

room

*no way in, go in, measure*¹

*The meaning of movement is the very movement of meaning.*²

*If the dancer . . . dances everything is there. The meaning is there, if that's what you want.*³

to prelude

Archival Drift originated as an inquiry into how an artist and an art practice, particularly a spatial art practice, might be social and political. Many art practices have emerged that prioritize social or political involvement especially since the 1960s. More recently in the 1990s, practices subsumed under the rubric of “relational aesthetics” were advanced by French curator and art critic, Nicholas Bourriaud.⁴ Although the focus on relations has resulted in the emergence of some innovative work, it often seemed to me that recent relational artwork was contrived and (re) exploited vulnerable people in adverse circumstances.⁵ Some projects ‘merely exoticise capitalism’s victims, consigning us to a “safari of images” [and causing a kind of] double victimisation; an exploitation or a declaration of powerlessness’.⁶

Just prior to my candidacy those initial misgivings were fore-grounded when I was invited to participate in an ephemeral public art project. *There forever* was undertaken on the cusp of a massive gentrification of the Port River area in Adelaide, South

¹ Samuel Beckett, *Imagination Dead Imagine*, (1965).

² Jose Gil, ‘The Dancer’s Body’, in *A Shock to Thought: Expression after Deleuze and Guattari*, edited by Brian Massumi, (London and New York: Routledge: 2002), 125.

³ Merce Cunningham, *Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years*, edited by David Vaughn, (New York, Aperture: 1997), 86.

⁴ Nicholas Bourriaud. *Relational Aesthetics*. (Dijon: Les Presses du Reel, 2003).

⁵ Rustom Bharucha questions the potential loss of limits in practices in public spaces that are outside of artistic conventions and whether interventionist art . . . has the capacity to change social relationships. . . . [or whether it plays] into the illusion or self-deception of an ostensibly radical politics. Rustom Bharucha, ‘The Limits of the Beyond: Contemporary Art Practice, Intervention and Collaboration in Public Places’, in *Third Text*, 21:4, July 2007: 397–416, Accessed online 25/07/08. <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals>

⁶ David Hopkins, “‘out of it’: Drunkenness & Ethics in Martha Rosler & Gillian Wearing’ in *Difference and Excess in Contemporary Art: The Visibility of Women’s Practice*, edited by Gill Perry, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 26. See also Julia Svetlichnaja, ‘Relational Paradise as a Delusional Democracy—A Critical Response to a Temporary Contemporary Relational Aesthetics’. Conference paper, BISA conference, *Art and Politics* (Panel). Dec 19–21, 2005. University of St Andrews, Scotland. *Wikipedia* Accessed 22/04/09. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relational_Art

Australia in April 2007.⁷ Developing processes for my contribution titled *Continuous Wave: Forms for a Dialogue* (2007; see images 1–3 and also in artefact images, *Continuous Wave: Forms for a Dialogue*, pages 1–8) was an opportunity to respond to inhabitants of a particular place. My inquiries revealed that the proposed upgrades were at “arm’s length”, fast-moving, and commercially-driven processes of spatial politics with little local consultation. In order to act most cogently within this context therefore, I needed to approach local inhabitants of the Port.

As Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt note, social conditions and relations are ultimately “sculpted” by architectural nuance.⁸ The works that emerged were both performative and material and corresponded to the architectural transition in process. The sites for my interventions became locations for dialogue and work titles; *swamp*, state of the port prior to settlement in the early 1830s, *dock*, the site of already razed structures at the time of this intervention, *shack*, the old customs booth for incoming goods and *shed*, a long-term *domus maximus* of a houseboat and its designer.⁹ The shack has served as the meeting place and accoutrements storage for a 25 year-old ham radio club. While convincingly competent with internet technologies, club members are amateur radio stalwarts, experts in radio electronics, antenna building and other kinds of communication systems like Morse code or continuous wave. Radio communication, they informed me, more than internet communication, affords acuity of interpersonal awareness; ‘you can always tell a pirate by the sound of his voice.’¹⁰ I attended Wednesday night meetings over a twelve-week period and proposed that as they were current Port residents on the cusp of this change, we could develop an art project about the club and its history in the Port. We talked about radio, the shack, or about their histories and often they wanted to entice me into an understanding of radio electronics and other know-how. Over time the complex social dynamics of any group are revealed, albeit this group responded to a shared artistic identification in the

⁷ See <http://www.ensemble.va.com.au/thereforever> re project’s curator, curatorial premise and other artistic contributions.

⁸ Antoni Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire* in Dieter Roelstraete, ‘Poesis Makes Perfect, Notes on Gesture (Reprise)’ Conference paper. *Summit: non-aligned initiatives in educational culture*. Berlin. May 24–28, 2007. Accessed 22/12/08. <http://summit.kein.org/node/191>

⁹ The latter two buildings are threatened with demolition but until now, remain standing.

¹⁰ Personal communication with D, 2007.

process. Curiosity and interest about what would transpire between respective fields of knowledge and expertise built slowly and incrementally. In subscribing to a different kind of local value and bearing witness to an erstwhile unknown field of electronic knowledge, I opened the work up to new individual and group subjectivities. As Jorella Andrews emphasises: ‘the capacity to take up personalized ways of being in [a] complex other(ness)–oriented way is something that must be learned and practiced,’ and this was a process of bringing into conjunction and witnessing different making processes.¹¹ While D learnt to construct various elements of an art installation, for example, I learnt how to use the language of radio communication and how it is relayed through the atmosphere.

During the collaborations, the quiet potency of this work revealed itself. Artefacts were made while protecting the privacy of participants by using close–frame video shots of hands or sounds and voices. Sustained interest and attention afforded sufficient understanding for works to be achieved without contrived surrender of expertise and aesthetic competence. Sometimes we just needed to wait for the next move to become evident or material to be sourced or fabricated. Sometimes I considered the possibility that nothing more would come about except the meetings and what was exchanged between people.

Ultimately, *shack* (See artefact images, *Continuous Wave: Forms for a Dialogue*) was opened to the public with the club members’ permission as a readymade installation and performance, a site of material knowledge and community. The interior was furnished with a soundscape of our conversations accompanied by sound–responsive lighting. Although a single–track recording was produced, the multi–layered “talk–all–at–once” conversations that mostly prevailed there, gave the impression of more complex sound engineering. To me this aptly reflected the layered and fluid identification of performers, makers and viewers from one to time to another. Significantly, each meeting with the radio club was, in itself, a social, cultural and political performance; a process clearly just as faithful to the concerns of the

¹¹ Jorella Andrews. ‘Critical Materialities’, Conference paper, *Summit: non–aligned initiatives in educational culture*. Berlin. May 24–28, 2007. Accessed 22/12/08. <http://summit.kein.org/node/1911>

participants and the project.¹²

Ninety bottles of water in plastic containers were situated inside the shack each with an inscribed date. Since utilities had been disconnected pending demolition, the club treasurer conscientiously carried water each week to ensure that tea and other conveniences were continued. After dark on the final night, in the performance titled *swamp*, (See artefact images, *Continuous Wave: Forms for a Dialogue*) I carried the bottles of water two by two onto the dock. A local audience watched as the accumulating bottles (lit by a generator lantern that was sourced by club members) gathered resistance in the empty space left by a recently razed boat shed. As I returned back and forth from the shack to the dock, the treasurer unexpectedly began to perform this manoeuvre of his own accord, carrying this water again with me. As a gesture of support for the project that we had watched over together, there was an ease to this contribution. Whilst tending sensitively to the alterity that was entailed, the performance emerged from a trust built patiently over time.

to expand, assemble, be immanent, to dance

Following *Continuous Wave*, I considered the notion that art practice might garner social and political cogency and sustainable qualities of relatedness in art contexts often dominated by forces of institutional or social regulation. As modes of performance and engagement with the world, therefore, this research examines relational and affective potentials of art practice through several bodies of work and in various spatial contexts. By implication, it also refers to “ecologies”. In this thesis I use the phrase “ecology of practice” to encompass the biological, social and political

¹² Since I have encountered Canadian artists Janet Cardiff and Georges Bures Miller’s installation, *Opera for a Small Room* 2005 that bears a resemblance to *Continuous Wave*, especially the cluttered context of another’s (longstanding music archiving) practice and the sound responsive lighting. However, the Cardiff/ Bures Miller work is undertaken by the artists in response to the archive collected by an absent, fictionalised protagonist and installed in the context of museum galleries. One does not have access to the room except through windows and gaps. In *Continuous Wave* (2007) the club members were present during installation openings, interacting with viewers in the shack. Viewers could thereby immerse themselves in the material, sound and light experience. This interior is the actual social context of an archival practice formed and based on their social engagement, radio communications, the construction of radio devices and the electronic practices entailed. Fascinating for its accumulations of old electronic parts with forgotten uses, theirs is an archive of an eccentric kind. See www.cardiffmiller.com

environments in which innovation can be sustained and potentials may be explored by artists, viewers, participants or collaborators.¹³

This exploration of ecologies of art practice seeks out potentials beyond ‘institutionalised systems of knowledge and creative production’ and reductionist binary models of production/consumption, subject/object and active/passive involvement. Over the course of this research, the social and political potentials that I explored emerged through a tendency already familiar to many artists; to redeploy old or anachronistic things. The activation of historical objects, places and ideas enabled the temporal dimension and virtual potentials of the work to extend material particularities; the sensational and affective experience of the work as well as its ability to stimulate new kinds of knowing.

These concerns expressed align the project with what has come to be known as an ‘expanded practice’.

. . . ‘[Expanded] practice’ refers to art practices that utilize approaches from other fields and also those practices that develop minimalism’s concern for the relation between object, body and site or environment.¹⁴

British academic and collaborative artist Simon O’Sullivan details his version of an expanded practice according to four moments or movements which include collaboration, ethics, politics and virtualities.¹⁵ Collaboration enables an alliance of participation and a practice based on relations of movement and connectivity. Ethics examines what a body is capable of in generating affects and productive encounters.¹⁶

¹³ Isabelle Stengers’ extensive writings about the potentials of interdisciplinary relations incorporate the term “cosmopolitics”. Cosmopolitics involves “an ecology of practices” where more permeable boundaries open up the possibility of cultural dialogue. An ecology of practices for Stengers aims to generate hopeful encounters; encounters ‘with things or people, or ideas that oblige her to think in new ways rather than ceding to probable limitations. Isabelle Stengers, ‘Cosmo-politics: Risk, Hope Change: A Conversation with Isabelle Stengers’ in *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*, edited by. Mary Zournazi, (Annandale, NSW: Pluto Press, 2002): 257–60.

¹⁴ David Burrows, ‘Ready-mades, Lavender Mist and Mirror Travel’: Deleuze, Badiou and the Time of Art Practice’, *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, Edited by Simon O’Sullivan, and Stephen Zepke, (London: New York: Continuum, 2008). 125.

¹⁵ See more about the art collective *ccred* at <http://www.ccred.org/> Accessed 1/04/11.

¹⁶ O’Sullivan refers to a particular kind of ethics that needs to be clarified here. Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995): We define things by what they can do, it opens up forms of experimentation. It is a whole exploration of things, it doesn’t have anything to do with essence. The will to power [as Nietzsche’s concept] means that you define things, men animals according to the effective power they have. Once again, it is the

O'Sullivan's third movement is the politics that allows an exploration of actions and processional subjectivity through the world-body and also the politics of art practice itself. Virtuality, the last movement, accesses past moments, histories and technologies of virtuality in the present both as critique, and as a call to the future.

'An expanded practice, [writes O'Sullivan], locates itself at that "seeping edge" between virtual and actual.'¹⁷ O'Sullivan's four "movements/moments", as these terms suggest, depend on shifting perspectives of what it means to be human, and also of ways in which ecologies of practice may be engendered as an artistic priority.

In this vein and in order to guide the reader further, I define some terms and consider some tendencies which are intentional and integral to this project. Although I frequently contextualise my work through philosophical and theoretical investment, I emphasise that the artefact making processes have determined the selection of terminology and methodologies if and when they coincide with the work and/or its motives. It is not possible, for example, to attempt a full lexicon of terms based on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari but rather to mobilise them connectively with the works cited by other authors, artists and my project. South African academic, Sarat Maharaj writes that visual art practices interact with established discursive academic circuits.

However this should not lull us into seeing the discursive as the prime modality of thinking through the visual. Alongside runs its "pathic" and "phatic" force, its penumbra of the non-verbal, its somatic scope, its smoky atmospherics, its performative range.¹⁸

question: What can a body do? Gilles Deleuze Cours Vincennes: Ontologie-Ethique-21/12/1980'. Accessed 23/05/10 www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=190&groupe=Spinoza&langue=2
The provenance of this ethical perspective of "what a body can do" refers not to a moral or judgemental ethics, but rather the attribution of the capability and agency of each particular body and its immanence within the world which cannot be known in advance. This view was advanced by philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), whose work was a particular focus of Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995). See Gilles Deleuze *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley, (New York: City Lights Books, FP 1970, 1988). This paper will constrain discussion to this aspect of Spinozan philosophy, and the brief mention of "expressivism" in *room with archive fever*, (See p.14). However, there are clearly strong links with this research that are nevertheless beyond the scope of this paper.

¹⁷ Simon O'Sullivan borrows this phrase from Brian Massumi who conceived of this "seeping edge of virtual and actual" as becoming in the realm of affect. See Brian Massumi, 'The Autonomy of Affect' in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, edited by Paul Patton. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers), 1996, and Simon O'Sullivan, 'The Aesthetics of Affect: thinking art beyond representation' *Angelaki* 6:3. (Dec 2001). Accessed 1/03/11, <http://www.simonosullivan.net>

¹⁸ Sarat Maharaj, 'know-how and No-How: stopgap notes on "method" in visual art as knowledge production' *Art&Research* 2:2, 4, (Spring, 2009), Accessed 4/09/09, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/maharaj.html>

A visual art *research* practice then must also accomplish through reflexive processes explicit and communicable contextual research writing.¹⁹ Drawing on recognisable and diverse disciplines such as art praxis, philosophy, archaeology, anthropology, sociology and psychoanalysis, the writing will attest to the tendency of visual art research to cross disciplinary boundaries or rupture disciplinary homogeneity. Combinations from these fields are consciously juxtaposed, assembled, recombined and redeployed. In the words of Deleuze, ‘practice is an unfolding and refolding of the body, matter and thought to see what combinations can be made.’²⁰ This research writing recruits a performative tendency in concert with the processes of artefact fabrication. In effect, the entire thesis is a “becoming assemblage”.

From an art historical perspective and according to 1960s curator William Seitz, an assemblage involved the juxtaposition of at least two different materials, ‘discarded or purloined . . . rather than new.’ Seitz insisted that these heterogeneous materials remain “identifiable,” otherwise he would consider the work to be sculptural rather than assemblage.²¹ At this time

[assemblage] presented itself as the privileged expression of a new consumer subject whose very identity was defined through an increasingly accelerated cycle of acquisition and disposal of objects. While the concrete nature of assemblage allowed it to underscore the new dominance of the commodity, it was its emphasis on process that suggested ways in which subjects are formed through this changing set of relations. Through suggestions of transformation, loss or invention, assemblage effected a *temporalisation* [italics added] of the object that articulated new forms of late-capitalist subjectivity.²²

More recently, and from his philosophical perspective, Deleuze deployed the term “assemblage” to express a comprehensive territorial process.

¹⁹ The reader must then accommodate the ways in which the art practice is ‘grounded in the means of the person who presented the message’. Although, as Hannula et al establish, an encounter and communication will never be neutral, but will always involve ‘a politics of listening’ or ‘a politics of representation’. Hannula, Mika, Suoranta, Juha and Vaden, Tere. *Artistic Research theories, methods and practices*. (Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki, Finland; University of Gothenburg/Art Monitor, Gothenburg, Sweden, 2005), 62–63.

²⁰ Burrows, 123.

²¹ Anna Dezeuze, ‘Assemblage, Bricolage and the Practice of Everyday Life’, in *Art Journal*, 67: 1, (Spring 2008): 1, Accessed 25/07/08, <http://web.ebscohost.com>

²² *ibid.*, 2.

Every assemblage is basically territorial. . . . The territory is made of decoded fragments of all kinds, which are borrowed from milieus but then assume the value of “properties”: even rhythms take on a new meaning (refrains). The territory is more than the organism and the milieu, and the relation between the two; that is why the assemblage goes beyond mere “behaviour” . . . [it] originates in a certain decoding of milieus, and it is just as necessarily extended by lines of deterritorialisation. . . . the concrete rules of assemblage thus operate along these two axes: . . . what is the territoriality of the assemblage, what is the regime of signs, and the pragmatic system? . . . [and], what are the cutting edges of deterritorialisation, and what abstract machines do they effectuate? The assemblage is tervalent: . . . (1) content and expression (2) territoriality and deterritorialisation.²³

The assemblage as illuminated by both of these (political) contextualisations is generative for the research process. Furthermore, the relationship of an assemblage to a “line of flight” is also crucial to this investigation. In developing a vocabulary of interconnection, Deleuze and Guattari emphasise

tendencies that could evolve in creative mutations rather than a “reality” that is an inversion of the past. . . . A “line of flight” is a path of mutation precipitated through the actualisation of connections among bodies that were previously only implicit (or “virtual”) that releases new powers in the capacities of those bodies to act and respond.²⁴

Artistic practices from the field past and present are referred to throughout this research writing by citing particular artefacts or artefact series. In this way artworks contribute to the contextualisation of this project. In exploring any artistic *oeuvre* there are multiple shifting priorities. Therefore the artefacts cited are judiciously chosen examples, or paradigmatic works of significance to the project evident in their material qualities, methods and/or conceptual, affective and social and political motives. Reference to the original nationality of the artist is certainly not to define them by nationality, but rather reflects a concern for the influence of place on the artist especially in that art’s relationship to social and political realms is investigated. Artefacts even in contemporary practices that seem local and familiar to their place of fabrication may nevertheless bear the marks of the artist’s first context.

²³ Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari. *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. and intro. Brian Massumi. FP 1987. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). 503–505.

²⁴ Tasmin Lorraine, ‘Lines of Flight’ *The Deleuze Dictionary*, edited by Adrian Parr, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 147.

The research will advance processes that I term “archival drift”. In the context of this research, archival drift means the accumulation and dispersal of assemblages, in spatial art practice that may challenge the temporal and spatial fixity of archival processes and even the limits of material integrity. This allows shifting trajectories, of inter-relatedness to co-exist in the sensational, contingent, potential or fictional aspects of archives. In this research therefore “archive” takes on the dynamism and vitalism of a verb as reflected in the research outcomes and this is also echoed as a refrain in subheadings throughout the text. In a sense, “to archive” refers to place, document or collection, but also, beyond this, to the activity and interactivity involved in attending to the materiality of the everyday world in which we are all immersed.²⁵

Everyday processes (make-shift and make-do), I contend, offer insights into “shaping” potentials in the varied and (sometimes slow) rhythms and tenacious repetitions that are features of quotidian life. Performative action and interaction with material (and immaterial) archives becomes a form of temporal assemblage in “intentionally unintentional” spatial art processes. Such unintentionality is not a lack of professional rigor or considered motives, but rather involves summoning different qualities of attention, while deferring logic, law and analytical processes. This allows sensational and immersive processes or even chaotic forces to enter the mix and assert unexpected influences on what the artwork can do. Although some processes are chance-related, and involve aleatory conjunctions, there is another kind of attention or perspicacity required to register the partially visible past in the now living. These processes ‘[rely] neither on a future Utopian vision nor on a pre-Modern nostalgic primitivism.’²⁶ A spatial art practice that focuses attention, on latencies or incipencies, can offer reciprocal openings between makers and other participants, allowing for social and political dynamism in spheres of relation.²⁷ Such a practice could also be termed “archaeological”; extending in time such that it may become not

²⁵ The etymological meaning of verb *to attend*: c.1300, “to direct one’s mind or energies,” from O.Fr. *attendre* (12 C, Mod. Fr. *attendre*) “to expect, wait for, pay attention,” from L. *attendere* “give heed to,” lit. “to stretch toward,” from *ad-* “to” (see *ad-*) + *tendere* “stretch” The notion is of “stretching” one’s mind toward something. Sense of “take care of, wait upon” is from the early 15 century’ Accessed 29/11/2010 <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=attend&searchmode=none>

²⁶ Anna Dezeuze. ‘Assemblage, Bricolage and the Practice of Everyday Life’, (*Art Journal*, 67: 1: Spring 2008: 31–37), Accessed online 25/07/08 <http://web.ebscohost.com>

²⁷ Jacques Rancière, ‘Art of The Possible’ in *Artforum*, (March 2007), 258.

only productive knowledge but also ‘a productive freedom’.²⁸

Melbourne academic, Nikos Papastergiadis writes that

[politics] exists not only in the content of the work but also in the ways it joins up with the experience and ideas of other people. . . the form of art is always saturated with political meaning because it has implications that precede and go beyond the artist’s individual intentions.²⁹

In observing that the political implications of art precede and exceed artistic intentions, it is important to note that the research processes involved in this project have enabled me to come to understand art as an immersive and immanent practice rather than one externally conceived, subject/object focused, metaphorical, and representational.

Negotiating Deleuzian thought on “immanence” and “univocity”, Claire Colebrook establishes that

[all] the images and concepts we have of being are not pictures, metaphors or representations of being; they are beings in their own right. There is not being plus representation. Univocal being demands that we think all that is within being, as immanent to life.³⁰

Complicit with the register of the ‘common origin of the forces of the earth and the living body’, in practice then, philosophy, science and art *in differing ways* organise the chaos of the natural world into ‘a plane of coherence, a field of consistency or immanence and a plane of composition on which to think and to create’.³¹ According to both Colebrook and Deleuze, art, science and philosophy all create differences from

²⁸ Grosz, *ibid.* See definition of “archaeology” by Giorgio Agamben in *room with archive fever*, 7.

²⁹ Nikos Papastergiadis, *Spatial Aesthetics: Art, Place & the Everyday* (London: Rivers Oram, 2006), 4.

³⁰ Claire Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze*. (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 75–76. Accessed 17/04/11 <http://www.scribd.com/doc/21980908/ClaireColebrook-UnderstandingDeleuze> Relating to the philosophies of Baruch Spinoza and Friedrich Nietzsche, Deleuze develops a philosophy of immanence and being as univocity in which we do not have to relate actions back to a subject or doer nor see events as having some prior cause. Thus ‘there is no dualist distinction between being and becoming or identity and difference’ but rather ‘a univocal field of differences’ which themselves become ‘constitutive forces’.

‘There is not a hierarchy in which an original unity or being then becomes; there is an original becoming which expresses itself in the multiplicity of events. The apprehension of immanent and univocal being demands that we account for the events of existence from existence itself without positing a transcendental condition (such as God, the subject or being)’. Lee Spinks, ‘Friedrich Nietzsche, (1844–1900)’, *The Deleuze Dictionary*, edited by Adrian Parr. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 178–179.

³¹ Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 4–5. Art also has a distinct power . . . opposed to common sense. While philosophers create concepts that help us to think of difference, art presents singular differences: the very being of colour, sound, tone or sensibility Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (Chichester: New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 164.

the one plane (of immanence) rather than ‘re-present a world that lies passively outside our acts of thought.’³² Colebrook asserts that if

we accept Deleuze’s notion of univocal being then we can no longer explain the difference of life according to a privileged or elevated being (such as the human being). If there is only one being, then human life is an event within this plane of immanent difference, not its condition, origin or end.³³

Not only are conceptions involved in the experience of art, but also in Deleuze’s formulation, perceptions and feelings (intensities). ‘Affect’ is a central term in this research and it is ascribed to the series of bodily responses that occur when “we feel an event”, including an art event. Accordingly, affects create feelings, just as percepts create perceptions (for example we perceive visually in order to see the colour blue), and together, affects and percepts create sensations. Significantly, neither affects nor percepts are located in a particular (subjective) point of view.³⁴ The affective dimension of art, including its reference to archival processes and its contribution to sensations, as I show, make feasible a political characterisation of art practices. Attention to this political dimension avails opportunities in the interstices; the tensions and correspondences between cultural forms and everyday articulations.³⁵ As the work of a work of art, it thereby opens to the play of potential and “becoming”.

Following on from Foucault’s positive and productive framing, Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “desire” is also fundamental to the research. This version of desire is ‘a productive and creative energy, a desire of flux, force and difference, a revolutionary desire that we need to think in ways that will disrupt common sense and everyday life.’³⁶ Moreover, it is a ‘process of experimentation on a plane of immanence.’³⁷ Unlike the impotent sense of lack ascribed to the individual by some psychoanalytical

³² Colebrook, 114.

³³ *ibid.*, 42.

³⁴ *ibid.*, XIX – XX.

³⁵ Rancière, 261.

³⁶ Claire Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze*. (Crows Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2002), XIV.
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/21980908/ClaireColebrook-UnderstandingDeleuze> Accessed 17/04/11

³⁷ Alison Ross, ‘Desire’ *The Deleuze Dictionary*, edited by Adrian Parr. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 63.

theories, (such as those of Sigmund Freud for example), these characteristics make desire a continuous social force ‘able to form connections and enhance the power of bodies in their connection.’³⁸ Significantly for art and for this project, desire is therefore experimental; an assemblage connecting territories beyond distinctions between naturalism and artifice or spontaneity and law.’³⁹ As a dancer experiences and makes visible to an audience, the experiment on a plane of immanence, is one in which movement becomes meaning and meaning is movement.⁴⁰ This research takes on a similar performative tendency.

In this respect the research owes a debt of understanding to the notion of formlessness or “*informe*”, as espoused by philosopher, Georges Bataille being an ‘operational, performative “force”’.⁴¹ Authors Yves–Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss specify four kinds of formless operations including base materialism, horizontality, pulse and entropy. These four operations (are explored through the work of selected artists), and they are also evident in my research processes, especially in the later artefacts.⁴²

³⁸ *ibid.* The psychoanalytical theories of Jacques Lacan advances lack as the cause of “desire”. See Jacques Lacan ‘The Signification of the Phallus’, transl. by Alan Sheridan in *Écrits: A Selection*, W.W. Norton & Co. (New York), 1977. Jacques Lacan, ‘Desire and Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet’ from *Seminar VI — Desire and Its Interpretation*, transl. by J. Hulbert in *Yale French Studies*, 55/56, (1977): 11–52.

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Jose Gil, ‘The Dancer’s Body’, in *A Shock to Thought: Expression after Deleuze and Guattari*, edited by Brian Massumi, (London: New York: Routledge, 2002), 125. ⁴⁰ As a dancer, I relate to the words of famous dancer/choreographer Merce Cunningham when he writes of the immanence of dance through movement. ‘When I dance, it means: this is what I am doing’. Merce Cunningham, *Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years*, edited by David Vaughn, (New York: Aperture, 1997), 86.

⁴¹ Yves–Alain Bois, and Rosalind E. Krauss, *Formless: A User’s Guide*. (New York: Zone Books, 1997). 9. Artists include Robert Smithson, Bruce Nauman, Cy Twombly, Robert Morris, Cindy Sherman, and Mike Kelley among others.

⁴² *ibid.*

to write, image, room, to move

The contextual research writing titled *Archival Drift* is divided into seven “rooms” instead of chapters which are bound as components of a research archive. In this way they activate multiple combinations and relations. They are rooms in which to move, they are expansive spaces; making room for feeling, thinking and sensation. The archive also includes three volumes containing further detailed illustrations of my research artefacts beyond the indicative image references within the rooms. Five short texts of prose and poetry, related to the artefacts, are also interspersed through these three volumes as companion works.

In guiding the reader, it is also essential to emphasise the commitment in this research to reflection upon and responses to the processes of intuitive and experimental practice. The research proceeds from the processes and artefacts themselves and what they to do, proceeding to the contextual referencing of other practices; including artistic, and philosophical practices. The contextual explorations thereby serve as parallel investigations and do not dictate the movement vectors of the work itself, at least at the point of its making or performance.⁴³ The practice functions at its best nomadically, without a set of intellectual pre-conditions, in the risk and freedom of unknown territories.⁴⁴ The “time of the artist” as Robert Smithson terms it, opens the work to its material potentials. As art praxis then, it returns later, in cyclic fashion, to consider the intellectual work of the research in context with that of other practitioners and it thereby expands into fields of related concerns.

⁴³ Hasemann writes that ‘[in] performative research, practice is the ‘principal research activity’ . . . it employs ‘variations of: reflective practice, participant observation, performance ethnography, ethno-drama, biographical autobiographical narrative inquiry, and the inquiry cycle from action research. Brad Haseman, ‘Rupture and Recognition: Identifying the Performative Research Paradigm’, edited by Barbara, Bolt, and Barrett, Estelle. *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, (London: New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 104.

Although I have focused on a series of research problems or concerns, a priori and at the time of making, these research artefacts are not consciously preconditioned, but proceed actively toward an unknown destination in the processes of material experimentation. Like the experience of the memory in the present, as something different to perception in the present, the work is conditioned by a detached distance from other work or contextual references. As the practice is not about mimesis, this intentional distancing process is essential, suspending the limitations of time, rationality and judgement. The work is reflected upon much later with the priority of understanding its innovation and difference.

⁴⁴ The term “nomadology” is explored in *room for eccentric archiving* see page 24.

room with archive fever, opens with an extensive exploration of the difficulties inherent in the coherence or “spectral nature” of official archives, referencing the psychoanalytical insights of Jacques Derrida and others. The investment in and language dependence of both archives and history is investigated with a particular emphasis on originary motivations. The narratives of historical discourse and the testimony of the witness, attest to the fixity of historical tenets that can obstruct new discoveries and understandings. Through philosophers, Giorgio Agamben, and Michel Foucault, archaeological processes are explored as methods of reactivating the past in the present as paradigmatic practices. In place of the return as a search for origins, or repeating as a mimetic action, Deleuze, posits returning as a univocal process of creating *difference*.

room for eccentric archiving continues with an investigation into the affective or intensive registers of systems such as archives, through the concept of the rhizome as defined by Deleuze and Guattari. Exploring diverse approaches to archiving, the ways in which an art practice can memorialise through active or movement-orientated processes are investigated. The question of the veracity of “historical facts” and also spatial and cultural notions of memory are examined. A kind of eccentric archiving is proposed, whereby the practices of artists that experiment with everyday materials, partial things and *objets trouvés*, reactivate the temporal range of the object from the past in the present, and opening access to potentials for the future. While Mieke Bal and Deleuze offer diverging approaches to the narratives that construct objects and collections of objects, Richard Wentworth engages the materiality of his objects at the point where they are in danger of disappearing from the realm of affect and signification. The 1960s art practices of the Situationists International and also Joseph Beuys offer perspectives on the social and political opportunities mustered through rhizomatic and performative material practices. Issues of collective memory and perception, spectacle and social dialogue are investigated with a view to orientating art toward an immanent relationship to the world. In Walter Benjamin’s famous *The Arcades Project*, an example of a nomadic practice, unconstrained by existing frameworks is investigated. Benjamin enlists the partiality of montage and direct connection to the materials of everyday life such that the temporal relations between things are foregrounded.

readymade room launches the discussion of the research artefacts in chronological order, although it offers not linear progressive outcomes, but rather a rhizomatic field of openings. Concerned primarily with temporal matters, this *room* explores virtual and actual states of the real, involving affection, sensation, perception, and intuition. In approaching an affective ecology of art practice, models of participation are explored through the work of Jacques Rancière and through the practices and writing of Minimal and Neo-concrete artists. A “molecular” process through which interrelated zones as well as objects can be activated, brings into focus the expanded field of practices in which collaboration, consultation or witnessing of other practices is proposed. In mobilising the transition between art and everyday life, the thesis also surveys qualities of attention that may rupture continuity, or alter what is “becoming” through necessary fluctuations in focused attention and intentionality. Explorations of the notion of being “unready”, features of the Duchampian Readymade, and the rupture of the unexpected event involving “slapstick methods”, also contribute perspectives to the research artefacts.

In *room temperature* the discussion of research artefacts is concluded with an extensive exploration of two large installations of assemblages. Both bodies of work offer different material evidence of the motives of movement, change, and experimentation. The utility of the thing or object and its relationship to and co-extension with the environment is elaborated. For material processes to establish relations in the real to the chaotic flux, intensities and sensations in the world, *room temperature* proposes that we must be open to the speculative potentials of experimental practices. In consideration for all kinds of vitality and “becoming”, we must also understand the vectors that link territories at the level of geography, architecture, objects, qualities of objects, and particles. The ability of art practices and other experimental practices to address these potentials depends on the dimensions afforded through temporal openings which may include scales of time, the time of the maker, the rupture of expectation, and processes of memory including those afforded through archival drift.

Finally, *for the love of the unknown room* offers concluding statements about the research processes and outcomes of *Archival Drift* and clarifies its contribution to research in the field of expanded spatial art practice. It also accounts for the qualities that characterise sustainable and affective ecologies of practice beyond the field to encompass other practices.