

THIS IS THE PLACE: SITE-SPECIFICITY IN
ERNESTO PUJOL'S *AWAITING* (2010)

by

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ABSTRACT

The recent performance work of Ernesto Pujol complicates the notion of site-specific art, extending into the tension of what--or who--constitutes a site. This project considers Pujol's April 2010 site-specific performance entitled *Awaiting* as a case study in the decidedly complicated relationship between the discursive or fluid nature of the body and the constructed notion of place. *Awaiting* used performance to call attention to what Pujol identified as an unspoken but omnipresent "culture of waiting" in Utah. However, rituals of shared dress, gesture, and extended rhythms punctuated by spatial and temporal gaps simultaneously invoked and transformed the cultural, historical, and social landscape in which *Awaiting* was situated.

Looking to the various uses of gesture and mapping within *Awaiting*, I argue that Pujol's invocation of "site" prevented him from creating a space that matched his intention to transcend the constructed nature of site. Rather, the embodied representations of Salt Lake's local identity infiltrated and transformed *Awaiting*. Consequently, I use Pujol's intentionality in *Awaiting* as a foil to examine the possibilities and limitations of site-specific performance. I conclude that *Awaiting*'s site-specificity originates not only in its allusion to a culture of waiting, but rather in its resemblance to a ritualistic history characteristic of Utah starting with the definitive utterance of "this is the place."

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INTRODUCTION

“You are beginning to wait, to *embody* the awaiting.”
Ernesto Pujol, *Awaiting Performance Manual*, 2010

Site-specific art encompasses more than the physical geography of the land in which it exists. Instead, the combination of physical location, time, and social elements mixed with the situation composed by the artist ultimately form a site-specific work.¹ Whether performed in the Judean Desert or Salt Lake City, the choice of site becomes a readymade for the artist, while the characteristics of the site become his materials.² Site-specific art, then, becomes a hybrid between the artist’s intentionality and the geographic and cultural framework of the site. The recent performance work of Ernesto Pujol extends

¹ Miwon Kwon. "One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity." *October* 80 (1997). 92. While I look to site specificity as a means to draw out *Awaiting*'s relationship to the local culture, it has become a largely disputed discourse. Within her article, Miwon Kwon traces a genealogy of site-specificity through art history allowing for multiple definitions of the term to emerge. By considering the turn away from museums and objects, Kwon argues that site specificity no longer includes only the grounded presence of the art object. When talking about the expansion of art into the public realm, Kwon states, "... the distinguishing characteristic of today's site-oriented art is the way in which both the art work's relationship to the actuality of a location (as site) *and* the social conditions of the institutional frame (as site) are *subordinate* to a *discursively* determined site that is delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, or cultural debate. Furthermore, unlike previous models, this site is not defined as a *precondition*. Rather, it is generated by the work (often as "content"), and then *verified* by its convergence with an existing discursive formation" (92).

² While Kwon is distinctly talking about site-specificity in her essay, she participates in the new movement of Situationism, or situation-specific (as opposed to site-specific) projects. Claire Doherty aptly defines situation-specific art as "works and processes [that] share the situational characteristics of contemporaneity, defined recently by Terry Smith as 'prioritizing the moment over time, direct experience of multiplicitous complexity over the singular simplicity of distanced reflection.' ... Often temporary and interventionist, invariably now performed by individuals other than the artist, mobilizing and demanding different kinds of public engagement, such works often result from a commission, as part of broader, place-based, scattered-site exhibitions. Yet such situation-producing works contest a literal reading of the specifics of place as fixed and stable, causing a destabilizing effect theorized by art historian Miwon Kwon as being in 'the wrong place.'" Claire Doherty, "Introduction," in *Situation*, ed. Claire Doherty (London: The MIT Press, 2009), 12-19.

beyond this definition of site-specific art into the tension of what--or who--constitutes a site.

On April 8, 2010, Ernesto Pujol conducted a twelve-hour site-specific performance entitled *Awaiting*. Dressed in white and starting at a place familiar to them, forty Salt Lake City area residents silently walked the city's streets arriving at the base of the Utah State Capitol. After lining up uniformly, the performers walked methodically up and down the steps of the Capitol grounds, mapping out the topography of the land with their bodies throughout the evening, overnight, and into the early morning. While walking, the performers made various gestures: raising their hands to their heart, intertwining their fingers in front of or behind their torso, and reaching out to touch the granite walls or iron railings of the Capitol. The performers moved within a series of prescribed paths up and down the stairs and around the colonnade at the top of the steps, pausing for moments of stillness between columns, some individuals moving, while others stood grounded. Each participant had a function in the larger aesthetic of the performance: the white-clad bodies set against and between the architecture, moving according to the available paths at the Utah State Capitol and the City of Salt Lake.

Rituals of shared dress, gesture, and extended rhythms punctuated by spatial and temporal gaps simultaneously invoked and transformed the cultural, historical, and social landscape in which *Awaiting* was situated. Pujol envisioned a neutral or secular space meant to question, make visible, deconstruct—and perhaps transcend—what he concluded was an isolating “culture of waiting” specific to Utah.³ Using *Awaiting* as a

³ In an interview with Paul Paret, Pujol discussed his role regarding site-specific art. He stated, “[In my performances], durational means that it transcends the standard duration of cultural events (approximately two hours), so that it actually manifests the unhurried flow of natural time. I try to create a rift in the

case study, I argue that Pujol's invocation of "site" prevented him from creating a space that matched his intention to transcend the constructed nature of his chosen location.⁴ Rather, I claim that the embodied representations of Salt Lake's local identity infiltrated and transformed *Awaiting*. The performance, thus, becomes less about cultural transcendence and more about how representation constructs culture. Consequently, I use Pujol's intentionality in *Awaiting* as a foil to examine the possibilities and limitations of site-specific performance. I conclude that *Awaiting*'s site-specificity originates not in its allusion to a culture of waiting, but rather in its resemblance to a ritualistic history characteristic of Utah.

Historiography

While I do not go into detail about Pujol's other site-specific performances, his larger portfolio demonstrates his intent to reveal the impure and static nature of human constructs.⁵ By doing this, Pujol endeavors to expose a universal truth: that all humans are subject to the passing of time.⁶ His use of monuments and durational performance become a standardized (and seemingly global) means to draw out the social implications of each site he visits.⁷ David Getsy briefly touches on this in his article on one of Pujol's

experience of urban time...I try to recapture the original purity of time beyond the human construct." Paul Paret. "A Culture of Waiting: Ernesto Pujol in Conversation with Monty Paret," *15 Bytes: Artists of Utah, Where Utah's Visual Art World Unites*. April 2010, 1.

⁴ Pujol's earlier work, such as his photographic series *Inheriting Salt* (2008) also addresses the theme of embodiment. Yet, performance as opposed to the stillness of a staged photograph evidences a more "real" - and ultimately elusive -- approach to the body.

⁵ Paret, 1.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ An example of this trend is in his performance entitled *Memorial Gestures: Mourning and Yearning at the Rotunda* (2007), Pujol held at the Republic Memorial Rotunda in the Chicago Cultural Center, a civic building similar to the Utah State Capitol. See David Getsy, "Mourning, Yearning, Cruising: Ernesto Pujol's *Memorial Gestures*." *Performance Art Journal* 90 (2008).

earlier performances entitled *Memorial Gestures: Mourning and Yearning at the Rotunda* (2007). Getsy discusses the stakes of displaying the personal or vulnerable body in the memorial public spaces that Pujol chooses.⁸ Getsy's argument indicates that (a) Pujol has a tendency to use memorial spaces for his site-specific performances, and (b) that the public display of the internal, individual, and private emotions embodied by the performers completed and/or altered Pujol's performances. I push Getsy's observation further by examining the private and embodied manifestations of site in *Awaiting* that contrasted with Pujol's intention to reveal his universal ideal.

Pujol's methods, however, still adhere to general definitions of site-oriented performance. Even though Pujol envisioned a very detailed aesthetic and conceptual outcome for *Awaiting*, he adopted characteristics specific to Utah's socio-historic landscape as his medium.⁹ According to Pujol's proposal for the project, durational walking, dress, ritualistic gesture, and attentiveness to sound through silence engendered a "culture of waiting" specific to Utah's socio-historical landscape.¹⁰ Pujol cited several reasons for his observation of Utah's culture, perhaps most resonant is his discussion of Mormonism. He indicated that Utah's culture of waiting resulted from the Mormon proclivity to wait for "the return of a spiritual figure," or a paradise-like afterlife.¹¹ By

⁸ Getsy, 16.

⁹ Pujol mentioned that he came to his conclusions about Utah based on his first visitation to the state. He indicates that this visitation led him to conduct ongoing academic and visual research of Utah. Regarding his research, he stated, "Site-specific art is created for a place, tailored to a very specific context. It embraces a landscape, a people, their history and oral memories as a fabric. You don't import the materials, those are the materials, the building blocks of the piece; so that it could only have been created there and may be meaningless beyond this context. I like the belonging." Pujol, 4.

¹⁰ Pujol, "Awaiting Project Description."

¹¹ Ernesto Pujol, "Awaiting Project Description," (unpublished manuscript 2010). Within his proposal, Pujol cites four reasons for Utah's culture of waiting including, (1). "the ancestral waiting of the pioneers, who toiled for what they perceived as a wilderness to become what they envisioned as a garden. However, this effort did not depend solely on them. It also depended on a notion of virtue and its calling on grace. Thus, there was a gap, a surrender – a waiting for the labor to be blessed by the universe. (2). the Mormon faith's

recontextualizing many of the visual codes that reinforced this belief in daily life, Pujol hoped to disturb the cursory nature of the social constructs evident in lived experience that encourage cultural isolation.¹² In effect, his methodical intervention into the public sphere indicates that a localized culture is an imaginary and fixed ideal constructed by representation.

Even though Pujol has a very specific methodology characteristic of his body of work, his choice of site irrevocably makes each performance distinct.¹³ Surprisingly, when asked why Pujol chose the Utah State Capitol over Temple Square (the site most iconic of Utah), Pujol said, “To have sited the performance at Temple Square would have compromised the secular universal nature of the piece.”¹⁴ He further claimed that even

culture of waiting, particularly among its many women, on whose lives of service the church has been built; of patiently waiting for the return of a spiritual figure who will transform everything and everyone. (3). Waiting for soldiers to return home from war. (4). a counter history of waiting, of refusing to wait any longer, of embracing this land as heaven, as a place of defining stewardship, and of brave individual voices and self-determination.”

¹² Paret, 1. When asked about the constructed nature of site or culture, Pujol responded by saying, “My art is not at the service of any particular faith, cult, or religion. I freely relate to these ideologies as information about the human condition, as cultural material. This approach marks the difference between doing a piece that is site-specific BUT universal, instead of doing a piece that is just local and, at best, regional. All human constructs are imaginary, fantasy, dream. The only reality is the body in nature. We are animals. At best, we can aspire to be holy animals, and thus, hopefully wiser stewards of nature. Site-specificity is a fragile balance between being sensitive to individual and collective human memories, intangible (unspoken) and materialized (embodied). As well as being sensitive to nature (geology, ecology, and wildlife). I try to take all those factors into account.” Ernesto Pujol, e-mail message to author, May 17, 2011.

¹³ While I do not go into detail about Pujol’s other site-specific performances, a trend emerges in his larger portfolio. His use of monuments and durational performance become a standardized (and seemingly global) means to draw out the social implications of each site he visits. In effect, his methodical intervention into the public sphere indicates that a localized culture is an imaginary and fixed ideal constructed by representation.

¹⁴When asked about his choice of the Capitol rather than a more iconic site of Utah such as Temple Square or the Mormon Conference Center, Pujol responded: “I used the visual codes of Mormon culture, and its yearning for the Second Coming, the end of times. But I could not artistically allow for the piece to become a Mormon piece, even though I have a profound respect and even admiration for aspects of Mormon culture and faith. My art is not at the service of any particular faith, cult, or religion. I freely relate to these ideologies as information about the human condition, as cultural material. Man and woman are religion-making machines. This approach marks the difference between doing a piece that is site-specific BUT universal, instead of doing a piece that is just local and, at best, regional.” Ernesto Pujol, e-mail message to the author, May 17, 2001.

though he adopted many of the visual codes of Mormonism, he “could not artistically allow for [*Awaiting*] to become a Mormon piece.”¹⁵ Despite Pujol’s efforts to exclude Mormonism from the work, the local perception of the visual symbols he used combined with the contextual framework make *Awaiting* a distinctly Mormon piece. Consequently, *Awaiting*’s site-specificity derives not from Pujol’s assessment of the culture, but from its reference of and participation in a lineage of visual codes and performative rituals specific to Utah’s history.

The culmination of *Awaiting*, then, bears an unexpected and shocking resemblance to the inception of Mormonism in Utah. It evokes a succession of histories specific to Utah beginning with the designation of place starting with the settlement by the Mormon pioneers on July 24, 1847. Since then Utah has kept alive the historic phrase “this is the place” through monuments, parades, and theatrical productions.¹⁶ Coined by Mormon Prophet Brigham Young upon his entrance to the Salt Lake Valley, the saying indicated the Mormon belief that Utah was a place for unification and protection.¹⁷ The phrase has since become a definitive mantra within the local culture appearing as a slogan

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Dramatic performance is close to the heart of Mormon culture. Prophetic speech-making, elaborate pageants that reenact scripture and educational activities involving whole congregations and different levels of church hierarchy are all part of Mormon life. Many of these practices include Pioneer Day, which celebrates the day the first pioneers entered Utah. The most prominent practice, however, is the Mormon General Conference, a biannual meeting in which the prophet addresses his congregation. General Conference occurs via satellite television, but the Church Conference Center located in Temple Square at the center of Salt Lake houses the event. Also, see Clair Enlow. "LDS Conference Center Welcomes the Faithful." *ArchitectureWeek* (2001): 5.

¹⁷ Brigham Young believed that Salt Lake Valley was a Zion. This is what led him to the west. He had divine inspiration once he entered Salt Lake Valley that it was the place. The *Brigham Young Monument* located at the center of Salt Lake City, shows his famous gesture that indicated that the place he stood was Zion. These gestures comment not only on the notion of a “right” place, or as the Mormons believed, a Zion, but also on the idea that Utah’s physical landscape has as much to do with the notion of utopia, or a fruitful place that provides a safe haven for unification. Joseph Smith, *Doctrine and Covenants*. (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints: 1982). Section 15: 9-19. Zion exists as a specific place or land as a reward for those who endure the trials of the earthly world while not giving into temptations considered sins by the Mormon faith. . See Thomas G. Alexander, and Richard W. Sadler. *Utah, the Right Place: the Official Centennial History*. (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1996). 97.

for local businesses and as a title for public parks around Utah. I argue that Pujol's choice of site allows for these layers of this history to resurface. Like those who came before, he designates Utah as "the place" for his performance, revisiting and further ritualizing a moment in the past. What follows is not a purely secular or purely Mormon work, but rather, a hybridized form of the two through their historical similarities regarding place.¹⁸

Methodology

The following chapters are an in-depth analysis of the site-specificity inherent to *Awaiting*. Specifically, I investigate the use of gesture and mapping in *Awaiting* to examine the connection between the body and place. Each chapter reflects the historiography I have laid out in this introduction. I do this by both addressing the ritualized history represented in Pujol's choice of site while also looking to the ways that the performance has contributed to Utah's identity.

In my first chapter, I discuss gestural forms of demarcation that identify or essentialize a site.¹⁹ As I consider the specific manual and bodily gestures used in *Awaiting*, I look not only at the performers' gestures at the Capitol, but also at gestures that extend beyond the twelve-hour performance. I interpret Pujol's self-representation and subsequent demarcation of Utah as "the place" as gestures comparative to commemorative depictions of the Mormon's entrance into Salt Lake Valley. By doing this, I frame Pujol's methods of identification within the repeated rituals of demarcation

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines demarcation as "the action of marking the boundary or limits of something, or of marking it off from something else; delimitation; separation." demarcation, n." OED Online. March 2011. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.utah.edu/view/Entry/49595?redirectedFrom=demarcation> (accessed April 17, 2011).

that have shaped the cultural identity of Salt Lake City. Particularly, I consider the arrival and settlement of the Mormon pioneers as a precedent to the construction of place. Both gestures, in turn, contribute to individual and collective identity by using representation such as words, images, and in the case of *Awaiting*, performance to define people, places, spaces, and objects.

In my second chapter, I contend that the types of mapping in *Awaiting* contribute to an embodied identity specific to the mapmaker. The choreographed routes the performers walk both at the Capitol and throughout Salt Lake attest to a choreographic mapping (and further act of demarcation) localized to *Awaiting*. The performers' individual routes, however, reflect and make visible an alternate identity that infiltrates the performance. Their bodies become maps of their personal histories; the places they visit are markers for a memory. While *Awaiting* allows for this type of intensely personal mapping, a paradox exists in the representations (such as maps) that standardize the experience. By considering the various cartographic practices in *Awaiting*, this chapter complicates the ways that one comes to define site.

I would like to rethink the impetus of "site" by considering many of the embodied notions of place in *Awaiting*. This includes the repetition of ritualized acts of demarcation specific to Utah. Consequently, I offer a more fluid interpretation of site-specific performance art. Pujol's choice of Utah, his subsequent planning of the performance, and the local and individual interpretation of his instructions bring the issue of site-specificity to the forefront. Even taken apart from the artist's intentions, the notion of site-specificity irrevocably alters and colors the performance.

CHAPTER I

GESTURE

“My body is a gesture that points at something else.”
Ernesto Pujol²⁰

In the *Awaiting* press release, Pujol mentioned his intention to create a space of meditation by shutting out the organism of the city [FIGURE 1].²¹ An image of Pujol accompanies the press release. The camera captures the side-profile of the artist as he looks on at the Utah State Capitol building (rather than out), the place where he will conduct his performance. Set against the black sky, the Utah State Capitol building is a beacon of light with its white columns and illuminated veranda. This space isolates Pujol. The light and classical architecture become symbolic of the enlightened authority of a structure influenced by an ideology of reason. Pujol’s body, straight and clothed in white, echoes the architecture emphasizing the verticality of the columns and expressing a similar monumentality that suggests his enlightened authority. Pujol positions himself as a viewer in relation to the building. Nevertheless, while he is viewing it, he is also being viewed from outside of the frame. Pujol is a mediator between the architecture and the city (and viewer) positioned to the side of him. Perhaps more poignant is the fact that

²⁰ Paret, 4.

²¹ Sara Pickett. "Awaiting." www.awaitinginsaltlakecity.com. 14 Feb. 2010. Web. <www.awaitinginsaltlakecity.com>.

Pujol frames the designated arena with his body, marking it as the place for his performance.²² By forming a permeable wall of performers and observers, Pujol proposed to close out the everyday bustle of the city to meditate on Utah's essential "culture of waiting."²³ His press release photograph echoes this intentionality. However, his body (not the performers and observers) is indeed gestural, and creates an isolating arena to contemplate Utah's culture.

This chapter examines the use of gestures in *Awaiting* to signify the real or imagined notion of "place" through representation. Particularly, I am interested not only the muted gestures within the performance, but also those that extend beyond the singularity of the twelve-hour event. As demonstrated in his press release, Pujol performs a gesture of demarcation by inserting himself into the local public sphere and designating Utah as *the place* for social intervention. In effect, he hearkens back to Utah's heritage, and evokes Mormon Prophet Brigham Young's entrance into the Salt Lake Valley. It may not have been Pujol's intention to parallel the Mormon prophet's gesture of demarcation. Indeed, Pujol intended to question the culture of waiting that stemmed from the settlement of Utah, rather than reenact a moment in Utah's history.²⁴ However, when placed within Utah's socio-historical (and predominantly Mormon) framework, the use of gesture in *Awaiting* allows for a rich investigation into the site-specificity of the performance.

²² Throughout his stay in Utah, Pujol made his presence and intentions known through public lectures, press releases, posters, and handbooks. Within this media, he stated his intentions regarding *Awaiting*. In this way, Pujol makes a connection with the structure of society based on the local history of the place. Ibid. 1.

²³ Pickett, 1.

²⁴ Pujol, "Awaiting Project Description," 1.

As peculiar as it may seem, *Awaiting* might be best understood by comparing Pujol's performance and its artifacts to the seemingly different ritualized memory and re-performance of Young's settlement of and entrance into Salt Lake Valley. Consequently, this chapter looks to the objects that construct and mythologize their grand gestures.²⁵ I am specifically interested in comparing Pujol's representation of his performance (through posters, publicity and preparatory materials, and his role as a visiting artist) with Cyrus Dallin's *Brigham Young Monument* (c. 1892-1900), a depiction of Brigham Young at the moment of his historical statement "this is the right place, drive on."²⁶ Dallin and Pujol memorialize the gesture of designation through bronze on the one hand and performance, photography and video on the other.²⁷ Both demonstrate that gesture extends beyond any literal moment into a larger performative or cultural gesture to communicate an ideal.²⁸ In effect, gesture has the ability to *actualize or embody* an event,

²⁵ Pujol's carefully constructed advertisements and pamphlets show that they do not merely notify, rather they function similar to Susan Sontag's reading of posters, where the artistic construction of the image has a visual appeal and indicates a modern concept of public space, especially an urban space. Sontag lays out the general characteristics of propagandist posters in her introduction, offering an artistic medium specific to revolutionary politics, and consequently, adding to the utopianism inherent in Pujol's construction of the posters. Further, Pujol's images publicize historical events, are collaborative, announce solidarity, and are intended to be consumed collectively. Susan Sontag and Dugald Stermer. "Posters: Advertisement, Political Artifact, Commodity." In *The Art of Revolution: 96 Posters from Cuba*. (London: Pall Mall, 1970).

²⁶ Rell G. Francis. "Mormon Church Themes." *Cyrus E. Dallin: Let Justice Be Done*. (Springville, UT: Francis, 1976). 68-77.

²⁷ The discourse surrounding monuments and memorials is fairly complicated. In her article, "The Wall, the Screen, and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," Marita Sturken traces a short genealogy of memorials and monuments. She states, "Memorials embody grief, loss, and tribute or obligation; in so doing, they serve to frame particular historical narratives. They are, according to Charles Griswold, "a species of pedagogy [that] seeks to instruct posterity about the past and, in so doing, necessarily reaches a decision about what is worth recovering." In this sense, it would seem that both a monument and a memorial commemorate a past event (whether victorious or defeated). While Sturken has very specific definitions of each, I should therefore specify that within the context of this project, a monument, like a memorial, memorializes and evokes moments in the past for the sake of public remembrance. Marita Sturken, "The Wall, the Screen, and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Representations*, 35 (1991): 119-120.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

person, place, or action.²⁹ Central to my argument is the complicated attempt made by artists to preserve and memorialize these ideals through representation. Gesture, then, becomes an external representation of an embodied social and individual history. These forms of representation are a citation of what came before, while simultaneously circulating the values of the artist. By participating in the ritualistic reproduction and remembrance of Utah's history, *Awaiting* becomes a work that comments on and contributes to a localized identity.

This Is the Place

The complexity of the connection Pujol is trying to make to place (Utah) might be best illuminated by an unlikely comparison between Pujol's promotional photographs and Dallin's *Brigham Young Monument* located at the center of Salt Lake City [FIGURE 2]. Standing atop the granite pedestal, the Mormon prophet, monumentalized in bronze, extends thirty-five feet above the ground. Looking east, his arm outstretched with palm loosely open, Young looks across Salt Lake City, gesturing his claim of the territory. He holds a staff in his right hand, which firmly digs into the place where he stands. A bronze bas-relief of a small pioneer family--man, woman and child standing against the backdrop of their wagon--decorates the rectangular pedestal. At the bottom of the monument are two bronze figures. On the east side is a Native American and on the west, a fur trapper. Both figures sport guns and represent the contributions of other communities that helped the Latter-Day Saints settle.³⁰ Their positioning at the base of

²⁹ "memorialize, v." OED Online. March 2011. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.utah.edu/view/Entry/116354> (accessed May 18, 2011).

³⁰ Francis, 67.

the monument, and placement in a peripheral position, however, further emphasize Brigham Young's centrality and therefore, his authority over the land at the expense of those who came before him. The extension of the base of the monument outward gives the entire sculpture a triangular effect triumphantly crowned with Brigham Young at the top.

While Dallin's monument shows a clear visual hierarchy, with Young at the top and the fur traders and Native Americans at the bottom, most significant is Young's gesture of mark making. As his staff connects with the ground where he is standing, he also grounds himself, declaring the land as his own. The vertical line of the bronze staff extends through the white oolitic sandstone pillar and the granite shaft (a rock specific to Utah). This verticality allows Young's gesture to continue through the length of the pedestal, connecting it with the ground below. The extension from monument into the ground recreates the symbolic point of entry and historical moment of the Mormons' claim of the Salt Lake Valley. By claiming the land as a place, as a site to be settled, Young exerts a definitive gesture. This gesture implicates the land as a passive blank slate to be acted upon according to the will of God and Young.

The monumental myth of arrival represented in Dallin's *Brigham Young Monument* relates to an image of Pujol in a University flier. Within the photograph, the artist shows his back to the viewer, and overlooks Salt Lake Valley from the banister of the hilltop Utah State Capitol building [FIGURE 3]. While Pujol turns away from the viewer, his stance is similar to that of Brigham Young's monument. He touches the banister in front of him and looks out over the valley. Like Young, he is the master artist, admiring the landscape as a canvas to dismantle and rebuild. His elevated position within

the composition is similar to that of Young, claiming an authority to make a change to the land in front of him.

Certainly, Pujol's positioning within the image is significant. As if the camera were a scope, Pujol acts as the crosshair of vision indicating Salt Lake Valley as his target. Such photographic construction positions Pujol as a figure central to Salt Lake's urban fabric. Facing away from the viewer, the verticality of his body, lined up against the one-point perspective of the horizon leads all lines to the central vanishing point of the valley beyond. This vanishing point aligns at his head, emphasizing his intellectual focus over the land. While Pujol does not extend his arm as Young does, the camera acts as an extension of scopic gesture, pointing at both his intellectual capacity and the sweeping view of Utah's geography. This view brings together the relationship between Pujol, the man, and Salt Lake City, an environment to be overtaken. Pujol's positioning, framed by the architecture, above the land, further reinforces his authority and role as orchestrator. Even though Young faces the viewer, the triangular motif of the monument leads the viewer's eyes up the pedestal, over his body, and across the extended arm indicating the valley before him.³¹ Dallin's monument becomes a monolithic representation of Young's actions, mythologizing Young's gesture. Pujol's body echoes this gesture through his performative marking of place. Both representations indicate a gestural language communicating the act of demarcation.³²

³¹ It is important to note here the difference between Young and Pujol in relation to the notion of a "blank canvas." Because Pujol references the past through his performance, he is commenting on the palimpsest-like nature of cities and history. In essence, Pujol's intervention is more self-conscious than Young's, as he takes into consideration that which he intends to displace with his actions.

³² Pujol and Young's gestures participate in a larger discourse of the romanticized traveler's ethnographic relationship with the land he travels. While Pujol maintains neutrality in his self-appointed role as itinerant photographer, his staged fliers suggest otherwise. The composition of his University flier resembles the German Romanticist Caspar David Friedrich's painting *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (1818) where the

Dallin and Pujol's representations shape and contribute to the idea of place. The act of claiming land or making one's mark is a prevalent theme in both the Mormon settlement and *Awaiting*. To settle the west is to claim the land as a blank slate – a gesture showing the beginnings of constructing a society and associating one's name with a place. Dallin's monument to Young's gesture relates to an overall tradition within Mormon practices that both simplify and package Mormon history through rituals, monuments, and performance.³³ These objects and practices become an embodiment of Mormon values and beliefs. Monuments such as Dallin's contribute to a collective identity and reinforce a general belief that Salt Lake Valley is a place meant for Mormon unification.³⁴

Time Memorialized

Pujol inserts and distinguishes himself in a place marked by a ritualized history, which in turn, ritualizes his own history through *Awaiting* and the attendant representation of the performance. While also referencing Utah's social landscape and history, Pujol demarcates Utah as "the place" through his bodily gesture.³⁵ Memorial

nineteenth century wanderer stands poised at the top of a mountain, overlooking the land before him. Like Pujol's image, both figures are central within each composition. All vanishing points in both images lead to the figure, enforcing his importance within the composition. Additionally, both figures rise above the land. While Friedrich's image has long been discussed within the discourse of the sublime – the attempt to understand man's relationship with the overwhelming expanse of nature – it maintains a visual hierarchy between land and man. In all images (Pujol, Young, and Friedrich), man emerges in an elevated position over the land, relating to both Pujol and Young's role within Utah's geography and the monumentality of their gestures.

³³ Enlow. 5.

³⁴ See Davis Bitton, "The Ritualization of Mormon History," in *The Ritualization of Mormon History and Other Essays*. (Urbana: University of Chicago: 1994) on how monuments, parades, heroes, ceremonies, and even standardized narratives have contributed to a celebrated identity for Mormons.

³⁵ Drawing from Miwon Kwon's discussion on the artist's role in site-specific performance, I consider the presence of the itinerant artist as an approximation of the "work," rather than the work as a surrogate of the artist. While commenting on the role of the artist as a commoditized presence, historian Miwon Kwon

objects such as monuments and photographs both reference and commemorate these moments in the past (an absence) while simultaneously representing the values of the present through their presence and circulation.³⁶ While Pujol's gestural act of claiming the land would seem the opposite of demarcation because of the ephemeral nature of performance, the physical relics of documentation are monumental in their own right. However, Pujol's body, as represented in his staged pre-performance photographs, becomes an alternate conceptual memorial. Like the white columns of the Capitol it resembles it acts as a memorial to the past. Pujol's body, as represented in his photographs, marks and is therefore a producer for site.³⁷ Further, its presence within the context of *Awaiting* conjures memories and concepts associated with the performance. This form of memorialization allows for the presence of something – the body, an object, a monument – to commemorate the absence of a moment in history or a memory.³⁸

states, "...the *presence* of the artist has become an absolute *prerequisite* for the execution/presentation of site-oriented projects. It is now the performative aspect of an artist's characteristic mode of operation (even when collaborative) that is repeated and circulated as a new art commodity, with the artist functioning as the primary vehicle for its verification, repetition, and circulation." Miwon Kwon. "One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity." *October* 80 (1997): 101-102.

³⁶ Sturken, 119-120.

³⁷ While I talk specifically about Pujol's body as a commemorative marker here, I expand upon this notion of the body-monument in my second chapter when I discuss the performers' bodies as an embodiment of both their personal and collective histories. What distinguishes Pujol from the performers, and therefore makes him monumental, is his larger gesture of demarcation through self-commemoration and staging. I like to think of Pujol's body as a self-sacrificed commoditized art object. Even though Pujol emphasizes the psychological and meditative aspects of the body in *Awaiting*, he resembles other body artists such as Adad Hannah who create living body sculptures. Hannah's most recent work entitled *Burghers of Seoul* (2006) restages Auguste Rodin's monument *The Burghers of Calais* (1884-1895) as a performative sculpture of bodies. Rodin's sculpture serves as a monument to Calais' association with the Hundred Years' War. Hannah's bodily monument, like Pujol, emphasizes the gestural quotation of the event *Calais* references. However, also like Pujol, Hannah reappropriates the meaning of the monument through the contextual shift of place and function of the title. See Adad Hannah's personal website, "Recent Projects," http://adadhannah.com/projects/show/burghers_of_seoul/ (accessed April 24, 2011).

³⁸ Memorial gestures, in this sense, become a prevalent theme in much of Pujol's body of work. I use this term in reference to a performance that Pujol conducted at the Republic Memorial Rotunda in the Chicago Cultural Center, a civic building similar to the Utah State Capitol. Pujol conducted the performance in October 2007 with members of the local community. The performance was entitled *Memorial Gestures: Mourning and Yearning at the Rotunda*.

Awaiting is a recent performance, the documentation of which has not yet been exhibited in museums or galleries. However, Pujol's body of work follows a trend of memorialization. In an exhibition of his *Inheriting Salt* series (2008), Pujol exhibited the relics of a performance that took place both in Utah's Salt Flats and the Judean Desert [FIGURE 4]. While photographs are the standard objects for exhibition with performance, Pujol had made a sculpture entitled *Desert Walk* (also referred to as *Salt Walk*) out of the sand from both places representing the performance [FIGURE 5]. The sculpture consists of an iron box that encases the salty sand of each site he visited. As long as Pujol's height and wide as his steps when walking, Pujol calls this object a "living sculpture."³⁹ The sculpture has impressions of the artist's footprints, representing Pujol's trek from one land to the next.

The display of the *Inheriting Salt* series demonstrates the rhetorical function of the images, objects, and pamphlets in *Awaiting*. Pujol has specific ideas about the function of the objects from his performances, expressing that they become an "archeology" of a time that has passed when exhibited.⁴⁰ He calls many of his objects "performative objects," or conceptual sculptures tied to a performance, but claims that they should stand on their own as art objects.⁴¹ Pujol's stylistic manipulation of his works

³⁹ Pujol, e-mail message to artist, April 17, 2011.

⁴⁰ Ernesto Pujol, e-mail message to author, April 17, 2011. Pujol states, "I often create the image (photo and/or drawing) of a character long before I perform him. I work like a film director, drawing or picturing the frame before I shoot the movie, as it were. It also affords me privacy and intimacy with my public work. They balance each other out. Those objects may be part of the performance, or result from it. The photos, however, are never part of the performance. They are done before, to envision it. (Not to be confused with press photos, which also envision a performance, but for a different reason: its promotion.) And they may later form an installation, or be shown to illustrate the performative object, like a document, an archaeology. And then. there's the raw documentation of the performance, usually an edited video."

⁴¹ Ibid.

assures that they no longer merely document.⁴² Just as his footprints index the moment in time that Pujol walked in a given place, so do the photographs for *Awaiting*. Perhaps more poignant is that the sculpture takes on characteristics of Pujol's body such as his height and foot width, becoming a surrogate for his bodily experience. Each object becomes a memorial to that moment, recalling a specific event and ritualizing that event through repetition. Pujol's images do not have the intense solidarity of granite and bronze; however, they are constructed and staged -- as a monument would be. They are permanent marks, objects mythologizing Pujol's role in Utah. The objects associated with Pujol's work contribute to and become relics of the performance, further reinforcing the physical gesture of mark making and designation.⁴³

Gestural Bodies

While Pujol's gestures deal with the body as an object with the ability to produce and demarcate place, the use of gesture also becomes telling *of* the body (both individual and collective). Aside from representational objects like monuments and photographs, gesture itself is another form of bodily representation that identifies a site (i.e. the body or where one comes from). Within the pre-performance workshops, each performer was

⁴² Ernesto Pujol, "Visiting Artist Talk" (lecture presented at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City, Utah, January 27, 2010).

⁴³ An example of one of these relics is the *Awaiting Performance Manual* consisting of "detailed instruction and logistics for performers." This fourteen- page manual dictates proper behavior through various sections. "Costuming" is one of these sections, stating how the performers should dress, where they should dress, and what state of mind one should be in when dressing. Pujol writes, "The performance starts the minute you begin to dress, the moment you begin to inhabit the persona of a walker." He goes on to explain every detail including how the performers should turn, look, adapt their walk, pause, what one should do if overcome by emotion, things to think about while walking, how to enjoy the sunrise, and finally, how to come out of the silence and what to do after the performance is over. Pujol's detailed instructions put in place a new set of practices that comment on previous ways of living. Pujol. 1-14. The Mormon's also have manuals instructing followers how to act such as the *Book of Mormon* and the *For the Strength of the Youth* pamphlet. These manuals instruct members how they should dress, what (and what not) to eat and drink, and what behavior is proper in the church.

instructed to find a gesture of their own. They practiced these gestures ahead of time. If the gesture was not something that communicated Pujol's idea of *Awaiting*, the performer was instructed to find a new gesture.⁴⁴ In another instance, the performers were informed ahead of time that when Pujol nodded after arriving at the Capitol that everyone should turn around simultaneously and break off to start their rotations.⁴⁵ Further, at every half hour, the performers were to change positions based on a pre-arranged audio signal.⁴⁶ This same type of signaling played out through the duration of the performance as the performers either gestured through a barely visible nod, or held both hands over their heart. These predetermined gestures became cues within the performance and took the place of verbal expression.

To someone unfamiliar with these signals, it would seem that only a certain incomprehensible sign language communicated the need to rotate. Because of this, the gestures the performers used became specific to *Awaiting*. They unified the group, allowing the performance to become its own separate space as Pujol had intended. All of the performers understood that Pujol's slight nod meant that they should change positions. Additionally, because they had practiced the gestures ahead of time, all of the performers understood how the gesture may have or may have not represented Pujol's idea of *Awaiting*. Even though the performers were supposed to communicate a gestural

⁴⁴ In an email conversation with Dana Hernandez (one of the performers), she wrote, "[Pujol] told us we had to have a gesture. He told us this on the first day of our workshop and told us we had to go home that night and look at ourselves in the mirror and practice our gesture (this was homework). He said it should look effortless and comfortable. So the next day everyone was in a large circle and he had each person step out into the center, display their gesture, and he made us walk. If he liked your gesture then you could keep it, if he didn't like it then he suggested and showed you what he thought would be a better gesture for you to do/perform. He also asked that we have a gesture for the time we spent standing still as well." Dana Hernandez, e-mail message to the performer, April 28, 2011.

⁴⁵ Pujol, "Performance Manual," 4.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 7. Pujol instructs the performers to listen to the toll of the audio that repeats every half hour. This aural indicator allows the performers to know when to change positions as well.

form of “waiting,” their individual expression of this concept allowed for a more intimate or private understanding with their shared experience. However, the community understood these gestures somewhat differently. This disjunction was only manifest in the small fissures between Pujol’s ideas of “waiting” and, for example, those performers whose chosen gesture was not exemplary of “waiting.” In this sense, gesture becomes a type of ritualistic unifier or anthropological social skin, indicating and marking one’s identity.

A more basic example of an anthropological marker of identity is the standardized white uniforms that separated the performers from the public of Salt Lake City. Even though Pujol intended the white to symbolize enlightenment, the costuming was seen to reference local practices.⁴⁷ Many viewers read the costuming only according to what they believed white clothing to symbolize in Salt Lake City’s context: Mormon temple clothing. A most prominent voice in this reading is Cara Despain. Despain wrote a review of *Awaiting*, pointing out the similarity of the performers’ costuming to Mormon temple clothing.⁴⁸ In this instance, Pujol asserts one thing (his signature look) and it was read alternately (as Mormon garments). Stemming from the local identity, the issue of clothing becomes significant as real (clothing) collides with the perceived (what it means in the context specific to those involved). Within each context, clothing becomes a ritualistic unifier, reinforcing a collective mentality based on symbols specific to the environment. Because performance usually involves the audience and the unexpected local response, Pujol’s intentionality gets lost in the local perception. The white costuming demonstrates the extent to which one’s surroundings influence an embodied identity. Gesture takes the

⁴⁷ Paret, 2.

⁴⁸ Cara Despain, "Ernesto Pujol: Awaiting." *Artpulse*. April 8, 2010.

idea of costuming one-step further. While clothing is a symbolic object, gesture involves the literal body *performing* a communicative symbol that can be read based on environment.

Gesture and clothing by themselves do not simply define an identity. It is only when gestures become a learned form of communication understood and repeated by others, does a collective gain a cultural identity. The internalization of the meaning and repetitive use of each gesture in *Awaiting* reflects an embodied identity specific to a localized community.⁴⁹ This form of language engenders what David Getsy deems a local narrative of interaction where gesture becomes a “social skin.”⁵⁰ When discussing Pujol’s earlier performance work, Getsy claims that even though there is minor interaction within the artist’s performances, the silence of the performers enhances the drama of interaction through gesture.⁵¹ While Getsy discusses Pujol’s work in terms of queer forms of communication, I posit that the forms of gesturing evidence qualities that are unique to collectives in general. Getsy quotes John Paul Ricco who argues that within communities there are

Specific local encounters and passing intimacies that do not require any further development or recording for their full force to be felt. Such forms put into question the values that are ascribed to ‘unretractable social marks,’ and argue for the legitimacy of social...promiscuities as modes of pleasure and survival, and the possible grounds for an ethics that operates without assured futures and codified parameters.⁵²

⁴⁹ This repetitive gathering is still present within *Awaiting*. As the one-year anniversary approaches, performers have talked about repeating the performance at the Capitol. If not that, the performers intend on holding a reunion remembering the event.

⁵⁰ David Getsy, “Mourning, Yearning, Cruising: Ernesto Pujol’s *Memorial Gestures*.” *Performance Art Journal* 90 (2008): 16.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 17.

Getsy and Ricco get at a central issue regarding identification with place. Both argue that within a given community there are “unretractable social marks” that offer evidence of that specific community.

Interestingly, *Awaiting* is a *performance* and not a “real” society. Because the performance is a type of representation, it illuminates the level of unnoticed performativity in daily life. Theorist Judith Butler discusses this idea of performed identity claiming that part of performing identity is the citation or ritualized production of a norm.⁵³ *Awaiting* does this through the attempt to perform Utah’s cultural norm of waiting. The highly stylized actions (such as gesture) of *Awaiting* reveal the constructed nature of waiting, and therefore, culture and identity. The local resident who performs in *Awaiting* maintains the appearance of what was essentially their core identity of someone who -- according to Pujol -- waits.⁵⁴ By performing said identity in an alternate collaborative and ritualized context, *Awaiting* deconstructs any “truth” in representational identity. This is the crux of *Awaiting*. If the performance resembles a society like Salt Lake City’s culture of waiting, it would mean that representation (such as the *Brigham Young Monument*) and ritual (such as white clothing and gesture) constructs Utah’s and *Awaiting*’s culture.

⁵³ Butler states, “Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. And this repetition is not performed *by* a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject. This iterability implies that ‘performance’ is not a singular ‘act’ or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance.” Judith Butler. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge, 1993. 95.

⁵⁴ Butler claims that by coercing subjects to perform specific stylized actions (such as gesture), that the subject who performs maintains the appearance in those subjects of the “core” gender (or as I argue: identity). The “core” identity in this instance is Utah’s “culture of waiting.” Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 171-90.

Central throughout my discussion is the correlative, communicative, and rhetorical power of gesture as a representation of a collective and the self. Gesture, in this sense becomes the sign for a larger agreed upon meaning. On the other hand, Pujol's demarcation, as shown in his bodily framing of the land, creates a setting that encourages a dialogue specific to the collective. His photographs and manuals reinforce his gesture of demarcation, monumentality, and therefore, identification. They are archeological artifacts telling us something about the culture and moment in time they came from. Perhaps, then, *Awaiting* is not just about waiting, but also about how representation influences and forms societies, identities, and places. Both Pujol and Young's images have become emblems, shaping and producing an idea of place. Whether through the white clothing worn on the exterior of the body reflecting an interior ideal, the symbolism of a civic building that upholds an enlightened and ordered authority, or a man monumentalized in bronze, photographs and sand, each gesture defines each subject, giving it a place.



FIGURE 1: Ernesto Pujol, *Awaiting* Press Release Photograph, 2010, Text written by Sara Pickett, Photograph taken by Colin Roe Ledbetter, reprinted with permission from the artist



FIGURE 2: Cyrus Dallin, *Brigham Young Monument*, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1892-1900



FIGURE 3: Ernesto Pujol, University of Utah *Awaiting* Poster Photograph, 2010, photograph taken by Colin Roe Ledbetter, reprinted with permission from Ernesto Pujol



FIGURE 4: Ernesto Pujol, *Inheriting Salt Series*, 2008, reprinted with permission from the artist



FIGURE 5: Ernesto Pujol, *Desert Walk* (also referred to as *Salt Walk*), 2008

CHAPTER II

MAPPING

“I am not in space and time, nor do I conceive space and time; I belong to them, my body combines with them and includes them.”
-Maurice Merleau-Ponty⁵⁵

This chapter examines the role of mapping as a further gesture of demarcation of site (or identity) in *Awaiting*. Specifically, I hope to make visible the forces behind the way one moves through environment by analyzing the bodily motion in *Awaiting*. Pujol’s pre-performance planning, the architectural geography of the Capitol, and the urban pathway arrangement of the city choreograph the performers’ walking. In turn, as the performers literally map out Salt Lake City with their bodies, the body emerges as an emblem of local and individual identity. I consider not only the routes that the performers map with their steps at the Capitol, but also the unplanned paths and manner of walking used within the performance that relate to their individual histories. The types of mapping I locate in this chapter complicate the individual experience of the body and the collective understanding of those experiences based on representation. What follows is a discussion on the various sites or spatial environments in *Awaiting* -- represented by maps -- that make visible the nature of a site.

⁵⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*. (London: Routledge, 2002). 140.

Mapping as an Abstraction of Space

Within a YouTube video documenting *Awaiting*, the cadence of the walker's step falls in line with their given environment.⁵⁶ Each walk has a specific performative aesthetic. With equal spacing, the walkers pace their trek in measurable increments. The accompanying audio played at the Capitol ebbs and flows, marking the moments in time, contributing to the rhythmic quality of the walk.⁵⁷ While the walkers fall into a similar rhythm, placing one foot in front of the other slowly, those surrounding continue in their daily routine. In one sequence, the camera pans across the grounds of the Capitol, capturing performers and passerby within the frame [FIGURE 6]. Both walking and white clothing visually separate the walkers from the observers. The performers pace is slower and timed by the audio, while observers walk brusquely, almost unconscious of their pace. This is not to say that those conducting their lives outside of the performance lacked a rhythm specific to their environment. Rather, *Awaiting* amplified the daily routine of walking, shedding light on its relationship to place.

Within the video, each environment times the pace of the individual. At the Capitol, Rosi Hayes' ghostly audio ticks off regular thirty-minute chunks of time. As the performers walk on their own, the daily rhythms of the city guide their slow rhythmic pace. Salt Lake's grid-like organization and the tempo of stoplights structured each step. As Pujol planned *Awaiting*, he considered this tempo. Pujol used performance and maps

⁵⁶ There have been various videos made that document *Awaiting*. The most accessible is a video put out by the *Salt Lake Tribune* by Rick Egan. The video is posted on YouTube and does not include the full twelve hours of the performance; rather it shows clips of the performance overlapped with Rosi Hayes' soundtrack.

⁵⁷ The music plays continuously throughout this video, however, in the actual performance, it only played every half hour as what Pujol describes as a "sound marker...echoing the passage of time for those who are in this timeless place." Additionally, the audio only played at the Capitol, not during the performers' individual walks. See Paret, 2.

as a method of organization, attempting to shut out the alleged chaos of the metropolis, creating an alternate space while simultaneously referencing the larger environment. Pujol intended to create a meditative arena for the performers.⁵⁸ Yet, he also amplified the daily practices within the metropolis by mapping out the choreography both before and after the performance.

This cartographic process plays out in Pujol's pre-performance sketches and post-performance materials. In an image documenting his process, Pujol sits in a room with potential performers [FIGURE 7]. A hand-drawn map of the Capitol grounds along with chess-like figurines symbolizing the performers' bodies rests in front of him.⁵⁹ Using this diagram, Pujol charted the choreography of *Awaiting*, placing the figurines on its surface.⁶⁰ As shown on both the map and in the performance, some performers were to stand between columns while others walked, ascending and descending the Capitol's stairs, crossing the grass, and circumambulating the architecture. The performers sitting within the photograph starkly contrast Pujol's figurines in both scale and appearance. When put into figurine form, the performers become a standardized collective, no longer maintaining the styles that may define them as an individual.

In contrast, Pujol's other pre-performance sketches no longer depict the performers' bodies even in object form. In one sketch, a vertical composition of the Capitol accompanies arrows, circles, and lines, demonstrating the direction the performers were to move [FIGURE 8]. Using flat shapes, the sketch shows neither

⁵⁸ Pickett, 1.

⁵⁹ Brian Snapp, a performer within *Awaiting*, made the figurines specifically for this purpose.

⁶⁰ Pujol also linguistically maps in this way in his performance manual. He goes to great lengths describing the type of walking and rotations that the performers needed to use. Additionally, in an email message to Pujol on April 17, 2011, the artist commented on the numerous sketches that he had made in a notebook of the choreography. His careful planning of the choreography attests to the conditions of display that Pujol wanted to emphasize within *Awaiting*.

illusionistic depth nor realistic scale. Contours of the façade of the Capitol decorate the top of the composition, while the grounds south of the Capitol take up the majority of the image. Circles representing lampposts speckle the image. While the performers' bodies are absent, arrows and circles represent their movement. As a flat surface or a map, Pujol's sketch represents both the social movement of *Awaiting* and the geography of the Capitol grounds.

Pujol's sketches reflect not only the social space he references, but also his impulse to depict what he sees, producing an image that represents his perspective of that space.⁶¹ This is especially evident in the abstracted forms in the sketch. The Capitol does not resemble a three-dimensional building. Instead, it becomes a symbol or caricature, only including the smallest identifying details such as the shape of the dome and gridded columns. Each stroke of the pen is uncontrolled and quick. The lines are not straight demonstrating that even though there was careful calculation in Pujol's planning, there was no effort to ensure complete mimesis. The arrows and thickly drawn circles overlap the Capitol grounds, consuming the image and force the structure into the background. Because of this, the artist's mentality infiltrates the work, allowing his perspective to overpower the actual geography of the grounds.

As representations of Pujol's intentionality, the aforementioned maps do not include the performers' individuality. Rather, they homogenize the performers into a collective force. While the performance is meant to emphasize a private experience, these maps almost completely eliminate the performer, revealing a paradox between the

⁶¹ Liza Mogel claims that mapping results in a natural impulse to think about representation and space. Liza Mogel, "On Cartography," in *Experimental Geography: Radical Approaches to Landscape, Cartography, and Urbanism*, ed. by Nato Thompson (Brooklyn: Melville House Press, 2009), 107.

individual and the collective. Perhaps most indicative of this paradox in the *Awaiting* website's "Map of Performers' Routes." These maps showed the routes taken by each performer before arriving at the Capitol. Made by Google, the map was highly interactive, allowing its user to type in a starting place and calculate the distance and amount of time to arrive at the Capitol. This type of mapping becomes very personal, as the user is able to put their chosen route into a standardized media. The Google map becomes an ideal metaphor for *Awaiting*, since it transforms the individual into a larger collective representation. In this sense, the map becomes an abstract sign, signifying the site. These maps are visual markers that contribute to the collective identity of both *Awaiting* and the Capitol.⁶²

Artist and geographer Trevor Paglen discusses the function of maps as being only "rough guides to what constitutes a particular space."⁶³ According to Paglen, maps, like a monument or photograph, communicate only a specific rhetorical perspective. Paglen contemplates whether maps (especially with all of the newest technology of Google Earth and MapQuest) can really tell us about a geographic culture *a priori*.⁶⁴ This question becomes particularly relevant when considering the map as an object versus the spatio-temporal implications of mapping an environment with the body. Pujol makes this shift from the abstract to the "real" when extends the documentary function of maps to create an additional gesture of demarcation with his body and the bodies of the performers. The

⁶² In his "Awaiting Performance Manual" Pujol emphasizes the that even though there will be a collective gathering in the performance, that there should not be any loss of the performers' identity. He states "Collectivity should never result in a loss of individuality. Remarkable individuals are the future of the collective. Enforced sameness at the sacrifice of the individual results in the eventual death of the collective." 3.

⁶³ Trevor Paglen, "Experimental Geography: From Cultural Production to the Production of Space," in *Experimental Geography: Radical Approaches to Landscape, Cartography, and Urbanism*, ed. Nato Thompson (Melville House, 2009), 28,

⁶⁴ Ibid.

map then becomes definitive of *Awaiting* and the Capitol standing in for the absence of performers' experience and their movement through their environment. However, while the maps assume this documentary function, they were created before the performance occurred. Because of this, the map does not objectively define *Awaiting* as much as it embodies Pujol's vision of the performance and Utah's culture. When put into action, Pujol produces an artistic and critical geographic perspective relating to the local identity. In turn, this perspective, represented in the abstracted form of a map, creates a new space for the Capitol, and therefore, a new identity.

Mapping with the Body

By creating maps *a priori* and then enacting his vision, Pujol allows *Awaiting* to step outside the two-dimensionality of a map and create a new space with the body. That is, the maps alone do not contribute to the identity of the site. The bodies of the performers are instrumental in producing the space that Pujol's map depicts.⁶⁵ The literal mapping of the Capitol and the city with the body is what Paglen describes as "Experimental Geography," where "practices take on the production of space in a self-reflexive way."⁶⁶ Calling for a more intellectual artistic praxis, Paglen claims that

⁶⁵ Within this project, I define space according to Henri Lefebvre's study of space where he claims that there are different types of space: physical (nature), mental (formal abstractions about space), and social (the space of human interaction). Lefebvre's definition of space addresses the social space of bodily practices and interactions in a given environment (anthropological), and the formal abstractions about space dependant on perception and manifest in representation. Lefebvre's approach ties together the varying degrees in which the body coincides with its surroundings. Andy Merrifield. "Space." In *Henri Lefebvre a Critical Introduction*. (New York: Routledge, 2006). 104.

⁶⁶ Paglen defines experimental geography as "Practices that recognize that cultural production and the production of space cannot be separated from each another, and that cultural and intellectual production is a spatial practice. Moreover, experimental geography means not only seeing the production of space as an ontological condition, but actively experimenting with the production of space as an integral part of one's own practice." Paglen, 31.

experimental geography extends “beyond critical reflection, critique alone, and political ‘attitudes,’ into the realm of practice.”⁶⁷ In effect, the role of the artist is to create “new spaces, new ways of being.”⁶⁸ Pujol’s methods certainly fit into Paglen’s discussion. However, in addition Pujol’s methodological intervention, the existing identity of the site does not merely disappear when the performance occurs. Instead, a composite of the social space that came before combines with the new contextual space of *Awaiting*.⁶⁹

An example of how the performance simultaneously created a new space and referenced its own site through bodily mapping is in a sequence of four consecutive images documenting *Awaiting* [FIGURE 9].⁷⁰ Within the sequence, one performer stands with their back towards the camera while another walks by. The performer in the foreground echoes the rigidity of the columns. His posture gives him an intense solidarity, as if he were a sculpture, or a part of the architecture. The performer’s body in the background is blurry, coming into focus where he is more still, becoming translucent where there is more movement. Within each image, the background performer is a ghostly white blur, appearing in different positions until he no longer exists within the frame. This sequence of images offers a stop-motion perspective of the performers’

⁶⁷ Ibid. 33.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ James Meyer examines this time-based layering as the “functional site,” which he defines as “a process, an operation occurring between sites, a mapping of institutional and discursive filiations and the bodies that move between them (the artist’s above all). It is an informational site, a locus of overlap of text, photographs and video recordings, physical places and things...It is a temporary thing; a movement; a chain of meanings devoid of a particular focus.” James Meyer, “The Functional Site,” in *Platzwechsel*, exhibition catalogue (Zurich: Kunsthalle Zurich, 1995), 27. Miwon Kwon expands upon Meyer’s definition, arguing that this trend in site-oriented work exhibits an (inter)textual structure rather than the creation of new spaces. She states that practices like Pujol’s follow an itinerary rather than a map, or “a fragmentary sequence of events and actions *through* spaces, that is, a nomadic narrative whose path is articulated by the passage of the artist.” Kwon, 95. I take up this discussion, claiming that *Awaiting*’s site-specificity originates Meyer’s definition of a “functional site.” In other words, the discursive nature of the site allows for an (inter) textual layering of meaning.

⁷⁰ The images come from photographer Amelia Walchli, who gave me copies of her photographs documenting the performance. Many of these photographs are also on the *Awaiting* website.

bodies in space, while they simultaneously disappear into--or become a part of--their environment. The transparency of the background performer's body in motion allows for a pictorial overlap between his body and the surroundings [FIGURE 10]. An illuminated street lamp directly behind the moving performer shines through his diaphanous body, causing him to visually embody his surroundings.

All bodies within the image--still and moving--demonstrate the bodily mapping of space in *Awaiting*. Each body adheres to its surroundings, becoming a part of the environment. The body of the performer in the foreground merges with his backdrop. With the accompanying columns in the background, he undergoes metamorphosis into an additional column, changing its appearance while still referencing its likeness. On the other hand, the performer in motion follows the paths of the Capitol, conforming to the subtle grid of sidewalks, railings, and steps. His movement traces a line into all of the crevices and avenues of the Capitol. His body becomes a new addition to the surroundings. The transparency of his body within the photograph reflects his ability to both imitate and internalize his surroundings through the experience of his motion.

The bodily mapping in *Awaiting* represents a type of trailblazing or re-encoding of space characteristic of the artist/cartographer/ethnographer's experimentation with land and spatial practices. As shown in the sequence of images, *Awaiting* transforms the space of the Capitol referencing its likeness, while simultaneously changing it. Every time the performers walked over the same spot, they added a new layer of history to the geography of the Capitol based on that moment. Concurrently erasing and building, they ritualized this history through their repetition of symbolic gestures and cyclical walking.

Becoming new columns or ghostly transparent forms, the place became a part of them, and they became the place.

Individual Cartographies

The same metamorphosis occurs with the performers' bodies based on their experience of their time at the Capitol. This is evident when many of the performers talked about their journey before meeting at the Capitol. Meggie Trolli, an *Awaiting* performer, stated:

I began my walk for *Awaiting* where I first started my journey here in SLC. I was about two years old when I moved here. My mother moved to Salt Lake with me because she thought it would be a great place to raise me on her own. We lived in a house just two blocks from the Capitol Building. I have driven by it many times over the last 30 years and just smiled. This time I walked by my old house with intention, silence and an open heart. I stood in front of the house, gazed and cried. I remember thinking to myself "My mother and I have come such a long way." When I arrived at the Capitol around 6:00pm, my mother was sitting on a ledge waiting for me. She was smiling and waving. I began to cry again. There she was, the woman who brought me into this world and who brought me to SLC.⁷¹

Starting at the house from her childhood, Trolli's route embodied a lifetime of memories and feelings starting with her first arrival in Salt Lake City, and leading up to the performance of *Awaiting*.

When the performers walked their chosen paths, their individual histories manifested their relation to place. Their bodies became ritualistic time capsules with the ability to contain, preserve, and influence multiple temporalities. In this sense, the

⁷¹ Meggie Trolli, comment on "Open Community Postings," The *Awaiting* in Salt Lake City Website, comment posted April 21, 2010, <http://www.awaitinginsaltlakecity.com/forum/> (accessed December 14, 2010).

external surface of the body expressed the internalized identity of the performer.⁷²

Trolli's commentary reflects the impact of personal experience that accumulates over time. Her testimony demonstrates the link between identity and place. Revisiting the memories of her past, she sustains the process of metaphysical layering of experience that contributes to identity. Simultaneously, this process reflects the consequence of time on the physical body. Bodily scars and wrinkles, impact craters and valleys represent transient topographies of the simultaneous breakdown and build up of appearance. A single mark - whether microscopic or distinct - contributes to a layering of identity while also erasing the visual appearance of what came before. The mind works in tandem with the physical alterations of the body: each scar represents an experience, each wrinkle, a day that has passed.

Yet, Pujol instructed the performers to map out their route in advance, to practice their path ahead of time and to make sure they plan both a manageable distance and time to walk in order to arrive at the Capitol by six in the evening. By doing this, the performers would allegedly create a new space using their slow walking and distinctly white costuming.⁷³ However, Trolli's commentary mirrors the ways in which place shapes personal identity, and how, in turn, the ritualistic production of space at the Capitol reflects a history of embodied spaces within Utah. That is to say even though *Awaiting* created a new environment, previous experiences of the site influenced subsequent activity. Art historian Nato Thompson discusses this issue, stating, “[when]

⁷² These bodily activities (that also happen to be visual components of *Awaiting*) form what anthropologist Terence Turner would also deem the “social skin,” a bodily geography of external appearance reflecting social practices and internal expression. Turner claims that the surface of the body is a common frontier of society, bringing together the notions of frontier, or land, and the body. Terence S. Turner, “The Social Skin.” In *Reading the Social Body*. Ed. Catherine B. Borroughs and Jeffrey David Ehrenreich (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993). 15-39.

⁷³ Pujol. *Awaiting Performance Manual*. 2.

asked, quite simply, to draw their own maps, individuals can privilege personal spaces, family lives, forces or conditions of oppression...⁷⁴ Thompson indicates the tendency for individuals to bring their own personal histories into socio-geographic art. The places that each performer visits on the way to the Capitol attest to their connection to Salt Lake City's geography and architecture. Furthermore, many of these everyday rituals used within *Awaiting*, including gesture, walking and dress, were embodied manifestations of the discursive nature of a given site.⁷⁵ However, the paths walked within a given space contribute to a cultural identity influenced by the cursory nature of the constructed sidewalk that guides one's path or the tempo of the metropolis. Mapping with the body in this sense is decidedly psychological. Walking the same route, that one has walked once, or countless times before triggers an unfolding of internal memory and history for each performer.

The Site of *Awaiting*: Place and Identity

While there is a literal mapping of space with the performer's bodies, they also enact a symbolic rewriting into the pages of Utah's history, sweeping over what has already been, constructing a newer history—a new space. Pujol added a layer of history

⁷⁴ Thompson, Nato, "In Two Directions: Geography as Art, Art as Geography," in *Experimental Geography: Radical Approaches to Landscape, Cartography, and Urbanism*, ed. by Nato Thompson, Brooklyn: Melville House Press, 2009. 19.

⁷⁵ As a means to add to the discourse of spatio-temporal bodily mapping, theorist Michel de Certeau claims that walking, language, and the structure of the city are totalizing strategies for a larger political rhetoric. Moreover, de Certeau states no readable identity exists beneath the representation of the city. Language and walking are similar to the architecture of the city, they are signs indicating a larger meaning. *Awaiting* takes up many of the practices that considered natural and specific to human nature. However, something as simple as walking is called into question when forty people gather together, cyclically walking in an isolated environment. Michel De Certeau, "Walking in the City," in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984): 94-95.

to the geographic space he intended to reference. When addressing his choice of the Capitol building for *Awaiting*, Pujol said,

I chose the grounds of the Utah State Capitol because when you look at the footage of its rededication ceremony it is supposed to be the house of the people; all constituencies are meant to gather there, to be represented there. Architecture is the ephemeral embodiment of human dreams...It was a conceptual act about the kind of people we wanted to become...The building is lit as a kind of monumental backdrop...the site gives me the walk. I always seek architecture that orders me in a prescriptive way how to move through it. I decode architecture through the body.⁷⁶

Referencing the connotations of the site, Pujol indicates that spatial constructions regulate one's motion. Like in the case of Pujol's map, the manipulated environment structures and guides movement, setting a stage where encoding or decoding of place may occur. This is perhaps most evident in the photograph of the pre-performance workshops. As he places each figure within his map, Pujol brings together geography and social practices. His map and the performers' bodies moving on the space of the Capitol produce a new geographical space. However, before Pujol's presence at the Capitol, someone had already created the Capitol as a place with an inscribed historical background through the rededication. Before the rededication (which created an alternate meaning through ceremony, gathering, and definitive gestures), the Capitol had been a topography of granite, wood, and marble. Before its presence, it was part of a valley settled by Brigham Young. Each interaction with the Capitol has created a striation of meaning based on these ritualistic acts of demarcation.

Because of its ability to contain multiple temporalities, video and photography visualize this metaphysical palimpsest of time. An example of this exists in the YouTube video documenting *Awaiting*. While the amplified audio voices continue throughout the

⁷⁶ Paret, 2.

video, short clips of moments in the performance create an abridged narrative of *Awaiting*. At the beginning of the video, the camera frames a female performer walking towards the camera. After a few seconds, the frame shifts from the body of the performer to her feet, fragmenting her legs and feet starting at the knee to focus on the performer's steps on the concrete of the sidewalk [FIGURE 11]. This type of editing draws a connection between her body, the way that she is walking (choreography), and where she is walking, allowing all three – body, movement, and place – to exist in one sequence.

Many of the sequences in the video have a similar pattern, moving from a fragmented close up of a performer's body, zooming out to capture the entire body in a long shot, and extending further to capture a panorama of the collective. Interspersed between shots of the performers are images of the places they have visited. The cuts from one scene to the next seem to flow naturally; as one fades out, another fades in, overlapping the one that came before. With this type of transition, a residue of the former scene remains for just a moment before the new shot takes over. This editing technique (called a lap dissolve) condenses the performance into a distilled narrative.

The lingering ghostly presence of the previous scene becomes a metaphor for the fleetingness of the memory of that moment and place. Video and photography are mediums that echo this theme and reflect the psychological overlap between the body and place. They repeat a specific moment in time – conjuring a sense of nostalgia for the past, or an attempt to preserve a memory. Capturing ephemeral moments, video and photography reify fragments of time, objectifying and exposing the difference between

the “real” experience and the recorded experience.⁷⁷ As a performance that invokes Utah history and culture, *Awaiting* locates a time and place that has passed through revisiting and repetition. The video demonstrates another type of ritualistic revisiting, further repeating a moment in time that has passed, and indexing the moment in memory. The repetition of places (through the performers’ revisiting and the video’s abridgement) indicates the reemergence of memories sparked by the interaction with each place.⁷⁸

The video and personal maps drawn by each performer externalize the internal and psychological connections between body and place. While each performer started somewhere familiar to them, fragments of the past, such as Trolli’s house, operated as effigies, standing in for the absence of memories that could never fully be revisited. The places the performers revisit indicated a presence while also signifying the absence of a moment in time.⁷⁹ Even the sporadic repetition of the audio soundtrack--voices hitting a low “ohm” or “ah” and receding back into the background noise of the city--ticks off the hours of the current time while referencing a time that has passed. The disembodied intonations further reinforce the absence of the bodies making the sounds. The vocal presence indicates a bodiless collective, or a past, a history of voices. . It represents an intensely personal embodied experience of the performers, playing back a specific

⁷⁷ See David Antin. "Video: The Distinctive Features of the Medium." *Video Art: an Anthology*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976). 147-66.

⁷⁸ The interactive map on the *Awaiting* website establishes a larger connection between maps and identity as the map is specific to each viewer who types in their address in order to draw their route to the Capitol. The map stands in as a representation for the viewer/participant’s personal history as they revisit sites that reference their past and the memories associated with the places that they visit. In both instances--*Awaiting*’s digitized map and the video-- technology, packages the durational shifting of place, conflating past and present into a single entity.

⁷⁹ In his book *Living Pictures, Missing Persons: Mannequins, Museums, and Modernity*, Mark Sandberg discusses the role of effigies, especially regarding their display in museums. He argues that effigies are objects associated with a person (i.e. their clothing, furniture) that became a *placeholder* or constructed identity for the person they belong to. Mark B. Sandberg. *Living Pictures, Missing Persons: Mannequins, Museums, and Modernity*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003). 1-17.

moment, allowing memory to physically transcend time. In this instance, technology becomes a surrogate for the body. Yet, surrogate lenses of a camera, maps, and bodily actions, would seem only a residue of the deeply personal corporeal experience specific to each performer in *Awaiting*. This attempt (and eventual failure) at preservation in turn reveals the impending passage of time and the accumulation of experience specific to each performer's history

Adapting the practice of cartography, *Awaiting* deviates from the more traditional approach of mapping -- the objective of which is to abstract physical space into representational space. Pujol's maps exemplify this traditional practice, allowing for an abstraction of the bodies of the performers and the physicality of the Capitol grounds. However, when leaving the two-dimensional surface of a diagram, the bodily mapping of the Capitol in *Awaiting* became a ritualistic practice reflecting the production of space. Central to the metaphysical or experiential mapping of a place onto the body is how one *embodies* place as represented in a personal sketch or map. These individual cartographies evince a psychological topography specific to the performer's history. That is, the embodied behaviors of the performers were a result of the ways that they not only have seen the world, but also an actualization of how they have moved through it. These embodied representations of the local identity animated the abstracted space of Pujol's maps, while also allowing what came before to permeate *Awaiting*.

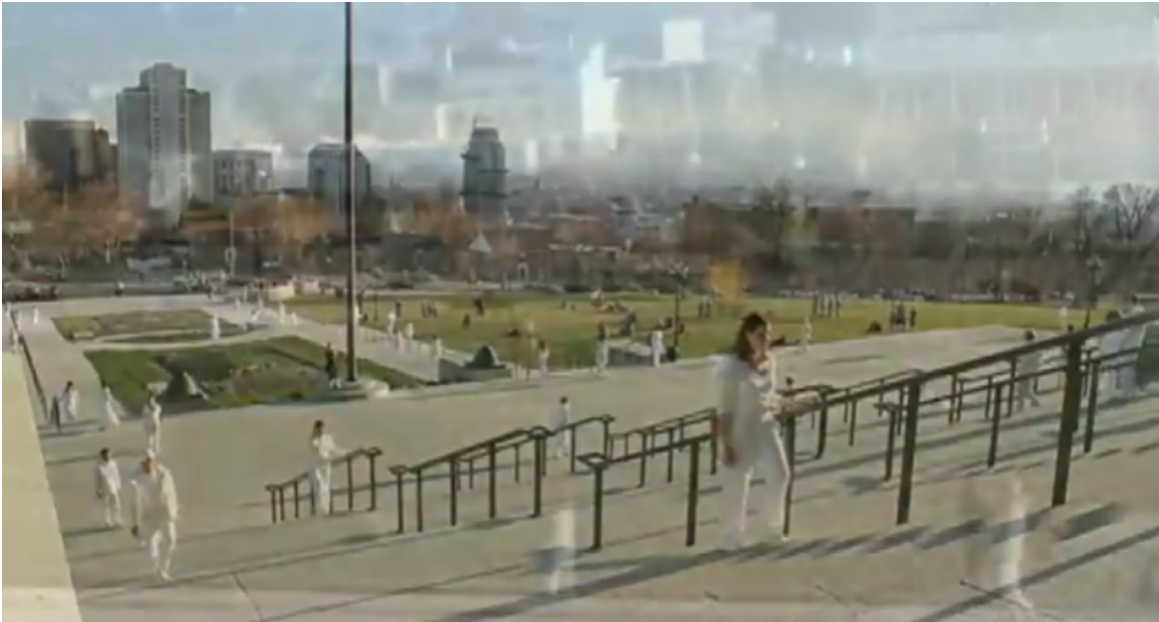


FIGURE 6: Ernesto Pujol, YouTube video still from *Awaiting*, 2010, reprinted with permission from the artist



FIGURE 7: *Awaiting* pre-performance workshop, photograph posted on *Awaiting* website, reprinted with permission from the artist

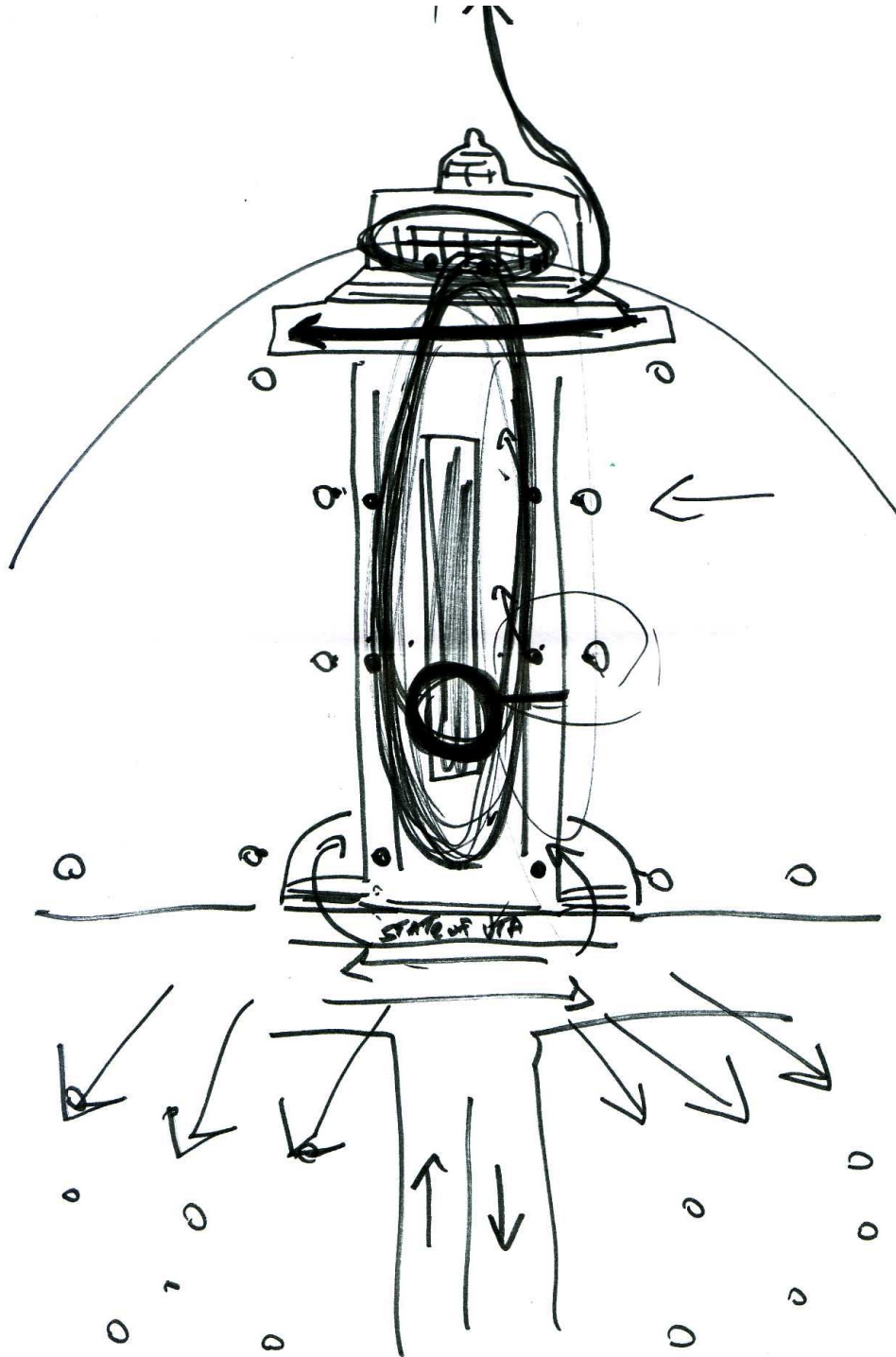


FIGURE 8: Ernesto Pujol, Pre-performance Sketch, 2010, reprinted with permission from the artist



FIGURE 9: Ernesto Pujol, *Awaiting*, 2010, photographs taken by Amelia Walchili, reprinted with permission from the artist



FIGURE 10: Detail of FIGURE 8



FIGURE 11: Ernesto Pujol, lap dissolve still from *Awaiting*, 2010, reprinted with permission from the artist

CONCLUSION

Thompson and Paglen raise a compelling question when considering the extent that a map, or representation, abstracts lived experience. By challenging the objective or documentary function of maps, Thompson exposes the power structures inherent to the types of representation discussed in this project. Pujol similarly challenged the predominance of Mormonism and waiting respectively, highlighting the cursory nature of self-representation in monuments and everyday practices (such as gesture, dress, and walking). By invoking Utah's socio-historical specificity, Pujol made visible the relative and oftentimes imaginary geographies produced through representation—including his own.

Despite Pujol's proliferation of the discursive nature of Utah, the lingering presence of Utah's socio-historical landscape as a place saturated the performance. Ironically, his performative designation of "place" resembled a ritualized history--visible in Cyrus Dallin's *Brigham Young Monument*--that has informed a sense of Utah's identity. The performers' gestures and choice of route represented their psychic, habitual attachments to place, reflecting an embodied identity (and alternate map) specific to their personal histories. Consequently, *Awaiting* exemplifies site-specific art with the merger between two camps: the artist's intentionality and the geographic and cultural framework of the site.

This project goes beyond these camps to explore the tensions present in the reinforcement and sustainability of identity. Perhaps at the center of my discussion is the question of neutrality regarding the role of representation within the public sphere. Thompson recognizes this complication. Returning to the function of maps as totalizing forms of representation he further asks, “Which maps [should one] choose to use? Whose life becomes abstract? Whose world gains precedence? How is value assigned and distributed?”⁸⁰ In other words, to what extent might Pujol’s maps, the Capitol building, and representations of the performers’ personal routes imply an abstraction of bodies and lives? What consequence, if any, might be found in the definitive utterance of “this is the place?”

⁸⁰Thompson, 19.

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