

Social Sculpture and The Thirsting Millions : An exploration of utopian propositions.

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2013

School of Art and Design

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An exegesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art & Design (MA&D)

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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.

Acknowledgments

I would like to commence with an acknowledgment to public participants and facilitators – so many of whom became collaborating artists for this project - and; without whom, all of this work would not have been fulfilled. Also to my partner, Su Hendeles, my children and grandchildren; and to Sue McNab, Dale Fitchett, Paul Cullen, and Dienneke Jansen, who gave so generously of their knowledge, wisdom and time in order to keep me moving toward the finish.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to our world. A world that I hope, one day soon, through the creative, artistic endeavours of every human being taking the time to transform their lifework into an artwork, will become a truly living and joyful organism instead of one that is on the brink of destruction.

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Abstract

This project explores the fissures and junctures between the utopian propositions that everyone has equal intelligence, that everyone is an artist, and that there is an art that the people can call their own.

The project re-examines the tensions that exist between the high art world and the public, focussing on the potentials that might occur if these tensions were bridged using social sculpture and emancipatory discourse theories of Joseph Beuys, Jacques Ranciere et.al.

These concepts are surveyed by means of participatory events and discourse, locating the events in diverse sites across New Zealand in order to test their capacity to function in the current cultural and art worlds.

Introduction

This project explored and tested “traditional relationship between art object, the artist and the audience.” (Bishop, 2012, p. 2), opening new territories and simultaneously reducing, or even eliminating, the distance of this between-ness. It also aimed to blur the traditional relationships between audience and object, artist and object and artist and audience. The audience were invited to become artists and test the location of the art – in the object, the situation, the conversations, the actions and the relationships between art and life. The work was positioned to “place pressure on conventional modes of artistic production and consumption under capitalism” (ibid.) through a variety of methods including collective authorship, operating both within and beyond the gallery, and an open-ended operational framework.

Joseph Beuys proposed that every person has the capacity to be an artist who can sculpt their lifework into an artwork (Beuys & Harlan, 2004); this project probed this viewpoint, seeking to empower and engage people from all walks of life with events where they could become contributing artists and participate in the making of an art they could call their own (Danto, 1997, p. 179). An objective was for people to gain insight into their capacities to discover greater degrees of emancipation, freedom or to reshape their lifeworks; also to move from an external locus of control toward an internal locus of control in areas of their lives that were currently perceived as rendering them powerless.

Ideas and philosophies with utopian persuasions, conveyed by Jacques Ranciere, Joseph Beuys, Arthur Danto and others were employed as starting points and modified through on-going conversations with participants. These points of departure were embraced with the realistic understanding that a complete realisation of any of them was highly improbable, yet each had potential to create different opportunities.

There are “methodological points about researching art that engages people and social processes.” (Bishop, 2012, p. 5). Written documentation can only give glimpses into “the affective dynamic that propels artists to make these projects and the people to participate in them.” (ibid, p.5). First-hand experience is necessary to understand these dynamics, preferably over a long period of time.(ibid, p.7).

An action research methodology¹ has been employed. I created an event, and then revised the method before creating the next event. Flexibility within the method was required to accommodate a diverse range of venues and situations. In every event, the primary goal has been to engage people in social sculpture - the sculpting of thoughts, speech and action – through the utilisation of site and/or other materials that had some degree of spectacular attraction.

¹ “Put simply, action research is “learning by doing” - a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again. While this is the essence of the approach, there are other key attributes of action research that differentiate it from common problem-solving activities that we all engage in every day [:].....the researcher studies the problem systematically and ensures the intervention is informed by theoretical considerations. Much of the researcher’s time is spent on refining the methodological tools to suit the exigencies of the situation, and on collecting, analyzing, and presenting data on an ongoing, cyclical basis.” (O’Brien, 1998)

Throughout the work, opportunities to investigate the potentials of what a more democratic form of art would encompass arose, developing inclusive and empowering propositions for a more universal art-making practice.

The thesis is constituted as practice-based work accompanied by this exegesis, which provides deeper insight to the practical and theoretical concerns the project engaged with. Contained in the appendices are collections of articles describing the project as it developed. The thesis is constituted as 80% practice based, accompanied by this exegesis, worth 20%.

Key Agendas

In 2010, a number of issues commanded my attention. I pursued a participatory art that communicates to all people, that challenged, confronted and healed. I also chased an art that bridged gaps between the Art-world and the public.

As my project evolved, I began to seek an art that empowered freedom of thought, expression and creativity. My project sought to be accessible to all. Every person could potentially engage with participatory projects as an artist. Through this change, the work established a more pedagogical context, seeking to arouse emancipatory methods. This work was largely influenced by Jacques Ranciere's book, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Ranciere, 1991) and Joseph Beuys' theory of social sculpture (Rojas, 2010). A late influence emerged during the work as I began to explore Paulo Freire's discourse on education as a liberatory force (Freire, M. B. Ramos/1970).

The project embraced freedom of expression and, consequentially, was operated on a basis of free voluntary participation and free of monetary charges to participants. These utopian positions were indicative, rather than directive. Conversations negotiated both the idealism they upheld and the reality of their improbability. Opportunities to imagine journeys toward these ideal positions emerged.

A primary intention behind this project was to raise the confidence and capacity of marginalised people and to reignite their potentials to create and to appreciate the creative endeavours of others. A parallel objective was to raise the questioning and understanding of both marginalised and privileged² people's creative endeavours.

² There has been a long and sustained discourse on social exclusion that differentiates marginalised and privileged people under various systems, particularly in terms of government. In contemporary society, this has tended to be most prevalent within the context of Capitalism, Socialism and Communism. Both terms refer to access, or lack of access, to certain advantages in society. Privilege is generally considered to be primarily gained through various mechanisms, of which money and higher education are probably the most significant in our culture. Having access to these resources empowers greater control over those who have not got access to them which, in turn, further marginalises those who do not have access and also further privileges those who do.

Key Methods

I purposefully engineered events which promoted public participation through action and conversation. I embraced dual roles of facilitator and observer, and I regularly became a co-participant. These roles became increasingly intertwined as the project progressed.

People were invited to participate in events which involved thoughtful engagement, with the option to express themselves creatively through mark-making (including writing and conversation). They were free to participate, or not, as they liked, engaging to whatever degree they wished. Throughout the events, three major principles were developed.

- Freedom of expression was foremost, providing it did not involve information about another person without their consent³.
- Participants were encouraged to respond with artistic qualities of creativity, originality, inspiration, imagination and intuition. Aesthetics were encouraged.
- The intent was that any idea expressed could be questioned in order to test its validity; we would meet without any basis of superiority or inferiority.

A series of events were developed based upon these principles and concepts. Participants were invited to take part in the earliest stages by bringing an empty water bottle, writing a message to put into it, and then gluing it together with other participant's bottles to make a wall. During their participation, discursive conversation was encouraged and ideas were often developed and questioned at length. Within a few events, the project developed its name, NZ's Wailing Wall, and the engagement criteria had been modified significantly. Each event had the potential to become modified as a result of conversations with participants. Not all participation took place at the events; conversations and messages contributed to the project through telephone conversations, and other channels, including the internet. The events began in Whanganui, then extended to Dannevirke, Palmerston North and Auckland before travelling the length and breadth of New Zealand.

Through conversation, I provoked reciprocal mark-making via speech; conversants' voices made marks on the thoughts of those listening and vice versa as the roles were exchanged. From these marks, refined or new ideas were posited and new marks overlaid preceding ones. This iterative process continued until the work was abandoned, laid aside, or resolved.

As experiments developed, elements of leisure and play became incorporated into both the events and the discourse. An environment was developed within which people could relax and separate from other modes of thought, encouraging playful actions and conversation, encouraging people to play in their own way with the event. Moreover, participants were sometimes invited to take control of the event.

Alongside these events, a virtual space was set up on Facebook. It was used to document the events using photographs and notes I made, as a tool for inviting people to participate and also as

³ Exceptions to this did occur, for example public figures such as politicians were accepted as valid subjects for written and verbal discussion.

a forum space for people to follow, participate and to freely offer feedback about the events and ideas expressed there⁴.

During the final presentation of this thesis, the intention is to increase a focus on giving back from the project to the people. Participants will be invited to engage with existing messages directly as well as contribute with their own. This will stage new opportunities for critical and evaluative thoughts, from which new and refined thoughts, speech and action may be sculpted. It is anticipated that advanced breadth and depth of artistic engagement from the participants will occur. It is also intended that a free newspaper will be produced that gives an account of the development of the *NZ's Wailing Wall* project. This will be made available to people who come to, or pass by, the event.



Figure 1. Turner, 2012, *Participation at Stewart Island* [Social Sculpture]



Figure 2. Hendeles, 2011, *Participation at Cape Reinga* [Social Sculpture]

⁴ Feedback could also be given about the virtual site itself.

Critical Context and Key Concepts:

Freedom of Speech is one of the cornerstones of human rights in modern democratic societies. Conversational art has found that a fertile ground exists in the “creative facilitation of dialogue and exchange” (Kester, 2004, p. 8). This project utilises conversation as a primary vehicle for sculpting new thoughts, speech and actions. Beuys championed the ideals of freedom of expression and direct democracy as essential elements for the future of humanity. In his theory for the expanded concept of art, he reasoned that thought, speech and the will were sculptable materials (Beuys & Harlan, 2004, p. 1). Every person had the responsibility to turn their lifework into an artwork. Beuys’ ideological view, stated repeatedly, was that “everyone is an artist” (ibid, pp.21-27). This project advocates that to understand this position, people need to meet as equals.

Ranciere proposed that people meet as intellectual equals (Ranciere, 1991, p. 18). During my many public conversations, there was clear evidence that many people experienced negative responses to their artworks from an early age, which have triggered a steady breakdown in artistic confidence and practise. This has consolidated into a fear of being an artist or even pursuing creative ideas. Current research has revealed that there is a developing creativity crisis in many places in the developed world (Bronson & Merryman, 2010), (Robinson, 2013). In contrast, people who are educated to believe that they have artistic capacity are typically confident in exploring and expressing their creative capacities. It can be reasoned that, when not understanding one’s own capacities, there is little understanding of the work of others and, hence, an inability to engage and understand their work.

The Ignorant Schoolmaster (Ranciere, 1991) focussed on the field of education, but its emancipatory energy is applicable to the context of effective conversational art. There is an old saying that ‘they don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.’ To meet as intellectual equals manifests a sense of value of, and care for the other, whilst also overcoming communication barriers that occur when one assumes superiority.

Danto (Danto, 1997, pp. 175-190) highlights such barriers when he describes the failure of the great museums and art galleries in their bid to impart knowledge to the public. The public never came because these institutions didn’t communicate in a language that was relevant to them. Danto says that “we all thirst for meaning” (ibid, p.188). He describes how community-based art and participatory projects have begun to break down the barriers and equalise and expand the field of art (ibid. pp.180-189).

The reasons for participation in the project were varied. My involvement tended to be dynamic, responding to the thoughts, speech and actions of the participants⁵. During this project, my personal motivations moved between rousing participants to engage, to encouraging them to participate as artists, raising awareness and consciousness of emancipatory and pedagogical potentials, and invoking a sense of freedom, liberty or communal empowerment. Bishop considers a number of these attributes as being desirable in today’s art climate (ibid, pp.3-6).

Referring to Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), Bishop says that participation “rehumanises a society rendered numb and fragmented by the repressive instrumentality of

⁵ And to larger issues present such as social, economic, ecological successes or disasters that may infiltrate the current occupation of time, space or place surrounding the event.

capitalist production.” (Bishop, 2012, p. 11) This encapsulates the driving passion for me to create participatory projects, yet through these projects, I also became more conscious of, and sensitised to, the hopelessness that taints many facets of Western humanity, including art.

Bishop’s comment, “Individualism is viewed with suspicion, not least because commercial art and museum programming continue to revolve around lucrative single figures”, (ibid, p.12) is pertinent to my work. This project has sought to provoke the antithesis of this through collective authorship.

Significant reasons for engaging people in these projects are to develop a sense of hope through creative sculpting of thoughts, speech and the will, to overcome the destructive forces at work and to re-create the resources we need to nourish ourselves and the world around us. Hope has an evangelical tone to it and there is a sense of being an art missionary in this work. Bishop says that participatory art projects are “an important buzzword in the social inclusion discourse” (ibid, p.13), which changes the nature of art production. “Instead of supplying the market with commodities, participatory art is perceived to channel art’s symbolic capital towards constructive social change.” (ibid, pp.12-13).



Figure 3. Turner, 2011, *Questioning commodification of art and seeking symbolic capital toward constructive social change* [Social Sculpture]

Danto’s argument was that the great cultural collections failed to attract the public (Danto, 1997, pp. 175-190) because the people did not thirst for the knowledge the museums held; they sought “an art of their own” (ibid, p.179). Danto posits that the traditional museums dictated what work was stored inside them, along with the hegemonies that created them; however these are currently in the process of being complimented with a multitude of works owned by specific, often marginalised, groups or communities that appreciate them (ibid, p.184).

One of the problems with many works of art is that they don’t communicate to, or belong in, public time and space. Even participatory art (including conversational art / dialogical art) is often focussed on an intellectual art world that is relatively incomprehensible to the public. It was, and remains, important for this project to bridge that gap, making its art accessible to the public, whilst still summoning discourse in ‘higher’ artworlds. Art must belong to all, a utopian aspiration currently compromised by access issues and understanding due to prevailing structures which act as gate-keepers and maintainers of some of the current marginalising and privileging social paradigms.

This project adopts Shelley Sacks illumination of Beuys concept for the 'Expanded Conception of Art'. Thoughts, speech and the will are materials that can be sculpted (Beuys & Harlan, 2004, p. ix), much like clay, they can be shaped and moulded, as they were by significant people in our lives when we were children.

One of Joseph Beuys' fundamental messages, delivered again and again in lectures, interviews, and artworks, was that human beings can and must learn to be creative in many different ways. His famous slogan "Everyone is an artist" was not meant to suggest that all people should or could be creators of traditional artworks. Rather, he meant that we should not see creativity as the special realm of artists, but that everyone should apply creative thinking in their own area of specialization-whether it is law, agriculture, physics, education, homemaking, or the fine arts. (Rothfuss).

Based upon Barthe's concept of "Death of the Author" (Barthe, 1967), the making of art requires at least two participants - a maker of something to be appreciated as art, and an appreciator to validate that something as art. Hence, if an artist is one who makes art, an artist cannot exist in the singular as collaboration is required to make art. As a dynamically fluid, social construct, art must communicate between people, although the communication may not be in a literal language. Moreover, art communicates within one or more art worlds, and is validated by being appreciated within at least one (Becker, 2008, pp. 35-36). There is a necessary relationship between the artist who makes a work and the artist who appreciates a work as art. As *Arbeitsrat für Kunst's* manifesto (1919) states: "Art and people must form an entity. Art shall no longer be a luxury for the few, but should be enjoyed and experienced by the broad masses." (Dempsey, 2005, p. 126).

Novitz describes the importance of "the uniqueness of a work of art" (Novitz, 2003, p. 71). Originality is an important characteristic of art. It is the result of creativity working from a base of what is known toward something new, something not yet known. This uniqueness is the precursor to the crafting of an artwork. The artwork is an expression of art – the unknown - made visible, audible, or in some other way sense-able using known skills or crafts. This project worked with an assumption, drawn logically from the conditions above, that it is possible for art to exist without being resolved as an artwork; it can be momentarily expressed solely through speech and/or action.(Beuys & Harlan, 2004, p. 1).

Sacks describes Aesthetics as the antithesis of anaesthetics (Beuys & Harlan, 2004, p. ix). Whereas anaesthetics numb the senses, aesthetics enliven or activate them. The word aesthetic came from the Greek root *aisthetikos*, which pertains to sense and perception (Morris, 1981, p. 21)⁶. From

⁶ Aesthetics differ from affects in that affects are sensory responses and are not stimulated directly by the event. They are stimulated from an association with a prior experience of the same or similar sensory provocation (Macey, 2001, p. 5). Aesthetics, by contrast, are sensory responses to the original nature of the sensory stimuli. Put another way, an aesthetic sense does not respond to copied or previously known sensory stimuli. This is the sensory domain of an affect.

Deleuze and Guattari define affect in terms of how one body is affected by another, with an associated increase or decrease of ability to act upon the affected body (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xvi). By this definition, an artwork may affect a viewer and such an affect may have an empowering or disempowering quality to it, but many sensory responses to artworks are neither directly empowering or disempowering. An aesthetic response such as fear could also become a disempowering affect if the fear is subsequently aligned with a previous experience.

this, I interpret senses to include intellectual and emotional senses, sensitivities and sensibilities. Simply put, the aesthetic causes you to think, 'Wow! I have never sensed it like that before.' I have found that engagement is essential – engagement from both the art-makers and art-appreciators. It is important to engage the senses actively and critically. A function of the appreciator is to critique art. This is a necessary aspect of proper validation of the art which, when done well, has an aesthetic quality, potentially invoking a reciprocal enlivening in the maker. It is necessary to clarify that judgements are important in terms of both the ideas of meeting as intellectual equals and also meeting as artists. Art becomes art by making a judgement that it is art.

Traditionally, Western definitions of art and aesthetics (such as Kant, Schiller⁷, Dickie, et.al.) have been written and endorsed by people from privileged classes, based upon their cultural values and sampled from their social circles. This position has ignored and/or undermined the values and aspirations of marginalised people, disempowering their voice. It disrespects democracy, freedom and equality in its own realm, despite espousing these values as truths that should be embraced in contemporary society. It is my observation that these attitudes contribute to a dulling of the sensitivities of the disempowered classes, with corresponding degradation of creative capacity, artistic confidence and aesthetic appreciation.

⁷ In *Artificial Hells*, by Claire Bishop (2012), she describes how Schiller's aesthetics is instrumentalised as he fuses the two opposing poles of physical sensuousness and intellectual reason in order to achieve a morality that reaches beyond the individual." (Bishop, 2012, p. 272). I wonder if the aesthetic is situated in the liminal interstices between these two opposing poles, slipping beyond the clutches of morality in order to invoke an experience that transcends it... i.e. If immorality is invoked by desire, then the aesthetic transcends it as desire has no place in the aesthetic. For this reason, morality is no longer an issue as it is also transcended due to its inherent relationship with immorality. Bishop also comments in terms of her frustration at the toothlessness of many participatory projects due to their perception that they must prioritise moral issues. She suggests that many issues that could and should be boldly confronted, putting moral concerns to the side (Bishop, 2012, pp. 187-190)

Control

One of the more fundamental questions this project has confronted is the question of control. If every person is to engage as an equal then, ideally, they should have equal power and, consequentially, control. This often meant encouraging people to move their locus of control from external to internal in order to own their own thoughts, speech and will. Without this, their responses would have been controlled by external stimuli rather than internal, creative energy.

Initially, I controlled the project by creating an event and inviting people to participate by bringing a plastic bottle that had contained pure New Zealand water. People were free to choose whether, or not, they participated and free to write messages about whatever they liked, and in whatever way they wished. Whilst some may have perceived that the materials were politically loaded, it was not my intention to position any particular political agenda in the work. Each participant was free to read the event, materials, experience and any other aspect in their own way and to express themselves accordingly, through dialogue, writing or actions. During this phase, for various reasons, many potential participants didn't bring their own bottles. This did not exclude them from participating in discourse but I did perceive a sense of disappointment that they could not participate in the making of the wall from them.

As a result of this perception and numerous discussions, I arranged a source of empty bottles. This gave people the option to choose to bring a bottle, or to participate with one supplied by me. I faced a dilemma when I provided bottles. I liberated people to participate in the writing of messages and adding them to the wall. However, I retained control of the situation by providing the specific materials I had requested. The type of bottles became a non-negotiable parameter of the project.



Figure 4. Hendeles, 2011, *Discourse with participant about whether, or not, messages should be able to be read by participants* [Social Sculpture]

As the project developed, ideas and feedback from the participants were incorporated into the on-going discourse and propositions were debated, negotiated and developed. I frequently relinquished some control during the events and encouraged participants to take more control. It sometimes felt like a conjuror's trick. Given a series of choices, I could manipulate participants' responses to achieve the outcomes I desired. Over time, I developed responses to popular discussions and could channel the direction of the conversation. This distressed me as it had the potential to compromise the participants'

locus of control being internalised. I made efforts not to control the conversation, yet I often caught myself subconsciously steering conversations and actions. For example, youths sometimes asked me if they could kick the wall over. I could say, "of course you can", and then invite them to think about why they wanted to do that and to consider writing messages as an alternative method of expression.

Sometimes, I invited others to take greater degrees of control of the event. For example, I invited some participants to take my video camera and document the event in whatever manner they liked. On several occasions, I left people to facilitate/supervise the event, removing myself for a period of time.

Sometimes I left the event totally unsupervised for a time, creating an opportunity for participants to engage without my control. I left an assortment of signs, to briefly explain the project and to describe what I was inviting them to do to be included in the project. Participants were free, in the absence of any supervision, to participate according to the guidelines on the signs or to engage with it in some other manner of their choice.

Throughout the hundreds of hours that the events took place, nobody intentionally damaged or took any of the equipment that was present. Whilst they were free to do so, especially when I was absent, people seemed to respect or embrace the project and the property associated with it sufficiently to resist compromising it. This transformation reflects Hooks' words, "in which those who help and those who are being helped help each other" (1994, p. 54) and moves toward freeing the work from distorted control.



Figure 5. Turner, 2011, *Observing the unsupervised event from a distance* [Social Sculpture]

Analysis of the locus of control in three Artworks, compared with the NZ's Wailing Wall Project

The following case studies examine shifts of power and empowerment between artist and participant, particularly in terms of where the ownership and control of the work lies and who is empowered as artist.

Thomas Hirschhorn – Bataille Monument (2002)

Hirschhorn's *Bataille Monument* was a participatory work made for *Documenta 11* in an impoverished Turkish settlement in Kassel, Germany. Hirschhorn paid some youths from the local Turkish-German community to form, activate, maintain and dismantle the complex installation. He also maintained a personal presence during the event, meeting with his workers for meals and accompanying them to locations such as the hospital and the courthouse. Lind criticises Hirschhorn for failing to give his participants recognition as co-creators, claiming he exploited them, creating a form of "social pornography" (Lind, 2004, p. 114). The project was discussed and developed with the locals, and I think that Lind's criticism is harsh as it is unclear how much input to the creative development of the project was directed by Hirschhorn and how much came from the participants. Many artists have employed unnamed paid workers to produce their artworks over many centuries. Lind's argument is underpinned by ethical issues. Bishop challenges this type of argument as ethical standards are subjective. Had Hirschhorn credited his workers-participants as collaborative artists, Lind's criteria should have been satisfied but, as Bishop asks, are ethics satisfactory criteria for evaluation? (Bishop, 2012, pp. 23-26).

The locus of control appears to have remained with Hirschhorn as he has been attributed full ownership of the project. In contrast, the NZ's *Wailing Wall* project sought to extend power to the participants, in line with Grant Kester's "new aesthetic and theoretical paradigm of art as a process – a locus of discursive exchange and negotiation" (Kester, 2004, p. 12), including them as contributing artists, acknowledging their contribution through the Facebook page and by stating that this was an art project to the people, for the people, by the people. Each participant had the

opportunity to contribute to the development of the project in terms of its concepts, contexts and methods.

Michael Parakowhai - On First Looking into Chapman's Homer (2011)

I encountered most of the installation Parakowhai exhibited at the 2011 Venice Biennale in Te Papa during 2012. To some extent, Te Papa succeeds in bridging the institutional and cultural chasm described in Danto's *Museum for the Thirsting Millions*. The public find Te Papa accessible and many drink from its fountain of knowledge.

Visually, the work consisted of three full-sized grand pianos, with seats, and two huge bulls which were positioned on top of two of the pianos. On closer examination, the two pianos and the bulls on them were castings, as were the seats beside them. They looked so real but were completely incapable of functioning. The powerful bulls, one lying on top of a piano and the other standing in a position that would eyeball any potential player, appeared to be guardians of these silenced cultural icons. These works were overtly inaccessible. The third piano, a Steinway; *He Korero Purakau*, was painted bright red with ornate Maori carving in the wooden case.

Museum caretakers invited visitors to put on white gloves and actually play this piano. I did. It was wonderful. I will be unlikely to forget this enriching experience. The piano was turned into an artwork by Parakowhai, and I was able to become a part of the artwork by playing it. This work was accessible in many ways, yet Parakowhai was no longer present; the terms of engagement for participants were pre-defined and controlled by him, through the museum, in a non-negotiable manner as far as participants were concerned. In comparison, the NZ's Wailing Wall had a significant number of participants who discussed the project directly with me, and described how they perceived it or the potential developments they envisaged as it continued its journey.

Mark Harvey – Productive Bodies (2012)

Mark Harvey's *Productive Bodies* (2013) was intended to examine alternatives to employed productivity that could help unemployed individuals gain a sense of usefulness in society. The five day event began each day with a discussion in City Gallery Wellington. Each morning, discourse was initiated by Harvey. A brainstorming discussion with the participants followed. Afternoon sessions involved implementation of the brainstormed ideas in the surrounding Wellington environment, with Harvey present and, largely, leading the processes. I participated on the second and third days of the event. After the introduction, Harvey invited us to try some of the previous day's activities and modify them or come up with new ideas. During this time, participation helped us to bond together and became quite playful as we experimented with activities.

Harvey actively encouraged participants to develop ideas within the context of the project's overarching framework, allowing more room for the participants to influence the work than either Hirschhorn's or Parakowhai's works. Given this opportunity, people struggled to develop new actions, tending to opt for minor changes to the actions described from the previous day. Whilst Harvey made sincere attempts to give up control of the project, the participants tended to resist his offers to take control.

Viewed from Kester's criteria above, there was dialogical exchange and negotiation but it failed to significantly develop the work during the two days I was present. With my own work, written

thoughts were only a snippet of the engagement. Significant content for the project was gained through conversation, where many concepts were discussed, developed and frequently included in the work of the project.

Using Lind's criteria, Harvey also failed to acknowledge us as collaborative artists. Again, with my project, I strived to acknowledge each participant's work, including through the Facebook site, where I have also published every message from the wall. Applying my own criteria to Productive Bodies, elements of creativity, originality and aesthetic sensibility from participants seemed to be relatively insignificant and, as a participant, I failed to experience the project's stated intention of identifying myself as a productive body.

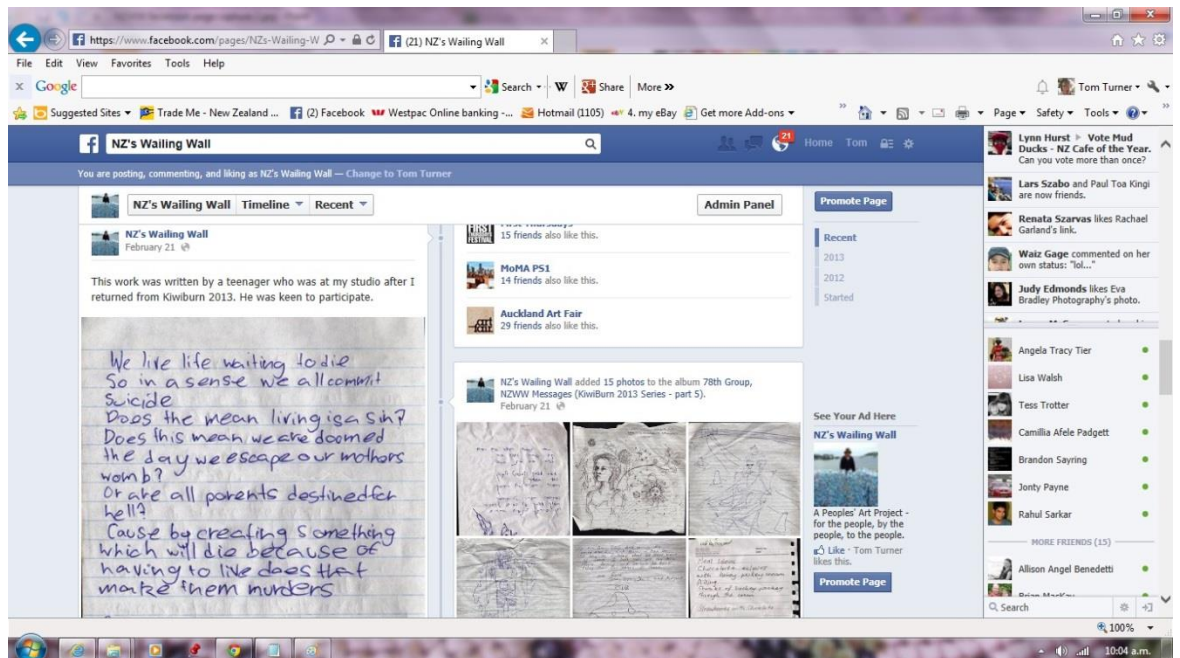


Figure 6. Turner, 2013, *NZ's Wailing Wall Facebook page with participants' messages published* [Screen capture]

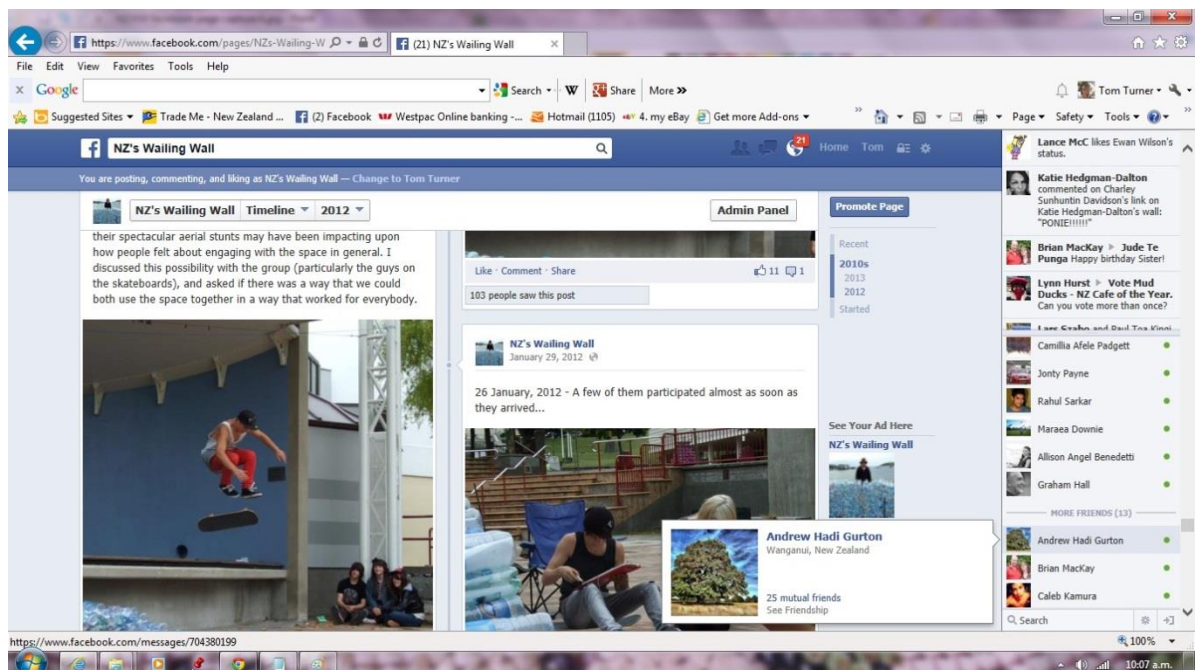


Figure 7. Turner, 2013, *NZ's Wailing Wall Facebook page as a vehicle for acknowledging participants' creative contributions to the project* [Screen capture]

Traditional Relationships

Danto describes how great traditional museums, intended to bring knowledge to the public, failed because the people didn't understand the culture as it belonged to the tribal type of white middle-class male (Danto, 1997, pp. 180-181). There have been a growing number of tribal museums based upon gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc. The problem with tribalisation is that it creates small groups of cultures which create art for themselves (ibid., p.184). A greater goal is to create art that blurs or transcends these boundaries and acts as a bridge, inviting the public to engage with, appreciate, and have a sense of ownership in arts from other tribes. This project has strongly embraced this goal, inviting all to participate, and making the work accessible and ownable by anybody. Participants were invited to expand their notions of what art is and what it can be through conversation and participatory actions.

Grant Kester discusses the dilemma with arguments by art theorists including Bell and Fry - that art can only be properly experienced when leisure time available and, for this reason, the working class cannot appreciate art properly. (Kester, 2004, p. 35) This project has strongly challenged these notions, as people from the working class did participate and contribute to the project as art-makers and appreciators.

Paola Merli refers to Vygotskij, who says that privileged classes have higher proportions of creative people because they have access to the necessary conditions for creativity⁸ (Merli, 2004). Merli also points out that involvement in participatory arts is a cultural need and not a primary need (ibid). She refers to Bourdieu's *Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception*, where he claims that arts can only be fully appreciated by exclusive and educated elite who are able to "decipher their codes." (ibid.). In my experience, Bourdieu's notion that arts can be fully appreciated is incorrect. Each person will learn to appreciate and, consequently, understand the work through the lens of their own contexts. As in Barthes' *Death of the Author*, they create a new interpretation of the work, translated in their own language. I would add that greater appreciation of art can be studied and learned, although there are strong arguments that it cannot be taught (Elkins, 2001).



Figure 8. Turner, 2013, NZ's Wailing Wall project installed by invitation in The Grainstore gallery, Oamaru [Social Sculpture]



Figure 9. Turner, 2012, NZ's Wailing Wall project at the entrance of the Aigantighe public art gallery, Timaru [Social Sculpture]

⁸ Unfortunately, Merli does not elaborate on what Vygotskij claims those criteria are and the original work is translated to Italian in 1930. I can't translate Italian and wonder how applicable the conditions are to today's situation.

An Art They Could Call Their Own

This work successfully engaged people from all walks of life, in part, because it did not examine them through a lens of privilege. It effectively bridges differences of class, gender, age, ethnicity, religious and/or political positions, bringing all the variations of these and other socially fractious ideological locations to the same table to be negotiated and appreciated by intellectual equals.

In the case of meeting as intellectual equals, Ranciere stressed the importance of questioning and verifying the findings of the student. In this sense, meeting as intellectual equals makes us both masters and students, questioning, evaluating and verifying the integrity of each other's findings. It is also important to recognise the significance of assessment, judgement and critique in the process of developing art. Without these processes, we tend to fail to develop ideas and remain in the realm of repeating what is known rather than creating new and potentially artistic work.

An overwhelming percentage of participants clearly expressed pleasure and joy as a result of participating in the project, although this was more prevalent once the wall had reached a critical mass. This critical mass was achieved at the event in the Whanganui UCOL, where the first section reached a size of approximately 1.2 metres wide by 1 metre high. At this point in time, the wall was beginning to have a significant presence and spectactularity.

Messages were predominantly written onsite during events. A few exceptions were written in response to the Facebook page or as a result of discussing the project with me at some other time. In the earlier stages of the project, messages were usually written after an introductory invitation from me, and then we often engaged in further discourse after the message had been located in the wall. The exception to this was in the very earliest stage of the project, where there was little, or no, evidence of what it was to become. Conversations about the vision were predominantly lengthy and engaging. As the form of the wall started to take shape, more and more passers-by began to enquire about the meaning and purpose of the object (wall). The more it grew, the more spectacular it became and its affect drew prospective participants. At this stage, I was able to focus more thematic discourse upon the concepts of being contributing artists, qualities sought in an artful approach to writing their messages and even concepts regarding sculpting thoughts, speech and the will to turn their lifework into an artwork. Participants tended to become more committed to writing something artistically meaningful. This artistic momentum increasingly freed me to encourage elements of creativity, originality, communicability and, in the latter stages of the project, aesthetic appeal.

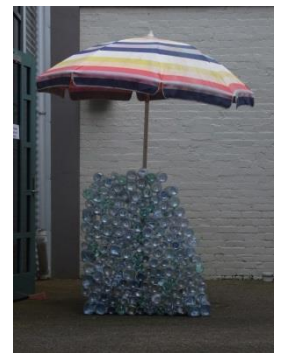


Figure 10. Turner, 2011, NZ's Wailing Wall reaching a critical mass at Whanganui UCOL



Figure 11. Turner, 2013, NZ's Wailing Wall project at KIWIBURN [Social Sculpture]

Reshaping lifeworks into artworks

Two approaches I utilised and developed to work with participants were to query the sources of their information and to question and examine their claims in terms of observations. For example, one man claimed that farmers were not responsible for the water quality problems in New Zealand's waterways:

Me: "Who is responsible?"

Man: "Fishermen and people engaging in water-sports."

Me: "What are you basing that idea on?"

Man: "They brought didymo into the waterways."

Me: "Is didymo causing water pollution or visual pollution of the waterways?"

Man: "I'm not sure."

Me: "How do you account for the pollution in the waterways in the North Island (including the Manawatu, which current research claims to be one of the most polluted rivers in the world)?"

Man: "I guess it must be the farmers."

Another method I used was to consider alternative approaches to problems posed. For example, many people on higher incomes said that they would happily pay more taxes in order to provide better services for those less wealthy:

Qu: "Does any government administer your tax contributions well?"

A: "No."

Qu: "How could you contribute the money you would happily pay in extra taxes more wisely to the needs of those in their area?"

These questions did not require quantitative responses; they aimed to elicit a qualitative approach to future thoughts, speech and actions.

Initially, creative thought expressed through conversation seemed to be somewhat constrained and not very exploratory in terms of developing thoughts, speech and will. Perhaps this was due to a perceived traditional educational model of master [of superior intellect] espousing to student [of inferior intellect] as described by Ranciere (Ranciere, 1991, pp. 4-7).

Many participants embraced the idea of being free to say whatever they wanted to, but frequently found that, on being given this freedom, they did not know what to say. In order to overcome this, I developed a series of 'starting points' from which to develop ideas for discourse and messages. During conversation, I strove to embrace Ranciere's proposition, to meet as intellectual equals (ibid., p.18), by listening to all ideas expressed by participants and questioning them or exploring alternative possibilities, as appropriate to the conversation. Conversations were often illuminating as we broached new territories of thoughts by investigating, critiquing, verifying or disputing a diverse range of issues that were raised by the participants. Many participants expressed their excitement as their senses were activated through discoveries during

conversation. I found that the key to this was to utilise the technique of open-ended questioning in preference to authoritative statements during discourse.

Qualitative research methods identify themes which recur across conversations (Ryan & Bernard, 2003); however, it may be tempting to ignore or downplay responses that don't fall within the main themes (Collier & Mahoney, 1996, p. 56). This work brought up broad themes of power, financial/economic, environmental, political, social and, of course, art. However, there were frequently more unusual conversations, such as two separate conversations with older adult males who insisted that teenagers were irrevocably focussed on vandalism. Neither was prepared to explore alternative approaches to their espoused opinions and, thus, I was unable to verify either of them adopting new thoughts, speech or action, despite my attempts to engage them with exploring alternative possibilities. In contrast, there were many conversations about the nature and shape of the project itself which sculpted new thoughts, speech and actions for both the participants and myself.

Through observing and listening, it became obvious to me that the majority of participants have been conditioned to think in particular ways which have largely subdued their creative capacity. Conversations with participants point to the project having been particularly successful in (i) uncovering these conditioned paradigms and (ii) assisting participants in exploring new and creative possibilities for alternative, empowering methods of thinking. For example, a number of participants discussed their lack of time to invest into artistic practices. On further investigation, they revealed that their time was being largely invested into trying to earn more money to pay for their living costs. When exploring possible solutions, the first response was typically to find a job that paid more money:

Qu: "Have you considered the option of spending less money?"

A: "No, I don't think I could possibly live on less income than I currently earn."

Qu: "How often have you bought something and then regretted it a short time later?"

This question became a powerful trigger for the discussion of alternative approaches to consumption and our wellbeing. Ultimately, the project became a catalyst for many people to consider and engage with possibilities and propositions that they could indeed become an artist who could resculpt their thoughts, speech and actions in order to turn their lifework into an

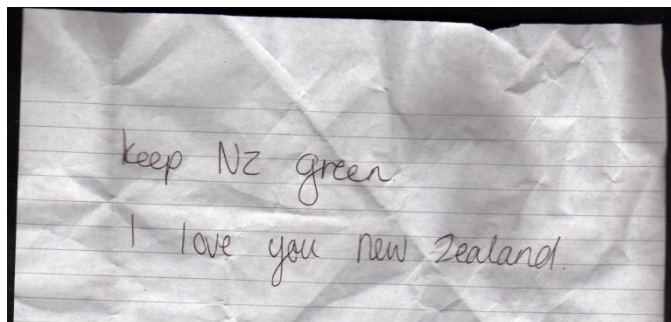


Figure 12. Turner, 2013, *A message from a participant in the early stages of the project* (circa April 2011)

artwork. A part of my role in this has been to sculpt art and artmaking into a form that is accessible to them. I moved from an initiator to an enabler and co-participant.

With skilful questioning and positioning, our discourse typically became more exploratory and creative. This often had a reciprocal effect which was evident in many of the messages that were written after engaging in discourse. Also, in the last event, held over five days, there were a significant proportion of the messages with a less didactic, and more poetic, quality to them.

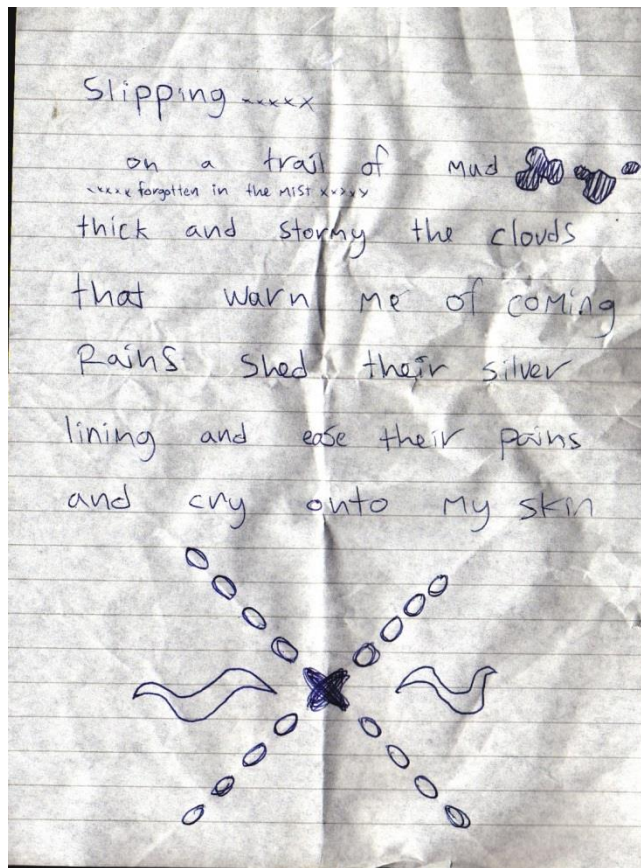


Figure 13. Turner, 2013, A message from a participant in the latter stages of the project (January 2013)

Conversations in the latter events shifted again toward discourse about freedom⁹ and liberation from power structures that we encounter politically, economically, socially and also within the art world.

⁹ Whilst I had barely encountered the writings and work of Paulo Freire at this time, I have since discovered the relevance and importance that he has in the fields of overcoming oppressive regimes through education. I intend to explore his writings and thoughts much more thoroughly as I develop work along this new trajectory.

Analytical Concerns

I documented the project through photographs, audio recordings, video recordings, Facebook and written notes. Each of these methods had inherent problems and none of them succeed in encapsulating a reasonable understanding of the aesthetic or affective qualities of the events and discourse. They create “a completely separate aesthetic reality to the action itself” (Bishop, 2012, p. 156). Today’s participatory art tends to value “what is invisible: a group dynamic, a social situation, a change of energy, a raised consciousness” (Bishop, 2012, p. 6). Bishop describes the trouble she had maintaining a critical distance from participatory art as analysing it requires “first-hand experience, and preferably over a long duration (days, months, or even years).” (ibid).

One aspect of participation I was unable to analyse was that of people who chose not to participate. In many cases, this was a conscious decision which, in some cases, was a protest against the project. Those who purposefully resisted participating essentially made a free choice. Whilst a few did verbalise this intention, I will never know how many did not. Those who did verbalise their intentions may be perceived as unintentional contributors as I, for one, appreciated the discourse in terms of its artistic and aesthetic contributions to the project.

A common problem experienced by conversational or participatory artists is the grounding of their work in a verifiable manner. Merli states, “one of the major problems of research into the social impact of participation in arts activities is that it has no strong theoretical grounding” (Merli, 2004). Qualitative, rather than quantitative analysis can be applicable to this type of work, especially as it acknowledges that themes will be generated in conversations (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). My work, deliberately aimed to be participatory, is likewise complicated and difficult to assess with its multiplicity of themes engendered by the participants and the variety of physical contexts, to which each participant brought their own context. Participants from all walks of life were able to engage with, and develop, alternative approaches to existing concepts. Age, experience and education tended to influence the breadth of resources participants were able to draw from in order to develop their ideas.

Qualitative research can use unstructured, or in depth, interviews to allow the respondent to tell their story (n.a., n.d., Qualitative research glossary). Merli concludes that in-depth discourse is probably the most effective method to determine the efficacy of participatory art projects (Merli, 2004). Discourse analysis, a technique used in qualitative research, in part looks at dialogue between speakers (n.a., n.d., Qualitative research glossary). Merli also notes that interviewees should feel free to express and explain ideas which are not being asked of them (Merli, 2004). Bearing this in mind, throughout this project, I developed conversational techniques that mutated from, in the earlier stages, enticing participation, to engaging with whatever issues and narratives the participants brought to the conversation and creatively examining new approaches to these issues. I have, largely, resisted outwardly assessing, judging or critiquing the participants as I did not wish to compromise their experience of the event.



Figure 14. Turner, 2012, *The wall was problematic because it was a component of the project, but not one of the primary materials the project was seeking to sculpt*

In some tantalising ways, the known and unknown aspects of the research in this project reflect some of the ideas inherent in the *Johari's Window* model (Stone, n.d.). What is known is essentially dependent upon participation, an experience and an interpretation. Without this essence, it cannot be known.

1 Known Self Things we know about ourselves and others know about us	2 Hidden Self Things we know about ourselves that others do not know
3 Blind Self Things others know about us that we do not know	4 Unknown Self Things neither we nor others know about us

Figure 15. Stone, n.d., *Johari's Window*

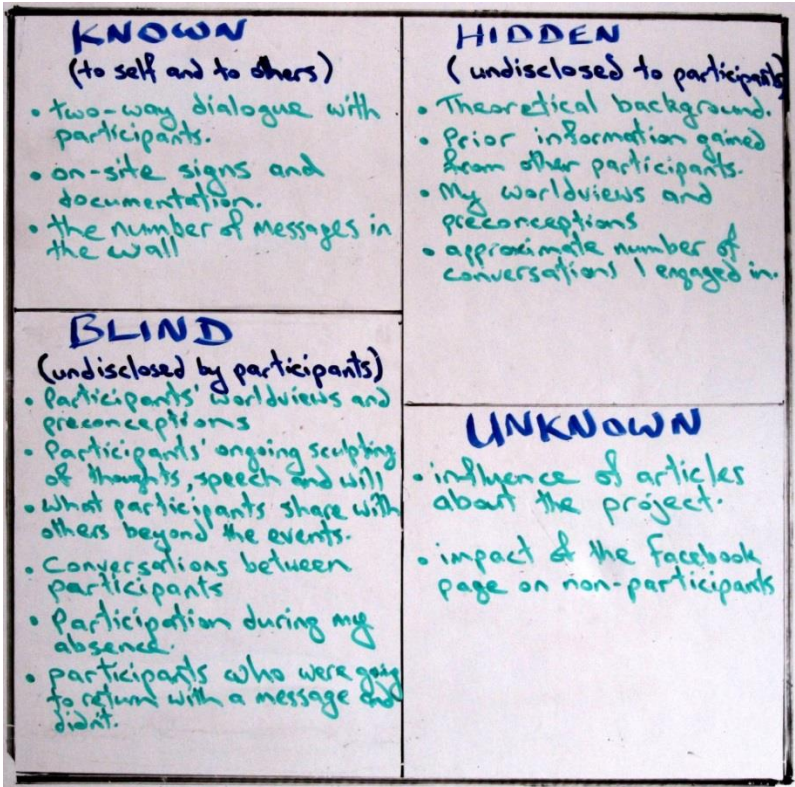


Figure 16. Turner, 2013, *Interpretation of analysis using Johari's Window model*

The Final Event

This chapter documents the final event for this thesis. It is very likely that there will be more events for the project. This will include negotiating a conclusion to the project and the forming of new participatory projects that include and satisfy the participants.

The event was held over three consecutive days at the popular Viaduct Harbour in Auckland City. The final site agreed upon with Viaduct Harbour coordinators was at Te Wero. The project was located amongst a number of outdoor seats on an astroturf surface alongside two shipping containers. One of the containers was used to house the project at night. The other is the site of a small library where people can sit and read a book, or take or swap a book for another. This library has no librarian and appears to be run on the basis of trust that the public will look after it and not abuse it. This ideology aligned well with the NZ's Wailing Wall project. Nearby was a bridge that rose regularly to allow vessels to pass through and there were many yachts and competing attractions close to the event. The site offered a significant challenge for the project to show its autonomy and stand up for itself in terms of its audiences; more so than any previous event, the project was critiquing a spectacle with a counter-spectacle.

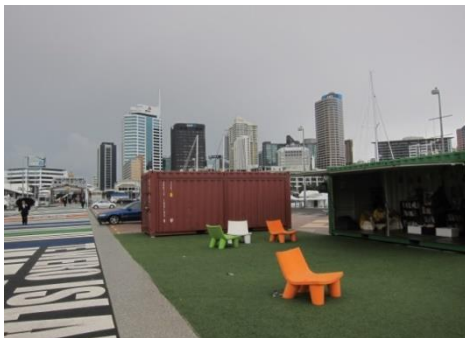


Figure 17. Turner, 2013, Te Wero Site



Figure 18. Turner, 2013, Testing the wall on site, competing with superyachts, Viaduct Village and Sky Tower.

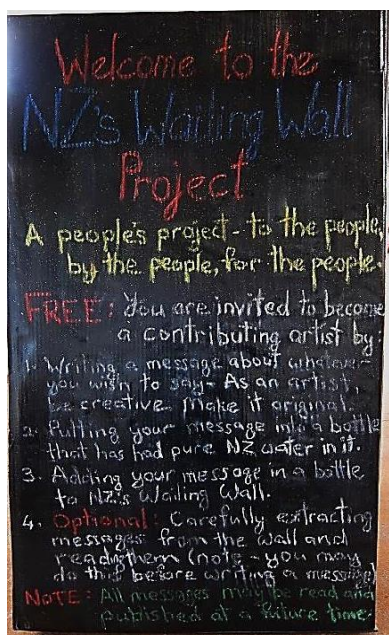


Figure 19. Turner, 2013, Invitation Billboard.

New cardboard billboards were made for the event. One invited passers-by to participate and the other introduced ideas the project invited people to consider when engaging with the project. A large bin was provided for people to contribute or use empty water bottles. Tweezers made from bamboo were placed alongside the wall for participants to extract messages, should they wish to.

A free newspaper was published and offered during the event, outlining the historical and conceptual content of the project. The intention of both

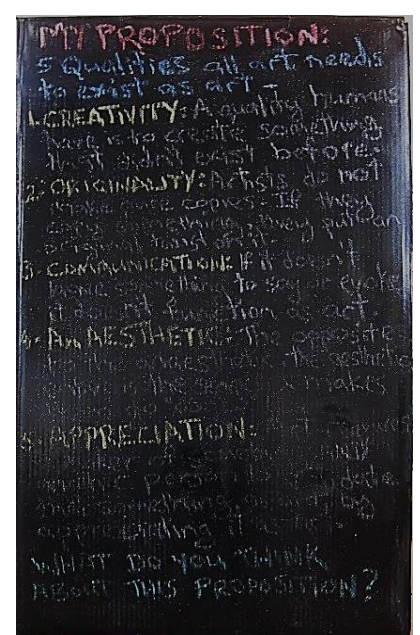


Figure 20. Turner, 2013, Concepts Billboard.

this newspaper and the tweezers was to give back more to the participants¹⁰.

The wall was positioned between the outdoor seats, which were used along with the project's metal stands, to assist with holding the wall upright when the sea breeze blew.



Figure 21. Turner, 2013, Wall with stands just before the storm.



Figure 22. Turner, 2013, Event during the thunderstorm.

This worked successfully for most of the event, however there was a heavy thunderstorm accompanied with occasional strong gusts that toppled the wall at a crucial moment on the first day of the event.



Figure 23. Turner, 2013, Event just after the wall was blown over.



Figure 24. Turner, 2013, Event at the commencement of the second day.

The storm cleared later in the afternoon and repairs to various components, as required, were made for the following day. There were similar changes in the weather during the morning of the second day and, over both days, the event was quite active during the dry weather but very limited during the downpours. Having said that, there were some captive audiences who chose to participate between downpours as they sheltered in the containers.



Figure 25. Turner, 2013, Participation before the thunderstorm.



Figure 26. Turner, 2013, Participation during the thunderstorm.

¹⁰ A Hyperlink to a digital edition of the free newspaper offered to participants and passers-by at the Te Wero event can be found at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7PP-fq6bLL0UUFduefZQmluS3c/edit?usp=sharing>

The third day of the event was a Saturday and the weather was fine all day. Passers-by tended to be in a more leisurely mode, enjoying the atmosphere of the viaduct harbour without the demands normally associated with the working week. Most of participation occurred on this day of the event. With over 100 new messages added to the wall, the event attracted a significant degree of participation (including conversations where participants did not write messages).



Figure 27. Turner, 2013, Spectacle vs Counter-Spectacle.



Figure 28. Turner, 2013, Participation at Te Wero



Figure 29. Turner, 2013, Participation at Te Wero

A number of people were questioned about what attracted them to participate. At least two of them responded that, for them, it was about making their mark. Another, who had suffered a brain injury, which she said gave her trouble writing, said that she felt good about having the freedom to write in whatever way she wanted to. These two comments, more than any others, helped me to understand the value of the project.

If the project had focussed on recycling, environmental concerns, commerce, or any other aspect, it would have been pedagogical, explicative and, consequently, the work would not have been an art the people could call their own. In giving people the opportunity to express themselves freely, they could make their mark and the work became dialogical. As the voices of many became heard, the people could identify with the work as an art that they could call their own.

Conclusion

There has been a long history of discourse about art and life versus art for art's sake. This project asked the question, "What would happen if everyone was given the opportunity to be an artist?" It did not demand that everyone must be, or even should be, an artist. It explored possibilities for making the opportunity available to every, or any, person; an art that is accessible. It pursued an art that participants can call their own. To achieve this, the project also sought to provide a situation where the participants could make the context of their work their own, breaking apart existing 'we know what is best for them' hierarchies that have often dominated thoughts, speech and the will. The situations needed to engage the participants in their world(s) rather than designing a world that is presumed to be 'better' for them. Until the people have an art of their own, there is nothing meaningful for them to engage with and there is no opportunity for cultural/emancipatory/liberating effects to take place through an art that is not their own. This necessitated the building of a communication bridge through inclusion, negotiation and exchange.

The project asked and explored, what we could achieve if we incorporated Ranciere's proposition that everyone has equal intelligence with Beuys' proposition that everyone is an artist? What could we discover if we make Danto's artworld - one that everyone can access? These questions, in turn, generated new questions about what the criteria would be for this artworld and how we could measure its success. This became a dynamic flux of negotiation, engagement, renegotiation and re-engagement. The process gained its quality not in terms of the quality of the outcomes but in the fact that there were outcomes... that people participated as contributing artists. For each of these individuals, new possibilities emerged and their participation had the potential to be a starting point for a new journey, as an artist of their lifework.

There is an ambiguity or diversity as to where this art project is located. "Work in public space is never a total success and never a total failure. Instead, it is about an experience, about exposing oneself, about enduring and creating an experience" (Doherty, 2004, p. 138). Elements of art exist in the objects, the messages, the events, the Facebook page, the newspaper, the conversations and the other subsequent thoughts, speech and actions. Aspects of the art were, and are, physically located and others, perhaps most, remain ephemeral or untraceable by all except those who have directly experienced them. This is the point where art initiates and completes (albeit an open-ended completion). At the very least, one maker and one appreciator have agreed to make an artwork.

Appendix 1

Newspaper articles about the NZ's Wailing Wall project as it travelled around New Zealand.

Call for bottles for "Wailing Wall"



Tom Turner with bottles for the wall.

A Wanganui sculptor and environmentalist would like Wanganui citizens to help him complete his latest project.

Tom Turner will be at Majestic Square from 9am until 4pm today, and also there on April 21 and 28, to promote his "Wailing Wall".

People can assist him to build the wall by providing a 1 litre or 1.5 litre plastic bottle that used to contain "pure New Zealand water".

Tom will use a glue gun to add each bottle to the wall.

People donating a bottle can also write a note if they wish to leave in a bottle or in a chink in the wall. Paper and writing equipment will be available.

Tom wants people to talk to him about water in New Zealand.

He said research had shown New Zealand water was no longer pure in the rivers.

It would become "a rare resource the way we are using it at the moment."

"Australia has water taxes and problems getting enough water for their people."

Tom's project stemmed from the Wailing Wall at Jerusalem. It is a famous and sacred site for Jewish prayer and pilgrimage.

Tom is uncertain as to how big his wall will get.

He said its final placement is open to suggestions from those participating in the build.

He hopes to develop similar walls in other New Zealand cities.

Figure 30. Call for bottles for "Wailing Wall". (2011, April 14). *Rivercity Press*, p.2.

Bottled-up thoughts welcome on wall

By Laurel Stowell
laurel.stowell@wanganuichronicle.co.nz

It was a cold social sculptor who sat in Wanganui's Majestic Square in the rain for five hours yesterday, waiting for people to come and help him build a wall.

Tom Turner's "Wailing Wall" project is about consumerism and the environment, and he wants people to be part of it.

All it takes is a 1-litre or 1.5-litre plastic bottle that used to contain "pure New Zealand water". Bring that along and you can leave it, and your opinion, behind.

Mr Turner has a glue gun, and the bottle will be added to a wall.

Anyone donating a bottle can also write a note expressing their thoughts, to leave in a chink of the wall or in a bottle. Paper and writing instruments will be made available.

Mr Turner said he wanted people to talk to him about the "100 per cent pure New Zealand" tourism slogan and the water in this country.

"I want to get people to think about water and what we purchase. We are consuming beyond the capacity of the world."

Social sculpture was about the sculpting of thoughts, speech and the will, he said. "Hopefully, we can create some beautiful thoughts out of this, and some wonderful conversations."

Mr Turner said the Wailing Wall concept came from Jerusalem. The Wailing Wall is one of the most sacred sites in Judaism and is a site for Jewish prayer and pilgrimage.

■ Tom Turner will be at Majestic Square again from 9am to 4pm on Thursday, April 14.



WAITING: Artist Tom Turner wants people to join in his sculpture project.

PHOTO/BEVAN CONLEY

Figure 31. Bottled-up thoughts welcome on wall. (2011, April 6) *Wanganui Chronicle*, p.3.

Slowly building a wall

By Paul Brooks

Tom Turner is an artist and he's convinced we all have an artist within us.

Tom has instigated a participatory project in which people help him build a wall of empty plastic NZ water bottles. Every Thursday he sets himself up in Majestic Square with music and a glue gun, inviting people to bring in their bottles and add to the wall.

He estimates he'll need about 1000 bottles to make a decent statement. He's asking Wanganui people to be artists and they can put messages into the bottles, too, if they wish.

"What I'm trying to do is question the consumption rather than just say it's right or wrong," says Tom. "It's to get people activated as artists and to put an artistic slant on their day."

"It's a statement, too, about what we've lost," he says. We no longer have pure water in our rivers and have to rely on springs or filtration plants to deliver clean water.

Tom's been a practising artist for many years, has completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Whanganui UCOL and is currently working toward a Masters in Art and Design through AUT.

Public awareness and participation are not rapid, as Tom is discovering, with many people too timid to approach or join in. While I was talking to him last Thursday, there were



WIN FREE: Tom Turner is asking for help to create a wall of art.

PICTURE / PAUL BROOKS 140411PBTOMTURNER.JPG

three inquiries about his activity; one displayed some half-hearted enthusiasm and the other two none at all.

The name of the artwork is Win Free, a sign which is an attraction in itself. "What do you win?" asks one potential artist, who starts to lose interest when learning there is no prize attached.

Tom needs people to participate, to make this truly a public work of art.

Figure 32. Slowly building a wall. (2011, April 21). *Midweek*, p.6.



BUILDING THE WALL: Wanganui artist Tom Turner is enlisting the community's help to build a wall of bottles and some creative conversations.
PHOTO/TRACEY GRANT 260511WCTGART02CAPTION

Water, water everywhere — what a topic for discussion

By Laurel Stowell
laurel.stowell@wanganuichronicle.co.nz

Tom Turner is excited that his Walling Wall social sculpture experiment is taking on a life of its own.

After a slow start his wall of "pure New Zealand water" bottles — and the ideas that go along with it — is growing.

"The bigger it's got, the faster it's grown. Even today in the wet I have probably had a good 12 people come and put something in," Turner said on Thursday.

The theme is water, what we consume and whether there really is "pure" water in most New Zealand lakes and rivers.

People are asked to bring water bottles and glue them into the wall, with or without a note inside them. They can then linger and talk about consumerism and its effect

"I want people to engage their own thinking to live their life more beautifully, more artfully."

Tom Turner, artist

on the environment.

Turner has taken the wall to Dannevirke, to the Whanganui River Traders' market, to the Savemart recycling centre in Peat St and to Whanganui UCOL.

He'll be back to some of those places, and also plans to take it to EnviroSchools in the district, Massey University, UCOL in Palm-

erston North and possibly also Napier. Participants have suggested going to Australia, and even the United States.

The recycling centre was allowing him to take empty water bottles it received.

There's no finish date for the project and as the wall grows the artist will need a trailer to move it around.

He's planning to enter it in this year's Whanganui Arts Review, and is also thinking about making a book out of the messages in the bottles.

The conversations it has sparked have been wide ranging — from dairy farming and water quality to the use of palm oil to soap. Turner said he didn't want to tell people what to think.

"I want people to engage their own thinking to live their life more beautifully, more artfully."

Figure 33. Water, water everywhere — what a topic for discussion. (2011, May 28). *Wanganui Chronicle*, p.7.

Plastic bottle Wailing Wall devised



Penny Wardle

A sculpture made of plastic drink bottles was displayed in Picton yesterday and will be in Blenheim today.

Sculptor Tom Turner, of Whanganui, asked passersby to add their own touch to his Wailing Wall of NZ, by inserting a message into one of the bottles.

"People can write whatever they like but I encourage them to be creative," he said.

This was a social sculpture which encouraged people to participate, not a political statement pushing an agenda, he said.

Turning something which would normally be thrown away into something beautiful was satisfying, he said.

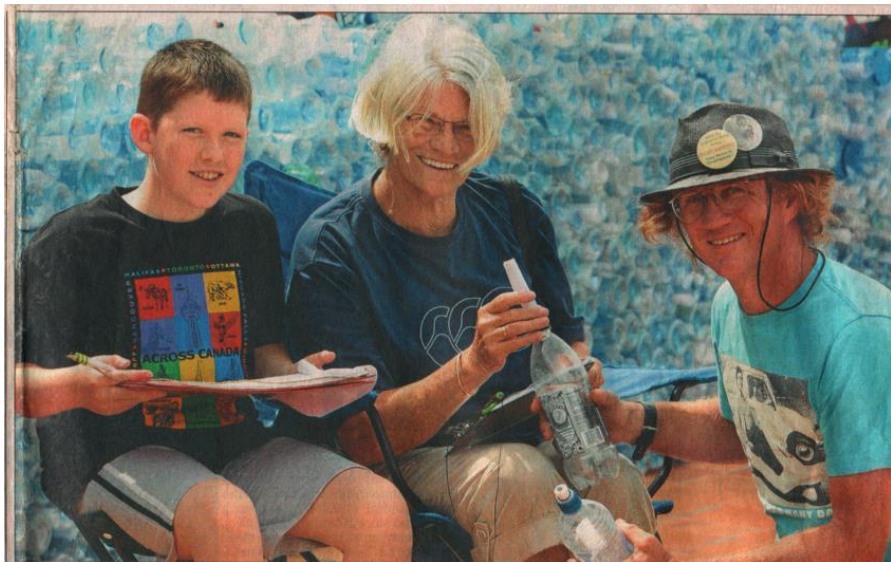
The bottles used were provided by the Whanganui recycling centre.

Picton was the first South Island stop for Mr Turner who has already toured the North Island. He plans to take the artwork to Parliament and encourage politicians to add their messages. His work can be followed on Facebook. Eventually remove all messages from the bottles, photograph them then put them back inside. The photographs could be used in a book or video to accompany the completed wall on display.

Time capsule: Sculptor Tom Turner, of Wanganui, helps Lincoln Thelin and Coco Watson, of Picton, glue their bottle to his Wailing Wall which he says will become a time capsule of 1000 messages.

Photo: PENNY WARDLE/FAIRFAX NZ

Figure 34. Plastic bottle Wailing Wall devised. (2011, December 29). *Marlborough Express*, p.5.



Art for the people: James, 12, and Patricia Neville contribute to Whanganui artist Tom Turner's wailing wall outside the Aigantighe Art Gallery yesterday. They drew pictures to put in bottles that will form part of the wall.

Photo: MYTHALL BRANS GROVE/FAIRFAX NZ

Wailing wall pays visit to Timaru

Erana Bailey
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Timaru people were told to bottle up their issues yesterday to promote freedom of speech.

Whanganui artist Tom Turner was outside the Aigantighe Art Gallery with the wailing wall he has created out of water bottles.

People put their message in a bottle and it is then glued to the moveable wall which he began last April and which so far has more than 1000 bottles. He hopes to create a wall 50m long and 1m high, promoting freedom of speech.

"The idea evolved over time; it came to me after there was a flood somewhere. I work with recycled

materials a lot and was looking at some green bottles stacked up with the light shining through them and it looked cool. I realised to create a wall I would need to drink at least two bottles of water a day and decided to get the public involved."

Some people showed him what they had written which varied on themes of water, whales, over-

consumption or somebody they disliked.

"It is art to the people, by the people, for the people. Choosing the bottle to use is also part of the individual's artistic choice."

Yesterday Patricia and 12-year-old James Neville decided to draw pictures for their bottles.

Mr Turner will be in Oamaru today at the public library.

Figure 35. Bailey, Wailing wall pays visit to Timaru. (2012, January 5). *Timaru Herald*, p.2.

Willing wailers bottle it up



SILENT CRIES: Artist Tom Turner was impressed with Oamaru contributions to his Wailing Wall project yesterday outside the Oamaru Public Library.

By Rebecca Ryan

People in Oamaru were more than happy to spare a thought for Wanganui artist Tom Turner yesterday.

Mr Turner is on a tour of New Zealand with an art project called *New Zealand's Wailing Wall*.

It is a non-political project that invites the public to participate by writing a message about whatever they feel.

"It's a way for people to voice

their opinions, whether they are inspiring, depressing, nonsensical or just the first thing that comes to mind," Mr Turner said.

Their message goes into an empty water bottle, which is then glued on to the existing wall of more than 1000 bottles.

In less than an hour, more than 30 people in Oamaru had added to the wall.

Among the first was Shane Hooper and Stacey Mansell, both of Oamaru.

"My brother [died] recently and when we heard about the Wailing Wall we thought it would be a really great opportunity to write a message to him," Mr Hooper said.

Mr Turner said some people showed him what they had written, but he never asked.

Of those he had seen, themes varied from saving whales and over-consumption to concerns about abusive parenting.

He hopes to make the wall at least 50m long and 1.2m tall by

visiting towns around New Zealand.

Mr Turner said he would like to end his journey outside Parliament before making a book out of the bottled messages.

Touring New Zealand with the Wailing Wall has cost Mr Turner more than \$8000, but he said it had been worth it.

"Such a magical thing has come from putting messages in recycled plastic water bottles. It completely baffles me," he said.

Figure 36. Willing wailers bottle it up. (2012, January 6/7). *Oamaru Mail*, p.1.



Messages in multiple bottles . . . Tom Taylor and his bottle wall in the Octagon in Dunedin yesterday.
REPORT DEBBIE PORTEOUS/PHOTO STEPHEN JACQUIRY

TOM Taylor believes his plastic bottle wall, and every message added to it by another member of the public, is making the world a better place.

Mr Taylor is a conceptual artist from Wanganui travelling the country encouraging people to write messages — any message they like at all — place it in a bottle and glue it to a growing wall of similar bottles with messages inside.

At the end of his travels, later this month, Mr Taylor will take

all of the messages out (he anticipates he will have about 1200) photograph them and put them back in their bottles.

He hopes to display the messages as an artwork, then store it as a sort of time capsule.

About halfway through the South Island leg of his New Zealand tour, he was finding the

wall a great place for people to share their burdens and get things off their chests, he said.

He liked to think of it a "people's art project".

It's to the people, for the people, by the people."

As a social sculptor, initiating the capacity for such creativity was very much part the goal

of the project.

"Everyone has the capacity to be an artist. I am trying to help people sculpt their life work as an art work — help them do something that makes life more valuable, purposeful and meaningful."

Creativity was an opportunity to leave things better than how

you found them, he said.

"The goal is to create that creative capacity so we can be responsible for improving our world around us."

Mr Taylor expects to be in Dunedin with his wall again today, weather permitting, and will go to Oamaru, before travelling to Invercargill, Stewart Island and north again, via the West Coast.

He uses bottles from recycling plants.

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Artist's wall a real bottler

Figure 37. Artist's wall a real bottler. (2012, January 7). *Otago Daily Times*, p.3.

Bottles become a wall of ideas



Photo: WILMA MCCORKINDALE/FAIRFAX NZ 626009987

A Wailing Wall is heading to the city tomorrow – the idea of travelling conceptual artist Tim Turner. Mr Turner, who was in Dunedin late last week with the wall, he issued an invitation; pick a recycled water bottle and place your written thoughts into it, anonymously or not.

The AUT distance Fine Arts Masters student from Whanganui has titled his piece *New Zealand's Wailing Wall*. It is in the city tomorrow, Bluff that afternoon and Stewart Island on Wednesday.

Mr Turner said the water bottles and their environmental impact and significance inspired the wall. "I saw a whole bunch of these bottles together one day and thought they looked rather beautiful. They'd had that pure New Zealand water in them. That was a great point to start from."

Part of the challenge of the work was to recycle the bottles, he said. The messages are intended to be removed, photographed, and returned to their bottles. He hopes once the work is complete, aspects of it can be exhibited in art galleries and museums. Maybe eventually the piece could go into storage as a time capsule, he said.

Figure 38. Bottles become a wall of ideas. (2012, January 9). *The Southland Times*, p.2.

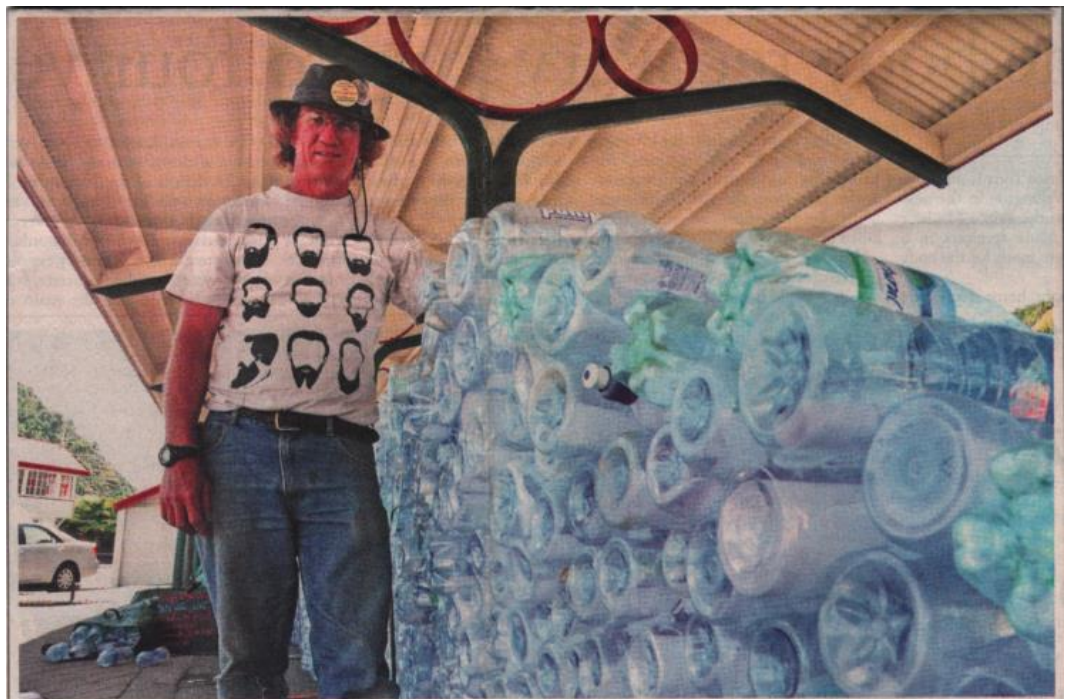


PICTURE: Supplied

'Wailing Wall' heading to Greymouth

An art installation entitled 'The New Zealand Wailing Wall', by artist Tom Turner, is shown during a stop off in Oamaru and will be set up in Greymouth on Monday. The wall is made up of water bottles, each containing a message written by members of the public. The bottles have been taken on a national tour and the wall has grown to a size of 115cm high, 5m long and 32cm deep. It will be set up at the Greymouth railway station on Monday between 11am and 4pm for people to make their own additions.

Figure 39. 'Wailing Wall' heading to Greymouth. (2012, January 13). *Greymouth Star*, p.2.



PICTURE: Nicholas McBride

Messages in many bottles . . .

Whanganui artist Tom Turner alongside his travelling art piece entitled 'The New Zealand Wailing Wall', which took up shop at the Greymouth railway station yesterday. The installation is made up of water bottles filled with messages from passers-by and has been touring the country. People are encouraged to show creativity and Turner says the resulting messages range up to several pages. He is still considering what to do with the messages but has thought of using them like a time capsule or displaying them separately as an art exhibition. The wailing wall concept is connected to the Jewish Western Wall symbolism where prayers are left in the wall of the remains of the temple on Temple Mount, in Jerusalem.

Figure 40. Messages in many bottles.... (2012, January 17). *Greymouth Star*,p.2.



Artist Tom Turner with his sculpture in Westport yesterday. (Photo – Kim Fulton)

Wailing Wall comes to Westport

By Kim Fulton

The people of Westport had the chance to contribute to an art project yesterday as New Zealand's Wailing Wall passed through.

Artist Tom Turner was travelling the country composing a wall of plastic bottles. He invited everyone in New Zealand to have ownership in the project by putting their message in a bottle.

"I believe everyone has the capacity to be an artist. This is an invitation to express themselves in whatever way they want," he said.

The Whanganui-based artist chose the name The Wailing Wall as a reference to the wall in Jerusalem where people could leave their joys and sorrows in cracks as messages.

Turner is studying for a Masters of Arts and Design at the Auckland University of Technology, focusing on the idea of social sculptures - sculpting people's speech, thoughts and actions.

He believed we were sculpted by others as children and, as we got older, learned some of that sculpting might have been faulty but got stuck in our ways.

He wanted to allow people to re-sculpt themselves into an artwork.

"So that their life becomes more beautiful, more meaningful, more purposeful and more valuable. And so that collectively our creativity can start to create a positive influence on our world around us," he said.

He had been working on the project since last April but started his major tour on December 3.

Since then he'd taken the wall all the way up to Cape Reinga and back down to Wellington, then from Picton down the East Coast to Stewart Island. He was now working his way up the West Coast.

He intended to put the wall outside parliament for a day before finishing the project and to invite politicians and the Prime Minister to come down and add their messages to the wall.

"It's a great equaliser," he said. When the wall, made up of about 1500 bottles so far, was completed he would take all of the messages and either make a book out of them or project them onto art gallery walls.

Figure 41. Wailing Wall comes to Westport. (2012, January 18) *The News*, p.1

Artist asks visitors to bring noise

Quest to 'liberate' everyday objects conjures up limitless possibilities

By Anne-Marie Emerson
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When local art lovers turn up to the opening of Tom Turner's latest exhibition on Saturday evening, there will be nothing to look at.

That's because Mr Turner expects visitors to bring the exhibition themselves.

Mr Turner's exhibition will be held at Space Gallery from May 4-10. It's called *An Unexpected Conversation*, and Mr Turner — who describes himself as a "social sculptor" — hopes to create an unexpected conversation at the exhibition opening.

Visitors are asked to bring an object that will make a noise. It can be anything at all, from a cushion to a book to a piece of cardboard to a saucepan. Mr Turner's only request is that people don't bring a traditional noise-making object, such as a

"I want the participants to have a sense of ownership over the event because they are the co-creators."

Artist Tom Turner

musical instrument.

"I'd like people to bring anything that appeals to them, anything whose voice they want to liberate."

Mr Turner is unsure about the enduring nature of the event, but admits that's part of the risk involved in participatory art.

"I'm taking audio and visual

recording equipment along and I hope that people will allow me to record the event. But it's up to them to decide — maybe there will be nothing at all to show for it after Saturday night.

"I'm only the facilitator. I want the participants to have a sense of ownership over the event because

they are the co-creators."

Mr Turner is no stranger to participatory art projects. In 2011 he began *Wailing Wall*, a travelling exhibition of empty plastic bottles with messages inside them from people who had contributed the bottles.

Although *Wailing Wall* started

in Wanganui, it travelled throughout the country, from Cape Reinga to Stewart Island.

■ Everyone is welcome to take part in *An Unexpected Conversation*, 5.30pm on Saturday, May 4. Please bring something for the meal and something to make noise with.



UNEXPECTED NOISES: 'Social sculptor' Tom Turner's latest exhibition invites people to take part using anything that can make a noise.

PHOTO/ANNE-MARIE EMERSON 250413WCAEART01

Figure 42. Artist asks visitors to bring noise. (2013, April 30). *Wanganui Chronicle*, p.5.

Appendix 2

Links to websites with articles about the NZ's Wailing Wall project:

NZ's Wailing Wall Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/NZs-Wailing-Wall/111733432248753>

The Big Idea – 14 June, 2011

<http://www.thebigidea.co.nz/grow/tips-tools/2011/jun/87650-messages-flow-into-wailing-wall>

Scoop Education: 13 June 2011

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED1106/S00052/messages-flow-into-wailing-wall.htm>

Youtube: NZ's Wailing Wall event in new shared space outside of Auckland Library - take 1 (filmed by youths at the event)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDTkFATzOUk>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aIMJk8g--4>

Deliberate Composition: 22 August, 2011

<http://mandaweeton.blogspot.co.nz/2011/08/nzs-wailing-wall.html>

NZ's Wailing Wall at Gisborne Public Library on the 10th of December

<http://www.kulone.com/NZ/Picture/EventShow/2588115>

Bottled up thoughts welcome on wall, By Laurel Stowell : 8:26 AM Wednesday Apr 6, 2011

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/wanganui-chronicle/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503426&objectid=11024445

Twitter: Have you seen NZ's wailing wall? In pigeon park now

<http://twitter.yfrog.com/odqgqbbj?sa=0>

Spare a thought for Tom's wailing wall, By Nicole Bennik in Manawatu Standard, Jul 16, 2011

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/news/5151903/Spare-a-thought-for-Toms-wailing-wall>

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