: Haka performer Tame Iti and 38 Pictures’ Director of Photography Jon Wilson checking light on set, (photograph Justin Spiers).
This chapter outlines the development, exhibition and reception of a public artwork developed by a contemporary New Zealand Māori artist Rachael Rakena, for Dunedin city during the 2011 Rugby World Cup event. The work addresses issues of commodification of Māori culture by sport, through presenting four digital video artworks depicting *haka* outside of sporting contexts. The history and use of this traditional Māori performing art form is outlined in section 7.3. The work offers contemporary presentation of four *haka*, to individual viewers in a publically sited booth. The development of the artwork involved a number of Māori and non-Māori artists, designers and film-makers, working closely together over a short period of time.

This case study connects the digital media presentation made by the artist with its reception, filtered through local and national news media. It examines how narratives of Māori *haka* performance and public art are controlled and utilized in the name of nationalism and for the formation of ‘public enemy’ discourse. Reflection includes the intercultural success of the artwork’s development, and the cultural fragmentation of its reception. This case study provides an example of an artwork that includes media components and presentation in a public setting.

### 7.1 Background to the project

Hosted by New Zealand in 2011 with games played across the whole country, the Rugby World Cup dominated the headlines. Promotion and sponsorship deals aligned businesses of all scales with a sports-focused crafting of ‘nationalism’. Along with many countryside vistas, some of New Zealand’s most everyday items were lined up alongside more treasured icons to be associated with corporate brands. From deodorant to Weetbix, the silver fern was attached as a corporate stamp, identifying New Zealand-ness for locals and visitors alike.  

50. The Silver Fern is a symbol used by New Zealand national sporting teams. Its original use as a national symbol dates back to 1885 when it was trademarked for use on dairy products.

**Artist Rachael Rakena, of Ngāi Tahu, Nga Puhi and Pākehā descent, was invited to produce an artwork for Dunedin in 2011. The former Dunedin resident proposed a concept for a public artwork in the town’s centre. As well as overlapping with the event of the Rugby World Cup, her opportunity coincided with the release of the Waitangi Tribunal Report, Wai 262, on 2 July 2011. This legal document identified a long battle for the rights of Māori to protect cultural Intellectual Property, including visual, performance and oral arts, as well as the representation of natural taonga (treasures) such as flora and fauna (www.waitangi-tribunal.govt.nz/news/media/**
The New Zealand Rugby Union and issues surrounding cultural property first encountered conflict in the 1990s surrounding the All Black’s new sponsor, Adidas, and their collective use of the *Ka Mate haka* in advertising media (“Rugby: The great haka debate: could it be sold, and should it be?” *The New Zealand Herald* 2000). Rakena’s work extends ideas surrounding this discourse by promoting discussion about *haka*, outside of rugby contexts.

The artwork that Rakena proposed, developed and presented, *Haka Peepshow*, critiqued the way that *haka* has been commodified by media in the name of rugby. By presenting alternative performers and performances of *haka*, the artist offered a different perspective on this cultural performance in a way that is not consistent with mainstream media. The four 3D video artworks each displayed *haka* performed by national heroes (and upcoming leaders) inside a booth. The booth reflected the shape of both a *pou*, or traditional pillar, and the shape of a men’s deodorant spray can ‘Rexona for Men’ a product also endorsed by the All Blacks, and clearly phallic in appearance.

This case study begins by reviewing key ideas presented in literature surrounding the association of rugby, *haka* and its contested history, and its use in relation to New Zealand identity. It considers the role of the media in forming dominant narratives, and recent debate surrounding the ownership of culture. Ideas of *tino rangatiratanga*, (Māori self determination) are identified through the earlier work of artist Rachael Rakena. (Section 2.5.2) I will then describe the development and production of the work *Haka Peepshow* from an insider’s perspective, the launch of the work, and the controversy that followed. Discussion draws on the role of public media and its shaping of dominant stories of New Zealand sport, art and Māori culture; and reflects on the role of art when considering our cultural landscapes and colonizing practices. The work is considered through the frameworks provided by Foucault’s heterotopia, and Fuller’s media assemblage. I consider how well these frameworks may account for the stories produced and circulated through this local and distributed artwork.

![Image of a Rexona brand deodorant bottle.](image)

*NB: image permission unavailable*
7.2 Connections to research themes

Bicultural landscapes, imagined communities

This case study articulates bicultural landscapes in New Zealand, in this case as two quite different cultural ways of understanding some shared practices and representations. The context of a global sporting event, and narrative around New Zealand as a nation state, created a window into how Benedict Anderson’s “false sense of wholeness” can be manufactured, reproduced and managed in our culturally diverse population.

Said’s “imagined geographies” are evident through distributed monocultural media narratives, and this can be seen as an example of Probyn’s “location”, where a taxonomy of experience is asserted, often rendering Western tradition as central. Conflicting viewpoints are amplified through local interactions between (at least) two communities, both asserting authenticity.

Art, land and colonizing practices

The landscapes incorporated into – and performed by – this artwork, were both digital and cultural. These landscapes were presented to the viewing public as an individual private viewing experience, in ways that could not be captured, colonized or reproduced, and each required an embodied and present viewer. In a perhaps paradoxical sense, this private viewing experience was presented in a public space, in the city’s centre, creating both a spectacle and a political statement around the ownership of culture and the use of public lands, encouraging Habermas-style debate. This was an act of reclamation, of asserting cultural landscapes as well as claiming intellectual and cultural property. This act of reclamation was positioned around the context of another form of landscape, that of the rugby field.

Representation and looking: how media frameworks can affect local places

In Chapter 3, I identified Poster’s concerns, namely that mobile communication conflicts with a world already filled with designated spaces. This case study considers the use of art in creating a temporary cultural space. Rather than being mobile, its temporary status mobilized a discourse in a politically charged environment that is local, distributed and political.
‘Media’ in this example may refer to the use of new technology – 3D videos installed in a private viewing booth – and also the method of mass distribution of the artwork’s stories, via newspaper, television and internet-based blogs. This case study provides an opportunity to consider how reproduction and distribution of local stories exclude or include local knowledge.

In the strategic and controlled framing of the viewing experience, two types of viewing took place in this case study; close-up, personal inspection (the videos) and viewing at a distance (the overall installation). The case study provides an opportunity to consider different ways of looking and representation that may help us to consider how meaning is not stored in an image, object or landscape, but in the context of the viewer.

Art, time and presenting (poly-vocal) histories

In Chapter 2 we learned that some new media and filmmaking practices in New Zealand express an Indigenous perspective of time. Rakena’s video artwork asserted that at least two forms of knowledge have the right to co-exist, and told a story of practices (prior to colonization) that continue to be celebrated in contemporary Māori culture. These practices are placed alongside their appropriated ‘other’, haka celebrated through rugby, held within a nationalist discourse. With close reference to contemporary popular culture (rugby, deodorant advertising) these older practices are given contemporary positions in ways that resonate with Haraway’s “power charged social relation of conversation”.

Rakena’s presentation of haka provided an example of Haraway’s situated knowledges, an engaged, accountable positioning. The work reflected a self-determining practice in the face of Bell, Said and Poster reminding us that the nation state is a political process that seeks a stable and unitary subject. This case study allows us to look at these tensions through a public art project.

Heterotopia, relational aesthetics and assemblages – towards andness

This case study provides a clear example of heterotopia, the controlled use of adjacent public and media spaces, layered, multimodal and synchronous. Such heterotopia can also be read in cultural terms, with layered cultural topoi, where exchange and contestation occur around in this case the proper place of haka.
The community involvement in the development stages of the work reflected the values of Bourriaud’s relational aesthetics, although these were perhaps not evident in the work’s public exhibition.

The work may also be an example of Fuller’s media assemblages, as the use of a standard object (the deodorant can, the *haka*) for a dynamic relationship which is composed so that sociality, media and location are drawn together in new ways. Fuller reminds us that art is useful for showing us complex relationships. He argues that art “… condenses and spews out moments of relationality” (Fuller 2008). Art localizes and draws attention to the dynamics of the assemblage and this case study may help us to examine Fuller’s claims.

Along with Fuller and Latour, Massey and Clark ask us to reconceive the local as always connected. Andness may be achieved through recognizing these connections – geographies become expanded, performed and inter-related. This event as a case study contributes to the task of recognizing the local as a practice, a dynamic flow of processes. It considers relationships assembled together as a flow, a collection of processes, and as elements in a composition.

### 7.3 Rugby, *haka* and New Zealand identity

Connections between sport, culture and advertising are well identified. New Zealand academics Steven Jackson, Nick Perry, Brendan Hokowhitu, Chris Laidlaw and Patrick Day all contribute to this local topic through international debate, and indeed it is in this mix of local and global that Rakena’s work is entangled. Televised live, the performance of a *haka* by the All Blacks is a sign that international rugby action is approaching. *Haka* however has a long and contested history in New Zealand, and survives considerable cultural negotiation.

A mistaken popular definition of the *haka* is that of a war dance. In fact, within Māori culture *haka* is the generic name for all types of dance or ceremonial performance that involve movement (Karetu 1993). The ‘Ka Mate’ *haka*, most associated with the All Blacks, was composed in the 1820s by a famous chief Te Rauparaha, as a *neri* (Karetu 1993). A *neri* is a type of *haka* that has no set movements, allowing each performer to express themself, although when performed by the All Blacks before international test matches the team has been choreographed. Today, *haka* have been identified by Hector Kaiwai and Kirsten Zemke-White (2004) as containing...
and portraying a “web of cultural meanings”. The history of haka and many other forms of traditional chanting, song and dance reflect traditional mātauranga Māori (Māori ways of knowing), encapsulated in Māori oral tradition. Originally many rules governed the knowledge of haka and karakia (chant) with a high degree of importance placed on oral language as determining relationships between humans and deities. “Colonization with its incumbent disease, war and migration disrupted this process of transmission with many important sources of matauranga Māori being lost” (Kaimai and Zemke-White 2004, 142).

Reconfigured as a result of colonization, by the 1900s some forms of song and haka became adapted for Pākehā concert party traditions, formalizing and integrating with some European musical forms. Kaimai and Zemke-White identify the haka as a site of contestation, adaptation and resistance. Although there was a considerable loss of song, the two identify some sites of preservation (the relative isolation of the iwi Ngāti Tuhoe enabled the preservation of some songs, being one example), and identify other examples of the fostering of tradition in the form of music and performance (such as Sir Apirana Ngata’s cultural revival activities). By the 1940s the kapa haka (line haka) had been established and disseminated, representing a coming together of musical traditions of both Māori and Pākehā, with many new composers adding elements, and the development of local and global tourism offering new audiences after the Second World War. The benefits and risks of this history of codification have been argued in recent years, with concern centering on what counts as traditional, authentic and legitimate:

In pre-European times, traditions were constructed within the confines of whānau, hapū and iwi-based 51 epistemologies, which meant that each iwi had its own adapted traditions. In the process of colonization and globalization and in the development of Kapa Haka, which draws from so many ‘sites’, defining or codifying tradition and what counts as an ‘authentic’ performance practice becomes a difficult task.

(Kaimai and Zemke-White 2004, 154).

Rather than dilute tradition however, Kaimai and Zemke-White (2004) argue that haka represent the potentiality to “… act, engage and produce history themselves”. In this sense, individuals, people and families interact with the dynamics of state, politics and history through the ongoing performance of haka in a way that is holistic and embodied.

51. whānau (family); hapū (kinship groupings or sub-tribes); iwi (tribes)
Just as musical traditions of European and Māori met and were transformed through haka, so too these cultures, and haka, developed a relationship through rugby. The first association of haka and rugby has been traced back to 1888, when the first New Zealand rugby team, referred to as the New Zealand Native Football Representatives, toured Britain and Australia (Phillips 1987). For New Zealand it was an opportunity to prove its sporting prowess against its colonial masters. One aspect of this demonstration was to perform the haka (Jackson and Hokowhitu 2002).

Notably from its earliest sporting introduction, the haka performed a dual function: first, as an expression of cultural identity and, second, as part of an entertainment spectacle to attract British crowds (Jackson and Hokowhitu 2002).

In 1905, another tour of Britain, of one of New Zealand's most famous touring rugby teams, now referred to as ‘The Originals’, marked the official use of the ‘Ka Mate’ haka within a sporting context, cementing and formalizing the relationship between rugby and haka. Jackson and Hokowhitu (2002) identify the haka in this context as playing a pivotal role in defining New Zealand identity, both domestically and abroad. Some argue this alignment of haka with rugby has popularized, if not bastardized the art form through its appropriation.

In 1995, professional rugby media agreements with Rupert Murdoch’s NewsCorp and subsequently sponsorship agreements between the New Zealand Rugby Union and Adidas saw investment by international business in the All Blacks. Along with association with this successful sports team however, was the investment of these two multinational companies in a brand.

Part of that brand is the history, tradition and culture of the All Blacks. Within a local context, this means ownership of aspects of the New Zealand community and its collective memory...providing access to the past, present and future meaning of not only the game, but the nation (Jackson and Hokowhitu 2002, 127).

Increasing focus was placed on the ‘Ka Mate’ haka, and in 1999 prior to the Rugby World Cup, Adidas launched an advertising campaign, featuring the All Blacks’ haka, for an international audience in over 40 countries. Advertising depicted traditionally costumed Māori warriors cut with current All Blacks performing the same haka. “The scantily clad warriors are portrayed as intense, angry fighters complete with moko, that is, traditional Māori facial tattoos” (Jackson and Hokowhitu
Less than comfortable about the nostalgic portrayal of traditional stereotypes of Māori and the use of the ‘Ka Mate’ haka, a legal – and media – battle ensued. Ron Peters argued “The [NZ Rugby] board doesn’t own the haka so we couldn’t sell it even if we wanted to... And if the [Wellington] tribe to whom the haka belongs put a price on it, New Zealand rugby could simply use another haka.” (“Rugby: The great haka debate: could it be sold, and should it be?” The Herald, June 17, 2000).

A key issue in the circulation of images of Indigenous culture is control. “Māori culture must be located and understood within an appropriate cultural framework” (Solomon, cited in Jackson and Hokowhitu, 2002). Increased globalization and new media technologies and the corresponding production and circulation of images see contemporary examples of images and video, both amateur and professional, of haka being performed, recorded and distributed outside of appropriate (or rugby) contexts, and further removed from Māori control.

On the flipside, constant exposure to the circulation of global cultural images and narratives are shaping local Indigenous cultures as globalization and new media technologies enable distant events, people and processes to have a more powerful and immediate effect on our lives (Jackson and Hokowhitu 2002). Contributing to this media environment in July 2011, the Waitangi Tribunal released its report into the WAI 262 claim, recommending wide-ranging reforms to laws and policies affecting Māori culture and identity and calling for the Crown-Māori relationship to move beyond grievance to a new era based on partnership. Māori cultural and intellectual property rights in the main part are collectively owned, and not already covered by New Zealand laws. Current laws, for example, allow others to commercialize Māori artistic and cultural works and areas of Māori traditional knowledge without acknowledgement or consent. The changes are aimed at allowing Māori to retain the rights of kaitiaki (cultural guardians) towards their taonga (treasures, including language, flora and fauna, artefacts, resources and knowledge).

Power relations are inherent in the broader cross-disciplinary field of cultural studies. Lawrence Grossberg (1997) suggests that cultural studies as an academic discipline aims to gain a better understanding of relations of power, “... believing that such knowledge will better enable people to change the context and hence the relations of power” (Grossberg 1997, 253). Stuart Hall...
(1997) intimates that dominant discourses are widely accepted as self-evident. They constrain and enable personal constructions of meaning in particular and predictable ways. Australian media theorists John Frow and Meaghan Morris (2000) move these concerns into the public arena, arguing that the “... intellectual project of cultural studies is always at some level, marked...by a discourse of social involvement” (Frow and Morris 2000, 327). They position culture as “… a network of embedded practices and representations” (316) and exhibit a commitment to “rigorous mixing” in ways that are potentially transformative.

7.4 The journey, and my involvement

In 2010 I approached Rakena to submit a proposal to make a new artwork for Dunedin. I was a member of the Dunedin City Council Art in Public Places subcommittee and this was to be our third commission. Previous commissions involved site-specific sculptures, Kuri Dog (Stephen Mulqueen) and Harbour Mouth Molars (Regan Gentry). The second work completed in 2010 had been high profile and much debated. The political environment had also shifted between the commissioning of these two works. The city’s civic elections in late 2010 saw a new mayor, and a large proportion of new city councilors, taking up new roles in their governorship of Dunedin.

The Art in Public Places subcommittee had approached three artists and curators to submit proposals for the 2010-11 budget. Rakena’s work was identified as being realistic, timely, fun and with a high enough profile to offer a new perspective of public art to Dunedin residents. Rakena’s proposal for a ‘haka peepshow’, a video booth to be placed in the Octagon (Dunedin’s ‘town square’) for a limited time was planned to coincide with the Rugby World Cup, an international sporting event of unusually large scale for New Zealand, with some matches scheduled for Dunedin in September and October 2011. Rakena’s work, though inevitably provocative, was selected for commission. Along with the annual subcommittee budget, top-up funding was offered to the project by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, the Māori tribal group that covers much of the South Island and to which Rakena belongs. This was the first time that external funding had been secured for a public art project in the city.

53. Rerehiko was described in Chapter 2, (section 2.5.2) a video work completed for her MFA in the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic in 2001, where tropes of Rakena’s work first began to form, and where I first became friends with the artist.
At the very end of our negotiation with the artist and relevant parties however, new subcommittee members joined the group, a result of a resolution from Dunedin’s new mayor that city councilors should be better informed of the workings of such subcommittees. There was a short period, over a couple of months, explaining the history behind decisions that had been made and the support granted for the project. In an unprecedented turn, the three new councilors on the subcommittee took the decision outside of the subcommittee to the relevant council hierarchy, and had the decision to commission the work overturned. Although work had begun on the project, the subcommittee decision was rescinded, and lack of time cited as a reason not to enter into further negotiation. This was infuriating to the longer standing group of members on the subcommittee, most of whom had spent four years meeting on a regular basis to plan and implement a strategy and working methods to develop new public artworks for the city. Several committee members resigned immediately. Others (including myself) maintained subcommittee membership for the sole reason of seeing Rakena’s project not be jeopardised further if possible funding could be secured.

After a brief period of confusion, a way forward was negotiated. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (based in Christchurch) came forward with the majority of the project budget, with the proviso that a second work be made for Invercargill, a smaller city south of Dunedin. They required that both works be launched for the opening of the Rugby World Cup. A budget shortfall remained, along with the pressure to develop an additional new work in an increasingly short period of time. After some fairly high level discussions between Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu representatives and the mayor, the Dunedin City Council agreed to pay the top-up funding of around half their original contribution but from a separate budget tagged for marketing Rugby World Cup events, not from the public art budget.

7.5 The project’s development

Upon reflection two factors may have influenced decisions. The new city councilors appeared to be feeling highly risk averse, and the artwork – aside from making a general critique of the appropriation of haka by sport – also proposed a provocative housing or booth. The phallic form of the booth replicated a Rexona deodorant can (sponsors of the All Blacks, the company featuring Māori All Blacks in their advertising). This became the main talking point in the City Council offices and caused alarm again for the mayor. Further high-level negotiations between local rūnaka elders, the mayor and the artist
revealed further detail about the *haka* and performers. It was noted in one conversation that the two cultures held very different values around phallic representation and that this difference had emerged over 140 years earlier when European missionaries – in an effort to extol Victorian sexual virtue – would cover or remove the penises on Māori carvings (www.teara.govt.nz/en/hokakatanga-maori-sexualities).

The mayor was invited to dinner to launch the week of video shooting, and along with local *rūnaka* and the project team we welcomed the first visiting performer. Tame Iti is a well-known activist, and particularly noted for his performances for the media. With a traditional full-face *moko* (Māori tattoo) his image had become regularly used in the media to represent Māori self-governance. This had recently become prominent with the invocation of the *Suppression of Terrorism Act* in an event known as ‘Operation 8’. In this high profile raid in 2007 the homes of a range of Māori and Pākehā activists were raided at gunpoint. Arrests were made including that of Iti and others from his rural *rūnanga*, as well as of urban Pākehā activists from groups representing anarchists and animal rights. Iti’s face became the central media image circulated and used in association with the phrase ‘terrorism in New Zealand’. A documentary film was made by the same name, where the dawn raids are depicted as without any real basis. Rather, the film depicts a criminal case drawn up through carefully constructed and decontextualized messages gained through illegally recording conversations in vehicles and houses and intercepted text messages. Iti, although awaiting trial, was given permission to travel to Dunedin for the filming.

Tame Iti and the Dunedin mayor got along very well. The following day it was reported that the mayor had emailed all council staff to confirm his support for the art project. The mayor from this point on offered only positive words in person and through the media, citing the opportunity as very important for the relationship between the city and local Māori.

Also as a result of the dinner, *Haka Peepshow* and its provocative booth in particular had a new term of reference: ‘*pou haka*’. A *pou* is a post, pole, pillar, or goalpost, but can also be a reference to a teacher or expert. This *pou* celebrates *haka*. A *pou* may also be a reference to the *ure* (penis) of Tane Tūturi, the progenitor of humankind. It became clear through the many conversations that Rakena had with many different communities and groups surrounding the project.

54. This is the North Island spelling or dialect, *rūnanga* is the same word as *rūnaka*, meaning tribal assembly.

55. There are three commonly told creation myths involving Tane, one who after fashioning a woman out of earth used his *ure* to try and bring his woman to life. In the end it was Tane’s breath that offered life (Orbell 1998, 145)
that the reference to the phallic form of the deodorant bottle was only offensive to non-Māori. A wide range of local rūnaka and Māori individuals and groups were consulted for appropriate protocol and permissions to be granted. While the phallic form usually evoked giggles and jokes, the form was not offensive to Māori groups, and yet continued to shock non-Māori. It was a Pākehā fear that the shape of the pou or booth would become more important than the content and form of the stories being told within it. At around the same time that filming began, Telecom (New Zealand) released a media campaign. The campaign asked for people to pledge sexual abstinence for the period of the Rugby World Cup. Those accepting the pledge would wear a black rubber ring on a finger to indicate their allegiance. The media response to the campaign was one of outrage, and several days after the campaign launch Telecom withdrew it. In what seemed to be an increasingly reactive media environment, the team decided to keep Haka Peepshow quiet until the week of the launch.

As the drama unfolded surrounding the original withdrawal of funding from the Art in Public Places subcommittee, I took on a pivotal role of drawing together a team of people capable of supporting the development and production of the artwork with Rakena. Together with Suzanne Ellison, a local rūnaka representative also on the subcommittee, we drew upon many personal and professional networks to see that the work and the artist could receive the support required. For my part, I drew upon my network of friends and colleagues who have worked together over the last few years, in developing proposals and exhibits under the Otago Institute of Design banner. This team included product designers, sculptors, sound and video artists and technicians, signage and print designers. In the early part of the project I also took on the role of project manager, although this became increasingly impossible for me with work and time conflicts. A professional project manager who had recently moved to Dunedin and whom I had met earlier in the year appeared by chance at a café meeting I was having with Rakena, and Josh Thomas became the project’s manager within 30 minutes of being introduced to the project. We called a meeting of the production team and identified forty days from start to installation.

Suzanne Ellison managed local Māori meetings and the consultation process. She contacted one of the performers, an uncle, personally encouraging his involvement. Rakena had a lot of support and connections with local rūnaka. Her masters project (Rerehiko) completed in 2002, saw deep connections develop with Kai Tahu Whānau. Both Rakena and her project contributed significantly to
these Dunedin communities and long-lasting connections remained with local rūnaka. Some of Rakena’s close friends still lived in Dunedin. Paulette and Komene Tamati-Elliffe, members of Kai Tahu Whānau and performers in Rachael’s original Rerehiko video works, became key facilitators of aspects of the haka filming.

A key role for me became a more social practice at this point. I had helped with initial connections and continued to support Rakena in often, daily meetings. At the film shoot, I was listed as ‘consultant’ and ‘caterer’. I would often identify gaps and propose connections to fill these gaps. This is how I became chief cook for the first film shoot, supporting the filming of three different haka performed over two days.

The films were shot by a local 3D film production company in a former Dunedin television studio over two weekends. An extensive schedule saw the involvement of 3D stereographers, students, and volunteers in set building and special effects. The division of labour was unusual, and there was a large presence brought to the set by the performers, particularly Tame Iti, Selwyn Parata and Wetini Ngāitai-Metini who, all very familiar with performing for a camera, were also consummate haka performers. Their mana (power, charisma or authority) was contagious and expressive. Strong connections and a sense of contribution were achieved through our working hard together to make something special happen. Each of us felt special in return.

I brought two of my sons to help me and watch aspects of the filming. Art student Justin Spiers documented the film shoots, and haka and Māori language teacher Komene Cassidy conducted bilingual interviews with each of the performers, edited footage of which was later shown on Māori Television.
The pou or booth was meanwhile being produced at the Otago Institute of Design workshop at Otago Polytechnic. Digital prototyping machines were used to print out ribs that connected together with fiberglass and high gloss car paint finishing. The pou was completed only in the nick of time, with adjustments and connections being made while the launch was underway in the Octagon. The pou itself needed to be set in concrete in the Octagon with the help of civil engineers, so as to be unmovable and vandal-proof.

I made two clear observations through my involvement with the development and production of this work. Firstly, the work existed in many ways in, and through, conversation. Rakena spent possibly 80% of her time on the phone or at meetings. The work was described, negotiated and gained permission through these conversations. The best and most important conversations were face-to-face, and thus travel was another important part of the project budget. For Māori, email and social media are used to maintain communities, but special attribution is given to kanohi ki te kanohi, or face-to-face conversation. Rakan’s prior relationships were also very important. Her contribution to the local community earlier in her career was recognized and valued, and these deep relationships were drawn upon to provide support.

A second and connected realization was that the role and function of community was central to nearly every aspect of the project. Deeper and richer than a social network, these communities were built on longstanding experiences, commitments and understandings. These communities were both Māori and Pākehā, although at times the two communities seemed to be quite separate and perhaps even working in parallel. This was perhaps epitomized in the formal relationship identified between the work’s co-founders, the Dunedin City Council and Ngāi Tahu. My own community has been developed over twenty or more years in Dunedin and I connect with many artists, designers and educators in creative projects. These connections were matched with Rakan’s strong relationships with local rūnaka, and the resourcefulness of Ngai Tahu at many levels. It was in this sense that Bourriaud’s relational aesthetics could be considered. Rakan did not personally know many of the performers before approaching them to participate in the work, and it was the extended relationships that drove these very busy professional performers to offer their time and expertise in the name of public art.
According to the project website:

Haka Peepshow is a celebration of the diversity of contemporary haka in Māori and broader New Zealand culture. In an era, when the haka is frequently a commercial branding device, this coin-operated peepshow invites viewers to take a fresh look at the haka and to consider it in the broader context of the sexualisation and commodification of Māori sportsmen and the representation of their masculinity and culture in the media. (http://hakapeepshow.co.nz/)

Each haka was a unique viewing experience, passionate and personal. Watching the performances being filmed was an honour and deeply moving. These powerful and accomplished performers worked with confidence and skill. The performances affected me in corporeal and emotional ways, difficult to explain, and deeply stirring. Their filming and 3D effects captured the performances in different ways, creating strong graphic images as they were framed for screen, but perhaps less able to capture the mana of these men and the warmth of the community that surrounded them. Despite this, their professional presentation was all ready for installation in the haka pou in time for the launch of the Rugby World Cup, and of the Haka Peepshow.

Presented in a viewing booth in the form of a pou, the five metre tall, high-gloss booth had four ‘peepholes’ to enable individual viewers to watch the performance of four different haka. 3D glasses were attached to the inside of these ‘peepholes’ enabling the viewing experience of each haka to be maximized. The haka were performed by three leading exponents: Selwyn Parata, Tame Iti, Wetini Mitai-Ngatai; and two young Ngai Tahu leaders – Waiairiki Parata-Taiapa and Taikawa Tamati-Elliffe. Each of the haka performed represented a distinct haka form and message providing a range and sense of authenticity beyond the well-known ‘Ka Mate’ haka used by the All Blacks. Each performer was chosen because of their roles as leaders who perform haka as part of their everyday lives (hakapeepshow.co.nz). In each case the haka was performed using special effects relevant to the local stories and whakapapa (genealogies) of the performers. These are briefly described on the following four pages (along with their sister work Ko Uhia mai) with information on all haka and performers drawn from the website (www.hakapeepshow.co.nz).
Figure 55: Still from Ko Uhia mai, showing members of the Black Ferns, New Zealand’s womens rugby team, performing for the sister exhibition to Haka Peepshow, (photograph by Justin Spiers from www.hakapeepshow.co.nz).

Ko Uhia Mai: A related work draws attention to gender issues in rugby and celebrates the success of the New Zealand Women’s Rugby Team, the Black Ferns, who are the current Women’s Rugby World Cup champions for the fourth consecutive time. Ko Uhia Mai which translates as “let it be known” draws attention to how little is known about the success of New Zealand women’s rugby. The six minute video, featuring six current players from the Black Ferns is a large scale projection and was shown for the first week of the Rugby World Cup on the side of a prominent building in central Invercargill as part of the Taste of Southland Festival.

The Black Ferns have won four consecutive Women’s World Cup titles – something unparalleled in rugby history. They have won 55 of 58 International test games. ‘Ko Uhia mai’ is the name of the Black Ferns haka written by Whetu Tipiwai....The artist invites the viewer to see these women as role models and strong elite athletes, and ask themselves why don’t they feature in television endorsements, sponsorship and advertising despite their remarkable international success? (www.hakapeepshow/ko-uhia/).
Rūaumoko is a Ngāti Porou (Eastern North Island tribe) Haka Taparahi generally attributed to Mohi Turei (1833-1914) of Ngāti Porou. The haka has a close connection to the family of Selwyn Parata who performed it for Haka Peepshow. This is a classic haka and the metaphor draws upon the iconography of the natural word, Rūaumoko the God of Earthquakes and Hikurangi maunga (Hikurangi Mountain). It celebrates the complementarity of the roles of men and women while describing in real terms the act of procreation. This haka is a statement affirming our descent from the gods, Rūaumoko’s reaction to the separation of his parents, our relationship with the whenua (land), and the survival of people.

Parata is a respected exponent of haka, with whakapapa (genealogy) connecting him to Dunedin as well as the Eastern North Island tribe Ngāti Porou where he is an historian, specialising in whakapapa and a practitioner of Ngāti Porou tikanga (values, traditions and practices). Parata provides cultural guidance and leadership, holding many positions both locally and nationally, including on Te Matatini a national committee responsible for fostering, developing and protecting traditional Māori performing arts and the pursuit of excellence in this genre. Parata fittingly performs Rūaumoko in the rain, representing the tears of Ranginui during his cosmic separation from his partner Papatūānuku (the earth mother). This metaphor is employed to express sorrow and tears for Christchurch and its recent destruction by earthquakes (www.hakapeepshow.co.nz/kaihaka/).
Figure 57: Tame Iti performs a local haka from – and about – his home, the Ruatahuna valley, (photograph by Justin Spiers).

Haka is often used to protest and call attention to political issues. Tame Iti is often seen in the media as the face of Tūhoe (a remote North Island tribe) and of activism and protest. Apart from this dominant media persona, there are other sides to Iti that range from artist and musician to social worker, family man and entrepreneur. Tame was invited to use this platform for whatever issue he would like to address. He chose to present himself as he does when speaking on the paepae or marae. Dressed in his good clothes and performing a haka that is about his whakapapa or relationship to his home, the Ruatahuna valley and its sacred mountain, Maungapohatu. Thus, Ngāi Tūhoe, Iti’s tribal group, are known as children of the mist and so he performed shrouded in mist, (www.hakapeepshow.co.nz/kaihaka/).
Wetini Mitai-Ngatai won the ‘2011 Male Leader of the Year’ award at the recent Te Matatini the national kapa haka competition. Male leaders are judged on their performance on and off stage, their presentation, speech and oratory skills and the way they carry themselves and their group. Wetini’s group, Te Matarae i o Rehu, which was co-led by Miriama Hare, won the 2011 Supreme Award in the traditional Māori weaponry master and kapa haka (performing arts) sections. Wetini is steeped in Māori oral tradition and has spent most of his life being taught by his elders. He has travelled extensively sharing his knowledge, founded Rotorua’s ‘Mitai Māori Village’ and is passionate about delivering a genuine, quality cultural experience to visitors from around the globe. Wetini was the choreographer for the 2011 Rugby World Cup official opening ceremony. He was invited to perform a peruperu (haka using a weapon) shrouded in steam as a reference to the geothermal region he belongs to and to the gym steam room. The haka he performed for Haka Peepshow is his own composition (www.hakapeepshow.co.nz/kaihaka/).
Figure 59: Waiariki Parata Taiapa (front) and Taikawa Tamati-Elliffe (rear) perform *Tenei te Ruru* in the snow, (photograph by Justin Spiers).

*Tēnei te Ruru* was the local haka – originally a *whakaaraara pā*, or sentry’s cry to alert the residents of the *pā* (village) to approaching danger. Metaphorically, the haka speaks of the *ruru* (native owl) who, like the *pā* sentry, will not be swayed from its task and remains resolute. It calls *Kāi Tahu* to *rise* up together. The haka has become widely known and is regularly performed by *Kāi Tahu*. Two young men perform this haka: Waiariki Parata Taiapa and Taikawa Tamati-Elliffe. Both grew up in Dunedin and *whakapapa* to local *hāpū* of Ōtākou and *Puketeraki*. They represent youthful leadership and the future of *Kāi Tahu*. They perform their haka amid a flurry of snow as a reference to tough southern men (www.hakapeepshow.co.nz/kaihaka/).
Komene Cassidy and Paulette Tamati-Elliffe organized the official event and launch of the artwork on Friday at noon, on the 9th September, the day also of the official Rugby World Cup opening in Auckland, and one day prior to the first match in Dunedin. The launch began with a short official ceremony, and was followed by a performance event publicized as a ‘Haka Off’. Through informal networks including a Facebook site Paulette and Komene had publicized the event for two weeks prior. The event invited any haka performers in Dunedin to join in a public competition culminating in a haka-off challenge between the two best individuals or teams. It began with a sign up on the day, and a small crowd of around two hundred people.

On a lovely sunny lunchtime, however, the crowd began to grow. Some school and childcare groups joined, and as time passed up to 2000-3000 people amassed in the Octagon. Around a dozen groups and individuals signed up and the competition began, with a very wide range of haka and performers, ranging from local rūnaka to a primary school and a blind Pākehā woman.

The final haka-off took over an hour to reach, with the top two groups voted to face each other: a group of young Māori men performing against a small group of Samoan men. Haka cries filled the air! The two groups performed to each other with crowds almost leaving no space. Eventually the Samoan group was announced victorious, receiving a small cash prize for their efforts. The event was a huge success and celebrated Māori culture in the centre of the city with delighted audience response. A hoard of international media, in town for the rugby match the following day, documented and interviewed people at the event.

Figures 60 and 61: Two teams of informal haka performers at the Haka Off following the official launch of Haka Peepshow in the Octagon, Dunedin 9 September 2011, (photograph Justin Spiers).
The Otago Daily Times, Dunedin’s daily newspaper, attended the launch and haka-off, along with numerous groups representing international media organisations. Their page 5 story about the artwork the following day focused on controversy, with the headline “A matter of some contention” (The Otago Daily Times, 10 September 2011). In fact the article reported no contention, but rather quoted extensively from the press release and quoted the mayor as “pretty proud” (ibid). The article notably identified who had funded the work and included figures. No mention was made of the crowds in the Octagon that had attended the work’s launch or the Haka-Off competition. Four days later, however, the artwork made front-page headlines: “Councillor resigns ‘in disgust’ over ‘rented’ art” (The Otago Daily Times, 13 September 2011). The article gave voice to the irate councillor who had resigned from the Art in Public Places Committee two months earlier, when the work was first being considered. The article reported that “…he was ‘agog’ when the project came to the Council again with the suggestion that it be funded by another budget ” (ibid). The councillor highlighted the fact that the work was to be situated in the Octagon for only a limited period. “We’re paying $50,000 to rent a black penis in the Octagon? What’s all that about?” (ibid). Issues of who actually owned the newly commissioned and completed work, and which of the city council’s budgets financially supported it were covered in the article. These two issues, along with the booth’s phallic reference, became the focus of
editorial columns for the next two weeks. The story made national television news and newspapers, along the grounds defined by The Otago Daily Times and the irate councillor’s position, (“Dunedin ‘penis’ art causes controversy”, 13 September, TV3 News; “Cup Short: Stiff Opposition”, 16 September, NZ Herald; “Inside the phallic form, rugby heads can enjoy 3D videos of different haka” TV3, Tuesday, 13 September 2011). All reports focused on the work’s funding and its phallic reference, with no mention at all of the 3D films or haka performances. “Locals describe it as looking like a giant penis. Rakena says she ‘... thought about it long and hard before deciding’ on the artwork.” (“Inside the phallic form, rugby heads can enjoy 3D videos of different haka” TV3 Tuesday, 13 September 2011). It was this TV3 play on words that caught the attention of the renowned U.S.-based blog, the Huffington Post.

Back in Dunedin a feature article was published on the front cover of the local Saturday newspaper with the headline “94 year old performs haka”. The story detailed the antics of an elderly resident of a local rest home, Tene Chisholm:

With her eyes rolling and tongue sticking out, Tene Chisholm is a formidable sight. One to strike fear into the hearts of the burliest international front row. The 94 year old is possibly the oldest – and certainly one of the most enthusiastic – haka exponents in New Zealand... ‘I learned the haka off the TV. It belongs to the Māoris [sic] and the All Blacks doesn’t it’, she said. ‘I like the All Blacks, they’re full of life. I think the All Blacks are definitely going to win the cup’.


For many in the city Haka Peepshow came to represent a waste of money in tough economic times. The wash of negative stories being published daily had a big impact on public opinion, and all of it negative. Some letters to the editor, online and in print, were from supporters of art, but indicated that supporters were a minority among the outspoken and outraged. I made an effort to visit the artwork most days, changing my daily paths to encounter the work, watch people and see the haka videos.

Figures 63 and 64: Haka Peepshow attracting visitors, (photographs: Left Justin Spiers, and Right Caroline McCaw).
There were plenty of people showing interest in the work – at most times of the day and evening – and the work was of particular interest to international tourists. Families, individuals and couples took turn watching the works. And the more people looked, the more it attracted the interest of others, to look at what was being looked at. Not until almost two weeks after the work’s unveiling however, was a review printed in the local newspaper written by a reporter who had actually looked at the videos. David Cunliffe starts:

Someone asked me the other day what I thought about the Rugby Haka Peepshow in the Octagon and I had to confess I didn’t have an opinion. I didn’t have an opinion because I hadn’t then had a chance, or taken the time, to have a look. I have now rectified that, stopping by on Monday in my lunch break to check it out and, have duly formed a view - of sorts.


Cunliffe admitted that “… there has been an awful hue and cry from a large number of people who evidently have not bothered to inspect it – rather relied on received opinion.” He continues to acknowledge that:

Art that is edgy, different, confrontational or carries a minority perspective or narrative, is by its very nature challenging. And when thus challenged, many people simply resort to abuse – partly because as a culture we are not particularly good at having mature conversations about art. (ibid)

Eventually Cunliffe reported that he found the haka performances “… a passionate and genuine instance of cultural expression … hypnotic … [and with] … a rawness and intensity”. He claims his own experience was not so much a matter of liking the work as being moved by it, “… unsettled. … [made] slightly uncomfortable by it.” Cunliffe reflects on whether we need to like art, rather than encouraging, nurturing, and developing artists. To do this he suggests “…are the signs of an increasingly self-confident culture as it explores its identity in relation to the society around it” (”Cultural confidence in eye of beholder”, The Otago Daily Times, 28 September 2011).

This reporter’s review identified a less dramatic response to an embodied and situated experience of the artwork. Cunliffe is not an art reviewer, and perhaps would have been unsettled by any work of art he had attempted to review. This reporter stands alone, however, as one that
took the time to engage, personally, with the work itself. These masterful depictions of *haka* – presented outside of the commodified terms of rugby or tourism – were completely ignored by most reporters, locally, nationally and internationally, in favour of phallic or financial controversy.

### 7.8 Analysis and discussion

![Figure 65: Bicultural negotiations: Ōtākou tribal leader Edward Ellison and Dunedin Mayor David Cull come face to face for the launch of Rachael Rakena’s *Haka Peepshow*, The Octagon, Dunedin, 9 Sept 2011, (photograph Justin Spiers).](image)

This work was produced and presented in a local Dunedin context, and yet was projected onto a large stage, involving bicultural as well as national issues, and international viewers and audiences. The work was intentionally provocative, inviting bicultural conversations. It was also a celebration of traditional Māori performance art forms, presented by both master and emerging performers.

Despite the intentional provocation, I don’t think any of us expected quite the response that the work received, nor the way in which the outrage over the phallic shape of the booth and the cost of the work, would overwhelm the more complex bicultural conversations around the *haka*.

The Dunedin City Council and mayor rejected the work twice for the phallic shape of the booth. In Māori culture however, the representation of penises, in their appropriate place, have no immoral overtones. Furthermore, the use of the booth as a *pou* has deeply powerful and significant connotations.
Despite two quite contrasting attitudes the Western interpretation definitely dominated public conversation.

Although the work facilitated high level political conversations, focus on the source of funding and in particular on the City Council’s funding portion became a strong personal connection with the artwork for many locals, and telescoped feelings of power and powerlessness.

It was in regards to this money that many Dunedin residents felt most connected and offended. One letter to the editor featured on The Otago Daily Times website outlines this popular feeling: “People like Mike M (a supporter) can freely donate their spare cash and encourage others of like mind to do the same. No more stealing bread from the mouths of children to fund elitist interests.” (“A better way to fund civic art” submitted by Blue Peter, 13 September, 2011). The arguments became focused on a lack of perceived value for money, and this spilt into broad abstractions, side-stepping the issues of art and cultural ownership. In this economic debate no value was, or could be, contributed to other systems, such as the value of international media coverage, of cultural conversations or of public debate.

The artwork did, however, become a catalyst for a number of conversations that connected themes of nationalism, representation and looking, heterotopia and technosocial media assemblages.

Nationalism, identity, looking (at ourselves)

The event of the Rugby World Cup presented New Zealanders with an opportunity to look at ourselves. The distributed site of the rugby field and televised competitions became a micro-version of the nation itself, both geographically and culturally. Furthermore, the event created a window through which we could be seen. This window also created a kind of reflection, where for a short period New Zealanders collectively saw ourselves as others might see us. This two-way looking is referred to by Steven Jackson, as a “postmodern national paradox”, a dialectic process whereby “… the nation becomes a contested terrain of meaning” (Jackson 1998, 194).

New Zealand as a nation – national identity being highly mediated – depends on whose definition or visualization of national identity is dominant. This is true of all countries and national identities, not solely New Zealand. We can draw upon Benedict Anderson’s definition of nations as “imagined communities” (Anderson 1993). He identifies three ways that nations are imagined: through the use of history,
memory and invention; through technologies of power; and through the identification of citizenship, an objectification created through a system of symbols, sites and commodities. The media hype surrounding the Rugby World Cup in New Zealand reflected the terms identified by Anderson in multiple ways. New Zealanders without any interest in rugby could not ignore the repeated tropes of nationhood recounting histories (particularly of sporting prowess). Emotional connections between New Zealanders as citizens were forged and reinforced through (sporting) memories, both real and imagined. Flags were attached to cars, buildings and people. Face painting became a national craft, associating colours with teams and loyalties. The silver fern became even more invested as a symbol and commodity, identifying an unequivocal ‘New Zealand-ness’. Messages of support and pride for the All Blacks were repeated, connecting strangers in new ways. Regional, racial and gender differences were simply overwritten by the narrative of heroic success. In the words of Clarke and Clarke (1982, 65-66):

... there is an articulation between sport and political nationalism which can only exist because of popular identification of particular athletes and teams as representations of ourselves ... Sport is a forum that allows the construction of the nation as ‘us’ – rising above and displacing whatever ‘minor’ internal divisions there may be.

In this environment, any discourse that was contrary to the sporting tropes could be considered seditious. The types of conversation prescribed by Haraway and others, could not be accommodated under these conditions.

Figures 66 & 67: Haka Peepshow created a large scale spectacle in the city’s centre, while allowing for personal viewing experiences, provoking many lively and emotional discussions, (both photographs Justin Spiers).
Heterotopia, media representations, narratives and counter narratives

Media narratives became a technology of power. The work's popular social reception at the Haka-Off launch and its negative portrayal through subsequent news media could not have been more different. In this mix, Haka Peepshow came to represent an alternative or counter-narrative of a nation that is not whole, but may be represented in various ways. The secure feeling of a whole and shared identity across time, place and social context was challenged by the portrayal both of alternate haka, and of a black, phallic shape. Multiple and competing discourses were offered about New Zealand and national belonging through these two symbols, which could be recognized as heterotopic in their juxtaposition with the dominant discourse.

Haka Peepshow produced heterotopia in several ways. The reclamation of haka as a relevant cultural form outside of rugby through these contemporary and diverse Māori re-presentations provided one clear example of heterotopic frameworks. This was both a claim to ownership (through identification with the Treaty of Waitangi WAI 262 claim) and a performance of ongoing cultural diversity, resisting and developing the narrow rugby-fetishized idea of haka commonly presented through public media. Confusion, fear and intrigue are features of the reaction to the presentation of this diversity.

The pou itself housed heterotopia. Through the use of different weather-evoking special effects, each haka was presented in its own landscape. Haka Peepshow provided windows into four adjacent landscapes, a heterotopia that drew on conventions of urban multiplex cinemas. The work evoked experiences similar to a museum too – another well documented heterotopic institution. These contemporary portrayals of, in some cases ancient haka and their stories, connected viewers across time drawing upon traditional methods. It was suggested in Chapter 2 that some Indigenous use of new media enabled the portrayal of non-Western conceptions of history. Haka Peepshow did do this, however the haka tradition itself also often perpetuates histories without the use of digital video, as live performances at marae (or meeting grounds) and celebrated through local and national festivals.

Rakena also drew upon her earlier work, presenting digital landscapes for Māori cultural practice to occur within, and this relates to Poster’s employment of heterotopia. Poster writes: “Spaces, identities and information machines now combine into new forms of practice that
seriously shift the cultural landscape away from its familiar modern parameters” (Poster 2004, 9). While Poster comments on the effects of mobile communication, his ideas are equally relevant to the way that Rakena’s work mobilizes landscapes. I will return to this idea shortly.

**Whose culture? Representation and media frameworks**

Two key elements of the work provoked very strong feelings. The first most potent symbol was the shape of the peepshow booth. While only mimicking the shape of an already commodified product, available for sale and decorated with the All Blacks’ logo at any supermarket, the black penis as a cultural marker created a symbol of counter-narrative that was extremely powerful. And more than any other element of the work, the depiction of a penis in a public place divided cultural opinion.

*The Otago Daily Times’ daily denouncement of the work hugely influenced local public opinion. They deliberately missed the point. And the avoidance of dealing with issues of the haka films only highlighted this lack of perceived value. It also highlighted a strong narrative surrounding the power inherent in news media and around the question of who has the right to speak. Before publishing any review of the video content (eventually this was conducted by David Cunliffe, not an arts reporter) the newspaper chose to feature their own version of the haka performance. The interview and coverage given to 94 year old Tene Chisholm was offensive in its deliberate misrepresentation of haka by a Pākehā woman. Cementing the reporter’s opinion that haka is only rightfully associated with rugby, the featured performer becomes an expert: “The 94 year old is possibly the oldest – and certainly one of the most enthusiastic – haka exponents in New Zealand” (“94 year old performs haka”, *The Otago Daily Times*, 17 September 2011). While this is clearly untrue, Chisholm’s self-taught status, (“I learned the haka off the TV”) belittled any notion of expertise or historic ownership. Her assertion of rightful ownership assimilated Māori culture with nationalism through sport: “It belongs to the Māoris [sic] and the All Blacks doesn’t it, she said.” (ibid).

The article claims the right for Pākehā expertise and performs Pākehā hopes for co-ownership of Māori culture in the name of sport and nationhood. Not only is the article erroneous, it asserts Pākehā cultural values, albeit through a ‘tongue in cheek’ review. Meanwhile the names of the Māori performers in the *Haka Peepshow* films have never made it to print, their actions willfully ignored. The highly respectful experience
I had shared in the making of the work was completely missed in these disrespectful representations.

The use of haka as a cultural marker was positioned by The Otago Daily Times as ambivalent: both powerful and powerless, but definitely to be kept in its place, close to the rugby field, where the rules of the game are clear. In contrast, Haka Peepshow offered us a different type of involvement with haka. By taking a peek, and becoming viewers, we were able to see – and in part experience – another kind of world. The performers were partially fictionalized through their digitization and mediated images. The 3D filming and special effects further removed the performers from the viewer’s space, but in ways that were visually enigmatic. Despite a technological removal, the performers were playing themselves and the haka they perform on an everyday basis. These performers were in different costumes, ranging from suits to piupiu, (a type of skirt made of flax), extending a range of possible contexts and reasons to perform a haka.

The pou protected and offered the performers a space where their identities are affirmed from a Māori perspective. Images of the videos were also carefully protected. This visual experience could not be photographed, distributed or reproduced, but rather experienced only there in the Octagon through individual and embodied looking. The experience of haka was socialized through its positioning for a crowd and in the centre of town. I’m reminded of Kaimai and Zemke-White’s claims that through the history of colonization haka has been a site of contestation, adaptation and resistance.

Through the development, presentation and reception of the work we witnessed strong feelings associated with the contestation of a territory. The four haka presented in the Haka Peepshow were a mix of traditional and contemporary, and each of the performers was exercising a traditional right to perform the works. Their presentation in the public booth positioned these values in the centre of town, and this could be seen as both an adaptation and an act of resistance.

Local and distributed assemblages: a technosocial situation?

Fuller’s media assemblages – and here we can identify Rakena’s re-use of (Fuller’s) standard objects (the deodorant can, the haka) – suggest that a dynamic relationship is composed. In these media ecologies sociality, media and location are drawn together in new ways. Fuller suggests that art is useful for articulating these complex relationships when it
localizes and draws attention to the dynamics of the assemblage. *Haka Peepshow* did work in this way, and was revealing in ways that were not simple, but perhaps made public a complex network of relations. In this light we might see that *Haka Peepshow* behaved as a cultural barometer, identifying weak as well as strong relations in our slowly maturing bicultural landscape. It certainly pointed out that New Zealand retains a strong Western bias in its newspaper and television media reporting, with strong claims to nationhood as a dominant narrative.

In broad terms it could be argued that all creative production is inevitably social, unavoidably governed by social and economic processes. This is more clearly evident in professional media production such as film, where teams are always required. The extent to which personal and group conversations contributed to enabling the development of this work became clear early in the process. Storytelling enabled complex ideas to become personally engaging, thereby “culturally generating sense making processes” (Bishop 2011).

Considering the work as a technosocial situation, the artwork assembled physical and mediated information systems through this cultural sense making. An Indigenous perspective was asserted, extending local social conversations into a public place, and presenting these to broader non-Indigenous and international audiences. This understanding of place relied on grounded physical sites and well-understood structuring social orders. These sites and orders were highlighted as culturally-specific understandings by their repeated misrepresentation in public discourse. Despite this, *Haka Peepshow*, considered as a technosocial situation, offers insight into how grounded practices emerge in and through artwork, in this case presenting a strong ownership of landscapes and practices.

I return now to the broader aims of my research, namely to investigate the changing role of the local in times of the internet and mobile communication. It was proposed by Fuller and Guattari that new assemblages (involving art, place and media) could help us to understand the local as a set of processes – dynamic compositions – rather than fixed in time and place. As a cultural barometer, *Haka Peepshow* could be said to have made a forecast of our bicultural climate, a snapshot of this time and place. Rakena’s deployment of digital landscapes as a forum created a space to open dialogue across cultures, employing history and image in tactical and strategic ways.
The work generated power-charged relations in conversation and public dialogue. This was an example of socially engaged art practice relying on grounded social connections for its development, production and distribution. Furthermore, it had a strong littoral frame of reference. Here the intertidal reference was best employed as a metaphor for cultural relations and tensions, always in movement. Like a pole placed in an estuary to gauge the tidal flow, *Haka Peepshow* became a marker in a cultural tidal space. Through its political locations – the commercial centre of the city, the media event of the Rugby World Cup – *Haka Peepshow* offered a marker for our bicultural and ever-changing positions.

Fuller, Latour, Massey and Clark ask us to reconceive the local as always connected. Andness may be achieved through recognizing these connections; geographies become expanded, performed and interrelated. Rakena’s digital landscapes complicate Haraway’s situated practices. However, her narratives take place in dispossessed territories, practiced in digital spaces. Their ‘local’ is harder to place, more closely aligned to Ito’s technosocial and hybrid communication landscapes. In some ways the intertidal metaphor works better in this situation. They propose andness in our time and space, here in Dunedin, New Zealand. The *haka* itself becomes a situated practice, one whose landscapes are strongly present as traditions belonging to sites. The intertidal flow of this work can be understood better as a kind of cultural wetlands; fertile spaces of both land and not-land: mist, steam, rain and snow...near the shores of Otago Harbour, as performed in the videos of *Haka Peepshow*. 
Chapter 8. **Case Study 3**

**Awash**

*Figure 68:* Participants gather for *Awash*, on the former shoreline, Albertson Avenue in Port Chalmers, (photograph Caroline McCaw).
This final case study outlines a small art project that exemplifies an intersection of frameworks proposed by my research. The project employs socially engaged, site-specific art and mediated stories and was presented at a local performance art festival, hosted by an artist-run gallery in a harbourside port village.

_Awash_ was a self-authored work with support from collaborator and sound artist Leyton Glen. It employed users’ cell phones and a performance event to augment an urban environment with sound effects. The audience performed both time and place as an engaged (and engaging) human wave on the site of the former intertidal zone. Physical, mediated, located and present, the work involved audiences in (Haraway’s) productive conversation, on the shores of time and tide.

Through retelling and reflecting upon this project connections are made between research contexts and tensions. Foucault’s heterotopia can be identified through the layers of history shifting into the present. Fuller’s media assemblages add sociality, media and location to the work’s deployment, incorporating representation – visual and aural – set upon the former tideline of Port Chalmers.

### 8.1 Background

In February 2011 I was invited to develop a new work for _QUBIT_, a performance art festival hosted by the Anteroom Gallery in Port Chalmers. Port Chalmers is an operating deep shipping port, on the western side of the harbour, around fifteen minutes drive from Dunedin city. It is home to a small port village, which lies between Dunedin and the Aramoana, and very close – on the other side of the harbour – to Quarantine Island, Kamau Taurua. (See map, figure 40, page 168) It is also home to a vibrant community of artists and musicians.

Charlotte Parallel and Sandra Muller (directors of the Anteroom Gallery) curated and produced the _QUBIT_ series, a two-day festival held in early November 2011. A panel discussion around the experiences and broader themes of performance art completed the weekend.
8.2 **Connections** to the research themes

**A conversational and performed local**

For this project I recognized an opportunity to test ideas of both performativity and the local, while sharing a context with other artists exploring ideas of performance. The curators were open to a broad interpretation of performance and I felt that I would be able to develop a work that required an active and participatory audience. As a festival, there would be ample room for conversation about, between and within works, and I anticipated the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon the work at the festival.

**Media ecologies and assemblages**

The initial invitation to participate in *QUBIT* identified the curators’ desires to “bring together local and national performance artists and offer a unique opportunity to experiment with intermedia approaches in a supportive environment” (email invitation, Charlotte Parallel and Sandra Muller, February 27, 2011). Their intent in framing the festival this way was to provide a platform to explore the spaces inbetween traditional media and disciplines. This notion of ‘inbetween’ and ‘media’ resonated with my reading of Matthew Fuller’s notions around media ecologies, and sparked my imagination. The brief suggests a role for enquiry, testing and evaluation of new assemblages, and making room for the landscapes and media co-presence surrounding my research.

**Representation and looking, employing media and performing local places**

Poster’s concerns, namely that mobile communication conflicts with a world already filled with designated spaces, seemed relevant here, and I recognized an opportunity to employ mobile communication media to help the performance of a site. This case study provides an opportunity to consider how looking and representation could be complemented with other forms of knowledge. The gallery’s context, a port village, provided a variety of shorelines and histories that would allow me to further think through the intertidal metaphor.
Awash developed from a concept, with several site visits and additional historical research.

My aim for the development of this work was to create a simple, digitally augmented and participatory experience for a group of people, responding to the site and history of Port Chalmers. I wanted to make connections to the earlier Intertidal works outlined in Chapter 6 on Quarantine island, Kamau Taurua, identifying and further developing ideas of tidal zones as fertile places, temporarily revealed. Charlotte Parallel, one of the series curators, had also worked on the One Day Sculpture Dunedin series, and we were able to reflect and consider the earlier works, and the areas of engagement we had personally found ongoing interest in.

I was particularly interested in the idea of re-creating a tide line, with human movement, as a social and collaborative event. My research started at the local community library that had a very good section on the history of the village. From here I was also directed to the nearby local maritime museum. Research into several possible sites near the gallery led me to this photograph.

![Figure 69: Photograph of Port Chalmers and Mussel Bay, late 1870s, (photograph De Maus, courtesy Port Chalmers Museum).](image)

The Anteroom Gallery inhabits the former Masonic Lodge, one of the early buildings of the town. Through my research I learned that the bay in front of the lodge was reclaimed in the 1930s through digging under the hill and
pumping silt from the dredging of the harbour for the deep port into the shallow tidal bay. Once called Mussel Bay by early settlers, the area was once a shellfish gathering site. The period of reclamation and filling in of the bay, was long and smelly according to a regional historian (Church 1994). The area is now home to a ring road, a number of houses, the local primary school, a childcare centre and kindergarten, the local covered swimming pool, and a rugby field. Mussel Bay is now the name given to the small beach remaining on the far side of the rugby field, and its deeper intertidal zone no longer provides suitable conditions to sustain shellfish.

The site’s proximity to the gallery was excellent. Further research showed that the former high tideline would have been roughly across the road and down a small bank from the gallery. By chance, the time of the local high tide also matched the timing of the performance event I was allocated.

*Awash* was a work devised as part of my personal practice, and in response to a curatorial invitation. Leyton Glen, a frequent collaborator, created the soundtrack. The postcards were designed by myself and printed with support by Martin Kean. The development of the work, over a period of several months, included ongoing liaison with Charlotte Parallel one of the series curators.

8.3 Background to this practice

I have used cell phones as personal and collective media in art performances for a number of years. In March 2006, a short event involved art performances around Dunedin beginning with the distribution of a ‘free lunch’ outside the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Armed with gifted sandwiches, audiences were asked to visit the destinations of various performances identified on a map, each within short walking distance, and to register their cell phone number with event organizers. Visitors were encouraged to SMS message a short review of the art that they witnessed to a central number. From here reviews were distributed to other registered participants via a centralized website, orchestrated by collaborator Martin Kean. The event, entitled *testing 1-2-3*, encouraged temporary membership in a distributed audience as community, encompassed through the theme and practice of a picnic. The event was coincided with a large number of rugby tourists in Dunedin that day, a number of whom joined in.

A second event that required audience participation and the use of cell phones was in March 2008. Here I was invited to present a work in a
sound festival as part of the Dunedin Fringe Festival. The festival, *Sound Inside the Cracks*, was presented over three nights at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. The theme I was invited to respond to was ‘composition’.

Considering the audience as composers, I worked with a cell phone technician, and with support from sound artist Leyton Glen, we developed a range of five cell phone ringtones each with a different beach theme. These sound files included lapping waves, a ship’s foghorn, dogs barking, seagulls calling and children playing. Each ringtone was assigned a unique phone and number. Each phone was placed upon a music stand on the stage area. Audience members could send SMS messages to the phone numbers to set off the ringtone. The performance involved a few minutes of practice, likened to an orchestra’s tuning. This allowed for players to test the sounds of their remote instruments. This was followed by a six minute ‘performance’, whereby the audience composed messages that in turn composed ‘music’. The result was *simphonía*, a symphony, or composition of different elements expressed in a way that reflects the word’s Greek origin, as a togetherness of sound. In this sense the composition was ‘harmonious’, attempting to form a whole relationship with the audience as composers, with and through the personal media of cell phones.

8.4 The artwork experience

A drizzly grey spring Saturday saw around forty visitors arrive for the start of the *QUBIT* performance art festival. As the audience started to settle in for a weekend of performance an expectant murmur emanated from the crowd.

Presented first in the programme, curator and gallery director Charlotte Parallel ushered people out of the front gate and across the road to gather on the corner of Wickliffe Terrace and Albertson Avenue, an intersection that branched up the hill and down around the flatter streets towards the school. A child peeked out the window from behind a curtain across the road.

I started to hand out postcards to the crowd, and people passed them to neighbours. Once distributed, I briefly explained the performance. The postcard showed the photograph sourced from the local museum (figure 69); it showed the Anteroom Gallery, and in my explanation I showed how we were standing in the centre of the image, where the road once met the beach. The audience briefly orientated themselves, looking, pointing, discussing.
On the rear of the postcard was a phone number, free to call, and roughly corresponding with the aim of this performance: 0800 PC TIDE. If we were to walk to the beach, now over a kilometre away, I explained that we would see that it was now high tide.

This performance required the audience to perform the high tide, here where it used to be. I asked the participating audience to phone the number provided and then to cross the road ten times together. The performance finished once all had completed the crossings.

We gathered along Wickliffe Terrace, and I waited for the group to assemble. I indicated the start of the performance and people dialled the number, waiting for the call to be put through. Once answered, phones played a recorded message of waves lapping, seagulls cawing and the occasional chirp of a cicada. A sense of delight made people pause as they listened, compelled by familiar yet unfamiliar sounds coming from their usually familiar personal media. Some people had to ask for help, others played the sounds on their phone’s speakers; a slow but sure comprehension grew among the small crowd.

And we started to cross the road. Across and back, across and back. A car or two passed, pausing to look and try and comprehend what was happening. The child across the road still peeked through the curtain. A man parked further along the same road got into his car, and drove away slowly, his trailer and boat tugging along behind him. The audience were fully engaged in their simple activity, completing the task proposed, often slowly and thoughtfully. As people walked their path across the former beach they chatted, laughed and paced themselves as they imagined themselves being a wave. These were individual steps, but together they inevitably formed a pattern. No longer a straight line, these human waves were more choppy, perhaps reflecting the day’s weather. Some people ended before others, but those walking more slowly and thoughtfully were determined to complete the task.

The event was so engaging that even those charged with the task of documentation forgot their roles and took part in the human wave. As a result the main evidence of the work are these few photographs, taken somewhat ironically, on my own cell phone. The series photographer did capture the start of the event, before he too was drawn into the work, and the video documenter apologized later for becoming engrossed in the performance and forgetting her job. From the photographs on the following page both anticipation and individual and collective engagement can be seen.
Figure 70 (Above): Audience gather to perform the high tide, crossing Albertson Avenue in Port Chalmers.

Figure 71 (Top Right): Audience perform the tide together, listening to a sound track on their cell phones.

Figure 72 (Centre Right): While crossing the road performers became successively asynchronous, mimicking the effects that wind may have on water.

Figure 73 (Bottom Right): A child peeks from behind a curtain in a nearby house.

(All photographs Caroline McCaw).
The work took around ten minutes for all to complete and was a simple and clear task-driven performance.

8.5 Analysis and discussion

My aim was to create a simple digitally augmented participatory experience for a group of people, responding to site and history. But further to this the work, aimed to create an encounter with a particular site as an event that activated that site. This was achieved in a number of ways.

Assemblage and reuse of standard objects

The work incorporated site-specific historical narratives, embedded in contemporary local spaces. Personal connections were made between physical spaces and digital artifacts. However, in its assemblage, the work as a performed event did not simply represent the past. In Doherty’s terms it “gather[ed] a confluence of repetitions, to ‘retroactively change the balance’ between an actual past, the present and the anticipated future.” (Doherty 2010, 12) The past is brought to light, but in its re-enactment is forever changed. In this case study the confluence of people and place, heterotopia and heterochronia were iterated through human repetitions as performed waves when we crossed a suburban street – an ordinary and everyday practice, reconceived as a metaphor for the intertidal zone.

This draws upon Fuller’s idea of ‘standard objects’. In Chapter 3 Fuller’s standard object was identified as a physical or digital item that is generally considered relatively stable. Fuller draws attention to the ways that standard objects are arranged, suggesting that they can be just as easily re-arranged, included in new compositions, including political, economic and aesthetic dimensions. Each of the elements in Awash: beach, road, postcard, cellphone, sound file, audience are by Fuller’s definition ‘standard objects’ and have been assembled in a composition for the event of this work.

Like the previous case studies, Awash drew upon prior histories of site as a palimpsest, a place where layers of story have been written upon the landscape, of which traces remain. In the case of One Day Sculpture Dunedin, these histories of colonization were drawn upon in the making and sharing of artworks as incorporated processes. In Chapter 6 this was identified as a failure to overcome colonization. In the case of Haka Peepshow, cultural elements were asserted as living cultural landscapes, in spite of dispossession of physical lands. In the case of Awash,
contemporary elements (urban streets, cell phones and a community summoned for the context of a performance art festival) met with older ones (walking, looking, imagining), and these elements were drawn together in an event.

The postcard became an imaginative device. Usually employed to tell stories to distant friends, in this case was brought back to the site of origin and used to connect us to each other and to that particular street corner. Although reproducing an image, the postcard was adapted for a particular purpose, and used to orientate participants, acting more like a compass than a map.

The use of personal cell phones also personalized the event. The cellphone is usually an instrument performing a role of global rhetoric. Its perceived affordances reproduce an ‘always on’ and (nearly) always connected function, in line with broader functions of the internet and mobile communication. In this sense personal cell phones were used to connect across time to reproduce a specific local context. Users were receivers of historic and evocative information, but through integrating this information with personal experience, performed through the act of crossing the road, the image (postcard), the device (cell phone), the place (a former beach) and the individual were all temporarily transformed. Their relationship was re-assembled.

Mobile communication, heterotopia and heterochronia

The local was briefly experienced in and through this multi-dimensional and inter-related system. Our reconception was practiced in the 50-metre stretch of road, but extended to the gallery. In Fuller’s words, the project could be seen to “condense” and “spew out” a moment of relationality (Fuller 2008, 45). Media forms, including the printed postcards, and people’s cell phones were rearranged, with a street, a time and set of circumstances; together layered and reused in a new communicating composition. Sharing the event with friends and strangers also contributed to a sense of both self-consciousness and shared experience. Collectively the event produced a temporary micro community engaged in a shared task, with reference to current and past communities of practice on this site. The work offered a gentle critique of seeing landscapes as fixed entities, and proposed that by seeing landscapes as a process we can participate with them socially. Engagement in social and media practices overwrote a visual rhetoric and produced new understandings.
This event contributed to Poster’s (2004) employment of (Foucault’s) heterotopic frameworks, where he claimed that:

Spaces, identities and information machines now combine into new forms of practice that seriously shift the cultural landscape away from its familiar modern parameters. These locations are neither non-places or nowheres but actual spaces of mobile communications (Poster 2004).

Poster’s conception relies on an understanding of these new forms of locations as drifting and separated from previous geographies.

Technosocial connections were made explicit and assembled and encountered in a material place through social experience. The spectator, who had come to ‘see and experience’ formed an integral part of this assemblage. Doherty suggests that the spectator “... becomes a participant in the forming of [an] event, [a] moment of becoming” (Doherty 2010, 18). This moment of becoming was a shared social experience. And the immersive social engagement, even of those explicitly demarcated as photographers, was evidence of the participatory urge.

**Technosocial**

While the work stood alone for many of its participants, it can be seen as an iteration of some key concerns identified in this research, drawing on features identified in previous case studies. Local and mediated experiences were reconceived as dynamic and inter-related systems.

Aspects of globalization (and colonization) were witnessed in the reclaimed landscape as a system of Eurocentric values, the roads and schools being more important than the traditional site of food gathering. One over-wrote the other, but traces remained. The cellphone became a radio – a system of communication through which ‘nature’ and ‘history’ was broadcast. Conversation bound us together as a temporary community with and through these connections to a particular site, but our actions were evidently our own. Our steps contributed to a larger form, but we had the responsibility to take them.

**Glimpses of the local**

I maintain that through making explicit connections with local, mediated and material spaces, a redefinition of the local emerges in an ecological relationship with spaces of communication and in revealing combinations. Conceived as a process, the local is mobilized, and not fixed, neither in time nor in space. It can be refashioned as multiple, and in motion. The
local can inhabit mobile communication media as a soundtrack for augmented experience. It becomes a practice in which our actions are implied, and our sociality is required. Referring to Ito’s proposition for the technosocial, a new role for the local is imagined, in material, social and cultural terms, that contributes to a discourse which values local experience at geographic margins and outside of large cities.

8.6 Social and relational art more than meets the eye?

In one site visit to Port Chalmers during the midwinter Matariki (traditional Māori celebrations) at dusk, I stood on the shores and looked around with another artist. We commented on nearby Quarantine Island Kamau Taurua, and reflected on the One Day Sculpture project that we had both attended three years earlier. The island appeared to be glowing in the soft late winter light. Apparently bereft of human occupation, the island and the surrounding hills of the Otago Peninsula were visually stunning, and achingly beautiful, their presence dwarfing ours. I rubbed my eyes. I wanted to erase this romantic perspective, to see the hills and islands as more than a layer of colonized landscapes etched onto these lands. Is it possible to see beyond such inherited scenes? The projects described in my research do suggest that certain art practices can engage us in ways of knowing the local that do not only rely on visualizing technologies, but that they develop social and relational approaches to understanding the local.

I recently read a chapter by Terry Smith (“Contemporary Art: World Currents in Transition Beyond Globalization” in Belting et al, 2012). Smith’s succinct argument sought an expanded definition of globalization; positioning globalization as one set of processes among others. Smith argues that we should pay more attention to the historic specificities of each place where art emerges alongside local and regional tendencies — and less as emanating from global centres (Smith 2012, 187-8). In his recent writing Smith’s definition of ‘contemporaneity’ assembles andness in a way that appeals to me. His use of art as a way of defining his ontology, assembles “worlds-within-the-world” (188) where the local, regional and international are multiply connected. These are assembled together with an “intensified experience of the adjacency of difference” and “everyone’s experience of co-temporality” (ibid). Together these combine to form Smith’s own analysis of contemporaneity, through which he identifies three kinds of art currents that I will briefly describe, as I believe they are useful for reflecting on my own research.

58. Matariki traditional Māori midwinter celebrations are marked by the appearance of the Pleiades, the Seven Sisters – a cluster of stars in the constellation Taurus. The first full moon after its appearance in the north-east horizon just before dawn in late May marks the time to celebrate the Māori new year. http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz (accessed 12 August 2014).
1. The first of Smith’s art currents he defines as “remodernist, retro-sensationalist and spectacularist”. This kind of art continues to assert modernist tendencies, and as such dominate Euro-American art markets and museums, “… near and in the centres of economic power that drove modernity” (188).

Work by Billy Apple provides a New Zealand example of this kind of practice. Born Barrie Bates, this young New Zealand artist moved to London in 1959 to take up a place at the Royal College of Art where he joined the so-called ‘Young Contemporaries’ alongside fellow students David Hockney and Derek Boshier. In 1962, Bates undertook a name change and more, becoming Billy Apple – a brand – who went on to become a significant figure in New York Pop Art and Conceptualism scenes.

Facilitating Apple’s growth during his London art school days was his gaining permission and access to move across departments:

“I was in the graphic design school and thought about transferring to the painting school because that’s where all my friends were. The head of graphic design, Richard Guyatt, didn’t think that would be a good move. Instead, he arranged for me to have access to all the different departments so I could use their facilities. That was a key moment for my practice. I was able to go over to the sculpture school and get their foundry to cast my apples and peeled bananas. The graphic design school printed my canvases on their offset printing press... I wasn’t like the other students. I was interested in ideas – the relationships between text and image, picture and headline (from Interview in *Frieze* with Anthony Byrt, 2012, www.frieze.com/issue/article/brand-new/).

In 1964 Apple moved to New York, where he continued to produce pop-related works and then developed a conceptual and process-oriented practice. He exhibited regularly in New York’s museums, dealer galleries and alternative art scenes. He went on to become a registered trademark in 2007, formalizing his art-brand status. This was the culmination of the pop conceptual project begun in London, producing works that investigated intellectual property issues (www.starkwhite.co.nz/exhibitions/billy-apple®-is-50.aspx, accessed 12 Aug 2014). “In London in 1962, I began an extended work which was part of an effort to break down the separation between ‘art activity’ and ‘life activity’. I decided to use my own identity as the vehicle...”
with which to explore the concept of the artist as ‘art object’ (Billy Apple, 1974).”

Apple’s work departed from the purely pop statement to include collaborations with botanists and geneticists, and involved the development of a trademarked ‘Billy Apple’ apple cultivar (HortResearch Orchards, Havelock North, New Zealand).

Although he is living in New Zealand now, Apple’s work has been developed and primarily exhibited in London and New York, and in this way displays those tendencies defined by Smith as “remodernist, retro-sensationalist and spectacularist”. Although working outside of traditional media, Apple’s commodification of ideas for art markets – and persistent work with brand strategies – articulates modernist tendencies. Unsurprisingly Apple’s work has found a home within traditional art museums and dealer art markets. Apple was also an artist included in the One Day Sculpture series, exhibiting a temporary billboard work in the Wellington Botanical Gardens.

2. The second art current Smith defines as “transnational transitionality”. This form of art, often emerging from previously colonized nations, places an emphasis on identity, national and post-colonial priorities, and is commonly associated with bienniales and international touring exhibitions promoting the art of a country or region. Such art seeks to ask questions surrounding what is regionally distinctive art, and how it distinguishes itself from international contemporary art?

Rachael Rakena’s work is a good example of a New Zealand artist working in this way. Her work addresses issues of identity in contemporary New Zealand, asserting Māori perspectives as contemporary, lived and ongoing. She has, in collaboration with sculptor Brett Graham, exhibited at the Venice Biennale. This was a selected exhibition for inclusion in the 2007 collateral presentations.

3. The third identified art current Smith cannot give a name to, as he claims it “... proliferates below the radar of generalization” (188). This category has evolved from

“... opportunities offered by new informational and communicative technologies” (188). Small-scale and interactive, this current of work is “concerned less with high art style or confrontational politics and more with tentative explorations of temporality, place, affiliation, and
affect – the ever-more-uncertain conditions of living within contemporaneity on a fragile planet” (ibid).

Such art prefers “… alternative spaces, public temporary displays, the Net, zines, and do-it-yourself-with-friends networks” (189). This third current is emergent, and Smith predicts “… will increasingly set the terms of what will count in the future…” (ibid).

Smith asserts that these models are not discrete; indeed convergence between these currents occurs, but more often Smith suggests, “… a multiplicity of languages coexist in close proximity…” (189) and that these diverse languages do require translation.

In my research one can see elements of each of Smith’s three currents, but particularly of the second and third currents. The second current of “transnational transitionality” is clearly evident in the One Day Sculpture project, and this national series aligned with a biennial approach to cultivating art in a regional context. Through curatorial decision-making the crafting of this series sought to integrate global concerns (and globally positioned art practices) in post-colonial New Zealand. A number of the artists selected to make ‘site-responsive’ works in the One Day Sculpture series were more familiar with Smith’s first current of art, that is “remodernist, retro-sensationalist and spectacularist”, such as that of Billy Apple.

In my second case study, Rachael Rakena’s Haka Peepshow, there are also clear elements of Smith’s “transnational transitionality”. Here a New Zealand Māori artist – with and through the active support of her community – was expressing clear intentions to define cultural value in a post-colonial context through reclaiming and redefining the possible and appropriate uses of the haka and representations of indigenous masculinity. This work highlighted the contrast and conflict between local presentation and the transnational and globally circulated re-use of a cultural form through international sporting contexts. This work reflected the nationalist, identity-driven and critical priorities identified by Smith, which are especially associated as emerging from previously colonized cultures.

In my third case study, Awash, we see a clear identification with Smith’s third current: small-scale, interactive art. In line with Smith’s definition this work can be described within the
framework of “tentative explorations of temporality, place, affiliation, and affect – the ever-more-uncertain conditions of living within contemporaneity on a fragile planet” (Smith 2012, 188-9). Its personal integration of place and media investigated the local as a collaborative process, including aspects of community, histories and futures. Engaging and affective, this work best describes my own creative values and processes.

I consider Smith’s organization of art using macro-level arrangements useful, as he avoids a sense of nested global hierarchies in favour of placing emphasis on adjacency and assemblage. I also found a personal home for this work in Smith’s third art current, identified in this case study: local, social, temporary and affective. The interconnections between local, regional and international in these currents help my growing definition of andness as a condition experienced together. In particular, I find Smith’s “intensified experience of the adjacency of difference” and “everyone’s experience of co-temporality” (189) with which he defines contemporaneity, to be qualities of andness.

8.7 Extending a community of practice

Through the case study *Awash*, I found myself experiencing a particularly local moment, as a process or a flow, rather than a fixed location. I want to look out now from this local moment and describe a small number of other projects that for me have produced a similar effect, with the aim of identifying a community of practice.

8.7.1 The God Particle

The first project occurred nearby the site of my case study, also in Port Chalmers, several hundred metres from Mussel Bay. As part of the (aforementioned) *Matariki* festival Charlotte Parallel and Sandra Muller (the Anteroom Gallery curators) co-ordinated an outdoor art event series – *Waterlines* – at Back Beach. I exhibited a work at this inaugural *Waterlines* event (7 July 2012), and this is where I experienced another work by two local artists: Armstrong Vaughan and Katrina Thomson. In this work a realistic sculptural model of a small dinosaur was pulled out of the bay and onto the beach by one of the artists dressed in a white lab coat. The work was titled *The God Particle* and its delivery coincided with that of CERN scientists in Switzerland, their groundbreaking work at the Large Hadron Collider, and their discovery of the supposed Higgs
Boson, nicknamed “the god particle”. Both this artwork and the parallel work of physicists in Switzerland were undertaken around the notion of discovery, but framed in different terms. In Switzerland scientists have spent many years developing the theories and conditions to test and evaluate these. In Port Chalmers, these two artists were working on fabricating the circumstances for conversations of a different sort.

As the event was held at dusk, the fading light made it hard to distinguish the details of the form. A group of children and parents gathered around the dinosaur and with the scientist-artist a fascinating conversation was held. The topic of this conversation was connected through this strange event to the emergence of the small sea-dwelling dinosaur on this beach at this time. Debate ranged from what likely species this dinosaur was, based on children’s knowledge of local fossils, through to ‘what is real’? The group discussed that there was certainty that this dinosaur form existed in front of us (children tried poking it with a stick) but debated the object’s being, reflecting on subtle differences between apparent visual appearances and the true nature of this apparition.

There are connections to be made between The God Particle and Bagnall and Hyde’s work as part of the One Day Sculpture Dunedin event, where discovery was reproduced as a 19th-Century process of observation and taxonomy. However, there were careful differences between these works too. While both produced conversations, Bagnall and Hyde’s work engaged the audience in the process of reproducing knowledge, while

Vaughan and Thomson’s work relied on their fabricated social object producing questions about knowledge rather than suggesting possible answers.

In *The God Particle* andness was first evident in the environmental situation: on the tidal shoreline between sea and land; at dusk between night and day; during midwinter seasonal changes. But it was also held in the space that emerged between fact and fiction, between object and story, between then and now, and between the people and place engaging in this conversation. It felt as though we may have been on a film set, but rather than being spectators watching a film being played out, we were part of a live situation. This situation proposed questions about here and now, and connected us through our ability to ask questions, and contribute to a conversation.

The baby plesiosaur became a focus for dialogue, and the artists’ role was to facilitate the dialogue in unplanned and unpredictable ways. The experience of this work was for me a powerful reminder of the significance of conversation.

8.7.2 The Central City Mini Golf Challenge

A second work that I believe helps to contextualize my community of practice is found in nearby Christchurch. Since the destruction of the urban centre of Christchurch city, Gap Filler – a community arts organization – has actively produced and facilitated public artworks and events. Gap Filler was initially formed in response to the September 2010 earthquake. Situating themselves through art interventions in the rubble that collapsed and demolished buildings left behind, this organisation supports creative endeavours and liaises with property owners to see a wide range of temporary work occur. Each project is designed to be temporary, urban and accessible. On their website Gap Filler describes their work:

> Gap Filler gives everyday people a way to contribute to the city’s regeneration instead of passively waiting for the professionals to do the job. Site-specific projects can help us celebrate, mourn and criticise all that we’ve lost; can help us play, experiment and toy with ideas for the future; can make otherwise empty areas active; and can ultimately pave the way in the revitalisation of the city (without using pavement)...We’re kind of like a community-centred, participatory innovation lab. (www.gapfiller.org.nz/about/ retrieved 12 January 2014).
Gap Filler identifies five core values on their website and these are evident in their presentation of works:

**community engagement:** encouraging community growth by assisting people to experience and participate in artistic projects;

**experimentation** and taking calculated risks; leadership by doing (making projects happen that celebrate playfulness, hope, critique and positivity);

**celebrating creativity** and innovative process;

**resourcefulness**, adaptability and a commitment to re-use, re-purpose and recycle;

**collaboration** seeking out partners to implement ideas together.

One project, *The Central City Mini-Golf Challenge*, pictured below, encouraged a playful engagement with city spaces, in line with psycho-geographies of the 1960s French Situationist movement identified in Chapter 4. In this ongoing work, a minigolf course is established between sites. Each hole is located on different sites around the inner city, with the whole course taking under two hours to complete. The turf and other materials were donated, or recycled from demolition materials, including second-hand putters and golf balls, and the course was co-designed by Gap Filler volunteers and members of the public, with support from property and business owners.

![Figure 76: 'The Central City Mini-Golf Challenge event’ 4/5/13.](image)

The temporary golf course was designed to encourage players to walk or cycle around the inner the city in its transitional form. Putters and balls were available at each hole. In return for a small entry fee on the day entrants received a scorecard and potential spot prizes. The holes will remain in place for as long as landowners are happy for Gap Filler to use their sites, and can be holes used by anyone at any time, (photograph retrieved from http://www.gapfiller.org.nz/gap-golf/challenge, 14 January 2014).
The Gap Filler website explains: “Each hole is named by its creators and numbered based on the street address. At each site there is information that includes an image of the building that was previously on the site providing a tangible reminder of what once stood on the land” (www.gapfiller.org.nz/golf, accessed 16 August 2014).

Along with making physical connections between spaces, architectures and memories the work is planned to activate social connectivity too.

‘The wonderful thing about this project is that it is for everyone’, says Richard Sewell, Gap Filler project coordinator and Gap Golf enthusiast. ‘Kids, their parents, the young at heart love mini-golf and we see this as the perfect invitation for people to return to the city together, to play and discover new places whilst travelling from hole to hole. It’s a great project too because it can easily move and grow as sites become available or unavailable. (www.gapfiller.org.nz/golf accessed 16 August 2014).

The example of The Central City Mini Golf Challenge identifies a temporary redefinition of city sites as connected places of play. This redefinition explicitly activates social and relational ties. The event itself initiates this relationship, which is maintained through the experiences of the players and by the landowners’ support of the activity through the ongoing maintenance of mini golf activities. Conversations in each case support these relational ties and the reconception of urban landscapes. These conversations are both between people, and between sites and people, operating together as a dynamic system.

Through small interventions, developed on a personal scale, the art practices sustained by Gap Filler have become an unmistakable part of the city’s development. Through visible, material and social engagement connections are made between the individual or human scale, the urban scale of the city and the macro scale of the earth and its destructive movement. This is an example of Clark’s flattened landscapes, where scales are reconceived and brought together through the event of a destructive earthquake. In Swyngedouw’s terms, the normal hierarchies have been deconstructed, and replaced with new mobilized places “…constituted as networks of interwoven processes” (Swyngedouw 2004, 129). Creativity
plays an activating and connecting role in the constitution and maintenance of these kinds of networks. While the example above – the reconception of a broken city as a temporary mini-golf course – is simple and fun, the activities of Gap Filler require ontological as well as political commitment. The value of the city becomes conceived less through economic terms as private real estate, and more as socialized public space that can be engaged with in potentially different ways. The urban landscape – its social, cultural and political significance – takes on new meanings.

In these two examples drawn from the South Island of New Zealand, and compared with the Awash case study project, an intersection of site-specific and socially engaged practices can be identified. In each case open-ended narratives were developed and produced for a public audience. These narratives were connected to the site, but each offered a different perspective of time. The works, when activated by a social audience, produced an experience of another time. This ranges from the Mesozoic era of the plesiosaur, to more recent times of pre-or early colonialism. The Christchurch mini-golf course both looks back (identifying sites of former buildings) and forwards, reimagining the future city as full of sites of play, while engaging in a socially conceived present. Conversation is key to activating these ideas, and a strong social urge drives the artworks. As identified by Smith’s third current these works each align with Smith’s definition of small-scale, interactive art and an “… intensified experience of the adjacency of difference” and “everyone’s experience of co-temporality” (Smith 2012, 189).

Of course these kinds of works are not unique to the South Island of New Zealand. Due to their temporary timeframe, they usually appeal to their local audience and documentation is infrequently found on the internet. At time of writing, of the three projects described in this chapter, only Gap Filler’s The Central City Mini Golf Challenge is searchable on Google.

A search for equivalent practices located outside of New Zealand then can only be limited. However, in the best cases they are supported by local arts organisations engaged in documenting such projects. A small sample of three comparable projects follow, each found within an arts organisation’s web catalogue. They help to identify further common themes, as well as showing a 30-year history of small-scale, interactive and socially engaged practice.
Common Ground is an arts organisation established in London in 1983 (and later in Shaftesbury, Dorset) that explored the relationship between nature and culture through a wide variety of arts, architecture, gardening and publishing events. Common Ground’s co-founders Sue Clifford and Angela King have developed a philosophy based around ‘Local Distinctiveness’, which encourages collaborative and convivial practices that connect people to their local place.

Local Distinctiveness is concerned with celebrating the unique characteristics of a place and with demanding the best of the new, so that quality and authenticity adds richness to our surroundings making them convivial to us and to nature.

The Apple Day project was first launched in Covent Garden, London, in 1990 by Common Ground. This celebration of the apple was intended to become an autumn holiday. The website describes the motivation for this annual event:

From the start, Apple Day was intended to be both a celebration and a demonstration of the variety we are in danger of losing, not simply in apples, but in the richness and diversity of landscape, ecology and culture too. It has also played a part in raising awareness in the provenance and traceability of food.
(http://commonground.org.uk/projects/orchards/apple-day/accessed )

Common Ground describes the annual event as a means to celebrate and demonstrate that variety and richness matter to a locality. They also use it as an example of activism – that it is possible to effect change in your place. Apples have become a symbol of the physical, cultural and genetic diversity we should not let slip away. Particular apples are linked with their place of origin, and with the rich diversity of wild life they support. Apple Day extends to include celebrations not only of a huge range of cultivars and heritage varieties but also includes apple products, gardening tips, play and creative outcomes. Apples are used both as a metaphor for physical and cultural diversity, of tradition and change.

Over the years, Apple Day has grown and is celebrated in over 600 locations around the UK, and now plays a part in raising awareness not only of the importance of orchards to landscape and culture, but also associated with health organisations, wildlife trusts, museums and galleries. This project’s success is in part due to the nature of conversation that connects the work’s themes with its audience. The humble apple is exposed as having diversity and site-specificity that its commercial circulation overwrites. It draws upon historic narratives, and through the event’s annual re-presentation, maintains the use of the apple as metaphor for reflections on time and place.

8.7.4 Deveron Arts

Deveron Arts is an arts organisation based in Huntly, a small market town in the north east of Scotland, that has been fostering art practices which profile the history, context and identity of the town since 1995. They work both with local and invited international artists with the aim of bringing together artistic and social relationships “... in a global network that extends throughout and beyond the geographic boundaries of Huntly” (www.deveron-arts.com/the-town-is-the-venue, accessed 16 August 2014).

There are two main themes identified on the Deveron Arts website and over 100 projects documented. The town is the venue invites artists to use found spaces throughout the town and its surrounding areas ranging from supermarkets to churches, and engage local community. The Walking Institute is the second key theme, identifying the aim of developing a ‘walking appreciation programme’ by bringing walking activities together with arts and other cultural activities. Two subcategories identified under The Walking Institute are ‘activities and pathmaking’ and ‘research and mapping’.
It was in the latter section that I found Alec Finlay’s project *Some Colour Trends*. Finlay’s 2014 project was nestled in The Hielan’ Ways series. This was once the local name for the walking routes that connected the market town of Huntly to more remote districts to the west. It was a vital link for those who lived along its way, enabling the flow of people, goods and livestock along these tracks and communities, through “distances ... covered at walking pace”. Finlay is an Edinburgh-based artist and poet. His work *Some Colour Trends* began with a fascination with the place-names that are embedded in the Scottish landscape relating to colour, both found on and off maps, and in and out of conversations with local people. Finlay describes his work:

Despite the intermittently dour hues of the climate, many of these names derive from colours and describe a *colourful* world. This lexicon bears the influence of Norse, Gaelic, Pictish, and Scots, as well as English, sometimes reflecting conflict or incomprehension between these cultures. Some names are poetic, others ironic, but they invariably refer to reality, and can be traced back to elements of the landscape. And so we wonder, are *The Cairngorms*, *The Blue Hills*, or *Am Monadh Ruadh*, *The Red Hills*, or *Binnmach duibh*, *The Dark Hills*? (http://www.deveron-arts.com/alec-finlay/ accessed 16 August 2014).

*Figure 78:* Image from The Hielan’ Ways series, retrieved from the Deveron Arts website http://www.deveron-arts.com/hielan-ways/ accessed 16 August 2014.
Finlay’s translations are focussed around translations of colour. He subsequently designed walks, actual and fictional, to make connection between colours. Place-names are combined and accompanied by new translations of the names into English, revealing something of their origin and evolution, in particular, the ways in which Gaelic culture perceived the landscape, not as a distance to be conquered, but “... as a series of views, and colours, to be reflected upon” (ibid).

This work has connections with both Awash and Gap Filler’s The Central City Mini Golf Challenge, through the use of walking as a way of reconceiving and re-picturing landscapes as alive and full of potential and histories. Its social engagement, facilitating conversations about place names, and their potential, held in translation, enabled connections in a network of Clark (2011) and Latour’s (2005)“flattened landscapes”.

8.7.5 Sean Starowitz, Byproduct: The Laundromat

This project was not found through the umbrella of an arts organisation as such, but via an interview on the Huffington Post website with arts and culture reviewer, Blair Schulman. Schulman identifies “... a movement of socially engaged art that is gathering momentum” (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/blair-schulman/the-selffulfillment-of-so_b_5079231.html accessed16 August 2014).

Words like social engagement, sustainability and community are frequently bandied about as buzz words, and their inclusion in the lexicon of corporate ideology may dilute their importance, but are still words with validity nonetheless. Artists like Starowitz challenge these paradoxes, putting ideas into actions, tasking his community to becoming equally involved (ibid).

In his project ByProduct: The Laundromat, Starowitz received funding to develop his socially engaged art practice in Kansas City. The Walnut Place Laundromat became the site for many different forms of community education ranging from experimental jazz concerts to film screenings to soap-making demonstrations. Each event is timed for the duration of a Laundromat wash cycle, and includes storytelling, performances, and discussion.
Through small-scale tutorials, curated conversations, and site-specific projects (during which program attendees actually do their laundry), *Byproduct* connects audiences with art that involves the community in unexpected ways (http://seanstarowitz.com/topics/portfolio/byproduct-the-laundromat accessed 16 August 2014).

*Figures 79 and 80:* Scenes from an event in Starowitz’s 2014 project *Byproduct: The Laundromat*, This event shows Local Pig & Tallgrass Brewing Company conducting a cooking demonstration at the Walnut Place Laundromat, one of the many workshops produced for the project in Kansas City, documented by artist Sean M. Starowitz on his project blog, “The Laundromat” (both photographs Matt Kleinmann Photography).

Over a period of a year, *Byproduct: The Laundromat* explored new ways of using spare time as a tool for cultural production; it provided a fresh look onto an already rich public space. In the *Huffington Post* interview Starowitz remarks of his audience: “I would say [they are] non-art oriented individuals, the everyday (citizen), and art folks. But Kansas City is hyper-segregated and I truly believe the arts can navigate that space, (establishing) conversations and (facing) issues with real impact and change...” (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/blair-schulman/the-selffulfillment-of-so_b_5079231.html accessed 16 August 2014).

Starowitz’ work is an example of a “non-transactional experience” (Schulman, 2014), where socially engaged art practice is used to incite change and helps to redefine culture in ways that make a place for community to become a part of it. This work encourages participation and direct engagement as a model of tangibility and influence “... that yields change where it’s needed most: the places where we live” (ibid).
The five projects identified alongside Awash in this chapter all demonstrate a broad range of thriving site-specific and socially engaged practices. They highlight themes commonly found in this type of practice, namely the incorporation of food, play, walking practices as art, and community education. Each project placed an emphasis on engaged conversation, between people, and between temporary or historically conceived aspects of the local. Each contained the potential for transformative relationships between people, and between aspects of the local. They produced, as Doherty describes in Chapter 4, “temporary sited communities”. And the works spoke back to artists and audiences, in what might best be described as a local dialect. This dialect is more than a visual language, it avoids representation in favour of direct communication; producing dialogue around and with forms of the local that are experienced in particular places and between particular people.

What is unique about Awash, in this identified community of practice, is the employment of mobile communication and its inclusion in an assemblage with people and place. We have come to understand landscapes in our geographically shaky, remote and also bicultural New Zealand, as being provisional. These landscapes must make room for change and otherness. In this regard perhaps it is not surprising that artists and audiences can also make room for media, particularly cellphones; that familiar warm pocket-sized media we personalize as a place of our own, and as a form of connection with others. In line with Smith’s definition Awash can be described within the framework of “tentative explorations of temporality, place, affiliation, and affect – the ever-more-uncertain conditions of living within contemporaneity on a fragile planet” (Smith 2012, 188-9). But this easy adoption of personal media seems also to fit and grow Ito’s model of the technosocial; the local is activated through this media too. Again, in De Nicola’s (2012) terms, media have become ‘landscaped’.
“The coastline paradox is the counterintuitive observation that the coastline of a landmass does not have a well-defined length.”
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coastline_paradox)

“nothing around us but blue bubbling air”
(Robin Hyde ‘Houses by the Sea’ 1937-1939)
This research began by identifying and examining the lands and landscapes that surround me, always multiple, shifting, communicating and communicated. Three key tensions were identified: our seismic island geography, our bicultural practices, and changes to understanding our sense of distance through contemporary hypermedia and its rhetoric of co-presence. This research sought to better understand what living in New Zealand means when considering these tensions.

Haraway insists on situating knowledge as a good way to encompass “elaborate specificity and difference”, an approach that is consistent with the research tensions. I chose Probyn’s ‘local’, as a place to examine these tensions from, and as a place from which analyses can be made. Ito’s technosocial also gave me a framework to perceive our media co-presence as grounded in local contexts.

The projects described in this research suggest that certain art practices can engage us in ways of knowing the local that do not solely or mainly rely on visual representation, and can provide alternative images, stories and ways of knowing. Three Dunedin projects presented different stories of places and times to local people in local situations. Each aimed to contribute to an understanding of the local through the connections they made.

This chapter evaluates how social, relational and a locally centred understanding of media co-presence (ie technosocial) approaches were articulated through these three art projects. Further, how social, relational and technosocial approaches might contribute to a clearer understanding of the local. The potential contribution of this research to our understanding of the local in the context of New Zealand is evaluated.
The research began with a critique of looking, and of visualizing technologies that insist on reproducing particular perspectives. From settler landscape painting through to dominant mass media narratives, these representations reproduce a colonial approach – authorizing narratives and normalizing particular perspectives – that continue to pervade our contemporary experience.

Alongside visualizing technologies other empirical and political frameworks were identified that maintain established ways of understanding our experience of living in New Zealand. The nation state, the notion of the antipodes and imagined geographies were each considered in light of the changing role of local places brought about by the internet and mobile communication.

Here in New Zealand our ways of seeing landscapes were produced and are reproduced through ongoing colonizing processes. Images position us, and allow us to speak back in controlled ways. This research sought to better understand these processes, and to question whether, when employed by artists, the internet, new media and mobile communication technologies can assist or re-organize visualizing technologies.

Issues surrounding the politics of visualizing technologies and frameworks were identified in Case Study 1, One Day Sculpture Dunedin, where visiting artists began by viewing from afar. In this project the island and its colonial histories as a quarantine station interfered, both visually and as a container for the islands’ own stories, reiterating a practice of deferred arrivals. Collaborating artists considered the use of visualizing technologies. From the oligoptic technologies of looking closely at processes of seaweed identification, to the lighting of a cave for capturing video images and stories, looking was explicitly employed in their participatory art practices.

Although it was proposed that our initial connection via the internet could have helped us to overcome some of these politics, in this case communication technologies alone did not provide strong enough social connection to enable distanced artists to collaborate with the island in more relational ways. Despite the conscious employment of social and participatory elements by artists, the resulting artworks struggled to overcome their strong visual frameworks and echoed colonial processes.
For this project the internet as a site for research and of collaborative endeavour was not rich enough. Although full of images able to retell stories of the island, as well as facilitated curatorial identification of information surrounding the place, and inter-personal communication, internet technologies proved to be neither adequately socially-engaging nor able to provide relevant site-specific experience. While touted as different in scale and process to the mass media, the internet and mobile communication technologies were not usefully enough employed in this case study. This suggests that distance does provide a semiotic interference in systems of communication and collaboration.

In terms of the project’s reception, the highly social works did not translate so well back onto the web as images either. The circulation of images as stories needed a photographer who was a participant. When positioned outside of familiar terrain, whether geographically, chronologically, socially or semiotically, photography as a tool of representation was only able to tell a partial story.

Here the intertidal metaphor was first employed, in this case as a marker of time.

9.2 Art and technosocial engagement

Ito’s term ‘technosocial’ was identified as a useful neologism, and has been employed in this research to invert the model in which we perceive ourselves as distant receivers of information. It became a useful term to describe how we employ technology in ways that fit our social, cultural and local understandings, knowledge and behaviour. Rather than perceive ourselves as victims of technological globalization, approaching technosocial-landscapes as fluid, shifting and always cultural, has helped to develop a perspective of the local as always at the centre of our communication, in my case in and of New Zealand. To understand our landscapes as always culturally written, and technology as a landscape that is equally cultural, is to assert self-determination. Such situated practices establish a culturally-based alternative to the visual as a dominant form of knowing.

In case study 2, Rakena’s Haka Peepshow used new media tools of representation, and 3D video in particular, to present a bigger picture of self-determination. Here the framed act of looking was initially identified as employed for the cultural appropriation of Māori haka. The haka was first appropriated by the All Blacks, and secondly for the maintenance of nationalistic narratives, perpetuated by mass media. The artist’s re-
presentation of the diversity (and ongoing relevance) of haka in Māori non-sporting contexts drew upon contemporary media techniques. However, the artist worked on political, cultural and epistemological levels that were in tension with current mass media narratives. Through this case study we see that visualizing technologies work in conjunction with other political, cultural and epistemological systems consistent with colonizing processes. The artwork’s development and presentation drew upon situated knowledges, situated practices and technosocial approaches, asserting a strongly Māori perspective.

New media and mass media processes are not, however, so separate, and in this case study we saw the reproduction of dominating colonizer narratives in the circulation and the retelling of the stories of the artwork’s presentation. Although Rakena successfully re-framed haka, as a visually pleasurable, authoritative and faithful act of a living cultural expression, the artist’s presentation was read by non-Māori as divisive. The threat posed to a non-unified nation created heated emotions in the public sphere. Here theories associated with the public sphere, and with online communication, were highlighted as representing the interests of some groups more than others. In the bicultural context of New Zealand, the public sphere gave voice to one main cultural group in what appeared to be a closed system. The use of online public fora such as blogs in this case study only maintained the interests of the many, behaving like mass media, and asserting a dominant Eurocentric cultural landscape caught in a narrative produced in the 19th Century.

This case study as a whole can however, be seen as a snapshot of bicultural New Zealand in the early 21st Century. It highlights the potential contribution of a technosocial approach to understanding, producing and reproducing our contemporary landscapes as always culturally grounded, but not resolving bigger tensions. The tension of global and local is reproduced in this case study through national and local Māori discourse under the media spotlight of an international sporting event. This tension – and with it the ongoing bicultural relationships between Māori and Pākehā landscapes – can be conceived through the intertidal metaphor. Here we experience overlapping sea and land, touching, mixing in the conversation, produced and circulated by the artwork.

By employing a technosocial approach in contemporary arts practice, our engagement with both media and landscapes can be reconceived, and contribute to our understanding of the local as culturally produced, a process and a practice, in a state of flux.
The use of technosocial processes in art proposes a particular kind of engagement, one that – in this case – asserted cultural difference. This relationship can also be conceived through the intertidal metaphor where landscapes and media co-presence both frame our experience of the local, contiguous – both touching and presencing us, and shifting with tidal flow.

9.3 Seeking andness

Social and relational approaches to understanding the local – in an increasingly globally connected context – were identified in both theoretical traditions and in particular art practices, as providing alternative ways of knowing beyond visualizing technologies.

Landscapes, ecologies, networks and conversations were all invoked as metaphors and processes for these social and relational propositions. These social and relational terms work alongside other forms of assemblage, such as heterotopia, that actively accept both belonging and difference, here and not-here are connected in “flattened” landscapes. These terms all help to define andness, a necessary modus operandi, established early in this thesis, for living in the geographic, bicultural and technosocial conditions of New Zealand.

By creating a focus on art that engages with social and relational approaches, we can see that art can assemble the local, and can draw our attention to the elements and dynamics of the local as an assemblage. Landscapes become understood as temporary settlements, culturally produced and provisional.

While each of the case studies assembled landscapes and technology in different ways, drawing upon social and relational processes, the third case study Awash perhaps articulated these as an assemblage most coherently. This simple work drew together time and place, lands and people, and technology was employed in this assemblage as a normal appendage of our being there. The work, although it employed a photograph, did not use it as an image to represent ‘here and now’, but rather the image suggested another time; it allowed us to reconsider this time. Similarly the use of the cell phone, as a standard object and in this work employed as a radio, reminded us of the sounds of another time, another type of place. Our experience of the work was social; together we made a wave, alone we could only be jetsam,
washed ashore by the tide. Assembling these thoughts together our bodies became central to the experience. As Bergson (1896) reminds us, our body is the centre of our perceptions in an ongoing process. The seemingly banal suburban street – through the artworks – was made informationally and aesthetically available to us as a landscape in process: social, cultural and political. We were momentarily aware that we were situated, and yet part of a network of processes in a dynamic system; we became a wave on the shore. Our visual knowledge met with our physical and social experience – crossing the road – a process at once familiar and yet full of imaginative possibility. Together we actively co-produced the local.

9.4 At the edge – drawn together

Dynamic conditions frame my experience of the local. Living on these unstable southern islands in the Pacific Ocean I find that the ever moving, shifting and mixing of our shores have created a place for thinking about more than one form or method of engagement. The reconception of the beach as a verb, a place always in process, led me to see the local as a similarly assembled place, in a constant state of change. This assembly draws together lands, landscapes, sociality and technosociality. The local begins with our lands, perceived as landscapes, always culturally produced. Bicultural affiliations necessarily multiply these culturally produced landscapes. These multiplied landscapes are navigated through conversation, and reproduced socially. Through adopting a technosocial approach, the local is reproduced when we engage with each other through the internet and mobile communication media too.

This research aimed to contribute to discourse that values local experience at geographic margins and outside of large cities. Earlier, Ito defined her term ‘technosocial’ by asking us to pay particular attention to three conditions ‘setting’, ‘context’ and ‘situation’, testing her own ideas through analyzing mobile phone users in Tokyo, London and Los Angeles. Through testing and evaluating these ideas through site-specific and socially engaged art practices, in the context of contemporary Dunedin, I offer three further terms that might help to expand and extend the usefulness of Ito’s technosocial beyond large cities. These terms were performed through the three case studies discussed.
**Motion:** Like Clark’s proposition that we reconsider these islands we call New Zealand as land, mainly submerged and in a state of movement, the strategy of motion leaves room for change. At the beach, always physically evident as a mixing of land, water and air on the shores of these islands, a refocus on motion allows us to apprehend rather than comprehend the local. This apprehension is an anticipatory gesture, rather than an assertion of ownership. As well as leaving room for change, it expects difference. These different elements are constantly being reconfigured, as if in a conversation.

**Connection:** The local is revealed in ways that are connected to global processes, including (but not limited to) the internet and mobile communication, to other people and places and across time. Beyond these meta-process connections however, people are connected with each other, and to other manifestations of the local, in sometimes surprising and unexpected ways. Our position in New Zealand, at a distance from other islands and lands, helps us to value connections. Observing these connections, and making connections where they are not normally sought, can help us to see technosocial situations as potentially productive expressions of the local.

**Moment:** In this research creative practices offer momentary revelations. The moment is one of recognition, in ways that connect us with a fleeting experience of the local. Particular sites and historical events – both distant and proximate – are exposed, and become accessible to us socially, available in a form of conversation. These conversations are similar to ways that we connect across the world using technology. During these moments we both perform and recognize our place ecologically, connecting cultural processes with landscapes, social and technological processes with our bodies, and global processes with local ones.

These interweavings, like waves, sands and tidal rhythms are systems that exist only as a temporary settlement.

Living here means accepting temporary settlement as necessary motion, and seeking moments – local, social and technosocial – in order to make meaningful connections. In this thesis three site-specific and socially engaged art projects helped to make these connections.
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Glossary of Māori words

Translations have all come from Te Aka Māori English, the online Māori - English language dictionary (www.maoridictionary.co.nz). Where there are several meanings for a word or phrase, the meaning relevant to its use in the thesis is included here.

Aotearoa  North Island, now used as the Māori name for New Zealand.

atua  ancestor with continuing influence, god, demon, supernatural being, deity, ghost.

haka  performance of the haka, posture dance - vigorous dances with actions and rhythmically shouted words. A general term for several types of such dances.

Hapū  kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe - section of a large kinship group and the primary political unit in traditional Māori society. It consisted of a number of whānau sharing descent from a common ancestor, usually being named after the ancestor, but sometimes from an important event in the group’s history. ALSO to be pregnant.

iwi  extended kinship group, tribe, nation, people, nationality, race - often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct territory.

kaitiaki  trustee, minder, guard, custodian, guardian, caregiver, keeper, steward.

kaitiakitanga  guardianship, stewardship, trusteeship, trustee.

Kaitohutohu  adviser, instructor.

kanohi ki te kanohi  face to face, in person, in the flesh.

kapa haka  Māori cultural group, Māori performing group.

karakia  ritual chant, chant, intoned incantation, charm, spell - a set form of words to state or make effective a ritual activity.

kaupapa Māori  Māori approach, Māori topic, Māori customary practice, Māori institution, Māori agenda, Māori principles, Māori ideology - a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society.

kāwanatanga  government, dominion, rule, authority, governorship, province.

Marae ātea  courtyard, public forum - open area in front of the wharenui where formal welcomes to visitors takes place and issues are debated.

mana  prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma - mana is a supernatural force in a person, place or object.

mana whenua  territorial rights, power from the land, authority over land or territory, jurisdiction over land or territory - power associated with possession and occupation of tribal land.

mātauranga Māori  Māori knowledge - the body of knowledge originating from Māori ancestors, including the Māori world view and perspectives, Māori creativity and cultural practices.

moko  Māori tattooing designs on the face or body done under traditional protocols.

Ngai Tahu/Kai Tahu  tribal group of much of the South Island, sometimes called Kāi Tahu by the southern tribes.

ngeri  a type of short haka with no set movements and usually performed without weapons.

Ōtākou  an important village near the Otago Harbour entrance at the time of early contact with Pākehā. Still occupied by Ngāi Tahu.

Pākehā  English, foreign, European, exotic; New Zealander of European descent - probably originally applied to English-speaking Europeans living in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Papa-tū-ā-nuku  Earth, Earth mother and wife of Rangi-nui - all living things originate from them.
peruperu leaping haka with weapons - performed with weapons to intimidate the enemy
pou post, upright, support, pole, pillar, goalpost, sustenance.
Rangi-nui atua of the sky and husband of Papa-tū-ā-nuku
rūnanga, rūnaka council, tribal council, assembly, iwi authority - assemblies called to discuss issues of concern to iwi or the community.
Rūaumoko atua of earthquakes and the youngest child of Rangi-nui and Papa-tū-ā-nuku.
reo language, dialect, tongue, speech, te reo Māori (the Māori language)
Tāne-Tūturi one of the offspring of Rangi-nui and Papa-tū-ā-nuku who was the first to see the sun shining under Rangi's armpit (according to some versions of the narrative).
Tāngata people.
taonga property, goods, possessions, effects; treasure, anything prized - applied to anything considered to be of value including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and techniques.
taonga tuku iho heirloom, something handed down, cultural property, heritage.
Te Wai Pounamu New Zealand’s South Island
Taupō (Taupō-nui-a-Tia) Lake Tāupo
Tikanga correct procedure, custom, habit, lore, method, manner, rule, way, code, meaning, plan, practice, convention, protocol - the customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context.
Tino rangatiratanga self-determination, sovereignty, autonomy, self-government, domination, rule, control, power.
Tiriti o Waitangi Treaty of Waitangi
Toitū be undisturbed, untouched, permanent, entire; be sustainable.
Tukutuku ornamental lattice-work - used particularly between carvings around the walls of meeting houses. Tukutuku panels consist of vertical stakes (traditionally made of kākaho), horizontal rods (traditionally made of stalks of bracken-fern or thin strips of tōtara wood), and flexible material of flax, kiekie and pīngao, which form the pattern. Each of the traditional patterns has a name.
tūrangawaewae place where one has the right to stand - place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship and whakapapa.
ure penis.
waka canoe, vehicle.
waiata song, chant, psalm.
whakaaraara pā watch song, sentinel’s chant, sentry chant - now often used to begin a speech.
whakapapa genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent - reciting whakapapa was, and is, an important skill and reflected the importance of genealogies in Māori society in terms of leadership, land and fishing rights, kinship and status. It is central to all Māori institutions.
whānau extended family, family group, a familiar term of address to a number of people - the primary economic unit of traditional Māori society. In the modern context the term is sometimes used to include friends who may not have any kinship ties to other members.
wharenui meeting house, large house - main building of a marae where guests are accommodated.
whenua land - often used in the plural, country, nation, ground, domain, ALSO placenta.