INSIDE, OUTSIDE, PASSING THROUGH:

QUEER PASSAGES IN A CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE-BASED PRACTICE

Matthew David Huppatz

B. Visual Art and Applied Design, B. Visual Arts (Hons)

School of Art, Architecture, and Design

Division of Education, Arts, and Social Sciences

University of South Australia

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Figure 1. Marcel Duchamp, *Paysage fautif (Wayward Landscape)*, 1946,
contained in box no. xii of the original limited edition of 20 Boîtes-en-valise (1941–47),
seminal fluid on Astralon backed with black satin.[1]

[1] The title of this work is often translated into English as "Faulty Landscape." I have elected to follow David Hopkins' "Wayward Landscape" (*Dada's Boys: Masculinity after Duchamp* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), which fits the queer theme of "veering off course" that recurred in this research.

Pour

'*mes petits fous, mes petits exclus, mes petits anormaux*.'[2]

[2] Michel Foucault, "*Prisons et asiles dans le mécanisme du pouvoir*," [1974], in *Dits et écrits, 1:1389–1393*, 2 vols. (Paris: Quarto Gallimard, 2001), 1:1391; trans. Lynne Huffer, quoted in Huffer, *Mad for Foucault: Rethinking the Foundations of Queer Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 23, accessed Dec. 9, 2015, ProQuest ebrary.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis:

- *presents work carried out by me;*
- *acknowledges all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications;*
- *does not incorporate, except where acknowledged, material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university;*
- *does not contain, to the best of my knowledge, material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.*

Matt Huppatz

December 1, 2016

ABSTRACT

This program of research traces a wayward line of inquiry that began somewhere between art and life. The exegesis supports the main outcome of this research, a body of art that includes works in assemblage, installation, and photo-media. The research has applied practice-based and hermeneutic methodologies within a queer post-structuralist framework.

This research follows feminist and queer-inspired revisions of twentieth century art practice that propose gendered and subjective readings of canonical works. It is particularly concerned with a "Duchampian" lineage that extends through Dada and into contemporary practice. David Hopkins' work, *Dada's Boys: Masculinity after Duchamp*, was a key departure point. This project provides a queer extension of Hopkins' deliberately "straight" reading of Duchamp's legacy.

Departing from a queer analysis of Robert Rauschenberg's early combines, the exegesis examines the subversive potential of artistic assemblage and considers the philosophical concept of *agencement* as an informative parallel.[3] It mines personal, theoretical, and artistic histories in search of connections; and charts the elusive gap between the artist's "inner" private life and the public "outer" life of the artwork. Its subterranean explorations make queer connections with the work of Robert Morris and Bruce Nauman.

Reflection upon the subjective generators of this research led to the development of the concept of the "party." This assemblage of sub-cultural milieus takes in a semi-mythic dance scene rooted in disco and includes a range of specifically queer and transgressive sexual sites. This research considers the theorisation of these extra-ordinary scenes and relates it to the formal and material operation of its artistic outcomes. In the process, it considers ideas about liminality and the mirror alongside queer conceptualisations of subjectivity and time.

This research offers insight into the dialogic relationship between subjectivity and creativity. Significantly, it contributes a practising artist's perspective to research on masculinity and queer subjectivities in art (and art history), and establishes interdisciplinary connections with studies of gender, sexuality, and culture. In practical terms, I have proposed that assemblage is a disruptive and expansive practice that can work in concert with queer theory. Together, these approaches operate in ways that are critical and dialogic while remaining resistant to reification.

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[3] *Agencement* refers to a concept developed in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. It is usually translated as "assemblage" in English. Here, and throughout the exegesis, I use *agencement* to differentiate between the artistic method of assemblage and the philosophical concept.

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+ + +

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATIONS

This research builds upon investigations undertaken in 2008 as part of an honours degree, which explored art practice that engages with domesticity and expressions of gendered subjectivity.[4] The motivation was to critically engage with two significant influences: subjective experience and a preoccupation with avant-garde artistic techniques—particularly the readymade.

This focus led to an examination of the role that domestic spaces and objects play in the development and articulation of identity; a review of key elements of queer theory, notably Judith Butler's work on the performativity of gender; and an exploration of expressions of masculine subjectivity in contemporary and historical artworks.[5] The latter was particularly inspired by the work of British art historian David Hopkins, who finds evidence for the exploration of masculine subjectivities in the work of Marcel Duchamp and his "progeny."[6]

This inquiry led me to position my work within the context of art that engages with issues of gendered subjectivity and within broader debates in the fields of gender and queer studies. In the process, I engaged critically with my status as a middle-class, gay, South Australian male of Anglo-European descent. My experiences in a (relatively) long-term, same-sex domestic partnership became a vehicle for investigating the generative potential of subjective experience within my practice. The compromises and pleasures common to all close relationships—along with the unique issues facing same-sex couples in a changing socio-political landscape—influenced the formal and theoretical course of the research.

The current research extends these inquiries with some shifts in focus and a deeper investigation into the practical and theoretical contexts of my practice. My interest in avant-garde tactics has been extended, with a focus on assemblage as a practical and conceptual process. This shift followed an intense resurgence of critical interest in assemblage in previous years, exemplified in the symposium, "Assemblage, *Bricolage*, and the Obsolete," held at the Henry Moore Institute,

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[4] Matt Huppatz, "Welcome to my House: An Inquiry into the Domestic Realm and Expressions of Gendered Subjectivity in Contemporary Art Practice," honours exegesis, South Australian School of Art, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 2008.
[5] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 10th anniversary ed. (New York: Routledge, 1999).
[6] David Hopkins, *Dada's Boys: Masculinity after Duchamp* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

Leeds, UK, in November 2006.[7] This revival prompted questions about the historical applications of assemblage and its usefulness as a process in contemporary practice. Significantly, research presented at "Assemblage, *Bricolage*, and the Obsolete" illuminated connections between assemblage, queer practice, and "the everyday." This nexus resonated with my previous research and offered a field of references that developed into the theoretical foundations for the current research.

In addition to a focus on assemblage, this project has delved further into the subjective drivers of this practice. In the process, it has shifted away from the homonormative context of same-sex domesticity and moved towards a queerer, "underground" world of nightclubs and other sites of transgression. Lisa Duggin, in *The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism*, defines homonormativity as a *politics* that

> does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions—such as marriage (and its calls for monogamy and reproduction)—but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilised gay constituency and a privatised, depoliticised gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption.[8]

The pressure towards homonormativity as a route to acceptance, and its subtle connections to capitalist and neo-conservative ideologies, had arisen as an issue in the earlier research. While difficult to elude these pervasive structures, this research draws together artistic, philosophic, and social practices that facilitate subjective agency and transcend—or even elide—the limits of normativity.

1.2 SYNOPSIS OF SECTIONS

This introduction is followed by *Section 2: Background*, which sets the scene for the exegesis that follows. This identifies the broad practical and theoretical contexts of this project and provides a link with my earlier research. It introduces the notion of "masculinity in crisis;" acknowledges the practical and conceptual influence of Dada and Marcel Duchamp (as key historical precursors); and indicates the influence of queer and poststructuralist thought upon this project.

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[7] *Art Journal* 67, no. 1 (Spring 2008) was dedicated to "Assemblage, *Bricolage*, and the Obsolete."
[8] Lisa Duggan, "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism," in *Materialising Democracy: Toward a Revitalised Cultural Politics*, ed. Dana D. Nelson and Russ Castronovo (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 179.

Section 3: Methodology summarises this project's approach to creative research, identifying Steven Scrivener's notion of research through creative-production as a key influence. It outlines the development of the project, providing insight into the "what, how, and why" of the inquiry process. This section highlights the emergent nature of creative research and identifies a methodological approach that has been likened to *bricolage*. Finally, it situates this project within a queer poststructuralist theoretical framework.

Section 4: Queer Passages forms the main body of the exegesis. It is arranged more-or-less chronologically, and divided into seven passages plus a postscript. Each passage outlines key events, influences, and artefacts as they emerged in the process of inquiry. These are embedded in practical and theoretical contexts, as outlined below.

Passage 1 outlines the theorisation of artistic assemblage by William C. Seitz in *The Art of Assemblage* (1961), and provides a gloss of the philosophical concept of assemblage—or *agencement*—in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. It introduces the concept of the "glory-hole-box," which marries the glory box—a quintessentially heteronormative "object"—with the glory hole—a site of queer sex; and presents the artefact *Solid*, a manifestation of the glory-hole-box.

Passage 2 traces an inquiry into the influence of US artist Bruce Nauman upon this project, offering a queer reading of Nauman's early practice and referring to recent feminist revisions of key works. Nauman's connection with Marcel Duchamp is discussed, along with the queer potential of Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917). The artefacts *Untitled (The True Artist)* and *Untitled (Self Portrait as Fountain)* are introduced as responses to specific Nauman works.

Passage 3 glosses Arnold van Gennep's conceptualisation of rites of passage and Victor Turner's theorisation of liminality. It outlines the qualities of liminal sites and "passengers," relating them to queer experience, and links Turner's mention of "floating worlds" to the transgressive sites surveyed in this research. The notion of "the party" is introduced as a key generative site of this research.

Passage 4 reviews recent revivals of assemblage in contemporary art; notes Jonathan D. Katz's queer revision of Robert Rauschenberg's "combines;" and reflects on potential resonances between queer subjectivity and the method of assemblage. It outlines the process of assemblage adopted in the early stages of this research; discusses a key artefact, *Narcissus (And Other Myths)*;

and glosses the mirror's role in psychoanalytic theories of identity formation. The artefact, *Tock-Tick*, is introduced as a precursor to the discussion that follows.

Passage 5 considers the constructed nature of time and its relationship to hegemonic modes of being. It introduces Jack Halberstam's notions of queer time and "stretched adolescence;" and investigates the queer tactics of US artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres (notably his appropriation of canonical "styles" with subversive intent). The development of the party as a means of conceptualising the generative sources of this practice is discussed, along with a related artefact, *Shiny Disco Balls*. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the rhizome is identified as an emergent theoretical influence on the project, and the artefact-installation *Sotterraneo* is offered as a practical example of this concept at work.

Passage 6 enters the Labyrinth, discussing the gay bathhouse as a liminal site and outlining Victor Turner's concept of *communitas*. This passage touches on spiritual and cosmic matters; draws parallels between the spatio-material qualities of queer underground sex sites and early minimal art; and explores Robert Morris's *Labyrinth* works. A gloss of Foucault's theory of panoptic control and self-surveillance is offered, and a direct link is made between Morris's work and the kinds of underground sexual sites that have influenced this research.

Passage 7 finds Roland Barthes in a notorious Paris discotheque and considers the generative potential of the nightclub. A party inspired artefact—*Marion Mega-Complex*—is discussed beside her queer offspring: *Ziggurat* and *Gladiator*. The orifice is considered as a portal into—and out of—personal and social bodies; and the idea of a glory-hole-using-body assemblage is entertained. An artefact, *Glory Boxes 1-2-3*, is introduced beside a discussion of the apparatus of public health. The mirrored maze of an artefact, *Glory Box Variations*, is contemplated in light of Foucault's totalising notion of *dispositif* and the liberating potential of the rhizome. The Postscript reflects on José Esteban Muñoz notions of queer Utopia through a consideration of a final artefact, *Go West!*

The exegesis concludes with *Section 5*. This reflects on the overall project and summarises the key concepts, contexts, and developments that informed this research. It presents the key insights that arose in the inquiry process and states the project's contributions to the field of artistic practice. In conclusion, it points towards future creative and research possibilities that have emerged in this process.

1.3 ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The artistic outcomes (artefacts) of this project constitute its primary contribution to the field of art practice. The exegesis serves to elucidate these works and their relationship to the concerns of this project. Rather than pursuing a single research question, the project was propelled by a "guiding curiosity" about assemblage—as artistic technique—and how it might act as an analogue for (queer) artistic subjectivity. The philosophical concepts of *agencement*/assemblage and *dispositif*/apparatus have been applied as theoretical foils in this process. As a "map" of the research process, the exegesis also contributes to an understanding of the creative processes involved in artistic production—the artist's main area of expertise—through sustained reflection on practice.

In addition to the creative artefacts, this research offers insight into the dialogic relationships between subjectivity, creative production, and self-expression. It has examined and articulated how these things play out in the queer practice under examination. Alongside its direct contribution to studies of queer masculinities in art, this research has the potential to contribute to understandings of "expanded" masculinities in other fields. The rhizomatic nature of this project has established interdisciplinary connections between heterogeneous disciplines, including art history, queer theory, and cultural studies. However, it must be noted that the primary contribution of this research is to artistic practice and understandings of the creative process. Contributions to art history—or any other cultural theory—however significant—are incidental.

In the process of articulating these contributions, the research offers a nascent queer reading of two ostensibly heterosexual male artists, Robert Morris and Bruce Nauman. Close examination of their early work—through the lens of the researcher's personal and artistic proclivities—reveals curious resonances between their practices and this practice-research. This reading is noteworthy because it offers an artist's insight (as opposed to a historian's or theorist's) into these practices, which share sculptural—and political—concerns with interiority/exteriority, control, and embodied experience.

Significantly, I identify a little known drawing by Morris, *Sex Chamber* (1975), as a direct connection between his practice and the kinds of sexual sites discussed in this research. *Sex Chamber* suggests that my queer interest in Morris's work—and the suspicion that it resonated with certain sexual sites—was not entirely fantasised. This throws a different light on Morris's earlier work—much of it ensconced in the canon of minimalism—and troubles formalist readings of this movement. Although not entirely original, this approach to Morris's work is unique

because these conclusions were reached via an underground and erotic line of inquiry.[9] In turn, this insight throws a unique, queer light on Nauman's related practice.[10]

1.4 OMISSIONS

This exegesis focuses on a few artists—in depth—and follows a strain of art practice that is relevant to this practice-research. This line surfaces in Dada and Marcel Duchamp, extends through neo-Dada and minimalism, and connects with postminimal practices in the final decades of the twentieth century. This trajectory omitted a number of relevant artists and related "movements" in order to focus on specific interests. These exclusions include deeper inquiries into Dada and neo-Dada (including Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns); detours into surrealism, the Situationist International, and Fluxus; and exploration of the queerer components of the Beat movement (notably Alan Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and the literary technique of the "cut-up").

The project's broader cultural and theoretical contextualisation was also constrained by time limits and the size of the exegesis. These curtailed extended inquiries into several areas, notably a line of inquiry into the "anti-work" tendencies of the Dada tradition and investigations into the theorisation of dance music cultures, specifically disco and associated dance music genres. Interest in the latter stemmed from a realisation—arising in the research—that these fields were substantial influences upon my subjective (and aesthetic) sensibilities. Although not immediately apparent, they are also deeply interconnected with the sexual sub-cultural scenes touched upon in this research.

Collectively, these queer practices occupy contested territory with regard to dominant notions of labour and leisure. Art historian Helen Molesworth offers a reading of Dada that illuminates this area.[11] She notes that Dada's rebellion against work has led to its various manifestations being

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[9] See, for example, Maurice Berger, *Labyrinths: Robert Morris, Minimalism, and the 1960s* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989). Berger's interpretation of Morris is discussed in Passage 5 of this exegesis.

[10] This line of inquiry was given an intriguing twist by a chance textual juxtaposition in the midst of the project. Though speculative and potentially misleading, from a queer art historical perspective it deserves further inquiry. It relates specifically to a period that Bruce Nauman spent in New York and the influence of a well-known homosocial (and homosexual) "gang" of neo-Dadas, which includes John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg, and Jasper Johns. There is no evidence—or implication—that there is a sexual aspect to this connection but it highlights the queer entanglements of assemblage, which also happen to propel this research.

[1111] Helen Molesworth, "From Dada to Neo-Dada and Back Again," *October* 105 (Summer 2003): 177–181. For more along these lines, particularly relating to gender, see also Molesworth, "Work Avoidance: The Everyday Life of Marcel Duchamp's Readymades," *Art Journal* 57, no. 4 (1998): 51–61, accessed June 18, 2014, http://www.jstor.org/stable/777927; and Molesworth, "House Work and Art Work," *October* 92, (Spring 2000): 71–97.

narrated as 'adolescent,' but finds it difficult 'to read the refusal to work-for-profit as adolescent or rebellious per se.' Instead,

> Dada's strategies of work avoidance or Neo-Dada's ironic work mimicry constitute a set of management techniques [...] for how to live, as an artist, [...]—amid the endless permutations, twists and turns, and baffling contradictions of capitalism—in a way that has some kind of provisional legitimacy. This legitimacy—or way of living (that in Bourdieu's phrase often understands its own arbitrariness)—often comes about through a challenge to previously articulated versions of labour and skill. [...] Rather than denigrate Dada's perpetual returns we might instead read such reinventions as infinite calibrations and necessary critical adjustments designed to counter the steady strength of the status quo.[12]

Research into the theorisation of electronic dance music (EDM) and sexual subcultures—especially the states and subjectivities that characterise these scenes—revealed similar relationships to dominant (capitalist and heteronormative) ways of living.[13] Although neglected due to the scope of this project, research into these fields reinforced my interest in party scenes as not only generative sites but also *creative contexts* for this research.[14]

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[12] Molesworth, "Dada to Neo-Dada," 180–81.

[13] In particular, Molesworth's words resonate with Judith Halberstam's notion of "stretched adolescence" (section *4.5.2 Queer Time and Space*) and her discussion of queer alternatives to normative modes of work and life.

[14] In the latter stages of the project, this line of inquiry connected unexpectedly with the artistic contextualisation of the work. Investigations into Morris and Nauman highlighted the influence of modern dance on minimal and postminimal practices. This sparked an interest in how popular forms of dance—specifically those related to EDM cultures—might connect to my practice and broader theorisations of contemporary art. This provisional investigation was discontinued but has the potential to be developed in future research.

2 BACKGROUND

Below is a brief summary of the broad artistic and theoretical tendencies that background this research. These are foregrounded here because they connect the honours work—which led into this research—to the project under examination. This sets the scene for the exegesis that follows. This summary flags masculine subjectivity as a major concern of this practice; confirms a particular strain of Dada—and the Duchampian tradition—as significant artistic contexts for this research; and acknowledges poststructuralism—including its feminist and queer offshoots—as the major theoretical framework for this project.

2.1 MASCULINITY IN CRISIS

"Masculine subjectivity"—and the much-debated "crisis of masculinity"—provides a backdrop to this research.[15] Writing in 1990, Lynne Segal noted that the idea of 'a fixed and pure heterosexual masculinity, to which women and children are inescapably subordinated,' was, if not in crisis, 'a little less hegemonic' than ever before.[16]

US theorists Harry Brod and Amelia Jones trace the roots of the crisis in Western masculinity to the enormous social upheavals caused by the two World Wars.[17] These challenged dominant conceptions of masculinity and led to cultural anxieties about the erosion of masculine virility.[18] Amongst the list of factors detailed by Brod—which include the deviation of norms, the impact of technology and war on work, competition with women for the prestige of income, and the decline of the "warrior" in the wake of the nuclear bomb—is 'the threatening spectre of homosexuality.'[19]

The late twentieth century saw the paradigms supporting hegemonic masculinity further undermined by the dynamics of advanced capitalism. The increasing "technologisation" of work and war further diminished the male as a 'productive or heroic' figure. The male body turned

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[15] Following David Hopkins, I employ "masculine subjectivity" as a less essentialist term than masculinity or male identity (Hopkins, *Dada's Boys*).
[16] Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (London: Virago, 1990), 100.
[17] Harry Brod, "Masculinity as Masquerade," in *The Masculine Masquerade: Masculinity and Representation*, ed. Andrew Perchuk and Helaine Posner (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 13–19; Amelia Jones, "Equivocal Masculinity: New York Dada in the Context of World War 1," *Art History* 25, no. 2 (2002): 162–205.
[18] For an insightful analysis of how this anxiety was reflected in the popular culture of film see Steven Cohan, "The Spy in the Gray Flannel Suit: Gender Performance and the Representation of Masculinity in *North by Northwest*," in Perchuk and Posner, *The Masculine Masquerade*, 43–62.
[19] Brod, "Masculinity as Masquerade," 18.

'from a site of production to a site of consumption,' a process evident in the 'the growth of male fashion and cosmetic industries' and the 'public display of the male body as a sexualised object.'[20] The ideal of a dominant white masculinity also came under pressure from various liberation movements (racial equality, feminism, lesbian and gay rights), which paved the way for the radical reconceptualisations of gender around the turn of the century.

Immersed in this ongoing crisis—and apparently contributing to it—my interest in the theorisation of masculinity was triggered by the contradictions of lived experience. This was especially evident in my problematic relationship with hegemonic masculinity as a middle-class, gay, white male. While a recipient of most of the privileges accorded this position, I am simultaneously excluded from its ranks by dint of my sexuality. My experience as a gay male also provided insight into the range of "masculinities" that exist in the sexual margins. This suggested that the ideal of masculinity is a construction that no individual can ever completely fulfil.

At the same time, I was aware that several of my childhood male role models had been diagnosed with clinical depression, and I heard regular reports of former schoolmates committing suicide. This suggests a general dis-ease amongst many men that relates to self-imposed and external expectations, their place in the world, and their relationships with others.[21] Reflection upon these circumstances led me to consider how my queer experience might allow me to contribute to reconceptualisations of masculinity and how this could be achieved through art.

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[20] Ibid., 19.

[21] There are undoubtedly many reasons for these events but in Australia, LGBTI people are three times more likely to experience depression than the general population and same-sex attracted people are up to fourteen times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers (See Beyond Blue, "In My Shoes: Experiences of Discrimination, Depression and Anxiety among Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex People," (2012), 1–2; Australian Bureau of Statistics, "National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results," 4326.0, Australian Government, Canberra, 2007; Suicide Prevention Australia, "Position Statement: Suicide and Self-Harm among Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Communities," SPA, Sydney, 2009; cited in Gabi Rosenstreich, "LGBTI People: Mental Health and Suicide," briefing paper, revised 2nd edition, National LGBTI Health Alliance, Sydney, 2013, https://www.beyondblue.org.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/bw0258-lgbti-mental-health-and-suicide-2013-2nd-edition.pdf?sfvrsn=2). These statistics suggest that issues around sexuality and normative gender expectations—in actuality the stress that results from not conforming to some of society's core expectations—may be also a factor in the mental health of the broader population.

2.1.1 *Map of Man Mountain (Day And Night)*

Map of Man Mountain (Day and Night) *emerged in the early stages of this research and acts as a symbolic touchstone for the project (fig. 2). A simple found sketch was photocopied, inverted, blown up, and doubled. One became two; landscape became map; day became night. A treasure map unfolded. These "maps" are derived from a scrawled diagram that depicts the stereotypical Western male psyche. A volcano of regret, disappointment, and sadness emerges from a sea of repressed emotion. Forced upward under pressure, it breaks the surface of the calm waters and threatens to erupt in anger and violence.*

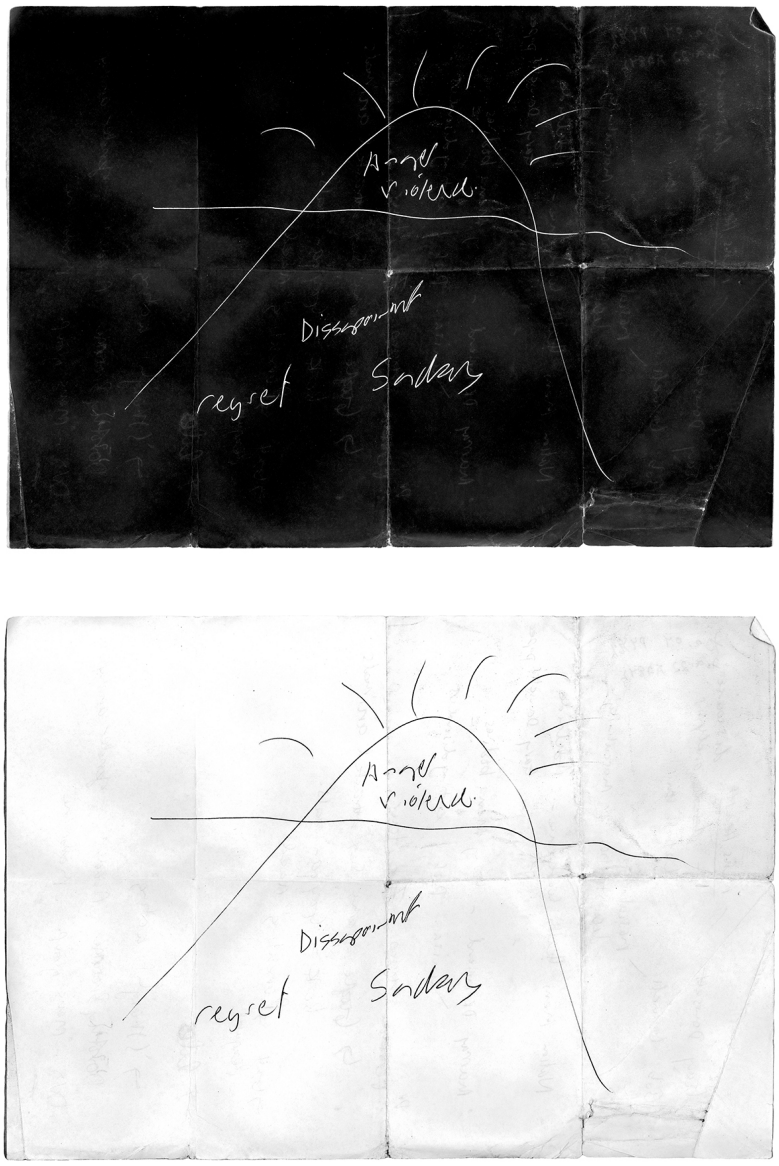


Figure 2. Matt Huppatz, *Map of Man Mountain (Day and Night)*, 2009, giclée print on rag paper, each 42 x 59.4 cm.

2.2 DADA'S BOYS

Curiosity about non-normative masculinities in art, and my interest in avant-garde practice, led to the work of British art historian David Hopkins. In *Dada's Boys: Masculinity after Duchamp*, Hopkins identifies New York/Paris Dada—and its legacy in surrealist and post-war art—as the pre-eminent site of 'self-consciously addressed and ironised' masculinity within modernism.[22] He argues that Marcel Duchamp and fellow Dadas thematise 'the body, sexuality, and gender from a male viewpoint in an utterly unprecedented way' (ibid.). In doing so, Hopkins nominates gendered subjectivity as a precondition of avant-gardism, a possibility missed by overtly "political" ideological schemas (ibid., 9).

Hopkins cites Duchamp's notes for *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (*The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*) (1915–23)—commonly called the *Large Glass* (fig.3)—as an example of how Duchamp's work can be understood in terms of male reflexivity:

> the "célibitaire," we are told, "grinds his chocolate for himself;" the "malic moulds," tumescent with "love gasoline," in the lower domain of the Glass, "will never be able to pass beyond the Mask," since they are "enveloped, alongside their regrets, by a mirror" that reflects back at them their complexity "to the point of being hallucinated rather onanistically."[23]

Furthermore, Hopkins identifies similar engagements with gendered subjectivity in the work of an array of ("post-Dada") artists since World War II, including Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol, Vito Acconci, Gilbert and George, and Sarah Lucas.[24]

It should be noted that Dada was a curious beast, with multiple manifestations and offshoots. The discussion of Dada in this exegesis neglects the post-war development of Dada in Cologne, Hanover and Berlin. Rather, it focuses on its earliest incarnation in Zürich during the Great War (as detailed in the writings of Hans Richter and William S. Seitz), and on the strain of Dada that

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[22] Hopkins, *Dada's Boys*, 3.

[23] Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even (The Green Box Notes)*, typographic version by Richard Hamilton, trans. George Heard Hamilton (New York: Wittenborn, 1960); cited in Hopkins, *Dada's Boys*, 3–4. This passage struck a chord at the beginning of this research, and in retrospect, seems significant in relation to the artefact *Glory Box Variations* discussed in section *4.7.11 Glory Box Variations*. The adjective onanistically refers to the noun onanism, a formal and perhaps archaic term for masturbation or *coitus interruptus*, from French *onanisme*, from the name Onan (Gen. 38:9), who practised *coitus interruptus* (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "onanism," en.oxforddictionaries.com).

[24] Other artists in *Dada's Boys* include Matthew Barney, Helen Chadwick, Douglas Gordon, Sherrie Levine, Andres Serrano, Rosemarie Trockel, and Gavin Turk. Although focused on male artists, Hopkins devotes a chapter to female artists who respond to Duchamp and what he calls 'the broader Dada legacy of masculinism' (Hopkins, "Spinsters? Post-Duchampian Women," in *Dada's Boys*, 159–190).

arrived in New York via Paris a short time later. This is characterised by the work of the émigrés Marcel Duchamp/Rrose Sélavy, Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, Francis Picabia, and Man Ray.[25] This scene was also a significant influence upon developments later in the twentieth century, which resonate throughout this research.



Figure 3. Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*, (*The Large Glass*), 1915–23,
oil, varnish, lead foil, lead wire, and dust on two glass panels (cracked),
each mounted between two glass panels, with five glass strips, aluminium foil, and a wood and steel frame,
277.5 x 175.9 cm.

[25] The focus on the this line was initially inspired by Hopkins' gendered reading, and later supported by the work of North American scholars including Amelia Jones, Helen Molesworth, Paul B. Franklin, and Irene Gammel.

Hopkins' work provides a solid matrix of practical and theoretical connections that was applied to situate this practice-research. Although deliberately heterosexual in orientation, he brushes up against the work of homosexual artists including Rauschenberg and Johns, and admits that Duchamp's practice was, 'inherently queer.'[26] His determination to downplay the queerer aspects of this tradition opens the way for other contributions, including that of this research, and inadvertently provided justification for this project.

Hopkins also articulates a sometimes-fraught relationship to feminism that has informed this project. He foregrounds the intellectual efforts of feminists that paved the way for men to rethink gender issues, and acknowledges that the appropriation of feminist discourse by men is problematic.[27] However, he insists that a 'less apologetic account of male identity' can be developed, which avoids—as far as possible—'naturalising the male viewpoint' (ibid.). Hopkins argues that it is important to address 'questions specific to male experience (especially bodily experience) outside the protocols of feminism' (ibid.). While men, post feminism, might be open to the idea of constructed genders, Hopkins says, many feel there is something unique about gendered experience that should be enunciated (ibid., 2).

Hopkins finds support for this approach in feminist theorist Alice Jardine, who calls for male theorists to engage with a range of topics in the wake of feminism, including their relationships

> to death, scopophilia, fetishism […], the penis and balls, erection, ejaculation (not to mention the phallus), madness, paranoia, homosexuality, blood, tactile pleasure, pleasure in general, desire […], voyeurism, etc.[28]

Jardine's challenge can be read as a list of potential concerns for queer and straight male artists, opening the way for contributions to these debates through artistic practice. While somewhat uncomfortable with Hopkins' insistence on a heterosexual position, I appreciate the drift of his argument. As a queer male artist, I also must acknowledge the transformational impact of feminist thought, notably on postmodern, post-structuralist and queer theory, and its significant influence on art practice and revisionary art history.

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[26] Hopkins, *Dada's Boys*, 1; ibid., 114.
[27] Ibid., 2–3.
[28] Alice Jardine, "Men in Feminism: *Odor di Uomo* or *Compagnons de Route?*" in *Men in Feminism*, ed. Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (New York: Methuen, 1987), 61.

2.3 QUEER

The significance of gender and sexuality as key generative sites in this research points to a "queer" contextualisation. Inquiry into the theorisation and experience of queer subjectivity has informed the development of methodology and artefacts, and the positioning of theoretical frameworks. One of the attractions of queer theory is that it remains averse to reification. It is important to remember that queer originated on the street and its academic incarnations continue to demonstrate a determined waywardness. From its inception, the term—although not the intent—was disowned and even declared "dead".[29] This disposability seems appropriate for an approach that sets out to disrupt fixed and hegemonic modes of being.

Queer in this context was originally a derogatory term for homosexuals, especially effeminate men. Gays and lesbians reclaimed it during the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, when activists re-appropriated its pejorative homosexual sense as a term of defiant pride.[30] Since the early 1990s, queer has signified 'a wide-ranging and unmethodical resistance to normative modes of sex, gender, and sexuality.'[31] It is difficult for those of us too young then—and too fortunate now—to appreciate the depth of feeling, indeed necessity, that inspired this second wave of gay and lesbian

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[29] Teresa de Lauretis. "Habit Changes. Response," in *Feminism Meets Queer Theory*, ed. Elizabeth Weed and Naomi Schor (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 316.

[30] Annamarie Jagose, "Queer Theory," in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. by Maryanne Cline Horowitz (New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 2005), 1980–1985. Despite this process of re-signification, Jagose emphasises that the term maintains something of 'its original charge of shame.' Indeed, queer theorist Judith Butler proposed that its force is built through the "repeated invocation" by which it became linked 'to accusation, pathologisation, [and] insult' (Judith Butler, "Critically Queer," in *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 226).

[31] University of Pittsburgh, "Keywords Project," s.v. "queer," accessed Oct. 28, 2014, http://keywords.pitt.edu/keywords_defined/queer.html. The etymology of queer reveals something of its disruptive potential. Its polymorphous nature resonates with this project's concerns and outcomes. Although the origins of "queer" are doubtful, its common modern sense as "strange" probably comes from the German *quer*, meaning "oblique, perverse." The sense of "strange, odd, peculiar, eccentric" was in circulation by 1513, followed by a second, negative, sense, as "bad, contemptible, worthless, untrustworthy, disreputable." Although considered obsolete, this second sense—used with reference to vagabonds and criminals, and later applied to counterfeit currency—permanently tainted the "strange" sense of queer. During this time it also developed a bodily sense of feeling "unwell, faint." Towards the end of the nineteenth century, queer became more closely associated with sexual deviance, and by the mid-twentieth century it had become a derogatory term for homosexuals, especially effeminate men. Until then, its use was usually coded or ambiguous, relying on context to indicate a sexual sense. For example, Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) applies the word several times 'but its use in particular instances might be read one way or another, or, more significantly and importantly, both ways at once.' This significance lies in the "simultaneity of meaning" that is identified as a key tactic in later queer thought. The late nineteenth century also saw the development of queer as a noun. This surfaces in W. H. Auden's (1932) reference to '[an] underground cottage frequented by the queer' (Cottage being the British term for a public lavatory or urinal where men meet men for sexual (and social) purposes). While the term queer was clearly employed as a self-descriptor by homosexuals during this period, the OED emphasises its derogatory potential when directed against individuals or groups from "outside." Throughout all these shifts, queer remained closely aligned to its "strange" sense. See the University of Pittsburgh's "Keywords Project," s.v. "queer," and the *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "queer," accessed Oct. 28, 2014, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/queer.

activism.[32] The passion behind the reclamation of queer by activists in the midst of the AIDS crisis is evident in activist literature.

"Queers Read This" is a pamphlet distributed by the activist organisation Queer Nation at the New York Gay Pride Parade in June 1990.[33] It introduces themes that became central to queer's academic stream: freedom of sexuality and identity; the radical potentials of bodily pleasure and sex; and exposure of the connections between heteronormativity, capitalism, nationalism, and patriarchy:

> Being queer means leading a different sort of life. It's not about the mainstream, profit margins, patriotism, patriarchy, or being assimilated. [...] It's about being on the margins, defining ourselves; it's about gender-fuck and secrets, what's beneath the belt, and deep inside the heart; it's about the night. Being queer is "grass roots" because we know that everyone of us, every body, every cunt, every heart, and ass, and dick, is a world of pleasure waiting to be explored. [...] Every time we fuck, we win.[34]

In keeping with a manifesto of war against heteronormativity, "Queers Read This" employs militant and even violent language. The lives of queer individuals were at stake, under siege from physical assault, institutional intolerance, and an AIDS epidemic made worse by homophobic government inaction.[35] Despite this, a utopian vision can be glimpsed between these hostile lines, an appeal to the future that continues to inform contemporary manifestations of queer.

Queer theory sprang from these activist roots and shares a theoretical background with other liberationist movements. Alongside AIDS activism, queer theorist Annamarie Jagose identifies the critical and cultural origins of queer theory in 'feminism, radical movements of colour, the lesbian and gay movements, [subcultural sexual practices…], poststructuralism, [and] post-colonialism.'[36] Feminist academic Teresa de Lauretis, who coined the term, proposed queer

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[32] It is important to keep in mind that violence and discrimination still impact queer lives in the West and, in many parts of the world, queers face ostracism and even death for deviating from hegemonic norms governing gender and sexuality.

[33] Published Anonymously by Queers, "Queers Read This," 1990, online version accessed Jan. 7, 2015, http://www.actupny.org/documents/QueersReadThis.pdf. Queer Nation is a direct action group formed in New York City in 1990 with the aims of eliminating homophobia and ending the escalating violence against GLBT individuals and sites through actions in public (i.e. heterosexual) space. See *Queer Nation NY*, "Queer Nation NY History," accessed Nov. 25, 2016, http://queernationny.org/history.

[34] Anonymous, "Queers Read This."

[35] It is widely acknowledged that the slow governmental response to AIDS in the United States was partly homophobic, in that it was initially identified as a gay disease, Gay Related Immune Deficiency (GRID). In the early years of the epidemic, its effects were most evident in gay male, African-American, lower socio-economic, and intravenous drug-using communities. In Australia, government agencies took a more pragmatic approach through highly effective advertising and education programs.

[36] Jagose, "Queer Theory," 1980–1985.

theory as "another discursive horizon, another way of thinking the sexual."[37] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick states that queer encompasses 'the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses, and excesses of meaning' experienced by any gendered subject.[38] It thereby eludes strict boundaries, encourages divergent sexual and gender identities, and defies heteronormativity and other dominant paradigms.

A key aspect of queer is its disruption of the normalising tendencies of the identity-conscious gay and lesbian movements. It provides a flexible 'anti-category' of identity that continues poststructuralism's critique of fixed identities. Queer is always 'an identity under construction, a site of permanent becoming.'[39] Feminist and poststructuralist academic Barbara Fawcett provides a gloss of poststructuralist subjectivity that is worth quoting at length:

> [Poststructuralists] reject the idea of an essential or core self [...]. Subjectivity is regarded as changing, complex, and contradictory. It is always influenced by social-relational as well as by biographical forces and by discursively constituted experiences. Identities cannot be viewed in a unitary way and subjects are regarded as having a shifting core that continually changes in relation to context. As a result, there can be seen to be a continual discursive struggle [...] for the temporary determination of a subject's identity, with different subjectivities being continually created by competing discourses and social practices.[40]

This establishes the foundations for queer notions of identity and simultaneously demonstrates the relevance of a poststructuralist framework to this project. Fawcett's summary captures the forces that motivated this research. It suggests the tensions between "inner and outer," "public and private," "desire and constraint," that compel my practice. The subject—caught in 'competing discourses and social practices'—is amorphous and changes continually in relation to context, like the spinning surface of a mirror ball. Queer theory's approach to identity and its emphasis on sexuality are key reasons for aligning it with this project. I propose that the artistic strategy of assemblage carries a similarly disruptive and expansive potential within the context of both historical and contemporary sculptural practice.

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[37] Teresa de Lauretis, "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 3, no. 2 (1991): iii–xviii.
[38] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 105.
[39] Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, 105.
[40] Barbara Fawcett, "Poststructuralism," in *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given, 667–670 (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008), doi:10.4135/9781412963909.n334, accessed Sept. 14, 2016, http://sk.sagepub.com/reference/research/n334.xml.

3 METHODOLOGY

> And try to love the questions themselves like locked rooms and like books that are written in a foreign tongue [...] Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day to the answer.
>
> —Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letter to a Young Poet*.[41]

This research questions the connections between subjectivity and artistic form, specifically in relation to queer subjectivities and the art of assemblage. As practice-based artistic research, the methodologies and methods of practice formed the backbone of the research process. Initially, these were incorporated into a cycle of action-reflection, a method of inquiry borrowed from Action Research. This generic approach was finessed over time as the specific theoretical and conceptual concerns of the project evolved.

Below is an outline of the research process that highlights key practical and theoretical developments. This is followed by a brief review of the key methodological influences on the project. Together, these demonstrate the dynamic interaction between life, art, and theory that propelled this research.

3.1 WHAT, WHY, HOW?

In February 2009 I attended a symposium, "Glocalising Sex and Gender," hosted by the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies, University of Sydney.[42] This provided an overview of poststructuralist and feminist theories of subjectivity, which sparked an interest in assemblage as a philosophical concept and its relationship to artistic assemblage. This thinking is evident in a "doodle" in my notes from this event, which shows a formless figure caught up in a mass of lines and objects (fig. 4). This curiosity marked the beginning of an inquiring line that stretched throughout this research.

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[41] Rainer, Maria Rilke, *Letter to a Young Poet* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962), 35; quoted in Lisa G. Corrin, "Self-Questioning Monuments," in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres* by Felix Gonzalez-Torres (London: Serpentine Gallery, 2000), 8.

[42] "Glocalising" (a portmanteau of the globalisation and localisation) is 'a refinement of the concept of globalisation [...] [that addresses] the problems that attend a simple distinction between the global and the local' (Roland Robertson, "Globalisation or Glocalisation?" *Journal of International Communication* 18, no. 2 (2012): 191).

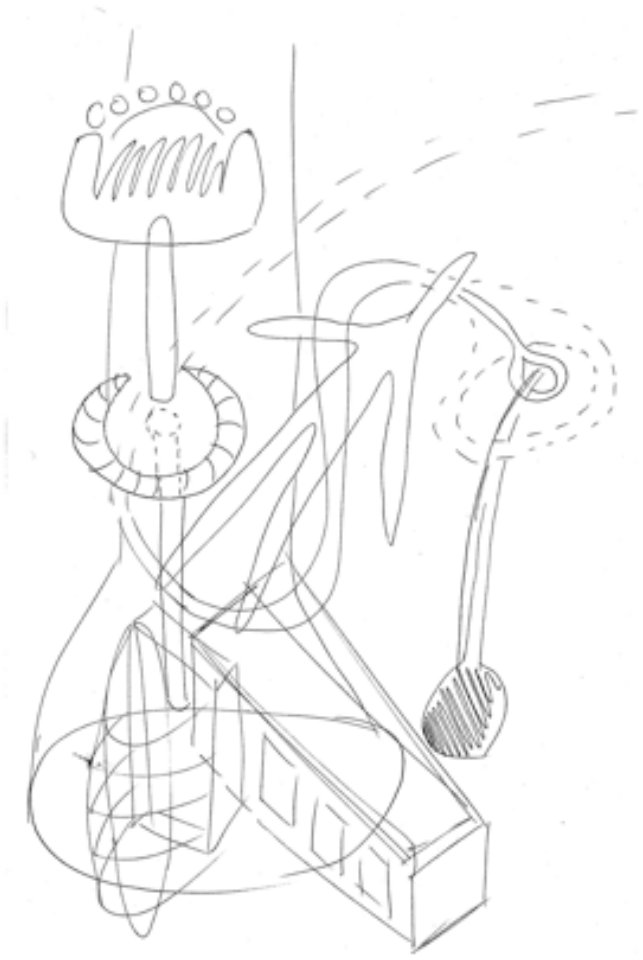


Figure 4. Matt Huppatz, sketch from research journal #1.1, Feb. 26, 2009.

The following six months provided time for free exploration of research interests through practical, theoretical, and art historical inquiry. On a practical level, I experimented with making methods, including working with text, maquette making, photomontage, photographic collaboration, traditional sculptural techniques, and assemblage. Parallel to these practical investigations, I reviewed recent artistic developments informed by critical interest in Dada and its key methods, notably assemblage and collage. I also looked closely at the work of conceptually relevant artists—amongst them Gilbert and George and Felix Gonzalez-Torres—and others who were formally interesting, but (seemingly) further afield conceptually. These included artists associated with minimalism, including Robert Morris and Dan Graham (fig. 5), and postminimalists, including Bruce Nauman.



Figure 5. Dan Graham, *Triangular Pavilion with Circular Cut-Outs*, 1989,
two-way mirror transparent glass, aluminium, 213.5 x 213.5 x 213.5 cm.

David Hopkins' work in *Dada's Boys: Masculinity after Duchamp* was a benchmark in this period.[43] It provided a provisional context for my work and inspired me to think of this research as a queer contribution to his mostly heterosexual discussion. It also encouraged me to undertake broader inquiry into studies of masculinity and gender, including feminist and queer studies informed by post-structuralist thought. The nature of these theoretical investigations led to a period of intense reflection upon my personal life, particularly certain socio-sexual proclivities and my movement between subcultural milieus. This led to a consideration of Arthur van Gennep's concept of liminality, and its later elaboration by Victor Turner, as a way of conceptualising queer experience

[43] David Hopkins, *Dada's Boys: Masculinity after Duchamp* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

in a normative world. Its resonance with the key subjective concerns of this project suggested the main title of the research—"Inside—Outside—Passing—Through"—which alludes to the spatial, connective, and transitional qualities that characterise liminal spaces and beings.

The initial investigative stages of this research confirmed artistic assemblage as a key area of interest. Significant influences were the exhibitions "The Uncertainty of Objects and Ideas: Recent Sculpture" and "Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century," and the symposium "Assemblage, *Bricolage*, and the Obsolete." [44] The work of queer art historian Jonathan D. Katz, "Committing the Perfect Crime: Sexuality, Assemblage, and the Postmodern Turn in American Art," marked a particular turning point because he explicitly links the operation of assemblage with queer imperatives.[45] This provoked questions about how queer subjectivity might relate to the practice of assemblage in general, and specifically how these dynamics might play out in my work. These questions animated the first year of the project, which culminated in a solo exhibition, "Shed Light Works." [46] This installation of semi-autonomous assembled works introduced notions of gendered space, queered time, and "the party," which informed the next stage of research.

The following year, in the (Northern) summer of 2010, I had the opportunity to immerse myself in the unique nightlife of Paris.[47] This led to an extended period of *in situ* reflection upon the phenomenological and psychological experience of life in a particular queer, underground world. In response, I began to conceptualise "the party" as a key "site" of aesthetic and theoretical interest within this project. Broadly, the party defines an idiosyncratic and potentially global network of party scenes (clubs, raves, festivals, and house parties) that intersect—or overlap—with sites and

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[44] Anne Ellegood, *The Uncertainty of Objects and Ideas: Recent Sculpture* (Washington, DC: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 2006); Richard Flood, *Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century* (New York: Phaidon (in association with New Museum), 2007); "Assemblage, *Bricolage*, and the Obsolete," Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, United Kingdom, November 2006. *Art Journal* 67, no.1 (Spring 2008) was dedicated to coverage of this symposium.

[45] Jonathan D. Katz, "Committing the Perfect Crime: Sexuality, Assemblage, and the Postmodern Turn in American Art," *Art Journal* 67, no.1 (Spring 2008): 45. Katz details an ongoing dialogue between Rauschenberg and his lover Jasper Johns, which is embedded in their work but nearly indecipherable to the uninitiated viewer. At the time, homosexuality was illegal in the United States, making this a necessary deceit. Assemblage was one of several 'linguistic, sartorial, [and] even literal' coded sign systems employed by homosexuals in this period. See George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

[46] "Shed Light Works" was shown in the Project Space, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia (CACSA), in November 2009.

[47] At this time I was working as a studio assistant to Lucy and Jorge Orta at Studio-ORTA in Paris. This experience had two main effects upon this research. The first related to an extended period of immersion in the queer "underground" of Paris. The second related to production methods and form, especially in relation to scale and materials, and the use of "outside" expertise and technologies in the production process. My time in Paris also provided the opportunity to reflect, in person, upon many early avant-garde works, including those of Duchamp and other Dadas and surrealists, in the collection of the Centre Pompidou.

subcultures of queer sexual contact.[48] It is an assemblage of sites, practices, and bodies that spreads across time and space, via a rhizomatic network of bacterial–countercultural–historical–personal–political–rhythmic–sexual–sonic–spiritual–technological–viral–visual connections.

The turn to the party prompted investigation into the theorisation of party cultures and consideration of how this intersects with my work. This included looking into the cultural theory that surrounds specific dance music genres; speculation about the political and social dimensions of subcultural scenes; and reflection on the alternative states and subjectivities that these promote. Materially, the mirror ball was taken up as an iconic sign, which was incorporated into—or inspired—several actual and imagined works.

Around this time, it became apparent that a rhizomatic way of thinking had significance for this project. This first emerged in a wall-based "diagram" produced for a process-based exhibition curated around the idea of "vague possibilities." The diagram consisted of printed web pages that were pinned to the wall in an expanding "map" that followed casual web surfing sessions. These were annotated and worked over with fluorescent highlighter pens, which traced idiosyncratic and subjective networks of "meaning" that were embedded "between the lines" of the structured pages. The spreading, tangled lines of this diagram inadvertently reveal, in a visual form, the thinking processes that directed this research. They are not arborescent lines of thought, which organise knowledge by representational, unitary, and hierarchical means.[49] They are rhizomatic and connective, and pertain to a map that, like this methodology, is 'detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, [with] multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight.'[50]

This entrance into the rabbit hole of the rhizome coincided with a period of dissolution in my research and personal life. I began to increasingly reference "party" time and space in my work as I engaged with their generative potential. This focus was reflected in a more "manufactured" look and a shift towards the use of highly finished, commercially available architectural materials. The fragmented but rigidly ordered reflectivity of the mirror ball was continued in the "geometric" form of these works, and the material qualities of optical acrylic products and polished metals.

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[48] Although global in reach, it must be noted that "the party" is primarily a Western phenomenon, though it draws upon non-western practices and traditions at various points in its manifestation and links into "Westernised" cultures around the world. Having stated this, it is possible to argue that the party—being based in an amalgamation of sex, music, and altered states—has cultural roots that extend far beyond contemporary notions of "the West."

[49] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 18; ibid., 12.

[50] Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 21.

These material shifts coincided with a broader interest in the material and formal qualities of "underground" music and sex clubs and their aesthetic of "surface."

Formally and materially, this new work returned me to thinking about minimalism. The maze, a common feature of customised male-male sex on premises venues (SOPV), arose as an archetypal form in both theoretical and field investigations. This prompted research into the history of the maze, or labyrinth, which unexpectedly unearthed a connection with Robert Morris's work. It also led to recent revisions of minimalism, which probe its subjective dimensions and open up (suspected) connections with my practice that were not supported by canonical accounts of minimalism. Around this time, I also returned to a consideration of Bruce Nauman's work, which bears comparison with Morris's minimal work.

These investigations led to further inquiry into the mirror and the labyrinth, especially as they relate to post-structuralist notions of control and subjectivity. Inevitably, in this process, I returned to the philosophical concept of *agencement* developed by French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari, and Michel Foucault's related concept of *dispositif*. These practical and theoretical explorations were further supported by a period of extended fieldwork undertaken during a residency at Concord Space, Los Angeles, in July 2013. Together, these informed the production of the final major artefact outcomes of this research.

3.2 PRACTICE-BASED ARTISTIC RESEARCH

Practice-based research implies that "knowledge" is gained in—and can be attributed to—the creative process. This corresponds with Martin Heidegger's idea of praxical knowledge, which maintains that ideas and theory are the result of practice, rather than vice versa.[51] Cognitive (theoretical) or practical knowledge surfaces in the practitioner's interaction with concepts, materials, tools, and processes.[52] Because these processes are partially predicated on 'the tacit and alternative logic of practice *in time*,' they proceed according to methodologies that are necessarily 'emergent and subject to repeated adjustment.'[53]

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[51] Estelle Barrett, introduction to *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 6.
[52] Ibid., 6; Peter Dallow, "Representing Creativeness: Practice-Based Approaches to Research in Creative Arts," *Art, Design, and Communication in Higher Education* 2, nos. 1–2 (2003): 55.
[53] Barrett, *Practice as Research*, 6.

Artistic practice operates along similar lines, and it is important to note that this research did not run on methodological "steel-tracks." Rather, the tools and techniques of practice formed the 'spine of the research process,' which was married with a "create to critique" mode of inquiry in which creative action was followed by critical reflection.[54] This approach inspired investigations into various practical and theoretical areas that inspired further creative works and theoretical explorations. With each cycle of inquiry, appropriate artistic and research methods were introduced as necessary in an improvised approach akin to *bricolage*.[55] These methods included formal literature and artefact reviews; exhibitions of artwork for public and critical review; and journal keeping, which included photographic and textual documentation of significant research events.

3.3 RESEARCH AS CREATIVE-PRODUCTION

The methodological approach adopted in this research is indebted to Steven Scrivener's theorisation of creative-production research. As such, it focussed on the production of creative works and deliberately avoided "problem solving." Rather than following a single line of enquiry, the 'issues, goals, and priorities' of the research unfolded in response to the work. This resulted in a 'stream of outcomes' that circumvented specifying a specific "problem" or yielding a final "solution."[56]

Scrivener's model of creative-production is procedurally similar to other practice-based research approaches but differs in its approach to knowledge. While traditional research is defined as *original investigation* that acquires 'knowledge of what is or was the case,' Scrivener defines creative-production research as *original creation* that provides '*ways of seeing* and *ways of being* in relation to what is, was, or might be.'[57] He argues that it is implausible to claim that art objects

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[54] Brad Haseman, "Rupture and Recognition: Identifying the Performative Research Paradigm," in *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 151; Graeme Sullivan, "Research Acts in Art Practice," *Studies in Art Education* 48, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 28. This "create to critique" approach is common to most artistic research models and practice-based research in general. It is often associated with the reflective cycle component of Action Research. Steven Scrivener and others identify its basis in Donald Schön's theory of reflective practice, presented in *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). See Steven Scrivener, "Reflection In and On Action and Practice in Creative-Production Doctoral Projects in Art and Design," *Working Papers in Art and Design* 1 (2000): not paginated; Carole Gray and Julian Malins, "The 'Reflective Practitioner,'" in *Visualising Research: A Guide for Postgraduate Students in Art and Design* (Abingdon, Oxon: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 22–24.

[55] The close theoretical ties between *bricolage* and artistic assemblage, a key method and interest in this research, reinforced the suitability of adopting this approach.

[56] Scrivener, "Reflection In and On," under "Creative-Production Projects."

[57] Stephen Scrivener, "The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Knowledge," *Working Papers in Art and Design* 2 (2002): under "Ways of Seeing and Ways of Being." Emphasis added. Scrivener's definition of traditional research refers to that provided by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in "Research Assessment Exercise 2001: Assessment Panels' Criteria and

should communicate knowledge—or that artists should produce 'knowledge artefacts'—and problematises the pursuit of knowledge as a primary objective of artistic research. [58]

Scrivener's approach does not deny knowledge a place in artistic research but it radically shifts the main aims of research: in this model, the primary goal of artistic research must be to advance the purposes of *art* and its principal outcomes must be *art*. [59] Therefore, alongside the creative artefacts that are the major outcomes of this research, this exegesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of the processes of artistic discovery, innovation, and creation.[60]

3.4 A Queer Poststructuralist Approach

This project's insistence on the centrality of subjectivity, sexuality, and gender aligns it with queer theory and firmly locates it within postmodern and poststructuralist theoretical frameworks. Queer theory and artistic research make peculiarly synergistic bedfellows, or methodological allies, because both occupy marginal—and often contentious—positions with regard to established research disciplines. They also share theoretical underpinnings in postmodern and poststructuralist thought. These frameworks challenge modern conceptions of the subject as 'rational, unified, and stable;' ridicule claims of a 'universal human condition;' and propose that 'knowledge is always contextual, partial, and fragmentary but never neutral [because] it defines the power relations between individuals and groups.'[61]

Methods." In Australia, the 2015 Higher Education Research Data Collection "Specifications for the Collection of 2014 Data" maintains this emphasis on knowledge, defining research as 'the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, and understandings.' See "Higher Education Research Data Collection Specifications," Australian Government, Department of Education and Training, last modified December 11, 2015, http://docs.education.gov.au/node/36749. It is interesting to note that for the purposes of the HEFCE's Research Excellence Framework 2014 (REF2014), research is defined 'as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.' See "Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions," Research Excellence Framework, last modified February 5, 2014, http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2011-02/. Later in "The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Knowledge," Scrivener refines this formulation, proposing that artistic research should be concerned with generating "novel apprehension"—or unique ways of seeing the past, present, or future—which results when the senses and the intellect engage with an artwork.

[58] Scrivener, "The Art Object," under "Shared Knowing;" Scrivener, "Reflection in and on," under "The Norms of Creative-Production Projects."

[59] Scrivener, "Reflection In and On," under "The Norms of Creative-Production." Scrivener does admit that 'knowledge, learning, and insight' should result from the inquiry (Scrivener, "The Art Object," under "Introduction"). In a similar vein, Grete Refsum points out that the "specialist arena" of the visual arts is the zone that takes in the conception, development, and materialisation of artworks. Once completed, the artwork enters the gallery, the market, and the fields of humanistic study (art history, philosophy, criticism)—areas largely beyond the artist's influence. Therefore, in the process of establishing an appropriate theoretical framework, the field of visual arts must build its theory production 'on that which happens before art is produced, that is, [in the processes that lead] to the finished objects of art' (Grete Refsum, "Contribution to an Understanding of the Knowledge Base in the Field of Visual Arts," *Working Papers in Art and Design* 2 (2002), accessed July 10, 2014, http://www.herts.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/12308/WPIAAD_vol2_refsum.pdf).

[60] Louise Poissant, "Research-Creation: Methodological Issues," editorial, *Leonardo* 47, no. 1 (2014): 2.

[61] Nick J. Fox, s.v. "Poststructuralism and Postmodernism," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Health, Illness, Behaviour, and*

These understandings about knowledge and "the knower" are reflected in the emergent and flexible methodology applied in this research. This project mirrored queer experience, and tended to "veer away" from 'the instinctual, the natural, or the commonsensical.'[62] Instead, priority was given to 'the unexpected, the unplanned […], [and] the lines of flight' that arose in the process of inquiry.[63] Queer research, like artistic research, struggles to make sense of—and bring to light—experience and understanding that is not often articulated in an academic setting. It is not surprising that queer methodology also supports an improvised, "knocked together" approach. Queer theorist Judith Halberstam writes:

> A queer methodology, in a way, is a scavenger methodology that uses different methods to collect and produce information on subjects who have been deliberately or accidentally excluded from traditional studies of human behaviour. The queer methodology attempts to combine methods that are often cast as being at odds with each other, and it refuses the academic compulsion towards disciplinary coherence.[64]

3.5 METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

It is important to note that the development of this methodology was far from straightforward. It proceeded in fits and starts and was marked by reversals and returns. The subjective nature of this project meant that lines of life and research became ensnared as they continually crossed. The hermeneutic cycle became less like a circle or spiral and more like a tangled line.

While the forms, materials, and processes of practice are inevitably entangled in various discourses, they are not usually—or constantly—conceived in this way. It took effort to convert an apparently instinctual way of working into a theoretical schematic that aligned with acceptable models of research. Following my inclination towards assemblage led me to consider *bricolage* as a way to conceptualise an emergent and improvised approach to methodology. In time, theoretical investigations connected *bricolage* with the rhizome—and the thought of Deleuze and Guattari—

Society, ed. William C. Cockerham, Robert Dingwall, and Stella R. Quah (Chichester: John Wiley, 2014).

[62] Jasbir K. Puar, "Preface: Tactics, Strategies, Logistics," in *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), xv.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 13. Those familiar with the writing surrounding artistic research methodologies will recognise this approach; the scavenger (or gleaner) is not far removed from the *bricoleur*. Curiously, the scavenger also appears in William Seitz's theorisation of artistic assemblage (see section *4.1.3 The Dada Assemblage*).

providing an explicit link to the poststructuralist frameworks that underpin so many of the artistic and theoretical contexts of this research.

My first instinct in this research was to follow the work, which proved to be a productive approach. This meant giving priority to the existing methods and methodologies of practice and paying attention to the themes and patterns that arose in the work, which were allowed to lead the research. Thus, as the project progressed, a *research* methodology was articulated alongside the *artistic* methodology of practice. This approach avoided applying an external "readymade" or pre-existent methodology, and allowed one to emerge from "within," fully enmeshed in the concerns and processes of the research.

4 QUEER PASSAGES THROUGH THEORY AND PRACTICE

> The problem of writing: in order to designate something exactly, anexact expressions are utterly unavoidable. Not at all because it is a necessary step, or because one can only advance by approximations: anexactitude is in no way an approximation; on the contrary, it is the exact passage of that which is under way.
>
> —Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.[65]

4.1 PASSAGE 1

The first stage of this research was a period of exploration marked by reflection upon my practice and its future direction. It was not overly concerned with studio-based activity except in a relatively perfunctory manner. Rather, it involved a "tossing around" of ideas and an attempt to tease apart the core drivers of the practice. It was grasped as an opportunity to follow up on queer hunches that had surfaced in the honours work. The identification of a "problem" was set aside in favour of a search for inspiration. An overview of poststructuralist and feminist theories of subjectivity sparked an interest in the philosophical concept of assemblage and questions about how it might relate to its artistic counterpart. This curiosity marked the beginning of a theoretical line that stretched across the course of this research.

4.1.1 The Art of Assemblage

Within visual arts discourse, the term assemblage was popularised by curator William C. Seitz in his exhibition, "The Art of Assemblage," first shown at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1961.[66] The exhibition included work from the twentieth century and earlier, 'combining Kurt Schwitters, Man Ray, and Marcel Duchamp with Jean Dubuffet, Robert Rauschenberg, and others.'[67] The catalogue, which constitutes the key historical text for this art form, has been a touchstone in this research.

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[65] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schisophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 20.

[66] William C. Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961). Exhibition catalogue. The term assemblage had been used earlier by the American artist Arthur Dove in his review of Alfred Stieglitz's exhibition "Seven Americans" (1925) and, as acknowledged by Seitz in *The Art of Assemblage*, by Dubuffet in 1953. See Roger Shattuck, "Introduction: How Collage Became Assemblage," in *Essays on Assemblage* by John Elderfield, Studies in Modern Art 2 (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1992), 119.

[67] Dorothée Brill, *Shock and the Senseless in Dada and Fluxus* (London: University of New England Press, 2010), 102. According to a MOMA press release, the exhibition included 'two hundred and fifty works by 130 artists' (Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Press Release no. 110," Wednesday, Oct. 4, 1961, available online, accessed Feb. 23, 2016, https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/2897/releases/MOMA_1961_0112_110.pdf?2010).

Seitz specifies the term assemblage to delineate an expanded form of "collage" and to distinguish the works in his exhibition from the historical collages made by 'the Dadaists, Picasso and Braque, etc.' in the period 1910–1920.[68] He characterises works of assemblage as follows:

> 1. They are predominantly assembled rather than painted, drawn, modelled, or carved.[69]
>
> 2. Entirely or in part, their constituent elements are preformed natural or manufactured materials, objects, or fragments not intended as art materials.[70]

Although noting the formal characteristics of assemblage and its antecedents in collage, Seitz stresses that his exhibition should not be viewed as a survey of techniques, histories, or movements (ibid.). Rather, he conceives of it as a survey of 'the metaphysics of assemblage' (ibid.). Indeed, Seitz singled out the term "assemblage" because it could denote 'a specific technical procedure and form [...] but also a complex of attitudes and ideas.'[71] This suggests that assemblage is characterised by an underlying philosophy that is mixed up with material and making processes. This view of assemblage is entangled with its historical precedents, and the idea that assemblage—as a "new" medium—was more suited than 'orthodox techniques' to carry 'developing viewpoints.'[72]

Significantly, Seitz proposes that the basic methods of assemblage—collage and juxtaposition—are relevant to key questions raised by 20th century art, including 'the nature of reality, the nature of painting itself, and *the methods by which creative thought is organised*.'[73]

4.1.2 The Liberation of Words and Objects

In Seitz's model, assemblage—as "expanded" collage—inherits the history and conceptual influences of collage. The 'methods and metaphysics' of historical collage, he proposes, were

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[68] Seitz, *Art of Assemblage*, 150, n.5, offers a thorough gloss of the practice of *collage* and related methods in modern art (including *papier collé*, *décollage*, *découpage* and photomontage) and their historical antecedents. Interestingly, he notes that the practice of photomontage (an assemblage of photographs by pasting or other means) gained its present meaning from the German Dadas, who used it to denote collages of photographs and other illustrative materials, beginning before 1920. 'With ironic intent, they appropriated the German verb *montieren*, a synonym of our verb "to assemble," and applied, as in one of our usages, to the mounting and erection of machinery. The Dada's expansion of this meaning survives not only in the common term "photomontage," but also in the application of the term "montage" to film' (ibid.).

[69] Thus, the category of assemblage could accommodate freestanding, three-dimensional—as well as planar—works.

[70] Seitz, *Art of Assemblage*, 6.

[71] Ibid., 10. Emphasis added.

[72] Seitz, *Art of Assemblage*, 87.

[73] MOMA, "Press Release no. 110," 1961. Emphasis added.

aligned with a characteristically modern "predisposition" evident in 'the sensitised and irritable personality' of the modern artist.[74] The 'often ironic, perverse, anti-rational, and even destructive,' aspects of the modern sensibility formed a complex and dynamic relationship with modern art (ibid.). This suggests that there is a relationship between subjectivity and form at the heart of avant-garde practice.

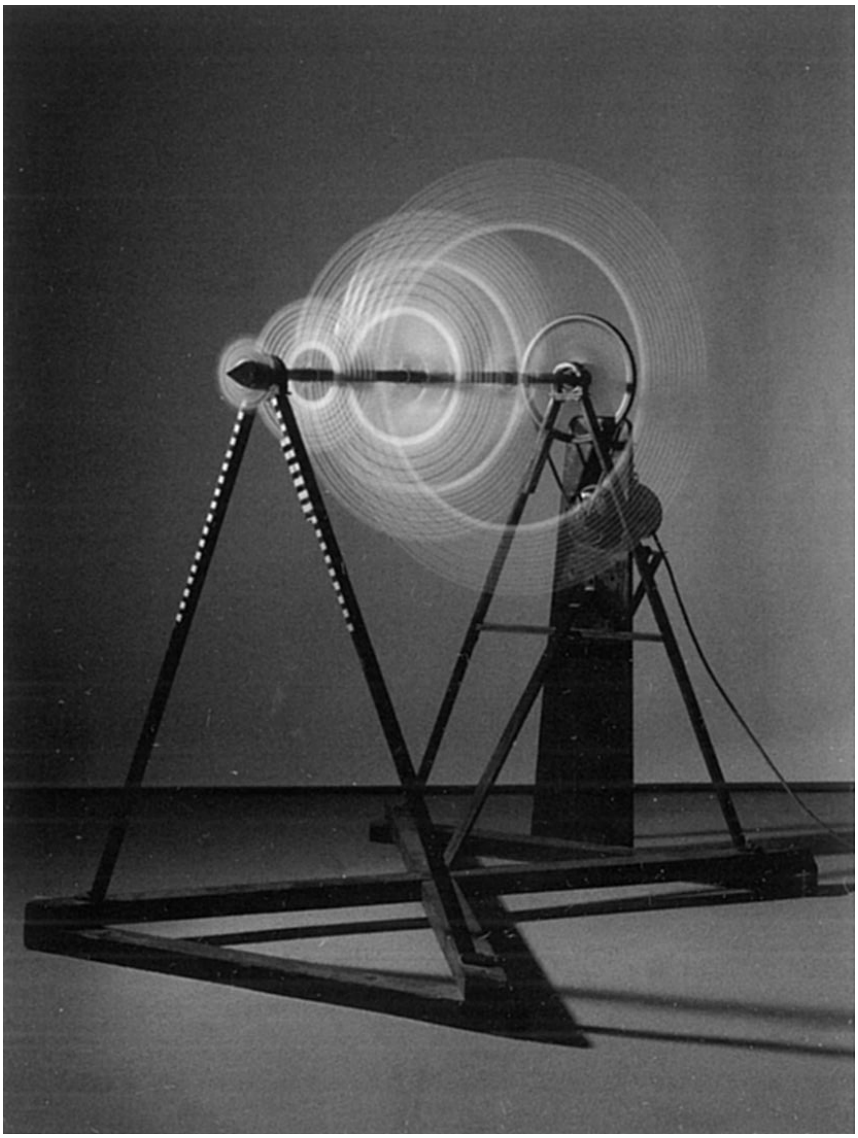


Figure 6. Marcel Duchamp, *Rotative plaques verre (Optique de precision)* (*Rotary Glass Plates (Precise Optics)*), 1920, replica 1979, Plexiglas, metal, motor, wood, paint, 170 x 125 x 100 cm.

[74] Seitz, *Art of Assemblage*, 10.

Seitz traces the roots of collage to a particular 'climate of ideas' that influenced literature, music, and the visual arts around the turn of the century. A relationship to ideas, and therefore language, meant that poets responded most rapidly to the spirit of the times (ibid., 13). Literary sources—including the "cubist" works of Guillaume Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Blaise Cendrars, and André Gide—therefore inform this shift in formal approach as much as any visual precedent.[75] Indeed,

> The arrangement of words, each carrying with it "an image or an idea surrounded by a vague aura of associations," is close to the method of collage. The poet's most important tool is the metaphor—"the joining of two things which are different."[76]

Seitz nominates Guillaume Apollinaire as the prime exemplar of this new spirit in literature. Apollinaire had moved 'toward freedom in assembling a poem out of disparate parts' as early as 1908.[77] He championed the use of collage in *The Cubist Painters* (1913), announcing:

> You can paint with whatever material you please, with pipes, postage stamps, postcards or playing cards, candelabra, pieces of oilcloth, collars, painted papers, newspapers.[78]

Along with other cubist poets, Apollinaire applied the same theory to language, using 'any words or word combinations, however mundane, jarring or disassociated.'[79] This method of juxtaposition and appropriation set forth 'the principles of an art assembled of actual, rather than verbal, objects.'[80]

It is fitting that criticism of Apollinaire's book *Alcools* (1913) could have been describing a work in "The Art of Assemblage" (or even a late twentieth century installation):

> Nothing could remind one more of an old junk shop than these collected poems [...] a mass of heterogeneous objects has found a place there and, though some of them have value, none of

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[75] Ibid., 13. Seitz here notes that '[f]uturism and Dada began as literary and political, rather than plastic, movements; surrealism originated in the automatic literary technique practiced by Apollinaire, the first spokesman for cubist painting; his poetry, that of Max Jacob, Blaise Cendrars, and Pierre Reverdy, and certain of the novels of André Gide, have been called "literary cubism"' (ibid.).

[76] Seitz, *Art of Assemblage*, 13; quoting, respectively, Roger Fry, *The Poems of Mallarmé* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 12; and Wallace Fowlie, *A Guide to Contemporary French Literature* (New York: Meridian, 1957), 100.

[77] Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1958), 259, quoted in Seitz, *Assemblage*, 15.

[78] Guillaume Apollinaire, *The Cubist Painters*, 2nd edition (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1949), 23, quoted in Seitz, *Art of Assemblage*, 14.

[79] Seitz, *Art of Assemblage*, 15. In Apollinaire's work, 'snatches of conversation, routine phrases, and clichés follow one another without transition or thematic connection.'

[80] Seitz, *Art of Assemblage*, 15.

> them has been made by the dealer himself [...] The rest is a collection of faked paintings, patched exotic garments, bicycle accessories, and articles of intimate hygiene.[81]

This passage points to the key tactics of cubist poetry that would flow into assemblage: appropriation, juxtaposition, and dissociation. Seitz places particular emphasis on the significance of juxtaposition as a method in post-cubist collage and assemblage, not least in the work of the Dadas. The forcing together of disparate parts that occurs in historical assemblage is a notable source of disruptive power.

4.1.3 The Dada Assemblage

Seitz reserves his most passionate writing for a discussion of Dada, which throws light on the ideas and attitudes that underlie his theory of assemblage. Dada emerged from a 'nameless anti-war and literary manifestation' that formed in Zurich during the Great War.[82] Unlike other "styles," it had 'no unified formal characteristics [...] but it did have a new artistic ethic from which, in unforeseen ways, new means of expression emerged.'[83] Dada was particularly relevant to Seitz's project because the contemporary wave of assembled works was being labelled "neo-Dada."[84] Seitz does not deny this connection, making it clear that 'the admixture of Dada in assemblage must not simply be granted; it must be insisted upon, and if possible, understood' (ibid., 33).

Seitz considers Dada's focus on negative values to be its greatest contribution to the theory and practice of the arts (ibid., 35). In the hands of Dada, 'unsureness and confusion [...] became a positive value, one that had lethal effect on systems of hierarchy and classification' (ibid., 37). For the first time in Western thought, Seitz proposes, dada 'substituted a non-rational metaphysic of oppositions for a rationalised hierarchy of values.'[85]

> As a consequence it accorded to unsureness, accident, confusion, disunity, and discontinuity a share of the attention formerly reserved for what had commonly been regarded as their moral opposites, and released a constellation of physical and intellectual energies through which an artist could (and still can) operate in a way that, at least in the West, was previously impossible (ibid., 37).

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[81] Art critic Georges Duhamel, quoted in Cecily Mackworth, *Guillaume Apollinaire and the Cubist Life* (London: John Murray, 1961), 150–151, cited in Seitz, *Art of Assemblage*, 15.
[82] Seitz, *Art of Assemblage*, 33. Seitz here paraphrases artist Richard Huelsenbeck.
[83] Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, trans. by David Britt (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1964), 9.
[84] Seitz, *Art of Assemblage*, 32.
[85] Ibid., 37. Seitz here seems to foreshadow Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome. See section *4.5.7 Rhizome*.

Assemblage, Seitz states, 'is inconceivable without Dada's negativism, for the precondition of juxtaposition is a state of randomness and disassociation' (ibid., 38). He likens the assembler to 'a scavenger wandering amongst ruins,' discovering order, as well as materials, by accident:

> At the start at least, his is an atmosphere without conditions, an alternating current in which hierarchies of great and small, order and disorder, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, are reversible or non-existent.[86]

The assembler—then and now—is cast amongst the 'random assemblage of the modern world,' which becomes a source of literal and metaphoric raw material. Here,

> nature and man are thrown together in an often tragic and ludicrous, but fertile and dynamic disarray: the crowded city, the split-level suburb, the "moon shot," the picture magazine, the summit conference, the television western (ibid., 38).

Despite being dated, Seitz's evocation of the modern condition as generative site remains relevant today. Contemporary society faces similar radical incongruities, albeit amplified beyond anything that the early avant-garde could have imagined.

> Dada awakened senses and sensibilities to the immense multiple collision of values, forms, and effects among which we live, and to the dialectic of creation and destruction, affirmation and negation, by which art and life progress (ibid., 38–39).

'Considered solely as a liberating creative method,' Seitz proposes, 'Dada offered (and still offers) a dispersive context within which untried kinds and degrees of organisation could (and still can) arise from a state of randomness and disorder' (ibid., 39). Thus, its processes are fundamentally different to movements that came before or directly after it (ibid.). When playing with juxtaposition, the artist must 'cede a measure of his control, and hence of his ego, to the materials and what transpires between them, placing himself in the role of discoverer or spectator as well as that of originator' (39). Here, Seitz inadvertently introduces the decentred subject of poststructuralist thought that is central to queer accounts of self and the destabilisation of dominant systems.

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[86] Ibid., 38. Again, Seitz seems to prefigure Deleuzian and poststructuralist approaches, which often invoke strange atmospheres, wastelands, and "scavenging," nomadic agents. The scavenger also suggests the *bricoleur*, and is perhaps an example of the "latent" anthropological aspects of assemblage discussed by Julia Kelly in *4.4.2 The Bricoleur*.

The disaffection of Dada is significant; it represents a frustration with the status quo and a desire to shift public consciousness that was radical, at least in terms of the visual arts. With Dada, art broke the confines of aesthetic and representational stricture. In effect making "ideas and attitudes" a set of tools for an entirely new kind of artist.

4.1.4 Assemblage as *Agencement*

> A book is neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations. [...] In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialisation and destratification. [...] All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage. A book is an assemblage of this kind and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity. [87]

Any discussion of assemblage in a contemporary context must acknowledge its prominence as a theoretical term in the humanities, social sciences—and creative arts—over the past few decades.[88] Assemblage in these contexts owes its prevalence to English translations of French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, most notably *A Thousand Plateaus*.[89] The coincidence of terminology in Seitz and Deleuze is something of a red herring, but it has been a productive diversion in this research. The primary cause of this anomaly is a matter of translation, "assemblage" being a stand in for the French term *agencement*. Apart from the linguistic coincidence, there are no obvious theoretical links between assemblage in Seitz and the more recent work of Deleuze and Guattari.[90] However, a comparison of the two throws light on how *agencement* functions as a concept in Deleuzo-Guattarian thought.

Assemblage in Seitz, as outlined above, refers to both a specific type of artistic object and an artistic procedure or method.[91] This use as a technical and classificatory term corresponds to its application in other areas including archaeology, palaeontology, and the natural sciences.[92] This

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[87] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "Introduction: Rhizome," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3–4.
[88] Rosanne Kennedy et al., "All Those Little Machines: Assemblage as Transformative Theory," *Australian Humanities Review* 55 (2013): 45.
[89] Deleuze and Guattari developed the concept individually and together over several decades.
[90] Despite this, reading Seitz alongside Deleuze and Guattari—and other Deleuzians—reveals similarities that suggest a closer alignment than is generally acknowledged.
[91] See *4.4.1 The Art of Assemblage*.
[92] John Phillips, "*Agencement*/Assemblage." *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, nos. 2–3 (2006): 109.

follows its common meanings in English, i.e. 'a collection or gathering of things or people,' 'a machine or object made of pieces fitted together,' or less commonly (as a mass noun), 'the action of gathering or fitting things together.'[93] These definitions align with the French *assemblage*, the origin of the assemblage in English, and the inspiration for Seitz. While *assemblage* also suggests a collection of things and a technical procedure, it is applied to a broader range of activities, with an emphasis on the physical joining or blending of parts.[94] Indeed, one definition of *assemblage* is "joint," as in cabinetmaking.[95] This reflects its etymological connection to the Old French verb *assembler*, "come together, join, unite; gather."[96] There is an obvious emphasis here on connection.

While Deleuze and Guattari use the term *assemblage* in their work, Deleuzian scholar John Phillips notes that it is 'never in a philosophical sense.'[97] The term they employ is *agencement*, a word with no exact equivalent in English.[98] *Agencement* is a noun—usually translated as "arrangement," "layout"—as in design or architecture—and "fixing," or "fitting"—which can simultaneously signify 'the act of fixing and the arrangement itself.'[99] The verb, *agencer*, "to construct," from which it is derived, can be applied specifically to the construction of an argument or the plotting of an intrigue.[100] *Agencement* is arguably a more dynamic term than assemblage, describing 'not the arrangement or organisation but the *process* of arranging, organising, [and] fitting together.'[101] However, by paying attention to the sense of both the French and English terms, one can gain a clear sense of the openness that Deleuze and Guattari intended by the term *agencement*.

In *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*, Manuel DeLanda proposes that the concept of assemblage applies 'to a wide variety of wholes constructed from

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[93] *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "assemblage," http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/assemblage.
[94] *The Oxford Hachette French Dictionary*, s.v. "assemblage," ed. by Jean-Benoit Ormal-Grenon and Natalie Pomier (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Phillips, "*Agencement*/Assemblage," 108.
[95] *The Oxford Hachette French Dictionary*, s.v. "assemblage."
[96] *Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. "assemblage," http://www.etymonline.com/index.php. Curiously, in the broader context of this research, in Middle English and in Old French, *assembler* was a euphemism for "to couple sexually" (ibid.). See especially section *4.7.12 The Glory—Hole—Using—Body—Assemblage*.
[97] Phillips, "*Agencement*/Assemblage," 108.
[98] Various authors have argued that the translation of *agencement* as assemblage is problematic on a number of counts. Stephen Legg suggests that it acts to solidify and simplify the more open concept of *agencement* (Legg, "Assemblage/Apparatus: Using Deleuze and Foucault," *Area* 43, no. 2, (June 2011): 128). John Phillips argues that the use of assemblage gives rise to connotations based on 'analogical impressions.' This has the negative effect of liberating *agencement* from a conceptual vocabulary that relied upon it to perform specific conceptual duties in a particular philosophical argument (Phillips, "*Agencement*/Assemblage," 108). It could be argued that Deleuze and Guattari would embrace the slippage involved in this imperfect translation.
[99] *Oxford Hachette French Dictionary*, s.v. "agencement;" *Harper Collins French Dictionary*, s.v. "agencement," college ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1990).
[100] *Oxford Hachette French Dictionary*, s.v. "agencer." This aspect of *agencement* aligns with Michel Foucault's related concept of *dispositif*. See section *4.7.10 The Public Health Apparatus*.
[101] J. Macgregor Wise, "Assemblage," in *Gilles Deleuze: Key* Concepts, ed. Charles J. Stivale, (Durham, UK: Acumen, 2005): 77. Emphasis added.

heterogeneous parts.'[102] Assemblages consist of parts that are 'self-subsistent and articulated by relations of exteriority' (ibid., 19). This means that a component part 'may be detached and made a component of another assemblage' (19). Significantly, the transported component will not only "work" in the second assemblage, it has the capacity to interact in different ways (13). The transferability of parts means that assemblages typically possess functional capacities but are not limited to a single, set function.[103]

The heterogeneous and connective qualities of assemblage are well illustrated by cultural theorist J. Macgregor Wise, who looks outside of philosophy to demonstrate how it functions.[104] In geology, an assemblage refers to a group of fossils that appear together and characterise a particular stratum. Similarly, in ecology, it designates "a group of organisms sharing a common habitat by chance."[105] Both assemblages demonstrate contingency: their components are somewhat random, but not completely, because only certain life forms existed in that form, at that time, under those conditions, in that location.[106]

A similar confluence of possibilities occurs in an archaeological assemblage, where myriad forces influence an accumulation of detritus. Significantly, the elements of an assemblage do not just appear together in a particular area; 'they constitute a *group* and they express a particular *character*' (ibid., 78). The 'diverse *things*' that constitute an assemblage also include "qualities"—'large, poisonous, fine, blinding'—and the affects of the assemblage: 'what it *can do*' (78). All these things—elements, qualities, and relations—are in turn caught up in the discursive assemblages that enable their description: 'the semiotics of the dig' (80). The assemblage itself is a semiotic system, and thus its elements include 'discourses, words, "meanings" and non-corporeal relations that link signifiers with effects.'[107] In the interactions between these diverse parts, the connectivity of assemblage/*agencement* comes to the fore.

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[102] Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (London: Continuum, 2006), 8.
[103] Assemblages stand in contrast to "organic totalities:" wholes that 'constitute a seamless totality or that display an organic unity.' These are characterised by relations of interiority, in which 'component parts are constituted by the very relations they have to other parts in the whole.' Unlike the components of an assemblage, '[a] part detached from such a whole ceases to be what it is, since being this particular part is one of its constitutive properties' (DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory*, 12).
[104] Wise, "Assemblage," 77.
[105] Ibid., 78; *Harper Collins French Dictionary*, s.v. "assemblage."
[106] Wise, "Assemblage," 77–78.
[107] Wise, "Assemblage," 80; quoting Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 504.

Although the examples above seem relatively "concrete," any assemblage is involved in a continual process of emergence and becoming.[108] It cannot be conceived as a static term, or "thing." This is evident in the geological assemblage of fossils, which relates—across time—to assemblages that were once bio- and ecological. An assemblage transpires whenever 'a set of forces coalesce together.'[109] The concept can be applied to any structure, 'from the behaviour patterns of an individual, the organisation of institutions, an arrangement of spaces, to the functioning of ecologies' (ibid., 18).

Assemblages are 'complex constellations of objects, bodies, expressions, qualities, and territories that come together for varying periods of time' (18). These consist of multiple, unstable organic and non-organic elements—each 'invested with the capacity to transform the whole'—that move 'between technology (content, material) and language (expression, non-corporeal effects).'[110] Significantly, the concept of assemblage deals with 'the play of contingency and structure, organisation and change.'[111] These forces became a preoccupation of this research and reappear in the discussion of liminality in sections on liminality, especially *4.3.3 Fixed and Floating Worlds*.

Researchers George Marcus and Erkan Saka note that there are two distinct streams or "genealogies" that use assemblage 'in creating the conceptual scaffolding of research material and experience.'[112] The first of these is 'a generic and rather ideological appropriation of the term as a desired association with—or inspirational connection to—the art, architecture and literary spheres of its creation' (ibid.). This includes the work of Seitz, amongst others. The other, is a 'more rigorous and exegetical derivation from the work of Deleuze and Guattari.'[113]

Though generally understood as separate branches of application and understanding, these approaches are not disconnected. Indeed, Marcus and Saka seem not to differentiate, placing them as events on a spectrum of how assemblage might be applied in research contexts. They note that 'the looser, more inspirational evocations [...] of assemblage from the aesthetic sphere have not been unimportant, but simply less substantive and less relevant' to research practice and analysis (ibid., 102). Indeed, as 'an ideological exemplar of modernist experimentation,' assemblage has

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[108] Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 4.
[109] Graham Livesey, "Assemblage," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr, revised (2nd) ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 18.
[110] Kennedy et al., "Little Machines," 46; Wise, "Assemblage," 80.
[111] Wise, "Assemblage," 77.
[112] George E. Marcus and Erkan Saka, "Assemblage," *Theory, Culture & Society* 23 nos. 2–3 (2006): 102.
[113] Ibid.; this stream includes Manuel Delanda's *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*.

been ‘very important’ in conceiving ‘the project of social and cultural research,’ and its textual and writing strategies (103). In the latter, ‘there is often a presumption that the heterogeneous form of the text mimics or is homologous to the forms that the modernist subjects and objects of study take in the world’ (103). This situates assemblage as ‘an experimental genre form’ that makes an organic fit with the contours of an object of study (103).

The discussion above demonstrates how assemblage operates as a concept. While these two branches might seem disconnected, they are inextricably linked through language. Indeed, considered side by side, the two quickly form an assemblage with a life of its own.

4.1.5 *A Close Encounter*

One morning, while waiting for coffee before "Glocalising Sex and Gender," a woman struck up a conversation over a spilled coffee. Kathy also came from Adelaide, so we had an immediate point of connection. She told me that as a child she had been placed in institutional care, and spent many years moving between institutions and foster homes. As a teenager, it dawned on her that marriage was her best chance of escape. Towards this end, she began to build up a glory box of domestic essentials. Having little money, she stole pots and pans from the home economics department at her school but her resourcefulness was discovered and the police were called. As a result, her life at the children's home became intolerable. She ran away, hitchhiking to Sydney in the mid-eighties, where she spent time living on the street. She became addicted to heroin and contracted HIV in 1989. Reflecting on this encounter later that day, a drawing emerged: the "glory-hole-box" (fig. 7).

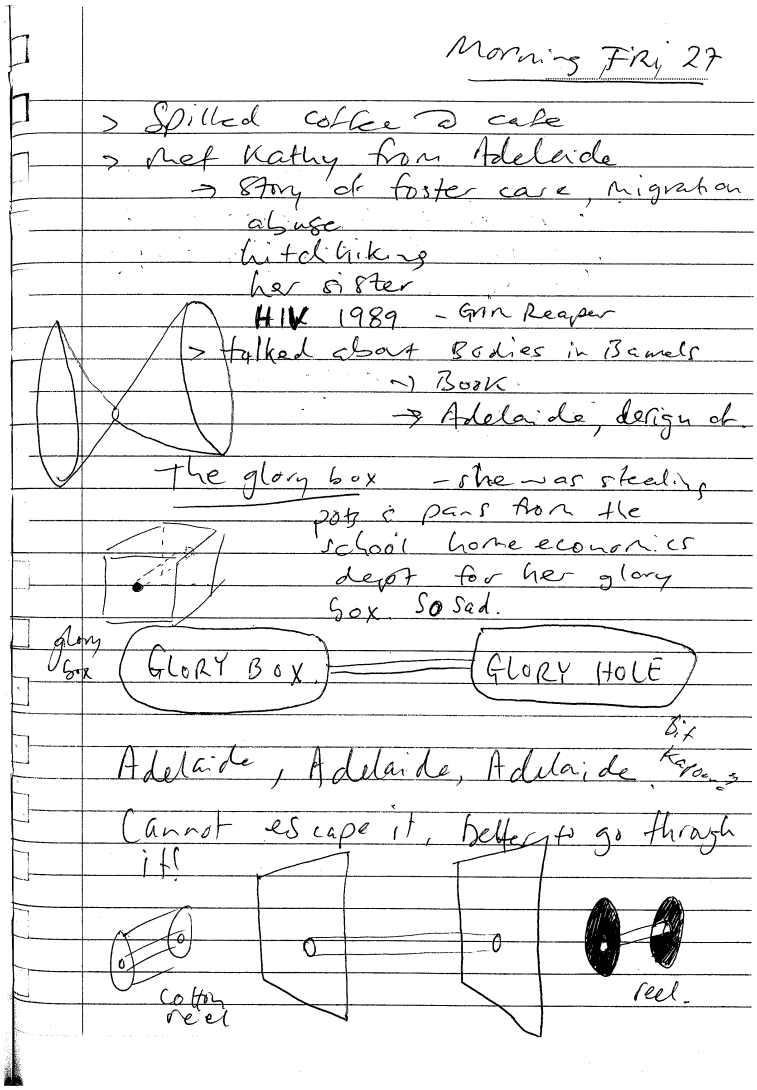


Figure 7. Matt Huppatz, glory-hole-box notes from journal #1.2, Fri. Feb. 27, 2009.

Although we came from different worlds, I recognised myself in Kathy's story. The assemblage of events that formed her life somehow, for a moment, connected with mine. We seemed to run on parallel tracks. The hope revealed in the story of the glory box was particularly touching. I hadn't heard of a glory box for twenty years, since my older sister was preparing for marriage in the mid-1980s. As a twelve year old I watched the preparations for her wedding with excitement and fascination. The glory box seemed an almost magical concept: it didn't actually exist; yet one worked towards assembling it, and it contained the prerequisites for living happily ever after.

At around the same time, the death of celebrities brought AIDS to the front-page of newspapers. In 1987, the National Advisory Committee on AIDS (NACAIDS) in Australia launched its brutally effective awareness campaign, which featured the Grim Reaper. This painted a bleak future for a young man who was well aware of his sexual interest in other males. Later, in the early 1990s, I spent my own time as a "runaway" in Sydney, tentatively exploring the peripheries of the gay underground. Here was another (albeit linguistic) connection to Kathy's story: not the glory box, but the glory hole.

4.1.6 The Glory-Hole-Box

The glory-hole-box (a glory box—cum—glory hole) gives form to a discordant notion. It collides two curious cultural "objects" that seem worlds apart. Closer examination reveals this to be an assemblage that intimately connects hegemonic and queer forms of sexual life. In Australia and New Zealand, "glory box" refers to a collection of items traditionally accumulated by a young woman in preparation for marriage.[114] It has been identified as 'a complex and ambivalent symbol' that defies simplistic interpretations.[115] The term probably derives from the Scots *glory hole*, a disorderly storage space.[116]

The glory box is a form of hope chest or trousseau, with roots in European customs of 'marriage preparation and female property.'[117] The tradition forms a legitimate part of normative female experience, notably in the mid-twentieth century when it was enmeshed in the domestic,

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[114] Australian National Dictionary Centre, "Meanings and Origins of Australian Words and Idioms," s.v. "glory box," Research School of Humanities & the Arts, Australian National University, updated October 29, 2016, http://andc.anu.edu.au/australian-words/meanings-origins?field_alphabet_value=121. Glory box is first recorded in 1900. Note that in anthropological terms, this "collection" is an assemblage.

[115] Moya Patricia McFadzean, "Glory Boxes: Femininity, Domestic Consumption and Material Culture in Australia, 1930–1960." Abstract. PhD diss. University of Melbourne, 2009. https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/37757

[116] *Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. "glory hole," accessed June 25, 2016, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php.

[117] McFadzean, "Glory Boxes."

'industrial, communal, creative, and sexual lives' of women.[118] This history aligns the glory box with traditional social expectations of women as dedicated wives, mothers, and housewives. It reminds us that marriage—in any form—cannot be separated from a set of cultural, social, sexual, and economic power relations.

The "glory hole"—from which glory box is derived—bears little connection to the common sense of "glory," from the Latin, *gloria*, which evokes the triumphant, magnificent, or omnipotent.[119] Rather, it likely relates to the Scots noun *glar/glaur*, "slime, mud," and the adjective *glaury*, "muddy."[120] An early use refers to 'a filthy, stifling cell' (1845) (ibid.). Today, it is often used in the context of mining or earthworks—referring to shaft holes, wellheads, quarries—and "untidy" areas in naval or nautical settings.[121] The glory hole thus leads to places far removed from the domestic idyll of the glory box, though still connected through the lives of working people.

In the 1940s—curiously, given the "dirty" and homosocial contexts outlined above—"glory hole" picked up a sexual sense.[122] Don Bapst, in "Glory Holes and the Men Who Use Them," defines glory hole as 'a hole in a wall through which a man exposes his genitals to another man in order to be fellated or masturbated, usually without having any other contact.'[123] The glory hole facilitates anonymous sex while providing privacy and protection from the surveillance of authorities.[124] This is significant given that the use of glory holes in the US developed when homosexuality remained criminalised.[125]

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[118] Ibid.

[119] *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "glory, n.," last modified June 2016, http://www.oed.com/. Only one common meaning of glory hole seems to vaguely connected with its religious connotations, that is as an "opening through which the interior of a furnace may be seen and reached," (originally in glassblowing c. 1849), probably from *glory* (n.), which had developed a sense of "circle or ring of light" by the 1690s (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. "glory hole").

[120] *OED Online*, s.v. "glory, n."

[121] *OED Online*, s.v. "glory-hole;" Wikipedia, s.v. "Glory hole," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glory_hole. Curiously—in light of discussions elsewhere in this exegesis—the term was used by British troops to name a 'labyrinthine' network of passages beneath the village of La Boisselle in northern France, which was strategically important in the Battle of the Somme, 1916 (Emily Allen, "Secret Tunnels of the Somme: Historians Unearth Truth about World War One's Underground Battles after Reopening Lost Labyrinth," Daily Mail Australia, last updated Nov. 17, 2011, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2057918/Truth-Sommes-underground-warfare-secret-passages-opened-90-years-on.html#ixzz4ClSMy2ty). See section *4.6.1 The Labyrinth*.

[122] *Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. "glory hole."

[123] Don Bapst, "Glory Holes and the Men Who Use Them," *Journal of Homosexuality* 41, no. 1 (2001): 90.

[124] NSA is a commonly used abbreviation in online sexual contexts for "No Strings Attached."

[125] Bapst, "Glory Holes," 93, notes that the glory hole is generally considered to be an American phenomenon that has spread to other parts of the world. The use of public glory holes in the West peaked in the period bracketed on one side by the World Wars, and on the other by the AIDS epidemic. This also happens to coincide with the developing "crisis" of masculinity discussed in section 2.

In the twentieth century, the glory hole was commonly found in public lavatories and other sites where men met for sexual contact.[126] The number of glory holes in public space is now in steady decline because of increased prevention strategies including laws against indecent exposure and public sex.[127] They can still be found in some "adult" stores—ostensibly aimed at heterosexual clients (through the marketing of straight porn and sex aids)—though these outlets are dwindling because of online competition. Most exist in "sanctioned" sites—registered bathhouses/saunas, sex clubs, and "cruising nightclubs"—specifically designed to facilitate (and contain) sexual encounters between men.[128]

[126] These sites—known as "cottages" (UK), "tea rooms" (US) or "beats" (Australia)—often centre around public conveniences located along—or at the intersection or termination of—main transport routes: highway rest-stops, service stations, train and subway stations, bus terminals, parks, shopping centres and public institutions. The liminal or heterotopic nature of these locations makes them ideal for anonymous meetings between a diversity of men. The UK and US terms are more specifically associated with public conveniences. In Australia, the term "beat" is applied to any public space where MSM meet for sexual purposes, including public conveniences. See Clive Moore, "Poofs in the Park: Documenting Gay 'Beats' in Queensland, Australia," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 2, no. 3 (1995): 319–339, doi:10.1215/10642684-2-3-319.

[127] Bapst, "Glory Holes," 90. This decline is commensurate with a general decrease in the incidence of public sex between men in many Western countries. Factors include the homophobic policies of local governments and authorities (reinforced by conservative political forces); increased access to online pornography and sexual activity; and the advent of location-based social media apps such as Grindr that facilitate sexual meetings, usually in private or hired accommodation. This push towards the privatisation of public sex is tied up with the cleansing and corporatisation of public space that has happened across the world in the context of globalisation. For a discussion of this phenomenon in the specific context of New York, see Samuel R. Delany's excellent *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, Sexual Cultures: New Directions for the Centre for Gay and Lesbian Studies (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

[128] Bapst, "Glory Holes," 91. Although colonised to some extent by "swinger" culture and the heterosexual pornographic imagination, glory holes remain strongly associated with "homosexual" subcultures. I place homosexual in scare quotes because although the modern glory hole exists largely in sanctioned (i.e. segmented and regulated) spaces (mostly frequented by men who identify as homosexual), public glory holes continue to attract men who do not necessarily self-identify as homosexual. Glory holes stem from—and maintain a nostalgic connection with—a pre-identitarian era when the sexuality of participants was less compartmentalised than it is today; I use "cruising nightclubs" to refer to a hybrid nightclub-cruising club format which combines a typical nightclub layout (dance floor, bar, chill out areas) with a sex-club layout (maze-like passages, private booths or "cabins," glory holes, communal darkrooms). In line with the public health and ethnographic literature referenced in this paper, I use the US term bathhouse to refer to any SOPV that is arranged around saunas and associated facilities. In Australia these are generally referred to as (gay) saunas.

4.1.7 *Solid*

Solid *sits like a square golden clam at the bottom of the deep blue sea (fig. 8). Pulled hard into its shell, it grips its darkest secrets.*

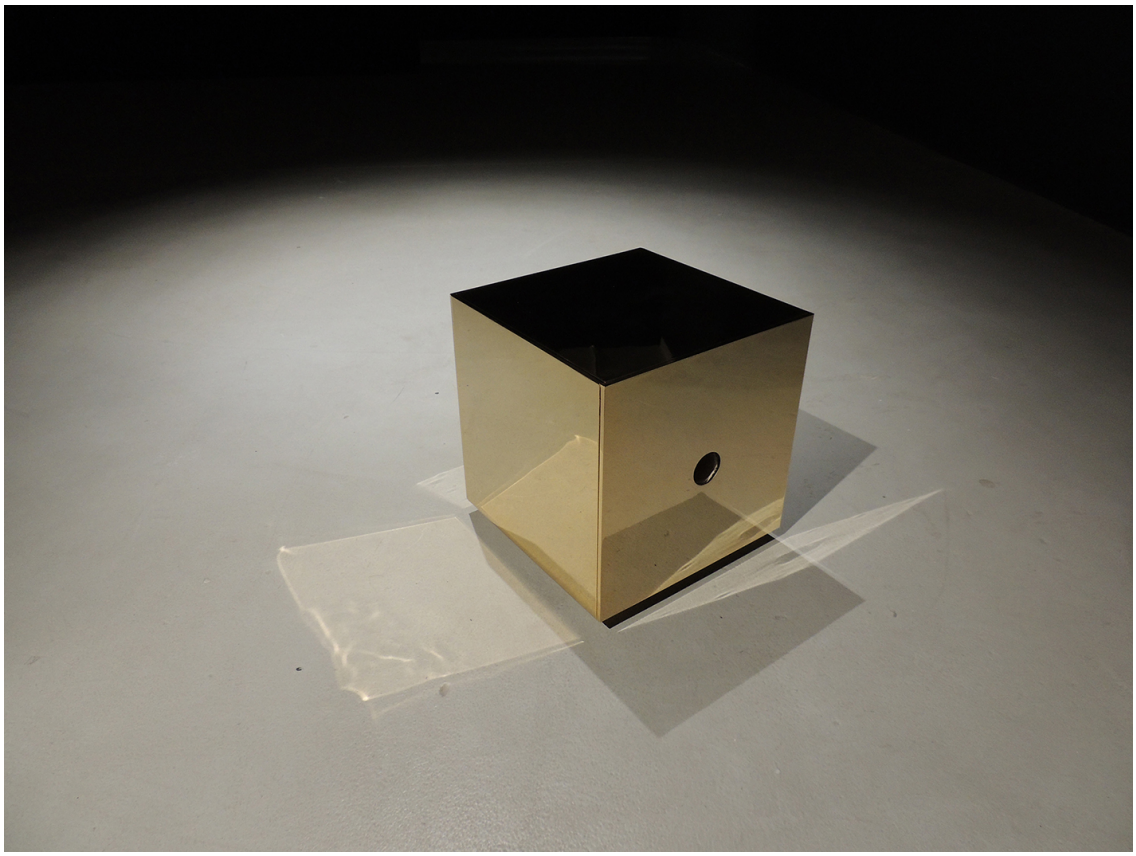


Figure 8. Matt Huppatz, *Solid*, 2015, gold-plated mild steel with internal steel fittings, 28 x 28 x 28 cm.

> *In some (but not all)* [...] *marine gastropod molluscs, the animal has an anterior extension of the mantle called a siphon, or inhalant siphon, through which water is drawn into the mantle cavity and over the gill for respiration. This siphon is a soft fleshy tube-like structure equipped with chemoreceptors, which "smell" or "taste" the water in order to hunt for food. Marine gastropods that have a siphon are either predators or scavengers.* [...] *Although in gastropods the siphon functions perfectly well as a tube, it is not in fact a hollow organ; it is simply a flap of the mantle that is rolled into the shape of a tube. In many marine gastropods where the siphon is particularly long, the structure of the shell has been modified in order to house and protect the soft tissue of the siphon.*[129]

[129] Wikipedia, s.v. "siphon (mollusc)," last modified May 12, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siphon_%28mollusc%29.

4.2 PASSAGE 2

If he was going to operate as close to the bone as possible, in a bare room, the subject of his art—in whatever form—should be himself.

—Peter Plagens, *Bruce Nauman: The True Artist*.[130]

4.2.1 The Nauman Connection 1

Where does the artist finish? And where does the work of art begin?

The (missing) figure of US artist Bruce Nauman marks the beginning of this wayward course. An image of his *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body Taken at Ten-Inch Intervals* (1966) lies at the beginning of my first research journal (fig. 9). A few pages later, his body reappears in a series of images from an early performance work, *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square* (1967–68). In a queer context, it is appropriate to admit an element of desire in my appreciation of Nauman's early work. I was interested in this attractive and earnest young man, in what he was doing, and what he thought.[131] *Neon Templates*, although clinical, has an erotic edge: the neon intimately traces the curves of the artist's lithe body.[132]

Nauman's absent body "haunts" other works produced around the same time, but these stand in contrast to his slightly later performance-based works, in which the artist takes centre stage. The oscillation between these two bodies of work raised questions about how Nauman fitted into his practice, and specifically about the role of subjectivity in his process. Although aware of Nauman's influence on contemporary artists—Sarah Lucas, Rachel Whiteread, and others—this

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[130] Peter Plagens, *Bruce Nauman: The True Artist* (London: Phaidon Press, 2014), 26.

[131] Others have noted the effect of Nauman's physical presence. Peter Plagens writes that the young Nauman possessed an artist's version of 'movie-star good looks' and a screen presence that makes it 'difficult to take your eyes off him' (Plagens, *True Artist*, 26). This magnetism, combined with Nauman's seriousness, was 'almost as essential to his early efforts […] as his ideas themselves' (ibid.). This is probably what incited critical (and perhaps coded, i.e. homophobic) charges of narcissism against Nauman during this period. For example, Nauman was accused of 'infantile narcissism' in an early review: Robert Pincus-Witten, "Bruce Nauman: Leo Castelli Gallery," *Artforum* 6, no 8 (Apr. 1968): 63.

[132] In addition to his "performative" videos, Nauman regularly puts his body to work in his early objects, including a number that—perhaps coincidentally—correspond with erogenous zones. These include *The Space under My Hand While Writing My Name* (1966), *Collection of Flexible Materials Separated by Layers of Grease with Holes the Size of My Waist and Wrists* (1966), and *Six Inches of My Knee Extended to Six Feet* (1967). The dispersed erogenous zones of the wrists, knees, and waist, are often associated with the female body, whereas the male erogenous zones tend to coincide with the genital region. In practice, especially within the context of queer sex, this distinction is questionable.

research marked the start of a focus on his work.[133]

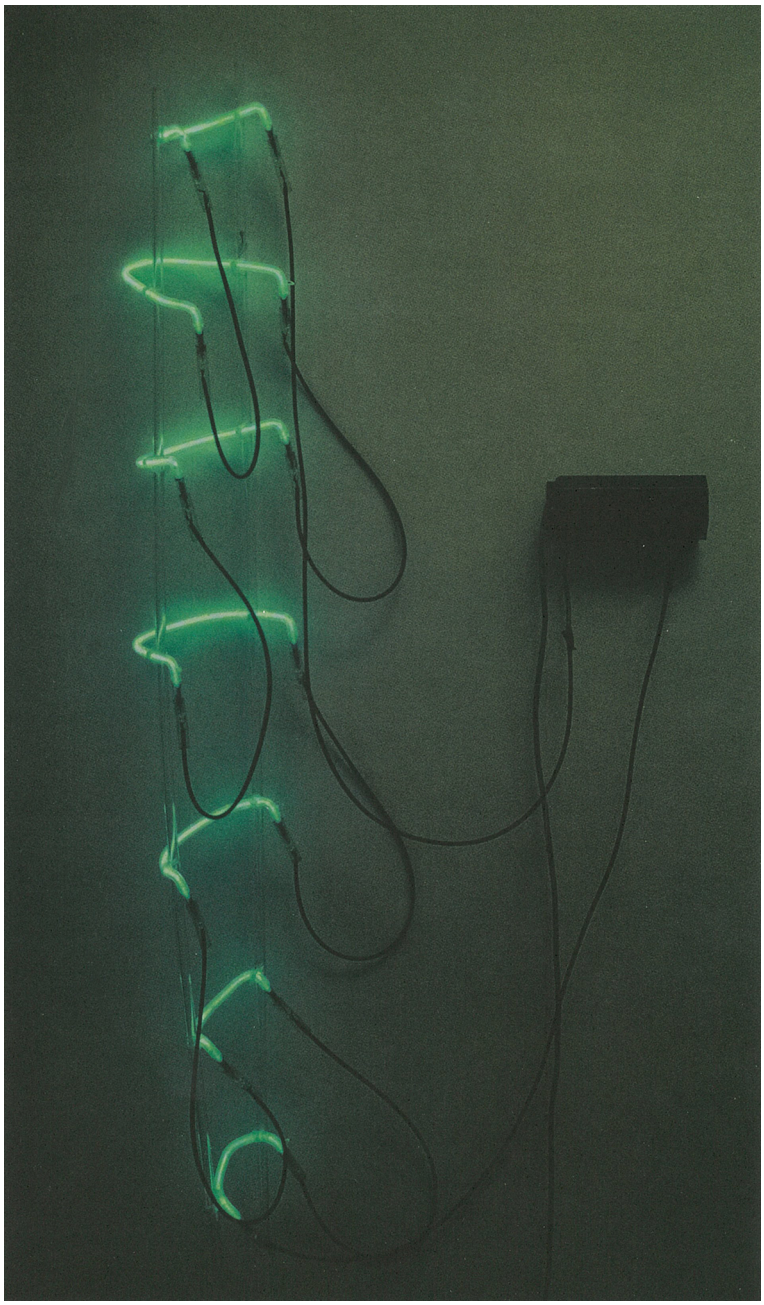


Figure 9. Bruce Nauman, *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body Taken at Ten Inch Intervals*, 1966, neon tubes, electrical wire, transformer, glass rods, and wall connectors, 177.8 x 22.9 x 15.2 cm.

[133] This ignorance is somewhat feigned: a photocopied image of Nauman's *Green Light Corridor* (1970) was pinned to the studio wall in my third year at art school. Despite this, my interest in (and knowledge of) Nauman was primarily formal and material. Lucas, Whiteread and other young British artists, however, were definite formal and conceptual influences upon my undergraduate practice. Nauman's influence, through them, is to be expected; Plagens submits that Nauman is possibly the most influential artist of the last half-century, and notes his pervasive presence in much contemporary art (Plagens, *True Artist*, 15).

Nauman places his body, one way or another, at the centre of his early work. Artist-critic Peter Plagens proposes that he was influenced by playing in art-school bands, which provided insight into using one's body as 'an integral part of one's art.'[134] At graduate school, the artist sequestered himself in a studio and determined that it should remain as empty as possible, leaving him with few materials.[135] Nauman explains,

> [This] raised the fundamental question of what an artist does when left alone in the studio. My conclusion was that [if] I was an artist and I was in the studio, then whatever it was I was doing in the studio must be art. […] It became a question then of how to structure those activities into being art, or some kind of cohesive unit that could be made available to people. At this point art became more of an activity and less of a product.[136]

I turned to Nauman now because his theory—that whatever an artist does in her studio is art—offered an interesting way into practice-based research. His thinking about "what an artist does" had been playing in the back of my mind for years. In the middle stages of this research, I spent considerably more time dancing in nightclubs and cruising for sex than "doing stuff" in the studio. I had to ask the same question: "How to structure these activities into being art, or some kind of cohesive unit that could be made available to people?"

The body traced in *Neon Templates* materialises in the videos produced by Nauman in the late 1960s. Ostensibly, these document various actions undertaken in the studio. With only himself as reference, Nauman began to focus on ordinary actions—sitting, standing, pacing—and the relationship between his body and space.[137] A series of stills from *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square* (1967–68) also marks the beginnings of my research (fig. 10). This work follows the artist as he traces the perimeter of a square with his bare feet. Although the action forms the subject of the work, Nauman is its prime object. Apparently benign, this work exerts a compulsion to watch.

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[134] Plagens, *True Artist*, 26.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Nauman, in "Nauman Interview," by Willoughby Sharp, reprinted in Janet Kray, *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 135; first published in *Arts Magazine* 44 (Mar. 1970): 22–27.
[137] Bruce Nauman and Coosje van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), 108.

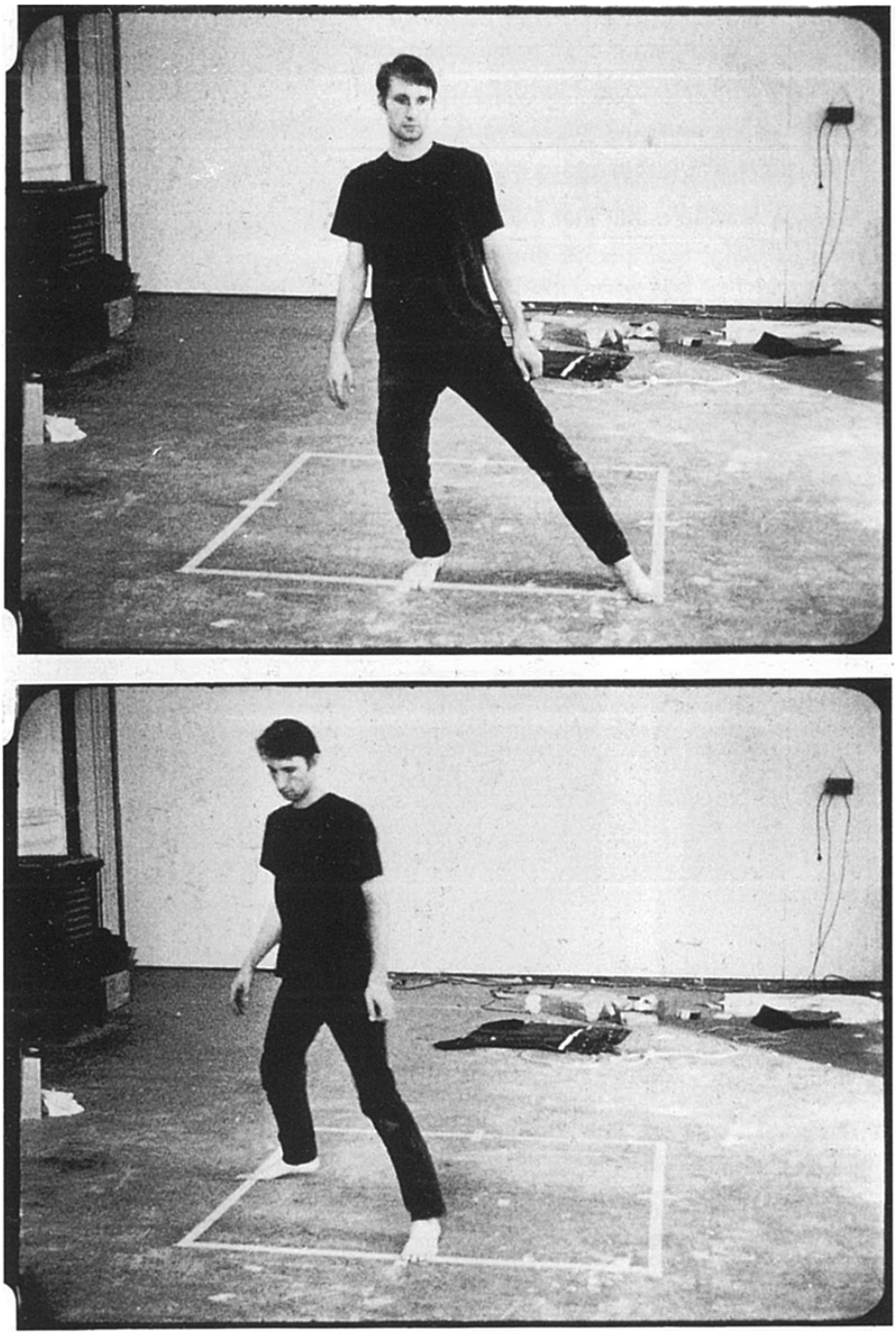


Figure 10. Bruce Nauman, *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square*, 1967–68, 16mm film transferred to video, b/w, sound, 8 min.

Other early videos—such as *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square* (1967), *Wall-Floor Positions* (1968) (fig. 11), and *Manipulating a Fluorescent Tube* (1969)—pique the queer eye more obviously. They present behaviours that trouble normative representations of masculinity, being at least non-normative, and potentially open to sexualised readings.

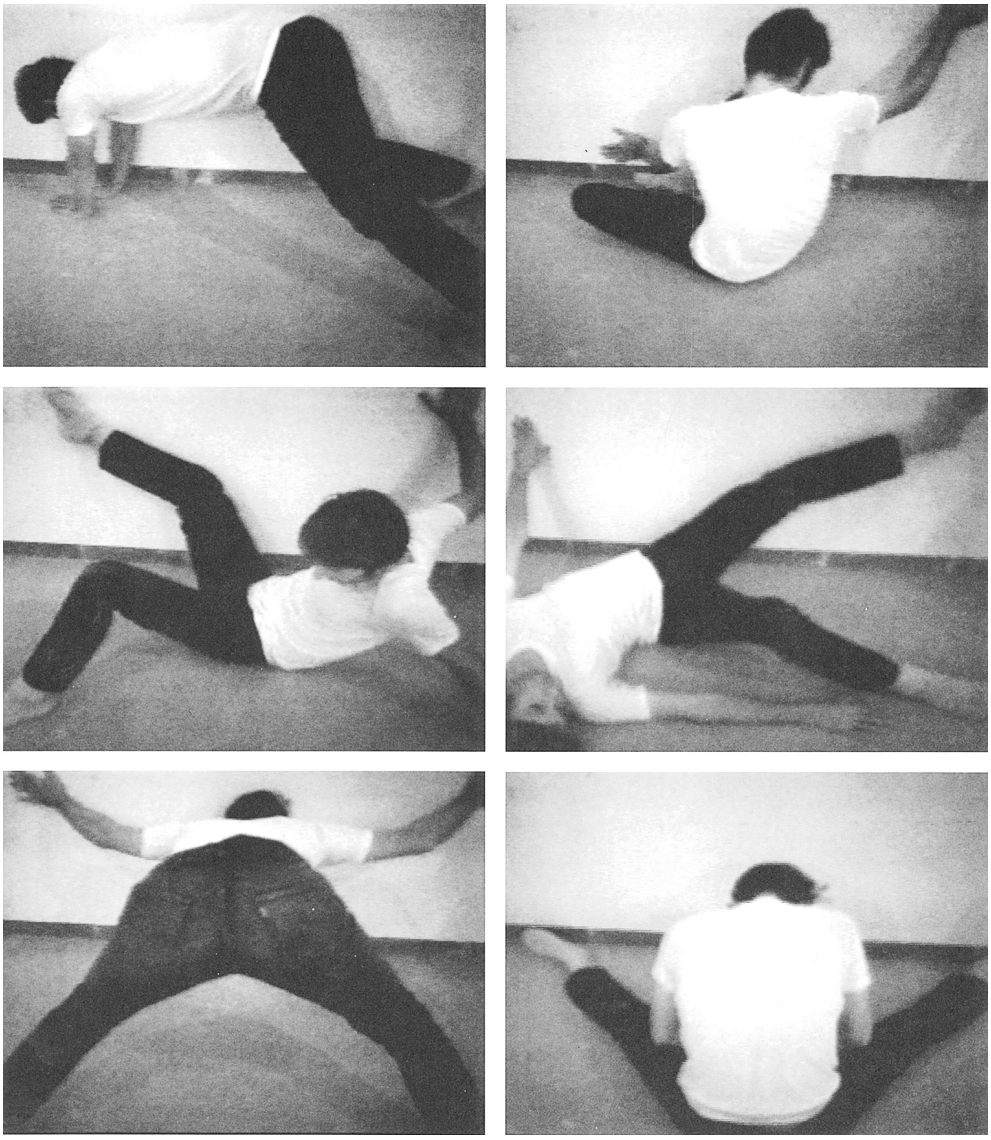


Figure 11. Bruce Nauman, *Wall-Floor Positions,* 1968,
single-channel video, b/w, with sound, 60 min.

Other artists have noticed the gendered and sexual potential of these Nauman works. In particular, a number of recent works play with the gendered, erotic, and even queer, potential of *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square* (1967–68) (fig. 12). US artist Legacy Russell, pairs Nauman's silent video with rapper Drake's "Shut it down" (2010)[138] in *Bruce*

[138] Drake feat. The-Dream, "Shut it Down," album version, 00:05:00, written by S Brown, Aubrey Graham, Terius Nash, and Noah Shebib, Young Money Entertainment/Cash Money Records/Universal Motown, 2010.

Nauman Cruising to Drake on tha Block (2010).[139] This juxtaposition disrupts a straight reading of the work, throwing Nauman's intentions—and the hetero posturing of both male artists—into question. Nauman now "struts" to the commands of disconcertingly apt lyrics:

> Put those fucking heels on and work it girl
> Let that mirror show you what you're doing
> Put that fucking dress on and work it kind of vicious
> Like somebody's taking pictures[140]



Figure 12. Bruce Nauman, *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square*, 1967–68, 16mm film transferred to video, b/w, silent, 10 min.

British performance artist Liv Fontaine has produced a similarly critical feminist revision of *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner*. In *Crawling in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a*

[139] Legacy Russell, "Bruce Nauman Cruising to Drake on tha Block," YouTube video, 00:07:04, posted by "Legacy Russell," Dec. 12, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uX4JERWvpak.
[140] Lyrics.com, "Shut it Down; The-Dream, Drake, The D.R.E.A.M," lyrics, accessed Sep. 14, 2016, http://www.lyrics.com//lyric/19652304.

Square (2013), Fontaine crawls lasciviously around a bright pink square on a gallery floor while dressed in a stripper-like costume: peroxide blond wig, pink bikini, pink platform heels, and heavy make-up (fig. 13).[141]

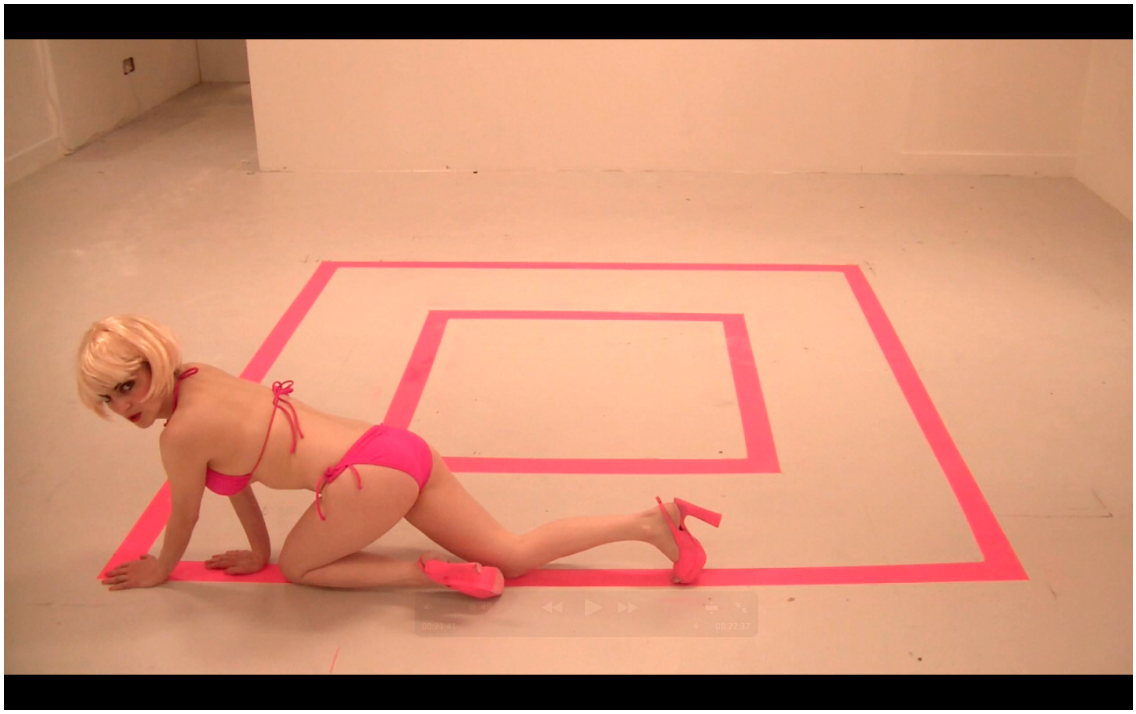


Figure 13. Liv Fontaine, *Crawling in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square*, 2013, video, colour, silent, 22 min 37 s.

Fontaine's position—which might be read as submissive and objectivised—suggests the subordination of women in art history and broader patriarchal society.[142] She places herself below the audience—they "look down" on her—but Fontaine 'manipulates the audience, by winking and licking her lips and blowing kisses, […] so she is the one in control.'[143] This fits with Fontaine's wider practice but raises questions about how these tactics relate to Nauman's performance work. It is possible that Nauman made similar use of his body to attract attention to

[141] Liv Fontaine, "Liv Fontaine - Crawling In an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square," YouTube video, 00:22:37, posted by "livfontaine," July 2, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCipvg0TWaU.
[142] For insight into Fontaine's practice and motivations, see Liv Fontaine, "Liv Fontaine is Getting Naked in the Name of Art History," interview by Tish Weinstock, *i-D*, May 20, 2015, https://i-d.vice.com/en_us/article/liv-fontaine-is-getting-naked-in-the-name-of-art-history.
[143] Sophie Chapman, "Artist Profile: Liv Fontaine," *Crack in the Road*, accessed Sep. 14, 2016, http://crackintheroad.com/arts/22875-artist-profile-live-fontaine.

his work. In his early performance works, he offers himself to the viewer's gaze and places his body firmly at the centre of his practice. This begs the question of whether the male artist—Nauman specifically, or in general—occupies a comparable (subordinate) position in relation to the broader culture, and specifically within the art world/market.



Figure 14. Bruce Nauman, *Walk with Contrapposto*, 1968,
single-channel video, b/w, sound, 54 min 23 s.

These responses to Nauman provide gendered readings of his actions and highlight the sexual(ised) potential of his work. They highlight, amongst other things, the privileged position of the heterosexual male artist, who performs free of the policing eye that watches female (and queer) artists.[144] While legitimate, these responses to *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner* are complicated by a later Nauman video, *Walk with Contrapposto* (1968) (fig. 14). This shows Nauman

[144] In fact, as mentioned above (n.131) Nauman was accused of narcissism and theatricality, both potential accusations of homosexuality, or effeminate—and therefore inappropriate—behaviour.

traversing a custom made "performance corridor" while attempting to maintain a contrapposto pose (fig. 15). The work references classical and Renaissance sculpture—exemplified by Michelangelo's, *David* (1501–04)—and might be a simple response to sculptural history, or a critique of the limits it exerts on contemporary art.

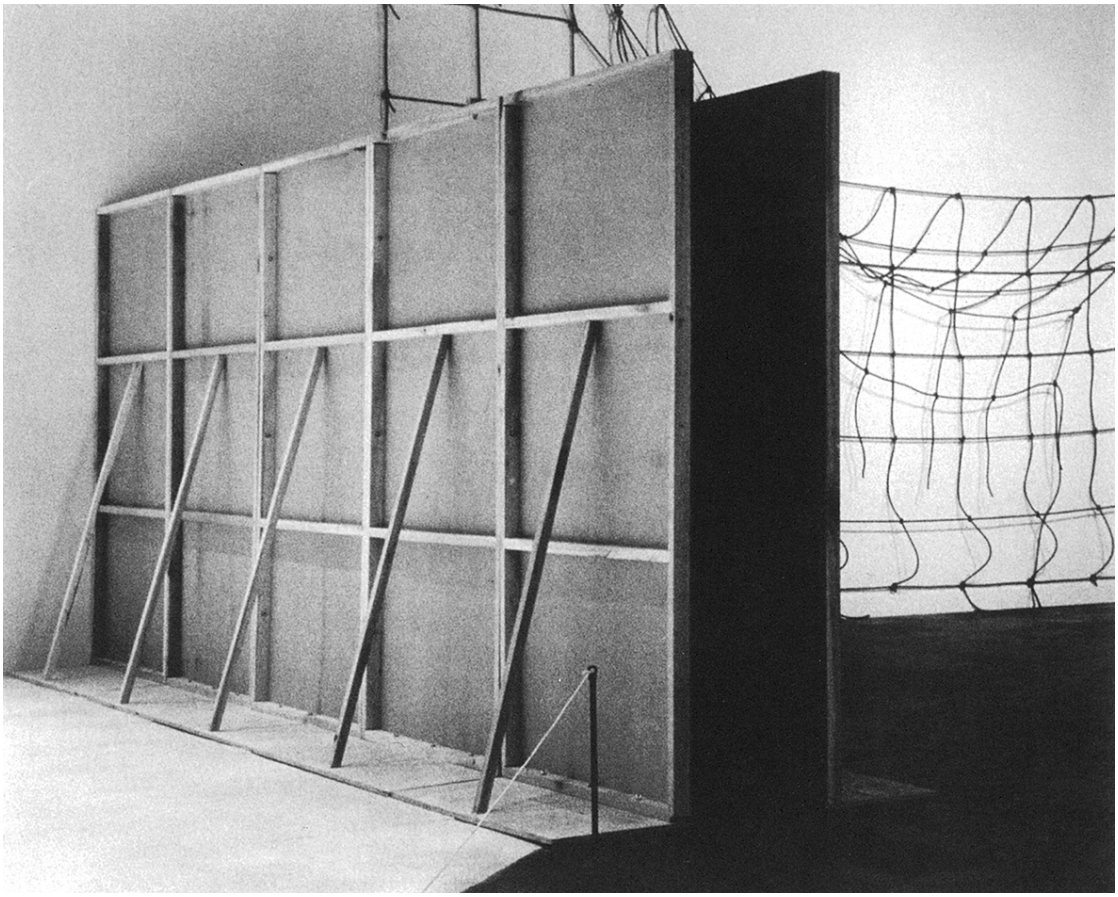


Figure 15. Bruce Nauman, *Performance Corridor*, 1969,
wallboard and timber, 243.8 x 609.6 x 50.8 cm.

The definition of contrapposto—'an asymmetrical arrangement of the human figure in which the line of the arms and shoulders contrast with, while balancing, those of the hips and legs'—points in other directions.[145] It reads as an awkward balancing of a body—or subject—that is constrained and decidedly *bent*. This "restriction" is emphasised by the tight passage, which

[145] *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "contrapposto," accessed Oct. 9, 2016, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/contrapposto. Contrapposto is derived from Italian, the past participle of *contrapporre*, from Latin *contraponere*, "place against" (ibid.).

inhibits the movement of the artist. Nauman walks with hands "locked" behind his neck—one commenter even suggests they are tied—and his 'wavering hips [...] butt repeatedly against the narrow walls.'[146] The queer eye will note this combination of contrapposto and restraint characterises representations of St Sebastian, an "icon" of twentieth century gay culture (fig. 16).



Figure 16. Guido Reni, *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, 1616, oil on canvas, 113 x 146 cm.

The restriction of *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner* illuminates the delimiting squares in the earlier videos, which now read as limits: Nauman paces as if 'chained.'[147] If classical sculpture depicts an

[146] Cristina Ricupero, "Bruce Nauman/Walk with Contrapposto 1968," *New Media Encyclopaedia*, accessed Oct. 10, 2016, http://www.newmedia-art.org/cgi-bin/show-oeu.asp?ID=150000000034750&lg=GBR; Robert Slifkin, "Now Man's *Bound to Fail*, More," in *Anglo-American Exchange in Post-War Sculpture 1945–1975*, edited by Rebecca Peabody, 59–75 (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 71, accessed Feb. 3, 2016, https://www.getty.edu/museum/symposia/pdf_stark/stark_slifkin.pdf.
[147] Chapman, "Liv Fontaine."

idealised masculine form, Nauman demonstrates the difficulties that flesh and blood have with conforming to rigid conventions of masculinity—and art. Hopkins, in *Dada's Boys*, notes that the performance aesthetic developed by the likes of Nauman 'is predicated to a degree on Duchamp's masculinism [...] but it should be emphasised that the masculinities at stake in much of this artistic production are fundamentally self-deconstructive or masochistic.'[148]

Walk with Contrapposto is a transitional work in the context of Nauman's broader practice. It marks a shift from solitary works performed 'in the private space of the studio—where the artist was simultaneously the subject and object of his investigations'—to the construction of 'public situations' which *force* the spectator into physical and psychological experiences.[149] Also, though the subject matter is similar to Nauman's other "self-videos," the introduction of an "architectural" element transforms this into a work of surveillance. As such this is a liminal work, located between Nauman's more "playful" early work and his later investment in constructing tightly controlled, claustrophobic, and even manipulative spaces. Significantly,

> *Walk with Contrapposto* also functions as a metaphorical proposal which places the artist at the centre of his creative process, a labyrinth where he struggles to gain control of a situation in which he nevertheless sometimes gets lost.[150]

Walk with Contrapposto leads us to other Nauman works that shaped the development of my sculptural sensibilities and are relevant to the outcomes of this project. Notable amongst these is *Green Corridor*, which marries the phenomenological explorations of space in the work of artists like Nauman and Robert Morris, with the visual exploration of light and colour by someone like Dan Flavin. These tricky "passages"—which chart the labyrinthine paths of Nauman's creative processes—also bring us close to the work of another artist, the "minimalist," Robert Morris.

4.2.2 Turning Inside–Out

Nauman's work encouraged me to follow the connections that form between body, mind, and space, in the creative process. I took permission from him to place myself—and my experience of the world—at the centre of this research. This raised the question of how to manage this approach without giving everything *away?*

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[148] Hopkins, *Dada's Boys*, 118. Hopkins includes Vito Acconci, Chris Burden, and Paul McCarthy in this list, amongst others. He contrasts the approach of these artists with that of Jeff Koons who, emerging as the performance boom of the 1970s waned, 'stands out from these mournful Duchampians because he is so brazenly happy to be a heterosexual male' (ibid.).
[149] Ricupero, "Walk with Contrapposto." Emphasis added.
[150] Ricupero, "Walk with Contrapposto."

Nauman's documentation of his acts in the studio has been understood as a turning "inside-out" of private space.[151] Robert Slifkin, scholar of modern art, identifies 'privacy and concealment (and their antipodes of communication and clarity)' as central concerns in Nauman's oeuvre.[152] This highlights a tension in his work 'between the desire for communication—and as a possible analogue, community'—and a fear of "exposing" himself.[153]

> Throughout his career, Nauman has grappled with the tension between private thought and public exposure—one of the great dilemmas facing the modern artist who is challenged to be intensely personal in a very public way.[154]

Nauman's answer has been to *assert* his withdrawal. In a 1970 project for *Artforum*, he published a number of statements that formed artistic proposals. One, in boldface, reads: "Withdrawal as an Art Form." This idea had already found expression in a hybrid architectural work: *Get Out of My Mind Get Out of This Room.* In a bare room, a deranged voice—emanating from hidden speakers—orders/pleads with viewers to "get out of my mind, get out of this room!"[155] This work reveals a passive-aggression that characterises Nauman's work: the private is made public, but through a process that is uninviting and even hostile.[156] Although Nauman's early works ostensibly deal with the body acting in space and explore the ontology of art, later works like this—in which Nauman's body disappears—seem derived from more psychological and personal sources.

The notion of private and subjective communication in art—specifically in relation to assemblage and queer subjectivity—comes to the fore in section *4.4.3 Queer Combinations*, where I introduce Jonathan Katz' inquiry into the personal undertones of Robert Rauschenberg's combines. My bent reading of Robert Morris's *Labyrinth* works in section *4.6.8 Psychosexual Minimalism* also points to the subjective roots of work that has been generally understood as formalist.

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[151] Keith Daly, "Bruce Nauman: Space, Mirror, Body," final paper, Art 282B - Section 1: Empathy and Embodiment in Contemporary Art, San Jose State University, Spring 2014, http://www.academia.edu/9855060/Bruce_Nauman_Space_Mirror_Body.
[152] Robert Slifkin, *Bruce Nauman: Going Solo* (Portland, OR: Companion Editions/ The Reed Institute, 2012), 13.
[153] Slifkin, *Going Solo*, 13. Nauman admitted to the fear of exposure in an interview published in 1975. Speaking of the element of control in his work, and the withholding of certain information, Nauman says, 'I think it has to do with the personal fear of exposing myself. I can only give so much. […] We all go so far that we have the fear of exposing ourselves. We really want to expose the information, but […] we are afraid to let people in' (Bruce Nauman, "Bruce Nauman: The Centre of Yourself," interview by Jan Butterfield, in *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words: Writings and Interviews* by Bruce Nauman, ed. Janet Kraynak, 173–183 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 182).
[154] Michael Auping, "Sound Thinking," in "First Take" by Debra Singer et al., *Artforum International* 46, no. 5 (Jan. 2005): 160.
[155] Ibid. For further insight into this work, and Nauman's engagement with language in general, see Janet Kraynak, "Bruce Nauman's Words," in *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words: Writings and Interviews* by Bruce Nauman, ed. Janet Kraynak (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 1–45.
[156] Daly, "Bruce Nauman," 9.

4.2.3 The Nauman Connection 2



Figure 17. Matt Huppatz, in collaboration with Reuben Duffy, *Untitled (The True Artist)*, 2009, 90 x 60 cm, chromogenic print on metallic paper.

A few months into this research, I worked on a photographic collaboration with artist Reuben Duffy. Two of these images—*Untitled (The True Artist)* (fig. 17) and *Untitled (Self Portrait as Fountain)*—responded to some of Nauman's earliest photographic and text-based works. *The True*

Artist is an Amazing Luminous Fountain (Window or Wall Shade) (1966) (fig. 18), *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths (Window or Wall Sign)* (1967) (fig. 19), and *Self Portrait as a Fountain* (1966/67), had captured my attention with their idealistic statements about the role of the artist, and their apparent reference to Marcel Duchamp's notorious *Fountain* (1917). These works seemed "mixed up" in a dialogic relationship that extended backwards and forwards in time, complicating straight readings of Nauman's work.

4.2.4 The True Artist

Though often interpreted as satirical, Nauman describes a complicated relationship with the statements made in his text-based works. Saying something like "The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths" presented him with a conundrum. On one hand, Nauman says,

> [it] is a completely stupid idea […] and yet, on the other hand, I believed it. It is simultaneously true and untrue. It depends on the interpretation and on how seriously you take yourself. For me it is still a very compelling idea.[157]

Nauman created these works during a period of intense introspection about the purposes of art and the artist.[158] Similar questions defined the beginning of my project. Alone in an empty studio, I identified with the young Nauman, who found himself in a similar position upon leaving graduate school. Nauman's description of his process at this time mirrors my approach in the exploratory stages of this research:

> I think that you do things to find out if you believe in it in the first place, just like often you'll say things in conversation, just to test […]. I think a lot of work is done that way, which doesn't make a fake or anything; it's the only way you find out, is to do it.[159]

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[157] Nauman, quoted in Constance M. Lewallen, *"A Rose Has No Teeth,"* in *A Rose Has No Teeth: Bruce Nauman in the 1960s* by Constance Lewallen et al. (Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, and Pacific Film Archive, 2007), 72. In contrast, the Whitney Museum's website states unreservedly that *Self Portrait as a Fountain*, 'satirises the cliché of the artist as a prolific genius who spews forth a steady stream of masterpieces' (Whitney Museum of American Art, "Bruce Nauman, Self Portrait as a Fountain," accessed Oct.12, 2016, http://collection.whitney.org/object/5714).

[158] The works were made following Nauman's completion of a Master of Fine Arts at U.C. Davis in June of 1966.

[159] Bruce Nauman, "Oral History Interview with Bruce Nauman, 1980 May 27–30," by Michelle De Angelus, May 27 and 30, 1980, *Archives of American Art*, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-bruce-nauman-12538.

These images, indeed all of the work produced during the first six months of this project, sit firmly within this understanding of how practice—and creative research—proceeds.



Figure 18. Bruce Nauman, *The True Artist is an Amazing Luminous Fountain (Window or Wall Shade)*, 1966, transparent rose-coloured Mylar, 243.8 x 182.9 cm.[160]

[160] *I had a peculiarly personal response the idea of a luminous fountain. A year earlier, at a winter solstice party in the Adelaide Hills, I had looked backwards into myself and seen a colourful, rhythmic "fountain" welling up within. It was a tunnel of light-liquid-muscle, flowing like an unfolding invertebrate. This was, I felt, a part of my being that was veiled by everyday perception. I was intrigued by Nauman's work because I had seen—no,* been—*his* Amazing Luminous Fountain.

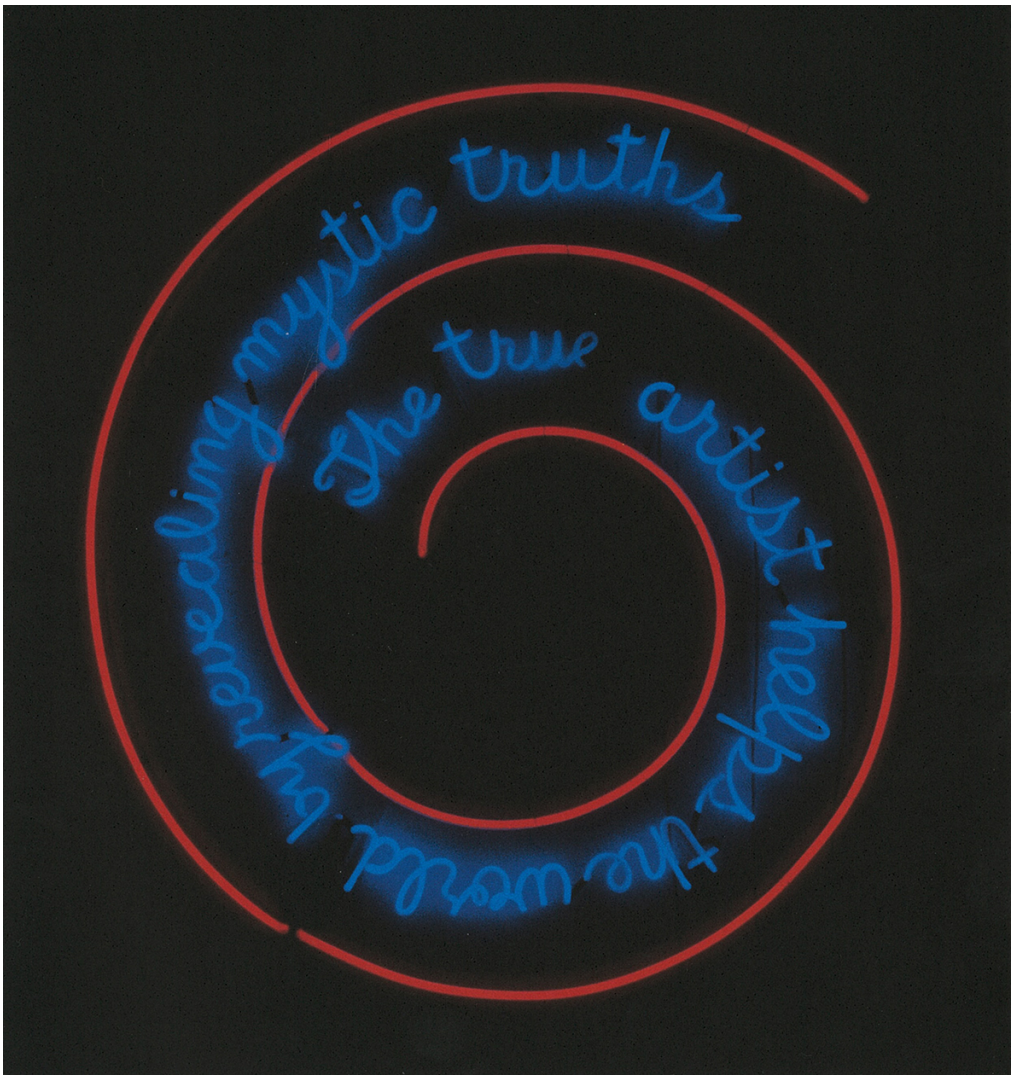


Figure 19. Bruce Nauman, *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths (Window or Wall Sign)*, 1967, Artist's Proof, neon tubing with clear glass tubing suspension frame, 149.9 x 139.7 x 5.1 cm.

From the perspective of this research, it is apparent that *Self Portrait as a Fountain* (fig. 20) engages directly with Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917). Duchamp's influence upon Nauman—both directly and indirectly, through the likes of Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns—has been acknowledged.[161] As such, the work constitutes an instance of artistic play across space and time.[162] Under a queer lens, the homosocial (if not homoerotic) undertones of this work emerge: it's not hard to imagine the nymph-like Nauman "pissing" his stream of water straight into

[161] Peter Plagens confirms that Duchamp was a known, even "cult" figure, by the time Nauman started studying at Davis in 1964 (Plagens, *True Artist*, 49).

[162] Curiously, David Hopkins does not mention this instance of inter-generational homosociality in *Dada's Boys*. Although positioning Nauman as one of the canonical post-war artists—along with Johns, Rauschenberg, Warhol, Hamilton, Klein, Beuys, Acconci, etc.—who are understood as "sons of Duchamp," Hopkins does not address any of Nauman works directly.

Duchamp's waiting "urinal."[163] The question of whether this is an innocent nod, a marking of territory, or an erotic pass, is left open to speculation.



Figure 20. Bruce Nauman, *Self Portrait as a Fountain*, from *Eleven Colour Photographs*, 1966–67/70, chromogenic development print, 50.9 x 60.3 cm.

The significance of this connection in a queer context is highlighted in Paul B. Franklin's "Object Choice: Marcel Duchamp's Fountain and the Art of Queer History."[164] From a dialogic perspective, Nauman's flirtation with *Fountain* is irredeemably tainted by Duchamp's gender tomfoolery, and the avant-garde tradition of sexual ribaldry. Franklin's exhaustive research weaves together queer history with art history, uncovering *Fountain*'s queer resonance in the

[163] The Whitney Museum, quite reasonably, proposes that *Self Portrait as a Fountain* imitates the nude statues that spout water from their mouths in decorative fountains (Whitney Museum, "Bruce Nauman," http://collection.whitney.org/object/5714). A more fruitful link—given the connection to Duchamp's *Fountain* and Nauman's piss-like stream—could be made to Brussels' famous *Manneken Pis (Little Man Piss)* (1619) by Hiëronymus Duquesnoy the Elder. The mass reproduction of this work—and its kitsch application in endless *petit bourgeois* contexts—makes it the perfect subject for a Duchampian/Naumanian critique.

[164] Paul B. Franklin, "Object Choice: Marcel Duchamp's Fountain and the Art of Queer History," *Oxford Art Journal* 23, no. 1 (2000): 25–50, accessed August 17, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3600460.

process.[165] While admitting erotic potential, most scholars insist upon heterosexist and gendered readings of *Fountain* as "feminine." While it may suggest a female form, 'it is not a priori a female object.'[166] Any argument along these lines 'presupposes gender to be a natural and unproblematic effect of biological sex, a naïve conclusion [disproved in recent feminist and queer theory]' (ibid.).

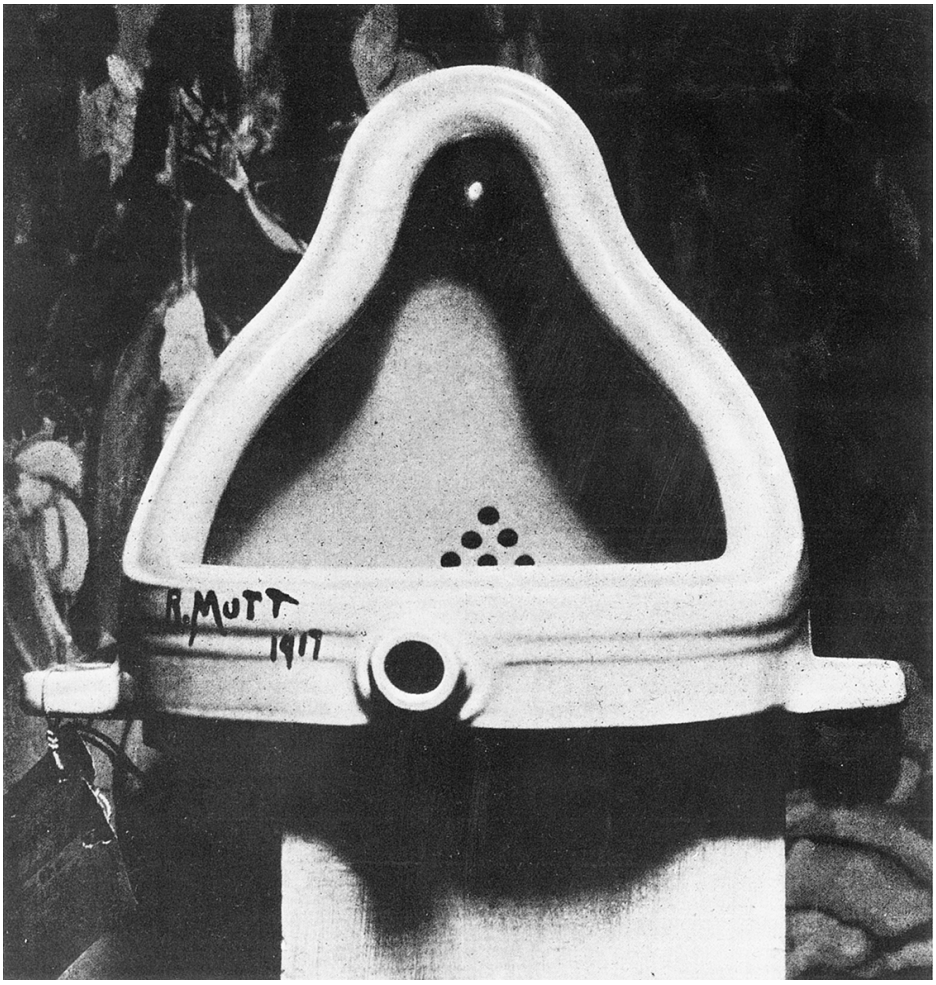


Figure 21. Alfred Stieglitz, photograph of Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, 1917
[Readymade, porcelain urinal on its back, inscribed on upper edge in black paint: *R. MUTT/1917*],
gelatin silver print, 23.5 x 17.78 cm.

[165]Franklin, "Object Choice," 26. This potential is largely ignored by straight scholars, who demonstrate 'interpretative blockage' in the face of *Fountain* (ibid.). Franklin nominates one exception: Jonathan Weinberg in *Speaking for Vice: Homosexuality in the Art of Charles Demuth, Marsden Hartley, and the First American Avant-Garde* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993) 208–211; and Weinberg, "Urination and Its Discontents," in *Gay and Lesbian Studies in Art History*, ed. W. Davis (New York: Hawthorn Press, 1994), 225–43 (ibid., n.9).
[166] Franklin, "Object Choice," 26.

These heteronormative readings are challenged by Franklin's interpretation of *Fountain*, which examines Alfred Stieglitz's original photograph of the work (fig. 21). The backdrop is identified as Marsden Hartley's *The Warriors* (1913), a memorialisation of 'the pageantry, hypermasculinity, and homoeroticism' of the Prussian military.[167] Franklin inserts himself between the two works and—assisted by a little-known posterior view of *Fountain* (fig. 22)—notes that the work's 'vulnerable "asshole"' is exposed to Hartley's queer canvas:

> In this homoerotic choreography [...] the curvature of *Fountain* as well as the position of its drainage hole uncannily suggests a human figure hunched over as if eagerly awaiting his due from this regiment of horny Prussian soldiers (35).

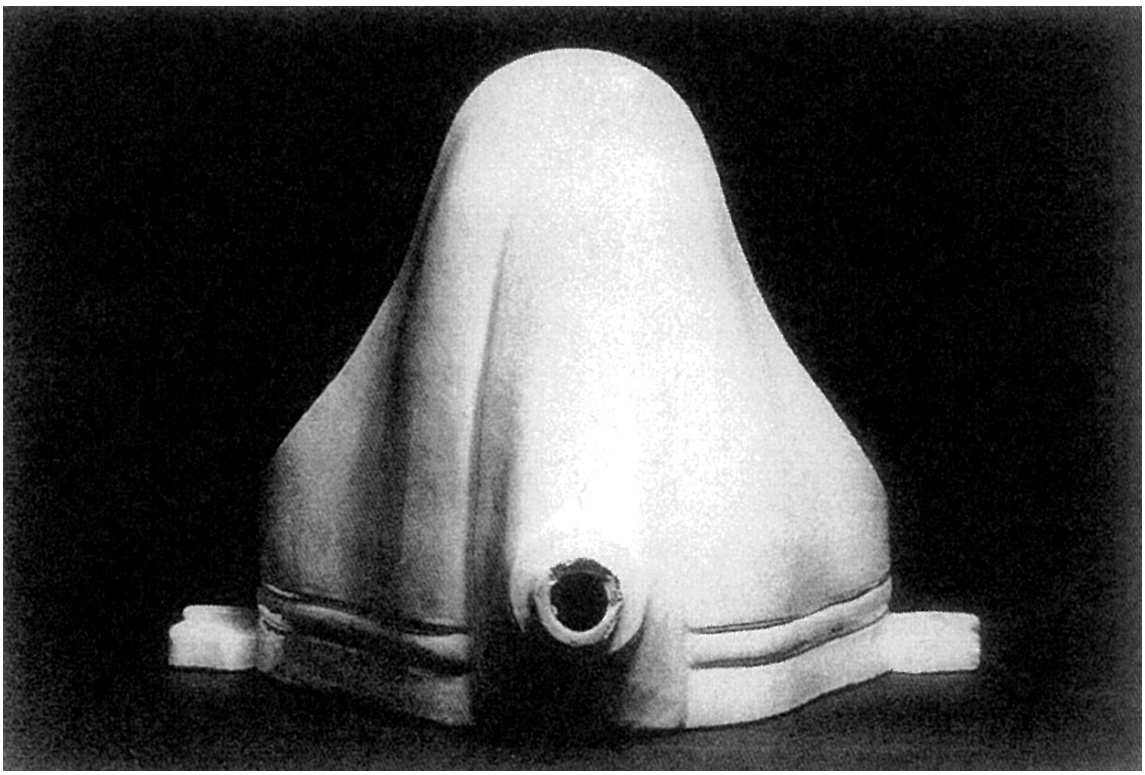


Figure 22. Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1964, fourth version, rear view, 35.56 x 49.05 x 62.56 cm.

Franklin's exhaustive and convincing expose (of which the above is only one example) firmly positions *Fountain* in an artistic milieu that would have been well aware of the work's queer sexual

[167] Franklin, "Object Choice," 34.At the time of painting, Hartley lived in Berlin, the gay Mecca of Europe and the headquarters of the Prussian military.

connotations. Indeed, he contends that Duchamp's choice of *Fountain* is revolutionary because 'it questions canonical notions of authorship and the art object *by making visible* the intimate alliance between certain modes of avant-garde artistic production and queer sexualities.'[168] Franklin supports this claim further by inquiring into Duchamp's stated interest in language, placing the term "fountain" within the 'queerly encoded semantic field of "tea-rooms"' and the artistic output of Rrose Sélavy, Duchamp's feminine alter ego (45). In particular, Franklin traces a 'paper trail of evidence' that 'verif[ies] her firsthand knowledge of *pissoirs* and public sex' (45). For example, on one occasion 'Sélavy dragged her camera inside a public men's toilet and photographed the sexual jottings on the wall,' which later appear in *Nous nous cajolions* (c. 1925).[169]

Franklin's queer reading brings *Fountain* into close contact with sites of underground sex between men. While Duchamp may have revelled in this discovery, it is unclear what Nauman would make of it. Post-AIDS, these places of public sex still exist—despite the best efforts of authorities to eliminate them—though they are increasingly displaced by "privatised" (commercial) versions, including sex-on-premises venues and location-based "hook-up" apps. This brings *Fountain*—and, by association, Nauman—into close proximity with some of this project's chief generative sources.

4.2.5 The Queer—Party—Assemblage

The artefacts *Untitled (The True Artist)* and *Untitled (Self Portrait as Fountain)* brought my work into dialogue with Nauman and Duchamp. They also formed an unexpected connection between the party aspects of my practice and Nauman's investigations into what artists do.[170] Most obviously, this came in the form of a novelty disco light, which was used to create the "fountain of light" in these photographs. My research into Nauman's work uncovered his diverse influences—literature, philosophy, modern dance, music, and mathematics. Reflecting on these, I considered

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[168] Franklin, "Object Choice," 26. Emphasis added.
[169] Franklin, "Object Choice," 45.
[170] Early in 2009 I began to video myself dancing. These videos were not intended as works of art, or even as preparatory pieces. I recorded the dancing out of curiosity, as a kind of self-surveillance or a narcissistic drive to see "how I looked." Dancing at home was a regular practice at the time and I was curious about the correspondence (or gap) between the way I felt on "the inside" and the way I looked from "the outside." Soon after I made the connection—centred on the disco light—between the Nauman inspired photographs and the dancing videos. I was aware that the videos were connected to Nauman's documentation of himself doing "things" in his studio. This led me to think about my personal transition from the "disco" to the domestic (in my 30s) and the potential to move more towards the disco again, particularly as a generative source. Like Nauman, I thought that whatever an artist does must be art, but I carried the studio in my head and ventured out.

comparable "resources" in my research practice. A spontaneous note in my journal from this period reads:

Movement—Disco—Dance—Music—Lights—Escape—Release

This signalled the beginning of a definitive shift beyond the domestic focus of my honours research towards other generative sources. In retrospect, it was the first evidence of a conscious engagement with "the party" as an aspect of this research. It also marked a shift away from the studio as the core creative space. I began to think of my practice as a process of doing things in the world—engaging in physical and mental inquiries—and processing these through artistic reflection in the form of artefacts. However, despite evidence supporting a shift in this direction, it took time for these emergent realisations to flow into practice.

These words, Movement—Disco—Dance—Music—Lights—Escape—Release, represent the nodes of an assemblage. Considerable time and energy was expended on efforts to comprehend the idea of assemblage through the model of the nightclub/party. Most of this work was omitted in the final cut of the exegesis, though traces of it remain throughout the writing and in the final presentation of artefacts. The bibliography, in particular, offers many routes into the theorisation of party sites as assemblages, from disco—through house music—to rave and psytrance.[171] These theoretical interpretations of intensely familiar scenes catalysed my initial engagement with Deleuze and Guattari. Electronic dance music's origins lie in the gay underground. It is not surprising that investigations in this area soon encountered threads—unravelled in the following passages—that led deeper into the theorisation of uniquely queer experience.

[171] The work of Graham St John, cultural anthropologist and researcher of electronic dance music cultures, was especially inspiring in terms of linking deeply felt personal experience to appropriate theoretical frameworks (see bibliography). Other influential works included *Rave Off: Politics and Deviance in Contemporary Youth Culture*, edited by Steve Redhead (Aldershot, UK: Avebury, 1993) and Anna Powell's *Deleuze, Altered States, and Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007). Articles by Maitra Ani, Matthew Bannister, John L. Fitzgerald, Jaap Kooijman, Brian L. Ott and Bill D. Herman, and Botond Vitos were also useful in marking out this territory.



Figure 23. Matt Huppatz, in collaboration with Reuben Duffy
Untitled (Self Portrait as Fountain), 2009,
90 x 60 cm, chromogenic print on metallic paper.

4.3 PASSAGE 3

The photographic artefacts referred to above—*Untitled (The True Artist)* (fig. 17) and *Untitled (Self Portrait as Fountain)* (fig. 23)—appeared in my first studio critique, alongside a heterogeneous collection of experimental works. This collection was read in terms of frustrated communication, troubled masculinity, and "covert activities." The latter applied especially to the photographs, which seemed to suggest an occult or private ritual. A connection was made with the night, and activities verging on the criminal: graffiti bombing or cruising beats for sex. Thinking through these heterotopic sites led towards the notion of liminality.

Michel Foucault elaborates upon the concept of heterotopia in "Of Other Spaces," a 1967 lecture given to a group of architects.[172] Before this, Foucault employed heterotopia to describe incongruous spaces in discourse and language that highlight "the out of place" of language.[173] This followed Foucault's inquiries into discourse and subjectivity, specifically the 'separation between the utterances of the subject and the enunciations of discourse that exist outside and beyond [the subject's] grasp.'[174] In Foucault's thought, this gap reveals the subject as a void, dispelling the myth of a creative agent who constructs the world from within, 'through thought and imagination' (ibid.). Paradoxically, 'this site without geography, or outside, is also the space of subjectivisation, in which the [...] idea of subjectivity as an interior process is [...] constituted' (ibid.).

In "Of Other Spaces," Foucault began to attach the idea of heterotopia to spaces in the real world. He suggests that heterotopias exist in all societies, and identifies two broad categories: 'crisis heterotopias (sacred space apart from profane space)—in effect liminal spaces in anthropological language'—and 'heterotopias of deviation.'[175] Foucault's outline of the principles of heterotopia introduces an array of spaces. They relate, amongst other things, to deviation (prisons, psychiatric hospitals, old peoples' homes); to forms that inhabit incompatible positions but somehow represent a society's view of itself (gardens, theatres, cinemas); to complex relationships with time, whether long and compressed (museums and libraries) or short and explosive (festivals and fairs); to systems of enclosure and openness (or controlled exit and entry); and to the ways

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[172] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22–7.
[173] Kevin Hetherington, "Foucault, the Museum and the Diagram," *The Sociological Review* 59, no. 3 (2011): 463–4.
[174] Ibid., 462.
[175] Ibid., 465, referring to Michel Foucault, "Different Spaces," in *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, The Essential Works*, Vol. 2, ed. J. Faubion (London: Allen Lane, 1998), 180.

heterotopias (brothels, colonies, the ship) function 'as a mirror, a space of contrast, or critique' in relation to the rest of social space.[176]

4.3.1 Liminality

Ethnographer Arnold van Gennep, in *The Rites of Passage* (1909), describes the life of an individual as 'a series of passages.' [177] These passages have special significance in the lives of individuals and societies because they define changes in state and ensure a smooth transition. This might be from one age or occupation, or from one social or cosmic world, to another.[178] These changes place individuals (and their societies) in uncertain relationships with one another. To support and defend the parties involved, they are surrounded with ritual structures, which van Gennep calls "rites of passage."[179]

Van Gennep offers the "territorial passage" as a model to explain his conceptualisation of rites of passage.[180] Territorial passage is a movement across a frontier, such as passing from one country to another. These movements are usually accompanied by formalities (or rites), 'largely political, legal, and economic,' but sometimes 'magico-religious' (ibid.). Van Gennep traces these rituals to earlier forms of territorial crossing—between tribal lands or mediaeval fiefdoms. In the former case, he notes, this often involved entering a neutral zone—sometimes corresponding with natural features like marshlands or forests—which acted as a "buffer" between established territories or "worlds."[181]

Van Gennep's masterstroke is to transfer this notion from the macro to the micro: from territorial passage to the level of architecture. He shifts from a 'territory,' to 'a village, a town, a

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[176] Hetherington, "Foucault, the Museum and the Diagram," 465–66.

[177] Arthur van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monica B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1960), 2–3. In the introduction, Solon T. Kimball notes that "transition" might be a more appropriate translation of passage (Introduction to *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1960), vii).

[178] Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 2–3; ibid., 10.

[179] Van Gennep quoted in Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 94; Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, xxv. I treat this aspect of van Gennep's theory at some length because I am intrigued by the way van Gennep identified and articulated such an appropriate model and wonder if I might apply an approach like this in my own research.

[180] Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 15.

[181] Ibid., 18. Van Gennep notes that these persist in the strips of neutral land between countries at border-crossings around the world. These were important in classical times when they served as market places and battlefields (ibid.). Van Gennep's invocation of landscape and place on a geographic scale is significant because it emphasises the spatial attributes of liminality and expands our ways of thinking about liminal space, as indeed a "world," or a "dream-like" space, that we pass through in liminal situations. It also highlights the "in-betweenness" of liminality.

section of a town,' and thus to 'a temple, or a house.'[182] Here he arrives at a compressed neutral zone: the entrance: 'a simple stone, a beam, or a threshold.'[183] A doorway marks the boundary between two worlds: the public and private in a house, the sacred and profane in a temple. 'Therefore, to cross the threshold is to unite oneself with a new world' (20).



Figure 24. Robert Morris, *Untitled (Pine Portal with Mirrors)*, 1978,
re-fabrication of a 1961 original, laminated pine and mirror, 213.4 cm high.

[182] Elsewhere in *Rites of Passage*, van Gennep relates the threshold concept to other architectural examples: 'the postern of the ramparts, the gate in the walls of the city quarter' (20); the monumental gates of Asia, the Roman arch of triumph (21); the "guardians of the threshold" that often displace representations of the threshold itself and manifest as monumental statues of winged dragons, sphinxes, and lions or other monsters in Egypt, Assyro-Babylonia, and China (21–22).
[183] Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, 19.

As a passage between worlds, the crossing of a threshold is traditionally marked with rituals. These are enacted before, during, and after the crossing.[184] Rites of passage, van Gennep notes, are typified by a similar ceremonial pattern. He divides them into preliminal, liminal, and postliminal rites.[185] The term liminal is derived from the Latin *limen*, "threshold." As such, in van Gennep's theory, the liminal designates an expanded threshold—a passage—between states, but it also suggests a particular relationship between a body and that passage.

4.3.2 Passengers

British cultural anthropologist Victor Turner revived van Gennep's work in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969).[186] This introduced liminality to contemporary thought and connected it to a range of contemporary phenomena. Turner focuses on the qualities of liminality and the attributes of liminal *personae* ("threshold people" or "passengers"):

> [they are] necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial.[187]

A primary function of the liminal phase in ritual is to homogenise and level initiands in preparation for change and renewal. In this process, they are "ground down" to a uniform condition (ibid.). All signs of status, property, insignia, rank, or role are removed and they go naked, or wear 'only a strip of clothing' (95). The ambiguities of liminality result in it being compared 'to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon' (95).

When I first read Turner's articulation of liminal qualities, I was surprised by its resonance with my personal (and especially queer) experience. These states and qualities—being at once "in" and yet "apart" from normative structures; holding ambiguous status; being fully or partially invisible

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[184] Ibid., 20. 'The threshold is sprinkled with blood or with purifying water; doorposts are bathed with blood or with perfumes; [and] sacred objects are hung or nailed onto them' (20).
[185] Ibid., xxv.
[186] Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1991). Turner first published these ideas in "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*," a chapter in his 1967 book *The Forest of Symbols*.
[187] Turner, *Ritual Process*, 95. This slipping through networks of classifications is somehow reminiscent of queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who famously defined "queer" as encompassing, 'the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances, and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning' experienced by gendered subjects (Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, 105).

in certain settings; being situated "beyond," "below" or "outside" of prescribed behaviours and norms;[188] living a life in darkness (the night)—describe my experience, certainly as a queer teenager, but also as a middle-class (and middle-aged) white male moving between queer and normative "worlds."

4.3.3 Fixed and Floating Worlds

My identification with liminality is not based in a unique queer experience, though its characteristics are surely felt more keenly by "outsiders." Turner proposes that society as a whole is a process in which human groups alternate between "fixed" and "floating worlds."'[189] Fixed worlds are established through 'the innumerable constraints and boundaries' that are imposed through 'verbal and nonverbal means of classification' (ibid.). While fixed worlds offer security—and keep chaos at bay—they also inhibit discovery and invention. In order to circumvent this fixity, Turner says, humanity creates 'spaces and times' that 'cannot be captured in the classificatory nets of their quotidian, routinised spheres of action' (vii). Along with ritual, these "floating worlds" include aesthetic forms—carnival, drama, and film—that are 'open to the play of thought, feelings, and will' (vii).

Significantly, Turner relates the processes at the core of these aesthetic forms to liminality and its destructive/transformative potential.[190] This liminal core represents 'the reflexivity of the social process' whereby 'society becomes at once subject and direct object' (vii). Here, 'suppositions, desires, hypotheses, possibilities, and so forth, all become legitimate' (vii). These forms generate new—'often fantastic'—models that can replace controlling models over time (vii). Turner proposes that the subversion of norms—even via 'deviant or criminous' behaviour—is necessary to innovation (vii). 'Play,' he suggests, 'is more serious than we, the inheritors of western Puritanism, have thought.'[191]

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[188] Turner's idea of *communitas* as a model of human interrelatedness is interesting in terms of the liminal spaces touched upon in this research. He identifies *communitas* in several cultural expressions whose relationship to social structure can be expressed in spatial terms, these being: in between (liminality), on the edges (marginality), and beneath (inferiority) (Charles La Shure, "What is Liminality?" *Liminality: The Space in Between*, Oct. 18, 2005 (first version), accessed June 8, 2009, http://www.liminality.org/about/whatisliminality/.) See section *4.6.3 Communitas*.

[189] Turner, *Ritual Process*, vii.

[190] Turner, *Ritual Process*, vii.

[191] Ibid., viii.

In the context of this research, it is worthwhile briefly opening up Turner's idea of "floating worlds." Although he mentions them only in passing, they connect to the "cultures of the night" touched upon in this document. "Floating world" is a translation of the Japanese 浮世 (*ukiyo*), which in this sense refers to the pleasure-seeking aspects of urban life in Edo-period Japan (1600–1867).[192] It is particularly associated with the pleasure quarter (or red-light district) of Edo (modern Tokyo).[193] The notion of floating world evokes 'an imagined universe of wit, stylishness, and extravagance—with overtones of naughtiness, hedonism, and transgression' (ibid.). While the original concept is based on a problematic system of 'forced and strictly controlled prostitution,'[194] the qualities of the floating world resonate with aspects of contemporary nightclub and MSM subcultures. While exciting, hedonistic, and transgressive, these too have their dark sides.

4.3.4 *Party Leech*

Party Leech *(fig. 25) was the first direct reference to "the party" in this project. It reflects an underlying speculation about how this aspect of experience and practice might connect with this research. At this stage, like* Party Leech*, these ideas were loosely assembled, unfixed, and even precarious. They continued to percolate over the following months, bleeding into other works, and crystallising over time into more substantial conceptual structures.*

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[192] Roman Adrian Cybriwsky, *Historical Dictionary of Tokyo*, 2nd edition (Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 72.

[193] Asian Art Museum, "The Floating World of Edo Japan," *Khan Academy*, accessed Nov. 2, 2016, https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/asian-art-museum/aam-japan-topic/aam-japan/a/the-floating-world-of-edo-japan. The sole licensed red-light district in Edo, the Yoshiwara, 'was a walled and moated city of about twenty acres' (ibid). This clearly designates a liminal site where everyday norms and expectations are suspended. Physically, it is reminiscent of van Gennep's neutral zone between territories, which operates under a separate set of rules and obligations.

[194] Ibid. 'Many Yoshiwara prostitutes, including those promoted by brothel owners to the highest ranks, started life in impoverished homes in the countryside. Taken from their families, they were brought to the quarter, trained, and typically bound to brothels during the term of a ten-year contract' (ibid.).



Figure 25. Matt Huppatz, *Party Leech (Version 2)*, 2009,
found milk crates, stool, muffler, woollen yarn, and gold insulation foil, 170 x 40 x 50 cm.

Leeches are hematophagous; they feed on the blood of other animals. Their segmented, tubular bodies are filled with connective tissue and have a sucking hole at each end. They are hermaphroditic.[195] *The* Party Leech *ascends, traverses, and descends like a large intestine. The sparkling tassel attached to its lower extremity could be an airflow indicator, but "a shimmering trail of cum" makes more sense.* Party Leech *is tied down, like the snake in* Narcissus (And Other Myths)*, but tying is not only restriction. As with social and cultural structure, it also holds up, or together.*

[195] Wikipedia, s.v. "Leech," last modified October 13, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leech.

4.4 PASSAGE 4

4.4.1 (Re)Turn to Assemblage

My initial investigations confirmed artistic assemblage as a key area of interest. Significant influences were the exhibitions "The Uncertainty of Objects and Ideas: Recent Sculpture" and "Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century," and the symposium "Assemblage, Bricolage, and the Obsolete."[196] *An essay by queer art historian Jonathan D. Katz, "Committing the Perfect Crime: Sexuality, Assemblage, and the Postmodern Turn in American Art," marked a particular turning point because he explicitly links the operation of assemblage with queer imperatives.*[197]

The proposal put forth by Katz provoked questions about how queer subjectivity might relate to assemblage, and how these dynamics might play out in my work. These questions animated the second six months of the project, informing the production of Party Leech *(fig. 25) and* Narcissus (And Other Myths) *(Section 4.4.5), and culminating in a solo exhibition,* Shed Light Works.[198] *This installation of semi-autonomous assembled works introduced notions of queer space and time—alongside elements of the party—which informed the next stage of research.*

4.4.2 The *Bricoleur*

British art historian Julia Kelly takes Seitz's *The Art of Assemblage* as a starting point to identify further subversive potentials in the practice.[199] Although contemporary assemblage is formally similar to its historical antecedents, Kelly insists that the technique retains an ability to 'trouble the category of art, through materials, execution, and presentation' (ibid., 25). This subversive potential is linked to the methods of historical assemblage:

> The anti-art function of found materials and their carefully chaotic combinations carried the potential to unravel the understanding of what art is for, becoming less an object of

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[196] Anne Ellegood and Johanna Burton, *The Uncertainty of Objects and Ideas: Recent Sculpture* (Washington, DC: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 2006); Richard Flood, *Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century* (New York: Phaidon (in association with New Museum), 2007); "Assemblage, *Bricolage*, and the Obsolete," Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, United Kingdom, November 2006. Papers presented at this symposium were published in a special issue of *Art Journal* 67, no.1 (Spring 2008).

[197] Jonathan D. Katz, "Committing the Perfect Crime: Sexuality, Assemblage, and the Postmodern Turn in American Art," *Art Journal* 67, no.1 (Spring 2008): 45.

[198] *Shed Light Works* was shown in the Project Space, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia (CACSA), in November 2009.

[199] Julia Kelly, "The Anthropology of Assemblage," *Art Journal* 67, no.1 (Spring 2008): 24–30.

> contemplation and poetic transfiguration than a tool for doing things, perhaps by roundabout and covert ways—a means of taking action via the apparently benign debris of everyday culture.[200]

Importantly, this formula stresses the liberating aspect of inventiveness and simply *doing things*. Kelly hereby suggests that the practice of assemblage offers a form of agency with the potential to resist hegemonic conventions—to take action—through everyday things and activities.[201]

Kelly locates support for this way of working in the musings of French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and the curious figure of the *bricoleur*. Lévi-Strauss, in *The Savage Mind* (1962), calls on the *bricoleur*—and the practice of *bricolage*—in an effort to define the mechanics of magical thought.[202] Perhaps best translated as a "Jack-of-all-trades," the *bricoleur* is an untrained handyman who can produce 'brilliant unforeseen results' through applying his extensive and heterogeneous—but limited—repertoire.[203] *Bricolage* draws on 'whatever is at hand' and is often compared to the practice of assemblage.[204]

In addition to *bricolage*, Kelly tacks together a number of diverse concepts that might have been explored further in this research. She begins by drawing attention to Levi-Strauss' allusion to the "magical" properties inherent in the *bricoleur*'s process of "interrogating" his [sic] collection of

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[200] Ibid., 30.

[201] In so doing, Kelly inadvertently links the operation of assemblage with the agency that resides in Deleuze and Guattari's notion of *agencement*. The concept of agency is complicated. Unpacking it in Deleuze and Guattari would involve looking carefully at the notions of process and pragmatism, and this is outside the bounds of this exegesis. However, despite being lost in the English translation of *agencement* as assemblage—and seldom mentioned in the literature—the agency of *agencement* is curious. It must be noted that there is a vast difference between agency, understood as *subjects* (artists) doing things in the world, and Deleuze and Guattari's conception of *process*, in which the world is already "doing" and no "subjects" are required for it to do so. Still, assemblages are arrangements that "create agency"—they produce 'new territorial organisations, new behaviours, new expressions, new actors and new realities' (Martin Muller, "Assemblages and Actor-Networks: Rethinking Socio-Material Power, Politics and Space," *Geography Compass* 9, no.1 (2015): 29). Assemblages in Deleuze and Guattari 'are temporal and spatial configurations; [in which] bodies are drawn together affectively only to be shifted by other bodies—a continuous process that produces self-organising differences and inherently transformative potential' (Kennedy, Zapasnik, McCann, and Bruce, "All those Little Machines: Assemblage as Transformative Theory," 48). More recent theories of assemblage and materialism—such as Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (2010), attempt to generate new understandings of agency that are useful in the context of artistic assemblage. In Bennett's theorisation of "material vitalism," she employs Deleuze and Guattari's transformative notion of assemblage 'to move agency "beyond human bodies and intersubjective fields to vital materialities and the human-nonhuman assemblages they form"' (Kennedy et al, "Assemblage as Transformative Theory," 48, quoting Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 30). 'Thus, the concept of "vibrant matter" recognises the diverse ways in which agency acts and is distributed via processes of emergence and becoming. In these configurations of distributed agency, matter is constituted in terms of various assemblages with different affective capacities, involving both human and non-human actors' (Ibid., 49). For a different take on ANT and the agency of materials and actors, see Tim Ingold's "When ANT Meets SPIDER: Social Theory for Anthropods," in *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* by Tim Ingold, 89–94 (London: Routledge, 2011).

[202] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[203] Ibid., 17. Locally, there is a trace of this approach in the ideal of the Australian bush pioneer able to fix anything with wire and baling twine, or the more contemporary "bush mechanics" from the television series of the same name.

[204] Curiously, given the contested place of artistic research within the broader academy, Lévi-Strauss positions the artist—who, he says, constructs 'a material object which is also an object of knowledge'—between the *bricoleur* and the scientist (Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 22).

tools and methods when approaching a problem.[205] Kelly is careful to place an emphasis on magic 'not as superstitious, pseudo-religious belief, but as a practical process of actions and manipulations' (ibid.). Here she draws on the anthropological work of Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, who stress the function of magic as "a collection of activities" and make a long list of domestic and artistically attuned activities that characterise the types of processes involved.[206] Finally, Kelly cites Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, who nominates cooking 'as an activity whose processes undermine the dominant order, just as magic is intended to disturb social structures.'[207] The domestic, assemblage and disruptive potentials were intimately entwined in my early research. This research continued to explore the potential of everyday, albeit queer, activities to provoke creative (and potentially social) change.

4.4.3 Queer Combinations

The work of queer historian Jonathan D. Katz—"Committing the Perfect Crime: Sexuality, Assemblage, and the Postmodern Turn in American Art"—marked a turning point in this research.[208] Katz provides a queer reading of assemblage, focused through the "combines" of Robert Rauschenberg. He dissects the obscure relationship between subjectivity and aesthetic form in Rauschenberg's work, asserting that his private life surfaces in his art, 'less as a representation […] than as a profound influence on its material means' (ibid., 40). In the process, Katz contests the work of prominent critics whose formalist readings deny a place to Rauschenberg's subjectivity—let alone his *sexuality*—in his creative process.

Katz bases his argument around a queer analysis of a number of Rauschenberg's works that index his intimate relationships with artists Cy Twombly and Jasper Johns. He specifically details an ongoing dialogue between Rauschenberg and Johns that is embedded in their work but nearly indecipherable to the uninitiated viewer. Katz shows how Rauschenberg employed assemblage in a move 'away from normative expressions of authorial intent and toward a growing investment in camouflaging or cloaking the author as mediator of meaning' (ibid., 43). This was a necessary

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[205] Kelly, "Anthropology of Assemblage," 29.
[206] Ibid., referring to Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *General Theory of Magic*, trans. Robert Brain (London: Routledge, 1971), 53–54.
[207] Kelly, "Anthropology of Assemblage," 30, citing Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
[208] Jonathan D. Katz, "Committing the Perfect Crime": Sexuality, Assemblage, and the Postmodern turn in American Art," *Art Journal* 67, no.1 (Spring 2008): 38–53.

deceit at the time of Rauschenberg's affair with Johns because homosexuality remained illegal in the United States.[209]

Foremost amongst the methodological traits of assemblage that Katz aligns with queer tactics are the methods of layering and juxtaposition. In a hostile environment, these became the perfect means to obfuscate authorial intent. The 'inherent instability of assemblage and its epistemological multivalence' was a tool for 'counterbalancing the authorial hand.'[210] Assemblage—because it could mean 'so many different things at once'—enabled 'different lines of communication to be sent to different audiences,' a classic queer tactic (ibid.). The "messiness" of assemblage simultaneously hid subversive content and enabled a complete denial of such content if it was inadvertently discovered.

In contrast to William Seitz and Hans Richter, who focus on the overt revolt of Dada in the context of WW1 Switzerland, Katz proposes a different operation of assemblage under McCarthyism in the USA. Working within enemy lines, so to speak, assemblage in neo-Dada employs a different "authoriality," 'one associated not with resistance, but with dissimulation, not with opposition, but with camouflage' (ibid.).

4.4.4 Fitting Things Together

A note in an early journal asks: *What is it about dismemberment?* In part, this is about how my work relates to the body and subjectivity: things come together and fall apart. But this also connects to assemblage: the fitting together of parts and pieces; their relationships to one another as a "whole;" and their potential to form assemblages with other things: to *be* other.

This interest in assemblage inspired a further series of works focused on applying this method. These were primarily formal experiments with found objects/materials, which explored collection practices, arrangement, and methods of connection. The process of assemblage started without preconceptions about what would result. Ideas and (subjective) meanings were allowed

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[209] Ibid., 45. The necessity for public 'discretion' at this time spawned a number of "linguistic, sartorial, even literal" coded sign systems amongst queers and their supporters, of which assemblage was one. These are detailed in George Chauncey's historical study of "men who have sex with men," *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994). Elsewhere, gay historian Jonathan N. Katz has documented the treatments used by psychiatrists to cure homosexuals (or "sex psychopaths") during the 1950s and 60s, when these works were made. They included castration, emetics (forced vomiting), hypnosis, electroshock therapy, and lobotomy. See Jonathan N. Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (New York: Crowell, 1976), 181–197.
[210] Ibid.

to emerge as things came together. A collection of objects and materials was gathered over time and brought together in a space. Then a kind of dance would begin, a lifting and placing of objects, an experiment with combinations and connections. Bits and pieces were selected—based on form, colour, feeling—and assembled in the space of transpiration. The results were provisional and lightly arranged assemblages that relied on placement, stacking, and balance to cohere.

These assemblages are not—they are never—fixed. *The work is not written in stone.* Their connections are fragile and provisional. Parts rest against each other, or balance atop one another, their qualities of weight, form, and design keep them together. Alternatively, they are tied with string, cord, or wire. This is a makeshift restraint, easily undone with the loosening of a knot or the cutting of a thread. Once released, each part can return to itself. Its potential to act in the world, its usefulness, is restored. This allows for development over time: it facilitates becoming.

The fragility of connection in these works is also temporal. These things are propositions. They are offered as mirrors and ways of thinking/seeing. They operate as tools for thought—or objects of contemplation—for the artist and viewer. We put the parts together and gain a sense of the work's meanings or relations. The work reaches out, projecting its filaments into the world—backward and forward through time—a kind of time/thought/feeling machine: tick-tock.

Two works characterise this period of concerted engagement with assemblage: *Party Leech* (2009) (fig. 25) and *Narcissus (And Other Myths)* (2009) (fig. 26).

4.4.5 *Narcissus (And Other Myths)*

A coiled, spring-like device perches on a white stool. The objects are tethered together with white yarn. The arrangement is balanced but the coil's irregularity lends it a volatile air. The "spring" might be a one-eyed, incessantly staring snake. Despite its restraint, it seems poised to strike. The "schlangehocker" stands beside a reflective pool of mirror.[211] *To one side, a nonchalant mattress leans against the gallery wall.*



Figure 26. Matt Huppatz, *Narcissus (And Other Myths)*, 2009, found mattress, stool, stainless steel pipe, mirror, acrylic yarn, inkjet print, enamel paint, masking tape. Dimensions variable.

[211] Schlangehocker = snake-stool. *Shlange*, the German term for "snake," is the root of a vulgar term for penis, "schlong" (1960s: from Yiddish *shlang*, from Middle High German *slange* "snake") (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "schlong," https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/schlong). Classic psychoanalytic symbolism identifies the snake with the phallus, however analyses of cult sects, folk tales, and mythology reveal a range of symbolic meanings relating equally to the vagina, eternal life, and death (Ralph W. Hood and W. Paul Williamson, *Them that Believe: The Power and Meaning of the Christian Serpent-Handling Tradition* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 97).

4.4.6 The Mirror

The artist is living in the mirror, with the echoes of himself.

—Kraftwerk, "The Hall of Mirrors"[212]

Narcissus (And Other Myths) marked the first use of an actual mirror in this research.[213] A skeletal "figure" stands beside a mirrored "pool," evoking the myth of Narcissus. Thanks to Sigmund Freud, this myth—and the mirror in general—has significance for any project concerned with (homo)-sexuality and identity. The mirror also connects to later psychoanalytic theories of subject formation, notably Jacques Lacan's "mirror stage."



Figure 27. Eugene Ernest Hiolle, *Narcisse (Narcissus)*, 1868, marble.

[212] Kraftwerk, "The Hall of Mirrors," from the album *Trans Europe Express*, written by Schult/Huetter/Schneider-Esleben, (Düsseldorf: Kling Klang, 1977), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAzq7FUrdXY.

[213] I first used mirrored surfaces as an undergraduate, influenced by Robert Morris and other minimalists. Later, as in this case, I used mirrors in the form of found domestic objects. The mirror used in *Narcissus and Other Myths* first appeared in an honours work, and was used again in *Tock—Tick* (see section *4.4.9 Tock—Tick*).

The myth of Narcissus first appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[214] Narcissus is a beautiful but proud youth who captures the heart of everyone who sees him. Callously, he spurns them all. A jilted suitor begs the gods to curse Narcissus with the unrequited love that he inflicts upon others.

Out hunting one day, Narcissus comes across a pristine spring in a shady glade. Wearied by the chase, he rests. Stooping to drink, he is captivated by the boy he sees reflected in the pool and falls instantly in love. Of course, his attempts to kiss the boy, or embrace him, are thwarted. Narcissus' loving words go unanswered. He cries out to the wood:

> "I do delight in him; I see him—yet, although I see and do delight in him, I cannot find him!"[215]

Narcissus eventually realises his terrible fate but he is consumed with passion that he cannot leave. He wastes away beside the pool; content in the knowledge that he will die together with his love.[216]

Freud introduced the concept of narcissism to psychoanalysis in his 1910 essay on Leonardo da Vinci.[217] He compared da Vinci's (supposedly repressed) homosexuality with the libidinal fate of a boy who is overly attached to his mother. The boy's love cannot be allowed to develop consciously and is thus repressed. In this process, he puts himself in his mother's place (identifies himself with her), and takes his boy-self as a model for the objects of his love. In other words, the boys he falls in love with are 'revivals of himself in childhood—boys whom he loves in [the same way that] his mother loved him.'[218] He finds, says Freud, 'the objects of his love along the path of *narcissism*.'[219]

Freud's creative formulation of narcissism is curious and significant on a number of counts. For one, as Tim Dean notes, 'we know that narcissism must be pathogenic because of Narcissus's fate [he dies], and [...] homosexuality takes over this connotation of impending doom.'[220] This had ramifications for perceptions of homosexuality (including homosexuals' self-perception)

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[214] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. M. M. Innes (London: Penguin, 1983).
[215] Ibid.
[216] The narcissus, or daffodil, is said to have sprung from the ground where he died.
[217] Tim Dean, "Homosexuality and the Problem of Otherness," in *Homosexuality and Psychoanalysis*, ed. Tim Dean and Christopher Lane (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 122.
[218] Sigmund Freud, "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood," 1910, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 11, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957): 100, original emphasis, quoted in Dean, "Homosexuality," 122.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Dean, "Homosexuality," 123.

throughout the twentieth century and is taken up as a core theme in certain strains of queer theory.

Freud's formulation is doubly curious because it proposes what Dean describes as a 'Norman Bates solution to oedipal crisis.'[221]

> Rather than seeking substitutes of his mother as love-objects, the boy seeks substitutes of himself; and by desiring boyish versions of himself from the position of maternal love, this boy seems paradoxically to ensure that his homosexuality is underwritten by an unshakeable heterosexuality, albeit of an incestuous sort (ibid.).

Dean argues that the boy—by assuming the "wrong" gender and loving self-substitutes '*from another's point of view*'—is identifying with difference rather than sameness.[222] It is the other who determines the direction of this ostensibly narcissistic boy's desire.[223] As such, Freud's prototypical homosexual 'contravenes the model of narcissism that he is supposed to illustrate' (ibid.). This could be understood to maintain 'the conceptual priority of desire as invariably hetero' although Freud complicates this reading in later articulations of narcissism (ibid., 124).

In "On Narcissism," Freud attempts to resolve the contradictions of the boy in the Leonardo case. He postulates 'a primary narcissism in everyone' by asserting that a human infant has two sexual objects—'himself [sic] and the woman [sic] who nurses him' (ibid.).

Dean notes that if we follow Freud's earlier logic, this could be interpreted as psychoanalysis positing a primary *homosexuality* in everyone (ibid.). In fact, as others have noted, Freud did imply a universal *bisexuality* shortly after "On Narcissism." In a footnote to the third edition of *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, he states:

> [P]sychoanalysis considers that a choice of an object independently of its sex—freedom to range equally over male and female objects—[…] is the original basis from which, as a result of restriction in one direction or the other, both the normal and the inverted types develop.[224]

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[221] Ibid., 124.
[222] Ibid., quoting Freud, "Leonardo," 125, emphasis original.
[223] Dean, "Homosexuality," 125.
[224] Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 1905, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 7, ed. and trans. James Strachey, 123–243 (London: Hogarth Press, 1953): 145, n.46; quoted in Dean, "Homosexuality," 126.

While curious, Freud's narcissistic tangent is most relevant because it leads to the infant-mother relationship, which is central to psychoanalytic theories of subjectivity. Freud, in his effort to "map" the human psyche, proposed a tripartite composition: the id, the ego, and the superego. Initially, he proposed, the infant identifies wholly with the mother and is not aware that it possesses a body separate from hers. The ego—or "sense of self"—develops in part through the infant's growing awareness of bodily sensations and its recognition of itself in others.[225] Jacques Lacan took up this emphasis on identification in his theory of the "mirror stage."[226]

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[225] Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion: The Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 85; Ros Minsky, ed., *Psychoanalysis – Gender* (London: Routledge, 1996), 31–3.

[226] Feminist theorists (led by Luce Irigaray)—alongside Félix Guattari, the practising psychoanalyst—vigorously contest Lacan's concept of the mirror stage. Given the nature of the theory being addressed in the exegesis, it would be impossible to treat this concept properly without bringing these contexts to bear upon it critically. A short gloss will have to suffice here. Careful attention by the reader to the language used around the mirror stage might provide insight into its creative influence upon the outcomes of this project. The mirror stage marks a key moment in Lacan's theory of subject formation. It occurs between the ages of six and eighteen months, when the baby first joyously sees its image in a mirror—or in the mother's mirroring look—and *misrecognises* itself as something 'apparently separate and distinct (with edges), something with an apparently separate, integrated identity' (Rachel Alsop, Annette Fitzsimons, and Kathleen Lennon, "Psychoanalysis and Gender," in *Theorising Gender: An Introduction* (Oxford: Polity, 2002), 52). Lacan proposes that the joy demonstrated by the infant when it makes this connection—the "a-ha" moment—results not from the recognition of its identity, but from the recognition of its make-up (Samuel Weber, *Return to Freud: Jacques Lacan's Dislocation of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Michael Levine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 13). In a child of this age, visual perception is more highly developed than the motor function; though strongly felt, its body is a 'confused reality,' uncoordinated, and "all over the place" (Weber, *Return to Freud*, 12; Alsop, Fitzsimmons, and Lennon, "Psychoanalysis and Gender," 52). The sight of another human being, be it the mother, caretaker, or even one's own mirror-image, becomes the matrix of a sense of unity, identity, and continuity which the child's bodily existence is incapable of providing (Weber, *Return to Freud*, 12). Until the child recognises an ideal integrity in the image of itself "out there," its body seems fragmented and uncontrollable. 'The ego is thus initially constituted through the child's identification with an image whose otherness is precisely overlooked in the observation of similarity' (ibid., 13). Through this 'fantasised identity with others, [the child] is able to take up the body as its body, to produce a separating space between it and others, between it and objects. The specular or virtual space of mirror-doubles is constitutive of whatever imaginary hold the ego has on identity and corporeal autonomy' (Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion*, 85–86).

4.4.7 *Shed Light Works*



Figure 28. Matt Huppatz, installation view, *Shed Light Works*, Project Space, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia (CACSA), November 6 – December 13, 2009. Photograph: Henry Trumble.

The terrain surveyed above informed the first year of this research. It culminated in a solo exhibition—*Shed Light Works* (fig. 28)—a collection of semi-autonomous assemblages that formed an immersive installation.[227] In terms of processes, materials, and forms, this exhibition extended the making methods used in *Narcissus (And Other Myths)* and *Party Leech*.[228] The works that materialised in this process were partially site-responsive and partially self-reflexive, and conceived almost entirely within the space.[229] The pressures exerted in the development and

[227] *Shed Light Works*, Project Space, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia (CACSA), Nov. 6 – Dec. 13, 2009.

[228] The exhibition also included "recycled" objects and works, such as the mirror from *Narcissus (And Other Myths)*, and two "gendered" chairs appropriated from an undergraduate work: *The Old In Out* (2007). A two-channel video work *Under Cover* (2008)—produced the previous year as part of the honours research—was the only work conceived before the installation of the show.

[229] While there were no specific ideas for works (in terms of how materials and objects would come together in the space) there had been considerable thought regarding possible configurations of the space, the viewing conditions, and the nature of the works (initially intended to be improvised assemblage). Over a period of almost twelve months, this thinking had swung between (1) improvised works set in restricted, highly controlled viewing conditions; (2) pre-planned and fabricated works in an open setting;

installation process—exacerbated by an accident in which I could have died—forced some of the subjective motivations of my practice to the fore.[230]

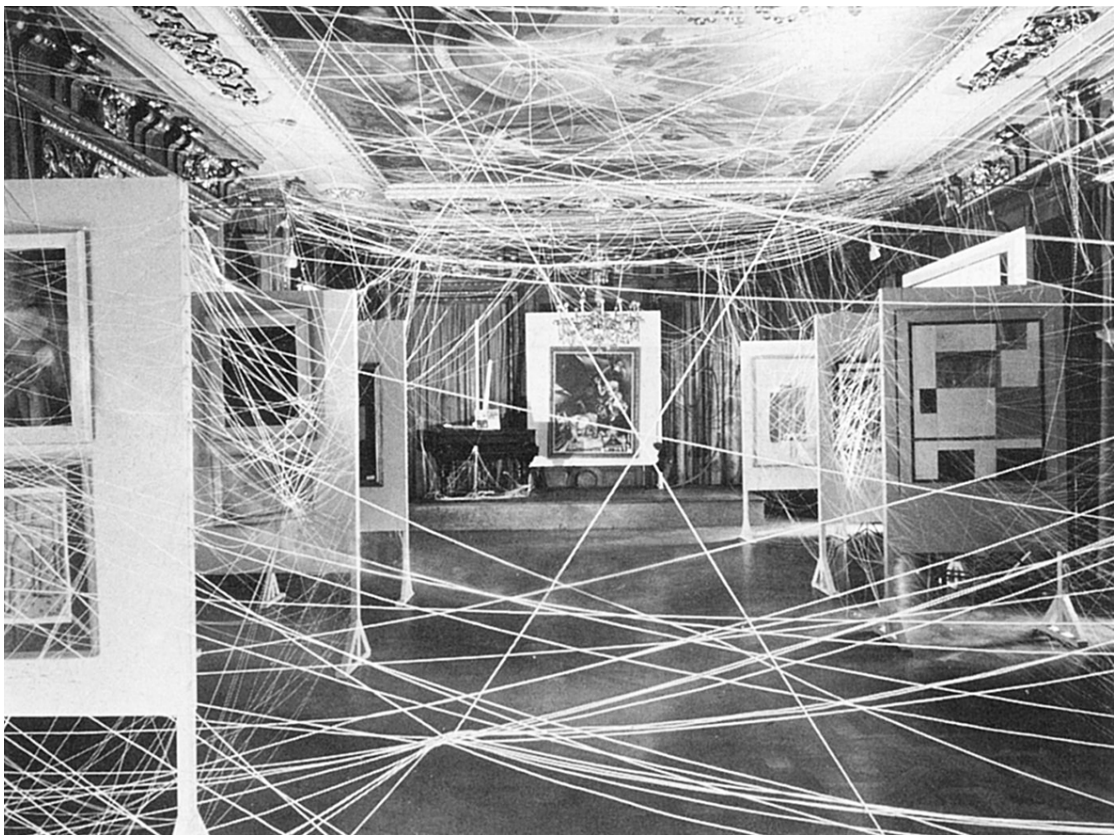


Figure 29. John D. Schiff, installation view of Marcel Duchamp's "mile of string" at the *First Papers of Surrealism* exhibition, New York, Oct. 14 – Nov. 7, 1942, silver gelatin print

A significant aspect of this exhibition was its dialogic nature. The installation—in concert with weather conditions—generated a peculiar atmosphere: an unseasonal heatwave raised the temperature to 35°C; the drying *Papaver Somniferum* gave off a heady odour; coloured light bled from one work to another; beer bubbled feverishly as it brewed, and plastic sheeting weighed

and (3) immersive light-based installation inspired by a night-club aesthetic. These ideas inevitably seeped into the installation, which became a hybrid of the three options.

[230] A collision between my body and a car in the lead up to the exhibition limited my ability to achieve anything but an exhibition of purely improvised assemblage works. However, this incapacity forced me to improvise with what was at hand, and allowed things to emerge that might ordinarily have been obfuscated beneath high-finishes, "minimalisation" (reduction), and precision.

down from above.[231] The works—and viewers—were forced into dialogic relationships by this atmospheric glue.[232] The "enclosed" nature of this experiment—a discrete space, set aside from other buildings—emphasised the internal relationship between parts and encouraged reading the work as an interconnected whole. Marcel Duchamp's "mile of string" (1942) (fig. 29) springs to mind: viewers, objects, and site became enmeshed in a network of communicative lines.

4.4.8 *Tock—Tick*

One work from "Shed Light Works" became a specific object of reflection in this research: *Tock—Tick* (2009) (fig. 30). It came together spontaneously in the last minutes of installation and borrows the mirror from *Narcissus (And Other Myths)*. This rests in a corner, reflecting the face of a clock that sits on the floor in front of it. One of the clocks ticks inexorably forward, the other back, forming contradictory flows of time that create an eternal now. *Tock—Tick* distils a key insight, which arose in the installation process, relating to the role of time and memory in this project, and their relationship to subjectivity. In particular, *Tock—Tick* signifies a queer relationship to the passage of time and space. This—along with the building pressure of the latent party in "Shed Light Works"—activated the next stage of the research.

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[231] The latent party continued to exert pressure on "Shed Light Works." It permeates the whole installation and is evident in the empty bottles, the brewing beer, the upturned opium poppies, and the coloured, moving lights.

[232] In horticulture, the verb "force" refers to artificially hastening the development or maturity of (a plant) through, for example, controlled growing conditions (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "force," accessed Nov. 2, 2016, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/force.



Figure 30. Matt Huppatz, *Tock—Tick*, 2009, electric clock, mirror, and air-conditioning duct, approx. 75 x 100 x 100 cm.

4.5 PASSAGE 5

4.5.1 Queer Time

Time is usually perceived as a natural flow of progression, an illusion that masks its constructed nature.[233] David Harvey, in *The Condition of Postmodernity*, deconstructs the naturalisation of temporal modes.[234] Time, he explains, is organised

> according to the logic of capital accumulation [such that] those who benefit from capitalism [...] experience this logic as inevitable, and [...] ignore, repress, or erase the demands made upon them and others by an unjust system.[235]

Elizabeth Freeman, in *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, coins the term *chrononormativity* to describe the use of time 'to organise individual human bodies towards maximum productivity.'[236] Chrononormativity—via 'schedules, calendars, time zones, and even wristwatches'—transforms 'institutional forces' into what seem like 'somatic facts.'[237] These manipulations of time 'convert historically specific regimes of asymmetrical power into seemingly ordinary bodily tempos and routines, which in turn organise the value and meaning of time.'[238]

From a particularly queer perspective, a significant aspect of chrononormativity is what Dana Lucian terms *chronobiopolitics*, or 'the sexual arrangement of the time of life.'[239]

> In a chronobiological society, the state and other institutions, including representational apparatuses, link properly temporalised bodies to narratives of movement and change. These are teleological schemes of events—or strategies for living—such as marriage, accumulation of health and wealth for the future, reproduction, child rearing, and death and its attendant rituals.[240]

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[233] Julie Cosenza, "The Crisis of Collage: Disability, Queerness, and Chrononormativity," *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 14, no. 2 (April 2014): 156.
[234] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).
[235] Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: NYU Press, 2005), 7.
[236] Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, Perverse Modernities, ed. Judith Halberstam and Lisa Lowe (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 3.
[237] Ibid., Freeman here references Evitar Zerubavel, *Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calendars in Social Life* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
[238] Freeman, *Time Binds*, 3.
[239] Dana Luciano, *Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: NYU Press, 2007), 9.
[240] Freeman, *Time Binds*, 4. While these strategies seem "natural" enough, and they may be from a hetero-normative standpoint, Freeman points out that these events are intimately tied up with national and familial economic interests relating to taxation, privatisation of care, social security, inheritance (redistribution of wealth), and other privileges.

This list, which aligns with homonormative priorities, is problematic from a queer viewpoint. It suggests the "improper" temporality of bodies that fail to conform to this "natural" narrative stream. Queer theorist Judith Halberstam proposes that 'respectability'—and the notions of "normal" on which it depends—relies on 'a middle-class logic of reproductive temporality.'[241] José Esteban Muñoz calls this the 'auto-naturalising temporality' of *straight time*.[242]

> Straight time tells us that there is no future but the here and now of our everyday life. The only futurity promised is that of reproductive majoritarian heterosexuality, the spectacle of the state refurnishing its ranks through overt and subsidised acts of reproduction (ibid.).

Notions of the future are contested within queer—and gay and lesbian—studies. One factor, as Muñoz highlights, is that 'cultures of sexual dissidence' are not compelled by the notion of a 'postponed future' that is inseparable from sexual reproduction (ibid., 49).

> The queer citizen-subject [rather than investing in a deferred future] labours to live in a present that is calibrated, through the protocols of state power, to sacrifice our liveness [...] for a fantasmatic future (ibid.).

Muñoz here raises the intriguing idea of "queer labour." Rather than working towards the capitalist ends of corporation and state, he says, queers *work*—on dance floors and theatrical stages, at sites of public sex and music festivals, in 'arenas both subterranean and aboveground'—at enacting queer worlds in the present (ibid.). This kind of critical activity—and its social ends—ties in nicely with Helen Molesworth's discussion of Dada's "non-work" tactics and their recurrence in contemporary art.[243]

Judith Halberstam argues for the existence of queer time *and* space, defined as follows:

> "Queer time" is a term for those specific models of temporality that emerge within postmodernism once one leaves the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance. "Queer space" refers to the place-making practices within postmodernism in which queer people engage and it also describes the new understandings of space enabled by the production of queer counterpublics.[244]

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[241] Halberstam, *Queer Time*, 4.
[242] Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, Sexual Cultures (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 22.
[243] Dada's work avoidance is mentioned briefly in Section 1.4.
[244] Halberstam, *Queer Time*, 6.

Both develop 'in opposition to the institutions of the family, heterosexuality, and reproduction [and] according to [alternative] logics of location, movement, and identification' (ibid., 1). Queer time and space are located outside of—or, I would suggest, perhaps squeezed between—prevailing measures of space and time.[245]

Conceptions of queer time—like so many aspects of queer theory—are influenced by the impact of AIDS on Western gay communities in the late twentieth century. For a time, the 'horizons of possibility' within these communities were 'severely diminished,' resulting in an emphasis 'on the here, the present, the now.'[246] As such, Halberstam proposes, queer time exploits the potential of what Charles-Pierre Baudelaire called "the transient, the fleeting, the contingent" (ibid.).

In response to the AIDS crisis, some gay men began to rethink 'the conventional emphasis on longevity and futurity' and to build community 'in relation to risk, disease, infection, and death.'[247] This is a radical project in a society that enshrines longevity as 'the most desirable future,' applauds the 'pursuit of long life (under any circumstances),' and pathologises 'modes of living that show little or no concern for longevity.'[248]

> Within the life cycle of the Western human subject, long periods of stability are considered to be desirable, and people who live in rapid bursts (drug addicts, for example) are characterised as immature and even dangerous (ibid., 4–5).

Ironically, Halberstam finds relief from 'the artificiality of our privileged constructions of time and activity' in 'the ludic temporality created by drugs' (ibid., 152). Significantly, he points to aesthetic forms—including Salvador Dalí's melting clock (fig. 31) and William Burroughs' notion of "junk time"—as successful articulations of this terrain.[249]

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[245] The idea of queer time and space resonates strongly with Victor Turner's speculation on the liminality of "drop-out" cultures.
[246] Halberstam, *Queer Time*, 2.
[247] Ibid., 3. See, for example, Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); and Lee Edelman, "The Future is Kid Stuff: Queer Theory, Disidentification, and the Death Drive," *Narrative* 6, no. 1 (Jan. 1998): 18–30, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20107133. Halberstam points out that there is excellent work on the temporality of lives lived in direct relation to the HIV virus but less on lives lived in the shadow of the epidemic (*Queer Time*, 3). She identifies women, the transgendered, and various queers amongst those who 'partake of this temporal shift in less obvious ways' (ibid.). Pointing to Cathy Cohen's work in *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*, she notes the problematic race- and class-based aspects of queer—i.e. mostly white, middle-class—conceptions of time:

> the experience of HIV for heterosexual and queer people of colour does not necessarily offer the same kind of hopeful reinvention of conventional understandings of time. […] Some bodies are simply considered "expendable," […] and the abbreviated life spans of black queers and poor drug users, […] [do] not inspire the same kind of metaphysical speculation on curtailed futures, intensified presents, or reformulated histories (ibid.).

[248] Halberstam, *Queer Time*, 152.
[249] Ibid.

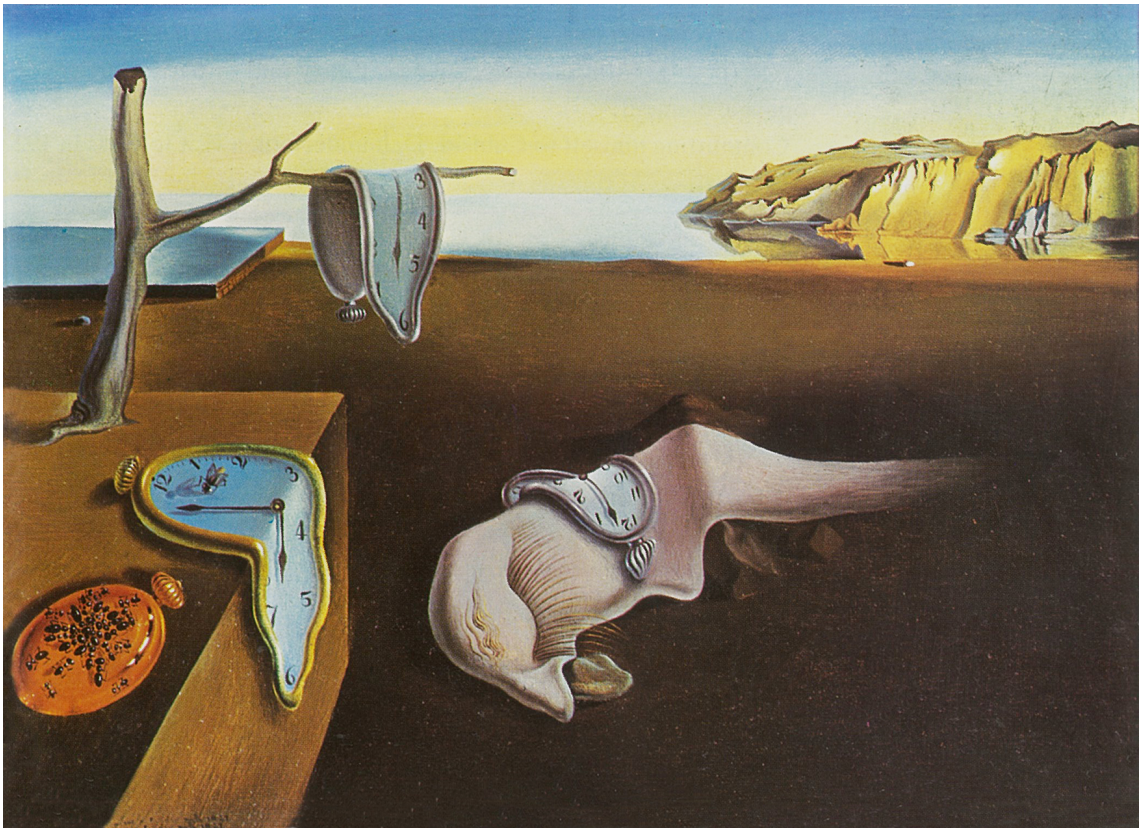


Figure 31. Salvador Dalí, *La persistencia de la memoria (The Persistence of Memory)*, 1931, oil on canvas, 24.1 x 33 cm.

Fittingly, the figure of Burroughs illustrates a temporal glitch that Halberstam says often characterises queer cultural lives: a "stretched" adolescence.[250] This facilitates extended subcultural involvement, which delays and "smears" the 'obvious transition' from childish dependency—through marriage—into adult responsibility—through reproduction.[251] This "improper" temporalisation challenges conventional accounts of subculture, youth culture,

[250] Ibid., 153. Discovery of Halberstam's identification of this trait released a degree of pressure in this research. At one point, in relation to a nightclub inspired works, I was "accused" of indulging in nostalgia. I took offence because I understood the critic to mean that I was reflecting on a culture that I had belonged to in the past, rather than one in which I remain engaged. Of course, my practice is nostalgic. The focus of this research on twentieth century practice and theory makes this apparent, but it wasn't obvious to me until late in the project.

[251] Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no.2 (1998): 553, cited by Halberstam, *Queer Time*, 153. This smearing muddies the "institutions of intimacy" that secure heteronormative culture's "metacultural intelligibility" (ibid.).

adulthood, and maturity, and undermines the formulation of life narratives into binaries of youth and adulthood.[252]

> Queer subcultures produce alternative temporalities by allowing their participants to believe that their futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience—namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death. [253]

'At a moment,' Halberstam says, 'when so many middle-class gays and lesbians are choosing to raise children in conventional family settings, it is important to study queer life modes that offer alternatives to family time and family life.'[254] This research, in part, contributes to this context through a subterranean exploration of queer time and space.

4.5.2 Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Tock—Tick, first shown in the "fecund" atmosphere of "Shed Light Works," appeared later in a studio critique related to the *Art Action Adelaide (AAA) Party*, an aborted offshoot of this project. Resituated in a "white cube," *Tock—Tick* underwent a transformation, becoming decidedly minimalist: all white, mirror, and stainless steel. This prompted an association with Cuban-born US artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres, who is known for appropriating a minimalist style and using both mirrors and clocks. In hindsight, this connection was almost inevitable: in addition to *Tock—Tick*'s formal resonance, at least one of Gonzalez-Torres' works, *Untitled (Go-Go Dancing Platform)* 1991 (fig. 32), references the night club, and the artist was openly gay.

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[252] Halberstam, *Queer Time*, 153. Interestingly, Hopkins identifies a similar "extended adolescence" in the resurgent "laddishness" that characterised young British art (Hopkins, *Dada's Boys*, 199). Examples include Sarah Lucas' defiantly "manly" stance and the Chapman Brothers 'boyish obsessions' with war games and sexual "freaks." Hopkins extracts the notion of extended adolescence from a discussion of Richard Prince's work, which focuses on his controversial representations of women and nostalgic evocation of the 'male self-assurance' of an earlier time (ibid., 194–99). Prince observed that his work contained 'a lot of extended adolescence' (Richard Prince, "Interview with Richard Prince," by Larry Clark, in *Richard Prince*, ed. Lisa Phillips (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992), 135; quoted in Hopkins, *Dada's Boys*, 199).

[253] Halberstam, *Queer Time*, 153. Halberstam indicates the work of Judith Butler in "Agencies of Style for a Liminal Subject," where she questions what forms of agency can be located in activities that are associated with style. See Judith Butler, "Agencies of Style for a Liminal Subject," in *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall*, ed. Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Grossberg, and Angela McRobbie, 30–37 (New York: Verso, 2000).

[254] Halberstam, *Queer Time*, 152–53.



Figure 32. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled (Go-Go Dancing Platform)*, 1991,
timber, light bulbs, acrylic paint, and go-go dancer in silver lamé bikini (when installed publicly).[255]

A review of Gonzalez-Torres' work clarifies the reasons for this presumed connection: *Tock—Tick* resembles a pastiche that collides *Untitled (Perfect Lovers)* (fig. 33) with *Untitled (March 5th) #1* (1991) (fig. 34).[256] These works are examples of a long-running series of pairs that characterises Gonzalez-Torres' practice.[257] Both were included in a three-part exhibition, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres:*

[255] 'Whenever Gonzalez-Torres' installation/participatory art piece is on display, a dancer clad in silver lamé shorts will ascend the lighted platform for just five minutes each day, unscheduled and unannounced, and dance to his or her own choice of music, heard only to the dancer through a pair of headphones ("The Art of Go-Go Dancing," *WTF Art History*, accessed Dec. 1, 2016, http://wtfarthistory.com/post/31522124753/the-art-of-go-go-dancing).'

[256] While I was likely aware of these works on some level, this was not a conscious pastiche. I did not consider Gonzalez-Torres a huge influence on my work. As an undergraduate, I was probably aware of him but hadn't latched onto his work in the way I had with the artists (mostly British: drawn from the yBas and New British Sculpture) whom I understood as strong formal influences on my early work. When Gonzalez-Torres was raised in connection to *Tock—Tick*, I dutifully revisited his oeuvre but was reluctant to look at it deeply. Perhaps I sensed the strong resonances but didn't want to admit influence, or to be discouraged from following the path I'd begun. While there was a definite attraction to his work, I was unsure about how it related to my concerns. It seemed so caught up in grief and AIDS, territory with which I have very little personal experience. In addition, I find his work profound, and I felt, at the time, that mine was frivolous in comparison. Over the course of the research, however, I contemplated the impact of AIDS on my sense of self, and realised that it had circumscribed my life since adolescence. This is not just about AIDS, of course, but homophobia and the broader social stigma of homosexuality. In hindsight, I recognise that there is a deep vein of grief—related to this queer experience—that runs through my life and inevitably taints my practice. Gonzalez-Torres' adoption of minimalist and conceptual strategies also provided me with a means to articulate my own engagement with these traditions.

[257] Pairs of things appeared in this project from the outset: early on, a found image of twin boys, pinned to my studio wall, watched over the initial practical inquiries. Pairs appeared in the work too, and their presence was raised in the first critique. Forced to consider them, I realised that pairs had also recurred in my undergraduate practice as obvious precursors to the current research. My recourse to the double was part subconscious and part habitual, being bound up in early artistic influences. These include: Richard Wentworth's *Siege* (1983–84); Robert Gober, *The Ascending Sink* (1985); Jeff Koons' *Two Ball Total Equilibrium*

Traveling, in 1994.[258] The second stage of this exhibition was shown in Washington D.C., where the US government had recently formulated its 'cowardly resolution' to the presence of gays in the military: "don't ask, don't tell."[259] This provided the perfect foil for Gonzalez-Torres' queer tactics. Against a backdrop of 'political intrigue, bureaucratic gridlock, and homophobia,' Gonzalez-Torres exhibited a collection of pairs that 'quietly, but insistently, whispered the presence of same-sex love' (ibid.).

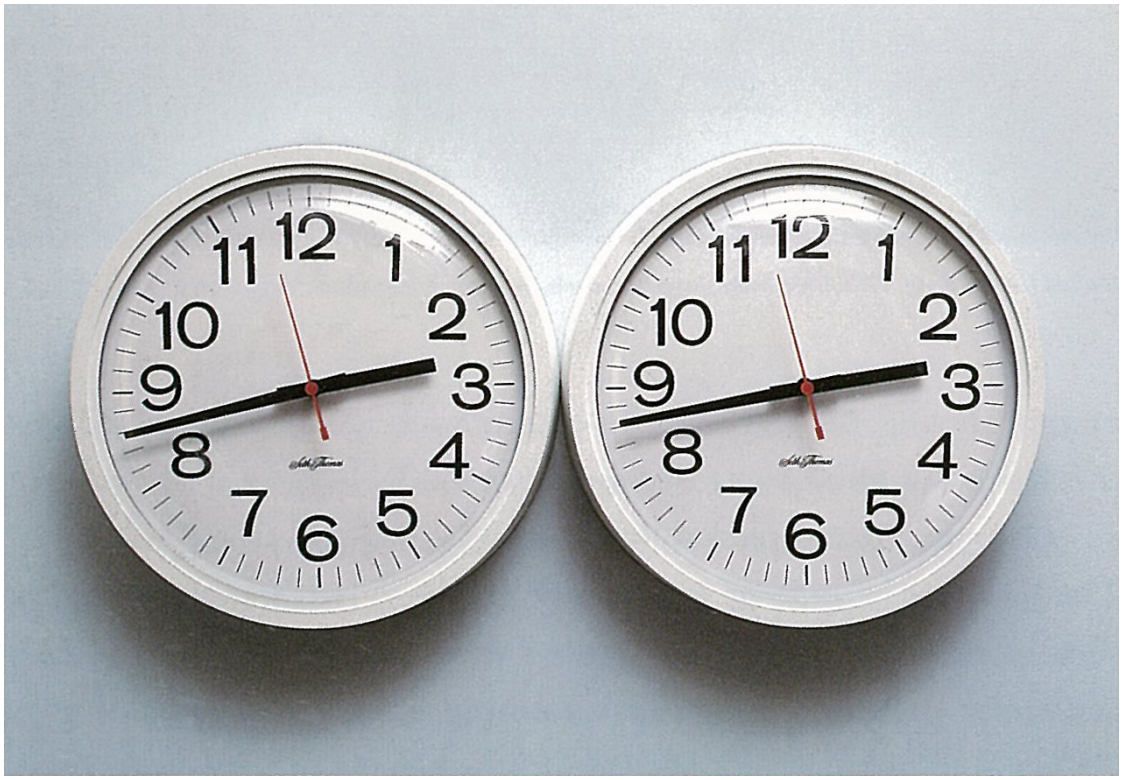


Figure 33. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled (Perfect Lovers)*, 1991,
two white-framed clocks, each clock 35.5 cm in diameter, 35.5 x 71 x 7 cm overall.

Perfect Lovers consists of two identical clocks that sit side by side on a wall, barely touching. They start out perfectly synced, but slowly—and imperceptibly—fall out of time as their batteries

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Tank (1985); Sarah Lucas' *Au Naturel* (1994), *Bitch* (1995), and *Self-Portrait with Fried Eggs* (1996). The pairs in my practice are thus inescapably mixed up with reflection upon gender, sexuality, and the dynamics of pair bonding.

[258] Nancy Spector, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres* (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 1995), 56–83. The exhibition—presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; and the Renaissance Society in Chicago—responded to each location, transforming as it travelled. The Hirshhorn Museum version presented a "self-portrait" of Gonzalez-Torres that was filled with 'veiled allusions' to homosexual love (ibid., 72). These were carried in the numerous sets of pairs shown in the exhibition, many of which were made following the loss of Gonzalez-Torres' long-term partner—Ross Laycock—who died from AIDS in 1991.

[259] Spector, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, 66.

fade. In the context of Gonzalez-Torres work of this period, this functions as a meditation on the inevitability of relationship breakdown, whether by death or other causes.[260] However, in the context of AIDS, this constituted a political act.[261] Gonzalez-Torres said of *Perfect Lovers*:

> Two clocks side by side are much more threatening to the powers that be than an image of two guys sucking each other's dicks, because they cannot use me as a rallying point in their battle to erase meaning.[262] It is going to be very difficult for members of the Congress to tell their constituents that money is being expended for the promotion of homosexual art when all they have to show are two plugs side by side, or two mirrors side by side, or two light bulbs side by side.[263]

This obfuscating approach is reminiscent of an earlier generation, whose work operates similarly towards related—although less public—ends. In the case of Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, for example, metaphor and dissembling tactics were also tied up with the problematic public status of homosexuality, but at a time when it was entirely illegal in the United States. While free to be open about his sexuality, Gonzalez-Torres walked a fine line between admission and denial when it came to detailing its significance in his work.

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[260] Gonzalez-Torres explained that making *Perfect Lovers* was a way to face his fear of time (and loss): his partner was dying from AIDS when it first appeared (Robert Nickas, "Felix Gonzalez-Torres: All the Time in the World," *Flash Art*, no. 161 (1991): 88).

[261] Significantly, although Gonzalez-Torres identifies the entirely subjective source of *Perfect Lovers* (see note above), the apparently benign nature of these objects also leaves the work open to interpretation. Although their doubling of "sameness" suggests a homosexual reading, this pair—along with his many others—could apply to any coupling. The work is generous in this sense, embracing and allowing interpretations that take in broader human concerns.

[262] Gonzalez-Torres alludes to conservative attempts to censor transgressive art in America during the late 1980s. In the midst of the AIDS epidemic, the rhetoric of conservative politicians was often overtly homophobic. Significant cases include the closure of the Robert Mapplethorpe retrospective at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington D.C. (under pressure from the republican Senator Jesse Helms and a hostile congressional committee) and the political furore that accompanied the 1989 exhibition of Andres Serrano's photograph *Piss Christ* (1987). Both cases centred on the pornographic or blasphemous nature of the works involved. The exhibitions sparked attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts—which was involved in funding either the galleries or artists involved—and threats of penalties against it and limitations of its ability to fund artwork deemed offensive or inappropriate.

[263] Gonzalez-Torres, quoted in Spector, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, 73. Gonzalez-Torres' words have renewed resonance as I write. Donald Trump is the president-elect of the United States of America. One of his chief supporters and advisors, former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani, notoriously attempted to shut down the Brooklyn Museum of Art following its exhibition of young British art (yBa), "Sensation," in 1999. Giuliani railed against Chris Ofili's *Holy Virgin Mary* (1996) and criticised the exhibition as anti-Catholic, pornographic, and sacrilegious (Alan Whyte, "New York's Mayor Giuliani and the Brooklyn Museum Reach a Settlement," *World Socialist Web Site* March 31, 2000, accessed November 18, 2016, https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2000/03/muse-m31.html). Giuliani's attack prompted a response from German artist Hans Haake in the following year's Whitney Biennale. His installation *Sanitation* (2000) consisted of a row of rubbish bins, quotes of Giuliani's diatribe against "Sensation" (written in the Fraktur typescript commonly associated with the Third Reich), and 'the sound of jackboots marching in the background.' See Judith H. Dobrzynski, 'Signs Point to New "Sensation" at the Whitney,' *The New York Times*, Mar. 9, 2000, accessed Nov. 18, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2000/03/09/nyregion/signs-point-to-new-sensation-at-the-whitney.html and "New Art Scandal in New York," *BBC News*, Mar. 12, 2000, accessed Nov. 18, 2016, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/675362.stm. Not surprisingly, the yBas—particularly Sarah Lucas—and Hans Haake were seminal influences in my undergraduate study.



Figure 34. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *Untitled (March 5th) #1*, 1991,
two circular mirrors, each 30.5 cm in diameter, 30.5 x 61 cm overall.

Gonzalez-Torres, in keeping with more contemporary queer tactics, resisted positioning his work within the discourses of identity politics (and multiculturalism). Like Rauschenberg and Johns, he opted for an aesthetic (and formal) solution to the problem of expression. Where they used collage and assemblage as a form of code, Gonzalez-Torres cloaks his queer intentions in a postmodern formal drag. His adoption of minimal, conceptual, and post-minimal formal traits is worth investigating briefly because it illuminates the operation of the artefacts in this research.

4.5.2.1 Formal Drag

Curator Nancy Spector associates Gonzalez-Torres with a generation of artists—including Nan Goldin, David Wojnarowicz, Keith Haring, and Robert Gober—who were 'intrepidly and quite candidly exploring the social construction of homosexual identity.'[264] These artists—rather than attempting to establish a new, more "truthful," counter-imagery 'about the social, psychic, and sexual realities of gay life'—aimed 'to repudiate any unitary notion of (representational) truth.'[265]

[264] Spector, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, 14.
[265] Ibid., 14–15.

> [They] worked to expose the stereotyping and misconceptions that feed [homophobic discourse] in contemporary Western culture. […] By appropriating and inhabiting classically "straight" aesthetic genres—the documentary photograph, the macho graffiti-like scrawl, the minimalist cube, and so on—they effectively infiltrated the art system and undermined some of its most conventional, complacent assumptions.[266]

Gonzalez-Torres, for his part, is associated with appropriating minimalism's 'rigid geometries,' postminimalism's 'dematerialised forms,' and the language games of conceptual art.[267] His work shares qualities with minimalist artists like Carl Andre, Sol Lewitt, Donald Judd, and Dan Flavin. These include the use of seriality, grids, and industrially fabricated materials, and an 'emphasis on bodily experience.'[268] However, like other postmodern artists, Gonzalez-Torres contested minimalism's claim to be 'neutral and free of content outside the formal language and process of art-making; that is, to be free of the artist's—and the viewer's—subjective experience.'[269]

4.5.2.2 Marginal Aesthetics

According to art historian Andrew McNamara, Gonzalez-Torres positions his work deliberately in a marginal aesthetic space that mirrors his position as a gay Hispanic artist in the United States. This marginality acts as a corrosive agent, troubling 'the seemingly neat and automatic equation of beauty with aesthetics.'[270] In the process, Gonzalez-Torres disavows traditional Leftist suspicions around aesthetics and art, and seeks to 'reignite the critical dimensions of aesthetic ambition.'[271] In this sense, McNamara writes, 'his motivation [is] as much critical as aesthetic' (ibid.).

> While [Gonzalez-Torres] distanced himself from identity politics and emphasised his aesthetic-formal commitments, he also made the question of the artist's biography central to his practice as well as to his reformulation of the legacy of minimalism and conceptualism. While appealing to the powerful attraction of aesthetic inquiry, he also asserted that he wanted to 'contaminate' aesthetic forms 'with something social.'[272]

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[266] Ibid.
[267] Ibid., 17.
[268] Lisa G. Corrin, "Self-Questioning Monuments," in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres* by Felix Gonzalez-Torres (London: Serpentine Gallery, 2000), 11.
[269] Ibid., 11–12.
[270] Andrew McNamara, "Illegible Echoes: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, the artist-spy," *Image [&] Narrative*, no. 22 (May 2008), not paginated, accessed Jan. 14, 2014, http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/autofiction2/mcnamara.html.
[271] McNamara, "Illegible Echoes." under "The Aesthetic Spy, or The Revenge of the Elevator Man."
[272] McNamara, "Illegible Echoes," under "The Aesthetic Spy," quoting Gonzalez-Torres, "Felix Gonzalez-Torres," interview by Tim Rollins, in *Between Artists: Twelve Contemporary American Artists Interview Twelve Contemporary American Artists*, edited by Lucinda Barnes et al., 82–101 (Los Angeles, CA: A.R.T. Press, 1996): 94.

Gonzalez-Torres—despite self-identifying as "marginal"—resisted attempts to determine his work's meaning based solely upon his subjectivity. While the politics of identity helped to legitimise his artistic presence, they also 'constituted a trap.'[273] These discourses proved 'prescriptive' because they tend to presume which 'aesthetic-political strategy' should be adopted by certain identities and how the resultant art should look (ibid.). Gonzalez-Torres responded by engaging an inter-textual dialogue with artistic and theoretical precursors from across the Western canon. Spector identifies this as a subversive and deconstructive approach that employs "guerrilla-like" tactics. In relation to artistic style, Gonzalez-Torres says:

> we should not be afraid of using [...] formal references, since they represent authority and history. Why not take them? When we insert our own discourse into these forms, we soil them. We make them dark. We make them our own and that is our final revenge. We become part of the language of authority, part of history.[274]

Gonzalez-Torres' remixing of aesthetic and formal paradigms subverts any claims to 'autonomy and objectivity' expounded by their original proponents.[275] Simultaneously, it acts as an aesthetic "bait" that both entices and challenges viewers. 'Beauty,' Gonzalez-Torres claims, 'is a power we should invest with our own purpose.'[276] Of course, beauty is not always "innocent," it can seduce in order to ensnare. Gonzalez-Torres' language in the indented quote above is provocative, verging on violently sexual. In typical queer fashion, he claimed the discourse around AIDS and used it as a creative metaphor. His work was 'as an aesthetic "virus" capable of infecting the structures of authority.'[277] Though shocking, these sexual analogies respond to a history of outright violence against homosexuals. They also reflect the subtle intensity of the violence inflicted when a minority's existence is denied, obscured, or overlooked.

4.5.3 *La Nuit*

In the (Northern) summer of 2010, I had the opportunity to immerse myself in the unique nightlife of Paris.[278] This afforded an extended period of in situ reflection upon the phenomenological and psychological

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[273] McNamara, "Illegible Echoes," under "The Aesthetic Spy."
[274] Spector, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, 15.
[275] Spector, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, 17.
[276] Gonzalez-Torres, quoted in Nancy Princenthal, "Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Multiple Choice," *Art + Text*, no. 48 (May 1994): 42, quoted in Spector, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, 17.
[277] Corrin, "Self-Questioning Monuments," 8.
[278] In early 2010 I took part in a workshop with Jorge and Lucy Orta as part of Adelaide Festival of the Arts' *Adelaide International*. Later that year, I spent two months working as a studio assistant at Studio-ORTA in Paris. This experience had two main effects

experience of life in a particular queer, underground world. In response, I began to conceptualise "the party" as a key "site" of aesthetic and theoretical interest within this project. Broadly, the party defines an idiosyncratic and potentially global network of party scenes (clubs, raves, festivals, and house parties) that intersect—or overlap—with sites and subcultures of queer sexual contact.[279] *It is an assemblage of sites, practices, and bodies that spreads across time and space, via a rhizomatic network of bacterial–counter-cultural–historical–personal–political–relational–rhythmic–sexual–sonic–spiritual–technological–viral–visual connections.*

4.5.4 The Party

The concept of "the party" developed over the course of this research to denote a set of influences and sites of inquiry. The idea has useful social and political connotations, playing on different senses of the term—as celebration, festival, and potentially chaotic eruption of *communitas* on one hand—and party as political apparatus—on the other.[280] Along the way, it takes in a number of heterotopic (or liminal) sites and activities that sit somewhere between these apparent "poles." These include places of sexual transgression between men—such as sex clubs, bathhouses, and gay "beats." These places often align with the thumping beats and darkened spaces of the dance party but they can also be understood in political terms.

The emergence of the party marked the start of a deliberate engagement with these influences and their effect the work. It manifested first in the form of subconscious inclusions and peripheral activities—things so habitual to everyday life that they were overlooked—but as the research progressed it became evident that it formed a core aspect of the research. It bears treatment here because I propose that the party—its historic and contemporary sites, and the theorisation of its various aspects—form a theoretical and *practical* context for this body of research. However, given the restraints of this research and exegesis, this is necessarily brief.

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on this research. The first, mentioned above, related to an extended immersion in the queer "underground" of Paris, which facilitated a degree of conceptual development. The second related to changes in production methods (especially with regard to using "outside" expertise and technologies in the production process) and the formal characteristics of my work (in relation to scale, materials, and surface finishes). My time in Paris also provided the opportunity to reflect, in person, upon the work of early avant-garde artists, including Duchamp and other Dadas and surrealists, in the collection of the Centre Georges Pompidou.

[279] Although global in reach, it must be noted that "the party," as conceptualised here, is primarily a Western phenomenon. It does, however, draw upon non-western practices and traditions at various points in its manifestation and links with "Westernised" cultures around the world. Having made this clear, it is possible to argue that the party—being based in sex, music, and altered states—has cultural roots that extend far beyond contemporary notions of "the West."

[280] The word "party" stems from Middle English (denoting a body of people united in opposition to others) and derives from the Old French *partie*, based on Latin *partiri*, "divide into parts" (Oxforddictionaries.com, s.v. "party," accessed July 28, 2014, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/party).

The party takes in a particular (subjective) party "scene" that partakes in a certain lineage of electronic dance music and includes sites and practices that include nightclubs, festivals, and house parties.[281] The contextual inquiry focused on the theorisation of several scenes with which I have deep personal attachments. These include early disco, the development of house music in Chicago, the acid house (rave) movement in the UK, first- and second-wave Detroit techno, and a number of electronic dance music (EDM) sub-cultures that followed. Many of these have, at different times, played a significant role in my evolving sense of self, or identity, and have had a profound influence on my aesthetic and political predilections.[282]

Through this inquiry, EDM culture was identified as a significant influence upon this practice and a creative *context* for this research. On a superficial level, this is apparent in certain material and formal tendencies, however research into the history and theorisation of certain EDM subcultures has uncovered a rich source of generative material. This provided ways of thinking about this practice-research and formed rhizomatic connections with other significant, though apparently divergent areas of interest. The theorisation of party-like environments; the states they induce; their dynamics; and their subject forming potential shone light on other aspects of this research. The party is an affective assemblage of music–sensations–technologies–aesthetics–dancers–guests–hosts–chemicals–moves–DJs–desires–fashions–costumes–bodies–gazes–styles–signs–languages–and–discourses.

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[281] The party is used in place of limiting terms such as nightclub or rave, which have specific connotations, particularly in the academic literature.

[282] This area of interest stems from the artist-researcher's long-standing—though sporadic—immersion in electronic dance music cultures over nearly 30 years. This extended contact is explained in part by Judith Halberstam's notion of "stretched adolescence," a phenomenon also evident in the "queer-friendly" communities that rub shoulders within the party zone (see *Section 4.5.2 Queer Time and Space*). It is acknowledged that subcultural formations around music play a significant role in the social development of youth; and clubbing—in particular—has been acknowledged as a popular site of meaning production amongst "Generation X." See Gordon Lynch, *After Religion: "Generation X" and the Search for Meaning* (London: DLT, 2002), chapter 5. Generation X refers to the generation born in the West between the early 1960s and the early 1980s (after the post-World War II "baby boom"). Lynch offers an alternative definition, proposing that individuals who seek "authentic" meaning for themselves—outside of the imposed "truths" of religious or other institutions—characterise Generation X. I was born in 1973, into what artist and critic Christopher Miles (b. 1968) says is a 'post-cynical generation.' We are, he says, 'trying to come to terms with a legacy of assorted critiques and endgame positions, deeply touched with postmodern doubt but wanting to transcend it' (Christopher Miles, "Christian Holstad," *Frieze* 85 (Sept. 2004), https://frieze.com/article/christian-holstad?language=en).

4.5.5 *Shiny Disco Balls*

Shiny Disco Balls *(2010) appeared in a group of works produced shortly after I returned from Paris (fig. 35).*[283] *It marks the beginning of a shift in the practical research. This centred on a turn from improvised assemblages—based on arrangements of found objects—to more complex assemblages of specially designed and prefabricated elements. The mirror balls in this work connect these two modes of assemblage: they were the first readymade objects to be purchased "off the shelf" for the purpose of producing a work of art.*[284] *They confirm the interest of this research in "the party" and signal the beginning of a sustained investment in incorporating aspects of the party aesthetic into the work. These shifts coincided with a broader interest in the material and formal qualities of "underground" music and sex clubs and their emphasis on "surface."*

The move towards "fabricated" assemblages signalled by this work did not go off without a hitch. One major work—provisionally titled "Newton's Balls"—was developed directly from Shiny Disco Balls *but later destroyed. Another,* Grindr*, did not make it beyond the conceptual stage because of its size and projected cost.*[285] *These initial probes into this way of working were a disappointment, a setback exacerbated by a contemporaneous cynicism about art and the art world. As a result, I returned to looser approaches in the search for a way forward. The work that followed was provisional and experimental, typified by incomplete works, maquettes, and drawings. Though largely incomplete, these works prompted the conceptual and formal qualities that characterise the outcomes of this research.*

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[283] *Shiny Disco Balls* takes its title from a popular dance music track—"Shiny Disco Balls"—that was receiving a lot of airplay on local community radio at the time. "Shiny Disco Balls (Main Mix), feat. Jessica Eve," produced by Who Da Funk, written by Jorge Mario Jaramillo, Alexander Alicea, and Jessica Eve Vargas, 00:06:46, original release 2001.

[284] However, they were later put to use in actual party contexts and eventually dispersed throughout various party households across Adelaide.

[285] A large-scale (unrealised) installation, *Grindr* did not make it past the maquette stage in this research. Despite this, it played a role in the overall development of the practical work, particularly as it drew the different aspects of the party (sex club and nightclub) together. In one respect, *Grindr* was a development of *Shiny Disco Balls*. In particular, it represented an attempt to incorporate "active" mirror balls into a work. This experiment coincided with my first experiences of the gay social networking application Grindr. At the time of making, I was reflecting upon the impact that this technology might have on gay subcultures, social lives, and perceptions of self. The emphasis on image and self-projection; the "trawling" through images of faces and fragmented bodies; the framing, capture, and transmission of self-images; somehow reminded me of the fragmented, spinning reflections of a mirror ball. I amplified this idea by doubling the single ball and (in my head) scaling them up to room sise. Spinning rapidly and close together, with barely enough room for a body to squeeze between, they would create an almost literal body "grinder." This work was not realised during the research because of the limited logistical and financial resources of the project.



Figure 35. Matt Huppatz, *Shiny Disco Balls*, 2010,
five mirror balls, each 25 cm in diameter, 125 cm in length overall.

4.5.6 Rhizome

In early 2011, I participated in a group exhibition of process-based work at SASA Gallery, Adelaide, called *Vague Possibilities* (fig. 36). Working on site, I produced several improvised assemblage works, including three-dimensional works and an experimental text-based wall "diagram." The latter was based on an expanding "map" of printed webpages that traced a series of web surfing sessions. These were taped to a wall, annotated, and worked over with fluorescent highlighter pens. The highlighters traced idiosyncratic and subjective networks of "meaning" that ran "between the lines" of the structured pages. This spreading web of lines captured—in visual form—the thinking processes that animate this practice and research.

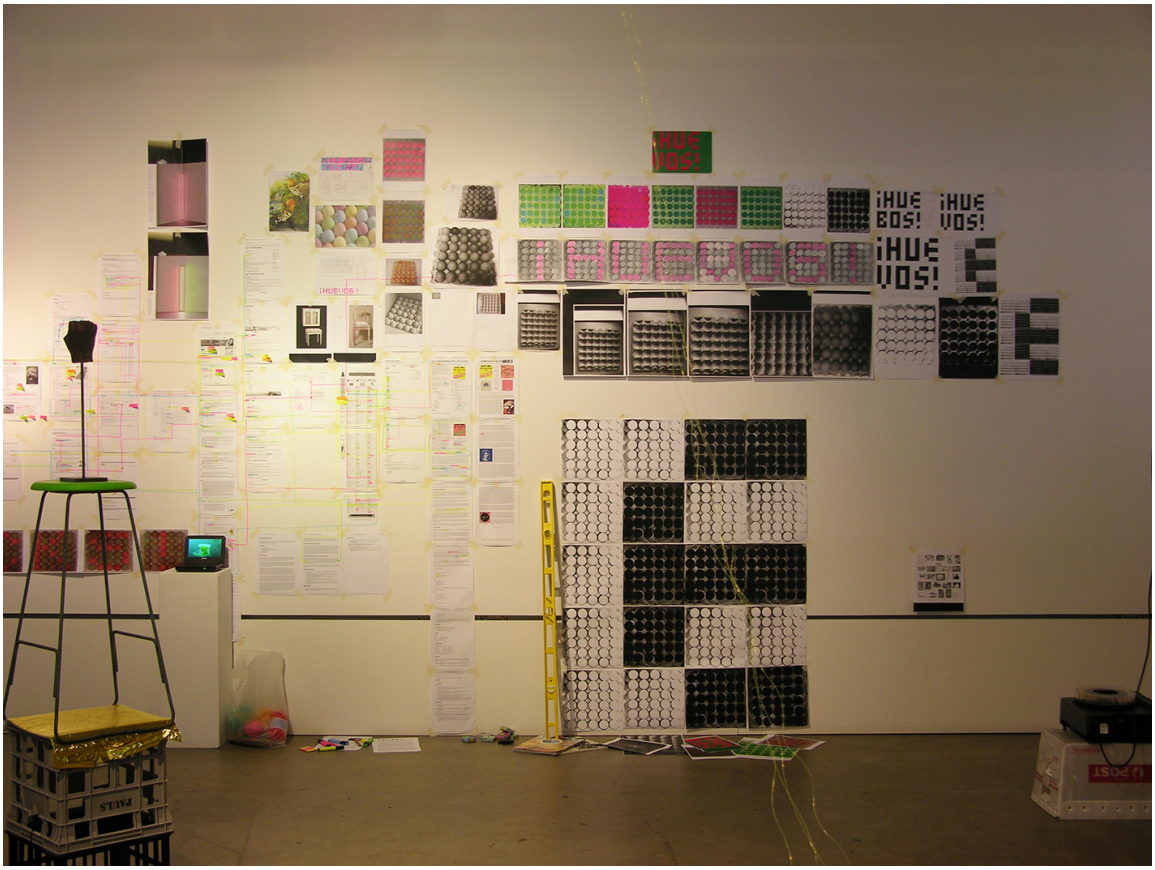


Figure 36. Matt Huppatz, view of installation, *Vague Possibilities*,
SASA Gallery, University of South Australia, Feb. 22–Mar. 25, 2011.

In hindsight, these "vague possibilities" made it clear that the research engaged with a rhizomatic way of thinking. This is not surprising given that the rhizome is closely aligned with the concept of *agencement* in Deleuze and Guattari. They offer the rhizome as an alternative to "arborescent"

thought, which they say has dominated Western reality since classical times.[286] The lines of arborescent thought classify knowledge by representational, unitary, and hierarchical means.[287] 'The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance.'[288]

The rhizome, in contrast, undermines arborescent tendencies by privileging 'becoming, invention and creativity, […] over stasis, identity and recognition.'[289] It travels 'from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing.'[290] Artist-theorist Simon O'Sullivan reinforces the connective potential of the rhizome:

> A rhizome is a system, or anti-system, without centre or indeed any central organising motif. It is flat system in which the individual nodal points can, and are, connected to one another in a non-hierarchical manner. A rhizome then fosters transversal connections and communications between heterogeneous locations and events.[291]

This makes the rhizome's resonance with assemblage clear. In effect, the rhizome describes the operation of the connections between parts in an assemblage. *Vague Possibilities* marked an entrance into the rhizomatic rabbit warren of this research. This was entirely appropriate, because it provided a theoretical counterpart to my parallel descent into the queer, underground, night.

4.5.7 *Sotterraneo*

> *Sotterraneo is an underground club located in a vast network of tunnels beneath Adelaide's quiet streets (fig. 37).*[292] *Its origins lie in a small techno club,* Underworld*, formerly located in the cellars of the Lion Hotel in Melbourne Street, North Adelaide. One night, in the early 90s, a small hole opened in the centre of the club's dance floor. The hole emitted a thin stream of light, which attracted the dancing crowd. One adventurous soul—no*

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[286] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 18.
[287] Ibid., 18; ibid., 12.
[288] Ibid., 25.
[289] Simon O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, Renewing Philosophy (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 3.
[290] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 25.
[291] O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters*, 12.
[292] In 2013, well after *Vague Possibilities*, I produced a site-specific installation for an ephemeral public art project, *FELTnatural*, organised by Adelaide artist-run initiative, FELTspace. The event was located along the banks of the River Torrens in the Park Lands adjacent to the Adelaide CBD. The installation appropriated a disused pump house, converting it into the "rear entrance" of a legendary nightclub, *Sotterraneo*. This "members only" club operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Loud music rattles its doors and permeates the surrounding environment, surprising passers-by. The club has multiple exits and entrances all over the City of Adelaide, and is connected, via a rhisomatic network of subterranean passages, to all of the world's major party destinations.

doubt high on LSD—stooped down to pick at the hole, hoping to expose the source of the light. Others joined, like moths to a flame, and in no time they had excavated a large pit. Driven onward by the relentless techno beat, the dancers burrowed down and down until the hole became a tunnel. Deep in the Earth, the dancers lost all sense of space and time. Eventually, after what seemed an age, they felt the familiar rumble of bass. The tiny tunnel of light opened and, in a rush, they pushed forth, emerging onto the dance floor at The Continental Baths in New York, c. 1973.[293] *From there, they infiltrated the party circuits of the Earth. After floating in a party haze for years, they returned to Adelaide and established* Sotterraneo, *as a living and vital link to the generative potential of the party underground. It has developed into a worldwide phenomenon that stretches across space and time, linking the world's major party destinations, both past and present.*



Figure 37. Matt Huppatz, *Sotterraneo*, 2013, site-specific installation, *FELTnatural*, River Torrens, Adelaide Park Lands, Nov. 21 – 28, 2013, appropriated site, operational 24/7, loud thumping beats, lights, acrylic sign (SOTTERRANEO), engraved aluminium sign (Rear Entry ~ Members Only) and peephole.

[293] For the curious, a good place to start is Dan Gentile, "Electric Relaxation: The Continental Baths Birthed NYC Disco and the Careers of Frankie Knuckles and Larry Levan," *Wax Poetics*, May 4, 2016, accessed July 19, 2016, http://www.waxpoetics.com/features/continental_baths_nyc_disco_frankie_knuckles_larry_levan/.

4.6 PASSAGE 6

4.6.1 The Labyrinth

Minos aspired to the throne of Crete and garnered divine patronage to support his claim. As evidence, Poseidon gifted Minos a majestic bull that was meant for sacrifice. Minos, coveting the bull, kept it and killed another. Infuriated, Poseidon turned the bull wild and caused Minos' wife, Pasiphaë, to fall in love with it. She, in her passion, enlisted the architect Daedalus as an accomplice. He devised a wheeled contraption—in the form of a hollow wooden cow covered with real cowhide—to seduce the bull. Pasiphaë positioned herself inside and Daedalus set the cow in a meadow where the bull was known to graze. On seeing the attractive creature, the bull mounted it and Pasiphaë was impregnated. In time, she gave birth to Asterius—also called Minotaurus—a human with the head of a bull. Minos, following oracular instructions, had Daedalus construct an inescapable prison, the Labyrinth, where the Minotaur was trapped. 'This labyrinth, […] was a cage with convoluted flexions that disorder debouchment.'[294]

Labyrinthine forms have been associated with disorientation and entrapment for millennia. In the West, the best-known labyrinth occurs in the Greek myth of the Theseus and the Minotaur. At the heart of this story is a tale of sexual misadventure, which makes a retelling worthwhile. Essentially a prison, the Labyrinth was designed by the artist-architect Daedalus to house the monstrous Minotaur. The Roman poet Ovid describes the successful operation of its 'blind walls of intricate complexity:'

> Appearances were all confused; the architect led the eye astray by a mazy multitude of winding ways […] in countless corridors [he] built bafflement, and hardly could himself make his way out, so puzzling was the maze.[295]

The Labyrinth is clearly a liminal space: it is taboo, underground, and dark. This liminality is embodied in the Minotaur, the abominable hybrid kept captive in its intricate folds. In many ways, the Labyrinth stands for the mess at the centre of this research, which was characterised by doubling back, endless wandering, dead-ends, and false hope. At the same time, it represents the

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[294] This retelling is based on a version by Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.8–11, trans. Keith Aldrich, reproduced in theoi.com, "Pasiphae," under "Classical Literature Quotes," under "Pasiphae, the Cretan Bull & Birth of the Minotaur," accessed Oct. 11, 2016, http://www.theoi.com/Titan/Pasiphae.html.

[295] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.130ff, trans. A.D. Melville, reproduced in theoi.com, "Minotauros," under "Classical Literature Quotes," accessed Oct. 11, 2016, http://www.theoi.com/Ther/Minotauros.html.

possibility of escape. The discussion of Robert Morris's work in *Sections 4.6.5 – 4.6.8* captures something of the Labyrinth's significance in this research. In his work, it acts as a metaphor for the convoluted relationship between self and society, and the endless search for an authentic relationship with the world.

4.6.2 The Underground

Victor Turner's theories on liminality are pertinent to a discussion of the queer underground, notably nightclubs and bathhouses. His thinking arose early in this research, and it became apparent that liminal rites resonated with queer sites. Jason Prior and Carole Cusack, whose research documents the experiences of men in the bathhouses of Sydney from the mid-1960s to the early '80s, share this observation.[296] They, and several of their participants, explicitly describe the bathhouse as a liminal and transformative space. Liminality, with its accompanying *communitas*, is evident in the experiences that participants describe, and in the customs and architecture of the bathhouse.

The bathhouse is a space "set apart." From without, it is inconspicuous: the inner domain is protected from the 'hostile' city by 'blacked-out windows, boarded-up openings, solid walls, and bolted doors.'[297] A discrete entrance provides access; the first of a series of 'threshold mechanisms' that provide security (ibid.). Crossing this protective threshold begins the 'transformative process' (84). Patrons then move 'through a passage into a vestibule,' navigate 'the coded language used to filter out possible aliens,' enter 'through the bolted door,' remove their garments, and don the small towel issued on entry.[298]

Prior and Cusack's participants describe this threshold crossing as "walking between worlds," "traveling into otherworldliness," and "going into a mysterious underworld" (86). This transition was not just physical, but profoundly psychological. Said one participant:

> The bathhouse [threshold] is a type of edge. A solid edge [off which] … leads pathways and corridors of possible experiences […] I suppose it's like a barrier, […] like breaking through a

[296] Jason Prior and Carole M. Cusack, "Spiritual Dimensions of Self-Transformation in Sydney's Gay Bathhouses," *Journal of Homosexuality* 57 (2010): 71–97.
[297] Prior and Cusack, *Self-Transformation*, 75.
[298] Ibid., 84. This process remains unchanged today in Western-style gay bathhouses across the world.

> place in my mind from the safety of the everyday structures, […] to make that journey into that place is letting go of the life you're living day to day […].[299]

Like a journey into the underworld, the descent into the bathhouse is 'marked by the stripping away of symbols' (86).

> This passage across the threshold was a cathartic experience that allowed patrons to "free-up" their sexual selves. Here, they would shed many of the laws, customs, conventions, and ceremonies that constrained their sexual selves in daily life.[300]

Following this "levelling," the "ritual subjects" entered a state that was "betwixt and between"—"neither here nor there."[301] They entered a community where all were equals, 'no longer an underclass or perversion of the normative sexual hierarchy of the world outside.'[302]

> Here, society was inverted, with homosexuality the norm and heterosexuality marginalised. Homosexual expression was fostered, creating a generic bond and a culture of "human-kindness" […], a sense of shared collective memories and experience, of connection based on a myriad of practices, involving […] bodies and emotions, as well as thoughts.[303]

Exposure to 'entirely new experiences' in this liminal underworld 'invited the possibility of transformation and ensured a return to the upper world with a new understanding of the meaning of life (86).

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[299] Prior and Cusack, *Self-Transformation*, 86. Inserted text and non-parenthesised ellipses in original. This shift in narrative from first to second person is instructive. While it may indicate a hesitation to speak of direct personal experience, it also suggests that the obligation to present a coherent, centered self is shed as the participant descends into the steamy darkness.

[300] Ibid., 84. The authors here note that this process was often 'stimulated and enhanced through the use of drugs such as amyl nitrate (poppers), LSD, and speed, in the late 1960s and 1970s, with the addition of ecstasy and MDA in the 1980s' (ibid.). While these drugs enhanced feelings of "otherworldliness," they were also 'a means of exploring our selves' and a tool 'to escape, […] to abandon conventional life' (ibid., quoting Andrew Hartman, personal communication, Aug. 29, 2000); 'Altered states of consciousness, whether induced by drugs or entered through ascetic exercises such as meditation, sleep deprivation, and flagellation, have a history of association with powerful rituals of becoming, such as tribal initiations and shamanic journeying' (ibid., 85; referencing Jess B. Hollenback, *Mysticism: Experience, Response, Empowerment* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 33–39).

[301] Prior and Cusack, *Self-Transformation*, 86, quoting J. Quigley, personal communication, Aug. 20, 2000.

[302] Prior and Cusack, *Self-Transformation*, 86. Prior and Cusack emphasise that these men often felt "out of place" in this world, "outside" of convention, a state that corresponds to the Greek *atopos* (ibid., 75). The term is used to describe early Greek philosophers who deliberately withdrew from their 'social location'—as citizens of the polis—and 'all the obligations, duties, and privileges that citizenship entailed' (Bernard McGinn, "Withdrawal and Return: Reflections on Monastic Retreat from the World," *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2006), 149). Although not acknowledged, it is likely that Prior and Cusack draw this connection from McGinn. Curiously, another definition of *atopos* resonates strongly with the definition of queer as "bent:" '*átopos* (an adjective, derived from *A* "not" and *tópos*, "place")—properly, out of place, i.e. *odd* (out of the ordinary); (figuratively) unsuitable because "warped" (not "falling in line with" needed expectations or the norm); strange, queer; out of line (kilter); amiss' ("824.atopos," Bible Hub, accessed July 2, 2016, http://biblehub.com/greek/824.htm); and elsewhere, in later Greek and especially biblical translations, more sternly, as 'improper, wicked, unrighteous, harmful' (ibid.).

[303] Prior and Cusack, *Self-Transformation*, 86.



Figure 38. Keith Haring, *69*, 1986, acrylic on canvas, 83.8 x 91.4 cm.

4.6.3 The Gay Labyrinth

As the wave of liberation grew in the 1970s, opportunities to free up the sexual self were enhanced through control of the bathhouse's lighting, built form, and atmosphere (88). Faint red lighting was installed—the relative darkness liberated sexual exploration—and music was selected 'to intensify the sensuality, rhythms, thrusts, and climaxes of pleasure.'[304] Bathhouse proprietors experimented with porn rooms, darkrooms, spas and pools, glory holes, mirrored

[304] Prior and Cusack, *Self-Transformation*, 92; referencing A. Kantrowitz, "The synagogue, the Saint, and the Mineshaft," *The Advocate* (Apr. 15, 1982): 32–35).

rooms, mazes, and an increased number of passageways.[305] These facilitated close proximity between bodies and offered nooks for intimate contact. Prior and Cusack specifically identify the maze as an "ingenious" device, which 'enhanced and augmented' the patron's sexual and spiritual experience (88).

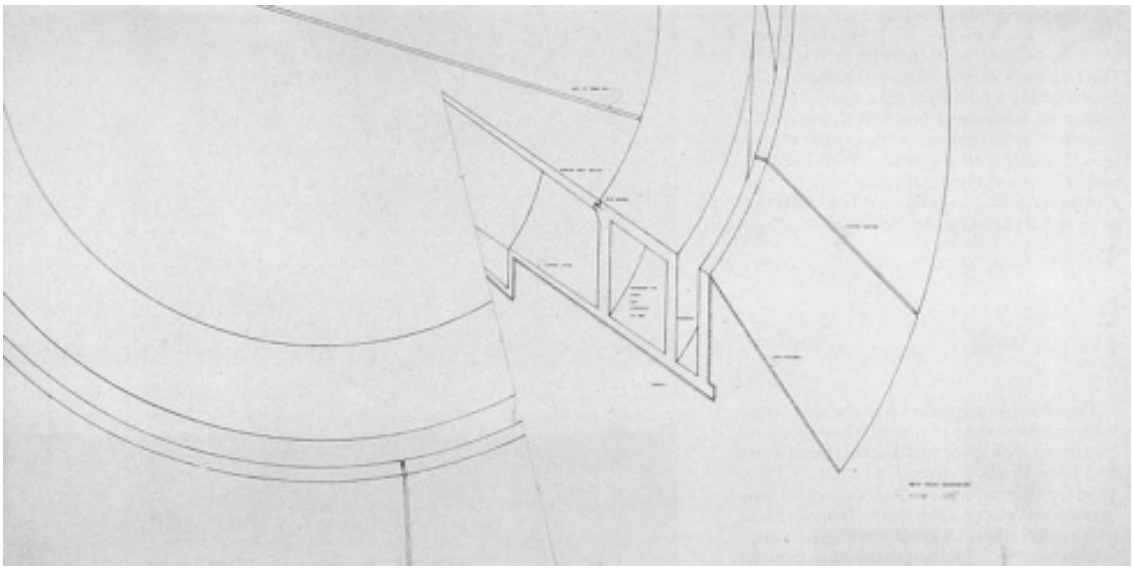


Figure 39. Robert Morris, *Bath House Observatory*, 1971, ink on paper, 106.7 x 213.4 cm.

Bathhouse patrons described the bathhouse complex layout as "cave-like structures," "catacombs," and a "labyrinth" (ibid.). A sense of disorientation 'was enhanced by mirrors, strobe lights, and clouds of hot mist' (92). One participant reflected at length on this labyrinth, raising curious parallels with the drawings—most notably *Bath House Observatory* (1971) (fig. 39)—that preceded Robert Morris' *Labyrinth* works:

> Within the labyrinths of this underworld, I [discovered] masses of people […] fighting for some type of freedom, pursuing a collective dream. I [identified] with all these men […], and yet was also watching it all as an observer. […] It seemed like I participated in hundreds of scenes depicting […] Babylonian temple prostitution, obscure rites and […] ritual orgies […].[306]

In these dark and steamy atmospheres, '[b]odies became fragmented and experiences between […] body parts became the focus.'[307] Sexual discovery within these liminal spaces focused on

[305] Prior and Cusack, *Self-Transformation*, 88.
[306] Ibid., 89, quoting C. Douglas, personal communication, Sep. 11, 2000.
[307] Prior and Cusack, *Self-Transformation*, 92.

'transient, though intense, physical pleasure' (ibid.). But the bathhouse was not only about the fulfilment of desires unacceptable in the city above; it also provided a 'nurturing [space] that allowed men to rethink their sexuality and other aspects of their lives from a different perspective' (92). Here, 'men could plumb the depths of sexual possibility through radical self-emptying and relinquishment that provided them with unexpected transformations of their being' (92–3).

> 'It was a journey to the centre of one's deepest feelings and sensations and back out into the world with a broadened understanding of one's self' (89).

Prior and Cusack propose that the baths provided men with periodic escape.

> To escape from the self is to free oneself of the struggle to maintain a certain image, a certain being, to abandon the pressures, demands, obligations, responsibilities, and other practices that plague the self (87).

'Like other forms of escape from the self, the journey in the bathhouse focused attention intensely on the body, enabling men to become absorbed in physical feelings' (88). In this understanding, the self is a composite of 'the physical body and an accumulation of meanings' (88). Escape in this sense 'is directed at getting rid of those meanings, that is, of shutting them out of one's mind' and engaging fully in the physical self (88). As one participant noted, the journey "is not just about escaping *from*, it's also about escaping *to*' (87).

4.6.4 *Communitas*

> For groups, as well as for individuals, life itself means to separate and to be reunited, to change form and condition, to die and to be reborn. It is to act and to cease, to wait and rest, and then to begin acting again, but in a different way.
>
> —Arthur van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*.[308]

The blend 'of lowliness and sacredness, of homogeneity and comradeship' evident in liminal phenomena such as the bathhouse is significant to Victor Turner:

> We are presented, in such rites, with a "moment in and out of time," and in and out of secular social structure, which reveals [...] some recognition (in symbol if not always in language) of a generalised social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties.[309]

This 'generalised social bond' is at the core of Turner's concept of *communitas*:

> It is as though there are two major "models" for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating. The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and (often) hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men [sic] in terms of "more" or "less." The second, which emerges recognisably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus,* community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders.[310]

Turner makes it clear that a distinction between structure and *communitas* is not equivalent to a division between "secular" and "sacred." Many fixed offices in tribal societies have sacred attributes but he points out that these are derived—or "retrieved"—from *rites de passage*, and specifically from the mode of *communitas* encountered within the liminal phase: 'Something of the sacredness of that transient humility and modelessness goes over, and tempers the pride of the

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[308] Arthur van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monica B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 189.
[309] Turner, *Ritual Process*, 96. These are the structural ties that we associate with hierarchies of caste, class, and rank. In stateless societies like those found in parts of Africa, they manifest as segmentary oppositions (based on kinship) that form "horizontal hierarchies" (ibid.).
[310] Turner, *Ritual Process*, 96. Turner uses the Latin term *communitas* to specify this particular 'modality of social relationship' and to distinguish it from the idea of community as "an area of common living" (ibid.).

incumbent of a higher position or office.'[311] For Turner, the significance of *communitas* in such rituals is:

> a matter of giving recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be *no* society. Liminality implies that the high could not be high unless the low existed, and he [sic] who is high must experience what it is like to be low (ibid.).

It would appear that, rather than a division between structure and *communitas*, the liminal opens a passage through which *communitas* is connected with the world of structure and vice versa. Or, thought in a different way, it is as if *communitas* is structure turned inside out.[312] This would account for the profound impact of liminal experience—that is, sustained immersion in *communitas*—upon participants in the bathhouse, and in the related party subcultures that I touch upon elsewhere.[313]

4.6.5 *Four Passages*

Reflection upon the queer underground led to a consideration of its generative potential. Passages (Portal 1) *(2011–14) (fig. 40) is a speculative work that developed in stages over the second half of this research. It emerged in the development of* Grindr *(2011)—an unrealised, large-scale installation work.*[314] *In that process, I made a series of perspectival drawings of empty rooms. Following a process used in the production of* Map of Man Mountain (Day/Night)*, I used a photocopier to "invert" the drawings.*[315] *The resulting black "rooms," with their edges highlighted in white, reminded me of the darkened rooms and passages found in gay bathhouses and sex clubs.*

Intrigued, I made more drawings, changing the dimensions to represent passages or corridors.[316] *In the process of photocopying these onto heavy art paper, the toner failed to adhere completely to the paper, producing a serendipitous "starry sky" effect. The potentially seedy bathhouse passage had become a portal to the heavens. This cosmic contrast suggests the liminal and "otherworldly" aspects of the bathhouse, which arise in the*

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[311] Ibid., 97.
[312] This is reminiscent of shamanic practice, which seeks to connect the world of here and now with the "underworld" that gives shape and form to this world, and is vital to its ongoing renewal.
[313] Leo Bersani quite rightly points out that the *communitas* formed within the domain of the bathhouse was not free of all hierarchy. Within bathhouses, rudimentary hierarchies about bodies often emerged within groups of patrons, e.g. the most muscular, the hairiest, the largest dick (Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?" in *AIDS: Cultural Analysis, Cultural Activism*, ed. D. Crimp, 197–222 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988).
[314] See note 279.
[315] See *2.1.1 Map of Man Mountain (Day/Night)*
[316] Curiously, in the final stages of this project while reflecting on this work, I realised that these "passages"—which might also be rooms—could just as easily be drawings for the artefact *Glory Boxes 1-2-3* (section *4.7.3 Glory Boxes 1-2-3*)

literature.[317] *Pushing the idea of "altered states," I hand-coloured the white lines with fluorescent ink, referencing the phosphenes that one "sees" in the darkness behind closed eyes.*[318]

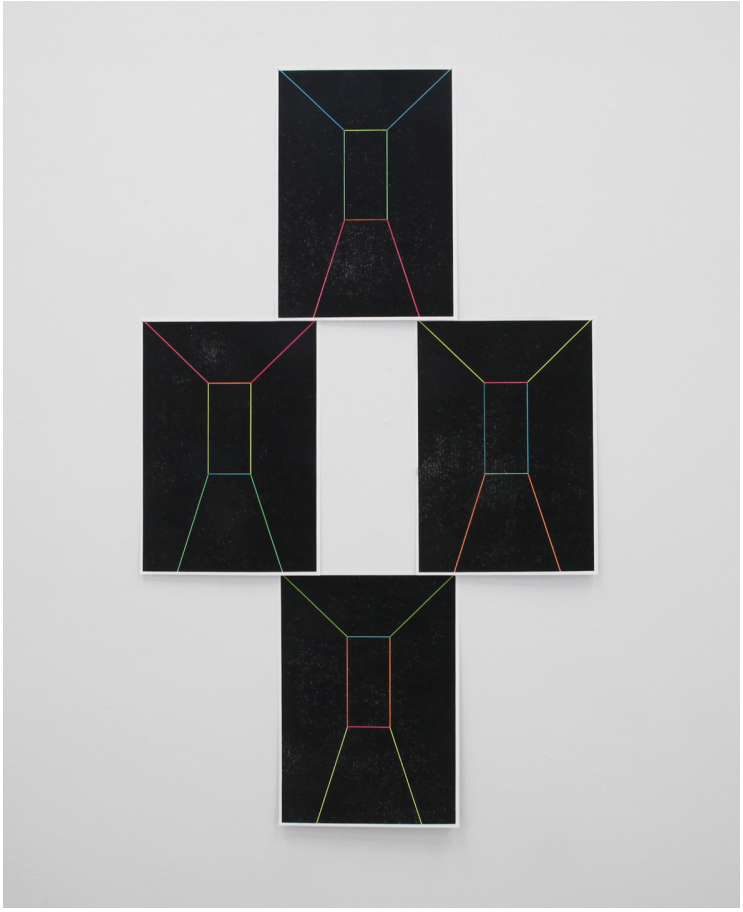


Figure 40. Matt Huppatz, *Passages (Portal 1)*, 2011–14,
four xerographic prints on rag paper, hand-coloured with fluorescent pen,
each 42 x 29.7 cm, 128 x 80 cm overall.

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[317] See *4.6.2 The Underground* above, especially Jason Prior and Carole M. Cusack, "Spiritual Dimensions of Self-Transformation in Sydney's Gay Bathhouses," *Journal of Homosexuality* 57 (2010): 71–97.

[318] A phosphene (formed irregularly from Greek phōs light + phainein to show) is 'an objective visual sensation that occurs with the eyes closed and in the absence of retinal stimulation by visible light' (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "phosphene," accessed Nov. 13, 2016, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/phosphene; Benjamin F. Miller, *Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health*, s.v. "phosphene," 7th edition (Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 2003)). Phosphenes occur spontaneously or can be provoked. The former are usually associated with a lack of visual stimulation, as in cases of visual deprivation, or with neurological conditions. They can also be induced mechanically, by applying physical pressure or electrical stimulation to the eyeball or brain. Visual hallucinations, including those caused by psychedelic drugs, are also classified as phosphenes. Klüver (1926), in an effort to typologise mescaline-induced hallucinations, identified four main types of recurring geometric pattern (which he called "form constants"). Curiously, in relation to *Passages* and related developments, these included grid-, lattice-, and honeycomb-like patterns; cobwebs; tunnels, funnels, alleys, cones, and vessels (Heinrich Klüver, "Mescal Visions and Eidetic Vision," *American Journal of Psychology* 37, no. 4 (1926): 505–15; Ronald K. Siegal, "Hallucinations," *Scientific American* 237, no. 4 (Oct. 1977): 132). In a later study, Siegal noted a similar recurring form constant in relation to tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) intoxication: the latticed tunnel (Siegal, "Hallucinations," 136). These findings resonate with the passages, pipes, orifices, tunnels, burrows, and rhizomes that pepper this research.

These "drawings" were first shown in a critique as *Four Passages* (2011), four prototype drawings presented side by side as separate passages. The idea was rephrased in 2014 as *Passages (Portal 1)*, placing the drawings in a formation alongside other party-inspired works—*Ziggurat* (2012) (fig. 53 and 54) and *The Ball* (2013). Here, the line drawings joined to form a larger portal hovering over a void. In 2015, in light of theoretical investigations, I began to experiment with expanding this basic network into a rhizome—or web—of interconnected structures. Although the original passages were immediately associated with the darked *agencement* of a gay sex club, their connection to labyrinthine spaces didn't become theoretical until later.

Further reflection on the sculptural possibilities of the queer underground led to recognition of the maze-like qualities of certain sites. In response, I sketched some provisional mazes plans and began inquiring into maze design and history. This led to Maurice Berger's *Labyrinths* (1989) and the labyrinthine works of Robert Morris.[319]

4.6.6 Robert Morris

Art is born of humiliation.
—W.H. Auden[320]

Stumbling across Morris's drawing Labyrinth *(1974) (fig. 41) was an uncanny experience. It was as if the works imagined in my head—and (crudely) articulated in my notebook—had manifested, but in the work of another artist, forty years earlier. Initially this was exciting, a confirmation of my research trajectory, although later it caused a degree of self-questioning.*[321] *The correspondence of these "idea-images" made me wonder if there was more to this than just an interest in the same archetypal form. Digging deeper, I was*

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[319] Maurice Berger, *Labyrinths: Robert Morris, Minimalism, and the 1960s* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989). In my reflections on the sculptural potential of the queer underground, it struck me that the formal, spatial, and material qualities of these spaces were *remarkably* similar to early minimal and postminimal works. Specifically, they utilise inexpensive building materials like plywood and Masonite; they often feature mirrored and clear acrylic dividing walls; they are painted a generic—almost "administrative"—grey (or black); they typically utilise CCTV technologies (for security) and feature screens in strategic places that play (pornographic) videos; and they are typified by passage-like layouts, which emphasise bodies in space. (For insight into the resonances between queer sexual activity and avant-garde practice, see Paul B. Franklin, "Object Choice: Marcel Duchamp's Fountain and the Art of Queer History," *Oxford Art Journal* 23, no. 1 (2000): 25–50.

[320] W. H. Auden, quoted by Robert Morris, "Robert Morris," interview by Wade Guyton, interviewmagazine.com (Jan. 6, 2014), http://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/robert-morris/.

[321] Further research into Morris reminded me that he had been a formal influence on my work as an undergraduate, although I had not engaged with his practice in any depth. This led me to wonder about subliminal influence, but I was confident that—even if there was an element of this—I had arrived at this juncture by a circuitous route based in personal experience.

intrigued to discover clues in Morris's other work around this time, which seemed to indicate more than just a superficial connection to my own concerns.

Robert Morris first took up the labyrinth as a central motif in the mid-1970s, when it played a key role in his investigations into 'traditionally conceived relations between sculpture and architecture.'[322] The labyrinth, through its mythic roots, is inevitably tied to the idea of imprisonment. Its symbolic form encodes 'the architecturally induced phobia of confinement and control.'[323]

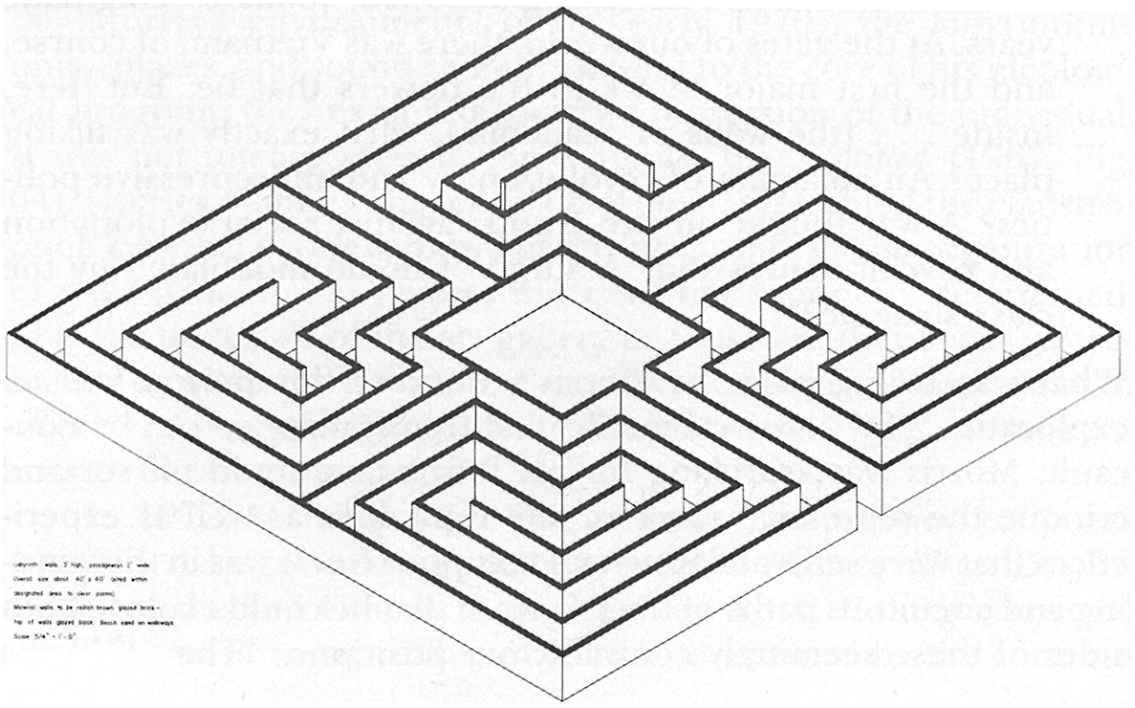


Figure 41. Robert Morris, *Labyrinth* 1974. Ink on paper.

As well as drawings like *Labyrinth* (1974), Morris produced a number of large-scale sculptural works that can be entered physically. The first to be constructed was *Untitled (Labyrinth)* (1974)

[322] Robert Morris and Thomas Krens, *The Drawings of Robert Morris* (Williamstown, MA: Williams College Museum of Art, 1982), no pag. Exhibition catalogue. In *Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem*, Krauss and Krens note that labyrinthine forms were taken up by other artists at around the same time, including Alice Aycock, Richard Fleischner, and Patrick Ireland For further information on contemporaneous use of labyrinthine forms, Krauss and Krens refer readers to Ronald J. Onorato, "The Modern Maze," *Art International* 21, nos. 4–5 (April–May 1976): 21–25; and Hermann Kern, "Labyrinths: Tradition and Contemporary Works," *Artforum* 19, no. 9 (May 1981): 60–68. See *Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem*, curated by Rosalind Krauss and Thomas Krens (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 1994), 250.

[323] *Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem*, 250.

(fig. 42), a unicursal variant modelled on a pattern found in Chartres Cathedral.[324] In that context, the structure is associated with pilgrimage and redemption, but it nevertheless relates to a form of entrapment (the eternal soul caught in an earthly body).[325] Morris's labyrinth, although 'clearly legible […] as an elegant pattern' from above, 'can only be experienced as elusive' from within (ibid.). 'Never dividing to offer choices, […] this object's strategy is […] one of processing the viewer's body through a protocol of confusion and disorientation (ibid.).



Figure 42. Robert Morris, *Untitled (Labyrinth)*, 1974,
plywood and Masonite, painted, 243 high x 914 cm in diameter.

Morris's sculptural labyrinths relate dialogically to two series of drawings: the *Labyrinths* (1973–74) and *In the Realm of the Carceral* (1978). The relationship to the formal variations explored in the *Labyrinth* drawings is self-explanatory, but the series of twelve drawings that comprise *In the*

[324] A unicursal labyrinth follows one continuous line.
[325] *Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem*, 250.

Realm of the Carceral provide insight into Morris's theoretical concerns. Executed five years after the first *Labyrinth* works, they mark a return to this form that this is reinvigorated—and somewhat troubled—by an engagement with the writings of French philosopher Michel Foucault.

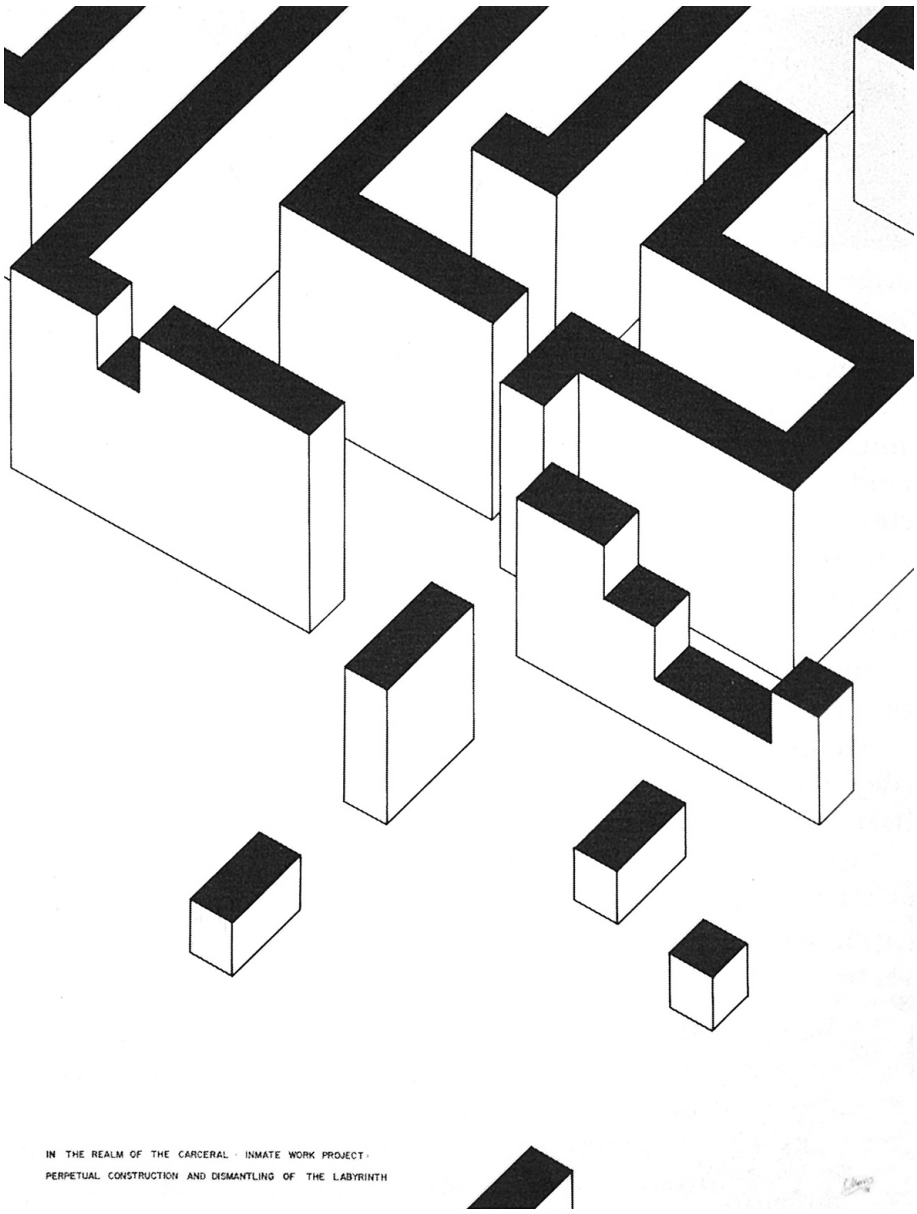


Figure 43. Robert Morris, *In the Realm of the Carceral: Inmate Work Project – Perpetual Construction and Dismantling of the Labyrinth*, 1978, ink on paper, 85.7 x 114.3 cm.

The titles of these later drawings leave little doubt as to their implications. They include *Gardens of Compulsory Exercise*; *Observation Yards*; *Security Walls*; and *The Walled Grounds of Parades and Punishment*. Each drawing is severely truncated; together they form a fragmented map of 'an overall structure of imprisonment.'[326] *Inmate Work Project: Perpetual Construction and Dismantling of the Labyrinth* (fig. 43) suggests a futile, repetitious, and endlessness process performed under duress. The half built/deconstructed walls 'metaphorise the condition of the Labyrinth itself' (262). It could be argued that this work reproduces a poststructuralist view of self: a thing under perpetual (re)construction. Although Morris is ostensibly occupied with institutions and forms in this work, this leap towards a subjective interpretation is not without foundation. This becomes clearer in the following discussion of Michel Foucault's thought and its influence on Morris's evolving practice.

4.6.7 The Labyrinthine Self

> To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now.
>
> —Samuel Beckett.[327]

Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* was a direct influence on *In the Realm of the Carceral* (262). His demonstration of how systems of power 'penetrate the body of the human subject, to control and construct it,' is evidently at play in these works (ibid.). *In the Realm of the Carceral* 'explicitly examine[s] the repressive order of industrial society.'[328] It is important to note that Foucault's insights were inevitably informed by his experience as a gay man. While his theories are well known, they were evidently influential upon Morris and retain significance for those who feel the constant pressure of control. Foucault's work has been quoted at length below

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[326] Ibid., 262. The author notes that these works are reminiscent of Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Carceri* etchings, which Morris saw in 1971. However, Morris shifts from Piranesi's Baroque perspectives, to an aerial 'panoptical viewpoint' that—combined with an exact technical drawing style—'reproduces the look of "clean" control' (ibid.). *In the Realm of the Carceral* relates to an earlier series of drawings from 1971, which depict an imaginary, almost utopian architectural complex inspired by ancient and modern monolithic sites (Morris and Krens, *Drawings*). The drawings depict spaces designed for socialising, meandering, "snoozing," practising T'ai Chi, and observing the sun (ibid.). 'Neither religious nor militaristic, the fantasy complex circles around a secular re-entry to time, place, and function.' (ibid.) The queer eye will notice a particular drawing that stands out in the context of this research, *Bath House Observatory* (1971).

[327] Samuel Beckett, in conversation with John Driver, 1961, quoted in Deirdre Bair, *Samuel Beckett: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978).

[328] *Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem*, 136.

because of its theoretical relevance, but also for its rich sculptural and erotic potential. I propose that Foucault, Morris, and this research draw upon fields of experience that are dialogic and, while diverse, intimately connected.

4.6.8 The Dissolving Prison

Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977) charts the shifting nature of juridical activity from the early modern to the modern period.[329] His analysis reveals a shift away from direct corporeal punishment as public torture and execution became taboo. The punished body gradually disappeared from view and the brunt of punishment fell upon a dematerialised body assembled around notions of an individual self.[330] If severe penalty no longer 'addresses itself to the body,' it now speaks to 'the heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations'—things usually understood to be "apart" from the body (ibid., 16).

The shift from spectacular and pain-driven punishment to less corporeal forms of discipline is significant. Where capital punishment still exists in the West, elaborate public rituals of execution have been replaced by "privatised" methods carried out "behind closed doors."

> Once punishment is no longer a commonly witnessed experience of a momentary, physical event in public space, but stands as a time-based process that we must intuitively imagine, it begins to implant its effect within all of our imaginations. Rather than […] being limited to the poor figure being torn to pieces […], the location of punishment is transferred so that it now unfolds within our collective minds, rather than on a single [objective] anatomy (ibid., 19–20).

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[329] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd Vintage Books edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). Originally published in London by Allen Lane, 1977. Foucault identifies two historical models of control that underlie modern disciplinary projects. The first is the marking of the leper and his separation from society as a model for projects of exclusion (ibid., 198). The second is the segmentation of plague victims and the processes of analysis and distribution applied to comparable outbreaks of confusion and disorder (ibid.). These ways of 'exercising power over men […] controlling their relations […] separating out their dangerous mixtures,' came together slowly in the nineteenth century, finding their ultimate resolution in the Panopticon (ibid.). Here, the space of exclusion—'of which the leper was the symbolic inhabitant (beggars, vagabonds, madmen, and the disorderly formed the real population)'—was superimposed with the partitionary technique of power (ibid.). Foucault's articulation of these models of control is significant in the context of this project because both the leper (who represents a creeping insidiousness) and the plague victim (an unexplainable, sudden chaos inflicted upon the innocent) can be understood respectively as analogues for homosexuality and the AIDs epidemic, and efforts to control both. 'Behind the disciplinary mechanisms can be read the haunting memory of "contagions", of the plague, of rebellions, crimes, vagabondage, desertions, people who appear and disappear, live and die in disorder' (ibid.).

[330] Anne Schwan and Stephen Shapiro, *How to Read Foucault's Discipline and Punish* (London: Pluto Press, 2011), 17.

Foucault's demonstration of how systems of power begin to penetrate the body is developed further in his well-known discussion of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. Foucault's account is worth repeating, if only for its erotic sculptural potential:

> […] at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open into the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside corresponds to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. […] By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualised and constantly visible.[331]

The genius of the Panopticon, of course, is that no actual supervisor is necessary. Power is "automatised" and "disindividualised." Its principle is 'not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up' (202). Subject to permanent visibility, the inmate succumbs to a state of consciousness that assures the automatic functioning of power (201).

> He […] assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.[332]

Under these conditions, the prison began to dematerialise: 'there were no more bars, no more chains, no more heavy locks; all that was needed was that the separations should be clear and the openings well arranged' (202). Fortress-like "houses of security" were replaced by the 'simple, economic geometry' of "houses of certainty" (202). The constraining force of power—previously embodied and symbolised in massive walls—'passed over to the other side—to the side of its surface of application' (202). In this sense, 'the panoptical system is the exercise of "clean" power,

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[331] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 200. The annular ring and the upright tower are obvious references to (homosexual) sex and the connections between sex and power. The prisoners are metaphorically (if not literally) fucked by the system.
[332] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 202.

rather than the pre-Enlightenment systems of public spectacles of punishment and torture.'[333] This is clearly the territory transcribed in Morris's drawings.

This returns us to Berger, who proposes that Morris's project attempts to transcend the 'panoptic, repressive world' through art.[334] Again, he aligns this approach with the theories of social theorist Herbert Marcuse, who proposed that art could play a substantial role in revolutionising '[a] repressive structure of the drives and instincts.'[335] This reflects one of Morris's long term interests: 'the idea of resuscitating the self—the private, psychological centre that gives each of us a sense of control of our lives—from the oppressive, ego-confiscating world of late capitalism.'[336] These aims resonate, in turn, with Foucault's later work in *The Care of the Self*.[337]

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[333] *Robert Morris: Mind/Body Problem*, 262.
[334] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 139.
[335] Jürgen Habermas, "Herbert Marcuse: On Art and Revolution," in *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 166, quoted in Berger, *Labyrinths*, 139.
[336] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 139.
[337] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*. Vol. 3, *The Care of the Self*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 1990). First published by Editions Gallimard, Paris, 1984.

4.6.9 Psychosexual Minimalism

I seem to speak, it is not I, about me, it is not about me.

—Samuel Beckett.[338]

In the final chapter of Berger's book, "Labyrinths: A Search for the Self," a decidedly queer image of Morris appears (fig. 44).[339] Wearing what appears to be S&M gear, Morris's hyper-masculine appearance immediately suggests the (then emerging) look of the gay "clone".[340] This allusion may have been lost on mainstream audiences, but it is likely that Morris recognised its queer potential. The provocative image points to alternate (or queer) sexual modes, and issues of power and control. The artist places himself in a precarious position with regard to conservative society and—in so doing—leaves his work and personal life open to question.[341]

Berger applies this image to discuss the 'aggressive sensuality' of Morris' work, which he proposes is an attack on 'the repressive chasteness [...] demanded by our puritanical culture.'[342] The poster stands as a metaphor for Morris's attempts to unlock 'the mechanisms of bourgeois repression.'[343] It 'self-consciously announces' a '"new political praxis that integrates sensuality, fantasy, and desire."'[344] This situates Morris's project in a continuum that includes "Marcusean" texts like *Eros and Civilisation*, *Anti-Oedipus*, and *The Politics of Experience*; all visions of an 'unbounded, experiential world' (161).

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[338] Samuel Beckett, taken from the first page of the preamble to *The Unnameable*, quoted by Berger, *Labyrinths*, 162.

[339] The photograph, taken by critic Rosalind Krauss, who was Morris' lover at the time, appeared on a poster for the Morris exhibition, "Labyrinths—Voice—Blind Time," at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, in April 1974 (Kriston Capps, "Lynda Bengalis/Robert Morris: 1973/1974," *Art in America*, July 8, 2009, exhibition review, accessed Nov 23, 2016, http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/reviews/lynda-benglisrobert-morris-19731974/).

[340] "Clone" refers to a look that originated in the Castro District of San Francisco. Popular amongst urban gay men from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, it is characterised by an exaggerated "macho" appearance, typified by tight t-shirts, check/plaid shirts, snug-fitting jeans, boots, short hairstyles, and full moustaches. It extended to include other overt "signs" of masculinity including uniforms, leather, and S&M gear. While introduced to mainstream audiences by popular performers like Freddie Mercury and The Village people, the clone look drew on "underground" sources. It has obvious precursors in the hyper-masculine, and entirely camp, drawings produced for "physique" magazines in the 1950s by Tom of Finland (Touko Valio Laaksonen). Gay rights advocate and writer Arthur Evans coined the term "clone" in the late 1970s. He used it in a derogatory sense in a satirical leaflet, "Afraid You're not Butch enough?" (1978). Evans criticised gay men who pursued hyper-masculine bodies and wardrobes, calling them zombies and clones (Wikipedia, s.v. "Castro clone," last modified October 15, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castro_clone; Wikipedia, s.v. "Arthur Evans (author)," last modified October 11, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Evans_(author)).

[341] There is some discussion about the image in the literature, mostly pointing to a masculinist reading but largely ignoring—or overlooking—the gay or queer potential. Morris refers to it as a portrait of Mars, the ultimate warrior.

[342] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 160.

[343] Ibid., 161. Berger is referring specifically to the works that were shown in the exhibition advertised by the poster: *Voice*, *Philadelphia Labyrinth*, and *Blind Time*.

[344] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 161; quoting Jürgen Habermas, "Herbert Marcuse: On Art and Revolution," in *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 169.

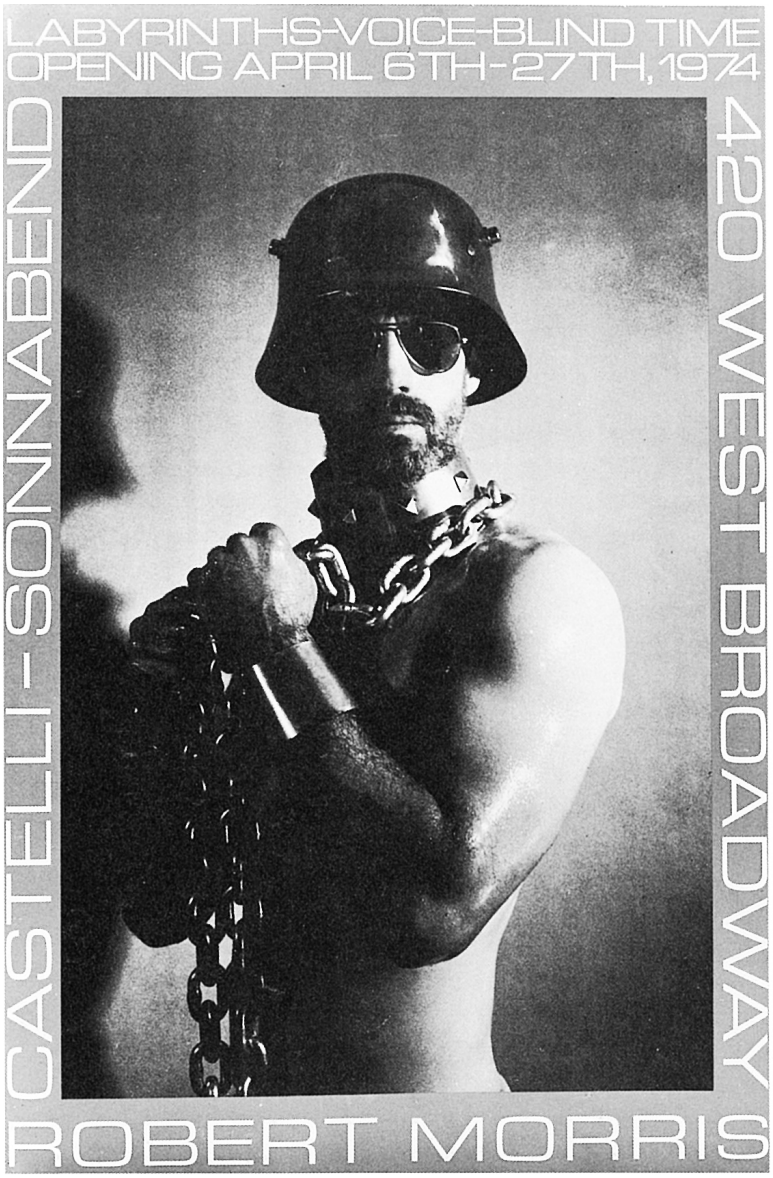


Figure 44. Robert Morris, poster for Castelli-Sonnabend Gallery exhibition, April 6–27 1974, 93.5 x 59 cm, edition of 250, photograph by Rosalind Krauss.

The discourse of liberation established by theoreticians like Herbert Marcuse in the 1950s was augmented by the ideological utopianisms of authors like Deleuze and Guattari and R. D. Laing.[345] Berger proposes that Morris reconciled these ideas with phenomenology, in the process 'constructing a correlative cultural discourse' (ibid.). His heterogeneous practice 'intentionally

[345] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 161.

decentred the spectator,' in the process asking questions 'about the nature of our confinement and the possibility of our freedom' (ibid.). While Morris's phenomenal investigations are generally cited as his most significant contribution to the expansion of art during this period, Berger proposes that the parallel exploration of psychosexual conditions in Morris's work is equally significant.

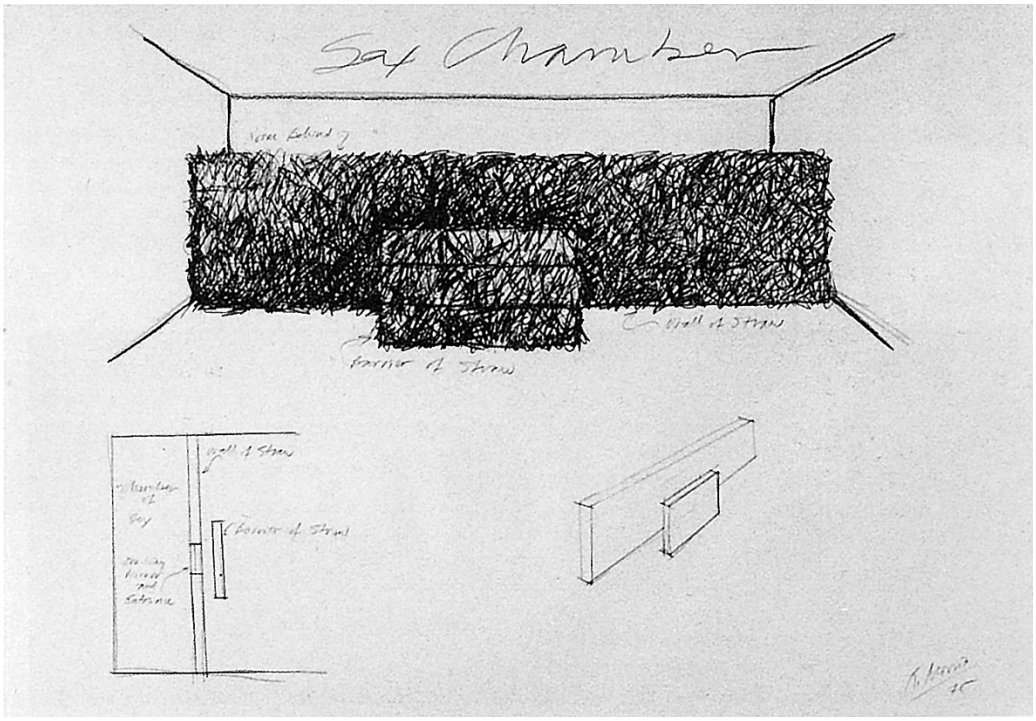


Figure 45. Robert Morris, *Sex Chamber*, 1975,
pencil on paper, 74.9 x 107.9 cm, collection of the artist.

In his discussion of the poster image, Berger mentions (in parentheses) several drawings that explicitly link Morris' *Labyrinth* period to a sexual context. These were produced in 1975 following a trip to Iran. The sexual references have been attributed to a stopover in Paris, where Morris' hotel bordered the red-light district.[346] *Sex Chamber* (1975) shows a proposed gallery installation of chamber-like structures built in copper and straw (fig. 45).[347] This outright sexual connection to the labyrinth confirms my suspicions that there may be a deeper, experiential basis to the coincidence of forms in our respective works. By ending his discussion of Morris's

[346] Morris and Krens, *Drawings*.
[347] Morris and Krens, *Drawings*. Berger, possibly drawing on this text, states that 'Morris proposed a series of nondescript sex-chambers as gallery installations' (Berger, *Labyrinths*, 160).

"minimalist" work with an image of *Sex Chamber*, Berger encourages reflection upon the erotic potential of the artist's entire oeuvre.

Berger locates the poster image and *Sex Chamber* in a trajectory that begins with *Passageway* (1961) and *I-Box* (1962). This line, 'chart[s] a journey wherein the ego is temporarily suspended, where the logic of "reality" yields to the visceral and the sensual.'[348] Here, Berger inadvertently identifies Morris as a liminal being, who moves between worlds, connecting disparate interests:

> Moving around and around in circles [...], Morris ground away at the desexualised persona of the elegant dandy or the obedient worker.[349] Gliding between the realms of personal expression and social commentary, [he] served as an important conduit for reconciling the interests of the avant-garde with those of the New Left. Throughout his insistent, exploratory journey, Morris sought to illuminate the social paradox of Beckett's words: "I seem to speak, it is not I, about me, it is not about me."[350]

Fittingly, Berger's final connection suggests that Morris was engaged in the same stuttering—or deliberately dissembling—struggle with self-expression that is evident in the discussion of Bruce Nauman, and Rauschenberg and Johns before him.

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[348] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 159.

[349] Art historian Amelia Jones, in "'Clothes Make the Man': The Male Artist as a Performative Function," charts the shifting conceptions of masculine artistic subjectivity from modernism to postmodernism as expressed in the "sartorial displays" of male artists. The dandy and the worker mentioned by Berger are central to her argument, these being the key models for artistic masculine dress in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (19). Curiously, although she discusses Morris directly (27–8), and recommends Berger's "provocative" *Labyrinths* (32, n.56), she makes no mention of this connection. Jones, "Clothes Make the Man," *Oxford Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (1995): 18–32. Jstor. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1360550.

[350] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 162.

4.7 PASSAGE 7

I was struck, at various points during this research, by Foucault's thinking on confession and examination, and the light it throws upon the exegetical component of this research. Dancing late at night in underground clubs, peering deep into myself, I reflected upon this research and wondered why my current state seemed so necessary, so integral, to my work. But this inquiry only made me wonder: "To whom am I reporting, and why?" [351]

4.7.1 *Sometimes (I Want to Leave my Body)*

Sometimes (I Want to Leave my Body) *(2012) is a suite of ten photographs that capture a muted light show above an empty dance floor (fig. 46 and 47). One night, in the midst of this research, I sat alone in an empty gay nightclub, entranced by the spectacular dance of intelligent lights, lasers, and mirror balls. The otherwise vacant space was filled by an articulated mass—composed of spots and cones of colour—choreographed by technologies of light and sound. Hovering above the dance floor, the lighting rig worked in unison like a mechanical Hydra. Its multiple heads twisted and turned, its many eyes scanning every inch of surface with a shifting, multidirectional gaze. I had often admired intelligent lights, which move with a rhythmic—if calculated—grace not usually associated with robotics.*

Later, I was pleased to discover that Roland Barthes—at the height of the disco era in Paris— had a commensurate artistic encounter with intelligent lights.

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[351] In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault describes confession as 'as a ritual of truth and the individualisation process' in Western societies (Olivier Asselin, "The Star and the Prisoner: The Spectacle and Surveillance of the Self on the Web," trans. Timothy Barnard, in *Precarious Visualities: New Perspectives on Identification in Contemporary Art and Visual Culture*, ed. Olivier Asselin, Johanne Lamoureux, and Christine Ross (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), 213). Confession has spread its effects far beyond its roots in the Catholic tradition, and now plays a part 'in the most ordinary affairs […] and in the most solemn rites; one confesses […] whatever is most difficult to tell. One confesses in public and in private […] One confesses—or is forced to confess' (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage, 1980), 59). Curiously, in the context of the academy, confession has been linked to another key aspect of surveillance in a disciplinary society: examination. 'The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalising judgement. It is a normalising gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them' (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 184).



Figure 46. Matt Huppatz, *Untitled II*, from *Sometimes, I Want to Leave my Body*, 2012, silver halide print on metallic paper, 90 x 60 cm.



Figure 47. Matt Huppatz, *Untitled III*, from *Sometimes, I Want to Leave my Body*, 2012, silver halide print on metallic paper, 90 x 60 cm.

4.7.2 Barthes at *Le Palace*

> Is not the great raw material of modern art, of our daily art—is it not, in this era, light?
>
> —Roland Barthes.[352]

Barthes, writing about the iconic Paris disco *Le Palace*, comments on the radical sculptural and artistic possibilities of the nightclub.[353] He identifies *Le Palace* as a place to "dream." Contemplating the strangeness of the space, the heterogeneous collage of fragments—traces of the building's theatrical past, its current clientele, and its futuristic technology—he exclaims,

> How strange this all is! […] Strange, the dark dancers (backlighting) in the mist that momentarily covers the floor, articulated like puppets under a ceiling of red and green rays. Strange the revolving mirror.[354]

The assemblage of light, effects, and bodies described by Barthes is significant. It identifies the central role of light in the nightclub, and connects this to sculptural potential:

> At *Le Palace* […] light occupies a deep space, within which it comes alive and performs like an actor; an intelligent laser, with a complicated and refined mind, like an exhibitor of abstract sculptures, produces enigmatic traces, with sudden mutations: circles, rectangles, ellipses, tracks, cables, galaxies, fringes (ibid., 46–47).

The technological prowess of the lighting is impressive, but what Barthes finds remarkable is

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[352] Roland Barthes, "At *Le Palace* Tonight…," in *Incidents* by Roland Barthes, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 45–49. Originally published as "*Au Palace ce soir*," in *Vogue Hommes* (May 1978).

[353] Le Palace is a theatre in Paris best known for its years as a nightclub 'where fashion, music, and underground culture intersected in a mythical blend' (Wikipedia, s.v. "Le Palace," last modified June 30, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Palace). Le Palace was opened in 1978 by impresario Fabrice Emaer—who was inspired by, but wanted to improve on, Studio 54 in New York. Emaer had previously started Le Pimm's Bar (a gay cruising club) in 1964 and—amidst the upheavals of 1968—Le Club Sept, which had 'a small dance floor in the basement […] with mirrors on the walls and a ceiling with multi-coloured lights that flashed with the music' (ibid.). Le Club Sept quickly became "the epicentre of disco" in Paris, owing to a great DJ (Guy Cuevas) and a radically heterogeneous clientele: Emaer mixed 'the "jet set" with the kids that just wanted to dance, hets with homos, and artists and intellectuals with anyone who had an interesting look' (ibid.). Emaer continued this practice at Le Palace, throwing together 'rich and poor, gay and straight, black and white, the bourgeois, even punk' in a rule breaking mix (ibid.). The journalist Frédéric Martel wrote that Emaer, through his clubs, 'invented a new way of being homosexual: chic and stylish to American [dance] music' (Frédéric Martel, *Le Rose et le noir: Les homosexuels en France depuis 1968* (Paris, 1995), quoted in Michael Sibalis, "Emaer, Fabrice," in *Who's Who in Contemporary Gay and Lesbian History*, Vol. 2, *From World War II to the Present Day*, edited by Robert Aldrich and Garry Wotherspoon (London: Routledge, 2001)). Later, in the mid-1980s, Le Palace 'gave birth to the Paris infatuation with house music,' notably through the Pyramid parties hosted by British group S-Express around 1987 (Wikipedia, s.v "Le Palace"). Australian "performance" artist Leigh Bowery was a regular on the star-studded guest list (ibid.).

[354] Barthes, "*Le Palace* Tonight," 47.

> the appearance of a new art, in its material (a mobile light) and in its practice; for this is actually a public art, in that it is achieved among the public and not in front of it, and a total art [...], where scintillation, music, and desire unite (47).

This *gesamtkunstwerk*

> extends beyond the constraints of cultural training: a liberation confirmed by a new mode of consumption: we look at the lights, the shadows, the settings, but also we do something else at the same time (we dance, we talk, we look at each other) [...] What is new is the impression of synthesis, of totality, of complexity [...] [the nightclub] is not a simple enterprise but a *work*, and [...] those who conceived it may regard themselves [...] as artists (47–48).

Le Palace, Barthes argues, is not simply a *boîte*—a "box" (the French for nightclub)—

> it collects in an original site pleasures ordinarily dispersed: [...] the pleasure of what is seen; the excitement of the modern, the exploration of new visual sensations [...]; the delight of the dance, the charm of possible meetings. All this combined creates something very old, which is called *la Fête* and which is quite different from Amusement or Distraction: a whole apparatus of sensations destined to make people happy, for the interval of a night (48).

4.7.3 *Glory Boxes 1-2-3*

While in one sense the body is the most abiding and inescapable presence in our lives, it is also essentially characterised by absence.

–Drew Leder, *The Absent Body*.[355]

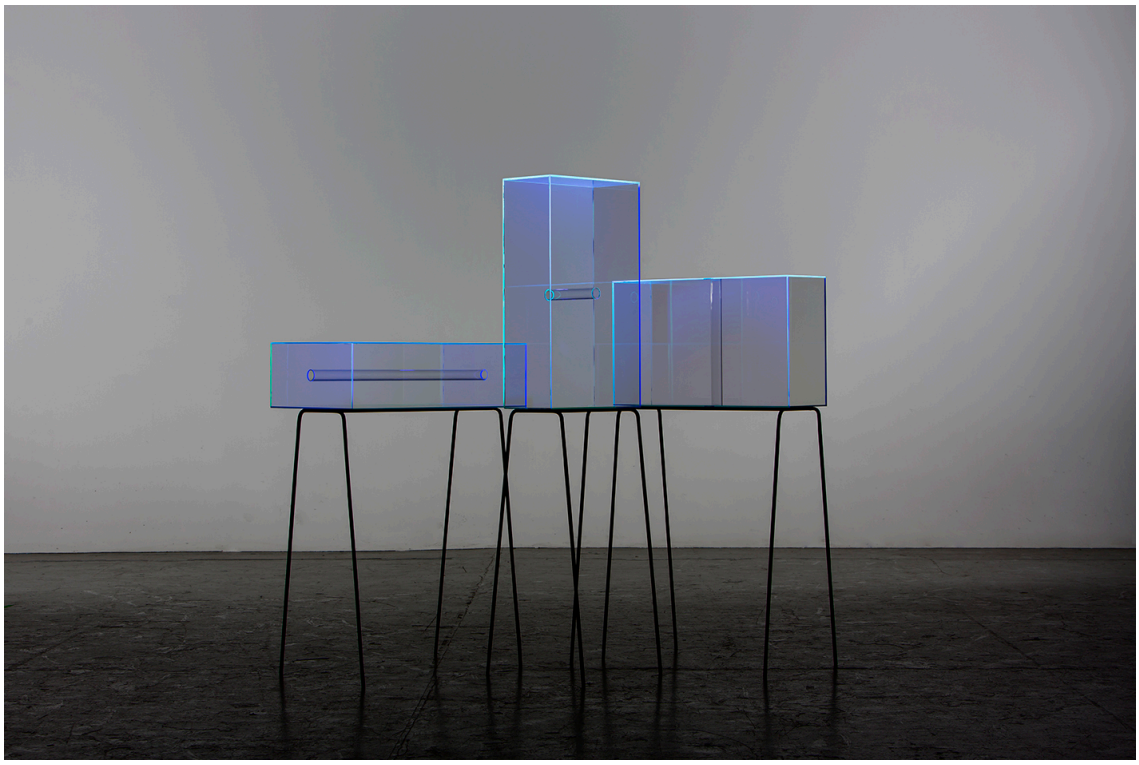


Figure 48. Matt Huppatz, *Glory Boxes 1-2-3*, 2015,
acrylic (Perspex Vario) and mild steel, dimensions variable,
each piece (box + stand) = 200 x 75 x 27 cm approx.

The transparency of Glory Boxes 1-2-3 *(fig. 48) draws particular attention to the relationships between inside and outside, and reveals the penetration of one by the other. The body is a tube-like box, centred on the circuitous passage that runs from mouth to anus—the alimentary canal: a barely differentiated continuation of the world. We are, almost literally, skewered upon the "outside." In this case, the outside signifies everything beyond the continuous surface of skin/mucous membrane that wraps around our inner and outer selves.*

[355] Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 1.

4.7.4 *Marion Mega-Complex*

In late 2011, at the time of the local pride festival, I began to imagine a "performance sculpture" or "costume-cum-vehicle" that could be worn at a drag ball, dance-party, or public parade.[356] *Marion Mega-Complex* came about during a period of regular partying. The idea was inspired by life—by interactions in the world—and directed back into that world. *Marion* was not an art thing exactly, but a creative, fun-filled, thing, which aimed to extend participants' experience of life.

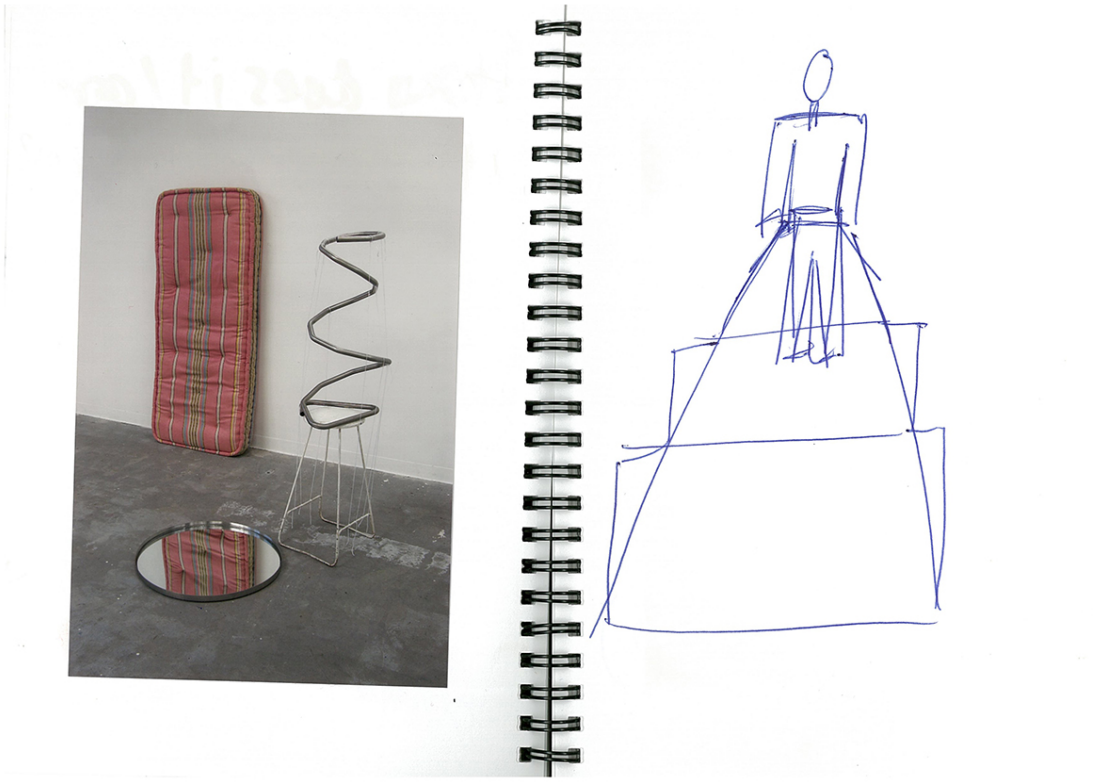


Figure 49. Matt Huppatz, concept sketch for *Marion Mega-Complex* (2011), juxtaposed with image of *Narcissus (And Other Myths)* (2009) (left), from Supermarket Art Fair Journal (2012), A5.

[356] Whilst being conceived as a "drag" costume—ultimately for the artist's own use—there were no preconceived ideas about the ideal gender of other potential user/wearers. Drag is understood here as something that is entailed in any and all performances of gender.

Marion Mega-Complex was envisioned as an overblown mirrored "ball gown" that would elevate the wearer high above a crowd.[357] A dress-like, multi-faceted structure—a stepped pyramid—provided the basic form. The size and height of the "dress" would prevent the performer from propelling themselves, so it had to have wheels. The object could then be propelled by (1) a tricycle-style propulsion system (fig. 50); or (2) costumed "litter-bearers." In its definitive form, the "skirt" would be large enough to house a booth for "site-specific" activities: dancing, sexing, chilling, and consuming "chemical technologies." If propulsion option (1) was employed, partygoers could sit and sip champagne while admiring the pedalling legs of the performer.

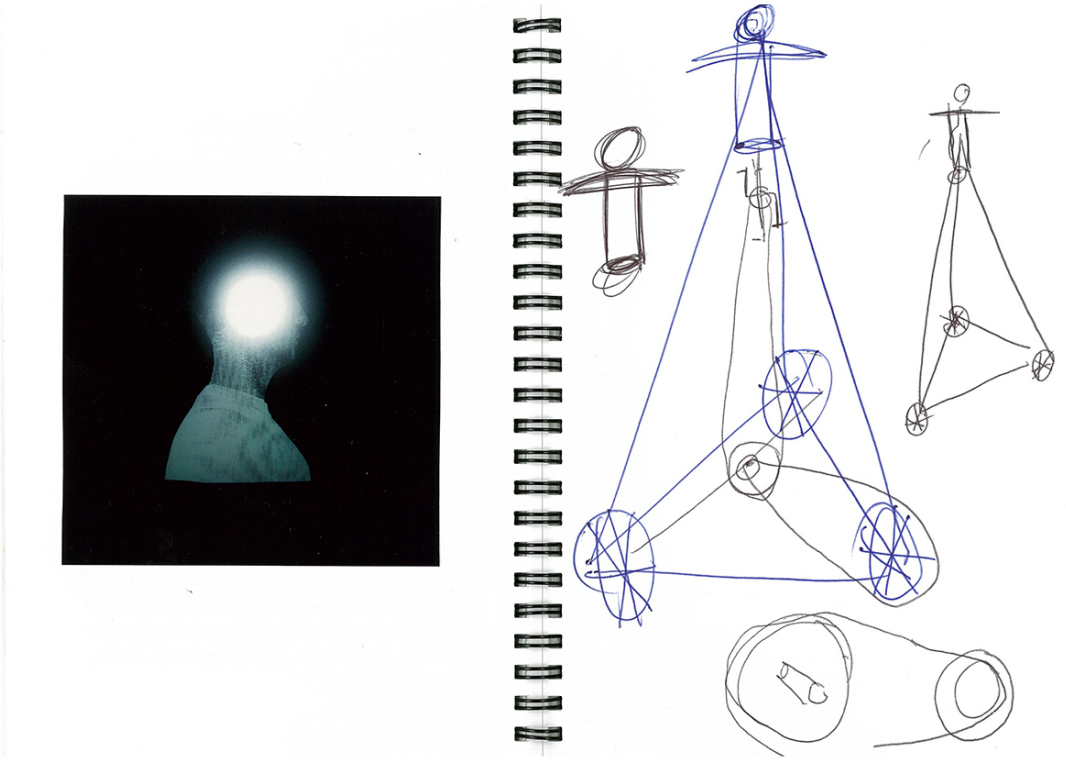


Figure 50. Matt Huppatz, concept sketch for *Marion Mega-Complex* (2011), juxtaposed with image of *Phase* (detail) (2010–12) (left), from *Supermarket Art Fair Journal* (2012), A5.

The sketches of this idea were clumsy attempts to manifest an ideal "vision." They evolved fluidly as thinking and drawing interacted. Significantly, one sketch is overwritten with lyrics transcribed

[357] The title positions the work in a specifically "queer" context, that of the "drag queen," and a specific locality: the title is derived from a blend of "Marion Shopping Complex" and "Marion Megaplex" (respectively, a large suburban shopping centre in Adelaide's southern suburbs and an extensive cinema complex within the shopping centre). "Marion," as it is generally known, is a sprawling, ever-expanding monument to self-definition through consumption.

from a house music track, "Most Precious Love."[358] This grounds the work in a cultural and social context: a specific "global" community and a certain worldview. The lyrics are personally transformative, or even "transportative." The music suggests an ideal: a goal. It is unashamedly utopian.



Figure 51. Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Poliscar*, 1991, open view, from *Homeless Vehicle Project*.

Marion Mega Complex's mechanical and vehicular qualities are reminiscent of contraptions devised by Polish-born US artist Krzysztof Wodiczko. His critical design practice combines art and technology to highlight emerging cultural issues that receive little design attention.[359] *Marion*—and her offspring: *Ziggurat* (2012) and *Gladiator* (2012)—introduced below—resonate with the vehicles in Wodiczko's *Homeless Vehicle Project*, especially *Poliscar* (1991) (fig. 51 and 52). The *Poliscar* was designed as a 'command centre' that could provide community members with

[358] "Most Precious Love," feat. Barbara Tucker, by Blaze presents U.D.A.U.F.L. (Underground Dance Artists United for Life), 00:07:38, King Street Sounds /Defected Records (UK), 2004/2005.
[359] "Interrogative Design: About," accessed Nov. 29, 2016, http://www.interrogative.org/about/.

somewhere to congregate in the public sphere.[360] The vehicle was equipped with essentials such as food, first aid supplies, and technologies for audio-visual production and transmission.



Figure 52. Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Poliscar*, 1991, from *Homeless Vehicle Project*.

4.7.5 *Ziggurat*

Ziggurat (fig. 53 and 54) arose out of playful thinking, a direct development of *Marion Mega-Complex*. Having identified *Marion* as female, it was difficult to resist gendering *Ziggurat*. Perhaps he is male—the phallic form speaks for itself—but he is sheathed in a shimmering "dress" and, like *Marion*, thoroughly queer. The possession of a phallus does not make a phallus.

[360] "Homeless Vehicle Project – Krzysztof Wodiczko – Site – Place – Context – 1987–1989," Emily Penn Research Blog, accessed Nov. 29, 2016, https://emilypennresearch.wordpress.com/2012/01/22/homeless-vehicle-project-krzysztof-wodiczko-1987-1989/.



Figure 53. Matt Huppatz, *Ziggurat*, 2012, view 1,
acrylic (Plexiglas Radiant), mild steel, castors, aluminium, and double-sided tape, 300 x 60 x 90 cm.

The ziggurat at Babylon was known by the Sumerian ceremonial name of *E-temen-anki*, "House of the Foundation Platform of Heaven and Underworld."[361] This platform is clearly a threshold, and

[361] Andrew R. George, "The Tower of Babel: Archaeology, History, and Cuneiform Texts," *Archiv fuer Orientforschung* 51 (Feb. 2005): 78, accessed Nov. 24, 2016, http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/3858/2/TowerOfBabel.AfO.pdf.

the heaven-earth connection resonates with aspects of this research. *Ziggurat* thus relates back to the title of this research, Inside—Outside—Passing—Through. On one hand, it stands for occupying a liminal (queer) standpoint and applying the resulting insights to an interpretation—and articulation—of experience. On the other, it constitutes an effort to establish a state of equilibrium between the competing—but equal—forces that threaten to throw one off balance.



Figure 54. Matt Huppatz, *Ziggurat*, 2012, view 2,
acrylic (Plexiglas Radiant), mild steel, castors, aluminium, and double-sided tape, 300 x 60 x 90 cm.

Ziggurat emerged as a "refined" version of something potentially complex, chaotic, and unpredictable (or *alive*). *Marion*'s "living" body is missing and, though her internal apparatus survives, it has atrophied. The two objects—though connected—are worlds apart. While *Marion* operates on the street and comes alive in the "real" world, *Ziggurat* is platonic—aloof—a thing of/for contemplation. Where she incorporates anything—and everything—he resists, seeking something that is less but simultaneously "more." Despite this, they share a function because both are vehicles: *Marion* offers a wild ride into a sensual life, and "*Ziggy*"—like his namesake—suggests a connection with another world.[362]



Figure 55. Wolfgang Laib, *Ziggurat*, 1999, beeswax, wood, 460 x 450 x 130 cm.

[362] Ziggy Stardust, the alter ego of English musician David Bowie, appeared with his concept album "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spider from Mars" (1972) (Wikipedia, s.v. "Ziggy Stardust (song)," accessed Nov. 17, 2016). The character of Ziggy was partly inspired by British rock 'n' roll singer Vince Taylor, who—curiously, given the Ziggy/ziggurat resonance and the discussion of the ziggurat *E-temen-anki* above—believed himself to be a cross between a god and an alien (ibid.). Ziggy is 'a bisexual alien rock superstar' living in a dystopian future shortly before the end of the world (Wikipedia, s.v. "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spider from Mars," accessed Nov. 17, 2016). In a dream, Ziggy is told to 'write the coming of a Starman,' whom he believes will save the world. His hopes turn to dust when the extraterrestrials arrive: they are revealed to be Infinites, beings that roam the universe jumping between black holes and care nothing for the Earth. They tear Ziggy apart and take bits of him to make themselves real (David Bowie, interview by William S. Burroughs, in William S. Burroughs, *Burroughs Live: The Collected Interviews of William S. Burroughs, 1960–1997*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2001), 231. Originally published in an article, Craig Copetas, "Beat Godfather meets Glitter Mainman," *Rolling Stone* (Feb. 28, 1974).

4.7.6 *Gladiator*

Gladiator *(2012) (fig. 56) began life as a series of small cardboard and aluminium foil maquettes made to explore the proportions of Ziggurat. Initially these were simple truncated obelisks, which looked nothing like Ziggurat but had pleasing minimal forms. A pair of wheels was added to one, turning it into a chimney-like chariot. It couldn't "stand" but it was an intriguing object: an industrial "something" or a part missing a whole. The aluminium foil—intended to mimic a mirrored surface—suggested other material possibilities, like stainless or galvanised steel. After researching the hot-dip galvanising process, the maquette was christened Hot Dip Gal.*



Figure 56. Matt Huppatz, *Gladiator*, 2012, front view,
polished mild steel, copper-plated hydraulic tube, acrylic tube, internal fittings,
60 x 18 x 12 cm.

Hot Dip Gal didn't have a leg to stand on. She was constantly falling down: legless. This situation called for a prop. The wheels suggested a chariot > a chariot needs a hitch > the hitch > became a tube > became a cock—cum—anus: a queer (pushed in—extended—drawn out—inverted) genitoanal organ (fig. 57). Hot

Dip Gal had transitioned into Hot Dick Gal! His ambiguously-gendered—but decidedly queer—"anus" introduced the notion of the orifice to this research.

Throughout this period, a shambolic earworm plagued me: the circus tune, "Entrance of the Gladiators."[363] *I couldn't resist the synchronicity: the little armoured warrior became—with all his comical pride—a Gladiator in polished steel. Adelaide critic Ken Bolton wrote '[*Gladiator*] looked sort of Dada, sort of [Philip] Guston, sort of Darth Vader—its cuteness a joke against its own busily forward-leaning self.'*[364]



Figure 57. Matt Huppatz, *Gladiator*, 2012, rear view,
polished mild steel, copper-plated hydraulic tube, acrylic tube, internal fittings,
60 x 18 x 12 cm.

[363] Often used to introduce the clowns at a circus, this tune was written by Czech composer Julius Fučík as a march in 1897. In 1901, American publisher Carl Fischer published an arrangement of the work by Canadian composer Louis-Philippe Laurendeau, titled "Thunder and Blazes." Around this time it gained popularity at circuses, and Laurendeau's version was also transcribed for fairground organs. This sealed its ongoing association with these heterotopias. Wikipedia, s.v. "Entrance of the Gladiators," accessed Nov. 17, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entrance_of_the_Gladiators.

[364] Ken Bolton, "Game On: Acting Out, Mouthing Off, Unplugged, and Tricksy," *Form Guide* 13, no. 1, accessed Nov. 30, 2016, http://aeaf.org.au/events/critical-writing.html.

4.7.7 The Orifice

In *The Orifice as Sacrificial Site: Culture, Organisation, and the Body*, sociologist James Aho considers the social and cultural significance of the body's orifices.[365] Following Merleau-Ponty in *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), Aho argues that 'the prototypical, everyday experience of embodiment' is fundamental to being human.[366] This is evident from the first moments of postnatal experience, which are mediated through physical touch.[367] The centrality of bodily experience leads Aho to propose that socialisation is more than 'the acquisition of ideas, values, and attitudes.'[368] It entails a process of "corporealisation" in which a sense of bodily comportment is attained.[369] Aho points to sociologist John O'Neill, who writes that 'human beings think society with their bodies.'[370] It is not just something "out there," it resides "in our bones" (ibid., 24).

Human anatomy and physiology have often been employed as metaphors to describe and comprehend collective life.[371] While O'Neill calls carnal analogising "anthropomorphism," Aho suggests it might better be termed *mirroring*: 'we use social classifications and processes to understand our own physicality.'[372] Aho posits 'that the experience of our personal bodies reflects the workings of our societal arrangements' (ibid.). Specifically, he takes 'our private exit and entry zones, our orifices, to stand for the doorways out of and penetration routes into the social bodies of which we are members' (ibid.). As such, 'the disciplines imposed on eye, mouth, anus, genitals, ear, nose, and pore [...] symbolise efforts by groups to stave off contamination, invasion, or absorption by other groups' (ibid.).

Aho follows social anthropologist Mary Douglas who, in *Purity and Danger* (1966), proposed that 'personal body margins are analogous to social margins; and orifices, their exuviae and infusions, to society's "[e]specially vulnerable points."'[373] Says Aho,

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[365] James Alfred Aho, *The Orifice as Sacrificial Site: Culture, Organisation, and the Body* (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 2002).
[366] Aho, *Orifice*, 1. Although this may seem self-evident, Aho points out that as recently as the mid-1980s sociology had retained a "theoretical prudery" regarding the body, although this had been gradually receding since the translation into English of Foucault's (1978) trilogy on the history of sexuality (ibid.).
[367] Aho, *Orifice*, 1.
[368] Ibid. Aho here draws on Bryan Turner, "Outline of A General Sociology of the Body," in *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology*, ed. Bryan Turner, 481–501 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), 494.
[369] Aho, *Orifice*, 1.
[370] John O'Neill, *Five Bodies: The Human Shape of Modern Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 28.
[371] Aho, *Orifice*, 9–10. Aho offers Hindu and Christian examples of carnal analogies that relate human body parts to levels of society, or even to attributes of the Absolute (ibid., 10).
[372] Aho, *Orifice*, 10.
[373] Ibid., quoting Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 2001), 122.

> The personal body, then, is a metaphor of the social body; orifices in particular stand for a group's weak spots. The more defensive and exclusionary a group is, the more pressure is placed on its members to police what goes into and what comes out of their bodies.[374]

Because orifices 'are zones of transition between our insides and outsides, orifices and their products are considered as anomalous.'[375] Douglas explains that this is because anything that cannot be classified in terms of traditional criteria—or falls between classificatory boundaries—is almost always regarded as "polluting" and "dangerous."[376]

> All body openings, eyes, ears, nose, mouth (navel), rectum genital zones—as well as the skin, have, as places of exchange between inside and outside, a numinous accent for early man.[377]

Despite this, Aho argues that the strictures placed upon orifices by various cultures are largely arbitrary:

> While their adherents typically experience orifice taboos as god given, rational, universal, and natural, in reality they are relativistic human artefacts that promote the partisan interests of specific groups.[378]

Humanity's wars 'on drugs, on fat, on gays, on abortion, on pornography, sex education, graven images, rock 'n' roll lyrics, incorrect speech, heresy, body odour, and so on' are all related to "orificial" restrictions (ibid.). This returns us to Victor Turner, who also questions why liminal sites and beings are perceived as 'dangerous, inauspicious, or polluting' to anything outside of the ritual context.[379] Turner also indicates Douglas' work on pollution, but links this to the symbiotic relationship between *communitas* and structure. For those concerned with maintaining the status quo any sustained manifestation of *communitas* 'must appear as dangerous and anarchical, and [has] to be hedged around with prescriptions, prohibitions, and conditions.'[380]

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[374] Aho, *Orifice*, 11.
[375] Ibid., 12.
[376] Ibid.
[377] Erich Neuman, *The Great Mother* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 39; quoted in Aho, *Orifice*, 15.
[378] Aho, *Orifice*, 15.
[379] Turner, *Ritual Process*, 108–109.
[380] Ibid., 109.

4.7.8 *Midas Touch*

Queer sex is fraught with the danger of liminal pollution. Anything and everything goes anywhere and everywhere; things end up where they don't belong. Gold Finger / (Poo Finger) / Midas Touch *(2011) (fig. 58 and 59).*



Figure 58. Matt Huppatz, *Midas Touch*, 2011, hand-formed gold polymer clay, each 11 x 1.5 x 1.2 cm approx.



Figure 59. Matt Huppatz, *Midas Touch*, 2011, detail.

4.7.9 Thres—(hole)—d

The orifice inevitably reconnects us to the glory-hole-box assemblage (Section 4.1.6 The Glory–Hole–Box); the glory hole; and glory hole-using men. Glory hole sex is a "niche" subcultural sexual practice and there is little academic literature on the subject. The scientific literature mostly subsumes glory hole sex within broader public health research into Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) and Sex on Premises Venues (SOPV).[381] This field is dominated by epidemiological research that charts the risks of MSM sexual behaviour and anonymous sex.

In other fields, ethnographic studies have focused on the experience of glory hole using men.[382] These provide insight into areas that are neglected by scientific research: the motivations and thoughts of glory hole users. This work is augmented by several inquiries that apply poststructuralist frameworks in a reconceptualisation of glory hole sex, opening up the potential of this practice to challenge normative forms of desire, sexuality, and identity. Don Bapst's "Glory Holes and the Men who Use them" and "Faceless Sex: Glory Holes and Sexual Assemblages," by Dave Holmes, Patrick O'Byrne, and Stuart Murray, provided insight within this project. These studies identify common threads in the experiences of glory hole using men and propose reasons for their engagement in glory hole sex.[383]

A particularly strong feeling amongst participants is that the glory hole flaunts society's rules

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[381] Dave Holmes, Patrick O'Byrne, and Stuart J. Murray, "Faceless Sex: Glory Holes and Sexual Assemblages," *Nursing Philosophy* no. 11 (2010): 251. MSM (Men who have Sex with Men) and WSW (Women who have Sex with Women) are common terms in public health discourse. For a useful discussion of the problematic use of these terms, see Rebecca M. Young and Ilan H. Meyer, "The Trouble with 'MSM' and 'WSW': Erasure of the Sexual-Minority Person in Public Health Discourse," *American Journal of Public Health* 95, no. 7 (July 2005): 1144–1149, doi:10.2105/AJPH.2004.046714. They explain that the terms were used first in HIV literature, in part to distinguish sexual behaviour from sexual identity, which undermined the initial identification of gay identity as a risk factor for HIV/AIDS: 'a characterisation that stigmatised lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) populations and confounded efforts to prevent HIV infection' (ibid., 1144). Despite this promise, the terms have been criticised 'because they obscure social dimensions of sexuality; undermine the self-labelling of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people; and do not sufficiently describe variations in sexual behaviour' (ibid.); much of the public health research focuses on MSM behaviour in Sex on Premises Venues (or Sites), referred to as SOPV or SOSVs in the literature. MSM has been used here because the territory that informs this research is located largely in the sexual peripheries rather than in a specifically gay context.

[382] See Don Bapst's aforementioned "Glory Holes and the Men Who Use Them," and David Holmes, Patrick O'Byrne, and Denise Gastaldo, "Setting the Space for Sex: Architecture, Desire, and Health Issues in Gay Bathhouses," *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 44, no. 2 (2007): 273–284.

[383] It must be pointed out that most participants in these studies self-identified as gay men. Bapst acknowledges the limitations of his research, in terms of the quantity and variation of the sample population, but nevertheless identifies some common threads in the experience of men who use glory holes, which are backed up in Holmes et al (Bapst, "Glory Holes," 100; Holmes, O'Byrne, and Murray, "Faceless Sex," 252–53). In brief, the attraction of glory-hole sex circles around: the excitement of anonymity; the focus on genital-oral sex (oral sex is the predominant form of sexual contact in this context but other sexual assemblages may form depending on the willingness of individuals); the intensification of genital [and oral] eroticism heightened by the sensory deprivation of separation; an association with "primitive" or "animalistic" sexual experience based on physical sensation rather than interpersonal intimacy; the thrill of exhibitionism; the excitement of having sex in public and the danger of being "caught;" the thrill of the "hunt;" the heightened role of imagination (or fantasy) in the sexual act; the excitement of "not knowing" who or what is on the other side of the wall, often associated with the possibility that one might encounter a "straight" man. See Holmes, O'Byrne, and Murray, "Faceless Sex," 252–253; Bapst, "Glory Holes," 93–99.

surrounding sex.[384] This transgression was experienced as experimental and liberating.[385] Like the related site of the bathhouse, 'the glory hole affords an intense, temporary escape from the demands of subjectivity.'[386] This does not necessarily signal a flight from an "undesired" subjectivity, but an escape from 'social roles' and the everyday self.[387] Users relate this to the role-playing aspects of glory hole sex, the anonymity, and the opportunity to 'be whatever you want to be.'[388] Importantly, the character that one assumes often reflects a part of oneself inhibited by friends, lovers and family.[389]

4.7.10 The Public Health Apparatus

If the glory-hole-using body 'constitutes a specific assemblage' composed of, for example, the hole—mouth—penis—throat—wall, it also composed of the discourses that describe it. Thus, it is 'tied to—and at times co-opted by—the panoptic apparatus' of public health.[390] Holmes et al. follow sociologist Deborah Lupton in proposing that this apparatus 'dominates the ways we understand our bodily practices *and* ourselves.'[391] The discourses and practices around the promotion of health, Lupton argues, dictate the constitution of the contemporary human body (ibid.). This includes the ways we have—and think about—sex.

The combination of gay sex and public sex is especially problematic from a public health perspective. In particular, sexually active, non-homonormative MSM are under constant pressure from external—and internal—surveillance. Within mainstream public health discourse, any man who has sex with men is at risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This risk doubles if he has sex in public, 'less for what he *does* than for whom he *is*.'[392] His very identity is "risky" and thereby 'demands' stratification.[393] Lupton links this to Foucault's notion of "bio-

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[384] Holmes, O'Byrne, and Murray, "Faceless Sex," 253.
[385] Participant quoted in Bapst, "Glory Holes," 100.
[386] Holmes, O'Byrne, and Murray, "Faceless Sex," 253.
[387] Bapst, "Glory Holes," 101.
[388] Participant quoted in Bapst, "Glory Holes," 98. This participant likened his experience of glory hole use to putting on a Halloween costume. In his account, the arrangement of glory holes cubicles in a sex club becomes theatrical. "Actors" assumed roles, ducking on and off stage, between dark and light spaces. Seen only 'for a couple of minutes at a time,' the actor could perpetuate 'the thrill of being the character over and over again all night' (ibid.).
[389] Bapst, "Glory Holes," 98.
[390] Holmes, O'Byrne, and Murray, "Faceless Sex," 258.
[391] Ibid., 257–258. Emphasis added.
[392] Holmes, O'Byrne, and Murray, "Faceless Sex," 257. Emphasis added. It must be remembered that Deleuze and Guattari famously implore us to ask not what an assemblage *is*, but what it does, the inverse of this approach.
[393] Ibid., 257. Stratification relates to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of mapping (*cartographié*), the process by which the world—and everything in it—is mapped and coded 'to make sense of it […] and to make it useful for social production and organisation' (ibid., 254). For Deleuze and Guattari, 'the fixed identity of the Modern subject is nothing more than the particular way in which

power," which describes the operation of power relations in and through the body.[394]

Bio-power functions in two dimensions: one exercises power over individuals and the other over populations. The first transpires through the 'interpersonal relations in the medical encounter.'[395] These constitute the body in discourse: 'the body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration.'[396] The second exercises power over the "body politic" by the incessant documentation and regulation of a population's health status.[397]

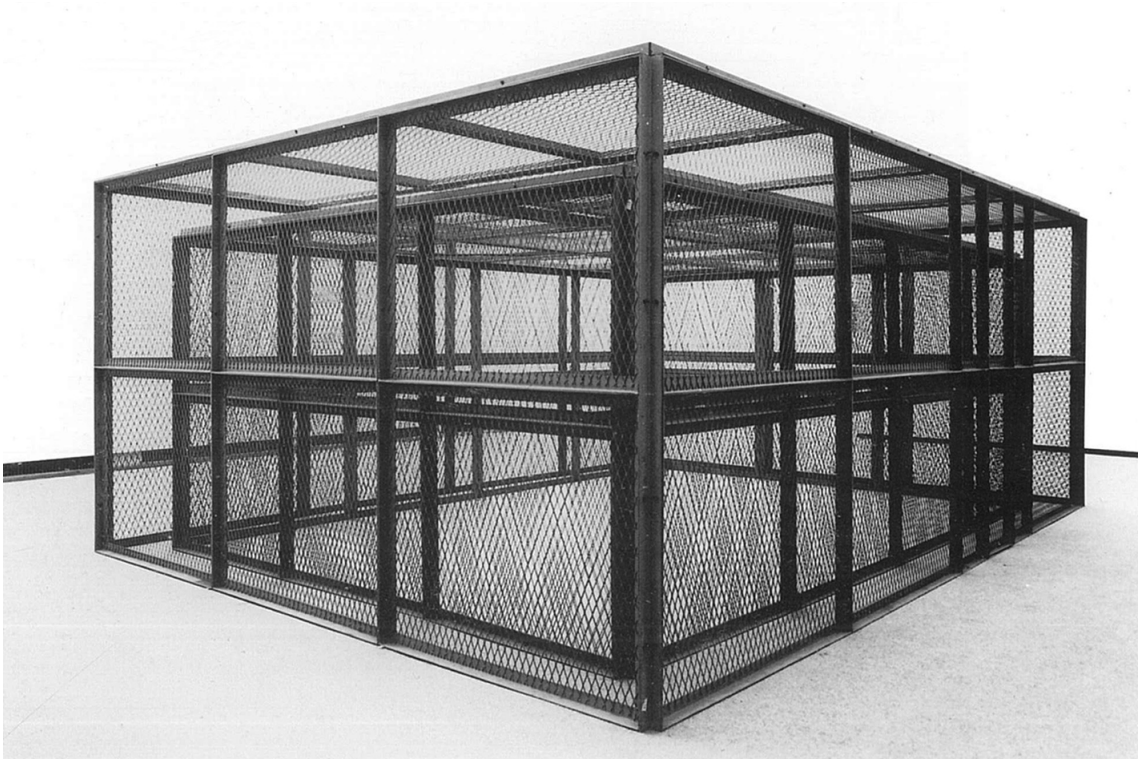


Figure 60. Bruce Nauman, *Double Steel Cage Piece*, 1974,
steel, 213.4 x 411.5 x 502.9 cm.

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bodies have been mapped or stratified' (254). In this process, 'the socius reduces the body's movements and complexity to fit within stable and predetermined categories;' ordering the body 'through discourses that tend to identify, classify, and hierarchise its behaviours' (254). As in cartography, a rigid grid is thrown over everyone in order that they may be positioned and assessed. Thus entrapped, the body's creative forces are stymied; its connection-making ability impeded, threatening 'the becoming process of the human subject' and 'reduc[ing] the body's potential to "become other."' (ibid., 255).

[394] Deborah Lupton, *The Imperative of Health: Public Health and the Regulated Body* (London: SAGE Publications, 1995), 6.

[395] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 83.

[396] Ibid.

[397] Lupton, *Imperative of Health*, 6.

Holmes *et al.* propose that the rhizomatic functioning of desire offers routes of escape from the apparatus' of control:

> bodies resist and repel these rigid, violent forms of categorisation because their intention and desire is to "become multiple" and to experiment [...], to privilege the "and" of experimental connections over the "is" of identity.[398]

Rhizomatic ways of being thus have the potential to undermine and slip through the grasp of the apparatus. The latter is drawn from Foucault's concept of *dispositif*, which has also been translated as "mechanism," "device," or "procedure."[399] From a certain perspective, the mechanical or technical implications of these terms stand in obvious contrast to the vegetative wanderings of the rhizome. It has been argued that where the *dispositif* 'has a totalising effect and is intimately linked to the production of power and knowledge,' the rhizome is associated with 'a fluidity and openness' that escapes attempts of 'totalising control.'[400] However, it must be acknowledged that these concepts do not stand in opposition: both are used to 'bind together various heterogeneous entities.'[401] Any gardener familiar with couch grass or invasive bamboos will understand the insidious potential of rhizomatic growth.[402]

Curiously, in light of this project's tendency towards the otherworldly, philosopher Giorgio Agamben provides a translation of *dispositif* with a determinedly cosmic spin: the dispositor.

> The term is in the English Oxford Dictionary; it is an astrological term that means the law of a sign in its relation to other planets. Thus, a dispositor—as the law of the astrological sign—

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[398] Holmes, O'Byrne, and Murray, "Faceless Sex," 258.

[399] It has particular currency in this setting because it is employed most obviously in the first volume of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, the fourth section of which is titled—in French—"*Le dispositif de sexualité*." In English, this has been translated as "The Deployment of Sexuality." See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 75–132.

[400] Frank Kessler, "Notes on *dispositif*," University of Utrecht, last updated Nov. 2007, accessed Apr. 10, 2016, http://www.hum.uu.nl/medewerkers/f.e.kessler/Dispositif Notes11-2007.pdf.

[401] Ibid.

[402] Alex Galloway, in "PROTOCOL, or, How Control Exists After Decentralisation," explains how the rhizomatic—and seemingly chaotic—distributed networks of contemporary society—exemplified by the Internet—are highly controlled by a range of protocols. Indeed, Galloway argues, '[a] distributed architecture is precisely that which makes [protocological] control of the network so easy. In fact, the various Internet protocols mandate that control may ***only*** be derived from such a distributed architecture' (Galloway, "Protocol," 42, his emphasis). He implies, following Hardt and Negri, that the diffuse network of *dispositifs* and apparatuses that construct social command in Foucault's disciplinary societies are replaced, in Deleuzian "societies of control," with '"mechanisms of command [that are] ever more "democratic," ever more immanent to the social field, *distributed* throughout the brains and bodies of the citizens"' (Galloway, "Protocol," 41, quoting Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 23, Galloway's emphasis). Indeed, Sociologist Manuel Castells uses the term "network society" as an analogue of Deleuze's "society of control" and Fredric Jameson's "late capitalism" (Galloway, 39). See Alex Galloway and Fredric Jameson, "PROTOCOL, or, How Control Exists After Decentralisation" (PhD dissertation, Duke University, 2001), ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

> embodies all of the forces and influences that the planet exerts on individuals, inclining them, binding them and restraining them in all possible ways.[403]

Agamben's translation de-emphasises the mechanical, instead implying a field of forces that acts upon whole worlds, or at least 'a technological, social, [or] legal […] context or environment.'[404] The *dispositif* arose as a significant theoretical touchstone in this project's final body of work. These works develop the aesthetic sensibilities of *Ziggurat* but venture deeper into the underworld of queer masculinity touched upon in the discussion above.

[403] Giorgio Agamben, "What is a Dispositor?" [2005], lecture transcript by Jason Michael Adams, accessed November 30, 2016, https://eclass.upatras.gr/modules/document/file.php/ARCH213/Agamben%20Dispositor.pdf.
[404] Frank Kessler, "Notes on *dispositif*."

4.7.11 *Glory Box Variations*

> Before you is a fully wound machine. Slowly its spring will unwind the entire span of a human life. It is one of the most perfect machines devised by the infernal gods for the mathematical annihilation of a mortal.
>
> —The Voice, preface to Jean Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine*.[405]



Figure 61. Matt Huppatz, *Glory Box Variations*, 2015, installation view, Australian Experimental Art Foundation (AEAF), polished stainless steel sheet, plywood, stainless steel tube and fittings, mild steel angle, 220 cm high, dimensions variable.

Glory Box Variations *(2015) (fig. 61 and 62) expands on the formal ideas put forward in* Solid *(fig. 8) and* Glory Boxes 1-2-3 *(fig. 48). The "glory-hole-box" undergoes a further deconstruction, becoming an arrangement of interchangeable parts.* Glory Box Variations *is a "hybrid—hybrid," colliding the idea of the glory-hole-box with the maze, or labyrinth. These object-things are human in scale; they possess "legs" and stand in relationships with one another, and together as a group. Surfaces—and the spaces in-between—are*

[405] Jean Cocteau, *The Infernal Machine and Other Plays* (New York: New Directions, 1963), 6.

emphasised. The lighting, materials, and forms combine to produce a complex arrangement that engages the viewer in an unsettling—and potentially humorous—encounter with the self and others.



Figure 62. Matt Huppatz, *Glory Box Variations*, 2015.

From "outside," Glory Box Variations *looks relatively straightforward: the outward facing "mirrors" reflect the surrounding space and momentarily capture anyone who passes. This passive dynamic shifts when the viewer enters the midst of these things. "Inside," the objects reflect one another, doubling and tripling partial fragments in a reflective feedback loop. The black holes, which perforate the mirrored surfaces, multiply like spots in the viewer's vision. Reflections "bleed" onto the floor, undermining its solidity in a mix of shadowy shapes and shards of light. The panels press in, suggesting a haphazard hall of mirrors.*

In a critique of Glory Box Variations*, it was suggested that arrangement invokes an infernal machine. The Oxford English Dictionary defines an infernal machine as*

> *an apparatus (usually disguised as some familiar and harmless object) contrived to produce an explosion for the criminal destruction of life or property; formerly, an explosive apparatus used in military operations.*[406]

In the contemporary context, this corresponds to the IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) used by insurgent forces in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. These things have the potential to violently and unexpectedly disrupt imposed systems of power. The "industrial" materials—and the network of pipes that runs intermittently through Glory Box Variations—certainly produce a machine-like effect. The infernal, if we think of it in diabolical terms, might be located in the work's warped and fragmented reflectivity, and the reddish glow that surrounds it.[407] *No doubt, for some, the work's references to the glory hole would evoke a Sodom with real world-destroying potential.*

4.7.12 The Glory—Hole—Body—Using—Assemblage

In the context of this project, it is significant that Holmes et al. conceptualise glory hole sex in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of assemblage. In particular, they relate this to the subject-transforming potential of the glory hole. They nominate Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy as especially appropriate because it emphasises 'surfaces of bodies, effects, intensities, impulses, and flows.'[408] These are the precise forces at play when two bodies meet 'at the shared surface of a wall that separates, but allows, intimate contact and erotic signification.'[409]

Holmes et al. apply assemblage to understand glory hole sex from a perspective, 'beyond the dominant discourse that informs public health research and debates' (ibid. 251). This allows them to avoid moral judgment, and consider how anonymous sex through a glory hole might be experienced as 'socially, politically, and sexually liberating,' but—it must be noted—also potentially addictive (ibid.).

Holmes et al. propose that glory hole sex necessarily implies 'a glory hole-using body assemblage'

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[406] *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "infernal," s.v. "infernal machine."
[407] Infernal, of course, derives 'from French *infernal* (from 12th cent. in Littré), < Latin *infernālis* of the realms below, infernal, < *infernus* adjective, situated below, subterranean, of the lower regions, whence *infernī* the shades, *inferna* the lower regions, and, in later (Christian) use, *infernus* noun masculine "hell"' (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "infernal").
[408] Holmes, O'Byrne, and Murray, "Faceless Sex," 253.
[409] Ibid.

composed of, for example, the hole/mouth/penis/throat/wall (ibid., 257). The architectural intervention of the glory hole highlights the body's parts and organs: framing an anus, thigh, finger, eye, hand, mouth, or penis. These are pleasure giving/receiving tools that link into an assemblage of intensities, fantasies, discourses, and flows (of desire, semen, saliva, blood). Poststructuralist thought rejects a truth based in "depth"—and the mental interiority of the Cartesian *cogito*—with its presumption of 'an individual, rational mind' that is 'distinct from the body' (ibid., 253). Bodies are conceived 'away from internal meanings and essences,' they can to take on 'myriad forms and […] functions' depending on how they connect 'with other bodies or parts of bodies (organs)' (ibid.).

> The body […] exists because it is connected to other bodies and to other objects; it is a contextual body, a body that is situated along a vector of meaning that is in flux. […] Defined through the assemblages they make with others, bodies become subjects able to interact with the social world (ibid., 253–254).

In the glory hole setting, bodies connect promiscuously. Initially, intentions and desires are communicated through the gaze or how bodies are displayed and 'display themselves' (ibid., 254). These preliminary connections create intensities, sparking and fuelling desire. This leads to potentially 'multiple and intense' *physical* connections between bodies, via touch and sex (ibid.).

> The body enjoys forming assemblages with others, whether people or things, in order to allow desire to flow in different directions, producing new potentials (becomings) and therefore new subjectivities (ibid.).

The transformative potential of glory hole use is caught up in this becoming, which Holmes et al. note, 'is a process, not a state; it implies flux and constant reorganisation and […] entails the de-structuring of stable systems, be they moral rules, social orders, [or] conventions.'[410]

[410] Ibid., 254.

4.8 POSTSCRIPT

A curious object sits in a brilliant white space. A "crystalline" form—which recalls an archetypal Western "house"—erupts from the back of a weathered trailer. Both the minimalist form and the found object suggest changing notions of labour and masculinity, in art and the wider world. The trailer, especially, points to the post-war period and a definite set of skills; a certain mode of masculinity; and a different relationship to labour, leisure, and consumption. It is painted in metallic silver—reminiscent of mid-century sci-fi—a deceit that suggests ideas of the modern or even "the future."



Figure 63. Matt Huppatz, *Go West!*, 2013–15 (installation view, *Matt Huppatz: Work!* at the Australian Experimental Art Foundation (AEAF), May 29–June 27, 2015), found trailer, clear acrylic, aluminium, reflective two-way film, stainless steel bolts, 300 x 150 x 350 cm.

The emphatic title of *Go West!* invites multiple readings. As a directive, it demands movement in a particular direction away from a given place. Famously, proponents of the westward expansion of settlement in North America issued the rallying call, "Go West, young man!"[411] The phrase was put to use by a different type of cowboy in the 1970s, when disco group the Village People released their track, "Go West" (1979).[412] Although inciting a different kind of colonisation, the drift was no less utopian in nature.

The Village People's "Go West" was written before AIDS. It has been interpreted as a celebration of 'the gay utopia of San Francisco—and California—in the era of YMCA and gay liberation [...] the era of Harvey Milk and all the rest of it.'[413] Twenty years later, in the midst of the AIDS crisis, the English pop group, the Pet Shop Boys, released a cover of the song. Even more anthemic than the original, this version was explicitly linked to gay activism. It was first performed at an AIDS benefit in 1992 at the iconic Manchester nightclub, the Haçienda.[414] In the context of AIDS, and the deaths of many people close to the band, the song took on different meaning. Lead singer Neil Tennant acknowledges this shift in meaning. With AIDS laying siege to the gay Utopia, 'this song now had a kind of pathos: it was a memory of the dream of gay liberation.'[415]

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[411] The phrase "Go West, young man" is commonly attributed to Horace Greeley and related to the westward expansion of European settlement in the USA (Fred R. Shapiro, ed. *The Yale Book of Quotations*, s.v. "Horace Greeley" (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 322–23, accessed November 24, 2016. ProQuest ebrary. Although specific to the USA, it could have applied to any number of exploration/colonisation attempts in the Americas, Australia, and Africa during the 18th and 19th centuries. Once this connection with the "Wild West" has been made, it is hard not to see *Go West!* as a defensive "covered wagon," ready to repel the circling "Red Indians."

[412] The Village People, "Go West," written by Jacques Morali, Henri Belolo, and Victor Willis. Casablanca Records, 1979.

[413] "Secrets of the Pop Song – Go West," YouTube video, 00:04:15, posted by "Barbuzuka," Oct. 6, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1IbpceQ3RA. Extract from the BBC's "Secrets of the Pop Song," Part 3, "Anthem," originally broadcast Saturday July 16, 2011.

[414] The Haçienda takes its name from a slogan of the Situationist International, "The Hacienda Must Be Built," from Ivan Chtcheglov's *Formulary for a New Urbanism* (1953), *Situationist International Online*, accessed Nov. 30, 2016, http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/presitu/formulary.html. The cedilla is not used in the Spanish spelling of hacienda but was chosen for esoteric reasons (Wikipedia, s.v. "The Haçienda," last modified Nov. 1, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ha%C3%A7ienda).

[415] Ibid. The "memory of the dream of gay liberation" has particular relevance for this research. Although, as a teenager in Adelaide in the 1990s, I was relatively unscathed by AIDS, the disease has made a powerful impression on my life, as it has on all sexual dissidents in the West and beyond. The pre-AIDS utopia referenced in the original song is analogous, for a person of my age, to Munoz's "queerer," pre-Stonewall time. The incredible creative release of this period was scotched by the deaths of thousands of creatives. In particular, I am thinking of US artist Keith Haring who was unstinting in his efforts to raise awareness of AIDS and in his artistic commitment to exploring the paradoxically terrific wonders of the gay underground. (I use terrific here in its archaic sense, "causing terror." *OED online*, s.v. "terrific.") I must acknowledge a debt to Haring for emboldening me to believe that "someone like me" had something to offer art and the world. I repay this debt by attempting to do the same for others like us, in the hope that the deaths of so many may not result in the complete subsumption of queers into hegemonic culture, but provide inspiration to maintain the fight for a way forward, for everyone.

4.8.1 Queer Utopia

Queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz returns to the radical roots of queer in order to 'offset the tyranny of the homonormative.'[416] He blames the politics of homonormativity for what he calls a "hamstrung gay agenda" that is bound up by pragmatic attempts to overcome homophobia and intolerance (ibid., 10). Drawing on the German idealist tradition (Kant and Hegel)—and its legacy in the critical Marxist thought of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Benjamin, and Marcuse. but most notably Ernst Bloch)—Muñoz posits utopian thinking as 'a portal to another mode of queer critique [...] a turn to a certain critical idealism [that] can be an especially useful hermeneutic' (ibid., 2).

Muñoz does not employ Utopia in a prescriptive sense. He uses it to connote an "ideality," or 'a desire for a thing, or a way, that is not here but is nonetheless desirable, something worth striving for' (ibid., 109). It does not aim to produce a 'practical politics or even a practical critical practice, because pragmatism has only ever failed to us' (ibid.). Rather, it seeks a way through and beyond the constricted potential of (homo) normative discourse. Queer creativity has a role to play in this process. Muñoz suggests that queer practice, represents 'a mode of being in the world, that is also inventing the world' (ibid.).

> Utopia is always about the not quite here, or the notion that something is missing. Queer cultural production is both an acknowledgement of the lack that is endemic to any heteronormative rendering of the world, and a building, a "world making," in the face of that lack. [...] Queer utopian practice is about "building" and "doing" in response to that status of nothing assigned to us by the heteronormative world.[417]

Notions of "building," "doing," and "being" are fundamental to the theoretical foundations of this exegesis. They are evident in the Heideggerian approach to emergent knowledge in theories of practice-based research, in the *bricoleur*'s knocking-together of bits and pieces, and in the agency

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[416] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, Sexual Cultures (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 26.

[417] José Esteban Muñoz, "Utopia's Seating Chart: Ray Johnson, Jill Johnston, and Queer Intermedia as System," in *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance*, ed. Gavin Butt (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 106. Muñoz makes reference here to Ray Johnson's "Nothings," which were conceptually minimal responses to the 'over-abundance' of the happenings movement, exemplified by Allan Kaprow's work: 'A nothing is a utopian act insofar as it acknowledges a lack that is normalised as reality and attempts to work with and through nothingness and ephemerality: it is both a critique and an additive or reparative gesture' (ibid.). Johnson was taught by Joseph Albers and John Cage at Black Mountain College, and was closely associated with the Judson Memorial Dance Theatre, where Yvonne Rainer and Merce Cunningham were influences (ibid., 104–106). Muñoz proposes that Johnson indexes postmodern dance as a process, and offers it as a model for thinking about the way Johnson's work operates in the world (ibid., 104).

that underlies Deleuze and Guattari's notion of *agencement*. In "Utopia's Seating Chart: Ray Johnson, Jill Johnston, and Queer Intermedia as System," Muñoz looks back at a potent time in modern queer history, the period preceding 1969's "Stonewall revolution."[418] In this "pre-identitarian" moment, he suspects,

> the counter-cultural map was perhaps a bit queerer, […] more expansive and including of various structures of feeling and habits of being that the relatively restrictive categories of gay and lesbian identities are incapable of catching (ibid.).

The spatial "not here" of Utopia suggests a corresponding temporal dimension of "not now." 'By my clock,' he says, 'we were queer before we were lesbian and gay' (ibid., 114). Muñoz proposes that a critical "looking back" may be 'a step forward:'

> The past […] can be instructive to queer critical and political [not to mention artistic] practices that will neutralise the impasse [of] the queer present, opening a portal to a queer future that would be, could be, should be.[419]

[418] Muñoz, "Utopia's Seating Chart," 101. Muñoz identifies Stonewall as the birthplace of the modern gay and lesbian movement and the subsequent 'formalising and formatting of gay and lesbian identities' (ibid.). The Stonewall revolution, or riot, '[was] a series of spontaneous, violent demonstrations by members of the gay (LGBT) community against a police raid that took place in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn, located in the Greenwich Village neighbourhood of Manhattan, New York City' (Wikipedia, s.v. "Stonewall riots," accessed Nov. 2, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stonewall_riots). While this identitarian turn was 'important and even historically necessary,' Muñoz proposes that it is equally important to reflect upon what was lost in this 'process of formalisation' (Munoz, "Utopia's Seating Chart," 101).

[419] Muñoz, "Utopia's Seating Chart," 114.



Figure 64. Mark Wallinger, *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space*, 2001,
stainless steel, MDF, 281.5 x 135 x 135 cm, shown at the British Pavilion, Biennale di Venezia, 2001.

5 CONCLUSION

While the account I render is true, it is, of course, also a fiction.

—Jose Esteban Muñoz, "Utopia's Seating Chart."[420]

5.1 NO BEGINNING

This project applied a practice-based methodology centred on a cycle of inquiry based in action and reflection. The methods and forms "native" to practice formed the spine of the research. Practical explorations were enriched by hermeneutic approaches to contextual inquiry and supported by the adoption of a queer, poststructuralist theoretical framework. Steven Scrivener's theorisation of creative-production research provided the primary methodological touchstone. This supports a focus on producing creative works rather than emphasising a "problem solving" approach. The issues, goals, and priorities of the research unfolded in response to both the making of artefacts and the vagaries of life. Thus, the inquiry did not follow a single line of investigation. This resulted in a stream of outcomes that circumvented the naming of a "problem" and the identification of a final "solution."[421]

Though Scrivener's model of creative-production is procedurally similar to many practice-based research models, it differs in its approach to knowledge. Scrivener defines creative-production research as *original creation* that provides '*ways of seeing* and *ways of being* in relation to what is, was, or might be.'[422] In this understanding, art objects are not expected to communicate knowledge and nor do artists produce "knowledge artefacts." The creative-production model does not deny a place for knowledge in artistic research, but it shifts the aims of research. Here, the primary goal

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[420] Muñoz, "Utopia's Seating Chart," 108.

[421] Scrivener, "Reflection In and On," under "Creative-Production Projects."

[422] Stephen Scrivener, "The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Knowledge," *Working Papers in Art and Design* 2 (2002): under "Ways of Seeing and Ways of Being." Emphasis added. Scrivener's definition of traditional research refers to that provided by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in "Research Assessment Exercise 2001: Assessment Panels' Criteria and Methods." In Australia, the 2015 Higher Education Research Data Collection "Specifications for the Collection of 2014 Data" maintains this emphasis on knowledge, defining research as 'the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, and understandings.' See "Higher Education Research Data Collection Specifications," Australian Government, Department of Education and Training, last modified December 11, 2015, http://docs.education.gov.au/node/36749. It is interesting to note that for the purposes of the HEFCE's Research Excellence Framework 2014 (REF2014), research is defined 'as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.' See "Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions," Research Excellence Framework, last modified February 5, 2014, http://www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2011-02/. Later in "The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Knowledge," Scrivener refines this formulation, proposing that artistic research should be concerned with generating "novel apprehension"—or unique ways of seeing the past, present, or future—which results when the senses and the intellect engage with an artwork.

of artistic research is to *advance the purposes of art* and its principal outcomes *must be art*.[423] Alongside the creative outcomes (artefacts) of this research, the articulation of their development contributes to an understanding of the processes involved in artistic discovery, innovation, and creation.

In concert with Scrivener's approach, a queer line of inquiry gave permission for this project to trace uniquely queer experiences and "veer away" from 'the instinctual, the natural, or the commonsensical.'[424] Priority was given to 'the unexpected, the unplanned,' and 'the lines of flight' that arose in the process of inquiry.[425] Queer theory shares contemporary art theory's close alignment with postmodern and poststructuralist thought, allowing that 'knowledge is always contextual, partial, and fragmentary but never neutral.'[426] Queer research, like artistic research, struggles to make sense of—and bring to light—experience and understanding that is not often articulated in an academic setting.

5.2 INTERMEZZO

This research was inspired by revisions of twentieth century art that expose the gendered and subjective elements of avant-garde and modern art practice. David Hopkins' *Dada's Boys: Masculinity after Duchamp*, was a key departure point. In part, this project contributes a queer extension to Hopkins' deliberately "straight" reading of this influential tradition.

Initially, this project followed a "loose" and intuitive methodology based in experiments with making and materials. This practical activity ran parallel to a survey of artistic contexts—specific artists, key exhibitions, movements, and contemporary and historical exemplars—and nascent inquiries into philosophical and theoretical milieus. The focus was on following desires, identifying interests, noting patterns, and making connections.

In the preliminary stages of inquiry, Bruce Nauman's work acted as a model of experimental practice and masculine subjective expression in postmodern art. I was intrigued by Nauman's initial deployment of his body/self, and his withdrawal from this approach as his work matured.

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[423] Scrivener, "Reflection In and On," under "The Norms of Creative-Production." Scrivener does admit that 'knowledge, learning, and insight' should result from the inquiry (Scrivener, "The Art Object," under "Introduction"). My emphasis.
[424] Jasbir K. Puar, "Preface: Tactics, Strategies, Logistics," in *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), xv.
[425] Ibid.
[426] Nick J. Fox, s.v. "Poststructuralism and Postmodernism," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Health, Illness, Behaviour, and Society*, ed. William C. Cockerham, Robert Dingwall, and Stella R. Quah (Chichester: John Wiley, 2014).

This shift raised questions about the connections between the artist—his body, his subjectivity, his life—and his creative process.

This scoping phase led to the work of Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, as decoded by queer art historian Jonathan D. Katz. He proposed connections between a key artistic interest—assemblage—and queer subjectivity, thus mirroring the concerns of my practice. This conjunction prompted questions about how subjectivity and form relate to assemblage generally, and specifically in my practice. Further research into William C. Seitz's theorisation of assemblage confirmed its potential links to subjectivity and its historical "form" as a subversive practice.

With this rudimentary field of inquiry established, the project developed through cycles of making (assemblage), theoretical/art historical research, and reflection upon art/work and life. I considered Katz' proposal alongside Robert Rauschenberg's famous claim that he works in "the gap" between art and life.[427] This in-between space recalled Victor Turner's notion of liminality, which I connected to my personal experience as a queer man and queer subjectivity more broadly. Following a number of purely formal experiments with assemblage (notably the artefacts *Narcissus (And Other Myths)* and *Party Leech*), I began to engage with personal proclivities—viz. partying and the dynamics of queer sites—as creative and theoretical generators. This began a charting of the illusive gap between my "inner" (and private) life and the public "outer" life of the artwork.

This drift towards "the party" initiated a shift inwards and downwards. The "passage" between art and life went underground and split into a network of rhizomatic connections. Here the party, exemplified by New York's pre-disco party scene, intersected with queer liminal sites such as bathhouses, sex clubs, and "beats." Inquiries into the theorisation of these extra-ordinary scenes unveiled uncanny connections with the artistic processes and outcomes of this research. Significantly, this theoretical work reinforced the usefulness of applying poststructuralist thought as a framework for the overall project. Queer theory proved to be an inspiring tool, particularly because it places an emphasis on the significance of sex, and promotes 'unmethodical resistance to

[427] Robert Rauschenberg quoted in Dorothy Miller, *Sixteen Americans* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959), 58.

normative modes of sex, gender, and sexuality.'[428] These arose as key concerns during this phase of the research.

In the latter stages of the project, the focus of the research shifted towards "post-assemblage" developments—such as minimalism and immersive installation. Here, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *agencement* came to the fore as a theoretical tool. Reflection upon the formal and phenomenal aspects of "party" sites—their layout, materials, forms, and operations—led to a series of provisional assemblages, diagrams, sketches, and maquettes. The maze emerged as a significant spatial and conceptual form. Inquiries into its artistic application revealed unexpected parallels between my interest in underground sub-cultures and Robert Morris' minimal work, notably his Labyrinth-inspired works of the 1970s. Reflections upon this connection, and the artefacts that resulted from it (including *Glory Box Variations*), led to an engagement with Michel Foucault's work on subjectivity, surveillance, and his concept of the *dispositif*, or apparatus.

5.3 NO ENDING

This exegesis supports a body of artefacts—in assemblage, installation, and photo-media—that is the main outcome of this research. The thesis as a whole positions itself in relation to a rising tide of homonormativity in the West, which is subtly connected to capitalist and neo-conservative ideologies. While it is difficult to elude these pervasive structures, this research has drawn together artistic, philosophic, and social practices that facilitate subjective agency and transcend—or even elide—the limits of normativity. In so doing, it makes a unique contribution to the field of expanded sculptural practice.

This project offers a queer view of the connections between creativity, subjectivity, and social contexts. Informed by queer conceptualisations of subjectivity and time, it has explored the themes of liminality and reflection that lie at the heart of this inquiry. In the process, it has made connections between interdisciplinary fields that include art history and studies of culture, gender, and sexuality. While the project contributes directly to debates around queer masculinities in art, it has implications for understandings of "expanded masculinities" in other fields. In practical terms, I have demonstrated that assemblage is a disruptive and expansive

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[428] University of Pittsburgh, "Keywords Project," s.v. "queer," accessed Oct. 28, 2014, http://keywords.pitt.edu/keywords_defined/queer.html.

practice that can work in concert with queer theory. Together, these approaches operate in ways that are critical and dialogic while remaining resistant to reification.

Paradoxically, many of the "outcomes" of this process are preliminary: they will form the basis of further art/work. The research threw up an array of ideas—and questions—that went unexplored because of the drift and limitations of the project. Amongst these was an initial interest in collage and photomontage as correlates of assemblage. Connections to social dance, performance, and social praxis were also under-developed, although they ran parallel to the research in my life outside the academy. Perhaps most significantly, at the very end of this project, a long held interest in the nexus of psychedelic experience—entheogens—botany—neurology—and—creativity was rekindled.[429] These untraced threads have left an indelible, if ambiguous, mark on this project, and offer passages into further art/research.

This research constitutes an assemblage—a provisional whole connected on material, formal, and conceptual levels. The connections between parts may be explicit (or implied) in the artefacts themselves, but they operate most intriguingly (and perhaps conspicuously) in the spaces between works and ideas. *Agencement* in Deleuze and Guattari refers to arrangement (and rearrangement), connection (and reconnection): a process of continual becoming. This exegesis maps the complex "reflexions" that have shaped and directed this research. I hope that it acts like Ariadne's thread, leading the reader out of—or at least *through*—this complexity.[430] Having said this, the puzzle has no definitive resolution: it traces a living and transformational process that has no beginning or end. Like a rhizome, it was—is—will always (be)—'between, inter-being, *intermezzo*.'[431]

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[429] This comes at a time when clinical research into psychedelic drugs is undergoing a huge resurgence after the "dark age" of political conservatism brought on by 1960s drug hysteria, which culminated in the West's failed "War on Drugs." An entheogen is '[a] psychoactive substance which is used in a religious ritual or to bring about a spiritual experience, typically a plant or fungal extract; (more widely) any hallucinogenic drug' (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "entheogen," accessed June 26, 2017).

[430] The OED links the etymology of exegesis to '(ii) ancient Greek *ἐξήγησις* statement, narrative, explanation, interpretation < *ἐξηγεῖσθαι* to interpret (< *ἐξ-* ex- *prefix2* + *ἡγεῖσθαι* to guide, lead) + *-σις* -sis *suffix*' (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "exegesis," accessed June 14, 2014).

[431] Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 25.

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