

The Shed Project

An exploration of the everyday through drawing

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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 and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

The thesis is constituted as 80% practice based, accompanied by this exegesis, worth 20%.

Documentation of the final exhibition will be included upon completion.

Acknowledgments

For my mother, who liked to walk.

I would like to thank all those who assisted me during this project, especially Diane who supported me in many ways, tutors Dienneke Jansen and Dale Fitchett, Sue McNabb for proof reading, all my fellow students for their invaluable feedback and encouragement and David Foster for lending me a lot of useful woodworking machinery.

"Then, quite apart from all these literary preoccupations and not connected to them in any way, suddenly a roof, a glimmer of sun on a stone, the smell of the road would stop me because of a particular pleasure they gave me, and also because they seemed to be concealing, beyond what I could see, something which they were inviting me to come and take and which despite my efforts I could not manage to discover." (Proust, 2002, p. 179).

Abstract

The shed project: An exploration of the everyday through drawing

This project attempts to translate my experience of the everyday street for the viewer; to reveal my experience of walking and looking through drawing. The everyday is an elusive and slippery subject that has been used for various and sometimes radical agendas by many writers and artists in the last two centuries. It is seen as having potential for finding the authenticity that is lacking in other spheres of human activity. However, there is an inherent contradiction for the artist engaged with the everyday in that, by definition, the mundane is barely noticed yet it can swiftly become extraordinary when examined closely. This project uses a toolbox of everyday tactics, processes and methods to explore and devise appropriate modes of representing the everyday street, while taking this contradiction into account.

Introduction

The focus of this research project was the translation of my experience of the everyday street through drawing and construction. I attempted to use methods and materials in keeping with the everyday to transcribe this experience for the viewer. Drawing was an ideal visual mode with which to investigate the everyday because artists have frequently returned to drawing when their way in art was unclear and theorists have turned to the everyday when seeking authenticity. This exegesis took something of a flâneur's stroll or a *dérive* around the critical context of the everyday and my visual exploration of the city streets, as the everyday tends to disappear or become extraordinary when confronted head on. The structure of both the work and the exegesis reflects the fragmented nature of the subject.

This exegesis is divided into four sections, the first of which provides the context of the project through a review of literature and art of the everyday, particularly the use of the character of the flâneur to approach the everyday street. This is followed in section B, *Early work of the everyday*, by a review of my initial search for ways to represent the experience of the everyday street and an analysis of the issues which arose from this work. This led to the investigation described in section C, *Drawing and phenomenology*, where I attempted to address these issues with a phenomenological investigation of the everyday through drawing. Finally, in section D, *Shed work – Iterations 3 and 4*, I discuss the work that resulted from these investigations, thereby clarifying its connections to the context of the street and concept of the elusive everyday. Once the *Shed project* was in progress, the reading and theory were driven by the needs of the work. The result of this project can be likened to a tool box of everyday tactics, with which I could manipulate the material of mundane life to create an art of the everyday street.

A. The everyday and the flâneur




Figure 1 Guys, 19th C., *Vanity fair*

The flâneur, a character in and observer of the 'modern' 19th century city, has been used by writers as a means of entering the labyrinth of the everyday world. The flâneur collected feelings of the local history and fleeting but significant impressions of people and places, which were then used in feuilleton sketches (light literary pieces for the French newspapers). The essence of what this mythical character sought was eloquently summed up by the quote from Marcel

Proust above (Proust, 2002). The flâneur was described by writer Edgar Allan Poe in his short story *The man of the crowd* (Poe, 1966) as a character type that evoked life in the modern city of his time. Poe's man of the crowd, who could not live without the crowds and bustle of the city, is followed by the narrator, who observed the city with heightened senses due to recent illness. It was this combination of needing the sights and sounds of the modern city and a heightened awareness of the everyday that characterised the flâneur.

The French poet, essayist and translator of Poe's short story, Charles Baudelaire, used the concept of the flâneur in his essay *The painter of modern life* to describe the artist Constantin Guys (Baudelaire, 1995). Baudelaire saw Guys as a perceptive observer and illustrator of everyday city life, see Figure 1 (Guys, 19th C), who used quick sketches and an astute visual memory to represent the fleeting moments of life in 19th century Paris. Baudelaire believed that Guys could capture suggestions of eternity by sketching the passing moments of the everyday.

In the *Arcades project* the cultural theorist Walter Benjamin used the flâneur to re-focus of history towards the ordinary, as well as highlighting the effect of the modern city on people's lives (Benjamin & Tiedemann, 1999). The flâneur appeared as a hero of the metropolis, feigning indifference to the shocks and fragmentation of city life and acting as



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Figure 2 Atget, 1908, *Au Tambour, 63 Quai de la Tournelle*

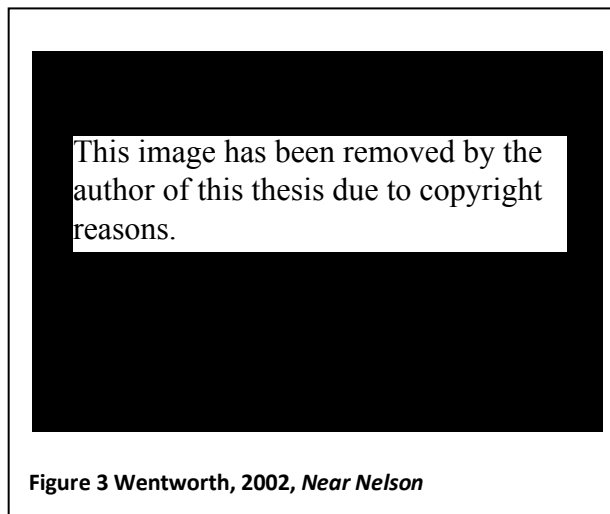
though separate from the crowd. Yet his idleness hid his real purpose; gathering material for writing feuilleton pieces to eke out a precarious financial existence. Benjamin wrote this unfinished project as a series of quotes and anecdotes about everyday life in Paris, interspersed with his own comments. Thus the structure of *Arcades project* followed the method of the flâneur as he walked, paused, contemplated and changed direction. Sociologist Graeme Gilloch suggested the *Arcades project* was text as the city as well as text about the city (Gilloch, 1997). Benjamin recorded the Paris he lived in, quoted both Baudelaire and Poe and frequently referred to the past, to create an everyday history of that great city. This was the world recorded through

photography by Eugene Atget, in the early 1900s, see Figure 2 (Atget, 1908). Atget also had something of the character of the flâneur, usually choosing mundane subjects for his photographs of a fast changing Paris (Rauschenberg, 2007). According to Brian Morris in his thesis *Journeys in extraordinary everyday culture* Benjamin argued for recognition of the everyday, the realm of habit, ritual and repetition, as a site where important cultural transformations occurred (Morris, 2001). Benjamin was ambivalent towards the great modern cities of Europe and saw them as both a source of exhilaration and hope, as well as reason for disgust or melancholy. Through both the way he wrote and what he wrote, Benjamin tried to portray the porosity of the city that arose from the fragmentation of social life, the interpenetration of public and private life and intermingling of old and new (Gilloch, 1997).

According to cultural theorist Rita Felski, the everyday tended to be defined to fit the purpose of the writer. It has been characterised as a set of attitudes and habits that shored up a stable society, a collection of perverse and self destructive impulses causing alienation and misery or a space full of hidden potential for creativity (Felski, 2000). For me the everyday is defined by negation, as what is left over. It is not the moments of self awareness, nor what is focused on; it is found in the gaps between the conscious interactions between people, and the objects and events of their lives. In *The infinite conversation* literary theorist, Maurice Blanchot, described the everyday as incomplete.

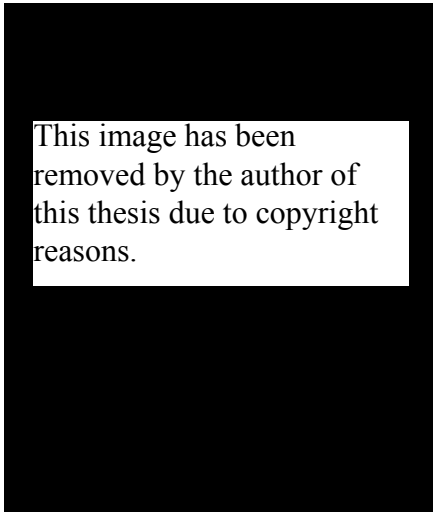
He thought we would miss it if we sought it through knowledge, because it was outside true and false (Blanchot, 1993). This could place the everyday outside any dualism or perhaps before dualism arose; the everyday simply *is*. Blanchot believed the everyday was to be found in the street, if anywhere, because it was a place we had in common and like Benjamin, thought the everyday was a key to social change.

The everyday streets of the city were paced out by the walker, not mapped by the city planner, according to the cultural theorist Michel de Certeau's *The practice of everyday life* (Certeau, 1988). The panoramic city was a visual simulacrum, whereas the movements of walking people formed one of the real systems that made up the city. "The chorus of idle footsteps" (Certeau, 1988, p97), intertwining, passing by, wandering and window shopping, had a qualitative character which could not be counted or measured. The walkers defined their own city through the use of tactics, such as shortcuts and deviations, to resist the official city which was defined by the strategies of city authorities and corporations. But these small resistances to the system gained the practitioner only temporary advantage and did not work in the official (proper) space; that belonged to others. Tactics depended on time and were opportunistic; the walkers did not keep what they had won.



This opportunism made De Certeau's tactics a making-do, or bricolage; an idea postulated by anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss in relation to myths and language (Lévi-Strauss, 1966). This making-do was investigated visually by Richard Wentworth in a series of photographs showing everyday objects being put to new uses, see Figure 3 (Wentworth, 2002). He grew up in a world held together by string and sealing wax, so got excited by the idea that someone at NASA may have fixed a

problem using the malleable plastic nature of an everyday substance such as chewing gum (Johnstone, 2008). Wentworth's work reflected his constant anxiety about exactly what it is we do when looking and how we select what we look at. He thought it was influenced by past knowledge and experience, as shown by how we tend to name everything and so avoid a dog turd but pick up a gold ring (Harper & Moyer, 2007). In his fascination with the use of ordinary objects, such as empty plastic containers, Wentworth could be seen as a contemporary flâneur, seeing the ordinary as special.



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Figure 4 Long, 1967, *A line made by walking, England*

Unlike Wentworth, artist Richard Long did not walk in the city, but sought out the countryside or wilderness. It was Long's use of tactics which left only temporary signs of his passing through a place that connected him to the tradition of the everyday and de Certeau's tactics in particular. The only permanent records Long left of his walks were texts describing the work, maps of the route of his walks and photographs of the subtle alterations he made in the landscape, see Figure 4 (Long, 1967). He saw these documents as forms that feed the imagination through a distillation of experience (Long, 2002). It was this distillation of experience that the flâneur aimed to capture in his writing on the everyday.

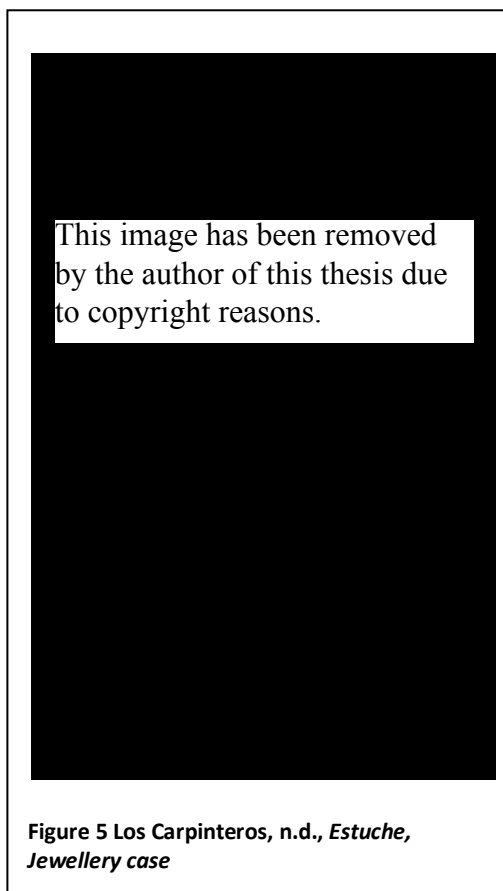
Whereas de Certeau and Long saw the tactics of the everyday walker as temporary, Guy Debord and the Situationist International wanted art to disrupt everyday routine through shock and rupture. They criticised habit as the enemy of authentic life (Plant, 1992) and used the *dérive* to investigate the psychogeographic contour map associated with the city. According to Debord's theory the *dérive* involved walking in groups in the city, being enticed by the ambience and atmosphere of the terrain and renouncing rational movement. Though the Situationists thought sectors of the city might have been decipherable to some extent, the personal meaning was secret and un-representable except through allusion and suggestion. For Debord the *dérive* was not the promenade of the Surrealists or the strolling of the flâneur, but it could be seen in retrospect to have descended from them, just as the tactics of de Certeau's walker were related to the *dérive*. Psychogeography was an experience of mobility in time as much as space, through the finding of 'ghosts' due to geology and landmarks, thus recalling the melancholic city of Benjamin and Baudelaire. Debord was concerned with the rupture of the city by the expressway and spectacle, which left no space for the *dérive*. Now the city is filled with tourists passing through, whereas in Debord's time it was filled with residents from other places, with whom he could stop and talk and drink. Thus a situational art was both temporary and lived and the *dérive* was a poetic attempt to re-conquer the authentic terrain lost to cleanliness and light, vehicles and commerce (Kaufmann, 2008).

The political theorist, Frederic Jameson, questioned if it was even possible to have an authentic experience of the everyday street. He thought the truth of that experience no

longer coincided with the place in which it occurred. The truth of a place was determined by its relation to such things as its colonial past and the current global system (Jameson, Hardt, & Weeks, 2000). My experience of the cafe on the corner of a street has to relate to conditions of the workers on the plantation where the coffee is grown, yet it is difficult to connect the immediate lived experience to the global network. If the everyday street is a region outside true and false, as Blanchot suggested, perhaps it is possible to find a path there that briefly circumvents this problem of inauthenticity, in the same way that de Certeau's walkers used various tactics to temporarily define their own maps of the city.

Another everyday tactic that could be used to counter the inauthenticity of our world is through practicing ordinary trades such as plumbing or carpentry, traditions of work done locally and by hand. It was these trades that the group of Cuban artists known as los

Carpinteros (Alexandre Arrechea, Marco Castillo and Dagoberto Rodriguez) concentrated on in their work. They claimed to try and make neutral works that combined two objects, such as a grenade and furniture, although their work made more sense as political commentary, see Figure 5 (Carpinteros, 1999). A grenade was certainly not neutral and even furniture talked of a particular type of household that it would be expected to be found in. Writer Henri Lefebvre thought this juxtaposing with the ordinary to make the extraordinary reflected the potential within the everyday of a disruptive spontaneity which could work against the official system that created the street. The result could be a reclaiming of the street for the Rabelaisian carnival (Merrifield, 2006) or the remembering of childhood play that Benjamin used to achieve a new reading of the city and contemporary society (Gilloch, 1997).



B. Early work of the everyday



Figure 6 Grinter, 2008, *Godwin Crescent*

This section introduces the work made in parallel with my initial investigation of the flâneur and the literature of the everyday. I will show how making these works developed my understanding of the need for everyday art to be embedded in the mundane; to include everyday attributes, materials and place and not just be a view from the outside. This realisation led to the phenomenological investigation described in section C, from which the final form of the project evolved.

Initially the obvious approach of drawing in the street was tried, but tended to result in drawings of buildings and stationary objects (see Figure 6). These backgrounds to the city did not reflect the porosity that Benjamin found in the city streets. One possible method would have

been to follow the example of Constantin Guys and use quick sketches and memory to create an illustration of everyday life in the city street, but would this approach be valid for the 21st century?

Alongside the *en plein air* works, I undertook a series of drawings and paintings from photographs in an attempt to represent moving people and vehicles. Photographs can



Figure 7 Grinter, 2008, *Power lines and drawings*

record movement so why not use the photographs themselves? The photographs were taken from fixed points so, even though they showed moving people and vehicles, they were stationary views of the street rather than a record of the experience of a person walking in the street. Another problem with photographs is the possibility that they could be lost amongst the myriad of images



Figure 8 Grinter, 2008, *The shed project: First iteration, Units 3 and 4*



Figure 9 Grinter, 2008, *Bricolage of power lines Spaghetti of wires*

used to promote and sell the consumer life style, an issue I will come back to.

Returning to drawing I explored working on tracing paper, so details from the street, such as windows, chimneys, letter boxes and aerals, could be viewed from both sides. The intention was to suspend these in the form of a map and so the viewer could move between the drawings emulating the experience of walking in the street. This idea evolved into building models of power poles and suspending the drawings from the lines between them (see Figure 7). This led to the *Shed Project*, for which I began constructing the drawings in timber. The project was so named because I saw the shed as an everyday site for adult play (Hopkins & Riley, 1998). The *Shed Project* was approached through a series of iterations of drawing and making. The repetition of the sequence of steps, described in detail later, resulted in the refinement of the outputs and procedures with each cycle. Each of these cycles produced a number of units that were shown together as an *Iteration* of the *Shed Project*. The base units of the *First iteration* of the *Shed project* were constructed from drawings of window arrangements and roof lines. Above these were constructions of the complex arrangements of power transmission equipment, aerals and chimneys (see Figure 8). This is a good example of the definition of the everyday through negation, in that this essential infrastructure is either ignored or seen as

visual pollution (Shelton, 2008). Yet it can also be seen as a fascinating bricolage of the different types of poles (old and new, timber and concrete), different voltage power lines, phones lines and transformers (see Figure 9). Together these form a network that has grown over the years to fit the changing needs of the society they serve. I feel this bricolage reflects our everyday existence, in which, rather than planning our lives, we get by using the skills and resources we have and the opportunities that arise. This idea became important when the *First iteration* of the *Shed project* was installed in the Atrium of The Quay School of Arts, Whanganui, where copious quantities of string represented power lines and connected the disparate elements together (see Figure 10).

Some of the cut-out figures of the *First iteration* were based on blind contour drawings. As



Figure 10 Grinter, 2008, *The Shed project: First iteration* (installation views)



Figure 11 Grinter, 2009, *First iteration, Bike man*

well as providing a method to draw moving objects and people, these drawings recorded my experience of the street, through imagining ‘touching’ and following the contours of an object with the pencil (Nicolaïdes, 1969). The contour drawing became an enclosed shape when cut out in timber or cardboard (see Figure 11), which undermined the effectiveness of the drawing method, as the openness of the original pencil drawings reflected the open nature of everyday. For the *Second Iteration* I constructed some of my pencil drawings using thin strips of timber, to re-present the drawn lines in three dimensions and bring the work back to everyday materials and processes (see Figure 12). The *First iteration* of the *Shed project* came from a pastiche of my drawings, whereas in the *Second iteration* I simply copied the drawings

in timber. I had intended to install these with a number of blind contour cut-outs (see Figure 30) but they were visually incompatible. The timber lines of the *Car shed* allowed the viewer to see through the drawing, making them more aware of the nature of a line drawing. The flat planes of the cut-outs were less effective at achieving this alienation effect, because the drawn line was not separated from the card or timber ground. The problem with *Car shed* was that it followed the rules of linear perspective. Because the shed was drawn from a single, stationary point the viewer is limited to that stationary, single position (Berger, 1972), undermining my aim of representing the experience of walking in the street.

The first two iterations of the *Shed project* raised a number of issues I needed to resolve in the work to follow. Drawing the street from a fixed point of view did not represent the experience of walking in the street. The problematic closing of the quick contour drawings was necessitated by the method of construction used for the cut-outs. Another issue I found with the *First iteration* was the uniform size of the constructions and their placement on the ground. When walking in the street people and objects vary greatly in size and are seen from above, below and at eye level. This was partly resolved in the *Second iteration* by increasing the scale of the work and hanging it. This early work also helped me refine my understanding of the everyday, in that it needed to look as though it

could be from any New Zealand city. I also began to question where perspective drawings fitted in a world overfilled with images promoting consumer products and services. The blind contour drawings combined with the construction methods of the *Car Shed* led to the work of the third and fourth iterations of the *Shed project*.

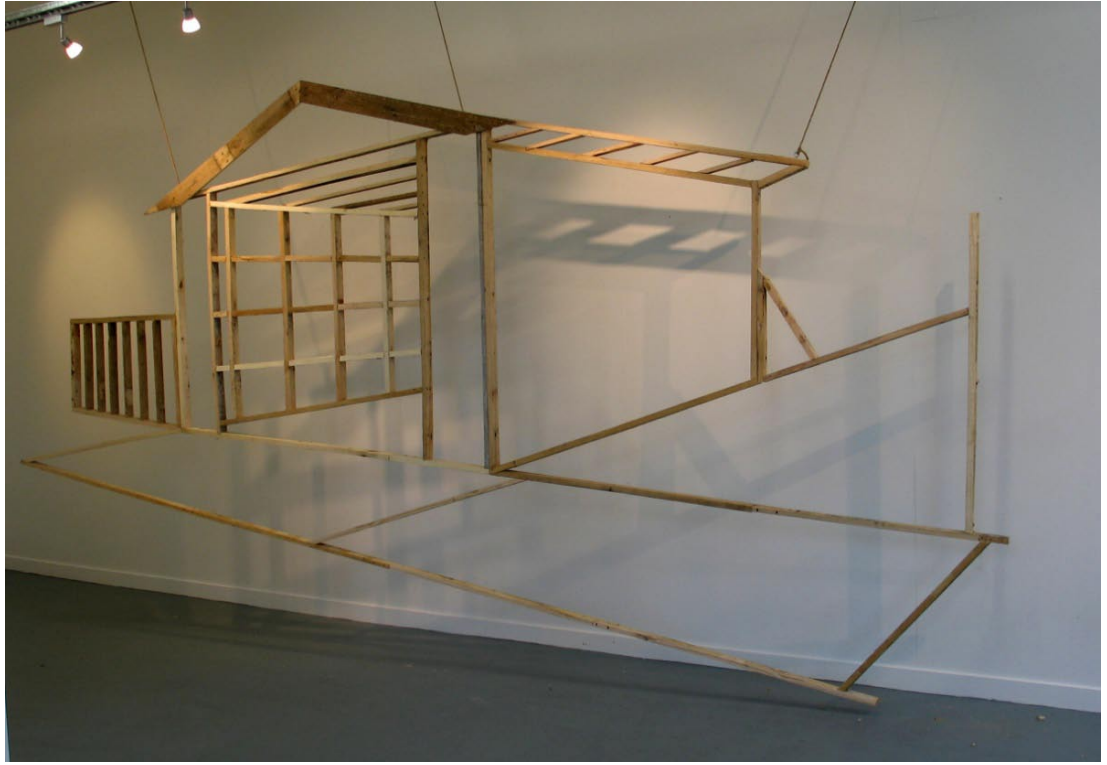
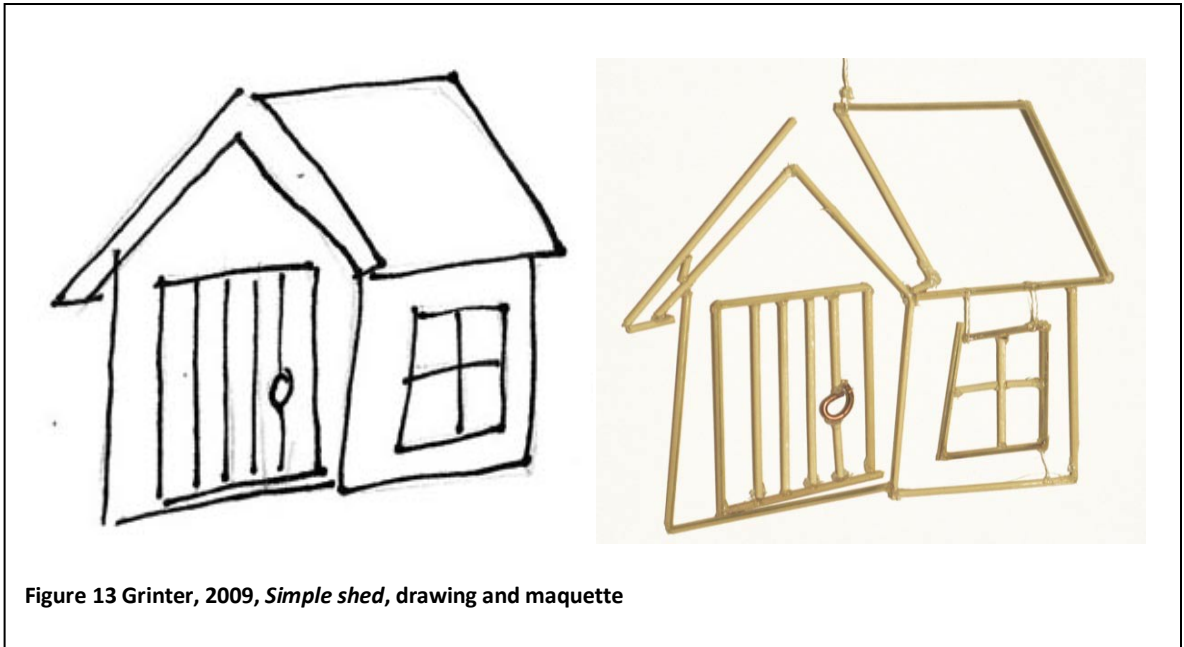


Figure 12 Grinter, 2009, *Second Iteration, Car Shed*

C. Drawing and phenomenology



To investigate and resolve the outstanding issues discovered in my early work, I attempted a phenomenological investigation of the everyday through a series of drawings and maquettes (see Figure 13). These maquettes evolved into the *Third iteration* of the *Shed project*. The phenomenological experience of the individual subject is the traditional raw material of the work of art, according to Fredric Jameson (Drolet, 2003). The German philosopher Martin Heidegger used the root meanings of “logos” and “phenomena” to define phenomenology as the art or practice of “letting things show themselves” (Kockelmans, 1985). Hence, when walking down the street, rather than looking for what was interesting, I tried to let everyday things attract my attention and say ‘draw me’. For Edmund Husserl, the originator of phenomenology, there was no distinction between consciousness and object, but an interpenetration, in that consciousness was always of something (Embree, 1997). This doctrine of intentionality allowed phenomenology to break out of the egocentrism of Cartesian thought that isolated the mind from the body and the world, (Sokolowski, 2000). I intended my drawing and construction to engage with the interpenetration of consciousness and the everyday street, but needed to explore ways to achieve this.

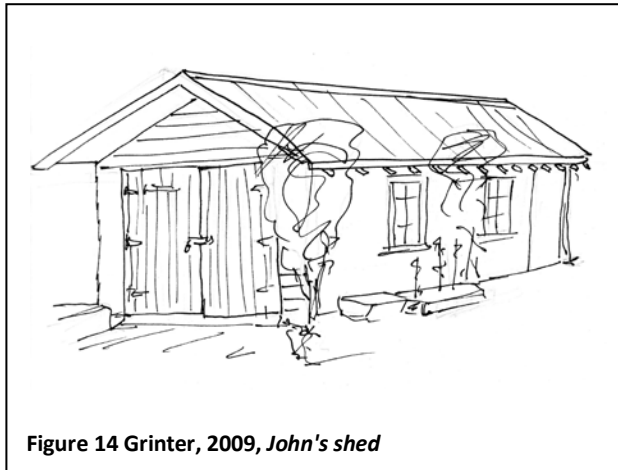


Figure 14 Grinter, 2009, *John's shed*

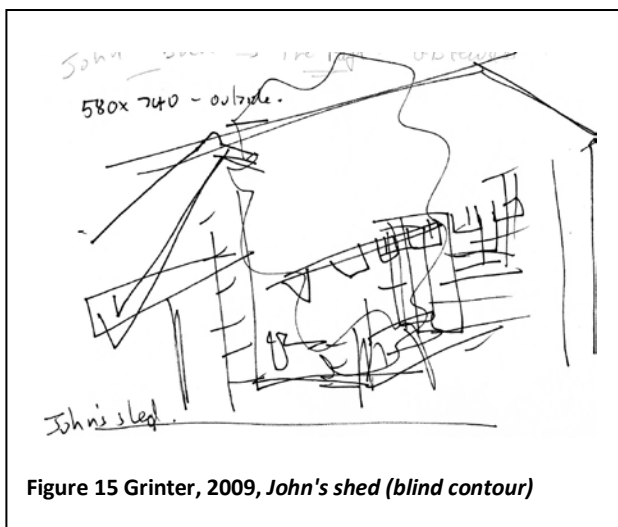


Figure 15 Grinter, 2009, *John's shed (blind contour)*

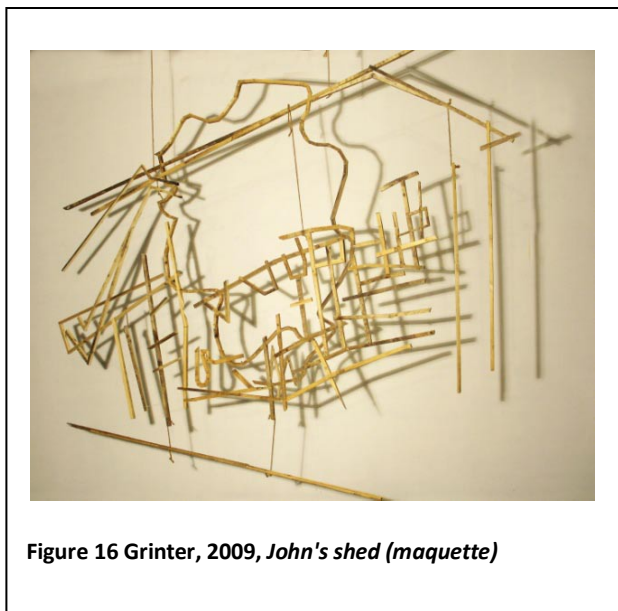


Figure 16 Grinter, 2009, *John's shed (maquette)*

I wished to move away from using perspective images because the perspective view from a single position was the fundamental format of the images that flood everyday life. The issue I saw in these perspective images was expressed by cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard, who suggested that consumption was the basis of our social order, resulting in signification, rather than use value, being the primary function of consumer products (Drolet, 2003). The commoditisation of art, theatre and music resulted in the compression of referent and sign, object and subject, making image and reality the same. Thus images and the consumer products they represent were signs that embodied a lifestyle, which we used to differentiate ourselves from others (Lane, 2000). Because of their close relation to the structure of the photographic images used to sell consumerism, perspective drawings could be seen as consumer products or signifiers of a life style, rather than drawings investigating experience (see Figure 14).

In contrast to perspective drawings, blind contour drawings loosened the connection between a drawing and a singular view point (see Figure 15). The construction of blind contour drawings was a means of creating images that might be seen as more than commodities or signifiers of life style. I hoped to bring the viewer's attention to

the lines of the drawing, as well as the objects represented by those lines, through taking the lines off the page and creating them in three dimensions (see Figure 16). This visual idea had a parallel in German playwright Bertold Brecht's alienation effect in theatre. Brecht used various tactics to interrupt the flow of his plays and remind the audience they were sitting in a theatre watching actors in a stage set. Brecht hoped they would carry this critical approach back to their everyday lives, becoming more aware of the injustices of the injustices of their world and so instigate social and political change (Bai, 1998). Unfortunately, even the most radical artistic activity tends to be appropriated by capitalism for the purpose of profit (Taylor, 1995), tying the artist back to the mock heroism of Benjamin's flâneur and emphasising the importance of de Certeau's temporary tactics of everyday life.

The *Shed project* drawing focused on line as it provided a quick and simple means of representing the experience of the everyday. But how do lines on a page represent an object such as a shed? Human perception is achieved through the system of body, eye and mind finding contours to distinguish objects from their backgrounds. Drawing is the re-presenting of these contours; thus a few lines can represent a shed. Movements of our eyes, head and body are needed to find the contours of objects to build a visual understanding of the world around us. If our head is held still and the saccades (both the large and flickering movements) of the eyes are negated with special glasses, we lose the ability to see (Coren, Ward, & Enns, 2004). Through these movements we build up a model of our world by focusing on and synthesising many different parts of the scene before us. Remembering such a scene is achieved through reliving the experience of seeing, rather

than having a picture lodged in the mind (Sokolowski, 2000).



Figure 17 Grinter, 2009, *Behind John's shed*

Perspective drawing is achieved through being able to see and record what is presented to the eye, rather than through 'knowing' the three dimensional object as interpreted by the body, eye, mind system. The specific devices of perspective allow us to draw an image as if we were perfectly still and had one eye (see Figure 17). These observational skills and the understanding of how we see were used to develop modes of drawing suitable for a phenomenological engagement with the everyday.

Graphic communicator Simon Downs thought contemporary drawing showed a post modern preoccupation with appropriation, fragmentation and indeterminacy. He described it as contradictory, performative, simple, obsessive and challenging to what is generally considered aesthetic (Downs, 2007). These characteristics are also closely related to the qualities found in everyday life by the various theorists, such as Benjamin's concern with the fragmentation of social life. Breaking up my work into numerous parts referred to fragmentation and my use of blind contour drawings reflected indeterminacy (see Figure 18). The way the work was installed had the potential to draw on the other attributes such as the contradiction of the everyday street being exhibited in a gallery, the obsessiveness evidenced by the amount of work shown or the repetitive nature of its construction process.



Figure 18 Grinter, 2009, *The Shed Project: Third iteration (detail)*

Downs also suggested that drawing could attempt to communicate experience with objects, rather than just reflecting the appearance of objects. This is the difference between walking past things seeing multiple, changing views and a snapshot taken from one point. In this phenomenological approach to drawing, perception of the current moment is seen as embedded in past and future. It is not just an instant that is captured but, because a drawing is created over time, it has the

potential to show the factor of time in our experience of things (Sokolowski, 2000). Curator and writer Laura Hoptman said drawing was freed from the page in the 1960s and 1970s and happened in the landscape and as performance through metaphorical acts such as walking, scattering and scratching. Photography was the crucial media for recording these activities, whereas pencil and paper were used as a means of transcription (Hoptman, 2003). My pencil drawings could be seen as a record of walking and looking and the construction process as a transcription that referred back to the time and sequence of drawing and walking.

According to art historian David Rosand drawing, like the everyday, is incomplete. It is made by selecting a subset of the information available to the artist, such as contour, tone

or colour. Drawing is also a record of the gestures that went into making it and the viewer may replay these gestures when looking at the drawing (Rosand, 2002). It is this incompleteness that gave drawing the potential to create an alienation effect for the viewer, making them aware they were looking primarily at a drawing, which although it may relate to a real world, is only a subset, selected and performed by the artist. Drawing, while trying to bracket or put aside all preconceptions and assumptions (including visual assumptions), could lead to the sense of wonder that Husserl was striving for through phenomenology (Sokolowski, 2000).

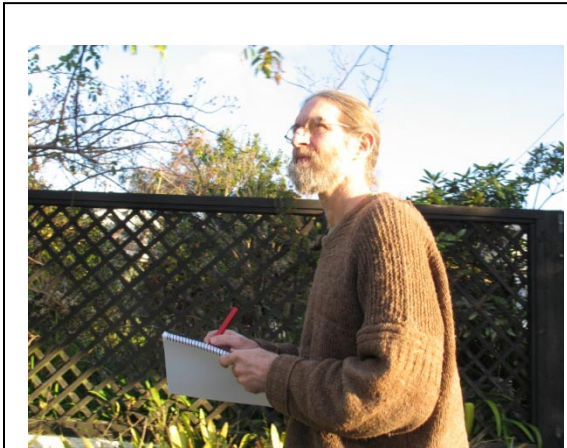


Figure 19 Grinter, 2009, *Walking while drawing*

My phenomenological investigation of the everyday through drawing led me to the simple idea of drawing *while* walking. A blind contour drawing made while walking was a kinaesthetic record, through the response of the hand, to both the walking in the street and to what I saw as I walked along the street (see Figure 19). The blind contour drawings made while walking focused on and combined different aspects of the street, creating a new image-world based on the phenomenological process of allowing everyday things to present themselves to me. A drawing was started

while I walked and continued as my view of the person or object changed until I either walked past it or became distracted by something else. This was of course mediated by preconceptions about what I looked at and raised the question of what exactly we do when looking. De Certeau explained how the walkers in the city followed an urban text without being able to read it and used space they could not see because they were in the text or were the instrument that wrote the text. It was as though the controllers of the bustling city were blind (Certeau, 1988). Fredric Jameson extended this concept by suggesting that, although we were embedded as nodes in the global network, we were not able to conceptualise it (Jameson et al., 2000). The blindness of the walker was consistent with the blindness of the artist drawing the everyday street (Derrida, 1993).

Curator Bernice Rose described A. R. Penck's use of drawing, in long obsessive series, as an exploration of thought and figures becoming abstract signs (Rose, 1992), for example *Welt des Adlers*, which is comprised of 472 pencil drawings, see Figure 20 (Penck, 1981). Art tutor Ron Bowen suggested that letters of the alphabet (abstract signs), evolved from hieroglyphs, which had in turn evolved from drawings representing objects in the ancient



Figure 20 Penck, 1981, *Welt des Adlers*

world (Bowen, 1992). Though I started from a different position, the *Shed project* work headed in a similar direction as it could be viewed as signs or hieroglyphs for the original subjects.

Poet and writer John Yau suggested that a key aspect of Penck's work was that it did not seek refuge in any form of belief. Penck's interests were wide ranging, including science and cybernetics, but he did not believe any meta-narrative could make sense of the world. It was in this context that he used drawing, the most basic means of making art, to investigate relationships between people and their world (Yau, 1993). Bernice Rose proposed that artists returned to drawing in times of crisis in art, such as when they felt art of the previous generation had reached

a cul-de-sac (Rose, 1992). Downs suggested drawing could be seen as outside art history and gave a means to participate in an art in crisis or to escape artistic trends (Downs, 2007). The everyday street, through its routines and repetition, gave me a place to work outside those meta-narratives, while blind contour drawing and construction gave me the means.

D. Shed work – Iterations 3 and 4

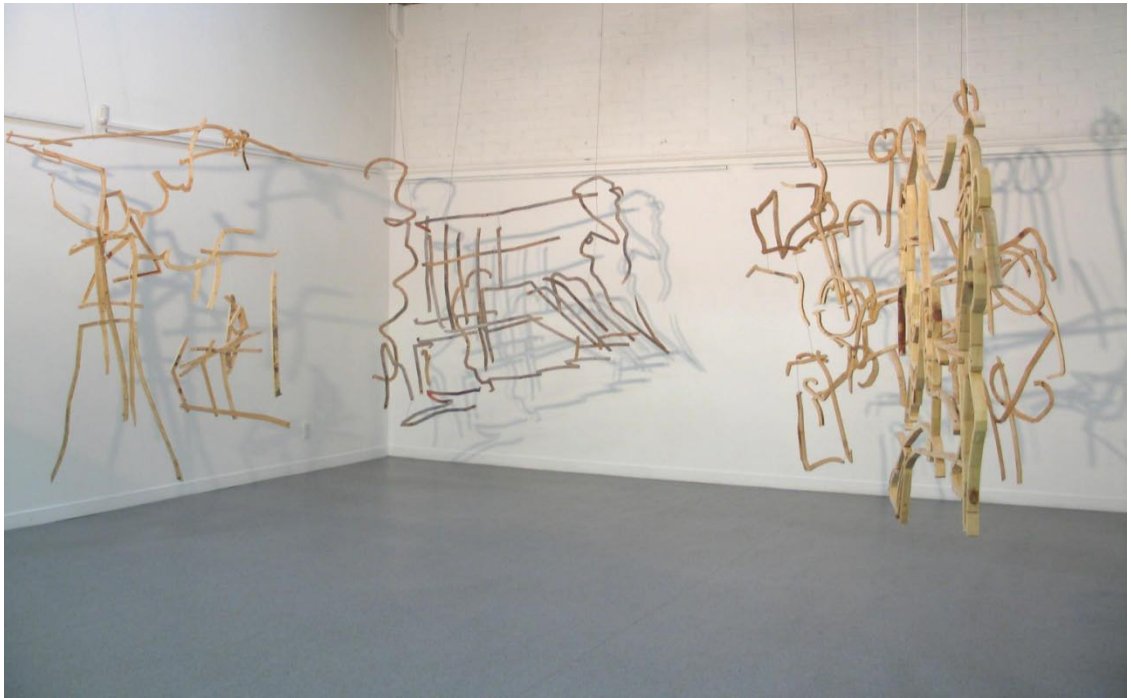


Figure 21 Grinter, 2009, *Shed project: Third iteration* (installation view)

The processes followed in the *Shed Project* evolved as ways of working with and through the everyday, by harnessing key aspects, such as making do, fragmentation, repetition and routine. The experience of the street was used as the source from which to create outputs in everyday materials (see Figure 21). The pencil drawings made while walking were



Figure 22 Grinter, 2009, *Walk, 17th July #7*

enlarged and constructed in the shed following repetitive procedures. The blind contour drawings could be seen as routine as they involved few conscious aesthetic decisions; I drew whatever my eyes happened to focus on (see Figure 22). Deciding which drawings to construct was initially by whim or left to chance through the roll of a dice, though for the *Fourth iteration* the decision was based on considerations of how the constructions would work together to

represent my experience of walking and drawing.

Cultural theorist Nikos Papastergiadis saw art of the everyday as being unconcerned with tradition and opposed to transcendental forces, i.e. down-to-earth. Although mediated by

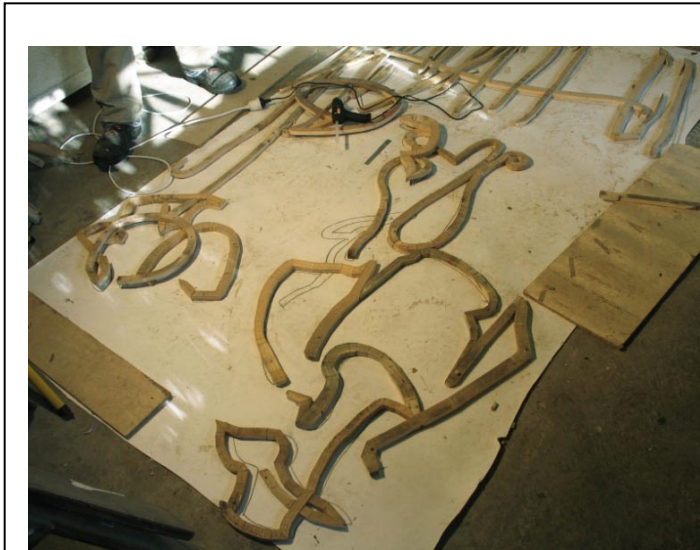


Figure 23 Grinter, 2009, *Fourth iteration, Chicken Man* (in progress)

language and culture, everyday art was a step towards the integration of art and living. He thought this could only be achieved through grounding the art in materiality (Papastergiadis, 2006). Reconstructing my drawings of the everyday in recycled timber, rather than leaving them as finished pencil drawings, allowed the work's materiality to relate to this positioning. To facilitate construction my pencil drawings were copied to overhead projector film and drawn onto

large sheets of paper (the ends of huge rolls scrounged from a paper mill). These large drawings were then placed on the shed floor and used as blueprints (see Figure 23). Contemporary drawing was often presented as finished art works (Kovats, 2005), however, my processes placed my pencil drawings in the traditional role of preparatory studies and the constructed drawings as finished works.

Construction moved the site of art making to a shed, an everyday place, and used recycled timber, an everyday material. The timber came from discarded pallets and showed its history through stains, nail holes and damage from hard use. The pallets were of course the platforms on which consumer goods were transported across countries and around the world; an irony which added another layer of meaning. The construction process added a record of actions in the shed, such as sawing, bending and gluing; traces of manual trades. The project had to make do with the machinery and tools available in the shed. In keeping with the opportunistic tactics of de Certeau's walkers, I was able to scrounge a number of woodworking machines on a long term basis, expanding the scope of the woodwork procedures available. However, the works for the third and fourth iterations were mostly made cutting planks on the bench saw and 'v's using the band saw. In some cases the constructions had to be held together with recycled wire from computer cables or nails from the pallets, in keeping with the spirit of bricolage. Recycled

wire was also used to suspend the works. My toolbox of everyday processes enabled the constructed drawings to come off the wall and out into the space, putting the viewer in the work and thereby creating an opportunity for active engagement rather than static observation. Likewise this re-presenting of the pencil drawings as large scale constructions was intended to distance the viewing experience from the image as a commodity or a signifier of lifestyle.



Figure 24 Grinter, 2009, *Third iteration, Path and Balcony*

These works were fragile due to their size and the way the timber was joined over a small area of end grain. Fragility is a characteristic of the everyday which becomes evident as a paradox in its study. The everyday is hard to pin down, because when examined closely the subject usually becomes poetic or extraordinary in some way, undermining its fundamental character (Felski, 2002). The works presented for the *Third iteration* of the *Shed project* were large and so needed frames to support them for moving and hanging (see Figure 24). Works for the *Fourth iteration* were still fragile but smaller, so did not need frames. The constructions are temporary as the timber is untreated; they will slowly disintegrate due to rot or borer, as well as falling apart as the glue gives way, which also happened as they were hung. These temporary and

fragile qualities aligned the works with the nature of the everyday in ways that more permanent works would not. Like the tactics of one of de Certeau's walkers, these methods, materials and procedures temporarily mapped out an authentic space in which to work with the experience of the everyday.

When the third iteration of the *Shed project* was exhibited, I was able to experiment with lighting. Without definite shadows, the works were not easily locatable in space; they could have been images mounted on the wall. The shadows created a relationship with the walls and made me more aware that the viewer could see through the work (see Figure 25). The shadows themselves could have been a transcription of the original blind

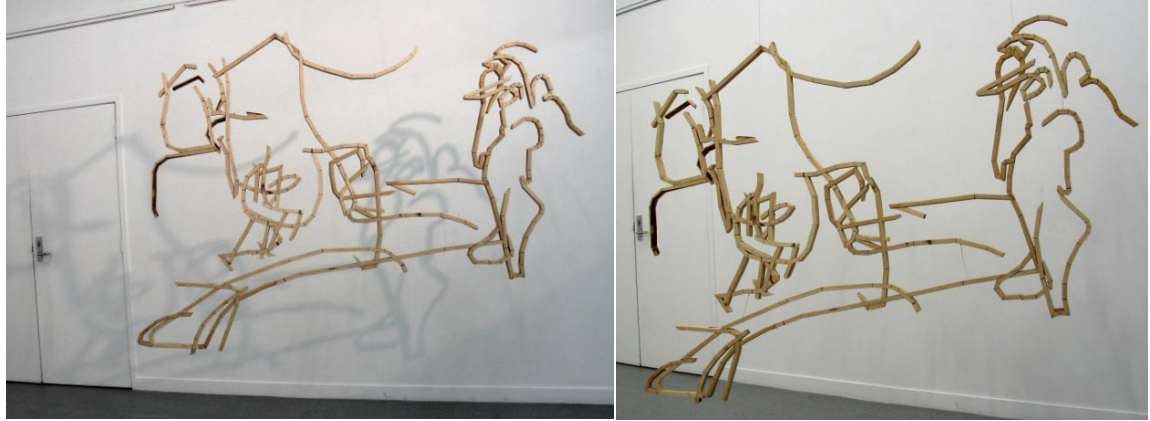


Figure 25 Grinter, 2009, *Third iteration, Woman on corner* (with and without shadows)

This image has been removed by the author of this thesis due to copyright reasons.

Figure 26 Parker, 1991, *Cold dark matter: An Exploded View*

contour drawings. They added another layer to the work which reflected the layers and complexity found in everyday life. My constructions bore some relation to the work of Cornelia Parker, in that they were static, suspended records of dynamic events. In her case the events were the accidental burning of a church, flattening of brass instruments or the blowing up of a shed, see Figure 26 (Parker, 1991). In my case the events were less dramatic, simply walks on which I looked and drew in the city streets.

Looking through one construction at the others gave the viewer a sense of being in the work and not constrained to a fixed viewing position (see Figure 27). This feature of the work was further developed in the *Fourth iteration*, to better reflect the artist's experience of being in the street. To allow for this more complex installation I separated the elements in my blind contour drawings, placed fewer on each sheet and constructed a greater number of smaller works, rather than the four planar constructions that made up the *Third iteration*. In the *Fourth iteration* the constructions became more three dimensional as a result of the timber being overlapped rather than cut into to make cross lap joints (Wagner & Kicklighter, 1991). The constructions quickly developed depth as they



Figure 27 Grinter, 2009, *Shed Project: Third iteration (detail)*

were built, effectively adding a dimension of time, or, perhaps more correctly, sequence. This method evolved at the start of the Fourth iteration during the construction of *Chicken man* (see Figure 23). They retained some of the two dimension quality of the original



Figure 28 Grinter, 2009, *Fourth iteration, Vehicle (detail)*

pencil drawing because they were built up as layers on a flat surface rather than defining three dimensional volumes in space (see Figure 28). This construction method replicated the original pencil line crossing over itself, enhancing the possibility of the viewer re-enacting the original gestures of drawing and perhaps the artist's experience of walking down the street.

Conclusion

Writers used the everyday as a starting point from which to reconsider philosophy, history and society. In a similar way artists used drawing as a way to return to basics when the way forward in art was unclear. By using everyday subjects and processes, along with a simple form of drawing, I attempted to create a tools box of methods that allowed me to elucidate, or at least imply, the nature of the everyday. The fragmented lines of the drawings in timber reflected the aimless wandering the artist who, like the poet and flâneur of Baudelaire and Benjamin, is a mock-hero of the metropolis in that he continues to work in the face of inevitable failure. The final iteration of the *Shed project* carries with it some of the characteristics of everyday life; it is flat, grubby, and repetitive, uses common materials and follows routine processes in everyday streets and the shed. However the results, rather like de Certeau's tactics, tend to undermine these attributes and the work has something of play or the street carnival about it. This reveals the potential of the street for disruption and laughter, which can temporarily define a space outside the systems that constrain contemporary life. By taking the mundane part of life and applying everyday procedures and processes to common materials I may have created something that defies its ordinariness and demands deeper exploration.

Visual Documentation



Walker, recycled timber, 100 x 40 x 1.5 cm



Schoolgirl, recycled timber, 120 x 35 x 1.5 cm

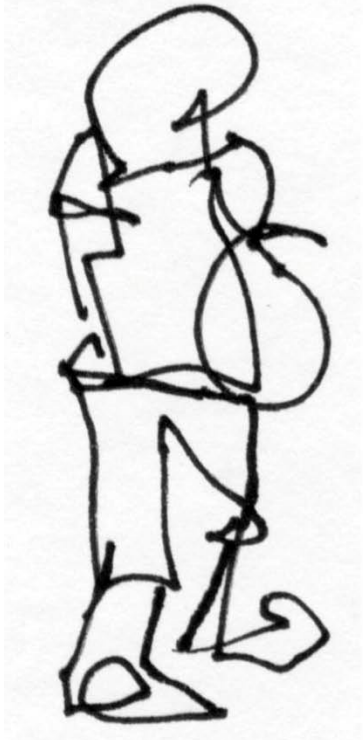


Car, recycled timber, 45 x 120 x 1.5 cm

Figure 29 Grinter, 2008, *The shed Project: First Iteration (Cut-outs)*



Boy with ball, cardboard, 150 x 50 cm



Boy with ball, ink on paper, 10 x 3 cm



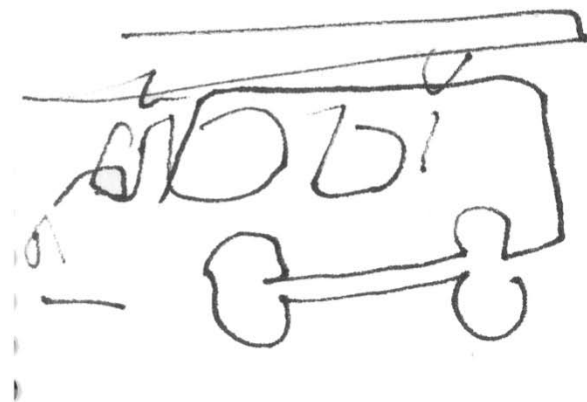
Ute, cardboard, 50 x 100 cm



Ute, Ink on paper, 5 x 10 cm



Plumbers van - Cardboard 75 x 150 cm



Plumbers van - ink on paper 5 x 10 cm

Figure 30 Grinter, 2009, *The Shed Project: Second Iteration* (Cut-outs and drawings)

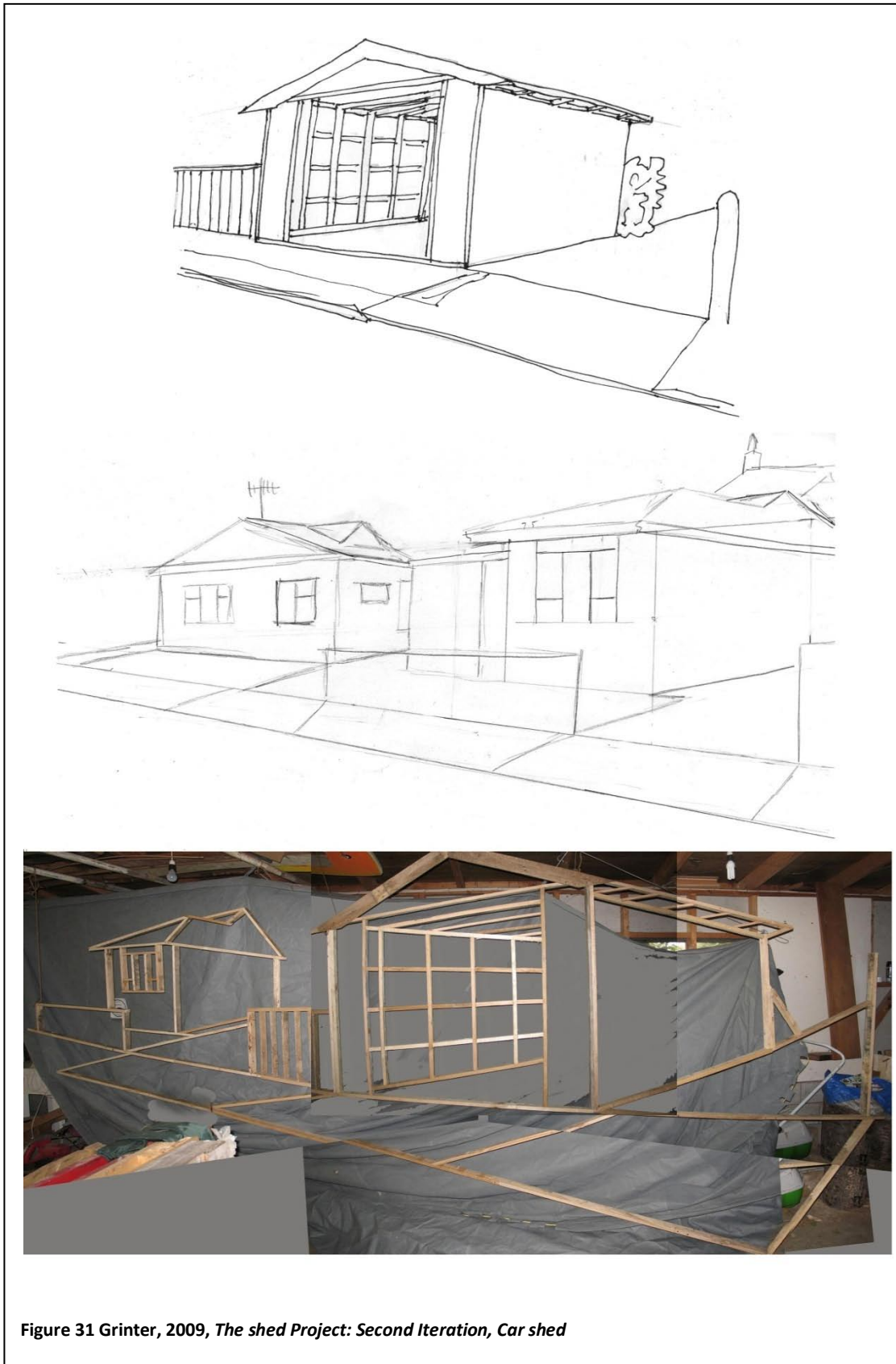
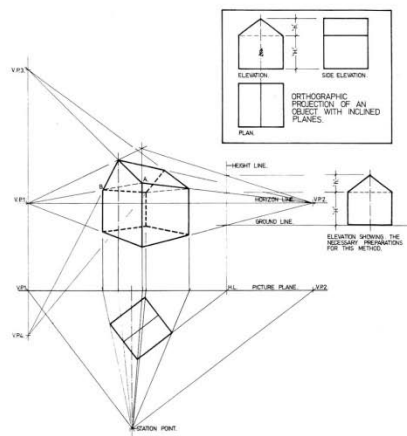
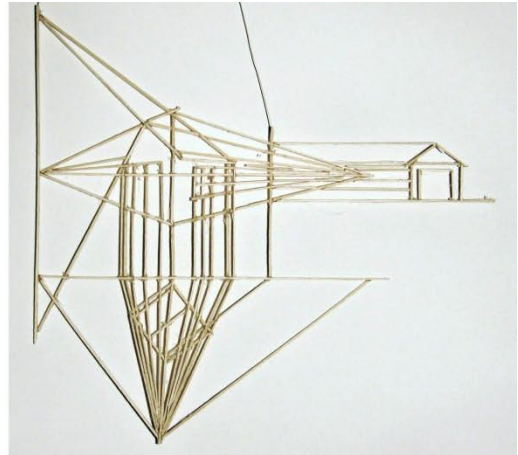


Figure 31 Grinter, 2009, *The shed Project: Second Iteration, Car shed*



Shed in perspective (modified from Gill)



Maquette - Shed in perspective - Balsawood



Mother and daughter with buckets, ink on paper



Maquette - Mother and daughter - Balsa wood



Behind John's shed - ink on paper



Maquette - behind John's shed - Balsa and paint

Figure 32 Grinter, 2009, *Maquettes and drawings*

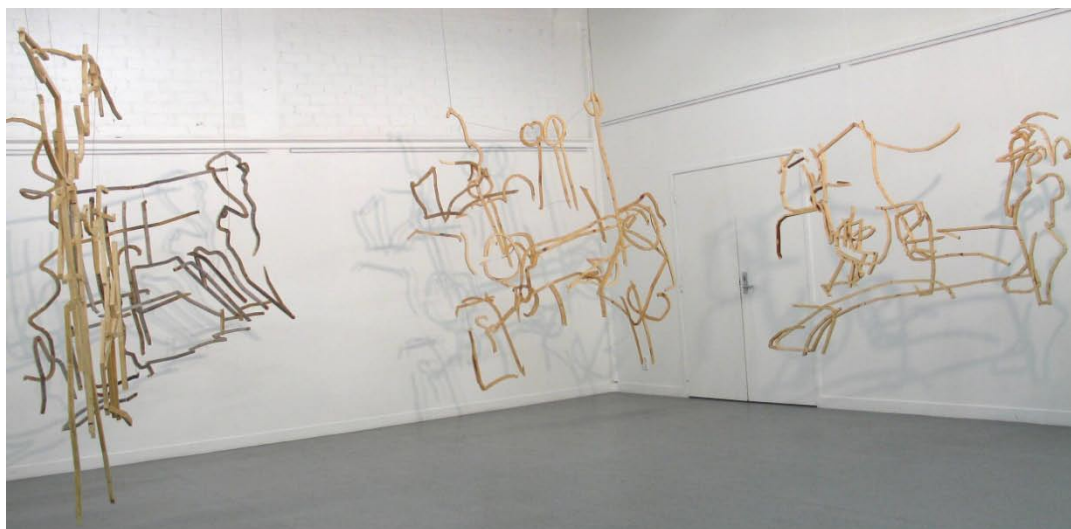
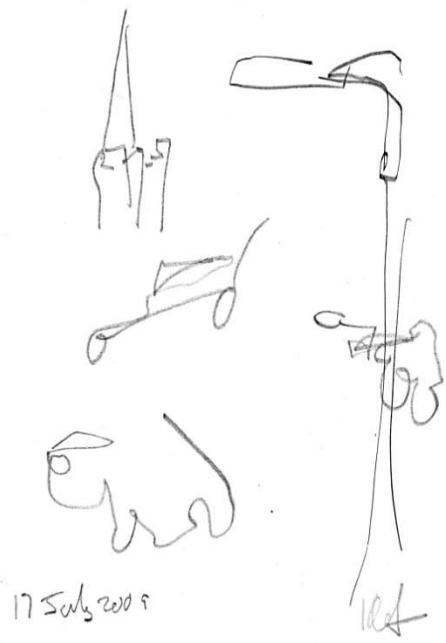


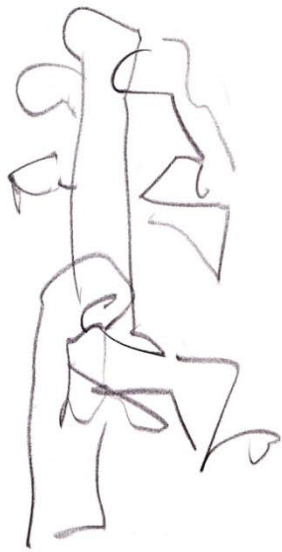
Figure 33 Grinter, 2009, *The Shed Project: Third Iteration* (installation views)



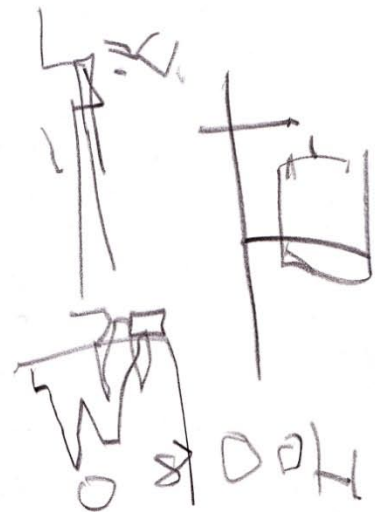
Walk 17th July drawing no 1



Walk 14th September drawing no 25

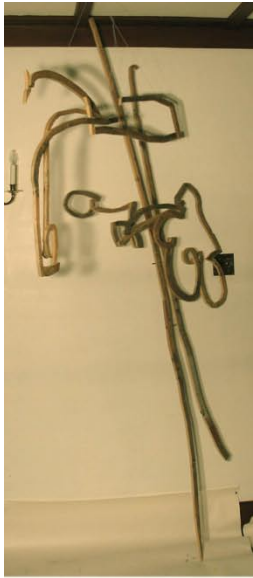


Walk 14th September no 26



Walk 14th September drawing no 7

Figure 34 Grinter, 2009, *Walking blind contour drawings* (for *Fourth iteration*)



Walk 17th July Drawing no 1



Walk 14th September Drawing no 25



Walk 14th September Drawing no 7



Walk 17th July Drawing no 1 and no 7



Walk 14th September Drawing no 7 (detail)



Walk 17th July Drawing no 7

Figure 35 Grinter, 2009, *The Shed project: Fourth Iteration*

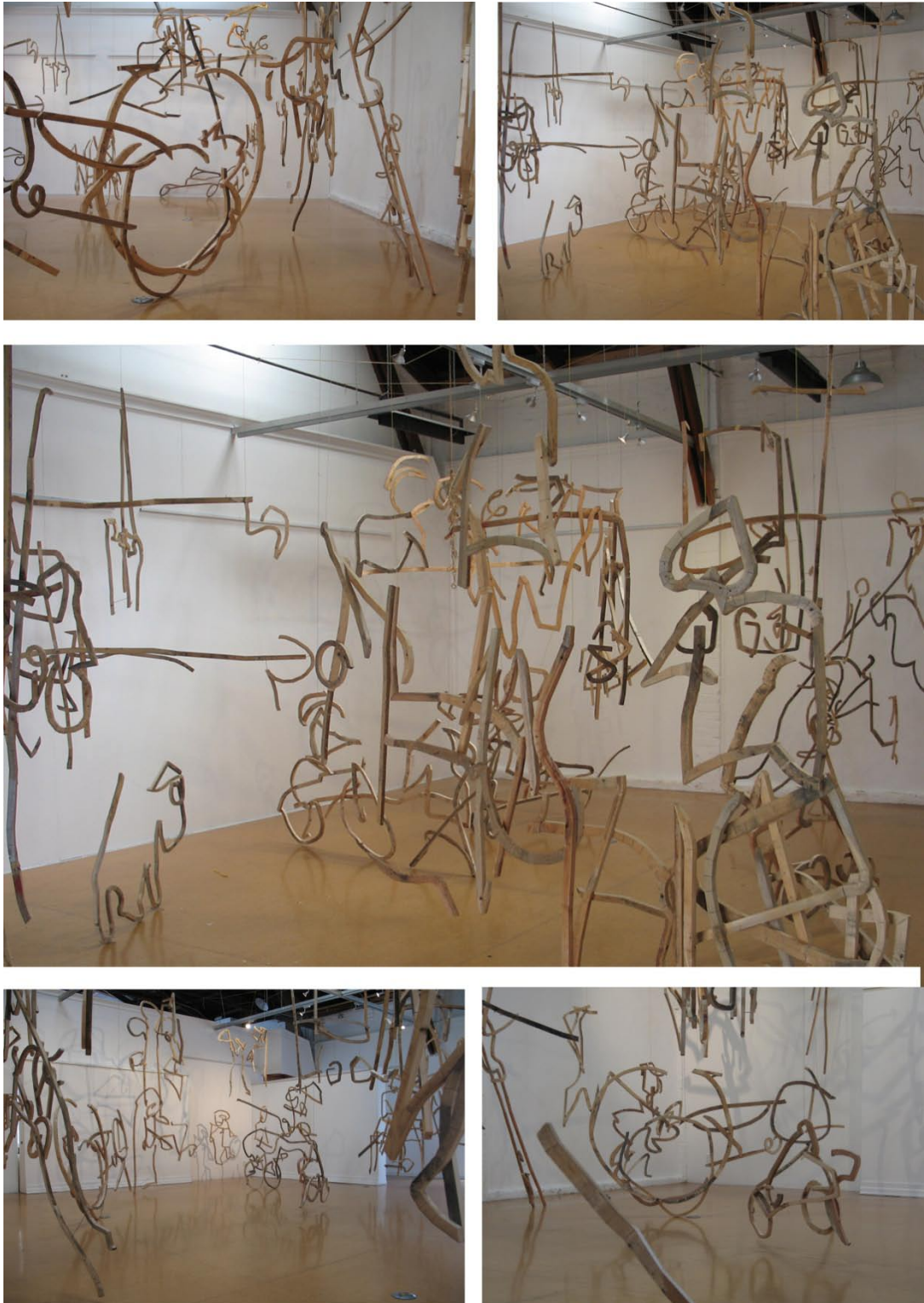


Figure 36 Grinter 2009, *Shed Project: Fourth Iteration* (installation views)



Figure 37 Hendeles, 2009, *Shed Project: Fourth iteration* (views from opening function)

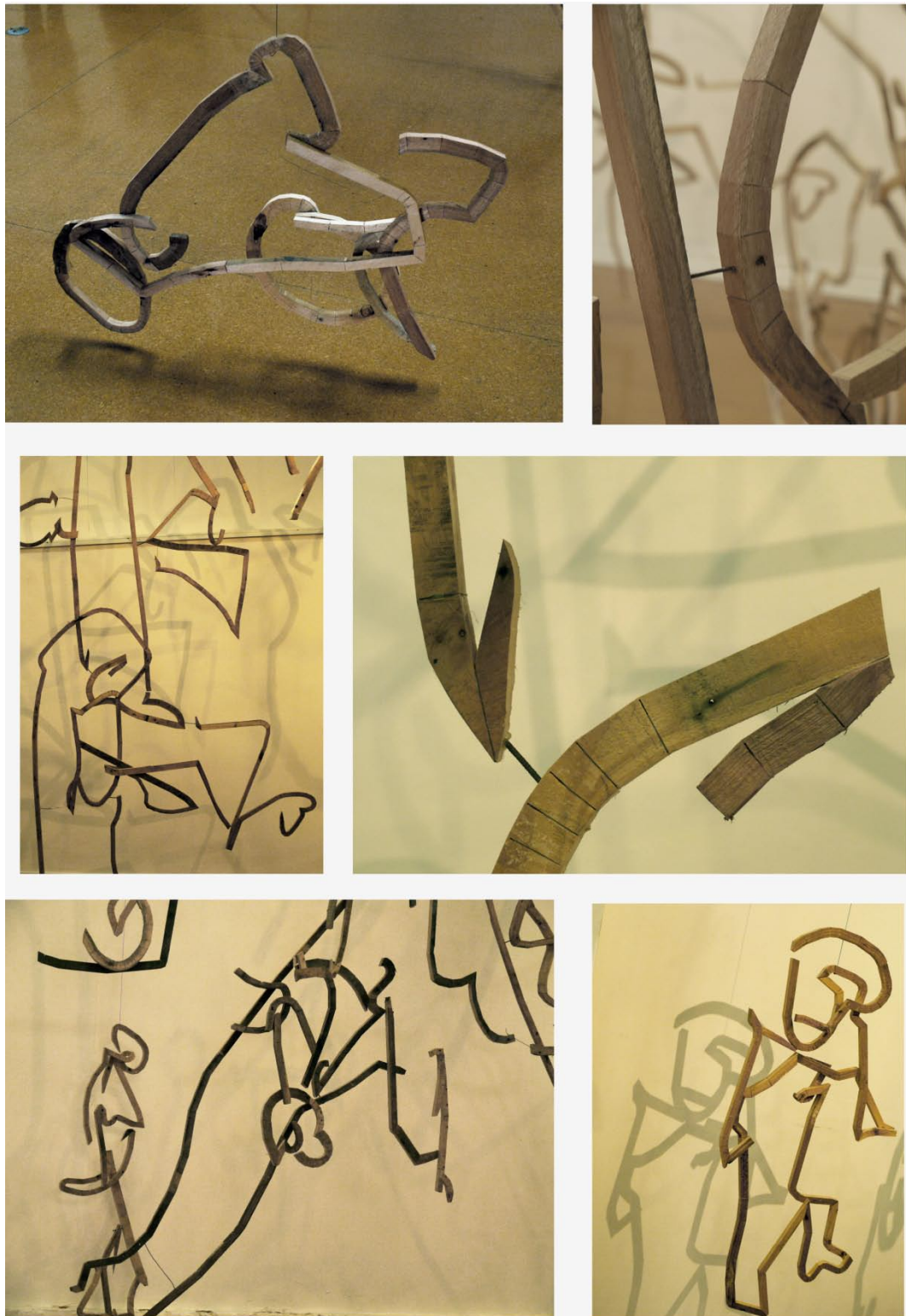


Figure 38 Hendeles, 2009, *Shed project: Fourth iteration* (detail views)

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