

**MEDIUM AND MODE: RELATIONSHIPS  
BETWEEN VISUAL EXPERIENCE AND  
PERCEPTION  
IN AN INSTALLATION ART PRACTICE**

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## Abstract

Working primarily within the natural landscape, this practice-led research project explored connections between the artist's visual and perceptual experience of a journey or place while simultaneously emphasizing the capacity for digital media to create a perceptual dissonance. By exploring concepts of time, viewpoint, duration of sequences and the manipulation of traditional constructs of stop-frame animation, the practical work created a cognitive awareness of the elements of the journey through optical sensations. Pauses that are a natural part of a journey counter-balanced the animated rapidity and confusion of the forward journey and provided moments of respite. The work allows an opportunity to reflect on the nature of visual experience and its mediation through images.

The study consisted of a series of four multimedia exhibitions providing a 75% creative practice weighting with the exegesis component taking up the remaining 25%.

The project recontextualized the selected mediums of still photography, animation and projection within contemporary display modes of multiple screen installations by analysing relationships between the experienced and the perceived. The various resulting works add to current discourse on the interstices between still and moving imagery in a digital world.

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## Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "OMS doeh.", followed by a period.

Date: April 2014



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Journey has been a central theme within this practice-led research project. Like most journeys there have been seminal moments and influential critical friends to provide stimulation and guidance.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Context

Digital technology and its relationships to empirical contexts, such as evidence, proof of reality, or as a mode of representation drives many debates on the nature of human visual experience and its creative articulation. A direction within my own artistic practice in embracing the digital has inevitably led me to join this discourse.

### Research Question

To frame this study my research question links my creative practice with contemporary discourse about the convergence of digital media and its curation within a display environment, specifically the question:

**In what way do the variables explored through digital still/moving media and presentation modes affect the relationship between visual experience and perception within an individual art practice?**

Primarily using the medium of photography delivered through modes of traditional stop frame animation, this practice-led Masters research project aims to create a diegetic, internally framed relationship between perception and visual experiences of a journey.

### Scope

Within this study, a number of critical debates are examined about the nature of the mediums of photography (still images) and video (moving images), and how the intrinsic qualities of these media have evolved through a contemporary immersive digital contemporary environment are examined. An inevitable progression from this discussion is a re-thinking of the intent of the terms 'medium' and 'mode' and their

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apparent limitations, particularly as innovative convergence of media and display paradigms are presented. Linked in my research question, medium and mode are connected in a discussion of visual experience and perception. The nature of my creative research practice demonstrates how the elements of medium and mode can be manipulated to involve both seeing and understanding.

The science of vision provides a theoretical discipline ground for the relationship between perception and experience. In particular, this exegesis outlines how stimuli is processed with our binocular eyes and yet constructed as a single monocular experience. In this section, I describe how a visual event undergoes several steps before cognitive recognition and a pre-notion or percept of a previous experience has a significant contribution to its perception.

The works of several pertinent artists are critically reviewed in Chapter 2. Examination of Mark Klett and Bryon Wolfe's work introduces the landscape as a photographic subject and how time and duration in the historical context can be reframed in the digital context. A discussion of an early work from Jeffery Shaw offers a conceptual correlation with the intent and outcomes of my research, while the examination of the digital intersections of David Claerbout's work positions my research in the framework of contemporary photography as a still (yet moving) medium. By offering an examination of their work, my objective is to elicit ways that artists can transform both medium and mode to create a genuine visual experience that positions perceptual understanding within the wider artistic and aesthetic experience. These established artists uniquely offer a history, as well as an indication of the future for convergence of digital media and curation of modes of display.

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Next I examine the design of my research. Chapter 3 outlines a methodology that has swung in intensity from artistic practice, and in particular, on-site and studio work, through to critical inquiry. Using a stone cairn as a metaphor, my research paradigm draws out specific events and pivotal moments and illustrates the nature of how the research has unfolded. As I examine aspects of this research throughout this paper, I will refer to relevant layers, indicating the emphasis or ‘weight’ of either artistic practice or critical inquiry and how each was ‘balanced’ in the stone cairn as it grew.

An analysis of various early iterations of the creative work follows in Chapter 4, summarised to outline the context, the creative work in each and the resultant reflective outcome. Each iteration stage purposefully contributed to the Masters exhibition work.

The final culminating work – *Journey: Frenchman’s walk* – is then examined in detail with subsequent results and known conclusions.

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## Chapter 2: Contextual Review

### Time, duration and relationship to medium

Predominant aspects of photography that have been conceptually privileged are as history and documentation — a record of a moment (time-space) shared by viewers (present-future) and the photographer. Theorists like Jean Baudrillard declared that objects within a photograph are seen as a mere ‘trace left behind by the disappearance of everything else.’ (Baudrillard 1997, 28) While the recording of moments in contemporary contexts can still be claimed, photography is understood as a more complex presence both as a medium and its relationship to time and duration.

### The Still Photograph

Gelder and Westgeest suggest that there are three ‘oft-mentioned characteristics of time in photography: the photograph as a frozen split second, the photograph presenting a decisive moment, and the stillness of the photograph that turns it into an object of contemplation.’ (Gelder and Westgeest 2011, 65) Robert Capa’s iconic *Loyalist Militiaman at the Moment of Death* (see figure 1) captures the frozen moment in time soon after the bullet enters the body of a soldier, throwing him backwards in an irrevocable act, signifying the time of death. While all photographs it can be argued capture a ‘frozen split second’, it is images such as this one that intensifies an element of significance, especially as an historical or social artefact.



Figure 1 Robert Capa *Loyalist Militiaman at the Moment of Death*, Cerro Muriano, September 5, 1936

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Capa,\\_Death\\_of\\_a\\_Loyalist\\_Soldier.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Capa,_Death_of_a_Loyalist_Soldier.jpg)

Accessed 28/07/2013

Henri Cartier-Bresson's striding foot motif shown in Figure 2 demonstrates the choice of the significant moment of time, illustrating the photographer's empathy with the subject, timing the shutter close to best aesthetic and visual effect. If the photograph was taken a second before, it would have altered the counter change patterned shape of the moving legs and taken a second after would have created unwanted ripple pattern as the heeled shoe touched the shallow water surface. The decisive moment of time is the selection of the judicious part of the whole sequence for composition, sense of theatre and aesthetic sensibilities. Cartier-Bresson theorises extensively on the decisive moment in his seminal text of that title concluding that '...photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression.' (Cartier-Bresson 1952, n.p.)



Figure 2 Henri Cartier-Bresson *Gare Saint Lazare* 1932

[http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=MAGO31\\_10\\_VForm&ERID=24KL53ZMYN](http://www.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=MAGO31_10_VForm&ERID=24KL53ZMYN)

Accessed 27/07/13

Cartier-Bresson is clearly referring to technical and conceptual dimensions of the still photograph. What happens when those moments are multiplied? The exploration of the decisive moment beyond a single frame by collecting and producing multiple frames is a significant part of the basis for this study. Consequently a possible elaboration of the decisive moment may be a decisive period that heightens many of the features of the organisation of the forms in the subject. Whatever the outcomes potential may be, both image and perception grow exponentially.

Hiroshi Sugimoto's *Theatres* series illustrated by *Tri City Drive-in* in Figure 3 exemplifies a contemporary artist's need to create a relationship with the spectator. The thoughtful gaze of the spectator visualises the non-existent but actually present movie in the white glowing screen. The photograph, exposed for the entire length of the film, overexposes its imagery with the accumulation of light, producing instead



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an apparent empty space on the screen, while the residual light during the exposure gives the scene a natural, crisp appearance.



Figure 3 Hiroshi Sugimoto *Tri City Drive-ins* 1993  
<http://www.sugimotohiroshi.com/theater.html> Accessed 27/07/13

All of these very recognizable traits of the still photograph rely on the active or sometimes pensive spectator to provide the belief of an enabled duration, or tense in time for a single, standalone image. Tense in time could refer to a moment of any duration that is in the past but relived in the present by the spectator.

Wollen, Professor of Film studies at the University of California, originally conceived of the time-based aspect of the media of photographs and film (or video, similar to film in real time display) by likening film to fire – ‘all light and shadow, incessant motion... like the flames in the grate’ – while ‘photography is motionless and frozen’ and more akin to ice. Wollen then revised his own thoughts to ask, can ‘the signified of a photographic image be seen as a state, a process or an event?’ (2003, 77) Opening up the conceptual frame of the photographic image beyond the static (a state) adds a signpost moment (an event) or a sense of duration (process).

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Andy Warhol saw the act of photography as similar to using a visual diary where ‘a picture means that I know where I was every minute.’ (Ganis 2004, 2) The photographic image using ‘tense’ in time where there was a sense of a past, a present or a possible future, becomes a signpost, marking the individual memory or what was experienced and connecting to Peter Wollen’s notion of photographs being an ‘event’ (Wollen 2003, 78). The tense of a still image exists in that moment in time, and subsequently stamped with that tense until further time has distanced itself from that moment. It is also reliant on the spectator adding that next tense component – the work itself does not provide time passing but in its place the spectator does as evidenced in Sugimotos reliance on the spectator ‘adding’ the presence of the movie to the still photograph.

Temporality in photographs has been predominantly theorised as part of the still or silent nature of the resulting image. Gelder and Westgeets’ photographic theories relating to the photograph as an object of contemplation as outlined in Chapter 1, are supported by Barthes and Baudrillard. For example, Baudrillard referred to the silence of photographs, where information rests within the photograph itself. Barthes referred to the notion of punctum, which identifies a point of departure within the still photograph. Barthes hinted at the potential of new dimensions beyond the still image and contemporary artists have attempted to expand this stillness to create new aspects of time and duration.

Therefore, for some theorists and artists, within the medium of photography, time is both motionless and discontinuous, and yet able to have duration if only as an inward facing ontology. What happens to the sense of time in a single still image when it becomes part of a series or a sequence of still images?

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American photographers Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe take existing historical or geological photographs or drawings, and rephotograph these scenes often from the same vantage point and time of day. Sometimes presented side by side but usually overlaid, these mashed up images create a sequence that creates a dialogue between two (or more) different chronological time constructs.



Figure 4 Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe *Four views from four times and one shoreline*, Lake Tenaya 2002 <http://byronwolfe.typepad.com/klettwolfe/yosemite/> Accessed 19/04/13

The appropriated images in Figure 4 include a Muybridge on the left and are heavy with detail; here is a clear linear time interval and visual connection between the images. There is an inherent understanding that much that is unobserved and unremarked has transpired in the time that is in between the images sequences. Klett and Wolfe's snapshots or quickly taken tourist-like documentations of being somewhere at sometime are at odds with the thoughtful aesthetically constructed and laboured black and white photographs. Additionally, the discourse between the images occurs from the duration of time that has lapsed between the capture of each. Even with the more recent photographs taken moments apart we can see the visual

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evidence of time passing – variations in the sky and the ripples of water. The black and white stills clearly contrast in actual historical time with the colour stills but, in truth, so do the colour stills amongst each other. Creating a sequence or a succession of single photographs clearly adds a notion of time or time passing that differs from solitary still photographs.

Gelder and Westgeest in *Photography Theory in Historical Perspective* state that ‘... media in contemporary art are characterized by ambiguity, diversity, confusion, and interaction between media, rather than purity.’ (Gelder and Westgeest 2011, 2) The convergence of photography and video formulating a still image to achieve duration, exemplifies Gelder and Westgeest’s statement of interaction. Investigation of the historical boundaries and emerging contemporary connections between photography (still) and video (moving) media was a way to extend my practice beyond the apparent specification of the discrete media, generating and offering a solution that offer a solution to my research question by reframing the elected media and modes of display. It was considered that the individual and collective characteristics of the still photograph convey a sensation of time and duration that interaction between photography and other media would only enrich. Nevertheless the potential of the still photograph can be expanded from its relationship to time and duration via a number of modes, thereby altering the perception of the spectator while still claiming the characteristics of its stillness.

### **The Moving Photograph**

In *Photography after photography*, 1996, a range of authors refer to ways of seeing, particularly in the digital era. Florian Rotzer describes an altering of the quality of

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the medium of photography by stating ‘ ... photographs are no longer taken as an end in themselves, but are merely raw material, the point of departure, for digital processing.’ (Rotzer 1996, 13) Freeing the photograph from being printed and hung on a wall has meant ‘images have become a possibility of observing something distanced in space and time, of being, of travelling somewhere else, without moving from where one is.’ (1996, 18) Spectators can construct their own time by slowing down, speeding up or creating a freeze photographic frame via a remote control in the lounge room and have expectations of involvement or intervention when they encounter digital images.

Whether images refer to instants in time and form the point, or juxtapose a host of images to create a linear progression, the mediums of photography and video are increasingly being used in a hybrid and convergent manner and, like Rotzer stresses, are seen as the raw material for other processes.

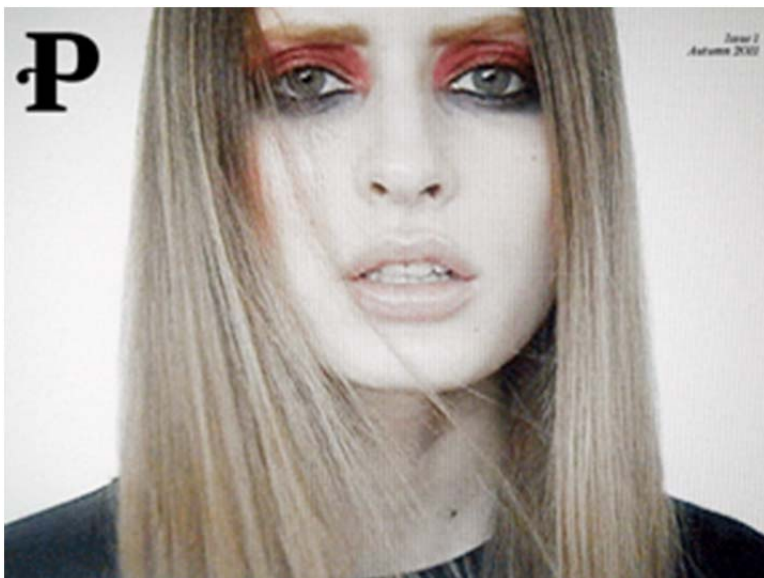


Figure 5 Issue 1 August 2011 BJP online cover  
<http://www.bjp-online.com/british-journal-of-photography/feature/2103447/stills-motion-reed-rader> Accessed 03/11/11

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According to promotions for the inaugural issue of *The British Journal of Photography* for iPad September 2011 New York based fashion photographers – Reed + Rader – are ‘push(ing) the next evolutionary step of photography as animations and hybrid still/video images.’ (ipad 2011, n.p) The animated still image, Figure 5, has a central stillness *and* elements that move in a deliberately stylized stilted fashion – hair flickering in the wind and eyes blinking in a hypnotic trance. The digital screen as a medium can incorporate still photos animated with often pervasive multiple durations and viewpoints, but also conventional web-based processes including animated gifs in the same modal environment.

Photographers are remediating established forms and processes of media and positioning them in innovative modes of display and delivery. AES+F accomplish what is essentially a ‘spectacle’ in the sense that they stage for the spectator combined perspective viewpoints such as aerial and lateral, digital high quality photography/animation and video installations. However, their works are directorial, entirely staged and highly stylised tableaux that do not rely on natural environments. In this sense spectators are clearly perceptually aware of an imagined optical experience.

### **Converging Media**

Our indexical relationship with photography and video has been one that has had limits set by perceptual habit and the inherent historical qualities of the media, including the types of apparatus to take, process and distribute images. Remediating customary processes and techniques of constructing time and duration through blurred or movement traced images, photographic slideshows, digital montages, panoramas, joiners, strip or slit photography and animations developed within and external to the camera are an inescapable element of a contemporary digital artists

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oeuvre. Contemporary artists subsequently interleave and create composite images that complicate the straightforwardness of the relationship between subject matter and image. This signals an inherent change in our conception of the indexical relationship with photography. Additionally, when the indexicality of an object or environment is subjected to repetition over time the work-spectator relationship may provide an unstable but very affective and engaging event.

### **Medium and Mode**

A new set of ontologies for the medium and mode of artistic creation and display of photo media are being born out of not only emerging technologies but also our own changing phenomenological connectedness and ways we encounter the world digitally.

The installation or display mode of an artwork has an inseparable but distinctive relationship with the medium of the artwork. By mode I refer to aspects of display or re-presentation of the images via projection, animation and scale. The selection of display mode and the decisions made by the artist/curator determine the experience of the artwork for the spectator and often assist in the interpretation of the medium. The medium of photography has a history of existing within the frame (Burgin 2003, 136), and offers another level for the artist who inducts the spectator into a temporal *mise-en scene* or placement within the location of the work. Creating a world within the installed space induces an experience for the spectator, as the spectator must physically and thoughtfully inhabit the place in which the work exists. Mode of display or presentation has also implication for digital media as ‘...the appearance of digital screens has completed the transition to a new mode of existence for images.’

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(Rodowick 2007, 235) How images are displayed affect our perception of what we visually experience. For example, projecting a large-sized image onto a floor will produce a different perceptual response to the same image projected from a smaller screened iPad positioned on a wall. The scale of the artwork and consequent architectural features of the space alters the impact of the viewing experience for the spectator. The large scale suggests the idea of the immersion of the spectator. However, any change of scale has the potential to alter the imaginative dimension for the spectator. (ie. Is it real or imagined space?).

Stanley Cavell reasons that due to the inherent qualities of the mediums of photography and moving images ‘we are at the mercy of what the medium captures of us, and what it chooses or refuses, to hold for us.’ (Cavell 1979, 126) He underlines the importance of the viewer in the process as ‘... our natural mode of perception is the view, feeling unseen. We do not so much look at the worlds as look *out at* it, from behind the self’. (1979, 102) Cavell suggests, therefore, that the still and moving image conceals as much as it captures. In his world the framing excludes the adjacent world to the view we see outside the photographs borders. Cavell limits the spectator their role in the viewing process by relegating them to the sideline as invisible onlookers. By including multiple viewpoints, a broader vista , which allows the spectator to question the boundaries of the frame; it also makes the viewing process more active and self-conscious.

Additionally, what we are looking at is information – information that often needs to be de-coded to be experienced. The nature of information is asking us to sort, see and understand with increasingly rapidity and the mode of how this information is displayed provides unpredictable ways for spectators to organise the visual elements.



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The uncertainty of what we are seeing and experiencing, Rodowick asserts, leads us to a position where ‘...we must create new conditions of existence for them (media). What characterizes a medium ...is awareness that it occupies a continuous state of self-transformation and invention that runs ahead of our perceptions and ideas.’ (Rodowick 2007, 235) A medium ‘*mediates*’, between us and the world, ‘it is not simply passive material or substance; it is equally form concept or idea.’ (2007, 42)

### **Experience and Perception**

Experience includes involvement, and develops through observation (seeing) and participation in a physical and cognitive development of knowing (understanding). For John Dewey, experience occurs continuously and *an* experience occurs when it ‘runs its course to fulfilment’ as a whole experience (Dewey 1958, 36) Dewey recognized that, ‘the action and its consequence must be joined in perception,’ (1958, 46) and ‘for to perceive, a beholder must *create* his own experience.’ (1958, 56) Consequently, the spectator experiences in some form what the artist has presented for experience. Ideally, there will be a transmission of signs (seeing *and* understanding). This can occur through an intuitive recognition of the signs and symbols presented but it is ‘in every experience we touch the world though some particular tentacle.’ (1958,180) Medium and mode becomes one such ‘tentacle’ for having an experience.

The dilemma in creating a relationship between visual experience and perception is not in observing and seeing what is created within the work, but with knowing and understanding it, and, as Aque contests, ‘To perceive something is thus not to understand something, but rather to hold that perception as a truth.’ (Aque 2007, 1) People come to any new event with a pre-notion of what will be seen, and emotions

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felt – titles, previous experience with the topic or the materiality of the work – all contribute to that first contact. Perceptually, spectators come to a video or photographic installation with expectations of how they will relate to the media.

### **Theory and Science: Perception**

Perception is linked inexorably to experience. Science and psychology (Wertheimer) hinge on notions of visual seeing *and* understanding with notions of persistence of vision and gestalt. According to Crone in *Seeing Space*, there are four generally accepted stages as we recognize and interpret objects and scenes (see and understand). The eye, through a series of visual scanning or saccadic eye movements, joins with the brain to create a:

- ‘rough linear sketch of the object’, then
- ‘surfaces are filled with their patterns, depth and colour’, next
- ‘the perspective description is objectified and schematised into a three dimensional model’, before the final
- ‘cognitive element: looking up the percept in memory’s catalogue and representing the object’. (Crone 2003, 113)

David Hockney’s photographic joiners therefore may be an analogy for the way we see a scene – ‘we assemble a representation of a scene from a similar collection of snapshots.’ (Wolfe 2009, 213) Hockney attempted to imbue the joiners with a sense of time and the integral visual experience of the processual experience *he* was taking and science gives credibility to this approach. Prediction in visual perception can be

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thought of as connecting two halves of a broken line that is separated by a discontinuity in space in time. (Melcher and Colby 2008, 470)

The natural direction of the eyes is straight ahead. Our two eyes see two images, but then we ‘perceive two images as one stereoscopic vision’. (Seppanen 2006, 60) Our field of vision is also increased by peripheral vision. So it is a natural component of seeing and understanding visual stimulus to be able to process two images (or more) either in quick succession or simultaneously, remapping stimulus intrinsically to create understanding.

My creative practice has included animating successive images that alternate in perspective. An aerial view photograph was taken of the scene in front of the camera, and then followed by a lateral view photograph of the same scene. After moving a pace the process was repeated creating a succession of images that after animating, produced a rapidly moving single sequence of two similar but different image viewpoints that could be cognitively understood.

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## Artists of Influence

Jeffery Shaw is an artist whose creative evolution with the digital sphere has produced works that provide considered physical and immersive works such as *The Distributed Legible City*, *Place: Ruhr*, and *Web of Life*. Mark Hansen in *New Philosophy for New Media* alluded to Shaw's work having the ability to make 'technology a supplement to the body and thus a means of expanding both the body's function as a centre of indetermination and its capacity to filter images.' (Hansen 2004) Shaw's latter works clearly demonstrate a tangible relationship between body, mind and technology, but it is an earlier work that has clearly relates to the conceptual and creative significance of my research project.



Figure 6 Jeffery Shaw *Continuous Sound and Image Movements* (1966)  
*Scan from New Philosophy for New Media*

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*Continuous Sound and Image Movements* shown in Figure 6, originally created and exhibited in 1966, consisted of ‘a hand-drawn black-and-white animated film loop, accompanied by sound elements, non-synchronously projected onto four screens.’ (2004, 54) The images were displayed only for a very short time (0.4 second for an image moment) and lead to a unique aesthetic experience that required the viewer to perceive the single moments and make cognitive sense or understanding of the whole. Shaw describes the work as ‘momentary retinal impressions that assimilate in time into an insubstantial yet coherent multiformity.’ (Shaw, n.d. 1)

Shaw further suggested with *Continuous Sound and Image Movements* (1966) that the work created a place where ‘the inner forms of the film will grow within the observer as a time experience – the appearance, perception or order from fleeting sound and image movements.’ (Hansen 2004, 54) Shaw’s creation of a mode of display created an atmosphere for spectator immersion reflecting Dewey’s idea of ‘whole experience’. This is actually manifest, particularly his sense of an experience having duration. Shaw’s artwork builds itself visually over time, transmitting seeing and understanding beyond Cavell’s notion of the spectator is limited by the information presented in a single frame.

David Claerbout is a contemporary artist who is remediating and redefining existing media and presenting it in a manner that supports c-existence and convergence. Claerbout, like Klett and Wolfe, often uses existing historical black and white photographs (or mock-ups of them) to create a sense of time passing. Often using the still image as a base for moving imagery he maintains a sense of a moment of time but captured them from many perspectives. In Figure 7, *The Algiers' Sections*

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of a *Happy Moment*, Claerbout takes freeze frames of a single moment, and then sequences them as a video of a family playing with a ball in an elevated courtyard from multiple angles and perspectives. These ‘present a moment from the past, (and)



Figure 7 David Claerbout *The Algiers' Sections of a Happy Moment*, 2008  
Single channel video projection, 1920 x 1600 Black and white, stereo audio 37 min  
<http://www.hauserwirth.com/artists/4/david-claerbout/images-clips/36/>  
Accessed 20/04/13

link up with different versions of themselves.’ (Barker 2012, 268) Multiple viewpoints and angles coexist as though we, the spectator, are in one place and everywhere at the same time. Additionally, although the animation is linear, there is a forward/back sensorial experience.

Often his work is ‘hybrid still and moving projections that challenge perceptual givens by weaving photographs, video, perception and expectation.’ (Strosnider 2008, 24) The element of expectation is akin to pre-notion and is an important element of setting up and positioning the spectator to anticipate artist-contrived experiences. If a work is assumed to be a still and it then offers some area of movement this sets up an expectation that other works will operate the same way. The spectator then approaches each new work with anticipation that something will happen and give the photograph or moving work deep scrutiny thus prolonging the relationship engagement. The suspense of expectation is part of Claerbout’s process

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as spectators anticipate (rightly or wrongly) what will happen next. This often creates a modal crisis. There is a structural expectation that arises from the moving image where we anticipate what will happen next. In a partially animated still this expectation is held in suspense.

Another element of time related to perception that Claerbout explores is an exploitation of how we see combined with nature's natural progression of time. In his work *Venice Lightboxes*, four lightboxes are displayed in a darkened room. These are genuine still images and 'the photograph does not move, but the accommodating eye creates a filmic process from night to dawn.' (Gelder 2011, 103) Each lightbox has a dark image of a view of Venice that is only perceptible after the spectator has invested time to view the work and the installation and their eyes adjust to the light conditions. Only then can they see the work emerging. Still/moving images converge perceptually for the spectator, combining natural progressions of time with variations. This increased the spectators' investment in the work by adding further dimensions.

David Green, in considering the convergence of the still and the moving image, asserts that Claerbout's work proves 'not the conflation of photography and film but a conjuncture of the two media...in which they co-exist and seem to simultaneously occupy the same object.' (Green 2004, 31) Claerbout is a contemporary artist who is remediating and redefining existing media and presenting it in a manner that supports co-existence and convergence.

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Taken together the discussed works of Claerbout and Shaw articulate a clear relationship, artwork and spectator, to the mode of display and the selected medium and the contemporary convergence of digital still and moving imagery.



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## Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

### Methodology

From the beginning and throughout an investigation, heuristic research involves self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery. The research question and methodology flow out of inner awareness, meaning and inspiration.

(Hiles 2001, 263)

As a practice-led researcher my interpretive framework and methodology was driven by the materiality of practice and articulation of my project question:

In what way do the variables explored through digital still media and presentation modes affect the relationship between visual experience and perception within an individual art practice?

Initially my research on reflective and self-reflexive approaches informed by Heidegger, led to an investigation of Elizabeth Grierson and Laura Brearley's methodology that includes 'ways of framing.' (Grierson and Brearley 2009, 2) Subsequent examination of variations of diagrammatic forms of reflection or reflexive cycles from Schon and Gibbs left a realisation that my approach would require my own graphic solution. Adapting selected procedural elements of heuristic inquiry developed by Clark Moustakas, and debated by Dave Hiles, I adopted a layered approach (see figure 8) whereby stages of inquiry included the materiality of my 'self' practice, leading to immersion, reflection, synthesis of inquiry and articulation. Each stage is shown in relationship to the others and each contributed to

the outcome of my creative practice through my Masters exhibition *Journey: Frenchman's walk* and this interlocking critical inquiry exegesis.

### Research Design

My subsequent research diagrammatic model has therefore delineated my research paradigm and the nature of my research that has shifted in emphasis between artistic practice and critical inquiry at different evolutionary stages of the research. Reflected is the physical nature of the stones in shape and weight, creating a metaphoric requirement to create an equilibrium and balance within my applied artistic practice and critical inquiry.

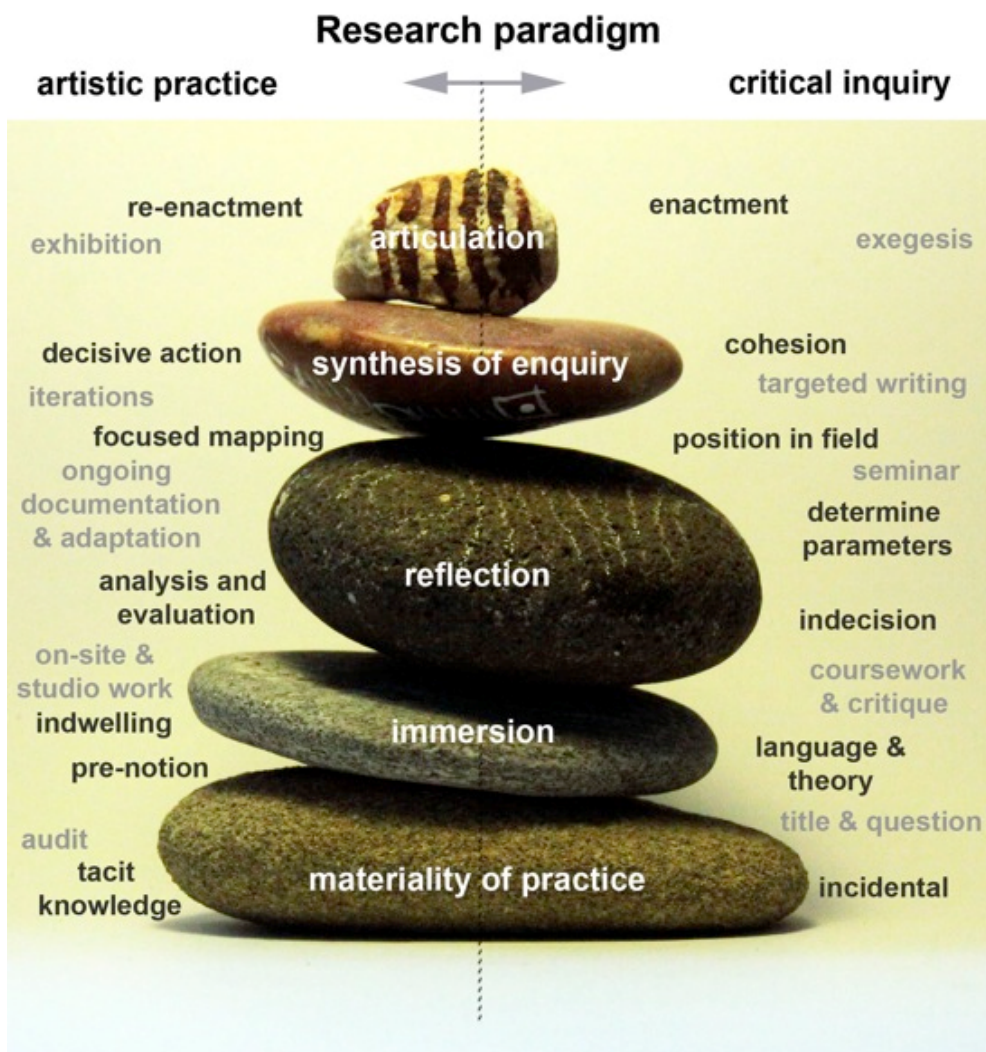


Figure 8 Research Paradigm

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In explaining the diagram/model, I will clarify how the central stone layers depict the methodological process of my research from initial evaluation of existing artistic practice and critical inquiry as an artist through to the project's outcome as an artist/researcher.

### **Materiality of practice**

Working through both sides of the grounding stone layer of the model – materiality of practice – emphasised for me an acknowledgement of a move away from painting/drawing to entirely digital media in recent practice. I audited my work, valuing the development of a convincing installation approach to the presentation and curatorial mode of my digital practice over the less innovative and static display mode of more traditional media. Critical inquiry had previously been undertaken but often in an incidental and unstructured way, where use of visual journals for research and documentation was regular but limited to a narrow focus.

### **Immersion, reflection and synthesis of inquiry**

Three formal iterations of the practical component of my research were offered, with two formal seminar/oral events and several formal/informal written elements completed to present my stages of critical inquiry. Each of these areas was pivotal and comprised of actual events and outputs that seesawed back and forth in intensity rather than being discrete. Each had an influence on the articulation my research question.

As staged iterations, *Window 1*, *Journey 1: Pause* and *Journey: Beachmere* each shared the central layers of the stone model – immersion, reflection and synthesis of inquiry.

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Indwelling, or a sense of being with the work, in the work *Window 1* was all-inclusive and pervasive. As the work was an adaption of my emerging creative practice process and technique of utilising aerial and lateral views, this iteration supported the determination of parameters for both the creative and critical domains in landscape and animated photo-media.

*Journey 1: Pause* contained an extensive investment in time and resources to physically gather and create. As a layer of my stone methodology, the immersion into what would be a core component of my creative practice required strong analysis and an evaluation of what the final journey would be. As an iteration it clarified the parameters of my study and gave concrete purpose to my research question.

Out of all the iterations, *Journey: Beachmere* provided cohesiveness to the animation sequences and a decisive positioning of my body of research to date in terms of contemporary still and moving image constructs and approaches. Still underpinning the work were the layers of immersion, reflection and synthesis of inquiry and by this stage the relative importance of each layer to the articulation of the whole work was transparent.

### **Articulation**

The work that gave equilibrium to my layered research methodology was my final Masters exhibition, *Journey: Frenchman's walk*. The entire exhibition was the culmination of the processes, concepts and determinations of my whole study and

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provided the final stone layer that gave balance and conclusion to the creative practice frame of my research.

### **Instruments**

With a 75% creative practice to 25% critical inquiry weighting for my practice-led research meaningful documentation of the intrinsic layers and multiple iterations of my creative practice has been essential. A full documentation artefact USB of the iterations and final Masters exhibition accompanies selected visual sampling through the exegesis.



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## Chapter 4: Results

### Framework

Framed by a layered methodology, my creative practice and critical inquiry has involved a thorough examination of my research question:

*In what way do the variables explored through digital still/moving media and presentation modes affect the relationship between visual experience and perception within an individual art practice?*

To determine the results of the metaphoric and actual journey I will initially summarize the outcome of the iterations, detailing their significance to the final work. In the Masters exhibition work *Journey: Frenchman's walk* each element will be examined and reflected upon in the context of the research question.

### Iterations

**Window 1 – 26 September-03 November 2012**

**Dare to do Square group exhibition, Pine Rivers Gallery**

**(Full work on Documentation USB)**

*Window 1* was the only iteration where both the raw material and the creative assembly were created in the same studio environment, as opposed to onsite in a landscape environment and then studio work. The stop frame animated work positioned the camera as a constant from my studio space with the square window the alternating perspective element – shots were taken at regular intervals – window open, window shut over the course of a day from dawn until dark. The group show was themed 'square' and I considered not only the digital frame of the animated

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projection but also the physical installed manifestation of the work itself in the square window box (see figure 9).



Figure 9 Catherine Schoch *Window I* 2012  
Installation still

Projected inside a purpose built square window frame, the moving image animation had duration of 2:18 minutes. I experimented with on screen duration of the frame, sometimes holding the still image, overlaying temporality of colour changes and moving imagery, endeavouring to instil what James Elkins calls a hypnosis effect, putting the spectator into a trance as they move from one image to another. (Elkins 2011, 69) The work also explored a variation of my aerial/ lateral animation sequence by positioning the camera as stationary and the window providing the change in perspective by an open and shut formation (see figure 10).



Figure 10 Catherine Schoch *Window I* 2012 2:00 Animation stills – Single channel video projection



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### ***Reflections and summary***

The alternating perspectives of open and shut successfully worked with the viewer having the ability to separate the two aspects and both see and understand on a cognitive level that they were witnessing two different viewpoints in succession.

A reprieve from the relentless saccadic processing required by the spectator was achieved by slowing the speed of the animation at various points and incorporating pauses. The role of the pause in enabling the spectator to experience the various elements of the final work both on screen and as the intervals between the elements of the work would also allow a cognitive build in perception.

#### **Journey 1: Pause – 31 October-02 November 2012**

**Ignite! 12 conference, The Block, QUT**

**(Full work on Documentation USB)**

An opportunity to pilot my technique of sequencing aerial and lateral views in *Journey: Pause* clearly defined a forward focus while simultaneously highlighting my state of indecision and confusion over the more reflective elements – the peripheral and pensive moments – within the journey. The purpose of the work was to provide ‘pauses’ to balance the frantic animation sequences and mirror the actual journeys breaks. The experiment would then be evaluated in order to take out the extraneous material. Consisting of three synchronised projections, the forward and left/right sides were arranged in one corner of a cubed space with the purpose built bench positioned in front for the spectator to experience and hear (see figure 11).

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The intent with the work was to enclose the spectator in three sides with a commencement of a forward sensation to the journey and to test some of the rhythms of the pauses I had included. A given with the work would be that the foremost perspectives would be aerial and lateral with some considerations given to a sense of periphery vision.

***Reflections and summary***

The core elements of the three synchronised projections successfully met the aims of experiencing a forward procession journey. The on screen pause portions provided a sense of atmosphere rather than merely adding a new technique by allowing a sense of a space beyond the forward perspective. It additionally allowed the spectator to see and understand the horizontal lateral and aerial animations and give the necessary time to process this new way of seeing an animation.



Figure 11 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Pause* 2012 3:50  
Installation still - three channel video projection with audio

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The work was one element of the five elements of the final exhibition and, as such, could not enrol the spectator in the sense of journey. The reliance on a single experience (the three synced projections) to fully innovate the media and display mode was not going to fully build an embodied relationship between visual experience and perception. Required for my final exhibition was a more complex mode of installation arrangement, consisting of a wider variety of media responses to signify aspects of the journey.

**Journey: Beachmere – 23 February-20 April 2013**

**Long and Focus galleries, Caboolture Regional Art Gallery**

**(Full work on Documentation USB)**

Comprising of two elements this iteration pushed my deliberations firmly out from a single element or display solution to encompassing a multi-faceted approach. With two adjoining gallery spaces I could refine the processes of the main concepts I had started with *Journey: Pause* and experimented with a two dimensional series of digital works on paper.

The paper printed work consisted of eight print works (see figure 12) that attempted to layer an aerial and lateral photograph to create a two-dimensional variation of the moving image sequences that used the same alternating aerial and lateral viewpoints.



Figure 12 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Beachmere* 2012  
Installation still - Series of eight digital print works



Figure 13 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Beachmere* 2012 2:26  
Installation still - Single channel video with audio

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### *Reflections and summary*

The projected piece very successfully balanced the spectator perception of successive aerial and lateral viewpoints while incorporating timely and supportive pause elements.

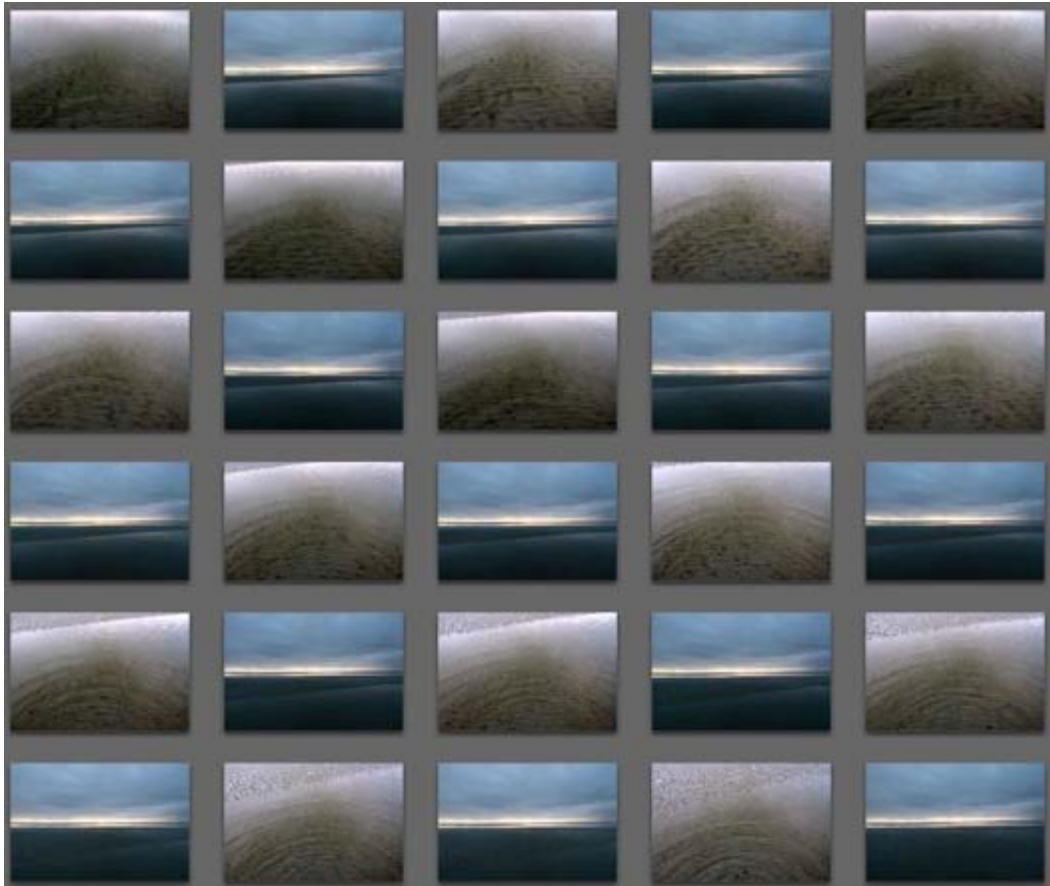


Figure 14 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Beachmere* 2012 2:26  
Animation stills – Single channel video with audio

Crucial to the perceived experience was to build a strong linear correlation with both viewpoints (see figure 14). A section of the work incorporated the lateral horizon line and the aerial curved linear wake of my movement through shallow water, creating a perfect synergy of the process that I had been developing and provided a significant aesthetic to the work.

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Limiting the presentation mode to two-dimensions proved that the process of aerial and lateral succession worked best in the animation, video environment. The print works successfully conveyed a sense of the environment and place they did not induce a complete sense of experience (see figure 15). A commitment to feature all moving works in the final exhibition was made.



Figure 15 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Beachmere* 2012 Caught (left) and Reach (right)  
Digital print on photo rag matte paper 50cmX50cm

## **Masters Exhibition**

**Journey: Frenchman's walk – 6 May-17 April 2013**

**Gallery 61, Queensland Academy for Creative Industries**

**(Full work on Documentation USB)**

The articulation of my creative practice research, *Journey: Frenchman's walk* will be examined firstly by outlining the work as a whole installed piece before reflecting on each of the five elements. A summary of results will conclude the section.

The installed work consisted of five elements encompassing eight digital media viewpoints (videos). Each element considered the space of installation and the device it was presented on or through. As an integrated installed work *Journey:*

*Frenchman's walk* took the spectator on a journey that was akin to the artist's experienced one. Each element of the exhibition explored various interstices of the artist's experience. Cumulatively the elements gave a sense of the whole journey. The spectator was consciously and deliberately part of a staged installation, led through a planned series of media works and screen presentation modes.

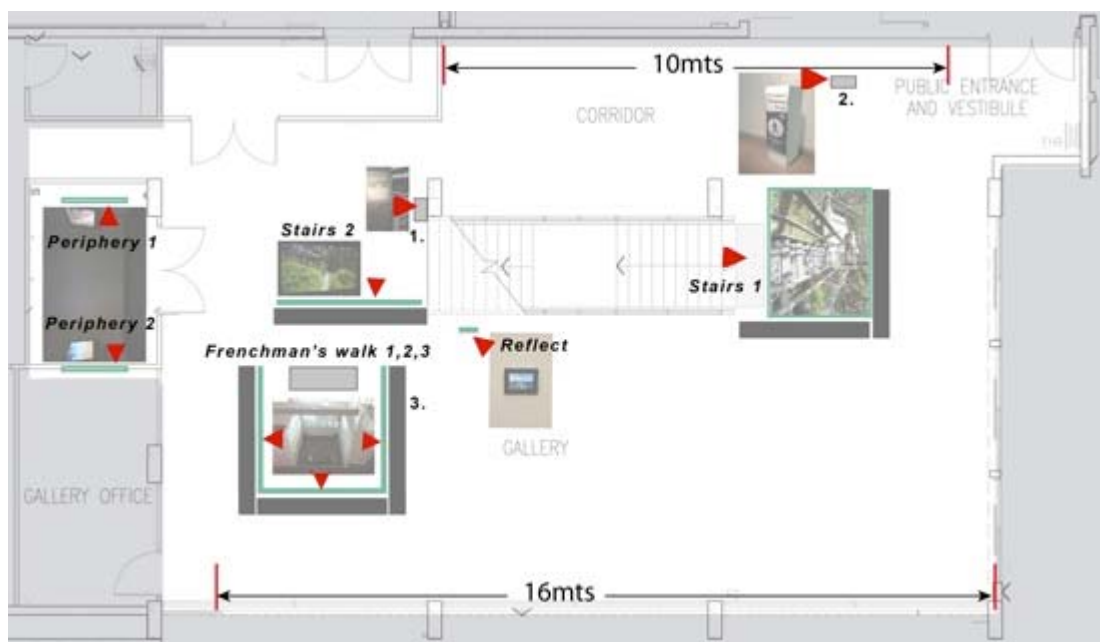


Figure 16 Gallery 61 Floor plan – *Journey: Frenchman's walk* exhibition

Figure 16, the exhibition floor plan outlines the stages and the in exhibition journey taken by the spectator. Aside from the five-installed space elements there were three prop elements to complement the staged installation scene and these are labelled 1, 2 and 3 on the floor plan. Props 1 and 2 were signs similar to the ones actually on site at the start of the walk from the road down to Frenchman's Beach on Stradbroke Island. They served a dual purpose of introducing a sense of place and atmosphere and a directional guide for spectators to follow as they went through the installation. The last prop, labelled 3 on the floor plan was the didactic panel (Appendix A) and

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was consciously positioned at the conclusion where the spectator was asked to review the journey through the artist's text.

While temporal gaps existed between the installed elements the presentational mode was designed to give each element individual space and consideration while still being part of the whole. Deliberate reflection was given to how the spectator enters and interacts with the presentation space; the mode of display; the sensory factors such as additional light; and sound and how the spectator leaves the space and moves to the next.

The relative size of each element, both to each other and for its own intrinsic purpose was important to building up a relationship with the spectator. Some elements invited full body immersion, while others quiet, studied reflection. The initial floor projection was a statement of intent and invitation and its size and staging needed to support this need. The small iPad video at the conclusion of the journey also reflected the need for solitary reflection after a full and demanding visual experience.

Each element of the exhibition was designed to give a sense of the complete experience of the journey not only as movement, but also as a variety of perceptual modes reflecting those of the artist. Cumulatively the parts of the exhibition explored various modes of presentation providing a variety of relationships between the perceived and the actual visual experience.



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## Elements

While initially confronting and in some case disorientating *Stairs 1*, forced the spectator into a direct relationship with the work. The animated work was projected directly onto a constructed floor and extended the actual stairway of the space through to the virtual projected stairs of Frenchman's walk (see figure 17).



Figure 17 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Frenchman's walk* 2013 Installation view 1 – *Stairs 1*

The only way through to the rest of the exhibition was to move physically on top of the work and this challenged the usual perception of how a digital work is experienced. It had a short 10-second loop, but only the last few seconds actually depicted movement, in this case, foliage. If the spectator was on the floor/projection as they walked down the 'stairs' (see figure 18) the sudden and unexpected movement may have startled them. The optical sensation of walking down and through the stairs successfully forced the spectator to inhabit the space and experience.



Figure 18 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Frenchman's walk* 2013  
Installation view 2 – *Stairs 1*

*Stairs 2* employed the usual and often expected mode of presentation for a projected work. It provided a foil for the pre-notion set up by the previous element that immersed the spectator into the work. The intention for the wall projection was to create a directional cue for the spectator into the next element and an indication of what lay ahead – the grassy path beyond the stairs (see figure 19). Overlays of the grass and stairs were animated to pull the spectator back and forward along the path. The spectator was called upon here to view the transitional layers within the short animation as viewpoints into the actual landscape.



Figure 19 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Frenchman's walk* 2013. Installation view 1  
and 2 – *Stairs 2*

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*Periphery 1* and *Periphery 2* changed the mode of presentation to television monitors in a small dark room where they faced each other, offering the spectator a dilemma in selecting which screen to concentrate on while viewing, hence the use of periphery in the title. The subject matter here changed to offer a view of the destination to the beach on one screen (*Periphery 2*) and a return to beginning of the walk (*Periphery 1*) on the other. The parameters of the journey are now established, defining the edges of the artists remembered experience.

The work effectively delivers an impasse – the perceptual awareness of not being able to see the two screens at once, except peripherally, effectively set up deep engagement with each independently before endeavouring to see and understand the connection to them both (see figure 20).



Figure 20 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Frenchman's walk* 2013  
Installation view 1 – *Periphery 1 and 2*

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The animations on the screens were technically different to what was seen thus far. The camera in each case was stationary and recorded a few moments of the location, photograph-by-photograph, frame-by-frame. Both animations followed the usual prescribed method for stop frame animation, letting the detail of the image within the frame be the focus and a single viewpoint depicted. Each had hypnotic components as the spectator waited for something. That something was the rhythm and pace of the natural scene. In the videos the time passes as wind blows the leaves and branches and the clouds provide progressive light and shade or the waves relentlessly progress from full-fledged breakers to passive ripples gathering at your feet.

*Frenchman's walk 1, 2 and 3* delivered the experience of the whole journey only seen in glimpses previously. Here, the exploration of the relationships between experience and perception, presented through digital media, culminated. Up to now the viewer had been led to a certain pre-notion or expectation of the journey through fragments. The still, slightly moving images of previous projections have changed to focused aerial and lateral animations of the forward propelling journey. Ghosted people came and went through the landscape, sounds trailing their movements and interspersing the natural birdsong with disembodied footsteps and muffled conversations.

The work is one projection but is technically made up of three video parts projected onto three screens ensuring an absolute synchronous work (see figure 21). Sitting on the wooden bench at the entry to the space, the viewers were positioned to experience a rapid-fire sequence of digital still and moving images comprising aerial and lateral forward projected movements. The collective experience of the journey

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from the road, down the stairs, through the grassed area and onto the beach to the water was accomplished, although fragments may be perceptually overlooked or unrecognised.

As the direction changes down the stairs of Frenchman's beach a bench seat is provided and the exhibition work embodies this by providing a replica, connecting the spectator physically to the journey. By requesting the spectator to view different scenes forward, left side and right side often at the same time this work interlocked many of the aspects of experience elements of the experiences found in the preceding elements of the exhibition. However, one important new component of the core video was the central forward propelled aerial and lateral animations of the actual path and stair journey of Frenchman's walk.



Figure 21 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Frenchman's walk* 2013  
Installation view 1 and 2 – *Frenchman's walk 1, 2 and 3*

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Figure 22 illustrates how the animation is made using two alternating perspective views that are still connected by their environment and proximity. The linear component of the path/trees, horizon lines and eventually stairs added to the connectivity of the two different views. The spectator was able to remap the scene each time the image changed (every 0.3 seconds) and see and understand they were viewing two perspectives. The cognitive stagger in processing the successive disparate images became easier as the animation progressed and was sometimes further interrupted as object, usually people, passed through the scene.



Figure 22 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Frenchman's walk* 2013  
Animation stills

*Reflect* was created to be quiet and contemplative. It was a hypnotic and trance-like vista of the wake of the ferry leaving Stradbroke Island and Frenchman's walk

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behind. Framed in the small iPad shell, its comparative small size to the rest of the installed elements completed the exhibition, by creating another unexpected presentation mode and symbolising a sense of perpetual journeying.

The spectator might once more become pensive and reflect upon the journey as a whole experience as we do as we return home.



Figure 23 Catherine Schoch *Journey: Frenchman's walk* 2013  
Installation view 1 – *Reflect*

### **Summary**

Like Klett and Wolfe, the subject matter of my work in this research project has centred on the landscape and its intrinsic relationship with people's documentation of it, both as an attempt to capture time and its perceived relative optical experience. By providing the spectator with a succession of animated still photographs of alternating perspectives, my culminating installation extended beyond the optical experience of what we see and understand from the cognitive processing of single images. By creating a mis-en-scene with a variety of display modes and media convergences, our auto ethnographic perspective builds a perceptible and acceptable truth from what is seen and understood. However, the

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spectators interpretations are invited to diverge from the expected by the way the work presents itself.

As outlined in my research question and abstract this project was grounded in an individual arts practice but is positioned within the wider contemporary digital art media and mode context as an example of the innovation possible with media and modes of presentation. Further, in this exploration of digital still media and its presentation mode I have created fresh and provocative relationships between visual experience and perception.

Traditional animation can be remediated to take on another guise. The aerial and lateral sequenced process or what I call *linear polocular perspective* succeeds as an animation process. It takes the traditional stop-frame one perspective technique and adds multiple perspectives, that, as scientific examination demonstrates, allow the spectator to process two or more visual stimulus simultaneously.

Although we can see and understand multiple visual viewpoints and the natural remapping of our perception allows for swift processing, paused intervals allow for the instability of the experience to be arrested and therefore be able to be seen and understood more clearly.

Time and duration requires decoding to be visually and phenomenologically experienced, both within and outside digital media. The dissonance created within convergent work, as Klett and Wolfe have also demonstrated, requires study and recognition of the purpose of the time/duration elements, regardless of media.



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By factoring in the relative scale of the individual works, the architectural features of the display space and the proximity of the segments of the work to each other, the mode of delivery of the presented work creates a more comprehensive experience by allowing photographic media to be perceived beyond its expected and often traditional paradigms.

The role of the spectator in modes of display is a crucial consideration for constructing an experience or the perception of an experience. The artist attempts to build a relationship with the spectator as the exhibition is experienced, by providing relationships to those encountered. Creating carefully constructed dissonances between the medium of the work and the mode of its display, more closely relates to how an event is experienced – a segmented, multiple perspective, variable paced journey.

In summary, *Journey: Frenchman's walk* makes discernible an array of sensory and perceptual relationships by combining various configurations of the medium of still and moving digital components in supportive presentation modes. In doing so, the work extends the scope of aesthetic methods to express visual experience.



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## Appendix A

### Journey: Frenchman's walk didactic panel

#### Stairs 1

A still image animates into small movements. The steep, forward and left directional stairs offer an invitation to walk into and through the space.

#### Stairs 2

A still image animates and overlays another view of the walkway. The stairs now lead right, introducing glimpses of the grassed path, inviting you in deeper.

#### Periphery 1 and 2

Periphery 1 has a view looking backward to the start of the walkway. We turn, before plunging into the long, steep wooded journey to the beach. The walkway remains still but there is movement and time passes all around – leaves and branches move as the wind takes control and the sun, or its absence, move shadows across the scene.

Periphery 2 has a view that looks forward to the end of the walk. We face the outcome of the journey – the beach. Waves roll in and gently fold across the sand, an ever-recurring cycle of movement and time.

#### Frenchman's walk 1, 2 and 3

Three views of Frenchman's walk taking you to the beach, presented to experience, as the artist has experienced, the journey. A wooden bench invites a pause in your journey to perceive the view of the artist.

#### Reflect

The walk is over but the journey is not. Looking back from the ferry the experience of the walk still lingers, inviting re-experience.