

Braddon Snape



An Inflationary Act: Sculptural process, materiality, performance and site

Image: *Materiality Performed - The Lock-Up*, 2015

An Inflationary Act: sculptural process, materiality, performance and site

Braddon Snape

MFA (UoN)

BAVA (UoN)

Higher Certificate (Newcastle Art School)

Exegesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, Fine Arts.

This research was supported by an Australian Government Research training
Program Scholarship (RTP).

December 2019

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby certify that the work embodied in the thesis is my own work, conducted under normal supervision. The thesis contains no material which has been accepted, or is being examined, for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University's Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968 and any approved embargo.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
List of Figures.....	ii
Abstract.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: The Act of Inflation.....	9
Part 1. Breath and the Notion of Inflation.....	9
Part 2. Discovering the Process – Inflating Steel.....	23
Inflating Steel – The Method.....	30
The First Inflation: <i>Cloud</i>	31
The Act.....	36
Chapter 2: Finding Performance.....	39
The Live Performance.....	44
The Inflation – a performative event.....	44
Proposal for the performance of an inflation.....	45
Preparation and Development.....	46
Next to Nothing – the Inflation.....	48
The Artefact.....	50
The Documented Performance.....	51
Chapter 3: Materiality Performed	58
Reflective Surfaces	61
Restraint.....	66
The Anthropomorphic Inflation.....	68
Safety Apparatuses, Inflatable Toys and Context..	73
Plugging In.....	76
Self-forming.....	78
Chapter 4: Internal Pressure	82

Background of Site and Context	82
Pressure, Confinement and Breath.....	85
Darkness.....	87
Performance and Installation.....	87
The Final Act.....	89
Act in the Main Gallery.....	89
Act in Cell D (The Reformation).....	92
Act in Cell E.....	95
Act in The Yard.....	97
Act in Cell B.....	99
Act in Cell A (The Remains).....	102
Act in Cell F.....	103
Act in Cell G (The Release).....	106
Act in the Small Front Gallery.....	107
Act in the Large Front Gallery (The Forming).....	108
Chapter 5: Site and Reception.....	111
Nothin' but Sky.....	111
Conceptual Development.....	112
Diary Note: 16.08.2014.....	114
Diary Note: 09.09.2014.....	115
Diary Note: 07.10.2014.....	115
Diary Note: 2014.....	116
Diary Note: Latest (Jan 2015).....	116
The Work Installed.....	117
The Encounter – Interaction.....	120
Specifics of Site.....	122
The Phenomenological Experience.....	123
Diary Note: Artist Talk 09.11.2014.....	126
Clouds Gathering.....	126
Conceptual Development.....	127
Creation.....	129
The Physio-cognitive	131
Engineering and Fabrication.....	132
Reception.....	134
The Phenomenological Experience.....	136
Postscript.....	137
Conclusion	139
Bibliography.....	146

Acknowledgments

Firstly,

I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this research was undertaken, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. I pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

The cliché reads that ‘to raise a child it takes a village’, and this is certainly true for the raising of a PhD. Therefore, I would like to thank ‘my village’.

Thank you to my family:

My dad, Bob Snape, for a lifetime of unwavering support and encouragement of any of my endeavours. My Mum, Elin O’Connell, who first fostered my aspirations of artistic and academic pursuit and whose straight talking and critical analysis I miss. My wonderful and bright and talented children, Bella and Blake who are my joy and inspiration, and especially my beautiful, loyal and ever supportive wife, ShellB.

A very special thank you to my principal supervisor Dr Faye Neilson for stoically believing in me and my work. Without Faye’s absolute commitment and support I am certain I would never have made it to this point. Thank you to Nola Farman, my co-supervisor for her long and enduring patience and I cannot neglect to mention the late Dr Angela Philp whose generous knowledge, encouragement and will set me on this path. Angela, you are missed.

Thank you to all my friends and colleagues who have supported me along the way, not to mention all the artists and makers at The Creator Incubator. Particularly, I would like to mention technical officer in sculpture and friend, Michael Garth whose encouragement to ‘give this inflation thing a crack’ rocketed my research and my practice on a new and exciting trajectory. Thank you to my good friend Ron Royes for his loyal assistance (and philosophical musings), Maurice (Moz) Waters for his collaborative support and to my great old friend and collaborator Dean Beletich.

Thank you to all the team at The Lockup, especially Jessi England, Courtney Novak and Dale Collier for not only providing the opportunity to hold such an important exhibition in their space but allowing me to do it a second time for the examiners.

My great ‘old mates’: Gary Telford for his enduring moral support and engineering advice; Anthony Paterson, again for moral and painting support; and David Sullivan for many years of stoic support and the weekly ‘check-in’ phone call to ensure I was ok and on task.

Finally, while writing this our family had to say goodbye to our loyal (furry) best friend and member of the family Lou Lou who was always there to oversee the children grow into adults and excitedly greet me on my return home every day.

List of Figures

Figure 1	Jayne Wilton, <i>Breathe In, Breathe Out</i> , 2016	10
Figure 2	Nat Finkelstein, Andy Warhol and Silver Clouds in the Castelli Gallery (detail), 1966.....	12
Figure 3	Braddon Snape, <i>Performed Materiality</i> (The Lockup 2015).....	14
Figure 4	Jeff Koons, <i>Balloon Dog (Yellow)</i> , 1994-2000.....	15
Figure 5	Ricky Swallow, <i>Caravan</i> , 2008.....	17
Figure 6	Alex Seton, <i>Durable Solutions I</i> , 2014.....	19
Figure 7	Alex Seton, <i>Someone died trying to have a life like mine</i> , 2014.....	19
Figure 8	Braddon Snape, <i>Large device for a yet to be assigned purpose</i> , 2016.....	21
Figure 9	Anish Kapoor, <i>Leviathan</i> , 2011.....	22
Figure 10	Anish Kapoor, <i>Leviathan</i> , 2011.....	23
Figure 11	Jeremy Thomas, <i>Pneumatic Red</i> , 2017.....	25
Figure 12	Oskar Zieta, <i>Plopp Stool – Standard</i>	28
Figure 13	Plasma Cutting identical profiles.....	33
Figure 14	Tack welded profiles ready for MIG welding.....	34
Figure 15	Valve preparation with tapped central thread.....	34
Figure 16	Early MIG welded cloud form and comparative TIG welded small form mock-up composition in the studio.....	35
Figure 17	Richard Serra, <i>Gutter Corner Splash: Night Shift</i> (1969/ 1995).....	41
Figure 18	Work in progress.....	47
Figure 19	Mid-performance of the inflation at The Lockup.....	48
Figure 20	Braddon Snape, <i>Materiality Performed</i> , The Lock-Up.....	50
Figure 21	Still picture sequence - Diametrical Crumple Crease.....	53
Figure 22	Still picture sequence - Diametrical Crumple Crease.....	53
Figure 23	Still picture sequence - Diametrical Crumple Crease.....	54
Figure 24	Still picture sequence - Diametrical Crumple Crease.....	54
Figure 25	Gallery Floorplan courtesy of Maitland Regional Art Gallery.....	59
Figure 26	Braddon Snape, <i>Hung n Strung</i> , 2016.....	60
Figure 27	Anish Kapoor, <i>Cloud Gate</i> , 2004.....	62
Figure 28	Constantin Brancusi, <i>Bird in Space</i> , 1927.....	63
Figure 29	Matias Faldbakken, <i>Untitled (Locker Sculpture #01)</i> , 2010.....	67
Figure 30	Braddon Snape, <i>Materiality Performed</i> , 2016, Installation view....	69
Figure 31	Braddon Snape, <i>Single fold propped</i> , 2016.....	71
Figure 32	Braddon Snape, <i>Performed two chamber plop</i> , 2016.....	71
Figure 33	Ron Robertson-Swann, <i>Vault</i> , 1980.....	73
Figure 34	Claes Oldenburg, <i>Soft Toilet - Ghost Version</i> , 1966.....	76
Figure 35	Braddon Snape, <i>Materiality Performed - The Lockup</i> , 2015.....	77
Figure 36	Anish Kapoor, <i>My Red Homeland</i> , 2003.....	79
Figure 37	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in The Yard</i> , 2019.....	83
Figure 38	The Lock-Up gallery floorplan.....	90
Figure 39	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in the Main Gallery</i> , 2019...	91
Figure 40	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in the Main Gallery (detail)</i> , 2019.....	91
Figure 41	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in Cell D (The Reformation)</i> , 2019.....	94
Figure 42	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in Cell E</i> , 2019.....	96
Figure 43	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in Cell E (Detail)</i> , 2019.....	96
Figure 44	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in The Yard</i> , 2019.....	99
Figure 45	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in Cell B</i> , 2019.....	100
Figure 46	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in Cell A (The Remains)</i> , 2019.....	102
Figure 47	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in Cell A (The Remains)</i> , 2019.....	103
Figure 48	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in Cell F</i> , 2019.....	105
Figure 49	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in Cell F (detail)</i> , 2019.....	106
Figure 50	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in Cell G (The Release)</i> , 2019.....	107

Figure 51	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in the Small Front Gallery</i> , 2019.....	108
Figure 52	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in the Large Front Gallery (The Forming)</i> , 2019.....	109
Figure 53	Braddon Snape, <i>Internal Pressure: Act in Cell D (The Reformation)</i> , 2019.....	110
Figure 54	Braddon Snape, <i>Nothin' but Sky</i> (maquette), 2014.....	112
Figure 55	Braddon Snape, <i>Nothin' but Sky</i> , 2014.....	117
Figure 56	The Sculpture by the Sea site map.....	118
Figure 57	Braddon Snape, <i>Nothin' but Sky</i> , 2014.....	121
Figure 58	Braddon Snape, <i>Nothin' but Sky</i> , 2014.....	121
Figure 59	Braddon Snape, <i>Clouds Gathering</i> , 2018.....	127
Figure 60	Braddon Snape, <i>Clouds Gathering</i> , 2018.....	128
Figure 61	Braddon Snape, <i>Clouds Gathering</i> , 2018.....	129
Figure 62	Braddon Snape, <i>Clouds Gathering</i> , 2018.....	131
Figure 63	Braddon Snape, <i>Clouds Gathering</i> , 2018.....	133
Figure 64	Braddon Snape, <i>Clouds Gathering</i> , 2018.....	135
Figure 65	Braddon Snape, <i>Nothin' but Sky</i> , 2014.....	138

Abstract

This practice-based research has sought to develop and interrogate an individuated process of creating cold inflated steel sculpture. Through the course of the study, unique outcomes have been revealed through identifying the performative potential of this process and by positioning my practice within the art historical contexts of both sculpture and performance – or as ‘action sculpture’. The extended parameters of my practice allow the work to exist spatially, as a real time performance or as a mediated event. Here, process drives the development of unique sculptural works that are self-contained, phenomenological and responsive to site.

The research consists of an extensive and original creative component, which is supported and consolidated with a written exegesis. The exegesis is an inter-relational reflection of my practice-based approach, firmly establishing my practice within contemporary discourse. As a companion to the creative outcomes, the exegesis serves to contextualise my practice in relation to the work of other artists, art history and specific sites of engagement.

Introduction

This exegesis supports and consolidates an inter-relational combination of practice-based and practice-led¹ research and serves as companion to the extensive creative component of the research.

The differentiation between practice-based and practice-led methodologies can be unclear. Linda Candy clarifies the differences quite succinctly:

If the research process is primarily based on the making of an artefact, the research could be said to be practice *based*. If the research leads primarily to new understandings about practice, it is practice *led*.²

By this definition my research, as exemplified in this exegesis, will demonstrate that the breadth of this investigation is a combination and interrelation of these two methodologies. My approach is specifically located in practice, in the development of a unique sculptural process of cold steel inflation and its application to performance-based outcomes, as 'real time' events, mediated filmic outcomes and site-specific installation. This exegesis will show how my approach contributes new knowledge to the fields of contemporary sculpture, installation, performance, video performance and public art making. It describes the evolution of my process and contextualises my practice within the broader art historical discourse, particularly in terms of contemporary three-dimensional art practice.

A primary motivator for this current research is that throughout the history of art, particularly before the 1960s, much of the analysis of

¹ L. Candy, E.A. Edmonds, and R. Ascott, *Interacting: Art, Research and the Creative Practitioner* (Libri Pub., 2011), pp. 33-59.

² Candy, Edmonds, and Ascott, *Interacting: Art, Research and the Creative Practitioner*, P 36.

art/artworks focused on the two-dimensional image, often neglecting analysis of the conditions unique to the making and/or experiencing of sculpture or three-dimensional materiality. In addition, much of the earlier analytical literature does not appear to specifically engage with the physical and psychological content brought to the work by the viewer, or perhaps more aptly, the participator.

Formalist art theory of the twentieth century, championed by individuals such as Roger Fry and Clement Greenberg, centred on the premise that an artwork should be engaged with or encountered as an autonomous entity, to be free of prescribed content, to be enjoyed for its specific formal qualities. Greenberg contended that the subject of art was art itself³. However, to experience the work *only* on these terms would require the work to be experienced in some kind of cognitive vacuum. How could any relatively intelligent and conscious being ignore or block out all of the visual, psychological and social history they have accumulated throughout their life's journey to then experience an artwork as an innocent, free of association? A formalist approach is but one aspect from which to experience and understand works.

Sculptors, particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century, adopted the Modern Formalist approach as it provided a license to explore form and material as the valid content of the work. This state of affairs provided conditions for the burgeoning of abstraction in painting and sculpture, however, no matter how abstracted and divorced from mimesis or representation, further representational content was always inherent, much to the chagrin of stoic Formalists. As Erwin Panofsky stated in *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, "In a work of art, form cannot be divorced from content".⁴

Panofsky's iconography and iconology is predicated on a linear and logical process of analysing artworks and is a handy tool to gain an understanding of some of the artwork's content. However, iconography

³ Anne D'Alleva, *Methods & Theories of Art History*, London 2012, p. 18

⁴ Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 205

and iconology can only help partially in the analysis of works. Iconography explores the signs and symbols inherent in an artwork and of course this approach can be applied when encountering site-specific sculpture. It is also important to note that not all percipients⁵ will be aware of or responsive to some or many of the signs contained within an artwork. Important to acknowledge is that the knowledge and experience that one brings to the work will set up an individually unique system of signs and/or symbols in addition to what may be perceived as a commonly understood.

Semiotics, the theory of signs is essentially a development of iconography and was developed by the Swiss Ferdinand de Saussure and the American Charles Sanders Peirce. It opens up the study of signs and symbols to a world of interconnectedness, where one sign generates another. One of Dutch writer Mieke Bal's contributions to semiotics was to introduce the notion that "a radically dynamic view, however, would conceive the sign not as a thing, but as an event."⁶ This introduces the viewer (the percipient) to the process of engaging with, interpreting and ultimately becoming an element of, or a participator in, artworks, where the percipient contributes to the meaning or content of the work. This acknowledgement of the psychology of the percipient is central to my research of site-specific artworks, in that formal, social, political and psychological context all contribute to the content of the work.

In a discussion of Martin Heidegger's philosophy, art historian Anne D'Alleva writes that "...when artworks no longer function as cultural paradigms, they can become merely objects of aesthetic contemplation – precious treasures, perhaps, but relegated to the margins of human

⁵ I choose carefully to use the word 'percipient' as the alternatives i.e. *viewer* or *spectator* do not sufficiently encompass all that is involved when experiencing a site-specific, large-scale, three-dimensional, immersive artwork. With my adoption of the word 'percipient' I aim to encompass experience as something perceived through the engagement of all the senses as opposed to just seeing from a disengaged distance.

⁶ Mieke Bal, "From Sub to Suprasemiotic: the Sign as Event" in Sunil Manghani, Arthur Piper & Jon Simons (Ed.) *Images: A Reader*, Sage Publications Ltd., London, 2006, p. 119

experience.”⁷ For Heidegger, art was about experience, and not about feeling.⁸ I concur with this assumption to some extent, but depart at the exclusion of feeling. In her book *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, writer and curator Jill Bennett observes that *Affect*, or emotion, feeling and memory are completely entwined in the process of experiencing and absorbing (and concurrently) contributing to the content of artworks,⁹ this thinking closely mirrors my approach to artmaking and its installation.

Memory, imagination and even mood are unavoidable ingredients in the reiterative mix that takes place when one encounters and perceives site-specific sculpture; therefore, it is necessary to explore the phenomenological investigations of philosopher Paul Crowther. Crowther is one of the few scholars who addresses the unique position of sculpture within the discourse. Crowther writes on phenomenological depth:

Phenomenological depth centres on the ontological reciprocity of subject and object of experience. The embodied subject is immersed in a physical world which is not dependent on that subject for its existence and which, indeed, determines the character of the subject (in terms of both its physical constitution and the activities in which it must engage, in order to survive). At the same time, however, the nature of the physical world as perceived is itself given a specific character through the range of cognitive and motor capacities, which the subject brings to bear upon it. The ontological structure of the subject and its objects of experience are thus reciprocally correlated in key respects. At the experiential level, each is, in effect, part of the full definition of the other.¹⁰

Importantly, Crowther’s notion of the phenomenological depth provides a horizon where everything is on the table, whereby; the *Affective*

⁷ Anne D’Alleva, *Methods & Theories of Art History*, London 2012, p. 120

⁸ Anne D’Alleva, p. 120

⁹ Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, Stanford University Press, 2005

¹⁰ Paul Crowther, *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts (even the frame)*, Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 3

(personal), *Social* (societal) and *Cognitive* (knowledge) all contribute to the meaning/content of artworks.

This document will traverse through my practice-based and practice-led research, chronicle discoveries in the studio, identify the ‘value’ of those discoveries and discuss the application of new knowledge in experimental processes and new works. These processes and outcomes are studied and reported throughout the five chapters of the exegesis.

Chapter 1, *The Act of Inflation*, guides the reader through my initial experimentation with the cold steel inflation method, its development and the shift in my practice that occurred in response to these findings. This chapter outlines the discovery of this method through a practice-based approach, and the subsequent practice-led meaning and content that has emerged from this discovery to drive the research further. The chapter also positions my practice within a broader art historical framework, drawing on theoretical discourse from writers such as Rosalind Krauss, Harold Rosenberg and Barbara Bolt.

The work of contemporary practitioners in the field, including Oscar Zieta and Jeremy Thomas, is also explored in Chapter 1, whilst historical examples of artists working with inflated forms serve to contextualise my conceptual position. Piero Manzoni’s *Artist’s Breath* and Andy Warhol’s *Silver Clouds* are early reference points, followed with examples of work by Anish Kapoor and Richard Serra and those of contemporary artists who adopt mimesis to simulate the inflated form, such as Jeff Koons, Ricky Swallow and Alex Seton.

The notion of *Finding Performance* is flagged in Chapter 1 but shapes the content of Chapter 2. This chapter heralds the emergence of a new performative direction in my research and practice, which occurred in response to studio experimentation and theoretical research. Chapter 2 focuses on the use of performance and its importance in driving the research forward. Beginning with Aaron Stoller’s writing around the

idea that the process is the artwork¹¹, this chapter also investigates Richard Serra's 'action sculpture' *Splashing* (1968) in relation to my studio exploration. I draw on Rosalind Krauss's analysis of the 'expanded field',¹² Nicholas Bourriaud's idea that the work of contemporary art is not an end point but a point of departure – as a generator of new ideas – and discussion of the value of documentation to artistic practice. This chapter investigates the documentation of performance and how it was identified and applied through my studio practice.

Chapter 3 announces my first opportunity to present this new research in a major exhibition, to a broad audience at a large public art gallery, Maitland Regional Gallery. Within this chapter, I demonstrate the breadth of my process-driven research practice in the studio and the theoretical consolidation of that practice, drawing from phenomenologists including Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger and Paul Crowther. Artists who have not only informed my practice but the development of sculpture to this point are also investigated in this chapter. From the minimal forms of Constantin Brancusi; the soft sculpture of Claes Oldenburg; the interactive, spatial explorations and reflective surfaces of Anish Kapoor, to Matias Faldbakken's interrogation of materiality as evident in his compressed bundles of steel lockers.

Through themes and the methodologies of *Reflective surfaces*, *Restraint*, the *Anthropomorphic Inflation*, *Safety Apparatuses*, *Inflatable Toys and Context*, *Plugging In* and *Self-forming*, I guide the reader through the intertwined duality of the formulation of process and concept throughout the research, and through the development and realization of the body of work presented in *Materiality Performed* at Maitland Regional Art Gallery.

¹¹ Aaron Stoller, "Time and the Creative Act," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society: A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy* 52, no. 1 (2016): pp. 47-61.

¹² Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," 8, no. October (1979)

In Chapter 4 the concepts of materiality, the duality of pressure and release, and restraint, that are clearly inherent in the inflated steel process, are fully interrogated in reference to the exhibition, *Internal Pressure* at The Lock-Up. Chapter 4 establishes the significance of site, specifically the internal or inside site. In particular, the prominent contextual conditions of the nineteenth century police lock-up, turned contemporary art space, *The Lock-Up*, will be discussed in direct connection to the development of the works for the exhibition, *Internal Pressure*. Through the chapter, I will communicate the implicit content gleaned from the cold steel inflation process that feeds into the contextualization of the installed works in the *Internal Pressure* exhibition. This chapter will also demonstrate the results of ‘finding performance’ through the practice-led studio research when interrogating the inflated steel method.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I will discuss the reception of artworks and the specific conditions of the external or outside site. When discussing the response to the artworks featured in this chapter, the influential spatial, environmental, social and psychological factors will be acknowledged.

Beginning with *Nothin’ but Sky* sited in Mark’s Park, Bondi, NSW, Australia, which came at the very beginning of this research, I will thoroughly chronicle the development of the work through conception, development, realization and the final siting of the work. Artists working in a similar vein, such as Nancy Holt, James Turrell and Anish Kapoor, will also be discussed. This work is placed in relation to the Modernist tradition, in specific reference to Ron Robertson Swann’s *Vault* (Fig. 33). Throughout the chapter, and drawing from the writing of Paul Crowther, I explain the phenomenological experience of *Nothin’ but Sky* (Fig. 55) and *Clouds Gathering* (Fig. 59) and how that experience changes as one moves around and through the works.

In the second part of the chapter focus is comprehensively set on the conception, development and realization of *Clouds Gathering*, sited at Maitland Riverlink Building, Maitland, NSW, Australia. *Clouds Gathering* was commissioned by Maitland City Council and as the chapter will attest, provided a timely opportunity to test my newly developed cold steel inflation methods on a grand site-specific scale.

The exegesis concludes with my reflections on the significance and value of my practice-led research and its contribution to new knowledge in the fields of sculpture, installation, mediated performance and site specificity.

Chapter 1

The Act of Inflation

This chapter is divided into two sections, the first considers the artist's preoccupation with contained air and breath and includes the discussion of a number of three-dimensional works that conceptually pivot on our relationship to the act of inflation. Although they all differ significantly from my own practice, and the list is not a comprehensive summary of artists who work with inflation, these works have been influential during my process of conceptualisation and in developing my broader understanding of the viewer's response to both inflation and materiality. The second section of the chapter deals directly with my discovery of the process of cold steel inflation and its development.

1. Breath and Inflation

What is it about these inanimate, inflated forms that engages our imagination and piques our empathy? Is it the idea of a contained breath or the potential for life to be expressed into a once flaccid or flat material?

In his essay *Blowing Things Up*, James Trainor ruminates on humans' familiarity with the inflated form:

The sympathy that we feel in the presence of a blown-up object owes much to its innately anthropomorphic qualities: soft, rounded, responsive to pressure and touch, and often called into being when we, godlike, summon them with our own breath. They are also disarming: how can you be angry at a balloon, any more than you can at a puppy dog?¹³

Artists have consistently explored concepts associated with inflation from the latter half of the twentieth century and through to

¹³ James Trainor, "Blowing Things Up: 2001 Luftbalons," *Border Crossings* 20, no. 3 (2001). P 49

contemporary times. This occurs through the creation of actual inflated forms, the adoption of mimesis (the imitative representation of natural or human made forms) in illusory materials and finishes or in utilising unlikely materials like stone. The evocation of breath, as a life-sustaining necessity, becomes evident in inflated forms and subsequently becomes conscious to the audience. The art of glass blowing is a clear example of the use of breath to create form.

Jane Wilton is a contemporary London artist, who for the past decade has been preoccupied with visualising breath in physical form. It is particularly interesting that this artist seeks not only to document the breath out, but also the breath in, which she claims “...is more challenging to capture without clinical equipment.”¹⁴

Figure 1: Jayne Wilton, *Breathe In, Breathe Out*, 2016¹⁵, Handblown glass by the artist, installed in acrylic box on plinth. 150 x 100 x 75 cm
Although Wilton uses a broad range of media to record breath, molten glass allows her to capture both out and in breaths through her blowing into the molten substance and then inhaling. The physical marking of

¹⁴ Jayne Wilton, (2016) “Take a Deep Breath In”, *Lancet Respiratory Medicine*, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 106

¹⁵ Julian Page and Joanna Bryant, (2016) “Visible Traces” available online: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/jayne-wilton-breathe-in-breathe-out> (accessed 08.10.2018)

the space that breath encompasses, visible through the transparency of the glass, allows the audience to observe the dimensions of breath in durable form (Fig. 1).

The significance of breath to the artist is no more evident than in the work titled *Artist's Breath* by Piero Manzoni (1933-63). Manzoni was an Italian avant-garde artist, who was at the forefront of conceptual art in the 1960s. *Artist's Breath* was an extension of the series of works *Body of Air* which consisted of a wooden case containing a white balloon, a mouthpiece, a tripod and a series of instructions. In following the instructions, the participator could then blow up the balloon to create an 'air sculpture'.¹⁶ To extend the concept, Manzoni would charge 250 lire per litre to fill the balloon with his own breath. The balloon would then be sealed and mounted on a board. As a result of this development the title of the work would then be changed to *Artist's Breath*.¹⁷ The use of the board base refers to the plinths which work to 'frame' sculptural works, separating them from the everyday. By placing the balloon filled with his own breath on this base, Manzoni signals that his breath is precious and rarefied. Moreover, the work is ironic in the fact that the artist doesn't intend that the work will last indefinitely. This work depends on our playful association with the balloon, fixing it in place rather than letting it float free.

In 1966 the universally acclaimed American artist Andy Warhol (1928-1987) exhibited the artwork titled *Silver Clouds* at Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. This was to be a significant piece in the puzzle that was Warhol's oeuvre. Warhol's practice was hugely diverse, and he has become known for his contribution to the Pop Art movement, however Pop Art only represented one aspect of his practice. *Silver Clouds* represented a departure from the Pop Art approach and a sojourn into new territory for Contemporary Art of the time – the immersive installation – the phenomenological, whereby the viewer / percipient

¹⁶ Gerald Silk, "Myths and Meanings in Manzoni's Merda D'artista," *Art Journal* 52, no. 3 (1993): P 72.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.72.

encounters the work from within – surrounded by elements of the work, thus physically inside the work.

Figure 2: Nat Finkelstein, Andy Warhol and Silver Clouds in the Castelli Gallery (detail) 1966¹⁸

Warhol's clouds were created from rectangular envelopes of mirror reflective Mylar and were inflated with a mix of air and helium. Mylar is a brand name for BoPET film, a stretched polyethylene terephthalate.¹⁹ It is used in many applications for its light weight, flexibility, strength and its impermeability to most liquids or gases. The mix of air and

¹⁸ Lauren Weinberg, (2008) "Andy Warhol's Silver Clouds comes to LUMA" available online: <https://www.timeout.com/chicago/art/andy-warhols-silver-clouds-comes-to-luma> (accessed 10.10.2018)

¹⁹ BoPET Film description available online from: <https://xamax.com/polyester-films/> (accessed 10.10.2018)

helium was derived so that the clouds would contain enough helium to lift off the ground but not so much that they floated up to the ceiling.²⁰ Thus, the clouds would hover in mid-air within the gallery space, allowing visitors to physically interact with them.²¹ The presence of a body moving through the space would then disturb the air and this turbulence would then continually reconfigure the cloud formation within the space.²²

This new and playful experience was unusual in a gallery context at that time in the history of contemporary art and led to an increased involvement with pneumatic work, also more broadly in design. It was previously associated with kid's parties and celebrations and not considered appropriate for what was understood as the 'serious business' of artmaking prior to Pop Art.

Both the aesthetic and this interactive, or phenomenological, element of Warhol's *Silver Clouds* has a relationship to the mirrored surfaces of my inflated stainless-steel forms. However, my forms are static by comparison, and it is from the movement of the percipient through space that the reflections change and so, the forms appear to change. This effect can be observed in Figure 3.

²⁰ Matt DiClemente, (2014) "Andy Warhol's Silver Clouds: More Than Just Hot Air", Andy Warhol Museum: <https://www.warhol.org/andy-warhols-silver-clouds-more-than-just-hot-air/> (accessed 08.10.2018)

²¹ See *Clouds Gathering* in Chapter 5, p. 59

²² Matt DiClemente, (2014) "Andy Warhol's Silver Clouds: More Than Just Hot Air".



Figure 3: Braddon Snape, *Performed Materiality* (The Lockup 2015), installation view, *Materiality Performed*, Maitland Regional Art Gallery 2016, mirror polished stainless steel, PVC air hose and air fittings. Dimensions: variable (inflated form 240 x 150 x 60cm).

American artist Jeff Koons (born 1955) has followed on from the investigations of Pop Art with his highly commercialised approach to the reproduction of mass-produced everyday objects, presenting them as

important objects of desire. Often this involves the upscaling of an everyday item and its reproduction in more sophisticated and everlasting materials, that closely resemble the properties of the original. Koons' *Balloon Dog* mimics a party novelty object made from air filled rubber balloons, which is upscaled and recreated in a durable material.

Figure 4: Jeff Koons, *Balloon Dog (Yellow)*, 1994-2000, High chromium stainless steel with transparent colour coating; 307.3 x 363.2 x 114.3 cm.²³

Koons' sculptures are often fabricated or cast in stainless steel or bronze and are then highly polished or meticulously painted to mimic the surface and form of an inflated object, which would normally be disposable. Koons' method completely disregards the evidence of process. It is evident that for Koons the refined object, free of any evidence of its manufacturing processes or of the hand of the artist, is the objective. The witness to these works almost immediately understands that these forms are not soft materials filled with air

²³ Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Jeff Koons on the Roof", available online: <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2008/jeff-koons> (accessed 03.09.2018)

pressure, and also that they are not inflated metal forms. Koons usually places such works on pedestals that suggest the historical tradition for presenting sculpture works, framing them as significant works of art.

Rosalind Krauss notes:

Before the 1960s there had quite simply been no problem about distinguishing between the classes of things. The material of sculpture, its mode of transformation, its isolation from ordinary space, all guaranteed that it would be neither apprehended nor treated like an ordinary object.²⁴

Koons' sculptures are technically brilliant replicas of the original throw-away party balloons, upscaled and rendered in permanent materials. My inflated steel works, however, clearly present as original forms that have been conjured as a direct result of the inflation method. They are not replications. They are the result of a process - an act - in the now. Koons' method of reproducing the everyday, often in 'high end' materials, speaks to the contemporary capitalist environment that celebrates the exalted object. This phenomenon is no more evident than in the commercial business of the art market, which Koons has exploited so cleverly. Koons employs other technicians and craftspeople to produce his works and, as a result his works have no trace of the artist's hand. His approach is antithetical to an acknowledgement of process as evident in a resultant artwork, of meaning in the making.

Another artist to use the balloon in his work is the Australian sculptor Ricky Swallow (born 1974). *Caravan 2008* is a work consisting of three balloons cast/replicated in bronze. The three balloons are encrusted incongruously with barnacles. This work is currently on display at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Sydney and forms part of the collection. The materiality of the work is described on the MCA website, noting our common associations with the balloon as a disposable object:

²⁴ Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, (8th Printing, MIT Press: USA), 1990, p. 197

We think of a balloon as being light as air, delicate, a captured breath. It is also something ephemeral – it can pop or sag, and eventually fall apart; but not these balloons, which are cast in bronze.²⁵

Figure 5: Ricky Swallow, *Caravan*, 2008. Bronze, 3 parts: 2 parts 30.5 x 22.9 x 24.4cm, 1 part 35.6 x 25.4 x 27.9cm

Like Koons, Swallow employs mimesis to build the conceptual premise of the artwork. As the above quote alludes, this work is about permanence and impermanence and that is where the importance of materiality and process ends when understanding its content. Cast bronze is employed as a signifier of permanence and weight and the balloon is used as metaphor for lightness and impermanence. The physical properties are much less important than the metaphorical properties in his application of the material.

²⁵ Ricky Swallow, *Caravan*, 2008, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, available online: <https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/works/2011.14A-C/> (accessed 03.09.2018)

An area where my methods converge with Swallow's is in the adoption of a binary dialogue. Evident in *Caravan*, Swallow elicits the binaries of permanence and impermanence. Historically, in my work I too have established binary relationships with both form and material. This is evident in the strapped or restrained works such as *Hung n Strung* first exhibited in *Materiality Performed* at Maitland Regional Art Gallery in 2016. I will discuss the 'strapped' works in more detail in *Chapter 3: Materiality Performed* and again in *Chapter 4: Internal Pressure – Space and Site*.

Another Australian Contemporary artist Alex Seton (born 1977) is a master of mimesis and a master of stone carving. His carved marble sculptures are beguiling renditions of the everyday, masterfully replicated in white marble. Seton's works at their conceptual best engage in politics and social impact. Other works are more playful and enjoy the representation of a universally understood everyday object, but in a material traditionally associated with statuary and the monumental. Seton's piece, titled *Durable Solutions I*, of 2014²⁶ employs the heavy, solid and earthly material of marble to render the form of an inflatable raft, a lightweight form that is formed by air.

In this dichotomy Seton proposes a certain irony of a practically useless life raft in direct reference to the plight of seafaring refugees, where many lives have been lost trying to reach Australia's shores. In this work there is no air, there is no life in this raft. Seton carried this theme through to another major installation titled: *Someone died trying to have a life like mine* for the Adelaide Biennial *Dark Heart* at The Art Gallery of South Australia, 2014. *Someone died trying to have a life like mine* consisted of 28 life preservers meticulously carved from marble.

²⁶ *Durable Solutions I*, Alex Seton 2014, Wombeyan marble, polyester rope, spigots 145 x 90 x 15cm.



Figure 6: Alex Seton, *Durable Solutions I*, 2014. Wombeyan marble, polyester rope, spigots, 145 x 90 x 15cm²⁷



Figure 7: Alex Seton, *Someone died trying to have a life like mine*, 2014. Wombeyan marble, nylon webbing, dimensions variable.²⁸

²⁷ Alex Seton, *Durable Solutions I*, 2014, Designboom website: <https://www.designboom.com/art/marble-carved-inflatables-alex-seton-memorialize-asylum-seekers-09-16-2014/> (accessed 03.09.2018)

²⁸ Alex Seton, *Someone died trying to have a life like mine*, 2014 from the University of New South Wales website - "Honouring the Dead: Alex Seton's moving Protest Sculptures Carved From Marble", <https://artdesign.unsw.edu.au/whats-on/news/honouring-dead-alex-setons-moving-protest-sculptures-carved-from-marble> (accessed 08.12.2019)

Like the life raft the purpose of the life preservers is to provide flotation in a maritime emergency and preserve life, however, also like the life-raft, Seton's preservers are made from cold, dense and heavy marble. They would only assist in dragging a person to the depths, instead of providing floatation and safety. Here, the memorial significance of marble is evident. This work also speaks to the plight of refugees fleeing dire circumstances by boat and acknowledges the lives lost. Similarly, one route of my research has explored the notion of the inflatable safety device in forms evocative of life rings, albeit dysfunctional. These works are a playful take on marine or industrial safety equipment and reference the safety colours used for those devices.

With my formative years filled with all manner of water sports, including yacht hull and sail forms, my childhood has provided a wellspring of memories and associations from which my practice is informed. From the minimal and floating hull forms to the billowing and collapsing forms of a yacht's spinnaker, to the life-rings and life preservers adorning every seafaring vessel. An example of my work that specifically responds to the inflatable life ring can be viewed in Figure 8, *Large device for a yet to be assigned purpose*, which was created in 2016.

After considering Seton, and summoning thoughts of drowning and gasping for air, we are led to Anish Kapoor. Much of Kapoor's oeuvre has dealt with the dialectic of the internal and the external, the form and the void, he too has produced inflated works that epitomise this relationship contained within one sculpture or installation.



Figure 8: Braddon Snape, *Large device for a yet to be assigned purpose*, 2016, welded, inflated and painted steel, 100 x 90 x 55 cm.

His gargantuan inflated bubbles of air encapsulated by a PVC membrane, titled *Leviathan* was commissioned in 2011 for *Monumenta* in the Grand Palais, Paris. It measured 33.5 x 100 x 72 metres and consisted of a composition of incredible interconnecting spherical void spaces. Often Kapoor's works initiate a spatial dialogue between the inside and the outside of forms and often turn the inside out. This work is no different. In fact, *Leviathan* provides two completely different experiences. From the outside it appears as a monolithic behemoth that consumes the voluminous Grand Palais space and from the inside it provides an experience of air and lightness. This experience is amplified by the changing experience of light on the form and when inside, red light filtering through the outer membrane.

Figure 9: Anish Kapoor, *Leviathan*²⁹, 2011, PVC, 33.5 x 100 x 72 metres.

²⁹ Anish Kapoor website: <http://anishkapoor.com/684/leviathan> (accessed 13.11.2019)

Figure 10: Anish Kapoor, *Leviathan*³⁰, 2011, PVC, 33.5 x 100 x 72 metres.

My inflated steel bodies are a combination of a buckled skin and the contained and unseen void. An empty vessel – or is it? Kapoor speaks of those spaces, those voids as the immaterial in stating:

I am interested in that part of material, which is not material because it seems to me that equivalent with every history of material, there is a history of immaterial.³¹

2. Discovering the Process – Inflating Steel

The idea to attempt to inflate steel originated from a casual conversation about research with my colleague Michael Garth in the Sculpture workshop at The University of Newcastle. I recounted

³⁰ Anish Kapoor website: <http://anishkapoor.com/684/leviathan>. Accessed 13.11.2019

³¹ Conversation between curator Marcello Dantas and Anish Kapoor from 'Ascension', Rio de Janeiro/Brazil/San Paulo 2006-2007
<http://www.anishkapoor.com/writing/brazilinterview.htm>

watching Mythbusters³² late one evening and described how they were attempting to inflate steel to ‘confirm’ or ‘bust’ a myth. I became very interested in physically testing the process myself, thinking that I could possibly use the process to economically create compound curves in sheets or plates of steel. These cut-out sections could then be used to construct larger, lyrical forms. Michael was also keen to observe this process, so the steel was ordered, and the research began.

Whilst researching and preparing for my first attempt at steel inflation, it was important to find any other examples of artists or others who have worked with similar methods and it is necessary to acknowledge that I was not inventing this process. However, over time I would create my own methodology and approach in response to my ongoing research. In those early days I found only a few examples from which to garner knowledge and from which to identify the unique qualities in my investigation and development of my method.

The first artist I encountered who was also inflating steel was the American, Jeremy Thomas (born 1973). When I discovered Thomas’s work, he was approaching the method from a blacksmithing viewpoint, in that he was heating metal forms in a large kiln/forge to change the properties of the steel, creating a more malleable state and allowing the metal to stretch and give to the heat. This move to change the properties of the material is similar to what occurs in glass blowing, where the material is heated to a high enough temperature to considerably change its properties. This process allows the material to not only change shape easily, but also to stretch once injected with air. The hot inflation method for steel creates soft creasing and fluid forms that are more akin to inflatable plastics or vinyls, as the heated material is much more forgiving of the process. In addition to his material approach, Thomas is largely concerned with the aesthetics of the colour

³² Peter Rees, Beyond Television Productions

relationships applied to his forms.³³ The colours he chooses to apply are often seductive colours that are easily associated with automobile coatings and are sympathetic to the apparent softness of the heated and forge-inflated steel objects he creates. There are obvious similarities between Thomas's practice and my own, especially in his contextualising of colour in relation to its industrial past, as I also allude to industry with my choice of colours. However, our material processes are quite different.

Figure 11: Jeremy Thomas, *Pneumatic Red*, 2017, cold rolled steel, powder coat and urethane, 127 x 125.73 x 101.6cm.

Although Thomas's sculptures are abstract and are formed as a result of the inflation process, for me they do not thoroughly interrogate the most remarkable aspect of the process of inflating steel. The fact that cold steel can be inflated with air in such a way. Thomas's works are solely pictorial three-dimensional illustrations of the process, very much informed by circle geometry, whereby his resultant forms are dictated by profiles cut from elements of a circle. For me, his approach would be

³³ Jeremy Thomas Studio website: <https://jeremythomassculpture.com/info-contact> (accessed 18.12.2018)

unsatisfying and represent the missing of an opportunity and the essential understanding of what the cold inflation method embodies. It is the remarkable performative and process driven nature of this method that holds the value in its pursuit. Thomas creates objects. His objects may be aesthetically desirable, and they are realised as a result of the inflation process, but the focus remains on the aestheticised object, isolated in space. Similarly, Thomas does refer to the relationship between maker and material in the moment of inflation:

Air is measured and experienced through pressure and volume. This work is the visual experience of that pressure and volume as applied to a geometric construct. These forms are grown more than fabricated. Each work is specific to the dialogue between the maker, the object and the moment of inflation.³⁴

Although we share an interest in the role of the maker, inflation and the industrial references to colour, this is where the similarities in our methodologies end. Thomas's process does not interrogate the performative potential of the inflation method, and this is one of the defining aspects of my practice that has emerged from my research.

matter

mangle

wrinkle

crinkle

crumple

pucker

crease

crush

My methodology is informed by the unique conditions of the cold inflation process. It answers to the response of the material, to the pressure injected, to the matter under duress. When performing the inflation under these set conditions, the buckling of the cold material

³⁴ Jeremy Thomas Studio website: <https://jeremythomassculpture.com/info-contact> (accessed 18.12.2018)

under pressure necessarily creates crumpling and creasing with the expansion of the form, highlighting the material properties. The above verb list is a sympathetic nod to the verb lists of American artist Richard Serra (born 1938),³⁵ however, Serra's use of the verb list is to propose a set of instructions with which to impose acts upon a material. My verb list is used to identify the response of the metal during the act of inflation. I adopt the word 'perform' consciously and very deliberately, as the forming of these works is an act of physical engagement with the steel - an embodied act with matter and air - in the moment, in real time. It is in this performed act, in reiterative response to matter and to changes in the steel and the forms, that the content of this work exists. It is 'action sculpture'. The concepts of *the performed act* and *action sculpture* are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

The analysis of Thomas's methods and of his resultant sculptural works was crucial to identifying the methodological and conceptual differences in our outputs. At this same early point in the research, there appeared to be only one other significant practitioner to analyse. This was Polish architect and designer Oskar Zieta (born 1975) and his *Plopp Stool*.

The *Plopp* stool is a functional, aesthetic object and Zieta and his FIDU team have utilised the latest technologies to reproduce these objects in series, in large commercial quantities. FIDU is a German acronym that translates to "free internal pressure forming".³⁶ In similarity to my pursuits with this material process, Zieta also ruminates on the

³⁵ G. Müller and G. Gorgoni, *The New Avant-Garde: Issues for the Art of the Seventies* (Praeger, 1972), p.94.

³⁶ Material District website: <https://materialdistrict.com/article/blow-metal-technology/> (accessed 14.12.2018)

Figure 12: Oskar Zieta, *Plopp Stool - Standard*, inflated steel, each 50 x 35 x 35 cm.³⁷

exploitation of material properties, whereby steel in its flat form has no structure (much like paper), however, once folded, or in this case inflated, it gains structural integrity. This development of the structural capabilities of the method is of primary focus for the FIDU Team.³⁸ Unlike my method, which equally exploits the failure in the material, Zieta's promotional material³⁹ places the objects within the high production design sphere, whereby their methods are to economically produce masses of consistently fabricated products. However, one important selling point for these products is that every *Plopp* stool is unique due to the inflation process, in that the creases in the material are always slightly different. While Zieta's approach to the process and methodology differs greatly from my own, the notion of producing unique and individual forms through inflation is also an important element of my process.

³⁷ "Plopp Standard", Zeita website: <https://ziata.pl/plopp-family/> (accessed 14.12.2018)

³⁸ Zeita website: <https://ziata.pl/plopp-family/> (accessed 14.12.2018)

³⁹ Zeita website: <https://ziata.pl/plopp-family/> (accessed 14.12.2018)

My methodology is solidly centred in ideas of the individuated, handmade object. The making process forms a physical and embodied relationship with the material and the immaterial (air), in a process that is acted by the body as an experience in time. This is an analogue act, which has been an important motivation in my pursuit of the process, in direct response to the contemporary fabrication and production landscape of the twenty-first century. Almost everything humans now produce in the developed world is a product of digital reproductive technologies. Almost any existing object may be digitally scanned and reproduced for the masses. This, now widely accessible proliferation of reproduction limits the experience of that which is unique and that which is created by a human being. As philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) alluded, the reproduced object has no identity or connection to its origins:

Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.⁴⁰

The Arts and Craft Movement of the early Twentieth Century and, more recently, the contemporary ‘hipster’ or ‘hand-made’ movement were very much a reaction against these advances in technology and industry. That said, my methods gladly adopt selected technologies in the pursuit of efficiency and economic prudence. However, it is vital that the forming of these unique works is performed by myself as the maker – in the moment.

Variations of the inflation process have been applied in different industries, such as automobile and motorcycle manufacturing. Primarily, hydroforming of motorcycle fuel tanks is the most common variation of the process in these industries. Hydroforming is very similar to air-inflated forming; however, it uses water instead of air to

⁴⁰ W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Penguin Books Limited, 2008).

fill and pressurise the forms. For manufacturing purposes, hydroforming is the preferred method as it produces finer results, creating more uniform surfaces with minimal creasing and buckling. This was the very reason that I chose not to adopt this method, as it is the failure in the material when subject to the air inflation process that is a key component of my methodology. It is important that the stresses and effects of the inflation process are clearly and materially evident in the resultant artworks produced from this research.

Another important aspect of this process for me, is often (but not exclusively) the necessity to produce forms that are not derived as the result of a prescribed metaphor. Instead, the forms are autonomous. There is no doubt that they will by association contain metaphor, however the metaphor is an end product and not an initial loading. The material aesthetic of the forms is a product of the *sensitivity* to the inflation method.

Each individual form is unique in its execution because with each inflation the relationship between straight lines, angles, concave or convex curve is different. These relationships are also subject to the thickness of the steel and any localised anomalies in the material and/or the weld, and finally, the limits of air pressure imposed on the form will also have a significant bearing on the result. Once again, this is evidence of the confluence of method, matter and the immaterial.

Inflating Steel – The Method

I don't get off on steel. It's just a material I use to control and define space, something I've been around my entire life. I believe that the selection of material has to do with one's sensibility: how you know the world has to do with how you sense yourself in relation to material. Steel is a material that I've learned to use. I started handling it at a very early age, and I thought I could use it in a way that I couldn't use other materials—or let's say I didn't have a feeling for using other materials. I worked with rubber, with lead, but steel ended up being the material of my choice. It's strange. When I see things written about me such as "man-of-steel," that's not how I see myself in relation to the material. I think of steel as something that's useful in terms of defining space, but I don't think

*of myself as being particularly enamored with it as a material in and of itself. For me, it's a means to an end. I happen to understand its potential and I have a direct connection to it.*⁴¹

Serra's musing on steel could, in some respects, be considered a little disingenuous. He speaks pragmatically about steel and clearly and consciously attempts to avoid any romantic notions attached to his employment of the material, however it is evident in the methods he employs to engage with the material that he works with sensitivity and understanding, reacting to how the material responds to actions. Serra inadvertently acknowledges this romantic connection to the material at the conclusion of the quote, where he acknowledges a "direct connection to it".⁴²

For me, steel is a desirable material as it can be both malleable and forgiving whilst equally it can be rigid and structural. The remarkability of the properties and the potential of steel is glaringly evident in its ability to be manipulated by the inflated steel process. Even more remarkable is its ability to be manipulated to such an extent in the inflation process without the property-changing introduction of heat.

The First Inflation: *Cloud*

At its most rudimentary the inflation process begins with two identical shapes cut from thin sheet steel. To achieve sufficient inflation, the ideal range of steel thickness or gauge is between 0.5mm and 1mm. It is possible to inflate thicker material; however, the thickness of the material constrains the inflation potential. Furthermore, when sourcing

⁴¹ Jonathan Peyser, (2002) "Declaring Defining Dividing Space: A Conversation with Richard Serra", available online: <https://www.sculpture.org/documents/scmag02/oct02/serra/serra.shtml> (accessed 17.01.2019)

⁴² Jonathan Peyser, (2002) "Declaring Defining Dividing Space: A Conversation with Richard Serra".

material this recommended material thickness is commonly supplied in 'cold rolled' grade mild steel. The properties of this grade of steel are suited to and adopted by industries, where it is necessary that the material has good bending and pressing capabilities. Most of my inflated works have been created using 0.76mm cold rolled steel or 1mm 304 or 316 grade stainless steel.

In earlier experiments, the two flat steel profiles were hand drawn onto the sheet steel and then cut using a handheld/manually controlled plasma cutter. The plasma cutter is a very useful and speedy tool for cutting sheet steel without heat distortion to the material. However, as it is handheld the cut lines are not smooth and have inconsistencies of two to five millimetres. As a result, this then requires a significant amount of time to grind and refine the steel profiles (shapes) to match identically. To do this, both were kept clamped together to enable the refinement of the shapes using a flap wheel on an angle grinder. The two profiles were then welded together adopting the MIG⁴³ welding method (Figs. 13, 14, 15 and 16).

The MIG welding method satisfactorily joins the two pieces, however it adds considerable material via a weld bead that is lumpy, inconsistent and messy. With this in mind, I concluded that for efficiency, weld integrity and aesthetics that I would reacquaint myself with the TIG⁴⁴ welding process (Fig. 16). I hadn't welded using this method for many years, so it took some research and retraining, followed by considerable practise to satisfactorily re-learn the skill in order to adopt the TIG

⁴³ MIG welding is the commonly used term for 'Metal Inert Gas Welding'. Inert gas is used to create a shielded area for the weld to perform satisfactorily. Sufficient intense heat to melt the steel is created with an electric arc and simultaneously an appropriate welding wire is fed through the operating handpiece and is laid down onto the metals to be joined to create the weld.

⁴⁴ TIG welding is the common term for 'Tungsten Inert Gas Welding'. Instead of having a handpiece with a welding wire feed, the handpiece has a tungsten electrode that concentrates the welding arc. The weld is then created by adding weld material with a separate welding rod using the other hand. TIG welding is used most commonly for the welding of thin metals and for refined welding applications, as the operator has much more control of heat and of the laying down of the weld metal.

method. Once retrained, I was able to weld the two profiles together much more neatly and efficiently.



Figure 13: Plasma Cutting identical profiles



Figure 14: Tack welded profiles ready for MIG welding



Figure 15: Valve preparation with tapped central thread



Figure 16: Early MIG welded cloud form and comparative TIG welded small form mock-up composition in the studio.

With the first experiments with the process, I developed a simplified cloud shape. Two identical flat cloud shapes were cut from 2mm mild steel. A 12mm hole was then drilled into the face of one of the steel profiles to accommodate an air hose fitting that was silver soldered into place. The two flat profiles were then welded together using a mig welder. An air hose was then coupled onto the air hose fitting on the flat form. At a pressure of 10psi, air was carefully pushed into the steel that expanded or inflated the flat form into a three-dimensional form. Air pressure/volume was increased until the form became approximately 180mm at the most inflated point of the cloud form. At this point, the steel creased quite considerably as the scalloping of the edge of the profile shape was at its most severe. The steel creased in the corner,

thus creating small tearing in the welded seam that in turn created a significant air leak. This meant that the air escaping was excessive and therefore further inflation was not possible without re-welding the affected area of the seam.

When looking back at the video recording of this first inflation (and subsequent inflations) it became increasingly evident that inflating the forms became an event. Each time I paused the inflation I became a stalker, inspecting the changing forms, inspecting the damage and assessing the possibilities of pushing further.

The Act

The inflated steel method of producing sculpture has many aspects of interest as a pursuit for making art, however it is the performance of the creation that is at the crux of my method. Sculpture is traditionally a slow, methodical and planned process that takes much time and labour. The lengthy process undertaken to produce the finished work can hamper the enjoyment of creation. Often this planned and laborious process also robs the work of freshness, of immediacy, of that “aha” moment of creation – of the authentic creative process. In making sculpture this planned process is dictated by particular methods of material manipulation. Careful planning often removes the element of mystery or chance and limits an embodied relationship within the creation of the work. The outcome is often all but predetermined long before the work is complete, unlike drawing, for example, which is often much more immediate and can happen in the moment. The cold inflation method is a much more immediate process in which the forming of the work happens right before our eyes - in the moment - and it is in this moment that the work is born. This is matter manipulated in real time, the material and spatial cousin to *Action Painting*⁴⁵ – *Action Sculpture!*

⁴⁵ Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," *ART news* January (1952).

Theorist Barbara Bolt (born 1950), in her analysis of Gilles Deleuze's philosophy in *Deleuze and Contemporary Art*,⁴⁶ signals that the performance of the making of the work is integral to what is the artwork. For me, the performance of the inflation process is integral to the understanding of the potential content of the work, and it is the materiality of the steel being formed that exemplifies this content. Furthermore, it is the act of the inflation and the associations that are established that help to inform the next iteration of each inflated form. Each movement is sensitive to this process, a process that feeds back into the next work. So, there are two things (or many more) happening here. The first is the movement of matter according to internal forces (air) and in accordance with the material properties of the selected metal – the phenomenological process.⁴⁷ This phenomenological process happens in a reiterative feedback with the prescribed profile of the flat form before inflation. The process informs the aesthetic, and in dialogue, the aesthetic informs the process.

The second and parallel movement is the performance of this synergic process. The act of preparing the material in its flat form state through to the performing of the inflation, the observing of the metal forming - stretching, creasing, popping, creaking and reverberating, air injecting – impressing, ingressing and escaping. This happens live - in the moment.

On multiple occasions throughout the studio research and experimentation of the inflation method, I performed (or demonstrated) the inflations before an audience of open-mouthed colleagues or students. The responses and reactions were always excited and tinged with an anxious tension. The air would be filled with an almost tangible energy and the spectators would walk away with adrenaline coursing

⁴⁶ Stephen Zepke and Simon O'Sullivan, *Deleuze and Contemporary Art*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2010). P 266-78

⁴⁷ Phenomenology is discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

through their veins. It was upon this realisation that I began to understand the significance of the performed artwork in this research.

At this time, I was afforded an invitation to participate in the symposium and performance event *Next to Nothing: art as Performance* at The Lock-Up in Newcastle from September 26-27, 2015. This symposium brought visual artists, actors, writers and musicians together with philosophers and other interested parties, to explore the wide-ranging field of performance, providing a timely opportunity to discover, develop and test the possibilities of this aspect of my research. It was the live performance of inflating a work, with spectators in a claustrophobic space, which alerted me to a whole new and emerging aspect of my research - the performance. *Performed Materiality* was the product of this event. The development and experience of this performance is discussed in depth in Chapter 2, *Finding Performance*.

Chapter 2

Finding Performance

Ultimately it is the temporal dimension of experience that creates the very possibility for creative acts, therefore, becomes the ground of its emergent meaning and value. The physical object of art, which is only the spatialized outcome of the process of art making, is then not the work of art. Instead, the work of art is the temporal undergoing – the acting and the doing – which is ultimately an act of reconstruction: a participation with the world in the co-construction of the world.⁴⁸

Aaron Stoller

Early in this research journey, and after conducting a series of inflations in front of colleagues and students, I began to realise the effect that the inflation method had on me, but equally on the spectators. In acknowledging this effect and reviewing the recording of each act of inflation in the studio, it became apparent that the inflation method was serving to conjure *process* as integral to the understanding of this developing practice. The potential for both live and recorded performative possibilities in my work became clear. At this time, I recognised that process, the act of creating/forming the works, was to be the true content of this complete body of work. The inflation method is visceral – it is palpable. Any witness to the event experiences the immediate expression of materiality and they feel the tension and anticipation through their body – as a live act. In his 2016 essay “Time and the Creative Act”, Aaron Stoller recognised the prioritising of process when he wrote: “In the creative act, meaning emerges as a result (rather than in spite) of an embodied, felt process of making.”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Aaron Stoller. “Time and the Creative Act.” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society: A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy* 52, No. 1 (2016): 47-61. <https://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed August 20, 2019).

⁴⁹ Aaron Stoller. “Time and the Creative Act.” 56

It was at this time (2015) of acknowledging the integral role that process plays in the realization of this research that I began to adopt the term *Action Sculpture* when describing the work. Initially I believed I had coined a new term in response to *Action Painting*, which was a term coined by Harold Rosenberg in 1952 when discussing the methods of Jackson Pollock.⁵⁰ It wasn't until undertaking further research that I discovered that the term had already been mentioned by German art historian Benjamin H. D. Buchloh (born 1941) in his essay "Richard Serra's early Work: Sculpture between Labor and Spectacle". In the publication *Richard Serra: Sculpture, Forty Years* Buchloh writes:

As the literature about Serra has recounted many times, one of the primary references for his discovery of painterly chance operations defined by gravity, horizontality, and random distribution was the work of Jackson Pollock, or, we should say, artists' dramatic rereading of Pollock's work in the early to mid-1960s. The assumption that Serra seemed to pay tribute solely to Pollock was immediately fixed in the media imagery of his production of the splatter pieces – for example, Gianfranco Gorgoni's photograph of Serra performing "action sculpture," which adorned the cover of the very publication in which the artist's crucial text work *Verb List* (...) a litany of performative sculptural operations, was published for the first time.⁵¹

Serra's splashed lead works and his verb lists were at the forefront of what may be described as 'action sculpture', whereby the immediate act of splashing the lead to create the artwork was paramount to the meaning and the content of the work, thus dislodging the emphasis to focus on process instead of outcome. The same can be said for the verb lists⁵² that serve as performative directions to create works.

⁵⁰ Museum of Modern Art website: <https://www.moma.org/collection/terms/4> (accessed 12.08.2019)

⁵¹ Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, quoted in Kynaston McShine et al., *Richard Serra : Sculpture, Forty Years* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007), p 52.

⁵² I refer to Serra's Verb Lists in discussion of my word lists in Chapter 3

Figure 57: Richard Serra, *Gutter Corner Splash: Night Shift (1969/1995)*, molten lead 'action sculpture' in the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) gallery.⁵³

At the Castelli Warehouse in New York, 1968, Serra first performed *Splashing*, an act of making sculpture that departed from the Modernist conventions of process, whereby sculpture was still tied to the idea of objecthood⁵⁴ and the adoption of conventional materials, such as bronze, wood, plaster or clay. These materials were employed for their absolute stability of state. Serra changed the state – the properties of his chosen material of lead, melting it down and liquifying it – to splash it. In the corner of the Castelli warehouse where the wall met the floor, in a performative act of sculpture making, Serra wielded a ladle of molten lead and splashed it, over and over again, accumulating a lead casting of the architecture. Buchloh writes of *Splashing*:

When Serra decided to make process and the specific aggregate state of materials into the primary forces of sculptural production and perception, he simultaneously dislodged two artisanal conventions from sculpture's arsenal; the process of modelling and the process of

⁵³ Richard Serra, *Gutter Corner Splash: Night Shift (1969/1995)*, image available through: <http://www.rudedo.be/amarant08/antiform/richard-serra-1939/richard-serra-splashing-lead-1968/serra06/> (accessed: 3.12.2019)

⁵⁴ M. Fried, *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (University of Chicago Press, 1998).

casting. *Splashing* literally *disfigured* modeling, wrenching it away from manual control and handing it over to an unpredictable process; it displaced casting by situating the sculpture not within a mold on behalf of a form of gestalt (least of all an anthropomorphic one) but within a spatio-architectural matrix.⁵⁵

There is no doubt this event was a seminal moment in the development of Post-Modernist⁵⁶ sculpture making and its discourse, however the performative nature of this act was equally important and its relevance to inflating steel as a performed act is undoubted. In his Yale Lecture of 1990, Richard Serra stated:

The fact that the technological process is revealed depersonalizes and demythologizes the idealization of the sculptor's craft. The work does not enter into the fictitious realm of the 'master'. I would just as soon have the work available to anyone's inspection. The evidence of the process can become part of the content.⁵⁷

Extending upon this point, each of my inflated steel works can be seen as the residue of the performance - the performance of the inflation. This process defies its time, which foregrounds the potential for instant reproduction. There is no script, only some simple parameters. Each performance is both an improvisation and an action of creation. Every act is different, subject to immediate conditions, to the minutely different yet unique qualities of each piece of steel, to my mood, my confidence, my gameness. How far do I, will I, should I push the steel? Do I risk pushing to the point of pop? Every act is a judgement of potential, a moment - of aesthetic resolve. There are no copies. There are no detailed plans. Just anticipation. Some fail it! Some nail it!

⁵⁵ McShine et al., *Richard Serra : Sculpture, Forty Years*, p52.

⁵⁶ In Post Modernism there was a moving away from the sculptural object and increased experimentation with new processes. In this context Serra's *Splashing* was performed in dialogue with the architecture and not as a stand-alone object.

⁵⁷ Richard Serra, "The Yale Lecture", Harrison, C. and Wood, P. *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Blackwell Oxford UK and Cambridge USA, 1992 p. 1125.

My inflation method interrogates the material properties and possibilities of steel in new ways not seen in contemporary art in Australia. The method exploits the unique qualities of sheet steel and how the force of air, in concert with the prescribed profile of the flat steel, develops a dialectic of control and capitulation, whereby this dialectical process results in an artwork that exemplifies a synthesis of control and capitulation – or chaos. Each iteration of the inflation method is subject to the relational interplay of matter, pressure and aesthetics. How the steel reacts or concedes to the pressured situation is subject to knowledge gained from previous iterations. Extending the expected understanding of steel has become an integral part of my process. In *The Yale Lecture*, Richard Serra discussed the importance of the industrial associations with steel and using it not just as an assemblage material, but embracing and pushing its inherent qualities:

To work with steel, not as a picture making element, but as a building material in terms of mass weight, counterbalance, loadbearing capacity, point load, compression, friction and statics has been totally divorced from the history of sculpture, however, it has found direct application within the histories of architecture, technology and industrial building.⁵⁸

An awareness of the medium and sensitivity to the process is crucial to the aesthetic outcome of each work. Relationships between concave or convex curves, straights and angles, and surface area, all interplay to develop the aesthetic of my inflations. My role is to be sensitive to this dialogue, to extract forms that are sympathetic and authentic to the materiality and to the method. In response to the development of this approach to the performed creation of the work, the focus of my work has changed from the lyrical or a metaphorical object to the autonomous object.

⁵⁸ Richard Serra, "The Yale Lecture", Harrison, C. and Wood, P. *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Blackwell Oxford UK and Cambridge USA, 1992 p. 1125

Furthermore, the exciting diversifying development in my practice that has transpired as a result of this research has been the identification and exploration of the performative potential of this new method. From this point of enlightenment, some resultant works now include the air fittings and hoses that were used to perform the inflation as elements of the contextual underpinning of the work, as-well as integral aesthetic resolutions.

These static inflated works are presented as artefacts – as post-performance residues of the inflation, much like the lead strips, *Casting* of 1969 that remained after Serra's performances with molten lead. My inflated sculptures acknowledge and are directly informed by the performance of process, by the materiality of the steel and the nothingness of the air that forms them. The reflective surfaces of the works, whether boldly coloured or mirrored, are employed to illustrate the folding and creasing of the material whilst acknowledging the phenomenological by drawing the surrounding environment into each work, thus connecting the work to its site. The objects are the results of actions – my actions. At that time. In that place. When discussing performance, artist Agatha Gothe-Snape clearly states that:

The presence of the bodies in the work foregrounds the process of creation, the site of production and the work's phenomenological relations. In short, performance articulates the point of origin of the work, making transparent the moment of authorial intention.⁵⁹

The Live Performance

The Inflation – a performative event

Throughout the inflating, Snape performs materiality before our eyes. All senses are awakened when immersed in the experience of this event. As the rush of the compressed air is heard forcing its way in between cold sheets of steel, the percipient is alerted to the forceful flow. Then, as the steel begins to give and flex to the

⁵⁹ Agatha Gothe-Snape, "Every Artist Remembered (EAR)" in Adam Geczy and Mimi Kelly, *What is Performance Art? Australian Perspectives*, Power Publications, 2018, p. 385

force and sound of steel popping, creaking and reverberating, an air of drama is introduced to the darkened cell space. As the pressure and tension builds, and the steel continues to yield to the process, we become aware of the unique properties of steel and of the magical dialogue between the invisible, the immaterial and matter. Here we encounter a phenomenological event.⁶⁰

The process of inflating steel is both intriguing and challenging. In witnessing this process, the audience intuitively projects their understanding of the material as inflexible, which has been formed through their experience of steel in solid structures like the architecture that surrounds us. They become concerned by the inflation process as it is counterintuitive to this reference point – they are affected by the thought that this material, that we understand to be strong and structurally sound, can be so vulnerable to the forces of the invisible.

At the point in time that I began to comprehend the performative possibilities of this method, a serendipitous email arrived. I was invited to submit a proposal for *Next to Nothing: Performance Stripped to the Bone*, a symposium/performance/exhibition event held at The Lock-Up⁶¹ in Newcastle and hosted by the School of Creative Arts, University of Newcastle, from September 26 - 27, 2015. This event provided a perfect opportunity to test this new development in my practice and to gain valuable feedback with a ‘captive’ audience.

Proposal for the performance of an inflation (June 18, 2015)

A blue air hose that enters the space from an exterior location will be seen coiled on the floor near where it enters the room. The performance will begin when I enter the space and retrieve the hose, uncoiling and dragging the blue line across the floor to connect to an air fitting attached to the flat steel form that sits on the floor toward the centre of the space, illuminated with a single spotlight. An inline valve will be installed into the air line at the point where it enters the space to control the airflow. This will keep the distracting noise of the compressor out of the

⁶⁰ Braddon Snape, “Next to Nothing: art as performance” available online at: http://www.thelockup.org.au/whats-on/UPDATED_A3_NEXT_TO_NOTHING_FOR_WEB.pdf (accessed 03.12.2019)

⁶¹ The Lock-Up is a contemporary art space, operating in a small disused prison site in the centre of Newcastle. NSW.

performance space, thus allowing the sound of the air movement and of the steel giving under the forces of the inflation. These sounds will be amplified to augment the Affect. The process will be slowly drawn out as I inject short bursts of compressed air into the flat form steel, expanding the form and incrementally building the tension of the experience. Eventually the form will reach its maximum point of inflation and distortion before it gives way to the process, to the point that its seams will be breached, and air escaping will counter the air ingress. At this time the controlled and synchronised injection of air in relation to the escaping air will initiate an experience of the steel form now breathing – slightly inflating and deflating. After a breathing period of one minute I will stop, disconnect the intake hose, coil the hose and hang it on a wall hook, return to the form, feel it, inspect it and leave the room.⁶²

Preparation and Development

The preparation of the material for this project was carried out in a considered and unhurried manner, in order to carefully safeguard against any failures that might occur later during the inflation. I was aware that I would only have one chance to get it right when performing the inflation live. I chose to cut two reinforcing discs to support the thin material where a thread needed to be tapped-in to accommodate the valves that screw into the centre of the stainless-steel sheet.

Prior to preparing and welding the full-scale rectangular sheets for the final work, I prepared a small prototype (35cm x 40cm) to test welding settings and procedures, and to confirm that the material would perform as anticipated. I then moved on to the final welding of the full-scale form with the reinforced knowledge and experience of completing the prototype.

⁶² Proposal submitted for *Next to Nothing: Performance Stripped to the Bone*, a symposium /performance /exhibition event held at The Lock-Up Newcastle, September 26 - 27, 2015.

Since the initial proposal, not much has been altered in the performance of the inflation. The main change was the inclusion of a release valve. The valve was introduced to serve two purposes. Firstly, it was a device to expel air from the inflating form, thus allowing the form to breathe. Air could be injected at a higher rate so that the form inflates, but once the injecting air is halted the release valve would then allow the excess air to expel, thus creating a condition akin to breathing. This release valve also served as a safety precaution, stopping excessive pressure build up.



Figure 18: Work in progress. Image of test piece and completely welded final pieces ready for inflation at The Lockup.

After research into the safety precautions to observe when using compressed air, a further precaution was undertaken to ensure audience safety. This was to limit the output of air pressure from the compressor to a maximum of 25psi, so that if a hose or air fitting was to malfunction the escaping air jet would not be harmful if in close contact with the skin.⁶³



Figure 19: Mid-performance of the inflation at The Lockup. Releasing the air valve and building the tension.

Next to Nothing: The Inflation

The final air pressure arrived at was a setting of 30psi. I arrived at this pressure setting after deeming that it was considered safe whilst still

⁶³ “The enclosed Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard 29 CFR 1910.242(b) requires that compressed air used for cleaning purposes must be reduced to less than 30 psig (pounds per square inch gauge, 204 kPa). Compressed air used for cleaning must only be permitted with effective chip guarding and personal protective equipment to protect the operator and other employees from the hazards of the release of compressed air and flying debris. Standard 1917.154, which addresses similar hazards in the maritime industry, explicitly prohibits the use of compressed air for personnel cleaning. While this particular requirement is not specifically applicable in the general industry setting, we recognize it as good practice for all industries.” <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/1994-01-14> (accessed 17.09.2019).

providing enough inflow of air to inflate the form to the desired state. The negative aspect of choosing this safer setting meant that as an element of the performance I could not satisfactorily create a breathing condition during the inflation act. It was intended that I would orchestrate an inflation and de-inflation, which gradually or incrementally inflated and formed the steel. As I could not inject the air quickly enough, the breathing aspect of the performance was negligible. However, ultimately this did not detract from the effect of the performance. I was delighted by the response to the building drama. The cell was buzzing with a mix of anticipation and anxiety. Initially there was a slight delay due to the compressor being turned off after testing.

Inadvertently the delay served beautifully to build the tension amongst the anxious and expecting crowd. With every pop, creak or reverberation of the steel, as it slowly and steadily formed, there were gasps followed by nervy giggles. The lighting effect was very successful in reinforcing the theatre of the occasion and in creating an atmosphere of the sublime. The light reflecting off the warping mirrored surface of the form reflected onto the patinated and inscribed walls of the cell like organic, waterlike and illuminated projections. Dr Angela Philp attended the performance and made the following observations:

It is an utterly extraordinary process to watch. In 2015, when a group of artists, philosophers and academics came together to a symposium at Newcastle's The Lock-Up to discuss performance art, the group gathered to watch Brad inflate one of these works. There was alternately trepidation, fear (of explosion?), excitement and a sense of the sublime – the process was almost mystical, even like a kind of alchemy. Snape's material process became a performance and the audience was spellbound. To witness this 'breath' enter the steel, swell and distort it, was like watching some anima or soul transform the normally mechanical associations we have with steel. There were gasps, laughter, joy and squeals of applause at the end.⁶⁴

The Artefact

The artefact that remains after the performance represents an ongoing residue, which in itself contains or embodies the memory of the

⁶⁴ Dr Angela Philp, *Materiality Performed*, catalogue essay Maitland Regional Art Gallery, 2015.

performance of inflation. The moment. The energy stored. In fact, the artefact of this event is realized in three differing forms of memory; in the inflated form that embodies the metaphysical memory held by each percipient, the material memory embodied in the energy storing crumpled steel, and the video recording of the performance.

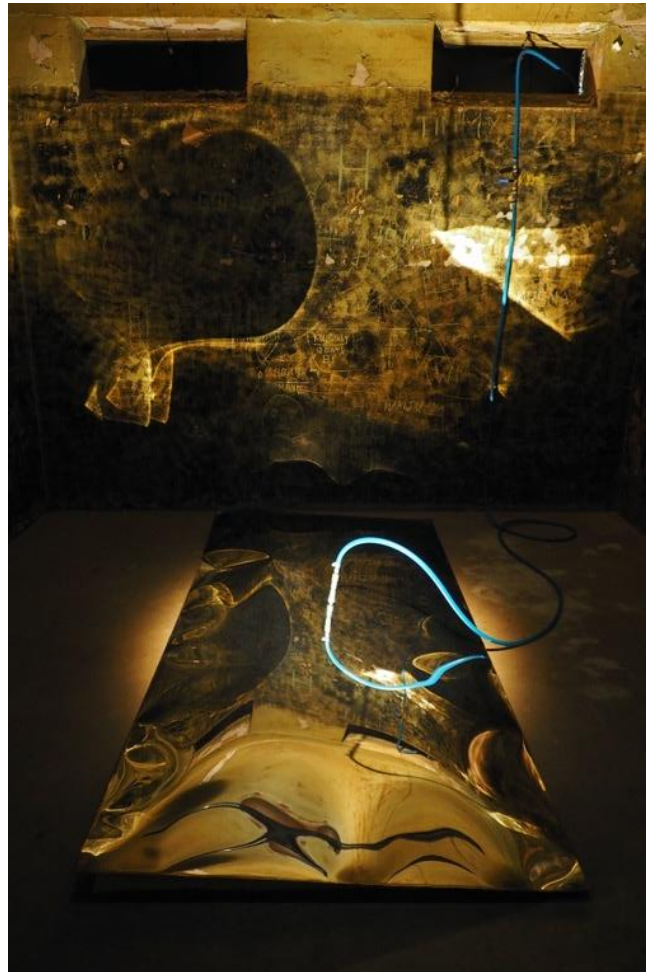


Figure 20: Braddon Snape, *Materiality Performed*, The Lock-Up. Inflation performance as part of Next to Nothing: Art as Performance Symposium, 2015

The Documented Performance

Although the recording of the live performance turned out to be of low quality and therefore unsatisfactory for future presentation, it served to spawn future plans for the documentation of a performance as an extension of the existing performed artwork and as a mediated stand-alone artwork for *Internal Pressure* at The Lock-Up in 2019, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 4.

The development of the documented inflation, and subsequently the documented performance, questions the difference between live performance and mediated or recorded performance, and the value of recording a performance beyond its use as documentation?

At this point, the recording of the performance of *Performed Materiality* at The Lock-Up was only that, the documentation of an event that happened – a pragmatic function, for posterity. The act of inflation as a performed act was not staged or directed with the camera in mind, as at that time it was only considered valuable as a live act.

Much early performance artwork was inexpertly documented in photography or film and these recordings of the events are highly valued today. In the 1970s it was generally held that performance art should be experienced in the moment, as described by performance artist Martha Wilson (born 1947):

Performance art has raided literature, music, dance and theatre traditions (while theatre has borrowed from performance art conventions), spreading confusion; but in general, performance artists remind their audiences: There is no artifice here; this is happening now, in “real” time.⁶⁵

Writing in relation to the 2014 event at the Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane, *Trace: Performance and its Documents*, curator Bree Richards questioned the singular emphasis on ‘real time’ in performance works, noting the increased accessibility offered by new media and the broader

⁶⁵ Martha Wilson, “Performance Art: (Some) Theory and (Selected) Practice at the End of This Century”, *Art Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 4, (Winter, 1997), p. 2

audience that works can engage with through documentation, she writes:

It might seem obvious when talking about performance that ‘you really have to be there’, in the flesh, to get the story right. Yet if performance is only ever about presence, then what are we to make of the many traces it leaves behind?⁶⁶

Art historian and philosopher Paul Crowther (born 1953) discusses the value of recorded documentation in relation to the performance *Expanding Space* of 1977 by Marina Abramović and Ulay, noting that “In this case, the recording of the performance on film has significance beyond documentation.”⁶⁷ Ironically, it is the potential for the work to be “repeated endlessly”⁶⁸ through reproduction that is of interest to Crowther in this instance, which is something that Abramović herself negated, in stating:

Lots of young artists are working with different media and using elements from the ‘70s, but now they’re doing it electronically. They will take one moment of the performance, reedit it, and make a loop that brings this feeling of endless experience to the viewer, but actually the artist himself [sic] didn’t go through that experience. That’s a big difference. You’re getting this illusion of something that didn’t really happen.⁶⁹

The realisation that the performative potential of my process was arising as an integral element of my practice, and specifically of this research, was in step with my early experimentation and discovery of the inflation method and the ongoing documentation of my process. The live performing of *Performed Materiality* at The Lock-Up occurred in parallel to the development and planning of the solo exhibition titled *Materiality Performed* at Maitland Regional Art Gallery 2016.

⁶⁶ Bree Richards, “Trace: Performance and its Documents”, GOMA website: <https://blog.qagoma.qld.gov.au/trace-performance-and-its-documents/> (accessed 20.07.2016)

⁶⁷ Paul Crowther, (2009) *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts (even the Frame)*, Stanford University Press, p. 137.

⁶⁸ Crowther, p.137

⁶⁹ Marina Abramović quoted in A. Kaplan, “Deeper and Deeper: Interview with Marina Abramović”, *Art Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Summer, 1999), p.13





Figure 21-24: Still picture sequence taken from the live recording of the inflation of Diametrical Crumple Crease. Videography: John Cliff

Presented as an integral element of the exhibition *Materiality Performed* at MRAG was a video recording of a large inflation, and this inflated object *Diametrical Crumple Crease* was also included in the exhibition. The inclusion of the live recording of the inflation was valuable in contextualising all of the exhibition components cohesively. This

addition consolidated a holistic reception of the body of work, establishing process as central to the understanding of the work. The recording or documenting of the work being inflated served as witness to the forming, returning the focus squarely to process. However, when considering this development, the potential to extend my practice and the potential of this 'process' by adopting another medium, in the form of a video performance, seemed both plausible and promising. The documentation then, was not the finalisation of the work, but a new beginning. French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud (born 1965) also makes this point, writing:

...the contemporary work of art does not position itself as the termination point of the 'creative process' (a 'finished product' to be contemplated) but as a site of navigation, a portal, a generator of activities.⁷⁰

My contemplation of the recorded documentation of the inflations served, as Bourriaud describes, as a 'generator of activities', in this case a new method of developing and disseminating conceptual content. Responding to Bourriaud's position that the artwork/object is not an endpoint but a launching point, has served to open the work up to new possibilities, which have extended its meaning and potential.

This interplay of documentation and practice is also outlined by artist Ruth Pelzer in her article "Post-Production or How Pictures Come to Life or Play Dead" she notes that:

...the application of theoretical insights – the 'postproduction' of the title – as a form of documentation can assist an artist in elucidating a process that was initially approached in a mostly pragmatic fashion.⁷¹

So, from this point in the development of my research, documentation led to a new method of creating works and opened my practice to the new territory and possibilities of video performance in concert with the 'real time' action of inflating sculpture. With this insight, a filmic and

⁷⁰ N. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Les Presses du Réel, 2002), P 18.

⁷¹ Ruth Pelzer-Montada, (2007), "Post-Production or How Pictures Come to Life or Play Dead." *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 6 (3): 229–43.

theatrical approach was developed in my practice, bringing with it the many new considerations that come with entering that conceptual and aesthetic space. The establishment of theatrical conditions assists in developing an immersive and sensorial experience, thus presenting an artwork's contextual parameters. Of course, this introduction of the realm of theatre is not a new development. In her seminal text *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, art theorist Rosalind Krauss (born 1941) noted that theatre had permeated contemporary art from the mid-1960s, writing:

By the mid-1960s it was clear that theatricality and performance could produce an oppositional divide between the sculptural object and the preconceptions about knowledge that the viewer might have about it and himself [sic].⁷²

American art historians Michael Fried (born 1939) and Douglas Crimp (1944-2019) were at odds when considering the legitimacy of theatrical content in fine art practice. In 1977, Crimp noted that in his attack on minimal art Fried asserted "...that 'Art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theatre,' defining 'theatre' in this context as 'what lies between the arts.'"⁷³ It is evident that Crimp effectively accepts Fried's analysis with the exception that whereas Fried understood the 'theatrical' as a degeneration, Crimp understands it as evolutionary, as is apparent when he observes:

...over the past decade [1968-1977] we have witnessed a radical break with that modernist tradition, effected precisely by a preoccupation with the 'theatrical'.⁷⁴

Crimp was obviously referring not only to minimal art but happenings, performance and environmental art, as well as experimental film and seminal modes of video art, which were shifting the boundaries of art practice at the time. In other words, 'what lies between the arts' becomes that which replaces the now defunct defining categories of

⁷² Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, The Viking Press 1977, p. 240

⁷³ Douglas Crimp, (1984), "Pictures" in *Art after Modernism: rethinking representation*, ed. Brian Wallis. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art; Boston: David R. Godine, Publisher, Inc., p. 176

⁷⁴ Douglas Crimp, p.176

painting and sculpture. It was originally sculptor Robert Morris (1938-2018) who declared that art was no longer restricted to the categories of painting and sculpture but had evolved into a “complex and expanded field.”⁷⁵

Today, the ‘expanded field’, which Morris heralded, and Krauss articulated in her essay “Sculpture in the Expanded Field” of 1979, has contributed to the diminishing of boundaries between the established sectors of the arts. Painting, sculpture, video, performance, virtual reality and more are all now accepted as elements of interdisciplinary practice by artists. This has given artists (myself included) the freedom to thoroughly interrogate the possibilities of their research, beyond the boundaries of traditional specialisations. This freedom to flexibly work in a variety of mediums was fully realized in the major exhibition of this research, *Internal Pressure*, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. The following chapter bridges the period following the discovery of the performative potential of my work, through its focus on *Materiality Performed*, an exhibition held at Maitland Regional Art Gallery in 2016.

⁷⁵ Michael Archer, *Art Since 1960*, Thames and Hudson, 1997

Chapter 3

Materiality Performed

One of the several significant milestones of this research project was my major solo exhibition of works at Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) in 2016, titled *Materiality Performed*. This exhibition provided the opportunity to explore and test many aspects and possibilities of the inflation method, its presentation, and to further understand the potential content of this method. Not only was the exhibition an opportunity to present my inflated objects, it was a chance to interrogate the relationship of the inflated forms to architecture and the context of the gallery space.

Once I had committed to the path of the inflation method, the process then became an exercise in wayfinding. What content and what meaning could I discover, or extract, from the investigation of this method? What was it in this wondrous process that engaged me, that resonated with me? This exhibition provided a major opportunity to attempt to answer these questions and, most importantly, to develop my methodological approach.

The downstairs contemporary gallery spaces at MRAG (Gallery spaces G4 and G6) provided a wide range of architectural conditions to interact with. Gallery space G4 is a more traditional contemporary exhibition space that measures 15.9 by 7.8 metres. Although the proportions of G4 and G6 are not exactly square or rectangular, these spaces remain akin to the ‘white cube’ understanding of a contemporary gallery space, in that they are essentially white-walled boxes. However, G4 is somewhat rectangular in proportion has a quite large opening at the end of one of the long sides.

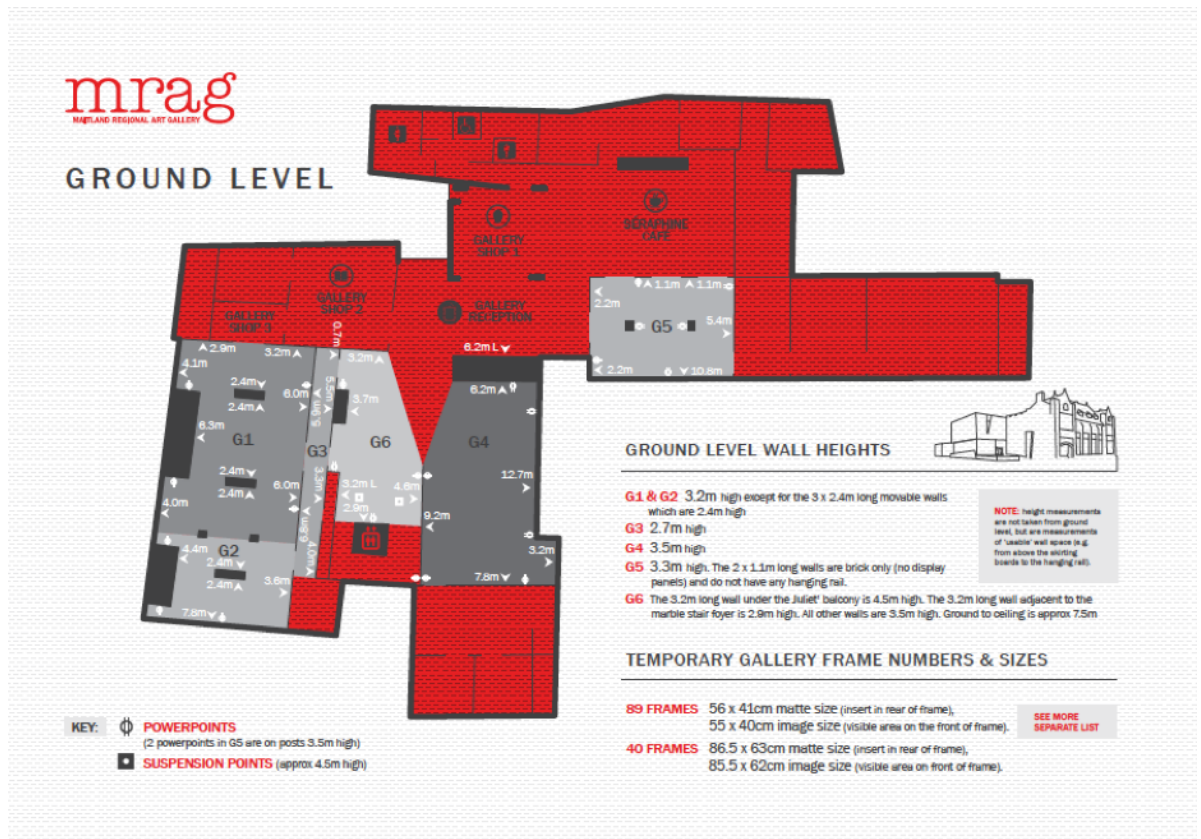


Figure 25: Gallery Floorplan courtesy of Maitland Regional Art Gallery.⁷⁶

The conditions of the G4 space allow for considerable control of lighting, although there is some interference, with outside light encroaching on the space in the afternoons. This light issue was of some concern, as I intended to create a dramatic lighting effect, so that the stainless-steel pieces would project distorted shards of light when their reflective surfaces were illuminated against a darker background. This background was established by applying a mid-tone grey wall paint in the space, with a flat finish that softly absorbed the light. It produced dramatic darker tones in concert with the brighter highlights of the mirror reflections. The crumpled and distorted reflective surfaces of the sculptures bounced a dazzling myriad of reflections back onto the floor and the grey walls. Evidence of this effect can be viewed in Figure 26: *Hung n Strung*. The reflective nature of this particular work, and of the later example in Figure 35: *Materiality Performed – The Lockup 2015*,

⁷⁶ Floorplan courtesy of Maitland Regional Art Gallery.

indicate my developing interest in interrogating phenomenology as I have progressed through this research.



Figure 66: Braddon Snape, *Hung n Strung*, 2016, Welded, inflated and polished stainless steel, ratchet strap and stainless-steel wall anchors. Dimensions variable.

Broadly stated, phenomenology is the study of experience and can be wide-ranging. Within the context of my research I interpret phenomenology as the study of experience in terms of both a physical and cognitive being, whilst also acknowledging the imagination and the unconscious. This understanding of phenomenology is in keeping with that of German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and later with the interpretation of French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961). In 1927 Heidegger wrote:

What is given and is explicable in the way we encounter the phenomenon is called "phenomenal". In this sense we speak of phenomenal structures. Everything that belongs to the manner of indication and explication, and that constitutes the conceptuality this research requires, is called "phenomenological".⁷⁷

In the preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty recognises that, despite much discussion, phenomenology has not been adequately

⁷⁷ Martin Heidegger, (2010) *Being and Time*, State University of New York Press, Albany, pp. 34-35

defined, he proceeds to describe the phenomenological world in this way:

The phenomenological world is not pure being, but the sense which is revealed where the paths of my various experiences intersect, and also where my own and other people's intersect and engage each other like gears. It is thus inseparable from subjectivity and intersubjectivity, which find their unity when I either take up my past experiences in those of the present, or other people's in my own.⁷⁸

The concepts associated with phenomenology draw the viewer into the work and as the viewer (or what I term, the 'percipient') moves around the work and through the space, their understanding and their experience of the form constantly changes. Mirror reflections change and light refractions change, making the viewing of these works experiential. During this experience, the percipient also becomes conscious of their own existence when their image is reflected in the work. I will revisit phenomenology in Chapter 4 when I discuss the immersive nature of *Internal Pressure* at The Lock-Up.

Reflective Surfaces

Of course, many artists have utilised reflective forms in their practice and none more famously than the English/Indian artist Anish Kapoor (born Bombay, India, 1954). As a contemporary sculptor, like myself, Kapoor has an expansive practice in which he explores the complexities of sculpture – of matter – of material – of form – of space. Kapoor's most recognisable mirrored, stainless-steel sculpture is *Cloud Gate*, 2004, installed in the AT&T Plaza at Millennium Park, Chicago USA (Fig. 27). Otherwise known as 'The Bean', *Cloud Gate* is a masterwork of engineering and design, and a triumph for public sculpture. As

⁷⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Montilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 1996

suggested in the title, this work dramatically brings the sky to earth through its curved reflective surface. Unlike my crumpled cold inflations exhibited in *Materiality Performed*, Kapoor's *Cloud Gate* focuses on control and perfection, evoking the sensibility of the highly influential twentieth century Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), who doggedly and repeatedly searched for perfection when attempting to discover the essence of form.

Figure 27: Anish Kapoor, *Cloud Gate*, 2004, AT&T Plaza, Millennium Park, Chicago USA. Stainless-steel, 1,006 x 2,012 x 1,280 cm.⁷⁹

Brancusi looked for that perfection in his surfaces also, where he refined metallic or marble surfaces to create mirrored or reflective states, as evident in his cast bronze versions of *Bird in Space* (Fig. 28) and *Sleeping Muse* of 1910. In these examples from his oeuvre, Brancusi's tendency for simplicity and perfection of surface and form can clearly be observed. Brancusi used mirror effects, in the surface treatment of many of his sculptural works, but also in the mirrored

⁷⁹ Anish Kapoor, *Cloud Gate*, 2004 available through Mike Warot/Flickr, <https://theconversation.com/anish-kapoors-cloud-gate-playing-with-light-and-returning-to-earth-our-finite-world-102272> (accessed 10.10.2018)

repetition of forms.⁸⁰ Moreover, he once stated that "works of art are mirrors in which everyone sees his [sic] own likeness".⁸¹

Figure 28: Constantin Brancusi, *Bird in Space*, 1927.
Polished bronze, 185.42 x 15.24 x 12.7 cm⁸²

Kapoor's *Cloud Gate* echoes Brancusi's commitment to simplicity of form and surface. This work is undeniably an inspiration for any sculptor and generally a remarkable achievement. A strength of *Cloud*

⁸⁰ This can be observed in Brancusi's *Endless Column* of the early 1900s.

⁸¹ Recounted in Trevor Winkfield, "Walks Around Brancusi", *Modern Painters*, Autumn 2004, p. 104

⁸² Constantin Brancusi, *Bird in Space*, 1927, available through the Los Angeles County Museum of Art website: <https://collections.lacma.org/node/2109716> [accessed 13.04.2018]

Gate is its seamlessness, showing Kapoor's fastidious attention to surface detail. Scale aside, it is evident that my works formed in mirrored stainless-steel bear some obvious aesthetic similarities to Kapoor's work. What is also clear when comparing the works from *Materiality Performed* are the glaring differences. Where Kapoor seeks perfection of form, my interest lies very much with the individualised failure of the material when subject to the conditions of the inflation process. Throughout much of Kapoor's oeuvre he has established the conditions for an embodied encounter, and for Kapoor "One is always returning to a similar set of problems about our bodies' relation with things in space".⁸³ This aspect of Kapoor's practice very much aligns with my preoccupation with the embodied encounter in form and space.⁸⁴

Kapoor's work has found popularity amongst both the art savvy public and the often-disinterested general public and this may be largely attributed to his use of mirrored surfaces. Humans generally have a fascination with their own reflection. This may be driven by the ego or just a fascination with understanding one's own exterior. To be confronted by our own reflection establishes a state of self-awareness and, at once, acknowledges our existence – our mortality, in the present time. From the days of Greek mythology and the story of Narcissus there has been much written about humans' relationship with their own reflection or image. As French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) wrote in his 1949 paper "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience":

The function of the mirror stage thus turns out, in my view, to be a particular case of the function of images, which is to establish a relationship between an organism and its reality – or, as they say, between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt* [the 'inner world' and the 'outer world'].⁸⁵

⁸³ David Anfam, (2009) *Anish Kapoor / by David Anfam, with Essays by Johanna Burton and Richard Deacon and an Interview by Donna De Salvo*, London; New York: Phaidon, p. 105

⁸⁴ I will discuss this aspect of my practice more thoroughly in Chapters 4 and 5.

⁸⁵ Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, W.W. Norton & Company, 2006, p.96

In the reception of an artwork, the phenomenon of the mirror serves to establish an embodied encounter, consequently ‘drawing-in’ the percipient - into the artwork. The resultant contorted mirror reflective surfaces of the inflated steel sculptures distort the captured image of the percipient. Whilst this illusory ‘crazy mirror’ experience induces humour into the work it also acts to inform the percipient of their body movement as the reflections of their body (their self) and their surroundings change in response to the body’s navigation of the work.⁸⁶ Kapoor interprets this reflective return of the gaze as a ‘modern sublime’⁸⁷ in an interview with gallery director Heidi Reitmaier:

...the traditional sublime is the matte surface, deep and absorbing, and that the shiny might be a modern sublime, which is fully reflective, absolutely present, and returns the gaze. This feels like a new way to think about the non-objective object.⁸⁸

Mirrors not only reflect the immediate moment/surroundings but can also reflect aspects of the wider environment. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the reflections of my public artwork *Clouds Gathering*,⁸⁹ where the sky is reflected in the mirrored clouds from certain viewpoints, whilst their immediate environment consists of architectural structures.

⁸⁶ This effect is also clearly illustrated in Figure **Error! Main Document Only.:** *Materiality Performed - The Lockup*, 2015

⁸⁷ Heidi Reitmaier, “Anish Kapoor.” Tate Magazine, July 2007. <http://anishkapoor.com/177/in-conversation-with-heidi-reitmaier> (accessed 12.08.2017).

⁸⁸ Heidi Reitmaier, “Anish Kapoor.”

⁸⁹ Images and further discussion of *Clouds Gathering* available in Chapter 5: Site and Reception.

Restraint

From the early days of this research, as I delved into the mechanical properties of the inflation method and its associations of breath and volume, I have been equally contemplating the antithetical position to breath and inflation, through exploring the binary counterparts of containment and restraint. This is manifested in my work through employing air hoses and fittings, the clamping apparatus and ratchet straps for restraint in the installation of pieces. These methods of restraint were used experimentally in *Materiality Performed*, following some research into the potential for their application. One artist I discovered whilst pursuing aspects of restraint and restriction in my research was Danish artist Matias Faldbakken (born 1973).

Faldbakken's practice is quite diverse and includes two-dimensional works, conceptual object interventions and site-specific installations, in the gallery space and in the urban environment. His biography is available through the Simon Lee Gallery website and describes his practice as holding "...in perpetual tension the forces of proposition and cancellation, vandalism and erasure, aesthetic generosity and conceptual restraint".⁹⁰ My interest in Faldbakken's practice centres on his bound or strapped works. Although there are aesthetic similarities between the crushed steel lockers featured in Faldbakken's *Untitled (Locker Sculpture #01)* of 2010 (Fig. 29) and my strapped and restrained *Hung n Strung* (Fig. 26), these two works are conceptually quite different. Faldbakken utilises the heavy-duty ratchet straps to bind, contain, compress and constrain everyday objects, such as the steel lockers pictured in Figure 5. This work prompts a conversation about materiality, but is conceptually more concerned with critiquing the value of the art object by appropriating everyday objects in the tradition

⁹⁰ Matias Faldbakken, Simon Lee Gallery website:
<https://www.simonleegallery.com/artists/matias-faldbakken/> (accessed 12.10.2018)

of a Duchampian readymade.⁹¹ Faldbakken employs such everyday objects to reconfigure and recontextualise them as art objects through the impact of restraints and, in doing so, tests the boundaries of the acceptance of these objects as pieces of 'high art', elevating their importance. Faldbakken states:

I play a lot with the somewhat confusing idea of value and the notion of the "pricelessness" of artworks in my own production. Many of the works that I make would not be recognizable as art as soon as you carry them out the gallery door.⁹²

In comparison, I employ ratchet straps in an act to restrain the inflated sculptural bodies, to restrict their volume, to restrict the 'breath', as an opposing force to that of the inflated steel skin. My inflated bodies are not readymades, they are completely concocted or fabricated.

Figure 29: Matias Faldbakken, *Untitled (Locker Sculpture #01)* 2010, 304 x 182.7 x 49.3cm.⁹³

The Anthropomorphic Inflation

⁹¹ Marcel Duchamp (1897-1968) was a French American artist, who was involved with the modernist art movements of Cubism and Dada and is particularly well known for inserting everyday objects into the art historical canon as 'readymades'.

⁹² "Gardar Eide Einarsson & Matias Faldbakken." (2012), *Flash Art International*, 45 (283) p. 74.

⁹³ Matias Faldbakken website: <https://www.we-find-wildness.com/2011/02/matias-faldbakken-2/> (accessed 12.10.2018)

Breath and associations with the body have been signalled as integral to the understanding of my inflated steel objects. It was during the experimentation, prototyping and development of works for the *Materiality Performed* exhibition that the possibility of these inflated vessels as anthropomorphic bodies was realised. Due to the process of forcing air (breath) into the envelopes of steel, it is understandable that almost all the forms realised through his method inherently elicit an association to the human body.

However, it was the creation (and the eventual presentation) of the three yellow multiple chamber pieces, titled *Performed two chamber plop* (MAKEit MADEit 2016), *Three chamber plop*, 2016 and *Single fold propped*, 2016, and their figurative proportions that really consolidated an empathetic reading of the forms in that manner (see Figure: 30). Each of these forms bears some resemblance to the air-filled plastic bags used in the packaging of electronic goods or the like, or possibly multi-chambered air mattresses. That is where the references were first established and an influential reason for the choice of industrial yellow (yet simultaneously playful yellow) for the surface treatment. Yet, more importantly, the composition or the posture of the objects informed the reading of them as sympathetic to the human form. This manifestation of the empathic form would

prove to inform both the development of my sculptural works and my response to The Lock-Up site, which is discussed in Chapter 4.



Figure 30: Braddon Snape, *Materiality Performed*, 2016, Installation view, dimensions variable.

In her seminal publication, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, writer and academic Jill Bennett interrogates art's capacity to trigger an empathic response from a viewer. Bennett argues that a viewer, or experiencer – being one whom experiences the artwork in an embodied encounter - can gain a cognitive understanding of trauma. In describing her approach, Bennett writes that her book:

...moves away from the traps of "crude empathy" to describe art that, by virtue of its specific affective capacities, is able to exploit forms of embodied perception in order to promote forms of critical inquiry. This conjunction of affect and critical awareness may be understood to constitute the basis of an empathy grounded not in affinity (feeling for another insofar as we can imagine *being* that other) but on a *feeling for* another that entails an encounter with something irreducible and different, often inaccessible.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, Stanford University Press, Stanford California, 2005, p. 10

This concept is evident as a result of a percipient's embodied encounter with any one of my yellow inflated works pictured in Figure 30. In its flat form before inflation, *Single fold propped* of 2016 (Fig. 31), was of rectangular proportions with a division placed at approximately one third of its length to create a second chamber. Once inflated, a rectangular form consisting of two chambers formed by air was realised - the depth of each chamber was expanded to approximately 30-35cm. The flat line (that ultimately serves as a crease line) dividing the two chambers remains quite flexible and lacking structure, as it is only two layers of flat sheet steel of a thickness of 0.75mm. The inflated form was then folded over (by hand) and into its slumped position. The sculpture was lifted and plopped into its final position of presentation. The physicality and materiality of this anthropomorphic form with its pent-up sense of pressure invokes a visceral response that garners an empathic response from the percipient in relation to trauma and compassion.

Once satisfied with surface and edge refinement, and composure (or posture) of the piece, it was sent to be powder-coated in the chosen *Interpon Yellow Gold* colour. It was only after the final moment of placement that this inflated form, filled with breath and a sense of energy stored, carried some affinity and association to a life-form – a human form, and it is this form that draws an empathetic response. The ensuing development of artworks that intentionally exploited this empathic response will be more evident in discussion of the *Internal Pressure* exhibition in Chapter 4.



Figure 31: Braddon Snape, *Single fold propped*, 2016.
Inflated stainless steel, 180 x 60 x 40cm.



Figure 32: Braddon Snape, *Performed two chamber plop*,
2016. Inflated stainless steel, 81 x 66 x 60cm.

The yellow colour chosen for these anthropomorphic works carries many associations. I mentioned earlier, the reference to apparatuses found in industry, however there is also a strong association to the history of Australian sculpture that cannot be ignored. In the year 1980 a controversial bright yellow sculpture, commissioned by Melbourne City Council, was installed in Melbourne's City Square by renowned artist Ron Robertson Swann (born 1941) and, for want of a better term, 'all hell broke loose!'⁹⁵

Vault is an abstract, welded and painted steel sculpture from the Modernist tradition realised in a scale of architectural proportions. At the time, the culturally conservative Australian public were not accustomed to public art that wasn't representational of a person or event, and so *Vault* was too obscure for the people of Melbourne to digest. The work was pilloried, as the general public and most of the culturally informed public too, had no idea how to receive such a work. This lack of understanding and of acceptance led to protests, ridicule and much disquiet. The sculpture was nicknamed 'The Yellow Peril', a play on the derogatory phrase used to describe the feared invasion by the Japanese in World War Two. Eventually, Melbourne City Council succumbed to the public outcry and the work was relocated to the less central location of Batman Park. After years of ignorance and neglect *Vault* now has a new home outside the Australian Centre of Contemporary Art (ACCA), where it sits in conversation with the monolithic ACCA architecture with its weathered steel surfaces. After its 'colourful' history *Vault* is now celebrated as an iconic artefact of Australia's cultural history. In creating sculpture in Australia using steel that is painted yellow, one cannot avoid association to Ron Robertson-Swann's both infamous and famous *Vault*.

⁹⁵ Kate MacNeill, 2012. "Narratives of Public Art: Yellow Peril, Vault and a Large Yellow Object." *Public Art Dialogue*, 2 (1): 15–33. An overview of the installation and response to *Vault* is also detailed in: Geoffrey Joseph Wallis and Ron Robertson-Swann, *Peril in the Square: The Sculpture that Challenged a City*, Indra Pub., 2004.

Figure 33: Ron Robertson-Swann, *Vault*, 1980. Steel and paint, 615 x 1184 x 1003cm. Commissioned by the City of Melbourne, City of Melbourne Art and Heritage Collection.⁹⁶

Safety Apparatuses, Inflatable Toys and Context

When discovering the cold inflation method, it became abundantly clear that the most obvious associations conjured by the inflated steel forms are the common and widely recognisable inflatable objects found in everyday life. The mirror polished stainless-steel forms resemble inflated wine cask bladders. The yellow multi-chamber forms are evocative of inflatable air beds, cushions or swimming pool li-los. The roundish red or yellow forms suggest life-rings or swimming pool toys.⁹⁷ These associations are so strong that it is near impossible to present one of these works without it conjuring those associations. Therefore, from the very beginning of this research discovery, I realised that contextualisation would be crucial to directing associational reading of the objects in order to promote a deeper understanding or engagement with these forms. It is at this point that the attachment of a title becomes crucial to the contextualising of the work. Careful application

⁹⁶ City of Melbourne, “City Collection”:

<http://citycollection.melbourne.vic.gov.au/vault/> (accessed 7/11/2019)

⁹⁷ See Fig. 8, *Large device for a yet to be assigned purpose*, 2016 in Chapter 1.

of a title can either develop an association with the work or deflect an association. For *Materiality Performed*, most of the titles adopted linked verbs or adjectives to describe the actions undertaken to perform the creation and the final presentation of the artwork, for example, *Hung n Strung*, or *Strapped, Stropped n Dropped*. The actions indicated by the verbs or adjectives served to deflect attention from the singular association with a referential object and instead direct focus to the object as a result of the act of the making – the process. The adoption of word lists is not uncommon for artists and, as mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, this is no more evident than in the practice of artist Richard Serra (Born 1938). As art historian Michael Maizels writes: ‘In the early part of 1967, Serra began his now iconic *Verb List: Actions to Relate to Oneself*, a delineation of over 100 single actions that a sculptor could perform on his material’.⁹⁸ My adoption of word lists is not to be instructive or prescriptive, more descriptive and associative. Some words are chosen to relate to process whilst others are selected to ignite allusory associations.

immaterial
materiality

cause
effect
affect

corrupt
imperfect
flaw
fault

failure

constraint
conform
deform

paradigm
shift

breathe

⁹⁸ Michael Maizels, "Steve Reich, Richard Serra, and the Discovery of Process," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance & Art* 39, no. 1 (2017): P 27.

breath
blow

air

pressure

perform
moment
frozen

subjective
objective
association

abject
object
autonomy

The playfulness of the brightly coloured objects in *Materiality Performed* also bear reference to the Pop Art movement and the work of artists such as Claes Oldenburg, the Swedish born American (born 1929), and Andy Warhol whose work was briefly described in Chapter 1. Oldenburg is known for his large-scale public artworks that consist of scaled-up versions of everyday objects, such as a clothes' peg or a garden trowel. More relevant to my inflated works are soft, stuffed and often scaled-up versions of everyday items, like an ice bag, a common household object from the 1960s, or *Soft Toilet – Ghost Version*, 1966 (see Figure: 34). In *Soft Toilet – Ghost Version* and other works of that genre, Oldenburg explores materiality and sags and softens the hard and the rigid, which is in direct contrast to my inflated steel artworks. While my works also explore materiality, they are made with hard steel that can appear soft and forgiving.

Figure 34: Claes Oldenburg, *Soft Toilet - Ghost Version*, 1966, canvas filled kapok painted with acrylic, on metal, 129.4 x 83.82 x 71.12cm.⁹⁹

Oldenburg's process of softening recognisable, everyday object serves to not only appropriate these everyday objects, but to reconfigure them in impractical materials which separates them from the practical, real world thus establishing them as art objects.

Plugging In

Materiality Performed provided an opportunity to introduce the accoutrements of inflation as an element of the work. The recognition of the importance of process as an essential element of the work became apparent during the studio research when planning for this exhibition and, as a result, became a necessary addition. The air hoses that connect from the air compressor to the flat forms are umbilical cords that give life to the forms. The logical work in which to include the inflation hose for this exhibition was *Performed Materiality – The Lock-*

⁹⁹ "Claes Oldenburg/Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen", Artforum: <https://www.artforum.com/print/previews/200905/claes-oldenburg-claes-oldenburg-and-coosje-van-bruggen-22717> (accessed 14.07.2017)

Up (Fig. 35), as this work is the residue, or artefact, from my earlier performance at The Lock-Up. There, the hose and the act of inflation was integral to the experience and understanding of the work. Some would say that including the air hoses in the final installation of the work destroys the mystery. However, the uniqueness and strength of these works resides in the process - the act of creation is laid out before our eyes. This is not about trickery, but the acknowledgement or revelation of the inflated act that is so viscerally engaging. With mystery there would be no direct connection, and no cognition, of process – of the act.



Figure 35: Braddon Snape, *Materiality Performed - The Lockup*, 2015, welded, mirror polished and inflated steel, 240 x 150 x 60cm. Image Braddon Snape
Self-forming

To inject the compressed air into the sealed pockets of steel and to watch the flat and flaccid sheet steel grow into form right before the eyes is the most remarkable aspect of my inflated steel method. This is a self-forming. A phenomenon. Traditionally, the forming of a sculpture is a slow and methodical process that takes many moves, to complete a construction or to chip away at a block to reveal a form. The self-forming nature of my inflation method defies much of this tradition.

Anish Kapoor is one artist who has adopted a variation of a self-forming method to create artworks, using a template to fashion the profiles of the form. *My Red Homeland*, 2003 (Fig. 36) is an example of a self-forming work created by this artist. A long, motorised arm with a cube-like steel ram at its end slowly circulates around a disc piled with luscious red wax. As the arm circles the disc, like the hand of a clock, it carves through the wax, moulding it as it goes whilst the excess wax is deposited to the sides – to the perimeter of the huge disc. The evidential path of the arm and the ram describe a routed form, whilst the excess wax pushed to the side provides evidence of this act, or movement. Kapoor's series of self-forming works traverse much associational terrain:

The mythology of the 'self-made/born' object (the meaning of the Sanskrit term *svayambhu*) drenches these things that ostensibly form themselves by their own volition.¹⁰⁰

Although this work is considered self-forming, Kapoor establishes a strict set of conditions in order for the machine to form the artwork. In this instance there is very little room for chance, or for the act to affect the outcome beyond the set conditions. Aside from the minutiae of the composition of the settling of excess wax, the outcome is predetermined.

¹⁰⁰ David Anfam et.al, *Anish Kapoor*, London; New York: Phaidon, 2009, p. 109.

Figure 36: Anish Kapoor, *My Red Homeland*, 2003. Wax and oil-based paint, steel arm and motor, diameter: 12 m.¹⁰¹

A similar viewpoint can be applied to *Svayambh*, 2007, which is actually titled in reference to the notion of self-forming:

...the site-specific installation is an eight-ton block of wax that crawls at an almost indiscernible pace along giant tracks suspended through the gallery halls. Passing through doorways, the wax is squeezed into shape by brute force, taking on the curvature of the arches in the 19th-century neo-classical building in Nantes, and in turn leaving red smears on the architecture.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Image: Braddon Snape captured from the installation of *My Red Homeland* at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) Australia in 2012.

¹⁰² <http://artasiapacific.com/Magazine/60/TheFictionOfAutoGenerationAnishKapoor> (Accessed 22.9.2019)

Svayambh employs the actual architecture of the building's archways¹⁰³ to extrude the resultant form, however, once again the conditions are set and the form is predetermined. This is a remarkable work that is significant for its fundamental approach to creating form and for its pure site specificity, yet it may be received as contrived. This contrivance is somewhat antithetical to the idea of self-forming in that, yes, the final act is performed by the work itself, however the conditions are almost completely prescribed by the artist. Similarly, the conditions of my inflation method are also prescribed by the artist, however the inflation process allows more room for a certain amount of unpredictability in the outcome. With prior knowledge of how the material may respond to certain parameters there is certainly some degree of predictability, but the process allows chance to intervene, or to collaborate. As mentioned in Chapter 1, in each inflation there are variables; the thickness of the steel in relation to the given profile of the steel; relationships of surface area to curves; the variation in heat applied to the metal when welding; the act itself - the speed of inflation; the mood of the artist and the 'gameness' - in the pushing the limits of the process. All these elements contribute to each form's potential irregularities and so, uniqueness, in the final outcome.

The realisation of this exhibition provided a platform from which to firstly evaluate recent developments and emerging potential in the work at that point. From that point came the fostering of ideas and potential avenues of investigation that were later realised in *Internal Pressure* at The Lockup. Further interrogation of the performative potential, the adoption of restraints (ratchet straps), the identification of the empathic anthropomorphic forms, the mediated performance, focus on site and audience reception were all areas of which to exploit when the

¹⁰³ This work was installed in the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes and the Haus der Kunst (House of Art) in Munich in 2007 and in the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 2009.

opportunity to install a new body of work in The Lockup Gallery and its cells. This I will discuss in detail next in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Internal Pressure

This chapter aims to describe and contextualise the exhibition *Internal Pressure*, which was installed at The Lock-Up in Newcastle in early 2019. The work included in this showing was the culmination of my PhD research and synthesised the unique material processes developed during my candidature. It established new ways to interrogate the inflated steel forms, through embracing the extended potential of both the performative aspect of the work and a close focus on site specificity.

Background of Site and Context

The Newcastle Police Station and Lock-up, situated at 90 Hunter Street Newcastle in NSW was built in 1861 and remained in service until 1982. The Lock-Up is a unique space to engage with as an artist. With its long and dark history of incarceration, the site is heavily loaded with associated content, which is not limited to the specific history of this site. Perception and imagination play a significant role in drawing associations with the visitor's own experience and understanding of the site, thereby establishing the contextual horizon in which the work is placed.

Incarceration
deprivation
pain
pressure
restraint
solitary
darkness
dankness
violence

The above word list is by no means exhaustive and serves to conjure an array of relevant associations to The Lock-Up site.

The Newcastle Police Station Lock-up was built as a holding place for law breakers awaiting their fate, to be dealt by the judicial system, and as interim incarceration before transportation to one of the State of New South Wales' major prisons. The closest of these was Maitland Gaol. It was host to the gamut of law breakers - petty criminals, drunks given the night to sober up, and serious hardened criminals. There is graphic residual evidence of the site's dark history, as evidenced by the still legible graffiti and blood stains that serve as an enduring reminder of this history, on the ceilings and walls.

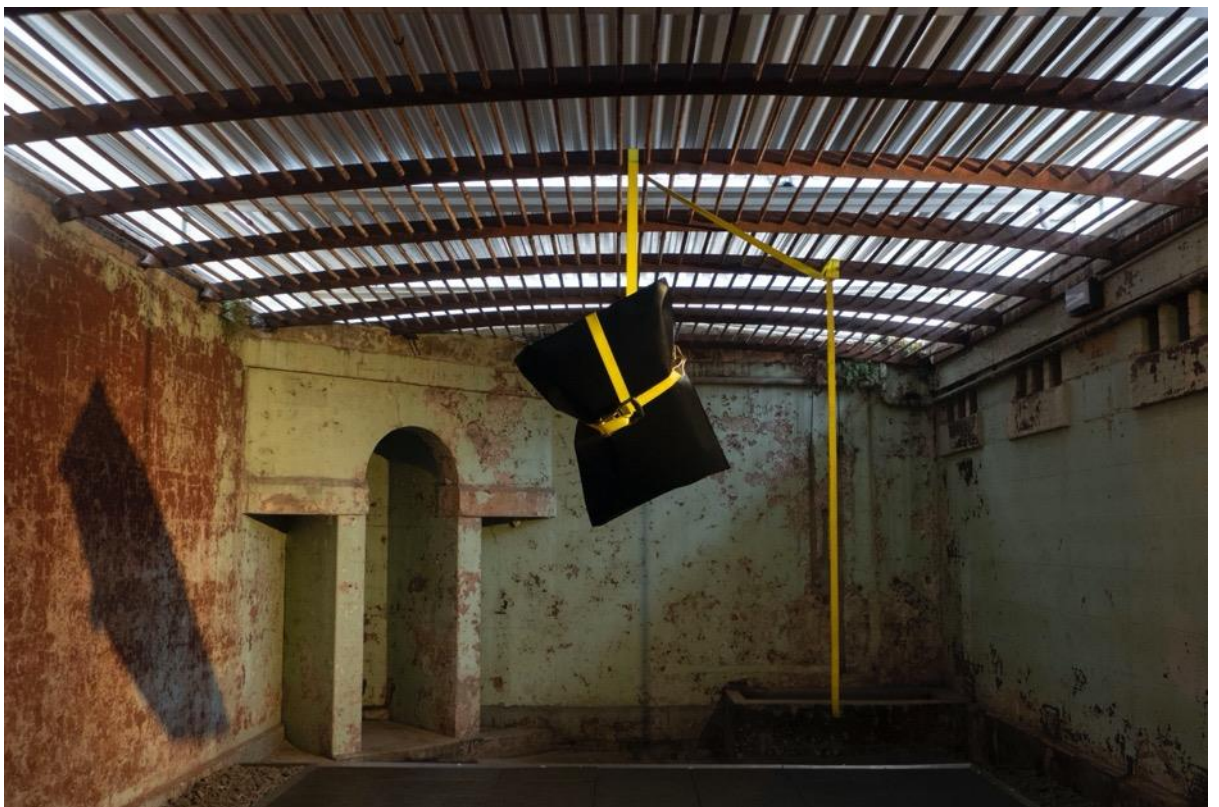


Figure 37: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in The Yard, The Lock-Up*, dimensions variable, 2019

The claustrophobic, dark and musty cells remain the same as the day they were decommissioned in 1982 and continue to conjure all manner of dark and desperate associations. This well of associations is what I have drawn on in my response to this evocative and significant site - murder, violence, loneliness, brutality – committed and endured, death in custody. It is not only the recorded history of these cells that has informed this response, but equally the ideas and the images conjured by the imagination when one considers the potential happenings in such a place. These imaginings feed the response and the content that establishes the contextual underpinning of the work derived for the site.

forced, contorted, pushed, pressed, rammed, jammed, battered, beaten, capitulating, submitting, yielding, beaten, solitary, lonely, lost, bodies

My exhibition *Internal Pressure* was held at The Lock-Up from 1 February – 17 March 2019. It was conceived as a direct response to this site and was the product of two and a half years of consideration – of rumination on both real and imagined happenings in the cells and the exercise yard. From the year 1856, a period in Australian history where cells and conditions in gaols were cramped, restrictive and quite primitive in comparison to the modern-day experience, recorded and anecdotal evidence describes a bleak experience in the country's gaols and Newcastle Lock-up was no different. When researching, actual accounts from The Lock-Up have proven difficult to unearth, however, according to Susan West¹⁰⁴ the 1860s were a prolific time for Bushrangers in NSW. This knowledge instantly stirs associations to the brutal times in which The Lock-Up's history is situated and although it may not have housed the likes of Ben Hall, it is evidence of the raw violence and criminal activity that was part of the time. The Lock-Up's website describes the space as follows:

¹⁰⁴ Susan West, "'The Thieftom': Bushrangers, Supporters and Social Banditry in 1860s New South Wales," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 101, no. 2 (2015).

The Lock-Up's cell block includes rare examples of cell types from the mid 1800's. Measuring 2.3 x 1.26m the first cell in the block is the final remaining unchanged cell from the original 1861 building and is a significant example of Colonial penal design introduced by Governor Gipps as an economic measure. Although planned for widespread use by Colonial Architect A. Dawson in 1859, this type of cell was rejected due to its cramped size. The original Lock-Up building had six cells this size.¹⁰⁵

The acknowledgement of the history of The Lock-Up provided a phenomenological context that was perfectly in concert with the performative method of steel inflation.

Pressure, Confinement and Breath

force
stress
angst
anxiety
pressure
compression
depression
conform
bend
bow

The energy stored in these forms is palpable. There is a sense of anticipation in that the bodies are pent-up and ready to burst. This encapsulation of energy breeds an anxious tension - pressure. An embodied response.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ 'Cells', available online through The Lock-Up website, <http://www.thelockup.org.au/pages/cells> (accessed 4.12.2019)

¹⁰⁶ Braddon Snape, Journal entry (August 2018)

It takes pressure to form these inflated bodies of steel. Compressed air is forced through a small valve at 448 kilopascal (1000 force of newton per square metre) or 65psi (pounds per square inch)¹⁰⁷ and the compulsion within the envelope of steel is gradually increased. As the material gives in to the pressure, an internal space is formed (a body is created) and the steel buckles and creases in response to the process, to the forces. Matter is transformed and molecules are charged. Charged with an energy stored – in stasis - a ‘Radical Flux’¹⁰⁸. This energy is palpable. It is the personification of an in-breath - held. Anxious. Anticipating.

The angst contained in the inflated steel bodies was amplified by the dark confinement of the encroaching cell spaces. The contained pressure of the forms pushes outward, while the enclosing spaces squeeze inward. This dichotomy generates a tension that is quite visceral, one that manifests as a physical embodied experience.

An actual experience of confinement, one that is experienced when entering the cramped cells is also a cognitive experience and cannot be divorced from the ideas or associations of confinement and restraint.

The steel bodies are filled with breath. A held breath, or breath released. As the works are formed by the pressure of air, it is impossible to avoid associations with human breath. The notion of breath is most commonly associated with life – life-force. In this installation, breath is clearly contained.

Snape’s objects are held uncomfortably in isolation, within the moment and within the space. These sculptures are petrified monuments that memorialise the pneumatic process, fixing it in a

¹⁰⁷ Viatran, White Paper, website:

https://www.viatran.com/static/media/uploads/white_papers/pressure_its_units_of_measure_and_pressure_references_white_paper.pdf (accessed 08.12.2019).

¹⁰⁸ Johanna Seibt, Process Philosophy. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018.

perpetuated state of inhale... holding breath. The building of internal pressure is palpable.¹⁰⁹

Darkness

The lack of light in The Lock-Up's cells assisted in building the drama of the individual exhibition spaces. Blacked out windows and singular or artificial light sources developed an association with cinematic narratives, where often subjects are interrogated and tortured in dark isolation with a single light source trained on their vulnerable bodies. The 'acting out' of this drama was evident in the video performance works. In *The Forming* and *The Reformation* the protagonist (an anonymous figure) stalks his subject against endless darkness while one single light illuminates the submissive body. The actor appears from the darkness, slowly revealed by the light, moves in and out of the light as he stalks his prey, acts upon the body, then disappears into the darkness.

Performance and Installation

The process of inflating steel can be perceived as a dangerous and violent act. The material is subject to an invisible and compelling force that brutally shapes it. This is *the forming*.

A collection of the inflated forms are then beaten and restrained – these are re-formed by an external force. Some are restrained by heavy duty ratchet straps, some are pinned, pressed or rammed by industrial steel props. This is *the reforming*.

¹⁰⁹ Faye Neilson, *Internal Pressure: Braddon Snape* (exhibition catalogue), 2019, available online: https://thelockup.worldsecuresystems.com/FORMS/5073_TLU_Catalogue_Braddon%20Snape_DIGITAL_V3.0.pdf, (accessed 16.09.2019).

The performative possibilities for this installation became evident in the work during *Next to Nothing: Performance Stripped to the Bone* – a symposium/performance/exhibition event hosted by the School of Creative Arts at the University of Newcastle in 2015. For this symposium, I was afforded the opportunity to perform an inflation in *The Lock-Up*. As described in Chapter 2, I chose to conduct this performance in one of the constricted and claustrophobic spaces of a gaol cell. With very minimal and dramatic lighting, and an air hose fed through the cell window's bars, I inflated a large mirrored, stainless steel form in the tight cell space, surrounded by anxious observers. This experience announced the performative possibilities of the inflation process, in the way it engaged the audience – the participators – the percipients in a visceral way.

For *Internal Pressure* the proposed works were not suitable for live inflation, mostly due to safety and logistics. Instead, it was conceived that performed inflations and interventions would be filmed and projected in specific cells. The primary recorded performances were initially the filmed inflation of a form – *The Forming*, and the beating of a form – *The Reforming*. For both pieces the intention was for me, as the artist, to assume the role of the calculating aggressor, stalking and physically manipulating the subject. The lighting and setting were designed to simulate a dark cell, so that once projected the event would appear as a kind of charged memory, like it was recounting an event that may have taken place in that specific cell space. The (all but) monochromatic cinematography and lighting effect was reinforced by the act of slowing the footage, which beautifully created a film noir flickering, which served to increase the drama.

Added to the visual drama of this recorded performance was the inclusion of the loud and foreboding associated soundtrack. The sound of metal scaping as it was dragged across the coarse concrete floor, and the drawn-out reverberating sounds of the metal being beaten in slow

motion, created a tension that respondents reported as ‘gut-wrenching’ within the historical cell context.

The inflation of this object within The Lock-Up’s historic environment of brutal incarceration also suggested a pivotal engagement with the human body, through resuscitation, torture or violent restraint. Here, the claustrophobic confinement of the prison site mirrored the strained boundaries of the object.

The tension of containment is extended to all aspects of *Internal Pressure*. Inflated steel objects are violently battered, beaten, propped, pressed and isolated in space. The artist’s signature method of strapped suspension becomes a haunting reference to hanging.¹¹⁰

The Final Act

The installation of the elements of the exhibition were each performed acts – appearing as interventions in the spaces. The act of ramming, jamming, pressing or restraining the body-like forms was both a physical imposition on the inflated bodies and the final process of creating the work.

Act in the Main Gallery

The visitor most commonly enters The Lock-Up through the foyer and into the main gallery space. As they travel down the corridor, they become aurally aware of a mixing of dramatic soundscapes. Stepping through the doorway, primed by the sound mix they are confronted by a single Act in the centre of gallery space. A vertical thrust of aggression jamming a shimmering inflated stainless-steel package-like form against a ceiling girder.

¹¹⁰ Faye Neilson, *Internal Pressure: Braddon Snape* (exhibition catalogue), 2019: https://thelockup.worldsecuresystems.com/FORMS/5073_TLU_Catalogue_Braddon%20Snape_DIGITAL_V3.0.pdf, (accessed 16.09.2019).



Figure 38: The Lock-Up gallery floorplan.¹¹¹

This Act resulted in the installation of two elements. The first element being the use of an industrial extendable screw prop to force a large inflated body against the steel universal beam structure of the architecture of the main gallery space. This is a universal body not a single body. This body is held in suspension in the void of the space - compressed.

¹¹¹ Floorplan courtesy of The Lock-Up, Hunter Street Newcastle.



Figure 79: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in the Main Gallery*, The Lock-Up
2019, 250 x 180 x 120cm.



Figure 80: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in the Main Gallery* (detail),
The Lock-Up, 2019

The chosen material for this piece was mirrored 304 stainless steel. This material responds well to the inflation process and its surface finish is relatively stable, in that it won't oxidise or discolour over time in typical interior conditions. The reflective nature of the material serves two key purposes. The first being that the mirrored surface reflects and rebounds the directed light, thus throwing an array of refracted light into the space. The second purpose of the reflective surface is in a sense the opposite in that it draws in its surrounds, whether that be the colour and forms of the immediate architecture or the body of the viewer -the percipient. This act of drawing in the percipient engages the phenomenological in the work, in that the presence of the person and their movement throughout the space feeds back into their changing experience of the artwork as those reflections continually change and evolve with every change of viewpoint.

This Act performs under a different set of contextual conditions than the other exhibited works in *Internal Pressure*. Although the piece is situated within The Lock-Up site, it is not within a cell environment. Instead it is presented and understood in a white-walled gallery context. These differing contextual conditions prompted considerations of the reception of the piece. Would the associations of The Lock-Up's greater environment permeate this work that sits in a commonly understood gallery context? This question is core to the planning and presentation of works in specific contexts. On this occasion, within The Lock-Up site, the social and historical atmosphere proved to pervade the *Act in the Main Gallery*. The opposition of forces, the pent-up pressure and the restrained installation, within the space of historical brutality and violence, carried through into the reception of this work.

Act in Cell D (The Reformation)

When exiting the Main Gallery through the doorway to the cells, a deep slow rumbling thumping sound fills the space, sometimes interrupted by the hissing sound of forcefully escaping air. As one approaches Cell

D the drama builds as the foreboding sound increases. As the percipient passes Cell C (the padded cell that remains in darkness) they question the origins of the sounds. Moving on to Cell D a flicker of light draws them in to the site of calculated violence – a beating – a reforming.

The viewer is witness as the antagonist stalks his victim, considering and calculating his next move. This is not a random act of release, of aggression. This is a considered imposition. A statement of power and control. The antagonist strikes! A blow with a deeply conjured power. This is not a frenzy of emotion, it is a calculated act – systematic. The steel, the vessel, the body, yields to the force and the rumbling reverberations are felt throughout the cell and the spaces beyond. Again, and again, and again. The inflated steel form (the body) that first appeared ready to burst with energy, with lifeforce, is now bereft - deflated.

The protagonist discards his yellow club, his weapon of choice (a pick handle). A woody, thumping sound echoes throughout the space as the club bounces across the floor. A moment of silence and then the tormentor wrenches the inanimate vessel from the floor, dragging the scraping, clattering, reverberating steel body into the darkness and beyond – and then it stops. Silence.

In this work power structures are physically enacted.¹¹² There is no denying the portrayal of masculinity in this act. That is the intent. Masculine violence has been an abhorrent feature of Australian history since Cook's first contact with these shores, throughout the history of The Lock-Up, and unfortunately it continues to be an issue to this day.

¹¹² In carrying out these performed actions, I acknowledge an awareness of psychological studies, such as *The Stanford Experiment* of 1971 in the U.S., where constructed environments were created to test and evaluate the human response to power relations between prisoners and guards within the prison environment.



Figure 41: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in Cell D (The Reformation)*, HD video, The Lock-Up, 2019. Filmed in collaboration with Maurice Waters.

With relentless acts of violence perpetrated by men on women and on other men, the dilemma is at the forefront of contemporary discourse. As a male (a white male) sensitive and sympathetic to this issue (and in choosing this site for an exhibition) I am compelled to act and to join this discourse. I assumed the role of protagonist with trepidation as I did not wish to be misunderstood and I was wary of the perception that I would be speaking on behalf of others. This was of equal concern when I was resolving the indigenous cultural implications of *Act in The Yard* which I will discuss later in this chapter. In solemnly assuming the role of perpetrator, and by adopting the devices of theatre and film, it was my intention illuminate masculine violence upon a disempowered body. The dramatization of historical and imagined events have assisted in communicating difficult to articulate themes throughout the history of these genres. Sometimes the enacted violence in these portrayals can

be difficult to consume, however, there is no doubt that by expressing such a visceral act the viewer or the percipient is engaged or *affected* in the conceptual space more comprehensively.

The act of inflation to create these bodies of steel was a forming under pressure, but the final forming was not done with. It was not until *The Reformation* had taken place that shaping was complete. Within this site this metaphor holds resonance with the residual conditions of toxic masculinity that permeates The Lock-Up spaces and beyond in contemporary society.

The Reformation takes the notion of ‘action sculpture’ a step further. In the inflating, as described in Chapter 1, pieces are formed ‘in the moment’, with an immediacy and are controlled in direct response to what is happening during the process.

Act in Cell E

The brutality continues. This is a body rammed (compliant) and jammed into the apex of the architecture. Lifted from the floor. Suspended in a moment of power and pressure. This form is large. Larger than life-size, yet it manages to evoke the proportions of the human body. It is folded into the space, where the wall meets the ceiling. Propped diagonally through the space. Screwed into a state of suspended animation.

The generic industrial props used in the construction industry support the parallel associations of material and process integral and evocative in the encompassing project that is this PhD research project. In The Lock-Up, these industrial forms serve as tools for the ‘enforcers’ and as a metaphor for societal structures.



Figure 42: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in Cell E*, The Lock-Up, 2019, dimensions variable.



Figure 43: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in Cell E* (Detail), The Lock-Up, 2019

Initially this work was to be jammed independently under the beam that dissects the ceiling of the cell, however once the piece was inflated and folded into the space it was a little too small and would not jam into the space satisfactorily. With this in mind as a potential scenario that I had considered when planning for the installation, I had a selection of alternatives to choose from. The alternative I settled on was ultimately more successful in the space than the original plan, as the addition of the extended construction prop was consistent with other interventions in *The Lock-Up* installation. This act further reinforced both the physical and mechanical imposition on the forms and the spaces.

As signalled previously in this chapter, *Act in Cell E* continues the metaphorical theme of power and dominance. The inflated form is pinned aloft to the corner of the cell, with the diagonal prop thrusting outward and upward. It appears to have the form by the throat, lifting its feet off the ground, in an act of pure aggression.

Consistent with the other cells, the lighting in Cell E is minimal and exploits the dark and claustrophobic characteristics of the architecture to consolidate the drama of the Act. The single dimmed spotlight projects onto the reflective surfaces of both the inflated body and the construction prop, leaving the remainder of the space enshrined in a constricting darkness, apart from an array of shard-like reflections of light bouncing off the inflated form onto the nearby walls and floor, like an aura of life-force. Again, the film noir lighting aesthetic is adopted as this is an *Act* performed under the interrogator's lamp.

Act in The Yard

Leaving *Cell E*, the visitor passes the looping relentless reformation in *Cell D*, down toward the other end of the dark corridor but they are diverted mid-corridor by a light filled doorway to the once exercise yard. Is this a reprieve from the heavy darkness?

A sole Act is enough to hold the psychological weight of this large space. This is an Act that claws at colonialism and the systematic cultural 'othering' that remains part of contemporary Australian society. A body hangs. Dangles in the space. Heaved aloft. It could have been hung with any available strap, belt or rope. However, it is restrained. Ratcheted of breath. Then reefed to the bars above by the heavy-duty (safety yellow) strap - a strand of industry - industrialisation – colonisation. This body is black.

In this context of the Exercise Yard of The Lock-Up, its history of incarceration, with thick iron bars enclosing the space and separating the sky, nothing more need be stated.

This site embodies the failures of colonialism. At the precipice of this failure is the ongoing plight of the original inhabitants of Australia. As a result, indigenous Australians are overly represented in Australia's history of incarceration. They are also overly represented in the statistics of incarceration and deaths in custody over the last two hundred and twenty-one years and this continues to today. Numbers of Indigenous deaths in custody had fluctuated and declined in the years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in Custody (1987-1991), however according to the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) Monitoring Report published in 2013¹¹³, numbers of Indigenous incarceration and deaths in custody 'almost doubled from 14% in 1991 to 26% in 2011.'¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Lyneham M & Chan A, "Deaths in Custody in Australia to 30 June 2011: Twenty Years of Monitoring by the National Deaths in Custody Program since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody," (2013).

¹¹⁴ Australian Institute of Criminology Publications webpage. Deaths in custody in Australia to 30 June 2011, Twenty years of monitoring by the National Deaths in Custody Program since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody – Abstract; <https://aic.gov.au/publications/mr/mr20> (accessed 12.12.2019)



Figure 44: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in The Yard, The Lock-Up*, 2019, dimensions variable.

Act in Cell B

The dank rectangular Cell B only measures 2.5 metres by 3.7 metres with a ceiling height of 2.9 metres. As one enters the doorway, a stainless-steel toilet bowl is visible in the corner and above is a small barred window. A rich blood-red ratchet strap is hooked to one of the vertical window bars. As the eye follows the line of the strap, we are confronted with a hanging object strapped (taut) to the wall between the two cell windows – suspended - crucified. This bright safety yellow object has body-like proportions. A vessel inflated under pressure and stored with energy, however that energy, that lifeforce is restrained – halted. Is this an autonomous act? Or one imposed - inflicted? This open-ended question posed by the ambiguity of the work serves to engage the imagination and so conjures imagined events in this cell. As alluded to earlier in this chapter, there was much violence perpetrated on behalf of both sides of the incarceration ledger throughout the

history of this site and throughout society at large in Australia and beyond.

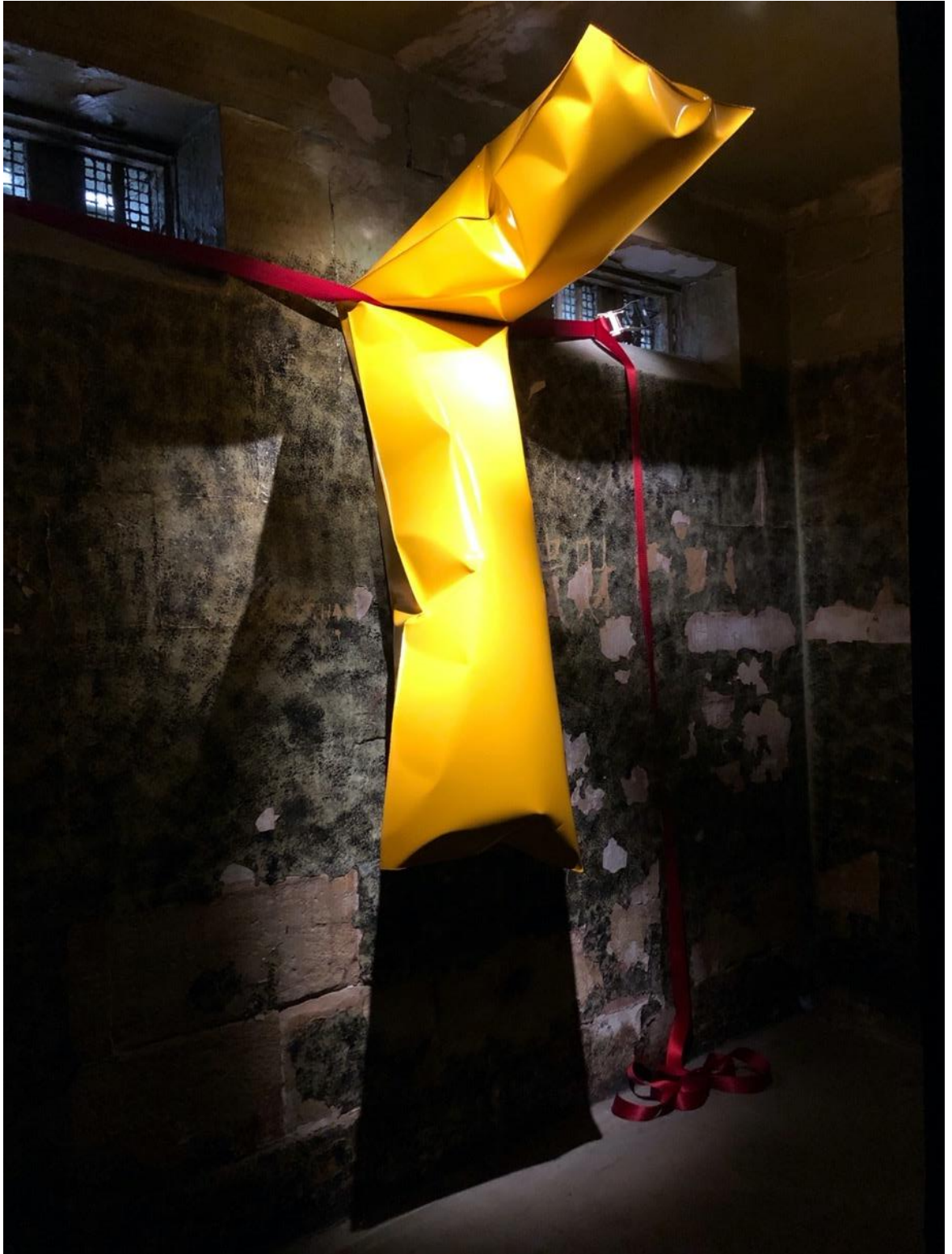


Figure 45: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in Cell B, The Lock-Up*, 2019, dimensions variable.

Act in Cell B encompasses one of only two painted works in the exhibition. This one is coloured a bold safety yellow, a colour that is industrial in its associations. In previous works this yellow has embodied a somewhat playful role, however in this cell space and within the context of *Internal Pressure*, that playfulness is far from evident. In this context, the yellow colour becomes one of warning. This is evidence that the contextual horizon in which this Act is performed has bearing on our reception of colour as-well as form.¹¹⁵ The Interpon *Yellow Gold*¹¹⁶ was chosen specifically as it is used commonly in industrial applications for machinery and safety equipment, in manufacturing or mining industry for example, but also in the marine industry, and it is also widely used for playful aquatic leisure equipment and children's toys.

The ambiguous presentation of this work affords the percipient the space to ponder and so conjure a range of conflicting associations regarding the circumstances that may have led to the suspension of this body. These associations were firstly embedded in the forms as a result of the pressurised inflation process and the notion of internal pressure is evident in these objects whether they are presented in a gallery context or the very loaded context of *The Lock-Up*. However, once installed in the highly dramatic Lockup space the potential for meaning (for extended content) is amplified, much like the drama is amplified by this unique contextual landscape. This added complexity to the content of the work is what feeds its ambiguous reading. A reading that confirms the reference to the myriad of penal and violent associations yet poses a question regarding the perpetrator of this specific situation. This duality of reception is a thread that may also be ascribed to *Act in The Yard*.

¹¹⁵ Refer to Chapter 1 for further discussion of the colour choices for my inflated objects.

¹¹⁶ Interpon is the Business name and *Yellow Gold* the product codename.

Act in Cell A (The Remains)

The video performance of *The Reformation* ends with the subject, the victim, dragged into the darkness. Exiting Cell B the viewer soon enters the next cell, the smallest one, Cell A, to encounter a scene of the aftermath. They are now witness to the residue of *The Reformation* - *The Remains*. Those that have been beaten - reformed. Their life force has been taken and they are now discarded on the unforgiving concrete floor. The scene is reminiscent of a wartime casualty ward of beaten and battered bodies. These deceptively fragile bodies of stainless steel encapsulate a dichotomy of strength and submission. This trophy room, in 'this place', invites the percipient to wonder if this but a temporary reprieve.



Figure 46: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in Cell A (The Remains)*, *The Lock-Up*, 2019, dimensions variable.



Figure 47: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in Cell A (The Remains)*, *The Lock-Up*, 2019, dimensions variable.

However, there remains another body in the cramped cell, which measures only 2.5 metres deep and barely 1.5 metres wide. Propped against the wall, it is untouched. Perhaps awaiting its fate or spared for some unknown ideological reasoning.

Act in Cell F

Back through the Main Gallery space there are two more cells to witness and the sound of hissing to follow. In Cell F a body is compressed. Its belly flattened to the floor by an unforgiving,

unrelenting prop - pressed to the ground. Trapped. In this cell. In this predicament. This is suppression. This is oppression.

Once again, the industrial prop is the adopted tool of oppression, as it projects forcefully downward to pin the inflated body to the centre of the floor, and it is with much consideration that 'oppression' is the chosen word to describe this Act. Again, the moment is interrogated by a single, focused light-source. This Act takes place in Cell F - the Women's Cell. Filled with breath, energy and promise, and almost bursting, this body is pinned, motionless, to the bare concrete floor. Trapped by its tormentor – its abuser.

The physical dimensions of this space are measured by this extended prop, projecting its forces outward to ceiling and floor in the act of pressing this body. There is life in this body, but it is denied autonomy. This may be the last breath.

The dimensions of Cell F are 4.5 metres by 3.7 metres with a ceiling at 3 metres. In its pressed position, the inflated body measures approximately 200cm long. Within the cell space it is strongly present but remains isolated and vulnerable.

This piece is also fabricated from 304 stainless steel with a 2B surface finish that presents as a dull grey yet semi-reflective surface. The material is ghostly in these low-light conditions as it reflects light and its surroundings. The 2B surface finish is very smooth to touch. Although obviously metallic, to the perceiving eye it reads as soft, supple and forgiving. In contrast, the cold, metallic and industrial associations of the construction prop are menacing against the yielding inflated body.



Figure 48: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in Cell F, The Lock-Up*, 2019, 250 x 195 x 55cm.

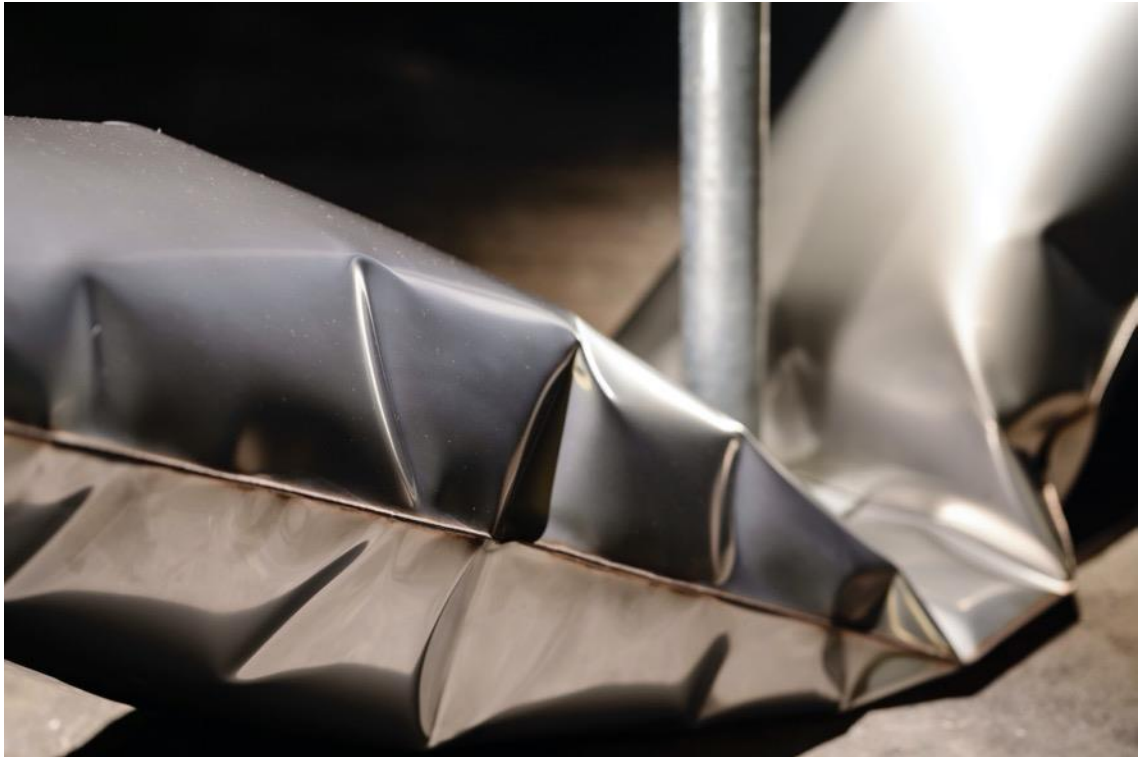


Figure 49: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in Cell F* (detail), *The Lock-Up*, 2019

Act in Cell G (The Release)

Hiss. Reverberation. Hiss. Dragging metal. Hiss.

Indiscernible, the mysterious sounds mix and meander through the confined spaces. The percipient is alert to the familiar hissing sound. Now entering Cell G, there is at once a sense of pressure building and a forceful release.

In this small cramped cell, which measures 2.6 metres x 3.7 metres, a projection is cast on the far end wall. The footage is projected on a screen that sits on the floor, so that the projection appears to be visually connected to the floor, as is the inflated and contorted vessel which is the subject of this act.



Figure 50: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in Cell G (The Release)*, The Lock-Up, 2019, video installation view. Video collaboration with Maurice Waters.

A hand enters the frame and with a click, disconnects the hose – the pressure source. The body spins as the pressure is released, orbiting out of the frame – careering like a planet spinning out of orbit – out of control. The life-force leaked. A breath exhaled. The forces are evident in the high-pressured hissing of the air releasing. This troubling sound echoes throughout the surrounding cell spaces, filling them with an air of anxiety.

Act in the Small Front Gallery

Navigating toward more sounds of hissing pressure and the surprising and occasional creaking and popping of steel, the percipient passes through the Small Front Gallery, past a solitary form, spot lit on the wooden and somewhat domestic floor. Is this too a body? Is this a pillow? In this mixed context, the understanding of this work is less

clear. This space is clearly connected to the context of the cell spaces, which is reinforced as the sounds from the cells reverberate into all spaces, but specifically it is a domestic space. This form could be a pillow with the impression of a resting head, or it could be a body – a body that has suffered a blow and has been discarded. The full picture has not been realised yet. There is more to be witnessed.



Figure 51: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in the Small Front Gallery*, The Lock-Up, 2019, 110 x 58 x 43cm.

Act in the Large Front Gallery (The Forming)

Finally, to the source. How it all was formed. The lighting is low in the Large Front Gallery. Only the actor and subject are illuminated by a single source. The rest is darkness.

The protagonist stalks his prey. The umbilical-like hose clicks upon connection. The subject is now prepared for forming. The trigger is

squeezed. The valve is opened. The hiss of air. Pressure builds. *The Forming* begins.

The sound – ingress of air, of metal buckling, creasing, distorting, under duress. Pause. The protagonist inspects. Body forming. Repeat.



Figure 52: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in the Large Front Gallery (The Forming)*, *The Lock-Up*, 2019. Video still image. Video collaboration with Maurice Waters.

The meaning and the metaphor are implicit in this process – this event. Every inflation consists of this build-up of pressure, which translates to the audience as a measure of psychological and physical duress.

Throughout this research every inflation has been fully recorded live. These recordings serve as historical archives; however, they provide more than that. They are artefacts of performed moments, of performed creation, of acts of making. They are not mere documentation. The act of inflation is not merely a means to an end, it is the forming process that is the work. In *The Forming* and *The Reforming*, the audience witnesses each manifestation of the object being created - the process of inflation forming the bodies and the beating of objects to creating reformed bodies.

This is action sculpture. It is site responsive and mediated, forcing the percipient to become a participant in the psychologically loaded space of incarceration.



Figure 53: Braddon Snape, *Internal Pressure: Act in Cell D (The Reformation)*, *The Lock-Up*, 2019. Still image courtesy Dean Beletich.

Chapter 5

Site and Reception

I believe that one of the major responsibilities of artists – and the idea that artists have responsibilities may come as a surprise to some – is to help people not only get to know and understand something with their minds but also to feel it emotionally and physically.¹¹⁷

Olafur Eliasson, 2016

This chapter will employ two case studies to discuss the reception of artworks at specific sites, particularly exploring external factors that may affect one's reading or reception of that artwork. The case studies illustrate the development of site-specific sculpture/ installation works, considering outdoor sites. The first is *Nothin' but Sky*, a work conceived for a particular location at Marks Park, Bondi, NSW, Australia as a contributor to *Sculpture by the Sea* in 2014. The second case study will demonstrate the complete process, from conception to completion, of a monumental site-specific public artwork titled *Clouds Gathering* for Maitland City Council, NSW, Australia, completed in 2018.

Nothin' but Sky

Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi, is one of the world's largest outdoor sculpture events and attracts approximately 500,000 visitors yearly.¹¹⁸ This event provides sculptors with a prime opportunity to develop a site-specific artwork for a grand location, whilst engaging with an audience that is also phenomenal in size and demographic, and not

¹¹⁷ Olafur Eliasson, "Why Art Has the Power to Change the World, Available online: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/why-art-has-the-power-to-change-the-world_b_9054158 (accessed 08.11.2018)

¹¹⁸ Naomi Jacobs, Report to community, housing, environmental services & public works committee, waverley Council. PDF Available online: http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/16828/Report_-_Sculpture_by_the_Sea.pdf (accessed 10.12.2019)

restricted to regular gallery visitors. *Nothin' but Sky* was conceived specifically for this event, its particular site within the event, and with the *whole context* of the site and the event in mind.

Sculpture by the Sea provided the first opportunity since undertaking this research project to test my developing methodology and to create an immersive sculpture of an architectural scale.

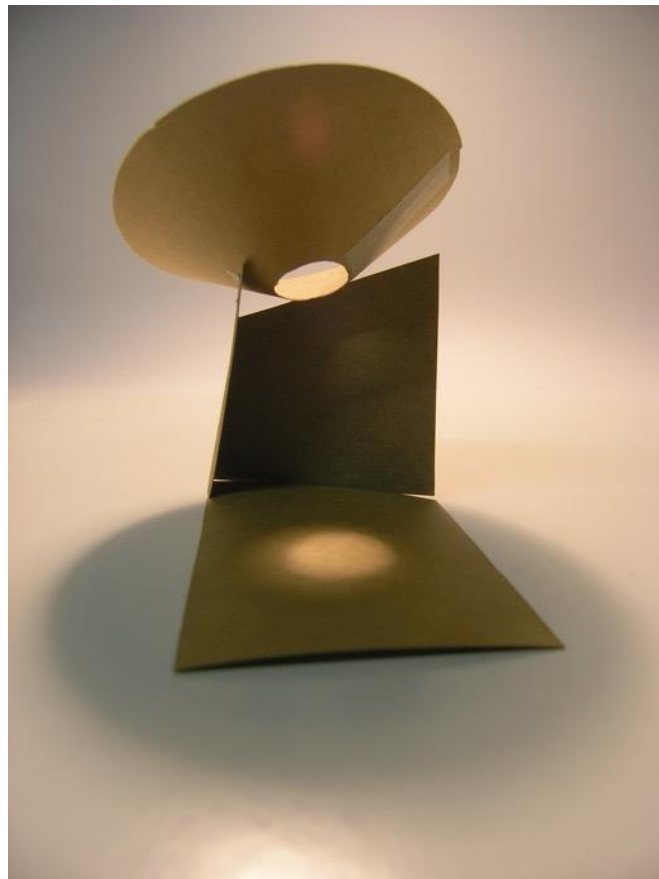


Figure 54: Braddon Snape, *Nothin' but Sky* (maquette), 2014

Conceptual Development

This work was borne out of deliberations in relation to my ongoing research, the site and material availability. Firstly, it was conceived in response to an aim of my research, which was to develop works that are immersive and site-specific explorations of form, and so to create works

in *real space*¹¹⁹ that can provide an opportunity for the audience to encounter the work experientially and in direct response to the site.

David Martin writes:

...the space around a sculpture, although not a part of its material body, is still an essential part of the perceptible structure of that sculpture. And the perceptual forces in that surrounding space impact on our bodies directly, giving to that space a translucency, a thickness, that is largely missing from the space in front of a painting.¹²⁰

Importantly, the aesthetic nature of the work was necessary planned to be an autonomous form, in that the sculpture needed to be free of direct association or prescribed metaphor, not exhibiting any explicit representation. The intention was to (at first encounter) present a work that appeared to be made within the Modernist and Formalist tradition of sculpture, as championed by theorists such as Clement Greenberg. That Modernist view positioned the artwork as autonomous, which was liberating for the arts. However, with this came the idea that the work could exist free of association. Existing only on its own terms. That initial understanding of the *Nothin' but Sky* was to be dissolved once a percipient actually interacted with the work, making the experience of the work part of the work. Secondly, as the piece was conceived for the *Sculpture by the Sea* event, the specifics of potential sites within the event's spatial parameters were crucial to the development of the concept. The physical nature of the immediate and the broader site, the social and psychological implications of the site, on its own and in relation to the *Sculpture by the Sea* event itself, were also integral to concept development and importantly, to the eventual reception of the work. Finally, as the availability of funds is always a factor, I was confident that I would secure a plate steel sponsorship through one of

¹¹⁹ D. Summers, (2003). *Real spaces: world art history and the rise of Western Modernism*, Phaidon.

¹²⁰ David F. Martin, (1976) 'The Autonomy of Sculpture' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 34: 273-86. Page 282

Sculpture by the Sea's significant sponsors, *Precision Oxycut*¹²¹.

Therefore, I approached the problem of the development of the concept with that material in mind.

The following inclusions are a series of diary entries, which directly respond to the process of formulating, the development (including re-evaluation refinement when executing the works conceptual premise), and the fabrication of the sculpture:

Diary Note: 16.08.2014 (Engineering)

Preparations for SXS continue. This week has been spent negotiating and refining specifications with Nikki Albriki at Maddens, the certifying engineers. The biggest contention has been the fixing of the cone to the top of the plates. Of course, for the minimal stacked assembly aesthetic that I want, I need for the connection of parts to be minimal, therefore connection points to be as small and unseen as possible. This is always an issue when dealing with engineering/engineers. I am always trying to push the limits of the engineering while the engineers are always playing safe. When dealing with the scale and weight of *Nothin' but Sky* it is understandable that the engineering is diligent. We are talking about a total weight of 1.7 tonne so if one aspect of the fabrication is not structurally sound, the result could be disastrous – fatal even.

It is important that I have developed a fairly sound understanding of structural engineering principles. When I conceive my works, I am considering the engineering principles from the start. The last thing I want to do is conceive a work of fantasy that has no hope of fulfilling engineering principles from the start. This would mean, in the end, that the final work would look nothing like its original intention. However, my concepts are always 'hopeful' in that I am always looking to push the engineering possibilities to the full extent in order to achieve the most challenging result.

Next week will entail engaging the TW Woods to fabricate/roll the cone form for me. Woodsy will specify the profile of the flat stock steel according to the specifications of the cone I have stipulated. From there, Precision Oxycut will cut and supply the steel for all the elements of the sculpture.

¹²¹ Precision Oxycut were material sponsors of *sculpture by the Sea*, supplying the steel for *Nothin' but Sky*

Diary Note: 09.09.2014

Finally, the steel arrived today! However, as always there were issues. Firstly, the truck missed Andrew at his workshop by 5 minutes, so he just drove off. After a couple of phone calls back and forth, the plates were finally delivered to Andrew's workshop and the cone plate was delivered to TW Woods. However, the second and most significant issue was communicated to me when Ziggy from TW Woods called me to inform me that the curves of the cone plates were actually not curves but faceted cuts. As time has become such a issue, because obtaining the material from Precision Oxycut has taken so long, I engaged TW Woods to re-cut the edge curve of the material instead of risking the loss of a week or more of time waiting for the replacement of the correct profiles. This means that the cone will be about 10-20mm smaller in external diameter and 10-20mm larger on the internal diameter, however those dimensions are not that crucial to make that an issue. Don't know how much extra that may add to the TW Woods (fabricator) bill, but I didn't want to risk further delay for the sake of maybe a couple of hundred dollars. So, hopefully the cone will be rolled and tacked together and delivered to Andrew's workshop at Mayfield West late Friday or early Monday so that we can start construction Monday afternoon.

As of this moment...the moment I saw the steel sitting on the floor of the workshop I am worried that the work is not as large and imposing as anticipated. This is after recently playing with other similar maquettes and questioning my composition.

Diary Note: 07.10.2014 (Composition of Elements)

The work has now come together quite quickly and with few hiccups or obstacles. As the work was scaled up directly from the cardboard maquette it did not leave much room for tweaking or refining the composition of the form/elements. In addition, any significant changes would have had to be vetoed by the engineers and by the Sculpture by the Sea site curator. However, I was satisfied with the general composition of the work and that was resolved when experimenting with the form in its scaled down cardboard state. The main issue of refinement was always going to be the final positioning/orientation of the cone form where even the slightest change of angle could be crucial to the experiencing of the work.

It was anticipated that the positioning of the cone would not only potentially be the making or breaking of the work but also one of the more dangerous procedures. Safety concerns when handling such heavy material were always at the forefront but sticking your head through a narrow aperture in a 2.5m steel cone whilst suspended from an overhead crane is a serious OHS issue. Therefore, the cone was held in position with the overhead crane while the forklift was used as a back-up to support the cone whilst I was then able to poke my head through the viewing aperture in order to ascertain the premium viewing angle and adjust accordingly. In order for the work to live up to the expectation of its title it was necessary that the position of the cone be so that when the percipient is in the viewing position, they can see *nothin' but sky*. This meant that the lower side of the rim had to be positioned accordingly to cut off the viewpoint to the horizon whilst still viewing in a forward direction.

Diary Note: 2014 (Painting)

Construction went smoothly and cost effectively, therefore I am able to afford the time and finances to have the whole sculpture sandblasted, so that it develops an even orange/red oxide finish as well-as wet spray with a two-pack primer and finish coat in powder blue¹²² at nearby Carrington. The work will then stay in the painter's yard until the day of transportation to Bondi.

The expectations of most industrial contractors are understandably much lower than that used in customised architectural finishes or for high-end artworks. Therefore, it is always with some trepidation that an industrial contractor is employed to provide a service when fabricating and finishing an artwork to the standard expected, however the final result of the painting and oxidising was very successful – and the colour proved to be perfect!

Diary Note: Latest (Jan 2015)

The entire sculpture was sandblasted in order to develop an evenly oxidised surface. The work was then rested outside in the yard of the painting contractor for five days, before it was then loaded onto a flat-bed truck for transport to Bondi. In that time there was little rain, therefore, the oxidising process did not develop completely to satisfaction. However, once the work was sited in the coastal climate on the Bondi Headland, it then only took one more day for the surface to thoroughly develop a

¹²² I was initially going to choose a sky blue, however I deemed it too dark, preferring a very light sky blue so that it didn't encroach on the viewer's peripheral vision.

consistent warm orange hue. It was only then that the work was considered finished. The oxidised orange was completely complementary with the powder/sky blue of the interior of the cone. It was not to be considered complete until it was thoroughly interacted with.



Figure 55: Braddon Snape, *Nothin' but Sky*, 2014. Welded, oxidised and painted steel, 270 x 380 x 250cm.

The Work Installed

The siting and final orientation of the work certainly fulfilled expectation. As soon as the work was placed in its site, other artists who were installing their works nearby and other install staff made a point of visiting to comment on how appropriately sited the work was. Comments of this kind from other artists, patrons and the general public continued and were communicated to me throughout the exhibition.

There were many factors behind the success of the site and its contextual conditions. As previously heralded in this paper, the three forms of contextual understanding that affect the perception of the sculpture in the Bondi site are the *Affective* (personal), the *Social* (societal) and *Cognitive* (knowledge).

The broader context of the site/locality can be signalled from various viewpoints to ascertain a comprehensive analysis. Firstly, there is the geological physicality of the site, and secondly there is the cultural context that is encompassed by a unique Australian social context.

The spatial dynamics of the site included the triangular paved area that beautifully echoed the cone form; the dropping ridge-line that led the eye to the work; the viewpoint directly out to the clear horizon; and the circle of sunlight acting like a sundial while tracking along the length of the work throughout the day.

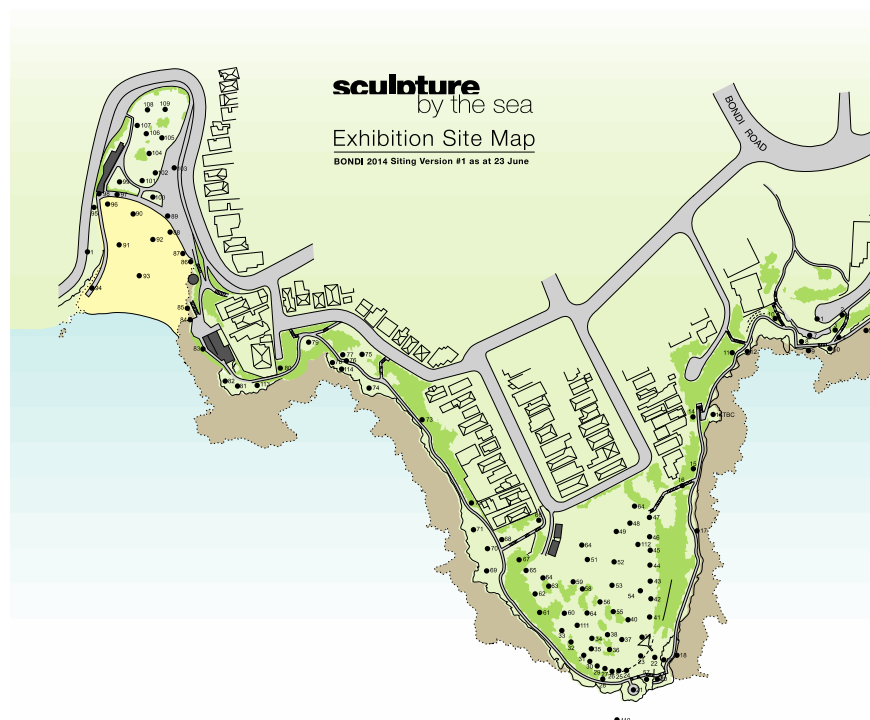


Figure 56: The Sculpture by the Sea site map depicts the position of the sculpture (#39) and the triangular paved area in front of it.

The orientation of the work was also very important and proved to be successful. With the open cone facing slightly North of East, to receive the trajectory of the rising sun, the work sat ideally in its physical location. It interacted with the sun as it traversed the sky, starting from the horizon and arcing directly overhead, as intended. This engagement with the sun was an integral element of the work, as it served to incorporate both the concept of time and the phenomenological natural environment into the work. These two elements, in conjunction with the physical object, acted to cognitively connect the percipient to not only the object, but to the contextual horizon that the work establishes.

Other well documented artists who have tracked the sun's trajectory or 'captured the sky' include Nancy Holt and her *Sun Tunnels* (1976) and Anish Kapoor's *Sky Mirrors* (2001,6,7,9). Holt perforated large concrete pipes with open ends oriented to capture the summer and winter solstice, while holes were cut into the body of the pipes to mimic various celestial constellations. At the solstice the sun rises through the open pipe end and throughout the year the constellations illuminate discs of light into the shadowed pipe interior¹²³. Holt fashions this sculptural device as a conduit between the artwork, the viewer (or participator) and the environment. Peter R. Kalb quotes Holt from her essay *Sun Tunnels 1976*: "I wanted to bring the vast space of the desert back to human scale."¹²⁴ Kapoor has produced many versions of *Sky Mirror* that act to bring the heavens to the earth. Reviewing *Sky Mirror, Red* (2007), Julia Kristeva recounts her experience of encountering human beings 'first such capture of the expansion of the cosmos in a timepiece....a fabulous clock kept in Louis XV's Cabinet des Pendules. In 1749, at the Academy of Sciences, the astronomer and engineer Claude Siméon Passemant (1702-1769)'.¹²⁵ Kristeva continues by

¹²³ Hronik, S., et al. (2019). "Here Comes the Sun Tunnels." *American Road* 17(1): 25.

¹²⁴ Kalb, P. R. (2012). "NANCY HOLT." *Art in America* 100(6): 170. The article reviews the exhibition "Nancy Holt: Sightlines" on view at the Tufts University Art Gallery in Medford, Massachusetts.

¹²⁵ J. Kristeva, (2015). "ANISH KAPOOR. (French)." *Art-Press* (423): 8-11.

crafting an analogy to *Sky Mirror, Red* with reference to her novel, *L'Horloge enchantée* 2015:

Passemant's android automaton (a figure with no arms or legs!) refolded the infinity of cosmic time and brought it down to the present of ceremonial courtiers in the Galerie des Glaces. There is a similar intention in *Sky Mirrors* and the rounding of the splendid Curve, which also lacks arms and legs.¹²⁶

The Encounter - Interaction

It can be enlightening when other artists engage with your artwork, as often they are able to articulate the experience a percipient may have with the work. The English artist Sean Henry commented on his experience of looking at the work, even before a close encounter, and perceiving that the work acts to “capture light and to pull the sky down”. This phenomenon is brought to bear with the successful choice of the sky-blue colour of the inside surface of the cone form. As the accompanying image indicates (Fig. 57), a visual trickery occurs, and it appears that one is viewing the sky through the cone at an oblique angle even though this is visually impossible. To reinforce the illusory deception of this phenomenon is the evidence of the sunlight beaming through the orifice and projecting as a spot onto the oxidised steel plate of the structure.

This phenomenological use of light brings to mind the work of the American artist James Turrell (1943-). Turrell has captured and sculpted light throughout his oeuvre and no more spectacularly than at *Roden Crater*, a monumental undertaking where he has crafted a crater in the Arizona desert where, like Kapoor, brings the heavens to the earth by construction tunnels, passageways and viewpoints that align with celestial, solar and lunar events. The light of from these celestial forces is coordinated through the spaces, aligning with certain points.

¹²⁶ J. Kristeva, (2015). "ANISH KAPOOR. (French)." Art-Press (423): 10.



Figure 57: Braddon Snape, *Nothin' but Sky*, 2014, Welded, oxidised and painted steel, 270 x 380 x 250cm.



Figure 98: Braddon Snape, *Nothin' but Sky*, 2014, Welded, oxidised and painted steel, 270 x 380 x 250cm.

This act brings the light of the heavens down and into a direct experience with the human world – to be understood at human scale. Like Turrell's *Roden Crater* and Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels*, Nothin' but Sky draws down the sunlight and tracks the path of the sun, engaging the percipient with the sky and the cosmos.

A surprising additional experience in relation to the beam of light being projected through the orifice was the potential for little children to *stand in the spotlight*. When the sun is in the Eastern quadrant of the sky then the inside of the sculpture is in shadow, except of course where the beam of sunlight projects a disc of light onto the walls or the floor. Therefore, when a small person stands under the aperture of light they are then illuminated by the light beam against the shadowed steel background.

Accepting that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to wholly quantify one's personal encounter with an artwork, then we are left mostly with casual anecdotal evidence. No survey can quantify the complexities of an individual's response and interaction with an artwork at a specific site. Therefore, the observation of visitor encounters, such as the previously mentioned observations from the British artist, Sean Henry, is one of the best methods for understanding the encounter.

Specifics of Site

There are many pros and cons of the *Sculpture by the Sea* context. A major pro is the massive quantity of people who engage with and experience the work, however, this is also a major con. The percipients mostly don't have the time or space to enjoy the work in isolation and with the opportunity to slowly meditate on its impact. The visitor's experience is generally rushed, unless they visit the site in the early morning or late evening. Even then, due to the popularity of the event, the percipient is never in isolation. The event is noisy and bustling during most of the daytime hours, therefore there is no opportunity for

a solitary experience. However, when a single viewer/participant enters the work completely, by pushing their head through the orifice of the cone, the audible auditory experience is altered and their experience becomes one of isolation, made more obvious because of the existing sound.

The Phenomenological Experience

Evaluating the work from the perspective of Phenomenology.

Essentially, *Nothin' but Sky* elicits a transcendental experience, whereby the percipient engages with the work initially from an external or disconnected viewpoint, but then is compelled by the physicality of the work to enter and encounter it from a distinctly different perspective. From this point, the percipient's experience of the work moves from being a spectator or viewer to becoming immersed and a part of the work. This experience is an integral element to the functioning of the work. For the percipient, this immersive and embodied experience is complete when they enter the work and project their head through the portal, thus the artwork essentially dissolves around them. This transformative moment, when one experience of the work is replaced by a new understanding and experience, is a significant outcome borne out of the ongoing research.

All of the contextual elements of the location and interaction with the work come together to make it the physical, psychological and cognitive experience that it is. The same can be said for the physical or material elements of the work. The colours and surface finishes used play a part in this process, as does the composition of the steel elements. Other contributing factors include the physical nature and spatial conditions of the site, in conjunction with its comprehensive contextual horizon. All these aspects of the work can be investigated in isolation; however, they must also be considered holistically when analysing the success or failure of the work.

The composition and aesthetics of this work were carefully considered to achieve a varied and lengthy list of expected outcomes. These can be addressed from a *formal* standpoint, in terms of scale, composition of elements, and materiality.

The scale of the work in its entirety was crucial to the effectiveness of the anticipated encounter the percipient would experience. Therefore, it was necessary that the work be of the scale of architecture, in that it has a physical relationship to the human body.

For *Nothin' but Sky* to function as intended, there were some parameters that were set by the scale of the body. The orifice of the cone or funnel form had to be set at a height comfortable for the average person to approach and then be able to project their head through the hole, whilst standing erect. If the hole was too high, then their head would not project sufficiently into the cone and the experience would not be complete. Effectively, the participant was faced with an experience similar to that of a pet wearing a conical post-operation collar that is designed to stop the animal from licking a wound. These measurements and proportions were all devised using my body (as a person of average height) as model.

The composition of the four steel elements that comprise *Nothin but Sky* was very carefully considered. Many iterations and minor adjustments of scale relationships were carried out on the cardboard maquette to refine and resolve the composition of the steel plate elements.

In practical terms, the ground plate acted as a base or anchor for the vertical plates and the viewing cone. However, its most important

function was in forming a floor plane that also acted as an enticing walkway to draw the percipient into the work.

The angular vertical plates too had a practical function in that they served to hold the viewing cone aloft in its necessarily functional position. However, like the ground plate, these plates had an equally important purpose. They were configured to create a partially internal space with an aesthetic that referred directly to Modernist welded steel sculpture. Sculpture by the Sea perennially exhibits sculptures set in the Modernist tradition (works akin to Ron Robertson-Swann's Vault - Figure: 33) and as a result the viewing public are accustomed to reading and experiencing this genre of artwork. One of the aims of Nothin' but Sky was to surprise the viewer and their perception that a formal reception or understanding of the work was the extent of the encounter. Instead, this interactive and phenomenological addition to the work served to extend the content of the work and place it in a Post-Modern space. The enclosing nature of the semi-internal space, created by the juncture of the two vertical plates and the viewing cone, was designed to cognitively prepare the percipient for the surprising revelation they encountered once projecting their head through the base of the viewing cone. Suddenly, the mass of this apparently Modernist steel sculpture dissolved from around the participator as their experience to encounter nothing but sky was established.

The history of steel in relation to an audience unfamiliar with reading artworks is rich. Steel is commonly understood as a strong/structural material used in engineering and architecture. It was the material synonymous with the industrial revolution. For an audience familiar with twentieth century art history, steel is understood as a material of Modernism, conjuring associations to Formalist welded steel sculpture from the 1950s onwards. As a result, any welded steel sculpture is forever associated to this late twentieth century tradition of artmaking. Particularly in the 1960s, sculpture was somewhat de-materialised and the traditional materials of steel, wood or plaster were sequestered for

less 'honourable' and more transient materials like found objects or paper, or earth, therefore, in employing materials considered traditional in sculpture making to construct Nothin' but Sky, it brings with it those historical associations. In this work those associations are exploited to initiate a dialogue with the rich history of sculpture and the contemporary discourse of contemporary artmaking.

Diary Note: Artist Talk 09.11.2014

While sitting on the bean-bags discussing my work with Scotty from Sculpture by the Sea and answering questions from the audience there was a constant line-up of people waiting to enter the work. This was a great thing, however a little distracting with all the commotion right next to me while I was basically public speaking.

Questions were mostly about practicalities of construction and transport etc. However, people were interested on my thoughts about the way people interacted with the work.

Clouds Gathering

From the very beginning of this part of my research project, the intention was to secure a large-scale public art project as a case study that would provide an opportunity to test and develop my method. Finally, after a leave of absence and some stretching of timelines the opportunity arose in the form of the \$360,000 Maitland Riverlink Building Public Artwork Commission. This commission presented itself as an ideal opportunity to create an immersive artwork, incorporating my investigation of public art and site-specificity in conjunction with my newly developing inflated steel method.



Figure 59: Braddon Snape, *Clouds Gathering*, Maitland Riverlink Building, 2018, dimensions variable. Image credit: Brett Boardman Photography

Conceptual Development

The inflated steel works are vessels of stored energy that engage the percipient in a variety of ways and on their own terms. They are experienced as autonomous objects and as evidence of a performed process, yet many of them are not necessarily conceived for a specific site. In contrast, the large-scale public artwork commissioned by Maitland City Council, which incorporated inflated forms, is in every way site-specific and its scale and integration with its public site and the associations specific to this site add more complexity to the experience and understanding of this major work.

The given conditions of the site, which included the architecture in which the work interacts and the wider physical and social environment, were integral to the conceptual development and the eventual realisation of the work.

Clouds Gathering is a multi-element installation of mirrored stainless-steel cloud forms that metaphorically reflect on historical associations with rain and flooding in the City of Maitland, NSW. Maitland's history of flooding is well documented, and this history is embedded in the psyche of the residents. This almost universal knowledge associated with the site was (for me) imperative to the development of this work.



Figure 60: Braddon Snape, *Clouds Gathering*, Maitland Riverlink Building, 2018, dimensions variable.



Figure 61: Braddon Snape, *Clouds Gathering*, Maitland Riverlink Building, 2018, dimensions variable.

Creation

Clouds Gathering consists of a cluster of eight mirror polished stainless-steel clouds held aloft by five mirror-polished stainless-steel poles. The

two most central clouds contain an internal water system that provides the facility for those two clouds to emit a light shower of rain. However, this is not the entirety of the installation. A scattering of individual clouds varying in size appear to break away from the main cluster and scatter across the wall and the ceiling of the award winning¹²⁷ Maitland Riverlink Building, designed by CHROFI Architects. An excerpt from the CHROFI website reads:

The space acts as a kind of ‘public living room’ for the community, reactivating an unused part of town and drawing locals back to the river that is a fundamental part of Maitland’s heritage, whilst bringing tourists and visitors to the town. In recent years, rural Maitland’s town centre had turned its back on the river, disconnecting it from its main commercial and community activities. A series of devastating floods meant locals no longer see the river as an asset, but as a threat to the community....

...The architecture is intended to act as a civic set piece in a street full of great buildings. It also registers as a landmark when viewed from the levee bank, from neighbouring Lorn and the Belmore Bridge. The design balances these architectural ambitions with consideration for the human scale. The precise angles of the walls, ceiling and floor, twist and distort the central space, to subtly slow movement through. The gateway frames a public space that invites occupation, a place to sit, shade in summer, a mobile library, access to high quality public amenities and a restaurant and can all be transformed into an outdoor cinema or theatre for the community.¹²⁸

There were many things to consider when responding to this site, however, primarily, it was the architectural/spatial qualities of the above described space, along with the historical and the contemporary social context, that were deeply considered when responding to this site.

¹²⁷The Riverlink building has attracted multiple Australian and International architectural awards, including the Blueprint Awards - Winner, Best Public Project with Public Funding Architizer A+ Awards – Finalist; World Architecture Festival.

¹²⁸ CHROFI Architects website, accessed 10.12.2019
<http://www.chrofi.com/project/maitland-riverlink>



Figure 62: Braddon Snape, *Clouds Gathering*, Maitland Riverlink Building, 2018, dimensions variable. Brett Boardman Photography

The Physio-cognitive

The embodied experience and the cognitive experience are inseparable companions when it comes to the reception of an artwork. One informs

the other in a reiterative feedback loop. In his book *Art and Objecthood* Michael Fried maintains that:

...for something to be perceived at all is for it to be perceived as part of that situation. Everything counts - not as part of the object, but as part of the situation in which its objecthood is established and on which that objecthood at least partly depends.¹²⁹

Although Fried's argument is deeply informed by the formalist, Greenbergian viewpoint, that the art object exists with complete autonomy, here he departs and accepts that one cannot perceive an artwork in isolation – and free from association – from context. This context may be physical and spatial but also cognitive – social and psychological. Any of these 'so called external' factors may inform or influence one's reception of an artwork. It is with this information that I attempt to consider the complete contextual horizon when conceiving works for specific sites.

Engineering and Fabrication

Clouds Gathering was a mammoth project and the largest build I have directly undertaken. Previous monumental projects have utilized external specialist contractors/fabricators, but the complexities and the unique specifics of the inflated steel method meant that I must be in complete control of the fabrication of this work. To achieve this, I would need to hire a much larger workshop space to accommodate the construction of a work so monumental in scale.

Numerous factors contributed to this being a difficult build. The thinness of the stainless steel, which was required to enable the inflation of the clouds, meant that the structural capacity of the material and the organic nature of the forming of the clouds posed many engineering problems and questions. The process of forming the

¹²⁹Michael Fried, M. (1998). *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, University of Chicago Press.

steel by inflation provides structural strength to the thin material and this was something to be exploited. However, in engineering terms the resultant forms are not easily quantifiable. As a result of these complexities it was necessary to work very closely with the engineer, Alan Willgoose, to resolve the engineering issues along the way whilst always maintaining the artwork's integrity. This close collaboration with the engineer resulted in a public artwork that was monumental in scale but structurally and perceptively light and seamless in its execution.

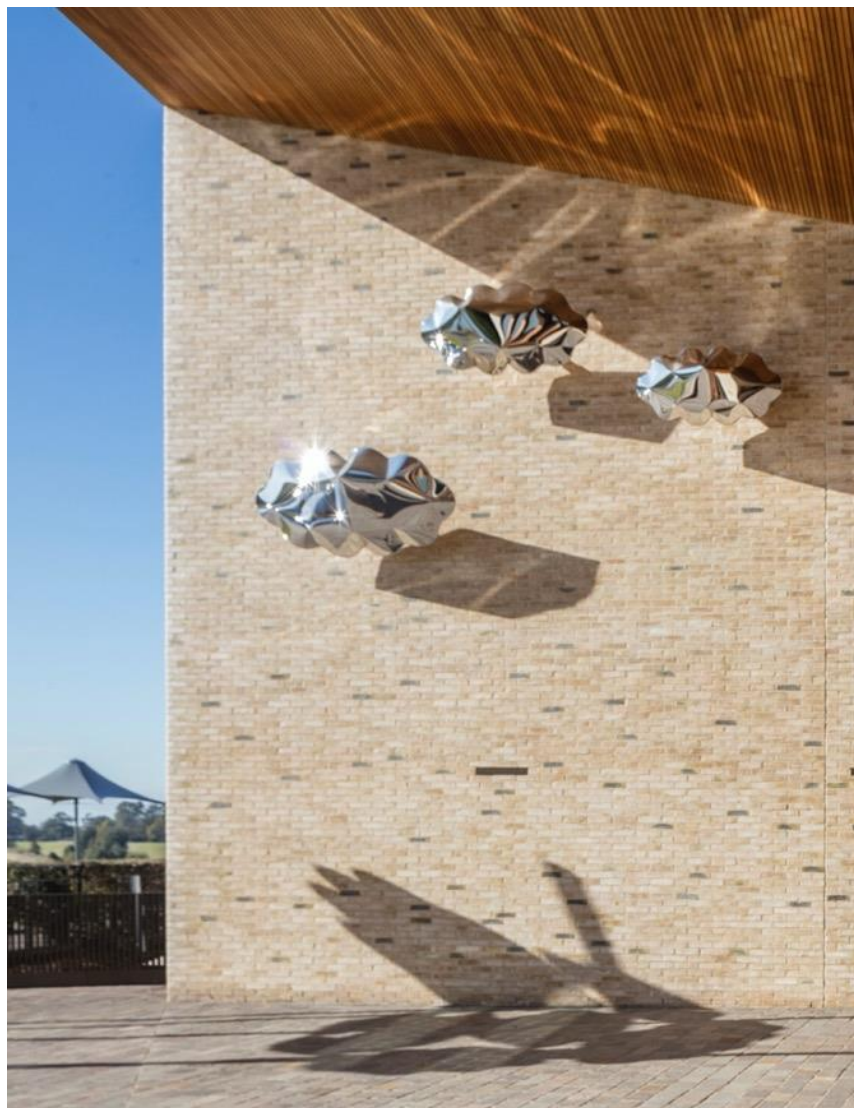


Figure 63: Braddon Snape, *Clouds Gathering*, Maitland Riverlink Building, 2018, dimensions variable. Cloud lengths: 220, 160, 140cm. Brett Boardman photography

Reception

One can encounter *Clouds Gathering* from two primary points, from the Heritage Mall direction or from the Riverside Walk. An integral directive of the brief was that the artwork, in conjunction with The Riverlink Building, would serve to entice, connect and engage the public with the river. With this imperative at the forefront of the conceptual development, the idea to draw the public in and through the cavernous Riverlink Building's void space, by enticing them with elements of the artwork, came to bear. The adoption of the breakaway clouds from the main cluster served this purpose well. From the Mall or street side the visitor is engaged by the single cloud on the predominantly West facing wall. Once closer more clouds along the internal (and predominantly) North facing wall appear that then draw the eye and the body along the expansive wall, through the aperture of the building toward the cloud cluster, and ultimately to the river walk.

Clouds, rain and the river have a palpable significance in the town of Maitland. It is the history of the combination of these elements that produced disastrous flooding many times throughout the city's history, before and after the European invasion. Flooding has been disastrous for communities, particularly during the twentieth century where many lives were lost. In 1955, according to The Maitland Mercury, eleven lives were lost during the town's most infamous flooding event.¹³⁰ As a result of this history, the Maitland people have been wary of large rain events and flooding and have had a love/hate relationship with the river. It was the recognition of this history and of the psyche of the Maitland people that informed the design of The Riverlink Building and the conceptual development of *Clouds Gathering*. Hence the development of the cloud forms and the association to clouds and rain. These forms are, within this context, most definitely clouds, but not only that, they are thought bubbles, or plumped and crumpled mirrored forms that reflect the segments of sky or glimpses of architecture (like

¹³⁰ Chas keys, The Maitland Mercury Newspaper article, June 21, 2014, accessed online 11.4.2019 <https://www.maitlandmercury.com.au/story/2365497/floods-and-death-the-maitland-experience/>

Kapoor's Sky Mirror). Also, in light of the flooding history of the site, it was necessary for the clouds to be more playful and uplifting, in contrast to the threatening nature of storm clouds. This playfulness was also carried through into the water element of the artwork where the two central clouds of the main cluster produce a light and intermittent shower of rain for the viewer, especially children, to play in.

When navigating the space, the experience of the work changes as the reflections change. At one moment the percipient, by reflection, is drawn up - into the clouds, and a moment later the sky is brought down to earth or other surrounding architectural elements are brought into focus. The experience is ever changing, as the embodied percipient is drawn into and moves through the space and around and through the work.

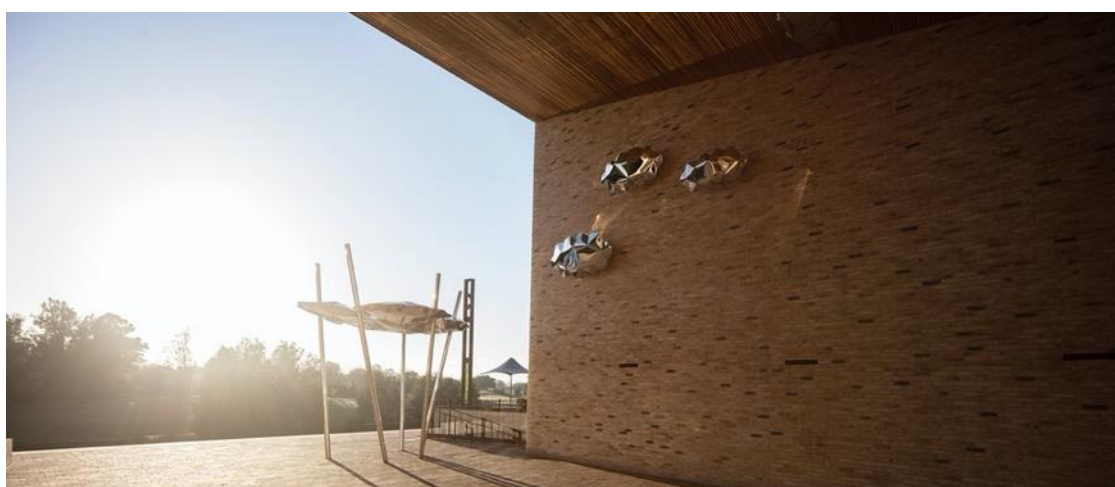


Figure 64: Braddon Snape, *Clouds Gathering*, Maitland Riverlink Building, 2018, dimensions variable. Brett Boardman photography

The Phenomenological Experience

The phenomenological experience was consolidated with the introduction of the mirror reflective surfaces of the stainless steel and pillow-like cloud forms. The reflective nature of the surfaces transcends

the understanding of the stainless-steel material as it becomes something else – a portal and a monitor - a monitor that reflects one's changing experience of the work. With this in mind, the work is experienced phenomenologically in that the percipient perceives it through all the senses and the imagination. This phenomenological reception of the work initiates a transcendence, whereby the raw materials of stainless-steel, water and the implicit architecture in which the work interacts, transcend their industrial properties to create an autonomous artwork that exists as a newly imagined entity. Paul Crowther in the chapter *Sculpture and Transcendence* from *Phenomenology of the Visual Arts (even the frame)* discusses sculpture's ability to provide phenomenological depth in terms of transcendence, and specifically concerning sculptures adoption of tangible materials:

The physicality of sculpture, then, is fundamental in a distinctive way. It imparts a special character to sculptural modes of transcendence. There is also a further aspect to this distinctiveness – perhaps the most decisive of all. Sculpture gives form or shape (or some other dimension of meaning) to inanimate material. Painting and architecture also have this character, but in the former the physical character of the image is usually consumed in its virtual structure, whilst in the latter, the functional dimension is powerfully to the fore. It is sculpture which offers the more unambiguous perceptual negotiation with physicality.¹³¹

Clouds Gathering is exemplar of the transcendental phenomenon that can take place when a percipient encounters an artwork of sculpture. The perfunctory nature of the chosen materials in concert with the artist's intent transcend pragmatic understanding of the materials to become something other, something more.

The reception of sculpture can be evaluated in two site related contexts, the external or outside site of which I have discussed in this chapter and the internal which I have addressed previously in *Internal Pressure*, Chapter 4. I discussed *Internal Pressure* at length, from initial planning and the acknowledgement of the specifics of site, to creation, to the

¹³¹ Crowther, P. (2009). "Phenomenology of the Visual Arts (even the frame)."

installation of the works within the unique internal site of The Lock-Up. From the perspective of the internal site I addressed the conditions for the percipient to experience artworks in an internal context is much different to an external experience. Within the internal or inside contextual environment the conditions differ, therefore the reception of the work/s is different in that the environmental conditions are not only more controlled but more confined.

Postscript

Nothin' but Sky was awarded the Sculpture on the Farm Acquisitive Prize, 2018 and now sits atop 'Hollywood Hill' at the entrance to the regional NSW town of Dungog. Here it sits comfortably, facing North to capture nothing but sky in its new context.



Figure 65: Braddon Snape, *Nothin' but Sky*, 2014; Sited in its new location in Dungog, NSW.

Conclusion

In my Introduction to this exegesis I established the interrelation of practice-based and practice-led parameters in which the research was undertaken. I also situated my practice in response to theoretical and historical discourse in citing Modernist theorists Fry and Greenberg; Panofsky's iconography and iconology; the Semiotics of Saussure, Pierce and Bal; the Phenomenology of Heidegger and Crowther; *Affect* and the significance of emotion in the reception of artworks in the writing of Bennett.

Beginning in Chapter 1, *The Act of Inflation*, I outlined the discovery, the adoption and then the early development of the cold steel inflation method in the year 2013. Following that initial discovery of a new way of making sculpture, and the commitment to the interrogation of that method, came a period of discovery, re-evaluation and transition. Process and the performative emerged as the key focuses of the research. This period was both exciting and one of trepidation, as my findings soon turned the focus of this research on its head. However, come early 2014, one project was well underway. *Nothin' but Sky* was conceived and accepted for Sculpture by the Sea, 2014 and the development of this work was in accordance with the initial focus of the research, which was centred on the reception of sculpture within a given site context. How that site, with its contextual accoutrements of the social, political, spatial and cognitive kind, may affect the reception of that work; and how the presence of that work may influence the experience and understanding of that site. This would continue to be a strong element in my research; however, the process and performative possibilities of the newly developing inflation method would hold focus from that point onward.

Chapter 5 specifically addressed the reception of artworks when discussing the significant outdoor site-specific projects; *Nothin' but Sky* and *Clouds Gathering*, whereas, the specifics of the internal site were examined in Chapter 4, *Internal Pressure*.

The practice-based and ultimately practice-led research methodology was the key to this creative research project. Chapter 1 demonstrated that this methodology of experimentation and play in the studio spawned new ideas and directions, both in my art practice and in research. In finding a new sculptural method for realising form and exploring it intuitively in the studio, I was able to analyse the results, to then identify and exploit content, and forge new directions for the research. It is in this reiterative feedback loop of process that my practice-led research entered new territory in combining process and (inflated) object making with video and performance.

I identified other contemporary practitioners in the field working with steel and demonstrated the clear differences in our methodologies and practice. Piero Manzoni and Andy Warhol were cited as important historical examples of artists employing breath or inflation. Anish Kapoor's interactive inflated and reflective works and Richard Serra's performative practice too were cited. I also acknowledged Australian artists Ricky Swallow and Alex Seton, and American Jeff Koons, as examples of the mimetic conjuring of inflated sculpture.

Chapter 2, *Finding Performance – The Lockup* outlined the practice led identification of performance that surfaced throughout the research. This new territory was consolidated through the examination of performance in the field of art – specifically sculpture, by firstly examining Richard Serra's *Splashing*¹³² 'action sculpture'. The significance of Serra's *Splashing*, and other similar works of that time, was demonstrably influential on this emerging aspect of my research

and practice. This chapter also evaluated the role of critical thinkers of that time throughout the 1960s, whose writing in response to Serra's work and performance have informed my research in this area. Writers of that time, such as Rosalind Krauss and Douglas Crimp, were seminal in not only identifying artists' breaking into new territory, but qualifying those new breakthroughs against the background of established thinking of the time. Krauss and future generations of writers, such as Nicholas Bourriaud, have served to provide license to contemporary artists to continue to 'expand the field'. This license has encouraged me through my research to do just this.

Later in Chapter 2, whilst guiding the reader through my process and the development of *Performed Materiality* at The Lock-Up, I demonstrated the value of practice-led research by identifying how it initiated another new direction forward for my research and practice – the documented performance. This chapter demonstrated that the performative process of making the inflated steel artworks was implicit in the meaning and reception of those works. This foregrounding of process in practice is reinforced in contemporary discourse, and was legitimized in the eloquent quote of Agatha Gothe-Snape. Furthermore, the chapter identified the filmic documentation of the performance and how it transcended into a new method of disseminating and communicating my process-based methods and the resultant artefacts, which was further revealed in Chapter 5, *Internal Pressure*.

Chapter 3 announced my first opportunity to present my newly developing research in a major solo exhibition at Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG), *Materiality Performed*. This chapter highlighted aspects of 'finding my way' in this new territory of process-led research. Writings of Phenomenology by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger and Paul Crowther informed my methodology. In conjunction with the spatial explorations and distorted mirrored surfaces of Anish Kapoor; and his and Matias Faldbakken's exploitation of materiality, I probed a series of themes that related specifically to my practice. Those

themes included *Reflective Surfaces*, *Restraint*, the *Anthropomorphic Inflation*, *Safety Apparatuses*, *Inflatable Toys*, *Context*, *Plugging In* and *Self Forming* and were clearly illustrated in relation to specific artworks throughout the chapter. A selection of the above themes was further explored in the conception and development of the exhibition *Internal Pressure* at The Lock-Up in 2019 and were clearly outlined in Chapter 4. Chapter 3 also demonstrated, through investigation of the exhibition at MRAG, an acknowledgement of context and site, and specifically the internal site of the gallery. The site-specific methodologies employed to generate the artworks and the installation of those artworks were first trialed at MRAG and employed as research material when planning and developing the installation of works at The Lock-Up.

Chapter 4 documented the progression of the research as reported in Chapter 3, and investigated these developments, further exploring the concepts of materiality, the duality of pressure and release, restraint, and introduced violence, masculine brutality, incarceration, mistreatment and death in custody, within the loaded context of The Lock-Up site. In this chapter I communicated the inextricable link between process and content, in that the cold steel inflation process informs the ongoing conceptual and contextual nature of the work within a circular and interrelated practice-based and practice-led methodology. Chapter 4 also revealed the unique internal site-specific nature of The Lock-Up and demonstrated my understanding of the reception and contextual associations of artworks, as it thoroughly discussed each artwork and installation throughout the exhibition.

In scrutinizing the video works, in particular, *The Reformation* in Chapter 4, I analysed the notion of mediated performance. Through the performed brutality upon the exposed materiality of the steel body, formed by slowly increased pressure in *The Reformation*, the themes of violence and toxic masculinity were explored through my role as the actor – the perpetrator. My assuming and the portrayal of this role developed an affective state for the percipient. One that jolted the

observer to attempt to reconcile the repulsive but intriguing act. Here, the act of violence was also part of the process of making the work.

The large-scale outdoor public artworks featured in Chapter 5 conveyed the process and realisation of major artworks for specific sites. The chapter demonstrated that consideration of the reception of artworks was integral to the conception and creation of *Nothin' but Sky* and *Clouds Gathering*. Research relating to the reception of a site-specific artwork was undertaken and carefully considered in the development of these works. Acknowledgement of the contextual horizon, encompassing the psychological *Affect*, and one's emotional response when experiencing works, the phenomenological experience, cognitive, spatial and the sociopolitical, was embedded and contributed to the resultant reception of both works.

The realisation of *Nothin' but Sky* provided the opportunity to demonstrate the application of my research, culminating in an immersive, experiential artwork. Chapter 5 thoroughly guided the reader through the conception and development, realisation, installation and appraisal of *Nothin' but Sky*. In its acknowledgement of Ron Robertson Swann's modernist *Vault*, Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels*, James Turrell's *Roden Crater* and Anish Kapoor's *Sky Mirror*, *Nothin' but Sky* signified a new and contemporary method of creating immersive outdoor public sculpture.

In the latter section of Chapter 5, I discussed and evaluated the significant, monumental scale public artwork *Clouds Gathering*. As this exegesis attests, *Clouds Gathering* provided an opportunity to demonstrate the extent of this research project. Aside from the complex practical issues encompassed in a work of such scale, *Clouds Gathering* exploited the materiality of stainless steel and the inflated steel method, whilst garnering research methodology from modernist principles through to contemporary discourse, to deliver a successful and significant public artwork. This outcome interrogated the reception of

an artwork, and sympathetically responded to materiality and site in all its associations.

This exegesis has engaged with practice-based and practice-led research methodologies in tracing the development of an individual method of finding form through the cold inflated steel process. New knowledge and experimental processes have driven the creation of unique outcomes, in interior installations and large-scale public artworks, as well as contemporary sculpture and performance. The performative approach undertaken has extended my practice conceptually, igniting the potential for socially engaged outcomes.

Throughout this research journey, I was motivated by process to create an incredibly expansive body of work. As a result, there sits a deep mine of further content on which to report. However, I trust this document will do service to this exciting and fulfilling project.

To the future. There has been much explored, interrogated and disseminated throughout this research period and now I look to future possibilities. I am both excited and overwhelmed with the possibilities that this research has presented for my practice moving forward. As a result, I now have an extensive library of notes, experimentation and documentation from which to draw from as I journey into the future.

I am looking forward to the long and deep exploration of my recent foray into performance, performed process and the mediated performance. Furthermore, my list of trials and experimentation with the wondrous inflation process has not shortened throughout this time. It continues to drive my practice, and I look forward to interrogating some briefly observed possibilities that include, exploded forms, experimental surface finishing, alternative restraints and clamping and new material relationships. These will be tested through the cyclic interrelation of my ongoing practice-based and practice-led research.

The process is exhilarating!

Bibliography

Abramovic, Marina. Marina Abramović quoted in A. Kaplan, "Deeper and Deeper: Interview with Marina Abramović", *Art Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (Summer, 1999).

Anfam, David. *Anish Kapoor / by David Anfam, with Essays by Johanna Burton and Richard Deacon and an Interview by Donna De Salvo*. 2009.

Arnheim, Rudolf. *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*. University of California Press, 1971.

Arnheim, Rudolf. *The Dynamics of Architectural Form: Based on the 1975 Mary Duke Biddle Lectures at the Cooper Union*. University of California, 1977.

Arnheim, Rudolf. *The Power of the Center: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*. University of California Press, 1983.

Arnheim, Rudolf. "Notes on Seeing Sculpture." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 42, no. 3 (1984): 319-21.

Archer, Michael. *Art Since 1960*, Thames and Hudson, 1997.

Asch, Rosalie L. "Review of the Power of Visual Perception 3192719.Pdf." *Art education* Vol.36, no. No.1 9Jan 1983): pp. 41-42.

Australian Institute of Criminology Publications webpage. Deaths in custody in Australia to 30 June 2011, Twenty years of monitoring by the National Deaths in Custody Program since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody – Abstract;
<https://aic.gov.au/publications/mr/mr20> (accessed 12.12.2019).

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by Maria Jolas. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1994.

Barnacle, R., and Informit. *Phenomenology*. RMIT Publishing, 2001.
<http://books.google.com.au/books?id=CEo0AAAACAAJ>.

- Barrett, Estelle, and Barbara Bolt. *Practice as Research : Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. London: I.B.Tauris, 2010.
<http://newcastle.ebib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=676435>.
- Beccaria, Marcella, Eliasson Ólafur, Simon Turner, and Tate Publishing (London England). *Olafur Eliasson : Oe. Modern Artists*.
- Benjamin, W. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Penguin Books Limited, 2008.
- Bennett, Jill. *Empathic Vision Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- Bourriaud, N. *Relational Aesthetics*. Les Presses du Réel, 2002.
- BoPET Film description available online from:
<https://xamax.com/polyester-films/> (accessed 10.10.2018).
- Brancusi, Constantin. Bird in Space, 1927, available through the Los Angeles County Museum of Art website:
<https://collections.lacma.org/node/2109716> (accessed 13.04.2018).
- Buchloh, Benjamin H. D. quoted in Kynaston Shine et al., *Richard Serra: Sculpture, Forty Years* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007).
- Candy, L., E.A. Edmonds, and R. Ascott. *Interacting: Art, Research and the Creative Practitioner*. Libri Pub., 2011.
- Candy, Linda linda lindacandy com, and Ernest ernest ernestedmonds com Edmonds. "Practice-Based Research in the Creative Arts: Foundations and Futures from the Front Line." *Leonardo* 51, no. 1 (02// 2018): 63-69.
- CHROFI, CHROFI Architects website, accessed 10.12.2019
<http://www.chrofi.com/project/maitland-riverlink>.
- Cooke, Lynne. "Rachel Whiteread. Philadelphia." *The Burlington Magazine* 137, no. 1105 (1995): 273-74.
- Cooren, François, Bruno Latour, and Ebook Library. *Action and Agency in Dialogue Passion, Incarnation and Ventriloquism*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010.
<http://0-www.newcastle.ebib.com.library.newcastle.edu.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=623314>
<http://library.newcastle.edu.au/screens/EBL-instructions.html>.
- Crimp, Douglas. (1984), "Pictures" in *Art after Modernism: rethinking representation*, ed. Brian Wallis. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art; Boston: David R. Godine, Publisher, Inc.

Crimp, Douglas. "Richard Serra: Sculpture Exceeded." *October* 18 (1981): 67-78.

Crowther, Paul. "Phenomenology of the Visual Arts (Even the Frame)." Stanford University Press. (2009).

Dantas, Marcello. Conversation between curator Marcello Dantas and Anish Kapoor from 'Ascension', Rio de Janeiro/Brazil/San Paulo 2006-2007
<http://www.anishkapoor.com/writing/brazilinterview.htm>

Dewey, J. *Art as Experience*. Perigee Books, 2005.

DiClemente, Matt, (2014) "Andy Warhol's Silver Clouds: More Than Just Hot Air", Andy Warhol Museum: <https://www.warhol.org/andy-warhols-silver-clouds-more-than-just-hot-air/> (accessed 08.10.2018).

Einarsson, Gardar Eide. "Gardar Eide Einarsson & Matias Faldbakken." (2012), *Flash Art International*, 45 (283).

Eliasson, Olafur. "Why Art Has the Power to Change the World, Available online: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/why-art-has-the-power-to-change-the-world_b_9054158 (accessed 08.11.2018).

Eliasson, Olafur. Holger Broecker, Gijs van Tuyl, Gillian Morris, Caroline Eggel, Allison Plath-Moseley, and Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg. *Olafur Eliasson : Your Lighthouse : Works with Light 1991-2004*. Zürich New York: Daros ; Distributed in the USA by D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2004.

Eliasson, Olafur. Madeleine Grynsztejn, Mieke Bal, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. *Take Your Time : Olafur Eliasson*. San Francisco New York: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art ; Thames & Hudson, 2007.

Eliasson, Olafur. Gitte Ørskou, and Aarhus kunstmuseum. *Olafur Eliasson : Minding the World*. Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2004.

Elliott, Jacques Rancière ; translated by Gregory. *The Emancipated Spectator*. Translated by Gregory Elliott. 2011 ed. London: Verso, 2011: Verso, First Published 2009.

Faldbakken, Matias. Faldbakken website: <https://www.we-find-wildness.com/2011/02/matias-faldbakken-2/> (accessed 12.10.2018).

Faldbakken, Matias. Simon Lee Gallery website: <https://www.simonleegallery.com/artists/matias-faldbakken/> (accessed 12.10.2018).

Fried, M. *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews*. University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Gaensheimer, Susanne, and Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus. *Olafur Eliasson : Sonne Statt Regen*. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2003.

Gibbons, J. *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance*. I. B. Tauris, 2007.

Gilbert, Chris, and Olafur Eliasson. "Olafur Eliasson." *BOMB*, no. 88 (2004): 22-29.

Godfrey, Tony. "Rachel Whiteread. London." *The Burlington Magazine* 141, no. 1150 (1999): 50.

Gothe-Snape, Agatha. "Every Artist Remembered (EAR)" in Adam Geczy and Mimi Kelly, "What is Performance Art? Australian Perspectives," Power Publications, 2018.

Gregg, Melissa, Gregory J. Seigworth, Sara Ahmed, Brian Massumi, Elspeth Probyn, and Lauren Berlant. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.
<http://newcastle.ebib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1172305>.

Grynsztejn, Madeleine, Michael Speaks, Daniel Birnbaum, and Eliasson Olafur. *Olafur Eliasson*. Contemporary Artists. London ; New York, NY: Phaidon Press, 2002.

Heidegger, Martin. (2010) *Being and Time*, State University of New York Press, Albany.

Hronik, Sue, Robert Klara, Lynn Miller, Erika Nelson, Thomas Arthur Repp, Mark A. Vernarelli, and Jess Winfield. "Here Comes the Sun Tunnels." *American Road* 17, no. 1 (//Spring2019 Spring2019 2019): 25.

Jacobs, Naomi. Report to community, housing, environmental services & public works committee, Waverly Council. PDF Available online: http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/16828/Report_-_Sculpture_by_the_Sea.pdf (accessed 10.12.2019).

Jacobsen, Thomas. "Bridging the Arts and Sciences: A Framework for the Psychology of Aesthetics." *Leonardo* 39, no. 2 (2006): 155-62.

Johnson, Allan G. *The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology : A User's Guide to Sociological Language*. Oxford, OX, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2000. Book.

Jungenfeld, Rocío von rocío jungenfeld gmail com. "Intersubjectivity and Intermediality in the Work of Serra." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature & Culture: A WWWeb Journal* 13, no. 3 (09/ / 2011): 1-7.

Kalb, Peter R. "Nancy Holt." *Art in America* 100, no. 6 (06// 2012): 170.

Kapoor, Anish. Anish Kapoor website:
<http://anishkapoor.com/684/leviathan> (accessed 13.11.2019).

Kapoor, Anish. Cloud Gate, 2004 available through Mike Warot/Flickr,
<https://theconversation.com/anish-kapoors-cloud-gate-playing-with-light-and-returning-to-earth-our-finite-world-102272> [\(accessed 10.10.2018\)](#).

Keys, Chas. The Maitland Mercury Newspaper article, June 21, 2014,
accessed online 11.4.2019
<https://www.maitlandmercury.com.au/story/2365497/floods-and-death-the-maitland-experience/>

Krauss, Rosalind. "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." 8, no. October (1979).

Krauss, Rosalind E. "Brancusi and the Myth of Ideal Form." *Artforum* 8 (02// 1970): 35-39.

Rosalind Krauss, Rosalind. *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, (8th Printing, MIT Press: USA), 1990.

Krauss, Rosalind E, Richard Serra, Douglas Crimp, Laura Rosenstock, and Museum of Modern Art (New York N.Y.). *Richard Serra : Sculpture*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986.

Kristeva, Julia. "Anish Kapoor. (French)." *Art-Press*, no. 423 (06// 2015): 8-11.

Lacan, Jacques. *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.

Latour, Bruno, and Ebrary Academic Complete International Subscription Collection. *Reassembling the Social an Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press,, 2005. <http://0-site.ebrary.com.library.newcastle.edu.au/lib/newcastle/Top?id=10233636>.

Lista, Giovanni. *De Chirico*. England: Art Data, 1991

A, Lyneham M & Chan. "Deaths in Custody in Australia to 30 June 2011: Twenty Years of Monitoring by the National Deaths in Custody Program since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody." (2013).

MacNeill, Kate. 2012. "Narratives of Public Art: Yellow Peril, Vault and a Large Yellow Object." *Public Art Dialogue*, 2 (1): 15–33. An overview of the installation and response to *Vault* is also detailed in: Geoffrey Joseph Wallis and Ron Robertson-Swann, *Peril in the Square: The Sculpture that Challenged a City*, Indra Pub., 2004.

Maizels, Michael. "Steve Reich, Richard Serra, and the Discovery of Process." *PAJ: A Journal of Performance & Art* 39, no. 1 (01// 2017): 24.

Marcoci, Roxana, and Claudia Schmuckli. "Projects 73: Olafur Eliasson: Seeing Yourself Sensing." *MoMA* 4, no. 7 (2001): 10-11.

Martin, David F. (1976) 'The Autonomy of Sculpture' *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 34: 273-86.

Material District website discussing Zieta:
<https://materialdistrict.com/article/blow-metal-technology/> (accessed 14.12.2018).

McShine, Kynaston, Richard Serra, Lynne Cooke, and Museum of Modern Art (New York N.Y.). *Richard Serra: Sculpture, Forty Years*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007.

Melbourne, City of. "City Collection":
<http://citycollection.melbourne.vic.gov.au/vault/> (accessed 7/11/2019).

Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Jeff Koons on the Roof", available online:
<https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2008/jeff-koons>
(accessed 03.09.2018).

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*, Montilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 1996.

Miwon, Kwon. "One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity." *October* 80 (1997): 85-110.

MoMA, "Museum Exhibitions and Programs
Project 73 Olafur Eliasson." *MoMA* 4, no. 7 (2001): 35-39.
Morley, S. *The Sublime*. Mit Press, 2010.

Müller, G., and G. Gorgoni. *The New Avant-Garde: Issues for the Art of the Seventies*. Praeger, 1972.

Museum of Modern Art, Website:
<https://www.moma.org/collection/terms/4> (accessed 12.08.2019).

Neilson, Faye. "Internal Pressure: Braddon Snape" (exhibition catalogue), 2019, available online:
https://thelockup.worldsecuresystems.com/FORMS/5073_TLU_Catalogue_Braddon%20Snape_DIGITAL_V3.0.pdf, (accessed 16.09.2019).

Oldenburg, Claes. "Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen", Artforum: <https://www.artforum.com/print/previews/200905/claes-oldenburg-claes-oldenburg-and-coosje-van-bruggen-22717> (accessed 14.07.2017).

OSHA. Occupational Safety and Health Administration Website:
<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/1994-01-14>
(accessed 17.09.2019).

Page, Julian, and Bryant, Joanna (2016) "Visible Traces" available
online: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/jayne-wilton-breathe-in-breathe-out> (accessed 08.10.2018).

Panofsky, E. *Meaning in the Visual Arts*. Penguin Books, Limited, 1993.

Parry, Joseph D. *Art and Phenomenology*. Taylor and Francis, 2010.

Pelzer-Montada, Ruth. "Post-Production or How Pictures Come to Life or Play Dead." *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 6, no. 3 (2007): 229-43.

Peyser, Jonathon, (2002) "Declaring Defining Dividing Space: A Conversation with Richard Serra", available online:
<https://www.sculpture.org/documents/scmag02/oct02/serra/serra.shtml> (accessed 17.01.2019).

Philp, Dr Angela, "*Materiality Performed*", catalogue essay Maitland Regional Art Gallery, 2015.

Poddar, Sandhini. "Anish Kapoor: The Fiction of Auto-Generation." *ArtAsiaPacific*, no. 60 (09//September/October 2008 2008): 150-59.

Pooke, Grant. *Contemporary British Art : An Introduction*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012.

<http://newcastle.ebilib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1075008>.

Raza, Sara. "Anish Kapoor: My Red Homeland." *Exhibit*, no. 50 (//Fall2006 Fall2006 2006): 121-22.

Rees, Peter. *Mythbusters*, Beyond Television Productions.

Reitmaier, Heidi. "Anish Kapoor." Tate Magazine, July 2007.
<http://anishkapoor.com/177/in-conversation-with-heidi-reitmaier>
(accessed 12.08.2017).

Rice, Robin. *Woman's Art Journal* 27, no. 1 (2006): 65-66.

Richards, Bree. "*Trace: Performance and its Documents*", GOMA website:
<https://blog.qagoma.qld.gov.au/trace-performance-and-its-documents/>
(accessed 20.07.2016).

Rosenberg, Harold. "The American Action Painters." *ART news* January (January 1952 1952).

Rotas, Alex. "Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art Jill Bennett." 165: MIT Press, 2006.

Rugg, Judith, and Craig Martin. *Spatialities : The Geographies of Art and Architecture*. Intellect, 2012.

Schmidt-Garre, Jan, Adrian Searle, Pars Media (Firm), and Arthaus Musik (Firm). *Olafur Eliasson Notion Motion*. Germany: Arthaus Musik,, 2005. videorecording, 1 videodisc (DVD) (90 min.) : sd., col. ; 4 / 34 in., 106008.

Seibt, Johanna. *Process Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018.

Seton, Alex. 2014 Durable Solutions I, Wombeyan marble, polyester rope, spigots 145 x 90 x 15cm.

Seton, Alex. *Durable Solutions I*, 2014, Designboom website: <https://www.designboom.com/art/marble-carved-inflatables-alex-seton-memorialize-asylum-seekers-09-16-2014/> (accessed 03.09.2018).

Seton, Alex. *Someone died trying to have a life like mine*, 2014 from the University of New South Wales website - "Honouring the Dead: Alex Seton's moving Protest Sculptures Carved From Marble", <https://artdesign.unsw.edu.au/whats-on/news/honouring-dead-alex-setons-moving-protest-sculptures-carved-from-marble> (accessed 08.12.2019).

Serra, Richard. "*Gutter Corner Splash: Night Shift (1969/1995)*", image available through: <http://www.rudedo.be/amarant08/antiform/richard-serra-1939/richard-serra-splashing-lead-1968/serra06/> (accessed: 3.12.2019).

Serra, Richard. "The Yale Lecture", Harrison, C. and Wood, P. *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Blackwell Oxford UK and Cambridge USA, 1992.

Silk, Gerald. "Myths and Meanings in Manzoni's Merda D'artista." *Art Journal* 52, no. 3 (1993): 65-75.

Snape, Braddon. "Next to Nothing: art as performance" available online at: http://www.thelockup.org.au/whats-on/UPDATED_A3_NEXT_TO_NOTHING_FOR_WEB.pdf (accessed 03.12.2019).

Snape, Braddon Snape. Journal entry (August 2018)

Spiegl, Andreas. "Olafur Eliasson Non-Trueness as the Nature of Theatre." *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context, and Enquiry*, no. 2 (2000): 97-105.

Stoller, Aaron. "Time and the Creative Act." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society: A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy* 52, no. 1 (2016): 47-61.

Summers, D. *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism*. Phaidon, 2003.

Sylvester, D. *About Modern Art: Critical Essays, 1948-96*. Chatto & Windus, 1996.

Swallow, Ricky. Caravan, 2008, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, available online: <https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/works/2011.14A-C/> (accessed 03.09.2018).

The Lock-Up, 'Cells', available online through The Lock-Up website, <http://www.thelockup.org.au/pages/cells> (accessed 4.12.2019).

Thomas, Jeremy. Jeremy Thomas Studio website: <https://jeremythomassculpture.com/info-contact> (accessed 18.12.2018).

Toffoletti, Kim. *Baudrillard Reframed*. Interpreting Key Thinkers for the Arts. London: I. B. Tauris, 2011.

Trainor, James. "Blowing Things Up: 2001 Luftbalons." *Border Crossings* 20, no. 3 (08/ / 2001): 42-49.

van Straten, Roelof. *An Introduction to Iconography : Symbols, Allusions and Meaning in the Visual Arts*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012. <http://newcastle.ebib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1039383>.

Weibel, Peter, Neue Galerie am Landesmuseum Joanneum., and Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe. *Olafur Eliasson : Surroundings Surrounded : Essays on Space and Science*. Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT, 2001.

Lauren Weinberg, Lauren, (2008) "Andy Warhol's Silver Clouds comes to LUMA" available online: <https://www.timeout.com/chicago/art/andy-warhols-silver-clouds-comes-to-luma> (accessed 10.10.2018).

West, Susan. "'The Thieftom': Bushrangers, Supporters and Social Banditry in 1860s New South Wales." *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 101, no. 2 (2015): 134-55.

Widrich, Mechthild. "The Willed and the Unwilled Monument: Judenplatz Vienna and Riegl's Denkmalpflege." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 72, no. 3 (2013): 382-98.

Wilton, Jayne. "Take a Deep Breath In." *Lancet Respiratory Medicine*, Vol. 4, No. 2.

Williams, Gilda. "Silver Silver." *Art Monthly*, no. 378 (2014): 1-4.

Wilson, Martha. "Performance Art: (Some) Theory and (Selected) Practice at the End of This Century", *Art Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 4, (Winter, 1997).

Winkfield, Trevor. Recounted in Trevor Winkfield, "Walks Around Brancusi", *Modern Painters*, Autumn 2004, p. 104.

Zepke, Stephen, and Simon O'Sullivan. *Deleuze and Contemporary Art*. Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

Zeita website, Image of "*Plopp stool – Standard*". Website: <https://ziata.pl/plopp-family/> (accessed 14.12.2018).

Viatran, White Paper, website: https://www.viatran.com/static/media/uploads/white_papers/pressure_its_units_of_measure_and_pressure_references_white_paper.pdf (accessed 08.12.2019).