

**Exploring the field of autotopography through live art practice: *The Frieze, The Anatomy Lecture Theatre and The Security Hut***

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## Abstract

This paper presents: *The Frieze*, *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* and *The Security Hut* as outcomes of my practice-based research project into strategies of making autotopographical performance. Departing from González's theory of autotopography (1995), which focuses on objects belonging to individuals that are seen to signify their identity (133), and drawing on Heddon's (2002; 2008), Bal's (2002) and Arlander's (2012) subsequent discussions around the term, I unpack the process of making live art performances in response to a site. During the process of making I examined the relationships between the material landscape, my processes of memory and my sense-of-self.

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## PREFACE

“This sounds like intergenerational trauma. Your unwillingness to go into depth about your study could be denial ...”

“It wasn’t denial. I was quite open about –”

“So you were unpacking?”

“Yes. I have difficulty – I don’t feel like I can say I have experienced trauma.”

“Well, you’re speaking about depression and memories. So it’s not exactly euphoric, is it? It sounds like you need someone to make sense of what you were feeling so that you can write about it” (The author in conversation).

Comparison of other people’s attempts to the undertaking of a sea voyage in which the ships are drawn off course by the magnet North Pole. Discover *this* North Pole. What for others are deviations are, for me, the data which determine my course. – On the differentials of time (which, for others, disturb the main lines of inquiry), I base my reckoning (Benjamin, 1999:456).

The opening lines to this paper were written from memory. They refer to a conversation I had with a psychologist. Philosopher and social critic Walter Benjamin’s reflection on the generative force of failure is placed alongside this personal narrative in order to suggest that moments of difficulty and deviation became the data that determined the course of my research. Much like when a theatrical performer forgets their line and the belief in the narrative as a continuum is threatened, failure to remember my life-story, as a complete timeline of events, brought about a different awareness to the practice of writing a life. My fixation on the performance of my own memory and its potential to fail shaped how I constructed my autobiographical accounts as discontinuous, fragmented and fleeting.

Key to how I approached autotopography was to think about the practice alongside Arendt’s and Cavarero’s feminist theories of ‘the self’. In *The Human Condition* (1957), Arendt argued that as philosophy sets out to establish ‘what’ Man is, by enumerating qualities that ‘he could possibly share with other living beings’, ‘who’ someone is cannot be articulated

through philosophical discourse as ‘who’ someone is – is unique (Kottman in Cavarero, 2000:vii). This does not mean that ‘who’ someone is, is ineffable or inexpressible. In fact, Arendt argues, ‘who’ someone is can be ‘known’ (although this is not epistemological knowledge) through that person’s actions and speech which forms their life-story (viii). As biography reveals that people’s lives are unique, unrepeatable and relational, Arendt proposed that narration offers an alternative way of understanding the political realm as an *interaction* of unique existents (in Cavarero, 2000:ix-x).

Departing from Arendt’s critique of traditional western politics and philosophy, Cavarero develops her theory of ‘relational selves’ (2000). In *Relating Narratives* she theorises that, the individual is not already ‘subjected’ to philosophical definition, the individual comes into appearance, becomes part of the political realm, as a flesh and blood person whose unique identity is revealed *ex post facto* through the words of her life-story (xiii). Furthermore, Cavarero recognizes that we know the other to be a unique narratable self through our own familiar experience of the automatic, ‘autobiographical exercise’ of memory (34).

In this paper I refer to a sense-of-self, a ‘sense’ of ‘being here’, which relies on hearing the story that memory recounts (36). This story constantly responds to the world around me, censoring, re-elaborating, selecting and forgetting the past (ibid.). Cavarero writes that, the individual who has forgotten their own life-story, the individual with amnesia, still knows herself to be narratable. ‘She has not *forgotten* at all that narratibility – the self’s unreflective sense [*gusto*] for recalling *itself* – belongs to the existent’ and so, she desires to hear the story of her life in the words of another (36-37).

So it is natural that the forgetful one searches in the memory of others for her lost text. By making others recount her own story, she is in fact attempting to stitch her narrative self together with the story into which she was constitutively interwoven. She is attempting to fit her *having been that which she is* into the life-story that has been interlaced with others’ stories on the exhibitiv and relational scene of the world (37).

During each of the three performances presented in this explication I refer to my personal experiences of mental illness. The difficulty felt during periods of depression to remember vivid and positive memories about myself fueled my desire to stitch my narrative together. Experiencing a change in my ability to remember influenced my sense-of-self. The present seemed so different from the past that I experienced myself as an “other” (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:10). Writing about this experience in the first person I sensed that the difference and distinction felt between these selves seemed to be hidden by the form of self-narration. When enunciating the ‘I’ the ‘I’ of before and the ‘I’ performing might have been understood as a unified subject.

The experience of migration from Newcastle in the United Kingdom to Cape Town, South Africa, beginning this period of research, meant that my life-story was no longer intimately interwoven with those belonging to people I encountered in my daily life. Without those individuals who could tell me ‘who’ I am, based on their knowledge of my past actions and deeds, I was more aware of my identity materialising differently within Cape Town’s city spaces. I was placing myself and being placed in different social networks, exploring what was possible and what was forbidden (Wilson, 2003:2-3). Often the socially constructed identities offered no sense of continuity between the self at home and the self abroad. Often my foreignness made me feel out-of place and other times I felt uncannily at home. Lippard claims that *place* is a ‘portion of land/town/cityscape seen from the inside’ and is ‘the resonance of a specific location that is known and familiar’ (Lippard, 1997:7). She states that our sense of identity is fundamentally tied to our relationship to places and the histories they embody (ibid.).

To rearticulate an earlier point, my approach to self-construction and deconstruction through performance departs from Cavarero’s theory that a sense-of-self is born from an activation of memories triggered by the body’s experience of the world. Knowing my memory to be fallible I sensed that my body was unable to truthfully account for it’s self and its experiences. Not knowing the place in which I am standing, then, not knowing its history, or not remembering being there before, might radically affect my sense of ‘who I am’ for we are, based on Cavarero’s argument, who we remember.

## INTRODUCTION

Although my methods are site-responsive and this research has taken place in various locations in Cape Town, my performance background is based in the United Kingdom Live Art sector – a specific geographical and historical context. Since the late 1970's United Kingdom based artists have theorised identity politics through performance and rethought the history of British Theatre (Johnson, 2012:4). Following this tradition of theorising around identity, self and position through Live Art practice I use strategies of performance making to explore the construction of sense-of-self in relation to place. As I encountered Live Art as a 'break' from theatre (Shalson, 2012:106-107) – rather than from a visual arts background, I was particularly concerned with the difference between performing the self and performing a character and what this might imply about how everyday identities are socially constructed and mutable.

This paper presents: *The Frieze*, *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* and *The Security Hut* as outcomes of my practice-based research project into strategies of making autotopographical performance. Departing from González's theory of autotopography (1995), which focuses on objects belonging to individuals that are seen to signify their identity (133), and drawing on Heddon's (2002; 2008), Bal's (2002) and Arlander's (2012) subsequent discussions around the term, I unpack the process of making live art performances in response to a site.

During the process of making I examined the relationships between the material landscape, my processes of memory and my sense-of-self. I focused on three sites on the University of Cape Town's Hiddingh Hall campus: A rehearsal room in Hiddingh Hall, the Anatomy Lecture Theatre, which is in the Old Medical School Building, and The Little Theatre. The performance texts were based on what each site reminded me of over the course of my research. I collected citations around the site's current uses and the historical narratives attached to them in order to locate my autotopographical writing within a cultural

intertextuality. Furthermore I stipulated, based on my archival research, what meanings might be made during the performance.

In the three live art performances staged for my Thesis Production, I address issues around the mechanisms of history, power, civilization, gender and race as a response to the memories that were triggered when encountering the three different sites. By exploring these issues through the form of autotopographical performance, engaging with personal stories linked to places, I hope to frame this knowledge as shaped by my position as a white British woman who has recently moved to South Africa. I have created work that allows for moments of awkwardness, forgetting and incoherence to arise. Through these slippages I hope to remind the audience that the scripted account they are presented with cannot fully contain my embodied knowledge of a place, which is constantly changing and in part ineffable.

It is important to note that the performance sites were not identified 'through counter-position to the other that lies beyond' but 'through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections to that 'beyond'' (Massey, 1994:5). I identified places using my knowledge of other things. For example, I connected the site of *The Security Hut* – the Little Theatre – with the urban site of a security hut, thus identifying it as a place that gave the appearance of safety and security.

The overall MA research project was broken up into three projects: the Minor Project, Medium Project and Thesis Project, each culminating in a performance. In this paper I will make the case that moments of failure or difficulty were generative in learning about the field of autotopography, like Benjamin's 'discovery' of '*this* North Pole', realising the limitations of one project pushed me on to the next.

This explication sketches a research process I liken to 'wayfaring' in the overlapping fields of site-responsive and self-narrative Live Art performance (Ingold in Fleishman, 2014:1). 'Wayfaring' is like going out for a walk 'responsive to what we encounter in the landscape' (ibid.). At the start of each project I took note of my 'starting point' (Kershaw, 2011:65); aims, position, stances and presuppositions. At the time of writing this explication I plotted these points as coordinates to map my movement in the field of autotopography.

## CHAPTER ONE: Approaches to autotopography

### 1. Definitions of autotopography

In the creation of an autotopography – which does not include all personal property but only those objects seen to signify an “individual” identity – the material world is called upon to present a physical map of memory, history, and belief. The autotopographical object thus becomes a prosthetic device: an addition, a trace, and a replacement for the intangible aspects of desire, identification, and social relations (González, 1995:134).

This initial definition is taken from González’s chapter, ‘Autotopographies’, in the volume *Prosthetic Territories, Politics and Hypertechnologies* (1995) in which ‘autotopography’ first appeared as a concept. Rather than defining a total phenomenon González encourages further study on the forms and effects of autotopography – ‘the common yet subjective practice of making identity materially manifest’ (147).

González introduces the term as a means of analyzing a series of exhibitions curated by Christian Boltanski in 1973 (Grasskamp, 1983:129). In one room of the museums involved, ‘all the objects that surround a person during his lifetime and which, after his death, remain as a witness of his existence’ were exhibited (González, 1995:133). Clothing, furniture, trophies, souvenirs and photographs: González claims that all these objects received the imprint of a human trace (133) and represent a personal identity in relation to a vast social network of meaning (134).

The autotopographical objects which comprise the autotopography are objects of memory. They form a *spatial annex* to the mental images that, voluntarily or involuntarily, are projected into consciousness (136). ‘The intangible aspect of memory becomes concretised in a bodily sensation triggered by an object’ (ibid.). In Bal’s analysis of Louise Bourgeois’ autotopographical artworks she uses the term ‘memory traps’ to describe objects embedded in Bourgeois’ sculptures that *seem* to hold memories (2002:165). ‘Memory

traps', are 'memories that inhabit the work [that] cannot really be "read" as narratives' (ibid.). The stories attached to the sculpture do not exist in the material, waiting to be read, but are created by the viewer based on their momentary position.

Viewing the fragments of tapestry taken from Bourgeois' parents' workshop that adorn the cage guarded by the steel *Spider* (1997) one might sense that they remind Bourgeois of her childhood. And subsequently, one might conjure up a sense of her childhood. This supports Cavarero's theory that we know the other to be a narratable self even if we know nothing of their story due the familiarity of our own self-narrating memory. The viewer accepts that the object belongs to the artist's past due to his or hers own processes of memory, and so, the autotopographical object, or 'memory trap', not only gives the viewer a sense of the artist's past but a sense of their own. The notion of 'memory traps' recognises that the meanings of the artwork are inter-subjectively made.

Initially unaware of González's use of the term Heddon conceived of autotopography as an area of research within the broader field of autobiographical performance – 'some form of the theatrical, in which performers explicitly use personal material in their work' (2002:1). Focusing on the genealogy of the word, she derived its meaning from, *topos*, the Greek word for place, and *graphein* to scratch, to draw, to write. *Topography*, she states, signifies the writing of a place, the *auto* acknowledges the subjectivity involved in mapping (2008:90).

Heddon's use of the term signals the study of 'the location of a particular individual in actual space, a locatedness that has implications for both subject and place' (2002:4). Influenced by my experience of migration I was interested in how memories seem to be triggered by places. All three of González's, Bal's and Heddon's definitions of autotopography, and the wider principles they draw on, opened up ways of analyzing site-responsive autobiographical performance making. Merging their key ideas I was interested in exploring the notion of place as a spatial annex for memories and reflecting on how this has implications for both the subject and the place of a performance.

### 1.1 Site

In *The Frieze*, *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre*, and *The Security Hut: Draft One*, the stories about my self and the story of places are inseparable. Turner's methods of performance composition are formed in relation to a rhetoric that 'situates us not *as within* but *as elements of* the space of site-specific performance' (2004:379). This rhetoric was useful to unpack my hunches around the interrelatedness of the construction of a sense-of-self and a sense of place during the performance. She acknowledges that the subject is not outside the place it is studying, deciphering its layers, but part of the place itself (ibid.). Adapting D. W. Winnicott's psychoanalytic explanations for the relationship between the infant and the objects involved in their creative play, Turner regards the site of performance as a 'potential space' (D. W. Winnicott, 1971). The term 'potential space' refers to the space between a child and its mother during the infant's early stages of development when the infant begins to perceive the difference between the 'me' and the 'not-me' (Turner, 2004:379). The 'potential space' connects the mother and the child and thus becomes a metaphor for their relationship (Ibid.).

It is agreed that one will never ask whether an object or other element is found there, or is created by the child. It is always both. The distinction between 'inner' and 'outer' worlds need not be made explicit (ibid.).

This space is different from Lippard's notion of place as known and familiar, 'the external word mediated through human subjective experience' (1997:7). Place, using this lens, is defined by the encounter between two subjects 'I' and 'you' who, situated within the realm of appearance, are embodied, relational and, as I will discuss in following chapter, marked by a fundamental opacity, marked by that which is unknowable.

### 1.2 Memory

In her article, 'Performing Landscape as Autotopographical Exercise', Arlander also refers theories of autotopography in order to explicate her research projects (from 2005-2006) that were concerned with how to perform landscape (2012:251-258). The private aim of the project (which culminated in an exhibition of video works) was related to the site chosen for the performance. The tree chosen for *Sitting on a Birch* was one she remembered well from

her childhood. It belonged to a small birch wood next to her grandmother's cottage (253). She made the assumption that by visiting the place regularly she would remake a lost connection with it, however, walking to and walking away from the site had an unexpected outcome. Rather than strengthening her ties to the place Arlander was urged to move on. She had 'walked herself free from her memories' (254). The autotopographical exercise, although failing to meet its initial aim allowed her to practically explore her own processes of memory, in particular, she explored the relationship between these processes and the practice of journeying to and from a place.

Like Arlander, I wanted to shape ties with places by making journeys to them. Like 'on a walk', when I came to a site of interest I paused and studied the landscape. I returned to the site, regularly. In the following chapters I examine not only how my sense-of-self seemed to shift due to this method of working, but also how the places of my study moved on. I refer to my practice as 'site-responsive', to describe a method of designing a performance 'to respond to the particular features of the location in which it is presented' (Couillard, 2006:32). This suggests that the design of the performance shifted during the process of making in relation to my changing relationship with the site.

### **1.3 History**

I also shaped my relationships to places by readings the historical narratives attached to it. Sensing the 'real, material and symbolic effects' of historical narratives on my sense-of-self I collected citations around a site from its archive (Hall in González, 1995:143). I reflected on the difference between the personal memory based narratives and the historical text. Although it is possible to see that memory as well as amnesia informs the social construction of history, history, González writes, cannot be read simply as a collection of memories. This is because stories born from memory do not necessarily 'take place in a linear, linguistic, or necessarily coherent manner' (147). Moreover, 'memory allows the object to have changing and multiple meanings, whereas history demands of the object a specific and single identity' (ibid.). Despite the practices used to form them – practices of memory and interpretation – histories tend to announce the 'immortal, monumental nature of its representation' (139).

In contrast, Benjamin searched for a “posthistory” redeemed by memory’ (Hutton, 2005:206). History, he suggested, was better conceived not as a directional timeline but rather as a porous surface (ibid.). He viewed the work of the historian as ‘generated by the desire of the present subject for self-understanding as well as for an understanding of the historical object-world’ (Steinberg, 1996:92). Benjamin’s work, *The Arcades Project*, suggested ways of presenting my self-understanding and understanding of the object-world through performance. Seeing the past not as a continuum but an assemblage, in *The Arcades Project*, which is ‘devoid of any narrative’, he composes ‘an arrangement, through remembered vision, of things’ (Pensky, 1996:165). The text is a collection of citations concerned with the architecture of the Parisian arcades conceived of as the embodiment of the bourgeois dream of the city (Rancière, 1996:33). In the chapters to follow I explicate the processes of writing from memory and writing in response to archival material. This led to the composition of performance texts that are arrangements of certain fragments of stories associated with a place.

## CHAPTER TWO: *The Frieze*

In April 2013, I performed *The Frieze* in a rehearsal room adjacent to the University of Cape Town's Hiddingh Hall Library. *The Frieze* was conceived of before I encountered the field of autotopography and was the outcome of my Minor Project – an initial exploration into the field of autobiographical performance making. The site of the performance was a small well-lit room with empty white walls. Marks on the walls and floor and a single remaining title written in paint were the only signs of past art exhibitions and performances that had taken place there. During the first part of *The Frieze* I attempted to hold onto a stack of white crockery bowls while reciting a list of memories. The action was introspective and determined. As the list went on I stacked the bowls higher on top of each other until they would inevitably topple and smash on the floor. These slippages interrupted the task of recalling a list of memories, and so, the verbal message was fractured and difficult to follow. When the bowls would break, after a momentary loss of composure, I would begin again. I continued to re-start until the score of actions had been completed. I followed this script for four hours while viewers entered and left the room at will. The task was cyclical, producing a non-linear self-narrative performance<sup>1</sup>.

In the second part of *The Frieze* I displayed those out of the original thirty-four bowls that remained unbroken and gave an account of the two-month research process. I then wrapped the bowls in the canvas cloth and hit the bundle against the wall. The broken pieces of crockery formed a sculpture that was my final response to the site and the memories that it had conjured<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix page 58 *The Frieze: Part One* for the performance text.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix page 60 *The Frieze: Part Two* for the performance text.



Figure 1: *The Frieze: Part One*. (Photograph by Daneel Knoetze)

### 2.1 *The Frieze* as autobiography

I began research into strategies of making autobiographical performance by observing what was produced from particular writing exercises. I wrote continuously and automatically for set durations, usually between five and fifteen minutes. In which time, I did not pause, look back over, or edit the work, valuing each of the seemingly unrelated thoughts.

Following this strategy I was involuntarily taken back to a place in my past. In the following passage translated by Richard Howard, Marcel Proust narrates how an encounter with a specific place affects him and releases a surprising and fleeting thought of somewhere else:

*I had not gone looking for the two cobblestones of the courtyard where I had stumbled. But precisely the fortuitous, inevitable way in which the sensation had been encountered governed the truth of a past which it resuscitated, of images which it released, since we feel its effort to rise toward the light, since we feel the joy of reality regained ... (Proust in Deleuze, 1972:96).*

It was an experience of involuntary memory that shaped the content and the structure of the text. The writing took the form of a self-narrative and reflected that the work of memory is 'discontinuous, fragmentary, fleeting and casual', it leapt, without adhering to chronological order, from a description of one place to another (Cavarero, 2000:35).

When he was there, then, he was living in a white room – alone. And the walls of the frieze and the white of his walls where he projected films, grotesquely magnified images, are bound by association, so that when I think of Dr. Young, that is, when I'm not with him, seeing or speaking, to him I imagine him within the frieze.

If contained within a room, the Secession building rises out from within the Vienna ring. As a tourist living from exit to exit, I felt only resonances past, I was forgetting what I knew, that I was there.

(Extract from *The Frieze: Part One.*)

Returning to the rehearsal room, regularly, I observed that my memories were unstable referents. From one visit to the next the same images refused to rise up. I had a sense of the past that was not static, placed in a repository of experiences, but 'always engaged from a present moment, itself ever-changing' (Smith & Watson, 2002:9). After the performance of *The Frieze*, I sensed the inevitable shortcomings of an autobiography as it fails to describe this ever-changing present. In other words, I sensed that the self-narrative couldn't capture the life unfolding before the audience (ibid.). I perceived the performance to support Butler's claim that '... since I always arrive too late for myself ... the 'I' is the moment of failure in every narrative account of oneself' (Butler, 2005:79).

Butler draws on Cavarero's theory of relational selves to suggest that whenever we offer an account of ourselves we need another to whom we can address our account (Kreider, 2014:103). Butler suggests that when individuals give an account of themselves there is a part of their history that evades being captured in their narrative and this limit must be respected (103-105). This history is a 'primary (pre-subjective, pre-historical, pre-grammatical) scene of address that constitutes us fundamentally' (104). In Kreider's re-articulation of Butler's theory she writes that, 'within this primary scene we are confronted

with the enigmatic signification of another: an overwhelming signification that comes to us through voice and touch' (ibid.). She writes that, for Laplanche, this 'enigmatic signification' is the unconscious of the other (ibid.). And so, 'interiorising the unconscious desire of the other, the subject is, thereafter, never able to present or know herself fully' (ibid.).

This 'prehistory continues to happen every time I enunciate myself. In speaking the 'I', I undergo something of what cannot be capture or assimilated by the 'I', since I always arrive too late for myself ... (Butler, 2005:79).

In Kreider's words, Butler calls for an ethics 'in which self-acceptance (a humility about one's constitutive limitations) or generosity (a disposition toward the limit of others) might find room to flourish' (2004:105). Without knowing the complete story of one's own self the performer must fail in their task or ambition to produce an autobiography. Perhaps recognising this limitation I might shape a more generous disposition towards the other I am addressing and myself. I returned to Butler's ethics based on accepting one's own limits when making *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* and *The Security Hut*.

## **2.2 The Frieze as autotopography**

After sensing that I had failed to produce an autobiographical performance I was concerned with how I was defining my practice. Autobiography as a conceptual lens seemed to me to be limited as a means of unpacking the experience of making subjectivity manifest *materially*. In order to analyse the site-responsiveness of the writing and how the installation of particular objects conveyed meaning during the performance my research led me to the field of autotopography. Reconsidering the writing exercises, I remembered that, prompted by the lack of wall decoration in the rehearsal room I was, perversely, reminded of another *material* place covered with figurative and symbolic painting. I was reminded of the room displaying Gustav Klimt's *Beethoven Frieze* in the Secession Gallery, Austria.

I entered the room with strangers, I walked along its edges and I read its story. When I reached the end of the Frieze, I ran – onto the edge of the ring – to a make phone call, until the money for the slot went dry and I was out onto the conveyor city again.

(Extract from *The Frieze: Part One*.)

Gustav Klimt's painting depicts a series of 'highly allegorical scenes' that comment on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Niekerk, 2010:96). The narrative of the *Beethoven Frieze* has the characteristics of the *Bildungsroman*, the autobiographical archetype: 'the tale of the progressive travelling of a life from troubled or stifled beginnings; in which obstacles are overcome and the true self actualised or revealed' (Stanley, 1992:11). De Lauretis has demonstrated that in the major quest myths of western culture the female subject is positioned as static obstacle or as non-dynamic space to be entered by the male and traversed (Diamond, 1990:95). This is the case in the narrative of the *Beethoven Frieze* as the last scene depicts the hero in a sexual embrace with a woman. This female figure is barely visible and is only seen in this frame. De Lauretis argues that 'the subordination and exclusion of women is endemic to narrative, inherent in its very morphology' (ibid.).

My memory of encountering the *Beethoven Frieze* is attached to my memory of falling ill. The story of when 'I' viewed the frieze, which 'I' involuntarily told to myself, was connected to feelings of anxiety, self-consciousness and failure. To make a live installation in response to these feelings I installed particular objects that acted as prostheses for my memory – as memory traps. A prosthesis is 'the replacement of a missing part of the body by an artificial one' (Roach & Richardson, 2000:53). The installed objects compensated for the embodied memory. Like a souvenir of my visit to the *Beethoven Frieze* the assemblage seemed to 'hold' the memory externally.

González defines the autotopographical object as a mnemonic device functioning 'to anchor the self-reflective image of the subject within a local, earthy cosmos' (1995:134). Despite the desire to 'anchor' the self, memory is notoriously inconsistent and constitutive rather than reflective (135). The installation failed to contain the memory. The task of precariously stacking the bowls provided a visual motif of this failure, understanding 'failure' as 'an index of the collapse or breakdown of an intended task or ambition' (Bailes, 2011:66). The action of trying to hold things together represents my desire to hold onto and to anchor memories. And so, might have gestured towards a more hidden desire to anchor myself to a place.

I consider *The Frieze* to be a departure from the *Bildungsroman*, 'the tale of the progressive travelling of a [male] life' which demarcates places via the hero's movement along a path

(Stanley, 1992:12). While a personal history might demand that the object has a specific and single identity, I consider the performance to give a sense of the autobiographical exercise of memory and the changing and multiple meanings of the place in which it is performed.



Figure 2: *The Frieze: Part One*. (Photograph by Daneel Knoetze)

### CHAPTER THREE: *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre*



Figure 3: *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* (Photograph courtesy of GIPCA by Ashley Walters)

Long after, Oedipus, old and blinded, walked the roads. He smelled a familiar smell. It was the Sphinx.

Oedipus said, 'I want to ask one question. Why didn't I recognise my mother?'

'You gave the wrong answer,' said the Sphinx.

'But that was what made everything possible,' said Oedipus.

'No,' she said. 'When I asked, What walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening, you answered, Man. You didn't say anything about Woman.'

'When you say Man,' said Oedipus, 'you include women too. Everyone knows that.'

She said, 'That's what you think.'

(Rukeyser in Cavarero, 2000:49.)

*The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* (December, 2013) was an hour-long exhibition in the Old Medical School Building at the University of Cape Town. The exhibition was the outcome of my Medium project and comprised four video works and one live performance. Each of the works gave a personal account of walking in the city. To make the live performance, which is the focus of this chapter, there were two main phases of practical investigation. First I experienced the city on foot. Then I collected citations around the site, these suggested particular ways of practicing place – ways of restoring past narratives to ‘unsettle’ the present (Franko & Richards, 2000:2).

Before I discuss the findings of my Medium project around my sense-of-self, processes of memory and their relationship to a particular site, it is important to explain why particular issues around gender and violence were addressed in the content and form of the performance. From March 2013, alongside my research into autotopography, I collaborated with a group of self-identified women artists on *Walk: South Africa* (Gardini; Matchett *et al.* 2014) a live art performance made in response to Indian performance artist Maya Rao’s *The Walk* (2013). *The Walk* responds to the murder of Jyoti Pandey who was raped and bludgeoned with an iron rod by six men on a bus in Delhi in December 2012. Lecturer at the University of Cape Town and director of the Mother Tongue Project, Sara Matchett conceived of *Walk: South Africa* after a series of personal correspondences with Rao and after reading Swart’s article entitled, ‘Will Anene Booysen’s brutal rape and murder shake the nation into action?’ (2013). Matchett was struck by the parallels between the rape and murder of Pandey in Delhi and Booyens in Bredasdorp in the Western Cape, 200km from Cape Town (*ibid.*). Given the limited space afforded by this explication I am unable to rearticulate the research on gender-based violence in the context of South Africa that informed the making of *Walk: South Africa*. However, it is important to acknowledge that my hunch that the practice of walking through the streets might be a means of exploring gender and place in the city of Cape Town stemmed from both Rao’s *The Walk* and the discussions I had with the *Walk: South Africa* collective.

### **3.1 Starting point: constructing *the city***

In “Walking in the City,” Michel de Certeau suggests that the meaning of a city is revealed and animated only by its pedestrians, that “their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together” (1984:99). If, indeed, meaning is

made and inscribed through wandering, then to know a city one has to walk its streets (Davids, 2013:93).

Perceiving a lack in research around the ways in which women have used walking in their artistic practice, Heddon and Turner suggest that the archive of walking performances being slanted towards documenting the work of male artists seems not only to suggest that women's work has been negated from the canon, but an interrelated social issue, that experiences of the city are considered as being different for men and women (2010; 2012). 'Many of our interviewees', they write, 'acknowledge anxiety as something that infiltrates their practice, either through the suggestion of others, or through their own internalisation of perceived dangers' (2012:236). Anxiety when walking in public space for fear of sexual attack is articulated in the aforementioned performance by Rao, for example, in the line 'Just a step at a time. Can I? Will I? Just...' (2013) I interpret that Rao is considering the risks involved in walking in the city. Fears around walking alone at night in the city were also discussed by the *Walk: South Africa* group drawing on our personal experiences of living in Cape Town. Stipulating as to why women artists might have these responses when faced with the task of walking, Heddon's argues that, 'fear of rape puts many women in their place – and arguably keeps them there' (Heddon, 2008:113).

Jackson has analysed how the production of space in Cape Town is obscured by the use of gender and race distinctions (2005:33). Her study engages with the relationship between the spatial model constructed by early colonial settlers and urban architecture today. She claims that for British colonisers the appearance of women in the city streets was regarded as a sign of disorder.

A woman who wandered out of her proper place, or engaged in behavior in a place it did not properly belong, exhibited a particularly alarming weakness of character. For many British colonial theorists, female prostitution is emblematic of the boundary confusion and disruption justifying some of the most deliberate attempts to interfere in the spatial order (Walkowitz in Jackson, 2005:36).

Jackson claims that in post-apartheid cities order remains the ultimate goal of South African planners, who consider female-centred homes to be one of the primary instruments of urban order (51). This echoes the apartheid model, in which, 'women could remain in cities, so long as they were tightly linked to the private, domestic sphere' (ibid.). It suggested to

me that the reluctance of women to enter public spaces for fear of sexual attack might reproduce a certain kind of 'order' in the city.

### **3.2 Memory Traps: remembering *the city***

The first walking performance began at 10pm. I had decided to walk from the performance site, the Anatomy Lecture Theatre in the Central Business District (CBD) to Sea Point Promenade, around 5 km. The ocean as a destination allowed me to move with purpose and demarcate the end of the performance; however I was not transporting my 'self' from A to B, 'I' drifted through various places and therefore various identities. Degen and Rose claim that experience of urban space is not a direct effect of the design of the built environment but mediated significantly by bodily mobility and by perceptual memories that mediate the present moment of experience in various ways (Degen & Rose, 2012:3283). While walking, I listened to the uncontrollable narration of my memory. I used walking as an opportunity to listen to the stories told to me by myself, allowing myself to be drawn to places of interest.

### **3.3 *The city* as potential space**

As Benjamin walked through the Parisian arcades, emptied of people, the things behind shop windows became 'magically half-endowed with the ability to communicate' (Pensky, 1996:167). I returned to Sea Point Promenade in the daytime, lured by the vision of the kelp dancing in the waves. It reminded me of stories told to me as a child living in Britain, of mermaids, ship-wrecks, and far-off lands. I sensed that, as de Certeau suggests, 'travel (like walking) is a substitute for the legends that used to open up space to something different' (1984:106-107). Rather than attempting to capture the data of surroundings, by writing a description of it, I wrote about the feeling of being in a hybrid time, between here and elsewhere.

### 3.4 Assembling texts

Benjamin's, *The Arcades Project* is the product of collecting, cutting and assembling quotations from an array of nineteenth and twentieth century sources in 'order to carry over the principle of montage into history' (Malcomess & Kreutzfeldt, 2013:10). *The Arcades Project* forms a spatial image of the nineteenth-century, a dream city, reminiscent of the memory palaces of practitioners of the ancient art of memory (Hutton, 2005:207-208). *The Arcades Project* collapses the concept of history as chronological and linear. It disrupts the city's contemporary image of itself, which is, as Malcomess and Kreutzfeldt write, more often than not, 'a projection into the future that repressed the potential to really experience the past in the present' (2013:16).

To reconstruct my experience of the city I assembled my written memories in a non-chronological sequence. The fleeting recollections were loosely connected around themes: the body, violence and illness. For example, the first street encountered on my walk was Orange Street, and I associated this name with a memory:

Where we are now, in this room, is on Orange Street.

I find it extremely difficult not to shop when I'm waiting for the bus. I find it particularly difficult not to shop for food. I particularly enjoy buying fruit because it's quite cheap. And because you get to pick it up and feel it and imagine what it's like inside. Also, I think that if I eat a lot of fruit then if someone picks me up and feels me they'll imagine something nice inside...

(Extract from *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre*.)

In the performance I explored my processes of memory using the method-of-loci technique. I was intrigued by Dalglish's findings, that the method-of-loci technique facilitates patients with depression to access a list of 'positive things about themselves' and so, positively affect their mood (Dalglish *et al.*, 2013:156). Following the rules of the technique, I imagined the route taken through Cape Town and associating self-affirming memories to specific loci along the way. Below are the opening lines of the first memory recalled during the performance. Behind me, projected onto a screen, was a series of portraits of the former Deans of the Medical Faculty.

If you leave this room and walk along the corridor, back down the stairs, through the main doors, across the car park you can see a red barrier. This reminds me of the gate at my first school and reaching up to let my fingers trail along behind me, along the edges of the fence that got smaller and smaller ...

(Extract from *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre*)

### 3.5 The Anatomy Lecture Theatre and place

What is special about place is not some romance of a pre-given collective identity or of the eternity of the hills. Rather what is special about place is precisely that throwntogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here and now (itself drawing on a history and geography of then and there); and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman (Massey, 2005:140).

The uncanniness of spectral traces complicates contemporary understandings of time and space, and of the city: linear memorial narratives are upset, habitual paths are littered with stumbling blocks and capital no longer circulates in predictable patterns associated with rent gaps. The taken-for-grantedness of urban space shifts (Jonker & Till, 2009: 306).

The Anatomy Lecture Theatre still houses lectures on various disciplines. The most obvious signifier of its function is its steep, concave viewing balcony. In the architecture of the

historical anatomy theatres – ‘the theatre[s] of the dead’ – Ingham recognises an extreme haptic-optic division described by Foucault as ‘the triumph of the gaze’ (2010:50). This distance between the spectator and the body, in the act of ‘turning tissue into text’, suggests to her that the act of dissection involved ‘a radical form of clinical detachment’ (ibid.). My first visit to the site did not suggest to me a particular narrative to retell, but instead it referred me to multiple pasts which might be referenced through the performance. When sitting in the auditorium the focal point is a large projection screen and a wooden stage floor. I was reminded of Irigaray’s reading of Socrates’ cave in *The Stage Set-up* (1997:63-86). Taking my position as the student/spectator I was looking down from a distance, onto the stage, in a place shaped like a cave or a womb (63).

My encounter with the lecture theatre was an encounter with the uncanny: ‘that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar’ (Freud, 1955:217-218). The architecture sheltered me inside a ‘place’ or ‘home’ of knowledge. The set of rules and scientific principles that shaped this environment encoded the subjectivity of the colonial state under which it was built. Mitchell refers to this refraction as ‘enframing’—a technique whereby the ‘appearance of order is fostered by an invisible and therefore a natural force, one that, if properly channeled, will automatically equilibrate belief, behaviour, and environment’ (in Jackson, 2005:50). I had a sense that, to me, a British scholar in ‘exile’, this room could be anywhere. The double specificity of self-reflexive, site-responsive research drew out the non-neutrality of a ‘neutral’ place of pedagogical performance. I sat in the ‘home’ of learning, facing forwards, in ‘a phallic direction, a phallic line, a phallic time, [back] turned on origin’ (Irigaray, 1997:65).

After the first phase of automatic writing in the space I began researching in the University of Cape Town’s archives. In particular I engaged with the memoirs written by past lecturers and technicians working in the Medical Faculty at various times in the twentieth-century (Coetzee, 1954; Kirsch, 1984; Kirsch & Knox, 1987; Louw, 1969). Influenced by Benjamin’s process of engaging with history when I considered these historical objects I asked myself: how did I understand the words of another in the here and now? And how did their stories shape my understanding of the site? In these stories of everyday lives the expropriation of

another's territory was written as part of the 'civilising process' (Mindel, 2003:34). This representation seemed to strive to legitimise violent exertions of power.

The Anatomy and Physiology laboratories were officially opened on 6 June 1912 (Louw, 1969:92). Mindel's Ph.D. Thesis (2003) examines how the model of medical education developed at the University of Edinburgh was adopted, transformed, and implemented by the University of Cape Town from 1904. It assesses how this model for educating doctors has helped to sustain the dominance of white rule in South Africa (2). She concludes that the gendered and racialised model of medical training at UCT did not start with apartheid in 1948, but drew on views about race and gender that go as far back as Hippocrates. Mindel states that colonial biomedicine 'built up a particular system of thought and action, with the body as the site of authority, legitimacy, and control; whether the body was white or black, male or female, rich or poor, however, affected how it was treated' (46). In his study, *The Anatomy of Power*, psychologist Alexander Butchart has shown that, for European colonisers, the African body was 'an object of knowledge' upon which they could affix their 'gaze' (1998:52). Through the act of making the body legible, naming and making maps of the body, it became a system of containers and enframed. The ideal model of the body based on the white European man, and models of acquiring and disseminating knowledge crafted in relation to this, supported the ideology that to progress from this position was to progress universal humanity (Mindel, 2003:46-47).

The process of archival research located my autotopographical writing within a cultural intertextuality. Aware that 'memories, like stories, can never be "free", they will always be laden with meaning' (Nuttall, 2002:88) *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* performance sought to remind the audience that both memories and historical texts are partial chronicles of the past, in the sense that they are both incomplete and slanted.



Figure 4: *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* (Photograph by Sitaara Stodel)

### 3.6 *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* and performance

The audience witnesses their lecturer (me) consume a prescribed dose of Zolpihexal – a sleeping pill. Despite the gradual slide into unconsciousness I desperately try to reconstruct my past, and my medical history, through fragmented narratives, subverting the historicist’s vision of a place directed towards the future as well as the progressive travelling of a life.

(Artist’s statement, *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre*, 2014.)

If we conceive of an archive as a series of ‘fragments of life to be placed in order, one after the other, to formulate a coherent story’ my response to the coherence of the Anatomy Lecture Theatre’s archive was to acknowledge its limits (Hamilton *et al.*, 2002:21). The series of actions that took place when the audience entered the room did not unfold as a causal chain of events; rather they reflected the impulsive, associative thoughts I had while researching the site. The site referred me to material objects in the past: bodies, street

corners, ocean views which all provoke sensations. In the performance I attempted to re-feel these sensations by installing objects on behalf of those initially encountered. The sequences bled into one another and the debris, ice, steam, water overlapped in the space. I presented memory traps (devices that indexed my past) in the shape of video projection, radio and voice recording. These devices structured the live speech and action that revealed memories of walking in *the city*. I hope that the place's past function might draw focus onto the embodied nature of this knowledge.

The prerecorded 'I', who narrated pieces of my life story, was inspired by the invisible praelector who in the traditional remote anatomy lectures would read the anatomical text (Ingham, 2010:69). This was the chief lecturer who did not actually dissect the bodies but instructed the demonstrator to do so. As I moved the installed objects in response to the recorded voice, at times, 'I' the live performer might have represented this demonstrator. And at times 'I' represented 'the body'. By performing naked and holding a pose laid out on a table I played the object of study onto which the audience might affix their gaze.



Figure 5: *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* (Photograph courtesy of GIPCA by Ashley Walters)

### 3.7 The ethics of failure

The bleeding of the sequences and the buildup of debris both represented and was conditioned by my diminishing ability to form conscious thoughts due to the dose of Zopihexal. From the anatomical mappings of the body as whole and systemised, I explored the body as fragmentary, incomplete and chaotic, reflecting my mental construction of *the city*. From my perspective, the spectator was physically enclosed in a place that existed both outside of me, found, and in my mind, created. In her analysis of Bourgeois' sculptures Bal claims that it is contradictory to approach a self-expressive artist like Bourgeois' work as simply a material manifestation of what Bourgeois says the work is about (2002:163). This critic ignores the *unconscious* impulses that flow out of the work. They ignore that memories, which are unknown even to the artist themselves, shape the work (166). Like Bourgeois' autotopographical sculptures I perceived *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* to theorise that the subject is 'not master in his or her house' (ibid.). The potential space was simultaneously both a disordered 'home' of knowledge and disordered 'house' of the mind.

Viewing the threshold between inner and outer worlds as ambiguous, as well as the threshold between mind and body, I resisted reconstructing the Cartesian conception of the (implicitly male) subject: 'unified and coherent within himself, he is the unified viewer at the center of a wholly self-possessed "gaze"' (Jones, 2002:70). By directly addressing the audience, and so, gazing back at them, I sought to 'encourage the viewer to recognise him- or herself as reciprocally constituted by the image of the other and so "grasp the objectivity of the *moi*"' (ibid.). Silverman suggests that grasping our objectivity as we view, 'we in turn give up our claim to empowerment via the gaze and come to recognise ourselves within those others' (ibid.).

In order to consider this discursive scene in relation to ethics I will return to Butler's *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005). In particular Butler's ground for an ethics based on these two points: 'the 'I's fundamental opacity and, with it, the 'I's necessary relation to 'you'' (Kreider, 2014:104). Acknowledging the self's fundamental opacity, and thus, respecting the subject's limitations, 'one would strive to listen to the other, regardless of one's capacity to comprehend' (105). Such an act might open up an ethical contact between 'I' and 'You' and

radically undermine the structure of normative subjectivity that maintains western patriarchy.

To extend this sense of limitation and failure, the unfinished, incoherent account of oneself was a trope across the different sequences. The breakdown of communication between 'I' the performer and 'You' the viewer came about via acts of voice distortion, deviating from one subject to another and loss of consciousness. Messages were communicated through the affective capacity of materials. However, these non-verbal messages resisted making direct sense. My desire not to 'make sense' is a response to the cultural dominance of instrumental rationality (Bailes, 2011:6). The event ended in the presentation of my limit to perform, to remember, and my failure to master myself; I fell into unconsciousness.

### **3.8 Moving on from *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre***

The process of examining the nexus between my location and my self had been one of perceiving both traps and potentials in both, site-specific performance theorist, Kwon's notions of 'rooted place-bound identities' and 'nomadic fluidity' (2002:8). In fact, the relationship between nomadism and the sense of a shifting identity might support the argument that identities are 'place-bound' if we note that the concept of place is also culturally specific and mobile. I followed different methods of researching place that seemed to offer contradictory outcomes; researching the architectural landscape of Cape Town provided clues and insight into the spatial models that regulate contact and conduct in urban dwellers' daily routines (Jackson, 2005:33). However, the experience of walking revealed the uniqueness of each moment. The research process revealed the differences between walking in the city and conceptualising *the city*. Scott argues that the political intentions of city planners are not directly built into the city and therefore urban planners should not approach the work of organising public space, 'seeing like a state' (1998). Adopting McKinnie's phrase 'performing like a city' (2012), my practice-based approach to site might differ from 'seeing like a state' by embracing the diversity and paradoxes produced by using different forms of mobility and by the intervention of perceptual memories (Degen & Rose, 2012:3283).

What are people going to remember about this place now?

(Extract from *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre*.)

In his paper *Everyday Afterlife*, Justin Armstrong draws on Benjamin's understanding of the walking art of the *flâneur* and the uses of memory and history to analyse his ethnographic fieldwork on the cultural history of abandoned spaces and places in rural Canada (2011:273-293). In his account he describes a performance that explores the relationship between an autotopographical narrative and an experience of walking in a place. After the first day of walking in Orkney, Saskatchewan, Armstrong's computer crashes and 'a day's worth of photographs were lost' (277). That evening he has a conversation with a farmer who has lived all his life in Orkney. The farmer describes each of the town's residents, he recalls the sounds of children playing and the community dances he attended. The next morning Armstrong pays a second visit to Orkney, he states that 'the place became permanently altered by this talk with the farmer' (ibid.). Armstrong recognises that we can never return to a place in the past. The city and the mind are not a repository for memories but constantly reconstructing in the present. By listening to the story of another, an act of story-taking, Armstrong radically changes his perspective on the place.

'Places', wrote de Certeau, are 'accumulated times that can be unfolded ... like stories held in reserve' (1984:108). The stories of Cape Town had shaped my knowledge of the place even before I had walked its streets. After *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* I wanted to examine the relationship between the accumulation of narratives and feeling a tie to a place. Adopting Armstrong's method of shaping his relationship to a place, I began collecting stories around a specific urban site, for the final project, which will culminate in the last performance in my Thesis Production – *The Security Hut*.

## CHAPTER FOUR: *The Security Hut*



Figure 6: *The Security Hut* (Photograph by Daneel Knoetze)

In one of the most famous books of Italian feminism, *Non credere di avere dei diritti* [*Don't Think You Have Any Rights*], a true story gets reported. We are in the 1970s, and the protagonists are two friends with assonant names: Emilia and Amalia ...

Emilia, in the early days, 'was pretty boring: she went on telling her story umpteen times a day,' says Amalia. The latter has the gist of being able to express things well, whether out loud or on paper, which the other lacks. In their exchange of writing exercises, the gap became evident. 'When I let her read what I had written,' continues Amalia, 'especially when I was talking about my hometown, about the farmers and particularly about my own life, she cried.' She too 'needed to tell about her life,' notes Amalia in order to explain this weeping, 'but she wasn't able to connect any of it up, and so she let herself go.' Amalia then decides to take an interesting initiative: 'once I wrote the story of her life, because I knew it by heart, and she always carried it in her handbag and read it again and again...' (Cavarero, 2000:56).

*The Security Hut* will be staged in the University of Cape Town's Little Theatre in November 2014. The performance will take place inside a theatre; however, the action conspires to unravel the appearance of the performance as separate from the 'everyday world' perhaps simultaneously rendering the 'everyday world' as a place 'thrown together' by different actors (Massey, 2005:140). Taking the urban site of a security hut as a locus of study, the work is inspired by its architecture, current use and the local, cultural and social values attached to it. I explore links between the security hut and the theatre as places that might be seen as maintaining order through exclusion.

Transforming my relationship to *the city* by returning to a single familiar architectural structure I conducted several informal interviews with security guards and researched, broadly, the role of private security companies in Cape Town. I then collected citations around the site of the performance, the Little Theatre, to consider what meanings the performance might make in relation to the place in which it will be presented. During the performance I will build a wooden security hut onstage while giving an account of my research into the hut. This performance text, *The Security Hut: Draft One* is an assemblage of notes from interviews, articles and personal memories.

#### **4.1 Starting points: relational selves and urban sites**

When they come, the first thing they come for is ... security.

(Comment made by George Walter, a security guard, working in Cape Town.)

The idea to make a work about security followed a conversation I had with a friend who works as a security officer in Cape Town. I, like Armstrong who observed his ideas around Orkney shifting, realised that my relationship to a place had significantly altered after hearing Walter's story, and so, before I began to compose the performance script I tried to establish whose autotopography was being told and for what purpose. In order to work self-reflexively as a 'story-taker' – 'the one who listens to life-stories told by others, in order to then transcribe them' (Cavarero, 2000:64).

Autotopographies are spatial representations of important relations, emotional ties, and

past events (González, 1995:134). Emilia's discarded narratives probably contained biographies of her immediate family, lovers, friends, albeit in a broken and confused structure. In Heddon's discussion on the ethics of autobiographical praxis, she begins with Eakin's observation that 'because our own lives never stand free of the lives of others, we are faced with our responsibility to those others whenever we write [perform] about ourselves' (Eakin in Heddon, 2008:125). When I wrote about my experience of the hut I considered how the lives of others became entangled in the text.

During the interviews I transcribed and interpreted the interviewee's stories and made notes of thoughts I had in response. I focused not only on the verbal-message but the manner of its presentation, and also how being within the site affected me. The aim of this project was to present sites as 'thrown together', Massey's term, which I came across during the making of *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* and which signals that places are socially constructed and so experienced differently by individuals in different positions. I thought that by presenting my personal memories alongside the interviewees', I might foreground how the production of space constructs different identities.

Bär observed that things tell, among other stories, 'primarily the story of the subject for whom they are things' (in González, 1995:144). I was interested in the stories that the security hut might tell me about myself and about those around me. Adapting the motif of precariously stacked materials presented during *The Frieze* I decided to build a hut. I began to unpack the issues concerning the relationship between anxieties of the self and the building of a site through Gibson's theory of affordances.

#### **4.2 Affordances**

I was introduced to Gibson's theory of affordances and its potential uses within the field of site-responsive performance in Dokumaci's article 'On Falling III' (2013:107-115). The article is a 'mediation on falling' defined as 'a shift in awareness towards the materiality of the body and the environment; falling as a disruption of the habitual; falling as a negotiation of physical obstacles ...' (107). Drawing on her own experience of the medical condition, rheumatoid arthritis, Dokumaci investigates the change when 'the ordinary sense of free and spontaneous movement is now replaced by calculated effort' (Leder in Dokumaci,

2013:107); she suggests that when 'falling ill' the affordances of place become more noticeable (109).

Affordances are the possibilities for action, 'the actualisation of which depends upon the reciprocity between the properties of an organism and the environment' (108). They are offerings which exist 'independently of individuals but only occur as properties [of things] taken with reference to the observer' (Gibson in Dokumaci, 2013:108). 'Ultimately the affordances of the environment are inexhaustible' (Stoffregen in Dokumaci, 2013:108). However, in 'everyday life', Dokumaci observes, 'the silence of things, the action possibilities offered by the environment remain buried under what appears to be its fixed furnishings' (109).

Dokumaci suggests that when a person 'falls ill', the ease that the world has offered them becomes dis-ease. She observes that the disabled subjects who's daily performances she documents as part of her research begin choreographing new ways of moving within, everyday 'taskscape' (Ingold, 2000:154) in order to avert and accommodate pain (Dokumaci, 2013:112). These new ways include acts of making that transform the world outside from an 'inanimate' space ignorant of human 'hurtability' into a place that can respond to that vulnerability by 'quite literally, "making it" as knowledgeable about human pain as if it were itself animate and in pain' (Scarry in Dokumaci, 2013:113). I imagined why a security hut might be erected on the edge of individual's home? How did this make me aware of the owner's sense of their vulnerability? The theory of affordances suggested to me that the home owners wanted to make their fear of people transgressing the border of the property known to others, and so, recoverable.

Dokumaci's meditation on Gibson's theory of affordances extended my thinking around the 'throwntogetherness' of places. It seemed that places might be 'throwntogether' in order to avert or accommodate an individual's pain or dis-ease. However, given that individuals experience places differently, from different positions, this might lead to the environment being less accommodating for others.

Dokumaci uses Gibson's theory of affordances to proffer that site-specific performance may have the potential to un-silence things. Pearson observes that when making site-specific

performances, performers who are ill equipped to deal with the conditions of a place in comparison to those who usually occupy the place, performers who are seen to battle with the elements, are witnessed by audiences who might perceive the impact of places which are often silenced by habitual patterns of behaviour (in Dokimaci, 2013:107). I suggest that site-based performances might un-silence each participant's part in the making of the site. Sites that seem fixed might be disrupted and 'the silence that is kept silent because it is 'good', because it is the best we can do under the circumstances' might be interrupted (Fleishman, 2012:19).

### 4.3 A macro-narrative: 'The story of private security'

'...The adequate protection of fundamental rights to life and security of the person as well as the right not to be deprived of property, is fundamental to the well-being and to the social and economic development of every person' (2001, *Private Security Industry Regulation Act*, 'Preamble').

Lemanski claims that since the demise of apartheid more than 20 years ago, South Africa has witnessed an explosion not only in crime but also an explosion in the 'depth and extent of fear expressed by its citizens particularly 'white' residents' (2006:787). Research shows that those previously 'sheltered' have 'become increasing concerned and fearful' (Lemanski, 2006:788).

'Research indicates significant fear amongst this group, largely focused on concerns that their western, modern and 'civilised' lifestyle is threatened by post-apartheid changes' (Ballard in Lemanski, 2006:788).

Lemanski's research departs from Beck and Valentine's claim that fear of crime rarely matches the actual risk of victimisation and claims that fear of crime then is often 'an euphemism for broader themes' (789). She goes on to suggest that the label 'fear of crime' is often used as an 'acceptable' explanation for deeper fears of change and racial difference in South Africa (ibid.).

As private security companies in South Africa are increasingly hired to order what is commonly called “public space” the terms private and public space have become ambiguous<sup>3</sup>. Private security companies do not aim to provide universal coverage, like state police, rather they patrol particular urban places, territories identified by urban managers such as City Improvement Districts (CIDs) (Paasche *et al.*, 2014:1560). CIDs are groups of business and property owners who provide additional services to their neighborhood as a tool for regeneration (1564). CIDs commonly focus on providing private security services (ibid.) which work to prevent opportunities for law breaking instead of focusing on actual law breaking (Berg, 2010:288). They ‘prevent the worse’ through the creation of literal and metaphorical barriers to keep out ideas, things and people that are seen to threaten the security of these spaces; Bookman and Woolford call this aim an ‘exclusionary definition of order’ (in Paasche *et al.*, 2013:1560).

In Cape Town the enframing of urban space has led to the enclaves of the city centre being secured through a combination of law and private force which contrasts greatly with parts of the city viewed as outside of the centre where ‘insecurity prevails’ (1562). These contrasts mirror the ‘racialised landscapes of power and privilege of the city’s apartheid era’ (ibid). Following Zedner’s suggestion that ‘private security companies see territory as a specific container in which they assert their power’ the activities of private security companies seem to restore the colonial idea that space is a container for particular bodies and not others (in Paasche *et al.*, 2013:1565).

Individuals who are identified as ‘undesirable’ by CIDs are forced over lines designating, so-called, public spaces (1566). These lines are invisible to many but known to both the security guards and street people (ibid.).

The standardisation and rational planning of urban space essentially creates a frame, which comes to feel more real than the contingent body that makes the frame possible in the first place ... This framework extends to the racialized and gendered

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<sup>3</sup> Berg’s article ‘Seeing like private security: Evolving mentalities of public space protection in South Africa’ offers a discussion on the different terminology used by urban theorists to describe former “public spaces”, for example the term ‘communal space’ (Hermer *et al.* in Berg, 2010:288).

containment of particular bodies that abide by a set of interior rules and spatial locations thought to be established prior to society (Jackson, 2005:50-51).

It seems that in order to identify individuals as 'undesirable' there must first be the belief that an ideal place is stable, and then, the belief that particular groups of people have the potential to disorder a place. The aim of a private security company might be to remind everyone of 'their place in the urban power landscape' in order to maintain power relationships (Paasche *et al.*, 2013:1568).

Berg's article 'Seeing like private security: Evolving mentalities of public space protection in South Africa' draws on Scott's aforementioned volume 'Seeing like a State' (1998). It analyses 'the way private security agencies 'see' policing' (2010:289). Based on the literature outline here, I presupposed that 'seeing like a security guard' meant to see 'physical or social disorders as things to be displaced from a particular drawn territory' (Kempa & Singh, 2008:291). However, after my interviews with several security guards my acceptance of this singular perspective was quickly unsettled. I viewed the officer's self-narratives to tell me the story of a self whose identity was unique and unrepeatable.

#### **4.4 Memory Traps: inside the hut**

Inside the security hut I was aware that I was trespassing. It was a place of work and yet domestic, there was a kettle, a fridge, a radio. Although placed within the borders of private property the hut is positioned on the edge of "public space": by this I mean, on the edge of streets, parks and shops. During one interview an anecdote that if spoken without interruptions would have lasted for five minutes, lasted for thirty. Every time the officer sat down to pick up the thread of his story another client would arrive for whom they would have to sign for. The performance thus included several restarts, anti-climaxes and pauses to wait for his memory to be regained.

The possibilities afforded by the hut were, necessarily, different for us both. As a spatial annex for memories the hut is a prosthetic device. As previously discussed, a prosthesis 'is a foreign element that reconstructs that which cannot stand up on its own, at once propping up and extending its host' (González, 1995:135). For me, the structure is inseparable from

the interviewee's comments about their long work hours and low wage. The space triggered anxieties in me around confinement and exclusion.

In the performance I will prop up the hut on stage. This structure will compensate for my diminishing memory of the interviews. I hope that the dis-easiness of the act might represent the collapsible, fragile event of remembering as well as the research remembered; the collection of the stories which told me that the private security industry makes particular places for some individuals *more* precarious and insecure.

In the role of auto-ethnographer, or story-taker, with 'the will-to-know' about this urban site, it was important to recognise that the interviewee revealed a performing self, perhaps 'redeploying' the written text, as it was being made in front of him, as a tactic of evasion and camouflage (Conquergood, 2002:150). So the notion of a 'truth' being told about this place was dismissed and I attempted in the text to embrace the subjectivity involved in mapping and storytelling. This same feeling of acceptance was extended towards the autotopographical history writers whose research informed my understanding of the performance site, the Little Theatre – and, extended towards my self.

#### **4.5 Traces and absences**

My self, as a trace, indexes a history of British immigrants living in Cape Town who mapped places through their life-stories. Donald Inskip was the Director of the Little Theatre from 1933-1971, *Forty Little Years* is his record of everyday performances and public shows that took place in the Little Theatre. The Theatre was established in 1930, a year before Inskip's arrival at the University. When the University moved from its place on Orange Street to Rondebosch, Professor W. H. Bell, the University of Cape Town's first Professor of Music, perceived potential in 'Daantji Hahn's old chemistry lab. just inside the lioness gates securing Government Avenue' as a site for a theatre (Inskip, 1972:11). The Little Theatre was 'to carry out experiments in production and décor akin to those ... many little theatres in England, America and Canada and elsewhere' (12). As the 'fathers' of the Anatomy Department had brought a 'transplant' from the Scottish University and 'introduced it' to the ground and culture of Cape Town (Louw, 1969:xv), similarly, Professor Bell viewed the project as an experiment in reproducing a model of a Western theatre in the city. Sir John

Carruthers Beattie, the first principal of the University of Cape Town, claimed that the Little Theatre would be a 'training grounds for young South Africans who would be given the opportunity of building up a true South African culture' (Inskip, 1972:17).

*The Security Hut* will contribute to the construction of knowledge about places and people through representing some things and not others (Heddon, 2008:92). Inskip's history is a trace that tells me (among other things) something about my own stances and presuppositions.

#### **4.6 The practice of *bricolage***

I assembled fragments from *Forty Little Years*, notes from conversations with security guards and personal accounts using the practice of *bricolage* – 'the drawing or constructing together of a creation from found or available other things' (Burns, 2013). I lay out each fragment of text on a table and then ordered and re-ordered the papers. Nicolas Mayer, Senior Technical Officer at the Little Theatre Workshop, constructed a hut based on photographs I took when walking in Cape Town. The four walls are made from pieces of past theatre sets and the roof from a piece of plastic found by the side of the road.

#### **4.7 Restored and disturbed behaviour**

The current geographical position of the Little Theatre in the city centre excludes those deemed 'undesirable' by the urban managers from it. Furthermore, the position of the theatre inside the gated campus of the University of Cape Town might exclude those who do not feel authorised, are not connected socially or are not invited into the enclave.

Like the architecture of the Anatomy Lecture Theatre, the Little Theatre's layout seemed somewhat familiar; inside, a proscenium arch stage faces rows of slightly concave and gradually raked, auditorium seating. The familiarity of the everyday routines described in Inskip's autotopography also suggested to me that the space elicits a relatively uniform 'restored behavior' (Franko & Richards, 2000:2). Franko and Richards suggest that performance, understood as restored behavior, necessarily brings back the past to unsettle the present (ibid.). I suggest that restored behaviour might also silence the affordances of place and bring back the past unproblematically into the present. I considered the customs

that are established in the theatre and the pasts that are brought back into the present through performance.

It is my belief that people go to the theatre basically for one or both of two reasons – firstly to see and hear real characters in situations which the audience can recognise and in which they can identify the general hopes, fears and experiences of all mankind, and secondly, to be “transported” out of themselves into “otherness” of place, time, situation and behaviour (Inskip, 1972:29).

To sustain the ‘imaginative world’ theatre acts rely on the exclusion of behaviour such as distraction, boredom and amateur performance. Amateurism, Bailes writes, ‘invokes a way of executing a form of labour that misses a mark or under-achieves intentionally within the conventions that the work usually aspires to’ (2011:93). If in *The Frieze* I responded to ideas around mastery of an artistic representation with failure, with suspension, with skepticism, inspiring anxiety, fear and instilling doubt through non-seriousness, and in *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* I responded to ideas around mastery over the body by exploring its limits, inabilities and medical history, in *The Security Hut* I will enact an amateur performance as a builder to respond to ideas around mastering a place. Attempting and perhaps failing to keep it stable and secure. Perhaps, “as the roof could fall in at any moment”, mastering a place is an impossible task (Extract from *The Security Hut*: First draft).

The presentational mode of my address strives to under-achieve at transporting the audience out of themselves into an “otherness” of place. I seek to acknowledge, rather than hide, that there is the potential for real pain to be felt in the theatre. As opposed to the ‘mimesis of pain’ in dramatic theatre, which leads spectators to a ‘painful empathy with the played pain’, in live art, ‘the observation of violence leads to feelings of responsibility and the need to intervene’ (Shalson, 2012:112). Real pain, Bailes observes, intensifies not ‘exactly the experience of reality’ but what might be described as ‘reality-effects’ (Bailes, 2011:20). According to Quick, ‘reality-effects’ focus on ‘the use of objects through “real-time actions” rather than through framed fictive events or narratives ...

the performance before us is, of course, no more or less “real” than any other kind of enactment, but the effects created conspire to unravel the appearance of the art

work as bound and separate from everyday reality or the behaviours and actions that make up what we refer to categorically as the “everyday world” (Bailes, 2011:9).

As Lehmann observes, the contract of the performance means that the need to intervene is ambiguous (in Shalson, 2012:112). Such ambiguousness, I suggest, also arises during performances outside of the theatre’s walls. Throughout the work I will make references to the contract established between myself and the audience *and* the contract established between security guards and their clients. In *The Security Hut* I want to bring the notion of ‘reality-effects’ into the ‘everyday world’, by presenting the performance space and the everyday space as constructed and mediated. The stage, becoming like life, as I fail to transport the audience ‘out of themselves’ might challenge the audience members’ usual disposition – ‘the unreflected certainty and security in which they experience being spectators as an unproblematic social behaviour’ (ibid.). Furthermore, if in agreement with Jackson, that the frames of urban space come to feel more real than the contingent body that makes the frame possible, I sought to make the audience aware of the throwntogetherness of all places.

There’s always that moment. After you’ve sat down. When you’re waiting for the action to begin. When you think to yourself ...

This time ...

This time ...

I *know* I’ve left the oven on.

(Extract from *The Security Hut*: Draft One.)



Figure 7: *The Security Hut* (Photograph by Daneel Knoetze)

## CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusions

In a survey of Live Art published in 1991, Ayers claims that ‘live art allows a direct and unmediated contact between art and audience ... it requires no equipment, no venue or agent, no intermediacy of any sort between the person who makes the art and the person it affects’ (Ayers, 1991:9). Over twenty years later, Johnson re-examines this definition in relation to the practices documented in the survey. The artists seen by Ayers to contact their audience without equipment, in fact, ‘variously manipulated furniture, power tools, fire, honey or mud’ (Johnson, 2012:6). Importantly, Johnson recognises that the notion of an ‘unmediated’ representation is ‘a contradiction in terms, all representations are in and of themselves exercises in mediation, even if the formal strategies were unusual, original or deliberately inartistic’ (ibid.).

Women’s Live Art works that use strategies of autobiographical story-telling have been similarly viewed as unmediated, and so, more authentic or life-like. MacDonald suggests that the act of revealing a true self has been seen as both possible and politically attractive;

'The act of self-revelation has a refreshing liberating bite to it when seen in relation to theatrical illusion' (MacDonald, 1995:191). However, after my initial research into autobiography, I perceived my self-narrative acts to be no less scripted than theatrical performances and no more mediated than everyday life. When I returned to my performance scripts and recited the narratives I had written in the past, I sensed that the subject, the 'I', had already moved on.

Cavarero argues that a sense-of-self is constructed by listening to the story that memory recounts (Cavarero, 2000:36). In my Minor Project I realised that these processes of memory were constitutive rather than reflective. The memories, which my sense-of-self was invented out of, were created rather than found and they arose and disappeared from one moment to the next. Due to memory's unreliability, I perceived my representation of a self as untruthful and inauthentic when performed. My desire for biography was a response to the patriarchal tradition of reducing the female *who* to a *what*: a mother, a wife, a nurse (61). However, I forwent constructing a persona who could tell this story coherently in order to represent the self as it was, fragile, confused, and anxious. Cavarero writes that, 'since the scene of action is contextual and mutable, the reality of the self is necessarily intermittent and fragmentary' (63). By telling multiple stories and leaving these open to various interpretations I hoped to resist the view of myself as stable and the view that my recollections are windows to the past.

During the process of making *The Frieze* the furnishings, the architectural structures and the debris around me agitated memories of distant places. The autotopographical place was perceived as an intermediate, or prosthesis for memories, which told me something about myself and facilitated the autobiographical writing process.

I used a similar method to make *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre*, however influenced by Bal's critical engagement with Bourgeois' sculptural works I reconsidered my practice, this time taking into account that the self is only partially narratable due to the 'I's unconscious thoughts and desires. Falling unconscious during the performance I explored the limits of my ability to remember my past in front of the viewer. In my analysis of the discursive scene of the performance I suggested that by acknowledging the failure imbued in the task of

giving an account of oneself, autotopographical performance might open an ethical contact between artist and viewer, based on the 'I's fundamental opacity, and its relation to 'You' (Kreider, 2014:104).

In the final Thesis Project I focused on the 'throwntogetherness' of place, in other words, how places are socially constructed and experienced variously by different individuals who occupy unique positions. I hope to draw attention to the 'I' the performer and 'You' the viewer's responsibility for shaping places. In *The Security Hut: Draft One* the act of building the hut represented my ideas around the making of a self; the notion that selves, like places, are inter-subjectively constructed and changeable.

The wayfarer is continually on the move.

Wayfaring, in short, is neither placeless or place-bound but place-making (Ingold in Pearson, 2010:109).

I am remaking the two earlier performances for the Thesis Production in order to give a sense of the way I wandered through the field of autotopography. I will use the VIVA VOCE (the interview with the examiners) as an opportunity to explicate any significant adaptations that were made to *The Frieze*, *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* and the first draft of *The Security Hut* and how I might subsequently know the field of autotopographical performance differently. Throughout this process of research I had hunches around how the construction of a sense-of-self was linked to memory and place and examined these hunches using the principles of affordances, throwntogetherness, memory traps and failure. The following extracts describe three of the key turning points in my research. They exemplify how I presented my research findings to the viewers during the performances.

1.

In the making of the installation, I seem to have told a story of myself that I was not fully conscious of until Dr. Young's diagnosis. Problematizing the act of defining this autobiography as such. Exposing it as a fleeting form, and as you listen now, interpreted. (*Go to clean the bowl*) I will say that *The Frieze* represents my fixation

on a time and a place both here and now and passed away already. Dr. Young might say that it represents something below the surface, something unresolved. (*Matter of fact*) a research outcome (*try to clean it*).

2.

I've been reading about Tim Dalgleish's research and practising the method-of-loci technique. I walked. I mapped a route and then assigned memories to the places that I passed by.

SOUND RECORDING: "The key is to imbed the memory in the location ... and they actually felt much better ..."

(*Wave your arm*).

Eugh. My voice sounds different here, than it does in my head. Funny different. More English, more authoritative, more embarrassing, more artistic ... more remote.

3.

All this frustration I have, I have to leave at the door because in my job I have to do many things, if I'm looking after you. I have to know that you are better than me, so that I can do my job. I have to believe that *you* are better than *me*.

(*Go back to rebuilding the hut*).

(Extracts from *The Frieze*, *The Anatomy Lecture Theatre* and *The Security Hut*, 2014.)

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## **Appendix – Performance Texts**

## 1.1 The Frieze: Part One

This is a story about the Beethoven Frieze.

The Beethoven Frieze is housed in the Secession gallery in Vienna.

Do you know it? Over there is where Dr. Young lives.

When he was there, then, he was living in a white room – alone. And the walls of the frieze and the white of his walls where he projected films, grotesquely magnified images, are bound by association, so that when I think of Dr. Young, that is, when I'm not with him, seeing or speaking, to him I imagine him within the frieze.

If contained within a room, the Secession building rises out from within the Vienna ring. As a tourist living from exit to exit, I felt only resonances past, I was forgetting what I knew, that I was there. You wouldn't believe the cost of a psychoanalytical session within the radius of Freud's museum, a short walk from the Secession.

A friend of mine was having a party; the drink gleamed in his eyes, he opened his arms wide and said to us: 'Thank you so much for coming' ... 'and you can leave whenever you want!' Likewise, tourist spots have exit signs.

This is a story about the Beethoven Frieze.

I entered the room with strangers. I walked along its edges and I read its story. When I reached the end of the frieze I ran onto the edge of the ring to make a phone call until the money for the slot went dry and I was out onto the conveyor city again.

I didn't go back. It was there when I went again later. When we were neither of us better although two years had passed. Time had cut the cord of the telephone coil across the continent. I cruised outwards and inwards. Slow-fucking my tube, my spinal nerve, with the drone of myself. Crawling up the walls of the frieze in my mind. Bombing the splat

plaster again. Chasing the relic to its birth place. Desperate to slip under the freezing point to the minus sign.

I tracked it down. It was hiding in the North. Building a noise tunnel through the country. Slowing down and stopping to train-spot in motorway traffic. Can you always blame it on the cold? If you wear two coats to walk as far as the corner shop and back. Beginning with. But then again, before. There were the hints, her visit to a hospital.

Fly up too early. Walk across the city brimming full of the wrong sort of happiness. Come back and they're up in the kitchen drinking from small white coffee cups and eating from white bowls, heads low.

No milk, no sugar, two cigarettes.

This is a story about the Beethoven Frieze. In a spinning café overlooking the city, she tells me that from time to time, now and then, she stops standing on pavement cracks and if she does – wait. Is that a projection on a moving wall? I've already left. I'm lip-syncing songs to the dressing table at my Uncle's house. A narcissistic wallowing; snug in the cupping synapse of my duvet fibres. Accept that the plane floor might evaporate under the sun and I will not be disappointed.

This is a story about the Beethoven Frieze, a wall painting too thick and big to be shifted, lies at the back of the mind waiting for the family reunion.

## 1.2 The Frieze: Part Two

1. 'The Story of "I": *(Pause)* Illness and Narrative Identity' begins with the following: 'To tell a story, it would seem is to model it on previous stories – a point made before me and one to which I shall return to later' (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:9). *(Choose a bowl)*.
2. Three weeks ago I decided I wanted to put the eggs under the bowls *(examine it)*.
3. One week later I met Dr. Young for the first time and he told me that the reason I had stopped bleeding, had not released an egg from my ovary, in over a year, was because I was blocking my femininity *(put it back)*.
4. *(Wincing)* the blunt narration of physical details might suggest that the author intends to provoke empathy *(hands up in surrender)* or catharsis *(sigh)*. *(Whispers)* I can stop periods with my mind. *(Pick it up again)*.
5. In the making of the installation, I seem to have told a story of myself that I was not fully conscious of until Dr. Young's diagnosis. Problematizing the act of defining this autobiography as such. Exposing it as a fleeting form, and as you listen now, interpreted. *(Go to clean the bowl)* I will say that *The Frieze* represents my fixation on a time and a place both here and now and passed away already. Dr. Young might say that it represents something below the surface, something unresolved. *(Matter of fact)* a research outcome *(try to clean it)*.
6. When I first entered this room I was reminded of the *Beethoven Frieze*, a piece of artwork made by Gustav Klimt, which depicts mankind's search for happiness *(try to clean it – when you give up, put it on the other side of the table)*. I sat down and wrote about it.
7. When I thought about my encounter with it four years ago, I remembered feeling fear, sadness and relief and joy. I decided I would follow this trail of thought and attempt to make manifest my fantasy. I would reconstruct the frieze in many ways: I would adapt its story of mankind's search for happiness, represent part of its history – the time when the gallery was bombed during WW2, and recall my personal memory of being there with it. To do this I wanted to invite other people to

paint an object (over and over and over). To make a material sculpture that then could then be ruptured, split and scattered. (*Pick up a bowl*).

8. Building a personal mythology onto the installed objects. Layering different kinds of labour on the body. Enduring the painting as thinking, the holding and the exhibition of the memories, the persevering drama.

9. (*To the bowl, held like the skull of Hamlet's father*). This is all very self-indulgent isn't it? Self-indulgent and excessive. Decorative, narcissistic, self-involved, demanding, and melodramatic, (*holds it to cheek*) melodramatic and excessive and self-indulgent, self-indulgent and... repetitive. (*Wash it*).

10. The solo occupation of the painter is, to me, emblematic of Jacques Rancière's spectator who composes her own poem. (*Attempt to wash it*) this is impossible! (*Go out to get a bucket of water, get on the table and pour the water over it*).

11. (*On the chair to the pillow*) find out what it is now, before you end up with a dowager's hump and you've been unhappy for 40 years. Look, you're searching for a way to solve this problem. You're beating yourself to death. Look, it's a good time to change. Look, I'm not laughing at you. (*Stand down*).

12. I would also play with autobiographical texts to contextualise the installation as a dreamscape. The work fell impulsively, and then through choice, into the genre of an illness narrative. Exploring my own performance during three sessions of psychosomatic therapy. I might say, as Broyard does, that 'illness is a drama' (1992:7). And that 'The drama of any story is not only inherent in that story' (Frank, 2007:384). 'The drama is also enacted in arriving at a story- a process that can include resisting, or provisionally accepting and then rejecting, other stories' (ibid.). (*Put the bucket down*).

13. I share the co-creation of these particular stories with Dr. Young - these stories are the kind of drivel one would only share with a professional. (*Look at the back wall*).

14. This is a story about the Beethoven Frieze – it was there when we went again later, when neither of us were better although two years had passed – time had cut the cord of the telephone coil across the continent. I cruised outwards and inwards, slow-fucking my tube, my spinal nerve, with the drone of myself. Bombing the splat

plaster again. Chasing the relic to its birth place. Desperate to slip under the freezing point to the minus sign. *(Put the sponge on the floor).*

15. This is a story about the Beethoven Frieze, a wall painting too thick and big to be shifted lies at the back of the mind. Waiting for the family reunion.

*Pick up the corners of the tablecloth to form a bundle with the bowls inside. Swing the bundle against the wall as hard as you can. Now place the cloth back down on the table revealing what's inside. Leave the room.*

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## 1.3 The Anatomy Lecture Theatre

### Act One: Training the Mind

*(Sit at the table facing the door. When everyone has taken their seats close the door and turn off the house lights. Pull out from under the larger table eight packets of ice. Place them on the table top.)*

**SOUND RECORDING: BBC Four, 'All in the Mind: Memory and depression; Global mental health; Compassion training' (Hammond, C. & Dalgleish, T. 2013).**

*(Split open the bags of ice.)*

Where we are now, in this room, is on Orange Street.

I find it extremely difficult not to shop when waiting for the bus. I find it particularly difficult not to shop for food. I particularly enjoy buying fruit because it is quite cheap. And because you get to pick it up and feel it and imagine what it's like inside. Also, I think that, if I eat a lot of fruit then if someone picks me up and feels me they'll imagine something nice inside.

I remember one time I was waiting for the bus and I'd gone into the shop to buy an orange. And it was a bit of a nightmare really because then the bus came and I had to make this decision. Could I buy the orange *and* get on the bus. What would I do if I missed the bus? Would I have enough time to have a feel of the apples?

When all of a sudden, I heard this horrible noise. It was really horrific. I looked up to see where it was coming from and noticed that the woman in front of me had dropped her coins onto the counter. The problem was that she had these huge, red artificial nails. They were so long that her fingers couldn't actually function. The sound came from her pressing back the plastic on the table trying to form a contact between her flesh and the coins. And so I helped her, and I just marvelled at the excess of it all.

*(The sound recording continues. Peel the orange. Throw the skin in the bin. Pour boiling water from the jug into the fish tank.)*

I've been fantasising about filling this room. Half up with jelly powder and then pouring boiling water through the door in the ceiling, then, adding ice so that it sets. And then bashing down the walls to see what it would look like inside.

*(Take the sleeping pill.)*

I've taken a sleeping pill for a few reasons. Firstly I'm very interested to see who's going to help me clean up afterwards. Secondly, I've heard stories about people falling asleep in lectures before, but in *their* stories it was never the lecturer. And thirdly, I wanted to show you what someone really far-away looks like up close.

I had never taken a sleeping pill before this project. I thought they seemed a bit too good to be true. I was worried that I'd be excessive with taking them. Of course when I began to write this lecture I began to have trouble sleeping.

I'm cyclothymic you see. I've been diagnosed as cyclothymic. Roughly this translates from its ancient Greek root to: cycle emotion. It means that sometimes I have too much energy. And other times I think that being asleep is the best possible place - which is a problem when you have to perform.

I've been reading about Tim Dalgleish's research and practising the method-of-loci technique. I walked. I mapped a route and then assigned memories to the places that I passed by.

**SOUND RECORDING: "The key is to imbed the memory in the location ... and they actually felt much better ..."**

*(Wave your arm).*

## Act Two: The Memory at Sea-Point

**VOICE RECORDING:** Eugh. My voice sounds different here than it does in my head. Funny different. More English, more authoritative, more embarrassing, more artistic...more remote... Than it does here in my head. I can always delete the recording. Maybe no one will remember. I can't believe how much the kelp looks like people. My audience. My audience. My audience is a kelp forest. My audience are weeds dancing in the water. Their bones are dark green and sinewy. Their skulls are formed by branches that separate out at the top and then curl back to below the surface, somewhere. This muscle, the supinator muscle, has detached and is dangling down from its wrist forming a spiral in the sunlight. Muscles are very superior machines; they have the special merit that they can go on functioning as long as we live with no special attention. Each approaching wave signifies the next inhalation.

**I think the audience is breathing.**

*(Place one end of tube connected to an air pump into the tank.)*

**Where was I? I couldn't remember the way the line had got into the water. My dad was occupied with it, while he was explaining, his way, gesturing with the wire, demonstrating, he looked back at me, inviting me to feel responsible, to feel pride in our shared achievement that the fishing line was there in the water. But I hadn't done anything.**

**At first, when the fish was pulled out, for a moment, it was quite straight as though it was about to speak.** *(Take out the end of the tube and slowly place it in the inner lining of your cheek. The sound made is high pitched like a scream.)*

**Then, its black eyes rolled in a full circle, from the point of the horizon, thickening up the sea, to my feet. I distinctly saw the fish eye up my feet. Before it continued, looking up to the shells, the high wall, the shiny white apartment blocks, to the top of the mountain, to**

**the pink, lavender, blue sky, the porcelain sun, the blue, the pink, back down to the waves and the perhaps dots began to appear.**

*(Inaudible)* can you hear me?

**But it kept on diving.**

*(Inaudible)* can you hear me?

**It needed a transplant. Its body was dancing. It was flicking its tail hard, like a switch. I saw the hook through its lips. I began to cry. "Put it back!"**

**He looked at me beseechingly,**

**"It's already been caught".**

**"But it's alive".**

*(Inaudible)* can you hear me? *(Take the tube out of your mouth.)*

**The line danced as my Dad was wringing the fish, swinging his arm in satisfaction. Its body was displayed to me and the rest of the school in the sea. One could apparently tell from looking that fish had no memory. It had been caught. We must not waste it. *(Open a packet of jelly powder and sprinkle it over the tank.)***

**There was the bucket and in it went. I could hear the fish thwacking its body against the bottom of the yellow plastic. I could see the shadow of the fish jump, not just up and down but side to side, it didn't fit lengthways it was bent at the stomach. It was extreme. It was something private. There was no water in the bucket. *(Detach the other end of the tube from the air pump and breathe through the tube into the bottom of the tank.)***

**I took myself out of the present time for the moment and contacted the fish. Over the colours and shapes of the present I spoke to the fish in my head. There, there was nothing to see but the back of skin through the red, which was the colour of the back of**

my eye lid. So when the sound became a shuffle like a flutter of wings and the flesh began to settle, I tried to believe that my mind was a little heavier. *(Turn off the air pump.)*

Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale.

### Act Three: On the Anatomy Table

*(Climb onto the table. Lie down on the ice and follow the instructions.)* To draw your attention a little bit further inward, simply begin by deepening your inhalations and lengthen your outbreaths. From here we're going to go into fish pose. Fish pose is a wonderful pose for any kind of colds.

Now, on the next inhalation, I want you to lift up your hips and slide your hands underneath them. From here press your elbows into the floor lifting your chest; working you elbows back to support you. Extend your legs, nice and long, looking towards your toes. Go into a gentle back bend. Draw your shoulder blades in, to support your spine, just like there are two hands opening up your heart towards the sky. Let your head hang back, with the top of your head towards the floor. Look back. Breathe a lot- slow, steady, cycles of breath. Fish poses are great to sort of clear your head. You can stay here as long as you like and come out when you're ready (McAlpine, F. 2011, video recording). I never dreamed of the fish under the surface of the water; to me, the fish was only ever dying. I tried to clear my mind.

Dreaming that you are completely or partially naked is very common. Finding yourself naked at work or in a classroom suggests that you are unprepared for a project at work or school. With all eyes on you, you fear that some flaw will be brought to public attention.

It was many years later when I began to sense the vastness of the problem. As far as I could tell, no fish were ever deterred from swimming in the sea. It almost seemed as though they were supposed to be there.

MUSIC: Donner Summer, 'I Feel Love' (1977) plays *(dance)*.

*(When the music finishes climb off of table.)*

#### **Act Four: The Lecture**

Are you going to start the lecture now?

**Yes.**

But you're not going to tell them what it's really about are you?

**No I will.**

But what would be the point. No one's going to learn anything from *you* will they?

**No.**

This has been going on forever, why are you going on about it? Why are you even up here? You should be over there. You're so passive.

**Yes I know...people do get better.**

Who, who gets better? You're getting worse. Every year you're getting further and further away from better.

**I'm making this aren't I?**

What you've made is a mess. What are people going to remember about this place now?

**What about the song, I love that song.**

**I love that song.**

*(Wave your arm.)* **Larkoff and Johnson's philosophical argument is that all cognition is embodied, that reason should be understood as emotionally engaged and are shaped by our bodily experience in environments.**

**We acquire a large system of primary metaphors automatically and unconsciously, simply by functioning in the most ordinary of ways in the everyday world from our earliest years. We think of love like a journey.**

**This metaphor is based on the schema 'source–path–goal', which is founded on the sensorimotor experience of directed travel as it is discovered at an early age. So when we think about love we're actually thinking about walking. Neither life nor love, in and of**

**themselves necessarily has a path, a goal or a direction, but these metaphors allow us to think and talk about their meaning more extensively and creatively.**

**But you don't go forward do you Rosa? You go round in circles.**

**It's been around 30 minutes by now you should be feeling sleepy.** (*Try to remember thirty 'self-affirming memories' using the method-of-loci technique, as you fall slowly asleep.*)

If you leave this room and walk along the corridor, back down the stairs, through the main doors, across the car park you can see a red barrier. This reminds me of the gate at my first school and reaching up to let my fingers trail along behind me, along the edges of the fence that got smaller and smaller ...

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## 1.4 The Security Hut: Draft One

There's always that moment. After you've sat down. When you're waiting for the action to begin. When you think to yourself ...

This time ...

This time ...

*I know I've left the oven on.*

You shift slightly in your chair towards the person you came here with - just enough, so that they know you have something on your mind. And for a moment in your heart there's a glimmer of hope. For a moment you imagine that they turn round and face you and say, "don't worry, I checked, everything's fine". And you think to yourself, "If you turn round now and tell me that you checked and you're sure, I will love you forever".

There's always the fire alarm. There's always insurance. The neighbours might be sitting out in the garden. Perhaps they'd notice.

And the last time you mentioned it, you made everyone worry for nothing.

And it's not nice to make a fuss.

And anyway there's nothing you can do now, it's already started.

And in a few moments you'll completely forget all about it.

But this time when the blackout comes, I'd rather you go home and check, if you're unsure, because the last time I was on-stage somebody's house did burn down.

**VOICE RECORDING: 'Upon seeing a flat, rigid and knee-high surface, I do not only see the surface but also the possibility of sitting, which is embodied in its material. Affordances are these possibilities for action' (Dokumaci, 2013:108). 'Ultimately the affordances of the environment are inexhaustible' (Stoffregen in *ibid.*). However in everyday life, in 'the silence of things, the action possibilities offered by the environment remain buried under what appears to be its fixed furnishings' (109).**

**'Whenever we are bereft of any means, any tools and ways of articulating ourselves, then we resort to our... first and most natural technical object, and ... technical means, that is, our *bodies*' (112).**

**That is *our* body or someone else's.**

If you want to start a security company you must first have people skills as you will be dealing with people. When you create security you start realizing that the tensions that would normally turn into a conflict, are connected to some areas inside that are fragile; to some insecurities. If you take the steps we're going to go over today, you'll feel safe enough to share what's really going on inside. Remember building your own private security company has become a very lucrative business. (*Begin building the security hut.*)

**To learn about emotional security, I decided to speak to people in the industry of making people secure. "Emotional security comes from being able to live with your conscience", he said (informal interview).**

My conscience owns a guesthouse in Observatory. He shortens his name to establish before I know him, that I know him and he chooses his wallpaper from his dreams and from the time he visited his cousin in Cornwall. My conscience makes me breakfast. It fills the time and space between the weather and the work. My conscience and I live together as though it was by chance, as though it can't be changed, because it's comfortable, it's secure.

My conscience has people skills so I ask: "How are you feeling?" You say that you sleep but you can't really sleep, even when you're at home, when you hear any little sound you're alert. You say that you have visions of rows and rows and rows and rows and rows of cars (informal interview).

It's a lot of responsibility. I know, I know. How's your concentration? You know, the hardest thing to act is awake.

**MUSIC: Sam Cooke, '(I Love You) For Sentimental Reasons' (1959).**

**'The man, upon seeing his pregnant wife uncomfortable with her body weight, not only feels her discomfort but at the same time – due to pain's aversive nature – wishes that it were gone. He then starts making a chair in an attempt at transforming his awareness of pain into something more tangible and shareable. In the process of making, his compassion becomes gradually externalized. This happens first, in the form of ephemeral movements – in a dance entitled 'body weight be gone' – where he, without his tools, is 'standing in one place, moving away, coming back, lifting then letting fall his arm, kneeling then standing, kneeling, half-kneeling, stooping, looking, extending his arm, pulling it back' (Scarry, 1985:290) ... In the end, the chair made becomes not so much 'mimetic of the spine' or 'mimetic of body weight' as it is 'mimetic of sentient awareness', and its shape functions as 'the shape of perceived-pain wished-gone' (289-90). Just as are the physical properties of a button hook, a pencil gripper, a long-handled comb, an adjustable chair [...] or as are the movements of a hand cutting food on behalf of his friend with arthritic hands or the gesture of an arm extended to a passer-by who has fallen on the ground' (Dokumaci, 2013:113).**

Down the road from where I live, there is a telescope and a mental institution and in front of these there is a security hut. While the security guard was working, he took the time to explain to me that there were people trying to get in, at night, from all angles, and it's his job to stop them. And I worry about his safety.

He tells me where he lives, and he tells me that he would like to save up to go to college, but with the money he gets each month saving up is impossible, because he has a family. But that's a choice.

It's a choice to work for so little money that you can never save up. It's a choice between never being able to save up and not making any money at all. And that's a choice.

If someone holds a gun to your head and asks you for money if you give it to them, then that's your choice. And it's a choice whether or not you hire someone to look after your home, your family, your body. It's a choice to have someone else stand between the bullet and your head, if they come to ask you for money. It's a choice between your body and theirs and that's a choice.

The problem is the more we believe in choices, the less you notice the difference between them. The more you believe that it's a choice that someone would work for so little money that they can never save up, the less you are likely to share your money, that is, unless there's a gun to your head or unless you get something in return, like their body.

It's a choice to stay and work for the twelve hours instead of going home and seeing if your house is still standing... And it's a choice to leave all this frustration at the door when you enter.

"All this frustration I have, I have to leave at the door because in my job I have to do many things, if I'm looking after you. I have to know that you are better than me, so that I can do my job. I have to believe that you are better than me" (informal interview).

**Half way between private thought and social order is the chair. The chair is a pretty good compromise.**

**Really the woman would rather lie down than sit. Really she'd like to leave. Really she'd like to get out. But the chair has been made, it's there, and certain places have certain rules, particular standards to maintain. You can't please everyone. Anyone who's anyone knows that. And anyone who isn't anyone knows that they should probably try to be more pleasing. And there are just not enough chairs to go round.**

**The task of reconciling the conflicting interests and petty jealousies of several private groups and societies is almost as difficult as building the theatre. There are dangers in giving people access, dangers in broadening scope and interest. There are dangers of possible divided control, dangers in the clash of strong personalities and the conflict of irreconcilable views.**

**And most importantly, there are dangers to the high standards already set...I suppose to build a secure, safe, well ordered place, what it all boils down to is access control.**

“Access control. Three gates, one, two, three. It’s difficult but not impossible. Over a hundred clients, you’ve got to keep the drunk ones out of the pool” (informal interview). Remain focused, forget your own emotions, be confident, be brave, be on time, don’t forget your lines, don’t forget who you’re supposed to be, don’t forget where you’re supposed to stand. The roof could fall in at any moment

Whatever you do,  
Don’t freeze.

*(Scream for help behind the hut walls).*

**Keeping within the government guidelines, the hut cannot be bigger than 1.8 meters square, must be made of wood, and can have no projections from the top, sides, front or back (Cape Argus, 2013, Online).**

When I dreamt of the fire I would first take down my photographs from the wall and throw them out of the window before climbing onto the ledge myself. Although I knew that the singeing of the paper would be safer than the singeing of my skin, I sometimes got confused as to where the ends were.

When I was inside the security hut looking across at him, I didn’t just see the surface but due to the moment’s affordances I also saw the possibilities. Inside the hut I could see a continual, a never dying, longing. Security lies in waiting. Security lies in the knowledge that someone isn’t going to burn your house down– not even you. It’s a longing for a time that never existed.

**“But isn’t it nice”, he said, “that white people let black people look after their stuff” (informal interview).**

**MUSIC: Sam Cooke ‘I’ll Come Running Back to You’ (1957).**

*(Burn your photographs, inside the hut and then leave the stage.)*

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