THREAT OR THRILL IN GROVEDALE: AN ARTIST'S RESPONSE TO THE CHANGING NATURE OF PLACE

What we call the beginning is often the end

And to make an end is to make a beginning.

The end is where we start from.

Eliot, TS 1950, *The Complete Poems and Plays 1909-1950,* Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York.

Jennifer Kamp

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctorate of Philosophy by Exhibition and Exegesis at Victoria University

4 September 2009

ABSTRACT

'Threat or Thrill in Grovedale: An Artist's Response to the Changing Nature of Place' has developed out of my realisation that 'my' space has changed. I was conscious of an unsettling, something not quite right as I moved around my neighbourhood seeking an explanation for my sense of unease. I examine conceptions of space and how we live, in a visual and textual exploration that loops across time seeking meaning and understanding of my changing urban landscape. As an artist through my photographic and video works I develop ways of working in a changing world with new pictorial possibilities. My work is a layered and reflexive project that illuminates the past, the passage of time and explores different ways of understanding the world through the new technologies.

I explore social and emotional experiences, our relationships that give meaning to the space we inhabit. My reflexive enquiry dealing with my personal sense of loss is intermingled with the past joys of recalled family celebrations and current confusion that resonates with an unsettled contemporary landscape. My enquiry combines different voices and tensions to express the 'edginess' of shifting 'threats and thrills' that characterise the contemporary landscape. I merge context and methodology, imagery and text with process, to investigate and visualise the subtleties and changing ways of 'being' in today's world. My art practice explores this 'edginess' utilising digital technology to develop interplay between the past and present, linking the virtual with the actual and the technical, to engender meta-narratives that may open new possibilities.

Declaration of Authorship

"I Jennifer Kamp declare that the PhD exegesis entitled 'Threat or Thrill in Grovedale: an Artist's Response to the Changing Nature of Place' of approximately 30,400 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this exegesis is my own work. It constitutes 20% of the material for the PhD degree, along with the accompanying exhibition which constitutes 80%".

Jennifer Kamp

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

For Evie and Jasper…may their landscape encompass a thrilling world of promise and wonder.

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THE EXHIBITION:

Heterotopia: New Spaces

Foucault introduced 'heterotopia' in his lecture 'Of Other Spaces' given in 1967, outlining places or sites which are 'outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality' (1986, p. 24). Heterotopias are troubled places unlike the imagined perfect place of utopia or nightmarish dystopia. Heterotopias act as counter-sites, bits of the social world that are different in some way to those sites that surround them. Their otherness or ambivalence marks them out as doing things in an alternative way, a similitude, an ordering and juxtaposition of signs constituted by an unexpected bricolage effect.

My exhibition *Heterotopia: New Spaces* maps my search for meaning in the ambivalent spaces of my everyday life. I move through what Carter describes as 'the dapple of things', the warping of surfaces, the shadows and reflections between the straight edges of our constructed environment (2009, p.1). The ten works in the exhibition were completed between 2007 and 2009 and evolved during the course of my research project. They include one cartographic work, a 5-metre canvas and four digital prints. The remaining five works are DVD projects with sound, made with computer animation software and play as an endless loop. Two of these are large-scale projected works on separate walls; one features the installation of a playground slide. The three smaller works are installed in a column of TV monitors.

Viewing the works and reading the text

It is my preference that the art works be viewed before the Exegesis is read to evoke a spontaneous response that is not conditioned by the text.

INTRODUCTION

'Threat or Thrill in Grovedale: An Artist's Response to the Changing Nature of Place' has developed out of my realisation that 'my' space has changed. The suburban surrounds where I have lived for more than thirty years are becoming unfamiliar. I was conscious of an unsettling feeling, something not quite right as I moved around my neighbourhood seeking an explanation for my sense of unease. I began to examine the contemporary landscape and compare it with my recollections of how it was when my husband and I moved to the fringe suburb of Grovedale, bordering the provincial city of Geelong.

The neighbourhood as I first knew it was a collection of building blocks purchased by a land developer from local farmers. Some houses had been built; others were in the process of erection. The infrastructure consisted of made roads, no footpaths, a small shopping centre, and primary school. Fenced paddocks and sporadic sugar gum trees surrounded the new estate; distant hills outlined the horizon.

Today this same landscape is a stark contrast to my above portrait. Overnight the district appears to have been overtaken by commercial business developments and a frantic house building industry. Swarms of rooftops have suddenly appeared on the once grass-covered hills. Earth-moving works abound not far from a new shopping complex with huge cranes silhouetted against the sky. Jackhammers and building noise accompany the revving of the many trucks and cars using the Princes and Surfcoast Highways that define Grovedale's geographical boundaries. Billboards and banners advertise franchised business products, beacons edging the roadsides announcing a different space.

Ideas about the reconfiguring of space surface throughout my project and influence the development of my art works. My thoughts continually return to the early ordering of our neighbourhood, the vacant lots, new houses, roads, schools and shops all mapped on a grid; and how gradually outside life moved inside, dominated by the screens of new technologies and other by-products of progress and contemporary life and thought.

As a practising visual artist and educator, it intrigues me as to why I am experiencing a sense of alienation in this place where I have lived for most of my married life. I decide that viewing the landscape from differing perspectives may explain and assist my understanding of the progress around me. My research examines my local space, the nature and products of the change, the things I no longer comprehend by comparing my observations with recollections of the past. I question whether these concerns are reflections arising from my now solo status as a householder. Nikos Papastergiadis in 'Spatial Aesthetics: Art, Place and The Everyday' argues that such forms of social investigation and cultural practice are becoming more common in the field of contemporary art. Artistic practice cannot be separated from walking through and living in city spaces. 'Critical engagement with the specificity of place involves more than using it as a stage for new ideas' (Papastergiadis 2006, p.199).

Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart describe a process of 'Participatory Action Research' that involves a sequence of self-reflective cycles (2005, pp.563-4). Their diagrammatic model presents the stages as neat and contained; however they argue that in reality, the cycles of planning, acting and observing can overlap. The criterion of success is whether the participant has a sense of development and understanding of the situation in which they practise. The path of my enquiry is more of an ethnographic study, a set of cycles that is not neat and tidy, but focuses strongly on the ethnographic inconsistencies of living in today's world. The process becomes one of jumps and starts, spurts and hesitation, apt metaphors to describe the threats and thrills of my

environment and evolving visual research. Through my art works, I query what phenomena may have contributed to the change in my suburban landscape. My path of investigation, like the landscape I inhabit becomes ambiguous; perceived threats morph into thrills, an inversion that re-occurs throughout my study, imbuing the landscape with an edginess that transcends boundaries. As my research weaves back and forth from my past to the present, threads blend adding other layers of meaning to my perception of the change around me.

My enquiry combines different voices and tensions to express the edginess of shifting threats and thrills that characterise the contemporary landscape. Barbara Milech's writing 'The Critical Artist' espouses the mix of memoir, narrative and theoretical research with practical knowledge, which enables the creative piece to be part of several knowledge regimes (2006, p.13). My personal experiences are expressed in italics to differentiate between these voices. I merge context and methodology, imagery and text with process, to investigate and visualise the subtleties and changing ways of 'being' in today's world. My art practice explores this edginess utilising digital technology to develop interplay between the past and present, linking the virtual with the actual and the technical, to engender meta-narratives that may open new possibilities.

In Chapter One I describe 'My' space, how it has changed and the disturbing observations that initiated my research project. I investigate the different experiences of young people, the generational change, the advances in technology that have revolutionised childhood activities and interactions. Play and the local children's playground, a symbol of past happy shared family experiences, seemed the obvious starting point for my study. I often hear the children participating in their activities at the primary and secondary schools close to my home, and wonder why I never see them playing in the streets or at the playgrounds, reflecting on how different it was when I was a young mother. The nearby playground was a fun place to be then, a centre for children's birthday parties and social catch-ups for the parents. Now it is a desolate

space, serving as an occasional car park and a repository for discarded rubbish and empty alcohol bottles. Another disturbing observation that motivated my research enquiry concerns a teen party out of control on the Grovedale school oval one winter's evening. The sickening consequences of this event and other occurrences of youth disengagement related in the media, prompt me to ask why many of our young people are behaving in this way. My work examines possible explanations for these changing spaces. As technology flourished and the economy grew, economists promised that our world would be a better place. Fiona Stanley Director of the Telethon Institute For Child Health Research argues how longer working hours and accompanying stresses have created tensions, an edginess that threatens our children's environment and welfare (Stanley, 2008).

In Chapter Two 'Urban space: streetscape', I reflect again on how our present boundaries differ from those earlier years. Our way of living was patterned on a predictable visible order and modus operandi where the grid defined our space, the blocks of land on the building estate and the planned infrastructure. In contrast today's boundaries seem ambiguous and confusing: a transient interweaving of public and private domains. Scott McGuire (2008, p.6) describes how our houses, containers of interactive media with a global reach, have become porous. The overlapping footprints of satellites enable Google Earth to peer into our backyards. I compare the complex space of today's multiplying housing estates with my recollections of the planned space of my neighbourhood in the past. In those early days the patterned grid of suburban life was programmed around the family and recreational activities with neighbours and their children. I explore how artists can extract new meaning from the prescriptive grid to explain the changing nature of space and describe how my visual works 'Gridslides' (2007) and 'Somatic Houses' (2008) were developed as a result of this process.

The dilemmas associated with my 'Interior space and stuff', society's preoccupation with material goods, are the focus of Chapter Three. Charles Taylor in 'The Ethics of Authenticity' (1991, p.1) asserts that the 'subjective slide' is an outcome of the 'malaises of modernity' and the excesses of the consumer society. Values and achievements seem to be structured around economic gains and technological solutions. Taylor suggests that these 'malaises' have contributed to a society of individuals who have sacrificed their freedoms and active participation in a vigorous political culture, to pursue their life style choices (p.60). Hannah Arendt in 'The Human Condition' voices concerns about the 'unfathomable consequences…in a society of beings too absorbed in consumption to take any responsibility for the human world or to understand their political capacities' (1958, p.xv.). I investigate whether our desire to possess the latest model television, computer, mobile phone and white goods appliances, has resulted in our homes becoming as cluttered as our landscape. My research examines the accumulation and management of stuff in our lives, the emotional attachment to our personal belongings, as witnessed in the tragic accounts of the Victorian bush fire victims, and queries our cultural belonging (Ross Honeywill & Verity Byth, 2006, pp. xi-vi).

In Chapter Four 'Technological space', I examine how the new technologies and new media have impacted on my life-style, and altered the way I live and communicate in the suburban landscape. In those early days we were fully engaged in setting up our family homes with the latest innovations, not aware of any impending transition. The new computerised technologies now dominate my interior and exterior space. I experience degrees of frustration as I endeavour to learn and apply the tools to my art practice and living in the merging boundaries of today's world. I analyse the contrasting methodologies utilised by the artists Rosalie Gascoigne and Andreas Gursky; how through the re-ordering of the grid in their works, they endow the space of their landscapes with added meaning.

A desire for new experiences has for some subsumed the need for more stuff. In Chapter Five 'Being in new spaces', I discuss the possibility of new spaces within the suburban landscape, heterotopia, sites where new social ordering may occur (Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, 1986). I gaze back at my early 'utopian' Grovedale space with its rigid divisions. Others like me experiencing a sense of disassociation and ambivalence in their neighbourhood are searching for new meaning in a landscape threatened with consequences of climate change and economic instability. My thoughts return to the playground where this project had its beginning, and to the value of child's play. Through my visual research, strands begin to converge as I renegotiate the space of my landscape. I consider a new re-ordering; a future of promise, where living on the edge in this unpredictable world could generate thrills of achievement that in another's perception would be considered a threat. Artists can make sense of human perception and experience by building bridges of communication through metaphor, illusion and imagination (Papastergiadis, 2008). I examine the challenging possibilities and ways that artists and electronic arts can interact with the public and make a contribution to the re-ordering of society, how diverse projects can be a reconstruction of the local as an open rather than a bounded territory (Timothy Druckery, 1999).

0.1 Methodology

Through my arts-based research I endeavour to re-contextualise my concerns and reorganise my perception of life around me. Art has the power to initiate cognitive processes and the imagination to frame the world in a variety of ways. Elliot Eisner in 'The Arts and the Creation of the Mind' proposes that a subjective awareness of the world and its ambiguities can be explored to notice a particular environment and our place in it, 'the arts are means of exploring our own interior landscape' (2002, p.11). We learn to see what we had not noticed, to feel what we had not felt and formulate the images for our understanding.

I propose to chart my research path using my art practice as a reflexive reference for framing and developing my ideas, allowing sight and form to shape my way. The process of reflection in action allows the artist to deal with problems and make sense of troubling phenomena. By nurturing particular kinds of reflexivity, new experiential patterns of thought may form, opening up new vistas. Maxine Greene in 'Variations on a Blue Guitar' defines 'aesthetic education' as an intentional undertaking, a personal aesthetic framework that can show the connectedness between life and art to make perceptible concepts and feelings not previously expressed (2001, p.6). Ideas and images become embarkation points setting the direction for emerging possibilities and new options. Eisner similarly (2002, p.10) describes these cognitive processes of representation as ends of discovery, which generate surprise. From surprise, the threat and thrill of unexpected encounters, we are more likely to learn something that makes changing context meaningful.

0.2 'The shock of the new'

Barbara Bolt argues the 'shock of the new' is a special type of understanding that is realised through our dealings with the materials and tools of our practice (2004, p.1).Working with Martin Heidegger's (1977) notion of 'handlability'in 'The Exegesis and the Shock of the New', Bolt proposes that the artist is open to what emerges in the process of practice. I have previously worked with traditional methods and materials to portray my imagery and my intention is to explore new digital processes to develop understanding of the ambiguities and transience of my contemporary space. Eisner (2002, pp.109-110) writes that artists' works must be more than purposeful, that aspiration needs a vehicle. Knowledge and technical skills are necessary to convert imaginative solutions into material existence. To think within a medium requires an understanding of specific techniques to realise the potentialities. Solutions to problems depend on the artist's imagination to visualise the possibilities of the process. Picasso expressed the interaction of space and time through his investigation of cubism,

revolutionising the art world with his now famous 'Les Demoiselles d'Avignon' (1907).
In Chapter Two I discuss how the Canadian-American artist Agnes Martin, searching
for truth in her elusive landscape, referenced the grid as an underlying structure to her
paintings (Griselda Pollock 2005, pp.165-169).
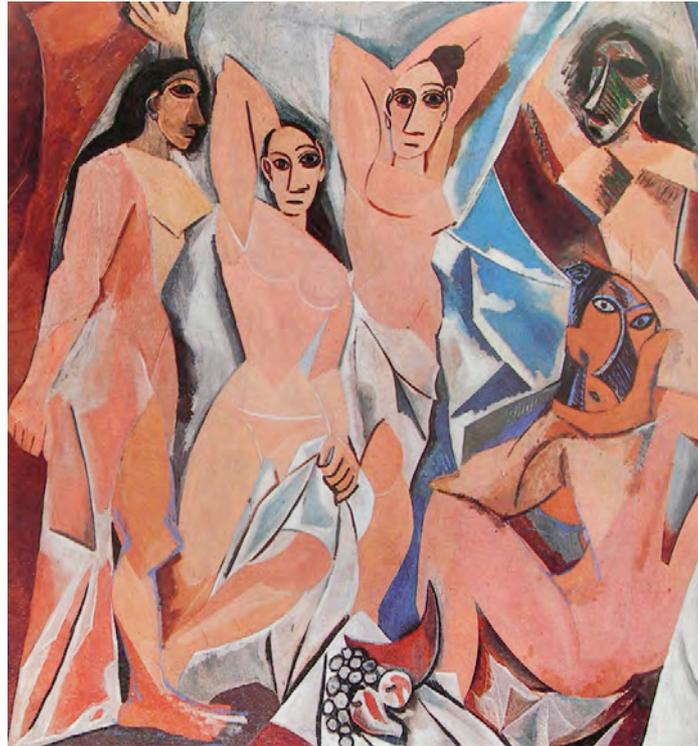
Pablo Picasso *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907, Oil on canvas 244 x 233 cm.
Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York

I see my search for a new repertoire of skills utilising unfamiliar computer software
tools as a metaphor for my unfolding research into discovering ways of negotiating and
re-engaging with my landscape. As my confidence and understanding of the unfamiliar
computer technology develops, my imagery becomes more flexible, expanding my
range of visual possibilities. Eisner (2002, 109-110) describes how this growth in

technical expertise is not only an acquisition of skills but also reflects a progression in the development of thinking. My empowerment over my environment is regained as my expertise with the technologies improves. The jumps and starts of my early images are replaced by a controlled rhythm and flow.

I photograph and video the neighbourhood, observing and recording images wherever I walk. The shopping centres, the playgrounds, roads, paths and houses are the subjects of my suburban landscape enquiry. Their shifting surfaces and changing shapes intrigue me. The transient forms evolving from patterns of light and shade, visualise the ambivalence of the landscape I described in my text, and I become conscious of shadows revealed by my computer screen. They infiltrate my narrative, tingeing past memories with sadness. I am trying to pinpoint whether lingering grief at my husband's sudden death from brain cancer has inspired my gaze towards the landscape; looking inside turned to looking outside?

My research project is expressed as a narrative embedded in the personal because of my participation in this changing landscape. My narrative evolves as a painter develops a collage, a collection of visual portraits, ideas assembled, layered, superimposed, sometimes re-arranged, not in a linear mode, but as Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln describe in 'Entering the Field of Qualitative Research', a bricolage of memory and meaning (1994, p.2). My story is framed on an autoethnographic model to engage the audience in my process of inquiry and discovery. Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner hold that in 'Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing'

> Instead of masking our presence, leaving it at the margins, we should make ourselves more personally accountable for our perspectives (1996 p.15).

I am attending my niece's wedding; she's lovely in her strapless cream appliquéd gown, her long blond hair flowing in ringlets down her bare back. 'Come on Auntie Jenni, family photos'. I line up beside Gerard's brothers and sisters-in law, I am there, and he is not…

The story as an evocative autoethnography affirms the subjectivity of the researcher and helps to frame the experience of being and address those experiences related to my work as an artist. The multiple voices I introduce represent the complexity and contradictions of my experiences to give the reader the opportunity to identify with similar understandings and discoveries. Autoethnography enables a qualitative analysis of my visual and textual research data that I propose to weave seamlessly through the narrative to create something viable and worthwhile.

My art-based research is a renegotiation of past and present space that is informed not by the traditional methodology for scientific research and scholarship, but is played out with my exegesis and artwork drawing on ethnographic data. Elaine Martin and Judith Booth (2006) in their Foreword to 'Art-based Research, a proper Thesis?', significantly state this methodology is not a method free zone; it is more implicit than explicit, and evolves rather than being defined and constrained at the beginning The work focuses on a form of knowing through the self, and the subjective experience of how we live with others in the social and cultural domain. Gaston Bachelard explains in 'The Poetics of Space how 'two kinds of space, intimate space and exterior space, keep encouraging each other, as it were, in their growth' (1994, p.201).

My transdisciplinary explorations of data led me to explore my initial questions about the changing landscape in Grovedale, and in the process, illuminated issues that I could not anticipate. My research project became an intermingling of slices of time and sound, a 'revealing' as I grappled with the painful memories and emotions associated with my

personal loss, as well as knowledge and an insight from an artist's perspective into the changing nature of place. Bachelard speaks of the artist's experience of a 'reverberation', the being of a new poetic image lying dormant in the unconscious (1994, p.xvi). Robert Nelson describes 'The sound of shadows and shapes,' how 'the audibility of the shadows' can impinge on artistic forms (2009). Bochner and Ellis discuss the importance of art as a mode of enquiry, a new research paradigm, and how it creates meanings for the spectator, how it can heal, what it could inspire or teach (2003, p.510). My looking at the past was not to reinvent it, but to understand and value that which is lost. The product of the research becomes not a conclusion but a transgressive activity, a means of inviting others to consider what they could become. Art can reveal an artist's feelings and perceptions, but it can also evoke the recognition of one's own.

CHAPTER ONE: 'MY' SPACE

My space just keeps moving; once it seemed fixed and routine, an ordered sequence of events and happenings, and a way of living encompassing the family, friends, the neighbourhood and the workplace. The thrill of anticipated celebrations that was in synch with the seasons, a rhyme and reason to life with everything in its place. Today the intense pace of technological change has propagated new ways of being in a landscape that re-morphs erratically, generating insecurity and threat associated with climate change and unemployment on a domestic and global scale.

I could walk around my suburb and meet with the neighbours, now the familiar streets seem quiet and uncanny, the atmosphere is different and I wonder what has changed in my space. My visual research project evolved out of this questioning about my changing landscape. Was it the environment or my state of mind? I reflect on how I move around my space as an artist and an individual. How I react to my changed surroundings, what I see, hear and feel. My living space, my home, looks the same but is different. A virtual world now pervades the solid walls of my once private domain. The ambiguity of my domestic space translates to my surrounding drought-stricken landscape, mushrooming with extensive housing estates and shopping complexes.

Conceptually the solid static images of my early Grovedale existence confront the dynamism and liquidity of today's space. My confusion about the space I now inhabit initiates my search for meaning in this rapidly changing place. Through my art practice I engage with virtual space and the challenges of the new technologies to gain understanding of others and myself in this edgy world. My visual path, as with the re-morphing landscape I explore, becomes transient as I zip back and forth traversing the virtual, grounded and conceptual space of my being.

I used to see my neighbours as I worked in the garden or washed the car, but Council restrictions, as a result of the drought, have limited these activities. Sometimes I glimpse my neighbours as I drive in and out of my carport, or when I put out the wheelie bins for rubbish collection, but am more likely to meet and chat with them at the recently developed Waurn Ponds Shopping Centre. My business contacts have become impersonal, with call services and numerous operators responding to my telephone requests. It is no surprise to read that people are signing up with social websites such as MySpace, Bebo and Facebook, making personal relationships on a global scale. Communication is immediate in a virtual world with interactive friendships available any time of the day or night. Headlines in the press highlight the risks for vulnerable teenagers, searching for belonging and identity (Warwick McFadyen, 2007).

Ideally 'my' space is the beach where swirling waves froth, cold against my bare legs. I am walking along soft sand, sensing it squeaking between my toes. I love its coarse gritty feel, not like that bumpy grey road that I must drive every day to the Waurn Ponds Shopping Centre. Cars beep and people dart around behind their ferocious shopping trolleys. I squeeze the car into a surprise space. 'Are you ok?' I ask a lady leaning on a walking frame. 'I can't find my daughter', she looks wildly around towards the circling shops. 'Come on, I'll walk with you'. 'Thanks dear'. We navigate a path between the parked cars, edging across the main thoroughfare to avoid the oncoming traffic. 'We can put an announcement over the speaker at Safeway'. I lead her in that direction, through the automatic doors. 'Look' she cries, 'there's my daughter...thank you so much'. 'Hello Jenni', I run into Stan the dog walker, and then Barry, a past colleague. 'How are the grandchildren?' Grabbing my own grotesque trolley I head down the supermarket aisles, list in hand, inspecting and selecting what I need. I nearly ram Heather, Glad's sister. 'How is she?' 'The treatment is working; she doesn't have to see the specialist for a month'. 'That's great, give her my love'. I am lucky, the checkout is

free and through I whiz, amazing, everything is packed swiftly. 'You have a nice day too'. Now, where's the car.

Shopping with my daughter and toddler grandson in the same complex is another experience. The buzz of people and soft Muzak engulfs us as we enter, zigzagging through the mall, and intent on visiting every enterprise, whether it is a boutique shop, confectionary outlet, pharmacy, retail business, shoe or coffee shop. We wander in a timeless world; our moving reflections mirrored fleetingly in the vast expanses of glass and luminous construction materials. The aroma of coffee, roasted nuts and muffins assails us as we pass the food outlets. We test perfumes, try on hats, pick up items we have no intention of purchasing, just chatting and continuing our fragmented journey stopping, starting, surrounded by glassware, chrome and beams of light flashing their transitory messages, zapping from electronic screens. Jasper in his pusher spots a toy mobile phone that excites him, a bargain at $3.00 so I buy it. We spend the rest of the day playing a game, 'hello Jasper, is that you?' He beams as the squeezed phone rings. The toy lasted for about three days. Other shoppers throng past us, intent on their personal excursions around the complex. Little boys, faces painted garishly, zoom by, scare Jasper and run off. He is exhilarated and wants to join them. On a high, thrilled with our trivial purchases, we head for home, keen to examine our new treasures. Like Don De Lillo, who writes in 'White Noise' about the euphoria of his family shopping forays, engineered as a distraction from threats of toxicity and contemporary technologies, we have happily indulged in retail therapy (1986, p.84).

As I describe our shopping excursion I realise that it could be a metaphor for my research project. Ross Gibson poses a 'new media consciousness' in his presentation at the Congress of the International Committee of the History of Art held, at the University of Melbourne (Gibson 2008, p.171). Gibson discusses its relationship with Zen culture; nothing is centred, there is a notion of endlessness, a momentary glimpse of what is at play. He speaks of Zen architecture, its polyrhythm a textual detailed interplay that, as

with my research project, interrogates the imagination to speculate on the next spatial, temporal phase. The new media is always on the move, a timeless pulsing and reconverging back to self with different propositions, a reflexive back and forth.

A stark contrast to the glittering façade of the Waurn Ponds complex is the skate-park located on the other side of the highway, facing the shopping complex. Its dark concrete landscape contoured with irregular humps and concave forms seems alien to me, recalling Ridley Scott's grey wastelands depicted in the film 'Blade Runner' (1982). Recent press reports document instances of cyber bullying and it is these repelling details that add to my distaste. Police have interviewed a thirteen-year-old boy in relation to an attack, which occurred at Waurn Ponds skate-park last month; it was alleged the attacker posted the details on the Internet site, YouTube (Daniel Breen, 2007).

I watch the young boys as they enjoy their activities in the skate-park and it is this pleasure that Shaun Gladwell so gracefully depicts in his video work 'Storm Sequence' (Gladwell, 2008). Gladwell skateboards freestyle on a concrete space above the crashing waves at Bondi, challenging the elements. He pirouettes and circles in slow motion, a painterly and sublime self-portrait that defies the incredible storm behind him. Luck plays a part in the work as falling rain spots on the camera lens transform the video piece into an almost impressionist painting. Visual artists use signs and symbols, semiotics, referents to the physical world to convey ideas. Gladwell's thrilling slow moving imagery visualises an urban landscape that is a cool space for the now generation. His work gives meaning to a non-space and references the changing landscape of western society.

Shaun Gladwell *Storm Sequence*, 2008 video still,
Courtesy the artist & Sherman Galleries, Sydney

1.1 The playground

Several events triggered my attention, providing the catalyst for my research proposal.
The first concerns the playground close to my home. Framed by spindly gum trees, it
stands on a scrubby piece of land between the football clubrooms, tennis courts and the
Grovedale College. In the distance a fence delineates the horizon line and the
boundaries of the football ground against a vast expanse of sky. This playground
comprises a multi-purpose modular play structure designed for young children and is set
on a boxed-in bed of pine chips. I walk past the playground almost every day,
sometimes in the morning, other times at noon or early on a summer's evening. What
perplexes me is that I rarely see anyone playing in this space or using the equipment.

To validate my observations I began to video the space at thirty-minute intervals,
varying the times of the day and week throughout January and February 2007. Mothers

strolled by with pushers taking children to school, boys practised cricket on the oval. A little girl played on the slide one evening whilst waiting for her dad at the tennis courts and another time a young mother gave her toddler a quick slide on the way past. During this time I engaged in some interesting conversations with parents parking cars and the year seven girls, supposedly on lunchtime yard duty. Otherwise my hours spent videoing verified an isolated playground, passing traffic and the birds.

Thirty years ago the original timber and metal playground equipment comprised a see-saw, roundabout, a slide and several fibreglass rocking horses. At mid-week, we mothers would take turns playing tennis, watching the children happily running from one piece of equipment to another.

The Grovedale Playground, 2006
Photograph Jennifer Kamp

It is late November and Nerissa's birthday party. Balloons are fluttering in the garden; the birthday cake, its four candles almost smothered with 'Smarties', is ready. Just have to organise the party pies, tiny saveloys and scatter hundreds and thousands over the fairy bread. 'Let's go to the park', we rush across the oval. Coreen reaches the playground first. The birthday girl and neighbours Rebecca, Vicki and Timmy follow in hot pursuit. 'Race you to the slide', up they go, whizzing down. I remember Nerissa's first attempt, gingerly stepping to the top, my coaxing push and triumphant catch by her father below. 'Race you to the roundabout', they rush to hop on. 'Careful now, we don't want a fall'. Squeals of laughter mingle with apprehension and excitement, plaits and bows are bobbing, party dresses swishing with the unpredictable spinning. Next it's a ride on the seesaw and rocking ponies. 'First in best dressed'. 'OK, time's up, let's go home for the party'. Off they run, Honey the poodle scampering ahead.

Now as I continue my daily walks along the still neighbourhood streets I puzzle over the abandonment of the playground and wonder if this lack of interest could somehow be connected with other changes in Grovedale.

This morning's early walk again takes me past the playground; heavy rain and muddy puddles partly obscure the rutted 'doughnuts', reminders of last night's car revellers. A lonely shopping trolley lies stranded on the verge surrounded by glittering glass shards, beer and vodka 'Cruiser' labels still intact. I contemplate the erect moulded play construction. Its geometric design comprises six dominant vertical poles that link two horizontal platforms with a diagonally placed grided climbing frame, a polyhemp net and the fibreglass slide. This boldly coloured tubular construction, a small pitched roof covering the upper platform, frames a collective of configured spaces reminiscent of Piet Mondrian's painting 'Composition with Red, Yellow, and Blue (1936- 43). Horizontal and vertical black lines dissect the canvas, creating abstract asymmetrical relationships with stark primary colours, referencing a Cartesian spatial order expanded

on by the Bauhaus art group around the 1920's. Henri Lefebvre in his book 'The Production of Space' (1991, pp.86-7) describes how this new consciousness emerged; by rotating and breaking up the picture plane, erasing any reference to nature and personal experience, the object was intentionally reduced to its plan and the flat surface of the canvas.
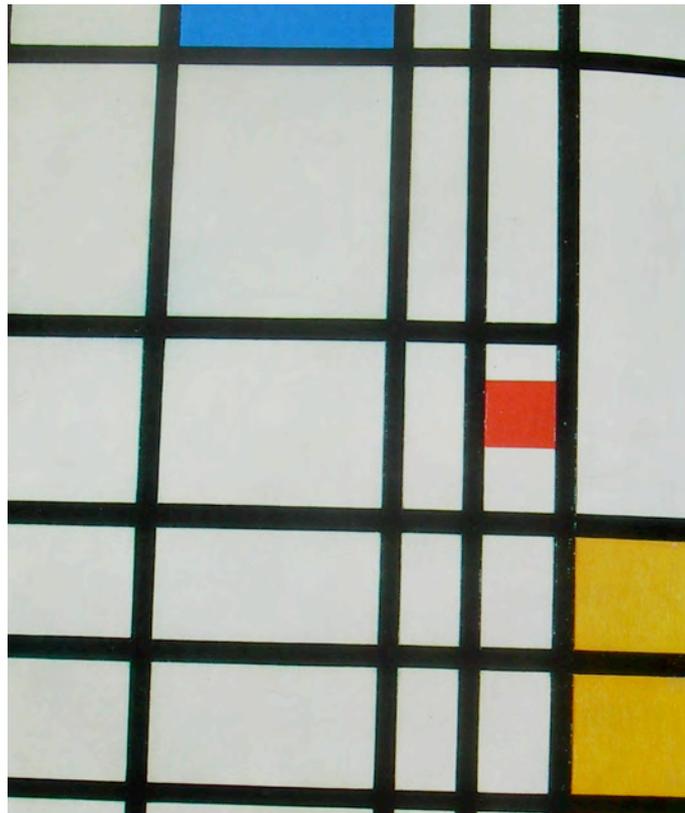
Piet Mondrian *Composition with Red, Yellow, and Blue*, (detail) 1936-43, 60 x 55 cm

Oil on canvas

Collection Moderna Museet Stockholm

I relate the design of the Grovedale playground structure, with its interlinking of vertical and horizontal struts, tubular plastic and chain, to the Bauhaus spatial theories. The

modular structure describes a formal connectedness of short ascents and descents; there is no sense of mystery to enthuse engagement with these fabricated materials. The predominance 'of straight lines right angles and strict (rectilinear) perspective' references a dominating space (Lefebvre 1991, pp.409-410).

A startling contrast to this design is the playground installation 'She – A Cathedral' (Stockholm Modern Museum, 1966) conceived by Nicki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely and Per Oluv Ultvedt (Alicia Paz-Solis, 2006). The twenty-eight metres long curvilinear female form encompassed a slide, an aquarium filled with goldfish, a small cinema, a bar and a love seat. A passage leads through the female's legs to the vaginal entrance controlled by red and green traffic lights, endowing this asymmetrical space with added meaning.
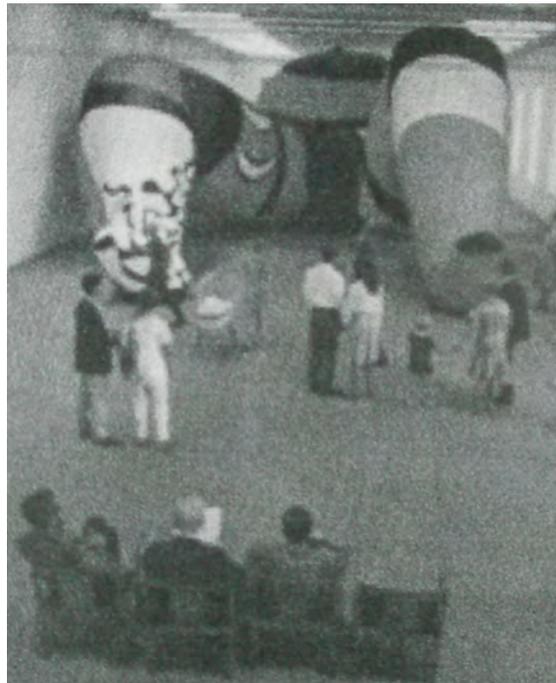
Nicki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely and Per Oluv Ultvedt *She – A Cathedral,* 1966
installation Stockholm Modern Museum

How does this relate to the playground space and change in Grovedale? Space that lacks meaning can generate ambiguity and alienation. Lefebvre argues that abstract space and shifts in contemporary social space can be read through signification and examination of the places where people meet…

> The form of social space is encounter, assembly, simultaneity…Social space implies actual or potential assembly at a single point, or around that point (1991, p.101).

Over the years every new housing development in Grovedale incorporated a park featuring individually designed play structures. I visited each one of them to observe whether they were better patronised. As I filmed these playgrounds as part of my visual data collection, I noted that they were just as isolated as my play space. I recalled the letters that I read in the Education section of 'The Age' from young students describing the deserted and boring playgrounds in their neighbourhoods, lamenting the dearth of creative play spaces (Alexandra Adornetto, 2007). She asks where are the children building makeshift cubby houses, or kicking a ball in the street, participating in imaginative childhood games? In 'Plea for playgrounds' the writer laments how children's play has changed, with the vast range of technological toys available and static plastic excuses for recreational equipment springing up everywhere in urban areas (Judy McKinty, 2007).

 This letter prompts a response of agreement from an eighteen-year-old student who complains about the mindless multi-tasking by her fifteen-year-old brother on the social networking MySpace, whilst talking on MSN. She protests that the lack of outdoor activity has much to do with fear and deplores the plastic excuses for recreational equipment as useless (Sarah Williams, 2007).

I smile as I read another published letter, this time from a year eleven student describing her boring street and the fact that 'more people walk their dogs down this street than any other I've lived in' (Shannon Madden, 2007). This could be my street in Grovedale.

The comment linking the lack of outdoor activity with fear is corroborated by the frequent media reports about our threatening society. The daily papers document bullying and assaults in public places. Recent graphic press accounts describe savage street attacks and the bashing murder and robbery of a Victoria University academic in Footscray (Julia Medew, 2008). Victoria's former Chief Commissioner Christine Nixon states people are concerned about vandalism, drunkenness, and graffiti in their local area (John Silvester, 2008). Closer to my home a report in the 'Geelong News', 'Grovedale fire deliberately lit', describes an arson attack on the football clubrooms, the damage estimated to cost up to $5000.00 (Nick Price, 2008).

It is early in the New Year and I am awake at 5.30 am; from my bedroom window I glimpse flashing green and red lights, reminiscent of the glimmering Christmas decorations stringing our houses several weeks earlier. These lights appear to be coming from the nearby football ground; minutes later a fire truck speeds past. I set off with my pets on our regular constitutional and through the haze see fire brigade vehicles, uniformed officers with hoses and ladders surrounding the clubrooms. An acrid smell permeates the air and pools of water cover the asphalt paving as the men direct their hoses over the scorched roof. 'Wheelie bins were placed against the main entrance and set alight, lots of internal damage,' comments a neighbour.

Other fears are evoked by the threat of a terrorist attack, road accidents or medical trauma. As a society, the rapid pace of technological change perplexes us. There are no immediate explanations for the sudden terminal cancers of loved ones and close friends.

Could it be electromagnetic emissions from transformer towers, there was a large one on my nature strip at Grovedale and another massive structure outside my late cousin's flat in Coogee. Toxic possibilities are associated with the use of mobile phones and microwave ovens; the 'White Noise' that De Lillo so graphically describes (1986, p.51).

Fear and anxiety may explain the absence of children at the Grovedale playgrounds, open public play spaces located in an urban landscape. 'Stranger Danger' child education programs and the 'Neighbourhood Watch' signs displayed around the streets heighten parents' concerns. The media constantly reminds us of child pornography and abduction cases. As recently as February 3, 2008 the Channel Nine television network 'Reality series, Crime Investigation Australia', presented a ninety-minute program documenting 'The Wanda Beach Murders and the disappearance of the Beaumont Children in the 1960s'.

This fear of missing children is steeped in Australian folklore and the paintings of Frederick McCubbin who explored the theme of vanishing children and the landscape (Anne Galbally1981, p.81). His famous painting 'Lost' shows a young girl who has wandered off into the bush to collect flowers. Peter Pierce (1999, pp. xi-xiv) in his book 'The Country of Lost Children: An Australian Anxiety' and Kim Torney in 'Babes in the Bush: The Making of an Australian Image' (2005, pp. 52-61) research this scenario linking the emptiness of the landscape with the myth of the lost child. The implicit threat in the scene shows the enveloping nature of the bush, the fear for this disorientated young child in an alien place resonates with our contemporary urban landscape. The novel 'Picnic at Hanging Rock' relates a similar theme, about the mysterious disappearance of schoolgirls and their teacher, who vanish on an excursion to Victoria's Mount Macedon area on Valentine's Day 1900 (Joan Lindsay, 1967).
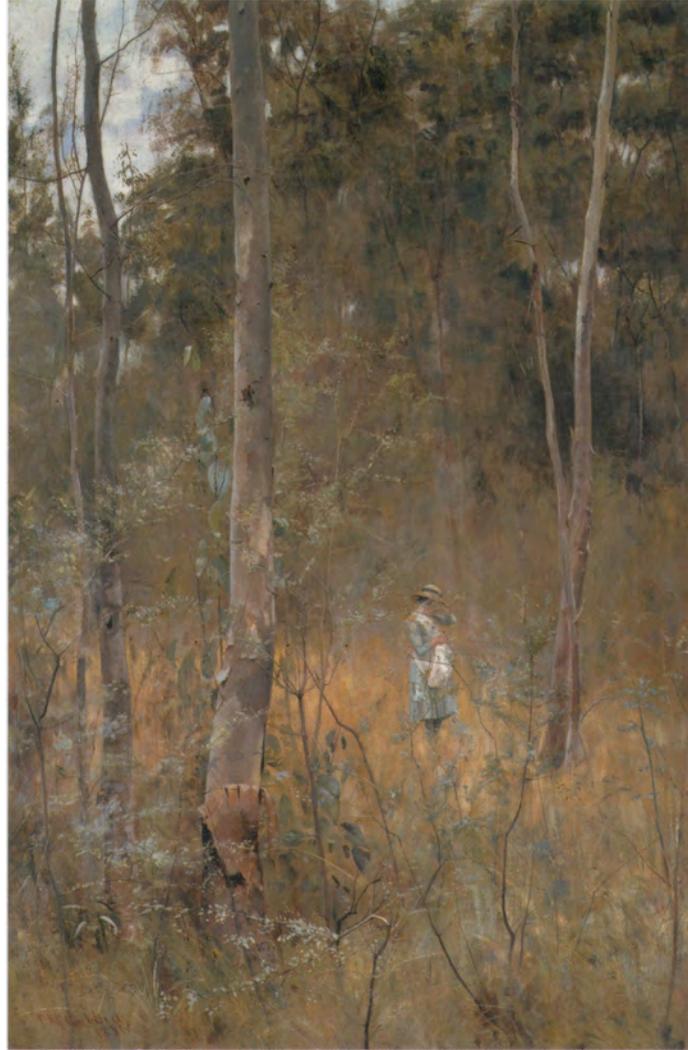
Frederick McCubbin *The Lost Child,* oil on canvas*,* 114.3 x 72.4 cm, 1886
Felton Bequest, 1940, Collection: National Gallery of Victoria

My nostalgic recollections of the happy times in the 1970s, playing with the kids at the Grovedale playground, contrast greatly to my contemporary description of desertion and isolation. Nowadays the absent children, the static structure, set amongst dry grass and broken seats, disturbed only by the rustling of the trees, birdcalls and passing traffic,

signify disconnection suggesting a metaphor for the transience in Grovedale. The silent iconic structure conveys a paradoxical message. It is meaningless – but also meaningful. It stands as a link, a referent between forms of life and human beings. W.J.T. Mitchell in 'What Do Pictures Want?:The Lives and Loves of Images' discusses this as 'double consciousness'…

> We need to reckon with not just the meaning of images but their silence, their
> reticence, their wildness and nonsensical obduracy (2005, p.10).

By making them resonate and speak to us we can transform the emptiness into a meaningful discourse.

1.2 Artists' referents to perplexing habitus

Bruce Nauman since the mid-1960s has created an open-ended body of work with diverse media including fibreglass and videos to produce interactive environments that challenge the viewer's perception in relation to the art object. He expresses the air of disorientation that Mitchell describes above, the viewer's interaction with unsettling places, in his installation 'Floating Room (Light Outside, Dark Inside)' 1972 (Valerie Hillings 2007, p.186-7). A puzzling timber structure is suspended from the gallery ceiling so that its walls appear to float above the floor. Entrance to the plasterboard-lined room is through a narrow door. Shadows of viewers outside the open door intrude on the dark interior of the windowless room, intensifying the uncanny atmosphere. This floating claustrophobic construction generates a psychological tension that imbues the space with alternating sensations of security and fear, emphasising the impact of experiential conditions on constructed space.

Bruce Nauman *Floating Room (Light Outside, Dark Inside),* 1972
Painted plasterboard and wood 304.8 x 487.7 x487.7cm
Guggenheim Museum Foundation, New York

Karen Ward explores this idea of disorientation further, but in a localised contemporary setting as a familial referent, at Werribee Park. Her timber sculpture 'Hut' (2001) utilises the structure of a child's cubby house to explore the concept of inaccessibility and mystery (Maria Bilske 2001, p.92). Ward's stylised cubby is a simple steel-framed plywood construction placed on stilts set amongst the pine trees at Werribee Park. There is no visible entrance to this mysterious self-contained house-like structure, only steps leading to a blank wall. The placing of the lone hut amongst the enclosing pines, close to the Werribee mansion of colonial times, adds to the ambiguity of this mysterious structure, that reminds me of the solitary playground at Grovedale.

Karen Ward *Hut*, 2001, Steel-framed plywood construction

Werribee Park, Victoria

Jeffrey Smart instils in his paintings the irrational with the most prosaic and obvious things that are around us to create mysterious works from landscapes that seem distressingly familiar. Smart's painting of the Italian 'Playground, Mondragone' (1997, Art Gallery of New South Wales) is much like the puzzling space that is the alien and ambiguous Grovedale playground. The children are also absent from this playground with its dominant orange cage resembling the scaffolding of an unfinished building. A solitary figure sitting in a yellow sphere contemplating some distant viewpoint heightens the sense of alienation in a desolate landscape. The antiquated playground equipment, the monolithic cage juxtaposed between the figure in the sphere and the other forms, imbue this seaside playground with ambivalent meaning. Smart's 'Playground, Mondragone', as with the Grovedale playground evokes what Mitchell described earlier as a 'double consciousness' a stating of the question about the landscape and alienation (2005 p.10).

Jeffrey Smart *Playground, Mondragone* 1997, oil on canvas 90.5 x 124.5 cm
Collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

Barthes discusses the power of the singular image in 'Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography' and refers to what lies beyond the experience of the image as a 'punctum' or wound, a punctuation point that has the capacity to reference places, people and events in the real world (Barthes 1981, pp.26-7). The 'punctum' or sting in the artwork needs to be looked at, giving the spectator the opportunity to say something new. Reflecting on the works of Nauman, Ward and Smart, I consider how as an artist I can best develop a meaningful visual and experiential discourse about my playground research. Looking at my images of the different Grovedale playground structures, now scanned into my computer, I remembered the artists Bernd and Hilla Becher's stark,

neutral photos, their catalogue of disused iconic industrial structures around Europe and England.
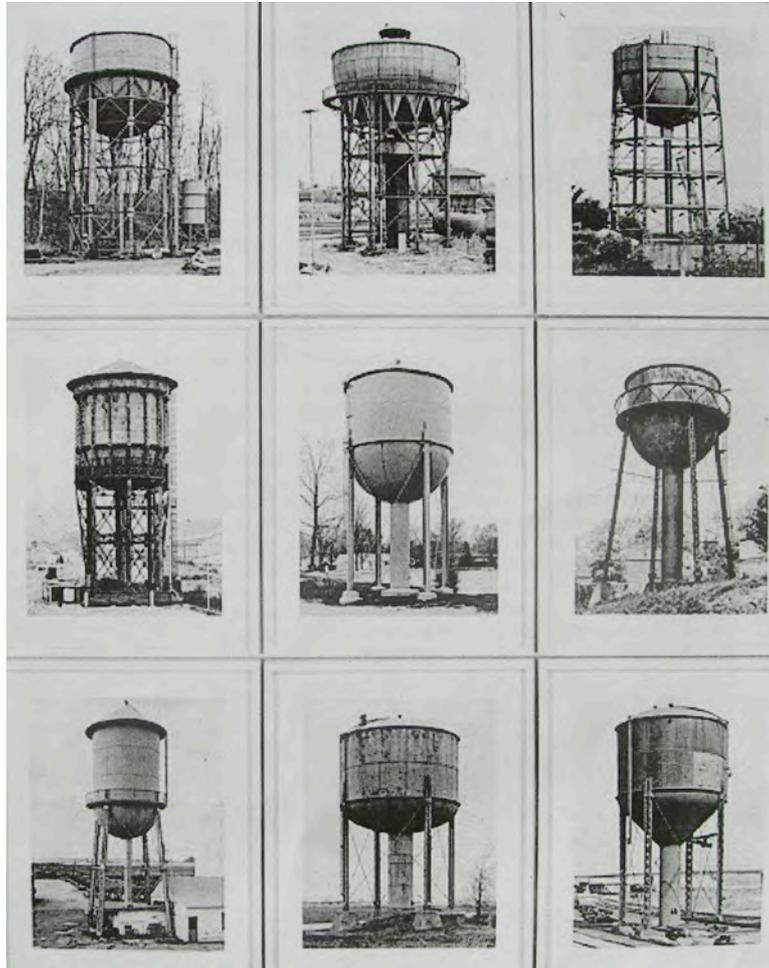
Bernd & Hilla Becher *Water Towers*, 1980, Black-and-white photographs mounted on
board, 147 x 127 cm overall
Collection Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

Their projects invoked and reinforced the sculptural properties of their subjects, creating
signifying memorials to a past order of industrial production. I was able to view their
works at the Art Gallery of New South Wales alongside the prints of Idris Khan in

2007. Khan has digitally layered a number of the Becher's serial photographs superimposing the edifices into one unified structure, shown in Figure 6, dissolving fixed meaning, evoking a momentary characteristic of the remembered icons. The rigid geometries have been transformed into a fuzzy mass more like a smudged charcoal drawing than a photograph. By combining the sequence of isolated images, Khan suggests an unfreezing of space and time.

Idris Khan *every... Bernd & Hiller Becher Spherical Type Gasholder,* 2004

Edition of 1 with 2 x APs

Lamda digital C print mounted on aluminium triptych, each panel 212 x 165 cm

Collection Saatchi Gallery Co. United Kingdom

Jennifer Kamp *Grovedale Icon,* 2007 digital print, 62 x 83 cm

1.3 'Grovedale Icon', 2007

I am intrigued by Khan's prints and his methodology of digitally transposing many images to create one form that re-energises the older prints. I collate my collection of playground photos and proceed to import each one into my computer. It was my first attempt at using this process to create a multi-layered digital print and I found the process quite challenging. I was utilising traditional printmaking skills, but with different tools that moved so fast that I 'lost' images and had to repeat the initial

process. In the past my practice involved a more physical engagement with the master block or plate to add or erase images, proofing and processing on an etching or lithography press in an artists' access studio. With the computer software I was able to reconfigure my imagery using similar techniques, but with the click of my mouse, proofing each image speedily with the printer in my home studio. No time for quiet reflection whilst waiting for the ink to dry in between overlays and the editing processes. I worked with the Grovedale playground images in separate layers, adjusting transparencies and erasing backgrounds with the rubbing tool. I gradually configured a composite playground structure enhancing some forms in favour of others to create an iconic symbol that suggests over time another spatial dimension to the desolate Grovedale playgrounds. This reconfiguration of public space becomes a constant theme that surfaces throughout my visual research.

'Road Map' (2007) a cartographic artwork on canvas, is my first visual response to a disturbing event that occurred one Saturday night on the Grovedale oval, becoming the analogue stimulus for my research project.

My friend was driving me home after a lovely Saturday evening shared with friends at our favourite Spanish restaurant in Geelong. It was one of those chilly nights, punctuated with short bursts of heavy rain and gusty winds. As we drove through Grovedale towards my home we passed groups of young people aimlessly wandering along the darkened streets. They seemed to be coming from the football and school ovals and I assumed they might have attended a social function organised by the local club. Nearing my home, I realised that broken glass was strewn along the street with cans and bottles littering the kerb. Some young people were still standing in clusters around the cars that were parked along the boundary of the oval opposite my house. After much calling out, a taxi arrived and picked up several passengers. Hoping that the

inclement weather would motivate the loiterers to move on to their own homes, I hurried inside.

Early on the Sunday morning I arose to take my pets for their usual morning walk. When I opened the side gate I was amazed to find bottles, broken glass and vomit strewn across my front garden and nature strip. Crossing the road, I led the dogs around the broken glass and made our way across the school oval where worse was to come. Hundreds of cans, empty and broken bottles, as shown in the photo, littered the nature strip and school grounds. Their labels indicated that the contents had mainly been vodka or beer. The sight was disgusting.

Broken Glass on the Grovedale College Oval, 2006
Photograph Jennifer Kamp

My neighbours, like me, were aghast. They said that it was about 9.00 pm the previous evening when throngs of young people converged on the oval from surrounding streets. Fights had broken out spotlighted by the intermittent flashing of recently installed towered urban night-lights. It appeared that someone had broken into the school buildings to gain access to the controls. The police had been called and apparently had been dispersing the crowd when I arrived home.

What had happened to initiate this behaviour in these young people? I am told their ages ranged from young teens upwards. After contacting the College Principal and the President of the Football Club who were 'dealing' with the matter it was explained to me that a local teenager had sent out an SMS party invitation and estimates indicated that approximately two hundred and fifty to three hundred teenagers had responded. Later that week the 'Geelong Advertiser' reported:

> 'Wild Party spreads to School'
> Smashed glass and debris littered Grovedale College's main oval after a weekend party spun out of control …it is alleged the party organiser distributed invitations over the Internet, attracting guests from as far as Werribee (*Geelong Advertiser* 10 May 2006, p.10).

I wanted to make an artwork that would help me to comprehend my discoveries on the road outside my home and on the school oval that morning. My practice as an artist has been grounded in traditional printmaking and painting methodology and although I wished to develop my project with new media technology, I found the idea of how to begin quite daunting. Since my husband's sudden death I had experienced difficulty in starting new works, so it was quite a challenge. I had just finished reading Umberto Eco's words in 'The Open Work', *'Form as Commitment'* about artists promoting a new perception of things and new ways of relating them to each other, enabling us to move more easily in the world (1989, p.136).

I commenced planning using a traditional cartographic technique utilised by John Wolseley, who employs it to depict the Australian landscape. Wolseley through his mapping techniques, rubbing sheets of paper over surfaces to make a frottage or an impression, describes his path and shows how space and the changing environment can be understood. Deliberate patterns of mark-making emerge as the plants and bushes

punctuate the surface, registering staccato dots and marks across his paper. The shrubs and grasses were recorded as well as the path of the artist as he moved through the landscape.
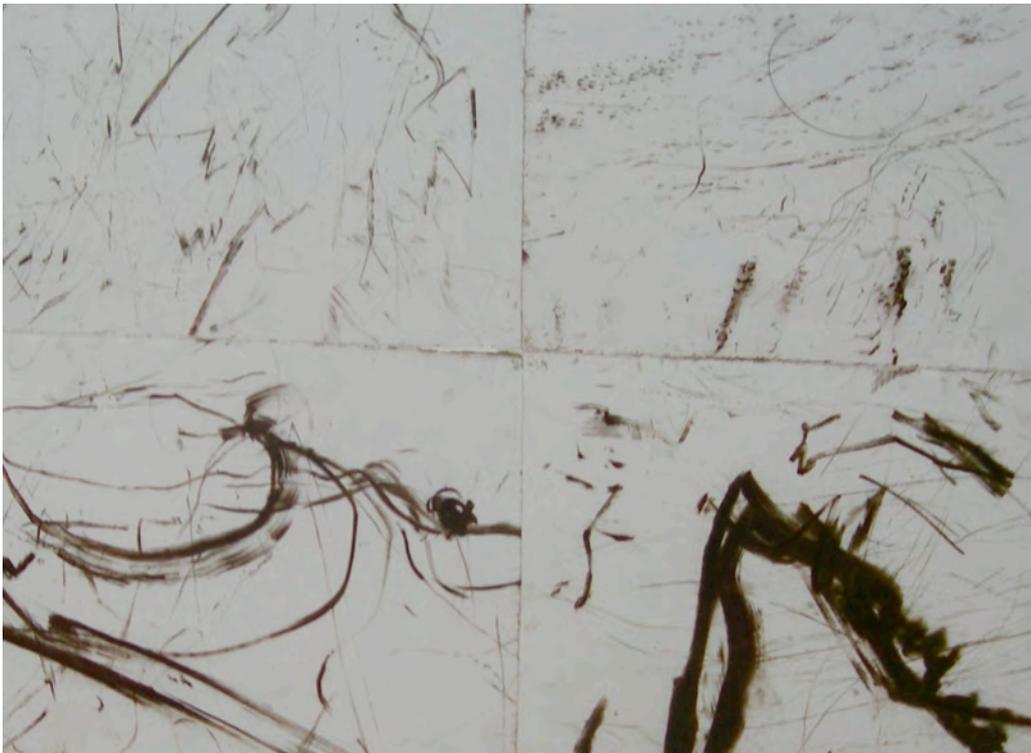
John Wolseley *Bush Notations, Curra Moors with Regent Honeyeater*, (detail) 2002, carbonised wood, coloured pencil, watercolour, graphite on paper121.05 x 546.5 cm Private collection

Wolseley proposes that the image of the leaf has relevance to the landscape where it grew; there is a subtle transformation where one system meets another (Sasha Grishin 2006, pp. 190-192). Wolseley's paths record the shifts and dimension of time from many viewpoints; by combining studies of the here and now with traces of the past, revelation can be experienced.

1.4 'Road Map', 2007

I prepared five metres of primed canvas, sealing the edges with strips of masking tape to simulate the bike path lines on the road alongside my front kerb. By placing the rolled canvas on the bitumen and working on approximately a metre a day, rubbing it with graphite, I was able to record the uneven, indented road surface. I parked my car in front of my workspace to reduce hazards as I kneeled over it, on the edge of the kerb, wearing my protective rubber kneepads. I initially planned to work in the afternoon because of the reduced traffic but the graphite started to melt in the heat of the day, so I changed to mornings commencing at about 7.45 am. The work took on a life of its own as different patterns began to emerge resulting from the constant shifting of my position and varying pressure of the graphite crayon over the canvas covering the gritty uneven bitumen. On sunny mornings the crayon became soft and smudgy and blurring occurred when unexpected rain spots drifted down from a sudden shower.

I was surprised by the interest of passers-by. Neighbours I hadn't spoken to for years stopped to look and chat, mothers and some fathers walking their children to school asked about the work, and drivers of passing cars even stopped to see what I was doing. Each day after I had packed up, sealing the section of work and leaving it to dry in preparation for the next day's session, I recorded these road conversations (see below).

Pollock (2007, pp.64-5) writes about the value of 'life-mapping' in a culture diffused by dislocation. Through an analysis of the work of the German-Jewish artist Charlotte Salomon, a victim of Auschwitz in 1943, she discusses how the creation of social and historical memory can spatialize and develop understanding of the world. Pollock proposes that Salomon's work, comprising over thirteen hundred paintings, 'Leben? Oder Theater?' (Life? Or Theatre?) is a life-mapping of the living, under suspension. Its disjunctive narrative becomes a theatre of fleeting memory. The map of memory,

reminiscences, urban spaces and discontinuities as lived in or moved through, creates a double spatiality, a fleeting form not of the real world.

Jennifer Kamp *Road Map*, 2007 graphite rubbing on canvas, 200 x 500 cm
Photograph Jennifer Kamp

I had intended to display 'Road Map' as a floor work, placing shattered glass fragments over sections of the canvas to represent the smashed bottles discovered following the oval event. However I now plan to suspend the canvas along the Gallery wall, adjacent to my recent video work 'Road Maps 3' that I discuss in Chapter Five. The two works are 'life-maps' representing the path of my research. 'Road Map' as an analogue work

marks the beginning of my study and 'Road Maps 3' visualises the path I have travelled and my empowerment over the landscape.

1.5 Diary of Road Map: conversations and observations, February-March 2007

I obtained 5 metres of primed canvas and taped the sides to represent the road and kerb lines. I rolled the canvas and placed it on the kerbside outside my home where the glass incident and oval disturbance occurred last year. My intention was to make a cartographic rubbing of the road surface using a no. 9 graphite stick.

I decided the best time of the day would be morning, starting about 8.00am during the coolness of the day with good light. I parked my car in front of my work space as a safety precaution against oncoming traffic. I estimated I could complete approximately half a metre a day to allow for applying fixative, a sealant and drying time before the next day's session.

Day 1
A man walking a small dog stops to observe me and ask questions.
Oncoming passing traffic slows, curious to see what I am doing.

Day 2
A primary school boy passes bouncing a basketball.
Alison, who has been a neighbour for 30 years, stops to ask about my work as she sets out on her regular walk.
She tells me about her daughter's planned wedding and what shoes she will wear. A mother taking her primary school children to school with a small foxy dog, stops to look and enquire about my work.

Day 3

Maurice, a neighbour from across the road, comes over to ask what I am doing. I explain that it is about the incident on the oval last year that upset us all. I describe how I will use the canvas rubbing in my art exhibition as part of an installation with the broken glass. He seems very interested.

Alison passes again; we talk about the gym at Deakin University that we both attend and how it is being taken over by a commercial provider. We wonder about the future of the staff and our fitness programs.

The mother with her two children and dog pass again, say 'hi, how's it going?'

Day 4

The same boy bouncing the ball passes. Neighbours from the court drive past and wave. Jeff, a neighbour who lives across the road from the school oval, walks past with his grandchildren. He comes back later to look and enquires about my work. Jeff is a member of the Grovedale Football Club and tells me about his hip replacement and knee reconstruction operations. He is off to the pool for a training swim. Alison walks past, says she will go to the gym today, and we must stick with it, I am unsure as to whether she is referring to my work or the gym sessions (perhaps both).

I say hi to another mother passing with a small child and Jack Russell terrier.

Day 5

The weather is overcast with grey skies. There are not so many walkers out today, but there is definitely an increase in the road traffic.

A mother taking a small child to school stops for a chat about my work.

Alison passes and waves.

I notice that varying rubbing patterns have emerged possibly caused by my shifting position, the uneven road surface, weather changes and variations in pressure due to the shortening of the graphite crayon.

Day 6

A yellow taxi slows down opposite and the driver watches me as I work.

The boy bouncing the basketball goes by again. Alison stops to check on my progress.

Another lady stops briefly to say hello and look.

Day 7

A purple car stops opposite me and a lady says she has driven past a number of times and is curious about what I am doing. I describe my project and her response is positive, making comments about the educational value.

A boy with a schoolbag runs past smiles a hello, says he is running late.

Alison stops again to check my canvas and remarks that we have had more exchanges in the past few days than over the previous years.

Day 8 (Saturday)

It is a very still morning with the junior football team exercising on the oval across the road. A number of cars are busily dropping off the players.

A man who I have not seen before, walks around the corner, says hello. He has driven past me every day and wants to know what I am doing. I tell him about my project and how it is based on last year's oval incident. He remembers it well, remarking that his girls were invited to the initial party but chose not to attend. We chat for sometime about children, social expectations, and the use of mobile phones. It seems he has lived in Grovedale for some time and recalls with a smile the 'Brushes & Flushes' business sign my husband and I once had on our front gate. We exchange names and he says he will 'look out' for my exhibition.

Day 9

Traffic slows as it passes me at work. The schoolboy who is usually running late is early this morning and stops and smiles to say hi! Two male walkers pass and also say hello.

Not long after, a secondary school student crosses the road to ask what am I doing. Two primary school girls pass and say 'hi'.

Day 10

It has been almost the hottest night on record. The morning is humid with a blustery wind blowing dust everywhere. A lady in a silver car stops, says she has passed me several times this week and am I making an art project?

The schoolboy is running late again this morning and waves 'good morning'. Several primary school children stop to look at the artwork and say hello. I ask if they have done rubbing art at school. They reply no.

Alison stops again after her walk, says, 'Nearly finished?' We continue a discussion on water restrictions and politics. A young man pushing a baby in a stroller passes looks and smiles. (He was on the other side of the road yesterday).

The graphite crayon is smudging in the humid blustery weather. After reflecting on this section it is obvious that the dust and heat have added a different dimension to the rubbing compared with the work completed on the previous days.

CHAPTER TWO: URBAN SPACE, STREETSCAPE

As a visual artist I reflect on my surrounding urban space, once a partially developed housing estate surrounded by grassy paddocks, and again picture the place I had once moved around with such lightness and anticipation. My neighbourhood is now densely packed with numerous homes, products of a vigorous economy and a surging housing industry. I notice as I make my daily walks how the newer estates have multiplied across the landscape, with many buildings incorporating a second storey and a double garage. The blocks of land, similar in dimension to my Grovedale home, are covered with structure. The fences that have gradually been added to the older suburban homes delineate frontal boundaries, closing in the residents from the street, suggesting a fear of intrusion. This suburb, no longer based on a pattern of accessible planned grids, has morphed into a complex mosaic of winding streets leading to dead-end courts. Intermittent highway noise from trucks and cars punctuates the occasional birdsong and stillness. The smell of dust hangs in the air, a consequence of the drought and stringent water restrictions, combined with the emissions of passing traffic.

My home is situated across the road from the secondary college and primary school, within walking distance of the well-patronised and regenerated Grovedale sports club. Sandwiched between the tennis courts and ovals is the little playground we once enjoyed as a young family, now unkempt and neglected. The main highway is close by, where commercial interests have established nationally recognised business franchises within the umbrella of an expanding shopping complex. Whatever I need can be purchased there, a convenience offset by having to negotiate problematic car parking spaces. Unlike the surrounding quiet neighbourhood streets, this shopping centre is always abuzz with adults and children of all ages enjoying the ephemeral security of a space closed in from an edgy landscape.

2.1 Grid and 'grids' as a measure of control

I compare this hectic scenario with those 'just married' earlier days…*Madly in love, sick of dog-box flat, got to get a block of land…somewhere in the country, but not too far away. Build a small house, not too expensive. We searched the local papers, inspecting almost every vacant block of land on the newly subdivided estate advertised on the outskirts of Grovedale. The delightful and engaging agent for T. M. Burke Real Estate, Miss Sheridan, hatted and gloved, showed us the plans with eloquent descriptions of the spaces allocated for schools, recreation areas, shops and the planned medical clinic. Maps of the housing estate were supplied; each lot on the grid could be identified with a specific number. Serial representation defined every house, shop, school, recreation and road space, with a concise summary below also listing the terms for payment. 'Yes' after much coming and going 'we'll put a deposit on that corner block. We can look through the gum trees across the open paddocks towards the hills, not too many neighbours to hem us in'.*

Other vacant blocks around us were soon purchased and newly built houses similar to ours began to dot and fill in the subdivision. We had television reception but it was quite some time before a telephone line was installed. Most of the residents were like us, just married, some already had young children attending kindergarten or the new primary school. Street activities in those days included bike practice where children could safely learn to ride a two-wheeler, wobbling along with mum or dad calling out instructions. Alternatively they would play hoppy or skippy in the driveways as parents chatted across their front gardens. Sometimes my daughter enjoyed flying a kite she called 'Tim the Bird' in a paddock across the road with the neighbour's two sons. Pepsi our old Gordon Setter, ever the escape artist, would dart in next door at every opportunity. I remember one occasion, now with amusement, how quickly us neighbours rallied, contacting the estate agent to query 'the situation, the goings on', suspicious of the new tenants across the road as we observed cars visiting on the half hour

throughout the day and night. When families went on holiday we would help out with mail collections, and feed and take their pets on our daily walks.

I would push the pram up the road from our new home, past the farmer's paddocks and surrounding blocks of vacant land. In 1970s Grovedale my path was more like Jonathan Raban's remembered lived experiences, following his seamless trail around his 'Soft City' of London (1974, pp.1-2). There were no footpaths just nature strips. Our first attempt at planting a lawn ended when the local farmer's cows traipsed across it early one morning. My path around Grovedale sometimes led to the small corner shopping centre, where after a quick cash withdrawal from the State Savings Bank I would pop next door into Hoopers' Supermarket. Occasionally the neighbour's children would tag along on their trikes hoping to score an icy pole or a packet of Smarties; no roundabout or traffic lights to interrupt us then. One year a number of enterprising neighbours organised a soapbox derby on this hilltop corner. Dads and kids had a great time, spending weeks assembling a variety of contraptions on wheels that they madly raced down the steep incline on a spring Sunday afternoon. The installation of the slide, roundabout, rocking horse and seesaw in the play space alongside the tennis courts, as shown on the original sale-marketing brochure, soon became a popular congregation area. However, today it seems the initial meaning attributed to this space has altered. The space with its iconic play structure surrounded by cars seems to have morphed into a 'playpen with a difference'.

On looking back, I think a similar transformation must have occurred with the neighbourhood, as people sold up moving on to other locations. Some of the original residents remain, and we meet casually on walks or whilst shopping, but over the years the open friendliness and visual character of the neighbourhood has shifted.

The Grovedale *Play Space*, 2008
Photograph Jennifer Kamp

Nowadays the extended streets encompassing the new housing developments are like an entangled maze, a walk can meander from road into crescent into court into dead end. My passageway recalls Benjamin's 'A Berlin Chronicle' (1992, pp.294-5) and his charted one-way path through the labyrinthine streets of Berlin and Paris but eerily quiet, as I cross over the walkway from the older estate to the newer sections.

In Chapter One, 'My' Space I discussed how Lefebvre in 'The Production of Space' describes the development of a variety of conceptual grids, which may assist our understanding of complex spaces, such as those I discuss above (1991, pp.86-7). Grids as systems of formal knowledge can distinguish oppositions and contrasts in space and have been utilised by many artists to reflexively interpret their world.

I am visiting the 'Guggenheim Collection' (2007) exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria and am attracted to the finely gridded paintings of Agnes Martin, the isolation and nothingness of her landscapes. Martin's experiments with the grid pattern were developed in the 1960s and expressed her spiritual and emotional response to nature through an extreme economy of formal means. The freely drawn works depict a rich degree of precision, focusing on space and distance. In 'White Flower' (1960) a meticulous grid of lines traces across the canvas of muted grey, white marks painted within the alternate gridded lines open a vista of viewing possibilities. *I see before me the initial Grovedale housing estate brochure, neatly mapping the rows of vacant allotments still available for home building.*
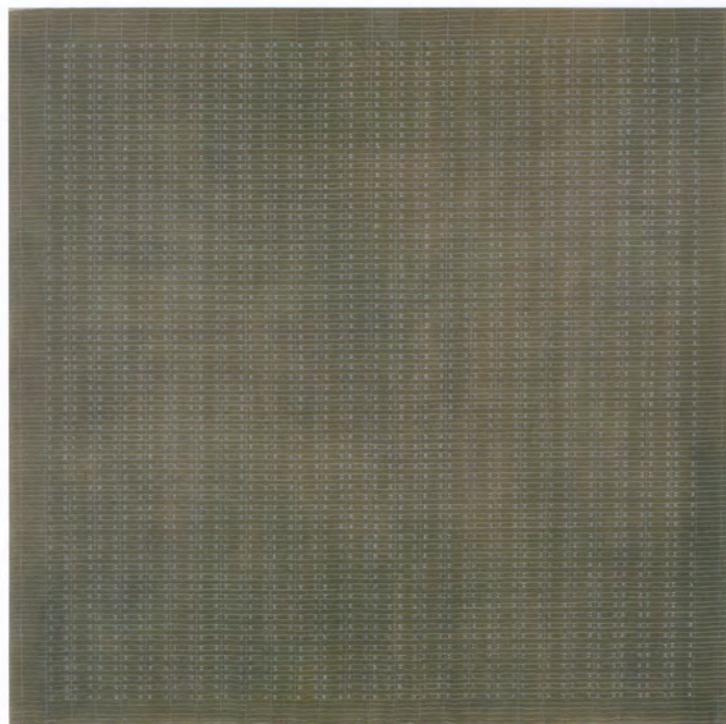
Agnes Martin *White Flower*, 1960 oil on canvas 182.6 x 182.9 cm

Guggenheim Collection

In 'Untitled No 14' (1977) Martin draws with graphite across a gently textured canvas with almost dissolving lines, creating subtle and measured variations to transform a shallow space with a delicate intriguing veiled grid. The variations of her hand and thinly applied colours, evoke a softness that contrasts with the rigid horizontal and vertical symmetry, endowing the work's grid-like composition with personal meaning that resonates with my 'Road Map' rubbings described in 'My' Space, Chapter One.
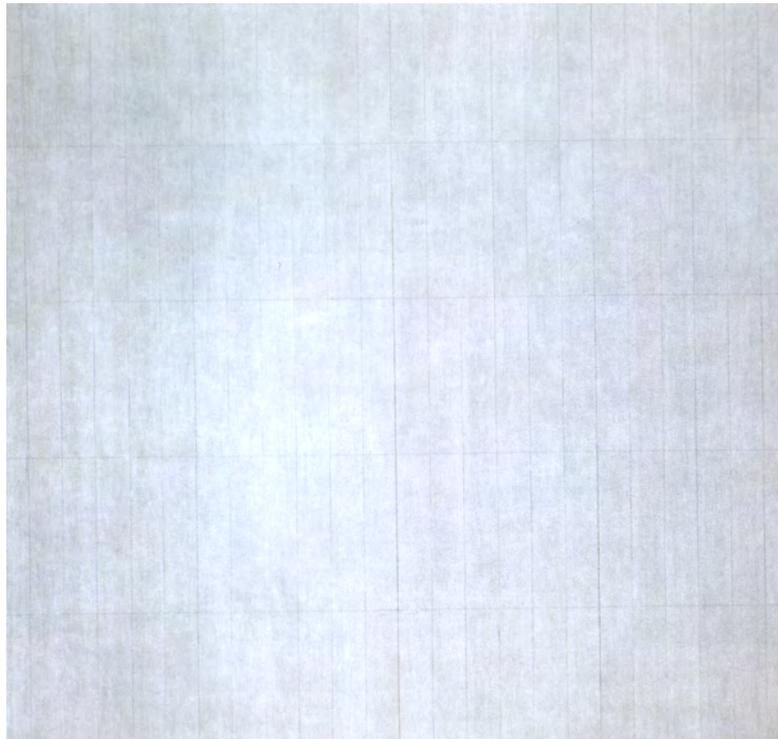
Agnes Martin *Untitled No. 14*, 2007 India ink, graphite, and gesso on canvas

182.7 x 187.7 cm

Guggenheim Collection

Andy Warhol's experimental art works in the 1960s, distinct from Martin's personal and spiritual inspiration, utilised the grid to critique mass reproduction and the popular consumer culture of the era. 'Electric Chair' (1971) also exhibited in this 'Guggenheim Collection' is a grid-like composition that gives dynamic meaning to an iconic structure, transience and death. A series of nine screen-prints based on a found photograph are displayed as a rectangular grid that references the interlocking spaces between the prints as well as film frame technology and the modulation of time. Warhol's manipulation of the chair fuses image transfer with colour applications and gestural marks that create a disturbing allusion to death and absence.

I ponder on how I can reconcile Martin's personal aesthetic with Warhol's dramatic examination of popular culture and loss to express my visual ideas. *My thoughts flit back to the housing brochures, the neatly subdivided spaces, prescribing lush green, grassy footpaths, not a hint of the dry rutted furrows to come, becoming an unwieldy course for pushing prams and wheelchairs.*

Andy Warhol *Electric Chair*, 1971 screen-prints on paper ed.193/250
89.5 x 121.9 cm each, Guggenheim Collection

Warhol's iconic imagery recalls again the series of black and white photos I discussed in Chapter One, taken by the artists Bernd and Hilla Becher to record the heritage of an industrial past throughout Europe and North America. The stark images, photographed from a direct viewpoint, mounted on board and arranged into grids or rows that organise reality by means of photographic integers, invite viewers to compare the subtle differences in their forms and designs. These edifices, like the solitary Grovedale 'playground' structure bedded in the pine chips, evoke a sense of a lost era and times past.

The above artists' visual explorations suggest that the prescriptive grid of the initial Grovedale housing development can be revisited and new meaning can be extracted to explain the changing nature of space as evidenced by the 'playground'. As Albert Borgman argues in 'Holding on to Reality: The Nature of Information at the turn of the Millenium' 'information can be produced by structure imposed as well as by structure revealed' and the grid is the instrument to extract that information (1999, pp.74-75).

'Gridslides', 2007-2008 Digital prints

Motivated by these artists' works and the possibilities associated with the re-ordering of the grid I begin to plan an artwork associated with the idea of the 'subjective slide' I discussed in my Introduction with reference to Taylor who expands on the term describing subjectivism as a 'kind of egoism, or a species of moral laxism' (1991, pp.16-17). I contacted the Recreation Officer at the Geelong City Council, to explain my research project and ask if she could assist my search for a children's slide. Eventually I obtained a vandalised slide from a local primary school playground.

Its brightly coloured fibreglass surface had been hacked in several places with a sharp instrument allowing rainwater to seep through the serrated cracks. It is heavy and unwieldy, with the water sloshing around its insides. After draining the slide, I

photograph it from all angles and install the photos into my computer. I 'repair' my slide images digitally and experiment with brilliant colours that recall the hyper schema viewed in the play-spaces at the local McDonald's cafe. I add vibrant backgrounds, making subtle variations to each repeated image. Only the proportions of the slides and prints remain constant. After numerous edits I process the final nine images in contrasting colours and mount the finished prints on a mat board, arranging them in a grid format similar to Warhol's 'Electric Chair' (1971). I photograph my 'Gridslides' against the wire meshed Grovedale oval fence opposite my home and immediately realise I am placing grid on grid, endowing the landscape with fresh possibilities. I reprocess this photo adding blocks of colour to the grid of the fence. As my research project develops I return again to visually explore the abandoned slide of 'Gridslides' (2007-2008) in my slide and video installation 'Slidesplayskate,' (2008-2009).

Jennifer Kamp *Gridslides*, 2007-2008 digital print 84 x 63 cm

I reflect on these new possibilities and the various happenings that have occurred recently on and around the oval space. It's as if the initial urban grid has been disrupted. My daily walk as usual takes me past the Grovedale Football Club. This is an area where I often pick up broken glass and empty beer bottles. I commence my morning walk, graffiti glares back at me from the road surface, 'f…!' I continue my journey past the netball courts, only to be confronted by more gender specific graffiti sprayed onto the spectators' stands. Once this language was frowned on and its frequent use nowadays is another indicator of how the landscape has changed.

A mother expresses similar sentiments in 'Fear and loathing in the park' (Kristen Alexander, 2008). The writer enjoying an idyllic teenage birthday celebration with her son and his friends in the local park is confronted by a black painted swastika, sprayed over the toilet's white tiles. She finds the image upsetting, wondering what feelings of hate, frustration or pain would cause a person to scar a wall with such an image. I empathise with her, as I recall my shock at the offensive and deliberate acts of graffiti on the road outside my home and around the netball courts.

I meet up with fellow dog walker Stan and his black Labrador, Oscar. 'Did you see the news last night about that party in Narre Warren?' 'Yes,' we discuss today's young people, the dogs happily sniffing around. Later I opened the daily paper and the headline 'Police probe how 500 teens got party invitation' caught my eye.

The report describes the revellers in Narre Warren spilling on to the street and a nearby reserve at about 10.00pm on Saturday, throwing bottles at Police vehicles. Backup was required and reinforcements included two police cars, a helicopter, two dog squad units, a critical response team, transit police and divisional van crews from surrounding suburbs. Local residents said the noise generated sounded like the roar of a football crowd. The Police believe most of the youths were drinking alcohol.

Police are investigating how social networking websites, email and SMS messaging may have been used to draw a crowd of up to 500 teenagers to a house party, hosted by a 16-year-old boy whilst his parents were interstate (Daniella Miletic, 2008).

I focus on the photo illustrating this report and the incident I had described earlier in 'My' Space (Chapter One) on the Grovedale oval in 2006 comes rushing back. The reserve pictured in the newspaper could be the one at Grovedale; in the foreground lying amongst the pine chips are the glass vodka bottles, one still half full of pink fluid dominates the frame. To the right is the playground equipment with its moulded slide, similar to the Grovedale model, but in this case its colour is green. The background landscape depicts nearby suburban houses, not dissimilar to those in Grovedale. I read in later media reports that a Victorian teenager has been charged with creating a public nuisance and producing child pornography after a wild suburban weekend party that has achieved global disdain (Sarah-Jane Collins & Miki Perkins, 2008).

Until the recent and sudden economic downturn, times have been prosperous. So what are we doing wrong and why am I so concerned. As an educator who has worked with young people for many years, it presents a worrying scenario for the future. I listen to the daily news and road reports, and continue to be horrified at the statistics recording the number of young people who are involved in major road incidents, especially over the holiday period, just hoping I will not hear a family member or friend's name announced. I am continually asking myself what is going on. As I collate and review my data and collection of newspaper articles, I am made more aware that many of them relate back to young people, linked with the misuse of alcohol and the new technologies.

2.3 'Somatic Houses', 2008 video animation

Somatic Houses is my first attempt at animating the imagery I recorded following my repulsion at the teen party out of control. There seemed to be a possible ambiguous connection between private and public space that I wished to explore. The event had been featured in the local press, and as the weeks passed other similar incidents were reported of teenage parties congregating around Geelong spreading to local parks, vandalising the infrastructure and nearby homes. The large attendance of gatecrashers had been attributed to the partygoers' use of their mobile phones to invite their mates.

I started to collate these newspaper reports; at the same time I was filming the houses, the deserted streets and children's playgrounds of my neighbourhood. I collaged these cuttings, adding the newspaper text to images of the house designs from the local project home marketing brochures, and imported them into the virtual space of my computer. I was able to cut and past each individual house design, adjust proportions and delete unwanted details before moving the images to be processed for animation. I wanted to show the houses as edgy forms, disoriented and uncertain, moving in alternating proportions and positions. I make the houses transparent with blank windows, so as they slowly move across the mirrored background as containers of mobile phones and text, the forms convey a sense of spatial ambiguity and impermanence.

Somatic Houses became my passage of negotiation through the edginess and ambivalence, the 'threat or thrill' of my social space in the suburban landscape. I make an animated visual statement about my changing suburban landscape to convey the impact of cultural change, linked with the new technologies, on our younger generation.

The process of creating my artwork, utilising a new technology, was akin to my navigating another landscape. In my traditional practice of painting and printmaking, the two dimensional images remain as static space and I am in control of the paints, ink and the printing press. However my digital computer images flit and shift before my eyes, I become fearful of losing them in virtual space. My fingers are stiff and my palms sweat as I hesitantly scroll through menus, new tools and across files, exploring this unfamiliar technology to develop my ideas. Days follow of continuous application, characterised by moments of utter frustration, as my conceptual exploration of this new technology develops. Finally I am able to process my initial ideas and imagery into a continuous DVD loop.

Jennifer Kamp *Somatic Houses*, 2008 video still

As I analyse this work I am pondering whether our children have lost a fixed line of communication, a centre of belonging. Where are the rules, the structures and support lines of days past? Headlines in my local paper read, 'Homeless Rates Grow: Our

youth crisis' (Rebecca Adam, 2008). The 17% increase relates to referrals from young people living in my postcode and the article cites rapid social, cultural, environmental and economic change as prominent factors. Jacques Derrida in 'Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews' (2002, pp.79-80) describes a desire for home, to be close to friends and family, as a growing need propelled by the technological delocalisation. It is possible that the mobile phone provides that cultural link for our young people, a communication network that feeds their need to belong, a replacement for a disengaged family structure.

I have just finished reading Tim Winton's latest book 'Breath' (2008) about adolescence and the addiction to danger. He speaks about the risk-taking of his youth, the dangers of the surf…the exhilaration of holding one's breath endlessly, an experience that does something to your body and mind. Winton describes adolescence as a period of unexplained anger, an empire of boredom and domesticity, occupied territory where pointless actions of risk-taking involved drugs, fast cars and sexual misadventure.

> More than once since then I've wondered whether the life-threatening high jinks that Loonie and I and Sando and Eva got up to in the years of my adolescence were anything more than a rebellion against the monotony of drawing breath….as a youth you do sense that life renders you powerless by dragging you back to it, breath upon breath upon breath in an endless capitulation to biological routine, and that the human will to control is as much about asserting power over your own body as exercising it on others (Winton 2008, p.41).

This risk-taking, a challenge to suburban safety and domesticity, the political correctness of our socio-environment could be another possible explanation for that Grovedale 'oval event'.

Shaun Gladwell uses his video art to respond to an environment that is both engaging and alienating, with moving images that subvert, fragment and reclaim urban space for a re-imagining of the city. Gladwell's video projection 'Kickflipper: Fragments edit' (2000-03) staged at Sydney's Bondi beach shows the artist performing his tricks, crafting a visual display against a backdrop of ocean and graffiti style mural (Julianne Pierce 2003, pp.4-5). His is a balletic and choreographed skateboarding performance that critically and poetically links personal experience with art historical, philosophical and cultural discourse.

Shaun Gladwell *Kickflipper: Fragments edit*, 2000-03 video still
Courtesy the artist & Sherman Galleries, Sydney

2.4 'Slidesplayskate', 2008-2009 video

Inspired by Gladwell's methodology, I revisited the Grovedale playgrounds during December 2008 and January 2009 and again made video films of these urban spaces. Nothing much had changed; they were just as desolate as I remembered. How could I generate new life and make them 'live' again... I needed children. My friends came to the rescue and a special 'play' day at the park with their grandchildren was organised. What fun we had, children up and down the slide, running, laughing and yelling egged on by their nanas and parents as I videoed. It was just like 'old times'.

I 'played' with the video footage in my computer and experimented with new 'tricks', manoeuvres utilising more advanced editing programs. I increased the speed, then slowed the action, reversed the images, and added footage taken at other times and places. My old 'sleeping doll' found amongst my mother's memorabilia, has a part in the action. I include images of the skate-park and superimpose the photo of a young girl on her scooter. She was playing near the Tate Modern Gallery in London, as her skateboarding brothers were busy entertaining the tourists with their 'jumps', set against a backdrop of graffiti art. I include 'Lucy and sad dog', a small heart shaped graffiti image from Melbourne's Hosier Lane. I felt these frames resonated with Gladwell's discourse and imagining of urban space.

I incorporated sound splices to intensify the visual excitement, alternating joyous tones with suggested ominous references. I was excited with my newfound ability to combine and interweave contrasting jarring images in the video with rhythmic passages to convey my ideas about an edgy and unsettled landscape. Frames could be tilted, images squeezed, distorted and flipped. I could exaggerate the motion and enhance the energy of the moment to reclaim 'my' space and empowerment within the urban landscape.

Jennifer Kamp *Slidesplayskate*, 2008-2009 video still

I reflect on the degree of technical knowledge and confidence I have gained through my research project, and how it has informed my imagery since my completion of 'Road Map' (2007), discussed in Chapter One.

CHAPTER THREE: INTERIOR SPACE AND STUFF

My interior space is one of dilemma; what am I to do with a house full of goods that, as a solo householder, I no longer need but am unable to dispose of. Each treasure has a memory that recalls times past. My daughter's kite and tricycle speak of happy days in the playground. The teak coffee table, inlaid with a mosaic of enamelled copper, individually crafted by my husband for a special birthday. The list goes on and I lovingly cherish these items storing them with obsolescent pieces of equipment that might just come in handy one day. As I make my daily walks around the neighbourhood, I notice many garages contain similar collections of pre-loved goods. Neighbours and friends share with me their emotional attachment to special possessions and I observe others in the media also expressing difficulty in disposing of valued personal items. Many of us still need to hold and possess the solid object, if only for a brief time. Is our association with the stuff we collect saying something about contemporary society? This preoccupation with material goods could signify a turning inward to the self. I think of the days when so much joy and pleasure was to be had playing outside with the children in the park. Our susceptibility to the promised joys of goods marketed by the media has seemingly replaced the thrill of the playground slide.

I am walking past another open garage, and peer into its interior stuffed with a jumble of bric-a-brac, obsolete technical equipment sandwiched amongst multi-coloured surfboards and camping goods. I notice that some of the double garages in larger newer homes are also crammed with a variety of goods; tricycles and toys peek through a mass of clutter, an old television perches on a washing machine. A scruffy Paddington Bear is squashed between a computer and printer. Items cling to brick walls, some suspending dizzily from exposed beams. 'Get more into it. Get more out of it'; the caption in a recent magazine advertisement quantifies such a garage (The Age Good

Weekend, 25 April, 2008 pp.2-3). I am fascinated by this array of jumbled goods, the secrets they may conceal, and what these stuffed garages are telling us about the community and the way we live.

I discussed in Chapter One how Barthes in 'Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography' referred to the power of a singular image as a 'punctum' or wound with a capacity to reference places, people and events in the real world (1981, pp.26-7). Barthes describes the image as metonymic, with a power of expansion that adds something more. Australians' private spending patterns show that the most of us believe we haven't enough stuff. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 'Trends in household consumption' survey from the 1980s to 2006, household spending is growing far quicker on new TVs, computers and mobile phones than it is on food, books and clothing (2007). It was thought in the 1970s that technological progress would reduce work hours and increase leisure activities. However the reverse has occurred with aggressive marketing, helping us to believe the manufacture of our ideal selves would bring us greater happiness. Income growth is spent on consumer products resulting in fleeting satisfaction and an endless cycle of hope and disappointment. Clive Hamilton and Richard Denniss (2005, p.7) describe this failure to distinguish between what we need and what we want as 'affluenza' and argue that most Australians believe necessities include plasma-screen TVs, personal computers, air conditioning, mobile phones and second bathrooms.

Anthony White in his paper 'Have Mary Janes Gone Up?': Participation and Disaffiliation in Oldenberg's *'The Store' (*2007) analyses the commodification and fetishism of consumerist culture, its everyday ordinariness as critiqued by Claes Oldenberg with his humorous and provocative artwork 'The Store', 1961. Oldenberg's sculptures, made from plaster-soaked muslin placed over wire frames and sloppily painted with bright enamel paint were inspired by the showy merchandise he saw in

local shop windows. The work '7UP' (1961) recalls a popular soft drink of the era, however the memory of thrilling consumption is unrealised; the plaster replica does not live up to its promise. Nostalgia for past dreams unfulfilled; Oldenberg's works, like the contents in the Grovedale garages, evoke the melancholy historical gaze cast by Benjamin whose analysis of the outmoded shopping arcades of metropolitan nineteenth-century Paris foreshadowed the transience and failure of the new commodity apparatus (Susan Buck-Morss 1989, pp. 81-86). Graeme Gilloch argues in 'Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City' that Benjamin's 'Arcades Project', regarding the myths surrounding commodity fetishism, the patterns of consumption and fashion, could be applied to our modern shopping malls (1996, p.95).

Claes Oldenberg *7UP*, 1961 Muslin soaked in plaster over wire frame, painted with enamel, 140.7 x 99.7 x 14 cm

Collection Hirshborn Musem and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution

The culture of compulsive shopping is socially sanctioned, facilitated by easily obtained credit and the marketers' mantra, 'shop till you drop'. *It was even printed on my rail concession ticket, making it hard to resist the many catalogues from the new retail stores just up the highway, urging us to buy the latest technological toy or must have household item. Maybe the bathroom does need a lift with those smart looking tiles, matching taps and vanity basin.* And so it goes on. A desire for ever bigger houses, our material consumption defines a life style where 'being' appears to be based on what we own. We may have lost our perception to see when our needs are fulfilled. Arendt in 'The Human Condition' expresses concerns about the

> unfathomable consequences…in a society of beings too absorbed in consumption to take any responsibility for the human world or to understand their political capacities (1958, p.xv).

The excessive amount of stuff accumulated by people in an age of affluence is examined by Josh Fear who proposes in 'Stuff happens' that spending money is now its own form of entertainment, we live in 'fat houses' (2008, p.12). Australian homes are cluttered with things that are rarely used and four in ten Australians report they feel anxious and depressed about the clutter in their houses.

Wendy Harmer, a pioneer of Australian comedy presented a human view of consumption in her four-part documentary 'Stuff' premiered on ABC TV (2008). In this series she examines our passion for the stuff we buy, treasure, desire and the stuff that's most important to us. 'Why do you love your stuff so much?' she asks. Our obsession and 'over-consumption' has raised concerns about its impact on global warming and resource shortage. But how can we give up our desire unless we understand our initial compulsion to have it? Harmer interviews students, a psychologist, 'chuckers' and 'hoarders' and retirees to understand how we develop relationships with belongings. Her light-hearted approach highlights reasons other than

power and greed that motivate our passion to consume. Harmer's interviewees seem happy as they discuss their 'wonderful stuff', explaining what it means to them and why they can't live without it.

I don't feel so guilty now about my own secret hoard of memorabilia, possibly regarded as junk by my family. My bike and golf clubs are jammed into the garden shed (I don't have a garage). Other items pile up in the spare room, my daughter's tissue-wrapped baby clothes safely stored high on a wardrobe shelf; my mother's treasured crystal cabinet, along with my grandmother's Singer sewing machine, occupy a discrete corner of my lounge room.

I am reading 'Inventory: on Op Shops', retail outlets run by benevolent organisations to raise funds for their charities, written by Sue Dodd & Enza Gandolfo (2007, pp.6-8) and as I glance at the illustrations featuring the donated racks of clothes and diverse goods, I experience a feeling of déjà vu. *Yes, I remember owning one of those dinner sets and a crocheted tablecloth along with numerous signature coffee spoons, now confined within my Edwardian sideboard. And look, there is a glazed Bendigo stoneware casserole pot just like the one on my hearth that I cooked coq au vin in one winter's day*. There is a pattern of repetition about the displays that suggests as consumers we demonstrate through our purchases a collective consciousness linked with our social activities. Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood describe this as 'Spread-of-Infection Model', people buying what they see their friends enjoying; they quote the rate of TV ownership as an example (1979, pp.101-2). Once everyone has a unit, future sales are dependent on convincing owners their model is obsolete, or maybe each member of the family requires a set. In today's society, the same analogy could be applied to other communication technologies such as the computer, mobile phone and the MP3 player. The problems associated with planned obsolescence are exacerbated by the speed of

developing technologies. *What am I to do with that stack of floppy disks and that outdated hard drive?*

Whatever the motives are for our purchases, the same problems arise, in the interests of sustainability how are we to dispose of our preloved and now useless stuff*? The local 'Salvation Army Op Shop' would not accept my still working VCR unit and older model computer.* Local government is responsible for the delivery and management of kerbside recycling, litter reduction, waste education and reducing the amount of waste going to landfill (Municipal Association of Victoria, 2008). The City of Greater Geelong completed the introduction of a residential kerbside recycling and waste system in 2003 supplying all residential properties with three standard bins to collect recyclables, garbage and green waste (Steve Adams, 2005). I asked a Council Representative why the hard rubbish collection had been discontinued, as the bins supplied are too small for most goods. 'Occupational health and safety issues' he replied. I am puzzled by this policy, because I have observed that some Councils do collect hard rubbish. I read that I am not the only one experiencing this disposal problem. 'Outrage as 'we' dump on Melton,' the neighbouring Council is complaining about Geelong residents caught on their surveillance cameras dumping unwanted household goods at their charity shops (Andrew Mathieson, 2008). Some householders leave stuff on their nature strips hoping their trash will be collected as treasure by passers-by.

Ralph Horne, Director of the Centre for Design at RMIT University, and Ruth Lane Senior Lecturer at RMIT's School of Global Studies, Social Sciences and Planning, undertook a study in 2007 of how households acquired and disposed of used goods (Lane & Horne 2008, pp.1-5). They investigated a 'waste hierarchy' concerned with the issues of consumerism, recycling, the responsible use of existing resources and planned obsolescence. The survey recorded that although most Melbourne households embraced

recycling many did not know about responsible disposable and possibilities of reuse. Lane notes how people became quite stressed about the disposal of precious objects belonging to deceased loved ones; recycling is not just an environmental initiative but also a social one. Douglas and Isherwood (1979, pp.65-8) argue that consumption cannot be discussed without looking at our social system. Humans consume for many different reasons, to be housed, kept warm, fed and be inspired by books, art and beautiful objects. Goods are used as gifts, to celebrate, and encode memory. They are the hardware and software that express our human identity.

Flourishing new industries and specialised storage systems have been generated by our consumerism. *'You Pack It Up, We Pick It Up'*, *yes for $140 per month a self storage module can be delivered to your doorstep giving you 'peace of mind' ('Containaway', 2008).* 'Phoenix Fridges', co-run by the 'Brotherhood of St Lawrence' in East Brunswick, will collect unwanted appliances, retrofit them to improve efficiency and sell them in their op shops. This scheme is a plus for the environment and the community by assisting refugees with a six-month traineeship and a TAFE certificate in electrotechnology services (Michael Green 2008, p.18). I read of initiatives and commercial projects that have developed creative ways to recycle pre-loved consumables. A 'swap frock' event is advertised; others sew purses and wallets from cast-off vintage fabrics and old dress patterns (Green, 2008). Professional organiser Lissane Oliver runs courses to advise her clients on how to 'Declutter Your Life' and has written a best-selling book about creative problem-solving (Oliver, 2007).

3.1 *'Garage', 2007*

I am inspired by these programs to visually store my 'stuff' and create 'my' virtual garage.

I persuade my friends and neighbours to 'show' me their 'stuff'. 'I can't fit the car in the garage', a neighbour laughingly explains. I photograph the disparate items in their

restrictive spaces, bikes, boots, electrical goods; the list is endless. Back home I photograph images from my personal store.

Expanding on the methodology I developed with my 'Grovedale Icon' (2007) work discussed in Chapter One, I scan the photographed images into my computer and reconfigure, compress and condense a random assemblage of goods into a confined space. I rehouse them in my reconfigured composite 1970s styled Grovedale garage. Unrelated objects are placed next to each other ad hoc, just as I observed in the neighbourhood. Chairs are inverted; cupboards are stacked, electrical appliances with TV's, computers and toys. Pavarotti's cage, the home of our once much loved Norwich canary, is suspended from a roof strut. Using the software tools, I make adjustments to enhance the digitised clutter. I manipulate sizes, alternate light and shade effects, overlap items, and increase transparencies.

Disorder is housed within walls brimful of memories too important to be donated to the Op Shop, disposed of at a garage sale or dumped at the local tip. An enclosure of past dreams and aspirations a collection of preloved objects, now useless. Their remembered meaning evokes an association with times past as well as a reminder of material and cultural impermanency.
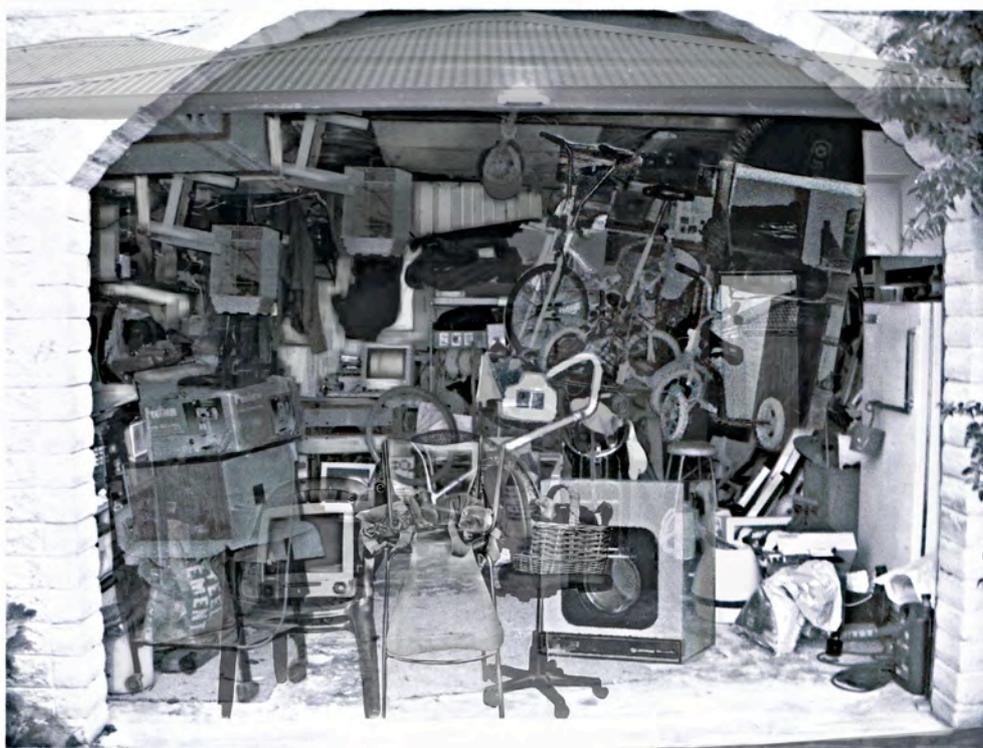
Jennifer Kamp *Garage*, 2007 digital print, 61 x 83 cm

3.2 'Framework House', 2007

I visualise too the prospect of more stuffed garages as the ongoing pattern of mushrooming Mac-mansions, framework and scaffolding, are assembled with speed across the surrounding landscape...

The ubiquitous shopping trolleys have become a daily intrusion on my urban landscape. It seems I cannot escape them. They are lined up outside every store or staggered in random groups around the car parks. Sometimes abandoned, the trolleys can be spotted in the park, dumped on the side of the road, or seen rusting near the railway line. New larger trolleys appeared recently at the Waurn Ponds centre. On occasions I return home, after manoeuvring these angular monsters in the complex and around the car

park, with bruises on my shins and scratches on the car, the 'joy' of the purchase offset by a painful reality.

I imagine an endless procession of shopping forays to the local retail stores, and returning trolleys stacked with 'life-style goodies' to furnish the new Mac-mansions. I take numerous photos of the shopping trolleys and import the images into my computer. The grids on each trolley frame are enlarged and I erase the in-between background spaces with the rubbing tool. The process seems to take forever, possibly because it is new to me. I alter the proportions of the trolleys, and think about how I will visually group and link them to the 'house as container of goods'.

Recalling again the iconic photographs of the Bechers (discussed in Chapters One and Two) I decide to reference their photos of houses built in the Siegen region of Germany ('Framework Houses', 2001). I construct my 'Framework House' with virtual layers, making a tilted structure of the partly superimposed trolleys. The completed transparent 'Framework House' stands grounded, set against a blue background, precariously balancing on one trolley wheel.

Bernd and Hilla Becher *Framework Houses,* 1973
Photographs, unique silver gelatine print,
39.4 x 62.2 cm each
Collection Barbara Mathes Gallery, New York
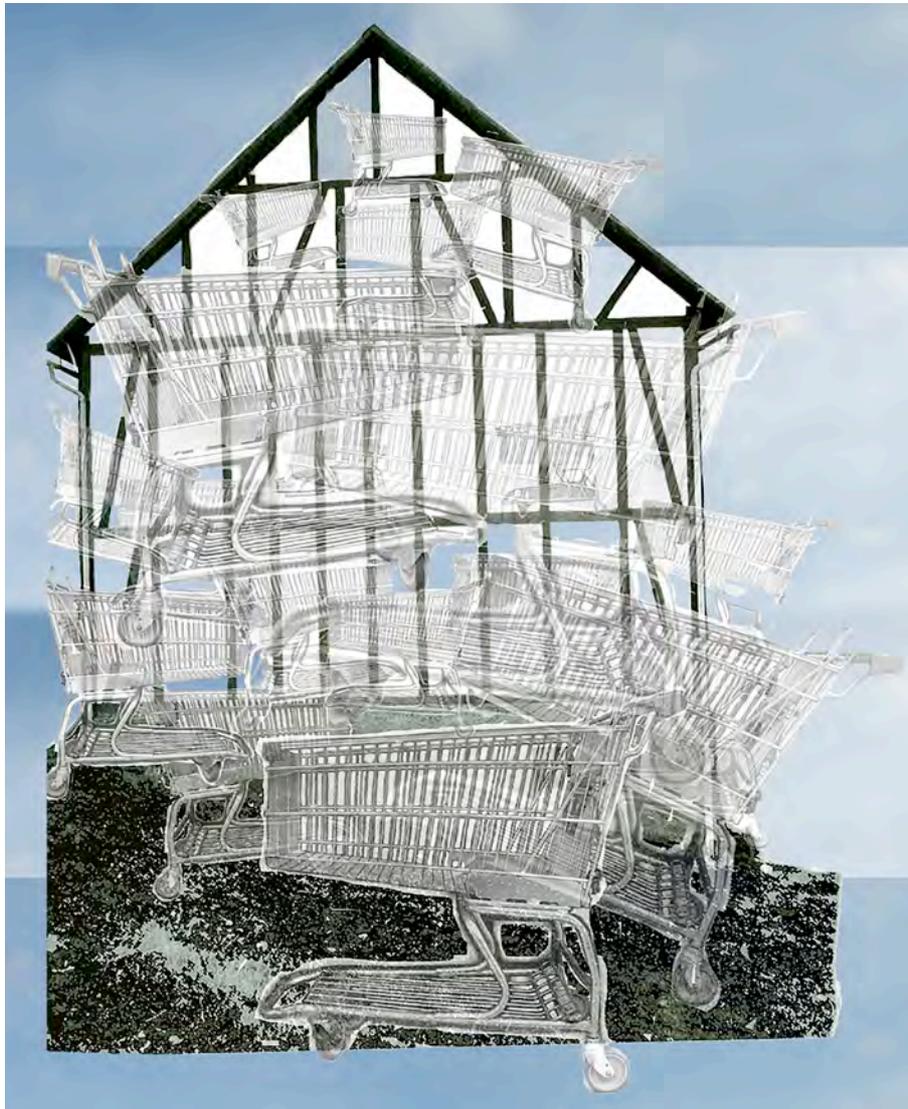
Jennifer Kamp *Framework House*, 2007 digital print, 84 x 68 cm

I see my two print works as complementary metaphors, descriptors for my changing suburban landscape. The chock-a-block virtual 'Grovedale Garage' (2007) full of useless, once treasured possessions, a counterbalance to the empty 'Framework House' (2007) the new Mac-mansion constantly in need of refurbishment.

The consumer behaviourist Honeywill and social scientist Byth propose in 'Power: how the new economic order is changing the way we live, work and play' that a 'New Economic Order' (NEO) is replacing the consumerism I describe above (2006, p.xi - ix). Data extracted from Roy Morgan Research indicates that a growing number of people are discretionary choice consumers forsaking the sameness of the malls in search of the unique experience. *I am reminded of the sensory associations of tantalising aromas that enhance my little trips across Grovedale to meet with friends at the trendy shopping arcades in West Geelong for that special latte. I browse through the new avant-garde bookshop or look for some exotic delicacy at the continental deli.* NEOs cross all age barriers, are happy to adopt new technology, enjoy leisure travel and the outer boundaries of the 'Third Space', the place that is neither work nor home (Honeywill & Byth 2006, p.88). In Melbourne a series of boutique and cafés are flourishing in the old once neglected 'Nicholas' building in Flinders Lane and other turn of the century laneways and arcades, with special tours organised around discovering Melbourne's 'path of hidden secrets' (Susan Miles, 2008). In his book 'Cities and the Creative Class', Richard Florida argues that ventures generated by human creativity are the 'ultimate source of economic growth' (2005, p.22). A super-creative class, whose members include scientists and engineers, artists and poets, architects, cultural figures, analysts and opinion makers, can produce new forms and designs, innovative city characteristics that spark quality economic growth.

Maybe this new consumerism and the search for excitement in other spaces, the 'playgrounds' with ambience, could explain my initial observations about the quiet Grovedale streets devoid of human activity?

The installation artist Carsten Holler critiqued these shifts in society with his work 'Test Site' (2006) at the Tate Modern's massive Turbine Hall in London, exploring meanings associated with the slide and fun. Holler's slides demonstrated the joy of letting go as

you travel without motivation to a specific place and experience a feeling of momentary freedom before you safely arrive. The five silvery slides enclosed stainless steel chutes roofed with transparent acrylic plastic. Elegant structures spiralling like giant serpents, enabling a terrifyingly fast ride, especially from the top-level approximately twenty-seven metres high, with a thirty degrees downward slant. Travellers encased in these curling twisting bodies, shooting down towards the ground, experienced a sudden exhilarating vertigo rush through space, providing a visual spectacle for the onlookers as they glimpsed people sliding and heard their screams, perhaps a combination of excitement and fright (Daniel Birnbaum 2007, pp. 75-6). 'Sliding at Tate Modern' (2007) a live web cam transmitted the scene of the hysterical sliders for world viewers to enjoy. Holler's engaging vision of thrilling consumerism, an experience that became a shared worldwide spectacle, an exciting contrast to the stark isolated playground and quiet environs of suburban Grovedale.
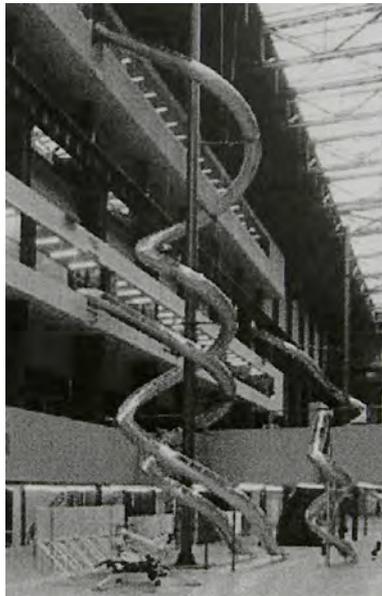
Carsten Holler, *Test Site*, 2006, stainless steel, acrylic plastic
Installation at the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, London

3.3 'Garage' reflection, 20 August 2008

In the stillness of my Grovedale studio I am once again gazing at my virtual garage, the enlarged print of my collected goods, thinking about their history, my association with each item; the old fridge, my daughter's bike and tricycle, Pavrotti's cage, Paddington Bear inert in his basket, and frog often left lying around the lounge room. The print is dark and sombre, a reflection of me I wonder. It is as if I am looking at the sum of our lives, a showcase of memories in a shop window, recalling Oldenberg's 'The Store' (White, 2007).

Suddenly I am back in Oxford, standing on the pebble-stoned kerb of a little street lined with cafes and trendy boutiques ('Visual Literacies Conference', 2008). It is early in the morning before opening time and I am peering through the glass at a display of fashionable frocks and shoes. The word POSH is slashed across the shop window in vivid lipstick pink. I immediately visualise a title for my garage showcase, inspired by another walk, several years earlier in the direction of London's Tate Modern Gallery. I am fascinated by the occasional quirky black-stencilled prints I discover along the Thames embankment, hiding, some almost obscured on a brick wall, or lurking on the pylon of a bridge. I take photos. Much later I learn they are the wall art works of 'Banksy', (2006) a pseudonym for the elusive artist now renowned for his provocative social commentary on contemporary society. A recently published book documents his works (sadly many of them have now been removed by zealous local authorities) and I rediscover the images I so admired. A young girl farewelling a red heart is the inspiration for my 'Garage' title. The caption reads,

When the time comes to leave, just walk away quietly and don't make any fuss. (Banksy 2006, pp.78-79)

CHAPTER FOUR: TECHNOLOGICAL SPACE

Technology permeates my existence these days and my accumulation of 'stuff' is exacerbated by the number of devices I require to function in today's society. Whatever I do in some way bears the stamp, the imprint of the new computerised technologies. Their flashing screens, blinking digital visual codes, dominate my interior and exterior space. My home computer, Internet connections and mobile phone, link me to transient virtual worlds. I must learn new tools to apply to my art practice and way of living in today's world. Communication, shopping and travelling involves unknown and complex challenges. This new technological space is characterised by phases of frustration, the threat of failure counterbalanced with the thrill of achievement. Since I commenced this research project my surrounding space has re-morphed yet again into another unpredictable world. I discover through my practice how recently mastered computer technologies just as speedily become obsolete, replaced by faster and more sophisticated systems to be re-learnt. Configurations that like amoeba seem to re-converge constantly into newer forms.

As I move through my landscape, observing young people's deft use of the new technologies, their mobile phones and laptop computers, I become more aware of the generation gap. Vibrant phone conversations and agile fingers busily text messaging and tapping away, speak of a re-ordered world, a way of being, that I seek to understand and image through my visual practice.

When I gaze from my home across the football and school ovals, towards the distant hills and surrounding farms dotted with gum trees, I am reminded of why I chose this specific block for our house. It seemed just like the country, mirroring the traditional landscapes I associated with Frederick McCubbin and other painters of the Australian bush (Galbally 1985, p.81). I consider how my life-style has changed.

I still live in the project home that my husband and I built on subdivided farmland more than 30 years ago. The external structure of my house has not altered greatly in the past years, though what remains of my garden is now wilted, brought on by the drought and stringent water restrictions. Interior changes have mainly been cosmetic and include a kitchen and lounge room makeover with replacement cupboards, blinds and floor-coverings. Many of my original neighbours have upgraded to larger Mac-mansions in the newer estates around Grovedale. Their homes are compressed on smaller blocks with a restricted garden area embracing a style that, according to Louise Johnson in 'Style wars: revolution in the Suburbs'? (2005, pp. 259-277), adds rooms and space to display affluence and facilitate home leisure.

I reflect on what has had the greatest impact on my lifestyle and how I function in the world, and the immediate response is technological change linked with my sudden personal change in the status quo. I question how the equation of threat and thrill evokes the changing landscape making a personal audit of how the new technologies, media and communications services, have impacted on my way of doing things. Glancing around my home, I note the microwave oven, the reverse-cycle air conditioner and nearby desk, computer, printer and scanner, with assorted instruction manuals on the shelves. Digital clock radios are in the remaining rooms along with two televisions, and a combined CD/DVD player. My mobile phone, secure in my handbag, goes almost everywhere I go.

With broadband and the net I can communicate globally with ease, email friends, and access numerous web sites online for whatever I wish to know and see. Instant entertainment is available with a flick of the remote control function. All of my photo images and data are conveniently stored on DVDs. The confronting downside to this technology is making sense of the complex instructions attached to each purchase of a newer model. Numerals, timer codes and flickering electronics linked by invisible

threads, seem to dominate my household. I panic when items malfunction, praying that my data won't disappear, promptly replacing equipment with an upgraded version because immediate repairs are uneconomic. As a practising artist and solo householder, I have become dependent on these technologies to support my research and communication networks.

Recent statistics indicate that my reliance on electronic media is typical of other Australian families. The 'Report of the Media and Society Research Project' offers an up-to-date picture describing the key trends of how families with children negotiate electronic media and communication in everyday life (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007). Every family has at least one mobile phone with an average of almost three mobile phones per family. Electronic media and communication activities overall take up about half of children's and young people's discretionary time, with eight to seventeen year-olds spending on average an hour and a quarter on line.

I consider my use of technology and the above statistics about family trends and electronic media, as I recall my daily walks around the neighbourhood with my dogs, and visualise the empty streets with numerous parked cars, and the deserted children's playgrounds. This data could partly explain the suburban family's preoccupation with staying indoors when not at work, or engaging in school, shopping or sporting activities. I compare my earlier country landscape scenario with my navigation of the nearby busy Waurn Ponds and the Geelong shopping complexes. Shrill sounds and conversations interrupt my transit as I weave a path mingling with the young people effortlessly engaging with their MP3 players and mobile phones. Individual ring tones signal their presence, reminding me that I am moving in another world; most of these young people have been born into a different traditional landscape to mine. I am as Marc Prensky describes in 'Listen to the Natives' a 'digital immigrant' in a 'digital native's' landscape (2005, p.9).

It seems now that everywhere I go my passage is interrupted by people of all ages engaging with their mobile phones, strangers and loud conversations, responding to workplace calls, or friends, detailing intimate encounters I prefer not to hear. Others, lines dangling from earpieces, are plugged into their MP3 players. The young man sitting alongside me in the train, eyes fixed on his laptop computer and a golf match on the other side of the world; all hooked into a subjective space in their personal domains. Technology permeates the most intimate corners of our lives. Our backyards are no longer private, with inquisitive viewers and bureaucrats peering at us from the satellite 'Google Earth' (Cameron Houston, 2008).

I am viewing a retrospective exhibition of the work of Rosalie Gascoigne at the National Gallery of Victoria, Federation Square (2009), enjoying the familiar references to past spaces of my comfort zone. Gascoigne's work is an ordered assemblage of stuff, found objects reconstituted with others to critique the cultural landscape. In 'Set up' (1984) pieces of old wood are combined with basins, pails and enamel jugs to create a chequerboard floor.

Rosalie Gascoigne *Set Up*, 1984
Synthetic polymer paint on wood, enamelled metal, 50 x 270 x 270 cm
Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

A collection of kewpie dolls mustered in assorted wooden containers 'Dolly boxes' (1976) gives new meaning to old toys. A massive wall piece 'Clouds 2' (1992) on closer inspection reveals floating pieces of weathered composition-board anchored to plywood.

Rosalie Gascoigne *Dolly Boxes,* 1976 wood, metal, plastic 40 x 160 x 28.5 cm

Collection, Queensland University of Art Museum, Brisbane

Rosalie Gascoigne *Clouds 11,* 1992 weathered painted composition board on plywood

137 x100.5 cm Collection of Lisa Paulsen, Sydney

Rosalie Gascoigne *Promised Land*, 1986 weathered painted plywood

112. x 249. cm

Collection Tarra Warra Museum of Art Ltd, Victoria

'Promised land' (1986) a large panel made from labelled soft drink crates, recalls not only a mythic utopian Australia, but alludes to the promise of happiness in soft drinks of past days.

Gascoigne's parquetry arrangement of blue, red and yellow panels, cut into strips titled 'All that jazz' (1989) recalls Mondrian's painting 'Broadway Boogie Woogie' (1942-43) grid of chequered bars.

Rosalie Gascoigne *All That Jazz*, 1989
weathered painted wood on plywood 130 x 100 cm
Collection of Graeme Uthmeyer, Melbourne

Gascoigne's reordering of quintessentially Australian materials, corrugated iron, linoleum, connects with the hardships of the landscape, the evocation of current times and extended drought. Her works 'Promised land' and 'All that jazz', the cutting of the crates, the repetition and compression, highlight the importance of the 'grid' that Deborah Clark discusses in 'Rosalie Gascoigne' (2008, p.31) as a key organising

principle to Gascoigne's oeuvre. The shattering of the forms is the beginning of a creation. As Rosalind Krauss has explained in her essay, 'Grids, you say',

> …the grid states the absolute autonomy of the realm of art. Flattened, geometricized, ordered, it is anti-natural, anti-mimetic, anti-real. It is what art looks like when it turns its back on nature. In the flatness that results from its coordinates, the grid is the means of crowding out the dimensions of the real and replacing them with the lateral spread of a single surface. In the over-all regularity of its organization, it is the result not of imitation, but of aesthetic decree. Insofar as its order is that of pure relationship, the grid is a way of abrogating the claims of natural objects to have an order particular to themselves; the relationships in the aesthetic field are shown by the grid to be *sui generis* and, with respect to natural objects, to be both prior and final. The grid declares the space of art to be at once autonomous and autotelic (Krauss, 1979).

Yet the discordant materials, the elements of mass production and handmade blemishes that scar their surfaces, interrupt the seamless repetition of Gascoigne's grids. Gascoigne's experiential aesthetic, adding meaning to nature, with referents to familiar past practices, makes old new again. Her works make sublime poetry of the ordinary, reflecting the essence of our relationships with the landscape and the disparate materials associated with the old technologies.

In those past days we knew our boundaries, where we were going, secure in our homes knowing what to expect. In this 'other' landscape the boundaries between home and office, work and leisure intermingle, one interface diffuses into another, the virtual can appear as reality. I am concerned that the complex interfaces and digital codes in these ephemeral spaces could blur truths and realities for inexperienced and unwary users

(*like me*). The merging digital spaces of the new technologies seem to be overlapping into once public spaces, the railway station, buses and the shopping mall, intruding on the need for personal space, that necessary 'reliable hiding place from the public world' (Arendt, 1989 p.71).

The many sized screens of the new digital media seem to dominate the cultural landscape; the 'Big Screen' is the urban heart of Melbourne's 'Federation Square'. Spatial participation may confound ways of visualising near and far, disconnected and connected, setting up a hyperreal condition with the viewers' understanding of virtual space dependent on their interactive experience. Images appear as representational, but if enlarged we can see the machine code the numeric data; behind the initial imagery a representational space becomes a contradictory matrix structure of pixels and bytes.

Rudolf Arnheim writes in 'Entropy and Art: An Essay on Order and Disorder' (1971, p.4) that the human mind requires order as a necessary condition for understanding, 'order is a prerequisite for survival'. I have been using new media studies (or digital studies) to visualize my art investigations into changing urban space; as Lev Manovich notes in 'The Language of New Media' 'the theory of new media… can act not only as an aid to understanding the present, but also as a grid for practical experimentation' (2001, p.10). Manovich outlines new media as a revolutionary impact on the development of modern culture and society.

> …the computer media revolution affects all stages of communication, including acquisition, manipulation, storage, and distribution; it also affects all types of media - texts, still images, moving images, sound and spatial constructions (2001, p.19).

Terry Flew in his book 'New Media: An Introduction' describes new media as a misnomer 'recombitant – derived from already existing media content developed in

other formats' (2002, p.11). The lines between 'new' and 'old' media are hard to draw; new media content is often digitised from existing media developed in other formats. Flew proposes that digital media is one of convergence, an integration of communications networks, content and information technology; the digital information can be manipulable, dense, networkable, compressible and impartial.

How to relate these new media informational spaces that offer unfixed virtual space, a fleeting display that is experienced subjectively, to my art practice visualising urban change. In the past, formal models of perspective utilising the grid and converging lines emanating from a central viewpoint represented and clarified the understanding of space. Objects and bodies were placed in a coherent matrix, a fixed reality. With the advent of each new wave of image technology, photography, cinema, and television, we have been prompted to rethink the space of consciousness. Jonathan Crary explains in 'Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century' how Modernization is accompanied by a disruption of physical space and matter,

> Modernization is the process by which capitalism uproots and makes mobile that which is grounded, clears away or obliterates that which impedes circulation, and makes exchangeable what is singular (1990, p.10).

Windows once designed to view an outer fixed reality in homes now frame an interactive space of global encounters that are intermittent, discontinuous and fluctuating, a transformation of concepts contextualised by distance, proximity, exteriority, interiority and locality 'the technological uncanny' (McGuire 2008, p.11).

4.1 'Roofgoogle 4', 2009
I am playing around with the 'Google Maps' on the web (11 January, 2009) checking out locations in my neighbourhood. I find my house, notice that the view is different,

something is not quite right. It is an image from another season, taken several years earlier when the trees had been lopped. I can peer into my neighbours' parched gardens; identify the cars parked in their driveways. Scanning over the surrounding streets, I notice the vacant tracts of land that have become the latest housing developments. Playgrounds, recreation ovals and shopping complexes slide across my screen, as I zoom and freeze the images to download and import into my computer.

I select my house, the one on the corner, along with my neighbours' adjoining homes. I copy the patterns of courts that map the estate, and then move my cursor across the drought stricken farmlands that surround Deakin University's Waurn Ponds campus. Most of them are now dotted with Mac-mansions that characterise the newer developments.

I am like a bird gliding across my urban landscape; I can swoop and dive for a close-up view, trace the paths of my daytime walks, then effortlessly fly away in another direction in search of a different focus and angle. I convert my neighbourhood into transparent floating clusters imbued with a dreamlike quality as they move across a vista of ochre paddocks. Their forms merge, change direction, and are subsumed by enfolding vertical overlays that morph into multi-faceted grids and the mirrored Princes Highway.

Close up the fused images and pattern of grids appear to converge into a heart-shape, fed by the traffic arteries of the many courts. I redefine their shapes into a jagged rotating mosaic that converges with a swirling background, to again be transformed into a new pulsating form. Sound splices are introduced to frame and 'ground' the visual work with the everyday reality of the urban landscape, mixing the incessant noise of the highway traffic with birdcalls from the surrounding parks and backyards.

Jennifer Kamp *Roofgoogle 4*, video still 1, 2009

Jennifer Kamp *Roofgoogle 4*, video still 2, 2009

4.2 The technological uncanny

McGuire's phrase (2008, p.11) could aptly be applied to the digitally constructed photographs of Andreas Gursky on exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria (2008-2009). I am completely overwhelmed and dwarfed by the massive scale of his photographs that image the global landscape. The spectacular and sumptuous works were both seductive and unsettling. The images at first startled me, and then fascinated I was drawn in to inspect the intriguing detail and make sense of what was depicted. He describes a homogenous world of global space, and non-spaces where the individual is insignificant; there is no beginning or end. These pictures are oddly flat, photographed from a bird's-eye perspective, not unlike the satellite 'Google Earth' imagery. The crisp

white borders that edge Gursky's photos printed on plexiglass sharply define the viewer's status as outside the frame. The viewer is a non-participant, looking in.

This impersonal objectivity evolved out of his rigorous mentorship training with Bernd and Hilla Becher, (previously discussed in Chapters One, Two and Four) where photographs were assembled in a single classification and displayed as a grid. Gursky has moved on from this systematic photographic style to make iconic, self-contained photographs that, viewed as a group, offer a spectacular visual microcosm of human social systems. With the mouse and computer as his paintbrush Gursky skilfully uses digital techniques to manipulate individual pixels and shift colour in the matrix, to manage a seamless intervention, to present life as being lived in this age of consumerism. The converging vanishing point of Renaissance depth has vanished at the level of the surface subsumed by a non-visible grid of visual codes, another visual order to challenge the former. Everything is a unit, depicting a bonded, isolated individual and the probability of being. This massive pixelated grid is suggestive of Foucault's 'Panopticon' prison, the management of populations not by force but subjectively with technical tricks to achieve what is necessary (1979, pp.200-201).

Gursky expresses his environment as a multiplicity of products, people, architecture and roads. The visually excessive '99 cent' (1999) pictures rows upon rows of gaudy discount goods, promises of pleasure that with over-saturation becomes sickly. 'Untitled X111' (Mexico, 2002) a massive landfill overflowing with the detritus and stuff of modern life, counters this spectacle of mass production and consumption.

Andreas Gursky *99 Cent*, 1999, 207 x 336 cm

Collection of the Artist courtesy of Mathew Marks Gallery, New York

and Monika Spruth Galerie Cologne

Andreas Gursky *Untitled X111*, (Mexico) 2002, 280 x 207 cm

Collection of the Artist courtesy of Mathew Marks Gallery, New York

and Monika Spruth Galerie Cologne

Gursky's 'Tokyo Stock Exchange' (1990) especially relevant in today's current phase of globalisation, is a network of mass human gender-specific activity, that reveals certain patterns in the world of trade, finance capital and information technology. He expands our vision through repetition and an emphasis on the formal elements of the picture to create a hyperrealism, a model of contemporary behaviour. The unseen machinations of a global institution, flows of capital, a dependence on complex technology, the liquid nature of global frontiers and the amorphous entity of digital space.

Andreas Gursky *Tokyo Stock Exchange*, 1990, 188 x 230 cm
Collection of the Artist courtesy of Mathew Marks Gallery, New York
and Monika Spruth Galerie Cologne

Such flows of capital and the invisible disempowerment of class in the global economy are the subject of his work 'Nha Trang Vietnam' (2004). Assembly lines of workers, another mass of nameless and faceless human activity, are industriously engaged in basket making, crowding this third world factory space.
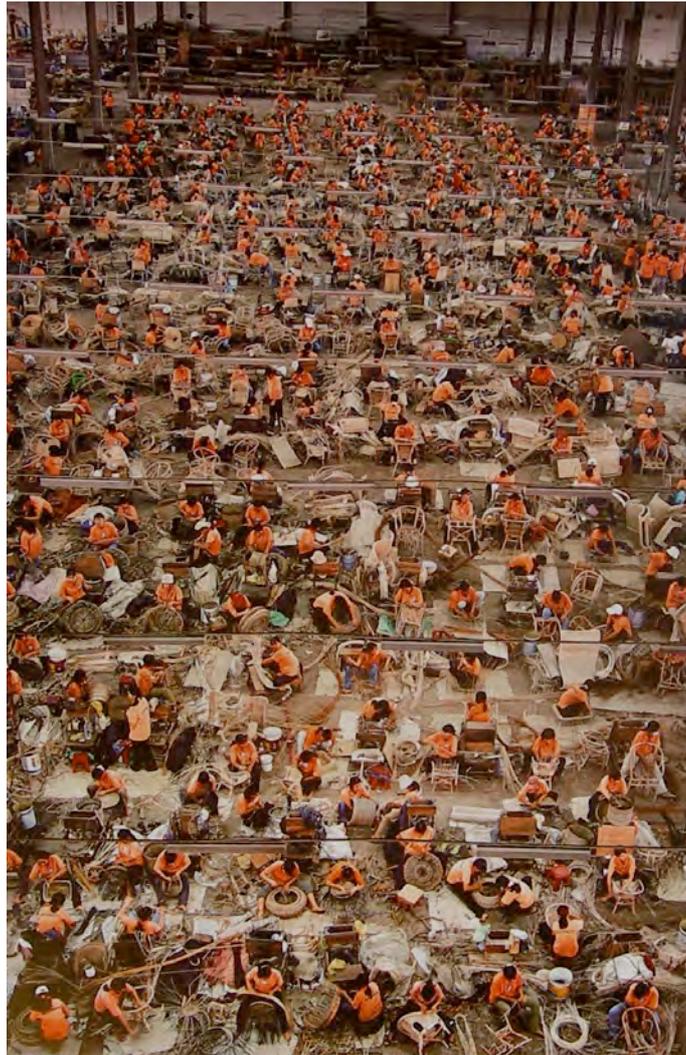
Andreas Gursky *Nha Trang Vietnam,* 2004, 296 x 207 cm
Collection of the Artist courtesy of Mathew Marks Gallery, New York
and Monika Spruth Galerie Cologne

In his most recent photographs that feature the mass rather than the individual, Gursky's subject is the annual Arirang Festival in Pyongyang that honours the late North Korean Communist leader Kim ll-sung. In this exact choreographed event, 100,000 participants are holding coloured cards, suggesting a grand matrix of human pixels ('Pyongyang 1', 2007). This week Gareth Evans, Australia's foreign minister from 1988 to 1996 and president of the international Crisis Group, reports that Pyongyang is again in the news outraging the global community with the provocative nuclear test honouring the power of the current North Korean leader Kim-Jong-il (Evans, 2009).

Andreas Gursky *Pyongyang 1,* 2007, 307 x 215.5 x 6.2 cm
Collection of the Artist courtesy of Mathew Marks Gallery, New York
and Monika Spruth Galerie Cologne

I gaze in awe at Gursky's invented world, the digital manipulation is made overt; a sublime fetishism, his work reflects the spirit of our age, financial capitalism. I consider whether Gursky's mode of digital realism is a strategy engaging us to reflect on our vulnerability in the face of mass culture and global capitalism or implicit in sanctioning the contemporary global landscape. Gursky, through technicity, may have created what Jean Baudrillard describes in 'Paroxysm: The Perfect Crime'

> Because nothing, not even painting, wants anymore to be looked at, but only to be visually absorbed and circulated without leaving traces --tracing in a way, under covers of the colours of simulation, the simplified aesthetic form of impossible exchange…(1993, p.5).

Like McCubbin's 'The Lost Child' (1886) in the bush, I feel uncomfortable and alienated by Gursky's vision of global society, a confronting and threatening world that depicts the vulnerability of the individual at the mercy of the invisible controlling powers of technology. In contrast to Gascoigne's meaningful grids, Gursky's spatial inventions can be intimidating.

CHAPTER FIVE: NEW SPATIAL PRACTICES, NEW ART

5.1 Being in changing spaces

Gursky's depicted world of global spatial landscapes exhibited at the National Gallery of Victoria (2008-2009) conjures up visions of a possible future society, alienated and dysfunctional. I am jolted into a renewed search for meaning and other possibilities in our constantly changing spaces, new evolving spaces within the suburban landscape where perchance, other creative social ordering may occur. Where artists, through the imaginative exploration of electronic arts, can build bridges of communication and make sense of human perception and experience to convey understanding of a transient landscape. Through my visual research utilising digital processes, strands begin to converge and endow with deeper meaning, my personal unsettling with my urban surrounds as I renegotiate the space of my landscape.

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' presented in his publication 'Outline of a Theory of Practice' emphasised the tendency of social structures to reproduce themselves through the practice of everyday life (1977, pp.78-81). Our mannerisms, the movements of our days, frame the way we live, how we interact with others, developing lasting acquired schemes of perception and action. The 'habitus' is a universalising mediation of the individual's practice laid down by his/her earliest upbringing which determines their mastery of social coordination. As an artist and educator I consider how Bourdieu's model can be applied to help us to understand our daily spatial customs, our being in the landscape.

I recall a recent shared experience with my daughter in a Melbourne playground. *'Mum, would you keep an eye on Jasper while I feed Evie?' We have just arrived at the recreation park close to Nerissa's home. 'Sure'. Munching a sandwich, I jump up from a bench, following Jasper as he darts off across the playground. There are so many*

pieces of brightly coloured equipment; he doesn't know where to go first. Eventually he settles for the climbing structure, crawls on to the platform, negotiates the steps, grabs plaited ropes and then tentatively pokes his head down the slide with a cheeky grin, hoping I will catch him. He finds a ball, a little girl joins us, smiling she holds out her hand and he throws it. Her mother chats with Nerissa, two dogs sit on the other side of the park fence confining the play equipment. 'Yes' she confides to my daughter, 'I'm expecting again, having two will be different'. They continue to chat about babies, feeding and 'never enough time in the day' matters.

Soon other mothers and a few dads arrive with their toddlers. Jasper imitates an older boy balancing on the small seesaw, and then follows other children into the cubby house. 'Peek-a-boo', they play, opening and closing the plastic window shutters and doors as they dart in and out laughing. Then it's off to the swings where Jasper finds a flaxen barbie doll in the tan bark and runs over to show Evie. Whistling dog walkers hurry past in the direction of the tennis courts, admonishing their pets for running ahead. Back at Nerissa's home I am preparing for my return trip to Geelong. 'Is anything special happening over the weekend? 'Yes, we thought we'd try out one of the parks listed in this book', she replies. I flick through the slim volume (Miller & Overburg, 2006). The authors have rated the best playgrounds around Melbourne's inner and outer suburbs, with detailed references to surrounding refreshment, sporting and transport facilities. I notice only one Geelong playground gets a mention (p. 234).

June Factor, a senior research fellow at the Australian Centre, University of Melbourne, argues in her paper ,'Tree stumps, Manhole Covers and Rubbish Tins: The Invisible Play-Lines of a Primary School Playground,' that there is a lack of appreciation of the importance of play amongst some parents and educators (Factor, 2004). The culture of childhood where a child tests, imagines, invents and adapts is under threat. She believes this has impinged on after school and weekend play. Street play has lessened because of

'stranger danger' worries, as well as traffic and schools placing restrictions on children's play due to fear of litigation.

In a more recent article Factor comments on 'The Cambridge Primary Review: Towards a New Primary Curriculum', a major interim report on primary schooling in the United Kingdom that criticises the government's excessive micro-management of education (2009). Factor is concerned The Australian Federal Government's recent standardisation policies with its focus on testing and performance will inhibit the celebration of cultural and community life in primary education, impacting on those subjects such as the arts and humanities, and those kinds of learning that require time for talking and exploring ideas. She quotes a worse situation resulting from the Bush Government's 'No Child left Behind' policy where…

> There are now whole school districts in the US where children's play time is reduced, adult-directed or simply eliminated (2009).

Play flourishes everywhere whenever young children are left with minimum adult direction and supervision. They love to play hidey and chase, clapping games and exchange cheeky rhymes in a place not necessarily carefully designed by planners and well-meaning adults. Perhaps the constraints on outdoor play are restrictions imposed by parents too busy juggling jobs, housework and childcare. Or maybe parents have prioritised other activities for their offspring. Carl Honore significantly writes in 'Under Pressure: how the epidemic of hyper-parenting is endangering childhood' (2008, pp.4-8). Rigid schedules and pressure to get into the best schools and excel in competitive sport means there is no time for children to join friends and play. The social and physical consequences can be dire. I am again reminded of Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' as a relevant theory for understanding cultural change. As well, the latest

scientific research shows evidence that lack of play can influence the child's brain development (Sergio M.Pellis & Vivien C. Pellis, 2006, p.247).

My thoughts return to my suburb of Grovedale, the quiet streets only busy with peak hour traffic, the enveloping housing estates, the frantic Waurn Ponds shopping complex and the forsaken playgrounds, that initiated this research project. I reflect on my observations of transitional change and how these now different spaces can be given new meaning.

It is 2008 and I am driving along the highway from the gym, looping past the deserted playgrounds and the semi-industrial zone towards the shopping complex. Lutheran vignerons had once tilled this land. My recollection evokes the Winter family's cool bluestone wine cellar beneath their now demolished farmhouse, a subterranean musty interior lined with dusty bottles and kegs, where a flagon of rough red could be purchased for a few dollars. The sun slides between the leaden clouds across the bare paddocks surrounding the Waurn Ponds complex. Last Christmas the centre boasted a $35 million facelift; new stores were opened in time for the rush. Six months down the track, everyone complains, the place is engorged with cars, parking spaces are at a premium and almost too narrow for the numerous four-wheel drives. This week headlines in the local paper announce, 'Waurn Ponds Expansion: It's the start of the boom as cash rolls in' (Alex Oates, 2008). The plans for the new Waurn Ponds complex include increasing retail floor space from 21,000 square metres to 35,000. The urban developer reportedly hopes to include medium density housing and a retirement village. No mention is made of improved bus services or water reserves to support the projects. Geelong, like numerous districts in Victoria, has been affected by severe drought for many years. From a vantage point on the Princes Highway I video my noisy surrounds and the incessant traffic, squinting as the sun now glares across the chocolate squared rooftops of the newest housing estate, soon to be replicated on the nearby-parched hills.

Returning home, other headlines demand my attention… Overseas, earthquake and floods ravage the human landscape. 'Eyewitness to Tragedy in Burma: The struggle now is for survival…the scramble for fresh water…the hunt for shelter' (Max Quincey, 2008). 'China Catastrophe: 60,000 unaccounted for as death toll rises,' (Ben Blanchard, 2008). Surreal and edgy spaces slide from the newspaper to the television screen and back again…

It is now early in 2009 and we are confronted with more shifts in our landscape. Sudden global banking crises result in unexpected economic instability initiating new mantras, 'Go forth and spend'; otherwise 'deflation' could mean unemployment for many. The Waurn Ponds shopping complex upgrade has been put on hold by the developers. Last week public transport chaos hit the headlines, along with reports of massive floods in Queensland.

This week we are mourning for the thousands of Victorians and communities tragically devastated by the bushfires. It has been called 'Victoria's Darkest Week' and Australia's worst peacetime disaster with terrified families running for their lives fleeing from the roaring march of flames (Chris Johnston, 2009). Many die where the bush and suburbs meet, some entombed in their gutted cars, others overwhelmed by the radiant heat as they endeavour to escape, some entrapped in their smouldering homes. Media images show the blackened towns, flattened houses are twisted piles of metal, the landscape a stark panorama of obliteration. Photos of the victims, now totalling 173, feature in the media, with tales of loss and grief recounting terrible images. Almost 2000 homes are destroyed by this vicious and unpredictable bushfire.

It is a tragic scenario, each day we hear different tales of survival and bereavement, families having to relocate, schools closed, animals suffering, problems with bureaucracy. I listen to emotional stories about missing treasured possessions, toys,

photos, and family mementos and think about the collections of stuff in our Grovedale garages and homes. I empathise with the victims who want to return and sift through the ashes, just to see for themselves if some precious reminder of a loved one can be found. Amid the ruins and ashes some memories will never fade; the grieving is the remembering. Art works exhibited by primary school children visualise the imagined horror of the disaster ('Gallery Sunshine Everywhere', 2009). Their paintings show whirls of grey smoke engulfing homes, people and trees. Explosive firestorms encompass cars, fences and livestock; a burnt out fire truck stands abandoned, encircled by the consuming orange flames.

Relief centres are overwhelmed with offers of stuff. A caller on the radio tells how the residents of an inner Melbourne suburb scoured their garages and homes, filling two semi-trailers with 'stuff' to aid the bushfire victims. The Major of the Salvation Army Relief Centre advises the public to stop sending goods, as they are running out of storage room. Former Police Commissioner Christine Nixon, now chairwoman of the Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority, announces she is working to establish a system for cataloguing and storing the voluminous donations of goods until required (Karen Kissane & Chris Johnston, 2009). The outpouring of spontaneous community response is amazing. The numerous fund raising ventures totalling over $300 million dollars for the Victorian Red Cross Bush Fire Appeal show that people do want to be involved in helping others when crises emerge.

The press continues to report daily on the state of the economy and details of job losses with firms moving production offshore. Some commentators' fear we are edging towards *recession as the stock market falls across world markets. The downturn is confirmed as the World Bank announces the collapse has arrived (Peter Martin, 2009). The Waurn Ponds shopping centre will now go ahead following a surprise announcement by Victoria's Planning Minister Justin Madden to rezone land for the*

$50 million expansion (Kate Lahey, 2009). The terms climate change and global warming pattern the media. The challenge is to make sense of the unforseen and unpredictable in our liquid seemingly surreal, subjective worlds. Sights, observations and different experiences can be re-imagined and re-ordered as new spaces with unexpected fulfilment.

5.2 Heterotopia

It is possible that our suburbs in this new century are places of alternate ordering, a reaction to an edgy and unsettled landscape. Foucault introduced 'heterotopia' in his lecture 'Of Other Spaces' given in 1967, outlining places or sites which are 'outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality' (1986, p. 24). His lecture described a certain manner of dealing with time and history in this epoch of juxtaposition. Foucault presented heterotopias as troubled places unlike the imagined perfect place of utopia or nightmarish dystopia. Heterotopias act as counter-sites, bits of the social world that are different in some way to those sites that surround them. Their otherness or ambivalence marks them out as doing things in an alternative way, a similitude, an ordering and juxtaposition of signs constituted by an unexpected bricolage effect.

My thoughts linger on my past utopian recollections of Grovedale reflecting that the contemporary landscape, my initial site of displacement and contradiction, could signify a personal heterotopia that I am experiencing and visualising through my art practice.

Foucault's theories presented in 1967 are ideas that theorize space as transient, subjective and contestory, questioning the order of spatial systems and challenging the way our thinking is structured. Heterotopic relationships make things appear out of place. Foucault referenced the surrealist paintings of Rene Magritte as an illustration of similitude (1983). Magritte was a painter of visible thoughts and ideas rather than

subjects, working in an era that the French-American artist Duchamp (1887-1968) was making controversial art from found objects or 'readymades'. Magritte's famous painting 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' ('This is not a pipe', 1926) critiques the common place of language and art. His systematic combination of meaningful contrasts and association of thoughts were presented with austerity and technical balance. By creating a heterotopia of the everyday, Magritte's artworks disorder the commonplace, figures fuse with landscapes, bottles become carrots, and a shoe turns into a foot, endowing these subjects with other meaning.

Rene Magritte *Ceci n'est pas une pipe ('This is not a pipe'),* 1928 / 9

Oil on canvas, 62.2 x 81 cm

Collection Los Angeles (CA), Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Heterotopia is described by Kevin Hetherington in 'The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering' as that space-between, not quite a space of transition but a space of deferral where practice and ideas representing goals of aspiration, a process of social and spatial ordering may occur (1997, pp.viii- ix). These spaces may come into being where tensions exist within modern societies between ideas of control or freedom. In these other spaces margins have become resistant to the dominant social order, becoming the spaces of other voices. New ways of experimenting with ordering society are practised. The significant gap lies between the invisible no-place and good place of social order. Hetherington proposes the historic Palais Royale standing near the Louvre in Paris as an example of heterotopia, expressing for a short time an alternate social order, an ambivalent combination of the socially central with the socially marginal, with the latter mobilizing popular support for change (1997, pp.13-19). Interplay in the eighteenth century, between the old aristocracy mingling with the new voices of philosophy, commerce and politics, both enmeshed in consumption and hedonism, shaping a new mode of ordering during the French Revolution. The Palais Royale was the locus in Paris where the new codes of consumer culture, described as modern, evolved.

Frederic Jameson has analysed in 'Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism' (1991, pp.39-40) The Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Las Vegas as a heterotopic site, a locus of consumption and late capitalism. Jameson describes a different mode of social ordering, a celebration of the ambivalent and incongruous, built like a futuristic labyrinth. The reflective glass skin of the hotel like opaque reflector sunglasses, distorts images of everything that surrounds it, achieving a placeless dissociation from its neighbourhood. The unmarked entryways, unlike the grand portals of older hotels, are lateral and back door affairs, the escalators as 'people movers' and the rapidly shooting elevators signify the loss of the narrative promenade we can no longer take on our own. The absolute symmetrical construction of the four towers

creates an ambivalent and difficult space for shoppers. Jameson proposes that the Bonaventure miniature city is a mutation in built space and we the human subjects 'do not yet possess the perceptual equipment to match this new hyperspace… because our perceptual habits were formed in that older kind of space … called the space of high modernism' (1991, pp. 38-9). Jameson argues that this disjunction point between the body and space, the incapacity of the human body to organise and locate itself cognitively and perceptually in a mappable world symbolises

> that even sharper dilemma which is the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentred communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects (1991, p.44).

Jameson's remarks are very relevant in our current global economic crisis and reinforce the urgency for us all about our use of the Internet and digital technologies. Foucault's theories regarding heterotopic relationships (1967) as a means to reorder fixed meaning, could be applied to critique the tension the digital technologies impose on contemporary society. The speed of the new technologies through the Internet, social websites Facebook and now Twitter, to disseminate information swiftly across the globe can generate communication confusion, as evident in the recent pandemic alarm regarding swine flu. Early media reports, 'The World holds it's breath' describe the fear of a virulent strain, 1614 suspected cases and 103 deaths in Mexico (Donald McNeil & Jo Tuckman, 2009). Panic spreads as the World Health Organisation (WHO) warns of an international public health emergency. Reports from countries around the world convey confusing messages about possible symptoms and the number of victims. Australia's chief medical officer briefs hospitals and the public is informed through the media of contingency plans, airport alerts, and details regarding the availability of prescription drugs. The alarm subsides in Australia, though the WHO continues to report an increase in confirmed outbreaks across the world. Suddenly there are new outbreaks in Victoria as

a number of mild cases are treated, and some schools are closed when several students test positive. Health experts proffer contrasting viewpoints regarding the extremity of the virus and containment procedures.

We witness the dire effects of further communication confusion resulting from the inadequacy of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to convey urgent fire alarm warnings during the recent Victorian bushfires. At the Bushfires Royal Commission round of hearings to address the cause and course of the fires, the chief officer of the CFA admits there was little warning for residents (Dewi Cooke & Karen Kissane, 2009). He was not aware that an expert in his office had accurately predicted the start of the Kilmore fire before it devastated the Kinglake Ranges resulting in the deaths of 120 people. The town of Strathewen where 27 deaths occurred did not receive any official warning on the CFA website. Marysville, where there were 34 deaths, received one hour's warning before being engulfed. Other reports document further confusion, how the emergency-000 system was non-functional, and misunderstandings regarding the implementation of evacuation policies and the use of sirens as a warning alarm. A report made in 2005 proposing the need for a national warning system was kept secret, so as not to alarm the public (Peter Ker & Dewi Cooke, 2009).

Zygmunt Bauman in 'Modernity and Ambivalence' (1991) proposes that the intention to produce order doesn't always develop desired outcomes, as described above. Bauman argues that if modernity is about the production of order with the grid being its ruling trope, 'then ambivalence is the waste of modernity' (1991, p.15). Societal reaction and disorder against the tidiness of the grid are like the weeds and waste of a garden and it is the failure of the tidying-up activities that adds to the ambivalence; the heterotopic site of alternate ordering described by Foucault.

Greer Honeywill *Off the Plan,* 2009
Wood, horse hair, found object
124 x 70 x 84 cm

Greer Honeywill's sculpture exhibition 'Off the Plan', (2009) critiques the architecture of an ambivalent contemporary society that seeks and desires personal and public fulfilment through the opulence of the suburban home (Kit Wise, 2009). Honeywill's work titled 'Off the Plan' is a disconcerting assemblage; the two disproportionate towers suggestive of dominance and power, are stabilised by a pre-loved child's tricycle and counterbalanced by inaccessible stairs leading nowhere. The tricycle supporting the edifice speaks of past memories, perhaps a vehicle of escape and romantic play, enhanced by the switch of horsehair attached to the rear of the assemblage. The meta narrative alludes to the tension between the public, private and personal spaces of our existence.
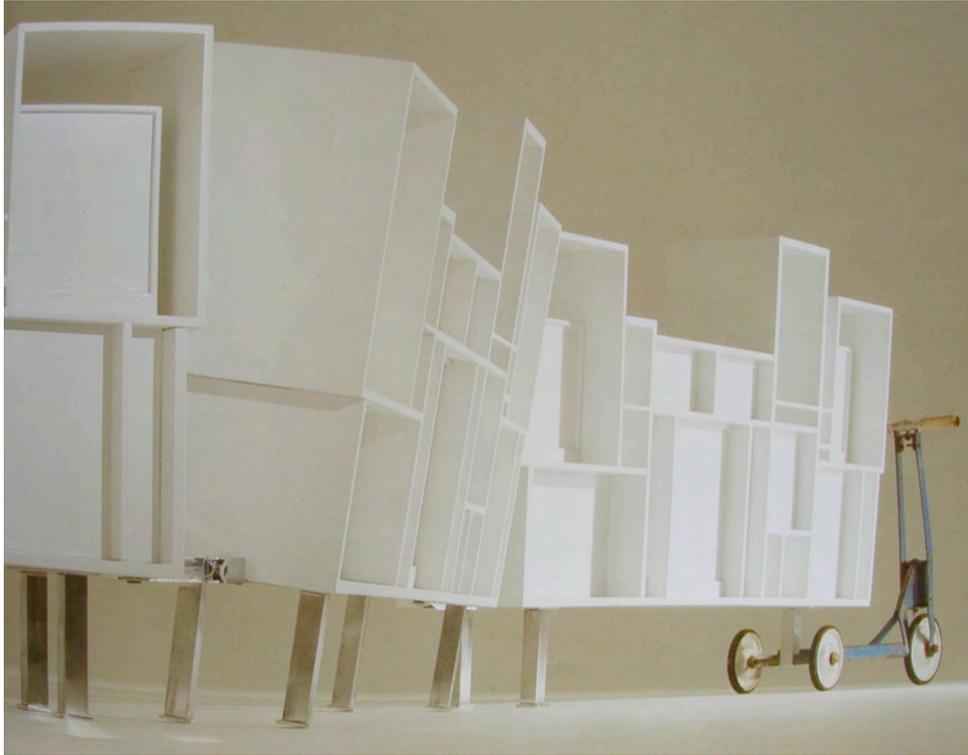
Greer Honeywill *Shadowboxing*, (detail) 2008
Found object, wood, paint, metal fittings
80 x 397 x 45 cm

Honeywill's work 'Shadowboxing' (2008) recalling the popular shadow boxes featured in1960s homes, reminds me of today's multiple, prefabricated modular Mac-mansions that encroach upon the Grovedale landscape. Honeywill's modular wooden forms are a multi-storeyed combination of sizes and proportions, leaning at disturbing angles, towed forward by a child's old scooter. The imagery speaks of the restrictions and disconnections within our living spaces, the grid of the suburbs, the monotonous repetition that may offer security but limits our freedom. Honeywill's references to the materiality of everyday life and the excesses of a consumerist culture are overlaid with nostalgia reflected in her use of the found toys, a punctum for past memories. The

structures cast light and shadows that resonate with Bachelard's poetics, the phenomenology of the home and our interior space (1994, pp. viii-ix). It is possible that Honeywill's battered pre-loved scooter may be dragging the staggered shadow boxes to a brighter future.

Sites of alternate ordering can initiate creativity, and Honeywill's ideas framing contemporary ambivalence bring to mind Melbourne's laneway street artists and Hardware Lane, its graffiti street art now a major tourist attraction (Daniel Ziffer, 2008). Although the ambience of this laneway culture, the exciting mix of the visual experience with exotic cafes has been celebrated at an international American festival in the state of Florida, there are civic leaders who disapprove of these ingenious and creative ventures (Jason Dowling, 2008).

In his book 'Cities and The Creative Class' Florida, cited also in Chapter 3, writes that it is the creative people who are generating employment and bringing money into the region and city (2005, pp.34 - 43). He describes the 'Bohemian Index', a measure he developed to ascertain from census data the number of writers, dancers, painters, musicians, actors, directors, and sculptors in a region. Florida argues that the 'Bohemian Index' became a strong predictor of everything from a region's overall population and employment growth to its high technology base. The significance of a high bohemian presence is that it indicated an open environment that attracted like-minded individuals, who in turn stimulated the innovation and creativity associated with high technology industries. Florida's arguments emphasise the value of creativity in the broad sense that an avant-garde, traditionally associated with bohemia, stimulates the development of dynamic urban regions, through innovative high technology.

Bolt discusses how this 'shock of the new' can be a stimulus to individual creativity (2004, pp.1-7). The essence of modern technology, as with the older arts, reveals as a

'mode of ordering' an enframing bringing forth of 'poiesis'…an 'unconcealment of that which is' (Heidegger 1977, pp. 24-5) an act of self-transformation. Truth happens in the work with the action of making and transforming matter. Lefebvre argues through the mind's image of reality, encountering 'what is susceptible of figuration' that new spatial practices can allow us to encounter our own images and enact self-narratives (1991, p.139). Maurice Merleau-Ponty claims in his 'Phenomenology of Perception' 'to learn new skills is to acquire a certain style of seeing…whether a system of motor or perceptual powers, our body is not an object for an 'I think', it is a grouping of lived-through meanings which move towards its equilibrium' (1962, p.153). A new cluster of meanings can come together with richer understanding.

I am exploring the digital process of mirroring my playground images, where the dark shapes converge and multiply across my screen. My thoughts delve back to a personal 'shock of the new', a flag in time I now see as the marking point of my changing landscape…
'I can't remember, when did we first meet?' he asks, and later 'my badminton shots are lousy, right arm isn't working, better see the quack'. Tests, scans…and more tests follow. The spidery black X-ray tracings keep spreading, trailing like ink across a damp primed canvas. Our world descends into a regime of medication to sustain bodily functions. 'How long have I got?' 'Better make your will, yes its ok to drink red wine', says the professor of oncology. Finally, morphine, and one last mouthed kiss. Afterwards…like 'Pikelet' (in Winton 2008, p.29) it's as if I am submerged in a river, forever holding my breath. Deep in the still yellow water, weeds and plant fronds brush past, my toes sink in the slime of the muddy bottom as I measure how long before I must surface from that cool quiet place. I emerge in a familiar space, but it is different…

The Arts can be a bridge to understanding… *it is Jasper's first visit to an art exhibition, 'The Waterhole', (Gerda Steiner & Joerg Lenzlinger, 2009). We enter the shiny foil*

tunnel, a giant drainpipe lined with tree branches. Holding Jasper's hand, Nerissa pushing Evie in the pram, we follow a winding path that opens into a magic rain forest. A maze of dangling plumbing fittings, old toilets, and drink bottles, intertwined with spiders and coloured shapes are interlaced with plastic pipes that convey murky drops of water down to a muddy mattress. We are entranced, in this eerie makeshift cave. Jasper's eyes stare wide at strange frogs, a crocodile, hovering stuffed owls and high above us a suspended parasol. Evie laughs and smiles from her pram at the flickering lights and forms. We move to another gallery, where amorphous images projected on the walls and ceiling surround us. We lay flat on the waterbed placed in the midst of the room; it shudders and trembles as we gaze above at the dancing merging forms. 'Just one more time', pleads Jasper again, he doesn't want to leave. We hop on, Jasper with mummy, and me hugging Evie, buoyant floating in awe, hypnotised and enveloped by the shadowy spectacle. Later she says, 'Dad would have loved to have seen all those hanging plumbing fittings'.

The thrills and enchantment of our experience in this magical site of displacement and contradiction forces us to examine what we take for granted in our fragile environment. Other families with young children were, like us, enthralled with this space, and I can visualise Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' at work (discussed above p.104). The children were engaging in an experiential and ever-changing space that could determine their future behaviours. The artists have created an interactive space utilising technology in a way that builds contexts with their art to reinforce social bonds.

Contemporary art spaces with new approaches can be a challenging experience for some viewers. The French curator Nicolas Bourriaud writes in 'Relational Aesthetics' how these spaces can be decoded, where the body is poetically and unexpectedly engaged in space in a lasting encounter with form 'which shows the typical features of the world' (2002, p.19).

Gerda Steiner and Joerg Lenzlinger *The Waterhole*, 2009, (with Jasper entranced)

Installation with plumbing fittings, found objects

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne

Photograph Jennifer Kamp

Gladwell as an artist and performer presents his poetic explorations of equilibrium, and how we experience the world internally as an ongoing subtext in much of his work. He makes comprehensible and gives a cultural aesthetic exploration of space, giving presence to the notion of ambiguity that Baumann describes in 'Liquid Modernity (2000, pp. 83-85). Gladwell's sublime mapping of urban surfaces on spinning wheels re-imagines the spaces, angles and textures of public space, to re-engage us with the thrills of our landscape and the inevitability of monoculture. 'In a Station of the Metro'

(2006) Gladwell builds a context of interaction that shifts the viewer away from a passive experience. The work features a Tokyo break-dance crew undertaking an endurance exercise in a busy metro concourse. They adopt a pose horizontal to the shining tiled ground surface, bearing their weight on their hands, staring at the camera until their legs shake and they must slowly abandon their position. The work, installed in a double-channel format with the two projections tipped on their side, creates intriguing imagery and space, with the tiled surfaces seemingly positioned to imply perspectival grids.

Shaun Gladwell *In a Station of the Metro*, 2006 video still
Courtesy the artist & Sherman Galleries, Sydney

Callum Morton focuses on the relationship between reality and illusion, the private and public space of contemporary society. 'The fragility of our comfortable little world' the control over ambivalence is a concept that Morton references throughout his works (Morton 2007, p.110). His models utilising light and sound manifest the aftermath of Modern architecture, and what is left following the destruction. Their counter-narratives

drawn from memory, historical records and movies are animated to visualise fond memories entangled with what has been repressed in the unconscious. His buildings, stages exploring encounters of the built environment filled with sounds of domesticity, are a mix of utopian concepts with community living. Morton's 'Habitat' 2003, a 1:5 scale model of a mass housing project designed by architect Moshe Safdie in Montreal for Expo 1967, represents a day in the life of a housing complex. Public and private space intersects, as a twenty-eight minute looped cycle enables us to view and reflect on the detritus of life repeating over and over again. Lights illuminate the miniature apartments, kettles whistle, toilets flush, cars start, giggles become hysterical screams. The perpetual routine behind drawn curtains is both provocative and depressing. *Maybe urban life in the past wasn't so great after all.*

Morton's sculpture 'Valhalla' constructed for the Venice Biennale 2007 looks like a ruin, the construction inspired by his childhood home, the house his architect father built in 1974. Within the dilapidated structure, torched and full of holes, is an immaculate interior space where lifts plummet to the accompaniment of soothing Muzak and seismic shudders. Morton describes the image of his family home as a significant influence on his life and work. He discusses buying the plot of land, and how carefully his father planned the building in the modernist manner, then moving in and developing the garden. Later he recalls the sadness he and his mother experienced at discovering an excavated site, when visiting the home after it had been sold. The erasure of property development didn't look dissimilar to the erasure of warfare. Morton describes 'Valhalla' as

> an attempt to traverse the pitfalls of putting your own biography too much on the surface of things lest it undermine its connection to ideas outside yourself, coupled with the real pleasure in fumbling about with the materiality of your memory, block by block (Morton 2007, p.114).

Callum Morton *Valhalla,* 2007

Steel, polystyrene, epoxy resin, silicon, marble, glass, wood, acrylic paint, lights, sound, motor, 465 x 1475 x 850 cm

Valhalla, Palazzo Zenobia, 52nd Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy

I am conscious of Morton's sentiments as I continue to develop my art works, thinking back to what Arendt (1958, p.52) said about looking at the world to see a reality from different perspectives and Taylor's views, 'the slide towards self-centred modes of the ideal of self-fulfilment in the popular culture of our time' (1991, p. 60) discussed in my introduction. Taylor writes further that 'each one of us has an original way of being human,' there is a close analogy between self-discovery and artistic creation (p.61).

Felix Guattari in 'Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm'*,* defines subjectivity as the set of relations created between the individual and the vehicles of subjectivity he comes across, human or inhuman informational machinery, a cartography composed of

cognitive and symptomatological references (1995, p.11). He argues for a mapping of the 'collective agencies' of subjectivity and that a recomposition is possible, the production of a subjectivity that is forever self-enriching its relationship with the world (1995, p.90). Guattari maintains that new forms of subjectivization can be created as an artist mixes new forms on his palette. The artist can open up other possibilities about the landscape and imagine spaces where encounters can occur. Their creativity can initiate positive interventions. Benjamin's cartographic methodology spatializing the world in 'One Way Street' (1992, p.45) may be outmoded in our complex contemporary space, where a renegotiation of our surroundings could mean a 'Two way street'. Artists through the imaginative exploration of electronic arts can make sense of human perception and experience to convey a better understanding of a transient landscape.

Stephen Haley's exhibition images depicted in his thesis 'Mirror as Metasign: contemporary culture as mirror world', speak of technology mirroring an uncertain and unsteady virtual landscape (2005). That landscape resembles the original but has been mysteriously transformed; altered and displaced objects picture another materiality. Haley proposes that the planners of new world space create divisions between the real and the virtual to picture the world in a certain way that displaces space. He argues that the older modelling systems of capitalism are applied through computer software, based on past perspectival models of realism and the repetitive structured Cartesian grid (2005, pp.146-7). Haley's ordered digital constructions set in artificial worlds mimic contemporary space. 'Ecohouse (blue)' (2002) a cubed transparent building stands aloof on a stark-mirrored landscape. The carefully modelled house featuring dramatic optical effects could be a replicant display model for homes in the next Grovedale housing subdivision. The work is suggestive of sites, reconfigured space with disembodied housing estates, reflecting a possible reality.

Haley's realistic scenes, paintings and virtual photographs constructed in 3D modelling software, embody the way in which the spheres of virtual and actual space oscillate, and increasingly merge to create a space where objects and experiences become displaced. His subjects formed in virtual space are reconfigured to simulate a mode of realism that could be representational of the space around us. Haley's visual works manifest the 'other spaces', the heterotopia of the computer screen that model our landscape.

Stephen Haley *Ecohouse (blue),* 2001, lightjet photograph 90 x 120 cm
Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Nellie Castan Gallery

Daniel Crooks' quotidian landscape observations, the daily commute and passage of time are the focus of his 'Timeslice' research project, analysed by Laurence Simmons in

'Daniel Crooks: The future of the past' (2009, pp.20-27). Crooks manipulates his video images to blur the systematic traditional connection between time and space. Using reconfigured cameras he describes a polyocular viewpoint that shows small differences of images from many angles. He takes a thin slice from each video frame in 'Train no.1' (2002-2008) and spreads these slices strip by strip across the screen and time. The rippling images become a metaphor for the everyday linear perception of the cityscape, creating a correspondence between the moving image and the motion of living.

Daniel Crooks *Train no.1*, 2002-2008, multi-channel, duration variable,

DV/DVD, 4:3 stereo

Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery

In his HD video work 'Intersection No.4' (vertical volume) 2008, Crooks' grouped bystanders become multiple repetitions. The figures appear to stand still against speeding backwards; their images are stretched and smeared with liquid colour that shrinks and dissolves. Through Crooks' digital 'timeslices' we experience the constant flux of space and the vulnerability of being caught up with the speed of contemporary life. Traces of light and vibrations ripple with trails of movement, linked shivers of continuity, time cut and slowed, that creates an intertwining of past and present.

Daniel Crooks *Intersection No.4 (vertical volume),* 2008, 720p HD video,

4.29 min, stereo

Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery

The present being split by a past image, a slice of time, resonates with the methodology of my research project, looking back in time to gain meaning of 'being now', as I am moving towards the future. I combine my videoed imagery of places and experiences recalled, utilising computer software programs to animate and digitally collage the separate lengths of footage, adding special effects to synergise the past with the present.

5.3 'Road Maps 3', 2009 video

I gaze at the photos of my analogue work, the canvas frottage 'Road Map' completed in 2007. The 'Map' is photographed draped over the yellow oval fence, covered with shards of shattered mirror, reflecting an early morning sky. They tell me it looks sombre and foreboding; a metaphor for the troubling 'oval event' I described in Chapter One.

I import my photos and video film of the work into my computer program, and proceed to 'makeover' the 'Road Map' footage. I offset the formal composition by tilting the canvas on

the fence covered with shards and reconfigure segments of imagery to suggest new meanings. I soften the mirrored shards into floating amorphous shapes reflecting prisms of light; in other segments they are multiplied into gridded rows, marching along a gritty bitumen surface that is then suffused with drifting rain spots. The gleaming convoluted forms regroup into new patterns that become enfolding vertical bands sliding in alternating directions.

My awareness of sound began to filter through my consciousness when, as I viewed my video recordings, bird songs, the strident crow call and black bird warbles, drifted in and out of my solitary playground footage. It was then I began to insert splices of sound to resonate with the transient converging shapes of my visual works. In 'Road Maps 3' I incorporated these bird sounds with others that reference my suburban surrounds, the cacophony of the supermarket intermingles with the raucous pub noise that evokes the shattered glass on the road after the oval event.
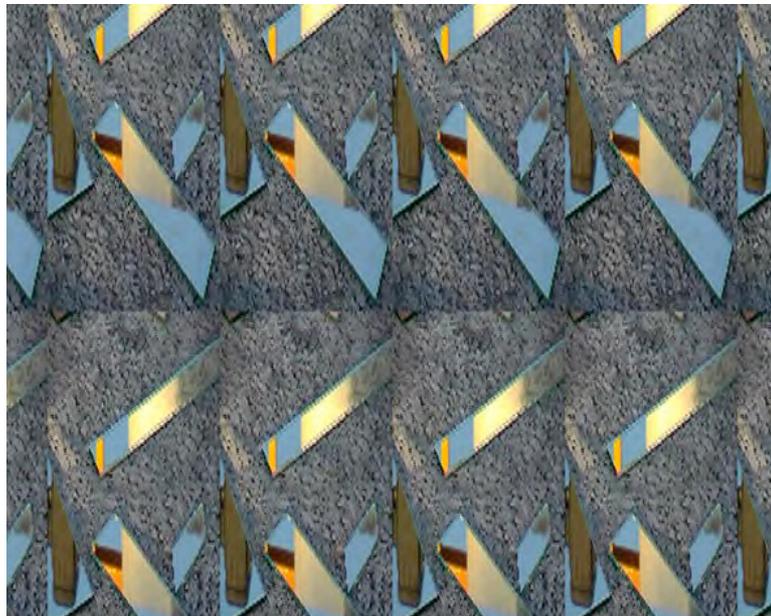
Jennifer Kamp *Road Maps 3,* 2009 video still 1
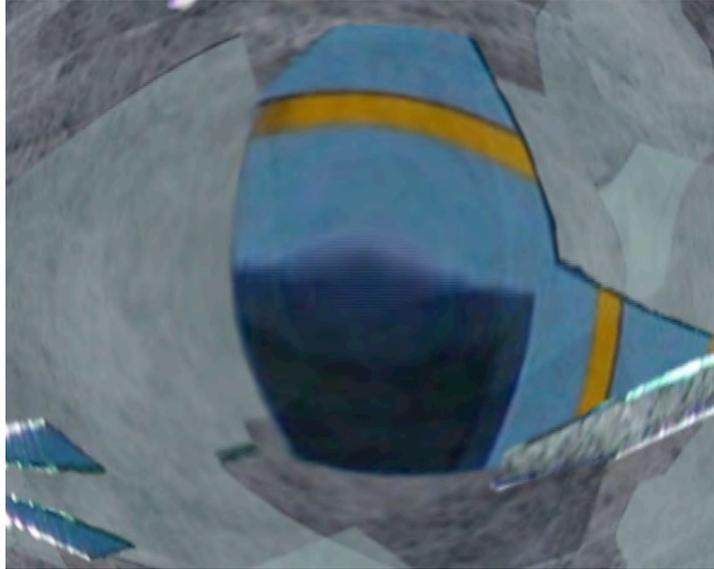
Jennifer Kamp *Road Maps 3,* 2009 video still 2

5.4 '*Sliding' 2009, video*

Sliding is a combination of sketches, photographs and videos of the Grovedale playgrounds made throughout the research project.

The initial images of the slides and playgrounds photographed and videoed around my neighbourhood remained static in my studio folio. I initially experimented with overlays and transparencies, reassembling the varied structures to make composite digital prints, referencing the works of the Bechers and Khan discussed in Chapter One. My early digital prints, 'Grovedale Icon', 'Garage' and 'Framework House' emerged from this process. They now seem solitary and remote.

Using my 'new' computer skills I aim to develop a 'relationship' between my earlier sketches, videos and photos of the surrounding playgrounds. Morphed inky images smudged and blurred as overlapping transparencies, could now be made to move,

introducing a sense of playfulness to the work. I collated the images into sequences of colour, grey, blue and red with each one referencing a different era. Within each sequence I make the playgrounds 'come alive' against a striated background. The irregular shaped red playgrounds sway slowly in unison. One almost leans on another, a bulbous looking playground that moves in time with its wrinkly and wavy partners. The blue sequence features a different dance on the background that now changes direction. The distorted blue playgrounds interchange positions, twisting and turning around each other, and then seem to merge as one. Shadowy slides revolve and stretch across the screen in the grey sequence. As their forms distend, glimpses of the trees in the playground park fleetingly appear as a backdrop to the morphing slides.

The playgrounds dreamily interweave, dancing rhythmically across a moving curvilinear screen to the accompaniment of my garden wind chimes. My Grovedale playgrounds have been re-energised with new life.

Jennifer Kamp *Sliding* 2009, video still

CONCLUSION

0.1 Reflections

My research project has come to an end and I am, as T.S. Eliot articulates in his poem 'Four Quartets' at another beginning (1950, p.144). My goal as an artist at the start of this research was to gain understanding of my changing suburban landscape through my practice, and visualise my research using unfamiliar technologies. Through my research I have learned to engage with the 'threats and thrills' of new spaces, the uncertainties of living in an unpredictable world, and deal with the constant changes to our cultural and physical environment.

My path, diffused by memories recorded with video and photography, commenced from my home and trailed around the suburban neighbourhood as I sought explanations for the sudden cultural shifts in my environment. My experiences became a personal revealing, initiating my search for ways of understanding how to live with meaning in a contemporary society driven by new technologies.

My artwork 'Road Map' became the analogue to my study. It was made from cartographic impressions on canvas of the road outside my home, following a disturbing incident on the local oval. I discovered that others in the community were also shocked and concerned. I was not an individual 'in the wilderness' expressing an isolated opinion. Neighbours were genuinely interested in my work about this troubling event involving teenagers from the area.

'What was I thinking of'?' I wondered as I first set up my 5 metres of rolled canvas on the kerb outside my home. 'What will people think of me?' The gritty road surface irritated my knees as I kneeled, rubbing with the graphite crayon, my fingers cramping with the constant

repetitive movement. It was with feelings of relief and surprise when I realised, as I continued with my project chatting with passers-by, that others in the neighbourhood shared my concerns about the 'oval event'.

Jennifer Kamp *Road Map,* 2007 Graphite on canvas, 200 x 500 cm
Heterotopia:New Spaces 2009, Level 17 Artspace Victoria University
Photographer: Vicki Jones

This reinvigorated my interest in extending my observations around the neighbourhood to see what other people were doing. *'Why are so many garages full of stuff?' I ask my neighbours.* Each piece has a story that is told to me while I photographed their stored goods. Their familiar narratives could relate to my household collection of paraphernalia.

'Where are the children playing?' I say to myself every time I pass the isolated children's playgrounds. I reflect on the past, when the playground was a lively space, with children running and yelling, exhilarated with their games.

Through the power of the research process I was able to share my concerns about the suburban landscape, develop an acceptance of my personal loss and overcome my inadequacies regarding the use of unfamiliar technologies in my art works. I explore creative writing techniques working with Christine Gillespie in her 'Writing Workshop: Christine's seven handy hints for powerful writing' (2008). I learn new computer software processes to express my imagery; the textbook is replaced by a personal interchange, a process of individual learning. Working with other artist educators exploring connections at workshops and within the studio, my developing study becomes an interrelated project. I discover the value of a praxis methodology, a tacit exchange of ideas and skills.

Knowledge can emerge through a careful handling of tools and materials to enrich understandings between human engagement and technology (Heidegger 1954, pp.23-24). Self-knowledge and illumination can surface with the everyday care of handling and engaging with the world. As my skills with my computer software developed, I was able to reconfigure and interweave my memories with my contemporary landscape. This embodied knowledge relates to Bourdieu's theories expressed in 'Sociology in Question' that cognitive knowledge of the production, the rational communication, comes after the production. 'The finished product, the *opus operatum*, conceals the *modus operandi*' (1993, p.158). Through my visual and theoretical enquiries I experienced a revealing of new ideas and processes that allowed me to transpose my personal experiences within the social context of my suburban landscape. My learning and understanding of the newer computer programs with sophisticated software, empowered me to animate and blend disparate shapes and forms, to generate fresh interpretations and ideas about the images of my landscapes and create new kinds of spaces.

When I commenced my research project, I had no intention of referencing my husband's death. It was not until I attended Gillespie's (above) and Ellis and Bochner's workshops (below) that I came to realise how his loss impacted on my perspectives and understanding of my interior and exterior landscape. Ellis and Bochner in their workshop 'Writing Autoethnography and Narrative in Qualitative Research' demonstrated how writing reflexively about their personal narratives enriched their research (2008). To express our innermost feelings and link our creativity with personal experiences in our research enables a sharing of tacit knowledge. A methodology that is expressed in different voices and feelings, to reach multiple audiences, opens up a discourse about the human condition and living with meaning in today's world. It is at the end of my project and as I study my visual works to describe my evolving thought processes in my text, the realisation comes to me that each one signifies a stage in the path of my learning, and empowerment over the landscape. This was an unconscious development as I worked to pursue my art ideas as threads independent of my written research.

0.2 Analysis of my completed artworks

Rudolf Arnheim writes in 'Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye',

> Words can wait and must wait until our mind distils, from the uniqueness of the experience, generalities that can be grasped by our senses, conceptualised, and labelled (1974, p.2).

It is not until the artworks are finally displayed in the exhibition 'Heterotopia: New Spaces' that I am able to objectively analyse each piece. Through the analogue artwork 'Road Map' I begin to re-engage with my neighbourhood and share perspectives with others. By moving from the *safe* interior of my home to physically work on the road surface *outside* I begin to investigate any possible *threat* to my landscape. The challenge of entering into a dialogue

with strangers about my intent and work was at first a daunting concept that soon faded as the work progressed and my confidence developed. The work was completed in stages and then rolled, so it wasn't until I could hang the finished canvas in my studio that I was able to evaluate my mark making. I had been working so close to the surface of the canvas, I needed to move back and view it from a more distant perspective. I see it now as a metaphor for my initial immersion in my surroundings that expands into a broader understanding of what is around me. The small individual marks seem to shimmer and undulate like waves, the linking of miniscule spaces into a massive interconnecting relationship. As my research progresses and I study Martin's gridded landscapes displayed in the 'Guggenheim Collection' (Chapter 2, pp.57-8) I can empathise with the sensitivity of her works that like 'Road Map' show an emotional attachment to one's surroundings.

My photographs and video of my environs initiated further questions about the nature of cultural change in the space of my surrounds, leading me in unexpected and enriching directions that went beyond the local community. I move in my practice from being an investigative observer of my immediate locale, to a participant in the changing social practices of universal space. Barthes and Mitchell's theories about the power of the image to jolt the viewers' response began to influence the way I presented my images (Chapter 1, pp.35 & 39). 'Gridslides' developed from my photos of the vanadalised playground slide linked with Taylor's views relating to the slippery subjective slide of contemporary culture (Chapter 5, p. 123). The brilliant jewel-like colours of the prints show an image that on the surface appears desirable but on closer inspection the distorted shape suggests something else, the punctum that I discuss with reference to Barthes and Mitchell. The power of the slide image is reinforced by arranging the completed nine prints in a rectangular grid format, as referenced in Warhol's dramatic series of screenprints 'Electric Chair', 1971 (Chapter 2, p.59). The interlocking of the 'Slide' prints with intervals of uniform space recalls the Grovedale housing estates, the serial representation of flanked houses lining the streets and courts.

Jennifer Kamp, *Gridslides,* 2007-2008 digital prints x 9, each 40 x 30 cm
Photographer: Vicki Jones

The development of my digital prints, 'Grovedale Icon' (Chapter 1, p.42) 'Garage', and 'Framework House' (Chapter 3, pp.76-80) evolved during the early stages of my visual research. The influence of the cataloguing photographic concept of the Bechers' recording of industrial Europe combined with the process of the layering of digital images developed by Khan (Chapter 1, p.41) resonated with my ideas about time and space. Each image stands in a solitary space, as I seemed to at the commencement of this project. 'Grovedale Icon', a monolithic structure speaks of a remote landscape, a space that is passé and threatening in its desolation. The image, a composite of past playground structures once

seen on the Grovedale housing estates, recalls an antiquity from another era. There is a sense of past times in this space that is ominous and grey, lost in history. 'Garage' is an enclosure of past dreams, disparate cluttered goods that have become a mix of memorabilia and 'just useless stuff'. It is a claustrophobic space suggestive of mustiness and decay. Life has left this static collection of obsolescence and moves in a more transient world. 'Framework House' is another static enclosure that references today's consumerist culture. Its rigid structure is not quite balanced, the stack of layered shopping trolleys ready to topple at any given moment. The empty trolleys allude to a lack of substance in the Mac-mansions that are multiplying across the newer housing estates. I wanted to convey in these works spaces that seemed familiar but now exude a sense of the uncertainty and strangeness that I reference with Nauman's 'Floating Room (Light Outside, Dark Inside)', Ward's 'Hut' and Smart's 'Playground, Mondragone' in Chapter 1 (pp. 37-9).

The animated 'Somatic Houses' (Chapter 2, pp. 64-65) is a continuing portrayal of a disturbing shifting contemporary landscape. These structures no longer static, edge across the screen without purpose; they stop and start, haphazardly moving and changing in proportion and direction. The transparent interiors of the shell like forms reveal them as containers of computers, mobile phones and distorted text. These images reference a contemporary lifestyle that no longer resides in the security of the once solid family home. 'Somatic Houses' becomes my visual exploration of shifts and changing possibilities, a consideration of other viewpoints, ways of understanding the new technologies and negotiating newer spaces.

In 'Roofgoogle 4' (Chapter 4, pp. 94-97) I learn to 'fly', my focus shifts from the road to the rooftops. I glide across my surrounding landscape, twirling and whirling through pastel shades of a different space. The everyday sounds of the landscape begin to reverberate around the images. It is exhilarating and unnerving, *threatening and thrilling*, the joy of

accomplishment balanced by the concern that the new technologies may harbour threats of surveillance that could impinge on individual lifestyles.

I keep returning to 'my' playgrounds to reinvent them and make them 'play', each time editing and adding configurations to visualise my new knowledge. The once solitary 'playground' eventually stars in the video 'Slidesplayskate' (Chapter 2, pp.68-69). The children are running, sliding and playing, but their images dissolve over the spectre of the vandalised slide attached to the gallery wall as part of the installation in the exhibition 'Heterotopia: New Spaces'. It seems whatever change of play or technical adjustment I introduce, the scenario does not change, I cannot reclaim the past. The moving imagery projected as a loop depicts a frenetic pace, the jarring of sounds and space against time.

Jennifer Kamp *Slidesplayskate* 2008-2009 video still
Heterotopia:New Spaces 2009

The grid structure in the ouvre of the artists I studied became an ongoing methodology and strong influence in the development of my artwork. As my computer imagery progressed, it became a powerful tool to contrast the form and order I had viewed in Gascoigne and Gursky's works with the amorphous shapes reminiscent of Crook's videos. I applied this methodology to the reconfiguration of photos of my analogue work 'Road Map'. In 'Road Maps 3' (Chapter 5, pp.127-129) the shattered glass is morphed to gleam and reflect a cornflower sky, the shimmering yellow fences gain new life as they are reformed and regrouped. New spaces are created by interweaving the structured patterns with the nebulous floating forms drifting across the screen. Formal gridded space is transformed with the addition of sound splices that reference the cultural change in my suburban surrounds.

The work 'Sliding' (Chapter 5, pp.129-130) metaphorically signals my adaptation to the changing spaces of my environment. The play spaces of a past era undergo a metamorphosis. My dancing slides develop 'relationships' as they glide, interchange and rhythmically swing in unison.

'Your images are dark', they say early in my research. I return again to look at those videoed spaces; the merging shadows and textured furrowed surfaces intermingling on my computer screen. Was that me I ponder, lost in a transient dark space, still suffused with grief at Gerard's sudden passing?

> What we call the beginning is often the end
> And to make an end is to make a beginning.
> The end is where we start from.
> (Eliot 1950, p.144).

0.3 Curating the exhibition 'Heterotopia: New Spaces'

I have referenced throughout my exegesis artworks that I propose generate a relationship between the viewer and the world they represent. The artists through these works challenge traditional viewpoints and social change. The curator Bourriaud writes in 'Relational Aesthetics' how art today is modelling possible universes.

> The role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever the scale chosen by the artist (2002, p.13).

My intention in 'Heterotopia: New Spaces' is to frame an interactive alternative space of encounters that generates questions about how individuals can inhabit today's world. Claire Bishop writes in 'Installation Art: A Critical History'

> 'how installation art creates a situation into which the viewer physically enters, and insists that you regard this as a singular totality' (2005, p.6).

The viewer is physically inside the installation; there is an emphasis on sensory immediacy, a need to walk into and around the work to experience it. Spectatorship becomes activated, unlike the idea of the centred viewer implicit in Renaissance perspective casting a panoptic gaze on the world spread before him. This exegesis describes my researched landscape and the human condition as fragmented and decentred by multiple perspectives. There is no one ideal fixed place to view the world. My aim is to activate the viewer in an installation, a narrative of everyday associations and experiences as described in my earlier chapters, to trigger conscious and unconscious associations. An embodied and multi- perspectival perception of space, that equates with an opposition to seeing things from one viewpoint.

I had viewed the exhibition of 'Centre Pompidou Video Art 1965-2005' at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) in March 2007, incorporating diverse media. This range of interactive works initially influenced my choice of an installation methodology to present my completed visual research utilising a combination of electronic and non-electronic processes. I selected the open Level 17 Artspace at Victoria University, Melbourne as a venue for my exhibition 'Heterotopia: New Spaces'. The space could accommodate installation work as well as providing two fixed projectors and a bank of three TV screens for my DVD works. My aim was to create an experiential space that would be accessible to a diverse section of the community and students of all ages. The location of the gallery at Level 17 in central Melbourne was contextual, the viewer moving from the busy city surrounds, transported swiftly by lift to the top floor and into a different space of discordant sound and image.

The analogue tactile canvas work 'Road Map' was suspended on the long entrance wall, leading to the animated 'Road Map 3', projected in a darkened alcove on the back wall. A couch placed in front of this work gave viewers the opportunity to rest and be immersed in the floating forms and surround sound. Around the corner the hyper-coloured nine digital prints of 'Gridslides' were pinned in grid format to an abutting panel. Across from this work the digital print 'Gridslides' in the landscape was hung. I was able to heighten the spatial tension by adjusting the long moveable panels across the gallery windows allowing finite glimpses of the Melbourne cityscape and hang my early melancholy studies, the digital prints 'Garage', 'Framework House' and 'Grovedale Icon'. The wheel hub of 'Grovedale Icon' could be seen mirrored in the ferris wheel located on the horizon in the Alexandra Gardens. I chose to frame and display these sombre prints laminated in Perspex, to highlight their remoteness and inaccessibility. I hung them apart from the other works in the gallery, alongside each other to emphasise them as monolithic images representative of times past.
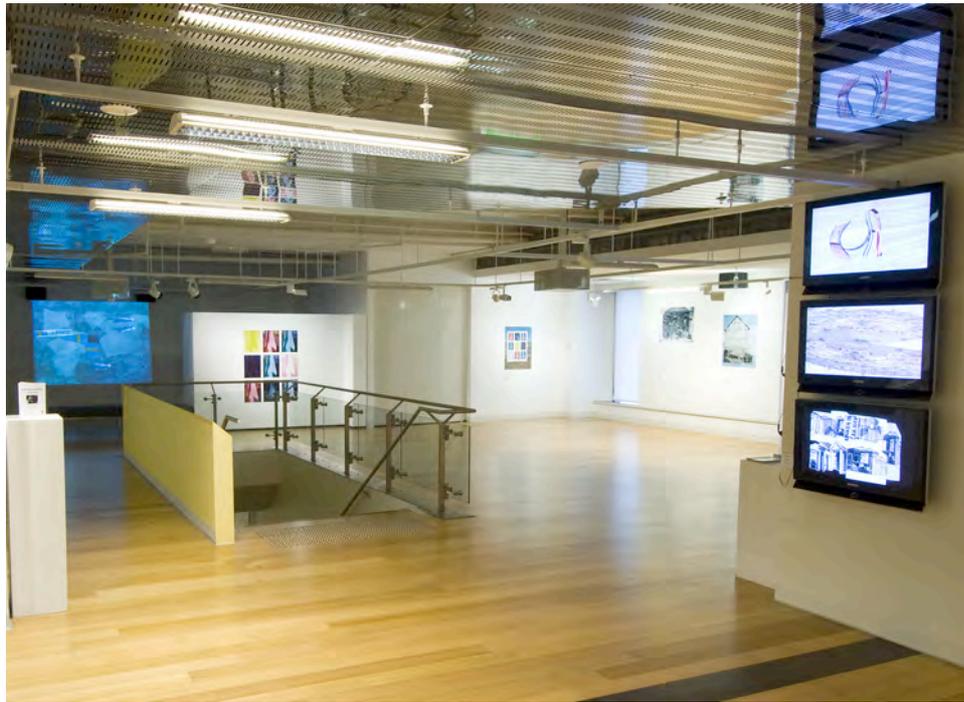
Jennifer Kamp *Heterotopia:New Spaces* 2009 view 1,
Level 17 Artspace Victoria University

My animated 'Slidesplayskate' was installed in the darkened adjacent alcove developing a visual link between the past playgrounds of 'Grovedale Icon' and the projected giggling children frantically sliding on the wall and over the emerging attached vandalised slide. Around the corner in the tier of TV screens, I installed the DVDs 'Roofgoogle', 'Somatic Houses' and 'Sliding' as composite ongoing video loops of morphing imagery.

Jennifer Kamp *Heterotopia:New Spaces* 2009 view 2,
Level 17 Artspace Victoria University

I wanted to visually emphasise through my artworks the transience of the spaces I
negotiated throughout my exegesis. My idea was to create a heterotopic *site* of disorder
with static space juxtaposed against fluid, sound with silence, jarring shapes with liquid
forms, a clash of colour contrasting with the sombre compositions. My intention was to
infuse in these gallery spaces an air of unpredictable encounter, create a fluxing of forms
pattern and texture with image, sound, light and dark. By moving the mobile panels around
the central stairwell of the gallery, I could make several viewing zones so the individual
works could be differentiated yet still linked to the space as an entity. In 'Heterotopia: New
Spaces' I wanted the viewer to engage independently with each work, yet be aware of the
overlapping tensions, the mutations of space and filtering sound emanating from the other
artworks. The DVDs were projected in an ongoing loop format, the bursts of plaintive bird
song intermingling with sound splices from the frantic supermarket surrounds and the hyper
playground to enhance the frenetic overlays associated with existing in the fractured and
constantly changing public and private space of the contemporary world.

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