



Mind your step

A Sculptural Investigation of Spatial Awareness and Site

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2019

Thesis in support of practice-based dissertation

Masters of Visual Arts

Auckland University of Technology, 2019

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of another degree or diploma or a university or institution of higher learning.

Signed

8th May 2019

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Dunstan family for helping me throughout the project with studio support and advice on strategies and various aspects of the project. Welly, for her constant support and aid throughout this project. Mon and Natalie, my supervisors, for giving me consistent sound advice, my father, for being the voice of reason when it got a bit too much for me. A big thanks to Luca for with the last minute help with the finishing touches to the work. I'd also like to thank my family for the privilege of living in country and giving me the experiences that have helped shaped me. Without their combined effort, encouragement, and patience I doubt I would have finished.

From the bottom of my heart,

Thank you.

PREFACE: Unfamiliar Territory

I began this project as a foreigner to Aotearoa, New Zealand. As an Australian (and although I am practically a next-door neighbour), I found my first steps in this country only highlighted my ignorance in understanding of its culture and heritage. I have made every effort to consult 'maps' of all kinds and to find guides whilst maintaining respect as I move throughout the new landscape. I understand that the land has its own paths and stories, and its own present shape. I have done my best to tread lightly, trying to gain an understanding of this land and its people. I have no desire to appropriate Maori culture, or images that belong to others, into my work.

My great grandmother Mary, on my maternal side, is of the Orange/Bathurst region of the Wiradjuri people,¹ and so my own ancestral heritage goes back further than European settlement. Due to the devastation of colonisation, subsequent genocide and the impact of eugenics, policies of removal and the stolen generations,² much of the family history has been unrecoverable to date.³ This heritage is a significant factor in guiding my actions within this project. I also need to acknowledge my Scottish heritage which was the result of displacement by the English of Scottish people from their homes in the Highlands and Islands -and also my English colonial heritage.⁴ I do not wish to claim to be more than what I am but I feel my combined lineage has contributed to the way I approach the landscape. From what I know of my ancestors, they all cared for the land in one way or another. As a child, my mother's awareness of the land and the stories of place sensitised me to unseen worlds no longer visible. When I was fourteen, my family moved to a 22-hectare farm in Coonabarabran, on Kamilaroi, Wiradjuri, and Weilwan territory on the edge of the Great Dividing Range, next to the Warrumbungle National Park between the mountains and desert plains below. On the farm was a rocky outcrop where both my mother and I experienced a presence. Brad Sutherland, a National Parks Aboriginal Heritage Officer whom we invited to survey our land, examined the place and uncovered carved logs hidden under white-trunked Ghost Gum Trees. We left them untouched as they were clearly ceremonial. An ethics of care for land and culture was beginning to take root. My family has always fostered care towards the landscape, my father being a keen naturalist, would frequently take my brother and I out camping. In the bush he taught us about the native flora, fauna

¹ Carpenter, Michelle. Kamilaroi –A Nations Identity."Location." <https://kamilaroianationsidentity.weebly.com/location.html>. Accessed, 26/4/19

² Duff, Amy. A genocide denied: the 'half-castes' of Australia during the stolen generations of 1905-1970 as genocide. 2016 1.3. <https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/handle/10092/12932>. Accessed 26/4/19

³ National Museum of Australia. "Why a 'white Australia'?" <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/white-australia-policy> Accessed 15/4/19

⁴ Devine, T M (2018). The Scottish Clearances: A History of the Dispossessed, 1600–1900. London: Allen Lane.

and their significance. He taught us about what was endangered and in need of protection but also how to conduct oneself so as to leave as little impact as possible on the environment. I grew up in a family which was connected to the land in more than just a physical way. I learnt that there was more to the landscape than what was visible; there being so much more on both a physical and spiritual level. Reverence and respect for the land stays with me wherever I go. An understanding that there will always be more than what I can comprehend in my surroundings. This appreciation is what leads this project.

ABSTRACT

Questioning my existence in this land and exploring the impact my presence has in it, *Mind Your Step* is a practice-led investigation searching multiple sites that combine to create a dialogue between process and material. Exploring a new environment and enquiring how materiality reflects my own observations. With a focus on Aotearoa, New Zealand and the landscape within Te Ika-a-Māui—the North Island, I look to establish a first-hand understanding of what has influenced the shaping of the landscape. Analysing how other artist's practices explore ideas of site and history in an attempt to capture the essence of a place, through careful consideration for material and site with an ethic of care. I am questioning what it is to exist in a space, what it means to be a visitor in a space and how to conduct oneself. The materials glass, metal, and stone are used to sculpturally articulate my own experiences of geological movements and human activity. The overarching methodology of 'the walk', a non-site observation, led this investigation. I am interested in paradigms around care, which I consider through my relationship with materials and how care influences decisions.

INTRODUCTION: The Beginning of the Journey

This project commences with an intention to explore Aotearoa, New Zealand to discover sites. The sites that I have responded to are the areas of Pakuranga, Maungarei/Mt Wellington, Muriwai, Taupo and Tāmaki Makaurau—Auckland. As a sculptor, I am inspired by geological processes and the formation of landmass, which in turn sparked my attraction to Aotearoa because of its varying abundance of active geology that has shaped this country. During the research process, unexpected methodological developments, such as labour, walking, and cleaning began to impact my work. These occurrences became focal points for the making process; transformative changes started to appear and I began to experiment with object and installation. This has enhanced my understanding of the importance of care in my relating to the landscape, utilised as the site of production.

I will be referencing German-Austrian geologist Ferdinand von Hochstetter's 1864 *Geology of New Zealand*, that has increased my understanding of the geological aspects of Aotearoa. Canadian geographer Edward Relph's concepts of 'Insideness and Outsideness' guide my ideas around the walk and what it means for me to take this journey. I am also drawing

inspiration from the ideas of American artist Robert Smithson, Australian/Aotearoa artist, Rosalie Gascoigne, and Australian artist Wendy Teakel. The works of Japanese artist/architect Colin K. Okashimo are also relevant in how he achieves visual balance. The theoretical discourse surrounding the work of Robert Smithson has had a strong influence, particularly his approach to non-site. The Japanese philosophy of *Wabi-Sabi*, with its ideas of the journey and the way elements of the landscape are considered a core method. The experience of landscape as concept and the act of walking is a large part of my practice, leading me to name my project: *Mind Your Step*.

SECTION 1: Feeling my Way Through (Project details)

1.1 Up the road, I go

The core focus of this research revolves around experiencing the environment, its construction and the imprint of human activity on the landscape. To begin this investigation, I first turned to the Zen philosophy of *wabi-sabi*, the Japanese art of impermanence and appreciation of subtle details of the natural. As a movement, *wabi-sabi* explores the subtle beauty of the weathered or flawed, ranging from 'flaws' found in nature or those that are found in human artefacts. As a philosophy, it engages an aesthetic approach that finds inspiration in the fleeting and the transient.⁵ Observation and first-hand experiences are integral to *wabi-sabi* and also to my project. It takes a great deal of time and care on a site to find and see the subtle hidden details. *Wabi-sabi* makes a point of deliberately paying attention to what is there and how it got to *be* there (Fig 1.01).

Materially, stone is an indicator of what natural processes have occurred. Metal, similarly, can tell me what kind of human interactions have taken place on site, as ore (stone with elements of metal) is dug up from the earth from mines and refined and manipulated for a specific purpose, such as manufacturing a soda can. If the metal is natural, it tells of the processes that created the site.

⁵Juniper, Andrew. *Wabi-Sabi: The Japanese Art of Impermanence*(Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2003) 51.



Fig. 1.01(-36.8464081, 174.9003814)⁶note: I am referencing all my photos of landscape and work as coordinates that locate the images and work to the specific places they have come from. The only exception is when I have knowingly photographed private land. This photo is taken at Musick Point, Bucklands Beach, Auckland. During this time, I was searching the site for an area that spoke to me. This detail tells the story of how this part of the beach was formed, how this sandstone rock face with iron concretion inclusions was once sea floor that has been pushed up due to volcanic activity in the

Auckland(TāmakiMakaurau) volcanic field.⁷There is also evidence of human activity in the form of graffiti scratched into the stone face, suggesting that this spot is also a social place.

⁶Google Maps. " Musick Point, Bucklands Beach." Accessed August 20,

2018[https://www.google.com/maps/place/Bucklands+Beach,+Auckland/@-](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Bucklands+Beach,+Auckland/@-36.8730663,174.875027,13z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x6d0d4aee12fc5539:0x500ef6143a2b920!8m2!3d-36.8689359!4d174.9061724)

[36.8730663,174.875027,13z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x6d0d4aee12fc5539:0x500ef6143a2b920!8m2!3d-36.8689359!4d174.9061724](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Bucklands+Beach,+Auckland/@-36.8730663,174.875027,13z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x6d0d4aee12fc5539:0x500ef6143a2b920!8m2!3d-36.8689359!4d174.9061724)

⁷Searle, E.J. (1962) "The Volcanoes of Auckland City," *New Zealand Journal of Geology and Geophysics* 5:2, 193-

227, DOI: [10.1080/00288306.1962.10423108224](https://doi.org/10.1080/00288306.1962.10423108224)

invisible.’⁸Koren identifies a spiritual value of *wabi-sabi* 'truth comes from the observation
The journey to the sites is a necessary part of this investigation to seek out materials that are
affected by time and show a specificity of each site. Stone and metal with oxidation
present on their surface have interesting interactions with glass. In glass manufacturing, the
colour of glass is created by adding oxides. I am looking for materials that already have
evidence that signifies processes of geology and time, in alignment with the values of *wabi-
sabi*.’^{9,10}

The *Wabi-Sabi* movement embraces the concepts of imperfection and impermanence in
objects.¹¹Leonard Koren in *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers*, contrasts
the movement with Western views of beauty and states that ‘*Wabi-Sabi* is about the minor
and the hidden, and the ephemeral: things so subtle and evanescent they are of
nature.’¹²(Fig1.03., 1.04.) I apply this notion of truth in observation, to both understand the
way a place was created and how it is used and experienced by others.



Fig. 1.02.(-36.7878282, 174.8579468) Rangitoto Island with Browns Island and St Heliers in sight from the summit of Rangitoto. I am awestruck by the island and its history.

⁸*Ibid.*,50.

⁹Juniper, *Wabi-Sabi*, 115.

¹⁰*Ibid.*,110.

¹¹Koren, Leonard. *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers*, (Point Reyes, California: Imperfect Publishing, 2008), 7.

¹²*Ibid.*, 46.



Fig. 1.03. (-36.9563047, 174.4661944)

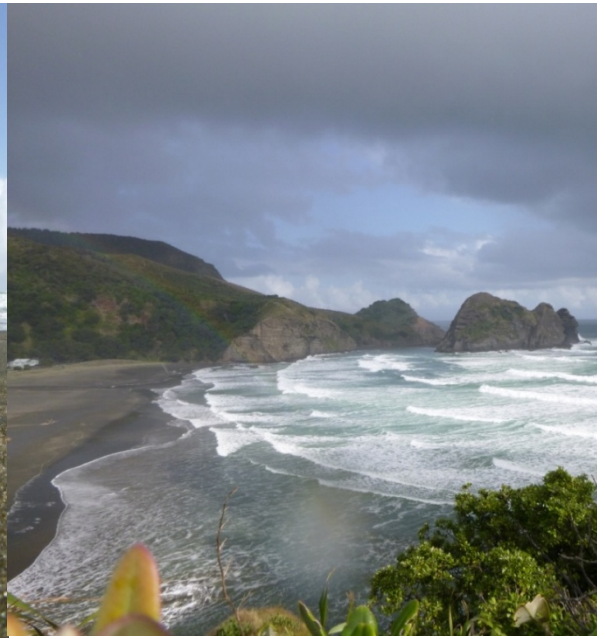


Fig. 1.04.(-36.9536407, 174.4667919)

Figs.1.03 and 1.04.Piha: view from Lion Rock and on the beach itself, both looking toward Tasman Lookout and Taitomo Island. This was a dramatic day at the beach as I had arrived just as a storm rolled in. I felt there was potential here so I continued looking nearby.

In *Displacement and Identity Discontinuity: The Role of Nostalgia in Establishing New Identity Categories*, Melinda J. Milligan discusses how we as people and individuals give meaning to a place through our own experience. She speaks of *place attachments* as one's own personal experience of a place, such as a home and the baggage that comes with it.¹³ She also talks of *social identity*, which is generally attached to unfamiliar peoples or places and how identity is given to a place rather than it being understood.¹⁴ I am trying to push past "social identity" to gain an understanding of site without a sense of "place attachment." I feel that *place attachment* brings personal feelings to a site that can alter the experience—whether that be either positive or negative.

¹³Milligan, Melinda J. "Displacement and Identity Discontinuity: The Role of Nostalgia in Establishing New Identity Categories, Symbolic Interaction." 26, no. 3 (Summer 2003): Wiley, on behalf of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/si.2003.26.3.381>. Accessed: 03/06/2018,382

¹⁴Ibid., 26:, no.3(2003): 382

After spending enough time at a place (which can vary) and it becomes site, I start to go there with more intention. It takes many visits in order to connect to the sites that I explore. First, I go without a camera or any intent to document—I simply want to have an experience. On the second visit I take photos, and on the third, I seek to find something I feel has qualities I can explore within the project. I spend many hours trying to create a positive impact clearing rubbish and removing noxious weeds, as a way to familiarise myself with the landscape.

This brings me to the concepts of 'Insideness/Outsideness' and 'Authentic Experience', as established by built environment geographer Edward Relph. These concepts are based on the idea of experiencing place. Relph argues that '...to study the relationship of space to a more experientially-based understanding of place, space too must be explored in terms of how people experience it.'¹⁵ (Fig. 1.05.-1.07.)



Fig. 1.05.(-36.8303501, 174.4262409)



Fig. 1.06.(-36.8310167, 174.4256468) Muriwai, Maori Bay.

¹⁵David Seaman and Jacob Sowers, Place and Placelessness, Edward Relph. Key texts in *Human Geography*, 2008, 2.



Fig. 1.07. (-36.8339227, 174.4265765). Muriwai, Maori Bay.

Figs. 1.05.-1.07. After travelling up and down the coast from South Head, Woodhill Forest to Port Waikato over several weeks, I eventually found a location. When I first got to Muriwai, all my instincts led me around the Grotto, past the gannet colony and toward Maori Bay. There is something about Maori Bay that moved me, encouraging me to investigate it, and to have that genuine experience of “place.”

The deep immersion in a place or landscape is referred to by Relph as ‘Existential Insideness’, most commonly experienced by the feelings of being ‘home’.¹⁶ However, as an Australian, the contrasting term ‘Existential Outsideness’ best describes my personal experience; that being of ‘a sense of strangeness and alienation, felt by newcomers to a place...’¹⁷ Relph states that places can be experienced authentically through a ‘direct and genuine experience of the entire complex’ of a place, without external influences interfering with the experience.¹⁸ Through the method of walking, observing, and moving through the landscape, I am embodying the concept of ‘Authentic Experience’, deliberately acting and moving in that space without a specific agenda. I am simply attempting to exist there, returning with an agenda when it becomes a site of significance for the work. After a great deal of exploration, I settled on the sites Pakuranga, Maungarei/Mt Wellington, Muriwai,

¹⁶David Seaman and Jacob Sowers, Place and Placelessness, Edward Relph. Key texts in *Human Geography*, 2008, 3.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 4.

Taupo and Auckland. I have listed the sites in chronological order. During my explorations, these sites each spoke to me at different times and in different ways.



Fig. 1.08. (-36.9072517, 174.8634128), Pakuranga. I frequently move through this part of Auckland to and from the city and often get to see subtle changes in the landscape. In this process, I move through this particular landscape without an agenda.

1.2 Conflicting creation, stone

A key question driving this project is how natural forces work with and against one another to shape the landscape. To explore this, I predominantly use glass, stone and metal; glass as a binding agent and catalyst for the stone, and metal sourced from site to make work that reflects my experience of those spaces. This alchemic way of fusing materials together creates physical relationships between the three materials that in turn activate ideas of material agency. The way material takes on a life of its own in the kiln during the casting process. Ideas around material agency help me develop concepts around the chemical reactions that occur when glass, metal and stone come into contact with one another at 860°C.. To help me explore ideas around abstracting nature, I look to sculptor Robert Smithson, who states, "There is no escaping nature through abstract representation;

abstraction brings one closer to physical structures within nature itself.¹⁹ This allows me to find forms in nature, such as the curve of a hill or the furrow of a waterway, simplifying them into curves or positive and negative space. I can mirror this in a cast object, helping to build upon connections between my work and site (Fig 1.09.). I see my own works as abstractions of elements that stood out for me in observations that further connects my work to the site.



Fig .1.09. Comparison between a work in progress reflected against the natural ore exposed in an outcrop of rock.

As Australian poet Dorothea Mackellar described, coming from a ‘sunburnt’ country where drought and flooding rain are more the story of my relationship with water, I am awestruck by Māori poet Hone Tuwhare’s steady ‘drum-roll of rain’ in this green land, ‘small holes in the silence’ created by the sea, and the sheer amount of water present.^{20,21} All of my

¹⁹Tiberghien, Gilles A. *Land Art*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995),2.

²⁰Dorothea Mackellar. "My Country –Poem by Dorothea Mackellar" PoemHunter.com. <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/my-country/>. Accessed September 19, 2018

²¹A poem a day. "Rain –Hone Tuwhare". <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/hone-tuwhare-s-rain/> .Accessed September 19, 2018

investigations of site are situated next to, or within sight of water. Pakuranga and Mt Wellington are next to the Tamaki River; Muriwai is a coastal beach; Taupo is a lake at the heart of Te Ika-a-Māui—the North Island; and Auckland is situated on the edges of two

1.3 Monumental. stone

The landscape and the active geology, such as that present in Taupo and Rotorua, has radicalised my understanding of site and geology. To experience active geology first hand goes beyond mere understanding. After seeing the sheer volume and pressure, I realised my understanding of the power of geology took a huge step forward(Figs. 1.10.-1.12.). One of the reasons this is of interest to me is that heat and water play a major role in the process of casting. Heat softens glass and metal enabling it to take on desired forms. Water is then used to clean and shape the solid form. It was amazing to see these two forces naturally occurring, to see the combination of heat and water, and to see how at the same time they can be both destructive and creative.



Fig. 1.10. (-38.6239227, 176.0875700)



Fig. 1.11. (-38.6241784, 176.0875485)



Fig. 1.12. (-38.6242100, 176.0880538)

Figs.1.10-1.12. Wairakei Terraces, water gushing from beneath the ground at temperatures ranging from 60-110°C.

The power of landscape is a concept many artists relate to, such as Australian-New Zealand sculptor, Rosalie Gascoigne, who was moved by the landscape of New South Wales. She would travel hundreds of kilometres to forage and collect materials.



Fig.1.13.-1.14. The state of New South Wales is outlined in yellow. The region Gascoigne travelled outlined in red is also known as the Monaro. The Australian Capital Territory is outlined in blue.²²

I relate to Gascoigne's methods/themes of landscape as she collected materials in a similar way to me. She travelled the countryside that inspired her, looking for materials to create artwork that was a reflection of the landscape. Materials collected were usually dismantled into components and rearranged to create something new.²³ They included found objects, such as remnants of human interactions, e.g. wooden Schweppes soda boxes, corrugated iron, as well as grasses, and so on. For example her work *Monaro* (1989), synthetic polymer paint on sawn soft drink crates on plywood. *Polyptych* and *Inland Sea*, (1986), corrugated iron & steel wire.²⁴

²²Gallantly, Kelly. "Art Appreciation – Kelly Gellatly Rosalie Gascoigne and the Monaro" SoundCloud audio, September 17 2017, <https://soundcloud.com/search?q=art%20appreciation%20-%20kelly%20gellatly> (Accessed 03/03/19) 20:48

²³Ibid., 11:15.

²⁴Gascoigne, Rosalie. Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, "ARTISTS". https://www.roslynoxley9.com.au/artists/62/Group_Show_/741/53391/

Gascoigne's territories of exploration and my own are similar in physical scale (Fig. 1.13., Fig.1.15). We both meander across country with no particular place in mind, simply experiencing what is there and occasionally finding something to inspire us, whether that be the materials or landscape.²⁵



Fig. 1.15. *Te Ika-a-Māui*—the North Island of Aotearoa. Outlined in blue is the region I have explored.²⁶

²⁵ MacDonald, Vici. *Rosalie Gascoigne*, ed. Steve Bush. (Paddington: Regaro Pty Ltd, 1998).

²⁶ Google Maps. "New Zealand." Accessed March 9, 2019. <https://www.google.com/maps/place/New+Zealand/@-39.3786509,157.2797644,4z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x6d2c200e17779687:0xb1d618e2756a4733!8m2!3d-40.900557!4d174.885971>



Fig.1.16.



Fig.1.17

Figs.1.16.and 1.17. Tracing my steps, seeing the bigger picture of where I have been. These tracings will become a work, but the form in which it will take is undecided.

This sense of restlessness and exploration brings me to the Australian artist Wendy Teakel, whose work is concerned with the landscape, a sense of place and the relationships formed by those that inhabit a place.²⁷ She explores the landscape, looking for material that she feels best comments on site. The body of work *(out of)Place*, and specifically the work *Grove*, questions what belongs in Australia²⁸(Fig. 1.18.). Teakel has used recovered shovels and invasive weeds from site to push this question. Her use of found material pushes my own thinking about the way material can be reused and pushed in unexpected ways. For me, this work brings up questions around moving in the landscape and not forcing your own will on to it. The shovels have handles constructed of weeds, which appear to be forcing themselves into the gallery floor where they can take root and alter the environment to suit themselves.

²⁷Teakel, Wendy. "Sculptures, About."<https://www.wendyteakel.com/intersections.html>. Accessed 01.05.19

²⁸Teakel, Wendy. "Sculptures, (out of) Place."<https://www.wendyteakel.com/intersections.html>. Accessed 01.05.19



Fig.1.18. Wendy Teakel, Grove, (2014), wood, steel, cable ties
343 X 350 X 280 cm²⁹

Teakel's work *Places* is another one that makes me consider my wider movements in a new environment. What would it mean for me to belong in it? *Places* responds to Relph's ideas of 'Insideness', and what it means for the inhabitant of a place to belong and be comfortable with the notion of belonging³⁰(Fig. 1.19.).



Fig. 1.19. Wendy Teakel, Paddock Remnant, (2018), universal lock fencing wire, corrugated iron, black pipe, grass, pastel 95 X 280 X 280 cm³¹

²⁹Teakel, Wendy. "Sculptures, Grove." <https://www.wendyteakel.com/intersections.html>. Accessed 01.05.19

³⁰Teakel, Wendy. "Sculptures, Places." <https://www.wendyteakel.com/intersections.html>. Accessed 01.05.19

³¹Teakel, Wendy. "Sculptures, Paddock Remnant." <https://www.wendyteakel.com/intersections.html>. Accessed 01.05.19

As there are multiple sites at play in this research, I have had to question the role of site and how it functions. Throughout this project, the sites shifted from site as a location for searching for materials, into being contextually core to the project.

Revisiting Smithson's writings, I have adapted his term 'Non-Site' to explain my own experience, but also extended its definition to something that more accurately relates to my use of site.³² Smithson explores site-specific work that has been taken out of context and displayed in a gallery or museum. While his 'Non-Site' looks at an individual site per work, my own is a combination of sites.^{33, 34} I am interested in looking at how a group of diverse places create a whole. Each individual art work is analogous to a single piece that fits into a larger whole and together they make up an abstract image or map of the project sites.

"Partial-Non-Site" is a term I have adapted to frame how my body of work speaks of a conglomerate of sites, which have been removed from geological context and exhibited in the gallery environment. The work is then referenced back to the geographical context. Partial-Non-Site differs from non-site as non-site refers to a singular place. Smithson would examine one site over multiple works. His work is that specific site removed from context and exhibited in the context of a gallery with a large amount of the material being from site. My work on the other hand contains parts of multiple sites and investigates each place and its unique qualities. It contains less material removed from site and focuses on the relationships within it, that contribute to the ideas of identity that site has on its own. While Smithson's work uses a large amount of material taken from site, Partial-Non-Site on the other hand uses as little natural material from site to convey a message. Partial-Non-Site is also attempting to give the feel of place rather than give the viewer the exact idea of a specific location. There is enough information in the title to find out exactly where the work is referencing but this is not immediately translatable.

³² Flam, Jack. *Robert Smithson, The Collected Writings*. (Los Angeles, University of California, 1996,) xviii.

³³ Smithson, Robert. M6, "Theory of Non-Site, by Robert Smithson(1968)" <http://www.multiplo6.com/theory-of-non-sites-by-robert-smithson-1968/> Accessed 01.05.19

³⁴ Smithson, Robert. M6, "Theory of Non-Site, by Robert Smithson(1968)" <http://www.multiplo6.com/theory-of-non-sites-by-robert-smithson-1968/> Accessed 01.05.19

SECTION 2: Practice-led Research (Methodology)

2.1 Reactive nature

The work that I make comes into being through practice-based concepts.³⁵ I follow the landscape through a combination of philosophical influences and geological factors (as stated in Section 1). Processes that govern the way landmass has formed are mirrored by those processes which I use to cast glass with metal and stone. I extend this relationship through installation strategies to further ideas around sculpture, installation and display.



Fig. 2.01. (-36.8332089, 174.4262647) Muriwai, Maori Bay. This clear division in the cliff face marks a major geological point in this cliff's history. The horizontal line divides the original seabed that has been pushed up and a volcanic eruption from above. I followed this prominent line in the cliff face which led me to a cave only accessible during low tide.

³⁵ Bolt, Barbara. *Material Thinking and the Agency of Matter*, Studies in Material Thinking. 1:1 (April 2007), Auckland University of Technology. <http://www.materialthinking.org>. School of Communication and Culture University of Melbourne, 1

When a site makes itself known, I ask myself what is it about this place that has drawn me to it, and why is this important? The answer can range from ‘I visit this place often’ to the site ‘spoke’ to me. What these places have in common is that I have come to them with no pretence and to experience them first-hand. If the space is one that I work in, or there is a predetermined purpose, I find this creates a *social identity* for the site which interferes with my overall reading of it.³⁶ Once a site is established, I research the underlying forces that have contributed to its creation. I then use those aspects that stand out to me to influence the work. Ferdinand von Hochstetter’s *Geology of New Zealand*, has informed my understanding of geological aspects of Aotearoa’s landscape.



Fig. 2.02. (-36.9073348, 174.8637595). Here we can see Mt Wellington in the distance as we look at the Tamaki River at low tide, from the vantage point of the Rotary Walk in Pakuranga.³⁷

The journey started in Pakuranga (Figs.2.02,2.03, 2.04). The visual clues that hinted at the creation of this site were obvious and everywhere. The first objects were made to speak of the movement of the tide and the volcanic activity that created the site.

³⁶ Milligan, “Displacement and Identity Discontinuity.” Accessed: 03/06/2018., 382:2

³⁷ Google Maps. (2017). *Google Maps*. [online] Available at: <https://www.google.com.au/maps/@-23.3394728,150.5201386,12z?hl=en> Accessed 18 Jan., 2019



Fig. 2.03. (-36.9067091, 174.8716247). Layering in the soil, evidence of past and present forces that have created the present landscape.



Fig. 2.04. (-36.9067091, 174.8716247). This is a sign post on the Rotary Walk along the Tamaki River that explains what each layer in the earth is.



Fig. 2.05. (-36.9077656, 174.8617546). Site at low tide at midday. The shape carved out by the movement of the tide is evident here. Mt Wellington appears to the right.



Fig. 2.06. (-36.9077656, 174.8617546). Site at high tide in the late afternoon.



Fig. 2.07. Charles Walker: Cast objects on found metal platforms. Group exhibition Transitory Nature. (Photo credit: Lea Schlatter)

Maungarei/Mt Wellington neighboured the Pakuranga site and it was one of the 63 points of explosive activity that created what is known as Auckland today.³⁸ These sites each have a unique presence. Maungarei/Mt Wellington has a view of the city and the waterways that were so influential in the first site. What drew me to use Mt Wellington as a site was the crater and the obvious turbulence of the earth that the mountain was created from. With the cast objects I wanted to capture aspects of the mountain's shape, and attempt to capture the feeling of movement frozen within the scoria rock that is so abundant^{39,40} (Fig. 2.8.).

³⁸Von Hochstetter, Ferdinand. 'Geology of New Zealand'. Trans. C.A. Flemming. (Vienna, Imperial and Royal Court and Government Printing Office, 1864), 178:3.

³⁹E. J. Searle (1962). "The Volcanoes of Auckland city." *New Zealand Journal of Geology and Geophysics*, 5:2, 193-227, DOI: [10.1080/00288306.1962.10423108](https://doi.org/10.1080/00288306.1962.10423108), 222:2.

⁴⁰Von Hochstetter, 195.



Fig. 2.08. (-36.8929459, 174.8467399). The crater of Maungarei / Mt Wellington with Rangitoto Island in the distance.

The first moment I arrived at Muriwai, I knew there is a presence there that I am unable to verbalise. Upon descending down the columnar basalt and pillow lava cliffs, it was stunning to see the layers of sea floor mud. Lava, sand, and ash has pushed its way up past the limits of the beach.⁴¹ The formation of this beach started about 23 million years ago as a result of tectonic plate movement.



Fig. 2.09. (-36.8329266, 174.4260217). Muriwai, view of Maori Bay from Takapu Refuge Walk. This was the first point that I saw Maori Bay. It was in this instant that I knew I had found site.

⁴¹Thornton, Jocelyn. *The Real Field Guide to New Zealand Geology: An Introduction to Rocks, Minerals and Fossils*, (Auckland: Reed Books, 2003), 179.

Lake Taupo has a sense of power. The earth itself seemed to be taking great breaths, inhaling and exhaling as I passed the steaming rivers spewing forth from the geysers around the Wairakei Terraces (Fig 2.11.).⁴² With the largest volcanic mountains in the country, this region is still volcanically active and is where some of the most dramatic events in Aotearoa's geological history occurred. There have been frequent eruptions with a high amount of pumice, mixing with the basalt and scoria littering the shoreline of the lake (Fig. 2.12.).



Fig. 2.10. (-38.6480468, 176.0677894).⁴³ One of the thermal vents at The Craters of the Moon, a site of active geothermal activity near lake Taupo.

⁴² Thornton, *The Real Field Guide*, 254.

⁴³ Google Maps. (2017). *Google Maps*. [online] Available at: <https://www.google.com.au/maps/@-23.3394728,150.5201386,12z?hl=en> [Accessed 28 Feb. 2019].



Fig. 2.11. (-38.6242048, 176.0880619).⁴⁴Wairakei Terraces.



Fig.2.12. (-38.8617145, 175.7808731). TeHape Bay, Whareroa Esplanade Reserve.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Auckland didn't strike me at first in the same way as the other sites did. It took me the best part of a year of regular visits to recognise this as site. This collision of nature and construction is a stark contrast to the other sites; however, I feel it is an intrinsic end to this project.⁴⁵ I started my exploration in the centre of the city, along Queen Street, and worked my way around, finishing at the Symonds Street graveyard.



Fig. 2.13. (-36.8569600, 174.7685082). Auckland.

2.2 Curious searching. And ore

The specific sites and materials I gather dictate the structure and form of each object. I attempt to capture a trace of each site; trying to capture a feeling of familiarity. A combination of object-making and installation are used to create this feeling of place. The indeterminacy of the casting process between the three materials introduces a type of entropy akin to that found in nature and the way in which a system or process degrades and breaks down.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Searle, "The Volcanoes of Auckland city," *New Zealand Journal of Geology and Geophysics*, 5:2, 193-227, DOI: [10.1080/00288306.1962.10423108](https://doi.org/10.1080/00288306.1962.10423108), 198:2

⁴⁶Smithson, *The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam, (University of California Press:1966), 303.



Fig.2.14. The end of the first stage of casting. Here is the finished wax object ready for the next stage.

Indeterminacy of the casting is a powerful driver for the project. I understand how each material reacts, but at the same time realise every cast will be different. The overall shape of the form, the composition and condition of the material all have individual effects and influence the outcome. This indeterminate entropy pushes the work out of my control and allows the nature of the materials, within any of my cast objects, to come to the forefront.

Entropy is change; it is a chance for organised chaos to alter something from its original structure, such as forms, slowly changing into something new, building up, or falling apart. The effects of the earth's processes wearing down, sudden or gradual, impact the original form. Through Smithson's ideas of entropy, I have gained an understanding of processes actively occurring in my work. Entropy of the environment is a form of evolution-like change. It is not headed for any ideal adaptive change, rather change that follows process. By setting up combinations of elements that I know will react with one another, I aim to parallel these natural processes. At top temperature, the materials are in a state at which they start to merge (Fig2.15.) and thus introduce the various stresses inherent in each material to the others in the conglomerate (Fig 2.16.).



Fig. 2.15. Checking the kiln at top temperature, 860°C. The start of indeterminate entropy begins.



Fig. 2.16. A work in progress, this is an example of the constructed conglomerate that accompanies the sculpture reflecting my experiences from the landscape creating a Partial-Non-Site.

2.3 Earthy deep-down things

Once I understand what has occurred within the object, I then carve into the form and bring aspects of the object to a polished or sandblasted look. I also intentionally leave marks of process visible, in homage to the way that nature leaves clues in how the landscape is shaped. The object is then polished to reveal the most exciting aspects of the newly cast work, fulfilling my desire to see inside the earth, and to witness what reactions have occurred in process.



Fig.2.17.Ashard of reactionary glass containing copper and stone.

The kiln activates the materials – this is the stage that conflicting forces, heat vs. cold, dry vs. wet, are in flux. The work as a whole, continues to shift well after display, as aspects of it oxidise and subtle shifts of colour appear. The viewer may pick up on the subtle changes,

much like a passer-by notices shifts in the landscape they frequent. My goal is to immerse the audience in the work to receive a feeling of site or place –a subconscious participation.

*"In this encounter, the human is no longer outside of the assemblage directing the proceedings. The human being becomes just one material-semiotic actor engaged in complex conversation with other players."*⁴⁷

During the process of firing, the heat makes the materials take on a life of their own, each reacting with another, contributing to the whole.⁴⁸

Theorist Barbara Bolt discusses philosopher and social theorist Brian Massumi's ideas of how the maker, their tools and materials has an agency of matter. This relationship is a deliberate exchange of energy which shifts the focus from the form to what comes from the action. This new unity speaks of the interaction that occurs in creation of the object, on many levels.⁴⁹ This exchange of energy is captured within the work and passed onto the viewer, whether they are aware of it or not. I am attempting to push this further by the idea of a Partial-Non-Site having the feel of a place, and by the viewer being made aware. It is not necessary to know exactly where the place is, but of a deep earthly feel nevertheless.

⁴⁷ Bolt, Barbara. *Material Thinking and the Agency of Matter*, Studies in Material Thinking, April 2007, 1:1, AUT University. <http://www.materialthinking.org>. School of Communication and Culture, University of Melbourne, 3.

⁴⁸ Bolt, *Material Thinking and the Agency of Matter*, 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

SECTION 3: Developments in the Process and The Body of Work

Over the course of this project there have been some surprising developments in the work and direction of the investigation. To begin with, I was focused on the object and its finish. However, as it progressed, the focus shifted from the finished object to the journey, site and how to locate this dialogue using installation. The emphasis changed from chemical reactions between the three materials to how the object itself came to contain a sense or feeling of site. The way in which the materials react in process and naturally decay due to the stress of casting suggests parallels between the geology on-site and the object itself.



Fig. 3.01. (-36.8354560, 174.4272712)



Fig. 3.02. (-36.8333269, 174.4256180)



Fig. 3.03.



Fig. 3.04. (-36.8347623, 174.4269772)

Figs. 3.01., 3.02., 3.04. are aspects of the site that I have been responding to specifically. Fig. 3.03 is one configuration of the Partial-Non-Site. The cast object is submerged in salt, I was playing with a strategy of representing water without using water.

3.1 Cracked, rough and unseen

Once the firing process is complete and the objects are cooled, they need to be divested (removing the mould material) and cleaned. I start to see how each material has changed and been affected on a chemical level. The object is then carved in order to refine the shape and to visualise the reactions. If a specific spot has reacted dramatically, I often bring it to a polish so it can be easily viewed.

While these reactions are an important part of the process and making of the objects, the emphasis has shifted to a focus on the overall work communicating the essence of site that drew me to it.



Fig. 3.05. This is an object just cooled and is ready to be divested. Of note are the interesting green marks on the mould surface.

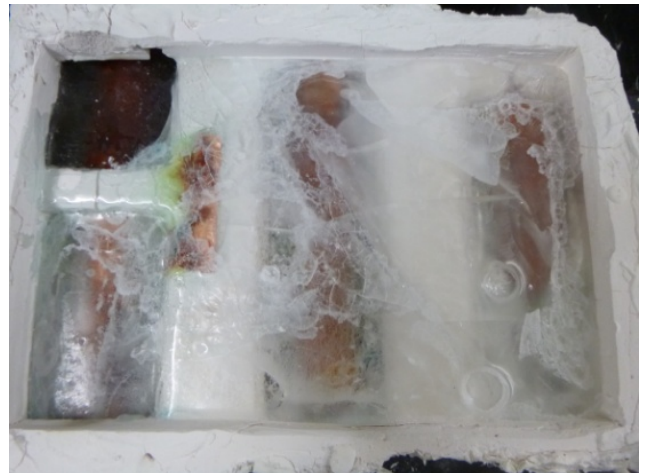


Fig. 3.06. This is the surface of the glass after firing giving clues to what occurred in the kiln.



Fig. 3.07. This object is fresh from the mould and ready for cleaning up and polishing.

3.2 PARTIAL-NON-SITES: fusion, reactions in glass

Each work has had a different result that reflects site in its own way. The most prominent feature of each grouping of objects varies depending on the quantities and type of material. Ultimately, each group of work reflects part of my response to site. Each Partial-Non-Site has various components that make up the response. Present are cast objects that are a constructed conglomerate made up of gifts from site and glass made and sourced in Auckland. The other is a structure that houses raw materials borrowed from site.

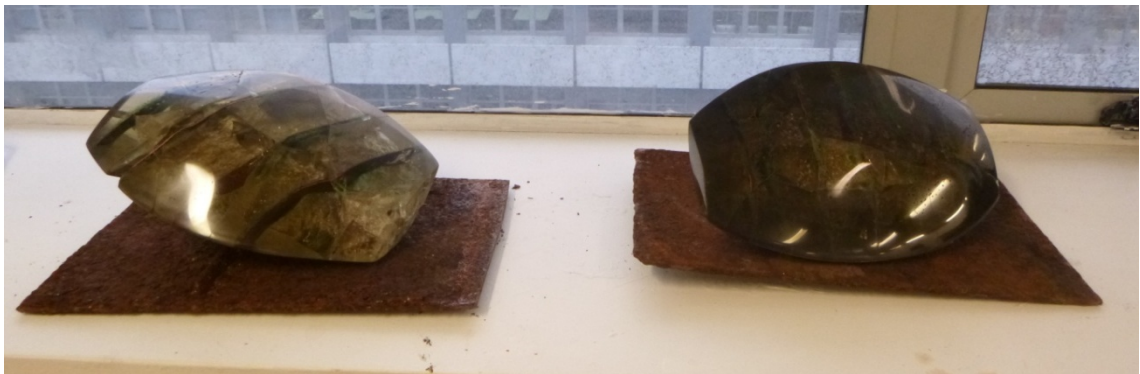
Influx and Outflux (Partial-Non-Site), 01/02/18-11/12/18

Influx and Outflux (Partial-Non-Site) was inspired by the movement of the tide at its highest and lowest points at the Pakuranga site that winds its way around the Tamaki River (Fig. 3.09.-3.14.).

This work reflects the shape of the water, the channel carved by the water and the shape of the bridge and mountain in the distance. The convex and concave, as well as the negative and positive forms that are present on site have inspired the cast form of the objects (Figs. 1.08, 2.02, 2.03, 2.04). To fully have a measure of this site, I had to be present at both high and low tide, and at midday and midnight. The following is data from my visits:

Date	Time	Tide	Water Level
5/2/2018	12:06pm	High Tide	3.43m
28/2/2018	12:05am	Low Tide	0.5m
7/3/2018	12:05am	High Tide	3.26m
14/3/2018	12:03	Low Tide	1.07

Fig. 3.08. Tidal events at Pakuranga.



*Fig. 3.09. from left to right: (-36.9077756, 174.8616858)Day, and
(-36.9077769, 174.8619688)Night.*

These are two of the objects that make up the Partial-Non-Site.



Fig. 3.10. (-36.9077756, 174.8616858)Day, and (-36.9077769, 174.8619688)Night. StPaulStreet Gallery Three.



*Fig. 3.11. (-36.907767, 174.8617955)Low Tide.
This is the third cast component of the Partial-Non-Site that makes Influx and Outflux on display in St Paul Street Gallery Three. At this point they were separate and disjointed.*



Fig.3.12. Detail of (-36.9077769, 174.8619688)Night.



Fig.3.13. Detail of (-36.9077769, 174.8619688)Night, (-36.9077756, 174.8616858)Day



Fig. 3.14. Influx and Outflux (Partial-Non-Site) is made up of (from top to bottom) (-36.9077769, 174.8619688) Night, (-36.9077756, 174.8616858) Day and (-36.907767, 174.8617955) Low Tide. I am starting to accomplish here what I want to achieve.

Mountain Texture (Partial-Non-Site) 08/04/18-10/05/19

Maungarei/Mt Wellington can be seen from the Pakuranga site, and is a prominent feature along the Tamaki Rotary Walkway. Various details of the mountain stuck with me as I walked to the summit, exploring the long grass and gravelly paths. Sections of the embankment have been cut out forming large steps, and in the recent past part of the mountain has been quarried. The cone, tuff, and basalt scoria at the summit are still present.



Fig. 3.15. (-36.8952409, 174.8482412).⁵⁰The rolling hill side of Maungarei/Mt Wellington.

Eventually, after a combination of research and time on site, I decided to cut the object in half (Fig. 3.15-3.18). I chose to do this to address the fact that Maungarei/Mt Wellington has been quarried for its scoria deliberately leaving the harsh cuts in the forms of the objects.⁵¹ *Mountain Texture* is a Partial-Non-Site responding to the history of the mountain, how it is a part of a much larger whole, and how human interaction has dramatically changed its footprint.

⁵⁰Google Maps. "Mount Wellington". Accessed March 14, 2019 <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Mount+Wellington,+Auckland/@-36.9138994,174.8065411,13z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x6d0d491bb2a9c303:0x500ef6143a2e780!8m2!3d-36.9084854!4d174.8387404>

⁵¹Davidson, Janet. 2011. Archaeological Investigations at Maungarei: A Large Maori Settlement on a Volcanic Cone in Auckland, New Zealand. *Tuhinga*, 22: 19-100, https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/tuhinga.22.2011.pt2_.p19-100.davidson.pdf. Accessed 01.05.19



Fig.3.16. This is the cast object on display for a critique. Soon after this point I cut it in half and started to address it as a Partial-Non-Site.



Fig.3.17 30/05/2018



Fig. 3.18.) From back to front the two cast objects that are a part of the Partial-Non-Site Mountain Texture (-36.8918562/ 174.8462665). Tapered and (-36.8929559/ 174.8467399)Crown. This is an early trial of the Partial-Non-Site to try to work out how to complete it. 30/07/2018

Cavern Shadow (Partial-Non-Site)20/06/18-10/5/19

with a thick layer of silver nitrate. This layer traps and reflects light from within and gives a glowing appearance. The second form responds to the rubble on the shore, the shapely hexagonal stones poking out of the beach (Figs.1.05, 1.06, 1.07, 2.01,2.10, 3.19, 3.20).*Cavern Shadow* is a Partial-Non-Site that consists of two objects responding to prominent features on site at Muriwai, Maori Bay. It was intriguing to attempt to capture the feeling of light

reflected in and out of a cave, during the process of making. To complete the forms I coated the internal negative space



Fig. 3.19.



Fig. 3.20. 12/12/2019

Figs.3.17, 3.18 from left to right (-328333269, 174.4256180)Cave, and (-36.8347623, 174.4269772)Rubble. These are a part of Cavern Shadow; they help make up the Partial-Non-Site response to the site of Muriwai.

Filter and Flow (Partial-Non-Site)03/08/18-06/05/19

The site that influenced *Filter and Flow (Partial-Non-Site)* is in the Taupo region, the great lake, and surrounding waterways. Hot water filters up through the ground in response to the thermal pressures below the surface, forming steaming vents and minerals crystallising the water then forms steaming pools, and rivers the flow above and below the surface. Where it flows below the surface, gushing vents of billowing steam burst through the cracks in the earth. I have coated the bottom half of the work in a layer of silver to give a feeling of water reflected. Pumice also floats to the shore and scoria sits on the bottom. The form of the work emulates the feel of an object that has been shaped by the lapping waters.



Fig. 3.21. (-38.7151125, 176.0812182). A view from under the lake's surface near the shore.



Fig.3.22. (-38.7058537, 176.0865001)



Fig.3.23.A section of Filter and Flow (Partial-Non-Site)in progress.



Fig. 3.24. A section of Filter and Flow (Partial-Non-Site) in progress.



Fig.3.25. Half of Filter in Flow nearing completion. These rocks have been documented where they come from around the Taupo shoreline and will be returned after the exhibition.

Auckland Vase (Partial-Non-Site)22/10/18-27/04/19

Auckland Vase is inspired by the tall contemporary shapes of Auckland, and how they are situated upon a geologically active site. Reactions resulting from heat, pressure, and conflicting cold patches shape the city, its composition of reactive glass sitting on cast concrete with a metal core directly reflects the cityscape.



Fig. 3.26. (-36.8540289, 174.7676100)



Fig.3.27. (-36.858518325, 174.7608589)



Fig. 3.28. (36.8585253, 174.7640326)



Fig. 3.29. (-36.8593256, 174.7641275)

Each object is looking at a different aspect of the city. The Auckland sites are Albert Park, the cemetery, the Sky Tower, and an event centre named the Long White Cloud at the Viaduct. The different ways nature interacts with human activity is what drew me to each place. There was a noticeable change in each environment, even at a few metres apart. There are points in the city where the trees replace skyscrapers, and in a couple of places, it looks like they go on forever. The complete reverse can be said for other parts of the city, however. The vase-like shape is in reference to the towering skyscrapers (another form of container) that are so dominant in the Auckland landscape.

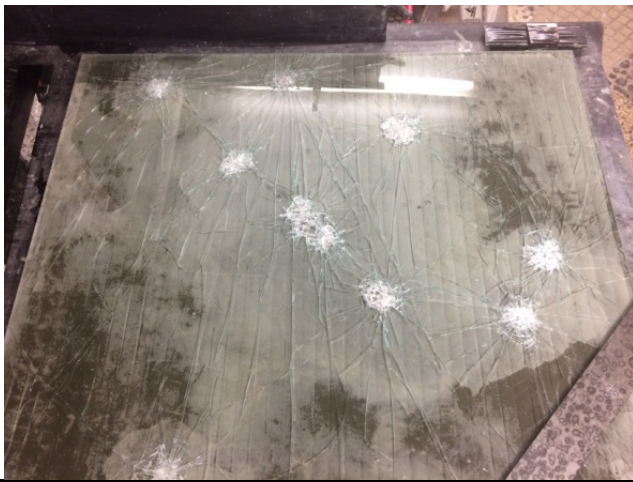


Fig.3.30. Untitled experiment.

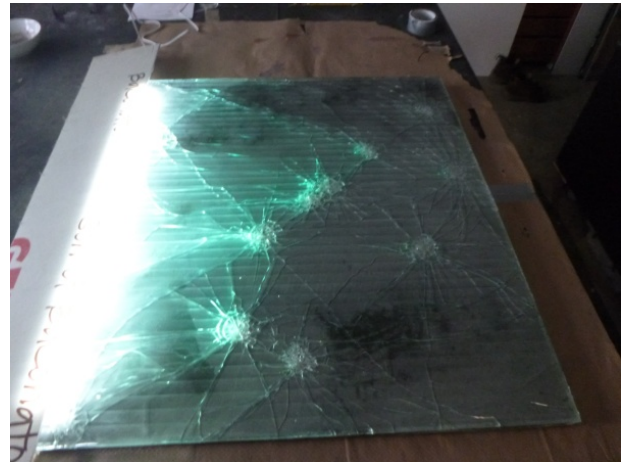


Fig.3.31. concrete, laminated salvaged glass, metal reinforcing, aluminium, LED light.

Figs. 3.30 and 3.31 are an experiment on mapping the city using the unrefined material of glass, metal and stone.

Each collision is a point in the city where major intersections occur.



Fig.3.32. 30/07/2018

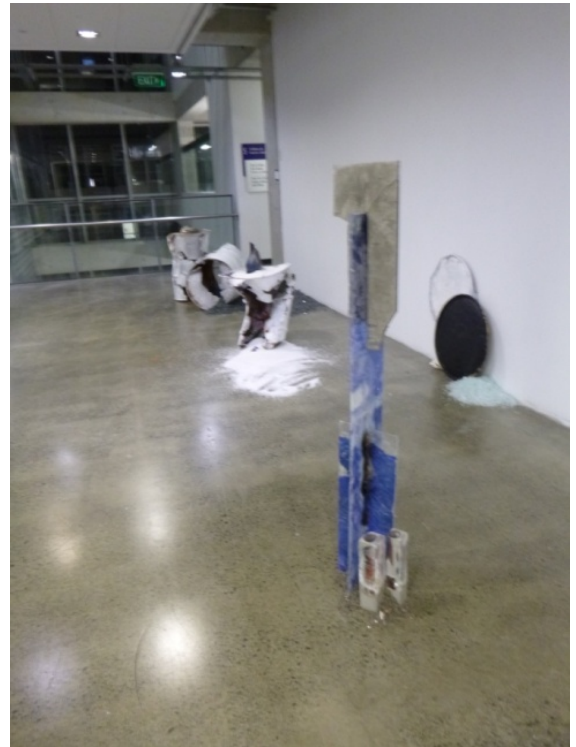


Fig.3.33. a later experiment with 2D/3D forms

Figs.3.32. and 3.33 are further experiments in playing with the 2D/3D form in relation to the city. This is the first appearance of the objects that make up Auckland Vase.



Fig.3.34. From left to right, front to back.

Front row: (-36.8483688, 174.7618818) Tower, (-36.8518325, 174.7608589) TwinSkyline, (-36.8587703, 174.7649704) Cemetery, (-36.8596158, 174.7640420) BridgeView, (-36.8591115, 174.7650160) BridgeBelly.

Back row: (-36.8404228, 174.7684076) Wharf, (-36.8584784, 174.7564849) PinkSkyline, (-36.8567650, 174.7675654) MirroredSkyline, (-36.8506767, 174.7679248) APFountain, (-36.8494334, 174.7680274) APark.



Fig. 3.35. 12/12/2018

Fig. 3.34. and 3.53. are an installation test of Auckland Vase(Partial-Non-Site)

3.3 Transparent, glass-like

An artist of influence is Colin K. Okashimo. Okashimo is a traditionally trained Japanese architect and artist. He treats his architectural projects as large-scale installations that the public is intended to interact with. Okashimo's work explores the inhabited history of site and how the public may interact with it. He mainly uses natural and locally-sourced materials, often adding something manufactured, such as cast glass or bronze. The intention therefore, is to highlight other materials used, so is used sparingly. For example, for *A Sanctum Journey: Belle Mare Plage*, Mauritius, Okashimo uses the history of the island of Mauritius and its people to inspire his installation at a local resort. He familiarises himself with the history of the site and responds as respectfully as he can. I feel a connection with the way Okashimo approaches and treats material, that is, with respect and an understanding of a materials heritage. In regards to *A Sanctum Journey*, the work responds to the people of the island and the history of slavery. Aesthetic choices are made depending on the sensitivities within the material, both emotional and structural. He uses dark volcanic stones in this installation which were sourced from the island. They are stones used for commercial use and not taken from a site of cultural importance.⁵² Similar Mounds of black stones in the cane-fields in Mauritius are of historic importance to the local community.⁵³ Mauritius has a history of colonisation and slavery by the Dutch, French and British. These black volcanic stones are believed to be the heads of those slaves piled up in the fields.⁵⁴ Okashimo's practice inspired me to up-scale my approach. I started to look at the potential of installation to respond to a site. I explored this idea with many trial installs pushing how I approached materiality. I started to use materials that I felt were raw in essence, altering them as little as possible. I introduced used barrels into the project. They supported my ideas and eventually the barrels became something in their own right, shifting to a focal point and the message, but at its core, the same (Fig. 3.36).

Eventually my installations became overcrowded as I added more raw material. I used broken glass, piles of rust and stone to attempt to bring the discussion towards the idea of

⁵²Bingham-Hall, Patrick. *Provoking Calm: The Art Works of Colin K. Okashimo*. (Singapore: Pesaro, 2013),

80. (This is the first time this reference has been used in the footnotes –full details need to be used here)

⁵³Ibid., 72.

⁵⁴Ibid., 72, 98.

materials shifting into something else; a state of entropy in action. Comments commonly made about the work were observations of an alien landscape, apocalyptic scenes, decollation and monumental feelings. This reading of the work expressed a failure on my behalf to execute the message I was trying to get across. In this process, ideas of landscape began to shift. Perhaps if cutting back the amount of material and incorporating other visual cues would allude to site or even landscape.



Fig. 3.36. *Residue* 16/2/19

Residue is from the group exhibition, *The Barrel Store Project* at Corbans Estate Arts Centre held in February 2019. My focus was the history of the site as a literal barrel store and how its use has changed from its construction to now. The barrels served many functions, first as a specimen to inform, and then as a support structure within the work, and lastly as the object(the work itself).



Fig.3.37. Early installation, 30/5/2018

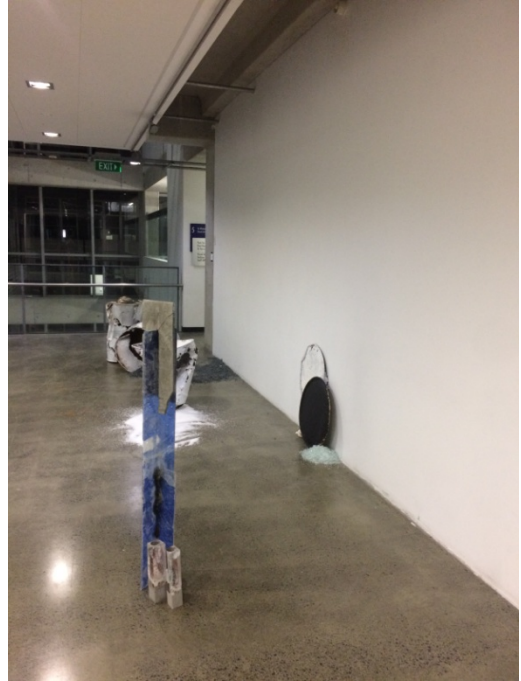


Fig.3.38. Too many ideas starting to appear, 30/07/18



Fig.3.39. Starting to simplify my approach, I pare back so the installation is more contained. The Partial-Non-Sites have been configured around frames, which is a strategy to de-clutter the installation. I have abstracted the forms found onsite, almost to the point of simple geometry.

Section 4:Outside influences

4.1700 hours

An 'ethic of care' has rippled throughout this project, originated at a farm in Puni, Franklin District where I work. It was here that I started to actively care for the land and country, Aotearoa. Over the duration of this project, I have worked over 700 hours restoring native bush. This experience has given me greater insight on my impact on the landscape and how I approach art making. The theme of cleaning and care has been a part of my practice, whether or not I was aware of it, right from my first weeks moving to Aotearoa to do my Masters.



Fig.4.01-4.02.Discarded barrels in 600-year old bush, and farm machinery in the middle of a field.



Fig.4.03-4.04. One of the many dumping sites from the previous tenants of the farm, and piles of metal

collected together to be recycled.

This place became a source for many of my materials, such as the barrels. The care and cleaning became a more evident part of my practice and developed into a method that was concisely and deliberately employed. I began to create connections between cleaning, creating, and the implied relations this brought to my practice; I would wash each material after it was collected and before it was composed into sculptural form.

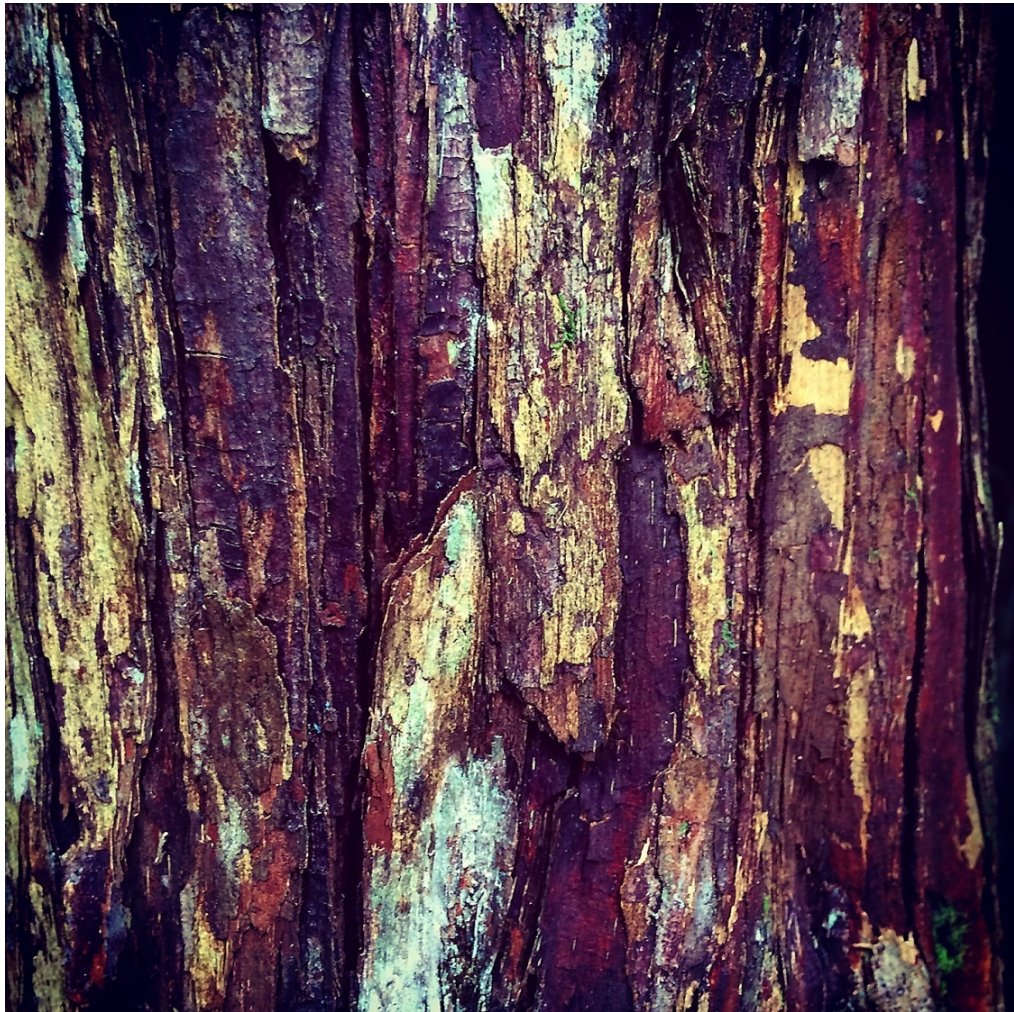


Fig.4.05. Totara tree bark detail.

This a large Totara tree on the farm in Puni. This is where I spent my free time, cleaning it up and replanting the native bush. The owners of the farm want to recover the farm from the abuse of the previous tenant and restore the native forest to what it once was.



Fig.4.06-4.07. Removal of old growth, invasive exotic species such as wilding pine trees, gorse, Burberry, woolly nightshade and others.



Fig.4.08-4.09. Giving back to the bush-planting native trees, and some planted on a freshly weeded hillside.



Fig.4.10.-4.11.As I worked I often made a friend along the way.

The time spent on the farm has culminated in a parallel practice, almost a 'Partial- Site'. I have salvaged material and spent considerable time reflecting on this project. As a result, I began to experiment with wood. I am approaching wood the same way I have the other materials. I am not harvesting material, but using wood that has naturally fallen down (if it is native). However, if I am removing a weed with old growth, I may use a section of this for the work. I am trialling how the salvaged and processed wood aesthetically accompanies the cast object and also how it looks on its own. At this early stage of experimentation, I feel these objects will become a new work.



Fig.4.12. Experimenting with wood, seeing how weeds and natives look together, reflecting how and where they were found. Deep red wood is Iron Bark, black/ brown is Puriri, Light brown is Totara, lightest brown is Yellow box gum and the almost white is Gorse.



Fig.4.13. Experimenting with display. A section of Filter and Flow on a piece of Puriri.

4.2 Conclusion

While engaging in this research, I travelled the central part of Te Ika-a-Māui. Through this process, I have gained a better understanding of the living geology that makes up Aotearoa, and have learnt a lot about the creative and destructive forces that have shaped the landscape and environment. Over this time, the questions I have been addressing have changed. Initially, I was concerned with how Aotearoa was formed and how I would translate that discovery into a cast object. After a radicalised understanding of site and geology, I realised what I was questioning was my existence in this land and exploring the impact of my presence in the landscape. These unexpected methodological developments impacted my approach and understanding of my artwork. The partial-non-site works are concerned with sites that demonstrate how land has been formed and what has influenced its overall creation. These are the sites I was naturally drawn to in my explorations. These were places that I developed an authentic connection with, which then guided the making process. Experimenting with object and installation has enhanced my understanding of the importance of care in my relating to the landscape, and how I treat materials as a whole has changed. I am much more considerate of the material and how/why I use it sculpturally, along with new understandings of how versatile materials can be. The project is essentially a material investigation of the landscape. It was only after my exploration of installation art in an attempt to work with site-related mechanisms of display, that my explorations took an unusual turn and my personal ethic of care became obvious to me. Reflecting on my own histories has always played a role in my actions and so it shouldn't have been such a surprise – but being so close to it, I didn't see it until recently.

The objects and works are instilled with individual personalities and aesthetic values mirroring the landscape and sites from which they derive. The combination of unique materials from site.

The objects and works are instilled with individual personalities and aesthetic values mirroring the landscape and sites from which they derive. The combination of unique materials from site speak of their changes thus developing their own internal dialogue. In addition, the practice attempts to create new language for processes of combining glass, metal and stone for the wider glass discipline. My objects have been said to contain a feeling

of frozen time; a captured moment and the perception of a fossil, as each gives clues of a particular moment in time. In a way, I have been trying to preserve the moments spent on site while simultaneously demonstrating how each site came to be. I want each artwork to express a visual balance, to ensnare my curiosity into the landscape's creation, and to capture the essence of the site. Some works do this better than others. As they are abstracted representations of my experience in each place, it is not immediately obvious where or what has inspired the objects. There is a rawness to the 'nature' of the materials showcased. Abstracting nature has always been an aspect of my art practice, but now I have a greater understanding of where that desire comes from. In this project, some stones were left unturned, an ethic of care took the lead and other things were just left untouched; simply observed but still experienced.

Section 5:References

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Appendix: Exhibition Documentation

The work I exhibited for the graduate exhibition *Matariki* was split over two sites. Gallery one in the window overlooking St. Paul St and in Gallery two. The work was situated in such

a way that it reflected where the sites are found on a map. each work with its correlating site has been placed in such a way that it reflected where each site is found on a map.



Fig 4.14 Gallery 1 window. the works exhibited here is *Filter and Flow* and *Building a longer table* is lent against the wall, these works are grouped together as the sites they are responding to are located the furthest away from the other four sites and are roughly in the same direction.



Fig 4.15 from left to right top to bottom, *Cavern Shadow*, *Auckland Vase*, *Mountain Texture*, *Influx and Outflux*, *Tracing My Steps*. This is the display of gallery three for the exhibition.

In the exhibition I am pushing ideas around object and installation, the position of each response to site is specifically placed to reflect the location of each site as it is found in the landscape.



Fig 4.16 Building a longer table is displayed this way for assessment as it is in response to the work which is continually being done on the farm. the table top is casually lent agents the wall, propel up almost as if after use ready to be put to use again later.



Fig, 4.17 detail of (-38.6241784, 176.0875485)*Rupture*, with pumice stone that litter the floor and that is built up around the base of (-38.7151125, 176.0812182)*Submerge*. I am reflecting on how the pumice littered the shore line at Taupo lake.



Fig 4.18 Gallery three, the set up for assessment. *Tracing My Steps* is placed on the floor and when the viewer stands facing the map, the viewer and the map are then orientated to face north. This locates the work in the gallery space and simultaneously on the map and on site.



Fig 4.19- 4.20 Front row(left row in right photo):(-36.8483688, 174.7618818)Tower, (-36.8518325, 174.7608589)TwinSkyline, (-36.8587703, 174.7649704)Cemetery, (-36.8596158, 174.7640420)BridgeView, (-36.8591115, 174.7650160)BridgeBelly.

Back row(right row in right photo): (-36.8404228, 174.7684076)Wharf, (-36.8584784, 174.7564849)PinkSkyline, (-36.8567650, 174.7675654)MirroredSkyline, (-36.8506767, 174.7679248)APFountain, (-36.8494334, 174.7680274)APark.



Fig 4.21- 4.24 from left to right (-328333269, 174.4256180) Cave, and (-36.8347623, 174.4269772) Rubble. These are a part of Cavern Shadow; they help make up the Partial-Non-Site response to the site of Muriwai.



Fig 4.25, 4.26 Detail of *Mountain Texture* as exhibited for assessment



Fig 4.27 *Tracing My Steps*. 2019 Butchers Paper and Ink, 594x1682 This work naturally was only completed at the very end of the journey when the last Partial-Non-Site was made. Only then could I properly account for where I have been. This map is placed exactly so when viewing you will face north. This is to orientate the viewer so they have an easier time locating themselves and the work in the respective sites.

I approached assessment to push ideas around installation but I approached the graduation show in a more conventional way, slight changes were made after assessment. I picked objects off the floor and added extra objects. This approach was make the installation a little easier to read and to remove trip hazards.



Fig 4.28 Building A Longer Table, 2019, Pine Bark, Gorse, Burberry, Senecio-Daisy Bush, Yellow Box Gum, Ironbark, Kauri, Puriri Size variable HWL, 28x2x308.

This work also was completed on the very last day of install. It took me longer the get my head around what I was doing and why I was working with the wood the way I was. To start I was taking fallen logs or branches and cutting them up to see how the wood inside was affected by that time sitting in the weather like that. I started to arrange the wood in various ways but the was the feeling that something was missing. I started to treat the invasive plants in a similar fashion. this had its own problems as most of this wood was still green. The meant that as I made things and manipulated the wood it would warp and shift changing the overall design of the work. I feel that this works with my process as I lets an aspect of my casting projects add impute into the overall finished produced.

Building a Longer Table has a bow in it that can be seen when it is hung on the wall in a landscape format.



Fig 4.29 Publication for the exhibition, only 41 where produced. The publication was folded like a map and contained the work *Tracing My Steps*, on the reverse side is detailed information on the exhibition, process and concepts.



Fig4.30-4.33 Details of *Mountain Texture* as exhibited for the graduation show.

From back to front the two cast objects that are a part of the *Partial-Non-Site Mountain Texture* (-36.8918562/ 174.8462665). *Tapered* and (-36.8929559/ 174.8467399) *Crown*.



Fig 4.34- 4.37 Detail of Gallery one window installation for the exhibition. The only change is that *Building a Longer Table* is exhibited hung on the wall. This orientation speaks more of the map that it is rather than a table top.

Room Sheet Information

CHARLES WALKER. MVA

Mind Your Step

Mind Your Step is a practice-led investigation searching multiple sites that combine to create a dialogue between process and material, an exploration of a new environment and enquiry into how materiality can reflect my own observations. With a focus on Aotearoa, New Zealand and the landscape within Te Ika-a-Māui—the North Island, I look to establish a first-hand understanding of what has influenced the shaping of the landscape. I am questioning what it is to exist in a space, what it means to be a visitor in that space and how to conduct oneself. The materials, glass, metal, and stone are used to sculpturally articulate my own experiences of geological movements and human activity. The overarching methodology of 'the walk', a non-site observation, led this investigation. I am interested in paradigms around care, which I consider through my relationship with materials and how care influences decisions. The sites that I have responded to are the areas of Pakuranga, Maungarei/Mt Wellington, Muriwai, Taupo and Tāmaki Makaurau—Auckland. As a sculptor, I am inspired by geological processes and the formation of landmass, which in turn have sparked my attraction to Aotearoa because of its varying abundance of active geology that has shaped this country.

Mind Your Step is presented in two sites;

SPSGallery 1 FRONTBOX (window) & Gallery 3.

Gallery 1 FRONTBOX

Filter and Flow (Partial-Non-Site)03/08/18-06/05/19(-38.7151125, 176.0812182)Submerge.
145x60x100cm(-38.6241784, 176.0875485)***Rupture.*** 8x10x30cmGaffer Casting Crystal, Silver, Steel, Pumice, Sulphur, Scoria, Iron.

Building a longer table

Fallen trees collected between 2018 and 2019; Puni Farm, Franklin District
Burberry, Gorse, Ironbark, Kauri, Karri, Pine Bark, Puriri, Senecio-Daisy Bush, Yellow Box Gum. 28x2x308

Gallery 3

MAP

Brown butchers Paper

60x168cm

**Auckland Vase (Partial-Non-Site),
22/10/18-27/04/19**

Group 1

(-36.8404228, 174.7684076) *Wharf*
(-36.8584784, 174.7564849) *PinkSkyline*,
(-36.8567650, 174.7675654)

MirroredSkyline

(-36.8506767, 174.7679248) *APFountain*
(-36.8494334, 174.7680274) *APark*

Group 2

(-36.8483688, 174.7618818) *Tower*
(-36.8518325, 174.7608589) *TwinSkyline*
(-36.8587703, 174.7649704) *Cemetery*
(-36.8596158, 174.7640420) *BridgeView*
(-36.8591115, 174.7650160) *BridgeBelly*

Concrete, Cement, Scoria, Blue Metal, 96
Spectrum Fusing Glass, Toughened Glass,
Float Glass, Gaffer Casting Crystal, Silver,
Copper, Steel.

**Cavern Shadow (Partial-Non-Site),
20/06/18-10/5/19**

(-36.8347623, 174.4269772) *Rubble*
(-328333269, 174.4256180) *Cave*,
10X20X30 cm

Gaffer Casting Crystal, Silver, Steel, Pillow
Basalt Lava, Salt Crystal, Black Sand.

**Influx and Outflux (Partial-Non-Site),
01/02/18-11/12/18**

(-36.9077769, 174.8619688) *Night*
(-36.9077756, 174.8616858) *Day*
(-36.907767, 174.8617955) *Low Tide*

Gaffer Casting Crystal, Silver, Steel,
Pumice, Scoria, Copper.

**Mountain Texture (Partial-Non-Site),
08/04/18-10/05/19**

(-36.8918562/ 174.8462665). *Tapered*
(-36.8929559/ 174.8467399) *Crown*

Gaffer Casting Crystal, Silver, Steel,
Pumice, Scoria, Iron.

CHARLES WALKER

June 2019

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