

THE ISLAND AS A MODEL FOR THE INTERPRETATION AND
DEVELOPMENT OF EXHIBITIONS OF CONTEMPORARY ART
BEYOND A GALLERY SETTING

LAURA MANSFIELD

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
the Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

MIRIAD, Manchester Metropolitan University April 2016.

ABSTRACT

The written thesis is presented in conjunction with a documented body of curatorial practice that together seek to examine and develop a proposed notion of 'the island' as a conceptual model for the staging and analysis of exhibitions of art beyond a gallery setting. The initial conception of 'the island' as model follows from a discussion of the function of the setting of islands in literature that identifies and abstracts their unique spatial and structural properties before reapplying them in a different context. On both a practical and discursive level, the ensuing research arrives at a thesis that puts forward the island model as an innovative and productive tool for contemporary curatorial practice.

The initial research presents the literary island as a contained site where subversive, fantastical or critical alternatives to a dominant norm are enacted. Appearing unexpectedly through the event of storm, shipwreck or loss at sea, the literary island interrupts the intended trajectory of the castaway who finds himself severed from the customs and routines associated with a homeland. In doing so, the setting of the island in literature often comes to figure as a test-site for new possibilities upon which a blurring between the real and the imaginary readily occurs. Retaining the identified properties of the literary island but divorcing it from its geographical setting, the proposed notion of the island as curatorial model conceives a space located within, yet always at the slightest remove from, the everyday itself – disrupting the familiar to facilitate a playful or subversive alternative to the status quo. Here, the structural effect of the island no longer depends on its physical distance to a 'mainland', but describes a spatial practice that facilitates a process of distancing from familiar norms.

Occurring outside of the confines of a gallery, the presented curatorial practice stages artworks that are physically situated within a given location whilst simultaneously providing an experience of the virtual possibilities for its transformation. In so doing, the thesis argues, these and similar artworks invite a re-imagination of familiar and everyday culture by blurring the distinction between the real and the imaginary in a manner that reflects - and can thus be productively modelled upon - the function of the literary island. In proposing an alternative strategy for the discussion and development of curatorial practices beyond the gallery, as well as putting into play a new mode of analysis and an innovative space of discourse, the thesis presents an original framework for contemporary curatorial practice.

LIST OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I. THE UNIQUE APPEAL OF THE ISLAND	.....11
II. APPROACHING THE LITERARY ISLAND AS A CURATORIAL MODEL	.....19
III. A SERIES OF CURATED PROJECTS.	.....29
IV. THE RESEARCH DISCUSSION.	.....33

CHAPTER I. ENCOUNTERING THE ISLAND

I.I MOVING FROM OCEAN TO ISLAND	.....43
I.II FOOTSTEPS IN THE SAND	.....59

CHAPTER II. TRACING THE BORDER OF THE SHORE

II.I HIGH AND LOW TIDE. ENCOUNTERING A SHIFTING SHORELINE	.....69
II.II THE STORY OF THE SHORELINE. THE EVENT OF THE ISLAND	.....81

CHAPTER III. THE ISLAND AS AN UNCERTAIN STAGE

CHAPTER IV. ISLANDS IN THE EVERYDAY

IV.I A DISTANT EDGE? BRINGING THE ISLAND INTO THE EVERYDAY	.....119
IV.II REFRAMING THE EVERYDAY, AN 'ERUPTION OF CONTRADICTION IN THE REAL'	.....133

CONCLUSION

.....15151

BIBLIOGRAPHY

.....159

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG. 1. View of the The Brough of Birsay from mainland Orkney at high tide, 21 st April 2012.	.....44
FIG. 2. Installation view of Triptych with works by Aliyah Hussain, 13 July 2012.	.....44
FIG. 3. Audience upon and beside the <i>Triptych</i> structure viewing works by Madeline Hall, 13 July 2012.	.....46
FIG. 4. Audience of 59.14 N 3.34 W upon the Brough of Birsay viewing Franziska Lantz's performance, 21 April 2012.	.....50
FIG. 5. Audience of 59.14 N 3.34 W walking towards the Brough of Birsay, 21 April 2012.	.....54
FIG. 6. Alan Kaprow <i>18 Happenings in 6 Parts</i> , Reuben Gallery, New York 1959.	.....70
FIG. 7. S.A.Y.D.A.N.C.E Franziksa Lantz, performance as part of Seven Sites, Lowry Outlet Mall Salford, 24 September 2011.	.....78
FIG. 8. Computer desktop showing Elisabeth Molin's film <i>Fish</i> (2011) as part of a <i>Pala</i> broadcast, June 2014.	.....82
FIG. 9. Stills from artists' works broadcast as part of <i>Pala</i> David Cochrane <i>If I could see you now</i> , 2009. Piotr Krzymowski <i>73</i> , 2012. David Wojtycz, <i>PHILIP</i> , 2014.	.....84
FIG. 10. Heather and Ivan Morison <i>I lost her near Fantasy Island.</i> <i>Life will not be the same</i> , Bristol, 14 July 2006.	.....88
FIG. 11. Passerby holding a bunch of flowers from, Heather and Ivan Morison <i>I lost her near Fantasy Island. Life will</i> <i>not be the same</i> , Bristol, 14 July 2006.	.....90
FIG. 12. Fort <i>The Golden Rule</i> , Galerie Lena Brüning, Berlin, 4 June 2010.	.....100
FIG. 13. Tim Etchells and Hugo Glendinning <i>Centre Point London</i> from the series <i>Empty Stages</i> , 2003-12.	.....102

FIG. 14. Tim Etchells and Hugo Glendinning <i>Highgate Wood School</i> <i>London</i> from the series <i>Empty Stages</i> , 2003-12.	.....102
FIG. 15. Edwina Ashton <i>Seven Sites</i> project launch, Cannon Hussey House, Salford, 14 August 2011.	.....104
FIG. 16. Tino Seghal <i>These Associations</i> Tate Modern, London, 2012.	.....112
FIG. 17. Stephen Willats <i>The Lurky Place</i> , published by Lisson Gallery, London, 1978.	.....122
FIG. 18. Stephen Willats <i>The Lurky Place</i> , published by Lisson Gallery, London, 1978.	.....124
FIG. 19. S.A.Y.D.A.N.C.E Franziksa Lantz, performance as part of <i>Seven Sites</i> , Lowry Outlet Mall Salford, 24 September 2011.	.....128
FIG. 20. Edwina Ashton <i>Seven Sites</i> project launch, Cannon Hussey House, Salford, 14 August 2011.	.....130
FIG. 21. <i>International Exposition of Surrealism</i> , Paris, 1938. André Breton <i>Chest with Legs</i> and Sonia Mossé <i>Altered Mannequin</i>.	.....136
FIG. 22. David Wojtowycz, <i>Good Girl</i> , 2013. Film shown in <i>Cacotopia</i> , International Anthony Burgess Foundation, May 2013.	.....142
FIG. 23. Elisabeth Molin, <i>Suspension</i> , 2012. Film shown in <i>Cacotopia</i> , International Anthony Burgess Foundation, May 2013.	.....144

INTRODUCTION

I. THE UNIQUE APPEAL OF THE ISLAND

Dreaming of islands – whether with joy or in fear, it doesn't matter – is dreaming of pulling away, of being separate, far from any continent, of being lost and alone – or is it dreaming of starting from scratch, recreating, beginning anew.¹

(Gilles Deleuze *Desert Islands*, 1974)

The remote or desert island has a captivating appeal. Resonating as a site of isolation, experimentation, play and critique, islands permeate popular culture from the weekly Desert Island Discs radio show², to the cult following of the American TV series *Lost*.³ The remote island is furthermore a recurring setting for narrative fictions from Greek epics such as *Odyssey*, in which the hero sails between different island worlds, shipwrecked on a myriad of fantastical lands, to the literature of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1791), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) and Aldous Huxley's *Island* (1962).

The enduring appeal of the island can be seen to be intricately linked to its geographical position at a distance – bounded by a vast expanse of ocean it is a self-contained site disconnected from the familiarity of the continental mainland. The separate and enclosed area of land presents a seemingly controlled environment upon which critical, subversive or fantastical alternatives to the dominant norms of a mainland can be played out, tested or lived. In the 2009 publication *Islands and the Modernists* Jill Franks notes that,

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands: and Other Texts 1953-1974*. (London: Semiotext(e) / Foreign Agents 2004), 10.

² *Desert Island Discs* was created by Roy Plomley in 1942. A guest is invited by the presenter Kirsty Young to choose the eight records they would take with them to a desert island

³ *Lost* is an American television drama series that aired from September 2004 until May 2010. Written by Jeffrey Lieber, J. J. Abrams and Damon Lindelof the series follows the survivors of the crash of a commercial passenger jet flying between Sydney and Los Angeles, on a tropical island somewhere in the South Pacific Ocean.

Islands exert a unique appeal because they are contained spaces, and therefore, theoretically at least, controllable... The Human psyche projects its desires as well as its hostility on islands.⁴

The self-contained area of land is a space of invitation, inviting an imagining of the potential actions that could occur upon its shore. As a site that invites a projection of narrative and imagery, the literary island can be considered akin to a stage, an empty space upon which imaginary scenarios unfold. The island is an intangible site that becomes a concrete space through the accumulation of props and characters that inform and enable specific narrative trajectories. It is further worth noting that within the majority of island fictions either a lone individual, or a handful of individuals play out the evolving narrative upon the relatively contained stage of the island.

As a site constructed through imaginary scenarios and fictional narratives, the island often features in children's games, where it resonates as a place of exploration and adventure at a remove from the constraints of the everyday. Similarly, in the context of children's literature, J.M Barrie's story of *Peter Pan* presents Neverland as both a physical reality and a make believe world at home in children's play

Of all the delectable islands the Neverland is the snuggest and most compact, not large and sprawly, you know, with tedious distances between one adventure and another, but nicely crammed. When you play at it by day with the chairs and tablecloth, it is not in the least alarming, but in the two minutes before you go to sleep it becomes very nearly real.⁵

Here the physical properties of a geographical island, removed from the everyday function as an ideal space for the imagination in both active play and the drift of daydreams.

In its appeal to children's imaginary, the island can further be utilised as a unique tool for learning. Indeed, within the Montessori teaching exercise *The Imaginary*

⁴ Jill Franks, *Islands and The Modernists. The Allure of Isolation in Art, Literature and Science*. (Carolina and London: McFarland & Company 2006), 7.

⁵ J.M Barrie, *Peter Pan & Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. (London: Wordsworth Classics 2007), 14.

Island Project,⁶ the construction of a model island is used to aid children's understanding of natural history and geography. In the Montessori curriculum the learning environment is peppered with materials to initiate self-directed development. A series of props, toys and visual cards are used as a means to introduce young children to aspects of geography and wildlife. Children construct models of islands out of clay on Sand and Water tables, adding different features such as hills, animals and vegetation as a method of learning their structure and vocabulary as well as presenting a site for, more or less, imaginary play, describing the fictional inhabitants of the constructed isle and their imagined activities. As the child progresses they are introduced to more features of physical geography such as river deltas, marshlands, tributaries, archipelagos, and lagoons as well as elements of human geography including social and economic infrastructures. The use of the island throughout the curriculum portrays natural and human environments as being fundamentally constructed bringing to the fore questions over the role of individual agency to change, shift or modify a given context. A question of agency that further reflects the possibilities to subvert, critique or re-imagine the status quo as has been identified in my reading of island narratives.

Returning to literature, the geographical nature of the island consistently seems to inform its function in fiction. In the article 'Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability' Stephanos Stephanides and Susan Bassnett note,

The topos of the island explores and creates bridges between the real and the imaginary.⁷

Located at a distance, or at a remove from a continental mainland the island invites and enables alternative perspectives, behaviours and actions to come to the fore.

⁶ *The Imaginary Island Project* was introduced to the Montessori community in the 1980s by Harvey Hallenberg through the Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies in Silver Spring, Maryland see Donna Seldin and Tim Seldin, *The World In The Palm of Her Hand: The Montessori Approach to Geography and History for the Young Child*. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press 1985).

⁷ Stephanos Stephanides and Susan Bassnett, 'Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability' *Transtext(e)s Transcultures. Journal of Global Cultural Studies* 01 (2008): 3, accessed October 2012 <http://transtexts.revues.org/212>.

Indeed, the island is a recurring setting for narratives that explore and experiment with potential alternatives, for better or for worse, to the status quo, which are safely and compactly contained on an imagined remote and isolated shore. Thomas More's political fiction *Utopia* (1516) presented an ideal island nation, Aldous Huxley's fictional *Island* (1967) explored an alternative society founded upon open relationships, meditative healing practices and hallucinogenic drugs. Raymond F. Jones' 1952 novel *This Island Earth*, John Wyndham's 1979 *The Web*, Christopher Priest's 1972 *Fugue for a Darkening Island* and J. G. Ballard's 1974 *Concrete Island* each utilised the remote island as a backdrop for narrative explorations of either dystopian versions of the present or future worlds.

As a site of the 'other' or 'outside' of a familiar mainland, the island, whether real or imagined, has further been a dominant locus of colonial expansion and exploitation. At a distance and in the margins, the island has been presented as both a virtual habitat for the romantic ideal of a new culture and climate, as well as a physical site open to experimentation where political, fantastical and social alternatives to the dominant cultural mainstream could be explored and as such, the site of the island and its accompanying culture could be correspondingly exploited. Indeed,

Islands became the loci of imagination, desire, hopes and fears malleable moulds into which cosmographers and cartographers could pour both art and science, material spaces which the merchant venturer, pirate, colonist and governor could penetrate and exploit.⁸

By the end of the 15th Century, Europe's development of trade routes to the Americas and Indies brought with it the discovery of a great number of islands. British territories included the Cook Islands, the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, the Bahamas and the Seychelles to name but a few. This era of exploration resulted in an encounter with new cultures, species and climates and fuelled within the margins of Western society a romanticized construct of the island and its

⁸ Denis Cosgrove, 'Review of *Islands of the Mind: How the Human Imagination Created the Atlantic World*, by J. R. Gillis' *Geografiska Annaler, Series B: Human Geography* 87 (2005): 302.

inhabitants as cultural 'others'.⁹ Although not a primary focus of the research project, it seems nevertheless important to at least acknowledge here the role of 'the island' – both real and imagined - within the troubled history of European colonialism. Furthermore, any discussion of the island as a site in the margin or periphery invokes the rhetoric of postcolonial discourses that have sought to grapple with the aftermath of processes of colonization and decolonisation. In his 1974 publication *The Colonizer and the Colonized*¹⁰ Albert Memmi discusses the relationship between the centre and periphery in relation to the text's title. Theorists Homi Bhabha and Edward Said have described the importance of the binary relationship between centre and periphery in relation to creating and maintaining a colonial power structure, as well as the fragility of the dichotomy such a structure involves.¹¹ The allure of the island in the western psyche seems to rest upon the site being uninhabited, the inhabitant is the 'castaway' of the centre, throwing up questions over the island in postcolonial discourses where a blinding to or repression of, the possibility for the island to be inhabited, a 'percepticide'¹² of the indigenous population seems to occur.

Within literary fictions, the remote and isolated island seems to maintain its unique appeal as a setting for imaginary alternatives as long as it remains separate from a given mainland. Once an island is inscribed cartographically (mapped, explored,

⁹ Here a notion of the island as a cultural 'other' further references a discussion of exoticism. The exotic presents the island as a space, at a physical distance to western cultural and climates and a psychological construct of the alluring 'other' associated with fantasies of opulence. See Victor Segalen, *Essay on Exoticism: An Aesthetics of Diversity*. (Durham North Carolina: Duke University Press 2002).

¹⁰ Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd 2003).

¹¹ See Edward Said, *Orientalism*. (London: Vintage 1979), Homi Bhabha, 'The Other Question . . . Homi K. Bhabha Reconsiders the Stereotype and Colonial Discourse' *Screen* 24.6 (2005): 18-36 and Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*. (London and New York: Routledge 1990).

¹² In her 2003 publication *The Archive and The Repertoire* Diana Taylor refers to such repression as 'percepticide'. She notes such a framework 'allows for occlusions, by positioning our perspective, it promotes certain views while helping to disappear others (...) for example, we might be encouraged to overlook the displacement and disappearance of native peoples'. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and The Repertoire*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press 2003), 28.

charted out, colonized, appropriated), it is included in the horizon of continental tradition and becomes attached to the mainland by symbolic and physical bridges, including the military dimensions of conquest. The latter, for instance, is described in Aldous Huxley's novel *Island*, in which an ideal island society comes to an end with the unexpected arrival of military tanks from the neighbouring mainland, breaking the utopian isolation of the island nation. Only by maintaining an illusive position, uncharted and unmapped, may the island continue to hold its power over the imagination.

The appeal of the uncharted island to the imaginary is perhaps best embodied by Thomas More's *Utopia*.¹³ Taking the Greek 'uo' meaning *no* or *not* and *topos* meaning place, utopia translates to no-place, a place imagined but not realized, a place that has the potential to exist but is not yet found or discovered¹⁴. More's ideal island is a site imagined, at times promised, but never fully within grasp. The virtuality of the island as foregrounded by More presents something of its enduring appeal. Once tangible, realised and actualised the island loses its appeal for the imagination. Indeed, throughout his lifetime, D.H Lawrence envisioned a small, working community that would come together on an island known as Rananim. In her studies of modernist fiction Jill Franks notes that for Lawrence, islands presented,

A mental space in which to dream of a utopia far from the constructs of modernity'.¹⁵

To actualise Rananim, Lawrence came to realize, would be to undermine the strength of its imaginary construct. As such Lawrence's ideal island remained a

¹³ Thomas More's *Utopia* was a work of fiction and a political philosophy. The book describes a fictional island society and its religious, social and political customs. Extracts from the book are available to read via the British Library catalogue. Accessed October 2011

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/utopia/more1/island1/island.html>

¹⁴ Ernst Bloch evocatively notes 'the island utopia arises out of the sea of the possible.' See Theodore Adorno and Ernst Bloch 'Something's Missing' in *Utopia* ed. by Richard Noble, 49-55. (London: Whitechapel, 2009), 50.

¹⁵ Franks, *Islands and The Modernists*, 106-7.

virtual model, a stage with constantly shifting locations, participants, narratives and represented ideals.¹⁶

Maintaining and cultivating its virtual nature, a number of literary narratives present the island as a site accidentally discovered. Uncharted and unmapped, the island unexpectedly emerges, interrupting a pre-planned sea voyage, if not a certain preconceived view of the world. Previously undiscovered, the new and unknown site begins to offer itself as a blank canvas for an author, as a site upon which the familiar structures of a mainland are to be thrown into disarray. In his essay *On The Monstrosity of Islands*, Graham Burnett highlights the role of the island as a setting for literatures of betrayal, solitude, madness, and despair. For Burnett, the island 'is a bit of earth that has broken faith with the terrestrial world'.¹⁷ Removed from the security and familiarity of a mainland, the island becomes a setting for both utopian and dystopian visions of the world. Here, extra-terrestrial alternatives to the status quo play themselves out, fantastical or subversive scenarios come to the fore. In doing so, the setting of the literary island begins to facilitate a productive blurring of distinctions between the real and the imaginary.

¹⁶ Ibid, 106-7.

¹⁷ Graham D. Burnett, 'On The Monstrosity of Islands' *Cabinet* 38 (2010): 91.

II. APPROACHING THE LITERARY ISLAND AS A CURATORIAL MODEL.

In her discussion of the nature of curatorial practice, Ine Gevers suggests that,

Curating is a practice that permits the creation of different interpretative contexts, embracing different political, social and psychological positions, theories and ideologies, at the same time as making critical connections between them. To put it more simply, it is about opening up 'spaces', within which different discourses can be brought into relationship with one another, 'spaces of transformation'.¹⁸

On this account, curatorial practice as a staging of critical relations is by itself intricately bound up with research. Here, research concerns itself with the different discourses and their relational potential in specific contextual frameworks. The contextual aspect of curatorial research is furthermore heightened when working with specific sites, contexts and communities, where it becomes central to devising curatorial projects that are sensitive to their singularities. My own curatorial practice has been largely informed by research in both of these senses. In undertaking the PhD project, however, the role of research within my curatorial practice has shifted, from context-specific considerations of diverse discourses coming together in a single context, to a discussion of the island as an overarching model for the development of exhibitions of art beyond a gallery setting - a model that it has been possible to be put to the test in a series of curated projects in diverse contextual circumstances. Furthermore, the manner of the analysis of more or less overarching curatorial strategies for exhibitions beyond the gallery setting is itself pursued in a curatorial mode. The ensuing discussion of curating brings together, in a meta-curatorial fashion, different disciplinary objects, fields and discourses in order to provide a 'space of transformation', within which they can be brought into relationship with one another. More specifically, it is the relational combination of curatorial, literary, art historical and geographical discourses that is put to work. Finally, by drawing out the connections between these diverse discourses and the curated practical projects, the following thesis weaves practice and written argument to create a third 'space' of their interrelation.

¹⁸ Ine Gever, *Curating: the art of creating contexts. Conversation Pieces*. (Maastricht: Jan Van Eyck Akademie 1995), 41-2.

In weaving together a diverse range of references and disciplines Jane Rendell's notion of a 'diagonal axis' has been of further interest.¹⁹ Drawing upon the work of Julia Kristeva, Rendell adopts the term to invoke a method of working that cuts across and through different disciplines providing an energy, dynamism and point of connection between diverse subject matter.²⁰ Rendell's discussion has led to my own adoption of an 'informed interdisciplinarity' throughout both the practical projects and the written thesis. In both aspects of the research I have drawn together a range of sources in an effort to highlight a series of shared conceptual concerns, as well as note the often contradictory problematics. In her writing on interdisciplinarity²¹ Lisa Lattuca suggests using the term 'informed interdisciplinarity' to discuss certain theoretical practices. For Lattuca, 'informed interdisciplinarity' consists of disciplinary research that reaches out occasionally to other fields, borrowing 'methods, theories, concepts, or other disciplinary components' in order to address questions that are nonetheless native to the scholar's home discipline. Informed disciplinary research 'may be liberally sprinkled with examples from other disciplines', but, says Lattuca, 'these examples are not central.' Informed disciplinary research tends to be 'limited to borrowing of disciplinary methods'. Resting between and simultaneously embodying different disciplines, the ensuing discussion of the literary island draws upon aspects and arguments of various disciplines - spatial practice, geography, literature and curatorial discourse- without placing itself exclusively within one arena. To position myself both within and across, as well as in-between the confines of a single

¹⁹ Jane Rendell, 'Critical Spatial Practice' in *Art Incorporated*. (Denmark: Kunstmuseet Koge Skitsesamling 2008), accessed July 2014 <http://www.janerendell.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Curating-Editing-Writing-....pdf>. See also Julia Kristeva, 'Institutional Interdisciplinarity in Theory and Practice: an interview' in *The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity, De-, Dis-, Ex-*, ed. by Alex Coles and Alexia Defert (London: Blackdog Publishing 1997) 3-21.

²⁰ In particular Rendell's, publications *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*. (London: IB Tauris 2006) and *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*. (London: IB Tauris 2010).

²¹ Lisa Lattuca, 'Creating Interdisciplinarity: Grounded Definitions from College and University Faculty' *History of Intellectual Culture, FREE SPACE: Reconsidering Interdisciplinary Theory and Practice* 3 (2003): 1-20, accessed January 2015 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/hic/>

discipline, attempts to carve out a third space of analysis that reflects the uncertain spatio-temporality and relative intangibility of the site of the island the ensuing discussion seeks to discern.

In attempting to define the conceptual and structural characteristics of the literary island and re-apply these features to a discussion of contemporary art curating outside a gallery context the resulting argument presents a comparative analysis. Despite the relatively fluid and expansive notion of the island that is presented through an informed interdisciplinary framework throughout the research discussion there are, nevertheless, three key areas that ground my writing and practice within distinct theoretical discussions.

1. A discussion of spatial practice in the work of Michel de Certeau, Elizabeth Grosz and Michel Foucault.
2. An adoption of curatorial discourses that look at possibilities for the productive experience of instability and uncertainty in an audience's engagement with a given work.
3. A consistent use of literature as both an analytical tool and a source for the development of curatorial projects.

Spatial practice

When discussing the interrelation between the spatial properties of geographical islands and their structural or poetic function as a setting in literary fiction, as well as the relevance of the latter for experiments in contemporary art curating, spatial discourses in the work of Michel de Certeau, Elizabeth Grosz and Michel Foucault provide a framework for both the analysis of island literature as well as its application in devised curatorial projects. Paying particular attention to the role and manifestation of boundaries, i.e between the island and the mainland, the situated work and its surrounding context, in both island fictions and curatorial practices beyond the gallery setting, I draw upon Grosz's discussion of boundaries. For Grosz the bounded experience of inside and outside only occurs by the movement of an individual as they trace a journey between spatial states. Similarly it is only with the

arrival of a character upon the shoreline of the island that the previously remote and distant site is brought into a tangible present.

Sharing Grosz's emphasis on movement as a factor that defines shifts in spatiality, Michel de Certeau²² proposes the different movements, velocities and interactions that occur within the fixed parameters of a place result in the site becoming an active and engaged 'space'. For de Certeau, space is conceptualised as the activation of fixed elements within a place by the body of an individual user.²³ The focus on use and individual agency in the activation of space is echoed in both island narratives and situated works of art. Within island literature the space of the island emerges with the movements of a central character. Similarly, a focus on '(mis) directing' the movement of an audience in certain situated curatorial projects actively informs the experience of the work and its given context. In her discussion of the work of artists group Oda Projesi²⁴, curator Maria Lind invokes de Certeau's concept of space. For Lind, de Certeau's insistence on space being activated and actuated by the interaction of an individual is echoed within the work of the artists group. Between 2000 and 2004 Oda Projesi occupied a flat within the Galata neighbourhood of Budapest inviting the local community to use the space. As such the flat became informed and influenced by the activities individuals brought to bare within its four walls. With the physical interaction of an individual a shift occurs from the role of the audience as distanced and passive observer to active participant, physically engaged in the evolving development of the artwork.

Curatorial discourse

Throughout the research discussion a number of curatorial projects have been devised that put to the test and reflect upon the development of the proposed island model. In devising the curated projects discourses around the staging of

²² Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles California 1988), 98.

²³ *Ibid.*, 98.

²⁴ Maria Lind, 'Actualisation of Space: The Case of Oda Projesi' in *Contemporary Art. From Studio to Situation* ed. by Claire Doherty. (London: Black Dog Publishing 2004), 109-122.

situated and participatory arts practices as well as examples of other artworks and projects, inform both the practice and the accompanying analysis. The work of Oda Projesi in particular is employed as an example of the use of the social as an active arena for the development and staging of artworks, presenting a move from the institutional context of a gallery setting into that of the everyday.

The social as a site for arts practice has formed a central discussion in curatorial discourses, most notably, Nicholas Bourriaud's influential publication *Relational Aesthetics*.²⁵ Within the publication Bourriaud defines relational art practices as using mechanisms of sociability that are present within the everyday to create new temporal spaces and communities, defining 'relational art' to be

An art that takes as its theoretical horizon the sphere of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an autonomous and private symbolic space.²⁶

However, for contemporary curators such as Joanna Wasza,²⁷ co-curator of the 7th Berlin Biennial which took the title *Forget Fear*, Bourriaud's influence has rested on the social being a friendly and pleasurable encounter rather than a site of disruption and discord.²⁸ The use of the social as an arena for the development and production of artworks that ignite experiences of discomfort and uncertainty has

²⁵ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*. trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland. (France: Les Presse Du Reel 1998).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁷ Joanna Wasza is founder and director of Laura Palmer Foundation. A visual art organization that operates on the verge of fiction and reality. Borrowing its name from the character whose central absence organizes the action of David Lynch's TV series *Twin Peaks*, the title is a means to initiate projects that examine social and political agendas, conceptual exhibitions, participation events, staged situations and performances. Through developing projects that incorporate real life and everyday workings of the city and fictitious or staged events, the Laura Palmer Foundation's premise is to examine formats of curating, art and activist practice.

²⁸ See also Markus Meissen, *The Nightmare of Participation*. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010) and Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. (London: Verso 2012). The recent publications explore the notion of the social as a site of discordance, the participatory artwork introducing problems over the willingness and complicity of the participants in the development and final interpretation of the work.

been further discussed by Amelia Jones. In her essay *Performance: Time, Space and Cultural 'Value'*²⁹ Jones references the work of Suzanne Lacy to present the possibility for performative situations within a social sphere to elicit new modes of interaction. Working in the late 1960s onwards, Lacy developed performative situations that activated individuals in relation to other subjects in order to create new modes of embodiment and new public spheres, developing her performance based works with a political impetus to shift social meanings. In taking Lacy's approach of producing situations that create a new mode of embodiment removed from the surrounding social sphere, the performative and site-based artwork can be seen to produce unique sites of activity where expected and established rituals of behaviour and patterns of viewing are suspended and put into question. For Jones, the performing of works that create unique sites of encounter in public contexts further elicit a mode of discomfort in their removal from familiar modes of inhabiting the given locale³⁰.

Drawing upon the curatorial projects *One Day Sculpture*³¹ by Litmus Research Initiative and Claire Doherty, as well as large scale installations by artists Heather and Ivan Morrison, the curatorial projects devised as part of the presented research have sought to stage momentary encounters that destabilised the expected behaviours of the surrounding social environment, presenting possibilities for uncertain and uncomfortable engagements with a given work. Within the curatorial projects *Seven Sites* and *Pala*, an emphasis on possibilities for interrupting and disrupting a familiar environment served as a means to facilitate unexpected and uncertain interactions with an audience. Here, a discussion of Bourriaud informs my

²⁹ Amelia Jones, 'Performance: Time, Space and Cultural 'Value'' in *One Day Sculpture* ed. by David Cross and Claire Doherty, 31-38. (Germany: Kerber Verlag Bielefeld, 2009).

³⁰ Ibid., 33-34.

³¹ *One Day Sculpture* was a series of temporary public artworks occurring in different locations across New Zealand. Twenty four artists were invited to produce new works that occurred for a period of 24-hours. The resulting works were staged over the course of one year. The project was led by *Litmus Research Initiative* at Massey University Wellington and UK curator Claire Doherty. See website www.onedaysculpture.org.nz

curatorial method, seeking to present sites of engagement, encounter and tension that mirror the place of the island in literary narratives as a site of unexpected dislocation and contained experiment within a time and space severed from the expected and pre-planned trajectories of the everyday.

My use of relational discourses and their critique returns to an informed interdisciplinary focus within the research project. The 2012 curatorial symposium *Imagining the Audience*³² saw curator and academic Paul O'Neill discuss the notion of a 'curatorial constellation'. Curatorial constellations resist the strict and often hierarchical distinctions between artist, curator and gallery as well as productively undermine the autonomy of each in an effort to enable differences and foreground multiplicities. O'Neill referenced Bruno Latour's notion of cohabitational time, itself drawing upon Deleuzian thought, as a frame through which a non-hierarchical practice founded on multiplicities can function.³³ Within each curated project developed as part of the research thesis, I have taken a role as both mediator and collaborator, working with the invited artists to stage their work in a manner that extended, and introduced new facets to their existing practice. I have further acted as provocateur, inviting a continual questioning of both the artists work and my own curatorial framework. Here, distinctions between the differing categories of artist, curator and space became a series of fluid, intersecting and often discordant relations, that draw upon elements of the performative and relational to create new sites or 'third spaces' of encounter and discourse.

Literature

Finally, throughout the research discussion literature has been both a tool for analysis and a material that has informed my development of practical projects.³⁴

³² *Imagining the Audience*, Two-day Seminar by MAP, BIO Rio, Stockholm, Sweden, October 25-26, 2012). See also <http://blog.frieze.com/imagining-the-audience-a-two-day-seminar-in-stockholm/> accessed December 2012.

³³ See also Claire Doherty and Paul O'Neill ed., *Locating the Producers. Durational Approaches to Public Art*. (Amsterdam: Valiz 2012).

³⁴ As outlined earlier, the key texts within this body of literature and those that will be referenced throughout the discussion are: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*

Pala takes its title from the nation in Aldous Huxley's *Island* and the exhibition *Cacotopia* drew upon the literature of Anthony Burgess and his use of the term to connote a deep and resonant uncertainty within a contemporary everyday. Invoking literary references has served as a means to mark both projects as resting within a fictional realm, introducing a fluidity between the concrete real and the literary imaginary that a discussion of the island embodies.

Such a use of literature draws upon precedents in contemporary practice. In a foreword to *The Mattering of Matter. Documents from the archive of the International Necronautical Society* by Tom McCarthy and Simon Critchley, Nicholas Bourriaud presents a discussion of fiction within artistic practice, commenting that fiction is employed as a medium through which artists and writers 'make contact with the real'.³⁵ For Bourriaud, fiction presents,

The will not to depend on a social context for the development of contemporary work, and as a consequence the power (among other things) to generate forms in a constructed space and time.³⁶

As a basis for the development of a curatorial project/theme a use of literature presents a means to construct an alternative 'space' within which the installed works are encountered by an audience. This other space of interaction seeks to recall that of the literary island. Furthermore, an analysis of the literary island in relation to exhibitions and installations of art beyond a gallery setting, introduces an underlying discussion on the possibility of utilising aspects of a literary discipline as a frame for interpretation and a research tool for the development and staging of exhibition concepts.

Throughout my written analysis and devised curatorial projects, the overarching theme of the island has provided a framework within which I have drawn on

(1791), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) and Aldous Huxley's *Island* (1962).

³⁵ Nicolas Bourriaud, 'Foreword' to *The Mattering of Matter. Documents from the archive of the International Necronautical Society* by Tom McCarthy and Simon Critchley. (London: Sternberg Press 2012) 46.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

different disciplines to present associations and echoes of the island in contemporary exhibitions, installations, and event-based practices. Although such echoes can, at times, perhaps seem tenuous, in presenting an expansive series of associations between; spatial practices, curatorial discourses, and literary references, the project nevertheless productively seeks to overcome disciplinary boundaries in order to introduce new possibilities for analysis.

III. A SERIES OF CURATED PROJECTS.

The following projects were devised in an effort to explore the potential for 'the island' to be a model for the interpretation and development of exhibitions of contemporary art beyond a traditional gallery setting. The projects occurred between August 2011 and July 2015. The accompanying booklet of documentation presents a comprehensive series of images of each of the individual projects. The booklet is to be read in conjunction with the written thesis. The order in which the practical projects appear in both the booklet of documentation and the written thesis reflects the general trajectory of the research, moving from concrete considerations of the island in literature and geography to more abstract conceptualisations of their spatial and temporal properties. Reflecting upon the practice, the written thesis discusses individual projects in relation to the developing island model. As such, a number of projects and individual artist's works appear more frequently within the discussion than others. Certain works are utilised as pertinent examples that actively demonstrate the potential of the proposed island model. The thesis is therefore a selective and reflective account of the following practical projects .

Imaginary Islands – a building kit.

Imaginary Islands – a building kit was an interactive visual game that encouraged individuals to compose and construct imaginary island landscapes from a set of illustrated cards/props. Working in collaboration with Vineta Gailite, we developed an index of over 200 different images that showed animal and plant life as well as geographical features such as waterfalls and mountains. Individuals were encouraged to construct a landscape from the provided set of images, creating a simple, realistic or fantastical island. Once constructed the island models could be further activated with torchlight to create a shadow theatre, becoming a prop for the different activities of story telling, drawing and role-play. The *Imaginary Islands - a building kit* was presented at All Saints Library Manchester Metropolitan University alongside a display of books from the Special Collection Library that detailed various island illustrations.

59.14 N 3.34 W

The public were invited to partake in a journey across the Brough of Birsay, a small tidal island off of the westcoast of mainland Orkney. Upon the island the audience encountered a series of artists' works. The artists Sovay Berriman, Franziska Lantz and Matt Rowe developed new works in direct response to the landscape and location of the Brough as site familiar to the local audience seeking to reframe and represent the known island. The artists further drew upon an idea of the island as a site of ritual, a sculptural form and a point of communication. Franziska Lantz developed an acoustic sound performance using material found on the shoreline of the Brough including discarded oil drums, pebbles, rope and sand. Sovay Berriman developed a sculptural work that represented the dimensions of the Brough as a simplified sculptural installation reimagining the island and the causeway as a series of symbolic markers. Matt Rowe developed an installation that utilised an area of undulating ground to act as a large reflective panel working in conjunction with a sculpture that sought to suggest a point of communication with other islands and mainlands. (See pp.27-41 in the accompanying booklet for visual documentation of each artists' work). The devised artworks were further framed by the overarching temporality of the event. Access to the Brough was only possible during the temporary window of low tide. The audience gathered on the mainland, collectively crossing the causeway and returning before the Brough and the experienced works became inaccessible. The event sought to shift highlight the borders to the site in an effort to frame the island as distinct and distant to the mainland.

Following *59.14 N 3.34 W* a series of projects were devised that sought to apply the specifics of the physical island onto other spatial sites. In moving from the physical island into contemporary environments the notion and construct of the island can be seen to manifest itself as a series of conceptual properties. The following projects sought to explore such 'islandness' and the ability for the island to be utilized as a discursive and curatorial tool.

Triptych

Triptych involved the construction of a free-standing unit for the exhibition of a series of works on paper and paintings by artists Lindsey Bull, Madeline Hall and Aliyah Hussain. Akin to a pagoda or bandstand, the structure took the form of a contained circular unit. The basic circle format was split into sections of varying heights and widths designed in response to the artists' works. With each work exhibited in an individual section of the larger unit, the structure created defined points of separation between the works on show. The audience could choose how and where they approached each of the individual works, creating a series of different possible sequences for viewing. (See p.49 of the accompanying booklet of documentation for a map of potential viewing patterns). A rotating rhythm of viewing served as an attempt to echo the concepts of ritual and geometry embedded within each artists' practice.

Seven Sites

Seven Sites presented a series of temporary performances and installations in different locations across Manchester and Salford.³⁷ With one installation or performance occurring at regular intervals between August 2011 and March 2012 *Seven Sites* developed as an accumulative collection of diverse encounters. The artists Edwina Ashton, Giles Bailey, Sian Robinson Davies, Amy Feneck, S.A.Y.D.A.N.C.E (Franziska Lantz), Antonia Low, Quarantine Theatre Company and the community organization *Ordsocs* were invited to create works in response to and reaction against, the differing contexts of a tower block flat, a hotel room, a comedy night, a local radio broadcast, a shopping centre, a church kitchen, an Indian cafe and a housing estate. The resulting encounters evolved into playful punctuation marks within everyday routines, disrupting the familiar frameworks of engagement that occur between artworks, audiences and the city. Throughout the research discussion particular attention is paid to the work of Edwina Ashton and Franziska Lantz, whose performances as part of the series provided marked shifts to

³⁷ *Seven Sites* began prior to the start of the PhD research. The project was devised in preparation for the PhD with the series of curated events completed following the first year of research.

the established behaviours and rhythms of their respective sites, (see accompanying booklet of documentation pp.65-73 and pp.74-79). An interruption and disruption to the site of a given work comes to provide a primary example of the function of the proposed island model throughout the written argument.

The marketing of *Seven Sites* echoed with the sentiment of a personal invitation, taking the form of a postcard or email detailing simply the time and date of a performance, inviting the audience to undertake a journey that would constitute the beginning of an engagement with the programmed work.

Cacotopia

Cacotopia was a group exhibition of work by Matti Isan Blind, Franziska Lantz, Rebecca Lennon, Elisabeth Molin and David Wojtowycz at the International Anthony Burgess Foundation Manchester. Exploring Burgess's use of the title phrase the exhibition took the mundane and everyday as an index for a cacotopian future, highlighting a discordance between present everyday rationality and the potential chaos, oppression and violence such rationality holds and seeks to suppress. A selection of new and existing artists works were installed within the archive of the foundation that responded to the theme of the title. Each work was rooted in a familiar aspect of the everyday, from the mass of advertising imagery, to the omnipresence of the television screen and the abundance of domestic paraphernalia. Through the artists' interventions this familiarity was subverted and infused with an uncertainty that reflected the sentiment of cacotopia. The exhibition opened with a performance by Franziska Lantz that drew upon recordings within the archive of Burgess's own musical experiments, devising a 'cacotopic soundtrack' for the exhibition. An evening film programme further accompanied the exhibition screening works by Ulf Aminde, Matti Blind, Aline Bouvy & John Gillis, Rebecca Lennon, Jen Lui and David Wojtowycz.

Pala

Pala is an online platform for the broadcasting of artist's film and video works. For over two years *Pala* has transmitted a series of short films and still images via an intermittent digital broadcast. Occurring unannounced and transmitted directly to individual computer screens the broadcasts function as a series of minor interruptions, visually disrupting the screen and intruding upon the viewer. The broadcast as interruption was devised to explore the potential for the transmitted imagery to create a temporary shift within the viewer's immediate (and familiar) environment. By extension, the broadcasts sought to create a disruption within a viewer's everyday, instigating momentary, involuntary encounters that rendered the familiar strange. Each of the broadcast works explored and subverted narrative structures and acts of viewing through devices of repetition, fragmentation and the still image as a means of drawing attention to the experiences of looking and interpretation, heightening a sense of estrangement and interruption to the surrounding frame of the computer screen. Whereas a number of the artists developed new works in direct response to the project theme, others contributed existing works that resonated with the curatorial framework. *Pala* has broadcast works by: Katriona Beales, Annie Carpenter, David Cochrane, Aliyah Hussain, Alexander Storey Gordon, Piotr Krajewski, Elisabeth Molin, Nicole Morris, Matt Rowe, Shelley Theodore and David Wojtowycz. Within the research discussion particular attention is paid to the work of Elisabeth Molin whose filming of instances of everyday action reframes their incidental nature and seeming familiarity. (See p.150 of the accompanying booklet of documentation for images of Molin's work). The representation and reconsideration of the familiar enters into the developing discussion of the proposed island model using Molin's broadcasts for *Pala* as a primary example of how the model can be perceived to function.

IV. THE RESEARCH DISCUSSION.

As both a physical area of geographic specificity and a site of imaginary projection, the island has appealed to my individual curatorial practice as a conceptual tool for experimenting with, and analysing, specific exhibition contexts. Embodying a duality of both the real and the imaginary, the actual and the virtual, I have taken the construct of the literary island as a point of reference for the development, analysis and discussion of the staging and exhibition of artworks beyond a traditional gallery setting. Here, once removed from the spatial framework of the gallery into varying sites and contexts of the everyday, the work of art is both physically situated within a given location whilst simultaneously providing virtual possibilities for its transformation. In other words, the place and time of a work's staging is experienced in a state of liminality that blurs the distinction between the real and the imaginary, the actual and the virtual, in ways that begin to resemble a construct of the island as discussed throughout the research project. As such, the situated work can be seen to invite a reframing and reimagining of its surrounding site, suggesting fantastical or critical alternatives. As a context within which the familiar or everyday can be reinterpreted, the situated artwork or installation resonates with a notion of the island as a physical area of land that invites and facilitates a more or less imaginary, but always playful reframing and questioning of the perceived status quo of a mainland.

Seeking to draw a line of connection between the actual and virtual island and a discussion of my curatorial practice beyond the traditional gallery setting, the ensuing research discussion highlights a series of features and structural echoes between the two. In order to fully present and expand upon the outlined comparison between a construct of the (literary) island and contemporary curatorial projects the thesis will be divided into the following chapters

- Chapter I. Encountering the island.
- Chapter II. Tracing the border of the shore.
- Chapter III. The island as an uncertain stage.
- Chapter IV. Islands in the everyday.

Throughout each chapter, literature will be used as both an analytical tool presenting accounts and descriptions of the island and as a framing device structuring the ensuing argument. The unexpected appearance of the island in literary narratives will be continuously revisited in an effort to present the site as conceptually and physically at a distance to the traditions of a continental mainland or cultural mainstream. Questions over the island as 'outside', at a remove, or in the periphery, will be addressed to further highlight a paradoxical relationship between the imagined island and the mainland - a site both at a distance to, yet perpetually informed by, the cultural and social conventions of a castaway's homeland.

The unexpected interruption and disruption of the island within a given narrative will take on further resonance in a discussion of site and event-based practices, where certain works will be presented to intrude upon and disrupt the familiar temporal frameworks of a given environment instigating momentary experiences of the unexpected and uncertain. Continuing an emphasis on uncertainty reference to the uncanny will weave throughout each chapter, presenting the island as a site of unstable and uncertain encounters, where a questioning and reframing of the familiar is readily enacted. A sentiment of uncertain encounter will similarly be brought to the fore in the continued discussion of site and event-based practices, in particular drawing upon the artist Phil Collins' assertion that a number of contemporary artists are concerned with facilitating an encounter that is founded upon 'disparity'.³⁸

Chapter 1. Encountering the island

Investigating the geographical and literary island as a contained area of land the chapter presents a discussion about the borders and thresholds of the site. Conceiving of the boundary of the island to present both a point of containment and a threshold that initiates further encounters, the discussion will draw upon the

³⁸ Phil Collins, (presentation at *Imagining the Audience*).

work of Elizabeth Grosz. Grosz proposes that boundaries are defined by the movement of an individual as they trace a journey between different spatial sites.³⁹ In relation to literature, the movement of a central character from their ocean voyage onto the island marks a movement between the familiar mainland and the newly discovered island, defining the boundary of the shore. Here, movement will be discussed as central to both a consideration of boundaries as outlined by Grosz and the narration of the island in literary fictions. Indeed, on arriving upon the island, demarking the border of the shore, the castaway proceeds to narrate the newly encountered site to the reader. Reference to Michel de Certeau's discussion in his 1988 publication *The Practice of Everyday Life*, that the development of a story is marked by a movement between a known and familiar site and an unknown exterior will further inform the ensuing discussion. For de Certeau, a story is actuated 'by a contradiction that is represented in them by the relationship between the frontier and the bridge, that is, between a (legitimate) space and its (alien) exteriority'.⁴⁰ In relation to island literature, de Certeau's concept of the frontier will be discussed as a means to frame the island shoreline as a boundary defined by the movement of a character, becoming a site of engagement and interaction where the castaway's encounter with the shore serves to inform the evolving narrative.

Presenting a construct of the island shoreline as a site of both containment, encounter and exploration, will be further explored in the development of the practical projects *Triptych* and *59.9 N 34.4 W*, moving from a consideration of the island in the literary imagination onto the concrete site of the situated artwork. Within each project possibilities for activating an audience into a movement within and upon a bounded area of ground in both a given location (*59.9 N 34.4 W*) and a constructed environment (*Triptych*) were undertaken. The audience's movement within the defined sites of *Triptych* and *59.9 N 34.4 W* attempted to reflect the

³⁹ Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside, Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. (Massachusetts: MIT Press 2001), 57-73.

⁴⁰ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 127.

notion of the shoreline in literary islands as a site of containment, a boundary to be traversed and a moment of encounter. In moving from a discussion of the literary island to the situated artwork the writing throughout the chapter takes a structural approach, mapping out and presenting the boundary of the given curated projects and artists works in an effort to find points of connection and disparity with that of the island shore.

Chapter II. Tracing the border of the shore.

Continuing a spatial investigation the chapter takes a suggestion of movement within, around and upon the island shore to inform a reading of the geographical and literary site. A discussion of movement is present in the work of both de Certeau and Grosz, where the motion of an individual is conceived to activate, actualise and describe a given space. Taking movement to inform and define a given site, a comparison will be made between the literary island and the audience's interaction with situated and event-based practices where a notion of movement can be perceived to be part of the spectator experience. In considering an audience's engagement with a situated or event-based work, art historical examples will be invoked, in particular the precedent of Alan Kaprow. Kaprow's development of immersive situations outside of a gallery context placed an emphasis on the active participation of the audience. With further reference to Jones's essay *Performance: Time, Space and Cultural 'Value'*⁴¹ the work of Kaprow will serve as a means to discuss a focus on the individual and their concurrent movements in relation to the interpretation, definition and development of contemporary situated and event-based practices.

A discussion on the interaction of an individual with a given work will further bring to the fore consideration of the perceived boundaries between audience, artwork and site. Referencing the work of Heather and Ivan Morison as well as my own curatorial projects *Seven Sites* and *59.14N 3.34W*, a series of questions over the distinct boundaries between the audience, the artwork and the surrounding site,

⁴¹ Jones, 'Performance: Time, Space and Cultural 'Value'', 31-38.

facilitated through a continual movement of the viewer will be highlighted. A questioning of the boundaries surrounding a given work will present a return to consideration of the literary and geographical island. In geographical terms, tidal patterns mark the boundary between land and sea to be an area in continual flux. Within literary narratives the mainland from which a central character derives can be seen to influence and inform their experience of the island site. As such, the island will be presented to be both outside of the continental mainland whilst perpetually informed by it - a site of shifting and paradoxical boundaries.

Chapter III. The island as an uncertain stage.

Taking artist Phil Collins's suggestion that event-based and situated artworks are founded upon 'staging an encounter' the third chapter of the thesis explores metaphors of the stage in relation to the literary island as well as situated and event-based art practices. Referencing the theoretical discussion of Samuel Weber⁴² the stage will be defined as a site of multiple and fractured perspectives where the totality of the unfolding action can never be viewed as a comprehensive whole. Similarly the contained site of the literary island provides a space upon which multiple unknowns haunt the central character of a novel. As such consideration of the stage and the literary island will be informed by a discussion of uncertainty. A consideration of uncertainty will be further presented in an analysis of situated and event-based artworks where the possibility for multiple viewpoints introduces diverse and varying interpretations for the viewer.

Moving around and within the site of a given work the audience takes a dual role as both spectator and performer, viewer and participant. In the projects *59.9N* and *3.34W*, *Seven Sites* and *Triptych* the audience for each were simultaneously participants in the devised works, both viewing and being viewed. Here, the duality of the audiences' position will be presented as providing the ground for an uncomfortable and uncertain experience, where the security of their viewing position is put into question. The uncertainty of the audiences' interaction with a

⁴² Samuel Weber, *The legend of Freud*. (Stanford California: Stanford University Press 2000).

given work will be presented as a means to invoke a questioning and reframing of an experienced site. Here, a return to a discussion of the literary island will be made where, from a position of uncertainty and unfamiliarity, a questioning of the status quo prevails facilitating fantastical, critical or subversive alternatives to a dominant norm.

Chapter IV. Islands and the everyday.

The chapter will highlight the role of the island as a space for imaginary, subversive or extraordinary alternatives to the everyday. As a site of alternatives to a dominant norm, the island will be discussed as presenting a site where the 'marginal' or 'other' can freely occur. Drawing upon Michel Foucault's notion of the heterotopia,⁴³ a construct of the island as a site for actions and behaviours that are counter to mainstream cultural conventions will be brought into consideration with contemporary environments and contexts framing the island as a virtual space conceptually at a 'distance'. As such, instances of 'islandness' will be discussed as manifesting within a contemporary everyday where actions and behaviours counter to, or at a remove from, the established norms of a given environment come to the fore. Consideration of such 'counter' or 'marginal' behaviours within a contemporary everyday will reference the artist Stephen Willats work *The Lurky Place* as well as Edwina Ashton and Franziska Lantz's performances as part of the *Seven Sites* project.

As a site for the 'marginal' or 'other' the virtual island will be further discussed as facilitating an interruption to the security of a given environment, providing temporal alternatives to the dominant norm. Here, the notion of the margin as a space outside of the mainstream will be re-presented as productively embedded

⁴³ Foucault developed a framework of the heterotopia through a discussion of spaces that are 'other', within or around the edges of what constitutes the norm-sites for marginal behaviours and actions situated within, yet always at the slightest distance to, the everyday itself. Initially presented in a lecture in 1967 the paper was later published as part the 1984 article 'Of Other Spaces' *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuite* 5 (October 1984): 46-49, accessed January 2012 <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/foucault1.pdf>

within a familiar everyday. In a similar vein, the curatorial project *Pala* actively sought to interrupt and disrupt the familiar environment of a computer screen in an effort to provide playful, fantastical or subversive alternatives to the immediacy of the viewer's everyday. Consideration of the island as a space of interruption and disruption will return the research discussion to a discourse of uncertainty.

Presenting the island as a site for uncertain and extraordinary encounters will be developed throughout the chapter to invoke consideration of the surrealist movement's development of *The Marvelous*.⁴⁴ *The Marvelous* was conceived as a kind of jolt or shock away from the everyday which produced a disorientating sensation triggering the viewer's momentary submersion into a space of psychic and imaginary alternatives. Such a process of estrangement is an effect that will be discussed in relation to the appearance of the literary island presenting further possibility for the island to be conceived as a space of psychological alternatives. Returning to a consideration of contemporary art practices Claire Bishop's discussion of the Surrealist *Marvelous* will be invoked.⁴⁵ Bishop discusses the surrealist concept of the *Marvelous* as a means of interpreting contemporary site-based artworks that present the viewer with something at odds with the immediacy of contemporary experience. Bishop's alignment of site-based practices with an experience at odds, removed and dislocated from the everyday will be invoked to present a fluidity between the concrete real and the imaginary alternative of a site that echoes with the literary island and the proposed positioning of islands as sites of conceptual removal, instigating imaginary alternatives within a contemporary everyday.

⁴⁴ Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant* trans. by Stewart Watson-Taylor. (New York: Exact Change 2001), 204.

⁴⁵ Claire Bishop, 'As if I was lost and someone suddenly came to give me news about myself' in *Off limits. 40 Art Angel Projects* by James Lingwood and Michael Morris. (London: Merrell Publishers 2002), 22-29.

CHAPTER I

ENCOUNTERING THE ISLAND

I.I MOVING FROM OCEAN TO ISLAND.

They had guessed before that this was an island: clambering among the pink rocks, with the sea on either side. But there seemed something more fitting in leaving the last word till they stood on the top, and could see a circular horizon of water.⁴⁶

(William Golding *Lord of the Flies*, 1954)

Invoking an image of the island a remote area of land surrounded by a vast expanse of ocean comes to the fore. In considering the encircling shoreline the following chapter will present a discussion on the borders and thresholds of the island as described in literary narratives. Working through a discussion of borders, the practical projects *59.14 N 3.34 W* and *Triptych* sought to transfer a construct of the island shoreline from its basis as a geographical phenomena to a site of exhibition where an audience were invited to step over and upon a clearly defined boundary in order to experience a series of installed artists' works.

Within literary narratives the knowledge that a character is upon an island comes hand in hand with their description of an encircling shoreline. Unexpectedly arriving upon a new site, the central protagonist of a novel seeks to gain an understanding of their location, often climbing the highest point they can find. On reaching the summit the edges of the island are described, giving an immediate impression to the reader and the central protagonist of the novel, that the land they find themselves upon is a contained and bounded site of a particular scale.

I propose to climb the mountain – if you can call it a mountain, at any rate it should be high enough to give a whole view of the island.⁴⁷

Here, the shoreline of the island, the boundary between ocean and land, both defines the site and marks a moment of narrative development, shifting from the

⁴⁶ William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*. (London: Faber and Faber 1988), 26.

⁴⁷ John Wyndham, *Web*. (London: Penguin Books 1979), 70.



FIG. 1. View of the The Brough of Birsay, from mainland Orkney at high tide, 21 April 2012.



FIG. 2. Installation view of *Triptych* with works by Aliyah Hussain, 13 July 2012.

narration of a sea voyage with its associations of the central character's homeland to the island fiction, where alternative scenarios can proliferate.

In an effort to mirror the centrality of the shoreline in island narratives, the curatorial projects *Triptych* and *59.14 N 3.34 W* explored the possibilities of working in relation to a relatively contained and clearly bounded site. Both projects sought to highlight the audience's necessary crossing of a given boundary in order to view a series of installed artists' works. Marking the boundary to the devised event further attempted to invoke the audience's awareness of themselves as being upon and within a contained site of a particular scale, affecting in turn their interpretation of the works on show. For example, *59.14 N 3.34 W* occurred on the Brough of Birsay, a small tidal island off of the west coast of mainland Orkney. The event began by gathering on the mainland, forming the audience into a group that was invited to collectively cross the causeway at low tide before clambering upon the steep island rock. Here, the border to the island was clearly marked. The Brough's geographical location defined the site as a distinct spatial entity - only accessible at low tide the Brough was both physically connected to the mainland and periodically cut off, at a distance and removed. The granite rock base of the Brough further marked the tidal island as a unique and contained area of ground in contrast to the wet sand of the causeway. On stepping foot upon the island a sound work by artist Fransizka Lantz became audible. The familiarity of the Brough to a local audience and its relative similarity to the landscape of the mainland was readily altered through Lantz's unexpected and unfamiliar soundscape. Following the acoustic of Lantz's performance the audience were invited to walk around a series of sculptural works by the artists Sovay Berriman and Matt Rowe positioned at the outer edges of the Brough. In viewing the installed artists' works the audience traced the boundary of the site mirroring the encircling border of the shore.



FIG. 3. Audience upon and beside the *Triptych* structure viewing works by Madeline Hall, 13 July 2012.

Moving from a geographical island *Triptych* involved the physical construction of a contained unit for the exhibition of two-dimensional works by artists Lindsey Bull, Madeline Hall and Aliyah Hussain. Akin to a pagoda or bandstand, the devised structure took the form of a circular unit with a sequence of three dividing walls. On moving around the structure the artists' works could be viewed both individually, in the singular sections of the unit, and in pairs when viewed from afar. Exhibited in an empty shopping warehouse *Triptych* was first encountered from a distance of fifteen to twenty meters. Viewed from afar the exhibition structure was readily perceived as a self-contained entity. In designing *Triptych* as a contained unit consideration was taken to clearly define the borders of the site. The flooring was a brightly coloured orange curving to fit the edges of each of the freestanding walls. With the ends of the walls resting upon the edge of the floor the structure was perceived to be a unified whole. Indeed, the audience did not initially cross onto the orange area of flooring, viewing the structure instead as a complete and sealed unit. Once one individual was encouraged to step onto the floor others entering the space instantly proceeded to undertake the same action – stepping over and upon the boundary to the site. Constructed from thin sheets of plywood the flooring further provided a slight shift in surface and a different texture underfoot. Although not intended, the thin wooden panels moved slightly when stepping on or off, rising and falling a little with the weight of the individual's body, creating a physical impression of movement onto a different and shifting area of ground.

In highlighting the boundary to the exhibition structure of *Triptych* and the outer edges of the Brough in *59.14 N 3.34 W*, both projects attempted to echo the role of the shoreline in island narratives, conceiving of the shore as both a boundary between the ocean and land, and a site to be traversed initiating further encounters. In his writing on island literature Hernan Diaz⁴⁸ defines the shoreline, and a character's relationship to the shore, as a structural device that serves to cement an overarching narrative theme. Diaz outlines two dominant narrative trajectories of either a castaway or utopian framework. Within a castaway

⁴⁸ Hernan Diaz, 'A Tropical Paradise' *Cabinet* 38 (2010): 79-85.

framework the central protagonist of the novel often stays on the shore, scanning the horizon in continual search for rescue. Desperate to escape his island isolation Edward Prendick in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* recalls,

At first I spent the daylight hours waiting on the southward beach watching for a ship, hoping and praying for a ship.... ... five times I saw sails and thrice smoke but nothing ever touched the island.⁴⁹

Counter to waiting upon the shore, the utopian character turns inwards, leaving the shoreline and travelling deeper into the island in the effort to build a new life.⁵⁰ As Diaz explains,

Castaways try to rebuild that which they lost, to over-come the unsolvable contradiction of beginning again; they want to go back, either by physically returning to the mainland or by reinstating its tradition on the island. Utopians, on the other hand, only aspire to widen the chasm separating them from the continent and are open to an experimental order.⁵¹

Such an experimental order is revealed in the story of *Pala* the nation described in Aldous Huxley's *Island*, where open relationships are a part of the island culture and hallucinogenic substances consumed as a healthy pleasure.

Although Diaz's argument is somewhat rigid in its definition of two distinct narrative frameworks, within both formats, crossing the boundary of the shore marks a crucial point of narrative development. Here, the shoreline of the island is both a defining boundary to the site, encircling, containing and isolating the literary character on the remote pocket of land, and a threshold that invites further exploration, inviting the shipwrecked individual to confine themselves to the border or step further into the island, exploring its confines and igniting new paths of interpretation. Within the devised structure of *Triptych* and the geographical location of the Brough of Birsay, something of the duality of the shoreline in literary islands, as both a boundary containing the site and a point of further engagement, can be seen. In *Triptych*, the visible and physically defined border to the exhibition

⁴⁹ H.G. Wells, *The Island of Dr Moreau*. (London: Penguin Classics 2005), 124.

⁵⁰ In referencing such a conceptualization it is important not to discount the possibility for either character, the castaway or the utopian, to enact a dystopian narrative, as dystopian fictions proliferate in island literature.

⁵¹ Diaz, 'A Tropical Paradise', 79.

unit was initially perceived as a stopping point, marking the structure at a distance to the audience. However, on crossing the boundary, moving over the threshold of the floor, the audience were able to more closely scrutinize the display. Subtly initiating a different engagement with the works on show. Within 59.14 N 3.34 W the Brough was a physically contained site, bounded by the tidal patterns of the surrounding causeway. On stepping foot upon the island a series of artists works revealed themselves to the audience, presenting new paths of engagement and exploration. Indeed, in an effort to shift the familiarity of the Brough to the local audience, the artists staged works that attempted to present radically alternative objects, sounds and actions to those previously undertaken or experienced on the site. For example, Lantz's sound performance entailed her wearing a headdress of scavenged materials and rhythmically drumming, whilst Berriman's sculptural markers invited the audience to physically shift their component parts in an effort to form spontaneous relationships between themselves, the work and the site. The boundary to the Brough therefore held both a containing function, marking the island as a separate and self-contained entity whilst simultaneously signifying a point of transition where, once upon the site, alternative actions and imagery proliferated.

Considering a border to be both a defined point of containment and a threshold that invites greater exploration invokes the work of Elizabeth Grosz. In her essay *Architecture From the Outside*,⁵² Grosz puts forward the notion that boundaries are not simply a limit to be transgressed, but a site to be traversed. Recalling Brian Massumi's proposition in *The Politics of Everyday Fear*,⁵³ that boundaries are only produced in the process of passage, Grosz continues her discussion to propose it is only through a movement from one space to another that a boundary is created,

Boundaries do not so much define the routes of passage; it is movement that defines and constitutes boundaries. These boundaries, consequently, are more porous and less fixed and rigid than is commonly understood, for

⁵² Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, 57-73.

⁵³ Brian Massumi, *The Politics of Everyday Fear*. (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press 1993).



FIG. 4. Audience of $59.14\ N\ 3.34\ W$ upon the Brough of Birsay viewing Franziska Lantz's sound performance, 21 April 2012.

there is already an infection by one side of the border of the other; there is a becoming of each of the terms thus bounded.⁵⁴ For Grosz, by physically tracing a shift in spatiality, moving from one site to another, the bounded experience of inside and outside occurs. Within 59.14 N 3.34 W walking across the causeway to the tidal island highlighted both the distance of the Brough from the mainland and its relatively small scale. Walking around the edges of the site further served as a means to foreground its position as an isolated and contained area of land. The crossing of the shoreline in island narratives similarly defines the encountered site. Once a central character crosses from the ocean to the island, crossing from one spatial site to another, a description of the island emerges defining the site as an enclosed area of land. As we read in *Lord of the Flies*,

Wave after wave Ralph followed the rise and fall until something of the remoteness of the sea numbed his brain. Then gradually the almost infinite size of this land forced itself on his attention. This was the divider, the barrier. On the other side of the island, swathed at midday with mirage, defended by the shield of the quiet lagoon, one might dream of rescue; but here, faced by the brute obtuseness of the ocean, the miles of division, one was clamped down, one was helpless, one was condemned.⁵⁵

However, as Grosz notes, with an emphasis on movement in the definition of borders/boundaries, the rigidity between spatial sites is dissolved. Continuing her discussion Grosz proposes that with a fluidity of movement, the outside does not necessarily remain eternally counterpoised to the interior, or the open counterpoised to the closed, the one is both at odds to, and informed by, the other. Continuing her discussion Grosz references Deleuze's concept of transmutability.⁵⁶ For Deleuze, the outside or the exterior does not remain consistently counter to an interiority that it contains, but rather one presents an infection by one-side of the border of the other.⁵⁷ As such, a boundary does not so much mark a fixed point of difference but can rather be conceived of as a porous line where two different spatial states encounter and inform each other. In relation to the island, the

⁵⁴ Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside*, ref.13, 65.

⁵⁵ Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 121.

⁵⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. trans. by H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta. (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press 1997), 212.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 212.

shoreline both defines the remote area of land and presents a site of interaction between the homeland and history of the shipwrecked character and the narrative yet to be enacted upon the newly encountered site. Indeed, as a central character of a novel moves over and across the boundary of the shore, landing upon the island sand, the narrative takes a new trajectory. This new narrative path is defined in relation to the familiar mainland from which the central character of the novel has derived.

Recalling Diaz's definition of the narrative structures of island literature, landing upon the island shore the shipwrecked individual seeks either to rebuild something of their continental homeland, as is the case with Robinson Crusoe, (Crusoe cultivates rice and wheat and finds comfort in his isolation from the Bible), or seeks to remove themselves further from it, undertaking behaviours and actions often deemed taboo in the social and cultural conventions of the mainland. In both instances the action described to the reader is done so through its relationship to the mainland, the home-land of the central protagonist whose voice narrates the story of the encountered island. As such the outside of the island, the ocean and mainland from which the island voyager finds himself removed, informs and shapes our perception of the new island space. The boundary of the shoreline therefore both marks the island as a contained and isolated area of land whilst simultaneously embodying a point of interaction and influence, where all that is outside of the island informs and shapes the ensuing fiction. In a similar vein, the visible boundary to the exhibition structure of *Triptych* both defined the exhibition unit as a distinct spatial entity, standing in contrast to the interior of the warehouse, whilst to some extent, simultaneously marked a point of interaction between the works on show, the immediacy of the surrounding site and the audience crossing its threshold.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Placed within an empty shopping warehouse *Triptych* inevitably drew upon the audience's prior experience of viewing artist's projects and exhibitions in empty buildings and industrial units. At the time of *Triptych's* installation there had been a series of temporary exhibitions in shopping units adjacent to the project site.

The influence of the surrounding site on the interpretation of an installation or event encountered outside of a gallery context is discussed at greater length in chapter II.I where a discussion on boundaries continues to propose a fluidity between the different categories of audience, artwork and site. Here, a relationship between a given artwork and the immediacy of its surrounding environment further brings into discussion a relationship with the everyday. Defining and interpreting a notion of the everyday and its relationship to the literary island as well as situated and event-based artworks, runs throughout chapters IV.I and IV.II

Returning to a discussion of boundaries as embodying both a containing function whilst simultaneously signifying a point of interaction and encounter, consideration of Michel de Certeau's discussion in the 1988 publication *The Practice of Everyday Life* provides a further avenue of analysis. Within the text, de Certeau proposes the development of a story is actuated 'by a contradiction that is represented in them by the relationship between the frontier and the bridge, that is, between a (legitimate) space and its (alien) exteriority'. For de Certeau the 'frontier' and 'bridge' present points at which a movement from one site to another occurs - a border between two different spatial states is traversed. This shift in spatiality serves as a means to develop a narrative sequence. Such a shift is seen in island literature. The physical boundary of the shoreline marks a split or 'frontier' between two spatial sites, that of the ocean and mainland, and the ocean and island. The narrative structure is founded upon a movement from the known and familiar space of the mainland to the unknown and 'alien' island. De Certeau continues his discussion by proposing the frontier holds a 'mediating' role - it is the point at which two differing spatial states encounter each other.⁵⁹ It is through this process of encounter that the 'other' characteristics of each side become apparent. For example, the momentary arrival of the central protagonist on the shore marks the point at which the reader encounters the possibility of an 'other' environment and an alternative way of behaving. As such the contained island site is perpetually

⁵⁹de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 127.



FIG. 5. Audience of $59.14\ N\ 3.34\ W$ walking towards the Brough of Birsay, 21 April 2012.

informed by traces of the mainland - it is only through our knowledge of a continental homeland that the island is marked and perceived as distant or 'other'.

De Certeau further proposes the frontier holds a unique space 'in-between',

A middle place, composed of interactions and inter-views, the frontier is a sort of void, a narrative symbol of exchanges and encounters.⁶⁰

Such a 'middle ground' can be perceived to be present in island narratives. In the instant of stepping foot upon the shore the central character of a novel finds themselves suspended between two different states. This initial encounter with the island presents a moment outside of and removed from, the linear trajectory of the narrative experience thus far. The central protagonist is momentarily suspended before the narrative follows its ensuing trajectory, to follow Diaz, of either a utopian or castaway fiction marking the island as distinct and at a remove from a familiar mainland. In an effort to reflect the momentary suspension of the shoreline experienced within narrative fictions, *59.14 N 3.34 W* attempted to mark the audience's collective arrival on the Brough with a staged pause. In developing the project the walk across the causeway was conceived as a framing device, contributing to the artists' efforts to shift the familiarity of the Brough in the local imagination.

The event began by assembling on the shore of the mainland. Gathered together in a group the audience members were asked to unpack and wear a highly reflective silver survival blanket before stepping foot onto the causeway and embarking on a journey to the Brough. The blankets formed the audience into a cohesive group and further served as a means to distance them from the somewhat familiar journey to the site, marking the walk as visually distinct to their prior excursions upon the Brough.⁶¹ As a united group, the audience walked towards the island, tracing a path across the causeway. Once upon the Brough the audience were invited to look back at the mainland. The momentary pause, although one full of chatter,

⁶⁰ Ibid, 127.

⁶¹ In feedback from the event the warden for the island, who spent many hours upon the site, commented he had never thought of it in such a way before, and will continue to think of it differently.

speculation on the event and expectation of what was to come, was conceived as a means to mark the audience's arrival upon the tidal island and further signify the start of an alternative encounter, their journey around and within the installed artists works. The orchestrated pause further attempted to mirror the shift in narrative trajectory that occurs in island literature once the castaway arrives upon the island shore, marking the movement between the different spatial states of the homeland or ocean and the unknown island.

The audience's momentary suspension on the island shore was undertaken in an effort to frame the shoreline of the Brough as a site in-between, akin to de Certeau's definition of the frontier. By extension, in aligning de Certeau's concept of the frontier with that of the shoreline in island narratives, the binary oppositions of inside and outside, ocean and land become less fixed. Indeed, de Certeau notes the frontier is a site of paradox,

Created by contacts, the points of differentiation between two bodies are also their common points. Conjunction and disjunction are inseparable.⁶²

The shoreline of the island can therefore be conceived to present a similar site of interaction, engagement and tension. The spatial shift ignited by the appearance of the island in literary narratives - the crossing from the ship to the shore, the ocean to the sand, presents the island as a site of both encounter and distancing. The shoreline becomes both an edge to the island, containing and isolating the central protagonist of a novel yet, simultaneously, presents the point of contact between the social and cultural history of the mainland and the narrative yet to be enacted upon the new island site. It is a site of both encounter and distancing, conjuncture and disjuncture.

Devising curatorial projects that centred upon a movement within and upon a contained site in both a given location and a constructed environment, attempted to explore the notion of the shoreline in literary narratives as both a site of containment, a boundary to be traversed and a moment of encounter. Such a consideration will be expanded beyond the specific curatorial projects described

⁶² de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 127.

above to consider a number of other exhibitions of art that occur outside of a gallery context where the clarity of boundaries between audience and artwork, and audience and performer is put into flux.

I.II FOOTSTEPS IN THE SAND.

The shoreline of the island has been presented as a permeable boundary, a site of influence and interaction that is founded upon a character's movement over and upon its edge. The following chapter seeks to highlight the movement of a literary character from their ocean voyage onto the island presenting a notion of movement as crucial to the developing fiction. Transferring a sentiment of movement onto consideration of the audience's experience of *59.14 N 3.34 W* and *Triptych*, a parallel will be drawn between both the literary island and the situated artwork or event where an emphasis on an individual's movements around and within the given site of the display come to the fore.

Within the majority of island fictions, the castaway encounters the island by crashing onto the shore. As Robinson Crusoe narrates,

Nothing can describe the confusion of thought I felt when I sunk into the water; for though I swam very well, yet I could not deliver myself from the waves so as to draw breath, till that wave having driven me, or rather carried me, a vast way on towards the shore, and having spent itself, went back and left me on the land almost dry, but half dead with the water I took in.⁶³

The dramatic arrival of a character upon the island sand marks a spatial and narrative shift from the progression of an ocean voyage and the familiar site of the continental homeland to the unknown and unmapped island. Recovering and composing themselves the castaway continues to undertake a movement around and within the newly discovered site narrating the encountered island to the reader. Movement can therefore be considered central to both the appearance of the literary island, demarking the boundaries of the site, and the evolution of the ensuing fiction.

Taking a consideration of movement within island narratives the curatorial project *Triptych* sought to explore possibilities for activating an audience into a sequence of movements in order to view a series of exhibited artists' works. The devised

⁶³ Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*. (London: Wordsworth Editions 1995), 33.

structure used an overall circular format segmented into three units. The divided sections necessitated an audience move around and upon the structure in order to view the different fractions of the display. Here, *Triptych* introduced a series of choices for the viewer - the audience were able to choose where they approached the structure, choosing to view one artist's work in detail before another, developing varied and individual patterns of viewing. In marked contrast to the literary island the choices given to the audience in the design of the structure enabled the viewer to freely leave and return to the site of the work, a decision taken out of the hands of the island castaway. A consideration of movement was further introduced into the initial conception of the structure. In the process of devising *Triptych* emphasis was placed on the ease of its construction with the intention of installing the structure in a variety of different locations, appearing temporarily, before being dismantled and re-erected elsewhere. The continual process of installing and de-installing was devised as an attempt to disrupt the fixed notion of display, introducing an element of movement into the development of the exhibition itself.

In developing a discussion of movement, the work of de Certeau provides a point for greater analysis. Within *The Practice of Everyday Life*, he proposes an individual's movements around and within a given location serve to actualise and define the site. For de Certeau movement is a central tool in defining our understanding and experience of a given site as a 'place' or 'space'. Discussing the interaction and engagement of an individual with everyday spatial environments, de Certeau proposes that the different movements, velocities and interactions that occur within the fixed parameters of a place result in the site becoming an active and engaged 'space', explaining,

A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability. A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalise it, and make it function.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 117.

Space is therefore conceptualised as the activation of fixed elements within a place by a group of users or individual user, their movements around and within a given site. Indeed, de Certeau discusses the movement of a walker through a cityscape as being ‘the spatial acting out of a place’.⁶⁵ Here, consideration of the audience’s interaction with *Triptych* can be seen to activate the static structure into a narrated ‘space’ of varied engagements. Returning to a consideration of island narratives, it is only through the arrival of the central character onto the island site, and their ensuing movements exploring and discovering the remote pocket of land, that the island is narrated to the reader.

“I climbed a rock”, Ralph said slowly “And I think this is an island”.⁶⁶

Invoking de Certeau, the movement of the shipwrecked individual upon the island shore shifts the ‘place’ of the island as remote and distant ‘other’ into a narrated ‘space’ of the shipwrecked or desert island fiction. An individual’s movement within and around the newly discovered island forms a series of interactions and encounters that serve to shape the evolving fiction.

A focus on the individual permeates island fictions. Continuing his discussion of island literature Hernan Diaz notes that an overwhelming number of island narratives are written in the first person singular. Indeed, *Robinson Crusoe* takes the title name of its central character, H.G Wells’s *Island of Dr Moreau* tells the tale of Edward Prendick, an English gentleman who finds himself an unwelcomed guest on the Pacific island of Dr. Moreau and the twelve year old Jim Hawkins is the chief narrator of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*. Through this narrative structure the central protagonist’s movements serve to define and narrate the encountered island recalling de Certeau’s assertion that ‘a story begins on ground level, with footsteps’.⁶⁷ The first person singular of island narratives can further be utilised as a framework for considering the individual body within the curated projects of *Triptych* and *59.14 N 3.34 W*. (A discussion on the engagement of the individual with a given work will be undertaken in greater detail in Chapter II.1 A

⁶⁵ Ibid, 98.

⁶⁶ Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 9.

⁶⁷ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 97.

shifting shoreline). The individual movements of the audience were heightened in *59.14 N 3.34 W* by the invitation to wear highly reflective silver blankets. Clad in reflective foil moving towards and upon the Brough the body of each audience member was given added visibility, taking on a performative quality.

Moving around and upon the Brough of Birsay the audience undertook a durational engagement with the installed works and the site of the tidal island itself.⁶⁸ A question of duration is embedded within a more general discussion around movement and the experiential encounter with specific performances, installations or events. Indeed within both *59.14 N 3.34 W* and *Triptych*, the experience of the individual artists' works was marked and framed by the durational engagement of the audience. In her essay *Viewing Positions: Here and There* film theorist Annika Wik draws attention to the centrality of duration in experiencing contemporary works of art beyond a traditional gallery setting. Wik notes that,

Many contemporary exhibitions and performances offer the audience a spatial experience extended in time, often in several parallel levels of time, directed as a movement, a narrative, or a world to enter into.⁶⁹

Walking around and within the given site of a work triggers a temporal unfolding that consequently informs and shapes the viewer's resulting experience. Here, an echo of de Certeau's discussion on activated space can be found - the movements of an individual within a given site serve to place the experienced location within a time frame, influencing and actualizing the encountered 'space'. The undertaking of movement in describing and defining the 'space' and 'time' of the situated artwork further reflects narrative structures of the literary island. For example, the placing of a character's feet upon the island shore triggers a temporal unfolding that marks the previously remote site as physically present. As *Robinson Crusoe* narrates his process of marking the passing of days in notches on a tree stump his desert island becomes an increasingly palpable site, a unique and tangible 'space'.

⁶⁸ The unique position of the Brough as a site only accessible through the temporary window of low tide brought added consciousness over the duration of the event to the audience's experience.

⁶⁹ Annika Wik, 'Viewing Positions. Here and There' in *Imagining the Audience. Viewing Positions in Curatorial and Artistic Practice* ed. by Magdalena Malm and Annika Wik. (Stockholm: Art and Theory 2012), 51.

Upon the sides of a square post I cut every day a notch with my knife, and every seventh notch was as long again as the rest, and every first day of the month as long again as that long one: and thus I kept my calendar, or weekly or monthly, and yearly reckoning with time.⁷⁰

The centrality of an individual marking out and defining the durational and narrative 'space' of both the literary island and the situated artwork invites a further comparison with Steven Connor's discussion of footsteps in his essay *Shifting Ground*. Contemplating the centrality of the ground in the work of Samuel Beckett and Bruce Nauman, Connor discusses the ground as an ever-present limit. In Beckett's *Footfalls*⁷¹, an old woman walks up and down a track whilst a voiceover tells the audience of a young girl who used to walk with a similarly intent desperation. The girl eventually asked her mother to remove the carpet explaining,

"The motion alone is not enough. I must hear the feet, however faint they fall".⁷²

Hearing the feet established the young girl's sense of being. The sound of each footfall marks herself as present. Connor explains,

The placing of the feet attempts to give the ground an answering solidity.⁷³ In walking upon the surface the character fixes herself to the ground. The fall of her feet marks her presence in the temporal moment. In a similar vein, stepping onto an isolated island in a number of literary narratives introduces the land to the reader, bringing the previously unknown site into the present, marking out and narrating the island 'space' through the durational exploration of its shore.

⁷⁰ Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 87.

⁷¹ Samuel Beckett, *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby 1975*. (London: Royal Court Theatre and Mighty Mouth LTD 2014).

⁷² *Ibid.*, 30.

⁷³ Steven Connor 'Shifting Ground'. This is the English version of an essay published in German as 'Auf schwankendem Boden', in the catalogue of the exhibition *Samuel Beckett, Bruce Nauman* ed. by Michael Glasmeier. (Vienna: Kunsthalle Wien, 2000): 80-7, accessed November 2011.

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/skc/beckettnauman/>

For Connor, Beckett's continual or repetitive marking of the ground in *Footfalls* creates a further moment of suspension, outside of or removed from a linear passing of time, he writes,

The ground is limit itself... .. It is time thickened and slowed into space, a stay against the passage of time.⁷⁴

The repetitive action of the woman suspends her within a new space. Walking back and forth demarks an area of contemplation that is at a distance to, or removed from, the immediacy of the surrounding site. She is suspended in her perpetual motion, her feet fixing the ground in a continual present-ness, marking out a separate and self contained 'world'. The durational pacing of the girl's feet recalls Wik's observation on contemporary arts practices where the durational experience of a given work serves to mark out and frame the devised installation/event as a separate spatial and temporal enclave within which the viewer becomes suspended from the immediacy of the surrounding site.

Transferring Connor's discussion of *Footfalls* onto the literary island, the 'ground' of the island gives the newly emerged pocket of land a fixed solidity, whilst a character's movement within and upon the shore serves as a means to mark out and suspend the island from both the familiar homeland and its concurrent structures of temporality. For example, literary islands are often encountered as an unexpected event, a marked rupture and interruption into the linear progression of a voyage. In the aftermath of this shock of discontinuity, the castaway finds himself cut from the habitual repetitions and more or less progressive linearity of his previous life in a state of temporal suspension. To recall D.H Lawrence in his 1927 fiction *The Man Who Loved Islands*,

Once isolate yourself on a little island in the sea of space, and the moment begins to heave and expand in great circles, the solid earth is gone, and your slippery, naked dark soul finds herself out in the timeless world ... you are out in the other infinity.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ D.H.Lawrence, 'The Man Who Loved Islands' in *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*. (London: Cambridge University Press 1928), accessed October 2011, <http://www.literature.org/authors/lawrence-david-herbert/the-woman-who-rode-away-and-other-stories/part-09/chapter-03.html>

An unexpected destination, the island exists outside of the established chronological order of a continental mainland, yet, once discovered the narrative fiction defines the island as having a durational life of its own. Robinson Crusoe's 'reckoning with time' follows standard structures of chronology. He marks off, days, weeks and months, however his knowledge of which day or which month is lost. He is left with the structural action of marking a chronology without the fixed association of a named and specific day. He is lost from, or outside of, the familiar calendar of his homeland. The narrative of many island fictions further frames the site as a temporary space, it is a 'place' that exists only once the novel's protagonist sets foot upon the shore, stepping onto the new ground narrating the island 'space'. Having unexpectedly emerged, the island continues to exist only as long as a character remains on its shore. Once the footsteps of the narrator cease to pace upon the island ground, the reader too, leaves the land within the realm of fiction.

The movement of a castaway around and upon the island therefore brings the site into a tangible present, triggering a durational narrative of interpretation that exists as long as their feet continue to fall upon the island ground. As the castaway ceases to move around the island, stepping off of the shore, the remote pocket of land fades back into an expanse of ocean. The activation of the narrative space of the island is inextricably linked to the narrated movements and actions of a given castaway. Such a focus on individual agency in the activation of space can be reapplied to instances of situated or event-based art practice, where an individual's footsteps around and within the site of a given work mark an encounter that activates, informs and shapes the evolving 'space' of the work.

CHAPTER II

TRACING THE BORDER OF THE SHORE.

II.I HIGH AND LOW TIDE. ENCOUNTERING A SHIFTING SHORELINE.

Within island literature the boundary between ocean and land becomes clearly marked by the arrival of an individual on the island shore. A centrality of movement can further be perceived within the geographical definition of the shoreline itself. Tidal patterns, wind and sea currents erode, build and shift the borders of the site. The shoreline between sand and sea, sea and rock is not therefore, a fixed entity, but rather an area of fluid interrelations. Island studies scholar Greg Denning notes,

The boundary marked by land and water is a critical feature of islands but by no means is it definitive, for the land and sea boundary is a shifting, paradoxical one.⁷⁶

The motion of the tides creates and continually redefines the boundary between the differing spatial sites of the island and ocean and ocean and mainland. The following chapter proposes a conception of the geographical island and its description in literature as a site of boundaries that are formed by, and remain in, motion. Developing a discussion of shifting borders the geographical and literary island will be brought into analysis with certain installations and exhibitions of art beyond a gallery setting where the clarity of borders between audience and artwork, and audience and performer, is put into continual flux. Furthermore, with an emphasis on movement, a focus on the individual returns, providing the ground for consideration of the individual in relation to a given work of art. Here, art historical references will be used as a means to draw a parallel between the presented construct of the island and the curatorial projects developed as part of the research discussion. Invoking historical examples serves as a means to both strengthen and explore the proposed argument.

The development of art practices outside of a gallery context has been contextualised in curatorial discourses as an attempt to break open the containing frame of the institutional environment, expanding and shifting the defined physical and conceptual borders of a given work.

⁷⁶ Elaine Stratford, Godfrey Baldacchino et al., 'Envisaging the Archipelago' *Island Studies Journal* 6 (2011): 115.

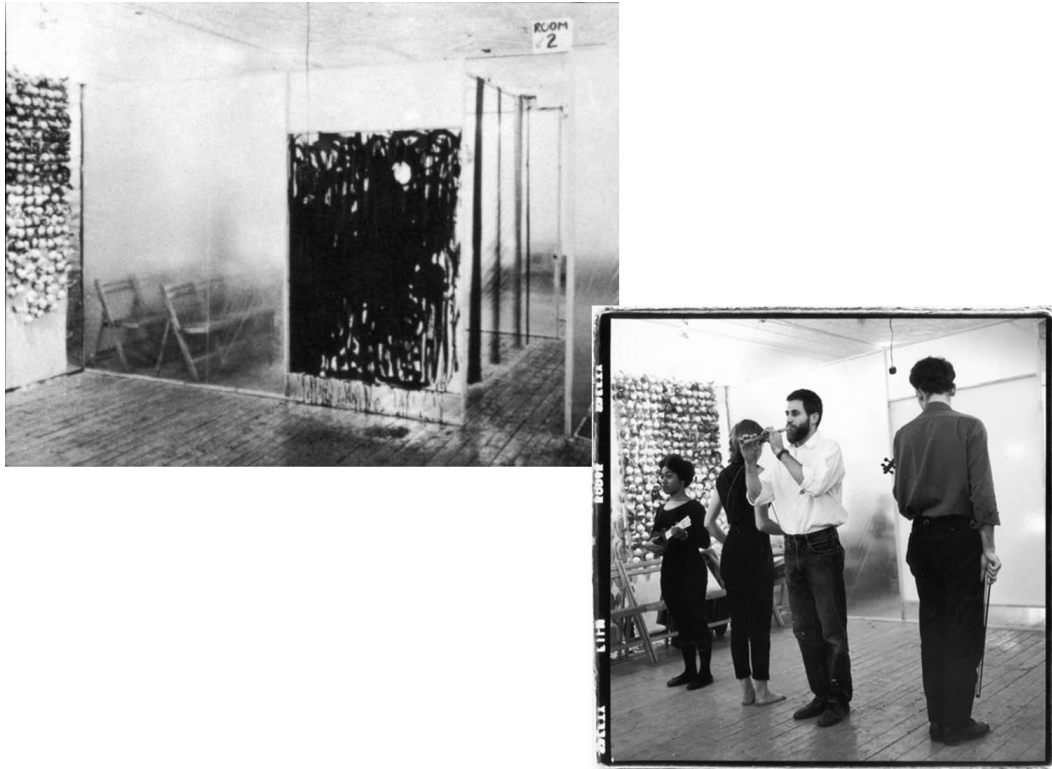


FIG. 6. Alan Kaprow *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, Reuben Gallery, New York 1959.

Amelia Jones in particular argues for a reading of contemporary installation, site-based and performance works that draws upon the historical precedent of artists working in the 1950s and 1960s to emphasize the bodily engagement of the viewer. For Jones, a focus on the physical engagement of a viewer demonstrates an expansion of the art historical frameworks that predominate within a gallery context - expanding and disbanding the aesthetic and institutional boundaries surrounding the work.

Discussing European aesthetics inherited from the Enlightenment, and in particular Kant's *Critique of Judgment*,⁷⁷ Jones proposes that such aesthetic heritage presents a containing function whose purpose denies the viewer any sensual or bodily engagement with the work of art.

Kantian aesthetics is predicated on the elimination of a sensual 'interest' on the part of the person who makes the aesthetic judgment – this person must thus be disinterested, not invested in a bodily or sensual way, in the artwork.⁷⁸

Jones proposes that such an inherited logic of aesthetics permeates the development of art history and in particular the gallery setting.⁷⁹ By invoking the historical precedent of artists such as Alan Kaprow and his contemporaries, Jones presents a conscious movement by artists to dissolve the traditional art historical notions of the contained and static art object.⁸⁰ By inviting the audience into the space of the work itself, becoming part of the unfolding work, Kaprow introduced the 'bodily and sensual' into the viewing experience itself.

Indeed, Kaprow's development of installations enabled the viewer to fully immerse themselves in his constructed works. With bodies moving within and around his

⁷⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Kant's Critique of Judgement 1790*. trans. by J.H. Bernard. (London: Macmillan 1914) accessed May 2014 <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1217>

⁷⁸ Jones, 'Performance: Time, Space and Cultural 'Value'', 31.

⁷⁹ For Jones such containment echoes through abstract expressionist painting and its formalist criticism which necessitated the artwork be 'wholly manifest, fully contained and framed' (Michael Fried, 'Art and Objecthood' in *Minimalism: A critical Anthology* ed. by Gregory Battcock. (New York: E. P. Dutton 1968), 145.

⁸⁰ Kaprow's works can further be viewed as symptomatic of the era within which he was working where there was a conscious drive to shift the production of the artwork from the studio to the gallery and further afield

constructed environments, the colour and texture of individual's clothing became additional notes within the overall experience of the work. Kaprow's installations became performances to be experienced in relation to their surrounding site, viewed in conjunction with, and alongside, the idiosyncratic movements of individual audience members, expanding and disbanding the art historical paradigm of static object and passive viewer into one of shared interaction and engagement.

For example, Kaprow's 1959 work *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* at the Reuben Gallery in New York⁸¹ presented an immersive environment that invited the viewer to actively participate in the unfolding performance. Lasting for ninety minutes, the eighteen simultaneous performances included painters working on canvases, readings from placards, the playing of musical instruments, a procession of performers and culminated in two performers saying single-syllable words as four huge scrolls fell from a horizontal bar between them. Individuals attending the event were given a programme and three stapled cards, providing them with instructions for their participation. The instructions included when to take their seats or move between the different gallery spaces, or when applause was appropriate, activating the audience into a physical engagement with the unfolding work that rendered them integral to the evolving action. Kaprow's participatory '*Happenings*'⁸² further blurred the line between what was an everyday movement, such as sitting down or standing up to view the evolving work and what was a 'performance', famously declaring, 'the line between the *Happening* and life should be kept as fluid, and perhaps as indistinct as possible'.⁸³ The unpredictability and fluidity of the *Happening* can be seen to diffuse the rigidity of the frame Jones emphasises as surrounding the traditionally static art object, presenting instead a permeable

⁸¹ *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* occurred within the confines of a traditional gallery setting. Staged within in a gallery Kaprow's activation of the audience was a critical act, serving to question the established boundaries between audience, artwork and performer.

⁸² Kaprow coined the term *Happening* in the late 1950s to suggest works that ensued a sentiment of '*something spontaneous, something that just happens to happen*'. See Jeff Kelley ed. *Allan Kaprow Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 1993), 62.

⁸³ Allan Kaprow. 'The Happenings Are Dead: Long Live the Happenings!' in *Ibid.*, 62.

boundary between the work of art, the audience and the surrounding site. For Jones, Kaprow's attempts to activate the audience into a bodily engagement with a work of art, blurring the distinction between viewer and performer, audience and participant, have served as a foundation for contemporary site and event-based practices⁸⁴ that place an emphasis on the individual audience member and the 'reciprocity between artist, work and interpreter'.⁸⁵

Within Jones's discussion it is, however, important to note that her notion of the gallery is somewhat limiting, setting up a series of binary oppositions between the art object and the audience, between the inside of the gallery and all that is outside of it. On a simple level, such a binary opposition can hold resonance in relation to the island and its relationship of being on the 'outside' or removed from the cultural and social norms of a mainland (a discussion of the island as a site 'outside' and in the periphery will inform chapter IV.1 A distant edge. Bringing the island into the everyday). However, such simplified terms negate the nuanced and subtle contradictions of both the island and the institutional setting itself where a series of fluctuating relationships around the works on show and the engagement of an audience present a greater indistinction between the artwork, its site of display and

⁸⁴ Jones positions her argument in relation to a burgeoning criticism of Nicholas Bourriaud's notion of Relational Aesthetics presented in his publication of the same name. (see Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*). In her introduction to the publication *Perform. Repeat. Record. Live Art in History* Jones writes 'a faddish and quite simplistic, embrace of 'relational' aesthetics has emerged over the past few years. This embrace is, to say the least, disingenuous and, to say the most, superficial and unhelpful as a critical formulation. The idea of relational aesthetics ignores a vast and complex history of contemporary art's increasingly assertive opening of artwork to participant (...) and to 'situation', 'dematerialization', 'intermediality' and a general reciprocity among, maker, work and interpreter'. See Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield ed., *Perform. Repeat. Record. Live Art in History*. (Bristol: Intellect 2012), 20.

⁸⁵ Such a reciprocity is further evident in the work of Suzanne Lacy. Working in the late 1960s, contemporary to Kaprow, Lacy developed performative situations that were based upon activating relationships between people in an effort to create new modes of embodiment and new 'public spheres' commenting, 'what exists in the space between the words public and art is an unknown relationship between artist and audience, a relationship that may itself become the artwork.' See Suzanne Lacey, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*. (Seattle: Bay Press 1995), 21.

the interaction of a viewer. Indeed, within contemporary curatorial practices the gallery space has become a site regularly hosting installation, performance and event-based practices that actively engage an audience into physical and discursive relationships with a range of differing works.⁸⁶ The gallery has furthermore taken on a role as amorphous, shifting and responsive site. For example in the work of *Eastside Projects*, Birmingham, the gallery user manual presents the exhibition space to be a continually changing local that aims to activate the audience into an engagement with its developing site,

If previous gallery structures tend to lull you into passivity then Eastside Projects demands, through its design, that you are active. This activity is a prompt for further work beyond the public space of the gallery into and onto the public sphere. This should be the purpose of the gallery.⁸⁷

For *Eastside Projects*, the physical space of the gallery presents a point of active engagement, where remnants and traces of previous shows echo within the space as each new exhibition is installed. In seeking to present a visual history of the space, the gallery is read as an evolving and live site.⁸⁸ The gallery further becomes a point from which activity is diffused into the surrounding city, reflecting shifting paradigms within contemporary art practice that draw upon social and discursive arenas.⁸⁹ However, despite this movement away from the static and fixed art object, and its own insistence on fluctuating and evolving activity, the gallery can be

⁸⁶ A discussion over the diverse role of the gallery introduces consideration of the term paracuratorial. The paracuratorial defines curating as not solely bound to exhibition making, but rather as encompassing, and making primary, a range of activities that have traditionally been supplementary to the exhibition itself such as events, symposia, screenings, residencies and publications - all of which occur and are facilitated within a gallery context.

⁸⁷ Eastside projects gallery user manual reprinted in 'Performing the Exhibition' *On Curating* 15 (2012): 18, accessed May 2015 www.oncruating.org

⁸⁸ The recent Eastside Projects exhibition *Display Show* at Temple Bar Gallery Dublin, presented a series of proposals detailing permanent alterations to the physical fabric of the gallery, reflecting the nature of display as something always subject to change. The exhibition evolved over time in a number of different sites exploring possibilities of the context of display as being in perpetual flux.

⁸⁹ The work of Kaprow can be seen to mark the start of consistent questioning of the gallery institution shifting the place of the artwork from the gallery to everyday environments. Such a shift is evident in contemporary discussions around relational and situated practices. See Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, and Doherty, *Contemporary Art. From Studio to Situation*.

perceived to continue to hold an authority that, to some extent, frames a given work. Situated within a gallery a work or art, be it performative, immersive or participatory is given authority and value through the framework of the institution itself.⁹⁰

Within contexts outside of the gallery setting the possibilities for varied viewpoints, influences and associations surrounding a work become multiplied, shifting the interpretation of a work of art from the overarching framework of the institution to the idiosyncratic experiences of an individual viewer. Indeed, Jones's emphasis on the work of Kaprow seeks to foreground a concern with the affect of the artwork,

On specific bodies within the complexities of (the works) unfolding over time in particular spaces,⁹¹

That she proposes can be seen as a basis for contemporary event-based and installation practices where the work takes consideration of, or is informed by, its spatial and temporal environment. Jones's assertion presents a return to the writing of Wik who proposes that a number of contemporary works and installations present the audience with a 'spatial experience extended in time'.⁹² In this merging of site, duration, audience and work, the clarity of boundaries around the traditionally contained and static artwork are put into question. Indeed, beyond the confines of a gallery it is not simply a visual art discourse that surrounds the installed artworks but the unexpected site of their display. Here, the clarity of boundaries surrounding the artwork within an institutional discourse become expanded incorporating the fluctuating and various rhythms, patterns and associations of the given site. When discussing the work of UK commissioning agency Art Angel, the organizations co-director James Lingwood describes his motivation for developing artists' site-based commissions as follows,

⁹⁰ Writing in the mid 1990s during a time of institutional expansion, Hal Foster warned that 'the institution may overshadow the work that it otherwise highlights: it becomes the spectacle, it collects the cultural capital, and the director, curator becomes the star'. See Hal Foster, *Return of the Real*. (Cambridge Massachusettes: MIT Press 1996), 198.

⁹¹ Jones, 'Performance: Time, Space and Cultural 'Value'', 36.

⁹² Wik, 'Viewing Positions. Here and There', 51.

We were interested in the idea that there could be a seepage of the work into the world and vice versa, to break down where the edge of the 'made' work might be, and where the edge of the 'found' world might be. Many of the projects with which we've been involved there is this kind of seepage of the one into the other.⁹³

Such a 'seepage' into the everyday provides a multitude of possible encounters and interpretations of a given work.

Utilising a series of different locations and varying time frames of duration the curatorial project *Seven Sites* sought to explore possibilities for questioning the perceived clarity of distinctions between artwork and viewer as encountered within a gallery context. The project involved the commissioning of seven new artists' works in different and varied locations across the cities of Manchester and Salford. Following a launch event by the artist Edwina Ashton in a top floor flat of a housing estate, seven new works were presented at regular intervals between September 2011 and June 2012. The artists and sites involved included Franziska Lantz in a shopping centre, Amy Feneck on a local radio station, Giles Bailey in a private hotel room, the theatre company Quarantine in a city centre canteen, the community group *Ordsocs* in a local boys club and surrounding housing estate, Antonia Low in a Church Hall and Sian Robinson Davies in a comedy club. Each artist worked in response to and reaction against the site chosen in conversation with myself and fellow practitioner Swen Steinhauser.

The performance of Sian Robinson Davies in particular provided a series of questions around the defined moment of the work of art, and the viewer's engagement with it as such, proposing a series of uncertain and complex boundaries around its temporary occurrence. Devised as part of a regular open mic comedy night, Davies presented herself as a comic testing out a new routine.⁹⁴ Davies' participation in the open mic night was not marked out or distinguished as a performance different to any of the others unfolding that evening. Her routine was

⁹³ Lingwood and Morris, 'A conversation', 11.

⁹⁴ For documentation of Sian Robinson Davies' full routine see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CR9S0Yq5yfE>

founded upon disrupting the conventions of comedy, replacing the standard and expected punchline with a blank and empty pause. Davies's performance mode further presented a vulnerability absent from the previous and following acts whose performances were centred on an element of bravado and enthusiastic energy. As the only female act Davies stood out, speaking calmly and with little gesticulation. Within the setting of the comedy club the unassuming 'art performance' became part of the evenings entertainment, furthermore for the audience aware of or waiting for an artwork to occur, the routines before and after Davies took on an added performative quality. What was or was not a visual artwork was unclear, each comic was viewed as a performer and Davies in turn as a regular comic. Her performance presented a series of questions around notions of performativity itself and the value judgments given to performances in different disciplines. The setting of the comedy club immediately framed Davies performance in line with the actions and interactions that predominate in that space, namely the conventions of stand-up routines.

In situating works in locations outside of a traditional gallery context *Seven Sites* sought to explore possibilities of creating unique moments of encounter that disrupted any clear distinctions between audience, artwork and site. For example, Franzika Lantz's sound performance as part of the series occurred within a shopping centre on a busy Saturday lunchtime. Taking over an empty shop unit within the central mall, Lantz transformed the interior into a blackened space in marked contrast to bright lights and clean surfaces of the surrounding shop fronts. Within the space Lantz set up two speakers opposite a table she would use to conduct an electronic sound performance. In front of the central table stood three

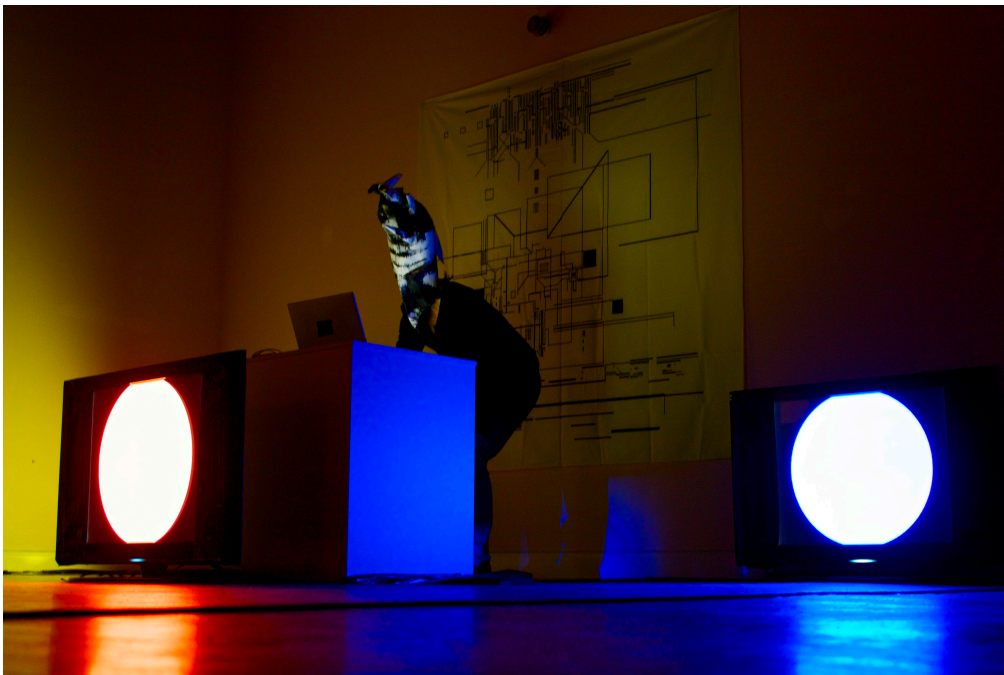


FIG. 7. S.A.Y.D.A.N.C.E Franziksa Lantz, performance as part of *Seven Sites*, Lowry Outlet Mall Salford, 24 September 2011.

large flat screen monitors showing a single coloured circle. The circles on each screen changed colour at different rhythms suggesting a signalling or form of communication in conjunction with, and in response to, the performed sound. When the performance began, the noise from the space spilled out into the surrounding shops. The audio interrupted the established rhythms of the shopping mall. However, despite the marked contrast of Lantz's interior to the surrounding mall, a number of features of the shopping centre were echoed in her performance adding to the evolving site of the work. The shopping centre was a site full of clashing sounds as each shop had their own music system and specific genre of music spilling into the central hallway. Lantz's performance both drew in and magnified the noise levels of the surrounding space. The shop unit used for her work was situated opposite a beauticians and hairdressers, both of whom had neon signs in their windows advertising manicures. The biting colour of the signage and the flash of the lighting seemed to echo the rhythmical light sequences accompanying Lantz's performance. Lantz's work both affected and was affected by the surrounding site. Here, a return to Deleuze's concept of transmutability and de Certeau's presentation of the frontier seems pertinent, where the border between two spatial states is a site of infection and influence, the one side informing and shaping the other. The environment surrounding Lantz's performance both informed and was informed by, her delivered performance.

With such permeable boundaries surrounding the work of art beyond a gallery setting an echo of the literary island can be seen. Within literature, the island shore is a site of encounter and exchange that draws upon both sides of its spatial binaries, informing our interpretation of the site. For example, the outside of the island, the ocean and mainland from which the island castaway finds himself removed, informs and shapes our perception of the new island space. Recalling de Certeau's discussion of the frontier, the boundary between two different spatial states is 'created by contacts', as each inform and shape the other.⁹⁵ In a similar

⁹⁵ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 127. However, for an informed audience an awareness of the encountered situation as an art event invariably affects and shapes an engagement with the action and the consequent

vein the environment surrounding a site-based or situated work both informs and is informed by the unfolding work, dissolving clearly defined distinctions between the work of art, the audience and the site of its display into multiple points of engagement that ignite a 'seeping of the artwork into the everyday'.⁹⁶ With such fluctuating and fluid points of encounter, the work of art situated outside of a gallery setting can be read to reflect the literary and geographical island, where the clarity of boundaries surrounding and defining its site can be perceived as fluctuating points of contact, influence and interaction.

understanding and experience of the work. Claire Bishop has noted that although physically engaged with a site-based or situated work we remain, constantly aware of our position of being in relation to a 'work of art', a position that mirrors our experience within a gallery context. She writes, 'activated spectatorship is inevitably circumscribed by both the artist and the place of the exhibition, as the gallery situation will always compromise what kind of gestures (if any) can be taken by the viewer, moving art away from the gallery does not fundamentally affect this conditioning' (see Lingwood and Martin, 'A conversation', ref.49, p.26). Here the authority of the institutional setting legitimizing the work of art is transferred onto our knowledge of the given encounter as 'artwork'. In relation to Lantz's performance, the unintentional viewer stepped in and out of the space momentarily, uncertain as to what was occurring perhaps returning several times. Notably the audience aware of the staged work stayed within the shop space for the duration of the performance. In the curatorial project *59.14 N 3.34 W*, the audience's awareness of the walk to and around the site as an 'art event' worked as a positive means to remove the experience from their familiarity of the Brough as a local beauty spot and destination for weekend excursions. Having not previously been used as a place of exhibition the staged event framed the island as a site of something unexpected and new. This process of influencing and pre-knowledge of the work of art has an echo within island fictions. The knowledge of the central character within a literary narrative that they are upon an island informs their explorations and experiences of the narrated site. The knowledge that they are isolated and contained, far removed from a familiar homeland enables and facilitates behaviours deemed deviant or alternative to proliferate. Furthermore, as a reader, our prior experience and cultural knowledge of the 'desert island' as a site of subversion, freedom and critique informs our expectations of the literary work. Here, the entangled relationship between the island in fiction, our prior experience of such narratives and a history of the island in the cultural imagination provides a series of points of reference.

⁹⁶ Lingwood and Martin, 'A conversation', 11.

II.II THE STORY OF THE SHORELINE. THE EVENT OF THE ISLAND.

Islands are blind spots on the surface of the known, one does not find ones way to them – it is rather they who manifest themselves with the force of an event, emerging at the last moment.⁹⁷

(Hernan Diaz 'A Topical Paradise', 2010)

The unexpected emergence of the island, erupting through shipwreck, storm or loss at sea presents a dramatic change to the narrative trajectory of what had previously been a sea voyage. This dramatic encounter throws the central protagonist of a novel from the relative security of their known voyage onto the unknown island.⁹⁸ As the castaway steps foot upon the shore the enclosed area of ground is activated into a narrative sequence, bringing the previously distant site into a tangible present. Yet, the emergence of the island lasts only as long as the shipwrecked individual remains upon its shore. As the central character of a novel leaves the island, the remote pocket of land resides back into an unknown cartography, physically out of reach. H.G Wells eloquently describes the fading of the island as his castaway Charles Prendick leaves *The Island of Dr Moreau*,

I drove out to sea before a gentle wind from the southwest, slowly, steadily; and the island grew smaller and smaller, and the lank spire of smoke dwindled to a finer and finer line against the hot sunset. The ocean rose up around me, hiding that low, dark patch from my eyes. The daylight, the trailing glory of the sun, went streaming out of the sky, was drawn aside like some luminous curtain, and at last I looked into the blue gulf of immensity which the sunshine hides, and saw the floating hosts of the stars.⁹⁹

Taking the unexpected and temporary emergence of the island as the foundation for a literary narrative, the following chapter draws a parallel with contemporary arts practices, installations, artworks, performances and exhibitions that take a temporal structure as their guiding framework.

⁹⁷ Diaz, 'A Tropical Paradise', 79.

⁹⁸ Within island narratives of *Lord of the Flies* and more contemporary fictions, such as the TV series *Lost* the central protagonist finds themselves on an island following a plane crash of some description. The shift from sea to air voyage presents developments in transport and does not alter the structure of island narratives discussed thus far.

⁹⁹ Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, 109.



FIG. 8. Computer desktop showing Elisabeth Molin's film *Fish* (2011) as part of a *Pala* broadcast, June 2014.

In his essay accompanying the 2009 project *One Day Sculpture*, Mick Wilson describes the series of temporary artworks and installations in relation to a notion of the event.

The event holds longstanding interest, naming something which happens, which takes place, which has a time and a place but which does not otherwise have a 'thing-like' existence. An event passes into being and passes out of being again without resolving into a discrete 'thingly' object as such.¹⁰⁰

Momentarily appearing, initiating a temporal encounter, before residing and evading any fixed form, the event-based and temporary artwork has an intangibility that recalls that of the literary island. Exploring the ephemeral nature of both the event and the emergent literary island, the curatorial project *Pala* devised a programme of fragmentary and fleeting digital broadcasts.¹⁰¹ Collaborating with a computer programmer, the project entailed designing a software package that individuals were invited to download. Once activated, the software enabled the transmission of a series of artists film and video works directly to their desktop. With each broadcast occurring unannounced and lasting for no longer than three minutes or as little as thirty seconds, the transmitted works presented a series of temporary encounters. The broadcasts emerged interrupting and suspending the viewer from the immediacy of their current task before residing, disappearing from the computer screen, returning the viewer to their task in hand. The unannounced interruption of the broadcasts further engineered a disorientation that sought to reflect the unexpected emergence of the island in literary fictions interrupting and

¹⁰⁰ Mick Wilson, 'The Event' in Doherty and Cross ed. *One Day Sculpture*, 23-26. Wilson continues his argument to discuss the focus of the event in recent philosophy, in particular Alain Badiou's essay 'The Event in Deleuze' *PARRHESIA*, 2 (2007): 37-44 accessed January 2015
http://parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia02/parrhesia02_badiou02.pdf.

For the purposes of the research project a simplistic notion of the event as something that temporality occurs and recedes is taken. The simplicity of this action is seen to be mirrored in the emergence of islands in literary fiction.

¹⁰¹ Although existing in a digital realm rather than a physical manifestation of work, *Pala* embodied the ephemeral and intangible concept of the event as proposed by Wilson

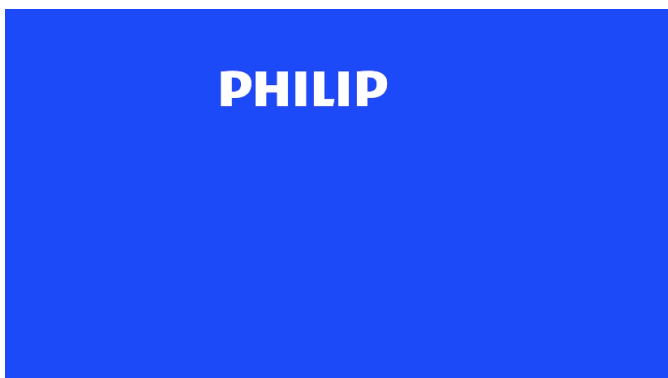


FIG. 9. Stills from artists' works broadcast as part of *Pala*:

David Cochrane *If I could see you now*, 2009.

Piotr Krzymowski *73*, 2012.

David Wojtycz, *PHILIP*, 2014.

disrupting the progression of a sea voyage, to provide an alternative site where the castaway becomes suspended from the familiarity of their mainland. Extending a relationship with the literary island, each film broadcast as part of *Pala*, invoked elements of everyday imagery and objects, reframing and representing them through techniques of montage, repetition and cropping. A discussion on the emergence of the island in literature as an event, and the subsequent reframing of a castaway's familiar everyday facilitated by an engagement with the unexpected island takes precedence in chapter IV.

Within *Pala*, the nature of the project and the one-on-one viewing experience engendered by the desktop format placed an emphasis on the singular experience of a given viewer. In discourses surrounding temporary site and event-based practices notably Claire Doherty's discussion of situated works in her publication *Contemporary Art. From Studio to Situation*¹⁰² and her essay *In Search of a Situation*¹⁰³ emphasis is placed on the experience of an individual viewer and their resulting interpretation of a witnessed work. Negating the traditionally static art object¹⁰⁴ the artwork experienced as 'event' is legitimised by the testimonies of those who participated in, or viewed its occurrence, presenting a shift from the institutional authority of the gallery context as proposed by Jones.¹⁰⁵ Indeed,

¹⁰² Claire Doherty ed., *Contemporary Art. From Studio to Situation*. (London: Blackdog 2004).

¹⁰³ Claire Doherty, 'In Search of A Situation', *Art In the Life World, Breaking Ground Research Papers* (February 2008): 9-11, accessed September 2014 http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/reading/RESEARCH_NEWSPAPER_all.pdf

¹⁰⁴ A negation of the object nature of art further negates its concurrent history of reification, critiquing relations of value and property.

¹⁰⁵ Jones would further argue that the centrality of the audience in the experience and development of the temporal event finds historical precedent in the work of Allan Kaprow. Playing a vital role in the development of Kaprow's *Happenings* the individual viewer became a performer, contributor and collaborator within the unfolding work. Kaprow stated 'people become a real and necessary part of the work. It cannot exist without them'. (Kaprow 'The Happenings Are Dead: Long Live the Happenings!' in Kelley ed., *Allan Kaprow Essays*, 64). The importance he places on the interaction and role of the audience can be seen to resonate with contemporary event-based practices where the audience are 'implicated' into an engagement with a given work.

Doherty comments that temporal and event-based works ‘implicate us in the act of engaging’¹⁰⁶ and as such, can only be experience first hand or in the retelling.

Emphasis on the individual as witness and participant further brings to the fore a process of discursive storytelling. An individuals’ account of a witnessed installation or event enters into the afterlife and legacy of the given work. In his continued discussion of event-based works Wilson suggests,

The ephemeral, fugitive and dissipative nature of certain eventual works can be used to prioritise local, informal, discursive or folk memory processes in the constitution of the work’s historicity and subsequent recuperation in longer term cultural memory.¹⁰⁷

The history and legacy of the work rests within the social and discursive domain that circles around the site of its occurrence, emphasising structures of oral storytelling and rumour in its lasting memory. Here, the narrated ‘experience’ of a given work can be seen to recall something of the first person singular of numerous island narratives. Moving around and within the island, the central protagonist of a novel defines and legitimises the site, narrating and thus actualising the ‘space’ of the island.¹⁰⁸ In a similar vein, the individual encountering and interacting with the temporary artwork or event can be seen to inform the evolving ‘space’ of the work, further contributing to its lasting legacy through a process of idiosyncratic storytelling. Recalling Maria Lind’s discussion of the work of Oda Projessi, the community’s engagement with the group’s Budapest flat, informed and activated the interior into a ‘space’ of artwork. The neighbours and participants’ account of their experience in the flat continues to inform and influence the work’s afterlife. For example, documentation of the project was shown under the title *The Room Revisited* at Kunstverein München¹⁰⁹. Within the gallery environment audio accounts and written descriptions by participants were displayed in an effort to reconstruct something of the original flat.

¹⁰⁶ Doherty, ‘In Search of A Situation’, 10.

¹⁰⁷ Wilson, ‘The Event’, 26.

¹⁰⁸ See the earlier discussion on de Certeau in chapter 2.1 A Shifting Shoreline.

¹⁰⁹ *The Room Revisited* Kunstverein München 5 June – 31 August 2003.

A focus on the integral role of the audience member/ participant in relation to the event or temporary artwork was explored in the curatorial project *Seven Sites*. Within *Seven Sites* each installation or performance as part of the series of events was devised to function as a unique encounter, using the notion of a temporary gathering as the framing point from which the audience would experience the work. As such, the marketing of each new work was promoted using the structure of a personal invitation, detailing simply the artists name, a location and time akin to a traditional party invite. The personal invitation sought to place emphasis on the individual attendee. Furthermore, the suggestion of a social gathering was devised in an effort to ignite a casual interaction between audience members and a discussion about their shared experience over the duration of the series of works, generating lasting narratives around each witnessed event.

Continuing a consideration of narrative a plethora of 'stories', either discursive, interpretative or engineered, seem to circle around the artwork as event, being both central to its actualisation and lasting legacy. Returning to the work of Alan Kaprow, rumour played a central role in the experience and resonance of the *Happening*. He writes that the event of the *Happening* ought to be remembered 'by the stories that circulate'. Such stories,

Evoke an aura of something breathing just beyond our immediate grasp rather than a momentary record to be judged. In effect, this is a calculated rumour, the purpose of which is to stimulate as much fantasy as possible.¹¹⁰

Considering more contemporary practices, for example, Heather and Ivan Morison's work *I lost her near Fantasy Island. Life will not be the same*, commissioned for the British Art Show 6 in Bristol, the participation of numerous passersby can be seen to have ignited diverse and disparate narratives around the installation that introduced possibilities for a misinterpretation and embellished re-telling of the encounter triggering 'rumours' around the work.

On Friday 14 July 2006, a jack-knifed lorry shed its load of 25,000 flowers across a harbour side location in the centre of Bristol.¹¹¹ A cascade of cut flowers fell from

¹¹⁰ Kelley ed., *Allan Kaprow Essays*, 62.



FIG. 10. Heather and Ivan Morison, *I lost her near Fantasy Island. Life will not be the same*, Bristol, 14 July 2006.

¹¹¹ See *Situations* website <http://www.morison.info/ilosthernearfant.html>

metal containers creating a vibrant display of flora. At 6pm, passersby began to take the flowers and by 7pm the installation was entirely dispersed across the city. Without being officially announced, the unexpected arrival of the lorry provided a point of engagement and discussion for all those passing by. With the distribution of the flowers the work shifted from the public space of its installation to the private spaces and personal histories of all those who took a handful of flowers. In the week prior to the appearance of the jack-knifed lorry, an anonymous postcard was sent to houses throughout the city. Designed by the artists, the postcards provided a fractured narrative printed with the text

African Grey Parrot, grey with red tail feathers.
I Lost Her Near Fantasy Island
Life has not been the same

There was no direct or obvious connection between the lorry appearing in the city centre and the postcard arriving on a doorstep. The two events presented fragments of narrative to diverse and specific individuals. With numerous individuals implicated and participating in the work, the legacy of the installation became imbedded not just within a visual art discourse but the personal lives and subsequent interpretations of those who received a postcard and those who encountered and interacted with the cascade of cut flowers. Playing with the distribution of different narrative fragments – the installed ‘crash’ site in the city centre and the evocative postcard, the artists ignited numerous (his)stories around the work that could have, potentially, entered back into the fabric of the city, becoming part of an individual’s future memory of a given site.

It is worth noting however, that a focus on the discursive and oral history of an event can be seen to negate a secondary audience that encounters the ephemeral work through its documentation. Here, the question of documentation provides a paradox. On the one hand discourses surrounding event-based practice place emphasis on the temporal and ephemeral nature of the work, focusing on the immediacy of the experience for an individual, yet on the other the event is captured, framed and re-presented for a specific visual art audience containing the



FIG. 11. Passerby holding a bunch of flowers from Heather and Ivan Morison's, *I lost her near Fantasy Island. Life will not be the same*, Bristol, 14 July 2006.

idiosyncratic experience in an overarching and clearly defined critical framework. Such a framework can, however, serve as a means to enable and facilitate a continued diversification of the event's initial audience. For example, the catalogue accompanying the *One Day Sculpture* series of commissions contains critical essays and photographic documentation of each event. Through their representation in the project catalogue the 24 hour duration of each work is extended to a global audience who can continue to read about and engage with the works months and years after their occurrence. In a sense, the temporality of the event and all that is associated with such ephemerality becomes 'suspended'. The intangibility of the event-based work is captured and consequently 'suspended' through a process of documentation enabling the work to exist beyond the immediacy of its occurrence, entering into other discourses and environments. It is perhaps possible to consider the continued distribution of the history of the work through the project catalogue as continuing the process of storytelling that is initiated by the moment of encounter with the event. In relation to the temporary projects undertaken as part of the research project, there was an endeavour to enable the documentation to continue to facilitate diverse encounters with each work and continue an emphasis on the discursive, albeit on a much smaller and more intimate scale. For example, following *59.14 N 3.34 W* a small bookwork was made and placed within Orkney Public Library. Resting within the local collection the publication has the possibility to provide an alternative and unexpected history of the Brough for a secondary audience who encountered the work. Feeding back into discursive and local histories of the site, the documentation of the event will, hopefully, continue to facilitate a process of storytelling or rumour around the specific site of the Brough.

Rumour, folk histories and idiosyncratic narratives can also be identified to play a role in the development of the literary island as a site of alternatives to the familiar culture of a continental homeland. The return of sailors, merchants and travellers to a home community brought with it stories of other cultures, climates and customs. In Walter Benjamin's *The Storyteller Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov* he details the development of story telling from two sources; the bordem of manual labour and the return of the traveler or explorer to the home community.

“When someone goes on a trip, he has something to tell about” goes the German saying, and people imagine the storyteller as someone who has come from afar.¹¹²

The unreliability of oral accounts of returning travellers inevitably resulted in a blurring of fact and fiction. Stories of distant lands and islands readily morphed into fantastical tales with the island becoming a prime site for the ‘other’. The 18th century myth of the ‘monkey-tailed people of the Indian Islands’ has been traced to interpretations of the Andamanese people, the various aboriginal inhabitants of the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal whose traditional costume includes wearing tailed skirts. These skirts seen from afar could have been misinterpreted by passing sailors as actual tails. The distance of the island therefore provides a space for misunderstanding, confusion, tall tales, and rumour, producing a fertile ground for imaginary wanderings both in the mind of the storyteller and in the mind of the listener positioning the island as a site just beyond our immediate grasp where the fictional can take precedence.

Exploring the relationship of the island to storytelling, the practical project *Imaginary Islands- A Building Kit* encouraged individuals to compose and construct fictional island landscapes from a set of illustrated cards. Individuals were invited to construct a series of unique island worlds, which, once constructed became props for further activities of story telling and role play, linking the island to a literary history of fantastical and fictional encounters. Although radically different to the oral history of event-based and temporary artworks, the blurring of fact and fiction that occurs within both oral and written histories of islands can be seen to have a clear resonance within certain temporal and event-based practices. For example, within Heather and Ivan Morison’s *I Lost her near Fantasy Island. Life has not been the same*, the interruption of the familiar harbourside with a jack-knifed lorry and its spilled contents of flowers created a situation where the fantastical or fictive entered into the everyday routine of numerous passers-by. In her discussion of

¹¹² Walter Benjamin, ‘The Storyteller Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov’ in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000* ed. by Dorothy J Hale. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing 2006), 361-2.

contemporary art practice, Wik notes that in such instances ‘the sense of reality is heightened through the intersection of fiction’.¹¹³ Presented with an unexpected scenario the audience are invited to reconsider the space they find themselves within. As such, the encountered artwork can be perceived to transform, enliven and reframe the site of its occurrence. (A question of reframing takes precedence in chapter IV.II). Again, recalling the experimental work of Kaprow, emphasis on the oral history of the *Happening* created a sense of something just out of reach, attempting to trigger an individual’s imagining of the given scenario and in so doing provided space for the event to morph and adapt with each new impression. Such a process of reframing facilitates a blurring between the real and the imaginary, inviting the potential for persistent reimaginings of the possible histories and futures of both the encountered artwork and the site of its occurrence, providing possibilities for the fictional to enter into its lasting history.

In considering the artwork as event, emerging unexpectedly before residing without fixed form, a parallel can be drawn with the appearance of the island in literary narratives. Resting upon an intangible and ephemeral encounter the artwork as event ignites an oral history around its occurrence. Triggering narratives of interpretation the temporary encounter further introduces possibilities for mis-readings and embellished re-tellings around the given work that serve to fuel rumours where the factual can easily slip into the fictional. Here, an emphasis on rumour and storytelling can be perceived to recall something of the island in the western imagination where oral histories of island lands have informed the role of the island in literature where a blurring between the real and the imaginary freely occurs.

¹¹³ Wik, ‘Viewing Positions. Here and There’, 51.

CHAPTER III**THE ISLAND AS AN UNCERTAIN STAGE.**

III. THE ISLAND AS AN UNCERTAIN STAGE.

Within event-based and situated practices the participation and presence of the audience can be seen to add to the unfolding artwork. As has previously been discussed, the individual audience member interacts, informs and interprets the encountered work, shaping its lasting narrative. Furthermore, as participants the audience are simultaneously both viewer and viewed, introducing an element of the performative into the viewing experience itself. The following chapter brings into discussion consideration of the viewer as performer extending this analysis to consider certain artworks as 'staged' encounters where the viewer enters into the space of the work itself. As such a discussion of 'staging' will be brought into comparison with the literary island where the castaway moves around and across the island site, narrating its presence to the reader and 'acting out' a series of alternatives to the status quo.

Continuing an analogy with staging and a sentiment of the performative, the castaway can be perceived as something of an actor upon the stage of the contained island. Discussing the theatrical, the English theatre maker Peter Brook comments that theatre begins with the simple action of one individual watching another, he notes,

I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.¹¹⁴

Taking Brook's emphasis on the theatrical being as simple an action as the viewing of one individual by another, a further analogy can be drawn with situated art practices. Indeed, the interaction of the audience in and around event-based practices or situated installations presents a theatre of sorts, injecting the scenario with an element of the performative. Recalling the curatorial project *Triptych*, the movement of the audience combined with the different points of viewing the structure - from a distance and in close proximity - rendered the audience as performers. Those upon the structure and within each divided section 'performed'

¹¹⁴ Peter Brook, *The Empty Stage*. (London: Pelican Books 1968), 11.

a rhythm of movement for others viewing from a distance, observing the bodies within and around the sculptural form. Here, the audience played a role in front of, or beside, the exhibited two-dimensional works.

A focus on the viewer as simultaneously performer introduces a concentrated process of looking that further serves as a means to reframe the surrounding environment. Although providing a distinct divide between the audience and the artwork, the 1964 work *Street Dance* by dancer and member of the *Judson Dance* group Lucinda Childs provides an example of how the everyday environment of a street scene can be transformed by inviting a process of careful and considered looking, drawing an audience's attention to a space in a manner that ignites a sense of expectation and, as such, introduces a potential reframing or transformation of the everyday. (A question of reframing the everyday takes precedence in the following chapter). Within the work the audience were invited to look out of a window and view the street below as the actions of two dancers highlighted certain aspects and everyday activities of the immediate space. Made for a choreography class given by Robert Dunn in downtown New York, Childs was tasked with creating a piece exactly six minutes long for an audience of classmates and invited guests in a loft apartment in Chinatown. Marcia Segel describes the work as follows,

To begin, Childs turned on a tape recorder and headed downstairs in the elevator. Pre-recorded instructions directed the audience to go to the windows and look down at a certain portion of the street below. A snapshot taken at the time reveals a row of shabby brownstones and loft buildings, with cluttered ground-floor storefronts, a fire escape, parked cars—the kind of scene New Yorkers pass through every day without a glance. At precise intervals during the next six minutes a tape-recorded voice in the loft read a list of objects, spaces, and actions visible in that slice of the streetscape. Childs and another dancer, cued by the recorded instructions, motioned to objects or details on the list that the audience in the loft above might not have been able to see clearly. At other times the dancers blended in with the scene.¹¹⁵

In *Street Dance*, the audience in the loft had the advantage of a guided tour, but the pedestrians down below simply encountered two ordinary looking women doing

¹¹⁵ Marcia B. Siegel, 'Dancing on the Outside', *The Hudson Review* LX (2007): 111-118, accessed May 2015
http://headlong.org/wp.content/uploads/2015/03/hudson_review.pdf

slightly strange things. Those passing by the action involuntarily became part of the performance for those viewing from above. What was, or was not choreographed or part of the 'performance', became unclear. The actions of Childs and her fellow dancer served to draw the viewer's attention to the scene before them in a concentrated manner removed from their daily interaction with the space.

Directing the gaze of the audience onto the everyday street scene further established a sense of expectation. The audience were waiting for an event or performance to occur. This sense of expectation served to transform the scene before any movement or choreography was enacted. A similar sentiment of expectation can be found in *The Golden Rule* by contemporary German collective Fort. Within the work the artists invited an audience to view not the interior of Galerie Lena Brüning where their work was advertised as being on show, but rather drew their focus towards the street scene in front of the building. Leaving the gallery completely empty, the artists played a musical track on repeat and offered drinks. Their work was to be found in the unfolding action occurring in front of the gallery

“if the visitors were observant, one could see that the street scene kept on repeating itself The same man walked by eating a Capri ice-cream, people repeating the same actions on a five-minute loop, in time to the song playing.”¹¹⁶

Aspects of the scene remained the same - a small girl sat on a bench and holding a balloon did not move for the duration of the gallery opening. Other individuals appeared to repeat their actions and re-enter the scene, a woman holding a yellow plastic bag, a girl riding a red bike. These performers only revealed themselves after viewing the street scene for a relatively long period of time. In conjunction with the staged actions, the unassuming passersby took on a performative quality. What was or was not part of the choreographed action was unclear. A similarity can perhaps be drawn here with Sian Robinson Davies work as part of *Seven Sites* where, occurring unannounced, her performance merged with the other stand-up routines throughout the evening. However, for those aware and waiting for an 'art

¹¹⁶ Jeni Foulton, 'Fort Collective' *Sleek Magazine* (27 June 2013), accessed February 2015 <http://www.sleek-mag.com/berlin/2013/06/fort-collective/>



FIG. 12. Fort *The Golden Rule*, Galerie Lena Brüning, Berlin, 4 June 2010.

performance' to occur the routines of the evening's comedians took on a heightened theatricality as a sense of expectation coloured the evening. Returning to Fort, *The Golden Rule* entailed a careful framing and staging of the street scene in front of the gallery. A man with two small dogs and bright neon socks seemed to linger intentionally yet was not viewed again once he left the street. The door of the house opposite opened and an older man drove off in a parked car. These fragments of unrepeated and unchoreographed action became part of the unfolding artwork. Through the artists' invitation to the audience to look at the scene before them, the everyday actions were infused with elements of the performative, heightening the everyday with a sense of expectation.

The ability for the situated and event-based artwork to reframe the surrounding environment suggests a further sentiment of theatricality associated with the physical structure of a stage. At the 2013 symposium WORDS / WORLDS, Tim Etchells discussed the allure of the empty stage in his ongoing collaboration with photographer Hugo Glendinning.¹¹⁷ In the collaboration Etchells and Glendinning catalogue empty stages in a variety of contexts - pubs, conference centres, amateur theatres, church halls, city theatres and working men's clubs. Through these temporarily deserted locations for performance, the work explores stages as spaces of imminence and expectation. The empty stage is a space of invitation, inviting an imagining of the actions that could potentially occur upon its surface. Although not a traditional stage, by inviting the audience to view the street below and in front of them, Childs and Fort transformed the everyday scenes into backdrops or stage sets for their ensuing performances. Therein, the street scenes were imbued with a sense of expectation and by extension theatricality.

As a site that invites a projection of narrative and imagined possibilities the physical stage and the designated site for event-based or situated artwork is further akin to the island in the literary imagination. Both are relatively contained sites where behaviours and scenarios at a remove from the familiar can be rehearsed and put

¹¹⁷ Tim Etchells 'Inaugural Lecture' (presented at WORDS / WORLDS, Lancaster Institute for Contemporary Practice, Lancaster University, May 9 2013).



FIG. 13. Tim Etchells and Hugo Glendinning *Centre Point London*, from the series *Empty Stages*, 2003-12.



FIG. 14. Tim Etchells and Hugo Glendinning, *Highgate Wood School London*, from the series *Empty Stages*, 2003-12.

into action. They can further be united by considering each - the literary island, the physical stage and the environment of situated works - as sites for the playing out of behaviours and narratives separate and suspended within a surrounding everyday. They are all places of rehearsal and repetition where movements and stories are enacted for a viewing (or reading) audience.

Returning to a notion of staging, the artist Phil Collins has commented that within contemporary practice certain artists are no longer the provider of an experience, but rather are tasked with 'setting a stage' that serves to facilitate an encounter.¹¹⁸ For Collins, the encounter facilitated by his practice and that of similarly minded artists, hinges on the interaction of the audience, proposing that the artist undertakes facilitating an environment that implicates the audience into an act of engagement. Although not a physical or traditional stage per se, the constructed encounter discussed by Collins uses a devised situation as a 'backdrop' or 'stage set' against and within which actions and interactions are undertaken or performed. For Collins, inviting the audience into the site of the work, onto the metaphorical 'stage', is an attempt to break their habitual movements and expectations, providing possibilities of uncertainty.

In the curatorial project *Seven Sites* each event was devised as an encounter that facilitated a temporary removal from the surrounding environment and a submersion in an alternative representation of the given site. Within this representation of the familiar, possibilities for uncomfortable and uncertain encounters were explored. For example, in Edwina Ashton's work as part of the project launch, the performance created an unexpected and uncertain environment. Staged within a domestic flat, individuals were invited to attend a party. On arrival guests were greeted by a host of characters dressed in Ashton's anthropomorphic costumes performing repetitive and mundane tasks - cleaning a window, washing up, mixing flour for baking, moving backwards and forwards along

¹¹⁸ Collins, presentation at *Imagining the Audience*.



FIG. 15. Edwina Ashton *Seven Sites* project launch, Cannon Hussey House, Salford, 14 August 2011.

the hallway or sitting unmoving on a sofa. The unexpected hosts of the launch party ignored the arriving guests, focusing instead on their own intent actions. As a project launch, guests arriving at the flat were expecting to be hosted by the project curators or at least, those involved in the project would be clearly visible enabling conversations about the forthcoming series of events. The only individuals visible were performers dressed in Ashton's costumes. Without any clear author or director to the action in the flat, no artist or curator obviously present, the interior became a site of uncertain behaviours from both the devised creatures and the arriving guests. On arrival the guests hovered silently in the sitting room of the flat, somewhat confused, bemused and a little taken aback. Uncertain as to the unfolding action that was progressively consuming and destroying the tidy interior, the arriving guests were similarly uncertain as to the expected etiquette within the space. Disrupting the expected behaviours and routines of a familiar party format the performance fostered an environment playfully and somewhat awkwardly removed from the expected, staging a series of uncertain encounters.

A continued discussion of artistic practice as 'staging an encounter' is developed by Bridget Crone in her 2013 essay *Curating Dramatization and the diagram: Notes towards a Sensible Stage*. Discussing curatorial practice, Crone suggests that the curated event or exhibition is realised through a coming together of its component parts. For Crone, this moment of formation creates an encounter that is intrinsically performative.¹¹⁹ Invoking Deleuze's discussion of dramatization, Crone takes dramatization to mean an articulation of the 'spatial temporal dynamisms' that

¹¹⁹ Bridget Crone, 'Curating Dramatization and the diagram: Notes towards a Sensible Stage' in *The curatorial. A philosophy of curation*. ed. by Jean-Paul Martinon. (London and New York: Bloomsbury Press 2013), 210. Continuing her discussion Crone conceives of the exhibitionary structure as a 'sensible stage', the creation of an encounter that rests upon a visible manifestation of ideas and research. Crone's argument further negates the centrality and multiplicity of the audience, suggesting instead the curator has control over the defining moment of the staged encounter, an encounter Crone perceives to exist in a specific time and space, proposing the moment of encounter 'is realized through a coming together of its component parts that can only ever be encountered in the instant'. As such Crone places emphasis on the role of the curator authoring the instant of 'coming together'. The curatorial projects presented as part of the research proposal

serve to actualize the 'Idea',¹²⁰ suggesting that in relation to the exhibition this moment of 'coming together' or encounter presents a moment of dramatization. Although not highlighted by Crone herself, I would argue that the dramatization of the curatorial encounter she presents inevitably entails an element of uncertainty. Rather than a disruption to or breaking of, the expected movements and interactions of the audience as facilitated by the work of Collins, an uncertainty within the curatorial encounter presented by Crone stems from the impossibility of creating or conceiving of the curatorial event as a singular instant. The interaction of a varied and diverse audience inevitably ignites multiple and varied interactions with the exhibitionary structure. For example, to recall the earlier discussion of Heather and Ivan Morison's work *I Lost her near fantasy island life has not been the same since*, the precise moment at which the audience encountered the work, the singular instance when the work 'came together', is unclear. Possible encounters ranged from viewing an individual carrying a handful of flowers on a street at a distance, to the jack-knifed lorry, or being confronted with the cascade of flowers falling from the back of the articulated truck. Within a gallery context, a further multiplicity of encounters can be found depending on how and where the audience approach a work and their position in relation to the other works on show.

By invoking the multiple possibilities engendered by the interaction of an audience with the staged encounter a further performativity can be brought to bear, destabilising the fixed parameters of the curatorial structure and traditionally separate platform of the stage, inviting the audience into the site of the work itself. Indeed, Collins's discussion presents the practice of 'staging an encounter' to be founded upon a disparity, breaking the habitual movements and expectations of

question such an emphasis on the singular authority of the curator, taking instead a collaborative role in the development of an artists work that can be seen to present an amalgamation between artist, artwork, site and curatorial framework.

¹²⁰ Crone references Deleuze's use of the term 'dramatization' as presented in a paper at the Societe Francaise de Philosophie (January 28 1967).

the audience to facilitate possibilities of indecision, vulnerability and uncertainty.¹²¹

A sentiment of uncertainty comes to the fore when the audience move from a passive viewing position into the environment of the given work, enacting idiosyncratic paths of interpretation.

A sentiment of uncertainty seems intertwined with the shifting role of the viewer from that of observer to cautious performer, moving within and upon the site of the work itself. Continuing a comparison with the suggestion of ‘staging an encounter’ Samuel Weber proposes uncertainty to be a fundamental condition of the theatrical stage. In *The Legend of Freud*¹²² Weber discusses the physical site of the stage to embody a series of fractured perspectives and unstable encounters. In viewing work upon a traditional stage, Weber notes that there are numerous different potential viewpoints and blindspots to the unfolding action and, as such, the entirety of the performance or narrative can never be fully comprehended. Such a fracturing of narrative unity results in an experience of uncertainty and insecurity for the viewer. Considering Weber’s discourse on the theatrical stage presents a return to a critique of Crone’s construct of the curatorial instant of encounter. With both the stage and the ‘staged’ artwork or event, multiple, fractured and diverse viewpoints are manifest. The presence of multiple and varied viewpoints facilitates in turn, manifold interpretations and readings of the unfolding action.¹²³

¹²¹ Collins, presentation at *Imagining the Audience*. See also Shama Khanna ‘Imagining the Audience: A two-day seminar in Stockholm’ *Freize Blog* (October 25 2012), accessed December 2012

<http://blog.frieze.com/imagining-the-audience-a-two-day-seminar-in-stockholm/>

¹²² Weber, *The Legend of Freud*.

¹²³ It could further be argued that through an individual’s attempts at analysing and interpreting the action unfolding upon the stage or within the situated work, the audience are activated, to a greater or lesser degree, into a engagement with the work. Considering the engagement or activation of an audience with work that reflects something of the stage or staged encounter recalls a history of theatre discourse, in particular in relation to Bertold Brecht. Brecht developed the notion *Verfremdungseffekt*, more commonly termed alienation, employing different techniques to jolt the audience out of a passive viewership, making the illusion of the play strange. Indeed, a translation of the German term literally means ‘to make strange’. Through the use of explanatory captions or illustrations projected on a

Continuing his analysis, Weber introduces a discussion of the viewer moving into and upon the space of the stage itself, shifting the defined boundaries between the audience and the performance into a context where the viewer is surrounded and immersed by the unfolding action. Such an immersion recalls event-based practices or installations where the viewer is implicated into an engagement with the unfolding work, as could be seen in Ashton's performance as part of *Seven Sites*. For Weber, when the viewer finds him or herself upon the centre of the stage they experience an uncertainty and unfamiliarity that fundamentally disturbs and destabilizes their sense of self. Taking a more psychological construct of uncertainty, Weber aligns the unfamiliar experience of being upon the centre of the stage with a concept of the uncanny.¹²⁴ Discussed by Freud in his 1919 essay *Das*

screen; actors stepping out of character to lecture, summarize, or sing songs in conjunction with stage designs that exposed the lights and ropes, the artificiality of the theatre was foregrounded. By instigating jolting reminders of the artifice of the theatre Brecht sought to activate the audience into a conscious engagement with the performance, inducing a 'critical attitude' that would dispel the passivity of mass entertainment. Peter Brook notes, 'it was out of respect for the audience that Brecht introduced the idea of alienation, for alienation is to call to halt: alienation is cutting, interrupting, holding something up to the light, making us look again'. (Brook, *The Empty Stage*, 81). The interruption and disruption to the linear narrative of the theatre performance undertaken by Brecht introduces an additional element of fragmentation to the unity of the stage. By initiating a series of interruptions to the linear narrative of the theatre play Brecht attempted to disrupt the passivity of the audience activating them into a critical engagement with the evolving performance. The activation of the audience facilitated by a disruption to the stage further fostered a conceptual dissolution of the clearly defined boundaries between the passive audience member and the active performer. Such a conscious activation of the audience echoes with the event-based practices discussed thus far. The event-based or situated work is not easily or readily contained, rather, the unfolding action facilitates fluctuating and multiple perspectives as an audience moves around, within and upon the site of the staged encounter. As such, the viewer is implicated in and contributes to the developing work. The level of the viewer's engagement is however questionable. Recalling a critique of Relational Aesthetics a viewer can be both engaged and repelled from a staged situation, their engagement being one of discomfort, uncertainty or disengagement. Furthermore, in contrast to event-based practices, Brecht's concept of the stage still presents a boundary between the site of the audience and the site of the unfolding action.

¹²⁴ Samuel Weber, 'Uncanny Thinking' in *The Legend of Freud*, 1-31.

Unheimlich,¹²⁵ the uncanny, put simply, functions as the return of the repressed - anything which 'ought to have remained secret and concealed, but which has come to light'.¹²⁶ With an interruption of the repressed, a conception of the body as a self-contained, unified and integrated whole is thrown into question. The ego is destabilised. What we thought was familiar and secure becomes strange and uncertain, indeed, the English translation of *unheimlich* is un-homely. The affect,

Makes you feel uneasy in the world of your normal experience, not quite safe to trust to, mysterious, weird, uncomfortably strange or unfamiliar.¹²⁷

For Weber, the stage and the uncanny are intricately linked. Rereading E.T.A Hoffman's story of *The Sandman*, the novel first used by psychologist Jentsch in his 1906 paper on the subject of the uncanny, Weber highlights the moment at which the fiction becomes a theatrical scenario, which also for Weber, is the moment at which the uncanny occurs. Indeed, as the boy Nathanael hides from his father and waits to see the figure of the *Sandman*, he witnesses a family friend, the lawyer Coppelius entering the house. Nathanael is so horrified by the recognition that the *Sandman* of his nightmare turns out to be the familiar Coppelius, and by the alchemic ritual that his father and Coppelius begin to perform, that he throws himself out of his hiding place into the centre of the room. As Weber recounts Nathanael,

Leaps out of his hiding place and throws himself at the Sandman's feet. In so doing he forsakes his role of spectator, seeing but unseen, and take the plunge ... onto the stage, into the theatre, abandoning himself to the dangerous sight of others.... The convulsive and passionate scene he has just witnessed overwhelms him and literally hurls him screaming onto the stage.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ For Jentsch the uncanny was embodied in the character of the automaton, the life like robot or doll as described by E.T.A. Hoffman in his story *The Sandman*. See E.T.A Hoffman, *The Stories of Hoffman*. trans. and ed. by R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Classics, 1982), 85-127.

¹²⁶ In his discussion Freud quotes F.W.J. Schelling's description of the uncanny in his 1856 *Philosophy of Mythology* (as quoted in Weber, 'The Legend of Freud', ref.41, 209).

¹²⁷ Sigmund Solomon Prawer, *Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror* (New York: Da Capo 1989), 108.

¹²⁸ Weber, 'The Legend of Freud', 14.

The story narrates a dramatic plunge, from the hidden and protected security of an unseen viewing position onto the centre of the stage. Falling from his hiding place Nathanael becomes part of the scene he was observing, disrupting his familiarity with the interior and security of a sense of place. Nathanael's fall further disrupts the established relationships of viewer and viewed introducing the possibility of multiple perspectives and certain blindspots.

What is shattered by this blow, this *Schlag*, this *coup*, is ultimately the unity of place which is the disunity of the stage. Why is the stage disunited? Because it cannot be seen, taken in, from any one perspective.¹²⁹

The previously observed parameters of the scene, the border and distance that marked a secure and stable division between viewer and viewed are thrown open. The viewer is no longer an anonymous, distant observer but actively implicated in the scene. The previous security of Nathanael's, and by extension the reader's, viewing position is de-stabilised. We enter a space of uncertainty.¹³⁰

Extending Weber's argument a similar suggestion of insecurity and uncertainty as evoked by Nathanael's entry onto the stage can be read in certain contemporary event-based or situated practices where the clarity of borders between audience and art object are put into question. Moving within the site of the work, familiar distinctions between viewer and viewed object become disrupted. As we walk into and around the site our previously secure position of 'the audience' in relation to an 'art object' is shifted into a realm of shared participation and relational action. Rather than a somewhat passive viewing position at a remove from the work we

¹²⁹ Ibid., 16.

¹³⁰ A similar 'coup' occurs within the discovery of the literary island. Thrown, tossed and fallen the castaway crashes onto the island site. As Aldous Huxley's 1962 novel *Island* begins, 'lying there like a corpse in the dead leaves, his hair matted, his face grotesquely smudged and bruised, his clothes in rags and muddy, Will Farnaby awoke with a start'. See Aldous Huxley, *Island*. (London: Vintage Books 2005), 7. The central character has undergone a trauma. He has to physically 'pull himself together', pulling together the now shattered conception of his body a unified and stable whole. With the ego destabilised possibilities for deviant behaviours, as well as previously repressed desires and past histories may come to haunt the castaway resulting in the development of dystopian fictions that proliferate in island literature.

become active performers in its unfolding narrative.¹³¹ A number of contemporary works further directly implicate the viewer through initiated conversation or task-based actions. The implication of audience member as performer brings with it a potential discomfort. Conscious of our role as both viewer and viewed, the audience becomes self-conscious.

The 2012 work *These Associations* by Tino Seghal at Tate Modern Turbine Hall provides an example of how the audience can be implicated into the action of the stage, initiating an uncomfortable and uncertain viewing relationship. Segal's work involved a group of performers moving in choreographed sequences around the central atrium of the Turbine Hall; at times singing, chanting and then returning to their patterns of movement. Within the constructed sequence performers would break out of their rhythmical actions and approach those observing from the edges of the space. On approaching the audience, the performers started to engage them in conversation. At first asking a question specific to the individual's appearance or presumed occupation, before beginning a monologue about a personal anecdote. Confronted by the performer, who spoke directly to the audience member in an intimate and casual manner, the viewer was activated into a direct engagement with the work. My personal experience of the work was one of awkwardness and discomfort. The interaction of the performer made me conscious of my observation by other audience members - I was implicated in the unfolding action, part of the performance. Aware of those watching me, I felt unable to ignore the intimate conversation of the performer, with its somewhat rehearsed intonations and overly enthusiastic storytelling. Resisting the urge to turn away from the performer and leave the space, an action that, due to the seeming intimacy of the conversation, would have felt rude, I instead, rather uncomfortably, and self-consciously, performed the role of engaged and interested viewer. Here the discomfort of the

¹³¹ It is worth noting that such activation is not always one of engagement, the relational work can also activate the viewer into a decision to leave the given site and actively dis-engage themselves from the situation.



FIG. 16. Tino Seghal *These Associations* Tate Modern, London, 2012.

encounter with the performer seemed to echo the awkwardness of other uninvited conversations, the awkwardness of intimacy with an unknown stranger as well the relationship between the different and diverse individuals of the audience group sitting in the public space of the gallery.¹³²

The uncertainty and discomfort facilitated by becoming part of the artists's devised event or situation returns to Phil Collins's discussion of 'staging an encounter'. For Collins, by devising works that rest upon an encounter between artist and audience, the staged artwork can present a moment of disparity that shakes the viewer out of their habitual routine, providing possibilities for the uncomfortable to proliferate. His presentation at *Imagining the Audience* discussed the 2008 work *You'll Never Work in This Town Again* where he invited the audience into his studio one on one. He then proceeded to slap them around the face and take a photograph.

I always tell the person that I will count to three before I slap them, but I always do it on two to catch them out ... For one sitting, I slapped 28 people in an evening.¹³³

The intimacy and shock of the encounter physically and emotionally disrupted the audience's experience of the entire exhibition. Those who took part in the work were left walking around the exhibition space with a red hand mark burning against their face, a portrait of their stunned reaction captured on film. Collins proposes such disparity has the potential to introduce new modes of experience, disrupting and reframing perspectives on society at large.¹³⁴ On the level of the everyday, it is

¹³² In her discussion of relational and participatory practices Bishop emphasises the productive role of uncertainty and discomfort in the experience and lasting resonance of certain works writing, 'unease, discomfort or frustration – along with fear, contradiction, exhilaration and absurdity – can be crucial to any work's artistic impact.' See Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 26. Despite or because of, my discomfort with Segal's work it lingered with me for some time.

¹³³ Francesca Martin, 'Turner nominee slaps 28 people', *The Guardian*, January 23, 2008, accessed March 2015.

<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2008/jan/23/art.photography>

¹³⁴ An attitude of social commentary is further evident in the more historical work of Suzanne Lacy and her proposition for a 'new genre public art'. See Lacy *Mapping the Terrain*. Lacy developed performative situations that activated relationships between participants in a political effort to highlight concerns within the social and cultural dynamic, attempting to shift social meanings. For example the 1977

possible to consider that from a position of discomfort a questioning of the surrounding environment proliferates. In experiencing a space of uncertainty we are invited to question or re-imagine the reality presented around us.

The potential for the uncertain and uncomfortable to invoke a questioning and reconsideration of the status quo further presents a return to the construct of the literary island. As the central character of an island fiction falls from the security of their position as a traveller on a sea voyage, a role imbedded within the larger networks of their known society, onto an unknown and isolated island, their relatively stable position within an established societal structure is put into question. Upon the new island site, with no existing behavioural codes, the security and familiarity of the mainland is thrown into question. In a space of uncertainty the castaway is free to critique, re-imagine and subvert the dominant cultural conventions of the mainland, making all that was previously secure, stable and familiar, uncertain and unhomey.

A castaway's fall onto the island seems to echo with Weber's discussion of *The Sandman*, as Nathaneal falls onto the centre of the stage all that was previously secure becomes uncanny and uncertain. In this space of uncertainty the familiar can readily slip into the fantastical. A fluidity between the real and the imaginary is discussed in relation to the uncanny by Jentsch in his 1906 study *Zur Psychologie*

collaboration with Leslie Labowitz, *Three Weeks in May, Speaking Out On Rape, A Political Art Piece*. In taking Lacy's approach of producing situations that create a new mode of embodiment removed from the surrounding social sphere, the performative and situated artwork can be seen to produce unique sites of activity where, akin to Collins' proposition of uncertainty, expected and established rituals of behaviour and patterns of viewing are disrupted and put into question. Amelia Jones discusses Lacy's proposition in her essay *Performance: Time, Space and Cultural 'Value'* bringing into the text a contemplation of the notion of 'discomfort'. For Jones, the performing of works which create and question new spheres within the existing public dynamic essentially perform, opened up, and elicited a mode of discomfort.

*des Unheimlichen*¹³⁵. In the text Jentsch equates the uncanny with the intellectual uncertainty as to the status of perceived objects: living or dead, real or imaginary. Continuing Jentsch's proposition Tzvetan Todorov notes in his critical study *Introduction a la litterature Fantastique*,¹³⁶ that the uncanny holds an intellectual uncertainty concerning the reality or non-reality of phenomena. As a site of uncertainty between the real and fictitious, the situated installation or event-based artwork can be seen to resonate with a similar sentiment of uncanny uncertainty. In her essay titled *As if I was lost and someone suddenly came to give me news about myself*¹³⁷ Claire Bishop discusses site-based and temporal practices as facilitating a decentring for the viewer. The staging of site-based works trigger a viewer's momentary submersion into a site of psychic and political alternatives, destabilising and interrupting the security of the familiar everyday. Such interruption and disruption again marks a return to the literary island where, emerging unexpectedly to cut the central character of a novel from the security of their day-to-day life narrated thus far, the island presents a site of uncertainty where the fantastical can freely proliferate – a stage set for the playing out of imaginary and often subversive and uncertain alternatives to the status quo.

¹³⁵ 'Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen' was first published in the *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift* 8.22 (25 August 1906): 195-98 and 8.23 (1 September 1906): 203-05.

¹³⁶ For the English translation see Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic. A structural approach to a literary genre*. trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975).

¹³⁷ Bishop, 'As if I was lost', 22-29.

CHAPTER IV

ISLANDS IN THE EVERYDAY.

IV.1 A DISTANT EDGE? BRINGING THE ISLAND INTO THE EVERYDAY.

In picturing an island an image of an isolated and contained site, positioned at a physical distance to a continental mainland comes to the fore. From the mainland it is a point at a remove and potentially closed-off, however once upon the island, it becomes the central ground from which the rest of the world is viewed. In the publication *Atlas of Remote Islands*, Judith Schalansky describes how Easter Island, roughly 4000km from Tahiti and 3600km from Chile is considered remote only from a certain perspective. The inhabitants of the island, the Rapa Nui refer to it as *Te Pito Te Henua* meaning 'the navel of the world'.¹³⁸ For its inhabitants the seemingly remote island is in fact the centre of the earth. The island is a site that therefore embodies a paradox, at a physical distance to a continental mainland it is perceived to be a site in the periphery, yet once upon the island shore it becomes the central ground upon which any ensuing action is defined. The following chapter considers the dual position of the island as simultaneously at a remove from a given mainland, a site in the periphery and the centre of its own unfolding world. Bringing into discussion the terms centre and periphery, an image of the island will be constructed where the remote area of ground is no longer at a geographical distance to a mainland but presented as a site of or for, peripheral actions and behaviours imbedded within a cultural centre.

A discussion of the terms centre and periphery touches upon their use in other disciplines, most notably in relation to postcolonial discourse.¹³⁹ Although the research discussion does not take postcolonial discourse as a primary material, its resonance with the island as a site of the 'other', at a distance to a cultural mainland, is important to acknowledge. Furthermore, within postcolonial discourse the periphery and the margin, the outside of mainstream culture (the metropolis) is conceived of as an ideological as well as geographical zone inhabited by a

¹³⁸ Judith Schalansky, *Atlas of Remote Islands*. (London: Particular Books 2010), 23.

¹³⁹ See John C. Hawley ed., *Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies*. (CT Westport: Greenwood Press 2001). See also Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd 2003).

disenfranchised 'other'.¹⁴⁰ Invoking postcolonial discourse of the margin to be an ideological as well as literal zone presents a productive comparison for the developing island model. As an ideological site of the 'other' it is possible to consider island spaces as not necessarily at a physical distance to a 'centre' but rather as sites embedded within the mainstream where all that is counter to the order of the surrounding society resides. Sites where the outcast or 'other' from the norm are to be found, spaces where marginal behaviours are freely enacted, critiquing or subverting the status quo.

In developing a construct of the island as a marginal site a comparison with Michel Foucault's notion of the heterotopia is pertinent.¹⁴¹ Presented in a lecture in 1967 Foucault developed a framework of the heterotopia through a discussion of spaces that are 'other', within or around the edges of what constitutes the norm. He specifically refers to them as sites of crisis and/or deviation. Using the example of primitive societies Foucault describes sites of crisis within the structure of societal groups, referring to spaces where adolescents would enact rites of passage, rituals into man or womanhood, as well as distinct areas for the dying and sites to which menstruating or pregnant women would go. In contemporary society these spaces are more commonly sites of deviation and include areas in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required norm are placed.¹⁴² For example, the sick are placed into hospitals, the criminals and dangerous into prisons, the mad into asylums, the dead and the mourning into graveyards, the drunk, and those seeking pleasure enter the funfair/carnival.¹⁴³ As a space of temporary removal

¹⁴⁰ Within literature however, the peripheral site of the island is conceived as uninhabited. Landing upon the island the castaway becomes the primary subject of the fiction. Displaced from their cultural mainstream, the castaway is an outcast from the ideological 'centre', narrating and framing the place of the island as a site in the margins.

¹⁴¹ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', 46-59.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 50-51.

¹⁴³ In conjunction with socially constructed sites of removal such as the hospital, graveyard and asylum Foucault discusses the museum. ('Of Other Spaces', 54.) The display of objects within a museum presents an environment of removal and suspension from the mainstream of society. Indeed, Foucault discusses how, within the museum, objects, artefacts, tools and clothing, presented on display, are devoid

where alternative and deviant behaviours are enacted the heterotopia creates both a distance to, and functions as a site of distancing from, everyday social space.

Through standing in contrast to the conventions of the surrounding environment, the heterotopia is deemed at a remove. Embedded within, or on the edges of the everyday, heterotopias present marginal spaces where alternatives to the cultural mainstream are readily enacted. As a site in the periphery the heterotopia can be brought into comparison with a discussion of the island as presented thus far.

Indeed, Island Studies scholar Godfrey Baldacchino presents a history of the island in the western imagination to be a site synonymous with behaviours, actions and events that rest outside of the norm of mainstream cultural conventions, facilitating a critique and subversion of the status quo.

Being on the edge, being out of sight and so out of mind, exposes the weakness of mainstream ideas, orthodoxies, and paradigms and foments alternatives to the status quo ... Islands, both real and earthy as much as concocted, or even those occupying the fuzzy space in between stand out as sites of novelty, of coy experimentation, of deliberate or coincidental path breaking events.¹⁴⁴

of their previous function and removed from their active role within past cultures. The object becomes suspended within the timeframe of the institution becoming part of the story of the larger collection and the agenda of the state or individual who initiated its organisation. Indeed, Foucault comments that the museums role throughout history has been to set a moral and political agenda in relation to society by means of showing art works and providing an insight into contemporary culture, confirming and reinforcing a society's belief in its history, identity and cultural heritage. The seemingly innocent display of objects is therefore imbedded within a greater cultural dialectic. Although removed or suspended from their use value, objects within a museum serve as a means to attest to the dominant narrative of the society in which they are presented. In contrast to other heterotopic sites, such as the asylum or graveyard, the behaviours enacted within a museum setting do not deviate from or negate, the established and accepted behaviours of society at large. For the purposes of the research project consideration of the heterotopia as a site in the margins where a critique or subversion of behaviours that dominant the cultural mainstream or norm takes precedence.

¹⁴⁴ Godfrey Baldacchino, 'Islands as Novelty Sites' *Geographical Review*, 97 (2007): 166.



FIG. 17. Stephen Willats *The Lurky Place*, published by Lisson Gallery, London, 1978.

Akin to the heterotopia, the imagined island enables and facilitates behaviours and actions at odds to the cultural norms of the mainland. In island literature, as a character arrives upon the newly discovered site the structured routines and conventions of their mainland are thrown open, enabling and facilitating marginal actions and behaviours to proliferate. By extension, if our relationship to the island is informed by the surrounding discourses and behaviours of the mainland from which we hail, we can re-consider island sites to exist not solely at a physical distance of removal from the mainland but, as sites of marginal or peripheral action within the everyday environments of a cultural 'centre'. Here, consideration of Stephen Willats' 1978 bookwork *The Lurky Place*¹⁴⁵ provides an example of a site of marginality imbedded within a cultural mainstream that can be seen to reflect a notion of the heterotopia and an instant of 'island-ness' within a contemporary context.

Willats' bookwork documents the artist's survey of discarded objects and traces of activity found in an abandoned area of ground in the midst of Hayes, an industrial suburb on the outskirts of London. The documented traces of activity on the site mark a notable distance to, and removal from, the social conventions of its surrounding environment, revealing *The Lurky Place* as a site for activities and behaviours divorced from the norms of suburban everyday social life. As a contained site that facilitates marginal, subversive and abnormal behaviours at a remove from yet amidst the 'centre' of a certain norm, *The Lurky Place* fosters a psychic rather than physical removal from the social fabric of its immediate surrounds. The landscape of *The Lurky Place*, as Willats explains,

Contains many images which are distanced from the institutions, norms and conventions which hold the fabric of society together. The nature of this Place is, of course, a product of the surrounding society – it forms a fulfilling

¹⁴⁵ Stephen Willats, *The Lurky Place*. (London: Lisson Gallery 1978), accessed July 2012 <http://stephenwillats.com/work/lurky-Place/>. Willats' work can be read to be part of an art historical discourse, symptomatic of a variety of other practices. In her essay 'Actualisation of Space: The Case of Oda Projesi', Maria Lind refers to Willats as 'the grand old man' of social projects drawing an analogy with the contemporary work of Oda Projesi, Dan Peterman and Rirkrit Tiravanji. (109-122).



FIG. 18. Stephen Willats *The Lurky Place*, published by Lisson Gallery, London, 1978.

context for behaviour and activities outside normal, daily life... The way peoples' destinies are largely determined by the dulling routines of their daily lives is contrasted with the freedom of pursuits and interests carried out within *The Lurky Place*. Elements of this freedom are transported from the constraints of our dominant culture and discarded in *The Lurky Place*, in the course of engaging in these various pursuits. Through these residual items, it is possible to structure connections between the consciousness vested in *The Lurky Place* and the restrictive society in which they originated.¹⁴⁶

For Willats, the remnants of actions found in *The Lurky Place* present a series of contemplations on the restrictions and expectations of the surrounding society. As a site outside or removed from the mainstream, *The Lurky Place* facilitates a freedom and critique of cultural conventions. Indeed, within its confines,

The boring routines of work and home are relieved by the freedom to engage in uninhibited pursuits. It is the release of a culturally suppressed consciousness into a discarded area of land which gives the location its analogous power. It is within such a Place that a consciousness, counter to that of institutional society, is kept alive.

Through his process of documentation Willats reveals what is considered part of the centre/mainstream and what occurs in the margins or periphery.¹⁴⁷ It is,

¹⁴⁶ Willats, *The Lurky Place*.

¹⁴⁷ It is worth noting that Willats' construct of *The Lurky Place* somewhat reframes the abandoned area of ground. Depicted in black and white photographs with accompanying text the dirty and desolate site becomes infused with an aesthetic sensibility that serves, to some extent, to romanticize the abandoned area of ground. In a similar vein the re-presentation of island cultures within European history has often been romanticised. Perhaps a familiar example of such romanticism can be seen Gauguin's decision to move to Tahiti and later the Marquesas Islands. Charles Gorham's novel *The Gold of Their Bodies* (London: Dial Press 1955) presents a fictional account of the exoticism of the era. A further testament to such island romanticism can be found in D.H. Lawrence's ambitions to form an island community. In his efforts to initiate a community of like-minded individuals on a remote island site, Lawrence concluded that his ideal society could only ever exist as a conceptual model. For Lawrence, to go back to a state of simplicity found in the exoticism of South Sea Islands and expounded by artists such as Gauguin or Syne would represent a loss in the advanced consciousness his experimental methods in fiction were striving to attain. (See Franks, *Islands and the Modernists*, 106-7). In order to maintain a distance to a romanticized construct of the island Lawrence's ideal community could only exist as a conceptual site, with constantly shifting locations, participants and ideals.

therefore, only through considering the surrounding environment that the activity of *The Lurky Place* is perceived as being 'at odds'. Akin to the island, it is only through comparison with the conventions of a mainland or cultural centre that the island becomes a site of the marginal and alternative. In Huxley's *Island* the central character Will Farnaby narrates his experience of the progressive society of the island nation of *Pala* in relation to the moral and ethical codes of his European mainland,

"I would like to know, just as a matter of anthropological interest, how long have you two been friends."

"Do you mean 'friends'?" asked the little nurse. "Or do you mean 'lovers'?"

"Why not both, while we're about it?"

"Well, Ranga and I have been friends since we were babies. And we've been lovers ... since I was fifteen and a half and he was seventeen – just about two and half years"

"And nobody objected?"

"Why should they?"

"Why indeed", Will echoed. "But the fact remains that in my part of the world practically everyone would have objected."¹⁴⁸

Upon the island the cultural conventions of a social centre or mainland can be freely inverted or subverted.

As a contained site facilitating the inversion or subversion of the cultural conventions of a social centre or mainland, Willats' *Lurky Place* can be seen to mirror some of the properties of the literary island.¹⁴⁹ Yet, whereas with the literary island, whose distance to and inversion of the status quo or mainstream, seems fundamentally related to its physical distance to the mainland, here an island-effect arises in closest proximity to that from which it constitutes a removal. By documenting found traces of marginal and subversive activities, Willats presents the *Lurky Place* as an 'other' space, distanced from, yet amongst the very midst of 'the institutions, norms and conventions which hold the fabric of society together'.¹⁵⁰ Both inside and outside of the conventions of a cultural 'centre', *The Lurky Place* is a space in-between, neither inside nor outside, a site of suspension -

¹⁴⁸ Huxley, *Island*, 74.

¹⁵⁰ Willats, *The Lurky Place*

removed from, yet in proximity to the dominant structures of the everyday. As such, Willats's work recalls the theoretical model of spatial practice offered by Foucault's concept of heterotopia.

Foucault presents the heterotopia to be a space both outside of and informed by, the social and cultural norms of a given society. For Foucault heterotopias,

Have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect.¹⁵¹

Using the example of the funfair or carnival, Foucault demonstrates how the freedom and chaos of the festivities present a sanctioned moment of subversion and inversion within the dominant cultural environment.¹⁵² The chaotic format of the carnival facilitates a freeing of behavioural conventions and a mixing and uniting of all that is usually separate, the old and young, the dead and the living, and by extension a dissolution of structured routines and established behavioural codes. Akin to the heterotopia, *The Lurky Place* presents a site of freedom and abandon where the moral codes of a cultural centre are subverted through deviant or illegal acts.

In an attempt to more playfully subvert the familiarity of given environment a number of artists' installations as part of the *Seven Sites* project, created temporary alternatives to the immediacy of their surrounding context. For example, Franziska Lantz's performance within the Lowry shopping centre constructed an audio and visual environment that was markedly different to the surrounding architecture and interior of the commercial building. Lantz blacked-out an unused shop unit transforming the interior with sways of fabric. The dark enclave created a site dramatically removed from the immediacy of the light filled atrium of shops. From

¹⁵¹ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', 49.

¹⁵² Literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin further positions the carnival as a mode that subverts and liberates the assumptions of the dominant style or atmosphere (the cultural norms) through humour and chaos. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*. (London: John Wiley and Sons 1984).



FIG. 19. S.A.Y.D.A.N.C.E Franziksa Lantz, performance as part of *Seven Sites*, Lowry Outlet Mall Salford, 24 September 2011.

within the blacked-out unit Lantz created a sound performance. Occurring unannounced, Lantz's acoustic interrupted the existing soundscape of the surrounding interior, forcing an alternative rhythm and noise into the busy shopping centre. This unexpected interruption, akin to an encounter with the literary island, physically ruptured and disrupted the structured behaviours and activity of the given site, interrupting the familiar routines of Saturday shoppers. In a more playful manner Edwina Ashton's performance as part of the project launch attempted to similarly subvert and disrupt the site of its occurrence. For the performance Ashton populated a domestic flat with performers dressed in creaturely costumes, undertaking repetitive and mundane tasks befitting the interior setting. For example, a caterpillar cleaned windows, several cats were sweeping or hoovering and a bear-moth creature was attempting to mix flour in the kitchen. The actions of the performers transformed the familiar domesticity of the flat, disrupting the structured tasks and routines expected within the given environment. In this moment of disruption, the familiarity of the everyday routines and actions were temporarily suspended. Divorced from their place within a guiding routine or end-orientated activity, the domestic tasks became removed from the order of established social and cultural conventions.

Here, a removal from the expected norm presents a return to the heterotopia. For Foucault heterotopias constitute areas within society that are viewed as other, where the individual is permitted to be other, or conform to another mode of behaviour and participation specific to the area that they enter. Such alteriority is founded, in part, upon a break with established structures of time. He writes,

Heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time - which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time.¹⁵³

This instance of distancing from traditional, and by presumption linear time, fosters the heterotopias construct as a space of suspension counter to a familiar and structured cultural centre. The island can similarly be seen to instigate a break with

¹⁵³ Foucault, "Of Other Spaces", 52-3.



FIG. 20. Edwina Ashton *Seven Sites* project launch, Cannon Hussey House, Salford
14 August 2011.

the established temporal order, presenting a marginal site where the structured behaviours and chronology of the familiar mainland are thrown open. As Robinson Crusoe explains,

It came into my thoughts that I should lose my reckoning of time for want of books and pen and ink, and should even forget the Sabbath days from the working days.¹⁵⁴

On crossing the threshold of the island shore, the island castaway enters a new site where they are free to devise their own day-to-day routines and rhythms. Within this freedom the possibilities for subversive or critical alternatives to the mainland proliferate. As has been discussed in relation to Willats's *Lurky Place*, the alternative behaviours enacted on the site are enabled and facilitated by its removal from the dominant temporal and behavioural norms of the surrounding suburban context.

Returning to Ashton's performance, and by extension the carnival and heterotopic site, the immediate environment of the encountered artwork becomes reframed in relation to the behaviours enacted in the emergent site. Viewing the performance of domestic tasks by Ashton's creatures provided a reconsideration of the daily activities, revealing a playfulness, humour and pleasure in the futility of the creature's mundane endeavours. In a similar vein, once within the heterotopia, or upon the island, the peripheral and suspended space becomes a central ground from which the social and cultural convention of the surrounding society are viewed, reframed and subverted. With the arrival of an individual within or upon the peripheral site of the island or heterotopia, the given environment shifts from a position in the margins to being a central point where the cultural mainstream is reconsidered. As such, the binary relations of centre and periphery as presented within postcolonial discourse are made complex.

Shifting from the periphery to the centre further invokes an uncertainty, the freedom of the carnival and the unknown of the island are temporal grounds, rupturing the familiar and secure routines of the social and cultural mainstream.

¹⁵⁴ Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 48.

Upon these sites of marginality a subversion or inversion of the familiar is enacted. Indeed, in a number of island narratives the familiarity of mainstream cultural space is re-presented or re-enacted on the island ground. Within this re-enactment the familiar becomes 'strange'. A castaway's attempts at recreating the conventions of a cultural centre or mainland resonate with a sentiment of the uncanny as the routines and rhythms of their normal experience become 'uneasy'.¹⁵⁵ In *Lord of the Flies* a description of a group of choirboys as they move along the beach emphasizes the slippage of the familiar into the uncertain upon the island shore.

Within the diamond haze of the beach something dark was fumbling along. Ralph saw it first, and watched till the intentness of his gaze drew all eyes that way. Then the creature stepped from mirage on to clear sand, and they saw that the darkness was not all shadow but mostly clothing. The creature was a party of boys.¹⁵⁶

The island is therefore a paradox, uncertain and un-homely it embodies sentiment of the margins, yet the marginal site of the island becomes the central ground and unstable home from which the dominant culture of the mainland is viewed, enabling a critique or subversion of the previously 'status quo'.

¹⁵⁵ Prawer, *Caligari's Children*, 108.

¹⁵⁶ Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 15.

IV.II REFRAMING THE EVERYDAY, AN 'ERUPTION OF CONTRADICTION IN THE REAL'.

Dreaming of islands – is dreaming of pulling away, of being separate.¹⁵⁷
(Gilles Deleuze *Desert Islands*, 1974)

In conceiving of islands as marginal or peripheral sites, the island can be presented as a space not necessarily physically at a distance to a familiar mainland but as a site that facilitates a sentiment of distancing within a cultural centre or 'mainland'. As the previous chapter proposed, akin to the heterotopia, islands can be perceived to be located within everyday environments and contexts. Marginal sites where social and cultural conventions can be freely inverted or subverted, presenting a break with or interruption to, the norms that govern a given everyday. Further considering the island as a peripheral site embedded within a cultural centre the following chapter brings a construct of the island into a discussion of the everyday. Considering the potential for the everyday to be reframed and re-enacted upon the island shore to create a space of extraordinary removal from the perceived norm.

Within a contemporary art context there has been a burgeoning of discourses surrounding the everyday as both a subject and material. In his introductory essay to *Every Day*, the 11th Biennial of Sidney, Johnathan Watkins defines artists' works that use everyday materials and objects to present,

Incidentally profound observations on the nature of our lives as lived every day, in contradistinction to supposedly fin-de-siècle appropriationist, neo-surrealist or mannerist strategies their impetus is derived from what is ordinary.¹⁵⁸

Watkins proposition that what is everyday is essentially what is ordinary, is further voiced by literary theorist Rita Felski. In her text *The invention of everyday life*¹⁵⁹ Felski discusses the foundations of the everyday to be centred around the ordinary

¹⁵⁷ Deleuze, *Desert Islands: and Other Texts*, 10.

¹⁵⁸ Jonathan Watkins, 'Introduction' to *Every Day. 11th Biennial of Sydney* ed. by Jonathan Watkins (Sydney: Biennial of Sydney 1998), 15-19.

¹⁵⁹ Rita Felski, 'The Invention of Everyday Life' in *New Formations. A journal of culture/theory/politics* 39 (1999): 15.

and expected noting, 'everyday life simply *is* indisputably: the essential, taken-for-granted continuum of mundane activities', concluding 'we are all ultimately anchored in the mundane'.¹⁶⁰ The mundane activities of an everyday root us within a cycle of repetitive actions, creating a familiar sense of temporality. This familiarity further provides a sense of home and security as Felski summarises,

The temporality of the everyday is that of repetition... ... the spatial ordering of the everyday is anchored in a sense of home the characteristic mode of experiencing the everyday is that of habit.¹⁶¹

Taking the three features of repetition, home and habit highlighted by Felksi and applying them to the literary island, the island comes to present a site conceptually removed from the everyday. Indeed, if the everyday is conceived of as the familiar, expected, and predictably ordinary then the development of islands can be seen to function as pockets of the unexpected and the extra-ordinary.

Returning to a discussion of the appearance of the island in literary narratives, the island emerges through dramatic and unpredictable circumstances. It is through the event of shipwreck, loss at sea, wild storms or fatal accidents that we come across the previously unknown site. Through the unpredictability of such events the day-to-day life of the narrated sea voyage is disrupted. Indeed, it is 'only in this journey without direction, only when disorientation is complete', when one can 'simply (be) anywhere, and headed for simply anywhere'¹⁶² does the character of a novel find themselves upon the island shore. The dramatic encounter with the island stands in marked contrast to the expectations of a predictable and mundane everyday, as Felksi writes,

Everyday life is typically distinguished from the exceptional moment: the battle, the catastrophe, the extraordinary deed... ... The distinctiveness of the everyday lies in its lack of distinction and differentiation: it is the air one breathes, the take-for-granted backdrop, the commonsensical basis of all human activities.¹⁶³

Cutting through the repetitive and predictable temporal rhythms that structure the daily life of the mainland, the island presents a site of radical removal. Upon the

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁶² Kurt Vonnegut, *Galapagos*. (New York: Dial Press 1996), 242.

¹⁶³ Felski, 'The Invention of Everyday Life', 17.

island shore the castaway finds themselves suspended from all that was previously familiar and secure. In their suspension from the norm, fantastical, subversive and critical alternatives to the everyday come to proliferate.

In a similar vein to the unexpected emergence of the literary island, instances of interruption and disruption to the routines and rhythms that govern contemporary everyday environments can be seen to facilitate pockets of marginality where behaviours, images and actions at a removal from the dominant temporal norms proliferate. In the curatorial project *Pala* a series of unannounced digital broadcasts sought to interrupt and disrupt the familiar space of an individual's computer screen with artists' film and video works. Although computers increasingly open our everyday spaces to the intrusion of an 'outside', whether through emails, video-calls, social media or the internet, such intrusions are more or less controllable through different computer settings. *Pala* worked with a premise of intrusion, on the one hand mirroring the most unwanted of all intrusions – the commercial pop up - but, through the use of curated artists' works, created a surprise and unexpected encounter in marked removal to the environment of the computer screen experienced thus far. Through the unannounced interruption the project sought to instigate a momentary dislocation from the everyday. Devised to occur over a two year period, the length of the project further attempted to heighten the unexpected nature of each broadcast work. With films programmed for transmission every two to four weeks it was hoped that individuals who signed up to the project might not witness a broadcast for several months or more, by which time their awareness of the project would have waned and the disruption and confusion ignited by the transmitted films would subsequently be heightened.

The ability for the everyday to be interrupted and disrupted with the affect of instigating a psychological and visual removal from the immediacy of the surrounding environment further echoes with a notion of the *Marvelous*. Coined by the Surrealists, the *Marvelous* refers to an unexpected psychological jolt or shock away from the everyday where images and objects become divorced from their place within a given environment and temporarily reframed - floating,



FIG. 21. *International Exposition of Surrealism, Paris 1938.*

André Breton Chest with Legs and Sonia Mossé Altered Mannequin.

dream-like and extraordinary. For example, for the Surrealists, the arcades of old Paris, the flea markets, snap shot glimpses of lettering on shop fronts and the displays of merchandise encountered in their windows, all provided momentary pockets of experience that had the potential to push the viewer out of the comfort of their everyday into a space infused with poetic and eclectic alternatives. This momentary shift into an alternative visual and psychological realm presented a disruption to the rationality of structured and familiar routines in a manner akin to the uncanny. However, rather than a return of the repressed and a resonant uncertainty instigated by the uncanny, the *Marvelous* disrupted the everyday to produce an excitingly disorientating sensation that triggered the viewer's momentary submersion into a space of the fantastical and extra-ordinary. In an initial discussion of the *Marvelous* the Surrealist movement's founder André Breton stated,

Let us not mince words, the *Marvelous* is always beautiful, anything *Marvelous* is beautiful, in fact only the *Marvelous* is beautiful.¹⁶⁴

The *Marvelous* momentarily interrupts and disrupts the familiarity of a given environment catharting an individual into a site of poetic and fantastical assemblages that reframe the familiar and mundane.

Continuing a consideration of *Pala*, with each unannounced broadcast, the viewer of the computer screen was presented with a temporary and alternative world where the familiar and everyday became momentarily reframed. Each film broadcast as part of the project was chosen due to its use of familiar objects and materials. For example the film works by Elisabeth Molin included brief footage of a goldfish, a running tap and water droplets slowly streaming down a train window. Through the artist's filming of these incidental occurrences the mundane and familiar became reframed. The artist's representation of facets of familiar images and environments divorced the subjects from their place within everyday

¹⁶⁴ 'Documents of the *Marvelous*' *Eye Magazine* 65 (2007): accessed July 2012 <http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/documents-of-the-marvellous>

situations. Such fragmentary and floating images can be perceived to present an extraordinary encounter akin to that of the *Marvelous* and further returns to a construct of the island as discussed thus far. Interrupting and disrupting the security of a sea voyage the island presents a site where the familiarity of a castaway's prior everyday is reframed. In attempting to survive the island the castaway re-enacts aspects of their previous day-to-day life. However, upon the island soil such actions become divorced from their place in an overarching routine, presenting instead fragments of familiarity or remnants of everyday action that take on a sentiment of the extra-ordinary.

Returning to *Pala*, confronted with the temporal broadcast the viewer was further invited to look intently. The concentrated process of looking served to reframe both the familiarity of the broadcast image and the context of the computer screen, inviting an imagining of the possible other images and actions that could occur within the immediacy of surrounding environment. This process of reframing returns again to a construct of the *Marvelous*, where facets of everyday scenery and objects were reconstituted into eclectic and poetic assemblages jolting the viewer from the security of their everyday. In a continued effort to highlight a process of concentrated looking as a means to reframe the everyday, *Pala* broadcast a series of still images by artist Shelley Theodore. Broadcast for twenty seconds at a time the still images seemed to elongate the moment of transmission, making the viewer increasingly conscious of their act of looking, suspending them in a silent and still scene at a marked removal from their prior activity on the computer screen. A process of reframing and an invitation to look intently at the mundane and familiar returns to the earlier discussion of works by Childs and Fort, where the audience were invited to view the street scene in front of them as the artists' works subtly intervened with the unfolding everyday action, inviting a reconsideration of the familiar and previously unnoticed. A sentiment of reframing and re-enacting facets of the everyday was further evident in Edwina Ashton's performance as part of *Seven Sites*. Ashton choreographed a series of creaturely performers undertaking familiar domestic tasks. Performed with an excitable furore the everyday tasks and their mundane associations of domesticity became manic,

comic and futile. Divorced from their place in a structured routine the tasks were undertaken for their action alone, without the aim of a final purpose. No longer a means to an end the activities were simply a means. Here, Ashton's performance presented the audience with a series of encounters that were suspended from their place within the linear progression of a temporal routine. Removed from their purposeful context and the guiding temporal routines that, as Felski notes, structure and define the everyday, the actions became extra-ordinary.

Suspended from a guiding temporal structure Ashton's performance can be seen to reflect a construct of the literary island where, no longer guided by the social and cultural norms of the mainland, with its guiding temporal structures, the castaway finds themselves upon a site of radical removal from their everyday. Within the freedom of the newly discovered site the literary island often becomes a space upon which aspects of a central characters everyday are intensified fostering subversive, critical or fantastical alternatives to the familiar cultural and social conventions of a continental mainland. In H.G Well's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* the inhabitants of the island include animals that have been experimentally morphed into near human figures by the hand of radical vivisectionist Dr. Moreau. These creatures, half human half-animal draw out specific traits of humanity. In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* the hierarchy of the playground is transported onto a desert island where the boys, free from any adult structure or clear rules descend into a brutal and violent gang that literally hunts down the classmates who oppose their behaviour. Within both narratives aspects of the everyday found within the dominant cultural and social structures of the castaways mainland are re-enacted. Finding themselves upon the unknown island the character of a novel begins a process of survival, reviving and retaining aspects of their familiar everyday. In this process of revival everyday actions and behaviours become divorced from their guiding routines enabling subversive, playful and deviant alternatives to come to the fore. As such the island can be seen to embody a function akin to that of fantastic literature. Within the literary genre of fantasy, narratives create situations and sentiments that play with, subvert and critique the context of the everyday.

In her study *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*¹⁶⁵ Rosemary Jackson describes the literary genre to be concerned with inverting the everyday elements of this world,

Recombining its constitutive features in new relations to produce something, strange, unfamiliar and apparently 'new', absolutely 'other' and different.¹⁶⁶

A re-combing and reframing of everyday images and objects echoes throughout the films curated as part of *Pala* and furthermore within Ashton's performance where the enactment of everyday tasks by creaturely beasts redefined and represented the mundane activities. Continuing her discussion, Jackson notes that fantastical narratives often draw upon elements of the everyday to produce works at odds to their immediate environment, pushing the viewer into a site of subversive, critical and extra-ordinary alternatives. Echoing with a sentiment of the *Marvelous* the reconstitution and reframing of facets of an everyday triggers a momentary suspension from the norm, disrupting and interrupting the security of the status quo with poetic and dreamlike alternatives.

In his 1947 essay *Aminadab or The fantastic considered as a language*, Jean-Paul Sartre discusses the place of fantasy in secularized culture as presenting 'a natural world inverted into something strange, something 'other', turning the transcendental human explorations of religious society into transcriptions of a human condition'.¹⁶⁷ He notes

In secularized culture, desire for otherness is not displaced into alternative regions of heaven or hell, but is directed towards the absent areas of this world, transforming it into something 'other' than the familiar, comfortable one. Instead of an alternative order, it creates 'alteriority', this world, replaced and dis-located.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. (London and New York: Methuen 1981).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁶⁸ Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Aminadab or The fantastic considered as a language' *Situations I* (1947): 56-72.

For Sartre, fantastic narratives present an outlet in modern society for what would have traditionally been invoked in religious story telling – the inferno of hell and the imaginary idyll of heaven. Within secularised culture fantastical narratives present an outlet for contemplations on the repressed or hidden side of human desire. As such fantastical literature presents a playful and subversive ‘other’ to the status quo.¹⁶⁹ Within Sartre’s notion of the fantastic, he presents the genre to invoke the familiar and everyday yet, it is a familiarity reframed, re-placed and dis-located. In this process of reframing the security of the everyday with its predictable routines and temporal rhythms, becomes destabilised. As a site of the familiar yet uncertain the fantastical, in contrast to the emphasis on the excitement of the extra-ordinary experienced in the *Marvelous*, facilitates a sentiment of the uncanny where all that is previously secure is ‘made strange’ and unheimlich (un-homely). Similarly, upon the island a castaway’s re-enactment of everyday actions and routines reframes and re-presents the familiar in a manner that evokes an uncertain sense of home.

Exploring the possibility to reframe aspects of the everyday in order to highlight a sentiment of the uncertain and uncanny, the exhibition project *Cacotopia* presented a series of artists’ works that manipulated everyday objects and materials to affect a resonant uncertainty. Presented within the archive of the Anthony Burgess Foundation the exhibition drew upon Burgess’s notion of cacotopia as a guiding framework. In a discussion of George Orwell’s famous work of fiction, *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Anthony Burgess abandons the more common expression of dystopia, introducing the term cacotopia¹⁷⁰ in order to more forcefully designate a government of the worst kind. He writes,

¹⁶⁹ Considering possibilities of the island as a site of the ‘other’ returns to a prior discussion of a romanticized construct of the island and its inhabitants as cultural ‘others’ within a western imagination.

¹⁷⁰ An amalgamation of the words cacophony and utopia, the term cacotopia was first coined by the British philosopher and social reformer Jeremy Bentham. In his 1818 Plan of Parliamentary Reform Bentham writes, ‘as a match for utopia (or the imagined seat of the best government) suppose a cacotopia (or the imagined seat of the worst government) discovered and described’. See Jeremy Bentham, *Plan Of Parliamentary Reform, In The Form Of A Catechism, With Reasons For Each Article:*



FIG. 22. David Wojtowycz, *Good Girl*, 2013.

Film shown in *Cacotopia*, International Anthony Burgess Foundation, May 2013.

With An Introduction, Shewing The Necessity Of Radical, And The Inadequacy Of Moderate, Reform. (Nabu Press May 2012).

Dystopia has been opposed to eutopia, but both terms come under the utopian heading..... I prefer to call Orwell's imaginary society a cacotopia – on the lines of cacophony or cacodemon. It sounds worse.¹⁷¹

Cacotopia as a system of governmental cacophony is contradictory at heart - neither a harmonious agreement on a collective norm, nor a state of pure chaos and sheer noise, a cacotopian government suggests a forced order of disunity, whitewashing the radical clashing of its elements. For Burgess it is such discordance, the dictation of a norm that suppresses its underlying conflicts, that forms the setting for Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four* as well as his own visions of a government of the worst, developed in the novels *1985*¹⁷² and *The Wanting Seed*.¹⁷³ In his continued discussion of Orwell, Burgess further suggests that a cacotopian tendency of society is visible in his own lifetime. Indeed, when 'the stresses of contemporary life grow intolerable' Burgess proposes we can read the signs for a coming cacotopia.

There are bills to pay, machines that go wrong and cannot be repaired, roofs that leak, buses that fail to arrive, dull work to be done, an inability to make ends meet, insurance premiums that fall due, sickness, the panorama of the wicked world displayed in the press.....¹⁷⁴

The overwhelming structures and institutional demands of contemporary society could be further exaggerated, exaggerating the everyday to reveal an underlying cacotopian sentiment. As such, Burgess's fictions employed familiar structures and everyday environments heightening their affect to create a subversion of the status quo.

Taking Burgess's notion of cacotopia the exhibition sought to explore possibilities for everyday materials, objects, and imagery to hold within them subversive and discordant alternatives to the established behaviours, structures and rhythms that

¹⁷¹ Anthony Burgess, *1985*. (London: Beautiful Books 2010), 53.

¹⁷² *Ibid*.

¹⁷³ Anthony Burgess, *The Wanting Seed*. (London: Norton Paperback Fiction Editions 2001).

¹⁷⁴ Burgess, *1985*, 83.



FIG. 23. Elisabeth Molin, *Suspension*, 2012.

Film shown in *Cacotopia*, International Anthony Burgess Foundation, May 2013.

govern a rational and ordered everyday. The exhibition included film, sculpture, soundworks and watercolours that responded to the term, manipulating and disrupting facets of everyday imagery to create works that were infused with a sense of unease. For example, David Wojtowycz's watercolours used motifs from Hollywood films and advertising imagery, transforming the familiarity of the popular culture images through repetition and techniques of mirroring, creating works that suggested a familiarity yet, the strangeness of the presented image was divorced from our prior experiences. Elisabeth Molin's video work depicted a coke can filmed fizzing and looped on repeat, the repetition created a vibration to the image that suspended it mid-action. Through a use of repetition the familiarity of these objects and images was destabilised igniting a removal from their place within a given everyday.

Returning to Felski's assertion that the characteristic experience of the everyday is anchored in a sense of home, the disruption to the familiarity and subsequent security of the imagery within *Cacotopia* triggered a sentiment of the un-homely, signalling something of the uncanny. As Jentsch notes, the uncanny resonates most strongly when all that was previously known and secure is made strange. The everyday becomes infused with an underlying uncertainty, creating a psychological distance to the rational and secure routines and environments of day-to-day life, facilitating a pocket of removal from the surrounding cultural and social mainstream. The curatorial projects *Pala* and *Seven Sites* similarly attempted to employ elements of the familiar and domestic and reframe their familiarity through the artists' considered re-presentation. Within *Pala*, an overarching framework of interruption and disruption was employed to further ignite an unexpected removal from the immediacy of the computer screen. Interrupting, disrupting and disturbing an everyday environment each project sought to facilitate a sentiment of uncertain removal from the rational and secure temporal rhythms that dominant day to day life, mirroring the psychological disruption and interruption encountered on the literary island.

The ability for contemporary artworks and curated projects to ignite a sentiment of removal from the routines, environments and behaviours of a familiar everyday is further discussed by Clare Bishop in her essay *As if I was lost and someone suddenly came to give me news about myself*.¹⁷⁵ Within the text Bishop proposes contemporary site-based art practices can be considered in relation to the Surrealist's development of the *Marvelous*, suggesting both have an effect of shifting the viewer from the immediacy of their surrounding environment and consequently familiar everyday experience, into a site infused with potential other imaginaries and psycho-spatial alternatives. For Bishop, in utilizing sites often removed or lost from the mainstream of contemporary experience, for example, old churches, empty buildings, areas of abandoned ground (as has particularly been the case with *Art Angels* production of artists' works in locations throughout London) site-based artworks introduce alternative locations, environments and situations to an individual's previous knowledge of a given city or area. Indeed, in the curatorial project *Seven Sites* the staging of artists works in a series of different contexts introduced the audience to buildings they had not previously encountered for example, a neglected church kitchen, a private flat on the top floor of an inner city tower block and a hotel room in the city centre. For Bishop, site specific and installation art can be viewed as presenting the viewer with something at odds to the familiarity and immediacy of contemporary experience.¹⁷⁶ In using sites removed from the mainstream of everyday encounters, situated artworks introduce facets of history and memory into the disposable instants of the present, explaining,

¹⁷⁵ Bishop, 'As if I was lost', 22-29.

¹⁷⁶ The immediacy of contemporary experience has formed a central discussion within postmodern theory, in particular in the work of Frederic Jameson and his 1985 essay *Post Modernism and Consumer Culture*. In his text Jameson aligns cultural production with a sentiment of schizophrenia – the fragmentation of experience into a series of perpetual presents that are powerfully consumable. The result of this situation is that we live in a perpetual present with a 'disappearance of a sense of history'. See Frederick Jameson, 'Post Modernism and Consumer Culture' in *Postmodern Culture* ed. by Hal Foster. (London: Pluto Press 1985): 111-125. In her discussion of site-based practices Claire Bishop proposes that it is within this context of the commodification of culture that site-based and installation works provide a possibility for intensified experience.

The best experiences of post-modern, post-medium specific art are not just forgettable moments (perpetual presents) on the infinite horizon of consumption, but intensified encounters that cathart the individual and cultural on a far more profound level.¹⁷⁷

The site-based work therefore has the potential to de-centre the viewer, triggering their momentary submersion into a space of imaginary and fantastical alternatives. Taking the title of her essay from Andre Breton's story *L'Amour Fou* Bishop aligns the de-centring and destabilising of present experience engendered by site-based works with a sentiment of the *Marvelous*.

Described by writer Louis Aragon as an 'eruption of contradiction within the real',¹⁷⁸ the *Marvelous* seems to echo with both a suggestion of the uncanny and the appearance of the island as discussed thus far. Surfacing through the force of an event, the island appears as a space both removed from, yet informed by, the familiarity of the mainland. However, the everyday structures and routines that guided an individual upon the mainland become lost the moment they arrive upon the island shore. As the character of Ralph observes in *Lord of the Flies*,

The world, that understandable and lawful world, was slipping away.¹⁷⁹

Attempts at re-enacting the guiding structures of a mainland upon the new island site become divorced from their overarching cultural and temporal framework. The familiar routines and rhythms of a previously dominant everyday are temporarily suspended. In this instant of suspension the re-enactment of facets of an everyday reveal fantastical, subversive and critical alternatives imbedded within the norm. Such re-enactments invite persistent reimaginings of the possible actions and alternative imagery that could surround and inform a given everyday, igniting eclectic assemblages akin to the *Marvelous* imagery of Surrealist Paris and the destabilised uncertainty of the familiar engendered by the uncanny.

¹⁷⁷ Bishop, 'As if I was lost', 22.

¹⁷⁸ Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, 204.

¹⁷⁹ Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 98.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Throughout the research project the island has emerged as a productive multifaceted model for the staging, development and analysis of certain situated and event-based artworks. Drawing out structural resonances of the island across the different disciplinary fields of spatial practice, curatorial discourse and literature, the research has woven practice and written argument together to create a new space of discourse around the notion of the island as a model for the development of exhibitions of art beyond a gallery setting.

The basis of the island as a curatorial model has been identified as being composed of a series of conceptual properties rooted within the framework of the island as a site that is both imagined and a physical reality. Such duality has been defined to facilitate a questioning and reframing of the familiar and everyday.¹⁸⁰ The (literary) island is a site of estrangement, reflection and experiment. Located at a distance from, yet perpetually put in relation to the continental mainland, it engenders the latter's dissolution, critique and more or less playful re-appropriation. For instance, the central character of a novel narrates his experience of the island through continual comparison with the mainland from which he finds himself removed. The island is therefore presented as a space that is both at odds to a familiar mainland and yet informed by it. Taking the structure of this scenario and divorcing it from its geographical context – whereby the island as a site at a 'remove' no longer depends on actual distance – the research presents an alignment of the island with Foucault's concept of the heterotopia. Such an alignment has enabled the development of an island model as a site of and for, behaviours, actions and temporal rhythms that are 'other' or 'marginal' to a surrounding contemporary everyday.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ The everyday as defined by Felski and Watkins as the 'ordinary', 'expected' and 'mundane'.

¹⁸¹ Furthermore, a consistent use of Foucault, Grosz and de Certeau in relation to a discussion of artworks occurring beyond the institutional confines of a gallery setting reflects the individual theorists' own discourses of institutional critique, discussing spatial practices in relation to the everyday.

In reducing the distance between the centre and the margin by identifying certain properties of the island amidst an everyday status quo a direct comparison with certain curatorial strategies for situated and event-based practices has been productively made. In staging an encounter within a specific context, the devised practical projects have provided curatorial strategies that enable and provoke alternative experiences to the established rhythms, histories, uses and perceptions of a given contextual and spatial locale. In doing so, the employed curatorial approach further invites the imaginary projection of the potential other histories, futures and uses of the site of an encountered work.

Presenting the island as a site of imaginary projection, the project *Imaginary Islands – A building Kit*, demonstrated the appeal of the island as a site of fantastical alternatives to the everyday. Within the game features of different habitats, flora, fauna and building structures, could be collaged together to present fictional worlds. Drawing upon such an analogy, the research has framed the island as a site of fantastical, critical or playful re-presentations of the everyday where a transition between the familiar and the imaginary is readily made. The instances of spatial transition from ocean voyage to remote island, shoreline to island topography, were explored within the curated projects *Triptych* and *59.14 N 3.34 W*. Here, the moment of crossing the border of the shoreline, or the threshold of the situated work, was discussed to present a shifting spatial and temporal dynamic that facilitated a reframing and reimagining of the given locale. The instant of transition from familiar mainland to unknown island, has been taken as a means to provide the ground for the staging of artworks that facilitate a similar shift from the concrete reality of a given space to imaginary projections of its potential other uses, most notably so within *59.14 N 3.34 W*, where the event actively reframed the familiarity of the Brough for the local audience.

Occupying varying sites and contexts of the everyday, the situated work of art is both physically located within a given context whilst simultaneously providing virtual possibilities for its transformation. Once no longer located at a physical

distance, the heterotopic nature of the island as presented in the research, becomes a primary analogy for the construction of a model that enables a realignment of the island with the development and analysis of situated and event-based art practices encountered outside of the spatial framework of the gallery. The curated projects *Seven Sites*, *Cacotopia* and *Pala*, actively blurred the distinction between the real and the imaginary, in a manner that reflected the function of islands in literature and demonstrated the presented research argument.¹⁸² For example, within the relatively familiar setting of a domestic flat in an inner city housing estate, Edwina Ashton's performance as part of *Seven Sites* demonstrated the potential for situated work to confuse and playfully reframe an expected norm. In doing so, the work ignited a reimagining of the domestic setting and the surrounding locale of the housing estate, igniting consideration of the potential other pasts and futures of the encountered neighbourhood.

The research has presented a model of the conceptual and physical island site as a framework for the staging and development of situated and event-based practices that productively invite the reimagination of familiar and everyday culture. Discussion of the curatorial projects undertaken as part of the research has emphasised the potential for such works to reframe their situated context. Indeed, located outside of a gallery context, event-based works provide the viewer with shifting spatial and temporal encounters that often suspend and disrupt the established patterns and rhythms of an everyday to provide alternative perspectives on the norm. For instance, in the curatorial project *Pala*, the interruption of a computer screen with an unannounced artist's work actively interrupts and disrupts a viewer's immediate task, not only presenting an image of an elsewhere, but rendering their current environment strange, thereby enabling the imaginary to playfully intrude upon their everyday and bring forth its potential

¹⁸² For *Seven Sites* this was most notably the case with Edwina Ashton's performance as part of the project launch, S.A.Y.D.A.N.C.E Franziska Lantz's performance at the Lowry Outlet shopping mall and Giles Bailey's performance in a city center hotel room.

otherness. Here, the productive use of interruption mirrors the encounter with the island in literary narratives.

The island in literature emerges unexpectedly interrupting and disrupting a sea voyage. As an interruptive encounter the research presents the temporal or event-based work to function akin to the literary island, momentarily shifting the viewer out of his or her everyday to facilitate the reframing and reimagining of the familiar. In literature, the unforeseen emergence of the island breaks with the relative security of a sea voyage, interrupting the linear trajectories associated with the behaviours and customs of a castaway's homeland. The island provides a new yet unstable ground, upon which the familiar is put into question and fantastical or subversive alternatives to the norm proliferate. Similarly, instances of interruption and disruption to the routines and rhythms that govern a contemporary everyday are at work in the curatorial projects presented as part of the research discussion. Each project under consideration can be seen to facilitate pockets of marginality in which images and actions at a remove from expected temporal and behavioural routines emerge, presenting instances of interruption and disruption that facilitate or provoke a reframing of a viewer's everyday.

Returning to a discussion of *Pala*, the temporal nature of the broadcast further reflects and draws upon the ephemeral nature of the island in literary narratives. As a site uncharted and unmapped, the literary island appears unexpectedly, proceeding to exist for only as long as the castaway remains upon its shore. The research aligns such a sudden temporal emergence and disappearance, with a notion of the event in contemporary arts practice. To reiterate Wilson's description of temporal artworks, the event,

Names something which happens, which takes place, which has a time and a place but which does not otherwise have a 'thing-like' existence.¹⁸³

At the instance of its occurrence, the event-based work and the literary island present momentary pockets of activity that have the potential to disrupt, interrupt and reframe the rhythm – the regularly repeated patterns of movement, action,

¹⁸³ Wilson, 'The Event', 23.

perception – of everyday life. The series of installations and performances developed for the *Seven Sites* project productively used a framework of the temporary event to actively reframe, to greater or lesser degrees, the site of each works occurrence. Such reframing invited in turn, considerations of possible ‘others’ to the status quo.

Facilitating the engagement and interaction of an audience with the artwork, situated and temporal art practices place emphasis on an individual, relational experience of the event. Similarly, the prioritising of an individual’s experience is an integral part of island literature. Indeed, with a majority of island narratives written in the first person singular, the space of the island only ever emerges through the movements of a central character. Transferring a focus on the individual onto a discussion of contemporary situated works, the research draws a parallel between the island and the curated artwork. In her discussion of art practices encountered outside of institutional settings, Clare Doherty suggests that the artwork experienced as ‘event’ is legitimised by the testimonies of those who participated in or viewed its occurrence. Such works ‘implement us into an act of engagement’,¹⁸⁴ transferring the authority of the institution onto the singular experience of the individual attendee. In this scenario, the plurality of testimonies continues to inform the work and its lasting legacy through the telling and retelling of the witnessed encounter. With a prioritizing of the singularity of encounter in relational and experiential work, the audience are, more or less, implicated in the work as both observer and performer, addressee and producer. The duality of their position introduces a self-consciousness and uncertainty in regards to their viewing experience. The research has harnessed such uncertainty as the ground from which a questioning and reimaging of the status quo can prevail. In so doing, an alignment with the uncertain terrain of the literary island is made, where all that was previously secure becomes destabilised in order to facilitate a blurring of distinctions between the real and the virtual.

¹⁸⁴ Doherty, ‘In Search of A Situation’, 10.

The proposed island model enables and has at its fore, possibilities for disruption and interruption to the established norms of a given context in order to productively provide instances of reimagining, reframing and reconsideration of an everyday. The research foregrounds such productive interruption as a means to provide a critical and conceptual space for the development of certain artworks that seek to work against, or rest outside of, dominant structures of exhibition making within a gallery context. In so doing the research proposes the island model as a new space of discourse, critique and more or less playful reframing, providing possibilities for the temporary and productive blurring of the real and the imaginary, interrupting and destabilising a given everyday.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adorno, Theodor and Bloch, Ernst 'Something's Missing' in *Utopia* edited by Richard Noble, 49-55. London: Whitechapel, 2009.
- Aragon, Louis. *Paris Peasant*. Translated by Simon Watson-Taylor. New York: Exact Change, 2001.
- Ardalan, Ziba and Bourriaud, Nicolas. *The Islanders An Introduction*. Charles Avery. London: Walther Konig Books 2008.
- Avery, Charles. *Onomatopoeia. The Port*. edited by Rene Zechlin. London: Walther Konig Books, 2010.
- Badiou, Alan. 'The Event in Deleuze', *PARRHESIA* 2 (2007): 37-44. Accessed January 2015 http://parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia02/parrhesia02_badiou02.pdf
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. London: John Wiley & Sons, 1984.
- Baldacchino, Godfrey; Farbotko, Carol; Harwood, Andrew; McMahon, Elizabeth and Stratford, Elaine. 'Envisaging the Archipelago' *Island Studies Journal* 6 (2011): 113-130
- Baldacchino, Godfrey. 'Islands as Novelty Sites' *Geographical Review* 97 (2007): 165-174
- Ballard, J.G. *Concrete Island*. London: Harper Collins, 2008.
- Bang Larsen, Lars. 'Life is Sweet in Sweden' *SIKSI - The Nordic Art Review*, 2, (1996). Accessed April 2012 <http://www.aleksandr.amir.info/projects/lifeissweet/life.html>
- Barrie, J. M. *Peter Pan & Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2007.
- Barthes, Roland. *Image Music Text*. Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath. Fontana Press: London, 1977.
- Basar Shumon and Miessen, Markus, edited. *Did Someone Say Participate? An Atlas of Spatial Practice*. Belgium: MIT Press, 2006.
- Bassnett, Susan and Stephanides, Stephanos. 'Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability' *Transtext(e)s Transcultures. Journal of Global Cultural Studies* 01 (2008): 5-21. Accessed October 2012 <http://transtexts.revues.org/212>.

- Battcock, Gregory edited. *Minimalism: A critical Anthology*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968.
- Beckett Samuel. *Not I/ Footfalls/ Rockaby*. London: Royal Court Theatre and Mighty Mouth LTD, 2014.
- Benjamin, Walter. 'The Storyteller Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov' in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000* edited by Dorothy J Hale, 361–78. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing 2006).
- Bentham, Jeremy. *Plan Of Parliamentary Reform, In The Form Of A Catechism, With Reasons For Each Article: With An Introduction, Shewing The Necessity Of Radical, And The Inadequacy Of Moderate, Reform*. Nabu Press May 2012.
- Bhabha, Homi edited. *Nation and Narration* London and New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Bhabha, Homi. 'The Other Question . . . Homi K. Bhabha Reconsiders the Stereotype and Colonial Discourse'. *Screen* 24.6 (1983): 18-36.
- Bishop, Claire. 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics' *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 51-79.
- Bishop, Claire. *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. London: Verso, 2012.
- Bishop, Claire. 'As if I was lost and someone suddenly came to give me news about myself' in *Off Limits. 40 Art Angel Projects* by Lingwood, James and Morris, Michael. 10-29. London: Merrell Publishers, 2002.
- Bishop, Claire edited. *Participation. Documents of Contemporary Art*. London: MIT Press, 2006.
- Bloch, Ernst. 'The Principle of Hope' in *Utopia* edited by Richard Noble, 42-45. London: Whitechapel, 2009.
- Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics*. Translated by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland. France: Les Presse Du Reel, 1998.
- Brook, Peter. *The Empty Stage*. London: Pelican Books 1968.
- Burgess, Anthony. *1985*. London: Beautiful Books, 2010.
- Burgess, Anthony. *The Wanting Seed*. London: Norton Paperback Fiction Editions, 2001.

- Burnett, Graham. 'On The Monstrosity of Islands' *Cabinet* 38 (2010): 90-94.
- Candlin, Fiona and Guins, Raiford edited. *The Object Reader*. Oxford: Routledge, 2009.
- Cardinal, Roger and Elsner, John edited. *The Cultures of Collecting*. London: Reaktion Books, 2004.
- Clarke, Martin edited. *Brian Griffiths: The End Of It*. London: Koenig Books, 2011.
- Coetzee, John Maxwell. *Foe*. London: Penguin Books, 2010.
- Coles, Alex and Defert, Alexia edited. *The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity, De-, Dis-, Ex-*. London: Blackdog Publishing, 1997.
- Connor, Steven. 'Shifting Ground' in *Samuel Beckett, Bruce Nauman* edited by Michael Glasmeier, 80-7 (Vienna: Kunsthalle Wien, 2000). Accessed November 2011 <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/skc/beckettnauman/>
- Cosgrove, D.G. 'Review of Islands of the Mind: How the Human Imagination Created the Atlantic World, by J. R. Gillis' *Geografiska Annaler, Series B: Human Geography* 87 (2005): 302-5.
- Craig-Martin, Michael, Jardine, Lisa, Lingwood, James and Morris, Michael. 'A conversation between Michael Craig-Martin, Lisa Jardine, James Lingwood and Michael Morris' in *Off Limits. 40 Art Angel Projects* by Lingwood, James and Morris, Michael. 10-29. London: Merrell Publishers, 2002.
- Crone, Bridget. 'Curating Dramatization and the diagram: Notes towards a Sensible Stage' in *The curatorial A philosophy of curation* edited by Jean-Paul Martinon, 207-213 (London and New York: Bloomsbury Press 2013).
- Cross, David and Doherty, Claire edited. *One Day Sculpture*. Germany: Kerber Verlag Bielefeld, 2009.
- De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by S.Rendall. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.
- Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. London: Wordsworth Editions, 1995.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Desert Islands: and Other Texts, 1953-1974*. London: Semiotext(e) / Foreign Agents, 2004.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Foucault*. Translated and edited by S. Hand. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.

- Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema: The Time-Image v. 2*. Translated and edited by H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta. London: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd 1989.
- Diaz, Hernan. 'A Tropical Paradise'. *Cabinet* 38 (2010): 79-85.
- 'Documents of the Marvelous' *Eye Magazine* 65 (2007). Accessed July 2012
<http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/documents-of-the-marvellous>
- Doherty, Claire edited. *Contemporary Art. From Studio to Situation*. London: Black Dog Publishing, 2004.
- Doherty, Claire. 'In Search of A Situation', *Art In the Life World*, Breaking Ground research papers (February 2008): 9-11. Accessed September 2014
http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/reading/RESEARCH_NEWS_PAPER_all.pdf
- Doherty, Claire and O'Neill, Paul edited. *Locating the Producers. Durational Approaches to Public Art*. Amsterdam: Valiz, 2012.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Island of the Day Before*. London: Vintage, 1996.
- Felski, Rita. 'The Invention of Everyday Life' in *New Formations. A journal of culture/theory/politics* 39 (1999): 15 – 31.
- Foster, Hall edited. *Postmodern Culture*. London: Pluto Press, 1985.
- Foster, Hall. *Return of the Real*. Cambridge Massachussettes: MIT Press, 1996.
- Foulton, Jeni. 'Fort Collective' *Sleek Magazine* (June 2013). Accessed February 2015
<http://www.sleek-mag.com/berlin/2013/06/fort-collective/>
- Franks, Jill. *Islands and the Modernists. The allure of isolation in art, literature and science*. California: McFarland and Company, 2006.
- Fried, Michael. 'Art and Objecthood' in *Minimalism: A critical Anthology* edited by Gregory Battcock, 116-147 (New York: E. P. Dutton 1968).
- Garland, Alex. *The Beach*. London: Penguin 2011.
- Gever, Ine. *Curating: the art of Creating Contexts. Conversation Pieces*. Maastricht: Jan Van Eyck Akademie 1995.
- Glissant, Eduard and Obrist, Hans Ulrich. *100 Notes – 100 Thoughts. Documenta (13)* Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag 2012.

- Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*. London: Faber and Faber, 1988.
- Gorham, Charles. *The Gold of Their Bodies*. London: Dial Press, 1955.
- Grosz, Elisabeth. *Architecture from the Outside, Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001.
- Hawley, John edited. *Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies*. CT Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001.
- Hoffman, E.T.A. *The Stories of Hoffman*. Translated and edited by R.J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin Classics, 1982.
- Hoffman, Jens and Jonas, Joan. *Perform (Artworks)*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2005.
- Hoffmann, Jens and McDowell, Tara edited. *The Exhibitionist. Journal on exhibition making* 4 (2011). Accessed May 2013 <http://the-exhibitionist.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/The-Exhibitionist-issue-4.pdf>
- Hugo, Viktor. *The Toilers of the Sea*. USA: Watchmaker Publishing, 2010.
- Huxley, Aldous. *Island*. London: Vintage Books, 2005.
- Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London and New York: Methuen, 1981.
- Janz, Bruce and Seiler, Tamara, 'Introduction to Free Space: Reconsidering Interdisciplinary Theory and Practice' *History of Intellectual Culture* 3. (2003): 1-20. Accessed January 2015 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/hic/>
- Johnstone, Stephen edited. *The Everyday. Documents of Contemporary Art*. London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2008.
- Jones, Amelia and Heathfield, Adrian, edited. *Perform. Repeat. Record. Live Art in History*. Bristol: Intellect 2012.
- Jones, Amelia. 'Performance: Time, Space and Cultural 'Value'' in *One Day Sculpture* edited by David Cross and Claire Doherty, 31-38 (Germany: Kerber Verlag Bielefeld, 2009).
- Jones, Raymond. F. *This Island Earth*. Huntsville Alabama: Thunderchild Publishing, 1999.
- Kelley, Jeff edited. *Allan Kaprow Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993.

- Kristeva, Julia 'Institutional Interdisciplinarity in Theory and Practice: an interview' in *The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity, De-, Dis-, Ex-*, edited by Alex Coles and Alexia Defert, 3-21. London: Blackdog Publishing, 1997.
- Kwon, Miwon. *One Place After Another*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004.
- Lacy, Suzanne. *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1995.
- Latour, Bruno and Weibel, Peter edited. *Making Things Public*. Karlsruhe: MIT Press/ ZKM, 2005.
- Lattuca, L. 'Creating Interdisciplinarity: Grounded Definitions from College and University Faculty' *History of Intellectual Culture, FREE SPACE: Reconsidering Interdisciplinary Theory and Practice* 3 (2003): 1-20. Accessed January 2015 <http://www.ucalgary.ca/hic/>
- Lawrence, David Herbert. 'The Man Who Loved Islands' in *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories* (London: Cambridge University Press 1928): Accessed October 2011. <http://www.literature.org/authors/lawrence-david-herbert/the-woman-who-rode-away-and-other-stories/part-09/chapter-03.html>
- Lind, Maria. 'Actualisation of Space: The Case of Oda Projesi' in *Contemporary Art. From Studio to Situation* edited by Claire Doherty, 109-122 (London: Black Dog Publishing 2004).
- Malm, Magdalena and Wik, Annika edited. *Imagining the Audience. Viewing Positions in Curatorial and Artistic Practice*. Stockholm: Art and Theory, 2012.
- Martin, Francesca. 'Turner nominee slaps 28 people', *The Guardian*, January 23, 2008. Accessed March 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2008/jan/23/art.photography>
- Massumi, Brian. *The Politics of Everyday Fear*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- McCarthy, Tom and Critchley, Simon. *The Mattering of Matter. Documents from the archive of the International Necronautical Society*. Sternberg Press, 2012.
- Meissen, Markus. *The Nightmare of Participation*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010.
- Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2003.
- Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty Four*. London: Penguin Classics, 2013.

- Peterson, Elmer and Sanouillet, Michel. *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1975.
- Pinet, Simone. 'On the Subject of Fiction: Islands and the Emergence of the Novel' *Diacritics* 33 (Fall-Winter 2003): 173-187.
- Sartre, Jean Paul. 'Aminadab or The fantastic considered as a language' *Situations I* (1947): 56-72.
- Shama Khanna 'Imagining the Audience: A two-day seminar in Stockholm' *Freize Blog* (October 25 2012). Accessed December 2012
<http://blog.frieze.com/imagining-the-audience-a-two-day-seminar-in-stockholm/>
- Prawer, Sigmund Solomon. *Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1989.
- Priest, Christopher. *Fugue for a Darkening Island*. London: Faber and Faber, 1972.
- Rendell, Jane. *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*. London: IB Tauris, 2006.
- Rendell, Jane. 'Critical Spatial Practice' in *Art Incorporated*. Denmark: Kunstmuseet Koge Skitsesamling, 2008. Accessed July 2014
<http://www.janerendell.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Curating-Editing-Writing-....pdf>.
- Rendell, Jane. *Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism*. London: IB Tauris, 2010.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London: Vintage, 1979.
- Schalansky, Judith. *Atlas of Remote Islands*. London: Particular Books, 2010.
- Schimmel, Paul. *Out of Actions: between performance and the object, 1949–1979*. New York & London: Thames and Hudson, 1998.
- Siegel, Marcia. B. 'Dancing on the Outside', *The Hudson Review* LX (2007): 111-118. Accessed May 2015
http://headlong.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/hudson_review.pdf
- Soja, Edward. *Third Space: Journeys to LA and Other Real and Imagines Places*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Stallabrass, Julian, van Mourik Broekman, Pauline and Ratnam, Niru edited. *Locus Solus. Site, Identity, technology in Contemporary Art*. London: Black Dog Publishing, 2000.

- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Treasure Island*. London: Wordsworth Editions, 1993.
- Stewart, Kathleen. *Ordinary Affects*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Soderberg, Erika edited. *Space Site Intervention. Situating Installation Art*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Taylor, Diana. *The Archive and The Repertoire*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press 2003.
- Tournier, Michel. *Friday or The Other Island*. London: Penguin Books, 1974.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic. A structural approach to a literary genre*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Cornell University Press, 1975.
- Verne, Jules. *The Floating Island*. Amsterdam: Fedonia Books, 2002.
- Verne, Jules. *The Mysterious Island*. London: Wordsworth Classics, 2010.
- Verne, Jules. *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. London: Wordsworth Classics, 1992.
- Vidler, Antony. *The Architectural Uncanny. Essays in the modern unhomely*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992.
- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Galapagos*. New York: Dial Press, 1996.
- Wallcot, David. *Collected Poems 1948-1984*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992.
- Watkins, Jonathan edited. *Every Day. 11th Biennial of Sydney*. Sydney: Biennial of Sydney, 1998.
- Weber, Samuel. *The legend of Freud*. California: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Weiss, Johann David. *The Swiss Family Robinson*. London: Harper Press, 2012.
- Wells, Herbert George. *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. London: Penguin Classics, 2005.
- Willats, Stephen. *The Lurky Place*. London: Lisson Gallery, 1978.
- Williams, Stewart. 'On Islands, Insularity, and Opium Poppies: Australia's Secret Pharmacy' *Environment and Planning D:Society and Space* 28 (2010): 290-310.
- Wyndham, John. *Web*. London: Penguin Books, 1979.

