OVER UNDER AND AROUND

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY
ROGER HORROCKS / TIM CORBALLIS / BOPHA CHHAY
MIRANDA PARKES / DAN ARPS / M&W / MARIA WALLS
AND CREON UPTON
EDITED BY
RACHEL O’NEILL AND THOMASIN SLEIGH
This is the second in Enjoy Public Art Gallery’s series of ‘occasional journals’. ‘Occasional’ because they are tended to arise—unbidden by Enjoy staff—when the need/energy/workforce happens to aesthetic theory when it is migrated to the antipodean context.

Miranda Parkes is a closet writer who, since beginning her life at Art, has amassed a banana box full of journals and poetry in her wardrobe at home in Christchurch. However, none of this has been published as it is better known as an art

Tim Corballis has spent the last fifteen years writing fiction, non-fiction and something in between. This has included the novels Below (2001), Measurement (2005) and The Fossils Pits (2006), all from Victoria University Press, as well as collaborative work with photographer Fiona Amond. He is currently working on a doctorate in Sociology investigating what happens to aesthetic theory when it is migrated from its Latin root in the word for ‘entrust’.

Maria Walls uses a range of media to deform and play with concepts of art — including still and moving image, audio, un/installation and writing. Her ongoing research investigates selection, collection and un/framing policies. It is similarly concerned with language, conversations, translations and renditions, rule, malfunction, anomaly—incompletion is embraced. Art is constituted as an inquiry into itself as a product of collective thought, affective echoes and activity. The topic under study is the impossibility offered an unvirtuous and unassertive art about. She is currently completing her Doctorate of Fine Art at Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland. This practice is largely viewed in private circumstance.

Rachel O’Neill is a writer, artist and editor living in the Kapiti Coast. Since moving to the Wellington region in 2006 she has been involved with Enjoy (as in order of appearance) as an exhibiting artist, writer, Trustee and editor. She is pleased to be showing off and reflecting on the visions and dedications of Enjoy’s publishing managers, writers, artists, editors, proof readers, photographers, volunteers, readers and viewes in this journal.

Dan Arps is an artist in lives in Auckland, New Zealand.

Bopha Chhay is a writer and editor who currently lives and works in Wellington, New Zealand. She is interested in the way experimental approaches to writing about art and alternative forms of publishing can expand the framework of visual art practices. Her projects include live space, a collaborative venture with Sydney Hart, a publishing platform dedicated to researching the social production of urban spaces. Her interests are guided partly by curiosity, speculation and humour.

Thomais Sleigh is a writer, editor, artist, photographer and publicist who lives in an old dairy in Petone, Lower Hutt. She has written about the work of several artists who have exhibited at Enjoy over the years. She also contributes regularly to various art publications throughout Australasia. In 2010 she completed her masters thesis in Art History on the writing of Wyman About Cyanide. Carried as such, is interested in the histories of art criticism and writing in New Zealand.

Over Under And Around is the second of Enjoy’s occasional journals to be published, the first of which, Public Good—demonstrates responsive public space, edited by Paula Brook and Marion Slater was published in 2008.

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Phone booths also become centres of nightlife, venues for illicit assignations and coy flirtations between strangers and singles living in one-room beds. I have seen a love affair form and then conduct itself after both its protagonists met at a booth. One travelled to a distant city and many long phone calls later, betrayed the other, who continued to call long distance from the same phone booth to berate her unfaithful “has been” lover. Each phone booth has a distinct character, which consists of an amalgam of the people who manage it and its repertoire of clients. Thus, there are little holes in the wall, which are proof of a panwallah’s sharp business acumen. Salesmen and commercial travellers gather here for a late-night cigarette and have abbreviated conversations about business deals, the musty smell of cheap incense. They crowd their walls with images of Sai Baba of Shirdi and Jai Mata Didi stickers. On hot summer afternoons, when no one ventures out to make STD calls, they talk to locals, Bulandshahar. Cuttack and Moguluraj or rapidly read out a list of numerals: 5, 9, 3, 43, 17 ... Those are the numbers the operators write down on their out-of-town lines to identify their callers and their out-of-town callers. Then they call up their wives, perfunctorily.

Phone booths can be run by aunties who cater to a family audience. Men and women in nightdresses and children come here to talk at length to relatives in the course of an after-dinner stroll. Their conversations are lively and encompass a universe that stretches from infidelity to tuition to work. He tells booths with fax machines and the beginnings of e-mail are the arena for the urban professionals, who can’t get rid of their mobile phones even when surrounded by so many other kinds of telephones. These are efficient but unruly places manhandled by sharp-looking young men.

I have seen a love affair form and then conduct itself after both its protagonists met at a booth. One travelled to a distant city and many long phone calls later, betrayed the other, who continued to call long distance from the same phone booth to berate her unfaithful “has been” lover. Long Distance Conversations / Shuddhabrata Sengupta

I am a prisoner of phone booths. STD/ISD/POC/ FAX/Xerox by Japanese machine, booths. I am entangled in other darkened glass panes, stenciled signage, and plastic flowers, the late hours they keep, and the stories that gather on their wallpapers. Like an idiot hungry for tales of everyday life and hear news of distant places. The phone booths close to where I live I’ve already visited a dozen over the years, Malayali nurses and Gujarati traders in transit. I go there to sit next to travellers and people with faraway relatives, and to listen to strange languages being spoken. I go there to eavesdrop on the world, because the world inhabits phone booths. I go there to whisper in my head the magic of distant place names – Adas, Addagade and Ahwes, Alasse, Galagali, Galu and Gammedho, Kanjirapuzha, Kaba and Kasturi, Zira, Zinta and Zineboto. Or, I search farther in the book of codes, languages and spices for cities with enchantments – Rosario, Erevan, Zineboto. Or, I search farther in the book of codes, languages and spices for a distant place name – Adas, Addagade, Ahwes, Alasse, Galagali, Galu and Gammedho, Kanjirapuzha, Kaba and Kasturi, Zira, Zinta and Zineboto. Or, I search farther in the book of codes, languages and spices for cities with enchantments – Rosario, Erevan, Zineboto.
when he left. How did he say what he had to tell his friend’s family? “Flavia and I are coming home tomorrow, but she is not alive,” or “Flavia died this morning at six-forty-five in her sleep.” or just, “Flavia is dead.”

A phone call breaks the pattern of an evening in a Barcelona home. Sudden distant death intrudes upon a family sitting down to supper. They make more phone calls, arrange for the funeral, find a picture of Flavia taken just before she had left for India and send it to the photographers for enlargement and framing. They watch, and so does the backpacker, and the time and distance involved in the transit of the body make it difficult to mourn. Death, Flavia’s particular death, takes on an unreal, virtual mantle, existing only on a phone call made at midnight in the Eastern Court phone booth.

An Afghan doctor and his wife, recent refugees from a meaningless and forgotten war, come to a phone booth to know if they will ring up Kabul. They asked them once whether they still have friends or relations there. “No,” they said, “every one dead, or in exile. We call only to see if the house we left behind is still standing. When the phone rings, it means that the house has not been shelled!” Sometimes I think of all the telephone conversations that criss-cross the earth and all the things that still remain usual. Numbers don’t match, there is static interference, satellite links fail and even when people get through they don’t know what to say, or are unable to say what they mean. Perhaps all that is unusual collects each night and hovers above us like an unseen layer in the atmosphere until it is blown away on the rare days when people find it possible to really speak to each other. Those are the days on which the STD booths shine, their tin and paint layers glaze as it washed away in a new rain. And the quiet hum of phone lines and many ringing dial tones signal the everyday fact of people enjoying the things they have to say to each other, across real and imagined distances.

This essay was first published in the India Magazine (August – September 1996) and reprinted in Public Good (2008). Enjoy’s first occasional journal edited by Paula Booker and Mamie Slater.

All activities involved with words or images are going through a huge upheaval. The transformation of the media is creating new cultural industries but is also putting old ones out of work. The urban landscape is changing as bookshops, newspapers, CD stores, video and DVD libraries, and many other familiar businesses are closing their doors or struggling to re-invent themselves. One of the areas least affected so far is art. Will it continue to be business as usual for art galleries, or is it possible in the near future that they too will become an endangered species?

These questions grow out of my reading of Sengupta’s essay ‘Long Distance Conversations’ published in Public Good (2008), Enjoy Public Art Gallery’s first occasional journal. This essay is a lively, down-to-earth description of phone booths in India at the height of their popularity in 1996. Phone booths were ‘hubs of conversation and social life’ because many were not soundproofed like New Zealand phone boxes. It was possible for waiting customers to ‘eavesdrop’, to share family debates, seductions, homesickness, announcements of births and deaths, and dodgy business dealings. They were simultaneously both a rich site of community activity and a centre of ‘long distance’ communication with the world.

But what do phone booths have to do with the current status of art? In fact, the editors of Public Good had already connected the two topics by choosing to include Sengupta’s essay in a collection of texts about ‘art sited within public space.’ The essay functioned as a ‘long-distance conversation’ between two countries (India and New Zealand) and two eras (1996 and 2006). In that context the ferment of New Delhi social life resembled a kind of performance art. It reminded me of David Mealing’s A Jubilee Sale staged in the Auckland Art Gallery 20 years before Sengupta’s essay.

I want to use this essay to explore a different aspect of the topic—the changing role of art in public space as that space is being transformed by the digital revolution.

An elegy for the phone booth

The community phone booth as Sengupta describes it can be seen as an analogue for the way a contemporary dealer gallery functions—both as a local, communal site and as a dialogue with the wider world (since art today is very much a global conversation). A gallery’s ambience is created by its community of visitors, just as a New Delhi phone booth has, according to Sengupta, its own ‘quiche of regulars, nodding acquaintances.’ Exhibition openings provide opportunities to drink, gossip, flirt, do business, and exchange serious talk. Personal experiences in galleries cover a similar range as Sengupta’s booth—when we ‘eavesdrop’ on the art, we gain a sense of life that is powerful in its ‘volume, intensity and projective power.’

But in 2011 I’m struck by the fact that this media species, the phone booth, has followed the dinosaur into history, since individual mobile phones arrived with SIM cards, and the Internet took over some of the social functions of the phone. These new media have strengthened global connections but also destroyed once-essential local sites of communal life. By 2008 Sengupta’s essay already evoked nostalgia, and today, in the age of Skype and Twitter, it has come to seem even more a slice of history. Its author has moved to Facebook. Sengupta replied to my enquiry in a Facebook message. ‘This essay functioned as a ‘long-distance conversation’ with him in India via Facebook. Sengupta replied to my enquiry in an email. ‘The passing of the phone booth has a certain melancholic sweetness about it.’

Phone boxes (as we call them) have almost disappeared in New Zealand. In the USA, shocked older users have uploaded protest videos on YouTube such as Where Have All the Phone Booths Gone? There are now only four outdoor phone booths in the whole of New York City. Peter Ackerman decided to write his book, The Lonely Phone Booth, after his puzzled 3-year-old son saw one of them one day and said ‘Daddy, why is that phone in a box?’

Artists have been quick to find a use for the obsolete booths. In France one was turned into an aquarium. In Limbdi and Los Angeles, Banksy has made several versions of a murdered phone booth—an appropriate sign of the times. And in 1989 one of the first pieces of performance art in China consisted of firing a gun into a gallery installation of two phone booths (the artists Tang Long and Xiao Lu were arrested).

There have been various attempts to save booths by re-inventing them. China is turning them into Wi-Fi hot spots. Austria is converting them to charging stations for electric cars. Other suggested uses include privacy booths, smoker’s dens, and Twitter kiosks. Much energy has been expended on the Internet figuring out what Clark Kent can do when there is no phone booth for him to change costume, or what Dr Who will use for a TARDIS.

British Telecommunications commissioned its booths and offered them to any local community that had a bright idea for recycling. A village in Somerset turned one into a micro public library (with customers expected to leave a book for each one borrowed). Great Shelford in Cambridgeshire adopted a phone booth as the site of a changing art installation. And Settle, a small town in North Yorkshire, has converted one into an art gallery which it claims to be the smallest in the world. These uses retain a local character but they will survive only so long as the community supports them.

Today other familiar sites of social life are being replaced by digital technology. I have already mentioned objects such as books, newspapers, CDs, videos and DVDs, but other objects also are starting to recede into history, such as the home letter box, the landline phone, the television set, the wristwatch, the analogue camera, the typewriter, the fax machine, and the reel of collodium film. For decades they have been part of the fabric of family or community life. A shopping centre that no longer has a Post Office, phone box, bookshop, CD store, DVD rental library, or newspaper and magazine shop becomes a bland and ‘melancholic’ place for some older visitors. Indeed, shops of all sorts are now struggling to compete with online buying (or ‘e-tailing’). To quote the headline of a recent Economist article: ‘Clicks Trump Bricks.’
I am a prisoner of phone booths. STD/ISD/PCO/FAX/Xerox by Japanese machine, booths. I am enthralled by their darkened glass panes, stenciled signage, and plastic flowers, the late hours they keep, and the stories that gather on their walls. Like an idiot hungry for tales of travellers who idled in the serais of the Delhi sultanate, I waste my time in the phone booths of nineties New Delhi. Even when I have nothing to say and no-one to call.

Long Distance Conversations / Shuddhabrata Sengupta

A big question, then, is why should the visual arts be exempt from the radical changes that have shaken up other sites of semiotic activity? Will the gallery be the next institution to lose its special aura? When we walk into a gallery, the art tends to consist of largely static objects of one kind or another. Will a day come when such objects feel as old-fashioned as a snail-mail letter or a vinyl record, or when the gallery setup feels as object as contemporary to be seen as a good investment. But if audience taste becomes more digital and movement-oriented, then static wall displays will be replaced by-the-moment—the culture of an older generation.

But, ah, don’t we all eventually want special pictures for the walls of their houses? When I visit people who run a website design business from their home, I’m struck by the fact that their walls are mostly clear. ‘Will the homes, or cafes, or galleries of the future have few paintings and many flat screens with changing, and moving images? As the digital era develops, it is possible that the pleasures we derive from contemporary art will increasingly be satisfied in that way.

The etiquette of the gallery may also start to seem restrictive. The fact that visitors are expected to look but not touch—like the ‘shhh!’ rule for audiences at classical concerts—may clash with the new social and cultural interactivity for the opportunity to become involved. The older generation is not eager to interact with art, but in a world of phone booths and telephones it may feel as if the digital is habituating reduction to a mere game. But for the digital kids who have grown up with computer games, it is natural to want to comment, share, edit, embed, mash-up, and play with a text.

A physical gallery space for contemporary art may also come to seem too localized and site-specific. If an artist can exhibit online, why exhibit only in Cuba Street or Karangahape Road? Granted, he or she can do both. The gallery can also have a presence in both worlds. But to maintain the material version, the owner has to keep painting walls and paying rates and rent. Because clocks are cheaper than walls, there is a real possibility that we will lose some of our most distinctive meeting places for art, as we also have already lost some unique record and book shops.

Past and future

Of course this is not the first time the gallery (or museum) has been under threat. The start of the 20th century brought new materials and methods, though most art still consisted of static objects. Modernist artists continually provided the gallery to rethink its policies. Later, the institution was challenged by street art and outdoor art of various kinds, and Pop Art paved its high culture status. Post-object art introduced new kinds of interaction, and political artists (such as Hans Haacke whose work was discussed earlier) have continued to question the alliance of art institutions with wealth and power. Nevertheless, the gallery continues to be a clear example of how new storms and managed-in one way or another-to assimilate all these forms of art.

The question today is whether digital culture is the development that will finally unsettle the gallery as a physical centre for art. In entertaining this possibility, I can’t help being aware of a strange historical coincidence. The beginning of both the 19th and 20th centuries was a period of radical change in both art and technology, and this seems to be again the case for the 21st. Of course all periods are periods of radical change, but it is true that some represent an exceptional burst of innovation. The end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century brought the Industrial Revolution, the Romantic Movement. Romantics such as Shelley and Coleridge were excited by the scientific discoveries of their day. Then the next turn-of-the-century (the period from 1880 to 1910) saw huge changes in technology—the introduction of film, radio, telephone, and the aeroplane. Modernism in literature and the arts would surely have happened regardless of those changes but many of its practitioners were fascinated and energized by them.

In terms of our own time, it is true that the internet and the computer have already been around for several decades, but arguably the start of the 21st century has seen their influence reach critical mass. A great spike in the rate of change has affected all existing media. It remains an open question, however, whether those technological changes have coincided with a wave of innovation in the arts comparable to Romanticism or Modernism.

I am struck by the fact that so many aspects of the Web and digital technologies seem to follow naturally from art developments of the last 40 years—the push to greater internationalism, awareness of a vast historical and geographical archive to be tapped; Post-modern appropriation and reworking of images from both popular and high culture, open and unlimited sexuality, the interest in multi-media, the desire for interactivity (in art environments, for example); the shift to conceptual or Post-object art, and a general feeling that a variety of the created person, the idea that there is no reality outside of discourse (in the broadest sense of the term); the use of hypertext, and linear and non-linear use of new media can be revolutionary in political as well as aesthetic terms. (Consider the use of Facebook and Twitter in today’s revolutions in the Middle East).

This is to suggest not a direct influence but a striking parallel between the digital world of the 20th century and tendencies that surfaced in the art world in the 1960s, based on it. The avant-garde is not new. The gallery, however, has often been taken as an obvious example of this change, and it is possible to argue that the increased importance of the digital arts may also come to seem less radical, even old-fashioned.

Nevertheless, the gallery has so far weathered the shake up that has taken place in other sites of semiotic activity, and political artists (such as Hans Haacke whose work was discussed earlier) have continued to question the alliance of art institutions with wealth and power. Nevertheless, the gallery continues to be a clear example of how new storms and managed-in one way or another-to assimilate all these forms of art.

In addition to these there are a number of talented digital artists at work in New Zealand, artists like Douglas Douglas-Bamford, Pieter Ket, Simon Ingram, Clay Bobhin and Greg Bennett. The Enjoy Gallery has hosted Douglas’ Bang-Shuf art project, and in 2005 he was the subject of a Ph.D. dissertation (The Process of choice certainly helped to encourage close viewing.) Nevertheless, the way that people live with images is changing so rapidly that audiences may come to expect something less traditional.

What will happen to the visual arts if the local infrastructure of galleries, dealers, art magazines and books similarly begins to disappear? What will happen to the increasing emphasis on the stationary, unique art object as a collectible has worked especially well in New Zealand. Because it is such an expensive business to insure and transport overseas your own shows, our dealer galleries have specialised in local art. In this respect, artists have an advantage not shared by local writers, musicians or film-makers who have had to find a market for their work abroad and produced in multiple copies and shipped here cheaply. Granted, the number of professional art dealers has not shrunk in proportion to the amount of new work produced. But we also know that our personal habits are still those of a digital immigrant.

I began writing this piece in a notebook; and while I am now working on a computer I will soon print out the text as hard copy to read and correct. I tend to be attracted to more than a long text than a short one because I’m hopeful it will have more depth and complexity and demand slow reading. In many young people those preferences are fading. They prefer a variety of platforms and media, and multi-tasking skills. I’m well aware that digital natives may find the present essay too long and linear, with not enough images, links, or interactivity.

I’m apologetic about my computer habits. But I think more often we need to consider what is being lost as well as what is gained. Changes in technology encourage utopian enthusiasm, but they also bring about the existing social infrastructure. In the social and cultural interactivity for the opportunity to become involved. The older generation is not eager to interact with art, but in a world of phone booths and telephones it may feel as if the digital is habituating reduction to a mere game. But for the digital kids who have grown up with computer games, it is natural to want to comment, share, edit, embed, mash-up, and play with a text.
books also help to maintain the sense of a tradition of New Zealand art. But what if these local institutions lose their audience? We will certainly benefit from an increased knowledge of the global but it is likely to be at the expense of the local, and that is a matter of concern for a small, marginal country such as ours.

In principle the Internet should create new economic opportunities, but in many fields this remains unproven. The existing structure of professional careers may collapse, as has already happened in some areas of book publishing and television programme-making. The Internet is full of amateur energy with so many individuals generating words and images that the culture is now awash with digital texts, photographs, videos and mash-ups. This is a positive, democratic development, and it does not have to undermine professionalism—the ideal situation will encourage both openness (the amateur do-it-yourself ethos) and recognition and financial support of the best work—but that is not how things are shaping up.

It is instructive to see what has happened to movies. A few years ago there was much talk about the advantages of the ‘long tail’—the boost that the Internet could give to specialised material—but the situation now looks more complicated. The market has been polarised, as The Economist observed (on 26 November 2009), between big budget blockbusters like Avatar with hugely expensive CGI (computer generated images)—and at the other end of the scale a flood of low budget or amateur films (which nowadays can be made with simple equipment such as a mobile phone). The problem is that most of the films in the middle range are disappearing.

The art equivalent of a Peter Jackson-style blockbuster will be a few galleries on a Te Papa scale that offer spectacle, interactivity, and entertainment. Also, the biggest and most famous heritage museums such as the Louvre, Uffizi, Prado or Museum of Modern Art will continue to thrive as tourist attractions. It will help if they have a large special feature such as unusual architecture (the Guggenheim at Bilbao) or an exhibition space for huge works (the Tate Modern’s Turbine Hall). At the other end of the scale there will be web (on-line) galleries. What’s at risk in this scenario is most of the middle range, including the site-specific local galleries that specialize in contemporary art. This will mean disaster for many professional artists and dealers. Granted, do-it-yourself ventures by young artists will continue to pop up, but that sort of activity will tend to be amateur.

My concern over the potential costs of the digital revolution makes me realise how much of my response is still shaped by earlier art, such as the importance of the site-specific and medium-specific. If those concepts disappear, then important strains of Modernist thinking will be lost. Production values on YouTube can be very depressing. Those who have loved their films with film have a serious, physical relationship with it, as many writers have with the book and painters with paint. People seem no longer to notice poor quality in moving images, or if they do notice it seems not to bother them. To digital enthusiasts, all that counts is content and it doesn’t matter what medium is involved. This use of the term ‘content’ implies a rejection of the long Modernist tradition of medium-as-message. A digital immigrant has many divided loyalties today, enjoying the energy of new developments but feeling reluctant to lose the best of the older traditions.

Predicting the future, especially in a time of exceptional change, is a risky business. Recently there have been some successful revivals of live events. For example, Jim Allen’s 1974 performance work Contact has been re-staged this year in three New Zealand galleries. In the realms of music, there has been a surge of rock concerts and tours. Does this prove there is a special appeal in the live, communal event? Let’s hope so. But many of today’s rock tours are an emergency response to the fact that CD sales are drying up because so many listeners are downloading music, either cheaply or illegally.

Above our heads

I am hoping that my pessimistic scenario for the future of art remains no more than a fanciful thought experiment. Distinctive local cafés, restaurants and bars, still thrive despite the endless expansion of shopping malls and cloned, branded outlets that appear to be managed by computer from corporate headquarters somewhere out in space.
An Imaginary Archive

The cultural economy of art is dependent upon a sphere of hidden social production involving collaborative networks and collaborative production—systems of gift exchange, unenumerated group labour, collective forms of practice—all of which resemble a species of missing mass or cultural dark that nonetheless anchors aesthetic value within the formal art world. Despite being entangled with this other, shadowy productivity, the art world refuses to acknowledge its presence. Recently this relationship began to radically change. Thanks in large part to the spread of digital networks dark matter is getting brighter. The once hidden archive has split open, its ragged contents are spilling out into view. This missing cultural networks dark matter is getting brighter.

Sholette’s Imaginary Archive is a public art project that explores this realm including collectivised and collaborative cultural practices that have been at the centre of this shift in dark matter: from dark to light. Graphics, text-based artworks, imaginary books and other speculative objects produced at the centre of this shift in dark matter; from dark to light. Graphics, text-including collectivised and collaborative cultural practices that have been global capital.

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Notes from the Collaborators

Dara Greenwald
Free Space/Alternate U Course Catalogue, #3, 1975 was found through examining the history of how free schools contributed to the development of radical culture. During this session of the Alternate U, it was located at the Mute Building/339 Lafayette Street in New York City. The building is also known as the Peace Pentagon and it is now slated for destruction. 

Although not fictive, the object feels like a possible fiction of a past when a free school had offerings every day of the week and offered courses like Soho Art Through Anarchist Eyes. This piece comes out of my primary source research into the cultures of social movements which is part of a larger project entitled The Interference Archive (with Josh MacPhee).

White Fungus
Blank Canvas was a short-lived Wellington political zone sparked by local events. The first issue, Kerry Prendergast and the Creativity House, was published in 2007 in the lead-up to local body elections. The publication was an unstrained attack on incumbent mayor Kerry Prendergast and her business interests, including surveillance technology company Surveylydd, whose clients include the US military.

The second issue was a response to the 2008 mass arrests of activists across the country—including Tabor, Mauti, sovereignty, environmental and peace activists—and the invocation, for the first time, of new anti-terrorism laws imported from the US. The issue examined the local arrests in relation to the “Global War On Terror.” Plans for two further issues of Blank Canvas were shelved after the zone’s producer, White Fungus, relocated to Taiwan in 2009. Now for the 2010 Wellington Collaboratorium, White Fungus has produced the covers only for these two non-existent issues.

Blank Canvas Issue 3
Blow Manory: A Creative Campus Expose Issue would have been an unspirng look at Wellington’s Manatory University and the commercialisation of New Zealand education.

Blank Canvas Issue 4
The Henry Kissinger and John Lennon Issue would have looked at the culture and politics of the 1970s in New Zealand and abroad.

Jeremy Booth

I’ve used the tactile, experiential nature of the wider Archive to anchor a series of subtle interventions within it. My project sees a number of papers, copies and notes inserted into other books. Seemingly unrelated, and understood, the inserted material positions the environmental evolution of New Zealand as key to its present social, cultural and political direction.

Jeremy Booth
The philosopher Gemma Corradi Fiumara argues that “Western territories is necessary, via dialogic processes including listening.” and established identity. “If a collaboratorium emerges within [such] and support trans-discipline practitioners. Collaboratorium (definition): is a decentralised and egalitarian Malcom Doidge and Grant Corbishley

straight forward semiotic development but rather show the jacket as an artists, “fashionistas”. The past-life narratives are interspersed and not told (by the peculiar nick-name of “Red Fred”) involved in the French Nuclear tests conducted off the Polynesian coast of Moruroa (and the subsequent controversies between France and New Zealand over the tests conducted in the 90s); the following adoption of the jacket by Green Peace activists, artists, “fashionistas”. The past-life narratives are interspersed and not told in historical chronology. This anti-chronology is meant to complicate any straight forward semantic development but rather show the jacket as an object embedded in numerous contradictions, conflicts and personal and political struggles.

Malcolm Dodge and Great Corshby

Collaboratorium (definition): is a decentralised and egalitarian environment where collaborative projects within the three practice arenas—conceptual, participatory and industry—are fostered. Collaboratoriums acknowledge local contexts: in this case, Anteas, Te Tiriti and Waitangi and indigenous systems such as Ahianga, Te Ohu, Kotahitanga and Kaitiakitanga, and support trans-discipline practitioners.

The space that the Wellington Collaboratorium inhabits is not a neutral space; Enjoy is a locality that comes with a received history and established identity. “If a collaboratorium emerges within [such] an existing hierarchical structure, a redistinction of pre-existing territories is necessary, via dialogic processes including listening.” The philosopher Gemma Corradi Fiumara argues that “Western sure, sure of what? Radical doubt is so passé. The best trick a scrup might do is speculate as to the possibilities that may have unfolded: Sheppard was an associate of the famed English landscape designer Capability Brown. A surveyor for the New Zealand Company, he professed views on ecology, conservation, and the integration of natural and social environments that would not be considered in the country for another century, at least. ...read this in the light. It doesn’t sound very realistic. I must have chipped from somewhere. I’ll roll it up and chew it until it forms a dense sticky wad with a satisfying texture. I can keep it with me that way, in my armpit or behind my ear, a constant reminder of another world. So, stepping out—wearing jacket—the problem is that there are two畲s from a cake like this: one to the present, if there is a present, one to the future or past whatever it was I was talking about earlier? Earlier? The jacket and the chewed up paper will be a comfort whichever way, keeping me warm and reminding me of the other path. What if...? What if. Maybe the jacket and the furs are the same thing? It would certainly solve two mysteries: where did the furs come from and where did the jacket go... and thereby serve to boost my confidence in my memories. ?It’s very to piece them together and set by their edges line up like jacket-like manner. No doubt there will be imperfections, decay caused by age and the effects of radiation. Ah, so hard to tell. It’s certainly not something I’ll be wearing in public in its current state, for fear of giving quite the wrong impression. Or maybe it’s just an old pile of furs thrown in with my gruel and newspapers after all. The comfortable weight of it on my shoulders. I remember that. The odds and ends in the pockets. Its military look, so popular with the young people who’ve never known the horrors they issued us with sunglasses. Or at least so I imagine. If it were true their broken frames would still be around somewhere. Or it’s possible I was just given it by someone who told me about the tests, the sunglasses, the philosophy and art must, rather than concentrate on assertive saying, begin to acknowledge the role of listening as a creative practice.” (Fisman, The Other Side of Language, 1990). p.21 We would explore steps to ensure robust exchange, regardless of disciplines and territories and to employ a dialectic approach to cut up, and redistribute these existing territories.

Maureen Conner

My project begins with the discovery of a book. The Making of a Modern Bank, a self-published hardback, published in 1923 by the Continental and Commercial National Bank of Chicago. Although the illustrations, fonts and layout as well as the language of the book have a distinctly Edwardian, “Bouton Brahmint” style long absent from contemporary book design, the reassuringly upper class quality of the text is used to day in this day in the advertising copy of banks and finance companies. And there are other parallels to recent financial episodes. Despite their apparent fiscal strength and expertise, Continental and Commercial National Bank announced in this publication, they had been just rescued a few years later—In 1930, by a $50 million loan from Reconstruction Finance Corp. (a federal agency) and became Continental Illinois National Bank and Trust Co.

For my contribution to Imagination Archive I’m picturing what might have happened if this “fail out” had not occurred. Instead, what if the bank’s enormous building, which takes up an entire city block in downtown Chicago’s financial district, was given over to housing the indigent, specifically to the organisation Hull House, begun by Jane Addams as a Settlement House in 1892. By the 1920s, Hull House had itself expanded to include most of another city block, and was on Chicago’s north side, where I grew up. The $50 million loan to Continental and Commercial National Bank had instead been granted to Hull House to shelter these “forgotten” men and women, as they were called at the time?

Bank Book, describes the possible outcome of such government largesse. Using the form of a pop-up book to “document” the transformation of the bank into a communal homestead for Chicago residents down on their luck, each turn of the page represents a different stage in the conversion of the Continental and Commercial National Bank building from business to domestic space. The primary models for these transformations are the flat plans, spatial proportions and corporate arrangements developed by “material feminists”, who are described by Dolores Hayden in her 1981 book, The Grand Domestic Revolution, as “women who identified the economic exploitation of women’s domestic labor by men as the most basic cause of women’s inequality.” Starting in the 1790s, a time when larger U.S. cities began to build multiple dwellings, material feminists proposed ideas such as communal cooking and childcare, as a way to turn isolated domestic work into social labour while still preserving private living quarters for individual families.

Preliminaries aside, then, I am almost ready to step out and for all: it is possible to leave through both doors at once? being simultaneously in the present and that future that’s also present and recreated and created? feel ready try? it’s all an elaborate myth or metaphor in any case. But to say that makes it seem as if I can just open my eyes. As if stepping out was just stepping out of a metaphor—a and if? in any case, that was one easy thing. Take money, for example: we all know that’s just paper and worthless metal—but do we treat it in that way? Of course, money, here in the jacket, money hardly exists already. And it does. The cube is awash in money, offset in its liquidity, money is the void that the cube floats in, you like, you’re not mistaken. There’s no money in the void in money which, by the way, is also the void that shows that money is void, if that makes any sense whatsoever to anyone, and anyone cares to pay attention. So having done that, you can play all kinds of tricks with money in here: juggle it, create, abstract it from its necessities—which are commonly known to be unnecessary, etc. Oh I don’t worry, I’m stepping out, just one last conversation before I do. It’s necessary to be fully prepared, though preparation itself is impossible. For example: I will have enough money. But, recall the aforementioned difficulties thereafter. I’ll have none, or on the other hand, I’ll have as much as I wish—but who would take payment in such cost? I will need a visionary, an investor or speculator to take me on as his son and bring me up in the arts of business and influencing people so as I arrived on the shores of a mythic America—where, by the way, everyone is male and women are objects of beauty and cultural capital.

Shouldn’t the thorn scratch around here for a coin or two note, something that might at least use to buy a bowl of mush or congee? I can’t expect favours. But at the same time, the world I step into will be overlaid with other world, if worlds: strictly speaking can overlap, the one that is created—recreated and has its peculiar relation to temporality. Would anyone be concerned with the state of my pocketbook in such a place, a place of such marvellous abstraction? That then, doesn’t that very abstraction recall us to the whole substrate, the void of money, the most-abstract—oh. You couldn’t really call this cube a dwelling place, despite its street address. For that you need to step out. Well, on that case, I just need to be brave, to make the leap of faith that stepping out entails. I’ll go to people and shake hands. What about the jacket? Possibly, as noted, not the best first impression to give. I’ll be cast amongst society, if there is a society, and forced to keep in a cardboard box with only the jacket/furs for warmth. Actually this would in many ways be so not so different from my current situation, apart from the absence of

Murray Hewitt

My contribution was two fold. First being the “local knowledge” helping Greg with the install of the structure in the gallery. And second I have contributed a spiral bound travel guide, Must sees for all Kiwis, containing stills of 60 sites from the New Zealand wars.

The thematic installation, Alternative Economics, Alternative Societies, focuses on diverse concepts and models for alternative economies and societies, which all share a rejection of the capitalist system of rule.

The project presents alternative social and economic models such as “Inclusive Democracy” from Takis Fotopoulos (GKGB), “Participatory Economy” from Michael Albert (U.S.A.) and “Anarchist Consensual Democracy” from Hal Varacs (D). Chaia Heller (U.S.A.) presents “Libertarian Municipalism”, Paul Cockshott (GB) “Towards a New Democracy” from Ralf Burnicki (D). Chaia Heller (U.S.A.) presents “Economy” from Michael Albert (U.S.A.) and “Anarchist Consensual Economy” from Oliver Ressler (G).

The Archive

Image courtesy of Enjoy.

Veegply Fiks

My contribution to the Wellington Collaboratorium consists of several fictional publications (sometimes with content, sometimes just cover), which present several (im)possible narratives of cultural politics in the Soviet Union and the United States. These publications present as factual, several events in Soviet and American art history of the Cold War and post-Cold War era. These cultural occurrences (such as an official exhibition of Soviet Non-Objective Art in Moscow in 1947 or the 1977 art album ‘Tragically Soviet Art published by the official Soviet publishing house) question the “impossible” of history. What this project addresses is not what could have happened but rather what has never materialised, for as viewed from 1917-1979 these events were possible, awaited, even expected to happen in the future. For a Russian revolutionary subject of 1918-1919 a statement “By 1947 Soviet non-objective painting WILL HAVE ACHIEVED great progress” was a real historical truth. Not wishful thinking but a fact. The events and occurrences that found materialisation in these publications present alternative historical trajectories as imaginable.

Olive Ressler

Alternative Economics, Alternative Societies

After the loss of a counter-model for capitalism—which socialism, in its real, existing form had presented until its collapse—alternative concepts for economic and social development face hard times at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the industrial nations, broadly discussed are only those “alternatives” that do not question the existing power relations of the capitalist system and representative democracies. Other socio-economic approaches are labeled utopian, devalued, and excluded from serious discussion, if even considered at all.

The thematic installation, Alternative Economics, Alternative Societies, focuses on diverse concepts and models for alternative economies and societies, which all share a rejection of the capitalist system of rule. An interview was carried out for each concept. Interview partners include economists, political scientists, authors, and historians. From these interviews, a video in English was produced. In the exhibition, these single- channel 20–37 minute videos are each shown on a separate monitor, thus forming the central element of the artistic installation.

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As interesting historical models, Tudor Koljian (SCG), thematizes workers’ self-management in Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s, Salome Melhs (D) talks about the workers’ collectives during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1938), and Alain Dalotel (F) discusses the Paris Commune of 1871. One of the videos discusses the Zapatist Good Government Junta, a self-governing, direct democracy network, which is currently present in certain rural areas of Chiapas, Mexico.

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Our constant and continual need to maintain simultaneous social networking personas via social media is a reflection of our ultimate dependence on the internet, as a core necessity in the ways we communicate, transmit, conduct, and receive information.

Within the world of publishing the speculative claims of the impending death of print have long been stipulated. The increasing accessibility of art writing and publishing via online platforms makes it necessary to negotiate and reconfiguration of writing type, and online publishing, in how this might alter our approach and practice of art writing. The future of publishing must acknowledge and take into consideration the online platform.

Publishing platforms and presses which continue to ensure production solely through printed matter, run the risk of being labeled as vanity presses, or are immediately categorized as pandering to the needs and tactile requirements of those with a taste for nostalgia. The practice of collecting and the cult of the object has ensured that printed matter has etched its own particular niche. Archives, libraries, and bookstores continue to be the gateways into online depths and recesses. A recent acquisition to the archive of Enjoy’s online publishing programme was Susi Auftink’s *Charming the Snake of Reason*. At the outset of this project Corballis thus responded to the exhibition Charming the Snake of Reason. 

The listing of the PDFs categorised by year resembles an index. Every exhibition is documented online, with a page dedicated to it, as part of the archive of exhibitions. On each exhibition page, there is a brief description, documentation in the form of images, and the commissioned essay appears in PDF format at the bottom of the page. The stylistic appearance of the essay on the Enjoy website seemingly positions it as a note or a reference. Visually, this suggests a different kind of text. The listing of the PDFs is like coming across interesting books in the shelves of bookshops and libraries. There’s something nice about just ‘happening’ upon books and texts. In a library or bookstore, a publication may be grouped with other publications of a similar subject matter: In a way this allows for a distinctive voice to arise. Does online availability eliminate these possibilities? Not necessarily. Studies have been conducted on the physicality of the essay on the Enjoy website, and it seems to allow for a generous in the practice of thinking, writing and production.

**EOP** asks **EPP**

It reminds me of the way that bibliographic references such as the Library of Congress or Dewey Decimal category classifications work. I guess stumbling upon interesting (and not so interesting) materials in internet wormholes is like coming across interesting books in the shelves of bookshops and libraries. There’s something nice about just ‘happening’ upon books and texts. In a library or bookstore, a publication may be grouped with other publications of a similar subject matter: In a way this allows for a distinctive voice to arise. Does online availability eliminate these possibilities? Not necessarily. Studies have been conducted on the physicality of the essay on the Enjoy website, and it seems to allow for a generous in the practice of thinking, writing and production.

If we think about the potential that print holds more weight than online publishing?

I think that neither print nor online publishing can be negotiated to ensure readership. Enhancing online capacity as a resource ensures that material becomes accessible. But it is less of a factor limiting information accessibility. In that sense it becomes more democratic. While the focus of the Enjoy publishing programme is on nurturing emerging writers, the immediacy of online publishing enables a wider audience, including dialogue with other art spaces online. It also allows for material to be published in alignment with online social media culture, including blogs, Facebook, Twitter etc. The meandering takes place online, as opposed to the tangible, in real life experience.

**EOP** asks **EPP**

Do you think that the accessibility of information online makes a difference to the way writers respond to projects at Enjoy? Is the web changing the way we write?

In consideration of the wider context of online space, the site of the internet has been associated with the coup of technological development, where an alternate reality can exist and where emerging practices are free to take place. It is a site where possibility is enabled. In this regard it can become a space that frees us as to approach art writing practices differently. It seems to allow for a generosity in the practice and process of thinking, writing and production.

Within the space of Enjoy’s online programme, the online PDFs encourage more open and playful forms of art writing. Ann Poulsen’s piece on summer resident Simon Glister’s *A Playful A–Z guide*—a list of bullet-pointed facts offering images and sensations provoked by Glister’s work. Poulsen maintains a safe following distance as to its shade and in no way imposes. She lists points of significance, allowing subtleties of language, humour, and storytelling methods to be embraced. Her unorthodox essay formatting also encourages a different kind of interpretation, one not limited by contemporary art vernacular, which art writing frequently embraces. Essay formatting also encourages an alternate reality can exist and where changing the way we write?

**EOP** asks **EPP**

Perhaps one of the major additions to the enjoyment of online publishing programme and this might sum up, or come close to capturing the spirit of the online programme?

Viewed together as a collection, I would say it creates the affect of a multiplicity of voices, especially as most of the writers are emerging writers with fresh voices and perspectives. The main difference in the way the writing is experienced online and in print lies in the accessibility and distribution of the material. Online accessibility allows for a broader readership, while print publishing allows for an engagement with the materiality and experience of the text. The experience of the text therefore becomes reliant on the way the text is presented through design. Design and format become key to the way the text is apprehended, read, consumed, digested.

**EOP** asks **EPP**

I think that both print and online publishing will suffer eventual demise in their current form. The current system is like coming across interesting books in the shelves of bookshops and libraries. There’s something nice about just ‘happening’ upon books and texts. In a library or bookstore, a publication may be grouped with other publications of a similar subject matter. In a way this allows for a distinctive voice to arise. Does online availability eliminate these possibilities? Not necessarily. Studies have been conducted on the physicality of the essay on the Enjoy website, and it seems to allow for a generous in the practice of thinking, writing and production.

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Everything next is written for money, shifting writing whatever I feel, to an abstract task pulling me along a line I wouldn’t have walked, this is work. I just interest by the time Terminator Three came out, she should have been so kick ass instead she measured around throwing stuff, the Apocalypse is an epoch that you can experience working, poetic widows yeartned for, searching ashes for meaning.

Instructions have indicated that this is not a review, is it a love letter? I’ve preferred oral submissions in the past due to their performance over time, rather than having some moron pour over your maides, care equipment rope and lights attached to the limbs of a breathing bird, how can I say that the poetics of this show were defensive? That the best bits were how it didn’t work, that it had the ambition of an android to re-populate the earth and no CUNT go DUCK, a routed nurture drawn on glass, maybe just a light sketch etched.

Of course this is why I laughed, I said to the artists “your talk went right over my head, you sound like you’re straight out of art school”. I appreciated the gap and breath that happened before their reply attack ensued, sharp and full of the glamour of someone whose haute couture has been mocked, but the new tone included me. Thanks. I meant that I didn’t enjoy being sold to, had the ambition of an android to re-populate the earth and no CUNT go DUCK, a routed nurture drawn on glass, maybe just a light sketch etched.

In this show I was given the option, to be in a virtual world, made flesh and real in this world. I’d heard that most toddlers, when faced with a spider in a virtual world, smash it with virtual hammers, that gle of feeling free and able to smash the delicate of things you don’t want to understand slammed in my face or rose like an air bag as my body crossed the threshold from outside door to inside gallery. My laughter was a joy that was seeing the gallery’s redundant old-fashioned values laid out like books at a used clothing store. They were interesting books, but really they were not to be seen as books at all. You should see the adventure the rush of pleasure that words tumble when ingested in the mind’s eye-cycle of love inside a mind’s mind that surface was smeared all over this space little lovers were insecure and precious about how they were fucking in the open without blankets, but not raw lust carried them through it, it was aesthetics, old-fashioned aesthetics, liberated from gravity and sent into three dimensions as if photo-ographs were out thoughts, and thinking came with a flush. A crowd around a screen. Look at me I took his is it poetry, will you see and agree with me? It’s like something I remember seeing before.

Remember when you saw that thing, and you read that book and now we’re here in the future reading it in our mind’s photo album. What did I take home?... Ambition. Ambition to be a soothsayer to read the patterns of time like a thrice of the dice a hand full of rain. I’m being asked to trust their readings of the future, but I too can read. No mind, an echo is can you read. (I’m going to write for 30 more seconds)

Remember when you saw that thing, and you read that book and now we’re here in the future reading it in our mind’s photo album. What did I take home?... Ambition. Ambition to be a soothsayer to read the patterns of time like a thrice of the dice a hand full of rain. I’m being asked to trust their readings of the future, but I too can read. No mind, an echo is can you read. (I’m going to write for 30 more seconds)

I wanted to be them like I wanted to be terminator, see the world through the eyes of a good looking camera (with sound) and line up my enemies to my state of being and roll them through my poetry and watch them come out smelling of flowers. Of plastic or something as good as real. It’s fun.

Holly Willison and Sarah Rose
Leading to form
7 August – 23 August 2008

Image courtesy of the artists.
a performance
rather than having some moron searching ashes for meaning
she meandered around throwing stuff
the best bits were how, attached to the kings of a breathing bird
your insides, shifting, sound like you’re straight out of art
and breath, just a light sketch etched, to repopulate the earth

an abstract task
is it a love letter?
this is why I laughed
how dare you say such radical kick-uc haute couture
your talk went right over my head

attack ensued
cave equipment rope and lights
this is not the Apocalypse
artists sharp and full of glamour need audience

I said thanks to the cold cunt
Of course I meant that I didn’t enjoy being someone whose responses were
figured out already
pouring over whatever I feel
how can I say I’ve preferred oral

I wouldn’t have walked along a line for money, but the new tone included me
a neutered nurture drawn on glass
the whole thing is so fleeting that life keeps taking over
I lost interest

over time
everything that had happened before
poetic widows
yearned a cock ambition
submissions in invulnerable poetics
indicated that this is experience working, android
writing to an epoch that you can review
the past due for its instructions

by the time I appreciated the gap it didn’t work
the show as you described it was sold
and no landscapes of dreamers with history books
enter eyeballs

a whole lotta other people shine brightest
their reply call run
pulling me to their school
an exciting mix of virtual poems
trimmed the nearest

physicality
a good looking rose
putting on eclectic shows
stripped of experience
you are entering completely constructed space

Holly and Sarah dreaming together
and vice versa.
I feel the gallery
a
Auckland rolls as four utopian mothers
since the beginning of new

I want to float like poetry
where the strings are out the window
...somebody say something downright real
the ball in the room
somewhere in the room
left to trip all the unsuspecting idiots

fathers
battle in technology
make them pull back, stop
it ticks them off
the mood to trade attention handed down
in line with a whole lot of rot

I just wanted to get through
hoping that the people were speaking about brushes
but I didn’t get that, there was so much baggage
delicate guns, site specific ammunitions, cultural warfares, other super
commodities.

I thought that the fore-references would fall away
it wants to be art
material and form and space, experience
Witt’s confusing the will

Art wells
the art from art
kind of hitting against the bow
well it could have been made under a sagging silver sheet

son
shine from the balls, enjoy
ha
with suddenly generous feeling
yes it is important
the reunion of sensation and joy
that has been mocked
a sock and a sock, I drew them up

I
I need the object
you know your natured shit statements
but not about anything in particular.

I am not in the grid
that parallel historical loan from others
jockeying for power

I was one that made you think
they gave me no pseudonym
the artists (who’ve done me) giggle

I had rules that didn’t work

this missed history
horses know what you mean
she should have been Terminator
Great Sol
The way to the door of the future

I remember
in a public exhibition there was the power to present a meal
but who owns the entrée?
writing prose around responses for the transparent angle
causes conversations about who gets to write the rules

a genetic hybrid computer simulated clone gave you what?
Wellington being presented as a three dimensional impression
yes that was important
looking is being
so here I go
know that these new comments catalogue artist talk

(f’im next door
next to you
you dropped me)

I
We first encountered Maria Walls writing in the HSP catalogue Canvas (Summer 1999–2000). That text convincingly read as a superb mobilisation of content, and rather simply wrapping all this around the semaphore of Simon Lawrence’s work from that show, we can, as far as introductory remarks go, quite simply suggest that Maria writes with the idea that art matters, that it doesn’t just aggregate but also accords.

It makes sense then, especially given the idea that M&W attempts to prolong the provisionality of an artist’s practice, we’re not at all surprised by Maria’s clinical beat in this text for it functions as a symbiotic relay of the rotational and observational vices of Arps’ show. Furthermore, such mobility isn’t just indicative of this particular work but stands out as a style of writing that should be celebrated as an active rubric for the types of engaged reception we all ought to practice and collectively endorse that much more often. So we’d also like to take this opportunity to point towards Maria’s substantial body of writing and in particular her superbly relevant text on Robert Hood’s show Wrecked Pathological Stimulus Soap Rotational Vacuum Idle Earth Manifold Detergent Runtime Glue currently housed in The Physics Room’s 2009 Annual.

As far as Dan Arps’ involvement in this particular publication goes, let’s just say that his initial show not only served as the genesis for our commissioning of Maria’s text, but also served as the catalyst for an in-filling of Enjoy’s archive of accessible documentation via Arps himself. Interested in the alter-narratives that populate history, M&W has always aimed to glean the imperfect traces of both formal and informal archives of experience, so we’re extremely fortunate to have been able to allow Dan’s other(ed) Enjoy show, Pharmacy (2000) to finally re-surface. We couldn’t have planned for this extension, this retrofitting on the official record of events, but pitying from the widest to aspects, given the familiarity and fraternity that both Maria and Dan actively cultivate the possibility of such a reflexive reconstruction was always on the cards, if not already in play.
The important point to note from these observations is the reverse of these observations.

For instance, when there is attention, art may be unstable and may develop. Using these techniques are sometimes ways of determining what the work is / not doing.

Was the art weighed?  
Yes ___ No ___

Was it stripped to practical limit?  
Yes ___ No ___

D'Arp is credited with the 1982 discovery of direct sight as posed within an art event, institution, facility, or process. The idea that art can be most brazenly observed.

Within the exacting science of fine art, D'Arp's observational research (OR) is a technique that involves a watch over designed phenomena within its most un/natural setting. It assimilates with experimental research (ER) in which the quasi-artificial environment is also created to control for spurious factors, and where at least one of the variables is manipulated as part of an exhibition. Although previously having installed crowd control into the High Street (cnr. Hereford and Colombo – now defunct) and later a woosky corporate veneer wall into a Sydenham office arena, it was not until just last week that D'Arp actually built a platform to simply enjoy the view.

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Personal Observation vs. Mechanical Observation (PO/NO)

What is the audience actually looking at?

Sometimes, one may develop special relationships with key artworks. If this occurs, ensure that no personal information given is included within the actual data.

How interested is the viewer?

Some audiences have ethical misgivings with the deceit involved in art. Consider how you will present yourself, both in terms of appearance and how you will explain your purpose to others if necessary.

How much should I disclose about who I am and what I am doing?

In art, findings reflect only a unique population: there are problems with bias. Often it is assumed that the viewer may, “See only what s/he wants to see.” Note — partiality, cannot be overcome, and is instead exacerbated by art training.

Observations are often in/flexible and need to be structured around a hypothesis. This is called disruptive research (DR).

Detect gallery traffic patterns:
- observe the dirt on the floor (short term).
- observe the wear in the floor (long term).

The extent of visibility loss depends on the amount of air in the art and the thickness of the supporting documentation. Document reduces visibility. Art phases may vary in depth and density. This is discussed in the (sealed) section on bush.

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How To, or Instructions Towards Better Observation (B.O.) —

1. Conduct trace analysis.
2. Utilise eye-tracking analysis whilst subjects survey.
3. Commission gallery shelf space audits.
4. Search art patterns through what it is that is dis-regarded.

Are people uncomfortable or unwilling to look at the work? Well done. You can/not see attitudes. You can/not be everywhere. There are certain things you can/not mind. For example, questions regarding sexual behavior are better left to the exhibition after-match at a shabby local venue. In order to obtain reliability, art must/not be seen several times (there is concern that the bystander’s presence may change the art).

Process by which mass and art transferred to record:

Art Worker wrote it ___ Someone else wrote it ___
Other ___

Type your notes into computer files using a standard format.

D'Arp knows that top quality art lessons incorporate an introduction or anticipatory act, an activity and closure. The transition from one segment to the next is needed to keep the art orderly. This case illustrates that use of closed-ended observation instruments promotes the reliability of meaning. The findings are thus more credible and likely to influence art managers to make necessary improvements. The audience participates in what they are observing so as to get a finer appreciation of the marvel. Audiences that participate tend to lose their objectivity and sensibility (LOS).

Unobtrusive Formulaic Observation (UFO)  
In disguised field analysis the audience pretends to join (or actually is a member of) a group and records data about that group. The group does not know that they are being observed for art purposes. Here, the artist may take on a number of roles.

Overt observation (OO)  
Here the audience identifies itself as the artist in order to justify a purpose. The problem with this approach is that artists modify their behaviour when they know that they are under inspection. The art researcher who is engaged in participant eyewitness tries to learn what life is like for an insider while remaining, inevitably, an outsider. This method is in/distinct not/because the artist approaches the audience in her/his own environment but because the audience becomes the artist.

Did Art Worker interpret results for the other?  
Yes ___ No ___

External validity, is described by D'Arp as the extent to which art’s findings are also true for other people, in other places, and at other times.

Name of Observer:  
Date: Time: Place:

Observation Deck was an exhibition by Dan Arps. It was held at Enjoy in 2023.
What’s real? What’s not? That’s what I do in my art, test how other people deal with reality. —Andy Kaufman

Nature does not know extinction; it all knows transformation—from Gravity’s Rainbow. —Thomas Pynchon

Some artists pick away at the fabric that we call reality, while others content themselves with a knowing critique, but few are as ready and really prepared to put a concept fully to the test as the astutely thoughtful Tao Wells.

Relying on the authority of an art gallery opening, Wells has drawn a curious crowd into his space, ever expectant of some validated art experience. He knows we’re after art. That’s why we’ve come here, in thirst of that art experience and eager for the stick-on badge we call inside knowledge and real art credentials.

It’s like John Lennon in the psychedelic 60s, over in India, whispering in the Maharishi’s ear. “Can you slip me the answer?” That’s how Paul McCartney tells it at least.

The room, or Enjoy, or Tao’s room is filled with scientific and philosophical experiments, boyhood trophies glued together and data sketched ...but The Artist’s shorthand is indecipherable and The Artist, himself, has retreated into the corner, behind what looks like an upturned skateboard ramp.

“Get on with it” a voice interjects into the audience, the crowd is led out onto the street, down Cuba Street to the pub The Mighty, full of Saturday night patrons, where Tao Wells returns, and after more arguments among the audience, the crowd is led out onto the street, down Cuba Street to the pub The Mighty, full of Saturday night patrons, where The Artist buys his audience a round of jugs of beer. Perhaps now they’ll be more receptive to his message.

Wells steps on to the stage, talks or rants into the microphone about how no one “gets” his work and that he’s a real avant garde artist and to hell with all the rest. Ranting, ranting and more ranting becomes a litany of complaints against a shadowy technical establishment ...until a group of choral singers slowly emerge from the audience to lift Wells above their shoulders and carry him triumphantly out of the bar in the splendor of a teenage fantasy. But back to Enjoy and the difficult artworks, a year’s work presented in two days. Wells has positioned himself in a standoff against the Enlightenment and all its unwitting adherents. It is a position of perpetual antagonism against a system of thought that is not aware of its own currents or origins. In many ways, it’s as though Wells has set about building himself a time machine. But at present, plans remain scattered about the ground, diagrams tacked to walls, while, promisingly, a window intersects through a table. The simultaneity of all history has been declared and Wells is leaving town for some other quest.


And scrolling down the page, fingers coming to arbitrary rest at my mouse pad’s southern end, at the centre of my screen then I read: “Only boring people get bored, right?”

And I was momentarily arrested, guessing that I was in the wrong here, right?

For having just that moment announced it, yelling it up the stairs—for I’m guessing the chorus will come through yet another opening paragraph, endeavouring to care, readying myself to close yet another PDF file, and to open yet another (in hopes, yelling, “I’m bored!”)

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Epigraph: “You’re talkin’ a lot, but you’re not sayin’ anything” —Talking Heads

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Yet it seems that I was not such a boring person when I read “Encounters & End Points” by Vera Mey and Reuben Schrader, for those authors did not take too long to say, nor resorted to language too sophomorically opaque in saying it, that disquisitions on subjective German verbs, with particular reference to Kant and then Foucault’s rejoinder to him, and enlightened discussions of the Enlightenment, and of the identity politics at play perhaps—that these may not be all entirely useful in considering an encounter with Art, or in imagining how and why and for whom and what that art comes to be, and to mean.


And Tao seems honest enough not to circumscribe all this within some pre-arranged, pretentious and quasi-didactic decolonisation, covering behind a giant, protective word-pillow, a suffocating mass of impenetrable means, stitched together by more syntax, devoid of useful meaning—heavy, insomniac and indefatigable, an emotionless, dreaming nemesis, absorbing body blows and leaving all corners slothful and wary, worn out by the frustration and tedium of an engagement that forever begins in defeat.

Rather, on naked display, the ego shows itself to be vulnerable and appalling in precisely equal measures.

Wells would love to be, in an ironic reality, carried on the shoulders of the people—aloft, glorious, the rebel impossibly adored, transformed finally into a definitive voice, into a leader unto the future, holding down with Bomber Bradbury to read together, in concert and out-loud over National Radio, falteringly like schoolboys, single-minded manifestos for change.

And I enjoy and admire how that messianic impulse—Tao’s Bono Complex—is not denied, repackaged or stage-managed; that it is allowed to arbitrary rest at my mouse pad’s southern end, to have just that moment announced it, yelling it up the stairs—for I’m guessing the chorus will come through yet another opening paragraph, endeavouring to care, readying myself to close yet another PDF file, and to open yet another (in hopes, yelling, “I’m bored!”)

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