

Varieties of encounter in an immersive installation of nature

Leighton C. Upson

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Primary Supervisor: Dr Chris Braddock

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Abstract

This exegesis explores how a visual arts accumulative installation process can open up questions about archiving and occupancy. It argues that such a practice signifies a desire for a kind of material fullness and immersion that can transform nature representation into an encounter of endless connectivity.

This project derives from a specific 15 x 8 metre natural forest site inside the Department of Conservation-governed *Ratapihipihi Scenic Reserve* on the edge of New Plymouth. An area of 120 square metres can reveal significant unexpected encounters and easily occupy a year of note-taking. The challenge of this project is to trial ways for the drawing, painting, photographic and installation media to transpicture these encounters with the forest. This exegesis links an installation's transcribing of the experience of being *in* a forest (the quantity, variety, composition and the perception of them) with Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's philosophy of conjunctions, multiplicity and experimentation.

The impetus for this research into 'encountering' comes from the intention of me as 'artist accumulator of nature' to engage in an intimate connection with a local environment and to question how an installation practice, as a way of framing, can reposition a drawing-painting practice. I argue that unsystematic drawing and divergent installation arrangements challenge customary habits of experiencing landscape. The significance of my contribution rests on how I have employed two modes of engagement, notational drawing-painting and installation, to engage with a natural environment, and to translate this experience into a gallery environment that provokes viewers into becoming participants.

Introduction

As artist-accumulator¹ of nature, how can I convey the relationship between my experience in the forest and my perception (as rational organisation) of the forest? This exegesis and the installation titled, '*This and this, and this, and other things too*', both examine how random growth and grouping in an installation contributes to making an art of encounter. This is an exploration of broadening the definition of 'researcher,' a term that implies a more systematic investigation, documentation, or search for knowledge. How do its modular walls, small-scale rooms, accumulation of a range of notational imagery gathered from personal experience in a local forest activate curiosity? How do its range of objects and furniture and accumulation of viewpoints, heights, angles, scales, materials, forms, space, detailing, colour modulations,² lighting tensions, and manual application of media, elicit engagement? Throughout this paper terms from Deleuze and Guattari are used to analyse how an art of encounter can create a closer relationship with nature.

Pursuing an art of encounter is important. To differ from scenic representations of nature that objectify, compartmentalise, and unify nature, such as the forest, '*This and this...*' experiments with how ever-evolving productive multiple media activities and free-flow connections can facilitate diverse ideas about a forest. The psychology of market

¹ The term 'accumulator' is defined as one who is in the act of accumulating, gathering together, amassing, and an increaser by random growth. This is in difference to 'collector,' who is involved in a more systematised grouping together of very similar things. Accumulating implies a more random method of grouping that changes dimensions and mutates constantly. Collecting implies more pin-pointed order and organisation to the process of gathering. Accumulating is more of an act, a series of events where the whole never achieves a homogenous quantity. To accumulate is to immerse in a gathering of an infinite series of like things. It is not tyrannical like the more planned collecting that hunts objects and has to stop when all the rarity has been killed.

² The play of modulation of colour features strongly in the mix in '*This and this...*' It is not just green, but is a range of relationships between lights and darks, saturated or rarefied, warm or cool, and bluer or yellower. Added to this multiplicity of greens' are the greens connections with dark browns. Colour and its combinations do not just remain optical, but can control a form and blur with the tactile: Deleuze (2003, [1981]) points out this difference to traditional representation: "*One could say that the optical space has itself liberated new tactile values (and also the reverse). ...the dismantling of the tactile-optical space of so-called classic representation, and as such they can enter into new and complex combinations and co-relations*" (p. 131).

advertising on the forest is to reject diverse ideas about it, to subordinate nature as people are made the subject in opposition to it, and to eliminate existing meanings and beliefs and make nature become scenery. However, nature eludes us and our systems. Non-systematic and immersive processes of drawing or installation or multiple media can encourage a conjunction of forest and the human mind. They can also create art encounters through abundance, multiplicity, and material fullness both to bring forth forest encounters and embed the spectator and pull their bodies into the artwork.

Chapter one is an enquiry into combining accumulating with the idea of occupancy through the role of artist as accumulator. It uses Deleuze and Guattari's notions of the *body without organs* and *becoming* to explore the idea of an accumulative installation. I begin with the artist as accumulator of nature and the transformation of the representation of, or ideas about, nature through an experiential drawing process, for an immersive and intimate interiority. This exploration of the accumulator constructing her or his own immersive and divergent world is likened to Robinson Crusoe, Cabinets of Curiosities, and the installations of Thomas Hirschhorn, Mike Nelson and Christoph Büchel. Chapter one is an investigation into how installation practice can provoke a viewer into becoming a participant, particularly a participant of speculation about the absent occupant of the installation.

Chapter two considers the relationship between the process of interdisciplinarity and encounter. Using Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the *rhizome*, I argue how a process of accumulation of variance in scales, forms, conjunctions of multiple parts, nooks and crannies, fragmentations and private spaces, can invite and raise curiosity in an art that opens up encounters. Inherent in this argument is how an accumulative installation process, as a way of framing pictures, is a repositioning of a drawing-painting practice. This chapter investigates similar interdisciplinary accumulations that activate spaces into becoming encounters, such as Geoffrey Farmer's installations and Aby Warburg's conjunctive wall atlas.

Chapter One: In the middle: artist and viewers' immersive and inquisitive participation

This chapter focuses on how to activate curiosity through activating participation: the viewer's participation, that is provoked by an immersive occupancy and the artist's participation with nature through a drawing and installation process of accumulation.

Encountering immersion

As drawing-accumulator, I am motivated by a desire to be immersed in an intimate interiority. After reading Leibniz on *absolute interiority*, Deleuze critiques exteriority. He proposes that all outside surfaces of objects should be experienced as interior, and that our exterior body be experienced coextensively with our inside, our mind. Thus, what is exterior in the forest is unfolded or illuminated by the human interior as forest living interior. Likewise, participants in '*This and this, and this, and other things too*' are prompted to question treating the exterior structures of the installation as interior. And as participants entering the installation feel the soft carpet, the closeness of the walls and the tiny scale of the diverse drawing elements, they can experience a prompting back to inside their bodies, their own interiority. Alain Badiou (1988/1994) summarises this as: "*Treating the outside as an exact reversion, or 'membrane,' of the inside, reading the world as a texture of the intimate, thinking the macroscopic (or the molar) as a torsion of the microscopic (or the molecular)*" (p. 61). This internalising relation to the world is termed by Deleuze as an infinite fold, or unfolding. Through an interior membrane, the whole world, or infinite multiple, is thus experienced as intimacy. Here there is no object; everything is the subject as intimate interiority. In occupying the space of the installation, visitors shift from being viewers into participants. The inbetweenness of interior and exterior and the

strange mixture of visual stimuli and textural observations in this labyrinth of drawings and objects raises curiosity, thus encouraging more exploratory viewing or encountering.

The initial encounter occurs as we approach the installation structures, we are on the outside. Where viewers are accustomed to seeing the artwork displayed (on the facing walls to the perceiver) they are instead confronted inside the gallery by an outside, the outside walls of '*This and this...*' The bare curving walls are constructed with hinges, suggesting its fragility, contingency, ephemerality and modular mobility. What can demarcate the work is not just its walls, but the room that it is placed in. One is placed in an encounter of 'behind the scenes', a place usually privy only to the constructors or the actors and artists. Some of the wall panels are pierced by bowls, which offer a tactile encounter and frustrates the setting up of a binary of interior and exterior. Are we inside the work as we stand outside it?

Beside the walls are two empty stools placed near boxes, like Department of Conservation bird-boxes, protruding from some of the wall panels. These stools and boxes attempt to incite the viewer to participate in some strange encounter with the installation, such as stand or sit on the stools to operate the non-functional boxes. The installation attempts to elicit wandering around the walls, as it is not directional, to discover openings into these stage set-like booths. One of the booths has doors that cannot be opened; this denial of probing attempts to further increase curiosity. How can we get in there?

'This and this..', is like a burrow with an unpredictable machine in its enclosure. The construction of each burrow, or booth, insinuates the human body as it is defined by the scale of an adult.³ The surrounded participants encounter a forest of notations, an immense microcosm with

³ The close sides are arm's-length. To 'keep at arm's length' implies also a keeping at a distance from oneself. However, in this context of molding an installation according to the reach of the body is a 'getting in touch with' rather than a 'standing aloof'.

its labyrinth of hand-made drawings of various permutations of a forest as subject and form. Cocooning participants, *'This and this...'* tries to catch them in a strange internalising bind, to engulf them in the intensity of the abundant and continuous flux of imagery and objects. The archival room is a place usually behind the scenes, ignored. The archive rooms attempt to serve as spaces for ideas, insight and inspiration – as think-tanks.

The mass montage of drawings in *'This and this...'* operates in a blurring of optic, embodied, and haptic senses. Topological twists, contractions, expansions and compositional heterogeneity moves attention everywhere. With hundreds of small drawings working as a swarm of varieties of variation, *'This and this...'* creates a vibration that opens up perception, feeling and thought.⁴ Just as the artist submitted to forces of encounters to invent new possibilities, *'This and this...'* attempts to touch the participants' eyes through its protrusions, layers of overlapping and push and pull of perceptual mixes.

'Artist accumulator' as an engaging art practice

The installation *'This and this...'* draws from Deleuze and Guattari's notions within their book *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980/2004), specifically two that emphasise ideas around the mixing process of *'conjunction'*: *'body without organs'* and the *'rhizome'*. The *'body without organs'* is a process of disorganising, of trialling different patterns, and an experimenting to activate potentials. The *'rhizome'* (which is discussed in chapter two), distinct from a tree structure, is a centreless process of open-ended configuring that allows a spreading in all directions. Both of these terms are offered instead of a singular, organised and anchored nailing down of nature to one scene. While the body without organs and the rhizome mutually allude to the accumulating of heterogeneous parts, the body without organs more specifically relates to the experiencing of life

⁴ Interpreting Deleuze and Guattari, Simon O'Sullivan (2006) proposes that in an encounter our habits are confronted (while representation inhibits thought); "*Our typical ways of being in the world are challenged, our systems of knowledge disrupted. We are forced to thought*" (p. 1).

as flows without organisation, especially to flows of desire with a fusion method of making.⁵

Desire in the body without organs is affirmed as a positive expression, of the will to form connections, create and construct.⁶ Guattari (2007) in conversation with Suely Rolnik asserts that desire “... *is never a function of disorder... Desire is always the mode of production of something, desire is always the mode of construction of something*” (p. 319). ‘*This and this...*’ relates more to this theory of productive constructing than to lack because it shows the accumulator-experimenter relating to the world in a very productive, creative manner. Here the flow of desire is an experiencing of delight in the pleasure of a continual construction of an accumulation. The installation environment in ‘*This and this...*’ is constructed in an effort to make it an immersive space and as energy transforming forces caught in process, similar to the extremely productive Ratapihipihi forest.⁷ This forest is revealed not as a multitude of factual substances but as a system of actualised possibilities.

⁵ This explanation of the body without organs is sourced from Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*, in difference to their early Marxist-inspired version where body-without-organs equates to capital. In the earlier books, *The Logic of Sense* and *Anti-Oedipus*, rather than a place of productive fusions, the body-without-organs is a repressive agent of anti-production, selecting what can and can’t be shown by those in charge of capital. With the process of desire as primitive accumulation, it disjoins the body of workers into components and then sheers these parts from their own powers, thus alienating workers from one another. This is a violent body-without-organs of the capitalist state that empties life: “*In this collapse of the surface, the entire world loses its meaning, it maintains perhaps a certain power of detonation, but this is experienced as empty.*” (Deleuze, 1969/1990 p. 100). Capitalism also sustains an absence of social relations in a forest. Ring-fenced off into scenic reserves, the forest is rendered as a private space under the misleading appearance of public/private sphere.

⁶ This definition is in divergence from psychoanalysis where desire is conceptualised as a lack. The difference in psychological terrain between Deleuze-Guattari and psychoanalysis in relation to the accumulator cannot be focused on in this exegesis. Further depth is necessary to apply the body-without-organs concept on the psychoanalytic conception that an artist accumulator, such as me, is a neurotic under a sublimated desire for love, fear of dying, or repression of death, redirecting frustrations toward socially useful goals. What could also be interpreted as lack is the absence of the rest of the forest that has been destroyed. The remaining isolated fragments of forest, such as Ratapihipihi reserve, are no longer forest; they become the lost or impossible forests. With the absence of the all-surrounding forest, I am only a visitor from my non-forest site, from my site once forest, to such lost forest fragments. But through creating ‘*This and this...*’ I can play with this reconstructive forest.

⁷ Deleuze (1980/2004) refers to Benedict Spinoza’s book *Ethics* in his emphasis on defining forms in process, in modes “*that come to pass: waves and vibrations, migrations, thresholds and gradients, intensities...*” (p. 170).

This investigation of the accumulator encircling and immersing himself or herself in an absorbing space of drawn notations resembles Deleuze's example of Robinson Crusoe on a desert island. Crusoe set about his occupancy of the island through a process of accumulating work activity. In his building of huts and a museum, Crusoe is immersed in the elemental productive vegetation and in a desire for the possible. His frenetic production correlated with his intimate interiority, burying of himself, in '*a larval envelope of his own body, ... as it reaches back to the Earth-Mother—the primordial Mother*' (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 353), thus exposing a paradox in accumulating. That is, the drive for a gathering of external things, exteriority, can become so consuming that it assumes a quality of internal being, interiority. Being engrossed within the accumulating of the outer creates a blur of intimate and uncentered interiority and exteriority.

Both in the production of accumulation and in the engagement with the return to the earth, frames between nature and culture dissolve. Crusoe is in the middle. Being in the middle is an engagement within something, in closeness to it, not analysing it from afar. Rather than dissecting and structuring the forest and the installation from an outside position, in the middle of it we can lose ourselves and be carried in the events in unexpected directions. "*It's not easy to see things in the middle, rather than looking down on them from above or up at them from below, or from left to right or right to left: try it, you'll see that everything changes*"⁸ (Deleuze, 1980/2004, p. 25).

As artist accumulator of imagery of the forest, I, as with Crusoe, go on to uncover an elemental world of the artist accumulator forest connection where I can form my own divergent worlds.⁹ Immersive

⁸ Deleuze and Guattari explain how words can change the course of events significantly. The words we select to portray an experience necessarily make us look back at it from some distance in time.

⁹ This leads to asking questions with a psychoanalytical approach to accumulating, such as: Does the installation '*This and this...*' just use the forest as a detour to the attainment of more and more images? That the desire, while elemental with forest, in a becoming with forest, is really only the

accumulating brings out instinctual desiring forces that crave the forces or energy of production and connective synthesis with its continual fusion play of and...and...and...this and then that, and then this, and so on... The build-up of an accumulation of objects and imagery are possessed by me, as the accumulator, who is consumed by the flow of desire itself. The accumulation within '*This and this...*' acts as an insertion of contact, touch, and nearness.¹⁰ It is a growing of my territory where the accumulated drawn motifs and marks act as characters that belong to this territory of my own combining and recombining (Deleuze, 1980/2004, p. 335). The objects are me! And they surge through me. I am finding myself through this desire-fusing process. A person can become absorbed by the desiring of desiring within the accumulating process. They can never reach any end; therefore they are always attaining it; eternally returning to it. I am swept up both by my forest experience and the accumulating of it. I am enveloped in both the interiority of the drawing process, the interiority of the forest and the interiority of my installation.

Akin to the immersive character of Crusoe is the more contemporary accumulator, Swiss installation artist Thomas Hirschhorn. As a productive artist-accumulator, in such works as '*Robert Walser Kiosk*', 1999, Hirschhorn occupies public spaces with his constructed booths, covering up all the walls with mixtures of images, text and objects.¹¹ These hand-worked, impermanent kiosks are interiors surrounded by crudely patched together disposable cardboard taped to makeshift wooden wall frames, which humorously undermine power. This improvised, do-it-yourself, use of sheeting is like '*This and this...*' Hirschhorn's kiosks are plastered with images and texts devoted to a

Image? How did the accumulating begin and how is it situated around the concept of repetition? How is my view of forest formed?

¹⁰ While environmental and social motivation underlies the accumulating as creative artwork to be shared publicly, the accumulation within '*This and this...*' is also my own community where I can form intense feelings of belonging with this specifically created neighbourhood of like things. It is not an accumulation as a process of narcissistic projection: Me towards the existence of me; A collecting of oneself; A private file within a concealed consciousness that strokes the 'I' who poses and rules over this accumulated crowd.

¹¹ Buchloh, B., Gingeras, A. (2004). *Thomas Hirschhorn*. London. Phaidon Press. P.139. (in a letter to Veronique, Paris, 2.1.2000).

particular committed philosopher (such as Deleuze), writer or artist, inviting participant reflection and discussion. Although all the information is based on a singular person, Hirschhorn's kiosks, inspired by the writings of Deleuze, are multiple, with a huge quantity of information packed inside, and where one can immerse oneself in an experience of complexity.

Early examples of immersive accumulations within occupied spaces of encounter can be found in the Renaissance Cabinets of Curiosities, which interconnected numerous miscellaneous specimens.¹² The accumulator, with encyclopaedic aims, was immersed in researching into, as yet, incomprehensible items. They were so engrossed in their bizarre curiosities that the objects piled up, cluttering the space. Ranging from wooden wall cupboards with many drawers or shelves of different sizes to small rooms with tables, the cabinets began as contemplative scholarly chambers, of the physical world. Encyclopaedic collections of hundreds of artefacts were accumulated in order to be emblems of a microcosm of a newly discovered world, or macrocosm. Always intimate in their scale, they were interiorised places for the accumulator's personal solitude and private intellectual diversion.

¹² While in Egyptian, Greek and Roman times collections of treasures were kept in secured cabinets, they were not studied as in Enlightenment Europe, whose values combined academic study spaces with collecting. These cabinets came about with sixteenth century endeavours to comprehend and to encapsulate a universal nature.



Aerial view of Ratapihipi scenic reserve, New Plymouth

Immersion drawings and ‘becoming-forest’

‘*This and this...*’ uses drawing processes analogous to the open montage methods of Hirschhorn. How can drawing open up closer relationship possibilities with nature? This exploring of relational proximity to the forest through drawing is in difference to distancing and constraining scenic cliché conventions. As artist accumulator of nature, one can utilize drawing and painting processes not only due to their openness to experimentation, notation, conjunction, and layering but also for their capacity to intensify one’s intimate and immersive experience with the forest.¹³ Through drawing, one can continually move in the manner of an intuitive wanderer, meandering off the main paths. ‘*This and this...*’ is the name of the immersive voyage that I am on, a moving and occupying voyage based on an intimate island of 120 square metres, the voyage of engaged fusions, divergent trialling patterns, and amassed matrix of disorganised layers of intuitive and unravelling-feverish practices to create

¹³ A relation of ‘*This and this...*’ (as a body without organs) to both the notion of becoming (that is, a coupling of forest and myself) and Heideggerian phenomenology (that is, a nearness of myself to the forest) is also worthy of another chapter.

new forest encounters in continuous variation.¹⁴ During this voyage I am not at the centre of the forest. It's not all about me. It is about the encountering experience between my interiority and the forest. I am in the middle of the forest, like Deleuze and Guattari's notion of a 'becoming-forest', related to fusion within the body without organs, without any points but *'is always in the middle. A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between...'* (Deleuze, 1980/2004, p. 323). *'In This and this...'* the accumulations of drawings act as the in-between connection that runs at right angles intersecting forest with human.¹⁵

The accumulation of notational drawings can attempt at a feeling of closeness to the abundant forest experience; to create my own body without organs that can question habits, where the productive life forces of forest (transmitted by me) and the innate force of me intensify towards procreative ends. An artist's immersive engagement with forest, instead of using pre-conceptions of how it would be represented, encourages a direct encounter with forest. The artist, in the drawing accumulation process, acts as conduit between the frames of nature and culture, where the interior of the artist contacts, opens and coexists with the nature interior. In drawing lines, the artist can forget physical distance and enter a state of being mentally closer, so as to move with the forest and go into a *becoming-forest*. Intimately immersed in population mass, optimism for growth, abundance, energy, territory, and a desire for material fullness, I am stimulated into action to draw and draw.¹⁶ In *'This and this...'* the

¹⁴ As accumulator of drawings, while I do repeat similar drawing and painting actions, the constitution by repetition is more of diversification than of sameness. This Deleuze and Guattari notion of repetition is a version of Nietzsche's 'eternal return', in difference to the psychoanalytical one of repeating driven by frustration (such as, at not being in the forest, at how little forest there is, and at not being able to fully reproduce the forest). In *'This and this...'*, while some enforce norms, many repeat to experimentally produce variation, deviation or even subversion of landscape norms. Deleuze and Guattari, in their revision of psychoanalysis, free repetition from the compulsive form given it by Freud's death instinct.

¹⁵ The concentrated joining of nature and the inner human has been a long-standing notion within the Romantic study of nature. Romantic writer Friedrich Schelling earlier argued that art stands *"as an active bond between the soul and Nature, and can be grasped only in the living middle between the two"* (Busch. 1994, p. 278).

¹⁶ If more local becoming-plants occurs and spreads productive forces, then a micro-political objective of dismantling war machines and destructive values can emerge. Drawing dynamic

drawings are then overlapped within an ad hoc constructed installation to operate as a collectivity of regions of intensity (plateaus). This installation is an attempt at an expression of the crannies and joins in the human mind and the combination of vectors and ebbs, of fold after fold in the forest (Deleuze, 1988/1993).

Drawing and painting offer a sense of immediacy to both artist and spectator enhanced by the immersive small scale space of '*This and this...*' Their ability to suggest emotion, imagination, intuition, fluidity, directness of application, and human touch encourages one to feel near to the artist and aspects of the subject. Both drawing and painting offer the intuitive notational. The inherent strength in the method of the notational by way of these fluid media is in the directness of picturing one's elemental connective experiences, such as a person experiencing a forest. As Emma Dexter (2005) states, '*We use drawing to denote ourselves, our existence...*', and that drawing is based on '*human experience... intimacy, informality, authenticity, immediacy, subjectivity, history, memory, narrative. Drawing is a feeling, an attitude...*' (pp.6-7). Dexter continues her phenomenological and existentialist argument that drawing is '*an art of process*', and that artists now choose to record their 'acts' with '*drawing because of its directness: in its presentness and its direct link with thought*' (p. 9). The directness of drawing can also be enhanced if emphasis is given to Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/2004) definition of nomad art: "*First, 'close-range' vision, as distinguished from long-distance vision; second, 'tactile,' or rather 'haptic' space, as distinguished from optical space*" (p. 543).

Akin to my accumulating drawings in Ratapihipihi, artist John Wolseley's method of working is experiential of the place, based on the immersive experience of the particularity of its detail, its force. Wolseley is an example of an artist as explorer-researcher of nature, who makes

images of the natural forest, with its own forces and unpredictabilities can induce cultural variation. Local plants provide a self-conception of humanity as 'human-forest', a 'becoming-plant', an experimental willingness to be swept up in an experience of difference that unites instead of divides, a drawing together, not a boundary or drawing apart.

watercolour and pencil notational drawings of a specific territory in Australia, Ewaninga in the Northern Territory. He accumulates hundreds of drawn motifs and marks into sprawling room-sized wall installations, such as *'Fragments of an investigation into a honey centre near Ewaninga'*, 1990. Wolseley, like a Crusoe figure, camps for weeks or months at his site, immersing himself to gain closeness to the elements he encounters. He observes, like an amateur natural scientist, and then mixes the biological, geological, geometrical and cartographic observations into combined collections, searching for alternative ways of breaking with the European visual landscape conventions.

'This and this...' is more open to variety than Wolseley's formats, papers, drawing tools, composition, layering and subjects interacting with the nature studies. The drawings in *'This and this...'* are less scientific, not always observational or empirical, and do not give preference to the system of cartography. The method of overlapping and chance arrangement in *'This and this...'* is different to Wolseley's more systematically landscaped rectangular and gridded attachments for his wall-based collages.

Viewer participation

With many unfinished drawings and left-open books, *'This and this...'* could well be a space in operation. Performing the exhibition space as workshop space, in which ideas are caught in process, has been created by a few recent artists. Two examples where accumulative installations prompt participants into speculating about the absent accumulator-occupant are Mike Nelson's *'Magazin: Büyük Valide Han'*, 2003, depicting a fake photographer's darkroom; and Christoph Büchel's *'Deutsche Grammatik'*, 2008, site-specific installation of a fake archiver's room.

For *'Magazin: Büyük Valide Han'*, Nelson tracked Istanbul's "forgotten corridors and long-locked rooms" (Jones, 2006) to locate an

unoccupied maze-like warehouse and installed a large darkroom on the ground level and a drying room in the basement. The installation's atmosphere stimulated unsettling feelings in the participant by leaving the red safe lights and old enlargers on, keeping the chemical baths full, leaving cut-off crops of paper on the floor, and keeping hundreds of photographic prints of portraits still hanging on drying cords (Eleey, 2005). Salvaged rubbish was left piled up, adding to the disorientating and intriguing experience. The debris helped in "*mixing the real and the fantastic*" (Jones, 2006), like the writing by Jorge Luis Borges. Questions are opened as to the artist's obsessiveness and occupancy, as in '*This and this...*' Had the artist just left or was she/he long gone? Why was she/he here? Were we authorised to see this space or go through the images?

Büchel creates a similar scenario of anxiety for the participants in '*Deutsche Grammatik*', exhibited in a basement-like room at the Kunsthalle Fridericianum, where viewers are struck by a room filled with an overwhelming quantity of notes in trays, ring-binders, boxes, on tables, floor, walls and shelves, in the process of being sorted. For viewer participation, the installation suggests a sense of both hope in the task of sorting such an accumulation and a psychologically disconcerting hopelessness of such an undertaking. Questions are on offer as to why people struggle to find answers and attempt to understand themselves? According to the Kunsthalle Fridericianum (2008), '*Deutsche Grammatik*' is based on, *German Grammar*, a book written in 1818 by the librarian at the Kunsthalle. Enhancing the active participation, as in '*Magazin: Büyük Valide Han*', "*Reality is reconstructed true to detail – there is an interplay and confusion between reality and fiction*" (Kunsthalle Fridericianum, 2008).

Differing from '*Magazin: Büyük Valide Han*' and '*Deutsche Grammatik*', which have more of an organised ordering system at work that make them easily recognisable as darkroom and filing-room, '*This and this...*', although strategically placing objects, is more of a muddled,

not-as-able-to-be-specified space. This is a desirable thing because it allows a myriad of possible interpretations. While the interior spaces of '*This and this...*' could be convincing in their believability as an authentic artist-accumulator world, in difference to Büchel and Nelson, its exterior of uniquely ad hoc, transient and stand-alone MDF puts it more towards an imaginary world than a duplicate or re-elaborated facsimile. The intention of being more on the side of the made-up is to augment the opening up of more questions from the participants.

The intention of using an overlapping and chance arrangement of the accumulated drawings in the context of an installation in '*This and this...*' attempts to get away from traditional spectator expectations of landscape representations. Like a private act in experiencing the immersive encounters in a forest, the overwhelming force of the multiple arrays of materials within '*This and this...*' envelops the body of the audience, aiming to elicit participation and provoke them to think. A work that one physically penetrates, walks into, and use one's body to forage amongst the dispersed images, can elicit less accustomed manners of engaging. The physical bodily engagement adds another level to the installation's immersive and archival visual element.

The installation '*This and this...*' attempts to provide participants with a sense of how it focuses on accumulation and dwelling behaviour, and psychological patterns, especially the drawer's ceaseless appetite to daily draw from a natural habitat. The installation provokes questions about various possibilities of this nature-artist via traces of a presence of a personality and via an absence of the accumulator. Participants are invited to question: Is it the workroom of a hopeful ecologist-artist trying to work out or find some random connections in an impossible drive to understand the world? Or is it a kind of diversion, or subversion, or a caught-in-process atlas, or some encoded search for something amongst the superabundance of the vegetative? While these are some accounts that could transpire, the installation's patchwork of observational and

imaginative material provides participants with many entry points into the work.

Another installation artist who assumes the persona of researcher-archiver, albeit absent, of nature is Mark Dion. In his work, '*Tate Thames Dig*', 1999, Dion reformed his collections of objects (from two specifically small areas on the banks of the Thames River outside each of the Tate galleries). Dion (2001) established that the project focussed on collecting that which '*slips through the gaps in our cultural filter*' (p.37). The work gives us options and characters that are not present in the official 'truthful' versions. Dion is always engaging in institutional critique. His work is about questioning scientific taxonomy and museological methods and organisation of knowledge. '*Tate Thames Dig*' is historically based, encouraging the viewer to take on the role of a museum object spectator. Highlighting the differences between '*Tate Thames Dig*' and '*This and this...*' places '*This and this...*' within a more experiential, personalised and aesthetic approach to finding new ways of representing nature. The site-specific fieldwork for '*This and this...*' uses experimental methods in a more private, empirical and aesthetic study of notational drawings that unfold emotions and a flow of mental imagery. Finally, Dion's installations are completed beforehand in finalised sketches, while my installation of drawings implies the idea of an unfinished, still getting to something, process.



Leighton Upson, trial of 'This and this, and this, and other things too', July, 2009, detail of interior of pod one

Chapter two: In the muddle: encounter of mixed accumulation

Equipped with the gathered notational drawings, paintings and photographs from an immersion within 120 square metres of forest, the question now shifts in this chapter as to how to arrange them to extend the evoking of encounters in an installation practice? While this chapter enlarges on notions of the artist-accumulator and viewer-participator, its principal objective is to demonstrate that mixing and unsystematising¹⁷ categories can enhance these ideas. This grouping and regrouping is the

¹⁷ Added to the course of encounter within 'This and this...' is an investigation into the use of fragmentation to heighten diversity. Emphasising the multitude in a natural environment experience does not annul some concentration on parts of the natural abundance. Rather, through the fragment in the drawings and the overlapping of the drawings, the indeterminateness of the natural environment can emerge. Dealing in fragments affirms that I cannot relate to the forest in its entirety or make an artwork based on it that is complete. As long as the fragment is left incomplete then it can remain open to unpredictable perceptual surprises, analogous to experiencing nature adventurously. In 'This and this...' participants' engagements are made more intellectually challenging when the whole body of work cannot be seen; they can be absorbed only in parts. When one rests on a fragment, it is not a fragment opposed to the multiple, nor opposed to one another, but is a local fold, an interval in continuum with everything else. Take Deleuze and Guattari's (1972/2004) example: "The bumble bee is a part of the reproductive system of the clover" (p. 313).

connection to where art dwells. I argue how installation, as a way of framing pictures, can reposition drawing and painting practice.

Accumulation as encounter and process of variance

The forest, like most natural environments, is traditionally established as a singularity; as ‘scenic reserve’, inhibiting other possibilities.¹⁸ It has been represented largely as singular scenes from one perspective. The idea of the natural environment has been trivialised as an organised and systematised ‘scape’.¹⁹ The forest has been closed down to a few prescribed rules about landscape painting that have been reinforcing our perceptual habits and recognition, thus inhibiting thought. In difference to scenic landscape depiction, the accumulation of variance in ‘*This and this...*’ compels us to think otherwise. Rather than the participant predicting restful and stable images concerning the environment, they encounter images based on change, movement and instability. In the fight against cliché, ‘*This and this...*’ affirms and plays with the forest, with its abundance of complex networks of forces, connections, relations and unending mutations.

To use O’Sullivan’s (2006) phrase, ‘an art of encounter’ is encouraged within ‘*This and this...*’ by the use of multiple techniques scattered around areas of intensities, in an accumulative Deleuze and Guattarian methodology of ‘rhizomatics’. There is no one dominating trunk with subordinate branches. Although still centred on the all-inclusive personality of me as the author, forest as theme, the structure in ‘*This and this...*’ is, in its assembling, of the rhizome. There is no one visual

¹⁸ In scenic reserves, such as the state-owned Ratapihipihi Scenic Reserve, the forest is caught in this representation to support existing power structures that segregate forest from society and conform what people do there. The binding of forest as resource is enhanced by the state in relation to it with carbon credits in opposition to a warming of the world.

¹⁹ An artwork concentrating on forest would already be predetermined to being received as beautiful. Because such bias in favour of typical beauty judgment pervades, an encounter with an artwork dealing with the natural environment is made harder to situate. Although the emphasis for this installation is questioning one’s traditional aesthetic judgments, thoughts of beauty judgments and remembrances towards the natural environment are not denied.

technique that governs the centerless configuration, no privileged locus of growth, nor single perspective or linear narrative. As artist-accumulator, I provide a controlling structure in the growth of *percepts*, that is, variance in compositionality, viewpoints, scales, forms, space, and detailing, within '*This and this...*' I do operate to form connections, 'combining forms' as in the definition of 'rhizo' (Parr, 2005, p. 232). Like the example of rhizomes of the potato plant, in its physical compositionality and drawing styles, '*This and this...*' spreads in all directions.

'*This and this...*' investigates how to use a rhizomatic process to mix different knowledge systems. Taxonomies have traditionally been compiled from the tree structure, where everything is separated out into regulated structures. '*This and this...*' adopts the rhizome's procedure of producing open-ended configurations, avoiding any systematisation, centrality and organisational coherence, due to the constant state of de-territorialisation, and of different intentions, styles, formats, rupturing any system that could arise. It reflects our contemporary context, today's scientific failure to 'know' the world with its environmental devastation. With its multiple media and methods, '*This and this...*' affirms that different orders are possible, that not one major code, or a binary of codes, needs to dominate an artwork. The overlapping, the blending and clashing, the overflowing mixture of styles, the haptic, and grouping and regrouping of these images attempt to break the participants' habits of classification and ways of thinking about the forest.

Conceptually, '*This and this...*' rethinks the formation of forest concepts by offering the intuitive connecting of biology with museology, ethology, psychology, geography, history and art. Stems grow off to establish connections with other shoots. Without centre or hierarchy, in which each image is in conjunctive nearness to every other image, participants to the installation might never stop on one unifying text. With no stable patterns of interconnection, any image can be connected to any other image in the installation. Some parts are transplanted on other walls to create further interconnections. The proliferation of '*This and this...*' into

the convergence and conjunctive ‘and’²⁰ and the divergence of series informed by the ‘or’ opens the subject, the endless permutations of forest trajectories, up to infinity. Deleuze (1969/1990) affirms this divergence:

“Instead of a certain number of predicates being excluded from a thing in virtue of the identity of its concept, each ‘thing’ opens itself up to the infinity of predicates through which it passes, as it loses its centre, that is, its identity as concept or as self. The communication of events replaces the exclusion of predicates”
(p.174).

In continually making connections and conjunctions, ‘*This and this...*’ has derided traditional conceptual barriers about the forest and a ‘transference’ into a freely inventive tongue.

Accumulating is not a putting in order but rather a wandering without organisation, where things gathered accrue, overlap and stack over each other. The accumulation is thus a mass that has been built up through a swelling rather than a systematized arrangement. As in Büchel’s installation ‘*Deutsche Grammatik*’, accruing has caused doubt as to whether the archiving work is incomplete. Büchel modifies his huge, complex works, such as in ‘*Deutsche Grammatik*’, between exhibitions and at stages during these exhibitions. These unfinished accumulation works are then always caught in process.

Another recent site-specific accumulative installation that thrives on the potential of the ‘caught in process’ accumulation is the work ‘*Cockatoo Clock (A Play)*’, created by Vancouver installation artist Geoffrey Farmer. For the Sydney Biennale in 2008, Farmer reused and adapted an accumulation of notes from the staff room noticeboard of Sydney’s Museum of Contemporary Art. The noticeboard itself had already, intuitively over time, mixed up traditional categorisations of images and

²⁰ While Deleuze argues that conjunction can be coordinated in a divergent way, he warns that using conjunctive synthesis could be too conformist in maintaining sameness: “*As for conjunctive synthesis, it tends toward being subordinated to the synthesis of connection, since it organises the converging series over which it bears as it prolongs them under a condition of continuity*” (Deleuze. 1969/1990, p.199).

texts, and eliminated any singular account. Farmer dispersed the reconfigured and rhizomatic mix of drawn and written notes all over a specially built corridor set placed in the same gallery. His work is full and the viewer is able to make constant digressions when confronted with a multiplicity of personally written note fragments from the staff room that switches between a divergence of content and milieux. Overlaying this exhibition are fragments of leftovers from a performance Farmer made in the space in which he created a fable that was triggered by a glass cabinet he found on Cockatoo Island in the Sydney Harbour. Usually Farmer introduces performance into his site-specific installations by changing them each night to open up new associations and keep it moving. His work is an ongoing shifting archive, as with '*This and this...*' In fact, as Farmer keeps making art it shows the impossibility of archiving. As an alternative to permanently fixing the elements, '*This and this...*' pins, stacks, bulldog clips and leans imagery to the wall, table or floor. Distinctions between before and after are also abandoned and chronological time is suspended.²¹ Visitor-participants to '*This and this...*' stumble upon masses of unexpected and unfamiliar juxtapositions. The installation passes between points, shifting the participants along, encounter after encounter, like a stage set, with encounters of movement in space and time.

Mobile arrangements over systems

Instead of '*This and this...*' being a compartmentalised, comprehensible and straightforward illustration of a territory, it is an ad

²¹ Accumulating is a psychological phenomenon with a continued contemporary presence. Accumulating can be a cover for being able to lose all sense of the present and abolish time. The ceasing of time can be a delaying of death or a rupture of chronology to take one into a realm of incorporeal becoming, like Nietzsche's 'Overman', where in an achronological time life is affirmed through a primal sense of time of the merging of past, present and future (where everything has already happened and is yet to come). This also aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's elaboration on the suspension of chronological time in Carroll's play with paradoxes of sense in his book *Alice in Wonderland*. In a nonlinear direction of a pure becoming, it '*divides itself infinitely in past and future and always eludes the present*' (Deleuze. 1969/1990, p.5). As I desire for more time in my life, I thus spend more time accumulating, and this, ironically, creates a further need for more time. Accumulating is more of a feel of working and gaining time as that spent immersed in gathering. Possibly the accumulating absorbs anxieties about time and death. Accumulation installations could become the new churches.

hoc mixing of drawing modes of enquiry. While all the drawings and photographs bear a specific locality, the observational is mixed with the imaginary. An art accumulation can involve a process of alteration, addition and adaption that can continue between exhibitions and during a public-run exhibition, thus making it harder to catalogue the work. A continual re-ordering of the forest makes apparent the impossibility of a total comprehension of it.

The cabinets of curiosities were early examples of rhizomatic accumulations within spaces of encounter. In these cabinets the images and objects were not categorised according to disciplines; their mixed display encouraged interdisciplinary connections, like in an encyclopedia.²² Although they had taxonomic aspirations, they mixed classification of some objects with random arrangement of other objects. The viewer was the activating agent of meaning in these pre-museums. They were places of encounter, consisting of such unfamiliar and incredible things as a salamander, an incomprehensible fossil, a dodo, a weapon, a unicorn horn, and the hand of a mermaid. These exotic, rare and bizarre curiosities were mixed up in the cabinet rooms in a state of flux, with every surface crowded and ready for a change in arrangement. Intuitive formations occur in both '*This and this...*' and the cabinets of curiosities, but '*This and this...*' is not taxonomic and ventures out more on drifting paths. '*This and this...*' escapes from formal organisation and tidied placements, and attempts to disorganise systems we have learnt - more so through taking detours away from any planned arrangements. To reveal multiple potentials that the forest offers, '*This and this...*' enhances a state of flux, unpredictable compositions and a feeling of life through an absence of predetermined planning.

²²Roland Barthes (1964/1980) spoke of this encyclopedic openness going beyond traditional boundaries of what our eyes see, so there is less certainty of ideas of the objects: '*The Encyclopedia opens up a new world to be explained... by displacing the levels of perception, by revealing the hidden, by isolating the elements from their practical context, by giving objects an abstract essence...*' (p. 400).

Similar to the cabinets' play with taxonomy, Aby Warburg establishes his own frameworks of collating in his *'Mnemosyne Atlas'*. This is an unfinished pictorial atlas of a thousand images, created from 1927 until his death in 1929. Aby Warburg's wall-mounted pictorial atlas and his library were both arranged according to his interests and his system of thought at the time, rather than traditional systems of classification.²³ He repeatedly rearranged his images and books when his research changed, in a rejection of art history's conventional hierarchies that regulate images to a singular anchored pattern.

"The law guiding (his) library was that of 'the good neighbour,' which states that the solution of one's own problem is contained not in the book one is looking for but in the one beside it. Warburg thus transformed (his) library into a kind of labyrinthine image of himself..." (Agamben, 1999, p.284).

The notion of 'the good neighbour' corresponds to the features of the notion of the body without organs. Both open the person to make new connections, to experimentation, and to keep their thought moving.

The connections in Warburg's *'Mnemosyne Atlas'* were productive, exploratory, open to experimentation and were multiple in their regions of intensity. *"In arranging the images... Warburg attempted to activate dynamic properties that would be latent if considered individually"* (Michaud, 1998/2004, p.253). His photo-montages played with categories and temporality by mixing and juxtaposing images taken from different sources.²⁴ A drawing of a close-up next to an extreme close-up photograph can be taken in simultaneously. Stamps, advertisements,

²³ Aby Warburg was a German cross-disciplinary art historian of the early twentieth century who wrote about art outside of the borders of aesthetics. His was a thematic and interdisciplinary approach that emphasised study on the iconographic identification of the subject, rather than the form. His was a psychology of the causes of images and signs and the symbols' capacity to heal and direct the human mind. He searched for ancient images transformed and disguised in later styles. See Foucault, 1970.

²⁴ To counter the belief in linear progress, Warburg assimilated Nietzsche's notion of 'eternal recurrence' and Freud's paper on 'Repeating-compulsion'. Warburg lectured on the psychology of images and the symbol's power to guide the mind. Warburg's thematic-based way of archiving was a reworking of the same motif. This method was an argument for the sublimation of psychic forces that keep repeating primal drives since antiquity.

maps, posters, newspaper clippings, postcards, personal photographs, participate with reproductions of historical artworks to create complex interconnections. In variation to teleological time, the '*Mnemosyne Atlas*' fuses the present with the Renaissance, the classical, the Medieval, and the early modern on the same strata.²⁵ The '*Mnemosyne Atlas*', as a shifting collective of regions fused toward creative ends, became a body without organs.

The accumulative process in '*This and this...*', as in the '*Mnemosyne Atlas*', multiplies the composite chains. It is a multiplicity of variations that increases densities, intensifies capacities, and feasts on growth. '*This and this...*' multiplies interactions of the person with their natural environment's variety of proliferating intensities. The artwork becomes more complicated and intense when plurality is increased. '*This and this...*' trials a reawakening and permutations of the previous history of drawing and painting styles towards a playful multiplicity of one's relationship with forest.²⁶

For the accumulating and the accumulation to open up to encounters is to be more open in the foraging and arranging to multiple digressions. While the accumulating, such as through drawing, is the agency, it is the way of gathering or of travelling that allows the opening up to surprising experiences. Drawing offers freedom to the maker to alter, to erase, to go off on unplanned paths of thought, to put together differences and fragments and to fragment. Likewise, rather than a systematic locking out of chance, a roving can promote the unforeseeable. The arranging in the installation can still be a regulated movement, but its trajectory can be wild.

²⁵ For example, "*Warburg juxtaposes the contemporary seaplane with classical coins bearing the chariot of Helios. The brave new world of modern technology... is intimately connected for Warburg with a regression into myth*" (Rampley, 1999, p. 109). Such collectives showed the power of conjunction of disparate things in an archive in reconstructing a cultural space, on affecting the role of cultural memory.

²⁶ In their mass, the layered and assorted drawings '*cross-over the limit, the schiz,*' Deleuze and Guattari suggest of a late Turner painting: "*Everything becomes mixed and confused, and it is here that the breakthrough - not the breakdown - occurs*" (Deleuze, 1972/2004, pp. 142-144).

Conclusion

This project has attempted to provoke viewers into becoming participants through an immersive and divergent installation process where they are open to questioning their traditional aesthetic judgments and assumptions. Immersion, multiple media, unfamiliar arranging and conjunctive methods combined to transform nature representation into an encounter of productivity and endless connectivity. The entangled accumulation of multi-media invited stepping in and around, a closer engagement by the participants. This project attempted to create an experience of being *in* the environment, rather than just looking *at* it. The variety and mass of notational imagery, without focal point, schematic plan or methodical progression, increased the range of ideas about the forest to beyond just that of the scenic. The use of an accumulative installation practice as a way of framing and repositioning a drawing-painting practice remains a primary and significant part of this thesis project.

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