

Transition on Waiheke:

Changing ways we view and inhabit the landscape

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Please note that all images, other than Fig 2:1, were photographed by Juliet Wakefield between 2001 and 2005.

¹ The original image for this real estate advertisement was photographed by Allan Priest, co-owner of Waiheke Real Estate, in May 2001.

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.'

Signed.....dated.....

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Abstract

This thesis project explores, through art practice that is informed by sociological and theoretical considerations, a transition taking place on Waiheke Island, in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The project focuses on, and investigates *change*. The research examines the heightened *public profile*, which has impacted upon the development of the Island. The study explores states of human occupancy, in particular how we view and inhabit the land.

As a photographer, it is my intent to consider how modern properties experience place, via the constructed *aperture* of the window.

This is a creative production¹ project, that utilises the medium of photography, to explore the notion of change through a representation of images. The exhibition of outcomes is divided into three distinct sections. I am employing analogue and digital technologies to contrast *old* and *new* Waiheke. The link between past and present, indicated by the movement of people to and from the Island, is delineated through a *journey* through the space of the installation. This passage, provides a metaphor for the transition.

¹ Scrivener, (2003) considers *creative production* when assessing post-graduate projects where the art-based candidate is an experienced practitioner. The term *creative production*, is used to describe a research activity, where the emphasis is less on developing new knowledge, and more on the development of human understanding. *Artefacts* are created, which are objects of value in their own right, and worthy of exhibition. These artefacts being more than an exemplification of know-how or a by-product of the research activity.

Ethics Approval

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee, granted Ethics Approval for this research project for two years, remaining valid until 19.04.06

Ethics Approval Number is 04/56

Experience which is passed on from mouth to mouth is the source from which all storytellers have drawn. And among those who have written down the tales, it is the great ones whose written version differs least from the speech of the many nameless storytellers.

Walter Benjamin (1968, p. 84)

This is the story of Terry, a long term resident, who has owned and operated businesses on Waiheke since 1981.

Narrative

I first caught sight of the island off the side of the Baroona ferry. Waiheke was a sight for sore eyes. Having emigrated from the UK, moving first to the South Island, travel agents in Christchurch were unable to tell us how we could make our way to the island. My wife and I were first taken to Palm Beach and Onetangi and neither of us had ever seen beaches so beautiful. I immediately fell in love with the place, with those pristine beaches, friendly locals, and baches by the sea. I had taken up a two-year contract to work as Chef at The Harbour Masters Restaurant at Matiatia. That was twenty-two years ago, and as it transpired, the longest time I have lived in one place in my lifetime.

We decided that Waiheke was a great place to settle down, buy a home and raise a family. In 1985, we bought a house in Jellicoe Parade, Surfdale, paying \$47,000 for it. We added to it as we could afford, and as our family expanded to five. All of our children were born on Waiheke, well not strictly, all three births involved trips into Auckland hospitals, some trips more urgent than others. That is fairly standard for Waiheke mothers, many have to make trips whilst in labour, on the ferries or the Police launch Deodar. Nowadays for emergencies there is the Westpac rescue helicopter. Life can be hard on Waiheke.

Introduction

Waiheke Island, jewel of the Hauraki Gulf, considered to be paradise by some, *the Rock* by disenchanted others, lies 20 nautical kilometers from downtown Auckland. Held to be a strategic location for early Maori and European alike, it has long been a destination for the *great kiwi escape*; a place to relax and unwind.

The impetus for this research project has been my involvement with the island, as a former resident. Through this, I am positioned as both an *objective* researcher and as a subject, who has been influenced by the experiences being researched. Accordingly, I have an intimate knowledge of this place and its people, my research inevitably being inflected by a subjective element. My subjective position, informs the framing and selection of images, information and knowledge. Images selected for display, are a reflection of my writing. This writing forms a reciprocal relationship with my practice, revealing an interrelationship between theory and practice. Therefore my approach to the subject, may be considered as dialogic.

Artists can be very good at exposing the layers of emotional and aesthetic resonance in our relationships to place.

Lippard (1997, p. 286)

This photographic exploration of Waiheke is place-specific, art about place. Lippard (1997) suggests that “successful place-specific art can be made by people who live, or have lived there”(p. 289). The aim of my practice-based research is

not therefore, to present an historical document, but to construct images as a *lens* witnessing the physical and social issues underpinning changes to the inhabited environment. To indicate the human perspective of change, the exegesis includes a first-person narrative. This is a resynthesising of recollections, of long term resident, Terry². His story weaves a path through the text, distinct, yet co-existing, with my own personal narrative and interpretation of the transition.

This exegesis tells a story, an account of change in the context of the island community. It involves a *process of change*, as does my exhibition. Without this background evidence, the story of the transition of Waiheke, would not be complete. Personal narrative proffers an insider's perspective of change, as perceived through *lived experience*, in contrast to the more formal consideration of *subject*.

This exegesis is divided into five sections. Chapter One, *Forces of Attraction*, looks primarily at how the raised public profile of Waiheke has brought about an increase in visitors, which is the key catalyst that has brought about growth. This interest is reflected in increased property values, and development. The island has been transformed from an isolated community, to an upmarket Auckland suburb. Issues associated with increased population, are considered.

Chapter Two, *Changing Values*, investigates shifts in the community, specifically the way change has disrupted established ties and community values. The chapter considers how *lifestyle* was once, and is now perceived, and how the *intrinsic value* of property has changed.

Notions of lived experience, along with issues of personal economies, are explored in Chapter Three, *Inside and Outside*. Concepts of what constitutes *inside* versus *outside* are considered, with direct parallels being drawn, and related to my visual representation of the transition of Waiheke. The notion of spatiality is addressed, with an initial focus on how space is perceived in baches, and how it is used in modern properties. This concept is expanded upon in the following chapter.

² In this project, Terry is represented only by his Christian name, because his story is typical of many existing residents on Waiheke. His story does not profess to be an authoritative account of change, witnessed on the Island.

Chapter Four, *Framing the View* discusses the notion of framing, in specific relation to how views are framed in a constructed environment. In modern properties, the island is observed from a perspective of 3D picture panoramas. This is contrasted to street frontages, implicit, in imagery of baches. A parallel is drawn between *the constructed apertures of windows framing the view, and the constructed frame via the aperture of the camera*. The position of the viewer is considered in respect of the isolate, and the community oriented inhabitant.

The Conclusion of the exegesis, reflects upon concepts raised in the preceding four chapters, and the exhibited body of work. The exegesis therefore, operates as a contextualising body of discourse, that helps to explain the exhibition. To define the weighting, the exegesis constitutes approximately twenty-five percent of the thesis project. This is because the primary site of research is the exhibition of photographic work.

The practical project

This thesis project primarily engages the medium of photography. Consequently, images have been produced that best display a subjective interpretation of physical change being witnessed on Waiheke Island. Advancements in photographic technology are visually linked to *change*, within the built environment, to *contrast* the *new* and the *old* Waiheke. Digital images, being a more recent technology, have been engaged, as they more appropriately relate to contemporary, modern design. This is contrast to my use of the earlier analogue technology, for the imagery of baches, as it reflects the era when baches were constructed.

The photographic installation comprises three distinct areas. Through the utilisation of precise lighting and positioning, the audience is encouraged to first view *Village Outlook*, analogue images of Waiheke baches. These small-scale, tactile, images of baches, are externally lit by warm incandescent light, which is the primary interior lighting source in such structures.

The next segment, *Points of Reference*, involves a sequence of underlit transparencies, mounted in perspex blocks. This section provides a metaphor for

a journey, of movement to and from the island. It delineates a pathway from old to new.

The installation culminates with *Framing the View*, a series of large-scale, backlit, digital images. These images are framed from within modern, private residences, observing panoramic views.

A feature of the installation design, is the consistent use of anodised aluminium, a product commonly used in the construction of window and door frames. This analogy serves to reinforce the notion of *framing*.

Methodology

This research project involves the creation of photographic imagery that best reflects *a transition* on Waiheke Island. To facilitate this, the project seeks to explore, in visual and written terms, changes to the inhabited environment. The process of this research therefore has been to articulate this phenomenon. A unique research design has been employed to achieve this. It incorporates practice-based, heuristic, transactional, and ethnographic approaches that utilise voices from the community.

Heuristic framework

Defining the researcher's position

This project is based on subjective, practice-based research. Heuristics has been employed, because my approach is *subjective*, and this methodology embraces this form of research. Heuristics involves a *process* of discovery, in which patterns are identified through questioning. Kleining (2000) defines the technique as one *involving dialogue*, as a specific form of dialectic. Heuristics is effective where no fixed formula for the research exists¹.

¹ Scrivener (2003) suggests that art and design projects that create artefacts, present issues for assessment, in that they do not fall into standard *categories* especially when dealing with creative production. In relation to this thesis, Scrivener, further states that "*in a creative-production project this knowledge is a by-product of the process rather than its primary objective. In short, although there is no overarching methodology, there is an overarching ethic of self-conscious, informed and systematic problem selection and solution*".

Scrivener (2003) suggests, "*that an attribute of the artefact, is that it should contribute to human experience. This being the case, the creative production, as an object of experience, is more important than any knowledge embodied in it*".

Because of the subjective nature of my position in this project, and the application of tacit² knowledge, it has been appropriate for me to employ a heuristic methodology. Kleining and Witt (2000) describe heuristics as a method used to *find patterns*. This style of research is interested in homologies and concordances between recollection, experience and imagery.

Throughout this investigation I have observed *patterns* in the inhabited environment emerging. Over the five-year period that this research project has covered, images have been produced and intuitively trialed, selected or rejected, and remade, so that they better reflect the nature of the island's transition. Because I have built and designed houses on the island, I am critically aware of *framing*. Framing is also an integral element of photography.

Heuristic methodology allows the researcher to create an artefact by reframing the subject, thereby contributing towards new knowledge. Lippard, proposes that art about place, involves drawing attention to new insights about place, which have previously not been investigated. Specifically the focus of this research, the way we view and inhabit that landscape, has not been investigated previously to my knowledge, in the context of Waiheke. Lippard (1997) says,

The idea was to look at what was already in the world and transform it through the process of seeing, naming and pointing out, rather than producing. This remains a valid methodology for making art about place, since any place is there for the finding, an independent entity that doesn't need to be created so much as excavated or highlighted by the artist (p. 266).

Lippard (1997) further suggests that “the artist's role is as *experiencer*, reporter, analyst and activist” (p. 278). Heuristic methodology is employed in subjective bodies of research where the researcher/artist utilises reflection, intuition, and learns through experiences both personal, and of others’.

According to Schön, (1983) *reflection* is central, both to the practitioner's ability to successfully complete projects, and to their professional development. Schön sees “*reflection as the primary cognitive mechanism for dealing with the unexpected*

² Tacit knowledge is defined as knowledge developed and internalised by the knower over a long period of time. It incorporates so much accrued and embedded learning, that its rules may be impossible to separate from how an individual acts. Examples of tacit knowledge include subjective insights, intuitions, and hunches.

and, through the resolution of the unexpected, for learning". My subjective approach therefore, is based on the inherent knowledge gained from living on, and viewing, the Island, and noting change taking place. Therefore I have a body of experience and knowledge, which can be drawn upon. Heuristic research allows the author to also become the reader.

Transactional research

Kleining and Witt, (2000) and Scrivener, (2003) both refer to a reciprocal research method that involves the researcher directing the focus of the study, and the research outcomes informing the investigator, as a *transactional relationship*. This relationship requires a subjective approach, where a *process* of learning emerges with practice informing research, and learning informing practice. As each new approach to image-making is synthesised, intuition plays an important role in the selection process. This intuitive reaction encompasses emotive responses, which evoke the *spirit of how* we approach the subject. In my research, this can be witnessed through my own changing perspectives on how to interpret the transition of the island, with decisions based on *intuition*. A number of interpretations of the transition of the island have been abandoned, as being too literal. Examples of this, were extensive photo shoots of baches' interior and exterior (including advertising for subject matter in the *Gulf News*); an emergent ethnographic study involving locals from differing walks of life; photographing Waiheke locals in their home environments; shooting unique Waiheke letterboxes. In the early stages of this research, a book was produced, which followed one family's history with one bach. This bach had been built, moved within the site, renovated, then removed from the site to a new location. This process of development, was to make way for a substantial new home. The project sought to witness changes in the built environment, and held links to family and community. Regrettably, it did not effectively embody the concept of *a transition*, which was my aim. The discourse between the experiments and the creator, resulted in addressing ideas outside the central concerns of this project. Ultimately these outcomes were set aside, with a greater emphasis being placed on personal narrative, and notions of framing.

Practice based research

Specific methodology needs to be employed when making art about place.

According to Lippard (1997) art about place needs to be:

Specific enough to engage people on the level of their own lived experiences.

Collaborative at least to the extent of seeking information, advice and feedback from the community.

Generous and open-ended enough to be accessible to a wide variety of people.

Appealing enough either visually or emotionally to catch the eye and be memorable.

Simple and familiar enough, at least on the surface, not to confuse or repel potential viewer-participants.

Layered, complex and unfamiliar enough to hold people's attention once they have been attracted, to make them wonder, and to offer ever deeper experiences and references.

Evocative enough to make people recall related moments, places, and emotions in their own lives.

Provocative and critical enough to make people think about issues beyond the scope of the work, to call into question superficial assumptions about the place, its history, and its use. (p. 286)

Lippard's methodology relating to art about place is particularly appropriate to my practice. She suggests, (1999) that "Environmental interpretation is a new field for which artists would seem eminently qualified" (p. 149). My aim is to position the viewer, to witness for themselves, the changing way in which we inhabit the landscape. The intention of the work, is to provoke contemplation and reflect on the influence of development. My intent is to engage the Waiheke community, relating as *insiders* to the concepts being explored, yet these notions conceptually engage the wider New Zealand audience.

Images produced, are instrumental rather than picturesque, to reinforce the concept of *framing*. To explore a *process of change*, a visual parallel is drawn between changes to the built environment; advancements in photographic technology; and improvements in creative lighting techniques. All three speak of

a *process of development*. Trailing therefore, has not only involved the selection of creative imagery, but the selection of which photographic and lighting technology is most appropriate to the research outcome. Much of the research question has involved the installation design, and use of appropriate lighting. In terms of originality, the method employed of integrating lighting *within* the installation of photographic images, is highly personalised and individual, and is a relatively new field in New Zealand. Whilst there are numerous commercial backlit displays, very few *art* photographers within New Zealand, to date, are exhibiting work in this fashion. Problem solving is a constant issue, with identified obstacles for example being image longevity, lighting *hot spots*, lamp usage life, and heat tolerance, of both transparency and digital printing film. This has required research methodology outside the normal parameters of standard methods of photographic art display.

Ethnographic research

If the method of enquiry and processing of data can be seen as heuristic, the stimulating and strengthening of this approach can be seen as employing specific techniques. A case study involving the *personal narrative* of long term island resident, *Terry*, manifests as an eye-witness account of life on Waiheke. This may be seen as a form of ethnographic research.

Taylor (2002) says,

The ethnographic researcher is said to obtain an insider's view of society and so to understand other people's own worldview, instead of taking the outsider's perspective.

Ethnographic research, she says "produces situated knowledge rather than universal, and captures the detail of social life" (p. 3). As suggested by MacCannell, (1999) ethnographers use critical reflection to reconstruct the society upon which they focus (p.xvi).

First person narratives, matter-of-fact and poetic, are remarkable testimonies to a disappearing way of life and the spiritual value of connection to the land. (Plate 5, Photo images by Nancy O'Connor: in Lippard, 1997)

Two systems of ethnographic research have been used in this project. The first is a case study that uses *narrative* through the voice of a resident. This narrative involves my creative reflection, as I have transcribed the information received. The second, is a shared narrative, which is based on collective knowledge from many informational and conversational sources, gained through networking with island residents.

The intention of introducing a personal *narrative*, enables me to bring in a voice from the community to permeate the exegesis, whilst I am developing my own position. This provides cohesion between myself as the researcher (an inside researcher), and an example of the researched. The purpose of this research method is to view change through *lived experience*.

Lippard (1997) acknowledges that “photography can reframe a place in retrospect or in preparation for new or renewed experience, and through books with texts, *people of a place can speak for themselves*” (p. 284). Change, in any form, impacts not only on the environment, it impacts on the lives of the *inhabitants* of *place*.

Lippard's, (1997) '*The Lure of the Local*', and Sarup's, (1996) '*Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*', engage personal narrative within the body of their texts.

Summary

A specific research design has been employed that best enables the creation of effective, art about *place*. This has included the participation of individuals from the island community, incorporating lived experience, and the significant, in-depth knowledge of place. These features allow the research and the practice to form a reciprocal relationship, which is ultimately reflected in visual terms. Contrasting photographic and lighting technologies, and *relating* those changes to the built environment, enables the viewer, to engage and reflect on the *changing* ways, we view and inhabit the landscape.

Review of Knowledge, Practice and Literature

Background evidence

At the outset of this research project in 2000, as a photographer practitioner, and resident, I became aware that no study had been undertaken, involving changes to the island, between 1930 and the present day. Monin (1992) and Day, (1989) had written detailed accounts on the familial, and early history of the island, prior to 1930. Both authors had included descriptive images in their texts.

Yoffe (1998) investigated the disappearing phenomena of baches on nearby Rangitoto Island. Those dwellings being on Crown leased land, were not subject to escalating property values. Although this is dissimilar to the privately owned land on Waiheke, Yoffe's study included the people who inhabited those baches. Her commentary on their egalitarian outlook, where social status was not a consideration, was relevant to this research topic.

Photographic studies, specific to Waiheke

Schaeffer (2004) has released a pictorial paperback of *Wonderful Waiheke*. This text displays images of Waiheke's favourite locations and views. Owning a microflyte and having worked as a photographer on the island since 1988, he has produced some evocative images, accompanied by text written by Jane Parlane. The work however, is more vernacular than academic, and does not proffer an in depth analysis of change on the island.

Photographic influences and studies

To place my work into a New Zealand contextual framework, Lawrence Aberhart has produced numerous examples of New Zealand architecture. In particular his work focuses on documenting vernacular architecture, without offering commentary on the *process* of development. Whilst his work engages my desire to preserve images of the vernacular, my practice does not align itself to Aberhart's work.

Allan MacDonald has exhibited photographic images with a focus on housing developments within Auckland. His work does introduce the notion of the changing ways we inhabit the landscape, but predominately explores cities of mass new housing developments.

An Exhibition of Lightbox art was shown at Soca EXIT gallery, Newmarket, in late August 2004. Various local artists participated, integrating lighting into abstract, and often tactile forms. Although these works might be compared to my practice, the nature of the group exhibition lacked the scale of conceptual engagement that a solo exhibition offers. Whilst certain works were highly evolved and professional, others lacked attention to finish.

Emergent forms of a distinctive style of New Zealand architecture have been demonstrated by Lloyd-Jenkins (2005). The specific form of modernist revivalist architecture has influenced changes to the built environment on Waiheke. These structures emphasise the way in which we frame the landscape, and reinforce the notion of *viewing structures*, that support this element of my practice. Lloyd-Jenkins' text has offered this project insight into the way in which specific forms of New Zealand architecture relate in contrasting ways to *passers by*.

Theorists

Lippard (1983, 1997, 1999) remains the predominant influence on this thesis project, both as a theoretician, and as a photographer. Significantly, her work is mindful of environmental issues, such as the impact of people on place. Lippard takes the position of the inside researcher, implicating herself in her critique of the

affluent, indulgent tourist who transforms their surroundings. Lippard's *Lure of the Local*, (1997) and *On the Beaten Track*, (1999) are particularly appropriate sources of reference, as they bring emotional response, and nostalgia, to an otherwise academic view of place. Appropriately for this research project, Lippard explores the political economies of leisure spaces, and surveys how artists are responding to the environmental, cultural and political issues surrounding contemporary tourism.

Sarup, in *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*, (1996) positions himself as an inside researcher. His use of personal narrative, running like a vein throughout the book, adds a human perspective to the academic text. His, and Lippard's (1997) use of narrative in this fashion was a major influence in my own writing, as I had trialed other ways of introducing voice, but none were as effective, or poetic. Sarup's views on the creation of personal identity, and implications of positioning *in or outside* of the mainstream¹, were an influence to my background research.

Theorists on tourism, Urry (2002) and MacCannell, (1999) were influential, especially in regards to establishing my position as an *inside researcher*. Urry's commentary on colonial seaside development has promoted me to frame beaches within the context of social engagement.

MacCannell (1999) suggests, that his text *The Tourist* is in effect, an ethnography of modernity, and that the book could also "serve as an introduction to a structural analysis of modern society" (p. 3).

Both writers reinforced my belief that the central influence to the transition of Waiheke, has been the impact of tourism and visitors.

¹ Mainstream may be understood as the ideas and opinions that are thought to be normal because they are shared by most people. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000).

There have been some major stepping stones that have made a huge difference to the way people live on the island. The first was the Fullers fast ferries. Waiheke changed from being a place that seemed inaccessible, somewhere you would only come for a holiday, to a place where people commute by the hundreds. That is mainly because it's more enjoyable and quicker to commute to the city by boat, than it is to drive in from the outer suburbs. The population increased at that time, but not as much as it did about five years ago. In 1999, Fullers introduced more frequent hourly sailings, and more visitors began to arrive. These people saw the opportunity to purchase effectively cheap houses in what they perceived as paradise. Perceptive property investors seized the opportunity to buy up several houses and on-sell them to more affluent arrivals. People have been so impressed with the features Waiheke has to offer that they are willing to pay huge amounts of money to be here. Wealthy property investors were never interested in the island before that. It is amazing to witness how sleepy hollow has changed into such high-powered place.

Chapter One

Forces of Attraction

The raised profile of Waiheke, and the associated increase of visitors, has provided the catalyst for the transformation of the island, from an isolated community, into an upmarket, and effectively new, *suburb* of Auckland. There are several contributing factors for this increased public profile that will be considered in this chapter.

The permanent population of Waiheke is 8000¹ but swells to approximately 20,000² over major holidays and long weekends. This is mainly because of the island's close proximity to Auckland.

The *Baroona*, a former ferry servicing Waiheke, was replaced by Fullers' fast ferry the *Quickcat*, in 1986, reducing the harbour crossing from one hour and fifteen minutes, to thirty-five minutes. This change was significant in drawing large numbers of domestic and international travellers, to the island. With increased accessibility, these visitors³ have become the main source of *new recruits* to the island, both as part-time and permanent residents. Even though the main transportation to the island continues to be ferries, both passenger and vehicular, a small airfield services the island, and there are an increasing number of private helipads for wealthy property owners. Multinational corporations currently own lifestyle properties, and with the lifting of restrictions from *New Zealand residents*

¹ See Parlane (2004, p. 7).

² Approximate figure based on passengers travelling to and from the island at peak times, supplied by Fitchett (2005), of Fullers Ferries.

³ In this exegesis, the term visitors, embraces both national and international tourists.

only⁴ purchasers, property in the Gulf islands can literally be purchased over the internet.

Geok-Lin Lim, Smith, and Dissanayake, (1999) state that the *Pacific Rim* has been a site for unprecedented growth and trade since the 1960s, (p. 1) with many powerful export-driven economies participating. This, combined with New Zealand's *clean green* image has attracted more international buyers to the country. By global standards, island and coastal properties have proved to be both attractive, and competitively priced.

Lippard (1999) in her observations of the positive and negative effects of tourism, states that "Tourism leads to summer people, leads to year-round newcomers, leads to dispossession and a kind of internal colonialism"(p. 22).

Tourists globally are requiring more comfortable destinations. Earlier visitors to the island, more likely to be backpackers and young families, may have been prepared to accept more basic facilities. By contrast, today's visitors are looking for frequent ferries, tour buses, taxis, rental cars, and cafés. The desired destination is increasingly comfortable accommodation in close proximity to beaches or vineyards. Priest (2005) suggests, that potential purchasers first having visited the island, decide to acquire land on Waiheke. Lippard (1999) refers to newcomers who arrive once the levels of comfort have improved, as *amenity migrants*. She says,

People visit, they like the place, they retreat or retire there, becoming what have been called amenity migrants. Then, prey to the drawbridge syndrome, they begin to complain about the tourists and other newcomers (p. 14).

The increase in the number of visitors has seen property prices soar to three-fold growth in less than eight years⁵. Part of this can be attributed to the national trend towards an increase in coastal property values, but greater accessibility and a higher standard of living on the island, have been the main contributors for the increase in interest. A current trend has been for more affluent mainlanders to own a second weekend property on Waiheke. These part-time residents

⁴ A Law was passed in 1995, the Overseas Investments Amendment Act, allowing non-residents of New Zealand, to purchase property on off-shore islands. (Brown, of Fraser and Co, Solicitors)

⁵ Bayleys Real estate advertised, median house prices show a three-fold gain between 1996 and 2004, with average prices within the last two years being \$300,000. Average annual quoted prices: 1996, (\$130,000); 2004, (\$400,000).

are faced with dual household expenses in each locale. This necessarily means that most *weekenders*, are likely to have sufficiently high income to support two homes, and if their second home was purchased in the last few years, they were likely to have paid in excess of \$300,000.

A place ethic demands a respect for a place that is rooted more deeply than an aesthetic version of the tourist gaze. Lippard (1997, p. 278).

The rise of tourism and seaside development in New Zealand
In 2005, the World Travel and Tourism Committee stated that the Global tourism is growing at 4–5 percent per annum. Travel and tourism is the largest industry in the world, accounting for 10.4 percent of world GDP (p. 3).

The rise of mass tourism began in Britain in the 1860s (coincidentally at a similar time that photographs were emerging) with *Wake's weeks*, which involved the working classes taking a holiday at the seaside, away from their normal place of residence. Improving transportation systems at that time in Britain was also an influential factor. Urry (2002) states,

Prior to that time, travel for recreation had been mostly undertaken by the upper classes, who, being influenced by the Romantics, believed that individual pleasures could be derived from an appreciation of impressive physical sights (p. 20).

Seaside holidays, remained the predominant form of family vacation in Britain up until the Second World War (ibid. p. 25).

As many emigrants to New Zealand, especially in the early twentieth century were from Great Britain, it might be assumed that the national interest in seaside holidays was a consequence of these changing patterns in their homelands. This contention is in contradiction to Urry's (2002) assertion that,

New Zealand had no necessity for seaside resorts, as most of the country is beside the sea therefore going to the seaside would not be seen as in any way special (p. 30).

The definition of the term *resort* per se is correct, but Urry failed to mention the significance of the many seaside destinations and developments, and the ensuing baches in New Zealand, particularly during the latter half of the twentieth century.

The postmodern⁶ inclinations of tourism has seen the international tourist strive for more unique touristic experiences. Currently *adventure holidays* are one of the unique attractions New Zealand has to offer. With the majority of international travellers arriving in the main centres, particularly Auckland, an abundance of tourists are looking at what is of interest locally. Waiheke Island is attainable and enjoyable as a day trip. This is because of its proximity to Auckland Central's international hotels, and it involves a boat trip through the Gulf islands, culminating with the arrival at the second largest, most populated of the islands, in the Hauraki Gulf. The burgeoning wine growing activities and resultant wine tours to vineyards are an attraction, along with the pristine beaches.

Issues related to the increase in population

The reality is that although there are now a few extra jobs available for locals, the majority of new, more permanent arrivals are not looking for employment on the island. Some are joining the *commuter* ranks, along with their laptops in use on the ferry, while others are professionals that can work from home, via modems, making fewer trips into the office in the city. Waiheke is perceived by newcomers, as the perfect location for a balance between work and home life. However, one might ask what impact this increasing density of population is having on the environment. More vehicles require widening and sealing the narrow roads and the need has recently arisen for creating pedestrian footpaths.



Fig1:1 The sign *Slow Down You're Here*, at Kennedy Point vehicular wharf .

⁶ Urry (2002) suggests, that tourism is prefiguratively postmodern because of its particular combination of the visual, the aesthetic, the commercial and the popular (p. 78).

The increasing number of residents and new homes require more regulation of on-site sewage disposal systems, and Mann (2005) states that due to increasing demand, a new waste-water plant was opened in early 2004, to cope with the increasing loading in the Oneroa commercial area. Auckland City Council's Strategic Plan, *Essentially Waiheke* (2000) views the island as the proposed new site for increased population growth, as the inner city struggles to expand. However, the infrastructure is finding it difficult to cope with the upsurge in growth and visitors. Conflicting needs of the increased requirements of visitors and newcomers, and environmental survival, are becoming more in evidence.

Local businesses are caught in a familiar trap not peculiar to Waiheke Island. Dependent on tourists for their livelihood, as *off peak* trading is limited, these retailers need the tourist income to survive. However, they generally regret the changes in the community that is associated with an increase in visitors. During the peak season when the population of the island soars, businesses are overrun and frequently run out of essential supplies.

The cost of ferry fares⁷ are reasonably significant, meaning that that low income families are likely to find the cost of visiting Waiheke prohibitive, which in turn reflects the level of wealth of potential *new recruits*.

Summary

Whilst the island has witnessed an increased public profile, it appears that the majority of visitors and new residents, come from a higher socio-economic group, than in previous decades. High property values, have been a factor in determining who can now afford to buy land on Waiheke. These properties were once perceived as undesirable, as were relatively inaccessible. Improved services therefore, have been a determining factor in attracting large numbers of people, which has had a reciprocal effect on development.

In Chapter Four, Framing the View, the interrelationship of tourism and photography are to be considered.

⁷ Fullers ferries advertise their family pass fare, as \$63 return. This figure does not include additional travel expenses, while on the island.

Back in 1981 Waiheke was a place that attracted hippies and alternative lifestylers. What struck me was that the locals were more tolerant and accepting of others' differences, and that they didn't interfere in other people's affairs. This differs from some of the residents of today who are less tolerant of those that are "outside the norm".

At one point with the changes taking place, we became disillusioned with the island. We sold our house for \$180,000, a phenomenal increase in five years. But that same house sold five years later for \$420,000, almost a ten-fold increase in ten years. This has been a fairly typical scenario, many of the old timers, who paid a pittance for their homes are being offered huge sums of money to sell up. It is a real dilemma for them, as they know that if they do sell, they will never be able to buy back onto the island again. Some count their lucky stars, as they are able to buy a decent house, for example, in the vicinity of Thames, and still have nearly \$300,000 to live out the rest of their lives in comfort. They are aware that if they stay on Waiheke they are likely to have to struggle to pay the rates bills.

The island used to be a location where social welfare sent people, because rents were cheap. In the early 1980s, you could rent baches on the beach at Onetangi for \$60 per week. Then a certain group of people began to change the image of the island. Rates increased, so that meant rental costs increased. This forced some residents to move off-island. Because of these rental increases, many of our original friends moved to places like Greenhithe, Titirangi and the Barrier.

The roading has also changed. There is far more curbing and channelling, with extra cars you need safe areas for pedestrians. Some visitors are unbelievable, walking four abreast up the middle of the main road, they must think they're on another planet. Locals know better and always walk single file. That's how the sign 'slow down you're here' came about.

Chapter Two

Changing Values

The economic environment in New Zealand, changed in the 1980s. This can be attributed to the policies of the National Party, continuing the reform strategy of the Labour Government, in an economic climate of recession and increasing hardship. Lloyd-Jenkins (2005) states,

Those hoping for a gentler, more egalitarian society in the 1990s, were disappointed. Not only did the gap between rich and poor increase, but there was now a gap between the well-off and the super-rich (p. 282).

Currently, many affluent New Zealanders are purchasing second, seaside properties. A nationwide phenomenon of rapid development in seaside localities has promoted change to those established communities. The lifting of restrictions to overseas buyers has evidenced a greater proportion of properties being purchased by foreign owners, often prepared to pay international rates for seaside real estate.

Lloyd-Jenkins (2005) maintains that currently,

The increased importance of grapes to rural economies saw a change in attitude and aesthetic take place. Vineyard complexes brought the attitude of the city to those areas (p. 282).

Waiheke's change has been dramatic, because of a variety of influences. It is attractive to potential buyers because of its proximity to Auckland, its proximity

to beaches and coastlines, and its proximity to vineyards.

Growth and development inevitably has had an impact on the established Waiheke community. A shift in group-dynamics has occurred. A new group of more affluent owners has entered the space of the more established group. The social composition of the new arrivals differs from the social composition of the established group. The permanent, established group on Waiheke, primarily includes farmers, retirees, local business owners and staff (including professional and non-professional), school-aged children and their caregivers, artists, beneficiaries, and those commuting to work in Auckland. The more recent arrivals, although containing members of the above social groups predominantly includes more affluent property owners, some of whom do not primarily reside on Waiheke. Tension can be created when the attitudes of urban dwellers encroach on established small community values. As suggested by Gallon, (2005) stories are becoming more prevalent of new owners preventing locals from parking outside their properties, because the parked vehicles, spoil *their* view of the sea. Thus it appears that some of the newcomers are introducing unwelcome actions, which are not aligned to the established values of the existing community. Services to, and within the island, appear to be in the process of being upgraded, to those of a city standard. For example, there are more frequent ferry sailings, an upgraded ferry terminal, and improvements to roading (curbing and channelling). Boutique vineyard restaurants, and cafés, are designed to attract the more affluent clientele.

The early attraction of the island has been identified by existing locals, as a special, and spiritual place that draws people to it. As Lyn-Holly (2002) expressed, the attraction of living on the island, is *nature inspired living*. This notion is reflected in the following passage from Lippard (1997),

The intersections of nature, culture, history and ideology form the ground on which we stand — our land, our place, the local. The lure of the local is the pull of place that operates on each of us, exposing our politics, and our spiritual legacies (p. 7).

Part of the initial attraction to the island was the belief that people were accepted for themselves. As profiled in Yoffe's 1998 study of Rangitoto, residents of Waiheke also valued their egalitarianism. In general, people were accepted for how they interacted with each other, not for what they had, or what status they held in their city life. Waiheke had its working life, and one fitted into it. Strong community ties bound the islanders together, particularly in times of hardship and loss. Locals believed they *belonged* to the island, and felt a certain *stewardship* towards *place*. Jokes were circulated about requiring a *Waiheke passport*. A worthy resident was considered to be someone who gave more than they took.

During the research process, many of the locals I spoke with referred to the *spiritual* attraction of Waiheke. Lippard (1999) states that "an island is a symbol of escape, isolation, distance from reality" (p. 54). Waiheke Island has been known as a regenerative place for members of mainstream society, to take *time out* from the stresses of city life.

Numerous residents spoke of the connection to the sea, enjoying the fact that Waiheke is physically separated from the mainland, by the Hauraki Gulf. To locals who have bonded with the island, and believe in the spiritual value of *place*, the perceived changes to the *intrinsic*¹ value of the land are unwelcome, as it has changed the apparent *character* of the island.

In the past decade, property investors have capitalised on Waiheke's popularity, recording some of the highest percentage increases in the country (Priest 2005). Whilst few would complain about their property values increasing markedly, a rising emphasis on *fiscal* value, has altered the basis for land ownership, on the island.

In the twenty-first century's hectic environment, a place that is less stressful is perceived as desirable. Irrespective of the reality of long hours of commuting, many residents feel that it is worth the effort to reside on Waiheke. Some commuters view the ferry trip as a time for peace and reflection, but for many it is a time to communicate and enjoy the company of friends. The shared experience of commuting by ferry, promotes camaraderie, unlike most other forms of transport to work. In my own life of journeying from the island to the

¹ Intrinsic value, in this context, refers to the elemental value of the land, in terms of those who have a spiritual connection to the island, in contrast to fiscal values, applied to the land.

mainland, a *breakfast club* was formed, seated at a regular table on the ferry. This was a group comprising as few as three, or as many as twelve locals, on any given day. It was a time to catch up, review the weekend, work, family, and plan get-togethers.

As in other small communities, certain sites are focal gathering points². These are places where locals can gather, where they can enjoy an active social life, and dialogue can occur, promoting unity. The proximity of Waiheke to Auckland, has meant that owners possessing *weekend* properties have an advantage of being able to reconstitute their community ties and associations on the weekends, whilst maintaining their urban lifestyle during the working week.

Lippard (1999) identifies a challenge to community bonding, when a location attracts large numbers of visitors. She says,

When a place becomes too popular, and too populous, when the intimacy is vanishing because its pleasures are shared by too many, its popularity wanes. Also vulnerable are the various ways in which places bind people together. Familiarity is one of them (p. 30).

With the upsurge in newcomers there are fewer, familiar faces on the island. Locals generally avoid the busy tourist areas during the peak season, or leave the island, renting out their properties at premium rates, to return once the visitors leave.

Many of the original residents are being marginalised by increased costs of living, and are taking advantage of the increase in property values. They are selling up and moving to alternative areas on the mainland, where certain properties³ are currently less expensive. The increase in property value has seen many of the early baches, purchased and renovated by new, more permanent owners.

The island has for many years held a disproportionately large artist community. Lippard (1999) suggests that “artists are attracted to cheap space, and become the flying wedge of tourism and gentrification” (p. 75). Artists and writers, seeking

² Popular gathering places for locals include the Saturday morning market at Ostend, and the Onetangi Beach Hotel on Sunday afternoons.

³ Properties in the Coromandel region, for example, Thames, Paeroa and Waihi, are proving popular, because they are currently less expensive than Waiheke houses (El Bakary, 2005).

an uplifting, yet serene environment were attracted to Waiheke particularly in the latter half of the 20th century. Low rents and property prices also contributed to the number of resident artists. However, the influx of newcomers and increased property values have seen many of the artist population move to more isolated areas on the mainland, Great Barrier Island, and the Chatham Islands. Changes in the rating values during the time of the now defunct Waiheke County Council saw displacement of some low-income families who enjoyed the relaxed lifestyle, and low rental costs that were available at the time.

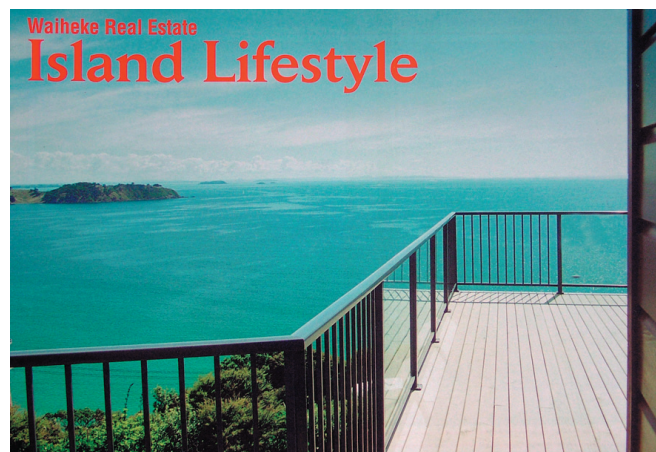


Figure 2:1. This advertisement clearly is advocating *lifestyle* as the primary appeal factor to potential property buyers. The original image was photographed by Allan Priest, of Waiheke Real Estate.

Currently, real estate agents promote *lifestyle* in their advertisements, suggesting that perhaps lifestyle is a commodity that may be purchased. According to Bauman (1993) “the good life has come to be thought of as akin to a continuous holiday” (p. 243).

MacCannell (1999) suggests that,

Lifestyle, a generic term for specific combinations of work and leisure, is replacing occupation as the basis of social relationship formation, social status and social action (p. 6).

Lifestyle, as it relates to life on the island, was once perceived as making a choice *between* a mainstream existence, *or* a quiet isolated life. It currently may appear that the term *lifestyle* pertains to a selected group having the option of simultaneously experiencing *both* mainstream, and island life. With multinational corporations owning multimillion-dollar properties on the island, the question arises as to whether lifestyle continues to be a consideration when purchasing property on Waiheke, or merely a statement of wealth, coupled with a good investment. The *perceived* value of property on Waiheke is clearly changing. El Bakary (2005) suggests, that whilst there are investors, purchasing on the island for profit, there are still affluent buyers, purchasing on the island, with the intention of Waiheke being their permanent home. These new residents, are attracted because of the relaxed lifestyle, and spiritual aspects, associated with living on the island.

Summary

The established Waiheke community is currently undergoing a transition from a small, close-knit community with its associated bonds, and established *values*. The *attitudes of the city* appear to have arrived, along with the new residents. With the increased focus on development, the current definition of the term *lifestyle* is clearly changing, along with the *fiscal values* attached to the land, on Waiheke.

Favourite places for locals to gather, are the Ostend market on Saturday mornings. The Onetangi Beach pub on Sunday afternoons, is popular for the whole family, listening to the bands play. The island has some great beaches for extended family barbeques, our favourite is Palm Beach.

Waiheke residents can be as involved or as private as they wish. One of the differences I see on the island, that appears to be not so common on the mainland, is that Waiheke has a seemingly larger politically motivated group of residents. The reason for this is that residents are very protective of the island, and many can be seen at the monthly Open Forum's held by the Auckland City Council.

On a fine day you can't fault the place. It can be a bit intimidating if you are trying to make a living here. Income is very seasonal, with a huge influx of visitors over summer. I've owned and operated stores in Blackpool and Surfdale, and now the Family Barrow in Oneroa. I've also been involved in doing house removals for people moving back to the mainland, and for years I have operated a stall at the Saturday market at Ostend. I bring vegetable produce and supplies back to the island in my truck, lots of unusual things, including water tanks. It is hard to start a business, but once you have established a niche, you can enjoy an enviable lifestyle. Long hours are involved, but I enjoy working with people, talking and listening, and bartering for supplies with them. Much of my job involves communicating with people. A popular misconception is that the island is a cheap place to live. On the contrary, living costs are higher for many reasons, for example added cartage costs, but also the fact is that island residents are a captive audience.

Chapter Three

Inside and Outside

Like so much else in the tourism paradigm, concepts of inside and outside are crucial. Going out to nature is supposed to recharge our batteries, run down from staying in our social niches. (Lippard 1999, p. 145)

Residents who commute to Auckland for work often remark that the best part of the week is being on the boat on Friday night, watching Auckland disappear into the distance, secure in the knowledge that you are *home* for the weekend. Living on an island, with its finite boundaries, inspires those who live there to *bond* and *identify* with place.

Grierson (2005) says,

Tourism has provided the impetus to the new as a new form of habitus.

Tourists or visitors pass through, rather than pause; gaze, rather than inhabit¹.

With its connection to development, tourism changes the perception of place, as lived and experienced by the local population. Waiheke locals often feel like they are *insiders* whilst visitors and newcomers are *outsiders*. This is echoed in reality as the visitors are physically on the outside looking in at the islanders as they go about their daily lives. As Urry (2002) suggests, the tourist “cannot evade his condition of outsider”(p. 91). Once newcomers have assimilated into a place and gained acceptance, they in turn feel guarded towards subsequent newcomers.

¹ Personal comments taken from a discussion in March 2005 at AUT.

Locals feel that *their space* has been invaded. They try to keep secret, favoured, secluded places².

Whilst *Waihekeans* consider themselves *insiders*, the island was once considered to be a place for people who were *outside the norm*, and not part of the *mainstream*. With the island's recent popularity, it appears that the divisions between Auckland and Waiheke are diminishing, if not in physical boundaries, then in attitudinal ones. The opinions and values of *mainstream* culture are permeating the *new Waiheke*.

Gablik (1991) suggests, that personal identity is something that is created, and for many who have lived on Waiheke, their personal identity has been *associated* with the island, and being perceived as living *outside the norm*.

As we begin to see the world through the lens of ecology, we also begin to reshape our view of ourselves. The holistic paradigm is bringing inner and outer — subjective and objective — worlds closer together. A world view in this sense is not something found 'out there', but is something individuals construct and create (p. 22).

Sarup (1996) also suggests, that the recent view of identity, is that it is fabricated, constructed, and in process. He says,

The outside of our concept of self could be called, perhaps, our public identity; and the inside of our identity, our private identity...the latter is how we see ourselves, and the former is how others have typified us (p. 14).

Perhaps then, what typifies an insider or an outsider on Waiheke, is not only how one assimilates into the community, but how one views oneself. Residents and newcomers who embrace the island community might consider themselves *insiders*, effectively calling themselves *Waihekeans*. In contrast, some newcomers who are not concerned about living within the island community, are literally *outsiders*, irrespective of whether they are a property owner, or a temporary visitor. It may be argued that that some residents live *within* the island framework, and others live *outside* it.

² An example of this can be seen at Cactus Bay, where the owner (John Spencer) removed the right of public access across his private land to this, and his other privately owned north facing beaches. There are many other prime beaches on Waiheke that are in private ownership.



Fig 3:1 The Gate, which is the sole entry to the Matiatia estate, a private residential locality.

Substantial, contemporary, modern houses are being constructed on *lifestyle blocks* in many parts of the island³. Owners of these properties, are often living their own personal economies; that of the isolate. Some of these residences, particularly on ridgelines, may be considered as being constructed *on* the landscape, rather than within it.

As Briggs (2005) suggests, very few of the multi-million dollar properties on the Matiatia estate, are permanently inhabited. This was a factor that was taken into consideration, when relocating to a more populated area of the island.

³ Specifically, lifestyle blocks Matiatia and Church Bay estates, provide examples of substantial modern properties.



Figure 3:2 and 3:3, Images of properties on *lifestyle blocks* on Matiatia estate, a residential locality, overlooking the harbour entrance, and the Hauraki Gulf.



Drinkrow (2005), commenting on the relationship of revivalist modern architecture to the land says,

The contemporary design's appropriational grip on its surrounds, however, treats them as a kind of desired substitute for the externality of nature: so the enveloped space is to place, what the fetish is, to the primal object of desire⁴.

A paradigm of inside versus outside may be applied to the way modern properties tend to utilise space. In contemporary residential design, consideration is often given to how the house relates to the outdoors. Constructed exterior living spaces extend the protective envelope of the structure into the surrounds, yet by its very nature, this design sets the habitat apart, as it is a *constructed* environment. An enclosure is provided from within which the occupiers can view the island. The habitus provides a *retreat*, removed from the island community.

Lloyd-Jenkins (2005) referencing Corbusier, states that “the modern(ist) house *was a machine for living in*. The interior and exterior *had to be integrated*” (p. 82). These contemporary modern houses being constructed on the island, are part of the *modernist revival* movement, which became evident in the mid 1990s. Lloyd-Jenkins (2005) argues that,

At this time, contemporary New Zealand architecture was heading to the beach. A new affluent class of New Zealander's were acquiring an additional beach or rural property...usually within sight of the sea (p. 289).

Rather than being inspired by the early baches as some believe, these structures owe their origins to modernism, now condoned by postmodern⁵ theory. Lloyd-Jenkins, (2005) states,

The idea was to chill out and relax in the rawest of natural landscapes, safe in the knowledge that contemporary architecture had rendered it benign (p. 291).

⁴ A quote taken from a conversation with Drinkrow, March 2005.

⁵ Lloyd-Jenkins (2005) states that in the early 1980s, postmodernism had brought modernism to heel. At first, postmodernism had been represented by a new classicism, which quickly ran through a gamut of revival styles. By the early 1990s it had run up against modernism itself. Modernism was welcomed back as a postmodern style (p. 288).

Fig 3:4 A discreet example of how the architect has integrated this property with the landscape, yet at the same time created its own environment.



Lippard (1997) associates local and intimate places, to a *circular notion*, that reinforces the concept that familiar places are invariably linked to people, and bonding. She suggests that linear time is implicated in the action of viewing, because it relates a *solitary* experience.

Around here, where we live, is a circular notion, embracing and radiating from the specific place where generalisations about land, landscape, and nature come home to roost. Out there is a line of sight, the view, a metaphor for linear time (p. 23).

In contrast to modern residences, most baches only have one or two single doors for egress. Outdoor spaces on such properties, tend to be less structured, less enticing for outdoor living. With minimal facilities at hand, occupants, especially on holiday, are more likely to vacate the premises to experience *place* outdoors, in the wider environment. Many original baches, with outstanding positions overlooking the sea, have very few windows facing the ocean. They were originally built to have most of their windows *overlooking the street* possibly denoting the builders' greater interest in social engagement. The social structuring of the bach primarily involves settlements that emphasise the occupiers' desire for the company of other like-minded people, whilst relaxing on holiday.

Lippard (1999) suggests, that camping is often not sought for the contemplation of nature, but for public camaraderie.

Camping was in fact an antidote to the isolation many feel in today's so-called communities. The real neighbourhoods and sociable ambience lacking in most towns and suburbs today, were being reconstituted on weekends (p. 145).

Notions of inside versus outside, directly relate to my image-making. These differing *aspects*, between contemporary modern houses looking *outwards*, and baches facing *in*, towards the street, have been a major influence on how I interpret transition on the island. These *aspects* address the intention of their owners. Clearly the *modern* houses *choose* to be isolated, or at least private from their neighbours, and the *earlier* baches, generally devoid of barriers or plantings from neighbours or the street, choose instead to *invite interaction* with the community. Physical boundaries between properties, or the street, rarely existed until the attitudes and preferences of *city-dwellers* arrived on the island, during the last decade of the twentieth century. These shifts in social stance, with distinctly emerging forms of habitus promoting isolation, are illustrations of marked cultural difference on the island.

The relationship of these concepts to my practice

The rationale for photographing contemporary properties from within, *looking out* at the landscape, contrasts to the external framing of baches that face *in* towards the street. This approach is based on the premise that these contemporary properties *frame* the island differently to houses built in earlier decades, and experience place in different ways from the inhabitants of the bach.

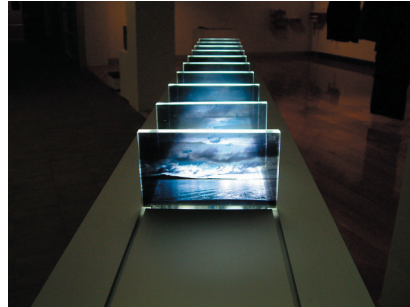
Notions of differing gazes, have been considered in relation to the positioning of the viewer. In all images, I have intentionally avoided photographing people. This allows the viewer to project themselves into the images, to witness and share the visual construction of the *contrasted* view of the environment.

The position of the viewer of the images of new Waiheke, *Framing the View*, allows the observer to share the position of the owner, invariably in an isolated, private location.



Fig 3:5 Framing the View. An example of a modern property with bifold doors. This creates a seamless vista, from the house, to the environment.

In the underlit installation, *Points of Reference*, the exclusion of passengers reflects my inclination to replicate the journey to and from the island, as a metaphor. This sequence encourages the viewer to make the same journey, as the freestanding design of the installation allows each viewer to experience the voyage from a different perspective. The reference points in this segment, are the boat, the destination, and the return journey indicating the repetition of cyclic movement.



Figured 3:6 Image of *Points of Reference*, reflecting the journey, to and from the island.

Imagery of baches, *Village Outlook*, has given me the greatest concern with the decision not to include people, as I refer throughout the exegesis to the importance of community involvement in the *old* Waiheke. These images also needed to *contrast* to the images of the *new* Waiheke. The orientation of the baches towards the street, in part solves this problem. A contrast is easily identifiable between the *new* houses looking out at the landscape, and the *old* houses looking in towards the street. This *invites* social interaction, especially since baches are approachable from the street. The implications of looking out, and

looking in, are clear. Further, in these images of baches the *framing and assembling* of images together, is the important aspect. The images have been shot of one particular bach, but it is in a village street surrounded by many more baches, therefore this may be considered as one segment of the whole. The position of the viewer then, is placed within this frame. The village wraps around him/her. Notions of *framing* will be considered further in chapter four.



Fig 3:7 Shows the positioning of baches in Surfdale, close to the street and to their neighbours. Most front doors were clearly visible, from the street.



Fig 3:8 An overview of Surfdale, to reflect density of established housing. Many baches are without fencing structures, remaining open to each other, and the street.

Summary

The position of the viewer, both as an inhabitant, and a viewer of the installation, is paramount. Personal economies, and the changing ways in which we build and inhabit the landscape, have been considered. Changing social considerations have been revealed, reflecting the modern desire for isolation, in contrast to the earlier inclination for social interaction.

There are stories now of how new beachfront owners are getting rusty cars towed away because they are obstructing the view. Some are having railway sleepers, or metal pegs, put in on the grass verge, so that no-one can park in "their" view of the beach.

Not all of the wealthy new arrivals are like that though. I shifted a lovely family over recently, who have just melted into the island, and the island has consumed them. Living on the island has changed their lives so much, they absolutely love it here. It's great to see new people that aren't just using the island as an investment.

Chapter Four

Framing the View

All art is a framing device for visual and/or social experience. It is difficult for an artform to dispense altogether with the frame, or to change frames on the spot, offering multiple views of the ways in which a space or place can be, and is, used (Lippard 1997, p. 286).

This chapter seeks to investigate the ways in which we experience place via the constructed apertures of picture windows. It relates this to the way we frame place via the *apertures* of the camera.

Waiheke Island boasts 96 kilometers of coastline. This factor, coupled with stunning seaviews, has seen the development of substantial modern houses on lifestyle blocks in prestigious locations, all over the island. These contemporary architectural structures create a framework from which the island is observed by their owners. The landscape is viewed from within these residences, as segmented 3D picture panoramas. These secluded properties, construct a point of difference, promoting an alternate interpretation of island life that contrasts with the intimate community of Waiheke. As Grierson (2005) suggests, “the framed view becomes their habitus, isolation, their personal economy”¹.

The ethic of contemporary modern architecture maintains that the *landscape is brought inside* the structure through the use of floor-to-ceiling glass, offering the spectator a seamless uninterrupted vista. This view is extended from the dwelling

¹ A quote taken from a conversation with Grierson, March 2005 (not retrievable data).

into the immediate surrounds via constructed devices such as balconies, decks, reflection pools and sculptured gardens. These provide a protective environment to which the occupier can retreat. The island is then observed as something *out there*. The ability for glass to retract to the edges of the frame, allows this uninterrupted extension of the structure to take place. These apertures invite the landscape in, but remain distinctly apart from it at the same time. Drinkrow (2005) says,

This peculiarly commodifying structure of viewing, which seems to be inherent to contemporary, new-world architecture, built to frame or capture a view, appears to be almost aggressively ocular, and really speaks of an acquisitive extension of the picture windows frame — a possessive envelope which stretches out from the aperture of the door/window².

This *possession* of the immediate environment via the viewing apertures of the modern dwelling, can be related to the acquisitional nature of (New Zealand) society. Lloyd-Jenkins (2005) affirms,

The fashionable home, a primary symbol of acquisition, sat uncomfortably in a society that, although aspirational and deeply acquisitional, wanted to emphasise the egalitarian (p. 1).

I suggest that the appropriative nature of the picture window, can also be related to the authoritative nature of photography, especially as performed by tourists. Both exhibit *possessive* characteristics, in relation to the landscape. Effectively, the concept and design of these modern houses, performs as a *viewing structure*, acting as if an *extension of the camera*. This is exemplified by Urry, (2002) who indicates that this new form of visual perception, is linked to the tourist gaze, and implicates the centrality of photography in these processes (p. 125).

² A quote taken from a conversation with Drinkrow, March 2005 (not retrievable data).



Fig 4:1 Image of modern property observing spectacular views, effectively a viewing structure.

Photographic representation, fragments the landscape, and in doing so establishes distance from the land, as Lippard (1997) states,

Conventional landscape photography tends to overwhelm place with image. It is usually presented in fragments rather than grounded sequences (p. 180).

In contemporary modern architecture, views are observed as segments of the landscape, rather like a sequence of artworks, decorating the wall. Properties with exceptional views, are considered to be more desirable in a society driven by acquisition. This poses the question whether the view itself is a commodity to be traded, like works of art, implicating fiscal values attached to the land.

In comparison, only limited segments of the environs are seen through the use of minimal glass in original baches and rural homes. These dwellings are less likely to have picture windows. Baches were originally created with the intention of being a serviceable sanctuary, promoting interaction with the wider environment. This was the primary attraction of location for the occupiers. This is in contrast to the level of comfort that the occupiers would normally achieve in their permanent homes³ elsewhere. It appears that the *raison d'être* of the bach contrasts dramatically with the principles behind modern, part-time residences being built on Waiheke.

Lloyd-Jenkins (2005) suggests that certain modern, residences illustrate the designer's refusal to "touch forelocks to the passerby" (p. 96). He contends that for a number of architects, the view from, or to the street, is not important. The breaking down of family ties and the resultant desire for individual private space may also be a contributing factor.

In contrast, the orientation of baches towards the street, promoted social engagement with the passerby. The orientation of these dwellings demonstrate an indifference to outstanding seaviews, which many original properties afforded. Whilst the origin of the specific *bearing* of these baches may well have been influenced by colonialism, I propose their indifference to potential seaviews was not a function of design, but rather the *personal choice*, of the owner/builders. The majority of baches were constructed in the early *twentieth century* in *settlements*

³ With the increase in property values, many holiday baches, have been sold and converted into permanent homes, therefore their current use differs from the original intentions of the owner/builders.

throughout the island. This hypothesis, based on time frames, is supported by the observation of Urry (2002) who quotes Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998), "By the *mid-nineteenth* century houses were built with their regard to their prospects as though they were a *kind of camera*" (p. 79).

As suggested by Urry (2002), "The typical tourist experience is to see named scenes *through a frame*, such as the hotel window, and the car windscreen" (p. 90). He suggests that the medium of photography is synonymous with tourism, in fact both became popular at a similar time, in the latter half of the 19th century.

Prior to that time, travel contained a scholastic element, being the opportunity for discourse via the ear, rather than as eyewitness observation, as the pleasant reward of travel (p. 147).

Framing has long been used as a device in art, and in particular in photography. There have been numerous debates throughout the centuries as to the subjective interpretations that the creating and selection of a frame, has made on an artwork. It is this selection process that has come under criticism, as the resulting image is the individual's own interpretation of what is viewed.

As Urry (2002) suggests,

The power of the photograph stems from its ability to pass itself off as a miniaturisation of the real, without revealing either its constructed nature or its ideological content" (p. 128).

These *constructed* images have the ability to project a theory, or tell a story. Sontag (1979) suggests, that all other forms of seeing and remembering were changed with the advent of the photograph.

As Lippard (1999) suggests, artists expose life, offering the viewer new insights and experiences. "Artists have always travelled and provided a *lens* through which the rest of us look around" (p. 4). This concept, relates to my image-making. Images have been deliberately constructed to exemplify the theory I pose. That is, that these picture windows are effectively *living lenses*, and that the occupiers within, are effectively experiencing place through these lenses.



Fig 4:2 Image of a modern property, with glass walls, acting like a *living lens*. Changes in weather conditions would be more dramatic in this environment.

Green (1990) states, “the language of views thus prescribed a particular visual structure to the very existence of nature” (p. 88).

The way we view and inhabit the landscape around us, and what we *choose* to see, has clearly changed. Properties once considered untenable, because of poor building platforms or poor access, are currently considered more desirable and valuable, if they offer excellent views. Our modern society’s attraction to views, I propose, may be linked to the propensity of New Zealanders to travel and observe spectacular sights around the world (tourism), *en masse*, in the latter half of the twentieth century. I suggest that there is a definitive link between the touristic experience of viewing, and the desire to *capture* a view, within one’s own residence.

Urry (2002) suggests, that shifts took place even earlier.

1840 then is one of those remarkable moments when the world seems to shift and a new patterning of relationships becomes irreversibly established. This is the moment when the tourist gaze, that peculiar combining together of the means of collective travel, the desire for travel and the techniques of photographic reproduction, becomes a component of western modernity (p. 148).

In this thesis project, my intention is to create a visual and theoretical framework to establish a correlation between the constructed apertures for viewing (doors and windows), and the apertures of the camera — effectively both *framing the view*. Once the view is observed through the frame, it becomes a symbol, of the original article. These representations of the view are *contained within an aluminium frame*, which parallels my exhibited images. This positions the viewer through the creative use of *framing*, to observe that we *choose* what to see. Effectively I am emphasising the *structure of framing*, on many levels. For this reason, the external frame has been an important aspect of the exhibition and has been specifically created.

Backlit digital images, *Framing the View*, concepts behind their construction

Architectural standard, anodised aluminium is commonly used in upmarket, modern houses. This product has higher specifications to allow outsized glass panes, and will withstand more exposed locations than regular aluminium windows. I have paralleled the use of substantial anodised aluminium, to frame my large digital images. This replicates and reinforces the concept of scale. These large digital images are backlit, with light being an integral element in the images, as it is in the house design. This notion is explored by positioning the viewer within a contained, artificial environment. He/she then gazes out towards picture-panoramic views, *illuminated by light*. These images correspond to the changing *living lens*, observed by these modern properties on Waiheke.

Concepts relating to *Village Outlook*, analogue images of baches

Imagery of baches includes the unstructured environment, outside of the dwelling, and the obvious orientation of the bach towards the street. The viewer participant is encouraged to handle the images. This *handling* is indicative that these structures have been handled by *hundreds of hands*, and are essentially intimate spaces. Images being linked together reinforces the notion of community bonding. This design positions and *involves* the viewer as an essential component in this segment of the installation.

Concepts involved in the design of the underlit installation

Points of Reference

This section links the old and the new, and conveys the notion of the movement of people to and from the island. The rationale behind these transparencies, mounted in perspex blocks, is to *highlight a pathway*. Individual, spaced images, are a metaphor for *steps* on a journey. Being freestanding, this central installation is designed to be viewed from many angles, and can be observed from either direction. Through positioning, it can be viewed as one compilation of images on a journey. The connection to the sea is analogous to the notion of the fluidity of life. The images depict a *return trip* promoting the concept that *change is a cycle, rather than a linear experience*.

Summary

The way in which we view our habitus has changed. As suggested, this may be a function of touristic experiences. Modern houses are constructed, not only to take advantage of views, but to appropriate and integrate them into the structure. Framing the view therefore, is an essential element of design in contemporary architecture. Frames may be related to as *living lenses*, linked to the *apertures* in cameras, providing a justification for the centrality of photography to the research question.

I'm witnessing things I've never seen before. School kids have commuted before, but now on Subritsky's ferries they are plugging their laptops in during the crossing. That was different from when my kids first went to school, they couldn't wait to get out and get to the beach. It really was such a great time, such a caring community, and so safe, you could leave your kids with anyone. They would happily go to sleep at other people's houses while we were out socialising. Being a small community, you tended to socialise in your own and friends' homes. We had wonderful times, family barbeques down at Palm Beach, well before the community gas barbeques were put there. There weren't any theatres or nightclubs, and only one pub. The island community is all about people, sharing and gathering together.

The island is changing. With the new school in Ostend, for the first time, we are witnessing zoning. People are wanting to pay higher rents, just to be in the new school zone. For the first time recently we witnessed serious road rage — in Oneroa, right outside our shop!.

It's not always easy accepting these changes, although my feelings tend to fluctuate on that matter. I still love the island, but it can never be the way it was, when we first came here to live.

Conclusion

This thesis project is all about a story, the visual and written narrative, of the transition of Waiheke Island. It is a *process of change*, aligned to the *processes* evident in my exhibition.

The rationale for including the personal narrative of *Terry*, provides *voice* to the local community, and an example of *lived experience*, without which this account of the transition of the island, would not be complete. Reflections from Waiheke residents, permeate the exegesis, to enhance the *shared knowledge of place*.

The first two chapters, involving social history, were necessary to explain the reasons, for *why and how*, the transition has occurred. This written evidence contextualises the reasons *why* I began this research project. As both a photographer, and an inhabitant of Waiheke, I was aware that I was ideally positioned to be able to record a transition, in visual and written form.

Chapter One, *Forces of Attraction*, emphasised the role that visitors have played in the transformation taking place on the island. These changes would not have been so dramatic, had the island remained isolated.

Chapter Two, *Changing Values*, highlighted community values, and how fiscal values have brought about a sometimes unwelcome change. The intrinsic value of land was implicated in the transition.

Chapters Three and Four serve to contextualise my visual practice.

Chapter Three, *Inside and Outside*, substantiates the rationale behind the images. The chapter highlights personal economies, *our position as a viewer* within society, and suggests how society is not only changing on Waiheke but in the wider arena. The changing ways in which we *inhabit* the landscape were addressed.

Chapter Four, *Framing the View*, highlights the changing ways we view the landscape. As Drinkrow (2005) suggests, my images pose a symmetry between the way we *experience place* through the window, and through the lens. What ultimately is important to me in these images is not the actual imagery, but the contextual *framing*.

This Exhibition comprises of three distinct sections.

The first, *Village Outlook*, depicts images of *old* Waiheke, and reinforces the notion of community. Baches are in close proximity to each other and the street, and are linked together accordingly. The tactile character of the exhibit supports the viewpoint that *many hands* have experienced these places. The scale and number of images replicate the size and profusion of baches. This factor is in contrast to the exclusivity of large modern residences.

The second, underlit segment, *Points of Reference*, indicates a journey to and from the island. The images depict the boat, as it passes reference points along the journey. These stages signal the diverse, contributing factors, that have combined to create a transition. The underlit feature of the exhibit, effectively *lights the way* from the old to new, Waiheke. The significance of the movement of people to and from the island is implicated in the transition.

In the final section, *Framing the View*, three large digital images, akin to massive *apertures*, depict exceptional views, from isolated properties. The scale of these images, explores the notion that these properties act like vast *viewing structures*, inviting the landscape in, yet remaining distinctly apart.

The rationale of creating three distinct sections, allows me to explore, by contrasting and comparing, three differing photographic technologies, whilst maintaining the integrity of the transition. *Change* is thereby evidenced on numerous diverse levels.

I found Waiheke to be an uplifting and spiritual place. I believe the island to be extraordinary, ideal for nurturing the mind, the body, and the soul. Perhaps it is Lippard's (1997) observation about lost connections, that best explains the motivation behind the body of work, submitted for this thesis.

Those of us raised in city and suburb (and many in the countryside as well) feel that humans have lost contact with the world of earth, sky, sea. We do not seem to be able to regain consciousness or even healing, except by imitation, or summoning up primal images, that recall our lost connections (p. 16).

In the process of this thesis project, many influences have become internalised. The opportunity has arisen for time to reflect. Change cannot be perceived as all good, or all bad. Progress can enhance a society, but there are negative aspects of growth. None of us are locked in a time-warp, therefore change is inevitable. It is how we adapt to change, and adopt new strategies, which maintains the integrity of our culture and makes growth a positive reality.

It has been my intention to *expose the changing ways we view and inhabit the landscape*, proffering an insider's knowledge of this place, and encouraging viewer-participants interaction with this body of work. My hope is that this study provokes new ways of seeing, encouraging understanding and consequently creating, a more positive link between the old and the new.

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