Trace: An Exploration of Alternative Means of Documenting Ephemeral Environmental Art

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ABSTRACT

The field of Ephemeral Environmental Art is now very well established in contemporary arts practice. The ephemerality of the work together with the fact that its location is frequently inaccessible results in the need for documentation. Photography is the primary means by which these artworks are recorded. The role of photography is very important, however, it is also limited as a documentary outcome.

As a visual artist who creates Ephemeral Environmental Art I am concerned that while photography can quickly and relatively easily create a visual record of the created form, its highly refined view of time and space is also problematic. The value placed on an instantaneous moment denies the process underpinning the interaction. Additionally, the camera as a mechanical intermediary between the work and its representation is counter to the intimate, viscerally known manipulation of materials that occurs onsite. Therefore a sense of disjunction can occur.

There are isolated examples of artists using alternative documentary formats in the recording of this art form. This research engages with these alternative image-making techniques to explore and extend the notion of documentation. While direct reference to the form is maintained, the documentary outcomes are enriched with subtle and appropriate allusions to the site, the significance of change over time and the process of material manipulation in the construction of the artwork.

This practice-led investigation has found that these alternative image-making techniques can produce meaningful forms of visual documentation. The considered application of these techniques, which is informed by the critical engagement with contemporary theoretical concepts, allows for the creation of conceptually appropriate documents. While the artworks demonstrate these enriched outcomes, no single documentary technique has been identified as applicable in all instances of recording Ephemeral Environmental Art.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Except where explicit reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere, or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for, or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been relied upon or used without due acknowledgment in the main text and bibliography of the thesis.

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Supervisor – Dr. Loris Button Date

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FOREWORD

In 2003 I was involved in an artist's residency that included an extended camping trip along the Snowy River in eastern Victoria. Nestled near a bend in river I created an onsite work using found natural materials of the site. Following my established process of interaction, I spent a length of time at the site, not only to familiarise myself with the location but also to allow me a period in which to slow down and find a sense of synchronicity with the rhythms of nature. Thereafter the frenetic urgency of modern living seemed to no longer apply. In relation to this slowing of pace, my level of attention to the immediate surrounds increased. I felt a greater sense of connection to the land around me. It was from within this place of attunement to nature that my environmental interaction took place.[1]

Works that I have created while feeling this sense of attuned visceral connection to the site tend to function better as interrelated interactions with space rather than forceful aesthetic impositions. The physical process of the creative interaction relied on my own bodily efforts, and was therefore, known at a very base, visceral level. Through this intimate exchange there is a further deepening of the sense of connection. The degree of connection begins to feel reminiscent of a pre-industrial way of understanding and being.

Once my physical endeavours had ceased, I engaged in the standard process of recording the created form. This occurred through the most frequently used method for documenting Ephemeral Environmental Artworks, that of still photography. In the process of creating this record I felt a level of discomfort in using photography as the sole means of documentation. This discomfort was due to the vastly different processes required in the creation of the onsite work and the nature of the documentary record. While the interaction developed through a physical intimately known process, the documentary technique of photography relied on a

[1] This notion of attunement and specifically ecological attunement is discussed by S. Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998). Roger Deakin also makes reference to this form of environmental sensibility in his earlier article, however he does not apply this specific term to it, see R. Deakin "Zen and the art of Andy Goldsworthy" *Modern Painters*, 10, 1 (1997), 50-54.

mechanised process, which while being cerebrally understood in terms of its function, was not intimately comprehended at a visceral level.[2]

In this respect, photography can be viewed as very much a part of the modern world. Modern technology means that we can go about our daily activities without ever really comprehending the items we use. While we may drive a car or use a computer, how many of us really know these items beyond how to make them function. I could not create one of these things anew. Rather I exist, having grown reliant on these conveniences without the same degree of connected understanding as shared with an item that I have created. In the case of using the camera as a tool for documentation, I felt that I was forfeiting some degree of connection that was central to the creation of the original work. Along with that loss of intimacy I felt a loss of authenticity and the personal truth that pervaded the onsite work. I had lost a degree of connection through the process of documenting the work.

After careful consideration, other concerns regarding the use of photography as the sole documentary method have become apparent; however, it was this initial loss of connection that provided the genesis for this research.

[2] It is this level of discomfort that is expressed in the *This is a photograph* series of works. These mixed media works show photographic records of earlier environmental interactions that have been printed over with text. This print involved the use of the wood block printing technique. The purposeful use of the straightforward technique creates a deliberate juxtaposition when placed alongside the technical and removed process of image creation that is photography. The image on the front page of this exegesis is one of this series of works. More works from this series can be seen in Appendix 1.

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INTRODUCTION

> *Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our current practices put at serious risk the future that we wish for human society and the plant and animal kingdoms, and may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know. Fundamental changes are urgent if we are to avoid the collision our present course will bring about.*[3]

The birth of environmentalism is difficult to pinpoint precisely. The publication of *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson in 1962 is generally acknowledged as having introduced concerns about the environment and sustainability to the general populace more broadly.[4] Carson's research looked at the effects of DDT and other pesticides and how they were poisoning much more than the insects they were intended to kill.[5] From these early beginnings environmentalism has grown to the point where it is no longer a peripheral societal concern, but rather, is a major focus for social, political and scientific research.

Central to this movement is the exploration and understanding of how human activity impacts on our environment. This concern focuses our attention on the sustainability of activities and in turn the sustainability of human existence. Researchers from a diversity of fields seek not only new means of interacting with the land, but also methods for framing our relationship to it. Researchers, philosophers and theorists in many fields debate the benefits and ramifications of these new means of thinking about our relationship to our environment. New philosophical perspectives have developed out of this reconsideration of the role of the environment in our lives.

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[3] World Scientists warning to humanity (1992) as cited in D. Suzuki & A. McConnell, *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering our Place in Nature*, (Vancouver, Canada: Greystone Books, 1997), 4.
[4] L. Lear, *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature*, (London: Penguin, 1998).
[5] R. Carson, *Silent Spring*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1962). The text was originally serialised in *The New Yorker.*

One such approach is 'Biocentrism' which implies a philosophical centrality to life, nature and biology. In scientific terms this theory posits that life creates the universe rather than the other way around. Robert Lanza describes it as a new perspective on the physical world that accounts for life and consciousness.[6] Less cosmologically focused is the social and political movement known as 'Ecofeminism.' This movement focuses on the patriarchal control over all nature and thereby extends to the feminine as females have been considered more closely aligned with nature due to their ability to nurture life. This perspective parallels a commodity based view of both women and nature as they are controlled and dominated by a male-dominated view of the world. As the domination of both women and nature is integrally connected, efforts to assist the environment need to be managed alongside work that overcomes the oppression of women.[7] Another human centered perspective may be found in the concept of 'Ecohumanism.' This model for social consciousness proposes that the restoration, healing and long term health of nature is an extension of the human condition.[8] As Janet McIntyre-Mills observes, this concept rests on a "belief in the universal human spirit that guides the creation of theory and practice in harmony with people and nature."[9] Many of these new perspectives focus on societal change through altering individuals' thinking and behaviour.

The breadth of attention being paid to our relationship to the natural world means that research into artistic practice that demonstrates a similar degree of mindfulness is particularly timely. While many works may reflect and discuss environmental issues from a distance, very few directly engage with the environment. Of the works that are a direct engagement with, and incorporate reference to, the contextual significance of the site, many seek to forcibly impose an artificiality of existence. This contrivance may either be an attempt at permanence, or a similarly artificial installation and de-installation timeframe. A sub-branch of Environmental Art does, however, lead to the creation of works that possess a relationship with the environment while also allowing nature to define the works' longevity.

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[6] R. Lanza., & B. Berman, *Biocentrism: How life and consciousness are the keys to understanding the true nature of the universe*, (Dallas, Texas: Benbella Books, 2009).
[7] The Green Fuse http://thegreenfuse.org/ecofem.htm [Accessed on 8/02/2011]
[8] Ecohuman world. A world of content people http://www.ecohumanworld.com/category/ecohumanism/ [Accessed on 8/02/2011]
[9] J. J. McIntyre-Mills, *Global Citizenship and Social Movements*, (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2005), 42.

Ephemeral Environmental Art is a process of interaction that responds directly to the site through the bodily manipulation of materials sourced from the immediate surrounds, and result in the construction of forms. Developed through the artist's direct relationship to the space, these works often create an aesthetic presence. Unlike much object-based practice however, the created form is not the sole conceptual referent. The aesthetic form is merely a moment in the greater life of the interaction. In many of these works the regression by natural forces is conceptually significant as it ties the interaction and its form to its surroundings. Therefore, the work is not a permanent unchanging imposition on the landscape, but rather an interaction that is naturally interacted with in turn. Not content to simply be, these works form a living relationship with the site. This type of intimate, non-deleterious relationship between the art and the environment is akin to the harmonious existence promoted by eminent geneticist and author David Suzuki when he states "we need to reclaim faith in ourselves as creatures of the Earth, living in harmony with all other forms of life."[10]

The grounded and ephemeral nature of these Ephemeral Environmental Artworks is conceptually significant, however, it also has some limitations, principally in relation to the role of the audience in attending to the nature and scope of the artwork. Partly for this reason, the majority of artists who work in this way utilize a secondary process of documentation as a means of recording a trace of the greater interaction.[11] Experiencing the documentary record whether it be in exhibitions of the photographs or simply in books, is markedly different from the physical experience of encountering the work onsite. The intent therefore, is not for the documentation to provide a fully analogous relationship with the onsite work. Rather, the document offers a reference or alludes to what has occurred. A larger audience is in turn, provided with a glimpse of the artwork.

Process-driven works can be problematic to document, as their comprehension requires a record that allows for the allusion to time. The works' full comprehension requires more than the viewing of a single record that focuses on the aesthetic form alone. The concern for documentation with these types of works is that it may focus the audience's attention too heavily on the resultant form, rather than the interaction with the site; in turn this skews the

[10] D. Suzuki & A. McConnell, *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering our Place in Nature*, 208.
[11] This use of a secondary process to create the record should not be seen as a categorical divide that separates the onsite interaction and its documentation. Just as the variety of approaches to Environmental Art tends to blur definitions within the field, so to the variety of perceptions regarding the relationship of interaction and document means that the onsite work and its record cannot always be viewed as distinct entities.

audience's perception towards an object-based understanding of the work. Such limited comprehension of the full nature of the interaction then results in the loss of the significance of process and the work's ephemeral relationship to the environment. Therefore the work is no longer understood as an exemplar of an interrelated site-specific process, rather it reduces the viewing of the form to an apparently static object outside of the effects of time. The application of appropriate documentary techniques that maintain or allude to the conceptual basis for the onsite interaction is vital if these works are to maintain their conceptual authenticity, and play a role in the dialogue between man's activities and the natural world.

The key question therefore becomes is it possible, and if so how, to create documentary evidence of Ephemeral Environmental Artwork that is closely attuned to both the conceptual basis of the work and the process driven nature of the interaction.

CHAPTER 1: WELCOME TO PLACE

Scholarship regarding Ephemeral Environmental Art has dealt with the field in a number of ways, however, this investigation is particularly focussed on qualitative exploration and evaluation of alternative documentary techniques that may be able to enrich the records that are produced. The primary objective is that this exploration will strengthen the allusion to the conceptual basis for the onsite work, thereby enriching the documentary outcome. A number of secondary objectives have also arisen throughout the research. Both the use of the term ephemeral, and its application in the field of Environmental Art, have required further consideration due to the lack of clarity in current usage. Additionally, the apparent paradox of creating a permanent record of a purposefully short-lived interaction in the landscape also needs to be addressed.

Although issues relating to Environmental Art *per se* are not the primary consideration of this investigation it is necessary to consider the definition of key terms related to the field. The term ephemeral, for example, as it applies to art, tends to be used almost interchangeably with the word temporal. This lack of clarity requires greater consideration to highlight the significant difference between ephemeral artwork and temporal works, particularly in relation to Environmental Art. The clearer distinction provides the basis for understanding the relationship between the various approaches within the field. It may not be surprising that the term Environmental Art itself requires greater clarification. Definitions of the term have been very fluid with some definitions being applied retrospectively. Therefore it is imperative to consider the historical basis and original intent of the numerous, overlapping terms in relation to their chronological occurrence. A stronger understanding and definition of the characteristics of Ephemeral Environmental Artwork will consequently facilitate this investigation of the appropriate forms of documentation.

In parallel to the lack of definitive structure within the field of Environmental Art, there is a similar lack of critical discourse regarding the documentation of this particular art form. For

this reason, the investigation explores the rationale for documenting Ephemeral Environmental Art. This consideration is followed by a review of the presently used documentary techniques. Within this discussion of documentation it is also necessary to address what some critics, such as John Rockwell, consider to be the central paradox of creating permanent records of purposefully short-lived artworks.[12] This concern centres on the notion that the permanence of the record is ultimately flawed as it negates the ephemerality of the original work.[13]

The theoretical basis for documentation within the defined field then forms the basis of the practical exploration of alternative methods of record creation. The objective for the studio component of the investigation has been to explore a series of different image making techniques for documentary purposes. Each of these techniques has then been reconsidered in terms of its appropriateness to the conceptual basis of the work. Any issues arising from this reconsideration have informed the exploration of the subsequent documentary techniques. In this way, each technique has enhanced the base of knowledge and led sequentially to the following image-making process.

1.1 Background

The specific category of artworks being considered as part of this investigation is a sub-group of Environmental Art. The term Environmental Art refers to the Western tradition of artistic practice that developed from the period post 1965.[14] This investigation will therefore focus on Western art practice.[15] In contrast to earlier land-focused artworks, this tradition was not

[12] J. Rockwell, "Preserve Performance Art? Can you preserve the wind?" *The New York Times*, (Friday April 30 2004), 153.
[13] Although not specifically ephemeral, curators have been addressing the concern of dealing with works that have an intentionally brief existence for some time. This is discussed further in S. Hochfield, "Sticks and Stones and Lemon Cough Drops" *Artnews*, Vol. 101 Issue 8 (September 2002), 116.
[14] While it is possible to draw parallels between this creative practice and some lasting remnants of pre-western civilisations, like the Nazca lines in Peru, this investigation concentrates on the period post 1965. Lucy Lippard's book *Overlay* explores some of these parallels between modern Environmental and Land Art practices and the examples of pre-western civilisations' interactions with the land. L. Lippard, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).
[15] Although not the focus within this investigation other cultures outside of the Western tradition of art have also developed their own practice that seeks to work with nature in a harmonious balanced manner. The South Korean group known as Yatoo is one such example. This group is highly active in the organisation and running of the Geumgang Nature Art Biennale. 'Nature Art Biennale': http://natureartbiennale.org/eindex.php [accessed 13/2011]

concerned with representation but rather direct creative interaction with the land. The breadth of works that are now classified under this term is extremely broad and diverse.[16] While the categorizing structure within this field is loose and often poorly applied, it is the branch known as 'Art in Nature' that informs this research.[17] Of this group of works, it is specifically those that have an ephemeral outcome that are the focus for this investigation.

Ephemerality within the created form is conceptually significant in many of the works as the term specifically relates the created form to the natural dynamism of the site. This openness to change allows the aesthetic form to organically retrogress back into nature as part of the continued interaction. The concern for site-specificity is also reflected in the preferential use of indigenous, non-refined natural materials. This concentration on the interaction and its relationship to the site occurs as part of a process-based approach to art making that in effect diminishes the significance of the object as product. In these Ephemeral Environmental Artworks the process occurs through the hands-on manipulation of materials, generally without the use of machinery. Another characteristic of this form of art is that due to the intimate, sympathetic nature of the interaction, the majority of such works result in minimal environmental impact. While defining these ephemeral creative interactions is a critical aspect of the investigation, the documentary outcomes of the works provide the primary focus for this study.

In broad terms, documentation can be understood as materials that provide a report of an event, occurrence or object, often given for the purpose of providing evidence.[18] This evidence supports a framework enabling better comprehension of an occurrence without the necessity of having experienced it directly. When discussed in artistic terms, documentation is generally considered to be the product of a secondary practice that aims to record artistic works. The original works often have specific limitations such as locational concerns or a brief existence, like temporary or ephemeral works, as in the case of Ephemeral

[16] Although not specifically established as an environmental sculpture event it is worth noting that the Mildura Sculpture Triennials provided an opportunity for artists to create works that were intended as responses to specific sites. The 1973 event, entitled *Sculpturscape*, highlighted the influence of site-specificity and post-object based thinking in Australian sculpture. In contrast Herring Island on the Yarra River in Melbourne was redeveloped specifically as a Environmental Sculpture Park. While numerous artists whose works are installed on the island are discussed within this research, their work there and also the works at the sculpture triennials lack ephemerality and, in turn, the production of a documentary outcome. For these reasons, although they do provide an Australian context, they are considered to lie outside the parameters of this investigation.

[17] For an extended discussion regarding the history and nature of these categories see chapter 2 – Literature: A Sense of the Ground.

[18] 'Oxford online dictionary': http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/documentation [accessed 13/2/2011].

Environmental Art. The role of documentation therefore, is to create a lasting impression or sense of the greater work. It is not an attempt to extend the life of the work, as the documentation is functionally different from the original artwork. Just as watching a recording of a dance recital is not the same as seeing the recital firsthand, seeing a documentary record of an onsite work is not the same as experiencing the work directly.[19]

The most frequently used documentary technique in the field of Ephemeral Environmental Art is photography. The use of photography is generally limited to the recording of the form that is created through the interaction. The majority of artists working in this art form then show the photograph, often as a single image, as the record of the onsite work. Photography is of course a valid and frequently aesthetically pleasing documentary method that can be read as a form of evidential proof of the works' occurrence. Its use as the sole documentary technique is problematic however, as it limits the potential for allusion to issues of time, change and the retrogression of the form. This investigation therefore, explores alternative documentary techniques as a means of extending and enriching the documentary outcome in relation to the conceptual basis for the onsite interaction.

The almost absolute reliance on photography for the documentation of sited environmental interactions began early in the history of Environmental Art. The 1968 exhibition *Earthworks* involved ten artists, the majority of whom exhibited photographs of outdoor work.[20] While there are isolated examples of artists using other documentary techniques, such as Nils-Udo's painted document *Robinia Leaf Swing* (1992/2000) as seen in Fig. 1, these are infrequent and isolated.

The field of documentation relating to this form of artwork is lacking in a critical discourse. While there is little discussion of documentary techniques, the reason for the predominant position of photography is quite understandable, as it provides a relatively easy method for quickly creating a direct visual record of the form of the interaction. Albeit arguable, the directness of the relationship between the photograph and the subject also means that photography is often regarded as a truthful proof of occurrence and appearance. While it is questionable, the concept of evidential proof provides photography with a measure of

[19] This phenomenon is not specific to Ephemeral Environmental Art, rather, it could be argued in relation to the documentation of all artwork.
[20] The *Earthworks* exhibition held in October 1968 at the Dwan Gallery in New York was the earliest exhibition specifically devoted to artists who were directly interacting with the environment, as discussed by Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1998), 23.

veracity due to the perception of limited author intervention in the creation of the record. The documentary advantages of photography also come with a series of limitations and concerns.

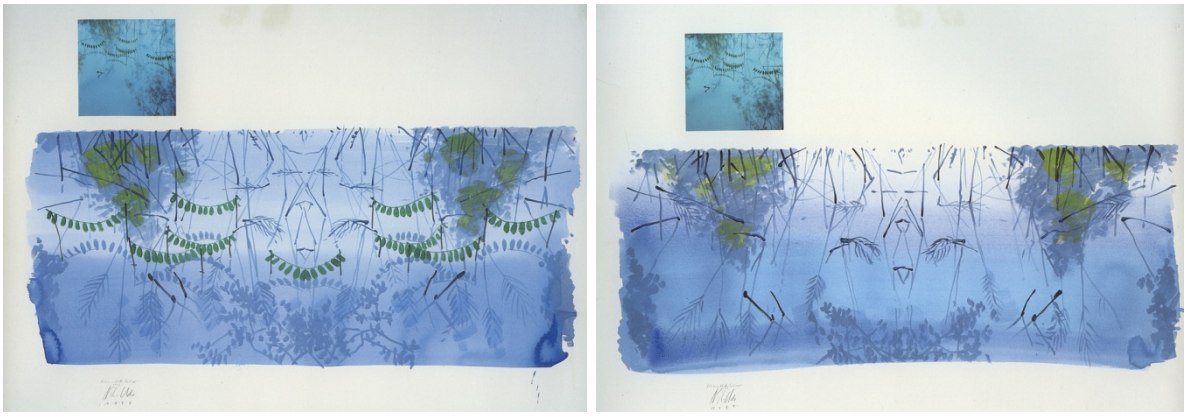

Fig 1 Nils-Udo, *Robinia Leaf Swing*, 1992 – 2000.

It can be argued here that the density of information regarding the physical qualities of the form, along with the specificity to a given moment in time and space, means that photographs are not ideal for the documentation of Ephemeral Environmental Art. Photography may also privilege the form itself and therefore devalue or indeed completely ignore the process-driven nature of the interaction, misrepresenting the form itself as the final objective of the interaction. The very idea of a final outcome is somewhat anachronistic in relation to this form of artwork. To use the analogy of the journey and the destination, this art form values the experience of the journey beyond the necessity of any final destination point. In this way, these works are more closely aligned with performative practices than sculptural ones. Photography as an instantaneous, literal visual documentary technique, inevitably focuses attention on the form of the work and away from the greater interaction. This effect demonstrates the inappropriateness of photography as the audience's attention is drawn away from the artist's original intention and therefore, the work itself cannot be fully comprehended.

In addition to the concern for potentially undermining the audience's comprehension of conceptual intent is the issue of the artist's potential loss of visceral connection to the artwork through the process of documentation. The creative interaction of Ephemeral Environmental

Artworks relies on the artist forming a physical relationship with the site which is founded in the experience of the location and the hands-on manipulation of materials at a practical level. By specifically using indigenous, non-refined, natural materials, the artist gains an intimate knowledge of both the interaction and the site. To then document this interaction through a single methodology which relies on technical, less directly knowable processes can appear counter-intuitive. By knowable, I mean that the image making process has a sense of immediacy because the technique of creation is straightforward, non-mechanical and directly experienced. Therefore, this loss is problematic as it may impact on audience comprehension while also disengaging the artist from the sense of visceral connection to the process that underpins the interaction.

The issue of disengagement is significant as an artificial rift can be created between the interaction and the documentation. A major concern is that this rift results in documentation which has not evolved as an element of the greater interaction, but rather appeared as an addendum to the work. This false separation relegates documentation to an 'afterthought.'[21] In cases where the artist is also the maker of the document, this artificial separation can lead to a loss of authenticity, and potentially result in documentation that is disengaged and disconnected due to the vastly different sensibility required in the creation of the record. In instances where the creator of the record is not the artist, the requisite change in sensibility is not an issue as photography is not distinct from an earlier means of working. This is not to suggest, however, that a second party documentarian will necessarily produce better documentary outcomes. Indeed, it could be argued that the artist documentarian may be likely to produce better documentary results due to their connection to the site and the conceptual intent of the artwork. This assumption is of course based on the artist's ability to overcome any potential disengagement through documentary process. With these concerns in mind, there is a distinct need to explore alternative means of documenting Ephemeral Environmental Art.

[21] Afterthought is the term used in S. Boettger *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE: A SENSE OF THE GROUND

As mentioned in Chapter 1 the existing literature poses a number of varied and considerable challenges to the investigation. Initially, these challenges relate to defining the field of study. Notwithstanding the increasing amount of scholarship in the field including the important work of authors such as Ben Tufnell, Jeffrey Kastner and Giles Tiberghein, in general terms, the literature presents the broad field of Environmental Art in an inconsistent and confusing manner; this in turn makes the definition of Ephemeral Environmental Art difficult.[22] This inconsistency and lack of clarity at the broader level means that more refined subdivisions within the field remain relatively unclear.

The challenge posed by the various definitions is further exacerbated by the use of the term ephemeral. The relationship of this term to life, rather than merely existence, requires further clarification in regard to the life of an artwork. Understanding this concept of the life of an interaction, with its relationship to material and site, is central to the comprehension of Ephemeral Environmental Art. Beyond the difficulties related to defining the field, a further challenge posed by the literature is the almost absolute lack of critical commentary and discussion regarding the documentation of these works.

For these reasons it has been necessary to begin the literature review process with an in-depth exploration of the genesis and intention behind the terms that define and shape the breadth of Environmental Art. This review process then considers what is specifically intended by the use of the term 'ephemeral' in defining the sub-division Ephemeral Environmental Art. The notable characteristics of the works in this subdivision are then identified which leads to a review of the rationale for, and the issues relating to, the documentation of the onsite works. Following the review of terms, there is an exploration of documentary techniques that are

[22] B. Tufnell, *Land Art*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2006), Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art* and G. Tiberghien, *Land Art*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995).

presently used by artists working in this manner. The literature review then concludes with an examination of the need for further exploration into alternative documentary techniques.

2.1 Defining the field

Most authors refer to the three terms Land Art, Earth Art and Earthworks as being originally used to describe creative environmental artworks. In his book *Land Art*, Michael Lailach discusses a fourth term, Ecological Art, as also having an historical basis in its early use in the late 1960s. The reference to this fourth term as an early descriptor of sited creative environmental interactions is, however, an isolated instance, with other authors referring only to the other three terms.[23] Of these, the least currently used term is that of Earth Art, generally credited to the artist Robert Smithson.[24] Smithson is acknowledged as the polemicist for the budding Earth Art movement in Brian Wallis's survey essay in *Land and Environmental Art*.[25] Wallis considers Smithson's, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects" (1968) as being manifesto-like for the *Earthworks* exhibition that was later held at Dwan Gallery, New York.[26] In his essay Smithson discusses the meaning and relevance of the then nascent Earth Art movement. His three primary assertions regarding Earth Art were all relatively confrontational towards established art practices. As Wallis notes, Smithson "proposed the work as a challenge to formalist views of sculpture."[27] Secondly, as Wallis explains Smithson's argues "that despite the apparent subject, Earthworks had little to do with conventional notions of landscape and nature" and thirdly, he claimed "that the more compelling artists today are concerned with 'place' and 'site'."[28] Many of these characteristics still hold true for much of the current practice in the field. Earth Art, as a categorising term seems to have fallen out of vogue, predominantly replaced by either Land Art or Environmental Art.

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[23] M. Lailach, *Land Art*, (Cologne: Taschen, 2007), 20.
[24] J. Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape*, 4th ed, (New York: Abbeville Press, 2006).
[25] B. Wallis, "Survey" in J. Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1998), 18-43.
[26] R. Smithson, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects" *Artforum* 7, no.1, (1968) as cited by B. Wallis in J. Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, 24. In addition to its publication in *Artforum*, this essay is reprinted in Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, 211-215.
[27] Wallis in Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, 25
[28] Wallis in Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, 25

As with many of the other terms used to describe this form of artistic creation, the term Earth Art was also the title of a significant exhibition. Held at the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, Cornell University in Ithaca, New York and curated by Willoughby Sharp, this exhibition included the major artists working in this manner at that time. Alongside the American artists were European artists such as Richard Long, Jan Dibbets, Gűnther Uecker and Hans Haacke. The majority of scholars, including Lailach, Tufnell and Suzaan Boettger, discuss this exhibition in relation to the historical basis of this field of art.[29] It is interesting, however, that very few of these publications comment on the term Earth Art beyond simply mentioning its existence.

Giles Tiberghien suggests that "in a certain sense 'land' is more understandable than 'earth', even if, metonymically, the latter designates the entire planet."[30] Unfortunately he does not overtly state the sense in which land is more understandable than earth. This kind of declarative statement without the support of an elucidating text is unfortunately not uncommon when people speak of Earth Art. The term tends to be dismissed by many writers in the field in preference for Land Art and Earthworks. Jeffrey Kastner's preface gives even less consideration to the term, merely mentioning in passing that it grew out of the term Land Art as did both Environmental and Eco Art.[31]

This avoidance or minimisation of the significance of particular terms has tended to perpetuate a sense of confusion. The lack of clarity regarding the use of these terms may have resulted from a similar lack of definition in the original usage and intent for their meaning. One possibility is that perhaps Earth Art was intended as a descriptive term, which referred to the material of the work, whilst Earthworks was intended to function as the categorising term.

Unlike Earth Art, the term Earthworks does still enjoy a degree of favour with writers and researchers. Two notable recent publications that utilise this term are Boettger's book entitled *Earthworks: Art and Landscape of the Sixties* and John Beardsley's *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape*, now in its fourth edition.[32] Like Earth Art, the term

[29] Lailach, *Land Art*, 11 and Tufnell, *Land Art*, 25 and S. Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 159-170.
[30] Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 13.
[31] Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, 12.
[32] S. Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) and J. Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape*, 4th ed, (New York: Abbeville Press, 2006).

Earthworks appears to date back to the previously mentioned "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects" essay by Smithson.[33] This seminal essay was first published in September of 1968 and in it Smithson uses the phrase Earthwork approximately a month prior to the exhibition entitled *Earthworks*.

The *Earthworks* exhibition, held in October of 1968 at Dwan Gallery in New York, brought the term Earthwork into popular use. According to Wallis, the title for the show was drawn from the title of a science-fiction novel by Brian W. Aldiss.[34] The timing of the exhibition only one month after Smithson's essay may seem to suggest that its title could be closely linked to the philosophy and writings of Smithson. This position is debatable, however, as exhibition details and titles are generally established considerably earlier than one month prior to a show. While the previously mentioned essay by Wallis discusses Smithson's writing as being manifesto-like, it is not credited as being influential in the naming of the exhibition.

Interestingly, Boettger emphasizes the role of artist Claes Oldenburg in the development of the term Earthwork. She states that in his journal he "wrote the word 'earthworks' in his notes … not in a phrase or sentence, but as an isolated word, as a random thought or reference jotted down."[35] This note was made around the time of his work *Placid Civic Monument* (1967) or, as it is otherwise known *The Hole*. The photograph of this work (Fig 2), is one of the rare instances in which the published document relates to the process of the work, not solely the created form. Based on this timeline, Oldenberg's use of the term is likely to date around early October 1967, almost a year prior to Smithson's essay. Boettger goes on to say, however, that Smithson's essay from 1967 "Towards the Development of an Air Terminal" was the first mention of the term earth works in an artistic context.[36] At that time the appearance of the term was as two words rather than the conjoined Earthworks.

[33] R. Smithson, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects".
[34] B. Wallis in J. Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, 23.
[35] S. Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties*, 9.
[36] S. Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties*, 6.

Fig 2 Claes Oldenburg, oversees a gravedigger excavating his work *Placid Civic Monument*, 1967.

Generally discussed as an American phenomenon, Earthworks are often monumentally scaled and made of the earth at the site. Due to the scale and materiality of these works the use of machinery is frequently involved in the displacement of large volumes of earth. In fact, Smithson notes that "Instead of using a paintbrush to make his art, Robert Morris would like to use a bulldozer."[37] Some of these works have been criticised in recent times for the amount of forceful change they have inflicted upon the land. The application of criticism retrospectively, however, does not acknowledge the context of time. Artists usually considered to fit within the category include Walter De Maria, Michael Heizer, Nancy Holt and Robert Smithson. The works by these artists that are referred to as Earthworks are also frequently referred to as Land Art.

One possible way of differentiating between Land Art and Earthworks is in reference to the materials. Earthworks deal specifically with the displacement of the material of earth while Land Art incorporates a broader range of materials associated with the concept of the land. For example, Heizer's *Double Negative* (1969-1970), as seen in Fig. 3, would be considered as an Earthwork whereas the large wrapping interactions of Jean-Claude and Christo may be considered as Land Art. For this reason Earthworks could be considered as a subgroup of Land Art. While materially speaking this position may appear plausible, it is not categorically stated in the various publications in the field. Additionally, the similar timing of the development of these two terms makes it difficult to establish a chronological or hierarchical basis for the relationship between the terms.

Of the three early terms, Land Art remains the most commonly used. Unfortunately this frequency of usage is not always warranted and sometimes occurs as the result of misapplication. Most commonly it is applied to a grouping of American works dating from the mid to late 1960s onwards. While almost all writers in the field discuss the Land Art in relation to this early American tradition of creative environmental interaction, the one exception is Lailach who claims that the term remained connected to European usage while Earthworks was used in reference to the American tradition.[38] In contrast Kastner argues that

[37] Smithson as cited in Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties*, 8.
[38] Lailach, *Land Art*, 8.

Fig 3 Michael Heizer, *Double Negative*, April 1970.

Land Art is "a quintessentially American art form", the first appearance of the term used to describe what is considered a particularly American tradition, occurred in Europe.[39]

The term Land Art was in fact first used as the title for a German television program that surveyed projects by eight artists (four American and four European). Sender Freies Berlin (SFB) aired the program on April 15, 1969.[40] As a result, the term is credited to the German independent filmmaker Gerry Schum. According to Boettger, Schum developed the word through the conjoining of 'land show' and 'Earth Art'. The phrase 'land show' appeared in a letter by Heizer and was also the title of De Maria's earth room in Munich, while *Earth Art* was the title of the previously mentioned exhibition.

American artists and critics quickly adopted the term to describe the tradition of creatively interacting with the land. The rapidity with which it was taken up meant that it became synonymous with the large-scale masculine impositions in or on the land associated with the American artists. For this reason some European artists, such as Richard Long, who felt their

[39] Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, 12.
[40] Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties*, 176-178.

works were distinctly different from those of the American artists, vehemently resisted the application of the term. Long expressed this sentiment clearly when he said:

> My interest was in a more thoughtful view of nature, making art both visible and invisible … It was the antithesis of so-called American Land Art, where the artist needed money to be an artist, to buy real estate, to claim possession of the land and wield machinery. True capitalist art.[41]

As a result, the term Land Art became increasingly specific to the works of the American artists.

While the historical basis for the term is clear, present day usage has clouded the specific application. Numerous authors, such as Tufnell and Tiberghien, quickly dismiss the range of terms and focus on Land Art as the primary term that encompasses the entire international field of sited creative environmental interactions.[42] In *Ecovention*, Sue Spaid declares that "Land art, [as] the most general category, encompasses any work that activates the land, however temporary. Earthworks, ecological art and environmental art are all examples of land art."[43] This reclassification of Land Art as the general term that includes these other fields is contrary to not only the earlier writing of Wallis, but also the concerns expressed by artists such as Richard Long. This reclassification by Spaid is also problematic in that she does not provide any rationale, nor does it reference any of the writings of the earlier authors in the field.

Although the terms Earth Art, Earthworks and Land Art are by far the most commonly used to describe the American tradition of creating large-scale, sited, environmental works, such works are also occasionally referred to as 'American Monumental Minimalism.'[44] This term acknowledges the minimalist aesthetic within the form of the artworks. Austere and purposefully lacking embellishments, the works were often monumental in scale.[45] Judging by these two criteria the term American Monumental Minimalism may seem apt. Viewing the

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[41] R. Long as quoted in M. Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 215.
[42] Tufnell, *Land Art*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2006) and Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 13.
[43] S. Spaid, *Ecovention: current art to transform ecologies*, (Cincinnati: Contemporary Arts Center, 2002), 10.
[44] This term is used in E. Hogan, *Spiral Jetta*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 2. This book follows the author's journey around many of the Land Art sites in her Volkswagen Jetta.
[45] While monumental, in this instance, is a reference to scale, some Land Artists found inspiration in the monumental structures of early civilisations. Michael Heizer in particular was influenced by his father's archaeological associations with the monuments of pre-Columbian civilisations. This connection is discussed in Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape*, 17.

works in this manner also removes the confusion of terminology associated with Land Art, Earth Art and Earthworks by aligning them in relation to the established tradition of minimalist practice. The problem however is that "for all their superficial similarities" the "sculptures from this period are in fact addressing a different set of preoccupations" to solely minimalist ones.[46] Comprehension of the works through the aesthetic qualities of the form alone is flawed as Wallis points out when he writes, "such aesthetic descriptions fail to acknowledge the complex relationships between the earthworks and the social and biological context of the desert."[47] The connection to context and site is a significant factor in these works as a number of the artists have commented. This attitude is succinctly expressed in Carl Andre's poetic writing:

> Sculpture as form
> Sculpture as structure
> Sculpture as place [48]

The significance of the connection between the work and its site is therefore made clear and it is worth noting that both the large-scale impositions of Land Art and also the more intimately scaled, sensitive approaches to creative environmental interaction consider this relationship important.

Chronologically speaking, these more intimate approaches emerged concurrently with Land Art practices. Although not discussed as the definitive beginning point for works of this type, Richard Long's *A line made by walking* (1967) is referred to in nearly all texts related to the field when discussing the genesis of this less invasive form of environmental interaction. To create this work the artist repeatedly walked a line into long grass. The ephemeral imprint of this relatively gentle action was recorded as a black and white photograph (Fig.4).[49] The photograph remains as the lasting document of this unpretentious yet conceptually audacious work, while the grass was left to return eventually to its upright position. In contrast to the heavy-handed impositional works of the Land Artists, this work is discussed by most

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[46] Tufnell, *Land Art*, 37.
[47] Wallis in Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, 29.
[48] D. Bourdon, "The Razed Sites of Carl Andre" *Artforum*, October (1966) reprinted in G. Battcock, eds., *Minimal Art; A Critical Anthology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 103-108. Like many of the artists discussed, this form of artwork was not the sole focus of Carl Andre's practice. While he may be better known for his gallery-based works he also created sited environmental works. Indeed, he was one of the artists that travelled to the desert with Smithson and was also shown at the *Earthworks* exhibition.
[49] This photograph is published in many texts relating to the development of Land Art such as Tufnell, *Land Art*, 24 and Lailach, *Land Art*, 71.

commentators as an example of a measured, unassuming approach to environmental interaction.[50]

Works such as *A line made by walking* (1967) are seen as an alternative approach to creative environmental interactions and are referred to as a predominantly European trend. [51] While the work of the American Land Artists appeared as a relatively unified front, the appearance of environmental interactions in Europe occurred in a more haphazard fashion. Richard Long, Hamish Fulton, Hans Haacke and Guiseppe Penone were all producing works that could be viewed as extensions of other art traditions such as Arte Povera and Conceptual Art.

Fig 4 Richard Long, *A line made by walking*, 1967.

[50] Tufnell, *Land Art,* and Lailach, *Land Art*, and Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*.
[51] Lailach, *Land Art*, 18.

The European trend emerged in a manner more closely associated with artistic development in Conceptual Art and Arte Povera. In this way, it could be suggested that the intellectual basis behind these works tended to be more developed. Most commonly these alternative approaches are generally referred to as Environmental Art.

The etymology of the term Environmental Art is somewhat less clear than that of many of the other terms used in the field. This difference is primarily due to the fact that many of the other terms were originally titles of significant exhibitions. In contrast, Environmental Art appears to have emerged as the rise in environmental consciousness progressed. In regard to chronology it is likely that the term first appeared in the 1970s, based on the premise of its relationship to the rise in social environmental awareness. This position is supported to some extent by the appearance of the phrase in Alan Sonfist's *Art in the Land: A Critical Anthology of Environmental Art* in 1983.[52] While it is not possible to definitively ascertain the etymology of Environmental Art, it is possible to note further distinctions between the term and others in the field of sited interaction.

One major difference between Land Art and Environmental Art relates specifically to who is interacting with the environment. In comparison to Land Art, the field of Environmental Art appears with considerably less gender bias. The tradition of American Land Art is generally regarded as a male dominated phenomenon.[53] Indeed much of the criticism surrounding these works relates to the dominant masculinity of the field. Ben Tufnell for example suggests that:

> For many critics, this attitude was unduly aggressive - even colonial - seemingly proposing the triumph of American culture and technology over nature. As a result the artists were (and continued to be) accused of being environmentally insensitive, unduly macho and ever arrogant.[54]

[52] A. Sonfist, *Art in the Land: A Critical Anthology of Environmental Art*, (New York: E P Dutton Inc, 1983).
[53] Interestingly, one female artist created sited works during this period and is therefore discussed in relation to Land Art practices. Nancy Holt, the partner of Robert Smithson, travelled into the deserts of the American West and created works alongside the male artists of that period.
[54] Tufnell, *Land Art*, 46.

Although it is unclear whether the "unduly macho" attitude of Land Art practioners was a force for female artists to react against, it does appear that developments in feminist thinking heavily influenced female artists in the creation of environmental interactions during this period. Developments in Ecofeminism occurred alongside female artists actively reclaiming and expressing their relationship with the earth. A powerful example of this is found in the performative works of Ana Mendieta's *Silueta Series* (1976 -1979), one of which is seen in Fig. 5. In this series of works, Mendieta explores the relationship between her body and the land by directly imprinting her figure in the landscape.[55] Human-scaled and intimate these works expressed a spiritual relationship to the earth. Where the Land Artists were criticized because of the maleness or assertive masculinity of their approach, these works consciously adopted a more feminine, nurturing, gentle means of interaction. This form of environmental sensibility has been a telling feature of more recent creative approaches towards sited artwork.

The difficulty in discussing the more recent terms within the field is quite different to the problems presented by the earlier ones. This is because the recent terms have not been applied so interchangeably. Often the greatest concern is their limited exposure and the relatively dismissive manner with which they are dealt with in some publications. Tufnell and Tiberghien, for example, only briefly mention the existence of terms such as Eco-Art alongside others in the field, and without definition.[56]

The term Ecological Art or Eco-Art, as it is more commonly known, is often discussed as a recent phenomenon.[57] As the artist Kathryn Miller states "while environmental art strives to put a beautiful object in the landscape, eco-art goes beyond that and works with ecological systems."[58] While this statement defines Environmental Art in a rather simplistic manner, it does give a sense of the difference between the two fields. Like Environmental Art, Eco-Art incorporates direct creative interaction with specific sites, beyond this it is more particularly concerned with functional ecological engagement rather than the production of aesthetic forms. Although the form of these works may still be aesthetically engaging, their appearance

[55] The online directory of 'Women Environmental Artists' emphasizes the direct connection between women artists and Environmental Art. J. Blankman, S. Leibovitz Steinman, and J. Hanson, 'Women Environmental Artists Directory': http://www.weadartists.org/ [accessed 13/10/2008].
[56] Tufnell, *Land Art*, 15 and Tiberghien, *Land Art*, 13.
[57] As mentioned earlier in this chapter the exception to this viewpoint is Lailach's reference to Eco-Art as having a more historical basis. Lailach, *Land Art*, (Cologne: Taschen, 2007), 20.
[58] As cited in P. Washall, "ECO-ART" *Whole Earth,* 101 Summer, (2000), 92.

Fig 5 Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Silhueta Series)*, 1976.

is as a consequence of the ecological function of the work rather than as an end point in itself. It is noteworthy that while Eco-Art is considered a recently defined field, the original use of the term appears to date back to May 1969 when the John Gibson Gallery in New York presented an exhibition entitled *Ecological Art*. The term, however, was not broadly adopted in the art world at that time. This may have been due to the fact that as Lailach observes "none of the artists exhibited by Gibson wanted their projects understood at that time in such a demonstrative, ecologically engaged context."[59]

A notable recent example of Australian art that falls within this category of Eco-Art was seen at 'In the Balance: Art for a Changing World' survey exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Sydney.[60] Rachel Kent, senior curator at MCA, interviewed five of the contributing artists whose work either incorporated natural elements or engaged with environmental issues. The resultant article discusses the artists' works as not overtly political but rather socially engaged.[61] Their work draws attention to environmental issues and raises social awareness surrounding these concerns. In relation to this study however, the artists do not discuss their practice as the creation of an ephemeral onsite form utilising natural materials that is later documented. For this reason, while this exhibition is interesting due to its environmental focus it is outside of the definition of Ephemeral Environmental Art and therefore this investigation.

Works defined by the term often involve a level of engagement with local communities and frequently involve a degree of restoration of the site. As a result some of these works are occasionally referred to as 'Restoration Art' or 'Reclamation Art'. Both of these terms can be considered as a smaller subgroup of Eco-Art. As the names suggest Restoration and Reclamation Art usually involves the reclaiming of sites and the re-establishment of natural eco-systems through creative engagement, such as with Alan Sonfist's work *Time Landscape: Greenwich Village* (1965 – 1978), (Fig. 6). This same work is most frequently discussed by theorists and commentators as falling within the realm of another subgroup known as Ecoventions.

[59] Lailach, *Land Art*, 20.
[60] In the Balance: Art for a changing world, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 21 August – 31 October 2010.
[61] R, Kent. "In conversation: Art and activism in a changing world" *Art & Australia*, Vol 48, No.1, (2010), 34-39.

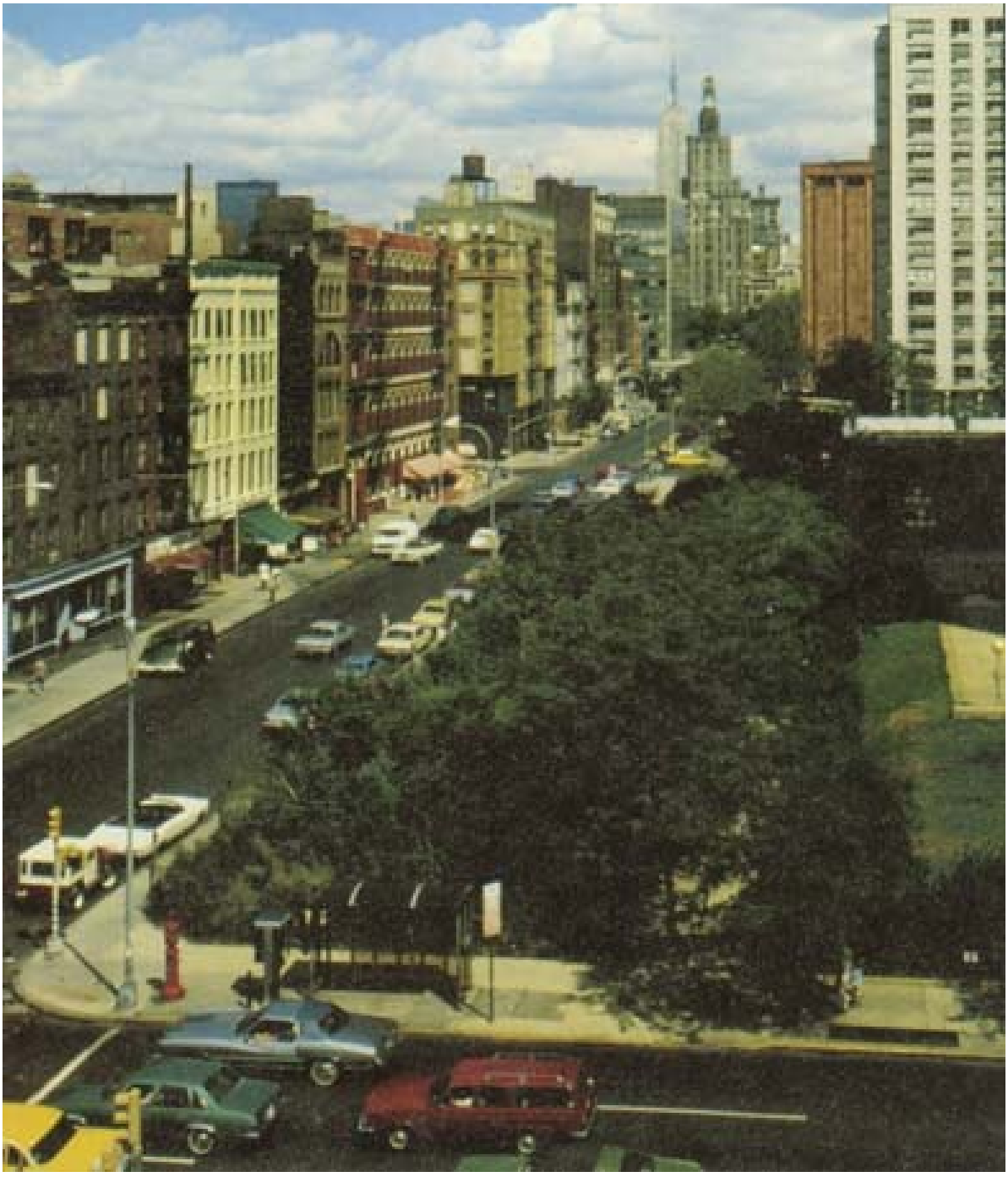

Fig 6 Alan Sonfist, *Time Landscape: Greenwich Village*, 1965/1978 to present.

Originally coined in 1999 the term Ecovention is a contraction of the words ecology and invention. Like many of the earlier terms this subdivision of Environmental Art has also been used as the title for a significant exhibition. The accompanying catalogue to the exhibition explains *Ecovention* as "an artist-initiated project that employs an inventive strategy to

physically transform a local ecology."[62] The connection to ecology and the transformative nature of the work means that this term is very closely aligned with Eco-Art. The extent of overlap between these two terms is considerable. As Sam Bower observes, "many of the examples in the *Ecovention* exhibition and catalogue were previously claimed by other terms so some reshuffling was required."[63] The significant degree of overlap between Ecovention and Eco-Art makes the distinction of the two fields somewhat dubious. As both language and art practice develop the two fields may become discrete with time. The present definition relating to Ecovention will, however, make this separation difficult.

Another major subdivision within the field of Environmental Art is Art in Nature.[64] Unlike Eco-Art and Ecovention, this approach is considerably more distinct with less overlap into other fields. In fact this subdivision is occasionally used as a defining tool to explain what Eco-Art is not.[65] In contrast to Eco-Art where the function of the work is of primary importance, the interaction and its subsequent form, albeit often ephemeral, is given greater significance in the field of Art in Nature.

According to Bower the term Art in Nature is used to describe a means of interacting with the land in which "beautiful forms" are created "with natural materials found on-site such as flower petals, mud, twigs and icicles."[66] The artists working in this field are primarily Europeans, including Chris Drury, Nils-Udo, Alfio Bonanno and its most prominent proponent Andy Goldsworthy. As a term it therefore remains closely associated with Europe. Generally speaking, works of Art in Nature tend to be less overtly political and more subtle in the delivery of their meanings. It appears that artists working in this manner often wish to foster environmental awareness through art. This emphasis on awareness, as opposed to direct activism, is a significant difference when compared to Eco-Art.

A comparatively recently formed organization known by its acronym AININ (Artists In Nature International Network) was established in 1998. According to its website, this group

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[62] Spaid, *Ecovention: Current Art to Transform Ecologies*, 1.
[63] S. Bower, 'A Profusion of Terms: Green Museum', http://www.greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php/ct_id=306 [accessed 14/10/2008].
[64] A. Mańczak, "The Ecological Imperative: Elements of Nature in Late Twentieth Century Art" *Leonardo*, 35, 2 (2002), 131-137. The author discusses work that she refers to as eco-installations. Judging by the definition given and the works that are cited this term duplicates the field defined as Art in Nature.
[65] Kathryn Miller makes this distinction in P. Washall, "ECO-ART" *Whole Earth* 101 Summer, (2000), 92.
[66] Bower, 'A Profusion of Terms: Green Museum', http://www.greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php?ct_id=306 [accessed 3/3/2011]

feels that Art in Nature "implies respecting nature, not using or abusing it for the sake of art. We think that this respect implies a specific creation for each site."[67] While this study focuses on the Western tradition of creative environmental interaction it is worth noting that this organization shares a close association with the South Korean Nature Art group known as Yatoo.

The application of the various terms discussed so far, mostly refer to singular directions within the general field, however, two terms have been applied more broadly as generalist terms for the entire field of work and this is problematic.[68] As noted above both Land Art and Environmental Art have been utilized by different authors when referring to the overall category of creative environment interaction. The term Land Art has been used by Tufnell and Tiberghein to refer to the broad international field.[69] The application of the term in this way has also begun to permeate popular culture as evidenced by numerous online social networking sites that refer to the general field in this way. In direct contrast, author and director of Greenmuseum.org, Sam Bower considers the term Environmental Art to be most appropriate when referring to the field more broadly.[70] I contend that the generalized application of terms, which were initially coined to refer to singular directions, dilutes the original intended meaning and further confuses definitions in the field.

The term Environmental Art seems ill-fitted to broad application as it is difficult to argue the environmental credentials of many of the large-scale impositional Earthworks. The word environmental, however, could be understood from a locational perspective rather than an ethical ideal, which may make the application of the term less problematic. As indictaed above, the fact that the name Land Art is also applied to this broader international field by some authors complicates the matter. This application tends to be of even greater concern because of how synonymous Land Art is with the masculine, forceful, impositional works of the American artists. Some of these works have been criticized for "marring"[71] or even

[67] 'Artists in Nature International Network': http://www.artinnature.org/mission.html [accessed 16/10/2008]
[68] Although these are the key terms that specifically apply to the field, new and alternate terms are occasionally used to reference these works. The reference to these works in other fields does not imply that these fields are directly relate to Environmental Art. Some alternate terms which overlap with works of this type are Sustainable Art, Green Art, Site-Specific Art and Crop Art.
[69] Tufnell, *Land Art* and Tiberghein *Land Art*
[70] Bower, *A profusion of terms*, "Green Museum.org", http://greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php?ct_id=306, [accessed 2/3/2011]
[71] Masheck as cited in Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 16.

"destroying" the land.[72] As a consequence, broader application to more sensitive approaches of environmental interaction, such as the European and feminine traditions is inappropriate. Therefore, I suggest that the re-assignment of a categorizing term to a general over-arching term is problematic. Of the two used by authors in this way, however, Environmental Art appears to be the better fit, particularly in light of artists like Richard Long's, sentiments that his approach to environmental interaction "was the antithesis" of Land Art.[73]

The categorizing role of the term environmental has not been fully explicated. One potential understanding of the relationship between Land Art, Earth Art and Earthworks with Environmental Art is that they were conceptual if not chronological precursors to the more recent practices. This understanding identifies a separation between much of the recent practice and the heavy-handed earlier works and it is therefore more inclusive while also showing the evolution of the field. I suggest a problem arises however, when one considers the blurred and indistinct boundaries in the field, plus the lack of any identifiable time or action that clearly delineates and separates these approaches.

One author who presents an alternative understanding of the relationship between the general term and the categorizing ones is Bower. He explains that the approach at Greenmuseum.org, arguably the Internet's preeminent site regarding this form of artwork, is to "use Environmental Art as an umbrella term to encompass Eco-Art, Ecological Art, Ecoventions, Land Art, Earth Art, Earthworks, and Art in Nature."[74] This position creates a framework from which to comprehend the relationship of terms, however, it does not deal with the significance of chronological development, nor does it pick up in the nuances in the meaning words environment and environmental.[75] The key difference in these terms is the human context that is layered into environmental. Like discussions regarding space and place the context of human relationships to location inform and shape understanding beyond the discrete distanced view of space that is referenced by the term environment.

[72] M. Auping, as cited in Tufnell, *Land Art*, 54.
[73] Long as quoted in Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, 215.
[74] Bower, 'A Profusion of Terms: Green Museum', http://www.greenmuseum.org/generic_content.php/ct_id=306 [accessed 14/10/2008]
[75] To assist in the comprehension of the interconnected relationship of these various terms I have created a flowchart (Appendix 2).

2.2 Ephemeral Environmental Art

The term ephemeral is often used in artistic discourse to describe impermanent works that last only for a short period of time. I have observed that its over usage has unfortunately led to the term ephemeral being treated as interchangeable with the term temporal. This inappropriate usage has blurred the subtle yet significant differences between each word. In some ways this interchangeability is not altogether surprising. When used in art discourse the terms refer to works that exist within the cycle of time, as opposed to works that strive for a measure of permanence. The subtle yet significant difference, however, lies in the connection of ephemeral to life as opposed to merely existence.

Temporal significance in artwork is by no means limited to Environmental Art. While it could be argued that all art is impermanent due to material limitations, temporal works are generally discussed as those that are created while being mindful of their relationship to the cycle of time. Installation Art, for example, could be considered as temporal due to its timeline of existence marked by the works' installation and de-installation processes. The defined parameters of this timeline impose an artificiality which is distinct from the notion of ephemerality. In contrast to the artificiality of an imposed existence, the focus of this research is Ephemeral Environmental Art, which as a living practice has a "brevity of life that when coupled with a lack of any formal de-installation process means that the works' departure is more like the gentle passing of a life."[76]

As both terms pertain to the length of time for which something occurs, or is in existence, there is a direct relationship between them. The significant difference, as mentioned above is this notion of life. This notion of lived existence applies to a select group of works within the broader grouping of temporal works. Therefore, the relationship between the terms could be understood as ephemeral works existing as a subset of those defined as temporal. In regard to this definition, ephemeral works can be described as temporal; however, not all temporal works are ephemeral.

It is therefore more appropriate to consider this category as a sub-group of the works referred to as Art in Nature. The subdivision of Art in Nature specifically relates to works that incorporate ephemerality of the created form as an ongoing part of the interaction.

[76] M. Shiell, "The Changing Sense of Social Space in Relation to a Developing Ephemeral Art Piece", in *Sensi/able Spaces: Space, Art and the Environment Proceedings of the SPARTEN conference,* ed. E. H. Huijbens and O. P. Jónsson, (Newcastle, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 117.

Characteristically speaking, these works are often created in response to natural impermanent phenomena. Due to the significance of impermanence within the inspiration, this fleeting character is often maintained in the artists' interaction with the site. In these instances, the intended natural retrogression of the form created through the artist's interaction is a conceptually significant element of the work. Therefore, retrogression of the form tends to be the facet of the process that is specifically referred to by the term ephemeral.

A fundamental concern as to why documentary practice of photography at a single point in time is problematic. As a process-driven practice, the specific attention being paid to the changing form in the application of the term Ephemeral Environmental Art appears almost reminiscent of object-based thinking. The overall process is greater than the form alone; however, this is alluded to through the use of the term ephemeral. The application of this term implies a degree of living relationship between the artwork, its materials and the site. Therefore, the term Ephemeral Environmental Art references not only the work, but also its connected relationship to the site.

The selective use of natural indigenous materials allows the site-specific interaction to have minimal ongoing environmental impact as the form naturally retrogresses. This is a common feature of Ephemeral Environmental Artwork, as is the inclination towards minimal environmental impact following the sensitive, intimate nature of the interaction. The degree to which this urge informs the interaction varies of course with each artist. Nevertheless, in general terms, works of this type are not overtly demonstrative of the artist's environmental intent; rather an awareness and sensitivity to environmental issues is more subtly layered into the work. Along with these defining characteristics, the manner of environmental interaction can also be viewed as a point of commonality between artists.

The majority of artists working in this way tend to utilise a hands-on approach to the manipulation of materials. This preferential use of non-mechanised processes in the creation of the work allows the artist a direct visceral understanding of the site. While this approach is generally the case, some artists, particularly those that create larger scale interactions do utilise machinery to a limited extent. For this reason, the methodological approach to materials, and the subtlety of expression regarding environmental concerns are considered as trends rather than defining characteristics.

2.3 Documentation

The ephemeral quality that is of such significance for this grouping of artworks means that the majority of artists working in this way utilise additional processes to create lasting impressions of their onsite works. Documentation within art is not limited to the practice of Ephemeral Environmental Art. Indeed, it could be said that documentation has a role in all art. Its function, however, seems significantly more instrumental when the work no longer exists. Purposefully performative works, such as Performance Art, as well as some Arte Povera and Fluxus pieces also utilise documentation as a means of recording a work that has only a brief existence. In fact the increased prevalence of conceptual and performative art practices appear to have increased the role of documentation in art.

Sol Lewitt heralded the formal arrival of Conceptual Art in 1967 when he proposed that "the idea becomes a machine that makes the art" as opposed to art that is merely "meant for the sensation of the eye."[77] This new basis for art making allowed for a practice that was not beholden to the production of aesthetic objects, but was rather driven by a concern for ideas and actions. The critic Lucy Lippard in her seminal text *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* documented the evolution of this practice.[78] The movement also offers a valid framework for comprehending Ephemeral Environmental Art's interaction with the land, irrespective of the longevity of the outcome. The de-emphasis on aesthetic objects allowed artists fresh opportunities for the contemplation of their practice, however, it also created new challenges. One such challenge is that if art is driven by concepts and ideas beyond the need for a lasting object, how then are these ideas and concepts communicated and disseminated? Documentation is therefore often closely tied with a range of practices that are spatially and temporally limited.

Artists who made direct creative interactions with the land appear to have quickly adopted the use of documentation as a means for sharing a sense of their works. The earliest exhibition specifically devoted to artists who creatively interacted with the environment was the previously mentioned *Earthworks* exhibition at the Dwan Gallery in New York. Even at this

[77] S. Lewitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" *Artforum* 5 no.10 (Summer 1967): 80 reprinted in A. Alberro. and B. Stimson, ed., *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999), 12-26.
[78] L. Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, (California: University of California, 1997).

early stage, the use of documentation was widespread; of the fourteen artists represented "most were represented only by photographs."[79]

Since that time the use of documentation to record various traces of artworks appears to occur more frequently. In the case of Ephemeral Environmental Art, documentation is specifically utilized for the purpose of recording the onsite work. Generally speaking this documentation takes the shape of a photographic record of the form of the interaction taken at the time of the artist's cessation of activity.[80] Occasionally, albeit rarely, artists record the subsequent decomposition of the form of the interaction as it retrogresses back into nature. The creation of a lasting record of works that place conceptual significance on their brief existence may appear paradoxical.

The apparent paradox in documenting ephemeral artworks lies in the notion that through the recording of the form, the documentation negates the ephemeral nature of the work. John Rockwell presents this argument when he expresses the view that documentation of this type of work is counter-intuitive, as it relies on "conserving and collecting art that was intended to be transitory and uncollectible."[81] At first glance this argument does seem to have merit, however the concerns relating to such an argument are twofold.

Firstly, this mindset seems to equate the document and the work it is recording as being equivalent; therefore, through the act of documenting there is no net loss as the form retrogresses back into nature. The view of a photographic record as being completely equivalent to, and indeed a replacement for the original is not without artistic precedent. In his essay of 1859 relating to early photographic practices, in particular stereoscopy, Oliver Wendell Holmes claimed:

> Form is henceforth divorced from matter. In fact, matter as a visible object is of no greater use any longer ... Give us a few negatives of a thing worth seeing, taken from different points of view, and that is all we want. Pull it down or burn it up if you please.[82]

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[79] Kastner, *Land and Environmental Art*, 23.
[80] Many publications relating to this form of art are full of these types of photographs. Some examples of such publications include, A. Goldsworthy, *Parkland: Andy Goldsworthy*, (Yorkshire: Yorkshire Sculpture Park, 1988) and C. Drury, *Silent Spaces*, rev. exp. ed, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004) and M. Hill, *Earth to Earth: Art Inspired by Nature's Design*, (Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2007).
[81] Rockwell, "Preserve Performance Art? Can you preserve the wind?", 153.
[82] O. Wendell-Holmes, "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph" *Atlantic monthly*, (1859) as reproduced in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. A. Trachtenberg, (New Haven: Leetes Island Books, 1980), 80.

This perspective is of course somewhat outdated in the 21st century for while the photograph and the subject share a direct relationship, audience experience of the two are distinctly different.[83] As Blair French noted in the article relating to Tom Nicholson's urban ephemeral work, the presentation of documentation is not intended to "infer a fully analogical 1:1 relationship between action and document."[84] Therefore, the document is not meant to be viewed as equivalent to the artwork.

The second concern regarding the apparent paradox lies in the possible understanding of the form of the work as being object-like, rather than a fleeting element of a greater art process. The reading of the form as an autonomous unchanging object may lead to the perception that it can be comprehended from a single viewing at any time. Such a viewpoint is particularly flawed as these interactions are created from a process-driven basis that is interrelated to both site and context. This process-driven basis re-weights the artistic significance onto the greater interaction within the site and away from the creation and valuation of an autonomous art object. If documentation is re-examined in light of a process-driven perspective, then it is apparent that what is being recorded are merely individual instances throughout the greater life of the interaction. Therefore, documentation does not continue the life of the work; rather, it is a complimentary practice to the onsite interaction, not an attempt to stand in for that process. Indeed it could be argued, that even if a document recorded an entire interaction over time it would still not be an indefinite extension of the life of the artwork due to the record's material limitation in documenting the multi-layered, contextual and sensual relationship of the interaction, the site and the audience. The experience of the documentation and the sited interaction are different in terms of both function and audience experience. Simply put, the purpose of documentation as it applies to this form of art is to translate some sense or trace of the work's life into a record, not to prolong that life.

The literature on Ephemeral Environmental Art includes many glossy photographic images of the onsite works, however there is very little critical consideration or discussion of the documentary practice. If documentation is referred to at all it is generally as a mere mention that it occurs. As a consequence much of the information for this discussion has been gleaned through observation and the consideration of alluded intent as opposed to explicit

[83] This relationship is explored in R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 1st ed. translated by R. Howard, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).
[84] B, French. "Tom Nicholson: Following the Event." *Art & Australia*, Vol 7, No.1, (2009), 143.

commentary by previous scholars. While the exact reason for the predominance of photography is not overtly stated, the near absolute reliance on this technique does seem to suggest a considered rationale underpinning its usage.

Photography as a documentary technique in the recording of Ephemeral Environmental Art possesses a number of strengths. The camera allows for an extremely convenient and relatively easy means of creating a direct visual record of the form of the interaction. Digital technology has added a further degree of immediacy and cost effectiveness. Through the use of photography the documentarian has the ability to control and refine space (viewing angle and picture frame) and time (light and shadow), thus exerting a level of control over the viewer's perception of the onsite interaction. Interestingly, this level of control does not diminish the audience's perception of truth in regard to this form of documentation. The claim of truth and authenticity in photography relies, as Tom Gunning states, on the indexicality and visual accuracy of photographs.[85] Indexicality, refers to the immediate relationship between the subject and the resulting photograph and as Gunning suggests, the visual accuracy is necessary in the representation of truth.[86] The perception of truth and authenticity, although questionable as pointed out by Arthur Goldsmith in his aptly titled article "Photos Always Lied" arises from the direct relationship between the photograph and its subject.[87] The directness of this relationship creates the perception of limited documentary intervention. While these advantages of photography may be valid, I contend that photography also presents conceptual concerns and limitations in the recording of Ephemeral Environmental Art.

The conceptually significant process driven basis and the contextual relationship to site that characterise Ephemeral Environmental Artwork mean that the use of photography as the sole documentary technique is limited; particularly in instances of documentation being presented as a single photograph. Lailach expressed this concern by referring to photography as a form of "documentation that artists viewed with a mixture of rejection and distrust, indifference

[85] Tom Gunning, "What's the Point of an Index? Or, Faking Photographs", *NORDICOM Review*, vol. 5, no.1/2 (September 2004), p.41
[86] Although not specifically related to Ephemeral Environmental Art, artists such as Thomas Demand have used photography to simultaneously reinforce and undermine the status of photography as an indexical trace of the real. Indeed, his photographs vouch for the existence of the photographic set which in turn refers to a another photographic document that is again a mediation of a real place or occurrence.
[87] A. Goldsmith, "Photos Always Lied," *Popular photography* 98.2, (1991), 68-75.

and pragmatism."[88] Unfortunately this declarative statement by Lailach is not supported by any quotes, or comments to underpin this position. The lack of critical discourse relating to documentation means that not only is Lailach's standpoint difficult to validate it is also difficult to disprove.

The refinement of time to single moments in photography has the potential to mislead the audience. The presentation of these individual momentary views can confuse the form of the interaction as being akin to a static sculptural object which diminishes the comprehension of process and the intended fragility of the work in relation to the site. This may, in turn, lead to the objectification of the process-based artwork. As the artist Dennis Oppenheim contends "the aspect of the documentation that I would tend to reject is that it is taking us back into an object, or into a rigid static kind of form which is exactly what the new work doesn't imply."[89] In addition to the concern of time, the ability of the photographer to manage space through the manipulation of viewing angle, distance from the subject and the controlling of image boundaries through the edges of the picture frame, presents the audience with a singular, restricted experience of the work. This restriction is contrary to the openness of the onsite works that can be experienced from a multitude of distances, angles and times. Robert Smithson supports this view when he states that "photographs are perhaps even the most extreme contraction, because they reduce everything to a rectilinear or square, and it shrinks everything down."[90]

The nature of the information that is presented in the form of the photograph could also be considered problematic. The density of visual information relating to the physical qualities of the form tends to ascribe a greater degree of significance to this aspect of the interaction. While the aesthetic form may be significant, the conceptual basis for the work may relate to considerations of the site beyond its visual qualities. For example, an onsite interaction may be created as a response to the feeding habits of bats in a particular region. In addition to the aesthetic qualities of the created form, the interaction may also incorporate an element of sound in reference to bats use of sonar. While the form of this work may be visually recorded

[88] Lailach, *Land Art*, 11.
[89] D. Oppenheim in interview with P. Norvell, *Recording Conceptual Art,* ed. A. Alberro and P. Norvell, (Berkley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2001), 23.
[90] Smithson in interview with P. Norvell, *Recording Conceptual Art,* 127.

photographically, the conceptually significant sound component would be lost.[91] Therefore, alternate approach to documentation acknowledges the breadth of the onsite interaction is imperative.

Additionally, the physical process of using the camera and the relative ease of image creation that comes with photography, while convenient, might be viewed as conceptually contrary. The process of taking a photograph requires a physical distancing away from the subject. The camera then forms a mechanical obstruction through which the documentarian visually experiences the subject. The imposition of distance and mediation is compounded by the mechanised process of image creation. Using photography as the single documentary technique which relies on technical, less directly knowable processes, therefore, seems conceptually contrary to the connected, viscerally known (through the process of physical bodily engagement) interaction with the site. This physical distancing and significant change to the creative process is problematic in that it may interfere with the artist's sense of connection to the work.

The potential loss of connection to the artwork through the process of documentation creates an artificial separation between the original interaction and its documentation. In this case, documentation is not an evolved component of the greater process, but rather sits as a distinct afterthought to the actual process. So ingrained is this perception of documentation as 'other' that in cases where it has been artfully executed it can lead to confusion regarding where the artwork really exists. Is the artwork found in the onsite interaction? Or is the onsite interaction merely an elaborate prop created in readiness for the photographer to create his artful image? I contend that a somewhat more challenging position would be that the two elements exist in, and are created from the same conceptual position.[92] While this notion provides documentation with an obvious evolutionary link to the onsite work, it is a more challenging position as it reengages questions of ephemerality and intent.

[91] In this example film may appear to be the most obvious option, however, due to this investigation's emphasis on knowable processes, film is not considered herein.
[92] In actuality this position does not change the central characteristics of documentation. While the documentation may be created through the considered application of technique in relation to the conceptual basis, and in turn possess a closer relationship to the onsite interaction, it remains functionally and experientially different.

One artist whose artful documentation of his environmental interactions is well-known through his many glossy publications is Andy Goldsworthy.[93] He is also one of the few artists who has written about his relationship with photography.[94] In an article for *Art and Design* Goldsworthy states, "I have a social and intellectual need to make photographs … Photography is my way of talking, writing and thinking about my art."[95] He also recognises the limitation of the technique when he writes:

> The photograph is incomplete. The viewer is drawn into the space between the image and the work. A bridge needs to be made between the two. It is necessary to know what it is like to get wet, feel a cold wind, touch a leaf, throw stones …[96]

This comment illuminates Goldsworthy's understanding of the relationship between his onsite work, the documentary photographs and the role of the audience in viewing the records. Interestingly, he views the limitation of photography as a positive. The photographic document acts as the starting point, which requires consideration in light of the viewers' own physical experience of nature. Sadly, he does not share with us how or if the conceptual basis for the onsite works inform his choice of documentary technique.

One challenge therefore of exploring alternative documentary techniques may be found in relation to maintaining audience comprehension of the relationship between the document and onsite interaction. As French states "an artist's overt manipulation (selection, editing, re-composing) of the 'raw data' of post-action documentation brings into play issues of authenticity and representational ethics."[97] While the use of alternate recording techniques may potentially lessen the directness of connection between the record and the work, I suggest that there is considerable potential gain in finding documentary processes that are enriched with stronger secondary allusions to the conceptual basis for the interaction.

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[93] Andy Goldsworthy is also well known through numerous video and film documentaries that have been created regarding his practice.
[94] A. Goldsworthy, "Relationship between photography and Goldsworthy's transient, site-specific work." *Art & Design* (May/June 1994), xi.
[95] Goldsworthy, "Relationship between photography and Goldsworthy's transient, site-specific work", xi.
[96] Goldsworthy, "Relationship between photography and Goldsworthy's transient, site-specific work", xi.
[97] French, "Tom Nicholson: Following the Event," 143.

2.4 Documentary Alternatives

Although the use of still photography is by far the most commonly used method for documenting Ephemeral Environmental Artwork, some artists have experimented with other documentary techniques, albeit rarely. The necessity for broader approaches to documentation may be inferred from Robert Morgan's observations about the relationship between Performance Art and documentation. As Morgan argues:

> Images used to document or represent performance art usually require additional information – a narrative text, a descriptive phrase, or maybe a set of related images presented in some sort of sequence or graphic order. A photograph, if intended to be read as a performance document, rarely exists as an independent agent without a (con)textual referent.[98]

Morgan's quote is quite damning regarding the efficacy of photography as a documentary outcome of performative practice. Whilst photography does have its strengths, I would suggest that when it is presented as a single outcome, Morgan's comments could be equally applied to the process driven works of Ephemeral Environmental Art. Therefore to provide greater contextual reference the idea of multiple referential forms in a single record seems logical.

Arguably, the most direct and readily knowable mark making process that could be used for documentary purposes is drawing. A number of artists creating these types of works utilise drawing as an element in their creative process. Interestingly, very few of these artists explicitly discuss drawing as a documentary outcome. The majority consider drawing as an observational and developmental tool. Andy Goldsworthy states that he uses drawing for two purposes. Firstly, he states "there are the proposal drawings which are not really drawings at all – they're more like written descriptions conveying information and trying to explain things."[99] Goldsworthy has published numerous images of this form of drawing in both *Varia: Refuges D'Art* and *Sheepfolds*.[100] In both instances his proposal drawings could easily be read as documentary images of completed projects rather than intended outcomes of future endeavours, (Fig. 7). Rather than having concerns with veracity of occurrence, Goldsworthy's extensive and well-publicised body of onsite works tend to reassure the

[98] R. Morgan, Half-Truth: Performance and the Photograph, *Action/Performance and the Photograph*, (California: Gardner Lithograph, 1993).
[99] Goldsworthy, *Sheepfolds*, (London: Michael Hue-Williams Fine Art, 1996), 20.
[100] Goldsworthy, *Sheepfolds*, and Goldsworthy, *Varia: Refuge d'art*, (Lyon; Digne, France: Éditions Artha; Musée départemental de Digne, 2002).

viewer of the authenticity of the drawings' relationship to an onsite work. In these instances, whilst the drawings are not intended to function as records of finished works, their documentary potential is evident. Secondly, Goldsworthy describes his other use of drawing in the environmental interactions when he tells us that, "the more interesting drawings are those scratched into stone or with curved ash sticks braced against a wall in a continuous line."[101] Interestingly, he does not link the use of drawing in the environment with its potential for inclusion in the documentation.

One artist who does refer to the potential benefits of exploring both drawing and painting is the German artist Nils-Udo. Although the majority of artworks shown in his book, *Nils-Udo: Art in Nature* are photographs, the documentary image of the work entitled *Robinia Leaf Swings* is recorded as a painted diptych (Fig. 1).[102] These images show the same work at different periods of its retrogression back into nature. The artist has also incorporated a photograph above each of the paintings. This additional image appears to reassure the viewer of the onsite work's existence, due to the perception of photography's evidentiary veracity. While the artist's choice of painting as a means of documentation may be intended as being indicative of the skill, patience and gentle touch used in the onsite works, his manipulation of the material also seems important. The thin wash of paint seems significant when considered in relation to the watery site in which the interaction occurred. It is also interesting to note the purposeful use of reflection and mirroring in these paintings. The artist has documented the reflection of the created form on the surface of the still water. This reflected quality has also been further reinforced by the artist mirroring the overall composition from left to right along a central axis. Although subtle, this considered approach to documentation seems to emphasize important conceptual elements of the onsite interaction. When Nils-Udo tells us that, "The possibilities, laws and rules of painting broaden my spectrum of means of expression" we are reminded that there are a range of potential benefits that come with the exploration of alternate methods of record creation.[103]

[101] Goldsworthy, *Sheepfolds*, 20.
[102] Nils-Udo, *Nils-Udo: Art in Nature*, (Cologne, Germany: Wienand, 2000).
[103] Nils-Udo, *Nils-Udo*, 10.

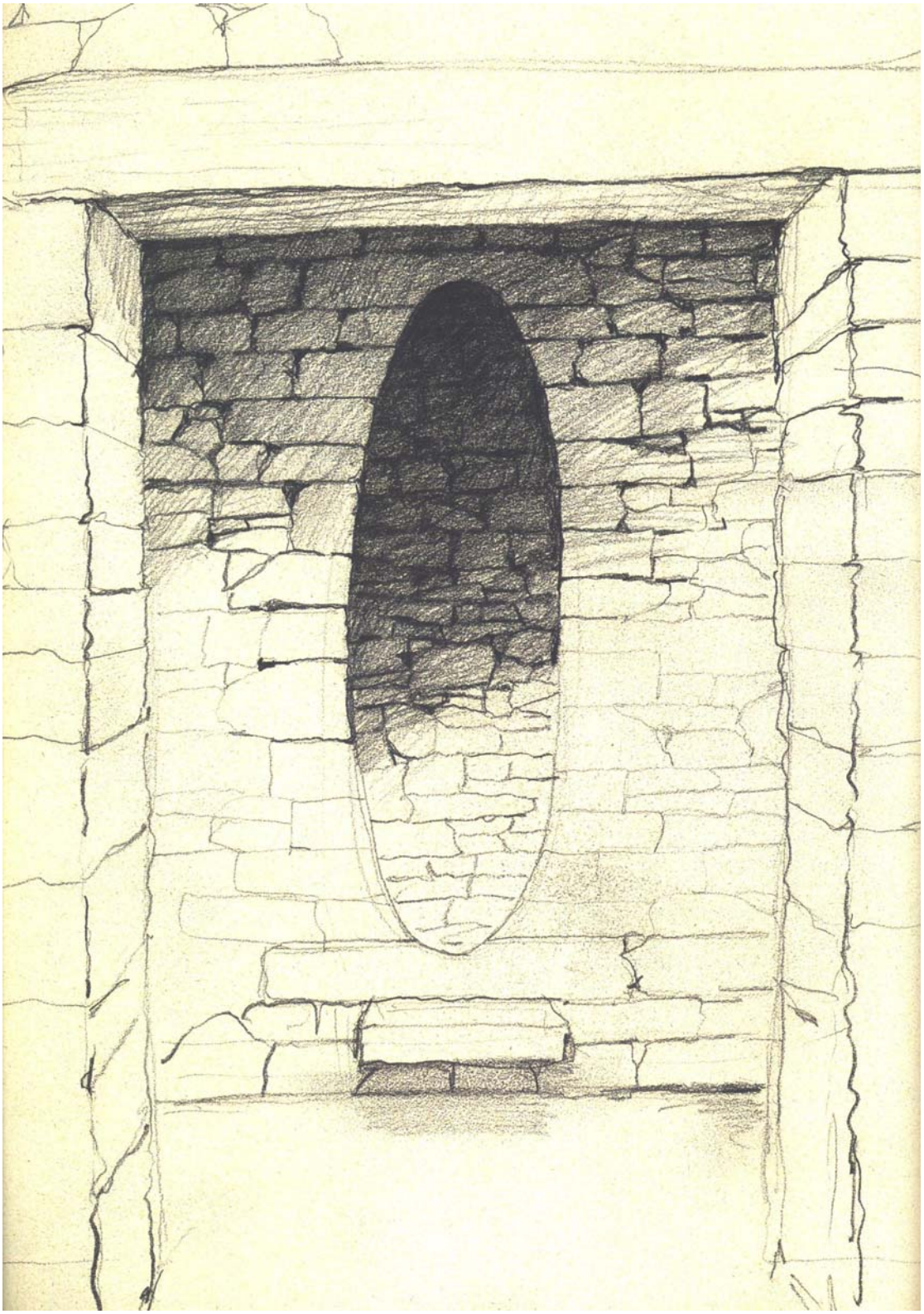

Fig 7 Andy Goldsworthy, Preparatory Drawing for *Refuge d'art* de la Chapelle Saint Madeleine, 2001.

Like Nils-Udo's use of photography and painting within a single documentary outcome, the British artist Richard Long also combines different documentary formats in the recording of his interactions with the land. While photography remains one documentary format, he also uses maps and text. Long has stated that:

> The photograph should be as simple as possible so that when people look at the photograph they are not dazzled by wide-angled lenses and special effects. Because my art is very simple and straightforward, I think the photographs have got to be fairly simple and straightforward…[104]

These photographs are accompanied by brief descriptive statements that illustrate the relationship of the photographed form to the broader site (Fig.8). In the gallery setting these photographic records are layered with mapping references (Fig. 9) and text pieces (Fig. 10) relating to Long's experience of site. This combination of references has the potential to envelope the viewer and allows for a richer documentary experience beyond solely the photograph alone.

KAROO CROSSING

A FIFTEEN DAY WALK IN THE LOCALITY OF GUARRIE BERG

SOUTH AFRICA 2004

Fig 8 Richard Long, *Karoo Crossing A Fifteen Day Walk in the Locality of Guarrie Berg South Africa*, 2004.

[104] Lailach, *Land Art*, 72.

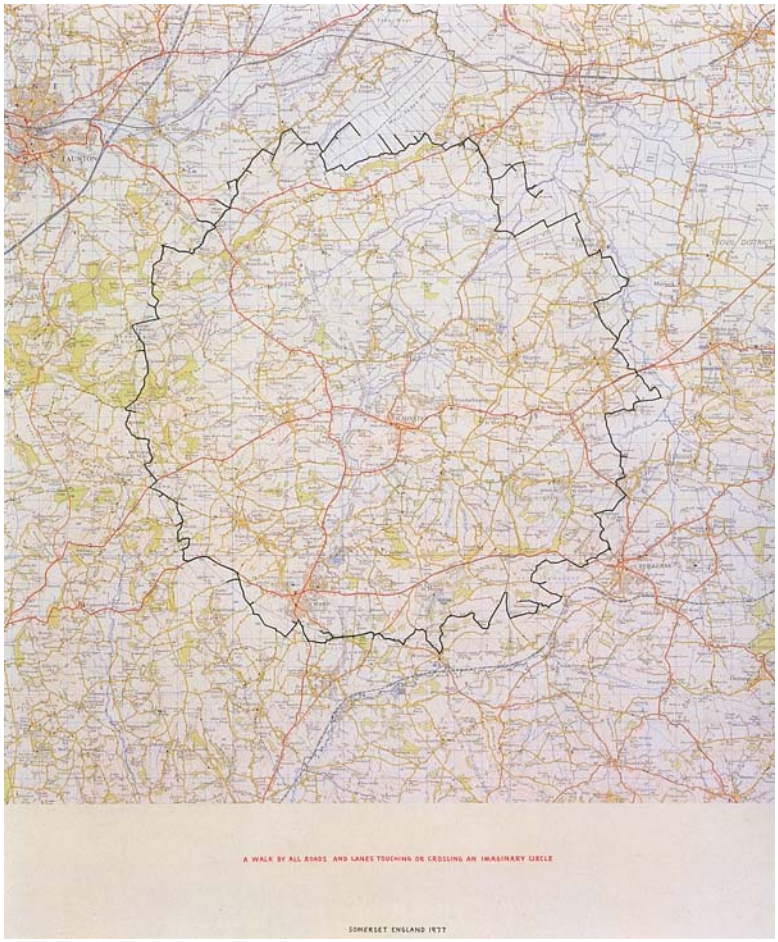

Fig 9 Richard Long, *A walk by all roads and lanes touching or crossing an imaginary circle*, 1977.

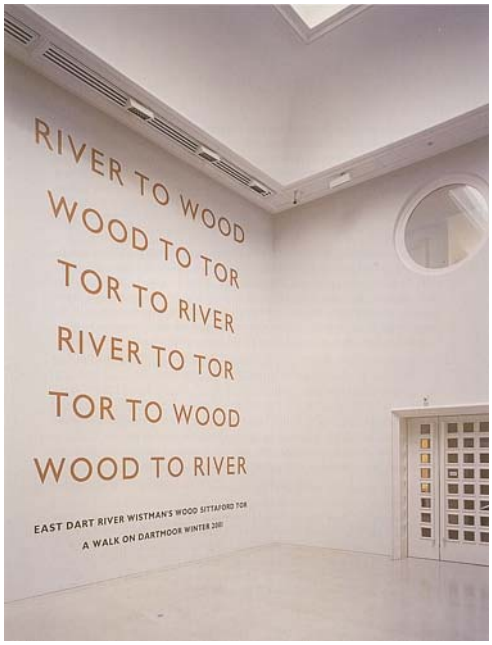

Fig 10 Richard Long, *River to River*, 2001.

American artist Dennis Oppenheim also utilises composite techniques to document his interactions with the land. Although more readily identified with Land Art than Environmental Art, his environmental works were not intended to have the same measure of permanence as his contemporaries' works. Regularly utilising snow as the material for his works, he clearly intended the work to disappear with time. One writer in the field, Tufnell refers to Oppenheim's works as being 'performative strategies' in nature.[105] As a response to this impermanence he frequently documented his own work. Unlike the recent reliance on photography as the sole documentary process, Oppenheim, like Long, utilised the photographic image as an element within a composite approach to documentation. Using different visual and textual expressions he layers varying documentary formats in order to visually reference both the site and the interaction. Beyond Long's combinations of dual documentary processes, Oppenheim combines photography, satellite imagery, topographical maps and text descriptors (Fig.11). The concern that led him to extend the documentary processes beyond solely relying on the use of photography was expressed in an interview with Patricia Norvell. In discussing his work's relationship to photography Oppenheim declared that "to solidify this through a photographic abstraction is ripping a thing that's going with a certain force out and throwing it back to the dormancy of a rigid form of communication."[106] The role of documentation is primarily to communicate. If communication is misunderstood due to the rigidity of the form, then logically it needs to be expressed in an alternative manner so as to improve understanding. Whilst Oppenheim used this still, two-dimensional composite approach to documentation, another Land Artist who explored alternate documentary formats was Robert Smithson. Arguably the best-known work by Smithson is the iconic piece *Spiral Jetty*, (1970) as seen in Fig. 12. While this work has been repeatedly documented in photographic form throughout its existence, it is the artist's documentary film that is of specific interest in this research. The film does not document the retrogression of the work back into nature, as the work still exists today, albeit somewhat changed with time. Instead, the film provides an unconventional and complex succession of filmic sequences that layer a broad range of references to the site and the making of the work. Unlike the majority of still images produced by Ephemeral Environmental Artists which portray a single moment in the life of the form, Smithson used film to interweave an array of imagery that provided a sense of the complexity of the work

[105] Tufnell, *Land Art*, 62.
[106] Oppenheim in interview with Norvell, *Recording Conceptual Art*, 23.

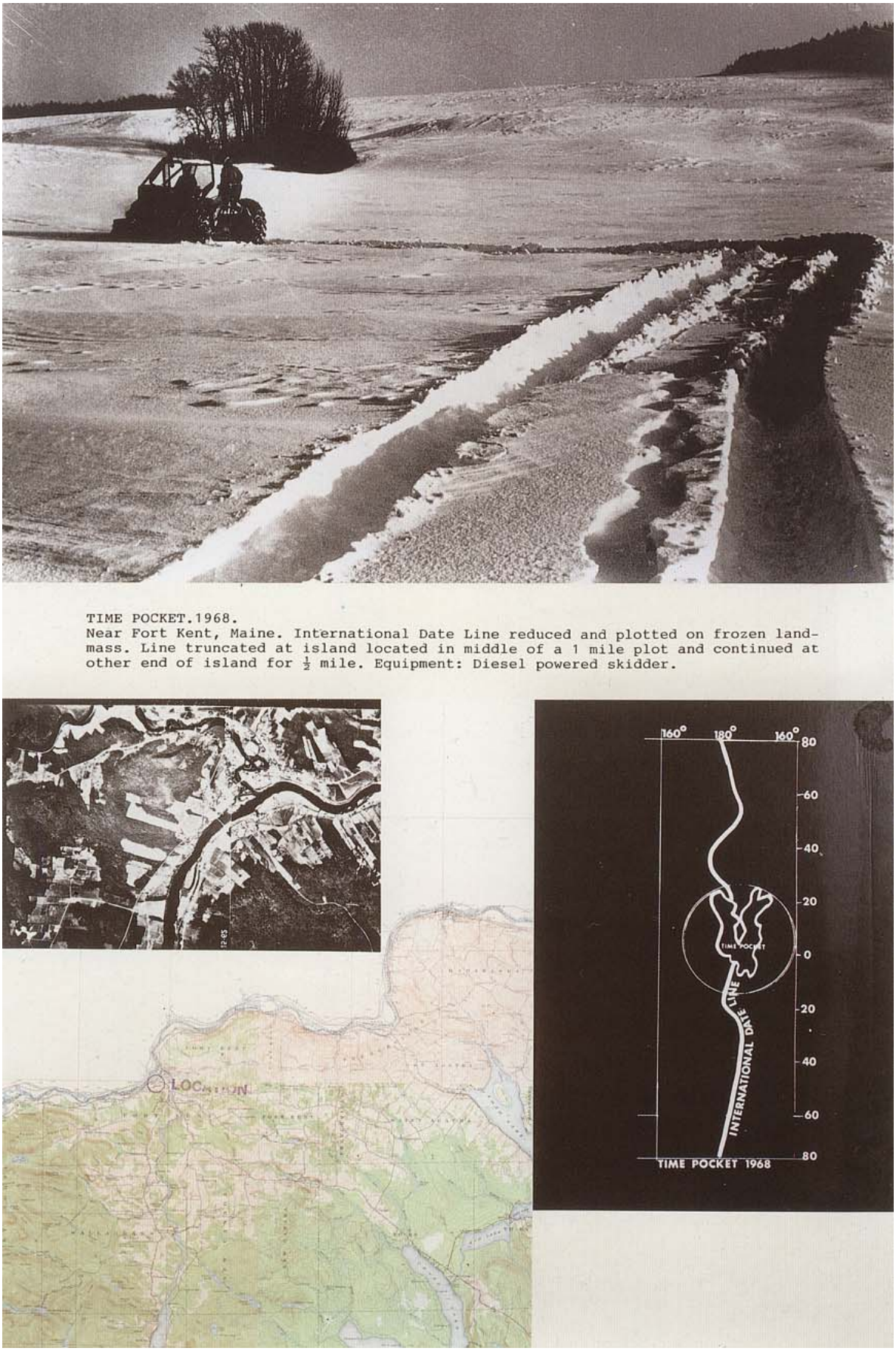

Fig 11 Dennis Oppenheim, *Time Pocket*, 1968.

and its relationship to the site. A range of film stills demonstrating the variety of imagery used by the artist can be seen in Fig. 13 and Fig. 14.

Another form of work by this artist that seems full of documentary potential in its possible application to Ephemeral Environmental Art, are Smithson's *Nonsites*. These gallery works act as points of reference to absent locations (sites). Tufnell describes the form of these works when he tells us that:

> A container resembling a modular Minimalist sculpture, within which the slate chips were placed, would be exhibited alongside a map indicating their source, the 'site'; *Site* and *Nonsite* thus establishing a dialectic of presence and absence, past and present, object and idea.[107]

Fig 12 Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, April 1970.

[107] Tufnell, *Land Art*, 16-17.

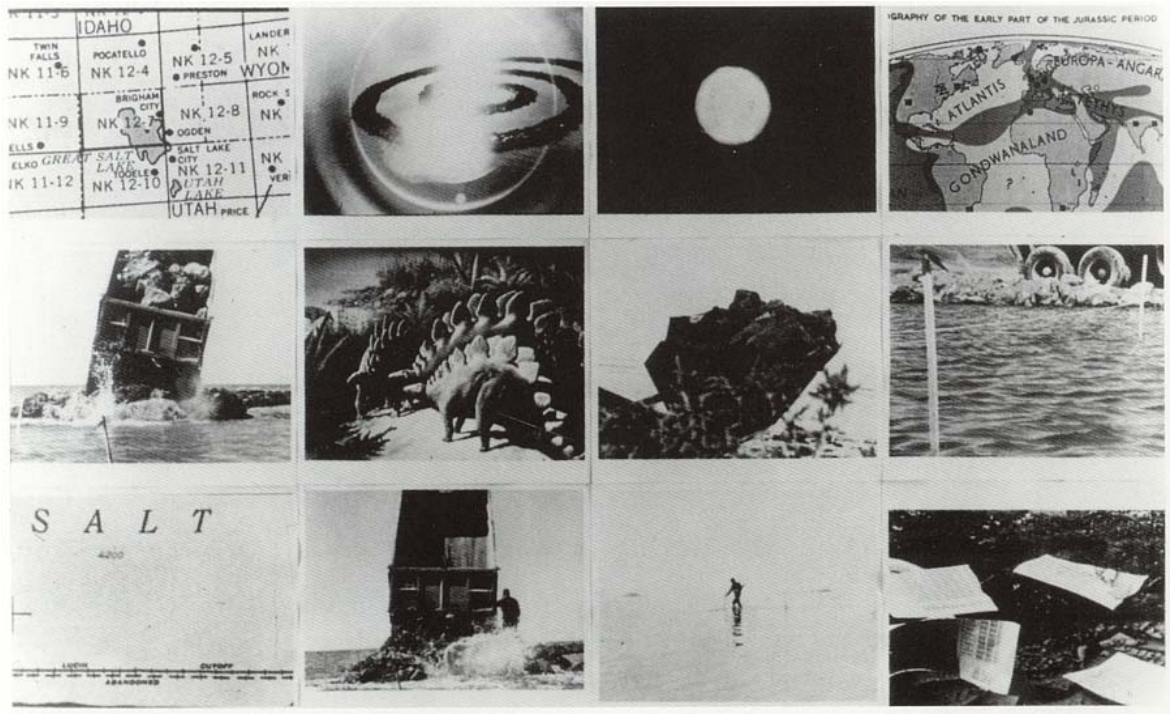

Fig 13 Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty Film Stills Photo Documentation*, 1970.

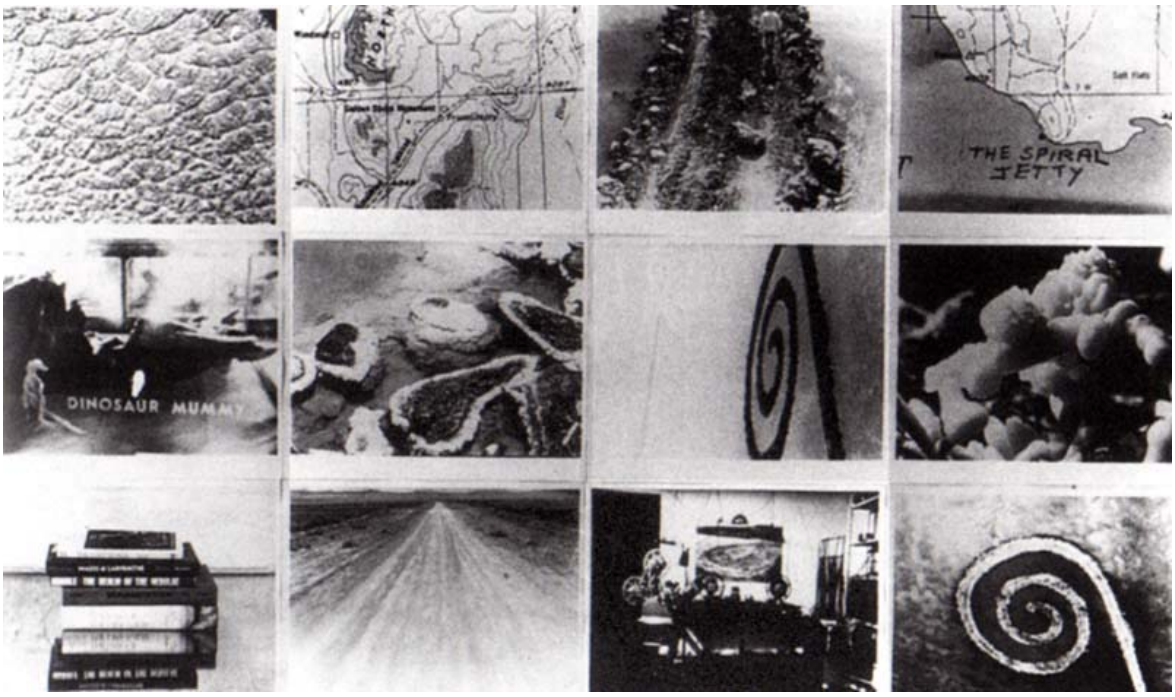

Fig 14 Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty Film Stills Photo Documentation*, 1970.

These works were not intended to function as a point of reference to artworks created in the land; therefore, they are distinctly different from the documentary outcomes of Ephemeral Environmental Art. The potential link for documentation may be found in their allusion to absence. As Smithson himself said "what you're really confronted with in a nonsite is the absence of site."[108] Smithson was by no means alone in his introduction of extracted materials to gallery spaces. For example, Richard Long also creates sculptures for exhibition in galleries from materials extracted from outdoor sites. Smithson was critical of this aspect of Long's practice as he felt that Long failed to establish a strong and meaningful connection with the outdoor site. The question for documenting Ephemeral Environmental Art then becomes, can elements extracted from a site or a sited work be used as a form of reference to not only the location, but also the loss or absence that is central to the retrogressed interaction?[109]

Unlike Oppenheim and Smithson who are generally not directly linked to Environmental Art, Chris Drury and Andy Goldsworthy are both closely associated with this form of art practice. Both of these artists have published books relating to their practice. Chris Drury's *Canvas Lavo* (Fig. 15), and Andy Goldsworthy's *Snow Drawings* (Fig. 16), are both pieces that remain as direct residual traces created by changes during the process of interaction.[110]

Interestingly neither artist discusses these remnant visual indicators as forms of documentation. The directness with which the visual remnants come into creation, alleviates the concern of authenticity that is incumbent in the use of secondary imaging processes for documentation. Irrespective of how these visual traces come into being, they may still be understood as residual indicators of a greater creative interaction. In contrast to the present use of photography, this form of documentation produces considerably more abstracted results. As documentation, these abstracted records are suggestive of process, rather than being literal visual indicators of form. Therefore it could be argued that these evocative records challenge the accepted position of visual literality within documentation.

In relation to the notion of self-documentation there are numerous other artists producing works that are not specifically self-documentation of Ephemeral Environmental Art, but

[108] Smithson in interview with P. Norvell, *Recording Conceptual Art*, 126.
[109] As discussed in Tufnell, *Land Art*, 29.
[110] C. Drury, *Silent Spaces*, 28-29 and A. Goldsworthy, *Midsummer Snowballs*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001)

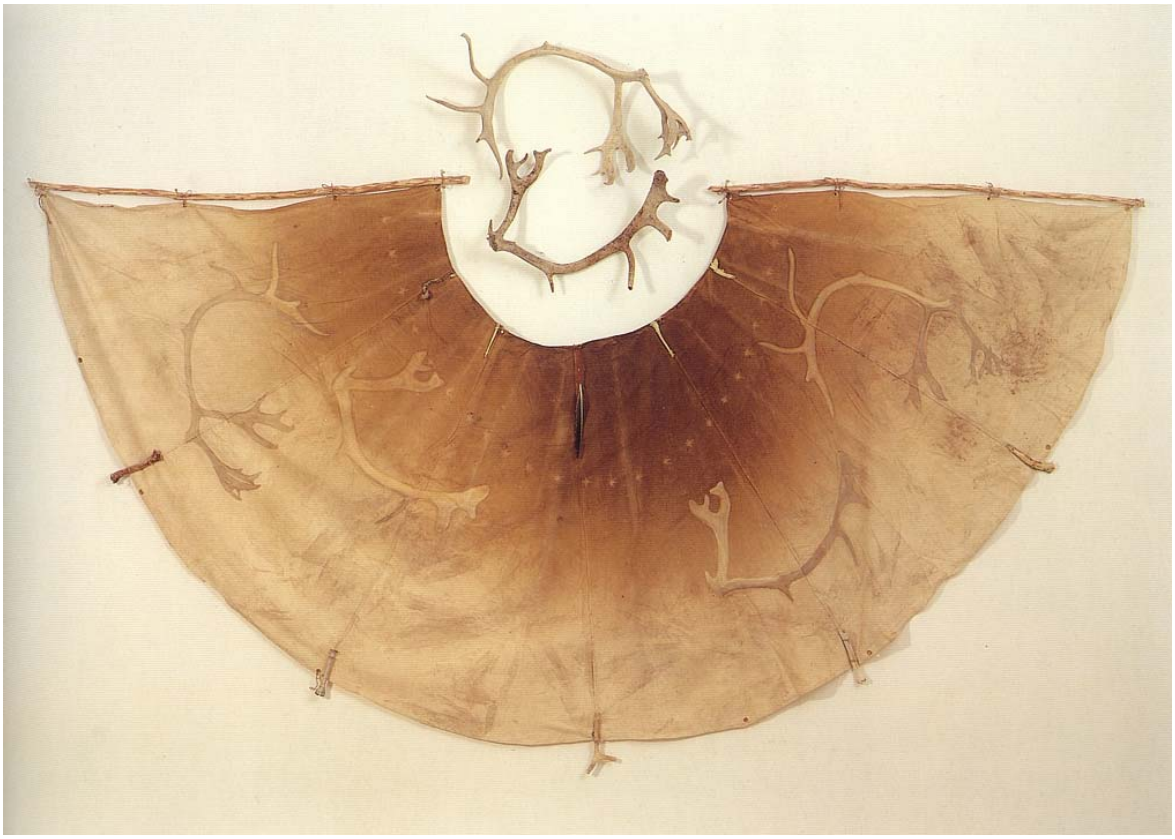

Fig 15 Chris Drury, *Canvas Lavo*, 1988.

Fig 16 Andy Goldsworthy, *Snowball Drawing – Lowther Peak*, 1991.

which are of interest here due to the direct environmental interaction in the creation of their work. For example, German artist Mario Reis places stretched cloth into rivers which then results in the accumulation of minerals, vegetal sediment and natural pigments on the material.[111] Additionally, Australian printmaker Heather Burness produced a series of prints based around the Wimmera River in north-western Victoria in 2007. The exhibition catalogue discusses her process as including the burial of metal plates along the river's edge. This then allowed the increased salinity levels present in the soil to corrode and mark her plates directly. Her prints were then created from these corroded plates.[112] While both these artists interact directly with nature to create artistic works, neither of their works function as a document of a separate form created onsite. It is acknowledged that the intent behind these works is functionally different, however their example demonstrates the potential of allowing minimally mediated environmental interactions to create forms of documentary record.

As this range of documentary possibilities seems to suggest, there is value in exploring alternative approaches to documenting these types of artworks. The powerful conceptual basis of many Ephemeral Environmental Artworks almost requires that the documentary processes employed in the recording of the works should be handled with a similar level of conceptual concern as the original work. For this reason the absolute reliance on any one technique seems counter-intuitive and unnecessarily limiting.

[111] While Reis's works use natural processes to create the outcome the artist also exerts a degree of control over the outcome through the considered placement of rocks on the cloth surface. This placement, along with the considered selection of site allows the artist a measure of control over the outcome. As discussed by J. K. Grande, *Art Nature Dialogues: Interviews with Environmental Artists*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 105.
[112] H. Burness, A.McMahon and S. Toorook, *Heather Burness*, (Canberra: Goanna Print, 2009).

CHAPTER 3 - PROCESSES AND METHODS: FIRE BURNS THROUGH

The methodological basis underpinning this research is concerned with the discipline of visual arts practice, specifically the creation of Environmental Art and its documentation. The relative newness of Environmental Art and the domination of photography in its documentation make this research particularly timely. Whilst the historical and theoretical knowledge provides the backdrop of academic rigor and has been addressed earlier in this document, much of the insight in relation to the creation and documentation of this form of work is based on more than a decade of my practical experience in the field. This practice-based knowledge gleaned through creation, observation and reflection is pivotal to this research project and has necessitated the reconsideration of photography's almost absolute position as the documentary technique for this art form.

The value of knowledge gained through the process of doing is particularly relevant to Ephemeral Environmental Art. As already demonstrated a process-driven practice diminishes the significance traditionally placed on the creation of permanent objects. Instead, ephemeral art privileges action and the actual process of making. This more performative conceptual approach directly values the act of creation and the subtly implied relationship of the artist, the artwork and site. This inter-connected relationship is expressed through the process of interaction and the retrogression of the created form.

This re-weighting of emphasis on the artistic process in Ephemeral Environmental Art centres on the interaction with the environment. In the majority of instances this interaction avoids the use of mechanised techniques of construction. This preference for the hands-on manipulation of indigenous, non-refined materials allows the artist an intimate visceral connection to the site. This approach, in combination with the urge to avoid introducing new materials, results in the use of relatively simple, yet highly knowable techniques of creation. The construction of the aesthetic, albeit ephemeral form often incorporates techniques such as

material arrangement, stacking, fusing and freezing elements together, as well as weaving and stitching. This concept of utilising readily knowable processes is a guiding principle of my work and is the basis for selecting alternative approaches to documentation.

In light of this concern for knowability of process, drawing, printmaking and painting are the key techniques being explored in this investigation. These three techniques are also combined to create mixed-media and composite outcomes. Beyond this, the additional documentary possibility of self documenting works is considered because it specifically deals with the remnant elements of the interaction and its retrogression, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The rationale behind varying the approaches is to consider the relative documentary strengths and weaknesses of each of the techniques in relation to the works being recorded. These strengths and weaknesses are examined with consideration for the conceptual intent of the onsite interaction. This reflection then provides the basis for developing an understanding of the documentary characteristics relative to each technique.

The identification of these characteristics not only forms the basis of knowledge, it also informs and guides the subsequent practical investigations. In this way, a sequential process of creativity has been developed that allows for a deepening and broadening of my understanding of the drive for, and the potential of documentation. I am therefore concerned with investigating documentary enrichment in relation to the onsite work's conceptual basis while being informed by my practical work as an artist. The intention, therefore, is that this development to understanding will allow for a similar degree of documentary enrichment in relation to the onsite work's conceptual basis. This notion of enrichment within the documentation relates to the potential for allusion and reference, beyond merely the visual representation of the form. As this referential enrichment is concerned with allusion, the method for image creation is also considered in regard to appropriateness.

The notion of conceptual appropriateness links the conceptual basis for the onsite interaction with its documentation. Selective focus on concepts as part of the documentary process acknowledges a key difference between the record and the onsite interaction. Rather than being a vain attempt to create a fully analogical record, this approach acknowledges the limitations of documentation, and allows the documentarian scope to emphasize the aspects of the overall work that are considered the most conceptually salient.

3.1 Drawing

The first technique explored for its documentary potential in the recording of Ephemeral Environmental Artwork is drawing. The motivation for beginning with this technique is due to the directness of the mark-making process, and therefore the degree of intimate connection that can be maintained through the process of recording. Indeed, it could be argued that the directness of the physical relationship between the documentarian and the record, makes drawing the most immediate of creative processes. The concern for preserving the artist's sense of connection, developed as it is through the interaction, is further maintained by drawing's potential to be rendered onsite. As 'site' is a significant facet of the interaction, the potential for complete immersion in the location may, therefore, be influential in the creation of the record. Additionally, the physical process of drawing each line may be seen to have a direct relationship to the experiential process of creating the onsite form.

The earliest of the investigations into drawing begins with the materials of charcoal and paper. In later investigations the selection of materials can be understood as a link between the interaction and the document. For example, charcoal may be seen as such a link if the onsite work incorporates willow or fire, however, the use of charcoal at this early stage, was primarily driven by its mark-making potential.

Due to my previous experience of photography in the recording of Ephemeral Environmental Art, as well as its predominant position in the field, the early use of drawing employs the visual literality of the photographic image as a starting point for exploration. These images are realistic depictions of the form at a specific moment in the greater life of the interaction. In this way these drawings are similar in appearance to the drawn works of Andy Goldsworthy.[113] This emphasis on visual realism within the format of a single image allows for the consideration of this technique in relation to photography. Therefore, the reflection on technique may be specifically related to the different mediums.

The singularity of these early drawn outcomes however, limits the perception of the interaction to a specific moment in time and space, and therefore may mislead audiences to

[113] The drawings are however markedly different in terms of intent and function. Goldsworthy's drawings (as discussed in Chapter 2) are intended as preparatory images for unrealised works, in contrast to these images which are pictures of completed onsite works.

perceive the form as an unchanging object. Such miscomprehension denies both the significance of change, and the ephemeral intent of the onsite interaction. Due to this concern the use of realistic drawings has been extended to include multi-paneled outcomes.

This series of drawings broadens the content being recorded by altering viewpoints and timelines to demonstrate the significance of change in the created form over the range of documentary images. The use of multiple images within a record brings a storyboard aspect to the documentation, and the presentation of successive images generates a sense of narrative that alludes to the passing of time and the significance of change within the onsite work. From an artistic perspective, the use of multiple images also creates scope for overlapping and layering the drawn outcomes. In this context, overlapping imagery can be used to suggest depth, imply a hierarchy of significance or allude to the imposition of the created form within the pre-existing site.

While these initial drawings explore the realistic representation of the onsite form, the concept of documentation as evidentiary proof, is dubious due to the documentarian's potential for either purposeful or incidental alterations in the creation of the record. This concern or capacity for mediation during the authoring of the record can indeed be argued for all documentary practices. Photography, however, tends to possess the perception of authenticity and truth due to the directness of the relationship between the document and the subject.[114] With this concern in mind, the technique of drawing has been extended to incorporate more direct connection between the onsite work and the record.

The second exploration into drawing as a documentary alternative specifically focuses on the fleeting shadows cast by the onsite forms. These shadow drawings are not intended to function as an exacting pictorial representation of the form of the interaction, and therefore they purposefully forego the illusory qualities that are central to other documentary outcomes. These drawings are created through a highly direct and comparatively straightforward method. As a consequence, this process preferentially weights the connection between the work and the record more highly.

[114] As mentioned in Chapter 2 this relationship is explored in Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*.

The relative simplicity of their process is also relevant to the previously mentioned concern for knowability. Paper is placed beside or directly underneath the form of the interaction. The shadow cast by the sunlight onto the paper surface is then quickly rendered with charcoal to create a lasting record. These flat drawings, do not strive for any measure of depth. Their reference to space is limited by the directness of the drawing process.

The perception of connection between the interaction and the subsequent record is noteworthy, however, the specific focus on shadows has its limitations. Just as photography overemphasizes the visual appearance of the form, shadow drawings tend to overemphasize the significance of light and shadow. The reliance on this technique alone would therefore be just as problematic as photography because of the specificity of its placement of emphasis. The use of shadows for their connection as an impermanent referent is revisited within this investigation. The concern arising from this restricted view on shadows therefore necessitates a broadening of the documentary gaze to explore alternative elements that maintain connection without the refined focus on shadows alone. This concern for the maintenance of connection has been the driving force in the third exploration of drawing. This exploration considers the potential for connection through the broader range of processes and materiality. The rationale for considering materiality and process is directly related to their significance in the overall interaction. After all, process is the means by which the interaction occurs and the preferred use of indigenous materials sourced from the site provides the direct media link to the specific location.

Drawn records that incorporate the materials or processes of the onsite interaction are particularly relevant. The work entitled *Clay Circle* (Fig. 17 and Fig. 18) shows this re-incorporation of both material and process from the onsite interaction within the documentary record. The use of these elements provides a direct relationship between the onsite interaction and its record. The ability to create broader references to site is somewhat limited in this range of outcomes. Therefore, this layering of connected elements was further extended to reintegrate the earlier use of realistic charcoal drawing in order to combine the site reference provided through the realistic drawing, while maintaining the direct link to the interaction through the use of indigenous materials.

As the final exploration into drawn outcomes, this combined approach also considers the significance of documentary scale as an additional point of connection to the onsite work.

Fig 17 *Clay Circle II*, Clay and charcoal on card.

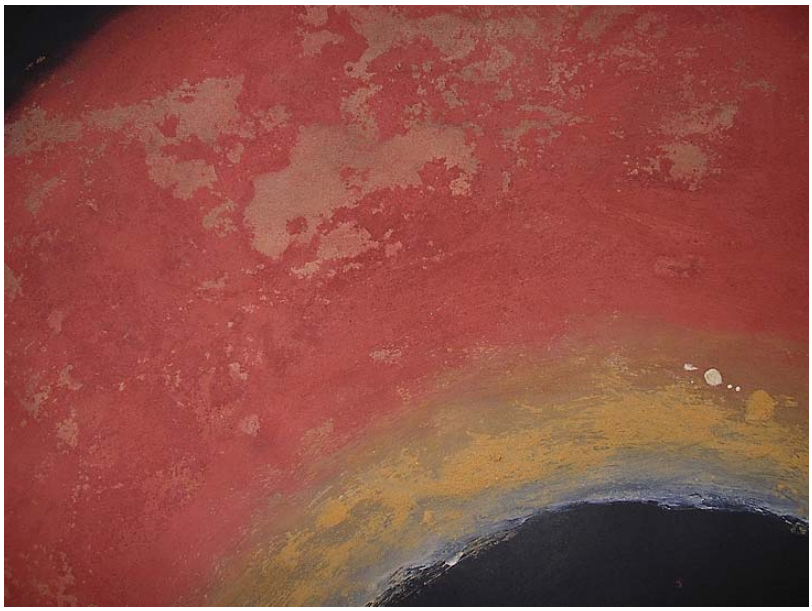

Fig 18 *Clay Circle II* (detail), Clay and charcoal on card.

The physical relationship of the audience to the work often differs considerably to their experience of the documentation. By creating drawn documentation that addresses this concern through a 1:1 relationship with the original interaction, the significance of documentary scale is also considered.

As the first technique considered, drawing as a documentary method has been varied through the range of approaches and materials discussed above. While not intended to be an exhaustive exploration of the technique, the resulting works may be seen to challenge the primacy of photography as the sole documentary process in recording Ephemeral Environmental Art. Beyond drawing, other image making techniques are also of interest.

3.2 Printmaking

The creative processes of scratching, carving and cutting that characterize printmaking, form the image-making basis for the next technique to be explored. In keeping with the desire to utilise readily knowable documentary processes, the relatively straightforward techniques of drypoint, linocut and stencil printing have been considered. At first glance printmaking may seem like an unusual methodological choice for the creation of documents for Ephemeral Environmental Artworks. As an image making technique it is often associated with the ability to replicate a single image through the process of editioning. The potential for multiple copies of a single unchanging image, a trait that it shares with photography, could be considered to reinforce the perception of the onsite work as an unchanging object. This perception is contrary to the ephemeral intent of the onsite interaction. By avoiding the strictures of identical editioning through the development of 'unique state' prints, the potential for change and variability within the printing process can allow this multiplicity to be a positive aspect.

Variations throughout the printmaking process allow for the production of unique state prints.[115] These prints arise from the valuation of individuality rather than seeking editions of identical outcomes. While multiple images may result from a single plate the objective is to

[115] The standard definition of a print state is any stage in the development of a plate at which prints are taken. Therefore, the customary understanding of a unique state work is a single print that is pulled from the plate at a particular state. http://www.monoprints.com/info/techniques/glossary.html [accessed 21/0/2011]. In this instance the term is also used to describe a 'unique state' in which prints are not able to be produced in additions due to variations of approach in the printing process.

create a series of unique outcomes differentiated through the printing process.[116] When viewed in series these differing prints demonstrate how purposeful variations as well as the acceptance of unpredictable influences or serendipitous chance may play a role in the creative process. This openness to chance, as opposed to a focus on identical replication, parallels the sensibilities used in the onsite interaction. Therefore the outcomes of this technique can poignantly allude to significant aspects relating to the onsite interaction.

A further concern which arises with outcomes that allow for reproducibility of results, is the breadth of audience. As artworks in outdoor, public spaces which are often remote, Ephemeral Environmental Art generally does not seek to bring large new audiences to the site. Most often the works are only ever experienced through their documentation. While limitation to audience size may be a function of location, it may also be conceptually significant. Drury, for example, created a work in a courtyard at Central Middlesex Hospital. The piece *Echoes of the Heart* (2008), is created to be viewed primarily by people at a nearby cardiac centre. This sort of intimate and considered relationship to audience may then require the use of techniques which do not support high levels of replicability. Alternatively, the concern of audience limitation may be managed through modifications to the exhibition phase. In relation to the techniques of linocut, drypoint and stencilling however, the inherent material qualities of the plate ensures limitations to reproducibility. This limitation diminishes the concern of audience breadth in comparison to photography's potential for endless replication. The exploration of these techniques and their material limitations began with drypoint, in which fine lines are scratched into an acetate plate.[117]

The rationale for following on from drawing with drypoint may be found in its close association with the quality of the drawn line.[118] As with drawing, printmaking is intended to incorporate further references and allusions to the interaction, beyond solely the depiction of the form. The fine linearity of drypoint lends itself to the creation of both pictorial and textual records. The intent behind the incorporation of these textual references is found in their

[116] The standard text on the issues of reproduction and unique states is W. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 1936. This essay is also reproduced online at http://www.arch.kth.se/unrealstockholm/unreal_web/workofart.pdf [accessed 19/3/2011].
[117] Drypoint can also be done through the scratching into metal plates such as copper.
[118] A. Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: An Introduction to the History and Techniques*, (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 71. "Drypoint is the simplest of the itaglio printing processes. The line is scratched directly into the ... plate." The plate is inked and then wiped clean. The lines in the scratched plate retain the ink for printing. The print is created through the pressured application of this inked plate onto paper.

ability to allude to the broader process of interaction, including the retrogression of the form. Text, which is poetical in nature, has been incorporated due to its richness of allusion beyond the literal, such as in *Sandcastle*, (Fig. 19).

Fig 19 *Sandcastle*, Ink on paper.

The earliest explorations of drypoint have been applied broadly to a range of onsite works. This openness of approach has illuminated some of the limitations and concerns for further deliberation. For example, the length of time and the space required for the creation of the document presented are the most obvious concern. The time-consuming nature of rendering detailed and tonal work necessitates the more considered application of this technique. As a process of image creation its use is more appropriate to onsite works that are purposefully austere or alternatively, possess a greater degree of longevity. In order to address these concerns, the use of drypoint as a documentary method has been re-considered and refocused. Much like drypoint, the relief procesess of woodcut and linocut also use the reductive technique of gouging and cutting into a smooth plate to create the image. While their processes may be similar to drypoint, the marks produced are considerably different.

In contrast to the fine linear basis of drypoint, linocut printing is used in this investigation because of its capacity to produce dense weights and strong contrast. The limitation of the palette to black in the early explorations of this technique provides for powerful contrasts that concentrate attention on the role of light and shadow in the interaction. This focus on shadows and silhouettes as an aspect of documentation is revisited throughout the

investigation. In onsite works where strong contrasts are a significant component, the use of this technique has been preferentially applied. Like many of these alternative techniques for creating documentary images, the handcrafted aspect of the document is important as it is indicative of the valuation of the artist's direct action.

As in drypoint's potential to reference works that utilize scratching onsite, the process of linocut can be considered for its connection through process. The production of an image using linocut requires a process of cutting as a means of creating the image and differentiating between negative and positive space. Linocuts can be employed to create an image of environmental interactions that include marks made through carving or imprinting on the land. In this way the documentary technique forms a degree of connection to the process onsite. This connection through process, was not however, the initial motivation for considering the documentary potential of linocut.

Like the exploration of drawing, the early application of this technique focuses on the production of single images. As previously mentioned, one concern relating to single outcomes is that like photography, the static individual depiction weights a specific moment more intensely and struggles to reference the greater process of the interaction.[119] This concern for the allusion to process has led to the extension of the single image to multi-image linocuts in a storyboard format because, the storyboard format enables a narrative structure capable of alluding to the changing nature of the interaction over time. Like the earlier linocuts, the storyboard prints focus on the significance of light and illumination in contrasts to shadows and darkness. Unlike the single images however, the storyboard prints are indicative of a period of time in the life of the interaction. Although this form of linocut is not an attempt to record the entire life from genesis to complete retrogression, such imagery aims to suggest the significance of change through the developing narrative.

I have found that both linocut and drypoint printmaking techniques are limited as documentary outcomes because they largely rely on the application of even pressure on the inked plate in the creation of the image. This pressure is most often applied with the use of a

[119] Goldsworthy, "Relationship Between Photography and Goldsworthy's Transient, Site-specific Work", xi. Andy Goldsworthy has considered the concern of referencing the greater process of the interaction while the documentation privileges a specific moment. As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, Goldsworthy suggests that the individual photograph is augmented by the audiences' prior physical experience of nature. This experience then informs their understanding of the broader process involved in the creation of the depicted form.

press.[120] In contrast, stencilling offers a degree of printmaking freedom, as it does not require the use of specialist equipment.

Stencilling is the third readily knowable printmaking process to be explored as part of this investigation. This technique uses either an acetate or paper sheet as the basis for a plate. This plate then has sections cut out to allow for the laying down of ink during the printing process. The uncut sections of the sheet act as a mask which blocks the laying down of ink. When compared with the solidity of a linoleum plate, this technique is partially constrained by my preferred technique which uses connection (bridges) between the uncut sections of the plate. While the attachment of the uncut sections is not a requirement, it does assist in alignment of the component parts (islands) and gives the plate a measure of strength. Images resulting from this technique are often bold with strong contrasting sections. Beyond the aesthetics of the outcome, this image making technique is also interesting because of its relationship to the paper-based ephemera of the media, and also its use in street art.

The stencilled image is part of our consumerist culture. It appears in the daily ephemera of posters, flyers and newsprint, only to be experienced, discarded and destroyed. Similarly graffiti artists have employed the use of this technique to mark the living spaces of city walls.[121] Like paper-based ephemera these painted works share a measure of impermanence. They are created in the knowledge that the works will eventually be overwritten and lost. This association of impermanence and loss ties in with the conceptual intent of ephemerality in the onsite interactions.

Following on from these initial explorations of stencilling, the plate itself is given further consideration. Even without being used to produce an image, the cut out plate can be considered as a document, because it depicts the form of the interaction. Interestingly, this pictorial reference to the form is created by the negative space in the plate. The plate, therefore, references what was created and subsequently allowed to retrogress through what is lost within the plate. This potential for the stencilling plate to be a document in its own right provides the next extension of this investigation.

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[120] While this is the most common method it is possible to produce block print images with the use of a handheld baren, a spoon or some other means of applying pressure.

[121] The use of stencils in Street Art has been developing since the mid 1980s. The recent publication D. Hopkins, *The Street Art Stencil Book*, (London: Laurence King Publishers, 2010) discusses the work of some of the leading practitioners of this art form, such as French artists Blek Le Rat and Jef Aérosol.

To date the documentary outcomes being discussed have all revolved around the production of imagery on paper. Process and materiality have been viewed as points of connection, however, the ground upon which the image is created can also be considered for its referential potential. The flexibility of the plate and the printmaking technique of stencilling, means that it can be applied to a broader range of surfaces. As a result, the ability to vary the ground can be explored as a referent to allude to either the site or the interaction.

Similarly, the materiality of the stencil can also be broadened to explore a further connection to the onsite work. Through the incorporation of materials and processes used in the onsite work, the stencilled outcome has the ability to maintain further links to the interaction. Documentation produced using materials and processes from the onsite work may also result in impermanent imagery. While the accepted expectation is that documentation is a permanent record, this temporal changing document presents an interesting alternative. Therefore, the exhibited document may take on a temporal quality during exhibition. While not necessarily ephemeral, due to its intended installation and de-installation timeline, documents of this type can still allude to the significance of impermanence and site specificity.

3.3 Painting

Following on from the drawing and printmaking techniques which focused on line, weight and contrast, within a reduced palette, painting has been incorporated into this investigation for its fluidity and colour. In addition to bringing colour to the documentary image, the process of application can also be seen as significant for this investigation. The use of painting as a documentary technique for the recording of Ephemeral Environmental Artwork is not without precedent, as discussed in the Chapter 2.[122] The medium of paint has been tightly controlled in this investigation in order to aid the knowability of process.

The intent in applying these constraining limitations is to maintain the sense of intimacy through the connection to the creative process. The use of readily identifiable and purposefully uncomplicated techniques is intended as a means to direct audience attention towards the artist's preferred use of uncomplicated processes onsite. For this reason,

[122] Nils-Udo. *Nils-Udo: Art in Nature*, 2002.

paintings related to this research project have been created under a series of guiding limitations. Acrylic paint is handled in a straightforward manner. It is applied directly to the painting surface without the use of any mediums to create effects or finishes. The paint is applied under heavy pressure using various sized palette knifes. This pressured application builds up a series of very thin layers of paint. Thus the layering of the paint surface is reminiscent of the sensibility utilised in the constructed process of many of the onsite interactions.

Minimal limitation is placed on the breadth of the colour palette, as this has been significant in the choice of this technique for documentation. Colour is limited to some extent however, as it is restricted to colours which are available within a commercial paint range. This means that no additional mixing of colours has taken place beyond that which occurred directly on the painting's surface. As previously mentioned, the intent in applying this restriction is aimed at maintaining knowability.

The building of the painting through the process of layering involves the repeated application of opaque and translucent pigments. The multiplicity of layers creates a smooth finish while also allowing for the appearance of texture as can be seen in *Balance – Cannonball Cove* (Fig. 20). This texture is achieved through two distinct processes. The first process utilises the nature of paint as a liquid material that dries to form a solid. As the wet media dries it forms a skin. This skin binds to both the surface of the painting, and any residual paint left on the palette knife. The continued working of this semi-solid skin allows the paint on the surface of the work to grip onto the drying paint on the palette knife, thereby tearing or scumbling the picture surface and exposing the earlier layers. The remnant effect of this relatively unpredictable process is a surface that creates the illusion of being. In contrast, the second process for creating the appearance of texture is the progressive rubbing back of the painted surface with a damp cloth. This creates gentler gradations of colour as it does not scumble the paint or layer fresh unpredicted traces. The combination of these processes requires an approach to the overall painting that is relatively fluid, reactive and spontaneous. Therefore this deceptively simple approach to painting necessitates a degree of balance between the constructive and deconstructive processes within the production of the documentary image.

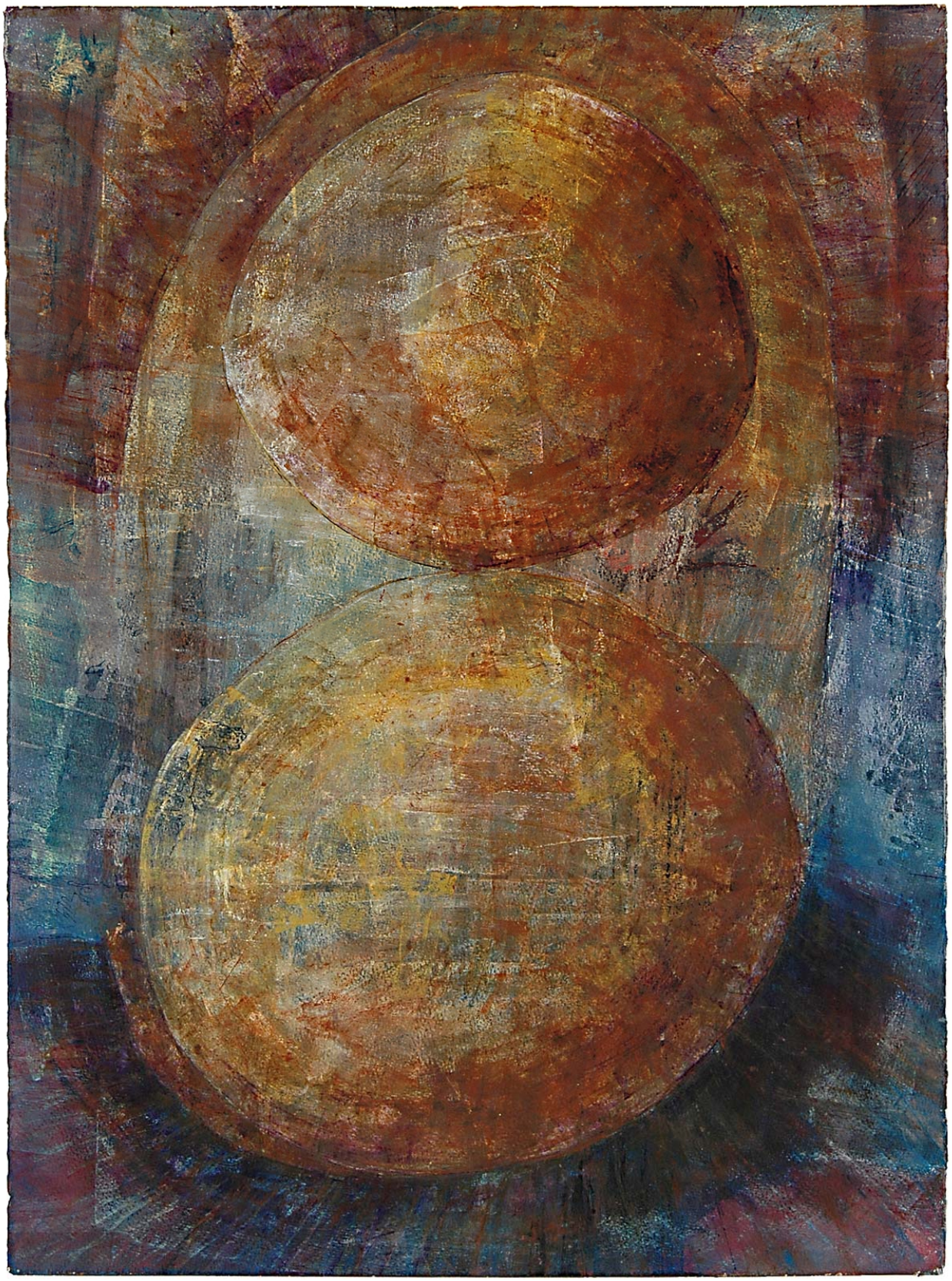

Fig 20 *Balance – Cannonball Cove*, Acrylic on paper.

In contrast to the intended literality of the earlier charcoal drawing, the painting process described above, does not lend itself to overt realism. While not attempting to be an exacting representation the painted work is intended to give a broader sense of what occurred. The descriptive quality of this painting technique centres on the form of the object. The combination of opaque and translucent layering also incorporates a degree of ambiguity into the image. The purposeful avoidance of realism extends to the restriction of techniques such as perspective and foreshortening. This limitation further distances these painted outcomes from the direct realism of photography. While this avoidance of overt realism and the illusion of depth may be considered as detrimental to the documentary outcome, it is also intended to create greater space for allusion.

While the printmaking techniques explored earlier allowed for a degree of reproducibility, painting does not share this particular trait. As a result this specific painting technique whilst knowable, is to some extent unpredictable and unrepeatable. The investigation of these media leads to an exploration of further methods for creating secondary references to both the site and the interaction. The intention behind the incorporation of these secondary references is to augment and deepen the audience's comprehension. For the purposes of this investigation, the exploration into secondary and additional referencing utilizes both mixed-media and composite approaches to documentation.

3.4 Mixed-Media and Composite Works

This category of exploration concentrates on the combination of various processes in order to produce a single documentary outcome. Through the layering of a range of earlier image making techniques, mixed-media outcomes are produced as forms of documentation. The intention behind combining this array of techniques is to work with, and extend the various strengths of each image making process.

The mixing of media within a single documentary outcome presents new challenges to the process of image creation. Some techniques present as more compatible than others. In instances where media and process can be combined however, there can still be a degree of risk. The layering of one technique upon another to produce a single outcome may result in

the complete loss of the documentary record if the second technique fails. Therefore, the layering of techniques requires a willingness to accept a degree of risk and unpredictability within the documentary process.[123] This openness to the ongoing development of the record, including its potential for failure, closely associates it with the process used in the interaction onsite.

Initial explorations into mixed-media approaches to documentation revisit a selection of the earlier outcomes of the single techniques. Through this reconsideration, techniques are combined in an attempt to alleviate some of the conceptual concerns that were presented in the early records.

The earlier explorations into linocut were found to produce strong contrasts while also allowing for relatively realistic outcomes. In some instances however, the specificity of this technique was found to be to too restricting. For example, in the onsite interactions which incorporated the use of fire to provide strong contrast between light and shadow, linocut seemed applicable. In those works where warmth was also conceptually significant, the limitation of palette was problematic. Alternatively, the use of painting to incorporate warmth and a realistic reference is also limited due to the restrictions prescribed. Through combining these two techniques however, the warmth of the firelight can be referenced through the use of colour, while allusions to the broader changing nature of the interaction can be explored through the realism and storyboard format in the linocuts.

This combination of printmaking technique and painting is also explored through the use of drypoint. The linear qualities of the marks made through this technique particularly lend themselves to the documentation of austere forms, such as in *Nanya Reflections* (Fig. 21). While the incorporation of text allows for broader references to the site and also the process of interaction, the lack of colour and the singularity of the outcome focuses the audience's comprehension heavily onto the textual statements.

[123] While it could be argued that all artistic practice incorporates a degree of uncertainty in the creative process, this technique escalates that degree of risk and uncertainty by applying secondary process directly over the first. It is this escalated risk and the potential for failure that extends this technique's ability to reference the unpredictability of the onsite interaction.

Fig 22 *Nanya Reflections*, Ink on paper.

In order to enhance this comprehension, painting is combined with these drypoint images to produce a work in series that references the slow degradation of the form.[124] The use of prints in series provides a narrative quality that alludes to change. Unlike the earlier use of storyboards that present a sequence of moments in the life of the interaction, this series presents one image as the basis for the entire series. The variation between images which refers to the significance of change is provided through the later application of paint. Unlike the earlier applications of paint which reference the form of the interaction, its use in this series is as a referent to the site, and to nature's reclamation of the ephemeral form. The retrogression of the form onsite can either be a slow, gentle process, or a forceful, rapid change affected by the environment. This variability in the nature of the retrogression is considered in the manner of paint application. While the earlier painting technique of dense colour and torn effects could provide references to strong rapid change, slower change

[124] Degradation of the image could also have been achieved through the repeated printing of the acetate plate. As the material of the plate is not particularly sturdy the rollers on the printing press would eventually flatten the scratched lines, thereby rendering the plate unprintable. As this repetition of printing has been discussed as a point of concern, this form of print degradation has been avoided.

requires a softer, gentler approach to the material. For this reason the painting technique is varied to thinner washes of colour that allude to the slow delicate retrogression of the form over time, best exemplified in the *Nanya Reflection Series* (Fig. 22).

Artist John Wolseley uses this type of combination of processes to produce mixed-media works. His works on paper often collapse environmental interaction and resultant documentation down into a singular whole, such as in his *Self-portrait of a bushfire* works created as part of his *Land Marks* exhibition.[125] These exquisite works on paper are often created onsite with the direct engagement of environmental influences incorporated into the outcome. As these works are not the documentation of ephemeral, created forms they are outside of the scope of this investigation. They are noteworthy however, for the direct incorporation of environmental interaction and their sense of documentary validity.

Beyond this mixing of creative techniques and materials in a single documentary outcome, a composite approach to documentation compiles and combines a series of discrete documentary references into a singular format. Individually, these references are not intended to function as fully resolved documentary outcomes. The intention is that the cumulative effects of these outcomes combine to form a single documentary record. Various references of this nature can be produced through a range of techniques and refer to not only the interaction but also the site. Outcomes of such a composite approach to documentation can be either flat two-dimensional records or further constructed outcomes such as artist's books. As discussed earlier, Dennis Oppenheim's approach to documentation (Fig. 11) can be regarded as an outcome of such a composite approach.

While readily knowable image making techniques, such as those that have been previously discussed are included, the compilation aspect of this documentary format makes technical imaging processes less problematic. By compiling these technical processes alongside more knowable processes, the concern relating to the use of a singular technique is reduced. Additionally, these technical processes also allow for different types of comprehension. The presentation of mapping conventions, for example, allows for a degree of cerebral understanding of space that augments the reference provided by other documentary forms.

[125] Works relating to the Land Marks exhibition and Wolseley's practice more broadly are discussed in S. Grishin, *John Wolseley: Land Marks II*, (Melbourne: Craftsman House, 2006).

Fig 22 *Nanya Reflection Series*, Drypoint and acrylic paint on paper.

In contrast to the purposeful avoidance of photographic elements earlier in this research, the incorporation of photography is one of the technical processes as noted above. As previously explained, this investigation is not intended as a denial of the documentary potential of photography. Rather, this research seeks to explore the potential of other techniques to add to the interpretative power of the documentary process. The incorporation of photography within this composite approach therefore places it alongside, as opposed to above, these other techniques. Such an approach incorporates a range of alternative outcomes and may result in a variety of different composite formats.

Composite documentation in the form of artist's books is of particular interest here due to the established association of books with narrative. The sequential experience of the viewer as they progress through the pages often involves a journey in understanding. As each viewer progresses further through the book, their comprehension of the narrative develops. This progress is most often made as the viewer physically turns the pages. It is the act of being handled that makes these documents distinctly different from the majority of other outcomes; in contrast to the potential for passive viewing of works on a wall, books require a degree of active engagement. As the manual handling of the book is significant, the scale and material construction are key factors in the development of meaning.

The exploration of this composite technique, and in particular artist's books, explores this notion of viewer interaction as they turn the pages. Therefore the book format is altered as a means to engage the audience in different ways. While the traditional Western understanding of the book as being read front to back and left to right (with the spine on the left) is utilised, it is also changed in subsequent explorations.

3.5 Self-Documenting Works

The final sequence of investigations into documentation deals with the notion of onsite works that may be seen as self-documenting. The concept behind this notion centres on residual markings resulting from the process of interaction including the retrogression of the form. While these residual markings can be considered as forms of documentation their occurrence is difficult to ensure. The deliberate removal of the documentarian from the recording process

is intended to minimize the degree of documentary mediation, however, it also causes the inability to construct easily read realistic outcomes. Therefore, the outcomes of such events may be more abstracted, however, the directness of their connection to the onsite work is extremely high.

In addition to their abstract nature, the occurrences of these forms of documentation are relatively infrequent and often unpredictable. As their occurrence often appears of their own accord, this unpredictability presents a dilemma in terms of the artist's intention. While the intent with Ephemeral Environmental Art is to interact with a specific site and create an ephemeral form that is then documented, it would be possible to contrive an interaction for the purpose of producing a remnant outcome as a form of documentation. This contrivance, however, raises questions regarding objective and execution. A process developed with the intention of producing a remnant outcome, appears to diminish the significance of the interaction and the artist's connection to the site that produces the ephemeral form. Having the intended documentary outcome as the primary goal, re-weights the greater process back towards an object-oriented intention. Indeed, it could be argued that this perspective relegates the process of interaction to merely an elaborate creative technique.

So as not to diminish the significance of the interaction, documentation and specifically the possibility of self-documentation is considered once the interaction has begun to take shape. In this way, the documentary concern does not impact prematurely on the process of environmental interaction. While this restriction maintains the process-basis of the interaction, it also maintains the relative unpredictability of this form of documentation occurring. With these concerns in mind self-documenting has been very specifically applied in this research.

Onsite works which incorporate fire as part of the process of interaction have been considered as particularly applicable to this type of documentation. Fire is a significant aspect of these interactions and has not been introduced for the purpose of creating a remnant record. The

light that is produced during the interaction, however, provides the source material to create the documentary photograms.[126]

Numerous Australian artists have used the direct exposure of photographic paper, otherwise known as photograms, as part of their process of environmental interaction. Melbourne based photographer Harry Nankin, used the direct exposure of light sensitive material to moonlight to create works. His stunning series *The Wave* (1997 - 1998) was produced by the nocturnal immersion of photographic 'rafts' in the sea at Bushrangers Bay south of Melbourne.[127] Victoria Cooper also creates photograms as part of her artistic practice. In contrast to Nankin's use of photographic paper, she creates cyanotype photograms.[128] Placing found natural objects onto watercolour paper that has been treated in cyanotype solution, she creates photograms through direct exposure to sunlight. Cooper then allows the flow of water at the site to wash the paper thereby stopping the exposure.[129]

In relation to the creation of photograms as part of this investigation, the process uses a range of materials that are either light sensitive, or have been treated with photographic emulsion. These materials are placed below and around the form of onsite interactions that are intended to incorporate fire. The firelight then exposes elements of the form of the interaction directly onto these light sensitive materials to produce the photograms. This exploration involving photograms is the final technique being considered as part of this investigation.

This range of image making techniques, both individual and combined, is intended as an exploration and extension of the concept of documentation as it applies in the field of Ephemeral Environmental Art. This sequential development of techniques is designed not only to explore the documentary potential of the various techniques, but also to engage with the critical thinking of documentation as it applies to the conceptual premise for each artwork.

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[126] László Moholy-Nagy introduced the term photogram in 1925. A photogram is created by placing an object on a light sensitive surface (like photographic paper) inside a dark room. This is then briefly exposed to light and later developed. http://www.photogram.org/concept/shortintroduction.html [accessed 21/01/2011].
[127] http://harrynankin.com/pr4.htm [accessed 21/01/2011].
[128] Cyanotype uses paper coated in a ferric ammonium citrate and potassium ferricyanide solution. The paper is then exposed in sunlight and when washed with water it results in a blue image. W. Crawford, *The Keepers of the Light*, (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Morgan and Morgan, 1979).
[129] http://wwww.barrattgalleries.com.au/j_past_exhibitions.html [accessed 21/01/2011].

CHAPTER 4 - INVESTIGATIONS IN THE STUDIO: FRESH AIR

The artistic works resulting from this investigation are a series of documentary images created in response to a range of onsite works I have produced throughout the research period. These images are produced through the variety of techniques discussed in Chapter 3. The discussion of these documentary outcomes follows the previously established sequential order in preference to a chronological ordering of the creation. Therefore this sequence facilitates a close examination of the media rather than infer a hierarchical relationship between the various techniques.

4.1 Drawing

The first series of results to be discussed are drawings. As mentioned earlier the initial exploration of this technique uses charcoal on paper to create single realistic images of the form of the interaction. The concern for visual realism and the singularity of the outcome arose from initiating the research from the point of documentary photography. *Woven Nest: Night* (Fig. 23) demonstrates the point that while drawing can have a measure of comparability to photography it can also share some of the limitations of that technique. Of particular concern is the focus on the form of the interaction at a specific individual moment in its life. This refined view through the production of a single static record, diverts attention away from the process basis for the interaction.

Colour range is tonally limited due to the purposeful restriction to willow charcoal. As seen in *Woven Nest: Night*, the use of willow charcoal lends itself to this exploration of tone. Otherwise, any overt differences in the appearances of these drawn documents when compared with photographic records are minor, in terms of the composition of the image. As

the image is similar to a photographic record, any further deepening of connection or allusion to the onsite interaction is more subtly embedded in the material or technique of creation.

Fig 23 *Woven Nest: Night*, Charcoal on paper.

The initial exploration of drawing proved that an allusion to time is difficult to create. More than time alone however, it is the significance of change through the passing of time that is important. The allusion to change in these documentary outcomes is minimal. Much like the presentation of a single photograph, this drawing method was not as strong as later findings due to the difficulty in referencing the importance of change.

Multi-paneled realistic drawings that illustrate change in the onsite form followed the initial exploration of the single image format. The documentary drawing *Platanus Acerfolia: Woven*

Nest, (Fig. 24 and Fig 25), is a multi-paneled record of a sited work in central Horsham. This sequence of images depicts a large woven nest form created in an English plane tree (Platanus Acerfolia). The various panels show this form over a twelve-month period. Throughout this time the tree lost its leaves, which slowly filled the nest form. As the weather warmed, the tree's leaves grew back and the nest slowly lost its contents.

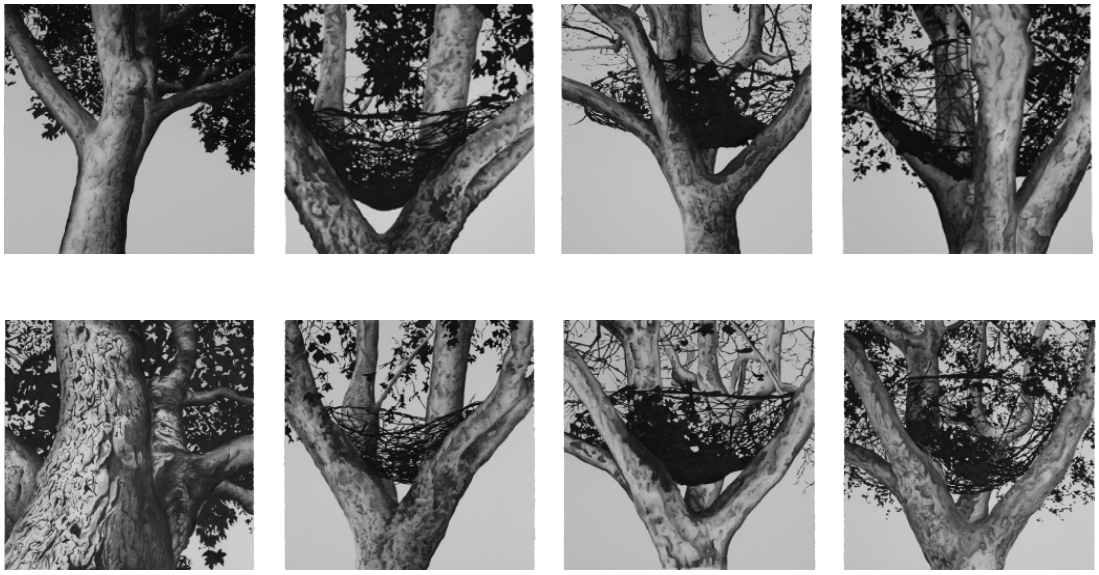


Fig 24 *Platanas Acerfolia: Woven Nest*, Charcoal on paper.

Fig 25 *Platanas Acerfolia: Woven Nest* (detail), Charcoal on paper.

The multi-paneled approach provides a sequence of momentary references. This storyboard format allows for a greater degree of overt reference to time and change. Change in both the tree and the nest form are readily evident over the course of the entire work. Additionally, the creation of the images from various viewing angles, distances, and at different times of day helps to illustrate the fact that the created form is intended to be understood more broadly than just from a single perspective.

Interestingly, the original concept for *Platanus Acerfolia* included a further referential layer beyond this multiplicity of images. It was intended that a large-scale cutout of the silhouetted nest would be suspended in front of the drawn component of the work. It would, therefore, overlay the drawings without directly impacting upon them. I investigated whether or not the silhouette over the drawings would reference the constructed character of the interaction within the site. In fact I found that it was necessary to abandon the silhouette due to its visual weight detracting from the softer character of the charcoal drawings. Beyond this aesthetic concern, the layering of the silhouette appeared to imply a hierarchical relationship that diminished the significance of change. The visual impact of this unchanging element overpowered the more subtle drawings and lessened their reference to the passing of time. The strength of the drawings also meant that the inclusion of the additional reference was unnecessary. From this work it appears that more does not necessarily translate to better in regard to conceptual allusion. Therefore, the urge to incorporate more subtle references beyond the depictive qualities of the image requires careful consideration in regard to audience perception.[130]

The intention underpinning the choice of drawing for the recording of *Platanus Acerfolia: Woven Nest*, may not be immediately evident. In comparison to environmental works that incorporate drawn processes within the land, this woven stick work appears less directly connected to the process of drawing. The weaving of the work, however, is directly related through its linearity in that the form is created through the interlacing of sticks (lines) to produce the shape. In this regard the interaction is a three-dimensional linear construction, woven through the hands-on manipulation of material. Similarly, drawing creates a two-dimensional linear construction while maintaining a direct physical link with the material of creation.

[130] While the breadth of audience comprehension cannot be fully accounted for it needs to be considered for the purposes of efficacy of documentation.

These drawings realistically depict the form of the interaction; however, as with many of the alternative documentary techniques explored in this investigation, there remains some concern regarding the audience's perception of veracity and documentary truth. Whilst the tenuous relationship between truth and photography has been explored elsewhere it is nevertheless the case that the photograph appears to provide a very direct and truthful record of a form.[131] In contrast, the lack of a perceivable immediate relationship between the form and the documentary record could be considered problematic in these drawn works.

In order to explore this notion of a direct relationship shadow drawings were undertaken as they are literally the quick rendering of shadows cast by the form of an interaction. The outcomes created with this shadow drawing technique produced highly variable results. While some images were recognizable in relation to the form of the interaction, others appeared considerably more abstracted. *Untitled I* and *Untitled II* (Fig. 26 and Fig. 27) are examples of the recognizable outcomes. The delicate line depicted in these drawings shows the light weaving of sticks and leaves in the onsite work. In contrast, *Bone Circle – Shadow Drawing*, (Fig. 28), is significantly abstracted. The density of materials onsite produced shadows that were less recognizable, thereby, resulting in a shadow drawing where neither the form nor material of the interaction is particularly evident. The reading of time in these documentary outcomes is also difficult to perceive, its effect however, is ever-present. The passing of time is referenced through the movement of the sun during the period of the drawings' creation.[132] Interestingly, the directness of the relationship between these documents and the onsite works ensures a high level of connection, although this connection does not necessarily translate to the accepted documentary norm of visual literality. In fact, the more abstracted shadow drawings work to challenge the expectation that documentation will simply present a realistic representation of the form.

While photographic documentation presents records that are rich in visual information, other image making techniques, such as this shadow drawing process allow for the presentation of alternative forms of information. Appropriate interpretation allows these alternative

[131] Goldsmith's rather aptly titled article "Photos always lied" argues this point particularly well. Additionally this perception of truth resulting from limited author intervention appears increasingly dubious due to the proliferation of digital camera technology and user-friendly photo editing software. A. Goldsmith, "Photos Always Lied." *Popular Photography*, 98, 1 (1991), 68-75.

[132] The direct impact of the Sun's movement within an environmental interaction can be seen in Charles Ross's *Solar Burn* works. In these works he uses a lens to magnify sunlight. This then burns a direct record of the Sun's movement onto a series of wooden boards. This work is discussed further in B. Oakes, *Sculpting with the Environment: A Natural Dialogue*, 1st ed. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1995), 50-51.

documents to allude to the interaction without the necessity of providing a realistic visual depiction. In instances where this type of documentary outcome is used, the record may require further augmentation via an explanatory text panel to aid in the accurate interpretation of the record.[133]

Fig 26 *Untitled I – Shadow Drawing*, Charcoal on paper

Fig 27 *Untitled II – Shadow Drawing*, Charcoal on paper

[133] Morgan has discussed this same need for additional interpretative materials in relation to the use of photography as the recording technique in performative practices, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Morgan, Half-Truth: Performance and the Photograph, *Action/Performance and the Photograph.*

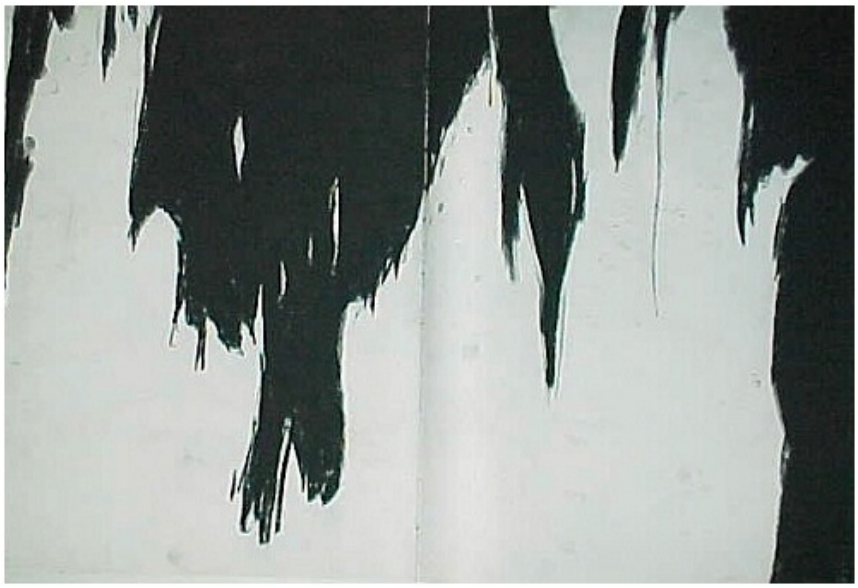


Fig 28 *Bone Circle – Shadow Drawing*, Charcoal on paper

One challenge surrounding the notion of interpretation that arises with the shadow both the realistic shadow forms and abstracted ones discussed so far is their focus on distinct sections of cast shadow. The sectional focus of the record makes broader extrapolations of form almost impossible. This selective focus on sections of shadow also requires the active mediation of the documentarian in the composition of the record. As the motivation for employing this technique was to limit such intervention, this sectional focus has therefore been broadened.

Fences and Chains, (Fig. 29), attempts to overcome the focus on sections at the expense of the whole by recording the full length of an onsite work. The onsite work was created on a dry salt lake in western New South Wales. Historical attempts to open this land for agricultural use incorporated a process known as chaining. This involved a massive length of chain being stretched between two vehicles and then dragged through the landscape. The process destroyed native vegetation and led to massive environmental degradation through erosion and the loss of topsoil. The impact on this fragile landscape is still evident many decades on. Utilising wood felled by chaining, a fragile fence-like construction was carefully created in the barren expanse of the salt lake. This work was intended as a reference to the agricultural objectives held for this land. The fragile and fleeting construction alludes to the futility of imposing such foreign agricultural processes onto this arid land.

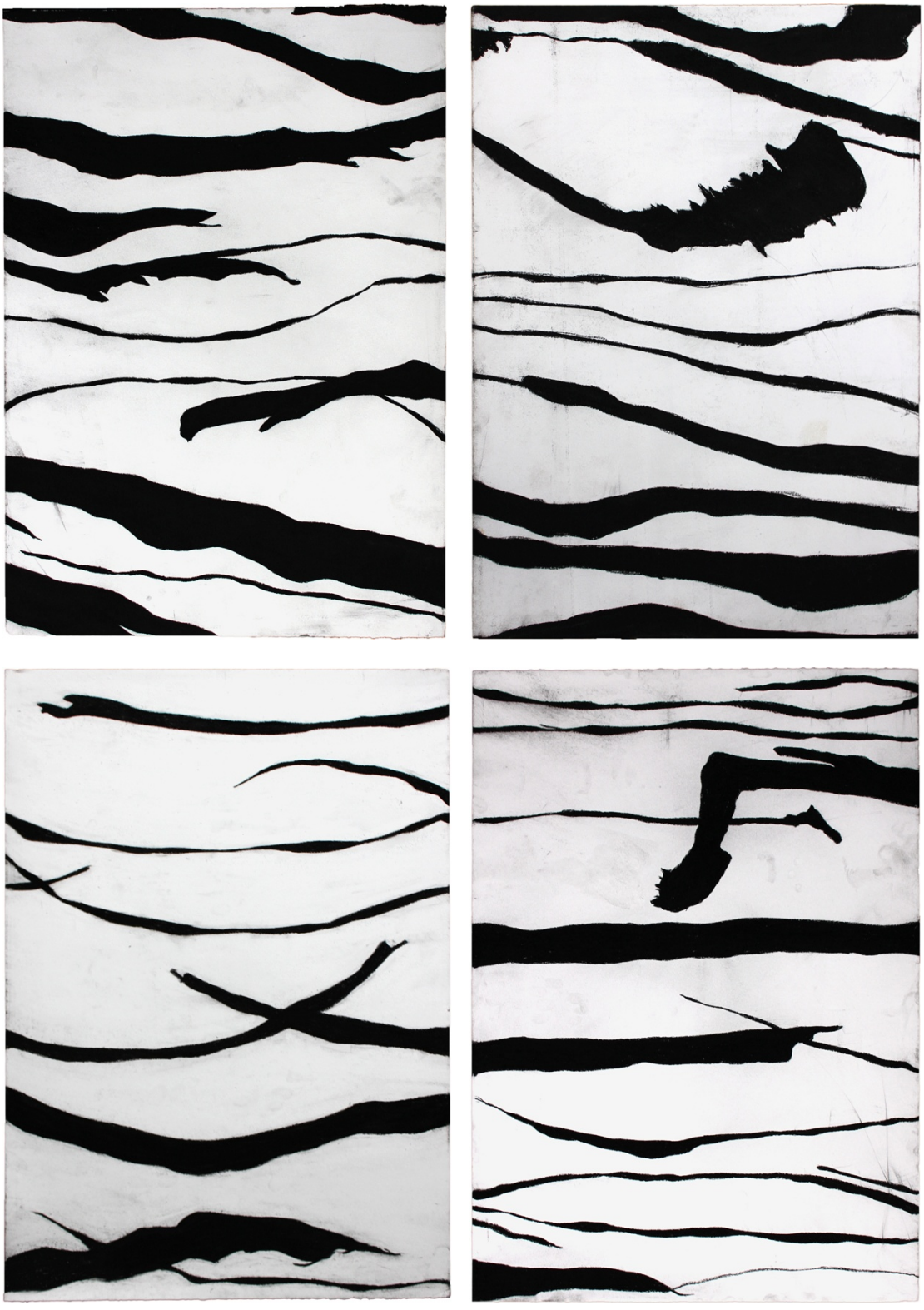


Fig 29 *Fences and Chains- Shadow Drawing*, Charcoal on paper.

The shadow drawing recording this lengthy work was created by progressively moving down the page as each section of shadow was rendered. This approach has been successful in recording the full length of the interaction, however, it also serves to deconstruct the fragile

continuous linearity of the onsite work. Reconstruction of the line requires the active engagement of the audience with the documentation. The intent is that, with guidance, the audience will mentally reconstruct the linearity of the onsite work. This level of audience engagement seems particularly apt when considering the active process used for producing the onsite work. Just as the interaction requires an active engagement with the site, documentation that elevates the audience from passive viewer to active participant is particularly conceptually appropriate. Nonetheless, the application of this documentary technique is somewhat limited. In many works the shadow cast by the form of the interaction is little more than a supplementary effect. In these instances the use of shadow drawing as documentation would be of concern. The central issue is whether the documentation is recording a conceptually significant element of the interaction, or merely an indirect secondary effect. Therefore, the broad application of this technique to all Ephemeral Environmental Artworks is problematic due to the specificity of its focus. This having been said, the connection between document and record coupled with the emphasis on light and shadow, means that its application would be suitable in select instances.

The underlying purpose in exploring the deceptively simple process of shadow drawing was to reduce the role of the documentarian in the composition of the record, while strengthening the connection between the work and the document. While the process of composing and creating the record is more direct and arguably less interpretative, the documentarian is still required to actively make choices. The previously mentioned sectional focus of the record requires the direct engagement of the document maker. In this respect the documentarian fulfils a very similar role to a photographer who also makes mediating decisions regarding the image.

Additionally, the decision of when the record is created also influences the documentary outcome. Those created later in the day can appear more abstracted due to the stretching of shadows and the rapidity of change resulting from the sun's movement. Timing in relation to document creation is therefore significant. Furthermore, as the form of the interaction is intended to retrogress, the time at which the document is created during the life of the interaction is also important. In the case of the single image document this then requires the documentarian to again make active choices which influence the outcome. Therefore even though the connection between the interaction and the document is more clearly expressed, mediation remains an issue.

The notion of maintaining connection between the onsite work and its record however, does appear merited when this relationship is considered more broadly. The drawing *Clay Circle II*, (Figs. 17 and 18) maintains connection through the materials and processes used in the interaction. The onsite work was a circular form scribed into a dry salt lake. By running barefoot in circles the lake surface slowly broke, exposing the coloured clays beneath. A nearby salt and gypsum formation inspired the creation of this shape within the environment.

A material connection between the onsite work and the drawing was maintained through the use of clay collected at the site. This clay was mixed with a binding agent and applied to a large sheet of paper to create the documentary record. By repeatedly walking on the paper with clay covered feet the circular drawing was created. The method for applying this mixture was significant due to its similarity to the onsite process. This technique resulted in a rough, texturally uneven application of clay. Interestingly, this unevenness caused a degree of impermanence within the documentary outcome. The binding agent could not support the thickest sections of clay, which has resulted in some segments falling away over time. The exposed paper, now devoid of clay, is stained the colour of the earth at the site. In this way, the ephemerality of the artwork resonates in the document in a particularly poignant and apposite manner.

It can be argued that the use of materials and processes from *Clay Circle II* within the documentation centres audience attention directly on the interaction and its subsequent form. This focus is logical, as it is through the interaction that the processes and materials are employed. One concern arising from this degree of focus is the limitation of broader references to site beyond the sole connection of materiality. This limitation is problematic as the location of site-specific works is an integral element of the overall piece.

Clay Tree, (Fig. 30), combines both material and process with a more overt reference to the location through the reincorporation of realistic charcoal drawing. This to-scale record documents an onsite work in which a dead tree, located amongst a section of belah woodland, has been coated in clay. The vivid orange clay used in the interaction and the documentation was collected from this site. The to-scale relationship of this drawing to the onsite interaction provides an exploration of the way in which size, relative to the form of the interaction, may affect audience experience.

Fig 30 *Clay Tree*, Clay and charcoal on paper.

The document began with the realistic charcoal rendering of the site. This image was then overlayed by the clay drawing of the tree. This overlaying of material into a pre-existing image parallels the interaction onsite. The image of the clay coated tree has been created by hand-rubbing material from the onsite work directly onto the drawing. The hand-rubbing process is the same technique used in the onsite interaction. The document, therefore, incorporates both process and material connection with the original work. Initially, this was intended to be the point at which the documentary activity ceased. Upon reflection, however, the large size of this record presented some conceptual concerns that necessitated further working of the documentary image.

The to-scale relationship between the document and the form of the interaction was intended to allow the audience a sense of the physical experience onsite. Although the scale of the drawing is significant, its size has had a conceptually contrary effect for the gallery-based audience. Onsite, the work sits approximately one hundred metres from the roadside and is somewhat obscured by other trees. Its presence is unmarked because the intention is that the remnant form will be discovered rather than the audience being directed towards its presence. The objective behind this is that the viewer's sense of wonder will be piqued; thereby drawing them closer, to fully reveal the partially hidden work.[134] In finding these remaining elements, the objective is to aesthetically engage the audience without the overt allocation of *object d'art* status. The work therefore aims to give audiences an experience of the interaction's aesthetic form without the preconception of an artistic viewing. This lack of preconception follows the established tradition of creative environmental interactions as being distinct from the gallery based experience of art. As Heizer once said "museums and collections are stuffed the floors are sagging, but the real space exists …That kind of unraped, peaceful, religious space artists have always tried to put in their work."[135] Therefore, the differentiation of experience is significant. This type of experience, however, is distinctly different from that of the documentation hanging on the gallery wall.[136] In contrast to this element of discovery, the size of this drawing means that its presence is almost overwhelming. The element of surprise is lost as the drawing, rather than being found,

[134] In relation to this onsite work, the potential audience is limited to the scientific researchers who visit the Nanya research station. Nanya is a research station owned by the University of Ballarat. It is located in the arid zone of western New South Wales and provides the opportunity for both conservation and research.
[135] M. Heizer, as cited in Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape*, 13.
[136] While this consideration is arguably true of all documentation, it is exacerbated in the case of such large-scale records.

imposes itself within the exhibition space.[137] The scale of document alone is not the only aspect that causes the difference in audience experience. While its size does draw audience attention, its perception as an artistic work and its inability to be unexpectedly stumbled upon, is also a function of the gallery space itself. As Brian O'Doherty observed, the sanctified space of the gallery is constructed to purposefully exclude the outside world. Nothing from without is allowed in that may be a distraction to the sanctity of the space and the works on display. Within this revered place artworks are seen in a highly codified and constructed manner.[138] The preconception of artistic viewing and the purposeful lack of distraction, while being part of this codified experience of the gallery, are contrary to the intended experience of the audience onsite.[139] Therefore the experience of documentation, particularly when seen in a gallery, is always as a constrained and incomplete record.

The effect of *Clay Tree* is further exacerbated by the aesthetic quality of the clay that originally appeared disjointed and distinct from the charcoal drawing. In order to alleviate some of the imposing nature of the scale, the clay has been gently reworked with charcoal to reinject a measure of subtlety. The effect of this reworking has been an improved sense of depth and visual grounding for the tree form in the overall record. The use of charcoal in this instance may appear conceptually problematic, as its use in this work has been specifically focused on the depiction of the site. This concern centres on the perception that the interaction and the site are distinct entities. This notion, however, misses the intended harmonious basis that underpins the artwork. Materially speaking, this artwork has an intimate relationship with site. The thinking underpinning the interaction does not seek to delineate spatial or temporal boundaries for the work. In contrast, the basis for understanding is centred on the perception of interrelatedness within the location.[140] In respect to this approach, the use of charcoal is particularly apt. As the referential material of the site, its use

[137] Although this research does not cover the exhibition of the documentation, this impositional effect may potentially be reduced in the showing of the record through the considered laying out of the exhibition design. It may also be reduced by variation in the style and scale of different galleries in which it could be shown.
[138] B. O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, (San Francisco: University of California Press, 2000)
[139] This concern appears to suggest that the exhibition of these documentary records may be more appropriately exhibited outside of the standard gallery space. This research, however, is specifically interested in exploring alternative means of documentation in relation to conceptual appropriateness. Further research is necessary to consider the role of the exhibition space in relation to the allusion of concepts within the onsite interaction. While this does appear to be a valid interest warranting further research it is outside of the scope of this investigation.
[140] This basis led Deakin to compare Goldsworthy's art practice with eastern philosophy. R. Deakin, "Zen and the Art of Andy Goldsworthy", 50-54.

in the softening and grounding of the tree form illustrates that the site and the artwork are not distinct separate elements.

As an artwork I feel that this to-scale documentary drawing is the weakest of the works produced throughout this research. While it shares a material and scalar relationship to the onsite work, as a resolved finished artwork it remains somewhat lacking. For this reason this work was not shown as part of the graduating exhibition but rather remained with the folio as a support work. During the work's creation there were times when it appeared that it would be a stronger outcome than the finished work appeared. For this reason I feel the piece tended to be overworked, over-thought and lacked the spontaneity of the onsite work.

The practice-led research undertaken for this project has found drawing to be successful as a documentary technique. It has enabled this artist to record the physical aspects of the interaction and more subtly allude to some of the conceptual bases for the work. The success of drawing may therefore be seen to challenge the primacy of photography as the major documentary technique used in the recording of Ephemeral Environmental Art. The points of concern identified in the discussion above suggest that while drawing is successful, its application needs to be mindfully applied in regard to the conceptual intent for the onsite interaction.

4.2 Printmaking

The second series of works exploring alternative documentary techniques were created through various printmaking methods. The selection of these printmaking processes was guided by the notion of knowability of process, as discussed above. The first series of documentary images resulting from the use of printmaking are drypoint prints.

Sandcastle, (Fig. 19), presents a textual reference within the realistic depiction of a moment in the life of an interaction. This documentary print records a coastal Ephemeral Environmental Artwork, made at Johanna Beach in Victoria. This onsite work was created using sand and seagull feathers found on the beach. Purposefully constructed in the tidal zone, it was very soon to be destroyed by the coming water.

The use of text in this documentary print is as an embedded component of the picture. The words "a castle of sand fortified by feathers guards against the encroaching tide" make a statement, while also providing the horizon line for the image. By layering this additional reference within the image, the statement is not separated out as a distinct addendum, thereby acting both as a conceptual reference, and as a visual component of the record. This process of layering additional references into the documentation is significant in that it allows for greater conceptual allusion.

British artist Richard Long incorporated text in the documentation of some of his creative activities in the environment, (Fig. 8). His use of text differs in works where sited environmental forms are created compared to walked works that don't create onsite forms. In instances where Long's environmental interactions result in an aesthetic form, he does not document the work solely through text. The ephemeral forms are generally recorded by either photography alone or the use of photography with text. Where there is text it appears as straightforward descriptive titles relating to the process of interaction, such as *A line in the Himalayas 1975*.[141] The texts within Long's documents, of this sort, generally exist separately to the photograph. In this regard the use of alternate approaches to documentation may, more readily allow for the incorporation of secondary references due to the flexibility of imaging technique.

The concern for knowability that guided the choice of image making techniques does however, limit the visual effects that can be achieved. In relation to drypoint, the ability to produce tonal effects is limited. Although these effects are achievable through cross-hatching and overworking previously scribed sections of the plate, it also extended the time required to create the image. The creation of drypoint prints can lead to a different spatial relationship of the documentarian to the onsite interaction than that which occurs in the use of drawing. While loose impressions of the interaction could be recorded onsite, the time-consuming process of scratching or scoring the image into the relatively easily damaged acetate plate, is generally completed offsite.[142] This means that the document lacks a direct spatial relationship to the interaction that may also extend to include a degree of temporal dislocation. The relatively slow and arduous process of image creation, particularly in

[141] R. Long, *Heaven and Earth*, 83.
[142] For a full description of process and terminology see A. Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: An introduction to the history and techniques*, 71

relation to highly detailed drypoint images, means that the plate may be completed long after the ephemeral interaction has disappeared. Therefore, the use of such a lengthy documentary process in the recording of short-lived onsite works is problematic.

On a more positive note drypoint may be better applied to works that have either a greater degree of longevity, or are more suited to the linearity of this technique. Furthermore, the process of scratching that is employed by drypoint may be viewed as a point of connection to the process used onsite. The marking of the smooth surface of the acetate can be paralleled to some processes of interacting with the land in that scratching techniques can be used to create marks within the environment. The linearity of this drypoint technique therefore lends itself to the documentation of onsite works that utilise drawn linear components. The interaction documented in the print *Nanya Reflections*, (Fig. 21), possesses both these characteristics. The onsite work depicted in this image was created in a shallow salt lake in the arid zone of western New South Wales. This vast flat landscape posed quite a few challenges to the interaction. A major concern was the density of the resultant ephemeral form. The issue being that too dense a work would appear heavy-handed and impositional within the space. This necessitated an austere and minimal aesthetic approach.[143] The process of interaction involved pushing a series of sticks into the thick clay of the lakebed. These clay-coated sticks and their reflections provided subtle upright breaks to the vast horizontality of the land.

The concern for lightness of touch and the minimal aesthetic that informed the interaction is paralleled in the fine lines of the drypoint. In the record the visual reference to both the upright and reflected stick forms, is given through their outline alone. Although greater textural detail could have been added, this minimal use of the outline suited the refined aesthetic qualities of the interaction. Similar in intent to *Sandcastle*, this print embeds textual elements within the visual outcome. The written component once again provides the horizon line within the image. Interestingly this textual horizon appears to sit in front of the upright sticks, therefore ensuring legibility, while also subverting the illusion of depth. In contrast to the single line of poetic text in the earlier drypoint, this work overlaps a series of statements to provide a stronger visual presence. Additionally, the function of this writing differs somewhat from that in the previous drypoint image.

[143] As discussed previously, the minimalist aesthetic quality is also noted in earlier forms of creative environmental interaction. Erin Hogan comments that Land Art was also known as American Monumental Minimalism in E. Hogan, *Spiral Jetta*, 2.

The use of text in the earlier work is a resolved statement that references the created form and also the manner of its impending retrogression. In contrast, this work incorporates an array of questioning statements, which illustrate the mental challenge of sympathetically interacting with this site. As such, this document allows the drawn component to reference the form, while the textual information alludes more broadly to the process of interaction. These open-ended thoughts contemplate the land, as well as the assumptions which are made in framing responses to it. The text reads:

> in such a vast flat land how does one respond to the great horizontalness [sic]
> the challenge remains how does one interact without imposing
> how does one touch the land without forcing it, without denying it
> is the key in understanding, in sympathy
> does sympathy imply a degree of separation from nature that is being overcome
> are we separate from the natural world
> is this separation an illusion
> if not sympathy, is the key then connection
> not just the cerebral connection that is apparent in disembodied understanding, but rather
> the bodily, visceral understanding that comes through physical experience
> the creative interaction is not then a theoretical thought one
> it is a felt one
> one must first feel the land

This reference to form, combined with the allusion to broader processes of interaction, provide the basis for the success of this documentary outcome.

While the minimalist sensibility of this interaction related well to the fine linear nature of drypoint, the recording of other onsite works are better suited to alternative printmaking methods. The work *Cave Fire*, for example, incorporated effects of firelight as an element within the interaction. This use of light produced areas of bold, strong contrast. The recording of this work is more aptly suited to a printmaking process that produces weight and contrast. For this reason the relief printing method of linocut, was selected as an appropriate method for recording of *Cave Fire*, (Figs. 31-32).

The concept behind *Cave Fire* involves contemplation of interior space, particularly in relation to shelter within the environment. The site of this interaction was a small cave located in the northern Grampians in western Victoria. To provide a degree of division between interior and exterior space, the opening of the cave was obscured by a series of upright sticks. By carefully flexing the sticks, they held themselves in place between the floor and the roof of the cave. Although this loose structure created a sense of boundary, it

remained relatively open and permeable. This permeability allowed the presence and effects of nature into the cave, thereby not excluding the site. The visual effect of this permeability was evident in the interaction through the contrast of light and shadow. During the day, light passed though the wall structure to cast shadows on the floor of the cave. At night a fire was lit within the cave that illuminated the edges of the interior and cast light through the boundary wall to the world beyond.

Fig 31 *Shadow I – Cave Fire*, Ink on paper

Fig 32 *Cave Fire – Storyboard*, Ink on paper

The initial print relating to this work is a single image of the interior of the cave. Light from the outside world permeates the wall to illuminate the darkened interior space and cast shadows within the cave. The significance of light and shadow are evident in this powerful image. Additionally, this picture incorporates a sense of perspective to create an illusion of depth within the print. Much like drypoint and the majority of the earlier drawings, this work includes a degree of realism as a means to connect the record to the onsite work. This sense of depth and space within the cave is crucial, as the onsite work was created as a contemplation of interior space.

As with the earlier drawn works, this particular outcome struggles to reference the process of interaction due to the single image outcome. Therefore a storyboard linocut showing five different moments in the life of the work has been created, (Fig. 32). The five images show the interaction at different stages of the process, as well as from differing vantage points. The first two images depict the light and the shadows in the cave during the day, while the three latter images show the cave at night, illuminated by the fire within. The first of these three night based images shows the interior view of the cave. Reading this print from left to right it is evident that there is a developing narrative that changes with time. Therefore the allusion to a greater process is markedly improved in the multi-panelled approach.

The use of perspective and the creation of depth are important in this work. The broader application of linocut as a documentary technique, however, may be applied without the necessity for realistic depth. The image making process of cutting the linoleum plate can be related to the physical experience of cutting or carving lines in the land in the creation of the work onsite. Therefore the use of this technique would be particularly apt in the creation of documents for Ephemeral Environmental Artworks that involve this form of environmental interaction.

The concept of connection between the creation of the document and the onsite work is also improved from the earlier exploration of drypoint. The relative sturdiness of the linoleum allows for work to be undertaken on the plate at the location of the artwork. To some extent linocuts can also be printed on location with the use of a baren. Most frequently however, both linocuts and drypoints are printed using a press to ensure the even application of pressure during printing. Therefore, whilst it is clear that the linocut technique can allow for a

measure of improved spatial relation to the onsite work, there are still some limitations in terms of creating the image from the plate.

The third printmaking method does not require the use of specialist equipment in the production of the image and is therefore less limited. The technique of creating images through stencilling is particularly interesting due its close association with Street Art and paper-based ephemera, as discussed in Chapter 3. *Balance –Cannonball Cove* provides an example of the early use of this technique, (Figs. 33 and 34). These stencils record a stacked stone interaction that was created in the tidal zone of Cannonball Cove in Victoria. This cove's name is derived from the spherical stones that line the beach. Using these stones, a single stacked work was created by carefully balancing each stone atop the previous one.

The resulting prints record the form of the work as it is struck by an incoming wave. This documentary concentration on an instantaneous moment is similar to photographic documentation. Also comparable to photography is the limitation of space arising through the restriction of a single viewpoint. Unlike photography however, this record does not simply allow the edge of the page to impose its subtle spatial boundary. Rather, it makes this limiting characteristic more overt through the imposition of a black border. By making the margins of the image visible the function and artificiality of this restriction also become more evident.

The border serves a secondary purpose as a reference to the ephemera of comic books. This framing device in this print is a subtle reference to the presence of a greater narrative in the same way that borders work in comic books. Another connection, albeit subtle, is the paper ground upon which the work is printed. Paper has the sense of fragility because it can be ephemeral, and that sense is what connects it to the intended ephemerality of the onsite work.

The subtlety of the reference to narrative and process in this work could easily be overlooked. For this reason *Spine*, (Fig. 35), uses the replicability of this technique as a means to illustrate development and change. The form created through the onsite interaction depicted in this document, is a tall, stacked stone work. Created near Murringo in New South Wales this piece was made using granite stones at the site. The purposefully fragile stack possesses the same number of stones as the human spine has vertebrae. The ephemerality of this interaction was also intended to reference the relative frailty and ephemerality of human existence. While this human element was significant to the onsite work, it is only referenced in the

document through the title of the work. The avoidance of visual allusions to this concept in the documentation is deliberate, as the title alone is considered to be suitably suggestive.

Fig 33 *Balance Cannonball Cove*, Acrylic paint on paper.

Fig 34 *Balance Cannonball Cove*, Acrylic paint on paper.

Fig 35 *Spine*, Acrylic paint on paper.

The documentary image for this work shows five prints produced through the stencil mask. In contrast to the notion of an edition, these five images all differ to some degree. These differences provide a sense of sequence throughout the work. When read from left to right this sequence appears to suggest the passing of the form, or alternatively, if read from right to left it appears to reference the building of the form.

Thus far the discussion of this technique has concentrated on the print arising from the stencilling process. This focus is reasonable as the printed image is considered to be the primary outcome of stencilling. The cut out stencil itself can also be read as a reference to the onsite work. As with the print, the stencil mask uses the relationship of positive and negative space to create the shape of the image. The work *Leaf Fence*, (Fig. 36), directly uses this play on the negative space of the stencil to reference the ephemeral form.

The interaction documented in this papercut mask is a small-scale intimate work created in the arid zone of western New South Wales. Unlike the earlier *Fences and Chains*, this piece was not created in consideration of any historical attempt to impose western agricultural traditions into this harsh non-arable land. The impetus for the work specifically pertained to modern day usage of land at the site. At the present time this site operates as a university-based research station dealing with arid zone ecology. As a result of this use, it is not uncommon to stumble across fenced off exclusion plots.[144] Although these plots are functional for scientific purposes, their presence in the land feels like an imposition that is overtly forceful. The denial of access in combination with the straightness of the fence lines leaves these plots seeming alien within their organic surroundings. In response to this sense of alienation, the interaction was intended as a somewhat playful, lighter contemplation of the fence form within this site. The intimately scaled work utilised the vegetation of the site to create a gently curving fence-like form.

The papercut presents an image of the form of the interaction created by the negative space of the mask. This use of empty space as a means of referencing form also allows for a reference to the ephemerality of that form. This stencil outcome also includes a number of other references to the interaction. The ground from which the stencil is cut is another significant feature of this document. As the site of the interaction is not a blank space devoid of

[144] Exclusion plots are fenced off areas that deny access to local fauna. By denying this access the vegetation inside the plot is able to regrow. Through comparison of the vegetation within the plot to that outside the fence line, scientists are able to gain an understanding of the grazing pressure applied by the fauna to the site.

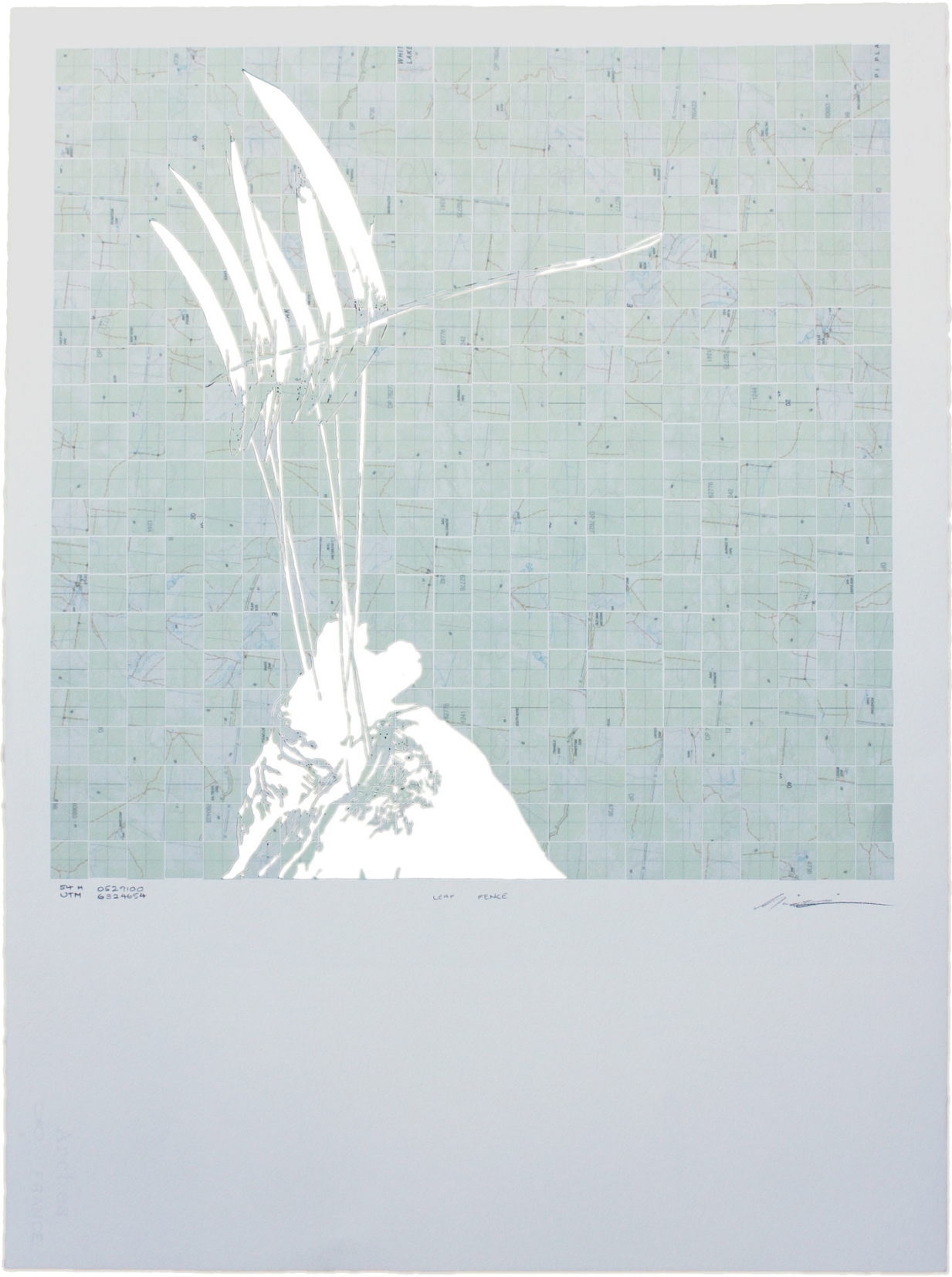


Fig 36 *Leaf Fence*, Paper cut in digital print on paper.

meaning, so the ground for the stencil is not a blank piece of paper. This relationship of the interaction and the ground upon which it occurs, is made all the more apparent through the incorporation of the topographical map. As the use of this map has been intended as a visual reference to the site, rather than as a functional direction giver, it has been purposefully deconstructed, jumbled and then reconstructed.

This deliberately approach of circumventing the conventions of presentation can also be seen below the stencil, in the titling information incorporated in the work. Through this information, the record appears to hint at a level of self-awareness regarding its own development as it adapts the titling conventions of editioned prints. Although it is a unique object developed through the printmaking process of stencilling the title information still follows the standard format of signature on the right, title centrally located with the editioning information to the left. As a unique piece, editioning information is superfluous. This information is, therefore, replaced by another mapping reference regarding the location of the site. In contrast to the reconstructed map's loss of function, the GPS (Global Positioning System) coordinates, as listed in place of the editioning information, specifically locate the site at which the interaction occurred. The success of this reconsideration of ground has been redirected back to the surface upon which stencilled images are printed.

Of the numerous techniques explored and works created throughout this research, these papercut works (Fig.36, Fig. 60 – 62) are some of the strongest pieces produced. As artwork in their own right I found these outcomes to be not only referential to the onsite work but also more subtle and poetic than many of the other documentary outcomes. This subtlety allowed space for documentary allusion rather than being an overtly didactic statement. This openness towards interpretation within the documentation also leaves me with a further sense of satisfaction as it relates subtlety of the work within the environment.

The documentary image *Wy-char-arng* also reconsiders the ground upon which the image is created as a potential point of connection between the onsite work and its record. The interaction that this work documents is a large-scale ephemeral geoglyph created on the dry bed of Lake Wendouree in Ballarat. Created in collaboration with the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative, this geoglyphic work references not only local fauna and the contested nature of water, but also highlights the lack of public acknowledgment of the indigenous significance of the site. Although the overall process for the piece took fifteen

months, the onsite component of the interaction required only one month for completion. The form of the three platypus swimming westward towards an unmarked sacred men's site, was carefully carved into the dry bed of the lake. Throughout this period, rubbish embedded in the site was removed. While much of it was thrown away a series of empty bottles were kept. These collected bottles provide the ground upon which the documentary stencil is now sandblasted, (Fig. 37).

Fig 37 *Wy-char-arng*, Sandblasted glass.

As with the earlier drawings, this record incorporates a material connection with the onsite interaction. In contrast to the earlier works, however, the material is not used to create the image. Rather, the relationship of the bottles to the overall work is through the site. The bottles, therefore, provide the site upon which the documentary image is produced. The transparency of the glass in conjunction with the sandblasted stencil, results in a document that requires a very specific relationship with the audience. When viewed from front-on, the sandblasted image appears as a singular outcome across all fourteen bottles. If the viewer moves either right or left the image is fractured, and the impression lost. This purposeful imposition of viewing position alludes to a similar concern in the onsite work. The overall size of the work on the lake meant that while it could be partially experienced at ground level, it required an aerial perspective to be fully comprehended.

As an artwork this piece leaves me with somewhat mixed feelings. While I like the use of material and the reference to site, the specific focus on the sandblasted element appears a touch overdesigned and mathematical While it could be argued that this strong sense of design is appropriate for this work, as maths played a crucial role in the translation of the piece to the site, this focus tends to leave the document relatively didactic and unsubtle. .

The incorporation of connection through materiality is further explored in the documentary image *Vantage Point*, (Fig. 38). Created amongst the dune landscape of an arid zone in western New South Wales, this interaction occurred on the highest point in the landscape. Resting on top of this hill lay a fallen eucalypt. Using loose gypsum collected from the ground around the site, the tree was coated in a fine white powder. Under the harsh Australian sun the white tree appeared to glow in the otherwise muted colours of the landscape. This visible marker could then be used as a point of navigation while moving amongst the surrounding dunes. Within three days the effects of the wind at this exposed location had all but returned the tree to its previous colour.

Fig 38 *Vantage Point*, Acrylic paint on paper

The documentary outcome of *Vantage Point* incorporated both material and process connection with the interaction. While the stencil printing technique provided the basis for image creation, its use was considerably extended in this record. Initially a stencilled print was created to depict the site upon which the interaction occurred. Much like the relationship

of the site to the interaction, this image then became the location upon which the documentary reference is overlaid. Using this same stencil as a mask, loose gypsum collected from the site is then lightly dusted onto the image of the tree. By creating the reference to the interaction out of loose gypsum it allows this aspect of the record to remain impermanent. As a means of illustrating the conceptual significance of the form's retrogression as part of the overall interaction, a video recording has been made as the gypsum is slowly blown away from the image of the tree.[145] Through this breaking-down process the underlying print of the site is exposed and returned to its original condition.

The non-traditional use of the stencilling technique has allowed for an array of the conceptual concerns in the onsite interaction to be referenced in the document. Therefore the unusual, albeit considered approach to materiality, parallels the use of non-traditional art materials onsite. Indeed, it is the specific use of gypsum from the site that provides a material connection between the interaction and the documentation. The purposeful avoidance of binding agents and the use of loose gypsum, suggests further references to the acceptance of change and the significance of ephemerality. Additionally, the dispersal of the gypsum to reveal the underlying print, is indicative of the concern for minimal lasting impact that is prevalent in the onsite works.

As with drawing, these various printmaking methods have been successful in the creation of documentary records for Ephemeral Environmental Artworks. The aesthetic qualities and creation processes relating to each method have been found to vary in their applicability depending on the interaction being recorded. I have found that each of these methods has the capacity to produce successful outcomes in that extended explorations into the unconventional use of materials and techniques, has produced works that allude strongly to the breadth of conceptual considerations.

[145] The use of the video recording in this document appears contrary to the notion of knowability of process in the production of the record. Interestingly, its incorporation in this more involved process felt less problematic than earlier instances of documentation that relied on mechanical processes alone to create the documentary record.

4.3 Painting

The third image making technique being considered in relation to this investigation is painting. Much like the earlier techniques, the use of painting has been controlled by a series of guiding limitations relating to the notion of knowability of process. These limitations are discussed in Chapter 3. Unlike the earlier investigations into drawing and printmaking, the effect of the limitations placed on the painting process has confined the outcomes to less realistic results. In much the same way that the shadow drawings challenge the necessity of realism in documentation, these painted results consider broader interpretations of allusion as potential points of reference to the onsite interaction.

The first painting being discussed relates to the previously mentioned interaction *Balance – Cannonball Cove*. The interaction, as noted above, consists of stacked stones and took place near Johanna Beach in Victoria. The documentary painting relating to this onsite interaction can be seen in Fig. 20. As an early exploration into painting, this onsite work appears well suited to the constructive process of layering paint to build an image. This picture evolved through the repeated application of opaque and translucent paint and a limited range of colours. In the creation of this work, however, it became evident that the multiplicity and translucency of layers that make up the picture plane, reduce the effect of the limited palette. If the concern for knowability is intended to be read by the audience then it is likely that the palette would need to be further reduced.

Balance – Cannonball Cove depicts only two stones; one carefully balanced atop another. Therefore, in relation to the overall interaction, the painting does not record the form at the cessation of the artist's activity. By purposefully avoiding the depiction of the entire form, the intention is to undermine the notion that any single instant in the process of the interaction, might be of more significance than any other. To some extent this is successful as it does remove the emphasis on the moment at the cessation of the artist's activity. The single format of this outcome, does not, however, overtly reference the process over time, and therefore this change of emphasis is not as desirable. While it could be said that that the whole form cannot be comprehended in this painting, the form is intended to be transient element of the interaction and therefore is never fully alluded to in single image documents.

The relative fragility and the sense of careful balance in the interaction are directly depicted in the painting. While the forms of the boulders appear massive, the contact between their

surfaces seems almost weightless. Barely touching, they rest delicately poised, with the potential to overbalance and tumble at any moment. The subtle use of haloed light surrounding the smaller boulder reiterates this tenuous relationship as it reaches down towards the larger mass, holding the form of the interaction in a delicate glow of illumination; the haloed light appears to extend beyond the upper boundary of the page. Complimentary to this extension, another two lines appear to reach further still. Although not depicted due to the upper boundary of the page, these lines seem to suggest that some greater extension of the vertical form may yet exist. This sense of possibility beyond the depiction alludes to the changing nature of the form.

Looking further into the painting, the textural effects arising from the method of the paint's application reference the materials of the site and the interaction. The textural markings on the boulders have been created through the continued working of the wet paint as it dries. This process of tearing at the paint has been discussed in Chapter 3. The resulting effect of this technique is the appearance of a rough textured surface on the boulders.

In contrast to the coarse effect of the torn paint, the fluid markings that reference the ocean at the site are created through the second reductive process of rubbing into the painting with a damp cloth. This process slowly reveals the fluid markings that were created in the initial layering of paint. The splash-like markings revealed to the right of the larger stone are highly indicative of the waves crashing into the form. Whilst the combination of these technical effects is used to reference both the form and material of the interaction, the final image, remains a relatively abstract document.

Clearly the avoidance of realism or the illusion of depth could be considered detrimental to audience comprehension of the direct relationship between the interaction and its documentation. The elimination of perspective also serves to remove the perception of spatial demarcation that can be read through documentation with a specific viewpoint. This move away from realism, towards abstraction, is developed further in the second documentary painting.

The work *Cave Fire* (Fig. 39)**,** is a painting relating to the onsite work from the Northern Grampians, discussed earlier in this chapter. This abstracted record relates to the site, the created form, and the use of light in the interaction. The composition of the resulting artwork

also relates closely to the shadow drawings discussed earlier. The site in which the work took place is referenced through the pale coloured, tilted, elliptical form that appears recessed into the painting's surface. This shape is drawn from the mouth of the cave, illuminated by the fire within. The darkened bands that block the emanating light, are the silhouetted sticks that give rise to the created form, while the darkened border of the work references the night sky under which the fire was lit. The extension of the sense of light emanating beyond the confines of the cave at the top of the image, illustrates the potential for light to diffuse and extend the boundaries of the work onsite.

As is the case in *Balance – Cannonball Cove*, the appearance of depth in *Cave Fire* has been deliberately undermined by avoiding the use of perspective. The process of layering the paint, has however allowed for some sense of foreground and background differentiation. The overlapping of opaque and translucent visual elements creates a relationship between elements, whilst their final location remains at an indeterminate depth.

Another outcome of the avoidance of perspective in *Cave Fire* has been the removal of the notion of a viewing angle. This work is not intended to give an immediate impression of a frontal or aerial view in particular. Indeed, the creation of this work has developed through multiple viewings and the depiction of numerous points of view within the single outcome. The resulting abstract image, arrived at through the use of a multiplicity of perspectives, carries through to the upright orientation of the work, even though the cave is in fact oriented horizontally. The intent behind this layering of imagery is to allude to the multiplicity of experience that comes with the repeated visitations to the evolving interaction at the cave site. *Cave Fire* therefore, demonstrates the potential of the painting process described above to depict form, while also incorporating a degree of ambiguity. In much the same way as the created forms of onsite interactions, these painted elements can appear distinct, yet simultaneously fleeting and fragile.

Comprehension of the evidentiary function of any form of documentation requires the viewer to exert a degree of interpretation. While the interpretation of this record may not be as readily available as more realistic presentations, the evidentiary clues are still embedded into

Fig 39 *Cave Fire*, Acrylic paint on paper.

the document. It can be argued here that the non-realistic representation in this document requires greater interpretation and therefore allows greater scope for site-specific allusions to be realized.

4.4 Mixed-Media and Composite Works

The fourth exploration of documentation focuses on records produced through the combination of the image making techniques discussed above. This combination of techniques has been separated into two distinct categories. Firstly, that of mixed-media works which directly mix the techniques in a single outcome. The second approach to the combination of techniques is the composite documentary outcome. This approach combines the techniques through a process of compiling discreet documentary references to form the composite work.

The first interaction in which this mixed media approach to documentation was used is *Cave Fire*, (Fig. 40). As previously discussed, this interaction has been documented as both a linocut and as a painted work. From these earlier works the storyboard print was found to provide strong allusions to process and time. The success of the painting arose through the addition of colour and the non-realistic outcome, which I suggest, allows greater scope for allusion.

The mixed media record combines colour and warmth through painting, with an allusion to process provided by the storyboard linocut. Like the print, the painting focuses on the prevalent concern for light and shadow within the interaction. While the abstracted quality of the painted cave alludes to the interaction, its primary function is to bring a sense of warmth to the document. By omitting the distinguishing features of the interior structure of the cave a sense of indeterminate depth is created. The effect provides a subtle reference to the spatially ambiguous character of the onsite interaction.

Interestingly, the process for creating this document might also be considered relevant to the sensibility used in the creation of the onsite work. In making this document, the painterly component needed to be completed prior to the linocut being printed directly onto its surface. This two-stage process naturally required a willingness to accept an element of risk, because

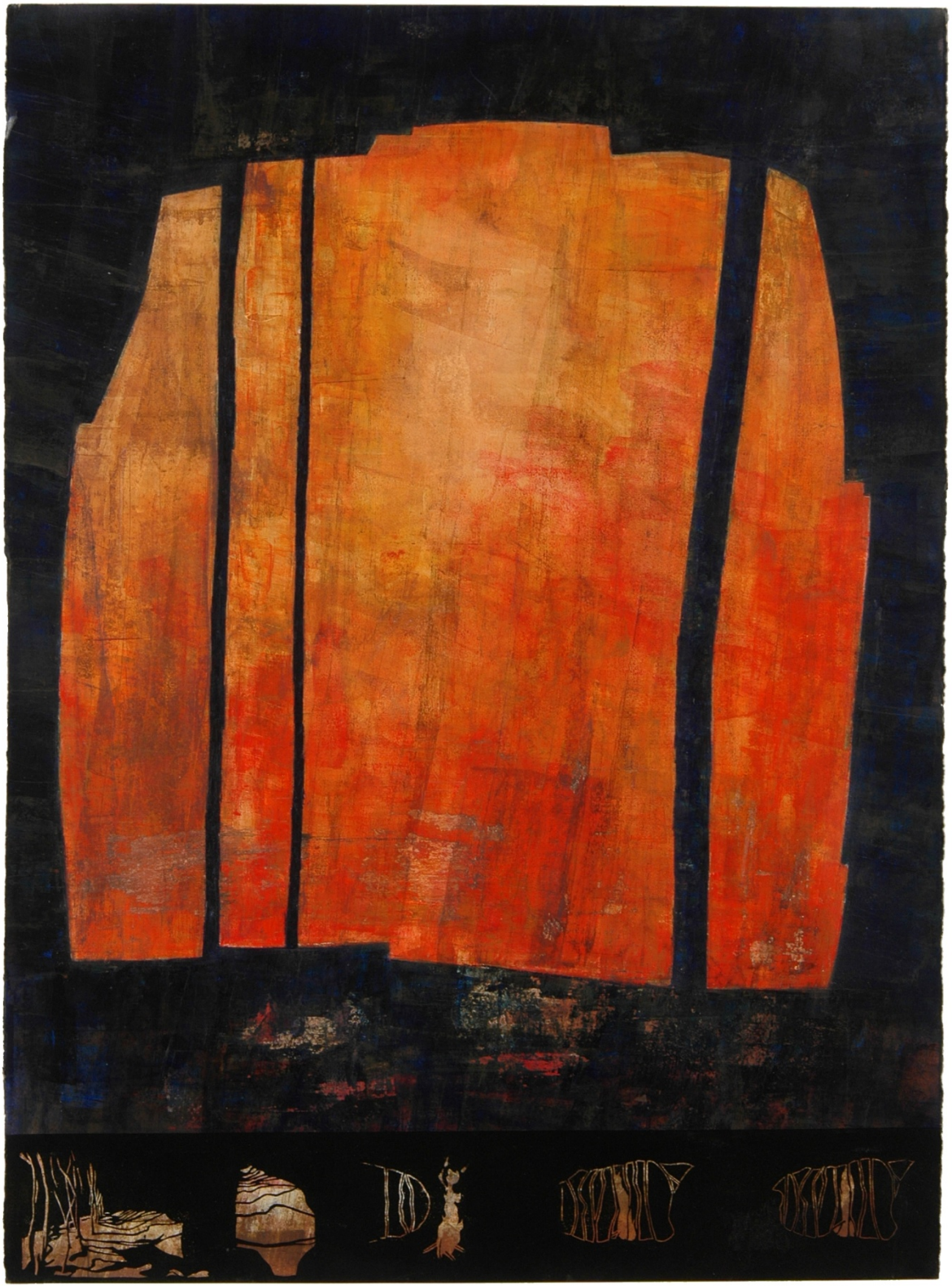


Fig 40 *Cave Fire*, Acrylic paint and ink on paper

of the possibility that the printing of the linocut might fail. In that case, the painting would also be lost. This degree of openness to material failure and unpredictability is highly reminiscent of the process-basis for the interaction.

The revisitation of a different printed outcome formed the basis for another mixed-media record. *Nanya Reflection Series*, (Fig. 22), incorporates the austere drypoint prints discussed earlier with the use of paint. While the presentation of the single print pictorially and textually referenced the interaction and the site, it is less successful in referencing the significance of change and the intended retrogression of the form. For this reason, the prints in this sequence were developed as a series in order to create a storyboard. In contrast to the sequential depiction of moments, the prints present the same basic image being progressively degraded through the over-layering of paint. The intention of this approach is to imply a narrative structure, without the realistic depiction of the retrogression of the form.

In this instance, the paint has purposefully been applied in a different manner to that prescribed earlier in the methodology. In contrast to the heavy layering of thick undiluted paint, this work utilised thin washes of paint. Unlike the earlier use of this material, the paint is not intended to function as a visually depictive element. Rather, this fluid, loose application of paint serves as a reference to the agent of water that causes the retrogression of the form over time. This altered approach to the application of paint is conceptually significant. Thick paint would have heavily covered and quickly extinguished the print's reference to the interaction. The weight and rapidity of such a change would have been contrary to the intended reference to the slow breaking down of the form within the site. Therefore thin washes were generously applied to the page and allowed to wash down the paper surface thereby closely approximating the slow retrogression of the form through gradual erosion.

The incorporation of water as an element relating to the retrogression of the form is relevant for two reasons. Water of course played a significant role in the onsite work by providing the reflective surface that mirrored the form of the interaction. Somewhat ironically, it was also the material that most significantly led to its retrogression. The presence of water softened the clay footing of the work, which then allowed the effects of wind and gravity to slowly bring about its demise. The inclusion of water with the paint as the reference to the retrogressive agent in the documentation is therefore very apt.

Colour choice, in relation to the washes of paint is also significant in that the selected colours directly relate to the colours of the site. The growing presence of colour over the series is intended to indicate the increased presence of the site as it reclaims the form of the interaction. Therefore the final image in the *Nanya Reflection Series* depicts the interaction as almost completely reclaimed by the colours of the site. Nevertheless, the presence of the underlying image still remains as a ghostly imprint within the space. The maintenance of this sense of trace within the documentation is intended to indicate indistinct temporal boundaries of the work onsite. While its remaining presence may confuse comprehension of the intended retrogression of the form and the intention to leave minimal environmental harm, the obvious decomposition over the series of images shows that the form is soon to be gone.

In much the same way that the mixed-media pieces allude to aspects of the onsite work, the combination of distinct documentary references within a single outcome may also be seen to reference the interaction more broadly. The composite work *Clay Tree* (Fig. 41), presents a two-dimensional document comprised of a series of individual records. These documentary elements include a detailed linocut referencing site, mapping elements, as well as satellite imagery of the location, and a series of photographic images illustrating the artist's activity in the process of interaction. These varying documentary outcomes are combined, albeit discretely, to form a single documentary record.

The relative significance of the linocut in this record implies a different relationship between the interaction and the site. Linocut is used to create a bold image that appears to strengthen the relative position of the site within the overall document. Whilst previous records have referenced site through either materiality or imagery, the references are largely either an indirect or a minor component within the overall document. The focus of the early works designates the interaction as being of primary importance within the documentation. In contrast, the scale and detail of the site-referencing linocut, elevates its significance in this composite record; thereby changing the relationship of the various documented components. Unlike the earlier works, the relative position of the reference to the interaction is not the primary focus. Therefore the visual components in this record seek a more balanced focus on both the interaction and the site, strengthening the position of the site within the document and elevating its significance within the onsite work.

The concern relating to the use of time-consuming methods of image creation in the recording of an intentionally ephemeral work was discussed earlier in the printmaking section of the results. Therefore, the use of a highly detailed linocut that took many months to create may appear inappropriate as a means to document the interaction. The selective application of linocut in the recording of the site however, is less problematic as the site remained ostensibly unchanged throughout this period. The inclusion of this technique is therefore, intended to maintain a degree of connection to the knowable processes used onsite.

Fig 41 *Clay Tree*, Ink and digital print on paper

While the linocut process does carry this connection, not all the image making process used in the creation of this document do. The use of satellite imagery, GPS references and mapping coordinates within the documentary outcome are contrary to the initial concern for knowability of process. These distinctly technological outcomes rely on scientific processes beyond the scope of visceral knowability. Their incorporation within this artistic documentation, is not however without precedent.[146] The use of satellite imagery is intended to extend the comprehension of spatial dimensionality of the work. As previously mentioned

[146] See for example the discussion in relation to Oppenheim's work in Chapter two.

these works are an interaction with specific sites, however the spatial dimensions of the site are not generally demarcated. The restriction of space created through the documentary imposition of viewing angle may therefore be problematic. The incorporation of the satellite imagery is aimed at extending the perception of space beyond a single perspective.

In addition to this play on spatial dimensionality, the document also references the ephemeral aspect through the storyboard use of photographs. While the linocut acts as the reference to site, the photographs in this instance have been used to illustrate the process of the interaction. Whilst the sequence of images does not include the complete retrogression of the form, the storyboard shows the process of interaction up until the cessation of artist's activity, as well as the ongoing presence of the form at a later date. The rationale for the incorporation of photography in these composite approaches to documentation is discussed in Chapter three.

The documentary artwork *Clay Tree* (Fig. 41) tends to leave me with a feeling of a work in two halves. While the intricately detailed linocut is a beautiful work in its own right the reference to the greater process is seen below in the photographic elements. While these elements are interesting in their own right they remain somewhat disparate in the final work. For this reason I feel that this work is successful as a document but not completely resolved as a final artwork.

Layering of component techniques within a single documentary outcome is not limited to this two dimensional result. The artists' book *Nanya Reflections* **(**Fig. 42) utilises the layering potential of the book format to illustrate the changing form of an installation over a number of years. This bound book incorporates images, text and cartographical references to the site and the interaction. The pages upon which the book is printed have been sourced from one of earlier the drypoint prints relating to this onsite work. The original print has been cut down to form pages, and therefore sections of the deconstructed print are still visible.

The reuse of the earlier print in this way serves a dual function. Firstly, it alludes to the fact that the onsite work is an interaction without demarked parameters. Just as the site is not devoid of prior contextual considerations, the document also begins with some pre-existing elements. Secondly, revisiting the earlier print as the basis for the pages, serves to emphasize a sense of ongoing continuity in the process. Process-based practice not delimited by

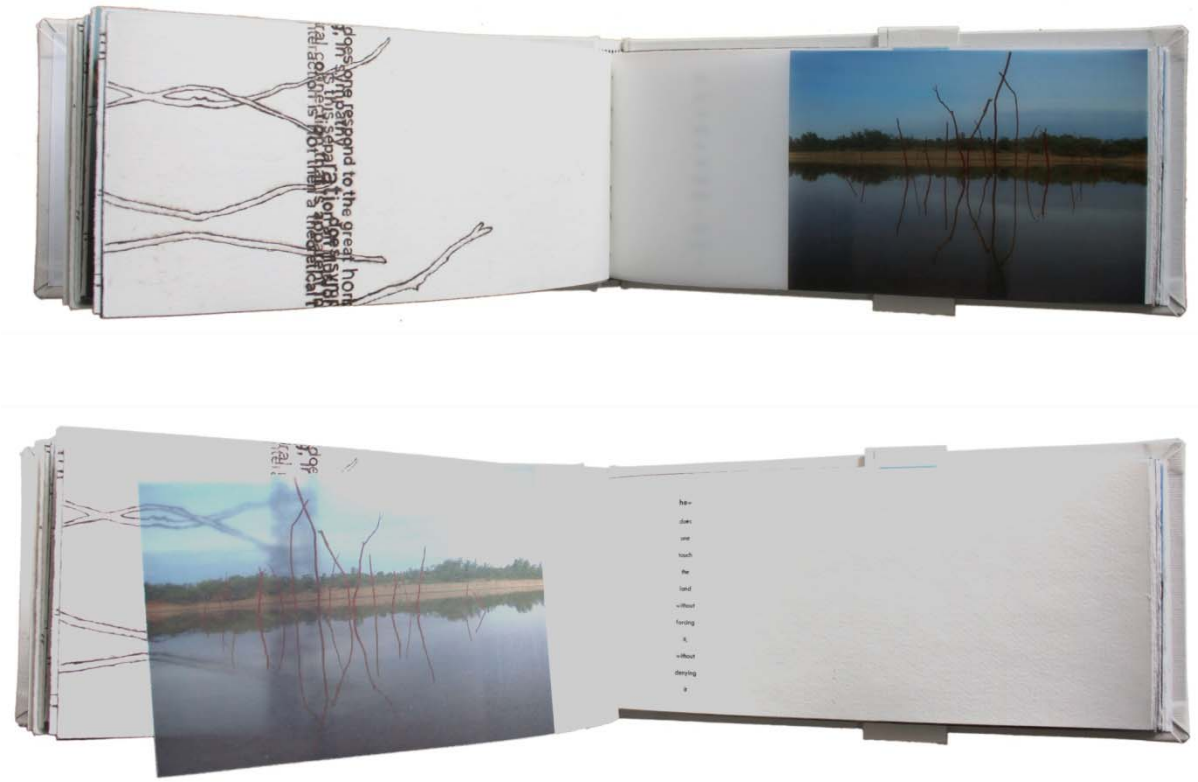


Fig 42 *Nanya Reflections*, Artist book.

temporal boundaries, often means that the sensibilities underpinning an interaction flow between one work and the next. It is from within this sense of flow that this documentation has evolved.

While the verso of each page carries a section of the drypoint, the recto incorporates pictorial and textual references to both the site and the process of interaction. The pages are interleaved with printed photographic records of the form taken over numerous years. The translucency of the interleaved pages means of course that each sheet with its photographic image, works in relation to the printed page below. Therefore the sense of relationship between the various components speaks to the site-specificity of the onsite work. As the interaction is created in relation to the physical parameters of the space, so to the various documentary elements work in relation to each other.

The appearance in the book of the onsite form alongside the overlaid text and pictorial references to the site, is intended to provide a balanced sense of the relationship between these distinct visual elements. This compilation of images and broader references to the site and the interaction is intended to build audience understanding as they engage with this form of documentary record.

The intimate scale of the book *Nanya Reflections,* invites the viewer to directly handle the record. The action of physically handling the work requires a different relationship than that which is evident in viewing wall-based works. For a viewer to fully comprehend this document, they must actively engage with the record. Such direct physical interaction is intended to relate the audience experience, to the process driven basis of the onsite work.

This relationship of active audience engagement through the process of handling, is extended further in the artists' book recording the interaction *Banded Tree* (Fig. 43). Once again this book uses interleaved pages as an integral facet of the documentation. The translucent interleaves reflect the changing nature of the interaction as the viewer progresses through the book. The recto of each page provides the surface that allows for clear viewing of the interleaf images. The verso of these pages carries a range of alternative references to the site, and the conceptual ideas which have informed the interaction. These pages are bound to the spine on the left hand side of the book, whilst the interleaved sheets, are bound separately to a second spine on the right. Keeping the relationship of pages and interleaves in order, therefore requires the viewer to take responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the document. Placing the onus of control back on the viewer alludes to the need for individual responsibility in actions that impact on the environment.

Fig 43 *Banded Tree,* Artist book.

The mixed-media and composite records have proved to be highly effective as documentary formats when recording Ephemeral Environmental Artworks. The multiplicity of techniques and documentary approaches described above, allows for a greater range of allusion and references to both site and the interaction. In instances where individual techniques have been found to be lacking in documentary strength, the mixture of processes has been able to strengthen the documentary potential of these records.

4.5 Self-Documenting Works

The fifth and final exploration of documentary techniques in the recording of Ephemeral Environmental Art relates to outcomes that are referred to as self-documenting. As discussed in the Methodology, these outcomes are remnant elements that arise from the interaction, but which may also be read as evidential records. Of the five categories examined this one is by far the most unpredictable and fraught with conceptual concern.

For the purposes of this investigation, strict limitation was applied to these elements so as to lessen the conceptual concern regarding their creation. As discussed in the Methodology, the very notion of trying to produce a remnant element out of an Ephemeral Environmental Artwork is concerning. The problem with the intention of creating a work that produces a remnant element may be seen to lie in the fact that it undermines the process basis for the interaction and leans the practice back towards an object basis.

In relation to this concern, photograms were created as remnant elements to interactions that included the use of fire. *Bone Stump Fire* (Fig. 44 and Fig. 45), provides an example of one of these outcomes. The onsite work that produced this photogram was an interaction in the arid zone of western New South Wales. At the time of the interaction this landscape had been ravaged by the natural phenomenon of drought and the man-made process of chaining. In response to these phenomena, animal bones were collected from within a small radius of the site. This material was then arranged in a circle around the stump of a tree that had been torn down during the chaining of the land. At night a fire was lit within the tree stump thereby illuminating the surrounding bones. Prior to the lighting of the fire unexposed photographic

paper was placed under the bones at the four cardinal points of the circle. Once lit, the fire then directly exposed these bones onto the emulsion of the paper.

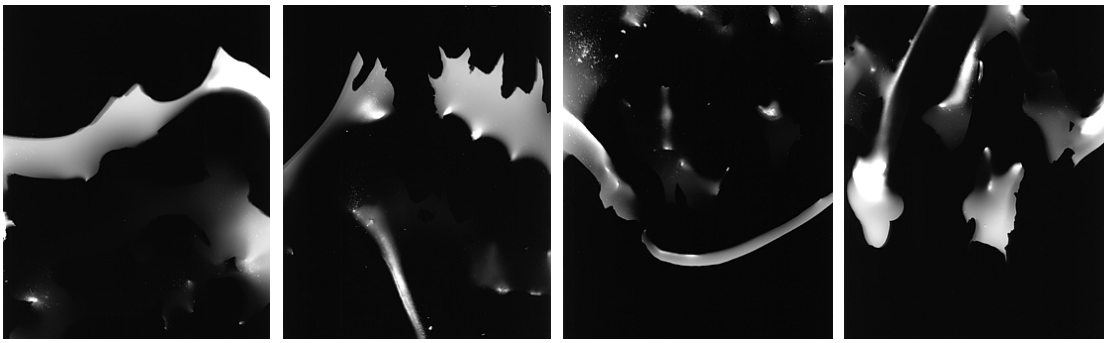


Fig 44 *Bone Stump Fire*, Photogram.

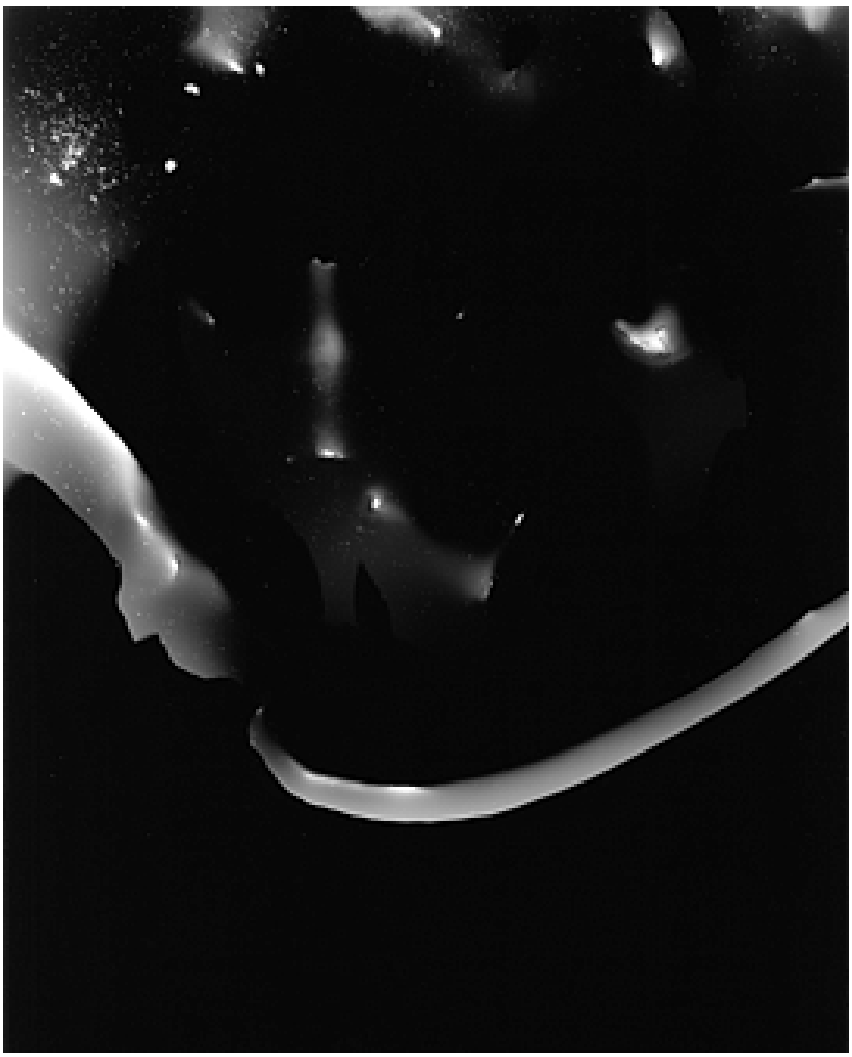


Fig 45 *Bone Stump Fire* (detail), Photogram.

The resulting document is a hauntingly beautiful photogram that shows the bone material as a ghostly presence. In some sections of the document, the flickering nature of the light source can be perceived by the doubling of exposure at the bone edges. The irregularity of the bones is also evident both through their ghostly shapes, and the brighter points at which they contacted the paper. The strength of this process is evident in the degree of connection between the form of the onsite interaction and the record. It is extremely direct and the intervention of the documentarian is also less evident.

It is clear from the foregoing discussion of outcomes, that conceptual appropriateness of the documentation requires careful consideration in the application of these techniques, and should be thoughtfully applied to each Ephemeral Environmental Interaction.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This investigation focused on the key question of whether it is possible, and if so how, to create documentary evidence of Ephemeral Environmental Artwork that is closely attuned to both the conceptual basis of the work and the process driven nature of the interaction. In my research, numerous image making techniques have been employed for both their visual effects and for their potential to reference process, time, space, site and the conceptual underpinning of the work. In order to expand and enrich the documentary potential of these techniques less traditional materials and processes have also been incorporated as a means of creating connection between the onsite interaction and the record.

In commencing this project, it was necessary to trace some of the history of Environmental artwork and the largely unchallenged role of photography as the pre-eminent form of documentation. By exploring the gestation and growth of Land Art, Earthworks and Earth Art and the distinction between different categories and subsets within this field it became clear that the focus on the creation of a form was seen as essential. As a consequence, the positioning of photography as documentary evidence of the form was almost inevitable but as it remained largely unexamined it was also problematic. Through a thorough investigation and clarification of key terms and their usage it was established that Ephemeral Environmental Artworks, while related to the history of Land Art, require a reconsideration of documentation because of the way they prioritise process, time and space over form or object. The apparent paradox of creating a permanent record of an ephemeral artwork was also discussed.

Overall, I have found that alternative forms of documentation for the recording of Ephemeral Environmental Artwork can address the issues integral to the work in a better, more sensitive manner than photography alone. The success has extended well beyond solely creating realistic depictions of the form of the interaction at a specific moment in time. This enhancement has included stronger references to site, time and the retrogression of the form

as an ongoing element of the interaction. Additionally, the alternative approaches have allowed the artist documentarian to maintain an improved sense of connection to the site throughout the documentary process.

The preferential use of indigenous materials onsite is one aspect of site-specificity that is layered into the work. In the works where the actual material from the site is present and used expressively in the document the specificity of site of the interaction is clearly maintained. The manner in which these materials are handled therefore enrich the document with a tangible sense of interaction within the environment. The link through this process allows the artist to maintain a sense of procedural connection to site and preserves a measure of locational attunement that is significant in the original work. As the conceptual basis for the interaction is often informed by the materials or means of interacting with the location, the continuity of these aspects strengthen the expression of the creative concept.

Beyond the materiality and processes used onsite there is also an alluded procedural relationship with the image making techniques. The primacy of photography in the recording of Ephemeral Environmental Art means that questions quickly arise when other imaging techniques are employed. The motivation to use such techniques seems to imply that there is greater consideration and significance behind the use of alternative documentary approaches.

Much like the use of photography each of the alternative techniques explored had both advantages and limitations regarding their use. Drawing allowed for an immediate and onsite response to the created form. The significance of touch in the process of image creation also ensured the relationship with the site was sustained. By varying the materials and approaches to drawing, stronger connection could also be maintained with the conceptual basis for the onsite work. The use of this technique is particularly suitable to onsite works that incorporate drawn processes within their means of interaction.

The three printmaking processes of drypoint, linocut and stencilling all provided valid alternative outcomes that could be read as forms of documentation. The aesthetic qualities of each of the techniques meant that in their varied application some results were stronger or more effective than others. The fine linear basis of drypoint appears particularly apposite for the austere or predominantly linear works. On the other hand the boldness of linocut and its strength of form made it better suited to works that incorporated strong contrasts. The

scratching and cutting of the plates to create the image meant that these techniques could also be applied to onsite works where similar scratching and cutting processes are used. One limitation of drypoint and linocut is their method of printing. This concern could be overcome within the stencilling process.

Stencilling was found to be especially strong as an alternate documentary technique due to its associations with printed media and street art. The flexibility of the printing process meant that the ground on which the image was created could also be varied to form a connection to the site, thereby enriching the documentary outcome. The papercut mask itself was also found to be an interesting documentary outcome in that the role of the negative space alluded to the ephemeral nature of the onsite work.

Within this investigation the use of painting was constrained by a series of guiding limitations. These limitations were intended to restrict the technique to a more immediate and readily knowable process. Due to these restrictions the resultant documents tended to be more abstracted. This measure of abstraction appears to create more intellectual space for the reading of allusion and reference beyond the literal.

The use of mixed-media and composite techniques in this investigation have allowed for the broadest range of references and allusions to be incorporated within a single record. The multiplicity of allusion has been provided through the breadth of processes and materials included in the single outcome. The strength of combining techniques is clearly demonstrated in the artist's books. The audience is required to be actively engaged in a way that is not required by the other media. This active engagement was varied to also imply a measure of viewer responsibility in the handling and ongoing use of the record, thereby alluding to the sense of environmental responsibility in the process of interacting onsite.

Of the range of techniques explored the concept of self-documented works appeared to show the most potential as documentation, but were also the most problematic in terms of the artist's intention. The documentary outcomes of this form were found to possess the strongest connection to the onsite works. As their production was directly linked to the process of onsite interaction, documentation was not an afterthought, but rather an extension of the process. In relation to this, self-documenting works were considered to have a stronger correlation to the veracity of onsite occurrence than all the other techniques.

This research into the modes of documenting Ephemeral Environmental Artworks and testing their appropriateness and applicability has generally been both challenging and rewarding. No single technique can be proposed to supplant the use of photography. Rather, this investigation has identified that numerous techniques are possible for creating documentary records. The artist's selection of which technique is most appropriate for a given onsite work requires a mindful consideration of the salient conceptual concerns of each Ephemeral Environmental Artwork.

APPENDIX ONE: Support Figures

Fig 46 *This is a photograph I*, Woodblock print and digital photograph on paper

Fig 47 *This is a photograph II*, Woodblock print and digital photograph on paper

Fig 48 *Untitled – Shadow Drawing*, Charcoal on paper.

Fig 49 *Sand Circle*, Sand on paper.

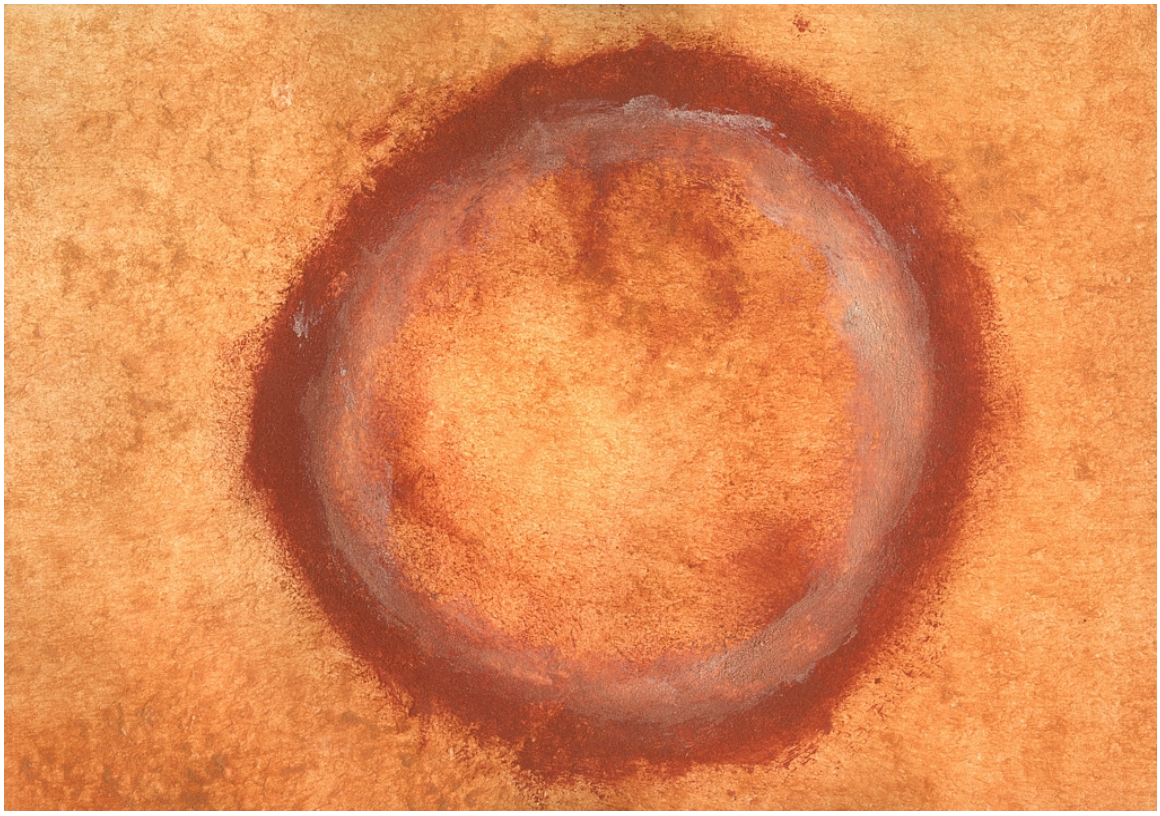


Fig 50 *Earthen Circle I*, Clay and sand on paper.

Fig 51 *Earthen Circle II*, Clay and sand on paper.

Fig 52 *Emu Tracking*, Coloured sand in sandblasted bottles.

Fig 53 Detail of Shadow Print from storyboard from *Cave Fire II*, Ink and acrylic paint on paper.

Fig 54 *Nanya*, Acrylic paint and ink on paper.

Fig 55 *Leaf Circle*, Acrylic paint and ink on paper.

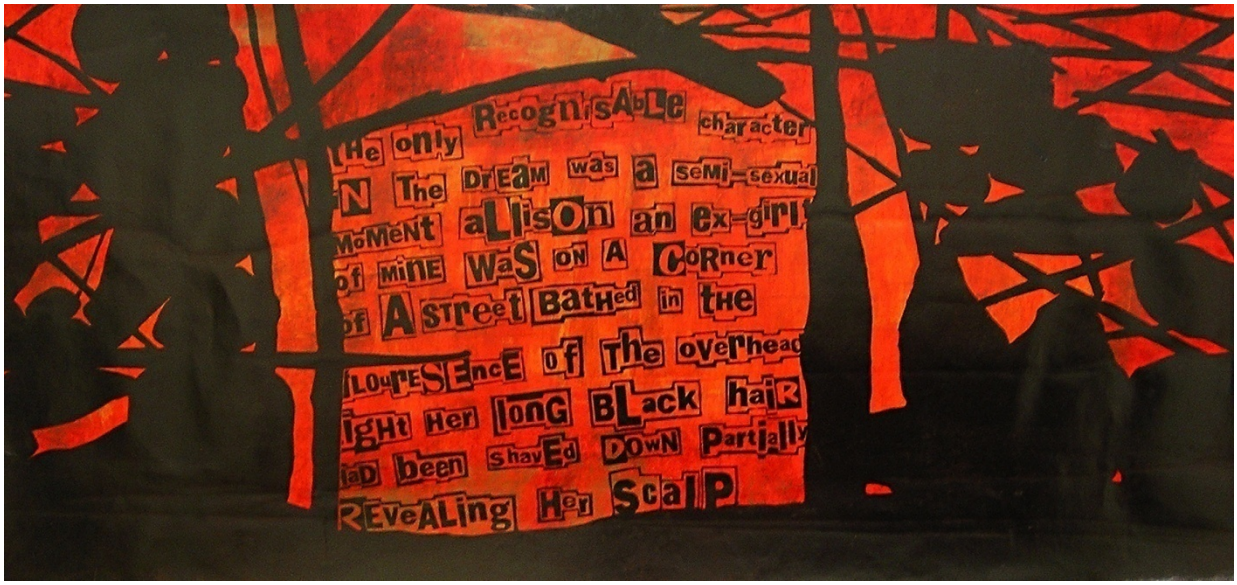


Fig 56 *Vision Quest*, Acrylic paint and ink on paper.

Fig 57 *Snowy River Shelter*, Acrylic paint and ink on paper.

Fig 58 *Hindmarsh*, Drypoint in lightbox.

Fig 59 *Kopi Tree*, Acrylic paint and sand on paper.

Fig 60 *Tree Circle*, Paper cut in digital print on paper.

Fig 61 *Buried Line*, Paper cut in digital print on paper.

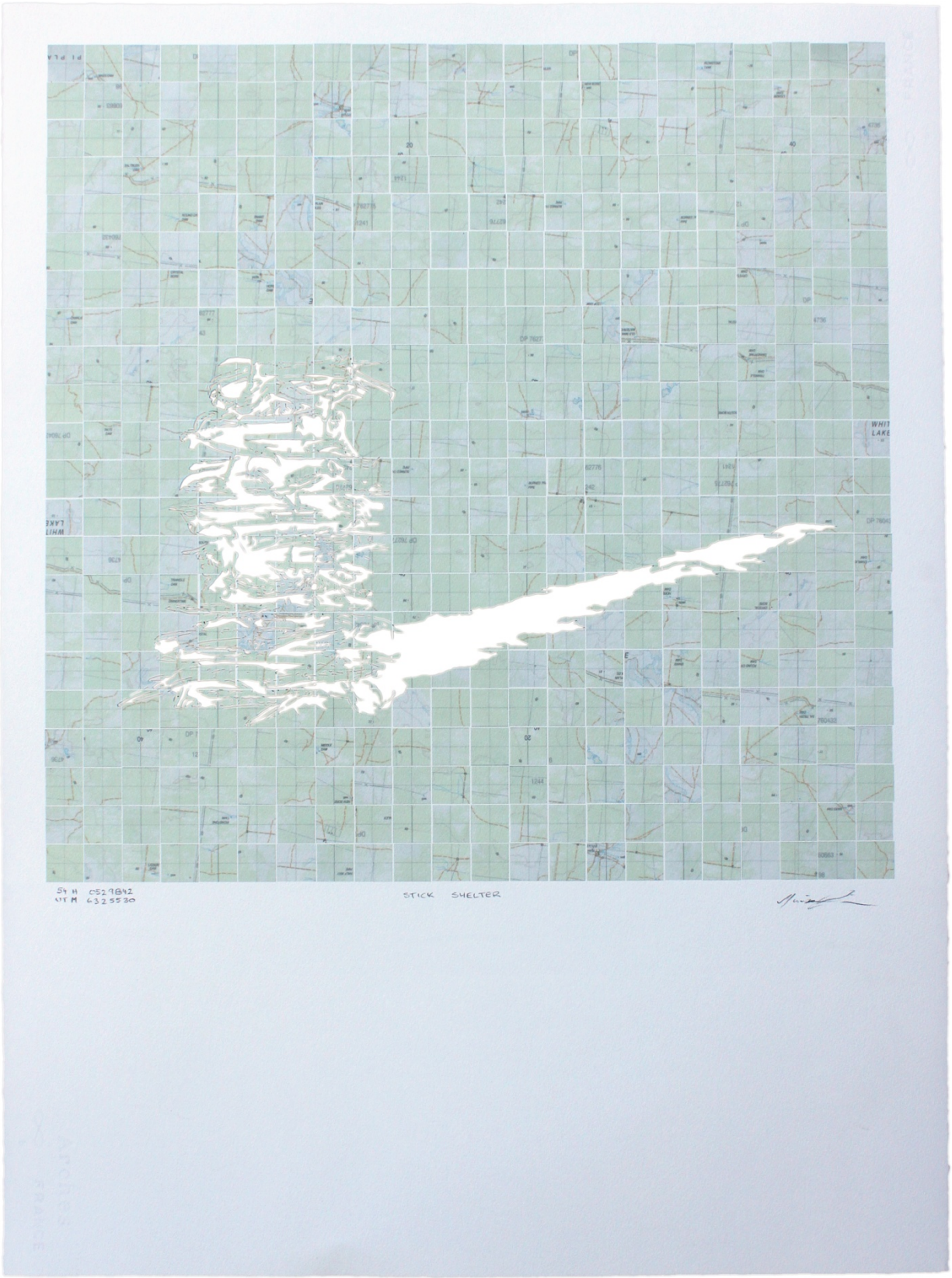
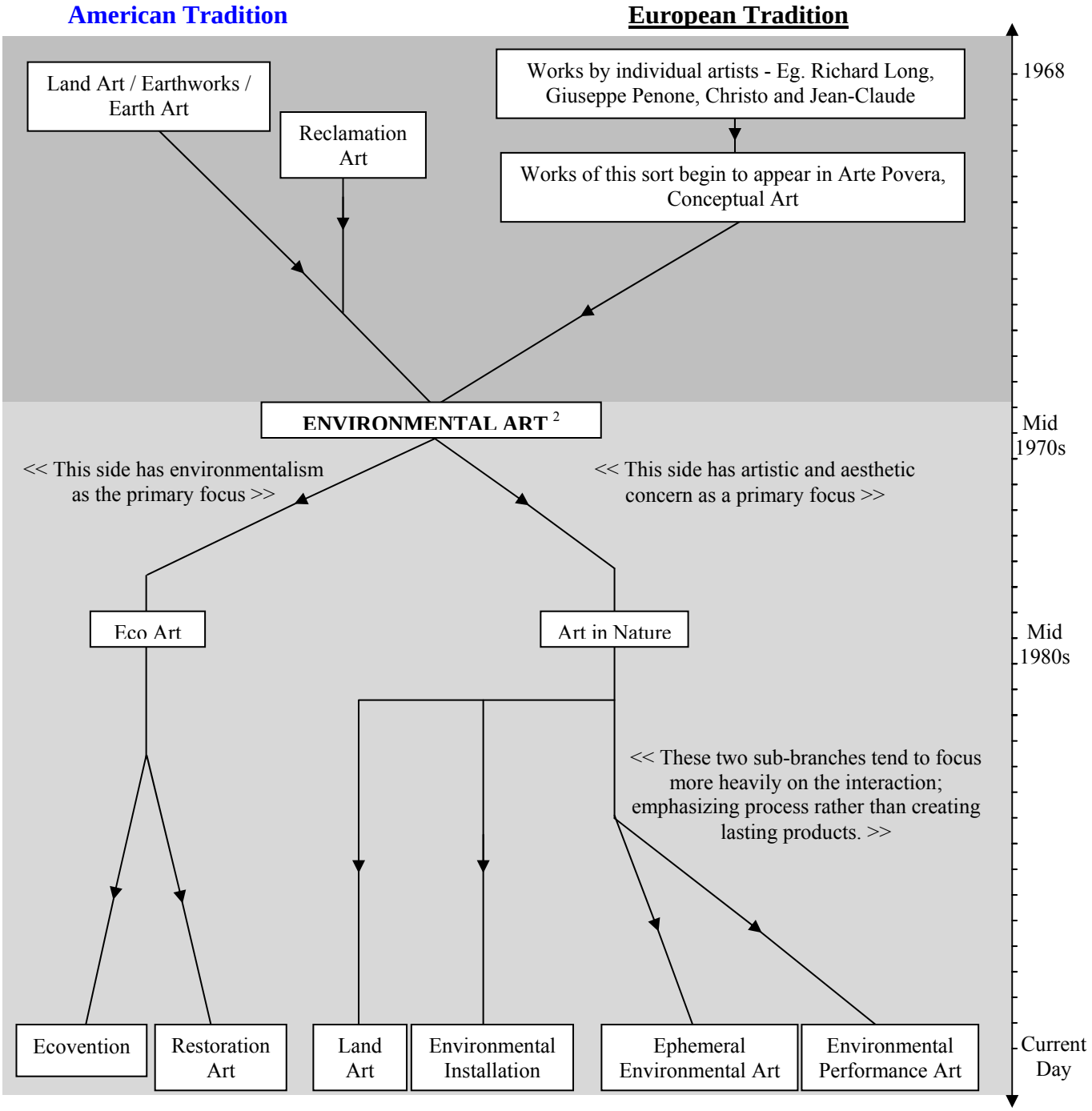


Fig 62 *Stick Shelter*, Paper cut in digital print on paper.

APPENDIX TWO: Flowchart of the development of Environmental Art

Defining the Field – Development of Environmental Art Post 1968[1]
Artworks that Incorporate Creative Environmental Interaction



[1] As Ben Tufnell aptly points out in his book *Land Art*, 1968 was not a definitive beginning point for works of this type. More accurately this year could be considered as the time around which the growing number of proposals and concepts reached a point of critical mass. No longer were these projects simply isolated incidences. They had become a greater direction in artistic practice.

[2] The term Environmental Art appeared around the early to mid 1970's. This has now become the broader term used to apply to all artworks that are a direct interaction with the natural environment, including those works done prior to this date. The emergence of this term is probably in response to a heightened sense of environmental awareness with the rise of environmental thinking.

APPENDIX THREE: Article

THE CHANGING SENSE OF A SOCIAL SPACE IN RELATION TO A DEVOLVING EPHEMERAL ARTPIECE

Since the late 1960's the increased significance of context within the creation and exhibition of artworks has ensured that a greater emphasis is being placed upon the physical, social and mental space that works now occupy. Permanent public artworks have been seen to change a society's sense of a given space. Impermanent works that have a definitive installation and de-installation timeline have also been seen to have a similar effect. Ephemeral environmental artworks however do not possess this same definitive beginning and end.

Unlike permanent, solid works designed to withstand the rigours of time, ephemeral environmental works exist within time's cycle. They are not intended to be a massive imposition within a space but rather an element of that space that will pass. This brevity of life when coupled with a lack of any formal de-installation process means that the works departure is more like the gentle passing of a life. Unlike the finality of removing work from a site, devolution allows the work to evolve into something else. In this case the intent of the artist and thus the original work may be lost but the constituent elements of the work can remain. This also allows for the continued evolution of society's connection to that space through that work.

Illustrative to this I will review the developing sense of connection with a specific space that has grown with the devolution of an ephemeral environmental artwork in western New South Wales. Begun in 2001, the work entitled '*Bone Circle / Bone Fire*' has considerably devolved. With this devolution however there has been a development in the significance of the space for the small community that uses the area.

Discussion

In terms of understanding art's potential for the transformative experience of space into place there is an incumbent need to better understand the artwork's relationship to its surrounding. Traditional outdoor works tended to impose themselves upon areas in such a way as to become the focus. Prior to the 1960's artworks inhabiting outdoor spaces generally did not see the specific contextual issues relating to the site as needing to impact upon the work. The art piece was a standalone autonomous entity. The space it inhabited was merely its surroundings. Works that have been produced more recently however are more likely to take into account at least some of the contextual issues that are applicable to the given space during a works creation.

This earlier attitude of the artwork being the focal element while the outside world tended more to distraction was also reflected the apparent attitudes of the gallery world. In Brian Dougherty's seminal text '*Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Spaces'*,[147] he explores how the physicality and functionality of the gallery space framed peoples' understanding of the art experience. He discusses the space of the gallery as possessing a sanctified quality similar to that of a church or a cathedral; a reverent space where silence is observed and the artwork is exhibited and seen in a highly codified and constructed manner. More poignantly however, he also wrote that the physical space of the gallery was created in such a way as to exclude the outside world. Nothing from without is allowed in that may be a distraction to the sanctity of the space and the works on display. With this in mind it is clear why the contextual significance of outdoor spaces did not impact on the works that would inhabit them. These works were not an interaction with space but rather an imposition that forced themselves to be the overpowering focus of that space.

Towards the end of the 1960's the predominance of a single driving style behind artistic development appeared to shatter. At this time we saw the beginnings of Conceptual Art, Arte Povera and Land Art to name but a few of the new directions. Many of these new directions did share varying degrees of overlap; a rejection of the supposed preciousness of the art object, a greater consideration of the role of process in the works creation and a varying degree of rejection of the gallery structure. Arguably the strongest initial rejection of the

[147] Dougherty, Brian "Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space" University of California Press, San Francisco (2000)

gallery system was to come through the early American Land Artists. Their distaste of the present system and the power it wielded was probably best categorized when Michael Heizer said "*The museums and collections are stuffed, the floors are sagging but the real space exists*".[148] They purposefully sought locations well outside of the usual artistic sphere as they headed for the Western Deserts of the United States. They further turned their backs on the galleries as they created works that were so massive and tightly bound with their site as to be uncollectible. Beyond their rejection of the gallery system and many of its underlying principles the development of their art forms also began to signal a change in the role of space in the consideration of art. As Michael Heizer stated "the intrusive opaque object refers to itself. It has little exterior reference. It is rigid and blocks space. It is a target. An incorporative work is aerated, part of the material of its place and refers beyond itself".[149] This statement appears as a conceptual precursor to the development of the more recent thinking such as that of site-specificity. Although his sentiments did not overtly speak of a need for a relationship between the work and its site it did flag the beginning of a coming change.

Although these fledgling concerns for site, which would later develop into the issues of space and place, appeared to influence the early Land Artists it is debatable as to whether their monumental results were particularly mindful of their sites. Indeed one journalist remarked that "earth art, with very few exceptions, not only doesn't improve upon its natural environment, it destroys it".[150] The flaws in this sentiment however are twofold. Firstly, beautification was not a goal of these works. Their motivation was driven by a desire to interact with the land not impose the judgement of beauty. Secondly, these massive works were produced at a time when public concern for environmental issues was only just beginning through the growth of the environmental movement. In this regard if some of these works are judged by today's standards they do appear to work against the site rather than with it. In contrast a similar earth-bound practice developed almost simultaneously in Europe but with distinctly different results. The works of artists such as Richard Long and Hamish Fulton were considerably more intimate and personal. In many ways it is the work of these English artists that share a direct conceptual link to today's ephemeral environmental art practices. One aspect of commonality shared between these two differing working

[148] Beardsley, John "Earthworks and Beyond" Abbeville Press Publishers, New York (4th ed), (2006): 13
[149] Beardsley, John "Earthworks and Beyond" Abbeville Press Publishers, New York (4th ed), (2006): 13
[150] Auping, Michael "Michael Heizer: The Ecology and Economics of Earth Art" Artweek 8 (June 18 1977): 1

methodologies that also influencing other artistic practices was the increased emphasis being placed on the context of works.

The heightened consideration that is now being given to the context in which a work is being seen has ensured that a greater emphasis is being placed upon the physical, social and mental space that works now occupy. The context has become a primary consideration in the relationship between an artwork and its site. In an attempt to define this relationship Stephanie Ross wrote that artworks could be understood to exist along a continuum. She defined various categories along that continuum from site dominant, through site adjusted, then site specific and finally to site conditioned and determined. The progression through each of these categories meant a stronger bound relationship between the artwork and its site.[151] This understanding of site-specificity does assist in our comprehension of arts potential for the transformative experience of space into place, because works that are more strongly grounded in their site can act as a conduit to the formation of a relationship with place.

One sub-branch of modern artistic practice that owes a lot of its development to the early Earth and Land Art practices is that of Environmental Art. Although not bound by a standard set of codified principles this movement generally is concerned with interaction with the land rather than merely its representation. Through the sited artworks of various artists such as Andy Goldsworthy, Richard Long and Nils-Udo this practice has also defined a different type of relationship to site that is more than just temporary. The affiliation is greater than that of a static object and its place in the land. By re-considering art as a process of interaction rather than solely by the objects it produces, the longevity of works can also be considered as an issue of context.

With regard to environmental artworks the physical connection to the context of a place is self evident. Of particular interest however, is the more subtle connection of ephemeral environmental artworks to the concept of time within the context of a site. The creation of permanent works is an object-driven practice that seeks to create unchanging forms that exist outside the effects and cycle of time. Temporary works such as installation art are still an object-based practice but they recognise the cycle of time. Therefore these works have a

[151] Ross, Stephanie "Gardens, earthworks and environmental art" as found in LANDSCAPE, NATURAL BEAUTY AND THE ARTS – Selim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell Cambridge University Press, New York (1993): 175

definite and limited time for which they exist. The installation and de-installation processes are clearly marked and the boundaries of the work are well defined. In contrast to this there is another creative practice that incorporates the significance of time without the strictly defined parameters of an installation and de-installation phase.

Ephemeral environmental artworks may appear similar to other temporary art practices yet they also have some very distinct differences. As a process-driven practice ephemeral environmental artworks are concerned with a greater length of artistic interaction over time. As the name suggests ephemeral artworks not only exist for a short period, but are also a living process. In contrast to temporary artworks that have distinct installation and de-installation phases that are externally applied, ephemeral artworks devolution occurs as a result of internal mechanism. Most commonly these mechanisms are a combination of the material of the work, the site in which it is created and the affects of nature and time. As these mechanisms are internal to the work and not activated at the hand of the artist, the longevity of the work is less defined. Also in contrast to temporary works whose de-installation is harsh and sudden, the devolution of form that occurs with ephemeral works is more akin to the gentle passing of a life.

Ephemeral environmental art by its very nature incorporates a level of ambiguity. It is a process driven creative practice that places no emphasis upon the creation of a permanent form. This reorientation towards the creative process rather than the product means that to comprehend the artwork the viewer must understand any form that it creates is a function of time. The comprehension of the existence of an artwork however is not easily defined because these works incorporate the devolution of their form as part of the interaction. Therefore even though the form of a work may be breaking down, it still exists as part of the greater art process.

As a result of ephemeral environmental artworks incorporation of change in the forms it creates, it allows viewers of the work to return and experience both the work and space anew. Unlike a static artwork that potentially may be comprehended in a single viewing, artworks that incorporate change necessitate multiple visits to comprehend a works evolution and devolution over time. Although this series of visits does not guarantee peoples' perception to change from space into place it does allow a greater length of time, and volume of experience in which this change can occur.

The temporal boundaries around these works are not the only margins that can appear blurred. Although these works are an interaction with specific sites, these sites are generally not bordered by any physical boundary. This lack of demarcation defining the works existence is only heightened as the work de-evolves. Its material constituents are still present, however they may have crumbled and fallen, but this destruction was always an intended element within the entire process therefore it still exists within the understanding of what is the art.

The effect of this ambiguity as the work de-evolves can impact the social perception of the space. Unlike temporary artworks whose de-installation is definite, ephemeral artworks devolution means that their presence still lingers even after their form has deteriorated. The lingering remains of an ephemeral piece appear to extend the works capacity to transform peoples' perception of space into place. In contrast to the finality of removing a temporary work from a site, devolution allows the work to evolve into something else. In this case the intent of the artist and thus the original work may be lost but the constituent elements of the work can remain. This also allows for the continued evolution of society's connection to that space through that remains of the work.

Due to the short life span of these types of works they also incorporate a secondary process of documentation. This recording is not done as a means to extend the life of the work, as this would be contrary to the original intent; rather it is done for the purpose of sharing the memory of what has passed. This documentation can then play a continuing role in the ability of the work to transform peoples' perception of space into place.

Case Study

Background

The Science Faculty through the University of Ballarat provides their students with in-the-field training through an annual excursion to a research property in western New South Wales, known as Nanya. Since 2001 these field trips have also incorporated an artist's residency program that allows for two emerging artists to experience the land of Australia's arid zone. I was fortunate enough to participate in this artist's residency in its inaugural year. The initial appeal of this opportunity lay in its sense of immersion in a unique and altogether inexperienced environment. Additionally the potential for gaining some understanding about

how others understand their experience of environment was a considered outcome. In reality the experience was a great deal more than that. The work that I created during this residency was to have an ongoing affect beyond anything that I could possibly imagine prior to the experience.

Before applying for the Nanya residency I had focused upon creating site specific ephemeral artworks in familiar environments. In so doing, I was working with areas that were charged with personal history and significance. I felt that this lack of a personal narrative in response to that land was of some concern; however any anxiety I may have felt turned out to be ill-founded. The breadth of scientific knowledge allowed for an augmentation of my own experiential understanding, which was lacking in this land. Although this scientific basis created a solid foundation it remained merely a point of origin in terms of the creative process. It formed the beginning dialogue between myself and the land, however the final resolution for the work was far removed from the clinical, objective results of scientific observations.

Primarily my work focused on the need for and lack of water within this landscape. As part of the arid zone this area of Australia was at that time experiencing its fourth year of drought conditions. As a result of this the signs of water deprivation were evident upon this scorched land. The lack of water created a very real and tangible pressure to the survival of both plant and animal life in this area. Survival pressures within specific environments also shared a degree of overlap with an ongoing interest I had in shelters as sites of relative warmth and safety along the length of a journey through the land. Far from being a point of disjunction between an organism and its environment, a site-specific authentic shelter can speak of the environment and the organism's relationship to it.

During the beginning of the residency I was less concerned with creating works as I was with adjusting to the space. Absorption, reflection and the subsequent creative expression is a journey that requires both experience and time. During this period I gained both an objective understanding of what I was seeing through the scientific information being provided, while also being aware of my subjective responses to both the sites and materials of this land. The overall sense of space is one of great openness. The minimal undulations among the vast open surroundings gave a sense of great distance. Within this expanse I sought areas of slight

depression, for had there been water it would have flowed and pooled here. These gentle recesses became the intimate sites for the works.

Working around this framework I made a number of smaller artistic interactions with the land. In each of these pieces the materials were sourced very near to the site where the works were then created. However it was the final work done during the residency that is of the greatest interest; not only for the work itself but also for the ongoing transformative result that it has had upon the scientific researchers and students who continue their own work at the property.

Bone Circle / Bone Fire

As the final work that was done during the residency the piece entitled *Bone Circle / Bone Fire* was the most resolved. At a superficial level the work could be understood as an interaction with the land in general, particularly in a land of such vast openness. In reality however the conceptual basis was drawn more generally but the work was a response to the small site in which it was created. The primary material that was used for the work was sun-bleached animal bones which were collected close to the depression where the work was situated. These bones were indicative of the harshness and aridity of this land. Its prevalence was also due, at least in part to the drought conditions affecting this part of Australia.

In deciding specifically on which slight depression to utilize for the work I decided on one that was close to the main animal drinking area on the property. Being almost completely dry it meant that many animals had perished in this area. I collected all the bones I would require from within a 150 metre radius of the site. I then swept the loose sand out of the depression with the intention of highlighting the cracked clay of this dried sunken hollow.

The bones were then arranged in a circular form within the depression. The purpose in working in this circular format was in direct response to the place of water in this land. As water flows along these vast open areas it gathers the loose debris and plant material that is found on the earth surface. This debris moves with the flowing water to collect in the puddles that settle in the depressions on the land's surface. The debris moves to the waters edge in

response to the action of wind and water. As the water evaporates the residual plant material is left in a pattern of circles and lines depending on the nature of the flow. In effect this patterning could be seen as a tiny topographical map as the debris traces the contour of the greatest height that the water reached.

The work remained in this form for the rest of the day but was destined to change after the setting of the sun. As part of the conceptual basis behind my environmental art practice is to create ephemeral works that have a changing life, it is not uncommon for my pieces to have a number of developmental stages prior to its own natural devolution. The next phase was to incorporate a cairn-like structure in the centre of the circle that would be internally lit under the darkness of the night sky. Using the remaining bones I began to build the small cairn skyward.

Beginning from the basic concept of the shelter as a place of respite and nurture in a harsh landscape I decided to make the cairn hollow, which also meant that the work was more fragile and susceptible to environmental conditions. This fragility was a vital element towards the honesty of the work as it reflected the tentative balance of life in this land. Since this work was also inspired by the dynamism of natural processes it would seem fraudulent to then create works that were dense and long-lived.

During the residency the moon in the night sky was almost full. This meant that working by moonlight alone was not difficult. Due to the extent to which the bones had been bleached by the sun's rays they appeared to glow under the radiance of the moon. Under these conditions the sun-bleached surface of the work created an eerie glow that seemed to resonate within the landscape. There was another stage however, during the works evolution that was to radiate more light.

During an earlier work I had observed that the bones held with them a sense of foreboding. The presence of death seemed to linger on. The challenge was then to use bone material as the basis for the work, but also to incorporate another element suggestive of regeneration and life as it applied to this environment. Fire is vital to the regeneration and bio-diversity of plant species, which then support animal species in this area. I therefore opted to include this as the additional element within this work.

Working carefully so as not to topple the fragile bone cairn a selection of dry grasses and small sticks were placed inside. The incendiary materials were then lit. Fire breathed a new life into the work. It was no longer a static form. The flame flickered and danced in response to the gentle breeze passing through the openings within the bone cairn. This dynamic movement brought a play of light and shadow to the bone circle. In turn the cast shadows danced around the ground, creating new energy and life.

Eventually the warmth and light of the fire died, leaving only the structure. This structure remained intact for the rest of the residency.

Post Residency

After the completion of many artist residency programs, the artist walks away in the knowledge that the experience that they have just had is completely over. Very rarely would an artist get a second chance to revisit the same site through the residency program. At the time of leaving Nanya I also believed that to be the reality of that experience also. I knew that I would pine to return to the silent, peaceful spaces of this harsh arid land but the opportunity would not come again as the program was designed to give different emerging artists the opportunity from year to year. Therefore when I left the intact work *Bone Circle / Bone Fire* it was with a longing as I knew that I would not have the opportunity to see the manner in which it returned to nature.

In September 2004 (three and a half years after the initial residency) I had just begun postgraduate studies through the Arts Academy at the University of Ballarat. The Nanya residency program was calling for proposals from the latest group of emerging artists. I did not apply as I had already had my experience and I did not wish to deprive another artist of theirs. Once the artists were chosen I was approached by the organisers who asked if I would like to attend again. As a postgraduate researcher I could do my work at Nanya without depriving others of the opportunity of attending the residency. Although a considerable amount of time had passed I was still very keen to see what remained of that work. Prior to leaving however I was to learn a great deal more about the way in which this work had affected others.

One of the most visibly evident indicators that the work had impacted others and their experience of this place became notable during a pre-trip meeting. After the initial residency the Science Department had purchased a very large photographic reproduction of the work, which had since hung in the main office of the school. While attending a meeting at the school I noticed that beside the large photograph were a number of smaller ones that been taken over the passing years. Upon enquiring I was to learn that the students had independently recorded the works devolution. As the students who attended these excursions generally changed every two years I was surprised that there was this level of continuity. During the 10 hour bus ride to the property I was to learn in part how this transformation had occurred.

Within the environmental management course at the University the excursion to Nanya is a requisite part of the program. Students in their second and third years of study visit the property to learn through doing their own first-hand research. Over the years staff had begun to use thee photographic record of the work as a tool to give the incoming students a sense of the Nanya experience. This image was also used within the science school to be indicative of the role of the artist residents and suggestive of the types of outcomes they may produce. As a result of this exposure students became highly accustomed to the work, however this was not the only exposure they received to the work prior to the excursion.

Other than the students, a minimum of four staff from the school also went on the excursion. It was these staff members that provided the continuity for giving the students a basis for the work prior to their arrival. As I was to learn from the students one particular member of staff spoke about this work with great enthusiasm. In his retelling of the works creation he imbued the story with so much fervour and life that the students' explanation sounded more like mythology than a process that I had actually lived. This form of oral history may lack the objective observation and certainty of detail that a definitive record produced at the time of the work's creation may have had, however its ability to be retold brings with it a sense of life. Details can be blurred a little, potentially elements may even be lost, but if the speaker's enthusiasm means the overall event still lives and appears relevant then maybe the cost is negligible. With regard to ephemeral works that incorporate the element of change as a vital part of their identity then it may well be relevant that oral history be used as a form of documentation. The work itself is bourn out of living process therefore a living record such as oral history and story telling would also be relevant.

During this return trip I noted a further two things of interest with regard to this piece. Firstly the manner in which the work had devolved was particularly interesting in regard to its initial inspiration. The work was inspired by not only the aridity of the land but also water and the manner in which it flows through a landscape. The devolution of the work had occurred in a direct relationship to this inspiration because the flow of water and the movement of the wind that has changed the work. Over the three and a half years since my previous visit the property had received some rainfall. This rain coupled with the effects of wind had brought loose sand and grass seeds back into the depression where the work stood. As had inspired the work, this flow brought that material to rest at the edge of the work. As the water evaporated the seed began to germinate. What remained then upon my return to the site was a shadow, a living ghost. A reminder of what had once been. The second point of note was the fact that the site of the work had now increased in apparent significance. Prior to the work this site was of no greater significance than any other area on the property. However over the previous years a visitation to the site had become a fixture in the excursion timetable. Upon seeing what remained of the work I quickly realised that it was not the work that drew them back but rather the place. The work became the conduit through which the experience of this space became one of place.

Conclusion

The unique relationship between ephemeral environmental artworks and the places they inhabit is distinctly different from both permanent and temporary art. As a process-driven art form its concern lies in the interaction with, and the formation of a relationship with a place. Since it is no longer the object but rather the process by which a works existence is measured this leads to a level of ambiguity about where the artwork begins and ends; both spatially and temporally. The spatial ambiguity occurs as a result of a lack of delineation regarding the physical boundaries of the work and the environment. Unlike the edges of a photograph these works do not have strongly marked limits. The temporal ambiguity is bought about as a result of the artistic interaction occurring over a length of time that also incorporates the devolution of the form as part of the artwork. If the conceptual underpinnings of the work intend for its devolution to be integral to the understanding of the piece then the form is no longer central to the works comprehension. One result of this uncertainty is that the work becomes an integrated element of that place. This tie between the work and the place can allow viewers to

form a stronger bond to, not only the changing work but also the area it inhabits. In this way the work can act as a conduit to the greater experience of the place in which it stands. Although the artwork is not guaranteed to transform peoples' perception of space into place, it can assist with the formation of an ongoing relationship to the area.

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