Paul Carter
CREATIVE RESEARCH AT INCUBATOR
PRACTICE BASED RECOLLECTING HUB
PROJECT BASED THINK TANK AT THE
MATERIALISING PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN LABORATORY
AT THE UNIVERSITY MATERIALISING
THINKING OBSERVATORY INTERDISCIPLINARY CENTRE REINVENTING OUT
REACH CLEARING HOUSE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
Dossier June 2008
A Conversation about Value

I have had a long and productive association with the University of Melbourne. At the end of 2008 I will have completed 15 years as a full-time research fellow. In that time I will have produced 11 books, 29 chapters and 35 major artworks across a range of genres.

These achievements place me in a unique position to play a major role in the University of Melbourne’s transforming research culture, one in which project-based interdisciplinary scholarship of the kind in which I specialise is outstandingly equipped to conceive, coordinate and deliver research applying holistic solutions to complex real-world problems.

The University’s investment in my work, a successful record of attracting ARC support, and a proven capacity to engineer new self-funding ‘real world laboratories’ in which the theorisation of public space has been tested and applied has generated growing interest internationally as well as at home, in the research community and widely in the design-based and creative industries.

It is logical that the University should reap the benefits of its own research investment. The time is ripe for this. The creation of a stronger interdisciplinary research platform within the University responds to a paradigm shift in understanding the role of the humanities in public culture. In future, interpretation and action, theory and praxis, will be ethically and poetically entwined.

The object of ‘A Conversation about Value’ is to open a dialogue on these matters with a view to strengthening and adding value to an already productive relationship.

Testimony

‘Carter is an interdisciplinary scholar who has produced an exceptional body of work across a range of disciplines in which he explores and uses public space, including the critically acclaimed Nearamnew, a public space design and artwork he created at Federation Square … Publications that have helped to establish his international reputation as a pioneer of spatial history include The Road to Botany Bay and The Lie of the Land … Professor Carter’s publications and public artworks are recognised as having made a significant contribution to knowledge in academe and in the community at large.’ (Citation for the award of The Woodward Medal for significant contributions to the Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Melbourne, 2003.)

1 The testimonies are typical instances of impact, selected to indicate the breadth of audience for my work, and are chosen on the basis of their concerted engagement with my arguments. Google Scholar records the in-depth impact of my publications on various disciplines.
A Conversation about Value in four parts:

Professor Tom Kvan recently asked me what I did: a reaction to the diversity of my activity, it is a question whose answer goes beyond a conventional CV, a question that invites a qualitative response, an analysis of key interests and of the logic that unites them in their different expressions.

‘A Conversation about Value’ is, accordingly, divided into four sections. The first three respond to Tom’s question:

- **Expertise** describes four concepts that I have introduced into the discourse of the Humanities. Extracted from the matrix of my writing and making, they illustrate the radiating influence my ideas have exercised across the humanities and design-based disciplines. Isolated in this way, the larger research question that unifies them – the poetic constitution of new societies in its broadest reach - also emerges clearly.

- **Practice** describes the other face of thinking, a career of art-making that provides ‘real world laboratories’ in which to test my ideas. This dialogue has produced a third hybrid discourse of place-making that reflects on the knowledge claims of our ‘designs on the world’, and hence directs attention to the ethics of invention.

- **Communication** describes how I bring my work to different audiences. It focuses on research leadership initiatives and ‘knowledge transfer’ opportunities that go beyond the conventional forums in which research findings are usually communicated/published.

I hope these sections are also useful to other readers who, while aware of one part of my work, may be unfamiliar with its other facets – and who, in any case, need to see how the parts inform the whole.

The fourth part of ‘A Conversation about Value’ is:

- **Direction**, an option for adding value to this research achievement. It describes a Creative Research Incubator that formalises, coordinates and expands the interdisciplinary research practice just described, extending its interests and deepening its techniques. The scale of such an Incubator is flexible. It is logical to seek affiliations with other related initiatives within the University. Its distinction is to secure the IP content of the research in a way that protects its independence and preserves its creative role in the delivery of real world outcomes.

In diverse creative acts ranging from the poems that flow across Federation Square to the imagined dialogues of The Calling to Come, the radio plays of The Listening Room, or the historical archaeology of The Road to Botany Bay, Paul Carter has challenged us to think about space and its inhabitation – beyond the square. Founding the concept of spatial history, Carter has generated a conceptual armoury to analyse “the lie of the land” – the echoes and murmurings of a ground that continues to speak despite the “Haussmannization” of colonial space. But Carter doesn’t “do theory” in the way one hears this phrase used in Australia. He doesn’t – to borrow a term from Jacques-Alain Miller – confuse theory with “generalised plagiarism”. Nor does he write poetry for Australian literary journals … and yet, strolling across Federation Square, a poem of Carter’s lies etched into the cobble-stones. Carter’s theoretical and speculative thought unfolds in a poesis in situ. It is theory for the here and now … There is little precedence in Australia for this kind of theoretical and poetic praxis … Yet there have been few intellectuals of such pervasive influence across genres and art forms, both within the academy and in the public realm. (Dr Jennifer Rutherford, Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne, Editorial, Southerly, 66:2 (2006).
A: EXPERTISE

I am a writer: the power of poetic expression, and the enchantment of narrative, are as important in what I do as its thematic and analytical foundations. Throughout my career I have sought to take writing ‘outside the book’ – into theatre, radio, landscape and urban design and public artwork. The synthesis of these creative and critical investigations is a unique profile as an interdisciplinary scholar best known for an on-going investigation of the nature of public space.

In books like The Road to Botany Bay and Living In A New Country, I have asked the question: how do colonising societies create new places? What discursive mechanisms bring new public spaces into being? In books like The Sound In-Between and The Lie of the Land I have argued for a new poetic foundation of postcolonial societies and polities, one that responds jointly to Indigenous understandings of country and to the experience of migrancy.

Other books report on major applications of these philosophical investigations in the realm of museum design (Lost Subjects and The Calling to Come), artistic collaborations with dancers, artists, film-makers and others (Depth of Translation, Material Thinking). Mythform draws out the design implications of the public artwork installed at Federation Square, Melbourne. Yet other studies are devoted to the vicissitudes of public space historically (Repressed Spaces) and in the contemporary period, particularly in the context of the ‘end to planning’ associated with the unpredictabilities of exponential population growth and unprecedented rates of dramatic climate change (Dark Writing).

The influence of this production on such disciplines as post-ethnographic studies, performance studies, museum studies, regional and urban studies, urban design theory, art and design theory and practice, cultural studies and creative research methodology stems from a synthetic capacity to extract leading ideas from a richly narrated matrix of historically and geographically suggestive case studies. Four of these leading ideas are outlined below to give an idea of the scope of my expertise.

Carter’s writing … its materiality as it touches other creative practices – visual art, sound installation, dance, architecture, film, urban design – is a “performance” that invites further touches. Carter’s writing is diffuse and inflective, made up of different shapes and densities, “a pattern made of holes”, a subject in the telling of the story. It holds tensions of being-migrant, of worn human maps, of palpable “mixed” relations, of gaps. For writing/making this entails inventing other ways of knowing “who we are”, “where we are from”, and “what we are”; it’s an inventive remembering beyond nostalgia that creates new conversation … Linda Marie Walker, “‘This Translation Without End’, a slowing in fifteen steps”, Southerly, 103
1. Spatial History, Poetic Mechanisms in Colonisation

Coined in The Road to Botany Bay, the term ‘spatial history’ evokes the discursive mechanisms used to produce colonial space. Practices of map-making, journal-keeping, and landscape representation may render new environments operational but their confrontation with the limits of their own representational categories exposes the underlying poetic and graphic assumptions that render their linear reasoning plausible. It is the investigation of this mythic substrate – the figurative mechanisms through which new societies bring themselves into being discursively at that place that constitutes the subject-matter of ‘spatial history’.

The Road to Botany Bay and follow-up volumes, Living in A New Country and The Lie of the Land, were widely perceived to bring a much-needed hermeneutical sophistication to postcolonial scholarship – which had largely been predicated on positivist criteria of testability. It made visible underlying principles of place-making that offered contemporary revisionist thinkers, artists and writers a new genealogy for their own practices, one that simultaneously allowed re-affiliation to their histories and the constructive critique of these.

This wonderfully written work is a critical study of the role of the “explorer,” a mythic figure in the history of European overseas expansion. Drawing on the work of Carter, Edney, and Winichakul, Burnett explores the nineteenth-century mapping of British Guiana as the layering of multiple myths atop a base stratum formed by the early modern legend of “El Dorado.” ... Carter, Paul. The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History. London: Faber and Faber, 1987; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989. This brilliant work was initially swamped by the other books marking Australia’s centenary, but has since gained a loyal following. Carter introduces the idea of “spatial history” as an antidote to the prevailing mode of “imperial history”; that is, land is not a static and unproblematic arena within which history unfolds, but rather the shifting configurations of the land in texts, graphics, and cartographies has a history in its own right, a history which undermines the mythic ideologies of regular history. See also Carter’s The Lie of the Land (London: Faber and Faber, 1996).
The exposure of the techniques of spatial production embedded in the discursive techniques used to legitimate acts of settlement has been widely influential, key findings being absorbed into new work coming out of such disciplines as historical geography, landscape and urban design, cultural and postcolonial studies, philosophical anthropology and visual theory. Nor has interest waned over the 20 years since the term spatial history was coined: A good summary of its current influence across a range of disciplines is William G. Thomas, III, ‘Is the Future of Digital History Spatial History’, Newberry Library Historical GIS Conference, March 2004 (www.vcdh.virginia.edu/thomas.spatial.pdf).

Books

Chapters
‘Passages’, original research (with Jane Lydon), and arrangement of literary materials from a wide range of First Fleet journals, letters, diaries, etc., to create a constructively critical context for the interpretation of the works of the Port Jackson Painter exhibited in the Fleeting Encounters exhibition, Museum of Sydney, May-June 1995, in Fleeting Encounters: Pictures and Chronicles of the First Fleet, Historic Houses Trust of NSW: Museum of Sydney), pp.22-130.

2. MIGRANT POETICS, COMMUNICATION IN A POSTCOLONIAL ENVIRONMENT

The concept of distinctively migrant forms of communication arose in the context of debates about the status of multicultural writing in Australia in the late 1980s. In the Sound In Between and in Living In a New Country, a poetic praxis characterised by the incorporation of ‘noise’ in the production of meaning was described. Communicational devices such as ‘echoic mimicry’ in dialogue and textual collage in writing dismantle accepted tropes of social identity and propose a model of identity formation that is ironic, self-doubling and improvisational.

In a series of electroacoustic applications of these ideas – in radio works and in museum installations spanning the period between Memory as Desire (1985) and Lost Subjects (1995) – the parallel between the improvisation of meaning in a contemporary migrant contact and in the preliminary stages of negotiations between colonisers and the about to be colonised was also explored. The results of these investigations appeared in The Lie of the Land and in the sound installation, The Calling to Come (Museum of Sydney, 1995).

My anti-novel Baroque Memories meditated on the implications of a migrant poetics for the creation of a different kind of physical and psychological space. More recently, in Parrot (2006), the potential of echoic mimicry to reground our relationship with the non-human world has been explored.

My involvement as an historical consultant and sound artist (unusual combination!) with the conception and design of the permanent exhibition of the Museum of Sydney, the making of a film based on Baroque Memories, and the teaching of my theoretical and performance texts both here and internationally are instances of the diverse impact fluence my notion of a migrant poetics has exercised on contemporary arts practice and pedagogy.
The key term migrant poetics has been appropriated from Paul Carter’s book Living in a New Country, to whose ideas the premise of this study is greatly indebted …’ (Isabel Haarhaus, ‘Turning the Stone of Being’: Migrant poetics in the Novels of Janet Frame, PhD University of Auckland, awarded 2005)

‘Following Carter’s line (1992), he saw colonial encounters as having “spatial and temporal characteristics charged with the symbolic meaning as newcomers and original inhabitants, total strangers, attempt to dissolve the physical and psychological distance between one another and open lines of communication in the search of coexistence’. I am confident that these will be crucial elements in any future methodological position taken to representing indigenous histories as we move further into the twenty-first century. (Martin Nakata, Savaging the Disciplines, Disciplining the Savages, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2007, 164, quoting A Williamson, ‘Decolonising historiography of colonial education,’ International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education 10(4), 407-23)

‘Philosophers, as Mr Carter notes, tend to dislike parrots. Perhaps this is because man has always defined himself as “the rational animal” - that is, the articulate speech - and parrots with their wisecracking mimicry subvert this cherished self-image. Mr. Carter holds out an alternative hope; that parrots in the benevolence of their squawking laughter … offer us a different way of understanding reality, one in which noise does not drown out tenderness, attachment and regret but, rather, amplifies it in so many directions that it becomes a new jungle, one where communication and culture are not linked by an = sign but whose relationship resembles the net. Throughout this passionate and brilliant book he contrasts the net with the cage; the cage confines and delimits, the net allows for slippage and escape. I hope he’s right, and that his net is made of meshes wide enough for these plumed and loquacious companions of our imaginations to wing freely forever. (The New York Sun, review by Eric Ormsby, Arts & Letters pages, January 25 2006)
3. Material Thinking, creative research in theory and practice

The concept of ‘spatial history’ and the identification of a distinctively migrant poetics both pinpoint creative mechanisms communities use to localize themselves in time and place. They emphasise the role invention plays in localization, or collective self-becoming at that place. The idea of ‘material thinking’ extends this reasoning to cultural production.

The knowledge produced through creative research is distinctive because localized or materialized in the act of making or inventing something new. It is characterized by the epistemological value ascribed to such attributes of invention as situation, process, collaborative contingency and a vulnerability to external factors. These characteristics produce a ‘weak’ knowledge that is strong precisely because it is reactive, and sensitive, to the environment of production. In this lies its superior potential to deliver sustaining and sustainable solutions to complex real-world challenges.

The book Material Thinking, the synthesis of ten years of artistic collaboration, was almost immediately taken up both by professionals in the creative industries and in institutions seeking to demonstrate the distinctive knowledge produced by designers and artists. In the year following its publication I was invited to give keynote addresses at 9 different interdisciplinary art and design conferences (New Zealand (1), UK (3), Queensland (2), New South Wales (1), South Australia (2)).

Recently, Studies in Material thinking, a new international peer-reviewed journal directly influenced by my work, was launched.

Studies in Material Thinking (ISSN 1177-6234), launched 2006
This journal is a vehicle for invited artists, designers and writers to explore their projects and research positions from the vantage point of both the materiality and the poetics of creative research. The aim of the publication is to develop a series of divergent positions, critical approaches and contestations around the term ‘material thinking’, centered as it is on an understanding of invention, design, creative practice and research methodology.
The relatively recent recognition of creative writing as a viable academic discipline in Australia has prompted a number of writers (and especially those within the academy) to interrogate and conceptualise their practice in such terms. At first, I found this a relatively stimulating activity but, more recently, struggling to come to grips with the newest elaboration of the Research Quality Framework and the latest current round of bureaucratic demands that I justify just how the various work I do— even the most scholarly—is research, Carter’s work is a breath of fresh air. Among all the stony-faced ‘please explain’ requests, Carter compellingly reminds us not only that the artist’s primary work is to create art, but that, in the process of doing this, artists actually can’t help but reflect upon how their ideas have become art and what exactly it is that they are learning during the creative process.

Carter clearly identifies research in the creative arts with creative practice, stating that ‘creative research is, in itself, an act of reflection and invention’ (191). This is a combination, moreover, which, at its best, produces knowledge that establishes fertile ground for future invention (8). Carter’s argument is premised on an idea that writers are familiar with: that while critics and theorists can only describe or rationalise the creative process based on its final outcome (the work), makers of that work of art can productively reflect on the creative thinking that created such works (xii). In Carter’s terms, ‘creative research’ integrates this usually unarticulated knowledge with the craft ‘wisdom’ of the artist (xii) to retrieve the ‘intellectual work that usually goes missing in translation’ when making art (xiii).

What Material Thinking does so lucidly (and inspiring) is to capture and illustrate, through a series of case studies of works Carter was intimately involved in as a creator, how this creative research thinking can be described in a text that is not only informative and instructive, but also a pleasure to read.

Donna Lee Brien, ‘Thinking about writing and research,’ TEXT. Vol 9 No 2 October 2005
4. Site Myth Analysis, Embedding Stories in Design

Urban design discourse remains functional and instrumental: a far more holistic approach to the design of sustainable and sustaining places is widely advocated by cultural and design theorists, but hard to achieve. Site myth analysis is a way of mediating between the past of places and their futures; recollecting an inheritance of place-making creativity it seeks to ground new designs on the place in a tradition of creative transformation.

Site myth analysis preserves the linkage between sustaining stories and sustainable places.

Because site myth analysis shows how much along the lines of Jean-Luc Nancy’s formulation, as a community ‘lying in wait’. the stories of places are embedded in the physical traces that have shaped them, there is a natural progression from the analysis to the creation of a graphic template, a ground pattern that gives a positive value to the preservation of passages and to the rhythmic notation of the site. In this way spatial history is able to inform design.

By transferring attention from the design of further fixed objects to the choreography and reinvigoration of spaces in-between, site myth analysis is a technique that realises in the realm of designed meeting places Jean-Luc Nancy’s notion of democracy as always a potential community ‘lying in wait’.

These ideas have been applied in a number of public space-making projects – at Federation Square (Melbourne) and the Darlington Campus, University of Sydney – and in place-making briefs prepared for Alice Springs CBD (client: NT Department of Planning and Infrastructure), for Victoria Harbour, Melbourne (client: Lend lease) and for the Southbank Precinct, Brisbane (client: Southbank Corporation).
Books
The Lie of the Land, Faber & Faber: London, 1996, 422pp, 23 illus, notes, index

Chapters
2006 ‘Writing Public Space: Design, philosophy, art’, New Zealand Sociology, vol 21, on 1, 2006, 9-26
2005 ‘The Empty Space is a Wall, the role of theatrical translation in the public reinscription of the other’, Performance Research, Routledge (Taylor & Francis), ‘In Form’ issue.

‘Neighbourhoods, Kevin Harris on neighbourhoods, neighbourliness, social capital, and life at local level’, writes (January 2004): The Urban Tapestries blog carries some material about their recent public trial in north central London. We talked about how different content would be authored in different kinds of locality, which brought to mind a comment in Paul Carter’s absorbing book, Repressed spaces: “Residents don’t need signs, only foreigners do… In this sense, all signs are signs of not belonging, of coming from somewhere else. Thus, logically, a city in whose streets signs cluster like bees is designed for strangers. It is constitutionally for the other.” … Hopefully there will be opportunities with projects like Urban Tapestries to explore such implications from the point of view of people in low-income neighbourhoods. (See http://neighbourhoods.typepad.com/neighbourhoods /2003/12/index.html)

What are the corresponding anxieties and phobias which might become apparent under the new regime of movement-space? Carter (2002) has argued that the range of symptoms known as agoraphobia (which, by some estimates, affects up to 5 per cent of Euro-American populations) should be understood as a movement inhibition arising out of an “environmental unconscious” which has been generated by specific spatial arrangements … his books lays down a challenge to think about how, as spatial arrangements and their consequential modes of body talk are changing, so a different kind of environmental unconscious may be coming about, one in which space is reworked, providing new kinds of locational fantasies and fears, new ambulatory tropisms and tendencies.’ (Nigel Thrift, ‘Movement-space: the changing domain of thinking resulting from the development of new kinds of spatial awareness’, Economy and Society, 33 (4), November 2004, 582-604)

The project is primarily inspired by Paul Carter’s assertion in his book The Lie of the Land that we walk “over the ground”, appreciating it “only in so far as it bows down to our will”. His suggestion that we float over the Australian terrain rather than touching the land is implied by our ongoing habit of wiping “it out; to lay our foundations on rationally apprehensible level ground”. In his writings Carter calls for an environmental consciousness to confront this deep psychological discomfort, something he suggests may be invoked through an “environmentally grounded poetics”. (Lisa O’Neill, Grounded Light, installation, Mt Tinbeerwah Plateau, Qld, 2003. See also Keith Armstrong, media Arts research website, which also uses The Lie of the Land as its defining reference point)
B: Practice

Part of my practice is to dissolve the conventional distinction between writing/thinking and drawing/making. Common to both is a recognition that the production of meaning is inseparable from the tools and media used to produce it. This is material thinking, but it is also spatial history. An overarching interest in the poetic constitution of communities and the symbolic forms they use to ground themselves ontologically, politically and environmentally runs throughout my work.

An experimental interest in how writing is inscribed in performance, in visual art and in architectural and landscape design has characterised my radiophonic production, my interventions into museum exhibition design and text-based public artworks. These investigations have had theoretical implications, showing how communication is always discourse, situated in time and space.

Writing merges into the notation of social spacing and timing. It also merges with drawing to produce designs on the world in which new speaking places are indicated, where performance, place-making, recollection and invention fuse to produce designed places that are emotionally sustaining because they ‘speak’ to us – but not in ways that are facilely legible (or easily legislated) – this is their democratic charge.

Within the university research sector my success in integrating ‘study’ and ‘process’ has had a significant impact on the emergence of creative, or project-based research as a methodologically-respectable, and therefore competitive, research domain. The key claim is that genuinely creative research is both interdisciplinary and multimedia. It occurs when practices of making and thinking are passed through each other. It is multimedia because a dialogue between image and text is a minimum condition of its distinctiveness.

Where universities seek to communicate what they produce more effectively to the public, the performances, exhibitions, landscape designs and other products of creative interdisciplinary research should be recognised as a valuable medium of ‘knowledge transfer’. They generate interest that creates enduring professional and community relationships. Their community connection and their power to deliver ‘real world’ outcomes that are concrete and engaging make them an ideal focus of industry-based and philanthropic investment.

One object of ‘A Conversation about Value’ is to recommend that the University capitalise on the potential of this creative interdisciplinary research, and to suggest ways in which this might be done.
Selected Works

1. Performance

JADI JADIAN (1997-1999)
A performance work designed to recover the non-material heritage of a contested colonial site in Georgetown, Penang. A collaboration with Chandrabhanu, The Bharatam Dance Company and members of the Gendang Terinai Orchestra of Perlis, the work was developed in association with the Penang Heritage Trust and represented Australia at the 1998 Commonwealth Games performing Arts Festival in Kuala Lumpur. The work, supported by a grant from the Australia Council and by the Faculty of the Constructed Environment, RMIT, belongs to a series in which choreography is used to elicit human traces that elude conventional graphic representation.

WHAT IS YOUR NAME/WIE IST DEIN NAME (1996-2008)
Originating as a radio work dramatising the disappearance of Indigenous voices from the historical record, What is Your Name was transformed into a trilingual stage work in Berlin in 2004. The production was generously auspiced by the Free University and generated two MA theses – as well as full houses in Mitte! It is a feature of creative research that it ‘thinks through’ the symbolic forms it produces; hence the sets, the milieux and the translations created for Berlin subsequently became key thinking devices in a third iteration of the work called ‘Save the Wall’ currently in development as an integral element of the program for the redevelopment of the Point Nepean Quarantine Station site (Mornington Peninsula, Victoria).

SUGAR (2007)
Commissioned by the Liverpool Capital of Culture’s Culture Company, Sugar explores the complex legacies of the slave trade, colonialism and post-colonial immigration as they manifest themselves in the creative youth communities of Marseilles and Liverpool. Developed with Rachel Swain of Stalker Theatre Company, the work uses the bodies, the gestures and raps of outstanding Hip Hop artists from both cities to reinscribe the body into public space. The particular context of this is Liverpool’s ‘regeneration’, a process of urban renewal that is, in effect, privatising the public spaces where young people have agency over their lives and futures.
2. Public Space Designs

Solution (2002)
Responding to an invitation from Lend Lease, Solution outlined a public space strategy for the redevelopment of Victoria Harbour (Melbourne Docklands). The core of Solution was a ‘movement form’ or pattern of passages intended to preserve distinctive aspects of the site’s human and non-human heritage. As these sites of exchange were traditionally associated with invention, they could be said to anticipate the latest re-invention of the site. Particular emphasis was placed on the development of a public space design typology that articulated the permeable and ecologically-distinctive aspects of the land-water interface.

Tracks (1999-2002)
Concept design, design development and public art concept for North Terrace, Adelaide. This project, funded jointly by the Federal and State governments and the City of Adelaide, was a rare opportunity to revisit the intentions of the original city plan laid out by William Light in 1836. This process revealed a far more complex origin than the later linearization of the Terrace might have suggested. Our design proposals focused on reactivating an informal network of north-south passages in order to lend the east-west alignment a sense of rhythm.

Ghosts (2008- )
Currently in the design concept phase, Ghosts will be a public domain strategy for the Carlton and United Brewery site in Melbourne, presently being redeveloped as a mixed residential and commercial centre by Grocon. The invitation to participate in this process arose from discussions with Grocon initiated as a result of findings made in the ARC Linkage Grant ‘Transnational and temporary: place-making, students and community in Central Melbourne’ (2006-2008, CIs, Carter, A/Prof Paolo Tombesi and Prof. Ruth Fincher, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne). The discovery of a ‘ghost community’ projected onto the abandoned site is documented in a forthcoming interim report called ‘Ghosting Community: the other people always there’, published by the research team.

Books

Chapters
2008 ‘Solutions: Storyboarding a Humid Zone’, Dark Writing, chapter 6 (forthcoming, University of Hawai’i Press)

Award
EVOLUTION WAY (2008)

Developed with the NT Department of Infrastructure and Planning in response to conflicting initiatives occurring in and around State Square, Darwin, Evolution Way uses one initiative - the provision of a covered way linking the new harbour precinct to the CBD - to storyboard another initiative, the preparation of a competition brief for the redevelopment of State Square. Informally referred to as ‘Da Da in Darwin’, Evolution Way uses typographical design to storyboard extant surfaces with images whose hybridisation models opportunities for imagining the appearance of Darwin in the future.

3. Public Art

RELAY (2000)

A commission of the Olympic Coordination Authority, located at Fig Grove, Homebush Bay, Sydney. The work, realised with artist Ruark Lewis, is a composition of 20 original poetic texts evoking the meaning of the Olympics to Australians.

The twenty lines are disposed across the terraces of Fig Grove, amounting in all to over 1 kilometre of text. The typography and paint colours were specially devised for the work. Thirty “graffiti clusters” set into the horizontal surfaces of Fig Grove are derived from Olympic athletes’ monograms and signatures, mingling these with the artists’ texts.

NEARAMNEW (2003)

A commission of the Public Art Program, Federation Square, Melbourne, located throughout the main plaza. This federated work comprises a global whorl pattern, realised in five tonal ranges of Kimberley sandstone cobbles, 9 regional surface figures made of Kimberley sandstone, and nine local, federal visions (approximately 70 square metres of poetic texts carved at three different depths into the surface figures).

A unique federal font was developed for this work; and new techniques for multi-levelled stone carving devised. Nearamnew was the fruit of a close collaboration with the architects (Lab) and the landscape architects (Karres en Brands) of Federation Square. Typography developed in collaboration with Sean Hogan, Tomato.
Golden Grove (2006– )
Integrated into the redevelopment of the public domain at the Darlington Campus of the University of Sydney, Golden Grove consists of a ground pattern, a lighting design and a suite of typographical interventions. Responding to the brief to create a more sociable and secure meeting place, particularly for the University’s student body, the work is inspired by the allusions to the Seven Sisters or Pleiades that run through the history of the site. The work is a collaboration with landscape architects Taylor, Cullity & Lethlean won as a result of a competitive tendering process.

Awards
2003 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Victoria and Tasmania) Award for Landscape Architecture for Federation Square plaza, Melbourne. With Lab architecture studio, Bates Smart, Karres en Brands Landschapsarchitecten and Equinox Design Group
2003 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Victoria and Tasmania) Award for Design Excellence for Federation Square plaza, Melbourne. With Lab architecture studio, Bates Smart, Karres en Brands Landschapsarchitecten and Equinox Design Group

Articles
2005 ‘The Empty Space is a Wall, the role of theatrical translation in the public reinscription of the other’, Performance Research, Routledge (Taylor & Francis), ‘In Form’ issue.

Public Lecture

Reference
C: Communication

Interdisciplinary research is particularly concerned with methodology. Communicating it means not only describing results but retracing and explaining process. As the audiences for this kind of work are in general discipline-based, communication also involves advocacy and a concerted commitment to the creation of an environment of reception. The most effective communication depends upon a capacity to address three audiences: the teaching and research community, the professionalised research user and the media.

1. The research community
Communicating what I do involves me in a full program of public presentations, locally, interstate and internationally. Most of these presentations arise from personal invitations stimulated by encounters with my published work. I regard these as much more than ‘knowledge transfer’ opportunities, using them instead creatively and cooperatively to assist colleagues in shaping research agendas. Recent and upcoming ‘master classes’ and research mentoring workshops at the University of Technology, Sydney, Monash University (Gippsland Campus), Flinders University, The Hawke Institute for Sustainable Sciences, University of South Australia and the University of Edinburgh communicate my research methods to a mixed community of PhD candidates, Post-Doctoral researchers and senior staff.

In addition I act as mentor to Dr Emily Potter and Janet McGaw (both in our Faculty) and as second supervisor to PhD candidates at RMIT University: current candidates include Charles Anderson and Peter King; successful PhD graduates in the last two years include Gini Lee (University of South Australia), Jenni Lowe (University of Brighton, UK) and Steven Neild (University of Western Australia).¹ I also give public lectures within the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, guest lectures in studios run by Dr Andrew Saniga and Prof. Catherin Bull, as well as lecturing annually to first year students at the VCA (where I am now also participating in teaching the new ‘Poetics of the Body’ course).²

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¹ Honorary Professorships in the Faculty of the Constructed Environment (RMIT) and in the School of English, Media Studies and Art History (University of Queensland) and Visiting Fellow status with the London Consortium reflect the strength of the educational links I have built.

² I remain keen to take on Creative Research PhD students within the Faculty, but this has not eventuated, partly because Creative Research does not figure largely within the Faculty’s priorities, and more recently because the University Research Office determined that my lack of a PhD disqualified me from acting as a PhD supervisor.
Professionals regularly seek my advice on a range of creative place-making issues and projects. These dialogues are an excellent medium for informing as well as becoming informed about new place-making initiatives. They frequently lead to engagements that furnish ‘real world’ laboratories in which creative research can be empirically tested. ‘Golden Grove’, a collaboration with landscape architects Taylor, Cullity and Lethlean is an example of this, and its study now forms a component of an ARC Discovery Grant.

Key professionals with whom I currently engage regularly, and on a sustained creative basis, include: Prof. John Worthington (DEGW), Peter Davidson (Lab architecture studio), John Wardle (John Wardle Architects), and Gregory Burgess (Gregory Burgess Architects). Key agencies with public space responsibility include: Futerra (London), Adelaide Botanic Gardens, Botany Bay National Park Redevelopment Authority, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Geelong City Council, Thames Gateway Development Authority, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Southbank Corporation (Brisbane), University of Sydney, Department of Planning and Infrastructure (Northern Territory), amongst others. These are mentioned because the ideas these conversations generate are concrete, situated and require careful and disinterested investigation. They are a fertile source of research projects.

Public presentations offer excellent ‘knowledge transfer’ opportunities. These presentations are often embedded in professional workshops, but they also take other forms. The on-going public artist relationship with Federation Square uses a variety of media and occasions to build bridgeheads with the public and the media.


Select research leadership engagements (2005-2008)

a) Temporary Mentoring Appointments

2007-2008, Consultation to three part seminar series on critical urban futures and learning ecologies (Centre for Literacy, Policy and Learning Cultures/Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies
2007-2008, Guest Critic, MArch Program, University of Edinburgh, the postsocialist city and its material prehistories
2006, George Simpson Visiting Professor, Architecture Department, University of Edinburgh.
2006, Visiting Professor, Studio leader, Faculty of Arts, University of Newcastle (UK), topic: themes arising from my book Material Thinking.
2005, Visiting Professor, conference and Workshop leader, Centre for Cultural Landscapes, Flinders University, SASelect bibliography
b) Keynote Interdisciplinary Research Presentations

2008, Keynote Speaker, ‘Pathbreaking in History: New Scholarship on Routes, Roads, and Migration,’ American Society for Environmental History conference, March, Boise, Idaho. (‘When we, the two organisers, began to imagine what such a panel would look like, I proposed a list of senior scholars whose work the new scholarship was developing. You were at the top of both our lists: Repressed Spaces was one of the great inspirations for my dissertation, and The Road to Botany Bay was very important to Sandra’s.’ Jo Guldi, PhD Candidate, UC Berkeley, 19 June 2007)

2007 October 13-15, Keynote speaker, ‘Poetic Geographies: Community renewal in Northern Victoria, Australia,’ Naming places/Placing Names: International Workshop, East Carolina University, USA

2007 Keynote speaker, “‘Care at a Distance”: Affiliations to country in a global context,’ Landscapes and Learning Symposium, Monash University, Gippsland Campus, 14th August, 2007.

2007, Keynote speaker, ‘Re-cognising the land (to see anew),’ Imaging the Land International Research Institute, College of Fine Arts, UNSW, Fowler’s Gap, UNSW Arid Zone Research Station, September 2007

2007 January, Valuing Historic Environments Colloquium, Dept. of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, UK


2006, Invited Speaker, Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA, conference topic ‘The Future of Collecting’.

2006, Keynote Speaker, ‘Ground Figures, Underwriting the Law,’ Of the South, Socio-Legal Research Centre, Griffith University

2005, Visiting Scholar, Faculty of Humanities, UTS, conceptual design studio, ‘Circling the Square’.

c) Professional exchanges, presentations and reports

2007 ‘Adyar Poonga (Chennai), Creative Inceptions, Gregory Burgess Architects/Pitchandikulam Forest Consultants, Auroville, Tamil Nadu

2007, July, ‘Care at a Distance, Strategy for delivering the Moving Alice Ahead – Lifestyle, CBD Revitalisation project,’ 1-11. Client: Department of Planning and Infrastructure, NT

2007, March, ‘Care at a Distance’, 1-14. Client: Department of Planning and Infrastructure, NT


2006 ‘Collaborations with Time,’ briefing paper commissioned by Liverpool Capital of Culture, 1-11

2006, ‘The International with Walls,’ briefing paper commissioned by Liverpool Capital of Culture, 1-12

2006, ‘Alphabets: Expanding the Horizons of Partnership, recommendations for the public art program, Devil’s Glen, Co. Wicklow,’ Coillte/Irish Forestry Commission

d) Public presentations/installations/appearances


2007, Nearamnew at Federation Square 5 years on: brochure, light projection, text panels, DVD and panel appearance, October


2006 Keynote Speaker, ‘Giacometti and the Enigma of Meeting,’ Facing Giacometti Symposium, Art Gallery of New South Wales

2006, ‘Designs on Public Space’, 3 public lectures, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of melbourn, I, Golden Grove, II A Fissure in reality III Sugar
**D: DIRECTION**

The exponentially expanding scope of the work described in the previous sections is creating a web of connections, interests and opportunities that should be coordinated and managed. The main point of this final section is not to rehearse the various initiatives I have in train as an individual but to canvass a new relationship with the University that enables us to capitalise on the opportunities that now present themselves. The core of this new relationship is the proposal to create a Creative Research Incubator.

**BACKGROUND**

In terms of organisational logic, professional interest and research aspiration, the essential discovery of the last few years has been that a significant gap exists between the rhetoric of interdisciplinarity and its reality – institutionally, in the market-place and in the culture of research funding. This is not the place to attempt to define interdisciplinarity, or its related term ‘collaboration’, except to say that in practice it rarely translates into any significant reflection on the grounds of different disciplinary logics or into significantly innovative methods of formulating problems and investigating them. One reason for this is another gap: this time between the design-based disciplines and the interpretative disciplines, between those who seek to model, manipulate and change the world and those who specialise in critique, reflection and evaluation. Genuinely productive interdisciplinary research needs, as Paul Feyerabend put it, to reintegrate study and process.

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Thankyou for your wonderful contribution to the Cultural Landscapes symposium last July [2005] … The event itself provided a window on what the intellectual life can and should be for all of us … People could really see the value of ‘strongly’ interdisciplinary research, and that recognition will live with us into the future … I particularly enjoyed the challenge of running with the speed of your mind and the deep eloquence of your speech. It reminded me of the essential and exciting things in the literary formation that underlies your intellectual work and my own education. In the current university world it is too easy to drift into pragmatic activities and sensible solutions, and to dig the deep arts of reasoning intuition that lie at the root of the humanities. You called me, and I think others, back to the difficulties and joys of that mission. No-one left any of the sessions without having seriously confronted the question of why her or his project is important. It’s the Socratic call to the examined life, the only life worth living, that you voiced so valuably and persistently. (Letter, September 28 2005)
Dr. Robert Phidian, Director, Flinders Humanities Research Centre for Cultural Heritage and Cultural Exchange, The Flinders University of South Australia
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1 The term ‘multidisciplinary’ allows disciplines to exist in parallel, even when focused on the same problem; as a result, the disciplinary contribution to resolving complex real world issues remains methodologically unchallenged. The term ‘transdisciplinary’ simply shelves the problem of how different disciplines talk, and more importantly, work with one another. The preposition ‘inter’ has the advantage of locating the challenge of many-discipline-based methodologies in the way translations between different logical and classificatory systems negotiate their differences.
The Proposal

The interdisciplinary is a kind of philosophical ambit claim. It is all and nothing. To render it concrete, and to materialise its possibilities in ways where I have expertise, I am keen to propose the establishment of a Creative Research Incubator (CRI) at the University of Melbourne. Creative or practice-based research is a relative newcomer to the publicly-funded research arena, and has struggled to gain recognition (and resources) because it is methodologically under-theorised. In ameliorating this situation, my own practice and its documentation and generalisation in books and publications, is recognised as offering a research-competitive benchmark because of its cross-disciplinary reach, its breadth of historical and philosophical grounding and its fertility of material application.

Key features of the CRI are:
• The differentiation of the Intellectual Property content from the creative outcome
• The capacity to market the IP content in the public domain
• The capacity to value add the IP content through a strategically-designed research program
• The capacity to enlist philanthropic, industry and government support for IP rich interventions in the real world
• The capacity to act as a ‘think tank’ or incubator advising these bodies on public space design issues
• The use of ‘advance briefs’ to protect the integrity of the research program
• The commitment to a ‘recuperative’ epistemology of open process

*Locating Design brought together some 150 delegates from around the world [specialists in such topics as] cloth and identity, housing modernity, digital spaces, rethinking filmscape, graphic places … In the light of this interdisciplinarity, the keynote address delivered by Professor Paul Carter … was excellent in framing, and indeed in directing the vigorous discourse on design and place … Carter’s talk asked: what is the place of higher education? How is it designed? Carter explored these questions through a consideration of drawing the line (disegnare) and fixing the spot (locus) and problematised these practices when reconciling them with the impulses of capitalist democracy’s desire for public spaces and the curiosity said to be a prerequisite of educability …

Dipti Bhagat, Academic Convenor, Locating Design, Design History Society Conference, London Metropolitan University, 2005
**Indicative Projects**

**Care at a Distance, Alice Springs**

The NT Government’s ‘Moving Alice Ahead’ initiative (2007) has as one of its projects the ‘revitalisation’ of the CBD. Through Material Thinking, I successfully tendered to provide a design options framework guiding this process. In early 2007 a series of community workshops were held. These led to the first announcement of the ‘care at a distance’ concept and the proposal to replace a conventional masterplanning approach with one based on the recovery of storylines and the translation of these into a bottom-up program for the promotion of key renewals within the study area. In March 2008 the framework was commissioned and will be delivered later this year. The framework will identify five or six interconnected projects that can be budgeted and commissioned. One of these, ‘The Red Centre Way Visitors Centre’, has already been developed to design concept stage. Care at a Distance is a joint initiative of the NT Government, the Alice Springs Town Council and the Uniting Church Alice Springs; key stakeholders include Lhere Arterrpe, the Mbantua Estate owners, Desert park Alice Springs, the Desert Knowledge Precinct, and Alice Solar City.

**Turning Point, Point Nepean Quarantine Station, Victoria**

This outstanding site of cultural and environmental heritage is due to pass into the hands of the Victorian Government at the end of the year. The task is to mediate between the past character of the site and its future functions. This involves identifying the creative mechanisms, the drivers of regulating change, that have repeatedly renewed the ‘sense of place’ and identifying their analogs in the future program of the site. Commissioned to prepare a ‘visions’ for the site, our work is focused on the interstitial structure and everyday routines - the mobile, non-material aspects - of the site which conventional studies tend to ignore. Among the proposals that the vision will canvass is a threshold structure that will act as a portal to the Point Nepean national park and incorporate a public artwork that visualises climate change data collected at the adjacent National Centre for Coastlines and Climate. As with other projects, the power of mythopoetic narratives to bring places into being is harnessed to show how a flexible design can put in place an evolving program of activities that avoid the prescriptiveness all too often associated with masterplanning. Our client is the Point Nepean Community trust acting on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.
Hamlet’s Mill, Thames, London

Hamlet’s Mill is a public artwork proposed for the lower Thames adjacent to the Millennium Dome. Visualising climate change data in the form of electronic displays spectacularly embodied in giant ‘buoys’, the work gives symbolic expression to London’s desire to pioneer sustainable community in the context of accelerating climate change. Start-up capital has permitted partnerships with private and public institutions to commence with a view to developing the design concept. This project investigates ethical and aesthetic issues at the heart of the arts/science interface. It is also profoundly embedded in the mythopoetic history of London, where the turbulence of change has been and remains a potent source of both anxiety and innovation. A partnership between the University of Melbourne, the project designers, and key institutions (notably those forming the London Consortium) offers outstanding creative research opportunities. The initiative becomes a model for a new kind of public artwork that redefines the public realm as a place where the future is written differently.

Nearamnew/Fed Square, 5th Birthday

On the University’s own doorstep, federation Square management plans to make the stories informing the public artwork Nearamnew integral to its 5th Birthday celebrations. It commissions a new brochure, a temporary exhibition, a DVD and a light installation. It also convenes a public forum on the theme of ‘public place and placemaking’. Much of the research for Nearamnew occurred in the University, and the 5th Birthday represents an outstanding knowledge transfer opportunity. But it is more than this: the success of this initiative is planned to lead to a new commission called ‘Suspended Ground’. This new artwork will tie the Federation square project to other place-making projects which locate story-telling at the heart of sustainability. The development of an on-going partnership with Federation Square gives the University privileged to the most popular public space in Australia, and furnishes the basis of interdisciplinary studios that extend the cross-disciplinary techniques and perspectives embedded in the design and program of the site.
**Organisation**

In its minimalist form a Creative Research Incubator formalises what my research presently does in a way that allows the University’s research and teaching culture to contribute to it and benefit from it. In this minimalist form, it consists of a Research Director and a fulltime Research Assistant with a brief to initiate and coordinate an integrated group of projects across key faculties (The VCA, Arts and Architecture, Building and Planning, for example).

Within the (still broad) domain of creative research, its focus is on public space, its constitution theoretically, historically and practically (particularly through design). This brief is partly reactive – planning, managing and delivering research outcomes that originate outside the Incubator and partly pro-active – defining a set of research priorities and assembling the teams and the environments in which practice-based research can be resourced and its outcomes optimised. The advantage of this minimalist model is that it recognises the nature of my work, provides me with sorely needed human resources, and with a mandate to value-add the quality of the research program through an enlarged access to relevant expertise within and outside the University.
Towards the Business Plan

But, to meet its potential and genuinely incubate new research directions, I think a CRI needs to be more broadly based, enjoy a much higher profile within the University research canon. Only in this way can it successfully meet the challenge posed by practice-based research itself – by definition, situated, that is (and without compromising its independence) engaged with industry, astute about ‘real world’ problems and inherently attuned to the aspirations of the end-user, who, like the ‘client’, is always a community.

On a five year model, a CRI set up in this way would have the capacity to initiate and/or manage and/or complete 3 projects per year on average, adding up to approximately 15 projects over a five year period. Of these 3 would constitute major core projects (running up to 5 years), 6 would be 3 year projects and the balance would be made up of smaller, opportunistic projects.

Each of these projects, but especially the core ones, would be designed to become cost-neutral, but would require of the order of $50,000 to start up. This translates into an annual investment in the research program of $150,000, to which one permanent Post-Doctoral salary, and the costs of appropriate research assistance, would need to be added.

These figures are obviously notional at this stage, but they presuppose a business plan that at least doubles the financial resources thus made available through competitive grant tendering, industry investment and government sponsorship. It is understood that research staff associated with the CRI bring their salaries with them.

The allocation of these resources would be three way:

- towards funding travel and accommodation costs associated with establishing projects,
- towards studio, symposia and visiting experts’ costs,
- towards documentation and all communication costs.

1 The meaning of the ‘business plan’ in a university context is open to debate. The ‘client’ of a publicly funded university and its research is the ‘public’, and the publication of research is an end in itself. In the new hybridly-funded research environment, researchers are expected to value-add their research by attracting ‘end user’ investment in the outcomes. However, this shift towards industry-partnered or transparently goal-oriented research runs into conflict with core values of critical detachment unless the university can provide its own ‘venture capital’.
Resourcing Creative Research

To measure the ‘research income’ a CRI generates, it is necessary to understand how CR operates. Other forms of research study a problem and deliver outcomes in the form of reports. These reports influence policy, innovation etc. However, the university-based research stands apart from the implementation of its findings. In this research model, the University wins competitive funding that directly supports studios etc that allow the research program to unfold.

CR operates differently. Instead of posing theoretical questions and addressing them in the simulated environment of the university, it emerges in a symbiotic relationship with projects that are actually happening. These projects provide the ‘real world laboratories’ in which theories are tested, techniques developed and methodologies critiqued. These complex real world laboratories are already funded and provide an heuristic environment that ARC funding could never replicate.

Note that the creative relationship described here is also different from the relationship with the Industry Partner which Linkage Grants fosters. Even though Linkage Grants allow researchers to access professionals and to address real world situations and end user needs, they do not allow the researchers to implement their own findings, that is, to materialise their own visions. Yet without the materialisation of the thinking creative research cannot test its own process.

How, then, is CR income to be measured in a way that properly represents its value to the University. For example, a place-making project at the University of Sydney in which I play a leading creative role, has a budget of $2 million. This creative research project (‘Golden Grove’) has already helped us win an ARC Discovery Grant. The winning of this ARC depends on the fact that I have already made this project available for creative research purposes. Evidently, $2 million, or even a small portion of it, is not going to come to the university, yet the University derives, or could derive, immense benefit from its expenditure.

This is only one example but it illustrates the accounting conundrum that CR presents. If, as the University’s own internal review of its Linkage Grant performance recognises, we need to improve our responsiveness to real world problems and end user needs, then the CR model presented here is exemplary. While flowing from the unique expertise incubated within the CRI, its research is situated and leads to material outcomes. To support it is simply to value-add what already exists. But to make this commitment means in the first place recognising the value in kind to the University of what is already invested in the projects.
Resourcing Options

A) Future Generation Professorship

The minimalist model of the CRI outlined above requires the Director to be able to broker research projects between and across a minimum of three faculties within the University. It expects the Director to generate ARC income as well as external income through ‘end user’ oriented projects. These requirements conform to those prescribed for the appointment of Future Generation Professors.

B) Federation Fellowship

Excluding the Director’s salary the CRI has annual staff costs of approximately $100,000. The annual ‘start up’ cost of projects incubated within the CRI is estimated at $150,000. The ARC contribution of $250,000 per annum to the costs of resourcing Federation Fellowship research programs dovetails with these estimates.

C) Value-adding the value-adding

Obviously, the proposed CRI does not emerge in a vacuum. Other, related initiatives include the proposal to develop a Melbourne Consortium (on the model of the London Consortium and the proposal (within the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning) to resource a UNESCO Observatory.

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