

**ERASING THE OBJECT:
SCULPTURAL MANOEUVRES INTO THE SUBLIME**

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For my father Antonios (Tony) Khoury

University of Cape Town

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Introduction

In the history of art two acts were repeated down the centuries: with the first the painter began to portray things observing them reflected in a mirror, with the other he observed external reality as it appeared beyond a transparent glass. In the same way, or perhaps at the same time, two tricks were used to fix the accidental world in the absolute space of visual representation. Both acts betray what anxieties torment the artist: he wants to be in the world, standing before things, observing them, representing them, reproducing them, convinced he can depart from this humanistic mechanism.

Attracted by the shape and meaning of reality, he tries to transcend its very limits by occupying a metaphysical position: he yearns for a seeing eye able to fix the world outside the limits of the world, beyond the limits of matter and technique, that is, he wishes to possess reality and supersede it. Art makes the exact vision of an image coincide with that of God, the reproduction with the original creation.

- Sergio Risaliti¹ (Risaliti 2002: 19)

During the Spring of 1969, as if adopting the guise of the explorer/adventurer of yesteryear, the American artist Robert Smithson (1938 – 1973) and his artist-wife Nancy Holt (1938 -)² travelled to the Yucatán peninsula, Mexico (Roberts 2000: 552). Over a century earlier, in 1841, the American ‘travel writer’ John Lloyd Stephens (1805 – 1852)³ had embarked on a similar voyage to the Yucatán peninsula and documented his encounters in his then celebrated book *Incidents of Travel in Yucatán* (1843). Smithson, aware of Stephens’ travels and book, published his own account of his experiences on the Yucatán peninsula in an essay wryly entitled ‘Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan⁴’ in the September 1969 edition of the periodical *Artforum*. Nevertheless, despite the apparent similarities between these two texts

¹ Originally quoted in the introduction of Francesco Gennari’s exhibition catalogue published in 2002. See: (Risaliti 2002: 19).

² Robert Smithson’s art dealer and friend Virginia Dwan was also a travel companion on this tour of Mexico.

³ Throughout the 1830s and 1840s John Lloyd Stephens wrote several books chronicling his travels to Central America, Turkey, Russia, Egypt and other destinations. He was celebrated in his time, although in present times much of his writing has been criticised for its imperialist undertones. See: (Roberts 2000: 544 - 545).

⁴ In all Smithson’s writings on his trip to the Yucatán peninsula, he omits the accent on the last ‘a’ in ‘Yucatán’. He also refers to the Yucatán peninsula and other Mexican states collectively, as ‘the Yucatan’. See an account of this in note no. 3 in Jennifer L. Roberts’s essay ‘Landscapes of Indifference: Robert Smithson and John Lloyd Stephens in Yucatán’. See: (Roberts 2000: 563).

(Smithson's adaptation of Stephens' title and the similar use of a travelogue as a means of narration) they are vastly different. Stephens' text is illustrative of colonial perceptions of western superiority in relation to so-called primitive cultures (Roberts 2000: 544 - 545). On the other hand, Smithson's text and the images that accompany it signal a change in his artistic production rather than being reflective of Stephens' text, as during his time on the Yucatán peninsula he produced some of his first site-specific sculptural interventions in a series entitled *Yucatan Mirror Displacements* (1969). Prior to his Yucatán trip Smithson was largely known for his sculptural installations within the conventional art gallery setting (Roberts 2000: 552 -553) and not the large site-specific earthworks like *Spiral Jetty* (1969 -1970) that would later become almost synonymous with his name⁵. Further, the series *Yucatan Mirror Displacements* is not just significant for being one of Smithson's first site-specific interventions, but for the very nature of the work. The series consisted of nine temporary sculptural installations on the Yucatán peninsula. Smithson temporarily embedded several twelve-inch square mirrors into the soil in a parallel formation and at different locations on the peninsula. Further, he photographically documented the installations as he made his way by car from one location to another (Roberts 2000: 553), hence the title of his essay 'Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan'. However, it is Smithson's musings on these mirror installations that seem a fitting means to introduce the discussion that will follow below. As the art historian Jennifer L. Roberts relates:

As early as 1964, Smithson had begun to use the term *enantiomorphic* to describe the relationship between objects or landscapes and their mirror reflections.

Enantiomorphism is a term used in crystallography to denote the relationship between two molecules or other forms that mirror each other across a single axis.

(Roberts 2000: 553-554)

⁵ It is important to note that in the year prior to his Mexican travels in 1968, Smithson began his Site/Nonsites works which were the first indication that he was moving towards producing work that was produced and shown outside the gallery environment. These works still kept a gallery element by having objects obtained from a site displayed in a gallery as a 'Nonsite', as Smithson termed it (Roberts 2000: 552). Smithson's concept of Site/Nonsite will be further explained and discussed in Chapter 2, in the section entitled 'Mobilisation of Site'.

This notion of interrogating 'the relationship between objects or landscapes and their mirror reflections' is one of the central ideas that will be examined in this dissertation, as is the questioning of the relationship between the object or landscape and the photographic image of it. This is particularly in instances when the photographic image becomes documentary material of a temporary site-specific artwork, as in the case of *Yucatan Mirror Displacements*. In both instances the reflection and photograph are representations or copies and are dependent on the 'object' that they represent for their very existence. Thus, they conceptually reflect each other. Nonetheless, the fact that they represent that which already exists, their presence or existence may have a cancelling effect, as they illustrate conceptually a process of erasure.

The overall objective of this dissertation is to present a theory, guided by certain contemporary artistic practices, that some artistic processes or pursuits can be an act of erasure by being self-cancelling acts. With the primary focus on the discipline of site-specific art production, a subdivision of sculpture, this dissertation will query what constitutes 'sculpture'⁶ in current artistic practice. The dissertation will illustrate the discipline's shift from its traditional manifestation as an object-based medium to contemporaneously being manifested as a photographic image documenting for instance a sculptural intervention in public space. By demonstrating the historical shifts in the medium, from object to image, it will also reference the theoretical re-definition of traditional sculpture in current times. The thesis aims to demonstrate that previous perceptions of sculpture have shifted, particularly due to some contemporary sculptural practices which have problemised it. Therefore the text itself reflects erasure, by illustrating the changes in definitions. Lastly, this thesis will present a hypothesis that certain sculptural practices have moved beyond being defined as object or image, and into a realm where they can no

⁶ This discussion stems from philosophical queries of definitions of art. The questioning on the nature and definition of art has always been framed as a philosophical question: 'What is Art?' from the time of the early philosophers like Plato to contemporary philosophers like Arthur C. Danto. See: Barnes, A. & M. Kelly 1998. 'Definition of Art'. *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. 1: 511 - 513.

longer be pin-pointed as one or the other. Thus they now operate in the realm of sublime representation. This is particularly evident in the practice of creating 'situations'⁷, which are both site and time-specific artworks, only existing momentarily. Thus the artwork is erased, or one can argue the artwork in this scenario is cancelled conceptually.

Further, my practice⁸ itself will illustrate concepts of erasure. By referencing and discussing in the dissertation artworks like *'I swear that mountain is following me'* (2003 -2006), a series of photographs of reflections of Table Mountain in shop-front windows in Cape Town's central business district, these images by being a copy of a copy erase themselves through the mirroring process. These elements of duality (one referencing the other) are further illustrated in works like *Circumnavigating the Great Divide* (2006 - 2007), a panoramic film of Table Mountain and Table Bay projected on Robben Island.

Chapter 1 introduces the over-arching theme of the thesis, namely that the art object erases itself in certain scenarios. 'Erasure' is presented here as a conceptual deduction, as in the case where the art object is reflected in a reflected surface and in that process becomes self-cancelling, or in the case of the doubling/copying of the art object it is cancelled or erased through its representation. Site-specific art will be introduced here as the primary focus of interrogation, particularly the problematics surrounding site-specific art and how it is documented or recorded. This chapter also traces the historical trajectory of site-specific art, as a subdivision of sculpture and Installation art, and how certain sculptural practices have moved beyond the traditional object-based practice (even when the site is considered the object) to being ephemeral and existing in the documentation material. The transition is from an object-based to image-based medium. The photographic series, *'I swear that mountain is following me'* will be discussed here.

⁷ The phenomenon of creating 'situations' will be further defined and explained below.

⁸ Please note that the artworks in this document are presented as a means to support the hypothesis outlined in this thesis, rather than being evaluated independently.

Chapter 2 largely deals with the introduction and discussion of 'situations', which are time and site-specific art works. It discusses the phenomenological nature of these works, specifically in relation to the art work *Circumnavigating the Great Divide*. As this work is a panoramic in format, the panorama as a medium will be discussed, as will as issues of viewing and gazing onto a site.

The concept of the 'wrong place' is introduced in Chapter 3 as a means to frame the discussion around the work *Circumnavigating the Great Divide*, a panoramic film of Table Mountain and Table Bay projected on Robben Island, alternating with another panoramic film of Robben Island projected on the mainland. As one place is transplanted into another through a site-specific intervention, the concept of the 'wrong place' is of relevance here.

Chapter 4 largely deals with the concept of when does a 'space' become a 'place'. This chapter will illustrate this through discussions of the psycho-geographical sense attached to a place due to the history or memory of that place. The wrought history of the South African landscape, as illustrating division and its colonial and Apartheid history, will be discussed here.

The conclusion will discuss the relationship between the disciplines of sculpture and photography, particularly the use of photography as a documentation tool in site/time-specific artworks. In 'situations', with the artwork being temporary and ephemeral, the only evidence of the artwork's existence would be in the documentation material. Thus in certain scenarios, it is questionable whether the actual artwork resides in the 'situation' or in the photographic record. With the art object no longer in play here, and the photographic image being a residual material of the art object's existence, the art object moves from the realm of physical representation to the realm of sublime representation and presents a conceptual vanishing point.

Chapter 1 – Sculpture: A Re-Definition

Art - as an act of Erasure

*The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth –
it is the truth which conceals that there is none.*

The simulacrum is true.

- Ecclesiastes⁹

Some years ago the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1929 – 2007) asked the all-important question ‘Why does the World Trade Centre have two towers?’ (Baudrillard 1988: 143). Ironically, in almost prophetic fashion as if foreseeing the impending September 11th disaster, he answered his own query in saying that the twin towers are ‘perfect parallelepipeds’, whose smooth surfaces mirror each other, thus cancelling out distinction or difference and are thus by its copy, simulacrum or reflection – or very nature of being – self-cancelling (Baudrillard 1994: 16&32). The twin towers are, in both their life span and in their post-mortem state, epitomes of an act of erasure. In the wake of the September 11th tragedy, the German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928 -2007) curiously and absurdly spoke of the World Trade Centre’s destruction as ‘the greatest work of art imaginable’¹⁰ ‘great’ in its precision in long-term planning, organization and execution (Hilferty 2001: 2). He further went on to say that it was ‘great’ as in one single almost inconceivable act and unrehearsed performance an objective had been achieved, an objective that one

⁹ Quote from: Baudrillard, J. 2001. *Selected Writings*. Cambridge: Polity. 169. Additionally it is important to mention that Baudrillard in his original French text noted the quotation as fictitiously derived from Ecclesiastes, thus the quotation is an illustration of simulacrum. This is referred to in: Toll, W. c.2003. ‘Notes on Jean Baudrillard’s “The Precession of Simulation”.’ *Literature* 446. [Online]. Available: http://www.unca.edu/~ekatz/literature_446_toll2.htm. Last Accessed: 18 August 2004. The side note, regarding the quotation, is not cited in the above-mentioned English translation of *Selected Writings*. The translator Jacques Mourrain of this edition stated in the prefaced *Notes on the Translation* (viii) that:

... Baudrillard rarely provides full citations in his own notes. The editor and translators have attempted to complete the citation, but in some cases this has proven impossible ...

¹⁰ A similar reference was made to these texts in: Diken, B. 2001. ‘Immigration, Multiculturalism and Post Politics after “Nine Eleven”.’ *Third Text*. 57: 3-22.

could strive a lifetime to accomplish (Hilferty 2001: 1)¹¹. However, absurdity aside, if the destruction of the World Trade Centre can be seen as a work of art, one inevitably must ask the question, how could *art* come to be known as this? Or could an act of erasure be art¹²?

Sculpture - From the Monumental Style to Anti-Form (A Brief Synopsis)

Over the past century, our perception of 'What is Art?'¹³ has been repeatedly and incessantly re-defined. The French writer Charles Péguy (1873 -1914) declared in 1913 that 'the world has changed less since the time of Jesus Christ than it has in the last thirty years'. This statement was made with reference to the Industrial Revolution, world events, methods of manufacture and construction, cultural production and so on. Additionally, this statement also referred to developments within the visual arts (Hughes 1981: 9). Rosalind E. Krauss (1941 -) went on further to state in 1979, with particular reference to the tradition of sculpture, in an essay entitled *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*, (1979) that:

¹¹ From the outset there was a huge public outcry about Stockhausen's remarks concerning the September 11th disaster, which he uttered at a press conference in Hamburg on 18 September 2001. As a result two concerts scheduled for the following Tuesday and Wednesday, as part of the *Hamburg Music Festival*, were cancelled. Stockhausen repeatedly insisted he had been quoted out of context, that his reference was made with direct regard to the process of art making and performance. He was quoted as saying the following:

What has happened is – now you all have to turn your brains around – the greatest work of art there has ever been. That minds could achieve in one act, which we in music cannot even dream of, that people rehearse like crazy for ten years, totally frantically for one concert, and then die. This is the greatest possible work of art in the entire cosmos. Imagine what has happened there. There are people who are so concentrated on one performance, and then 5000 are chased into the Afterlife, in one moment. This I could not do. Compared to this, we are nothing as composers ...

Hilferty, R. 2001. 'The Greatest Work of Art in the Entire Cosmos'. *Andante*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.andante.com/article/print.cfm?id=14377&varticletype=EDIT>. Last Accessed: 5 August 2004.

¹² This reference to 'art' here refers to the creation of something of beauty, not specifically related to any discipline such as painting or sculpture. If 'art' refers to something that is created, it seems strange that it be attached to something that is destroyed as mentioned in that passage.

¹³ This is framed as a philosophical query, as discussed in: Barnes, A. & M. Kelly 1998. 'Definition of Art'. *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. 1:511-513.

Over the last ten years rather surprising things have come to be called sculpture: narrow corridors with TV monitors at the ends; large photographs documenting country hikes; mirrors placed at strange angles in ordinary rooms; temporary lines cut into the floor of the desert. Nothing, it would seem, could possibly give to such a motley of effort the right lay claim to whatever one might mean by the category of sculpture. Unless, that is, the category can be made to become almost infinitely malleable. [...]

As the 1960s began to lengthen into the 1970s and 'sculpture' began to be piles of thread waste on the floor or sawed redwood timbers rolled into the gallery, or tons of earth excavated from the desert, or stockades of logs surrounded by firepits, the word *sculpture* became harder to pronounce – but not really that much harder. (Krauss 1998: 281-282)

In understanding the dramatic shifts in the categorising of 'What is Sculpture?'¹⁴ in the last century, one needs to illustrate the move away from the traditional sculptural object to other forms of sculptural engagement like the installation and site-specific works mentioned in the extract above. One of the traditional functions of sculpture was that it was explicitly attached to the monument/memorial. As Krauss posits, it served as a 'marker' of a specific time, place or historical event, such as Gianlorenzo Bernini's (1598 – 1680) sculpture of the *Conversion of Constantine* (1664 -1670) (fig.1&2) positioned at the base of the Vatican staircase, linking the St Peter's Cathedral with the papal seat of power (a historically significant sculpture as it marked the birth of the Catholic Church) (Krauss 1998: 286). It was through the sculptural base or plinth that a sculpture rooted itself to a specific place or site (Krauss 1998: 288). Thus the removal or erasure of the sculptural base or plinth at the outset of the last century by Constantin Brancusi's (1876 – 1957) *Endless Columns* (1918) (fig.3&4), signalled and demanded a re-definition of sculpture, as it presented the scenario of a self-supporting and 'site-less' sculpture by absorbing the base. This, along with the Marcel Duchamp's (1887 – 1968) readymade, has been celebrated as one of the most influential creations/innovations of the last century, with its

¹⁴ Please note again, this framing is in keeping with traditional wording of philosophical arguments.

importance only being acknowledged in the last fifty years (Hulten 1993: 16) and changing the perception of the sculptural medium for decades to come. Duchamp, when asked in conversation with Arturo Schwarz in 1954, whether the *Bicycle Wheel* (1913) (fig.5) was his first readymade, replied 'not even Ready made', and hesitantly added the date '1913' (Schwarz 1969: 442). The *Bicycle Wheel* was Duchamp's response to the Cubist collages of Pablo Picasso (1881 - 1973) and Georges Braque (1882 -1963), using the fragments and detritus of the everyday to provide a less illusory perspective, and a more 'truthful' rendering of life (Hulten 1993: 15). Therefore, one can deduce that the bicycle wheel on a kitchen stool is a hybrid art object: a collage-sculpture-readymade (Hulten 1993: 16) with much in common with Brancusi's *Endless Columns*. The found object or the 'readymade' as Marcel Duchamp termed it, was his means of desecrating art, stripping it of its aura and sacredness, making it accessible and touchable (Hulten 1993: 21-22). It was the 'dematerialisation' of the art object as Lucy Lippard (1937 -) referred to it in 1973 (Lippard 1973). Thus, through Duchamp's inception, did artists (such as Jasper Johns, Joseph Kosuth, Joseph Beuys and others) make use of the found object, particularly during the Conceptual art movement of the 1960s.

Starting in the mid 1960s there was a diverse range of activities that fall under the rubric of what later would be known as Conceptual art (also known as Idea or Information art), namely Body art, Performance art, Land/Environmental art, Minimalist art, Video art and Installation art (Smith 1997: 256). Central to these creative productions was that the 'idea' or 'concept' behind the work was more important than the technical/creative skill of the artist. Additionally, these works were produced in a large range of materials and media, which included texts, maps, diagrams, film and video (Godfrey 1996: 509) and incorporated everyday, commonplace materials, rather than those that were usually attached to particular artistic disciplines, reiterating Conceptual art's purpose of dematerialising the art object. Particularly with Installation art there was an apparent shift from the fixed autonomous art object, this with specific regard to sculpture. Precedents of Installation art can be traced to the Dada and Surrealist exhibitions of the early 20th

century and the 'environments' and 'Happenings' of the Fluxus movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s (Gonzalez 1998: 503). Initially, installation referred to the process of arranging artworks in a gallery space, though currently it has come to represent a definite type of art-making where separate elements arranged temporarily in a given space can be viewed as a single work. Often these works are known as site-specific, as they cannot be reproduced elsewhere (Godfrey 1996: 505) and the space becomes an integral part of the artwork as it is incorporated into the artwork itself, thus possessing qualities similar to Land/Environment art.

It has been said that Installation art stemmed from the intermixing of materials that was already evident in Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque's Cubist collage. The artist Allan Kaprow (1927 - 2006) and the curator William C. Seitz (1914 - 1974) maintain that this was the 'destruction of the pictorial space', which in turn would lead to two-dimensional relief, three dimensional assemblage and eventually to the moving away of the artwork from the wall into whole rooms and architectural spaces (Gonzales 1998: 504). If this is so, it is imperative to ask what happened to the sculptural object within the Installation art context. The sculptural object took on a transitory, weightless quality by either being suspended or consisting of numerous components arranged about the space, this in itself being incongruous to the traditional nature of sculpture. Much of this weightless quality of the sculptural object within an installation space can be seen in the work of the sculptor Eva Hesse (1936 - 1970) (*fig.6*), where weightlessness is also exemplified by the use of non-traditional sculptural materials of rope, jute, cord, plastic tubing, papier-mâché and hessian. Hesse manages to take the weight out of sculpture, sculpture as a discipline that has over the centuries been concerned with mass and being rooted in one particular space or place. Hesse's use of these non-traditional materials has much in common with the Italian art movement Arte Povera, meaning 'Poor Art', where mud, twigs, cloth, rags, paper, felt and cement were combined to try and fuse nature and culture as a reflection of contemporary life in the 1970s (Godfrey 1996: 508). In relation to traditional sculpture this perplexes the notion of the sculpture bound to a specific space and being imbued in that it has weight. This was a defining moment,

the concept of anti-form came into play and emancipated sculpture from being entrenched in Modernist/formalist aesthetics of consisting of harmony of form and line, of being a three-dimensional solid/weighty form or of being solely object based. It also marked the impoverishment of materials, of sculpture not being entirely associated with precious metals and stone. Claes Oldenburg's (1929 -) *Giant Soft Fan* (1967) (fig.7) and his other soft sculptures (fig.8) are typical examples of the materialisation of the anti-form ideology (Morris 1993: 46-47). However, the anti-form ideology in itself is an iconoclastic act, disregarding all that came before it. It is essentially the destruction of form. This destruction of form can manifest in other ways, as in the reflected image of an object or landscape in a mirror or reflective surface. As the form in the mirror might be subjected to distortion and also that the form will exist in the mirror temporarily, there is a further destruction of form.

In 1978 Dan Graham (1942 -) produced a work entitled *Two Adjacent Pavilions* (1978-1982) (fig.9), which has an uncanny visual resemblance to the World Trade Centre's twin towers. The work consisted of two identical mirrored cubed forms, made of two-way reflective glass on a steel framework/support almost 2m x 2m in dimension, and was first exhibited at Documenta 7 in 1982, in a wooded area along the Kleine Fulga River (Graham 1993a: 265). The historical precedents of *Two Adjacent Pavilions* are evident in other architectural structures, like the rustic hut, the nineteenth century gazebo, temporary pavilions constructed by the De Stijl or architects for major expositions and the present-day bus shelter. The reflective glass of the work makes direct reference to the modern-day city high-rise office building, usually made from transparent glass, which enables viewing from within as well as from outside (Graham 1993a: 264), and thus the dynamics of the inner workings of the company can be viewed by passers-by on the street. The building would be open to the natural world outside, the light, sun and sky, but simultaneously shut off from the exterior, in that the exterior environment would be reflected on its surface. Glass, as an architectural building feature stemmed from the late nineteenth century Crystal Palace that housed the trade expositions and botanical exhibits in London. This was later incorporated into modern building design in America, at the turn of

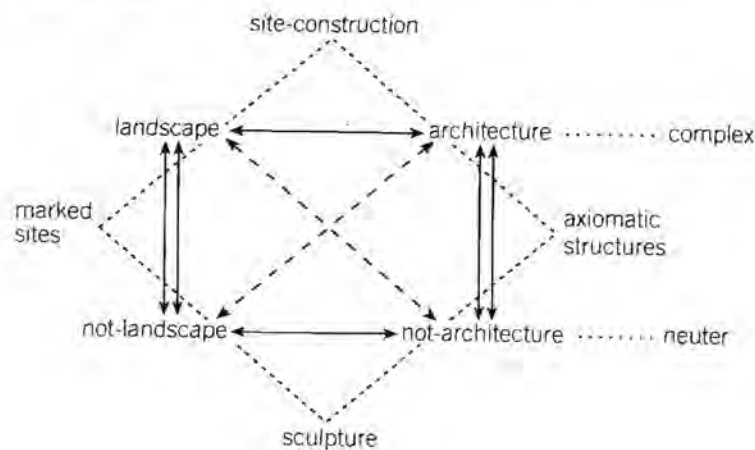
the last century, with the inclusion of glass-roofed atriums in office buildings such as the *Bradbury Building* (1893) (fig.10) by George Wyman (c.1860 - 1900) and the *Larkin Building* (1904) (fig.11) by Frank Lloyd Wright (1867 -1959) (Graham 1993b: 271). The glass-roofed Paris arcades built in the 1830s serve as the earliest instance of glass incorporated into building design, with interior streets being produced purely for shopping purposes and for the show of wares. This heralded the department store and later the shopping mall (Graham 1993b: 268).

However, Dan Graham's *Two Adjacent Pavilions* is not the sole architectonic-like art structure that has a resemblance to adjacent glass buildings like the World Trade Centre. Gordon Matta-Clark's (1945 - 1978) *Splitting* (1974) and Rachel Whiteread's (1963 -) *House* (1993 - 1994 R.I.P.) (fig.12) make similar references to it. In *Splitting* (fig.13) Matta-Clark literally split a two storey wooden frame house (Lee 2000: x), and in doing so created two separate forms that seemed to be identical in appearance. Whiteread's *House* (Lingwood (ed.) 1995) is an embodiment of both the inside and the outside, in that the piece cannot exist without the positive space/solid space of the walls, staircases and windows that presented the mould for the casting of the negative space, which eventually becomes the artwork and ironically the new positive space. This presents a dualism between inside and outside, positive and negative, in that they can only exist as a result of the presence of the other, and thereby present an inter-changeable exchange with one another. They are thus reflective of each other. If they are reflective it essentially means they are self-cancelling of each other, and exact copies of each other. Both *Splitting* and *House* functioned in the tradition of monumental sculpture, but more so as an unintentional monument, as they both stood witness to housing redevelopment projects of their time and are also classified as being site-specific artworks. Even though these works resemble architecture, they do not function as architecture. Rosalind E. Krauss noted this very point by saying:

But it would probably be more accurate to say of the work that one found in the early sixties that sculpture had entered a categorical no-man's-land: it was what

was on or in front of a building that was not a building, or what was in a landscape that was not a landscape. (Krauss 1998: 289)

Thus sculpture can be seen as not-architecture and not-landscape, and inversely not-architecture could be classified as landscape and not-landscape as architecture (Krauss 1998: 290-291). Krauss expounded further that a complex scenario in terms of classification would occur in cases where both landscape and architecture were visibly evident as in labyrinths and mazes, Japanese gardens and similar instances (Krauss 1998: 292). She presented this diagram to illustrate 'the expanded field of sculpture' as she coined it:



Krauss suggests that these sculptures are ambiguous structures, as one cannot classify them as either landscape or architecture. Nevertheless, there is an element of 'doubling' that occurs, in that the sculpture that appears to be architecture or a landscape acts as a copy or is recognisable as architecture/landscape. Thus, in a conceptual way it erases or stands-in for that which it is imitating or copying.

Further, with particular reference to sculpture, erasure can be seen as a mode of working, as one is constantly eliminating and simplifying in the production process. Sculpture, within the traditional production process, has always existed in two veins: firstly as a process of eliminating/removing by carving rock/wood into a form and secondly as an additive-type of art, creating a form by adding to it, putting layer upon layer or adding section by section, such as clay forms for casting, several

components being used to create a complete constructed work. Within traditional sculptural processes there is a procedure of 'mirroring' to create the end product, casting from a positive form creates a mould, which is the inverse and impression of the original form. The moulds, when put together, create a void or empty space where the form existed, like an erased form and then eventually these 'forms' produced within the process are discarded. Thus to speak of the use of 'erasure' as a mode of production is not an absurd notion.

Reflection and Simulacra

The Austrian psychoanalyst Otto Rank (1884 -1939) in 1914 explored the notion of the 'double' with regard to reflections in mirrors, to cast shadows and to the body coexisting with the soul. He concluded that the 'double' ensured an eternal life for that which was reflected or shadow cast, as in the case of the body, the soul ensured that the body had an immortal extension beyond death (Morris 2004). With regard to the uncanny and reflections, the chance and surprise encounter with one's own reflection in commonplace objects like a shop window could be interpreted as an uncanny experience. Within the history of art, there are numerous references to the notion of reflection. Pliny - the ancient encyclopaedist - relates a story of a painting contest between the artists Zeuxis and Parrhasios, in the 4th century BC, where the artists were obliged to paint a still life as mimetically as possible. Parrhasios won by painting a curtain so realistically, that Zeuxis attempted to draw back the curtain to reveal - the then unknown - absent still life behind it (Godfrey 1998: 19). Arab philosophers recount another interpretation of the legend, which describes how the winning artist polished the opposite wall to his opponent's mural till it shone like a mirror and thus reflected the other's mural (Oguiibe 2001: 10). Thus, with regard to the above, a painting in some omnipresent form does exist in a mirror, in that it also has a frame (Benjamin 1991: 17). The same can be said of shop-front windows and of the glass panels of high-rise buildings, as they are mounted on a steel framework. Thus one could deduce that one hypothesis on reflection is that an artwork of sorts exists within a mirror.

If an artwork exists within a mirror, what is the very nature of reflection? Is it mimesis - that which art has defined as an imitation of the real/life, a representation/reproduction of the real in Platonic terms? Moreover, artists who dabbled in mimesis were described as tricksters and frauds in Book X of Plato's (428/427 BC - 348/347 BC) *The Republic* as a result of producing these representations from life (Benjamin 1991: 19). In writing *The Republic*, Plato's main objective was to outline the criterion of his proposed ideal state, and to stipulate what he perceived as requirements of a just state and its just citizens, thus he makes the assertion that all poets and painters should be banished from the state, as they deal with imitations of reality (Minor 1994: 31). This prompts the question: is a reflection a mere imitation/representation or is it an exact copy of the real? As Andrew Benjamin (1952 -) states:

The mirror reflects. It reflects more than that which is reflected in it. It takes what is outside and in providing the surface and frame can hold and thus re-present it inside. Reflection and representation are not reducible of each other. None the less the mirror enacts the temporal simultaneity and exactness of production - of reproduction - such that it functions as almost the ideal type of representation. The mirror mirrors the perfection underpinning the ontological aspirations of representation. It constructs the perfect homological relation between inside and outside. What appears within the frame is the 'same' as that which is outside it. And yet one is reflection of the other. (Benjamin 1991: 15)

One may therefore deduce that the reflection is an ideal representation. However, what would the implications be if one were to photographically document a reflection? Would that documentation still refer to the ideal, or would it be referred to as a simulation of the real reflection? In the 1970s and early 1980s Jean Baudrillard developed a whole social theory around the notion of simulation and simulacra. Baudrillard speaks of the 'cybernetization' of society, where simulacrum is a copy of the real. With the proliferation of the copy of the real in the mass media, the cybernetic image takes on an independent status divorced from the real and reality

and in a reversal, this cybernetic image is considered 'real' by audiences, through its reverberation in the media (Smith 2001: 368). Thus a simulacrum can be perceived as 'real', as it is axiomatic in nature. Baudrillard insists that this brings about a society that is no longer governed by the logic of representation, but instead produces a culture of hyper-reality characterised by reproductions of the real (Moos 2001: 369). Thus the simulacrum cancels out the real, which in turn becomes an act of erasure.

The 'City as a Museum'

Further, to return to the reflection, what could the reflected surface imply? As we previously determined, one hypothesis for reflection could be that a painting could exist within a mirror as it has a frame. What does that imply with regard to other reflected surfaces, like shop front windows and high-rise glass buildings? If a shop front window - in that it reflects - presents an image, then would not consecutive shop front windows on a city street present a series of images? This presents the interesting scenario of the city street being an open-air outdoor museum/gallery, and of the city being a living museum. The concept of 'the city as museum' is no novel idea. Napoleon had envisaged that he could convert Paris into a museum. With the existing city monuments and the construction of new ones¹⁵, Paris would have become a never-ending exhibition to educate and remind the masses of France's conquests and historical accomplishments (Graham 1993c: 250). Current day architects like the Belgian Leon Krier (1946 -) and the Italian Aldo Rossi (1931 - 1997), have requested the return to the pre-capitalist and pre-industrialised city (Graham 1993c: 244-245; 256) as posed by the late nineteenth century Viennese city planner Camillo Sitte (1843 - 1903) (Graham 1993c: 263)¹⁶. Rossi envisioned a move away from Modernist architecture of separate buildings, where space occupied by

¹⁵ The building of the Arc de Triomphe is a good example of this.

¹⁶ Camillo Sitte researched the European city in Greek and Roman times and deduced through his studies that there was not much differentiation in architectural styles between that of a theatre, house, temple, public square etc. (See Graham 1993c: 263). Camillo Sitte's findings were recorded in: Sitte, C. 1965. *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (translated by George R. Collins & Christiane Crasemann Collins). New York: Random House.

an isolated building was seen as 'positive space' and that which surrounded it as 'negative space'. Rossi's vision would erase the isolated separate building, and instead speak about the building within the context of the whole city, where a dialectic would be formed between a building and the space that surrounded them. Thus in the whole city streets, piazzas, walls, arcades and other features would be viewed as reflection of their building counterparts (Graham 1993c: 256). In art theoretical terms this makes similar references to Installation art, where the city with its particular arrangement of buildings and streets can be seen as a sculptural installation in its entirety. The artist Ilya Kabakov (1933 -), renowned for his installation work, speaks of the discipline in terms of being more aptly titled 'total installation'. The notion of 'total installation' is that the installation is not simply the arrangement of specific objects within a given space which is seen as a whole complete work, but the space which exists around the complete artwork is regarded as being integral to the installation and its response (Podoroga 2003: 345). It places the viewer within the 'frame' of the artwork, as in Installation art the viewer is not at a viewing distance from the artwork as with traditional painting and sculpture. Benjamin Weil stated that current artistic practices have developed mostly in the form of creating environments. The viewer/spectator is required to move about and within the artwork as opposed to viewing art (as painting and traditional sculpture) in a solitary stationary position. This movement about and within the artwork induces a complete bodily and sensory experience of the work of art, and, as a result situates the viewer within the artwork 'frame' (Gonzales 1998: 507).

In the event of photographically documenting reflections, the above paradigm shifts back to the artist as maker of images, and not the city as museum. When one photographically documents a reflection of say a glass window, that which is inside and outside fuse into one picture plane in the photograph. As one is recording that which is reflected on the glass surface as well as that which is seen through the glass, it presents itself as a natural montage. In the photograph, which is the end product of the documentation process, the artist/photographer attempts to fix the accidental world or a chance encounter in some absolute concrete form. What is documented

can be considered as *mise-en-scènes*, which the artist encounters and documents while moving through an urban space. This notion of *mise-en-scènes* would be particularly congruous with documenting an installation, as setting and environment are vital here. Rosalind E. Krauss spoke of the dual relationship between photography and contemporary sculpture and this is prevalent in this regard. With particular reference to site-specific/construction artwork, Krauss states that works like Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1969-1970) (fig.14), Michael Heizer's (1944 -) *Double Negative* (1969), Christo's (1935 -) *Running Fence* (1976), Mary Miss's (1944 -) *Perimeters/Pavilions Decoys* (1977-1978) (fig.15&16) and so on, are impermanent interventions/interferences upon the landscape. Yet they also exist as temporary marked sites. However, through the photographic documentation of these works, they acquire a somewhat permanent existence (Krauss 1998: 296-297), as do the locations that are intervened with. Here, the photograph serves as a constant reminder of the intervention carried out to that specific site, location or landscape, at that particular point in time.

Much of my current production process has focused around the idea of mirroring processes and the documenting of natural mirroring processes like reflections. Like the series entitled '*I swear that mountain is following me*'¹⁷ (see catalogue), the work consists of over 800 images documenting reflections of Table Mountain in shop front windows in the Cape Town central business district, illustrating the indelible force of the mountain, as a constant to locate and orientate oneself within Cape Town. This project has been extended to other reflected surfaces such as water, for instance the moat at the Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town. The assertion here is trying to fix the accidental world or chance encounter in some concrete form like in a photograph, or the photograph can be seen as documenting a natural artwork, congruous to what

¹⁷ This is a photographic series I began in 2003 as a sideline project to my sculptural projects during my final year of a BA Fine Art degree at the Michaelis School of Fine Art. I eventually used some of the imagery for the *Theory and Practice of Art IV* course for a fictitious artist catalogue project. I used the pseudonym 'Ana Davies'. Largely, this theory project discussed the nature of the reflective surface in relation to the city. The above suggests that the photograph is documentation of a site-specific installation.

was discussed under 'the city as museum'. These reflections almost present themselves as natural artistic/sculptural interventions on the urban landscape. The reflection of the mountain in the moat suggests that the mountain has fallen into the moat, implying a metaphorical erasure of the mountain from the Cape Town skyline, as it exists in its reflection, and not in its natural domain. The reflection also presents the mountain at arm's length, which has curious connotations, like touching the hand of God. Or the artist literally can play God, by re-shaping and re-defining the landscape through digital means, as in Stephen Hobbs' (1972 -) work *Erasing Roadmarkings, Cnrs Bezuidenhout and Jeppe Streets* (c.1998) (fig.17). Here digital technology erases the artist's limitations to a certain extent.

The twin project to '*I swear that mountain is following me*' is a series entitled '*I swear that island is there*' (see catalogue). This consists of a series of reflections of Robben Island in shop front windows along the western coastline of the Western Cape. The significance of this project is that the island seems to hover on the horizon line and is often not visible from the shoreline, or its memory is best to be forgotten, as a result of its entrenched history. Another work includes mirror panels on top of Table Mountain reflecting Robben Island, which is usually seen from a distance on top of the mountain, and not at arm's length for the viewer to be properly confronted with the reality of it. These works make direct references to Robert Morris' (1931 -) work *Untitled (mirrored boxes)* (1965) and Richard Long's (1945 -) sculptural/photographic works like *A Line in Japan* (1979). Here, in a photograph, Long records a sculpture he made from rocks he found while climbing a Japanese mountain. The sculpture remains as residue of his walk and the photograph as trace and residue of the sculpture, as the sculpture is ephemeral (Godfrey 1996: 274). This presents a similar mode of working, as the interventions will have an ephemeral quality, as they will only exist in documentation form. Similarly the documentation of the reflection series will have an ephemeral element as a reflection is ever changing, even when documenting the same window the image is different, depending on different window displays, passers-by, bystanders, weather and so on. Each intervention is like capturing one singular and solitary moment in time.

'Death by Geography' and Derrida's 'Erasure'

To adopt and adapt a phrase coined by Lucy R. Lippard, 'Death by Geography'¹⁸ relates to the 'death' of a place or community due to the location of that place. Here the mere proximity, geography or location of a given place is the deciding factor in the reason for its destruction (Lippard c.1997: 169). These sites can be referred to as 'marked sites'. The World Trade Centre due to its very location in the heart of America's finance capital New York and its structure - which was a totem-like structure for capitalist free trade - made it a vulnerable site. Its very location was physically and visually marked on a map of New York, before becoming a marked site and eventually erased. The same could be said for District Six. Its mere proximity to Cape Town's CBD made it vulnerable to the Group Areas Act (Ordinance no.41 1950) with the first forced removals seen in 1966, after it was declared a slum area (Seppie 1998: 385). District Six's 'death' was determined by its 'geography'. All that remains of District Six (renamed Zonnebloem) are a few houses, which escaped bulldozing, and an indelible 'scar' on the slopes of Table Mountain (Seppie 1998: 385). In both these instances the landscape had been altered by an act of erasure. The French theorist, Jacques Derrida (1930 - 2004), used the notion of erasure as a typographical and editing tool within his Deconstruction theory. By marking certain key words or terms within a given text with a large capital X (X the symbol for erasure)¹⁹ these words were highlighted as possibly being problematic in interpretation. Here Derrida was acknowledging the numerous associated meanings attached to these words within the use of everyday language, and how they are often incongruous to the word/terms real meaning. Thus words marked with X were considered 'under erasure' (*sous rature*), because it was feared

¹⁸ Lippard's original coining of the term "Death by Geography" stemmed from her investigations into environmental issues, of how usually poor low income communities and Native American communities were effected and depilated as a result of industrial plants in close proximity to their towns. For further reading, see chapter six of: Lippard, L. R. c.1997. *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicentred society*. New York: New Press.

¹⁹ Jacques Derrida adopted the notion of marking words as 'X' from the philosopher Martin Heidegger, one of Derrida's forerunners. For further reading see: Strydom, M. & V. E. Taylor, C.E. Winqvist (eds) 2001. 'Erasure'. *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*. London, New York: Routledge. 113-114.

that if these words remained they would be misinterpreted by the reader (Stryck 2001: 113).

The symbol X, as a marking device, is evident in other instances, like the marking of locations on a land or street map, as a means to orientate oneself. X is used as a marker for targeted sites on aerial maps for air bombardment campaigns, as seen from the first inclusion of aircraft in modern warfare. X as a symbol for erasure takes on a more physical meaning here - it symbolises that which is targeted and that targeted site's possible destruction. With the earlier examples of the World Trade Centre and District Six, they were initially targeted sites marked X and in their post-mortem state they are spoken about in terms of 'ground zero'. It is strange how mathematical variables like X and 0 become markers of a geographical site. This presents itself like a mathematical equation, the sum of X and 0 is:

$$X + 0 = X$$

$$0 = X - X$$

$$0 = 0$$

Thus they become self-cancelling of each other, as one cannot exist without the other. They appear as 'zero-sum signs', to use a phrase coined by Jean Baudrillard (Baudrillard 1994: 16, 22). Here presence and absence are intrinsically linked, as one denotes the other. Martin Heidegger's (1889 - 1976) notion of erasure was entrenched in presence and absence, which was directed at the metaphysics of presence. Heidegger tried to illustrate in his writings that which was 'forgotten' or 'concealed' in the history of metaphysics, and that the first notion that would go under erasure is the idea of being/existence itself, as something that was present had become absent (Stryck 2001:114). This scenario presents itself as the perfect crime, with the self-cancelling of each other without a trace. Strangely enough, if you fly over Robben Island (*fig.18*), you will notice that the two runways on the island intersect to form a perfect 'X'. This suggests another instance of a site being targeted.

Chapter 2 - On Looking Both Ways (*and that space between*)²⁰

Concept - On Looking Both Ways

Then, the field of vision assumes a peculiar structure. In the center there is the favored object, fixed by our gaze: its form seems clear, perfectly defined in all its details. Around the object, as far as the limits of the field of vision, there is a zone we do not look at, but which, nevertheless, we see with an indirect, vague, inattentive vision ... If it is not something to which we are accustomed, we cannot say what it is, exactly, that we see in this indirect vision.

- Ortega Y Gasset (Morris 1992: 868 - 9)

Our Attempt at focussing must give way to the vacant all-embracing stare.

- Anton Ehrenzweig (Morris 1992: 869)

Standing on the edge of the precipice presents a reflective or apprehensive mode, either to look forward in anticipation of the view or to look (and tread) backwards in trepidation of the edge. In both art history and literature alike there is a plethora of imagery depicting the lone figure standing on the edge of a precipice, transfixed by the gaze and collating the view. The German Romantic painter Casper David Friedrich's (1774 - 1840) painting *The Wanderer above a Sea of Mists* (1818) (fig.19) is emblematic of this transfixion with the view and mixed apprehension of the cliff drop. As Werner Hofman expounds in his monograph *Casper David Friedrich*:

The Wanderer, a Rousseauque *promeneur solitaire*, has come to the physical end of his explorations. He cannot go a step further; only his thoughts can carry him from 'here' to an uncertain 'there', from the height he has reached into the inaccessible

²⁰ The title is a variation on the name of the exhibition *Looking Both Ways: art of the contemporary African Diaspora* curated by Laurie Ann Farrell at the New York Museum for African Art held 14 November 2003 - 1 March 2005. The exhibition focused on work by artists of the African Diaspora living abroad. These concerns do not feature in this paper. See: Farrell, L. A. 2003. *Looking Both Ways: art of the contemporary African Diaspora*. New York: Museum of African Art. The concept of 'looking both ways' with regard to art production is further explained below. It also refers to modes of observation, as the cautionary look left, right and left again when crossing the road. Additionally, in this text, it is also refers to looking from one point to another.

distance. He stands on the brink, confronting a void which might just as easily fulfil expectations as arouse fears. (2000: 9)

It is as if Casper David Friedrich's 'Wanderer' has a sublime experience. A sublime experience as described by the German Philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) is an ambiguous emotion involving both the feeling of fear/dread and great pleasure as depicted above (Lyotard 1992 [1982]: 1008).

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's (1896 -1940) novel *The Great Gatsby* (1926) a similar preoccupation with the gaze on geographical space is revealed when Fitzgerald's protagonist Jay Gatsby is clandestinely observed gazing at a green light on the end of a dock across the New York Sound. Here what Fitzgerald presents is not a vacant stare but one steeped in longing and desire as the green light is at the end of Daisy Buchanan's dock (Gatsby's love interest in the novel) (Fitzgerald 1967 [1926]: 21-22 & 156). Here the geographical space or location has manifested and made concrete that very desire.

Over the centuries desire or envy has been attached to coveted tangible objects, and not necessarily to what are considered non-objects like a place, space or location. However, within present day terms this is no longer the status quo, as illustrated in the estate agents' mantra 'location, location, location'. Location has become the new enviable 'thing' thus dismissing the earlier perception. As Barry Curtis and Claire Pajaczkowska relate, 'location envy' has often been the 'blind spot' with regard to understanding the very nature of desire. Furthermore, they state that location has become a tangible 'object' either by accessing it through a 'fantasy realm' as a desired destination to travel to, or by physically actually travelling to that much desired location (Curtis & Pajaczkowska 2002: 23). The concept of armchair travel is further illustrative of this. However, often one's movement towards a location is first determined and accompanied by a process of gazing from a distance and then possibly by moving/travelling towards it (Curtis & Pajaczkowska 2002: 24), either physically or through a flight of fancy. The very experience of a location is imbued in

a process of the experience of seeing and 'looking both ways'²¹ at a site. One may have a perceived notion of a place, and this is altered through the actual physical experience of that place. Thus one experiences the place by 'looking both ways'. Alternatively one experiences a place as a landscape of the mind/physical space, which is dissimilar to the actual experience of a place. In effect this has become a meta-experience. The artist Robert Morris reiterates this notion of a perceived or physical space in an essay entitled 'The Present Tense of Space' (1978) where he explains that:

Location and point of view are constantly shifting at the apex of time's flow. Language, memory, reflection, and fantasy may or may not accompany the experience. Shift to recall of the spatial experience: objects and static views flash in the mind's space. A series of stills replaces the filmic real-time experience. Shift the focus from the exterior to environment to that of the self in a spatial situation [...] Objects are obviously experienced in memory as well as in the present ...
(Suderburg 2000: 1)²²

Location, Location, Location (Where the Art's at)

A single signpost (*fig.20*) marks the road leading to Rozel Point, Great Salt Lake (Utah) indicating the direction to Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970). Some thirty-five years later tourists and sightseers alike, by enlisting for a 'Tour of the Monuments of Great American Void', still flock to the site of Smithson's monumental earthwork of basalt rock forming a coil upon the lake's surface. More so since the *Spiral Jetty's* re-mergence to the lake's surface in 2002, brought about as a

²¹ The concept of 'looking both ways' is used throughout this chapter as a means to illustrate perceived notions of a place and location and how these may alter due to the physical engagement with a location. In art historical terms it used to demonstrate how the knowledge of certain site-specific interventions has changed the perception or awareness of a particular site, as physical engagement with the site may perpetually recall the moment of artistic intervention. Further it is also an attempt to engage with the area beyond our field of vision and query that which we do not actually physically see.

²² Quoted in Erika Suderburg's 'Introduction' to *Space, Site, Intervention: situating installation art*. Original reference as follows: Morris, R. 1978. 'The Present Tense of Space'. *Art in America*. 66: 70 - 81.

result of five years of drought in the region (Trainor 2005: 94). In 1997 - during the *Spiral Jetty* submersion period - the British born artist/filmmaker Tacita Dean (1965 -) was drawn to this site and produced the work *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty* (1997) (fig.21), a twenty-seven minute audiotape documenting her odyssey-like journey and futile search to find and locate the *Spiral Jetty* (Godfrey 2005: 104). This project also included several photographic works combing the lake surface (Williams 1998: 88). Dean describes this work more as a travelogue than an artwork, though it is making art out of the process of searching - searching for that which is perceived to be lost (Art Gallery of New York University 2005). Here, due to the knowledge of the artwork at that particular location, Dean demonstrates how the *Spiral Jetty* and site for the staging of the artwork cannot be divorced from one another as they are intrinsically linked. Also, in doing so Dean presents a method of 'looking both ways' at the site. In that she is drawn to the site due to the knowledge of the artwork, as are those who go on the guided tours, Dean even without seeing the *Spiral Jetty* documents the site, and in doing so she has viewed the site by looking at it both ways.

Similarly, this means that 'looking both ways' can be applied in the viewing of most artworks. It is not just specific to the reception of the artwork as the viewer enables that the artwork is subjected to equivocal and multi-interpretations, so that its interpretation cannot be predetermined or fixed and is thus volatile²³. It is particularly that in the viewing of site-specific installations or interventions in environmental or urban sites that the concept and the experience of 'looking both ways' becomes multi-faceted. This concept is further conveyed by the artist collaboration team Christo and Jeanne-Claude (renowned for their 'wrapping' of objects, buildings and landscapes), specifically in their wrapping of the Pont Neuf bridge in Paris in 1985 (Chilvers 1996: 105) and more recently *The Gates* project in New York in early 2005 (Christo & Jeanne-Claude 2005). In both instances, after the interventions have been removed, the very site of the artwork becomes a place for

²³ Please refer to reception theory here. See: Holub, R.C. 1984. *Reception Theory: a critical introduction*. London: Methuen.

the viewer of mnemonic recall of the project, thus through memory enabling the viewer to look at the site both ways. Of *Pont Neuf* (fig.22) it was said that long after its 'wrapping' people still gather at the site to view the 'untainted' site in relation to the intervention (Maysles Film Productions 2004). In effect the artwork becomes literally and philosophically sighted again, and possesses an element of re-discovery that is more in tune with an archaeological find than just a site of artistic intervention. As many of these works are short-lived and ephemeral, the artworks are not just site-specific but also possess a time-specific quality. These simultaneous occurrences have now been termed a 'situation' particularly by the art historian Claire Doherty in her most recent book of compilation essays *Contemporary Art: from studio to situation* (2004).

The polish-born artist Krzysztof Wodiczko's (1943 -) work presents a similar occurrence of his work being both site and time-specific artworks and also references the notion of 'looking both ways'. This is evident largely in his early artistic production in 1980s where he used night time projections of photographic images on predominantly historical architecture, for example works like *Projection on South Africa House* (1985) (fig.23) Here upon the façade of the South African embassy in London Wodiczko projected a swastika, and by doing so made an overt comment of his opposition to the South African government apartheid ideology at that time (Barnes 1999: 495). Though this specific work does collapse time and history, in that the artwork marks and refers to a particular period in South Africa's history and acts like a time frame or marker, it also reversibly speaks of time as a constant, in that the site for the staging of the artwork still remains. In this way the site continuously becomes a place that refers back to the artwork. David Company reinstates this in his comments of *Projection on South Africa House* by saying: 'For those who actually saw the projection or who bought the card, this image became inextricably associated with the building' (2003: 117). Further the building can now be referred to as symbolic architecture, by making continuous reference back to the artwork. Here, as in the case of Tacita Dean's *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty* and Christo's *Pont Neuf*, the knowledge of the artwork at a particular site has made the artwork 'sighted'.

Location, Location, Location vs. Situation, Situation, Situation (Where Art Happens)

Nonetheless, many of the above are bound by being experiential occurrences due to the viewer and are thus reliant on the viewer. In an essay of collective artist statements entitled 'Situation Esthetics: impermanent art and the seventies audience' by Nancy Foote in the January 1980 edition of the journal *Artforum*, this practice of inclusion and particular regard of the viewer was exemplified as a concern for many of the artistic activities of the 1970s. As Foote remarks:

At the end of the 1970s many artists are dissatisfied with the exclusive posture of the traditional avant-garde and seem to be seeking ways to extend the art audience.... It could be argued that the '70s, as distinct from '60s, art is characterized more by this change in attitude toward the audience than by the change in actual forms, or even content. (Jones 2000: 332)²⁴

As demonstrated by the artworks previously mentioned, if the work is physically experienced it thus has a phenomenological quality, as being both time-specific and site-specific. This aligns with the philosopher/theorist Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1908 - 1961) writings on phenomenological 'situations'. Merleau-Ponty, as much of French phenomenology of the 1950s and 1960s, speaks of the 'body/self' being positioned/projected into an environment and only by the subject acknowledging his/herself in that space does the experience become an embodied one. By those means the experience of the body within this space becomes a 'situation', as it has a phenomenological aspect. The American sociologist Erving Goffman (1922 - 1982) went further and termed this extension of the body/self as performance (Jones 2000: 335). In applying this in relation to the experience of art, the viewer had become an active participant.

²⁴ Quoted in Amelia Jones 'The 1970s "Situation" and Recent Installation: Joseph Santarromana's Intersubjective Engagements' in *Space, Site, Intervention: situating installation art*. Original reference as follows: Foote, N. 1980. 'Situation Esthetics: impermanent art and the seventies audience'. *Artforum*. 18(5): 22 - 29.

Similarly the art critic/historian Michael Fried (1939 -)²⁵ and the artist Robert Morris²⁶ spoke of the theatricality and staging of art that presents the viewer/spectator in a 'situation' (Jones 2000: 334 - 35). In more recent years this concept of the 'situation' has been re-applied to contemporary art practice bringing to light further shifts to traditional art practice. In an essay entitled 'The New Situationists' the art historian Claire Doherty explains the move to creating 'situations' in the last decade and what specifically it encompasses. With referring to 'situated' or 'situations'²⁷ Doherty speaks of artistic activities where context often acts as the initial position of inquiry but not necessarily dominates the work (Doherty 2004b: 7). As a personification of this, Doherty draws upon the artist Francis Alÿs (1959 -) art project *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002) (fig.24&25). Here on 11 April 2002 five hundred people gathered in single file at the base of a sand dune outside Lima, Peru armed with digging utensils and moved a 16 00-foot long dune 4 inches from where it once stood. The question posed here is what is the artwork? Is it the actual event/happening, the documentation of the event, or the residual material stemming from the event like the three-screen video installation of

²⁵ Much of these deductions by the critic Michael Fried came about in his essay 'Art and Objecthood' first published in *Artforum* Summer 1967. His comment of 'theatricality' was made in response to Minimalist art of the 1960s, which he coined *literalist* art instead. This was a retort to the works and writings of Minimalist artists like Donald Judd and Robert Morris that were in opposition to Abstractionism in Modernism. Though the comment on 'theatricality' was meant derisively, in relation to the viewer experience of Minimalist art, it did provide an astute observation. See: Fried, M. 1992. 'Art and Objecthood', in: *Art in Theory 1900 - 1990: an anthology of changing ideas*. eds: C. Harrison & P. Wood. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 822 - 834.

²⁶ Robert Morris' observations on the viewer's experience of art where first stated in his 'Notes on Sculpture (Part 2)', first published in *Artforum* in October 1966. See: Morris, R. 1992 [1966]. 'Notes on Sculpture 1- 3'. in: *Art in Theory 1900 - 1990: an anthology of changing ideas*. eds: C. Harrison & P. Wood. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 813 - 822.

²⁷ Historically this can be traced from Dada's Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich to the Fluxus movements 'Happenings' of the 1950s and 1960s though much of this was born out of the Situationist International (1957 - 1972) movement's concepts of the *dérive*, *detournement* and the spectacle. This also refers to Victor Burgin's essay 'Situational Aesthetics' (1969) that was influenced by both Donald Judd and Robert Morris's writings on a phenomenological experience of art. See: Burgin, V. 1992 [1969]. 'Situational Aesthetics'. in: *Art in Theory 1900 - 1990: an anthology of changing ideas*. eds: C. Harrison & P. Wood. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 883 - 885. Many of Burgin's ideas here are appropriated by Nicolas Bourriaud in his book *Relational Aesthetics* (2002). See: Bourriaud, N. 2002. *Relational Aesthetics*. Dijon: Le presses du réel.

the work that was acquired by the Guggenheim Collection in New York or the actual anecdotes of the event by the participants that have an endless dissemination (Doherty 2004b: 8).

On where the significance of the art piece rests, Alÿs elucidates by saying that he wanted to 'de-romanticise Land art'; he further explains that:

Here, we have attempted to create a kind of Land art for the land-less, and, with the help of hundreds of people and shovels, we created a social allegory. This story is not validated by any physical trace or additional to the landscape. We shall now leave the care of our story to oral tradition.... Only in its repetition and transmission is the work actualised. (Doherty 2004b: 8)²⁸

The art historian Miwon Kwon in her book *One Place After Another: site-specific art and locational identity* describes Alÿs as one of a number of 'nomadic artists' who 'mobilise' locations (2002: 46). She further posits that this phenomenon has come about due to artists and cultural theorists' engagement with interdisciplinary practices like anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, political theory and so on. So to this extent the concept of 'site' has changed from being a rooted 'fixed' place, to one which is ever fluid due to its being moulded by socio-political and economic procedures and concerns (Kwon 2002: 10). In this situation it is the negotiation of space being shaped by time. However, the notion of mobilising site/location in itself becomes an oppositional response to the practice of site-specificity.

²⁸ Quoted in Claire Doherty 'The New Situationists' in *Contemporary Art: from studio to situation*. Original reference as follows: Alÿs, F. & A. Saul 2002. 'A Thousand Words: Francis Alÿs talks about *When Faith Moves Mountains*'. *Artforum*. 40(10): 146 -147.

Mobilisation of Site and Artist

In 1997 Daniel Buren (1938 -) stated that the word site-specific 'has become hackneyed and meaningless through use and abuse' (Buren 1997: 79)²⁹. Site-specificity was born out of the Modernism preoccupation, with regard to sculpture, to promote the autonomy of the sculptural object through its absorption of the sculpture's base or plinth to allow it to become self-supporting, portable and site-less³⁰ (Crimp 1993: 17). This led to installation and site-specific concepts of the dissemination of the art object, of the distribution of the sculpture's weight that had once kept it rooted and bound to a specific place. Ironically site-specific art (in theory) is the inverse of these Modernist efforts, by re-rooting or bounding the artwork to a site again (Crimp 1993: 17). Though with creating 'situations' that are time and site-specific or by mobilising the site as seen in Francis Alÿs's *When Faith Moves Mountains*, the site and artwork become uprooted and unbounded again.

There are aspects in 1960s and 1970s site-specific artwork that have elements of mobilisation in them, presenting movement away from the site, particularly the trace material of these works. As Miwon Kwon notes regarding 'the photographic documentation [...] the preliminary sketches and drawings, field notes, instructions on installation procedures, etc.' many of these by-products of site-specific work have now become part of museum collections, which is ironic as initially site-specific work was considered hard to 'collect' or impractical to duplicate (Kwon 2000: 47 – 48). Robert Smithson went as far as to classify his production as either 'site' or 'nonsite'. 'Nonsite' refers to natural matter that was removed from the 'site' and often exhibited in a gallery context, but still with references to the site. 'Nonsite'

²⁹ Also Quoted in Erika Suderburg's 'Introduction' to *Space, Site, Intervention: situating installation art* on page 3. Original reference as follows: Buren, D. 1997. 'Like a Palimpsest; or, The Metamorphosis of the Image'. in: *Contemporary Sculpture Projects in Münster, 1997*. eds: K. Bussmann, K. König & F. Matzner. Münster: Verlag Gerd Hatje.

³⁰ Many of these concepts of sculpture's removal and absorption of its supporting base were also expressed by Rosalind E. Krauss in her seminal essay 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field' first written in 1979. She further posits in the essay on the loss of site, the possibility of an artwork being either 'site' or 'site less' and of site being a marker of time.

would also include the by-products of the site-specific artwork (De Oliveira 1994: 33). As derivatives of his work the *Spiral Jetty* Smithson also produced a film and an essay of the same name (Ashton 1999). These 'nonsite' works both being a means to mobilise the site and a method to reach a greater audience. Tacita Dean's tribute to Smithson in *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty* also acts as a piece of 'nonsite' in mobilising the site-specific, by encouraging a dialogue between the artwork, the artist and the audience. The impermanence of many site-specific/land art pieces would also suggest the mobilisation of site, by being either impermanent structures to be removed or as in the case of Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* being at the mercy of nature.

The above discussion has established the mobilisation of the site, but what about the mobilisation of the artist? In terms of the artist this does present a quandary about the place of the production of art. With the artist becoming nomadic, where does art happen? The artist Daniel Buren has grappled with this question throughout his career, producing writings and artworks from the 1960s onwards that question the purpose of the artist's studio, often perceived as the first place of artistic production. Throughout the years he has been unyielding in producing his work *in situ* which aligns with his philosophy (that has consumed much his artistic career) of 'the desertion of the studio' (Buren 2004: 15). Much of Buren's discourse around the studio is recognising 'the studio' as often the origin or birthplace of the 'artwork' and thus the first place of 'framing' of the artwork. Over the centuries 'the studio' has not been questioned as a place of 'framing' in the same way that one would consider the positioning of an artwork in a gallery or museum. As a place of 'framing' the studio has been a neglected area, in much need of interrogation. Buren argues that the relocation of artworks from the studio to their final destination, displaces the original place of 'framing' and that the 'reframing' at the final place of installation does not take this into account (Buren 2004: 16 - 17). Thus with the shift towards producing artworks *in situ*, the artist consequently becomes a nomad/drifter/wanderer. These sentiments echo much of the Situationist International writings on the theory of the *dérive* (literally translated as 'drifting') by Guy Debord (1931 - 1994). As he expounds in 1958:

In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. (Debord 1992 [1958]: 696)³¹

What is presented above are several modes of looking at location/site as place of artistic production, with interrogations of both historical and contemporary engagements with site. Shifts in practice have been discussed to illustrate the move to phenomenological experiences of place. Primarily this oscillation from 'location' to 'situation' presents a revision of concepts of site-specificity and thus art history. Nevertheless, to negate history is to look at the present with the mind of the past, and to do so one has to engage in the activity of 'looking both ways'.

'The Eye' embodied in the Viewer/Artist

Q: Why didn't you make it larger so that it would loom over the observer?

A: I was not making a monument.

Q: Then why didn't you make it smaller so that the observer could see over the top?

A: I was not making an object.

- Tony Smith's replies to questions about his six-foot steel cube. (Morris 1992 [1966]: 816)

From the questions posed here to Tony Smith (1912 - 1980), one can discern that the observer or viewer has become a dominant factor in deciding how an artwork is received and possibly determining how it is produced. As it has been previously established, the viewer within a 'situation' has a phenomenological or existential experience of space: one of an embodied self, acknowledging the self in that

³¹ This extract is taken from the Situationist International (1957 - 1972) movement's publication *Internationale situationniste* from the section entitled 'Theory of the *Dérive*'. Guy Debord originally wrote this in 1956 but it was only published in 1958 in the 2nd edition of the *Internationale situationniste*. Twelve editions of the *Internationale situationniste* were published, where the movement's fundamental ideas of the *dérive*, *detournement* and the *spectacle* were addressed.

environment. Although the viewer's body is positioned within the frame of the artwork (as in installation and site-specific art) and the viewer has a full bodily experience, the entire experience is still governed by the practice of looking. To return to the practice of looking is to recognise the eye as an extension of the body, and the fact that the eye can travel to places that the body may be physically restricted from venturing to. The viewer within a 'situation' presents a real time presence, which adheres to concepts around the 'metaphysics of being'. Within the French philosopher Jacques Derrida's theory of 'the metaphysics of presence', primal 'truth' is equated to 'being' and being is equated to presence, which is to be true and truly naturally exist. Thus even absence can lead one to presence (existing) and to truth (Carlson 2001: 1). One of the earliest models of 'being' or announcing presence was Rene Descartes' dictum 'I think therefore I am', later to be replaced by the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's (1901 - 1981) 'I see myself seeing myself'³². In modern day terms in a surveillance-heightened society due to CCTV and security cameras, Lacan's model can extend to the following: 'I am seen and I see that I am seen' (Mirzoeff 2002: 10 - 11).

In 1976 the artist and writer Brian O'Doherty (also known as Patrick Ireland) (1935 -) shocked the art establishment by publishing his infamous 'Inside the White Cube' essays, questioning the authority of the art gallery, in the art journal *Artforum*. The gallery, or the 'White Cube' as he coined the phrase, was interrogated as to whether it was the ideal context and space for the viewing of art. Ultimately O'Doherty advocated the desertion of the gallery space. His second essay (of a series of three essays) entitled 'The Eye and the Spectator', particularly speaks of the viewer's relationship with the gallery space. In a tongue in cheek manner O'Doherty asserts:

³² In formulating this model Lacan makes use of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1943) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945). See page 138 & 265 of Hal Foster's *The Return of the Real*. Full bibliographical citation as follows: Foster, H. 1996. *The Return of the Real*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press.

Who is this Spectator, also called the Viewer, sometimes called the Observer, occasionally the Perceiver?³³ It has no face, is mostly a back. It stoops and peers, is slightly clumsy. Its attitude is inquiring, its puzzlement discreet. He – I'm sure it is more male than female – arrived after modernism, with the disappearance of perspective. He seems born out of the picture and, like some perceptual Adam, is drawn back to contemplate it. (O'Doherty 1986 [1976]: 39)

O'Doherty goes further and distinguishes between 'the spectator' and 'the eye', 'the eye' being of a higher calibre as it can be honed and taught how to look, and being a 'noble organ' that can aesthetically measure what it sees (O'Doherty 1986 [1976]: 41). On the contrary the viewer responds by 'What is it supposed to be?', 'What does it mean?' or 'Where am I supposed to stand?' and needs direction (O'Doherty 1986 [1976]: 55 & 61). Nonetheless, both 'the spectator' and 'the eye' confirm that the process of looking is a twofold experience, more so when it is a conscious and phenomenological process of 'looking at ourselves looking' (O'Doherty 1986 [1976]: 61) the mode of 'looking both ways'.

By a similar means of 'looking both ways' Robert Doisneau's (1912 - 1994) famed photographic studies of *Mona Lisa* (fig.26) and viewers at the Louvre in 1952 (McMullen 1977: 1 - 3), present what can be termed a visual conundrum³⁴ in that, as the viewer, we fix our gaze on the represented viewers and thus look out from the position of the painting. In effect as we simultaneously position ourselves from both the 'viewer's' and the 'painting's' standpoint, we have managed to look both ways. Here the knowledge or the mental image of the 'unsighted' painting has made the painting 'sighted' and the invisible visible. This aligns with and visually illustrates

³³ Other definitions/names for 'the spectator' include Joseph Addison's (1672 - 1719) 'the onlooker' and 'the beholder', which had their birth in 18th century rationalism. See page 41 of Brian O'Doherty's *Inside the White Cube*. See: O'Doherty, B. 1986 [1976]. *Inside the White Cube: the ideology of the gallery space*. San Francisco: The Lapis Press.

³⁴ This is the appropriation of a phrase coined by Hal Foster in discussing the nature of representations of reflections from his book *The Return of the Real* page 142. Full bibliographical citation: Foster, H. 1996. *The Return of the Real*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press.

Jacques Lacan's mirror stage theory on the gaze: 'The picture, certainly, is in my eye. But I, I am in the picture' (Lacan 1973: 89). It is as if the picture gazes back.

In Richard Wollheim's (1923 – 2003) thesis entitled 'Art as a Form of Life', he deduces that the artist exists as both spectator and artist simultaneously (Wollheim 1984: 138), as in production the artist engages with the practice of looking/gazing upon the art object. Roughly around 1800 the painter Casper David Friedrich expressed the notion: 'The artist should paint not only what he sees before him, but also what he sees within him. If, however he sees nothing within him, then he should cease from painting what he sees outside' (Gamwell c.2002: 16). This insists that the artist should have both a 'seeing eye' as well as an 'inward eye'. The 'seeing eye' speaks of the joy acquired in looking and deducing for oneself what an object - be it an artwork or scenic view - means (Herbert 2001: 13), whereas the 'inward eye' speaks of having a profound encounter by which one discovers and discerns personal connections with these objects (Herbert 2001: 12). However, 'the eye' is an extension of the body, and in many regards it can be considered metaphorically as a disembodied organ, detached from the body. Even though it is physiologically part of the body, the eye can transcend spaces and places beyond the body's physical limitations. Like Casper David Friedrich's wanderer perched on the precipice: 'He cannot go a step further; only his thoughts [and eyes]³⁵ can carry him from "here" to an uncertain "there" ' (Hofman 2000: 9). Nevertheless, as a viewer, even when one has a phenomenological encounter (a full bodily and sensory experience) of an artwork, 'the eye' still sees from a distance and can only imagine what the 'uncertain there' is like, and it is this space between the eye and the object that becomes evocative. What does this distance imply: desire, longing or even envy? 'Desire' from coveting the object (from gazing from a distance), 'longing' epitomising one's need/yearning for the possession of the object and 'envy' illustrating one's frustration at the inability to possess the object. These all imply some measure of lack, and that the encounter with 'the object' and 'the eye' may be one steeped in lack. Thus the distance encountered in viewing/looking says more about the 'self',

³⁵ Text in square brackets has been additionally inserted.

than 'the other' - the subject of the gaze. The notion of the 'othering' of the unobtainable place/location through the process of the distance imposed by the gaze, brings Barry Curtis and Claire Pajaczkowska's 'location envy' theory to mind once more: the eye's fixated gaze upon the landscape.

The Gaze on Geography

In dissecting the gaze on geography, one needs to acknowledge 'the eye' not just as an organ of sight but also as a probe that surveys the landscape. Previously the context and experience of location/site within the landscape was interrogated, neglecting the actual visibility and the geology of the landscape, not probing that which the eye sees. In modern day terms the eye as a probe finds some affinity with the camera, specifically as the camera is often compared to the eye. Accordingly the photograph and photographer become witness to what the eye sees. Neville Dubow (1933 -) in his essay 'Constructs: Reflections on a Thinking Eye' in David Goldblatt's (1930 -) exhibition catalogue of *The Structures of Things Then* (1998) speaks of this body of work by Goldblatt as a 'geological probe' (Dubow 1998: 22). Of this exhibition of photographs of built structures (N.G. churches, memorials etc.) upon the South African landscape Dubow elucidates the following:

David Goldblatt's work is about buildings and structures in the South African landscape. [...] But it is also about ideological structuring: about mental constructs that underpinned the structures of South Africa in its colonial era and more specifically, the apartheid years, the locust years, of its recent past. [...] For the markings on the landscape go beyond its surface: they are testimony to the ways in which contestation over land, and what lies beneath it, has shaped the forces which have formed our landscape - its myths, its metaphors, its memories, and its memorials.

Dubow further speaks of the positioning of photographer, the position from which the photographer directs his/her gaze. The gaze announces the photographer's presence in a place and it is from this place that the photographer decides on how to bear 'witness' to what is encountered (Dubow 1998: 27). Thus what the viewer is

presented with in the photograph is an array of vantage points, depending on how the photographer has arranged them within a given space, with the space in between omitted. A probe suggests movement of the eye. In terms of the surveying of space, what the eye sees is multiple vantage points, which for a tangible object would translate into the panoramic image. The all-embracing eye has a 360° sweep of space. The panorama presents the process of 'looking both ways' in one flat linear image. It encapsulates the whole view. Even in the process of looking forward and back, the absent space not looked at, presents a panorama.

Panorama vs. Panopticon

Stephen Oettermann speaks of the panorama as 'a school of perspectives', as it encompasses various vantage points and points of perspective. The panorama was invented by the painter Robert Baker (1739 – 1806) in 1787 as a large circular painting, depicting either a scene or landscape that wrapped around 360° encircling its viewer (Dinkla 2002: 27 - 28). Etymologically the word panorama derives from the combination of the ancient Greek words 'pan' meaning 'all' and 'hórama' meaning 'to see' (Dinkla 2002: 28). Although ultimately it is about an all-embracing, seeing eye, it depicts the compression of an exterior space so to fit into an interior space, and creates the false impression of the viewer being in a natural environment. In her essay 'The Art of Narrative: towards the *floating* work of art' Söke Dinkla says 'the panorama satisfies the human desire to take possession of nature' as the illusion of the space presented does not convey nature's endless bounds, making it easier to possess (Dinkla 2002: 29). The experience of the panorama is governed by looking outwards, and similarly the Panopticon presents a parallel viewing experience to the panorama. In 1786, the philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748 – 1832) devised the Panopticon (*fig.27*) as the ideal prison structure (Mirzoeff 2002: 10), a sphere-shaped building with a glass-windowed surveillance room/tower in its core and prison cells on its margin. Michel Foucault (1926 – 1984) in his book *Discipline and Punishment: the birth of the prison* spoke of the Panopticon as 'so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible'. As a result of the heightened sense of surveillance exercised here, Foucault

expressed the view that this confirmed that 'visibility is a trap' the gaze directing control and thus issuing power (Foucault 1986 [1975]: 200). Ironically the invention of the Panopticon and the panorama occurred a year apart. Though the viewing experience of the panorama is a leisure activity and the Panopticon is one of intense observation, examination and supervision, both require gazing from a distance. If 'visibility is a trap' as Foucault posits, then to be *seen* is a trap, and the observer doing the *seeing* is engaging in an activity of either leisure or control. This is much like the Manichaeic bind that postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon (1925 - 1961) identifies in *The Wretched of the Earth* that one cannot exist without the other (Fanon 1967 [1961]: 41), they are inter-reliant and co-exist ensnared in the 'trap'. Thus when 'looking both ways' within the field of vision, the object of the gaze within the range of the eye only exists when there is an observer to perceive its presence.

Gazing from a Distance

In his book *the Wooden Eyes: nine reflections on distance* (2001) Carlo Ginzburg asks 'What is the exact distance that permits us to see things as they are?' He talks further about trying to uncover the ideal position to view an object, of not being 'too close' so that one's objectivity is diminished or too distant so that 'distance' warps one's vision (Ginzburg 2001). In Robert Morris' 'Notes on Sculpture' he asserts that one should at times view objects from a distance in order to grasp an object in its entirety (Morris 1992 [1966]: 817). Much of my production has been driven from a process of gazing from a distance upon geographical space. This gaze has been particularly directed at two familiar marked sites on the South African landscape, Table Mountain and Robben Island. These activities have been centred on a project called *Circumnavigating the Great Divide* (see catalogue). The project's main purpose is to present a dialogue between the mainland and Robben Island. It is meant as a means to reconcile the history of the island (from leper to penal colony (Smith 1997)) with the peninsula. *Circumnavigating the Great Divide I & II*, are loosely based on the concept of the lighthouse as a signalling device to communicate a message. As each strobe of light from the lighthouse beam acts as a parcel of information to be disseminated, the staccato flickering nature of the light behaves like visual Morse

code sending out messages or signals. *Circumnavigating the Great Divide I* consists of a cinematic circular/panoramic projection of an animated panoramic image of Table Mountain and the city as seen from East Pier at the Victoria & Albert Waterfront. This was projected onto historical landmarks on Robben Island, namely the prison wall and the limestone quarry. As a night time projection, this aligns to time-specific and site-specific concepts illustrated above with regard to Krzysztof Wodiczko's work and the notion of creating situations. *Circumnavigating the Great Divide II* inversely is an animated projection of a panoramic view of the island, projected onto historical sites on the peninsula, like the breakwater wall at the Victoria & Albert Waterfront. Imposing the one place upon the other is meant to make both spaces seem within tangible grasp rather than something that hovers in the distance. This echoes the ideas of mobilisation of site previously addressed. Ultimately it is meant to bridge the divide between these two spaces, and create communication across the bay. These projections metaphorically and visually mimic the panning light of the lighthouse beam and also make reference to the beam acting as a searching device. *Circumnavigating the Great Divide III* is a film/video work documenting a helicopter ride circumnavigating the island from the air. It is significant to note that the series *Circumnavigating the Great Divide* makes reference to the history of the traditional panorama in its very nature. Additionally, it is essential to note that this project is a site and time-specific one, and that the artwork resides in the experience of the work, whereas the photographs become the residue material.

Another project entitled *Watery Graves* (see catalogue) explores the notion of death by drowning. It consists of close-up seascape images taken within the space from the peninsula to Robben Island, with the idea that as the graves of those who perished by drowning are unmarked, the sea surface acts as the tombstone. Visually this work makes art historical references to Cuban-born artist Félix González-Torres' (1957 - 1996) *Untitled* (1991) artwork, a floor installation of an endless stack of repeated lithograph prints of a close-up seascape (Herkenhoff 2002: 61), and a graphite on paper drawing of the sea by Czech-born artist Vija Celmins (1938 -) entitled *Untitled (Ocean)* 1970 (Herkenhoff 2002: 55).

Chapter 3 - Meditations on the 'Wrong Place'³⁶

Concept - The 'Wrong Place'

How many maps, in the descriptive or geographical sense, might be needed to deal exhaustively with a given space, to code and decode all its meanings and contents? It is doubtful whether a finite number can ever be given in answer to this sort of question. What we are most likely confronted with here is a sort of instant infinity.

- Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre 1991: 85)

The artist is a map-maker ... Poetry is a place.

- William S. Burroughs (Barnes 2002)

What the map cuts up, the story cuts across.

- Michel de Certeau (De Certeau 1984: 129)

Signposts are curious objects, as they appear to measure distance. They mark our landscapes and roadsides, not only indicating the direction/distance to a final destination, but as if they have miraculously measured how far we have come in order to indicate how far we have yet to travel. In other instances, the signpost has a more ornamental quality than a functional one, like the signpost situated at The Pierhead at the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, in Cape Town (South Africa) (fig.28& 29). Here perched on the edge of The Pierhead is what appears to be a Victorian relic, a signpost painted in black with white embossed letters and numerals inscribing the place-names and distances to cities around the world. Like a litany it recites:

Mombasa 3985 Km; Boston 12421 Km; Buenos Aires 6456 Km; South Pole 6131 Km;

³⁶ The term 'the wrong place' was conceived by the art historian Miwon Kwon and outlined in her essay 'The Wrong Place'. See: Kwon, M. 2004. 'The Wrong Place'. in: *Contemporary Art: from studio to situation*. ed: C. Doherty. London: Black Dog Publishing. 29 - 41. The essay was initially presented as a lecture for the International Lecture Series which played an essential part of the art project *In All the Wrong Places* presented at The Ottawa Art Gallery in 1999. The initiative *In All the Wrong Places* was curated by Sylvie Fortin and ran for six months (May - November 1999), utilising alternative sites throughout Ottawa with the aim to encourage a dialogue between artwork, artist, location and viewer. Kwon's lecture was first published in the periodical *Art Journal* (Spring 2000) and then amended for the conclusion to her book *One Place After Another: site-specific art and locational identity* (2002: 156 - 167), before appearing in *Contemporary Art: from studio to situation* (2004).

Sydney 12202 Km; Osaka 14330 Km; Rio de Janeiro 6061 Km; San Francisco 16690 Km; Zurich 9086 Km; Auckland 14227 Km; Chicago 13662 Km; Singapore 9661 Km, with its outstretched arms indicating the direction to these locations. Here the signpost acts much like a world map/globe as it appears as if the world has converged in one place, incidentally the 'wrong place'.

The art historian Miwon Kwon outlines her concept of the 'wrong place' in her essay 'The Wrong Place' (2004: 29 - 41), as an entry to the discussion she states:

But what is a 'wrong' place? How does one recognise it as such, as opposed to a 'right' place? [...] Is being in the wrong place the same thing as being out of place? And what are the effects of such mis/displacements for art, subjectivity, and locational identities? In light of the intensified mobilisation of bodies, information, images, and commodities on the one hand, and the greater and greater homogenisation and standardisation of places on the other [...], I continue to wonder about the impact, both positive and negative, of the spatial and temporal experiences that such conditions engender not only in terms of cultural practice but more basically for our psyches, our sense of self, our sense of well-being, our sense of belonging to a place and culture. (Kwon 2004: 30)

'Functional vs. Literal Site' & 'Mobile Site'

In relation to artistic/cultural practice Kwon further elaborates that this unhinged question of 'belonging to a place and culture' has been particularly interrogated in current site-specific art produced by a new generation of artists, namely Andrea Fraser (1965 -), Mark Dion (1961 -), Renée Green (1959 -) and Christian Philipp Müller (1957 -). In their interrogations they have moved beyond the original concept of site-specific art as 'phenomenologically-orientated'³⁷ and bound to a specific site/place, as exemplified by works like Richard Serra's (1939 -) *Tilted Arc* (1981) (Kwon 2004: 30). James Meyer, in his writings on site-specific art, distinguishes between the site-orientated works of the 1960s and 1970s and those of current

³⁷ The phenomenological aspects of site-specific art were discussed previously in this dissertation.

practice by referring to two concepts of site: 'literal site' and 'functional site'³⁸. Meyer defines 'literal site' as being 'in-situ; it is an actual location, a singular place'³⁹ (Meyer 2000: 24), whereas 'functional site' (more prevalent in contemporary practice) may possibly not include a 'physical place' but rather a dialogue between different sites/ locations, essentially creating an inter-textual network between sites (Meyer 2000: 25). As Meyer explains:

In contrast, the functional site may or may not incorporate a physical place⁴⁰. It certainly does not *privilege* this place. Instead, it is a process, an operation occurring between sites, a mapping of institutional and textual filiations and the bodies that move between them (the artist's above all). It is an informational site, a palimpsest of text, photographs and video recordings, physical places and things: an allegorical site, to recall Craig Owens's term, aptly coined to describe Robert Smithson's polymathic enterprise, whose vectored and discursive notion of "places" opposes Serra's phenomenological model. It is no longer an obdurate steel wall, attached to the plaza for eternity. On the contrary, the functional work refuses the intransigence of literal site specificity. It is a temporary thing, a movement, a chain of meanings and imbricated histories: a place marked and swiftly abandoned. The mobile site thus courts its destruction; it is wilfully temporary; its nature is not to endure but to *come down*. (Meyer 2000: 25)

³⁸ Miwon Kwon on page 30 & 31 of her essay 'The Wrong Place' also references James Meyer's new definitions on site-specific art as an entry into her discussion on 'the wrong place'. See: (Kwon 2004: 30 - 31).

³⁹ James Meyer in his definition of the 'literal site' quotes Joseph Kosuth in saying that the artwork is 'in-situ'. The original reference to Kosuth's statement is as follows: Kosuth, J. 1991. '1975', in: *Art after Philosophy and After: collected writings*. ed: G. Guercio. Cambridge: MIT Press. 134.

⁴⁰ To further define, the 'functional site' need not be an actual place/space, as in the case of the 'literal site'. The 'functional site' is a means of creating intertextual references or a means to critique by, for example the critique of 'the body' or 'the institution' can be a 'functional site'. For further reading see: Meyer, J. 2000. 'The Functional Site; or, The Transformation of Site Specificity'. in: *Space, Site, Intervention: situating installation art*. ed: E. Suderburg. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 23 - 37.

This concept of the 'mobile site' brings to the fore the idea of the artist as a 'nomad'⁴¹ or 'artist-traveller', moving from site to site, and of his/her practice itself being nomadic (Meyer 2000: 28). Meyer suggests that as the artist moves from place to place, the site does not just impinge on the work a set of associations, but the place is impinged on or is affected by the artist's subjective and historical relationship with that particular place. This is particularly noticeable in the artist Christian Philipp Müller's earlier work, where he created several performative site-specific works by carrying out 'illegal border crossings'. From 1993 onwards, posing as a hitchhiker, Müller crossed official Austrian borders into neighbouring countries, like the former Czechoslovakia and Poland, without the necessary travel documents/visas required by western Europeans entering the former eastern block at that time⁴². He additionally documented these 'illegal border crossings' by mailing a postcard from each border post to his art dealer in Vienna, Austria. In works like *Illegal Border Crossing between Austria and Principality of Liechtenstein* (1993) (fig.30), Müller antagonises and alienates his own national and cultural identity further, as he is a Swiss-born artist but was residing in Austria at that point in time⁴³. Here he fashions a new national identity or even a *non-identity* by migrating across multiple borders. Additionally, in initiating this project in 1993, the year itself marks a quintessential moment in the onset of globalisation and the implementation of 'late capitalist'

⁴¹ The previous chapter entitled *On Looking Both Ways (and that space between)* discussed Miwon Kwon's concept of the 'mobilisation of site', and the concept of the artist as a nomad or as Kwon terms it an 'itinerant artist'. For reference to these concepts see: Kwon, M. 2000. 'One Place after Another: notes on site specificity'. in: *Space, Site, Intervention: situating installation art*. ed: E. Suderburg. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 38 - 63.

⁴² The European Union (EU) was officially established in November 1993, when the Maastricht Treaty was ratified. Initially it consisted of 25 member states. Austria became a member state in 1995, thus prior to that visas were required to travel to other European countries. For further reading see *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics* online. See: *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics* 2006. 'European Union'. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*. [Online]. Available:

<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?entry=t86.e441&srn=3&ssid=705161037#FIRSTHIT>. Last Accessed: 10 May 2006.

⁴³ Christian Philipp Müller currently resides in New York. See:

<http://www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/en/exhibitions/future-exhibitions/mueller.html>. Full bibliographical reference as follows: Kunstmuseum Basel 2006. *Future Exhibitions: Christian Philipp Müller*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/en/exhibitions/future-exhibitions/mueller.html>. Last Accessed: 10 May 2006.

notions of an international free market economy/system (Meyer 2000: 28). Müller's work thus functions as a 'functional site', as the work becomes a 'site' to critique issues around what constitutes a national or cultural identity and additionally it wryly alludes to issues around influx control. This aligns with Michel Foucault's notion of a 'place' not simply being an experience but additionally a social space that is discursively negotiated depending on the social and historical climate (Meyer 2000: 27 & 29). Thus 'place' goes beyond just being a physical site, it can also be a historical moment.

'The Wrong Place' vs. 'The Right Place'

If one were to argue that Christian Philipp Müller in his 'illegal border crossings' adopts the national identity of the country he has just entered (as that would exonerate him from acquiring a visa), then by this process he acquires a 'wrong' identity and thus occupies the 'wrong place'. Or, alternatively, by adopting several national identities over the course of this art project he has acquired a non-identity, as they expunge each other. Nevertheless, in both cases it is an alienated identity: 'alienated' with its negative connotations would suggest something as being wrong, but what would define a place as *wrong* as opposed to *right*? Lucy R. Lippard in her book *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicultural society* (c.1997) cites Martin Heidegger's phenomenology philosophy on the value of having a 'dwelling' or 'place' as being emblematic of the perpetual state of 'homelessness' currently experienced worldwide. For Heidegger the world has not been the 'right place' for some time. Lippard, like Heidegger, proposes that belonging to a place or having a 'sense of place' is an essential psychological desire, and without it people the world over will continue to feel displaced (Kwon 2004: 31)⁴⁴. This suggests a world in flux, bodies in perpetual motion. Miwon Kwon, in her efforts to define the 'wrong' and 'right' place, relates two scenarios to differentiate between them: the first being the postmodern theorist Fredric Jameson's (1934 -) now well-known narration of his

⁴⁴ In her essay 'The Wrong Place' Miwon Kwon quotes and references Lucy R. Lippard. The original reference to Lippard is as follows: Lippard, L. R. c. 1997. *The Lure of the Local: sense of place in a multicultural society*. New York: New Press. 11 - 12.

'spatial experience' of the Westin Bonaventure Hotel (*fig.31*) in Los Angeles⁴⁵; and the second instance being the seemingly displacing experience of the central character Michael Majeski in the play *Valparaiso* (1999), written by Don DeLillo (1936 -) (Kwon 2004: 33).

Jameson speaks of the Bonaventure Hotel as: 'a total space, a complete world, a kind of miniature city'⁴⁶ that becomes isolated from its city location. This is further intensified by the building being a glass structure that not only reflects its surrounds but simultaneously 'repels the city outside'⁴⁷, as Jameson puts it, as one cannot view the interior from the outside (Kwon 2004: 33). The Bonaventure, with its glass exterior reflecting the city, creates a simulacrum and a hyper-real representation of the city which makes negotiating that space disorientating in terms of finding one's bearings in the city. Jameson expressed this experience as follows: 'this latest mutation in space - postmodern hyperspace - has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organise its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world' (Jameson 1991: 44). Cape Town's equivalent to the Bonaventure would be the Arabella Sheraton Hotel (now renamed the Grand Weston Hotel) (*fig.32*) at the Foreshore, which on a clear day reflects Table Mountain (if one approaches the city from the M5 highway off-ramp). This creates the illusion that the mountain has been transplanted - the mountain which serves as a landmark by which we orientate ourselves in Cape Town. This experience, like Jameson's experience at the Bonaventure, becomes an encounter with hyperspace. In reviewing Jameson's experience Miwon Kwon posits that as a result of the overwhelming sense of disorientation Jameson experienced in that space, he was having an experience of 'the wrong place'. She states: 'a place that instigates a sense of instability and

⁴⁵ The Westin Bonaventure Hotel was designed by the architect/ developer John Portman. See page 38 - 40 of Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*.

⁴⁶ Miwon Kwon quotes directly from Frederic Jameson here. The original reference as follows: Jameson, F. 1991. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press. 40.

⁴⁷ Miwon Kwon quotes directly from Frederic Jameson here. The original reference as follows: Jameson, F. 1991. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press. 41.

uncertainty, lacking in comfort, a place unfamiliar and foreign, might be deemed “wrong” ’ (Kwon 2004: 35).

Don DeLillo’s play *Valparaiso* opens with its protagonist Michael Majeski having just arrived back home from a business trip to Valparaiso, Chile. On his arrival he is met with a flurry of activity as he was meant to travel to Valparaiso in the state of Indiana, but due to an error by a check-in clerk he had travelled to the ‘wrong’ Valparaiso. As the play unfolds, news reporters and talk show hosts interview Majeski, wanting to know how he got it so wrong. In four-and-a-half days he conducts 67 interviews, re-relating his encounter, and eventually his whole life story (Kwon 2004: 36). As explanation of his error Majeski narrates:

Yes, it was strange. The aircraft seemed too big, two wide-bodied for an intrastate flight [...] And I said nothing. I was intimidated by the systems. The enormous sense of power around me. [...] Think about it. If the computers and metal detectors and uniformed personnel and bomb-sniffing dogs had allowed me to reach this assigned seat and given me this airline blanket that I could rip out of its plastic shroud, then I must belong here (Kwon 2004: 38)⁴⁸.

Although Majeski goes to ‘the wrong place’, his experience is one of being in ‘the right place’ (Kwon 2004: 38). Nonetheless it is a mediated place, as Jameson’s experience is mediated depending on the placement of buildings in a city. Majeski’s place is mediated by ‘the systems’ he mentions, these ‘systems’ being the air traffic controllers and navigation systems that control his movement through the skies, so that Majeski’s space is a ‘virtual space’ as opposed to Jameson’s ‘hyperspace’ (Kwon 2004: 37). Nevertheless, in evaluating both Jameson and Majeski’s experiences, it is evident that the experience of the ‘wrong’ and the ‘right’ place is a subjective one.

⁴⁸ Miwon Kwon quotes from Don DeLillo’s play *Valparaiso* here. The original reference as follows: DeLillo, D. 1999. *Valparaiso*. New York: Scribner. 86 - 87.

'The Wrong Place' - artistic manifestations

In applying Miwon Kwon's notions of 'the wrong place' to contemporary artistic practice, particularly site-specific art, one would be compelled to re-negotiate ideas concerning a site/place. As suggested earlier, a site/place is impinged on by the artist subjectively and alternately a site/place may impinge certain associations onto an artwork. One can argue that the site/place itself is subjective. Consider the city of Johannesburg, where its early history has imposed a certain association on it, as it has been said that the city was 'fathered by gold and mothered by money' (Richards 2006: 62)⁴⁹. On the city's geographical and topographical layout, many have noted that Johannesburg is one of the few economic centres in the world that has no river. Commenting on the city's barren landscape, the artist and critic Colin Richards (1954 -) has stated: 'Johannesburg has no sea, just slimesdams. No river, just a polluted dribble called the Jukskei' (Richards 2006: 62). However in 1997, by a strange set of circumstances, a river flowed through the city of Johannesburg ... but only for a day. Here, by an insidious action, the Danish-born artist Olafur Eliasson (1967 -) changed the urban topography of Johannesburg, when he unexpectedly drained a rainwater cistern into the city streets (Obrist c.2003: 200). Initially, Eliasson was in Johannesburg to exhibit a photographic series *Blue Series* (1995) as part of the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale *Trade Routes: History and Geography* (12 October - 12 December 1997) (Enwezor 1997: 96 - 97), however, on his arrival in the city he decided to also produce an intervention in response to the local environment, which also simultaneously critiqued the formalism of the gallery system. He titled the project *Erosion, Water Project* (1997)⁵⁰ (fig.33), the first of many other 'clandestine interventions' that Eliasson would perform in urban spaces from 1997 onwards, this work formed the basis of his now famous *Green River* (1998) series (Obrist c.2003: 199 - 200). Commenting on *Erosion, Water Project* (1997) in an interview with Eliasson in 2001, the curator Hans Ulrich Obrist noted: 'Johannesburg is a city without a river,

⁴⁹ Colin Richards quotes Charles van Onselen here, from van Onselen's two volume book *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand* (1982).

⁵⁰ Also known under the title *Erosion* (1997). See following reference: Grynsztejn, M. 2002. 'Attention Universe: the work of Olafur Eliasson'. in: *Olafur Eliasson*. London: Phaidon. 84.

isn't it; so you actually created a river?' Eliasson responded in saying: 'I emptied out this rainwater reservoir. The water ran for one and a half kilometres through the city like a small river. It looked wonderful – very simple and poetic at the same time' (Obrist c.2003: 200).

Nevertheless, Eliasson's *Erosion, Water Project* (1997) goes beyond being a mere artistic intervention, as in this work he almost acquires a mapmaker's powers of being able to change the urban topography. Here in the city of Johannesburg he created 'a river' in 'the wrong place', in transplanting a river into a city not associated with one,⁵¹ this work itself becomes an experience of 'the wrong place'. This idea of 'the wrong place' is further cemented by the everyday passers-by's reaction to *Erosion, Water Project* (1997). The curator Madeleine Grynsztejn described the audience's reaction as follows:

The work manifested itself less through its object-formation than in the way people responded to it – pedestrians improvising makeshift alternative routes, urbanites being caught unawares, jostled out of the discipline of the city grid and into a creative reinvention of the habitual activity of walking. This gently subversive action reinscribed the social space of the city with new, if temporary, byways that lent a revived attentiveness to a 'practice of everyday life'⁵². Such transitory conceptual remappings of presumably fixed axes... (Grynsztejn 2002: 84)

In a similar vein to Eliasson's *Erosion, Water Project* (1997), the South African artist James Webb's (1975 -) recent series *There's no place called home* (2005) (fig.34&35) evokes this idea of 'the wrong place'. Webb, known for his sound art interventions, produced *There's no place called home* (2005) as part of an artist residency in 2004/2005 at the Centre of Contemporary Art in Kitakyushu, Japan. In this work he planted

⁵¹ Often cities the world over are associated/coupled with the rivers that run through them, namely Paris with the Seine, London with the Thames, Rome with the Tiber, New York with the Hudson, and so on.

⁵² Madeleine Grynsztejn references Michel De Certeau's famous expression here, 'the practice of everyday life'. The original source as follows: De Certeau M. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkley: University of California Press.

sound recordings of non-migratory South African summer birds in winter trees in Kitakyushu, and on his return to South Africa reworked the artwork by placing sound recordings of Japanese winter birds in a summer tree in Stellenbosch, South Africa (Jonker 2006: 28). The work has since been re-sited in Guangzhou, China (Jonker 2006: 27). In these several re-sitings of *There's no place called home* (2005), Webb activates James Meyer's concept of the 'mobile site' by creating inter-textual references between each site. Further in the transplanting of non-migratory bird sounds from one corner of the globe to the other, Webb performs a migration of sorts and the work becomes the artistic manifestation of 'the wrong place', as one place transposes the other. Here Webb enacts the role of the artist as a demiurge, playing creator/God with the universe. Or, alternatively, he plays the role of the artist as a prankster, joker who has the magical ability to re-shuffle the place-names on a world map/globe: Kitakyushu becomes Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch becomes Kitakyushu. Thus, Webb's *There's no place called home* (2005) not only becomes an artwork that evokes 'the wrong place' aurally but an artwork about the remapping/re-positioning of a place, as 'the wrong place' gets envisioned in a different place.

The Atlas and the Map

On the subject of the remapping of a 'place' as an artistic activity, the art critic Anne M. Wagner has said: 'What does it mean for a work of art to *be* a place? What then happens to the work of art? Erasure or expansion? Or both? And what about the place? On what map does the new hybrid appear?' (Wagner 2005: 267). If one were to accept that a 'hybrid place' is created through the remapping of a place, then one could deduce that a 'hybrid map' may be needed to accommodate it. This concept of a 'hybrid map' visually materializes in the current art production of the South African artist Gerhard Marx (1976 -), who uses the cut-up fragments of South African maps to create what he calls 'drawings' from reconstituted map fragments (Dodd 2006: 80). In works like *Sheet #2: Horizontal Figure 2* (2005) (fig.36), Marx not only uses the fragments of maps as a raw material but constructs a new or 'hybrid' map and consequently creates a visual reference to a non-place or non-existent place. Further, in constructing a new or 'hybrid' map Marx recalls the well-known saying

by the American novelist and essayist William S. Burroughs (1914 - 1997) that 'the artist is a map-maker ... Poetry is a place' (Barnes 2002).

The practice of map-making or cartography has long been an artistic pursuit, spanning from the Renaissance. However, over the centuries it has become the domain of the city planner/developer and the land surveyor⁵³ (Williamson (ed.) 2005). Thus Marx's practice draws on the rich tradition of cartography as an artistic activity and revisits a Renaissance practice. However, regardless of the era, Marx's artworks like those of the Renaissance artists/cartographers are constructions, the difference being that he constructs his map 'drawings' from collaged fragments, where the Renaissance cartographer created/constructed maps from the actual practice of drawing/draughtsmanship. The cartography historian J. Brian Harley (1932 - 1991) argued in his book *The New Nature of Maps: essays in the history of cartography* (2001)⁵⁴ that the map is a 'social construction', as history and geography collide in the map. Specifically geography has always been shaped by history, for instance as historical events occurred/unfolded, like the discovery of the 'new world' or the imperial annexing of land worldwide, so did geography change and our knowledge of the world. Thus, geography and its visual outlet - cartography - are at the mercy of history. Additionally, if one accepts that the map is a 'social construction', then it has never really been 'the right place'.

Gerhard Marx's practice aligns with this history of the map being a 'social construction', but he breaks new ground in embedding other visual codes in his map 'drawings'. In *Sheet #2: Horizontal Figure 2*, fragmented pieces of cut-up maps are tightly linked together by an undulating red line; with the red line 'drawing' the image of a human foot perched on the fragmented map. This fragmented body part, on the fragmented map brings to the fore several interesting associations. Firstly

⁵³ Incidentally Gerhard Marx worked as a cartographer during his military service. See: http://www.artthrob.co.za/05dec/listings_gauteng.html.

⁵⁴ Printed posthumously, as J. Brian Harley died in 1991 in Milwaukee. See the preface to the book written by the editor Paul Laxton.

Marx breaks the 'silence' of the map here, by making reference to the existence of human occupation in a place, instead of the map being just a mere topographical depiction of a place⁵⁵. This idea of a permeating 'silence' inherent in maps has been criticized by J. Brian Harley, as for Harley 'silence' suggests that a measure of editing and censorship has taken place (Harley 2001: 83 – 107).

Further, in analysing Marx's 'reconstituted maps', these works present a fragmented landscape or cityscape that one would suspect is akin to puzzle pieces or parts that would eventually make-up a cohesive whole. This concept is congruous with Walter Benjamin's (1892 – 1940) analogy of the city as being a body, constructed of fragmented body parts, which he illustrated in his essay *One Way Street* (1925) describing the body as being inscribed on by the city space (Burgin 1996: 140 -141). This amalgamation of the imagery of the 'body' and the 'city' has a historical trajectory, which can be traced back to the third book by the Roman architect Vitruvius, which he devoted to the designing of temples. Here Vitruvius (c.80-70 BC – c.15 BC) expounds the notion that the extended arms and legs of a 'well-formed man' should extend to the parameters of a circle and a square. Referencing a well-known drawing by Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1519), which he produced as a means to encourage Renaissance architects to display a harmony of form in their designs as found in the human form, this model became known as the Vitruvian model (Burgin 1996: 141). Thus, one can argue that the body is not simply contained by a built structure but it is the originating principle by which a structure is built. Furthermore, the human body is seen not only as the derivation of the edifice/building but of the whole built/constructed environment (Burgin 1996: 141). As the Renaissance architect Leon Battista Alberti (1404 -1472) stated: 'The city is like a large house and the house like a small city, every edifice is a body' (Burgin 1996: 142). This notion of using the metaphor of the body still today permeates contemporary theory, not just as a metaphor of the city but as metaphor for describing modernity, as illustrated in

⁵⁵ Some maps, usually as part of educational atlases, include population statistics as additional information, mostly found in the corners of maps or in an auxiliary document. See page 32 of the following secondary school atlas: Macmillan Education 1995. *New Secondary School Atlas*. Pietermaritzburg: Macmillan Education Ltd.

Linda Nochlin's (1931 -) book *The Body in Pieces: the fragment as a metaphor for modernity* (1994).

In trying to apply this theory of the body in pieces one must think in terms of the 'city in pieces'⁵⁶. These concepts of the body and the city in pieces resonate with Fredric Jameson's disorientating experience at the Bonaventure Hotel, and thus would imply that Marx's work in its fragmentation of a place is also an expression of 'the wrong place'. This is intensified by the body projected in that space being fragmented as well, thus implying that the fragmented body may be a metaphor for the experience of the body's disorientation in that place. Therefore Marx's work becomes a study into the psycho-geographical effects of a given space, the disembodied body, or Marx's truncated foot perched on the 'ruined map', the 'foot' being emblematic of the practice of walking or strolling through a space, of making that space a place⁵⁷. This brings to mind the title of Giuliana Bruno's book *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map* (1993). Consequently, as a result of the 'ruined map', the logic of the map has been disrupted, or its historical and geographical narrative - usually etched in its surface - no longer applies. History becomes particularly redundant here, as its normal chronological timeline/narrative is fragmented/broken; it is ultimately the collapsing of time and space. Thus 'streetwalking on a ruined map' becomes an act of defiance. Here the map is made redundant, as its land-markings and co-ordinates etched upon its surface no longer provide a framework to envisage a given space and thus find one's way. Thus, to street walk on the 'ruined map' is to defy the mediated control of one's movement imposed by the map - essentially it is to drift.

⁵⁶ Victor Burgin devotes a whole chapter to the concept of the 'city in pieces' in his book *InDifferent Spaces: place and memory in visual culture*. See chapter 7, entitled 'The City in Pieces'. See: Burgin, V. 1996. *InDifferent Spaces: place and memory in visual culture*. Berkley: University of California Press.

⁵⁷ Mark Haywood refers to these ideas of making 'space' a 'place' in his essay 'Imagine the City', for the exhibition catalogue of Gavin Young's *Salt River Soliloquies*. Original reference as follows: Haywood, M. 2002. 'Imagine the City'. in: *Salt River Soliloquies*. ed: G. Young. Cape Town: Bell-Roberts Publishing.

In review, as illustrated in the art production of Christian Philipp Müller, Olafur Eliasson, James Webb and Gerhard Marx, they activate 'the wrong place' in numerous ways, either by means of referencing other places in the world or by intervening with the world as we know it (as in Eliasson's case). Nonetheless, if we accept that the map is a 'social construction' as Harley posits, then the map itself is 'the wrong place'. Would that then mean that our reference to the world is 'wrong' and therefore that the world, as we know it, is really 'the wrong place'?

University of Cape Town

Chapter 4 - 'A Tale of Two Cities'⁵⁸

Extensions of 'The Wrong Place'

I am Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town,

I am Langa, Chatsworth and Bonteheuwel,

I am discussion, argument and debate,

I cannot recognise palm-fronds

and nights filled with throb of the primitive,

I am buses, taxis and trains,

I am urban South Africa.

- Richard Rive, *Writing Black* (Subirós 2001: 50)

In the opening sequences of his seminal essay 'Walking in the City' (1980)⁵⁹, Michel De Certeau's (1925 - 1986) begins by describing the view of Manhattan Island from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center in New York City. Surveying the sprawling city below the writer relates:

To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center is to be lifted out of the city's grasp. One's body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law; nor is it possessed, whether as a player or played, by the rumble of so many differences and by the nervousness of New York traffic. When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up itself any identity of authors or spectators. An Icarus flying above these waters, he can ignore the devices of Daedalus in mobile and endless labyrinths far below. His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was 'possessed' into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more. Must one finally fall back into the dark

⁵⁸ This title is a direct appropriation of Charles Dickens famous novel title *A Tale of Two Cities*, which narrates the stories of the cities of London and Paris through the novel's protagonists during the French Revolution.

⁵⁹ The essay originally written in 1980 as a chapter in Michel de Certeau's book *The Practice of Everyday Life*. It was translated and published for the first time in English by the University of California Press in 1984.

space where crowds move back and forth, crowds that, though visible from on high, are themselves unable to see down below? An Icarian fall. (De Certeau 1993: 152-153)

In his 'Icarian Fall' De Certeau does not find himself walking the streets of New York but instead the streets of his native Paris (De Certeau 1993: 158 - 160). Thus he narrates the tale of two cities in 'Walking in the City'.

Taking direction from De Certeau, I often find myself 'lifted' or propelled to the summit of the city that I inhabit, and surveying Cape Town from its 'summit' - Table Mountain. Gazing directly below the city lies tightly nestled between Signal Hill and Lion's Head to the left and Devil's Peak to the right, with the city's periphery hanging off the mountain face. Facing north, Table Bay simmers, arching up the West Coast, to Blue Bay, Table View, Bloubergstrand, Melkbosstrand and beyond. In the distance to the north-west beyond the rim of Signal Hill lies Robben Island floating on the horizon line, a speck in the distance, from time to time disappearing in the heat of the sun as if it is oblivious of its own history. Like De Certeau's 'celestial eye' or 'totalizing eye' (De Certeau 1993: 153) surveying the land from above or from a distance might distort one's vision, as one is beguiled and seduced by the picturesque spectacle. Like Icarus soaring too close to the sun, the beauty from above belies the horrors of the history of the land below. My 'Icarian Fall' finds me in another city, another Cape Town beyond the rose-tinted glasses afforded by 'distance', a divided city, an ambiguous city with several 'tales' to narrate.

Landing in Cape Town by airplane - like a modern-day Icarus - affords another view. Touch down on the N2 national highway en route from Cape Town International Airport and the reality of the city becomes more apparent on ground level. Saddled alongside the highway are the informal settlements of Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Guguletu and Langa, which dissipate as you near the city centre. The highway road skirts the mountain, swaying you in various directions, if you choose to move towards the sea and Atlantic seaboard and you will be greeted by another

city more akin with the French Riviera or the Costa del Sol than the southern-most tip of 'Africa'. The curator Shaheen Meerali (1959 -) makes a similar observation on a visit to Cape Town in 2001⁶⁰:

As one drives out from the airport, the usual shanty towns and hamlets which are found in and around the airports of most Third World countries line the streets that pave the diameter of the airport. [...] As the view of black South Africa recedes from the motorway and the view of Cape Town 'proper' becomes more apparent, so does the apparent disparity of the colonised and the 'colonisers' abodes. Two cities, twinned by the horrors of the recent past: a geography created by magnetic opposites. Cape Town spawns high rise and Spanish villas, painted white with long winding approach roads lined with fan palms. One has to be careful and water one's eyes by blinking often. The long plane journey might have mistakenly brought you to some wrong destination such as the south of Spain or France, with Le Corbousier [*sic*] inspired designs of private mansions, Madrid style villas with terra-cotta roof tiles, manicured garden with their bourganvillia [*sic*] and crazy paving. The schizophrenia does not end there, the further we travel away from the black enclaves, the grander and more exclusive and expensive the white thoroughfares become. [...] Cape Town is a divided city: in terms of its economic abilities, geographic location and cultural spaces. [...] Apartheid is not post, apartheid is real. (Meerali 2001: 85 - 86)

Thus, the above extract postulates that the experience of Cape Town is ambiguous and contradictory and that it is a city of extreme opposites. As on appearance it can be classified as a city that is in reality two cities co-existing as one, due to possessing both so-called 'First World' and 'Third World' characteristics or having both a European and an African face. Therefore, the Cape Town urban text writes a 'tale of two cities'. In walking the streets of Cape Town, this disparity becomes more evident, particularly in the different architectural styles visible in the city from Cape Dutch, Victorian, Art Deco to International Style. Susan de Villiers went as far as to speak of Cape Town as being a city of 'three tales': The first 'tale' being its historical

⁶⁰ She was attending the Kay Hasan DaimlerCrysler exhibition at the South African National Gallery.

establishment as a Dutch refreshment station and colonial outpost, the second the development of the modern city from the 1930s to the 1980s and the building of the foreshore area and its byways. The last 'tale' refers to the city of the future (de Villiers 1985: 7). Nevertheless, the city's colonial history is ever visible in its buildings, which act like repositories of its past. At times, while walking in the city, you might be forgiven for mistaking Cape Town for London or another European capital, as the red 'London buses' transport sightseeing tourists. You might be forgiven for thinking that you were in 'the wrong place'. Nevertheless, returning to Cape Town's summit on Table Mountain your misgivings of being in 'the wrong place' might be dispelled by looking towards the south-west to Camps Bay, where just below the Twelve Apostles an intertwining road incises into the mountainside what appears to resemble the map of Africa (fig.37). Thus 'Africa' is forever inscribed on 'Africa'.

This notion of the transplantation of place was one of the central themes in the exhibition curated by Pep Subirós (1947 -) entitled *Africas: the artist and the city* in 2001⁶¹. His essay for the exhibition catalogue entitled 'Africa or Africas?' suggests one cannot just speak about the physical African continent any longer as just being 'Africa'. As with the African Diaspora and the migration of various cultures to European cities like London and Paris, it is as if smaller versions of Africa exist beyond the actual continent, thus there are many 'Africas' (Subirós 2001: 10-12). It is like experiencing a philosophical 'continental drift', as one place seems to exist in the 'wrong' geographical position.

Continental Drift

This notion that a simulation of a place can exist in the 'wrong' geographical position presents what could be termed a conceptual 'continental drift', as recognisable visual elements or references to those continents/places exist elsewhere. The German contemporary photographer Max Becher (1964 -) represented and wrote about this type of occurrence in his undergraduate dissertation project entitled 'Transportation

⁶¹ The exhibition was held at the Centre of Contemporary Culture in Barcelona (CCCB), Spain.

of Place: Geographic Memory in the First/New World', a collection of photographs of New Orleans, Quebec and New York's Chinatown, where he illustrated how these cities would appear to be situated in Europe or other world locations rather than in America (Lippard c.2006: 142). Becher explores this concept of 'the transportation of place' further in the photographic project *Global Village* (2003 - 2005), produced in collaboration with Andrea Robbins (1964 -). The series of photographs was taken at the Global Village theme park in Americus, Georgia which has been described as a 'poverty theme park' constructed by the humanitarian organisation Habitat for Humanity in order to instruct visitors on how impoverished communities live worldwide (Berger c.2006: 151). Recreated in the theme park are replicas and examples of urban housing conditions from around the world like the townships/shantytowns of Southern Africa to the *favelas* in Brazil and the Mexican *colonias* (Lippard c.2006: 146). The above examples clearly outline the idea of 'the transportation of place', of how one place can be distinctively reproduced in another geographical position. One could suggest that, as examples of different cities exist in other parts of the world, the continents are adrift.

In a photographic project entitled *Twin Town* (2007) the South African photographer and academic Svea Josephy plays with a similar concept. The project consisted of a collection of photographs of locations in South Africa displayed alongside photographs of locations with the same name elsewhere in the world. A photograph entitled *Barcelona, Spain*, an aerial view of the Olympic swimming in Barcelona, Spain, is juxtaposed with the informal settlement Barcelona in Cape Town, South Africa. Similarly in the photograph *Lavender Hill, London, United Kingdom* the dreary looking Lavender Hill housing estate is starkly contrasted with the photograph *Lavender Hill, South Africa* showing a hostel dwelling set in full sunlight within a South African landscape (Malcomess 2007). Of the exhibition *Twin Town* the South African art historian Lize van Robbroeck states:

In *Twin Town* [sic], Josephy mines the layers of ironies deposited over centuries by colonial naming practices. The geographical doubling that forms the theme of this

exhibition opens up delicious opportunities for a deconstructive reversal of centre and periphery, first and third worlds, original and copy - opportunities explored by Josephy with intelligence and a great deal of visual acumen. The exhibition is saturated with slippages and simulacra. Throw in postmodern discourses about representation (and photography in particular) as a practice of doubling and redoubling, and you begin to appreciate the sophistication of Josephy's visual games. Puns on the theme of doubling and redoubling abound. (Van Robbroeck 2008)

As suggested above, Josephy deftly illustrates the ironic colonial place naming in her photographs and the stark difference between the locations she photographed to their twin city/town. Although these place-names make reference to the original places they are named after, they also further illustrate Miwon Kwon's concept of 'the wrong place' and the concept of a continental drift that was outlined above. Where Becher and Robbins photographed exact replicas/copies of places, Josephy's *Twin Town* demonstrates the vast differences between the first and the third world economies and the fact that the only commonality between these places is their shared names. Thus Josephy narrates 'a tale of two cities'.

This notion of the 'wrong place' or a conceptual continental drift is significant, particularly with the project *Circumnavigating the Great Divide I & 2*. *Circumnavigating the Great Divide I* is a cinematic circular/panoramic projection of an animated panoramic film of Table Mountain and the city as seen from East Pier at the Victoria & Albert Waterfront and projected on Robben Island. *Circumnavigating the Great Divide II* is inversely a circular cinematic film projected on sites on the peninsula. As the notion of the transposing of place comes into play here, the concept of 'the wrong place' seems appropriate.

Conclusion - Manoeuvres into the Sublime

The sublime is usually described as that which is simultaneously frightening, overwhelming and awe-inspiring (Saint Girons 1998: 323). However, what is its reference to sculpture, with particular regard to the titling of this thesis *Erasing the Object: sculptural manoeuvres into the sublime*? The beginning of this survey began with illustrating the dematerialisation of the art/sculptural object. Having already illustrated the shifts over the last century in what has been classified as sculpture (from monumental style sculpture to 'anti-form', to architectonic-like structures, to architecture, landscape and photography and so on) one must now pose the question: What is a contemporary definition of sculpture? Earlier, Rosalind E. Krauss demonstrated in the quotation from her essay entitled *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* (1979), that numerous non-traditional forms like '... narrow corridors with TV monitors at the ends; large photographs documenting country hikes; mirrors placed at strange angles in ordinary rooms; temporary lines cut into the floor of the desert ...' have over the century become known as sculpture (Krauss 1998: 281). Does this theory hold true for a contemporary definition of sculpture? One hypothesis could be that the vanguard of contemporary sculpture has moved beyond the object into the realm of the sublime. Friedrich von Schiller (1759 - 1805) in an essay entitled *On the Sublime* (1801) reiterates what Immanuel Kant viewed as the difference between cognitive statements and an aesthetic judgement/response to an object. As Frances Ferguson (1947 -) posits in this regard:

What Schiller draws from Kant's *Critique of Judgement* is the basic sense that the significance of aesthetic judgement is the subjective character. ... Aesthetic objects therefore come to have less interest because of what they might teach us about the things they depicted and greater interest because of what they lead us to recognize about human capacities. (Ferguson 1998: 328)⁶²

⁶² Original reference: Schiller von, F. 1966. *Naïve and the Sentimental Poetry and On the Sublime: two essays* (translated by Julius A. Elias). New York: Ungar Publishing.

With reference to above-mentioned works like Tacita Dean's *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty* interesting questions are posed about human capabilities, with specific regard to the sublime, as 'a sublime object exists in reception rather than production' (Ferguson 1998: 328). As some of the artworks mentioned above like *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty* and *When Faith Moves Mountains* rely heavily on the phenomenological experience of the work, such artworks can be considered to have 'sublime' characteristics. Further, something is sublime only through experiential means.

The sublime is often that which cannot be grasped, and one could say that contemporary sculpture has become sublime in that it cannot be literally grasped in the traditional sense. As a result of their experiential and phenomenological nature, works cited above could be defined as sculptural manoeuvres into the sublime. This theory is furthermore cemented as a valid definition for contemporary sculpture/art, in Jean-François Lyotard's (1924 - 1998) findings on the sublime and art in *The Postmodern Condition: a report on knowledge* (1984). As Francis Ferguson explains:

Thus in *The Postmodern Condition: a report on knowledge* (1984), Lyotard examines the sublime as index to the importance of the avant-garde. What he calls 'modern' in art is an art committed to the sublime, which he characterizes, following Kant, as taking place 'when the imagination fails to present an object which might, if only in principle, come to match a concept'. (Ferguson 1998: 331)⁶³

However, once more with reference to the works of Graham, Matta-Clark and Whiteread, other interesting conclusions are presented by their being self-referential, by resembling and representing. In that they are a copy, a reflection and a representation, they are self-cancelling and self-erasing. Thus one could say in the reflection of an object/art object (reflection being the purest form of representation as earlier deduced), the reflection cancels out the object, making it null and void. An

⁶³ Original reference: Lyotard, J. F. 1984. *The Postmodern Condition: a report on knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. The sublime will be furthered researched in future, with reference to the sublime in landscape and Jean-François Lyotard's notion of 'postmodern sublime'.

image/object self-destructs in its reflection, thus to create is to annihilate. Again with reference to Jean Baudrillard's 'zero-sum signs' (Baudrillard 1994: 16&22) and the ontological nature of presence and absence, this constitutes the ultimate breaking and disregard of form, an iconoclastic act, and an act of erasure. Thus an act of erasure can be art. With regard to possible future definitions of sculpture, the notion of 'zero-sum signs' can also refer to a vanishing point, the point at which something vanishes/disappears or ceases to exist (Longman 1991: 1787). Vanishing relates to disappearing and a disappearing act. Now the question remains as to whether something can disappear/vanish from the realm of representation.

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Illustrations

1. Gianlorenz Bernini
Conversion of Constantine (1664 -1670)
From: Wittkower, R. 1981. *Gianlorenz Bernini: the sculptor of the Roman Baroque*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Phaidon. Plate no.110.



2. Gianlorenz Bernini
Detail of Conversion of Constantine (1664 -1670) illustrating his vision
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3. Constantin Brancusi
The Endless Column (1918)
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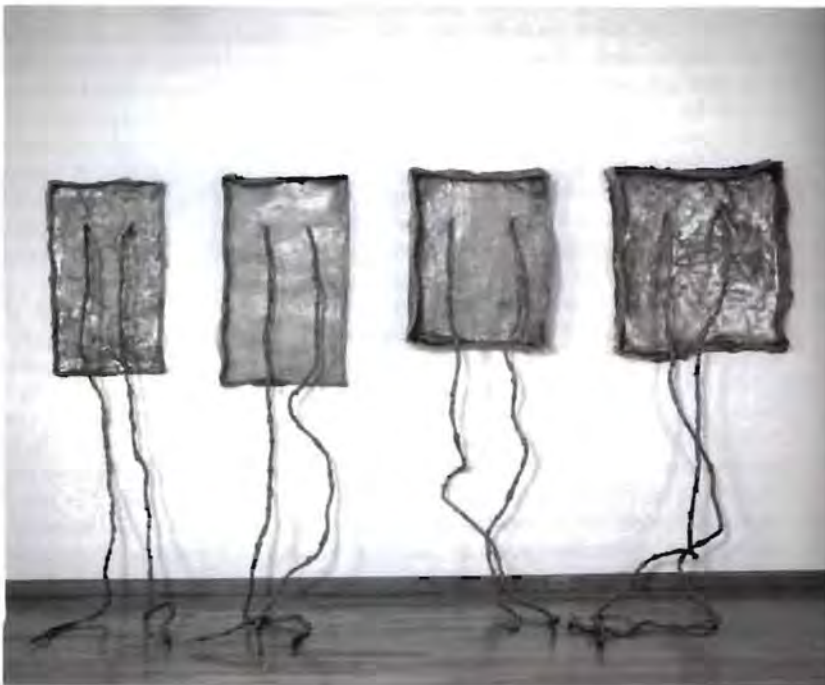
4. Constantin Brancusi
View of Studio (c. 1925)
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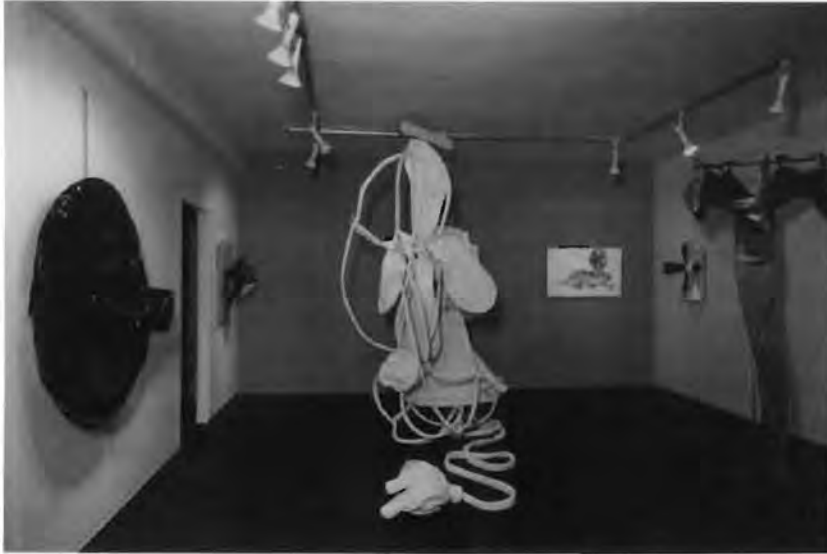
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Bradley Building (1893) Los Angeles
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Spiral Jetty (1969-1970)
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15. Mary Miss
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20. Sign indicating route to Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, Rozel Point, Great Salt Lake (Utah)
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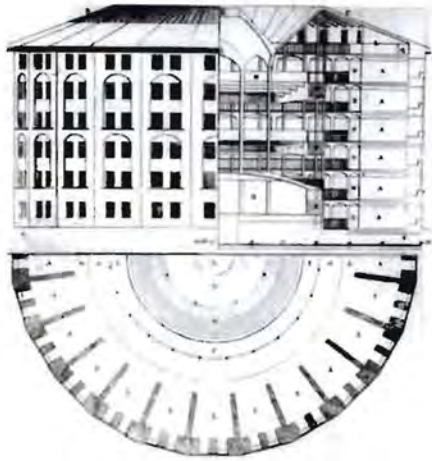
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27. Jeremy Bentham's Plan of the Panopticon.
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28. Milia Lorraine Khoury
Signpost at The Pierhead at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, Cape Town (South Africa), 28 April 2006



29. Milia Lorraine Khoury
Signpost at The Pierhead at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, Cape Town (South Africa), 28 April 2006



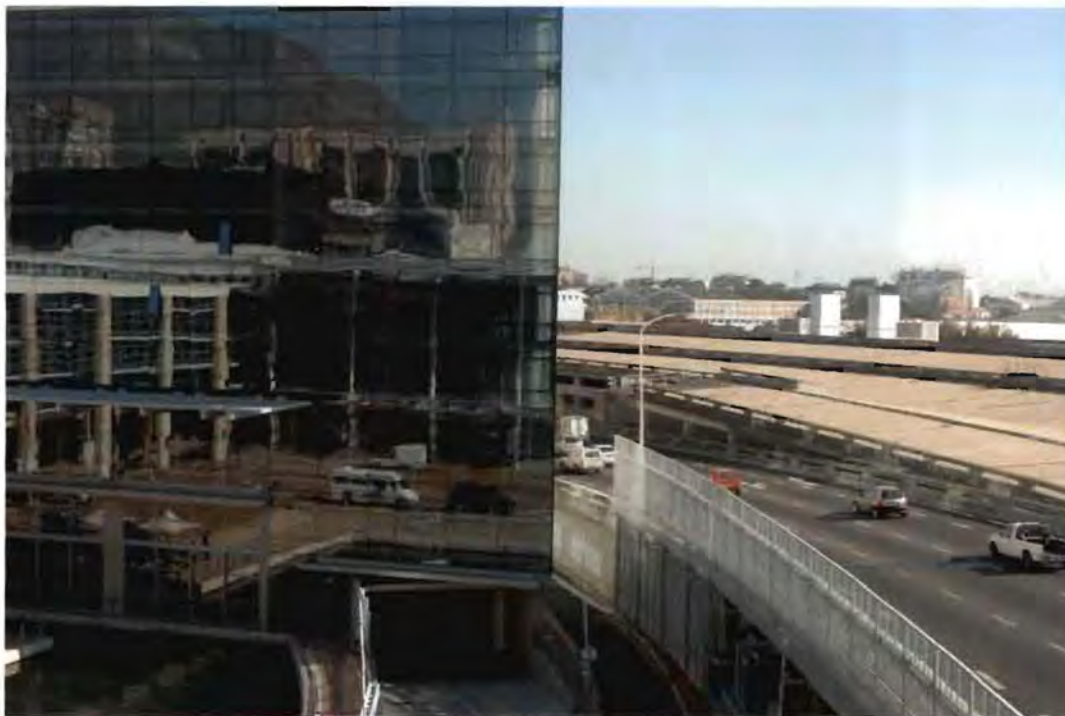
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32. Milia Lorraine Khoury
Arabella Sheraton reflection
'I swear that mountain is following me' (2005)



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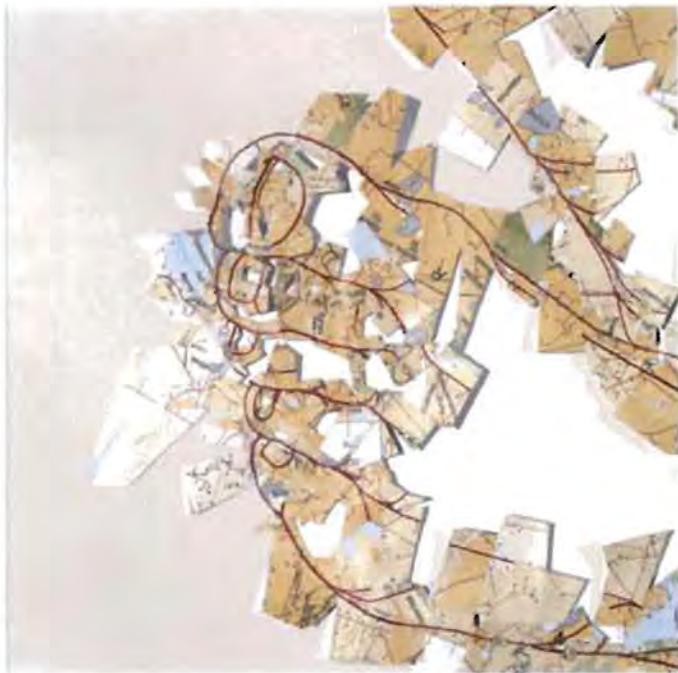
34. James Webb
There is no place called home (2005)
From: Williamson. S. (ed.) 2005. *Artthrob*. [Online]. Available:
<http://www.artthrob.co.za/05dec/images/webb01a.jpg>. Last Accessed: 10 May 2006.



35. James Webb
There is no place called home (2005)
From: Jonker, J. 2006. 'Haunted Weather'. *Art South Africa*. 4(3): 26.



36. Gerhard Marx
Sheet #2: Horizontal Figure 2 (2005)
From: O'Toole, S. (ed.) 2006. 'Editorial'. *Art South Africa*. 4(3): 8.



37. Milia Lorraine Khoury
View from Table Mountain, Cape Town (South Africa) 11 April 2006

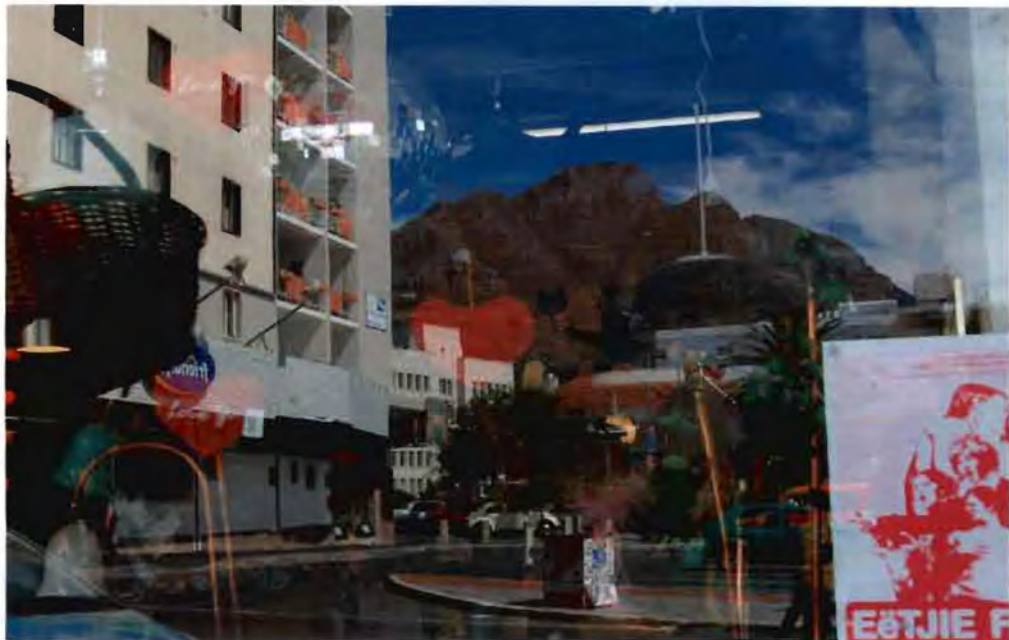


Catalogue

1. Milia Lorraine Khoury
'I swear that mountain is following me' (2004)



2. Milia Lorraine Khoury
'I swear that mountain is following me' (2005)



3. Milia Lorraine Khoury
'I swear that mountain is following me' (2005)



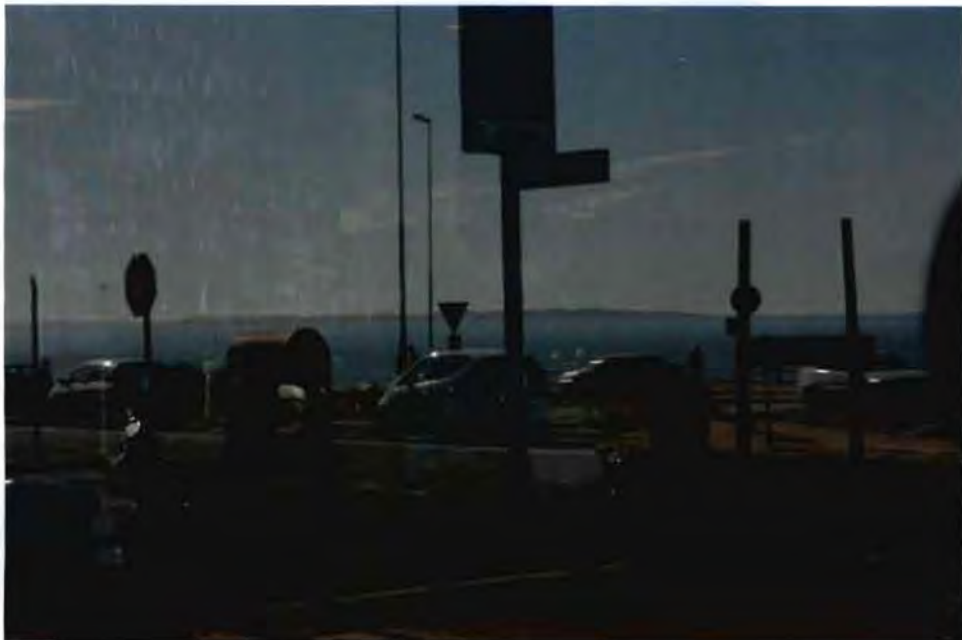
4. Milia Lorraine Khoury
'I swear that mountain is following me' (2005)



5. Milia Lorraine Khoury
'I swear that island is there' (2005)

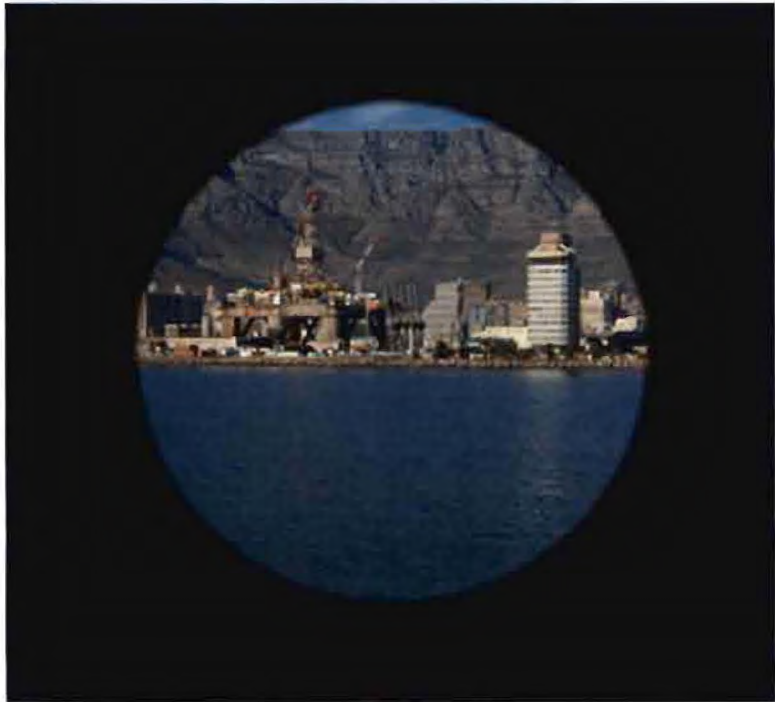


6. Milia Lorraine Khoury
'I swear that island is there' (2005)



7. Milia Lorraine Khoury
Circumnavigating the Great Divide (2006 - 2007)
Stills from animated panoramic film.





8. Milia Lorraine Khoury
Watery Graves, 2005

