

Circles Within the Archive
Navigating the Paradoxes of Paul Cullen's Practice

A PhD by Layla Tweedie-Cullen

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Abstract

The impetus for this PhD research arose after the death of my father in 2017—the artist Paul Cullen—an event that brought into focus the extensive archive of his work. My brother Ry and I inherited his collection, which includes artworks, drawings, work-books, documentation, and materials amassed over a forty-year career. This research sits at the intersection of critical archival studies, contemporary art practice, and practice-based research, exploring the paradoxes and tensions in preserving and activating works that are ephemeral, spatial, site specific (or site related) and process oriented. I argue that traditional archival methods tend to overlook the dynamic, contextual nature of these works, losing their full implications and meanings. In response, I reconceptualise the archive as a dynamic cultural actor—a repository and a network of practices that engage with contemporary cultural contexts and transform the artwork into a field of possibilities. In doing so, I extend the notion of the archive to embrace non-textual forms of knowledge, long-chain inter-generational relations, and intangible cultural practices, thus challenging the conventional Western archival focus on fixed, tangible records.

My inquiry examines how archiving practices shape our understanding of Paul's work, how his work might be archived and exhibited to resonate with and extend its conceptual foundations, and how a practice-led process might activate the archive—fostering engagement, generating new trajectories, and promoting continuous emergence—while opening novel pathways for understanding his work and practice. To address these issues, I adopt a transdisciplinary methodology, assuming the roles of archivist-researcher, daughter-archivist, designer, editor, curator, and performer, and I develop a range of tools and modes of operation through practice-led research. I also examine the impact of societal shifts, evolving technology, and changing methods for documenting and writing history, incorporating queer, feminist, and decolonial perspectives.

Throughout this exegesis, I oscillate between academic analysis and personal reflection—drawing on registers of creative nonfiction, including auto-theory—to engage with contemporary historiographical practices that redefine the historian's role from chronicler to interpreter of signs and meanings, while foregrounding my relationship with Paul. My work culminates in a series of outputs—including publications, exhibitions, performances, written work, and a curated online repository of my father's oeuvre—and in the performative staging of Paul's conceptual proposal to install a selection of sculptures at the Musick Memorial Radio Station on Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. In this staging, I analyse the factors that influence site-specific installation artworks and their presentation over time. I contend that this PhD research is increasingly relevant given the growing demand for archives to be dynamic, inclusive and interactive, aligning with the shift towards more active, participatory cultural-heritage practices, while offering a transdisciplinary framework for engaging with art, culture and memory.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	6
Attestation of Authorship	13
Acknowledgments	14
<i>Preamble to Paul: Overwhelm</i>	17
0. Starting the Circle: An Introduction	23
0.1. Overview of Paul's Practice	24
0.1.1. Early Work: 1970s/1980s	25
0.1.2. Projects in the 1990s	32
0.1.3. Projects in the 2000s/2010s	36
0.2. Navigating Terms: Sculpture, Installation Art, and Site Engagement	37
0.3. My Creative Practice: A Multidisciplinary Approach	43
0.3.1. Dutch Design Education	43
0.3.2. The Walker Art Center	45
0.3.3. Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira	46
0.3.4. split/fountain	47
0.3.5. Collaborations with Paul	48
0.3.6. Projects with the Paul Cullen Archive	49
0.4. Positionality and Voice: A Multidimensional Narrative	55
0.5. Defining an Expanded Field of Archiving, and Framing Questions	59
0.6. Exegesis Overview	61
<i>Reflection to Paul: Denial</i>	65
1. Shifting Perspectives in Archival Theory and Practice	67
1.1. Initial Rotation: The Circle Pivots	67
1.2. Three Contexts: Paradigm, Historiography, Technology	69
1.2.1. Paradigm	69
1.2.2. Historiography	75
1.2.3. Technology	76
1.3. The Archive as a Site of Power	78
1.3.1. Ruth Buchanan: Uncovering the Politics of Institutional Collections	78

1.3.2. Paul Soulellis: Documenting Omissions and Absences	85
1.4. Reflecting and Looking Forward	88
<i>Reflection to Paul: Excessive Acquisition</i>	91
2. Archiving Paradoxes	95
2.1. Early Revolutions: The Circle Spirals	95
2.2. Ordered Disorder: The Convergence of Creation and Cataloguing in Paul's Studio	97
2.3. Available Material, Unavailable Future: Cataloguing Artworks	101
2.4. Similar Dissimilarity: <i>Models, Methods and Assumptions</i>	109
2.5. Protective Destruction: <i>Southern Cross</i>	114
2.6. Static Continuity: The Carpark Garden	119
2.7. The Archive as a System	120
2.8. Continuing Conversations: Disordered Order	123
<i>Pataphysical Musings</i>	126
3. Archiving Provisional Arrangements	128
3.1. Initiating Turn: The Circle Expands	128
3.2. Foldable Furniture and Perforated Stretchers	131
3.3. Excursion into Ihumātao	141
3.4. Temporal Narratives: Phenomenological and Discursive Site Specificity . .	144
3.5. Blurred Boundaries: The Artwork–Archive Continuum	146
3.6. <i>Object/Anti-Object (O/AO) 2</i>	152
3.7. Documenting the Sculptural Experience	158
3.8. <i>O/AO 1 or The Odessa Project</i>	161
3.9. An Open Ending: The Archive as a Discursive Site	169
<i>Digital Transmutations</i>	172
4. Staging the Archive—Intersecting Narratives on Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point	188
4.1. Setting the Scene: The Circles Tangle	188
4.2. Choreographing Narratives	198
4.3. The <i>r/p/m</i> Covers as Script	201
4.4. The Absent Audience	208
<i>The Musick Project: A Performative Log</i>	213
4.5. Site-Specific Installations as Networks in Action	218

4.5.1. Physical Dimensions: Concept to Realisation	221
4.5.2. Social, Familial, and Symbolic Shifts	221
<i>The Fire Ceremony</i>	224
4.6. Echoes and Reverberations: Lasting Impressions	229
5. Circling Back: Concluding Reflections	234
5.1. Navigating Archival Paradoxes in Paul’s Practice	239
5.2. Beyond the Physical Object	241
5.3. Reconceptualising Archival Strategies to Capture Dynamic Art Practices	242
5.4. The Creative Artefacts	244
5.5. Contribution to Expanded Archival Practices: A Discursive Approach	248
5.6. Further Research in Archiving and Publishing	249
Bibliography	252
Appendices	259
Appendix A: Ethics Approval	260
Appendix B: Tools	261
Appendix B.1: Participant Information Sheet	261
Appendix B.2: Consent Form	265
Appendix C: Research Outputs	266
Appendix C.1: <i>Building Structures</i> ++ Publication	266
Appendix C.2: Tossing Components	269
Appendix C.3: Installing <i>Discovery of Oxygen</i>	270
Appendix C.4: An Installation Strategy for <i>Explaining the Results of</i> <i>Observation and Moon/Navigation</i> Components	271
Appendix C.5: <i>Weather Stations</i>	276

List of Figures

- Figure 1** Paul and Layla, 1980. 16
- Figure 2** Borer bomb, Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2020. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 18
- Figure 3** Paul Cullen's studio, April 2017. Photographs by Marie Shannon. 19
- Figure 4** Paul Cullen's studio, April 2017. Photographs by Marie Shannon. 20
- Figure 5** Paul Cullen's studio, April 2017. Photographs by Marie Shannon. 21
- Figure 6** Paul Cullen's studio, April 2017. Photographs by Marie Shannon. 22
- Figure 7** Paul Cullen installing a work in the vicinity of Waimakariri River, c. 1974. Photographs by Minerva Betts. 26
- Figure 8** Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, vicinity of Waimakariri River, c. 1974. Photograph by the artist. 26
- Figure 9** Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, c. 1974–75, Withells Road, Christchurch, Photographs by the artist. 27
- Figure 10** Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, c. 1974–75, grounds of Ilam School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury. Photographs by the artist. 27
- Figure 11** Paul Cullen, *Untitled [window frames]*, the artist's studio, Christchurch Arts Centre, c. 1974–75. Photographs by the artist. 29
- Figure 12** Paul Cullen, *Of Possibilities and Probabilities*, 1975 (installation view and details), Centre Gallery, Christchurch. Photographs by the artist. 29
- Figure 13** Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, c. 1975–76. 30
- Figure 14** Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, c. 1975–76. 30
- Figure 15** Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, c. 1975–76. 30
- Figure 16** Paul Cullen, *Fishing for life / balancing*, c. 1975–76. 30
- Figure 17** Paul Cullen, *Constructing the process/logic by which we build*, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1985–86. Photographs by the artist. 31
- Figure 18** Paul Cullen, *A Structural Situation*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton, 1986. Photograph by the artist. 31
- Figure 19** Paul Cullen, *Constructed Architectural Drawings*, 1985 (left), 1984 (right). 31
- Figure 20** Paul Cullen in his studio, Devonport, 1985. 33
- Figure 21** Paul Cullen, *Science (Inconclusive evidence)*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton, 1993. Photographs by the artist. 34
- Figure 22** Paul Cullen, *Recent Discoveries*, Fisher Gallery (now Te Tuhi), 1994. Photographs by the artist. 35
- Figure 23** Paul Cullen, *Recent Discoveries*, Fisher Gallery (now Te Tuhi), 1994. Photographs by the artist. 36
- Figure 24** Paul Cullen, *Falsework* (left: installation view; right: detail), Conical Inc., Melbourne, Australia, 2007. Photographs by the artist. 38
- Figure 25** Paul Cullen, *Situations*, Panmure, 2005. Photographs by the artist. 38
- Figure 26** Paul Cullen, *Situations*, Panmure, 2005. Photograph by the artist. 38
- Figure 27** Paul Cullen, Mariatorget, Stockholm, Sweden, 2007. Photographs by the artist. 38
- Figure 28** Paul Cullen, *Hotel Attempts*, 2005. Photograph by the artist. 38
- Figure 29** Paul Cullen, *Hotel Attempts*, 2005. Photograph by the artist. 38
- Figure 30** Paul Cullen, selected *Attempts*, 2003 / 2007. Photographs by the artist. 39
- Figure 31** Paul Cullen, *Weather Stations*, 2009, as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf, Waiheke Island. Photographs by the artist. 40
- Figure 32** Paul Cullen, *A Diagram*, 2011, as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf, Waiheke Island. Photographs by the artist. 41
- Figure 33** Paul Cullen, *Things from Geology (Underworld)*, 2017, as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf, Waiheke Island. Photographs by Marie Shannon. 42
- Figure 34** Paul Cullen, bookstand edition for *split/fountain*, 2010. Photographs by Marie Shannon. 49

- Figure 35** Filming *Things from Geology (Underworld)*, Waiheke Island, 2017. Featuring, left to right: Alyx Duncan, Layla Tweedie-Cullen, Ry Tweedie-Cullen. Photograph by Paul Cullen. 50
- Figure 36** Film projection by Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, split/fountain, Karangahape Road space, 2010. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 51
- Figure 37** Posters by Fiona Jack, split/fountain, Karangahape Road space, 2009. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 51
- Figure 38** split/fountain, Karangahape Road space, 2010. Photographs by Asumi Mizuo. 51
- Figure 39** *The Loft Was Made for No One*, Michael Parr and Blaine Western, split/fountain Dundonald Street space, 2012. The table and seating booth on the left were built to facilitate a second artwork, *The Newspaper Reading Club Daily*, by Fiona Connor and Michala Paludan. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo. 52
- Figure 40** *The Loft Was Made for No One*, Michael Parr and Blaine Western, split/fountain Dundonald Street space, 2012. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo. 52
- Figure 41** Film screening on the neighbouring building wall as part of *The Loft Was Made for No One*, Michael Parr and Blaine Western, Dundonald Street space, 2012. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo. 52
- Figure 42** *Bare walls, empty room*, installation by Dino Chai in the split/fountain Dundonald Street space, 2012. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo. 52
- Figure 43** *Art Hotel* reading by Wystan Curnow in *Bare walls, empty room* installation by Dino Chai, split/fountain Dundonald Street space, 2012. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo. 52
- Figure 44** split/fountain bookshop and an installation by Xin Cheng, Dundonald Street space, 2012. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo. 52
- Figure 45** Wall painting by Glenn Otto, split/fountain Dundonald Street space, 2017. Photograph by Alex North. 52
- Figure 46** Selected split/fountain publishing projects, various dates. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 53
- Figure 47** Selected publication projects created in collaboration with Paul Cullen. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 54
- Figure 48** Drawing by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, date unknown. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2022. 55
- Figure 49** Note by Ry Tweedie-Cullen, 1991. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2022. 56
- Figure 50** Paul Cullen's work installed in the garden in the house we lived in on Church Street, Devonport, Auckland, 1983, featuring Layla Tweedie-Cullen. Photographs by Paul Cullen. 58
- Figure 51** Layla Tweedie-Cullen reading *Art New Zealand* (upside down), Devonport, Auckland, 1983. Photograph by Paul Cullen. 58
- Figure 52** Paul Cullen's works installed in the garage space of our residence, a converted power station unit, featuring Ry Tweedie-Cullen. Photograph by Minerva Betts. 58
- Figure 53** I interact with artwork components in Paul Cullen's archive, Henderson, 2020. Photographs by p. mule. 61
- Figure 54** Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2022. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 67
- Figure 55** Large works on paper, in the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2022. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 69
- Figure 56** Ruth Buchanan, *The scene in which I find myself / Or, where does my body belong* (installation views), Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2019. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 81
- Figure 57** Contributions by Paul Soulellis to the Internet Archive, 2019. Screenshot by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 86
- Figure 58** Spreads from Paul Soulellis's publication, *Thank you for your interest in this subject*, 2017. 87
- Figure 59** I interact with artwork components in Paul Cullen's archive, Henderson, 2020. Photographs by p. mule. 90
- Figure 60** Layla Tweedie-Cullen, *15-Volume Reader*, 2022. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 93
- Figure 61** Paul Cullen, studio installations for documentation, Henderson, 2016. Photographs by Marie Shannon. 94

- Figure 62** Screenshot of the artwork database, 2024. **99**
- Figure 63** Paul Cullen, *Newton's Bucket Theory*, 2015, the artist's studio, Henderson, 2016. Photograph by Marie Shannon. **102**
- Figure 64** Paul Cullen, *Newton's Bucket Theory*, 2015, the artist's studio, Henderson, 2016. Photograph by Marie Shannon. **102**
- Figure 65** Paul Cullen, studio installation for documentation, Henderson, 2016. Photograph by Marie Shannon. **102**
- Figure 66** Paul Cullen, studio installation for documentation, Henderson, 2016. Photograph by Marie Shannon. **102**
- Figure 67** Paul Cullen, *Green Block Table*, the artist's studio, Henderson. Photograph by Marie Shannon. **103**
- Figure 68** Paul Cullen, *Things on my table*, the artist's studio, Henderson. Photograph by Marie Shannon. **103**
- Figure 69** Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, the artist's studio, Henderson. Photograph by Marie Shannon. **103**
- Figure 70** Paul Cullen, *Everything*, 2004, *After Tatlin (yellow)*, 2015, *Untitled [deckchair]*, 2007, the artist's studio, Henderson, 2016. Photographs by Marie Shannon. **103**
- Figure 71** Paul Cullen, studio installation for documentation, Henderson, 2016. Photograph by Marie Shannon. **103**
- Figure 72** Paul Cullen, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series, 2010–15. Photographs by Marie Shannon, 2016. **106**
- Figure 73** Paul Cullen, *One Metre Reduced*, 2009, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series. Photograph by Marie Shannon, 2016. **107**
- Figure 74** Paul Cullen, *One Metre Reduced*, 2009, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series. Photograph by Marie Shannon, 2016. **107**
- Figure 75** Paul Cullen, *Ruler Reduction*, 2009, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series. Photograph by Marie Shannon, 2016. **107**
- Figure 76** Paul Cullen, *One Metre Reduced*, 2008, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series. Photograph by Marie Shannon, 2016. **107**
- Figure 77** Paul Cullen, *One Metre Reduced*, 2008, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series. Photograph by Marie Shannon, 2016. **107**
- Figure 78** Paul Cullen, *Untitled Models*, 1997–2005. Photographs by Marie Shannon, 2016. **108**
- Figure 79** Paul Cullen, *Untitled (R)*, c. 2002–5. **110**
- Figure 80** Paul Cullen, *Sketch of the outward appearance*, c. 2002–5. **110**
- Figure 81** Paul Cullen, *Endless (W)*, c. 2002–5. **110**
- Figure 82** Paul Cullen, *Endles (K)*, c. 2002–5. **110**
- Figure 83** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements* (installation detail), Two Rooms, Auckland, 2017. Photographs by Sam Hartnett. **116**
- Figure 84** Paul Cullen, *Southern Cross* (1990), the artist's studio, Henderson, 2016. Photographs by Marie Shannon. **118**
- Figure 85** Paul Cullen, studio rehearsal for the *Provisional Arrangements* installation at the Ilam Campus Gallery in the artist's studio, Henderson, 2016. Photographs by the artist. **120**
- Figure 86** Cactus plant from Paul Cullen's work, the Henderson warehouse. Photograph by Marie Shannon, April 2017. **121**
- Figure 87** Cactus plant from Paul Cullen's work, the Henderson warehouse. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, January 2020. **121**
- Figure 88** Cactus plants from Paul Cullen's work, the Henderson warehouse. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, February 2023. **121**
- Figure 89** Carpark garden, Henderson, 2019–23. Photographs by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. **125**
- Figure 90** Paul Cullen's studio, April 2017. Photograph by Marie Shannon. **131**
- Figure 91** Components from *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements*, the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2023. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. **132**

- Figure 92** Components from *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements*, the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2023. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 133
- Figure 93** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Rentons Beach Reserve, Ihumātao, 2015. Photograph by the artist. 135
- Figure 94** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Rentons Beach Reserve (featuring Ryder Jones), 2015. Photographs by the artist. 137
- Figure 95** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Leura, Australia, 2016. Photographs by the artist. 138
- Figure 96** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Joshua Tree National Park, California, USA, 2016. Photographs by the artist. 138
- Figure 97** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Whatipū, 2015. Photographs by the artist. 138
- Figure 98** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Pirongia, 2015. Photographs by the artist. 138
- Figure 99** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2016. Photographs by the artist. 138
- Figure 100** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Pirongia, 2015. Photographs by the artist. 139
- Figure 101** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements: Operative Structures*, Rentons Beach Reserve, 2014. Photographs by the artist. 140
- Figure 102** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements: Operative Structures*, Rentons Beach Reserve, 2014. Photographs by the artist. 140
- Figure 103** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements: Operative Structures*, unknown location (featuring Ryder Jones), 2014. Photographs by the artist. 140
- Figure 104** Page from Paul Cullen's workbook, 1985, featuring a transcription of one of Rosalind Krauss's diagrams mapping the expanded field of sculpture. 144
- Figure 105** Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Two Rooms, Auckland, 2017. All photographs by Sam Hartnett, except for the bottom right image, which is by Marie Shannon. 150
- Figure 106** Components from Paul Cullen's *Provisional Arrangements* series (2013–16), the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2023. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 151
- Figure 107** Paul Cullen, *O/AO 2* (installation details), the Athfield property, Khandallah, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by the artist. 154
- Figure 108** Paul Cullen, *O/AO 2* (installation details), the Athfield property, Khandallah, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by the artist. 156
- Figure 109** Paul Cullen, work in progress for the *O/AO* installations at the artist's studio, Henderson, 2013. Photographs by the artist. 157
- Figure 110** Paul Cullen, *O/AO 2* (installation details), the Athfield property, Khandallah, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by the artist. 159
- Figure 111** Paul Cullen, *O/AO 2* (installation details), the Athfield property, Khandallah, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by the artist. 160
- Figure 112** Paul Cullen, *O/AO 1* (installation details), 30upstairs, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by the artist. 164
- Figure 113** Paul Cullen, *Odessa Field Notes*, 2013, *Provisional Arrangements*, Pirongia, 2015. 165
- Figure 114** Page from Paul Cullen's dossier as part of his *O/AO 1* installation at 30upstairs, Wellington, 2013. 166
- Figure 115** Buildings on the Athfield property, Khandallah, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by Paul Cullen. 168
- Figure 116** Google Maps images of Alexandra Redoubt in Pirongia, sourced from Paul Cullen's files. 168
- Figure 117** Screenshots of a LiDAR representation of the Paul Cullen Archive in the Henderson warehouse, created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2023. 176
- Figure 118** 3D models of components from Paul Cullen's *Discovery of Oxygen*, created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2023. 177
- Figure 119** Multiple views of 3D models created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen, 2023, based on Paul Cullen's artworks: *The Orange Theory* (top), *Fox Circle* (middle), and *Geographer [1]* (bottom). 178
- Figure 120** Multiple views of 3D models created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen, 2023, based on Paul Cullen's artworks: *Moon* (top) and *r/p/m [3]* (bottom). 179

- Figure 121** The *Planetarium* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring a digital models of Paul Cullen’s *Moon* and *The Orange Theory* positioned in a 3D scan of Eise Eisinga Planetarium, completed by Tomek Dersu Aaron. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. **180**
- Figure 122** The *Octagon Room* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring a digital models of Paul Cullen’s *The Orange Theory*, *r/p/m [3]*, and *Fox Circle* positioned in a 3D scan of the Octagon Room, completed by Phoenix Tui. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. **181**
- Figure 123** The *Linnaeus* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring a digital construction of Paul Cullen’s propositional *Table: R2*, 2011. This 3D model, derived from the artist’s drawing, incorporates a table component from *Discovery of Oxygen*, scanned by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. The model also includes hose and water animations, built by Felipe Pulfer in consultation with Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen, and is positioned in a 3D scan of the Linnaeus Garden created by Biyanto Rebin. Model positioned on the cover of Paul Cullen’s *r/p/m Proposition #4: Linnaeus Project for the Linnaeus Garden, Uppsala, Sweden*. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. **182**
- Figure 124** The *Linnaeus* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring a digital construction of Paul Cullen’s propositional *Table: R2*, 2011. This 3D model, derived from the artist’s drawing, incorporates a table component from *Discovery of Oxygen*, scanned by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. The model also includes hose and water animations, built by Felipe Pulfer under the supervision of Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen. *Table: R2* model positioned in a 3D scan of the Linnaeus Museum created by Biyanto Rebin. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. **183**
- Figure 125** Digital model of the Musick Memorial Radio Station and adjacent trees on the cover of Paul Cullen’s *r/p/m Proposition #3: Musick*, created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2023. **184**
- Figure 126** The *Musick* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring digital models of Paul Cullen’s *Geographer [1]*, *The Orange Theory*, and *r/p/m [3]* positioned in the Musick Memorial Radio Station Meeting Room, and *Fox Circle* positioned in the Operating Room. 3D models and location scans created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. **185**
- Figure 127** The *Musick* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring digital models of *The Orange Theory* and *r/p/m [3]* positioned in the Musick Memorial Radio Station Meeting Room, and *Fox Circle* positioned in the Operating Room. 3D models and location scans created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. **186**
- Figure 128** Digital model of the Level One Operating Rooms and Meeting Room at Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata / Musick Point. Created by Ry Tweedie-Cullen and Layla Tweedie-Cullen using LiDAR, 2023. **187**
- Figure 129** Paul Cullen, drawings for *r/p/m* publication *Proposition #3: Musick* cover, 2011. **188**
- Figure 130** The Musick Memorial Radio Station Tower Room (window looks south over the road leading to the station entrance), Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point. Photograph by Paul Cullen, 2011. **190**
- Figure 131** The Musick Memorial Radio Station Operating Room, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point. Photograph by Paul Cullen, 2011. **190**
- Figure 132** The Radio Maintenance Depot, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2011. Photograph by Paul Cullen, 2011. **190**
- Figure 133** Component from a transmitter or receiver at the Musick Memorial Radio Station. Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point. Photograph by Paul Cullen, 2011. **190**
- Figure 134** Page from Paul Cullen’s workbook, c. 2010–11, featuring an annotated drawing of Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, including the Musick Memorial Radio Station. **192**
- Figure 135** Paul Cullen, drawing from “Notes towards the Ocean Box”, a folder of twenty-two loose pages containing sketches and notes, 1978–80. **193**
- Figure 136** Gatefold covers for Paul Cullen: *r/p/m*, Propositions #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5, 2011, featuring artwork on both the exterior and interior sides. Artwork by Paul Cullen, graphic design by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Jayme Yen. **197**
- Figure 137** Framed image of the Musick Memorial Radio Station building, c. early 1990s, in the Meeting Room of the Musick Memorial Radio Station building. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2023. **199**
- Figure 138** Paul Cullen, selected *Attempts*, 1999–2002. **203**

- Figure 139** Paul Cullen, selected *Attempts*, 2001–5. 204
- Figure 140** Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication covers #2 and #3, referencing *Fox Circle*, 2007. 207
- Figure 141** Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication covers #1 and #3, 2011, referencing *Geographer* [2], 1995. 207
- Figure 142** Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication covers #2 and #3, 2011, referencing *Lost*, 2007. 207
- Figure 143** Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication covers #1 and #3, 2011, referencing *Science (Table)*, 1993. 207
- Figure 144** Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication cover #3, 2011, 2011, referencing *r/p/m* [3], 2010. 207
- Figure 145** Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication covers #1 and #3, 2011, referencing *Geographer* [1], 1995. 207
- Figure 146** Paul Cullen, *The Orange Theory*, 2007, the artist's studio, Penrose, 2011. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo. 208
- Figure 147** Paul Cullen, *Moon*, 2013, the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2023. Photograph by Marie Shannon. 208
- Figure 148** Paul Cullen, *Science (Inconclusive evidence)*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton, 1993. Photographs by the artist. 210
- Figure 149** Paul Cullen, *Science (Inconclusive evidence)*, Artspace, Auckland, 1994. Photographs by the artist. 210
- Figure 150** The Musick Memorial Radio Station Meeting Room, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2011. Photographs by Paul Cullen. 211
- Figure 151** *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 213
- Figure 152** *Fox Circle*, 2007, and *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Meeting Room Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 213
- Figure 153** *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 213
- Figure 154** *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 213
- Figure 155** *Moon*, 2013, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 214
- Figure 156** *Moon*, 2013, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 214
- Figure 157** *Geographer* [2], 1995, and *Moon*, 2013, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 214
- Figure 158** *Geographer* [2], 1995, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 214
- Figure 159** *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 214
- Figure 160** *Geographer* [2], 1995, on the Mezzanine Landing, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 214
- Figure 161** *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the Tower Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 215
- Figure 162** *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the Tower Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 215
- Figure 163** *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the Tower Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 215
- Figure 164** *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Mezzanine Kitchen, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 215
- Figure 165** *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Mezzanine Kitchen, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 215
- Figure 166** *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Radio Maintenance Depot, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 215

- Figure 167** *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Radio Maintenance Depot, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 216
- Figure 168** *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the West Corridor, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 216
- Figure 169** *Moon*, 2013, *The Orange Theory*, 2007, *Fox Circle*, 2007, and *Geographer [2]*, 1995, in the Memorial Hall, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 216
- Figure 170** *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Memorial Hall, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 216
- Figure 171** *The Orange Theory*, 2007 and *Geographer [2]*, 1995, in the Memorial Hall, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 216
- Figure 172** Ry Tweedie-Cullen loading artworks into the van outside the Musick Memorial Radio Station, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 216
- Figure 173** Paul Cullen's *r/p/m* sculptures installed in his studio, Panmure, 2011. Photographs by Asumi Mizuo. 220
- Figure 174** Drawing by R. G. Kirkwood 1942 from sketch by Geoff Fairfield of Te Waiarohia o Ngariki pā (later Ngaitai). The red cross marks where Pita Turei's Matariki fire ceremony took place in June 2023. 223
- Figure 175** Ceremony attendees gathered around the fire, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 224
- Figure 176** Pita Turei (second from right) and attendees observing Matariki, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 226
- Figure 177** Ceremonial fire at dawn, marking the observation of Matariki, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 227
- Figure 178** Sunrise over Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen. 228
- Figure 179** Paul Cullen with his installation *Things from Geology (Underworld)*, as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf, Waiheke Island, 2017. Photograph Marie Shannon. 233
- Figure 180** Black-and-white images: Paul tosses a globe from his studio in front of Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1995. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. Colour images: I re-enact this event in Napier with a globe from Paul's archive, 2020. Photographs by p. mule. 234
- Figure 181** Selected page spreads from *Paul Cullen: Building Structures ++* (Tāmaki Makaurau: split/fountain, 2021). 266–267
- Figure 182** In the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2020, I toss artwork components into the air. Photographs by p. mule. 269
- Figure 183** J. A. Kennedy installing Paul Cullen's *Discovery of Oxygen* (1996) in the Henderson warehouse, 2021. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. 270
- Figure 184** Components from *Moon/Navigation* and *Explaining the Results of Observation* (1991), installed by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and J. A. Kennedy in p. mule's studio, 2022. Photographs by Marie Shannon. 273
- Figure 185** Components from *Moon/Navigation* and *Explaining the Results of Observation* (1991), installed by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and J. A. Kennedy in p. mule's studio, 2022. Photographs by Marie Shannon. 274
- Figure 186** Paul Cullen, *Moon/Navigation*, Artspace, Auckland, 1991. Photographs by the artist. 275
- Figure 187** Paul Cullen, *Moon/Navigation*, Artspace, Auckland, 1991. Photographs by the artist. 275
- Figure 188** Paul Cullen, *Explaining the Results of Observation*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton, 1991. Photographs by the artist. 275
- Figure 189** Paul Cullen, *Weather Stations*, 2009, installed by Ammon Ngakuru and J. A. Kennedy with the Paul Cullen Archive (Layla Tweedie-Cullen) in the courtyard of Te Tuhi, 2023. Photographs by Sam Hartnett. 277
- Figure 190** Paul Cullen, *Weather Stations*, 2009, installed by Ammon Ngakuru and J. A. Kennedy with the Paul Cullen Archive (Layla Tweedie-Cullen) in the courtyard of Te Tuhi, 2023. Photographs by Sam Hartnett. 278

Attestation of Authorship

I declare that this exegesis is entirely my own work. To the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where duly cited and attributed. This exegesis does not contain material that has been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any university or institution of higher learning, except where explicitly acknowledged. All published sources and theoretical frameworks have been appropriately cited. Contributions from interviews I have conducted, whether quoted directly or paraphrased, have been included with the informed consent of the interviewees and are acknowledged.

This research was subject to ethics approval, which was granted by the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTECH) on 28 September 2020, reference number 20/237.

The design, layout, image editing, and image selection for this exegesis were undertaken by the author.

Layla Tweedie-Cullen

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Finally, I dedicate this research to my father, Paul Cullen (1949–2017).

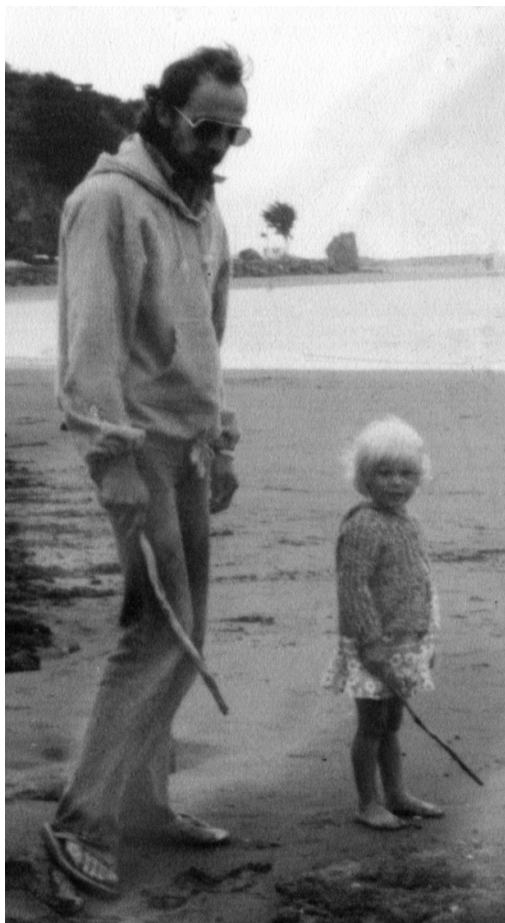


Figure 1: Paul and Layla, 1980.

Preamble to Paul: Overwhelm

After you passed away, we relocated the contents of your house into your already full Henderson studio. The entire floor was covered. Artworks, components, and miscellaneous materials were stacked up and leant against each other on walls, tables, windows, and shelving units, now mixed in with domestic items, clothing, kitchen things, and furniture. Your library of books was distributed between multiple boxes piled on chairs or wherever they could fit. Ry and I found additional artworks perched on the beams in your garage and in a rotting wooden crate under the house labelled *NZ Sculptors at Mildura* in black stencil lettering. Most artworks refuse to be organised or packed away neatly: too unwieldy, too heavy, too fragile, or too unstable. Modified furniture with awkward protrusions or extensions: plastic beans, coloured rocks, ruler pieces, and concrete counter-weights connected by string. Moving *Green Block Table*, even a small amount, requires two people: one to stabilise the weighted three-legged desk and someone else to manoeuvre the chair and align it back in position. The table with the black tarred surface marks everything it comes into contact with.

Between 2017–2020, I spent many hours rearranging artworks and components, obsessively devising more efficient ways to slot them together in the smallest space possible, like a game of Tetris. I got asthma from the dust and, twice, broke out in an allergic rash while painting the studio using tubs of matt white acrylic you had sitting around. I repurposed your walking stick as a makeshift paint stirrer and then applied one wall section at a time, shifting things out of the way and back again. The roller got so clogged with spider webs that I had to throw it away. In 2018, I accidentally broke a few artworks: a green plastic bucket crumbled to pieces in my hand, and one of the pipes in your table-tennis table water-work splintered apart with a loud crack as I was trying to open the roller door behind a mountain of plywood.

Things on my table was damaged a few years later in 2021 by a courier company. The work was collected from the studio for inclusion in an exhibition, but shortly after it was delivered to the gallery, the curator identified an active borer infestation. In the commotion and urgency to evacuate the work immediately and return it to us, the yellow pencil projecting out under the table surface snapped off. Ry and I purchased a borer bomb from Mitre 10 Mega on Lincoln Road and activated it in the warehouse, observing the grey vapour enveloping the space from outside. Borer larvae can spend two to four years tunnelling inside wood before they exit as adult beetles to breed. With so many artworks constructed

from found wooden furniture components, some dating back to the 1990s, I suppose the infestation is not that surprising.

Jane warned us about pests and the impact of temperature and humidity on the artwork. She advised us to move the plan drawers away from the windows to prevent exposure to direct sunlight. We've removed the bench saw from the space too, and the concrete mixer. With Jane's assistance, we continued the archiving work that you and she began. Although Ry and I decided to establish the Paul Cullen Archive in 2017, we didn't start cataloguing until 2018, and we continued for some years (it's still a work in progress). One day, we arrived to find Jane had taped archive numbers up around the studio, which competed with existing labelling on the industrial shelving beams, product numbers and barcodes left over from their previous life in a commercial warehouse. Temporary paper numbers carefully placed on components throughout the space were at risk of blowing around whenever I opened the door. Some labels displayed images of the corresponding works on that shelf, while others were directive, indicating placement with instructions such as "Nothing on Top", assigning certain catalogue numbers to the "Left" and others to the "Right". This prompted me to wonder if I posed as much of a risk to the works as the bugs and fluctuations in temperature. As I write this in 2023, some of these labels remain on the shelves, but many are displaced due to our ongoing reorganisation and consolidation of items. In some instances, we needed to create space to accommodate our belongings, too. We have continued to use the space in a multipurpose manner, as you did, allowing it to function dually as an artist's archive and a workspace for our activities.



Figure 2: Borer bomb, Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2020.
Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.



Figure 3: Paul Cullen's studio, April 2017. Photographs by Marie Shannon.



Figure 4: Paul Cullen's studio, April 2017. Photographs by Marie Shannon.



Figure 5: Paul Cullen's studio, April 2017. Photographs by Marie Shannon.



Figure 6: Paul Cullen's studio, April 2017. Photographs by Marie Shannon.

0. Starting the Circle: An Introduction

In the aftermath of an artist's death, the questions around artist legacy become submerged beneath a tide of grief, administrative paperwork, legal processes, and mounds of banal everyday stuff. Somewhere in the midst of all that will be the artist's works: wrapped works recently returned from an exhibition, older works in the farthest corners of the studio that even the artist may have forgotten, and works in progress, started but not yet finished.¹

The impetus for this PhD research arose following my father's death. He was the artist Paul Cullen, and he died on 13 March 2017. My brother Ry and I inherited his life's work and archive, which comprises an extensive collection of artworks, drawings, workbooks, documentation, and materials he had amassed over his 40-year-long career.² The archive, as a body of creative knowledge that Paul developed and sustained in his studio, is remarkable for its volume and diversity. Paul remained dedicated to his art practice right until the end. In the weeks following his death, two exhibitions of his work concluded their runs: *Provisional Arrangements* (figures 83, 105), a solo installation at Two Rooms (10 February–11 March 2017) and *Things from Geology (Underworld)* (figure 33), a site-related project he developed as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf on Waiheke Island (27 January–19 February 2017). Faced with the monumental task of sorting and organising the extensive assortment of materials in his studio, Ry and I were confronted with critical decisions about what to keep, what to prioritise, and what to let go. Although Paul had started archiving his work in mid-2016, he ultimately did not finish this task, leaving most artworks uncatalogued.

My PhD research, which I began in July 2019 and completed in August 2024, builds on the work I started in 2017 and has evolved from my decision to continue archiving my father's work. In this exegesis, I refer to the artist as 'Paul', a choice that reflects our familial relationship and is consistent with how I have always addressed him. I refer to the warehouse in Henderson, Auckland, which served as Paul's artist studio and now houses his archive, as both the 'studio' and the 'warehouse'. When discussing the period when Paul was alive and actively working in the space, and the months immediately following his death, I use the term 'studio'. For later dates, I use the term 'warehouse', despite the fact that I continue to use the space in a studio-like capacity. I make this distinction to acknowledge the transition of the space's primary function over time.

1 Gilane Tawadros, "Appendix; or, Some Adjectival Notes on Authorship and Legacy," in *Artist, Authorship & Legacy: A Reader*, ed. Daniel McClean (London: Ridinghouse, 2018), 342.

2 Paul left his archive to both myself and my brother, Ry Tweedie-Cullen, who is involved in decision making around the archive.

Archivist Laura Millar posits, “Archives and records are important resources for individuals, organisations and the wider community. They provide evidence of and information about the actions of individuals, organisations, and communities and the environments in which they occurred. They extend and corroborate human and corporate memory and play a critical role in maintaining awareness of how the present is shaped by the past.”³ Echoing Millar’s emphasis on the vital role of archives, my research seeks to establish innovative methods for archiving Paul’s practice. The significance of this practice-led research lies in my exploration of methods for archiving, structuring, and activating Paul’s work, which often takes the form not of single objects but of multifaceted phenomena.⁴ This project brings aspects of his practice to light and aims to provide access points for future researchers to facilitate critical discussion around artist archives and narrative construction. Within this PhD, I consider archiving as an expanded form of art practice, and I have developed publications, creative writing, and a web-based archive as components of my practice-based research.

In this introductory chapter, I will start by providing a brief overview of Paul’s practice, touching on the artist’s philosophy and approach to art. Subsequently, I outline my creative-practice background, including collaborations I worked on with Paul and my engagement with his archive since 2017. I then articulate my research questions, elucidate their significance, and acknowledge my positionality. Finally, I delineate my research aims and methodology, concluding with a synopsis of this exegesis and short summaries of each chapter.

0.1. Overview of Paul’s Practice

Paul’s early work explored links between cultural anthropology, molecular biology, and archetypal architectural forms.⁵ He studied sculpture at the Ilam School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, and graduated with a Diploma of Fine Arts (Honours) in 1975. At Ilam, he studied under Tom Taylor, who led the sculpture programme between 1960 and 1991.⁶ Before going to art school, Paul earned a Bachelor of Science in botany and biological sciences from The University of Auckland and spent a year studying landscape design at Lincoln University,

3 Laura A. Millar, *Archives: Principles and Practices*, 2nd ed. (London: Facet Publishing, 2017), XI.

4 Alex Potts, “The Artwork, the Archive, and the Living Moment,” in *What Is Research in the Visual Arts? Obsession, Archive, Encounter*, ed. Michael Ann Holly and Marquard Smith (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2008), 119.

5 Marcus Moore, Allan Smith, and Paul Cullen Archive, *Paul Cullen: Building Structures ++* (Tāmaki Makaurau: split/fountain, 2021), 87.

6 Marcus Moore, “Reconstructing Building Structures,” in Moore, Smith, and Paul Cullen Archive, *Paul Cullen: Building Structures ++*, 22.

Canterbury, after which he transferred to the DipFA programme at Ilam. As a student, he was influenced by the ideas of art theorist Jack Burnham and anthropologist and ethnologist Claude Lévi-Strauss.⁷ In his writings, Paul has acknowledged the influence of conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s, land art, Arte Povera, post-object art, and constructivist traditions in sculpture on his work. Later in his career, he completed a Master of Fine Arts (2000) and a Doctor of Fine Arts (2007) at Elam School of Fine Arts, The University of Auckland.

Between 1996 and 2008, Paul taught on the Visual Arts degree faculty at Manukau Institute of Technology, Auckland. In 2008, he moved to Auckland University of Technology, where he taught in the sculpture programme until 2016. He was appointed Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Visual Arts in 2014.⁸ Paul received several awards, travel grants, and residencies, including the Moët et Chandon Artist's Fellowship in France (1996) and a Senior Fulbright Award (2012), which took him to the Architecture Department at Auburn University, Alabama, where he collaborated with landscape architect Rod Barnett.⁹ In 2015 he was an artist in residence at the Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik (ZK/U) in Berlin, Germany.

0.1.1. Early Work: 1970s/1980s

Amongst the materials in Paul's studio, I uncovered several boxes of slides and negatives dating back to the 1970s, including documentation of work he created at art school, which I have been slowly digitising as part of my research. Images from 1974–75 show him working outside traditional gallery spaces, directly within the landscape, creating temporary installations using natural materials such as branches

7 Influential texts include Jack Burnham's *Beyond Modern Sculpture* (1968), *The Structure of Art* (1971), and *The Great Western Salt Works: Essays on the Meaning of Post-Formalist Art* (1974), and Claude Lévi-Strauss's *The Savage Mind* (1962), *Structural Anthropology* (Volume I published in French in 1958, English translation 1963; Volume II published in French in 1973, English translation 1976), and *The Raw and the Cooked* (published in French in 1964, English translation 1969).

8 Paul's AUT Visual Arts colleague Monique Redmond shared (2021): "Visual Arts staff would have a day-long planning retreat off-campus, often at one of our studios or houses at the end of each year. When Paul was Head of Department, he hosted the Visual Arts retreat at his factory studio in Henderson. The space was chocka and in full-studio mode, but Paul had cleared a long rectangular area and arranged a meeting table of sorts for us to sit along either side ... it was built from an assortment of his tables, parts of artworks and tables for future use. They were different scales, heights, surfaces and colours. The funny aspect was that some of them had holes, circles for buckets or pots, hinges where parts folded inwards, slots and other geometric shapes routed out of their tabletops to house an object, or for something larger to pass through. There would have been about fourteen of us at the retreat. We had to sit where there wasn't a hole or space! It was with great hilarity that we perched along this temporary arrangement of props for a meeting and a shared lunch. There was something quite funny about its provisionality, Paul's sculptural humour and our delight. Usually a relatively dry event, it made the strategising all the more entertaining."

9 Moore, Smith, and Paul Cullen Archive, *Paul Cullen: Building Structures ++*, 87.



Figure 7: Paul Cullen installing a work in the vicinity of Waimakariri River, c. 1974. Photographs by Minerva Betts.

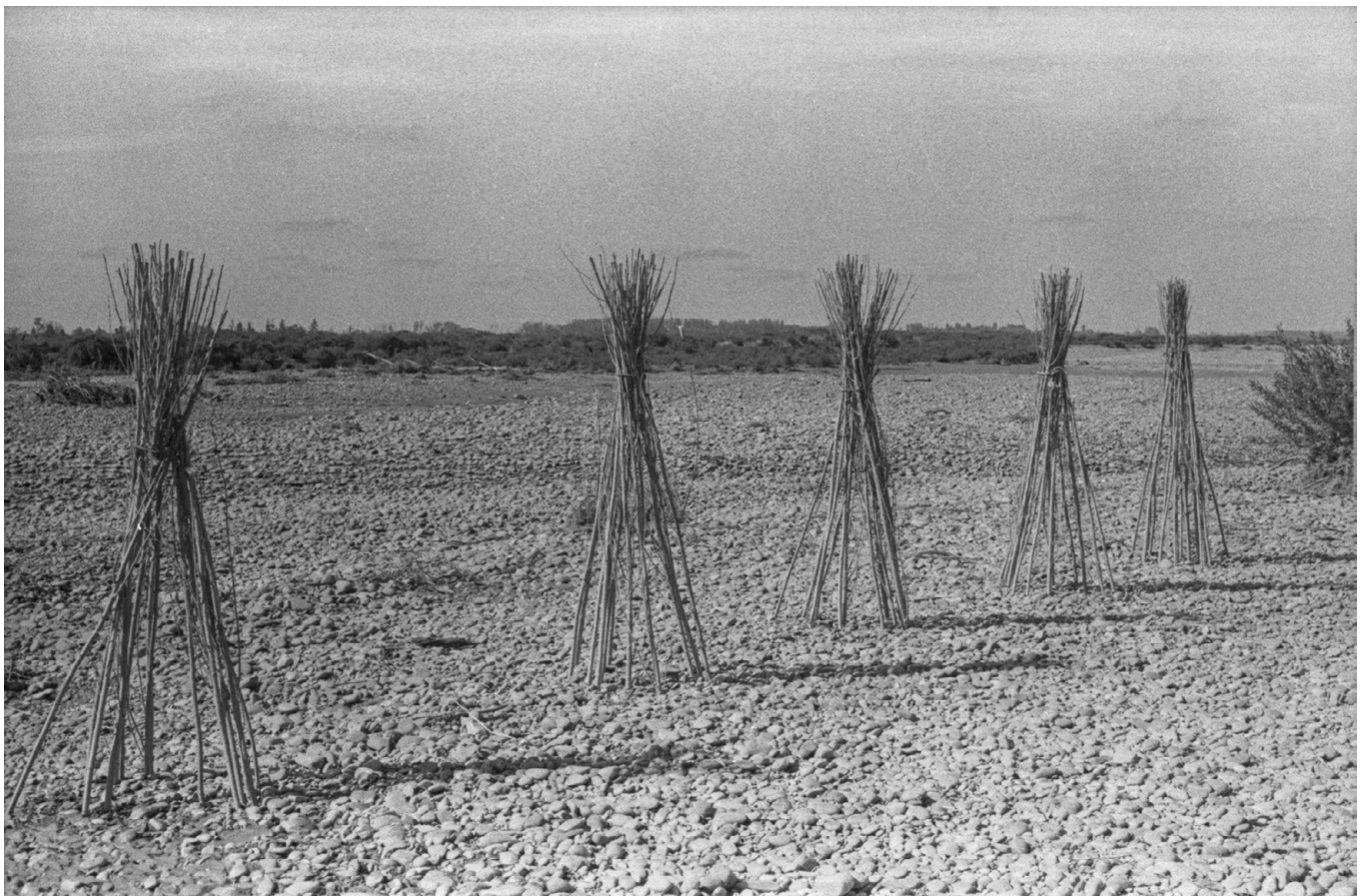


Figure 8: Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, vicinity of Waimakariri River, c. 1974. Photograph by the artist.

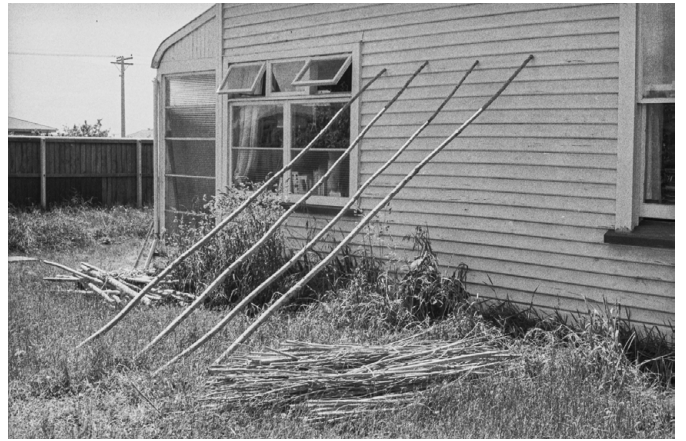
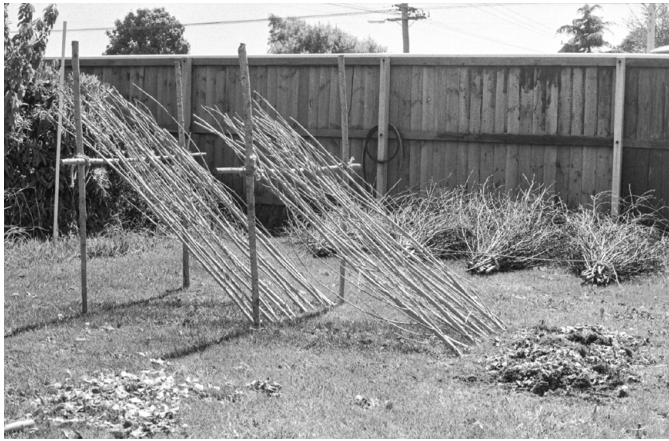


Figure 9: Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, c. 1974–75, Withells Road, Christchurch, Photographs by the artist.

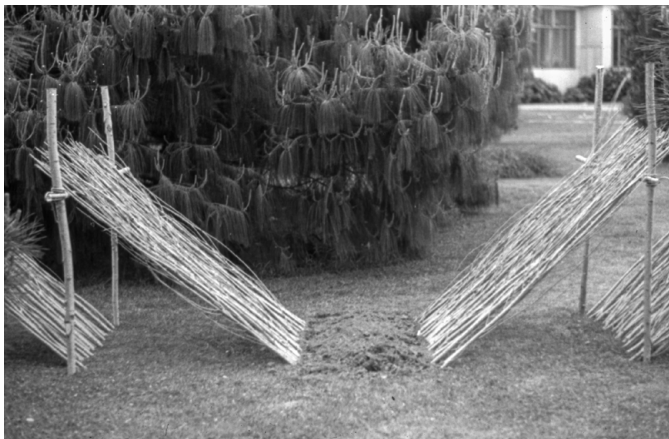


Figure 10: Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, c. 1974–75, grounds of Ilam School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury. Photographs by the artist.

and river stones. Locations included Birdling's Flat, the Waimakariri River Gorge, and the gardens of houses he lived in while a student. In *A Notebook of Sculptural Ideas* (1974), Paul writes, "There are no gaps in the physical work, it may be perceived as a continuum. A continuum analysable as a series of connected energy states."¹⁰ Paul's art practice challenges an anthropocentric (human-centred) logic. By creating installations from natural materials and situating them within the landscape, he underscores a symbiotic relationship between these structures and the natural world, highlighting the interconnectedness of human and non-human entities. These works set the stage for the artist's *Provisional Arrangements* series (2013–16) and temporary outdoor installations that I explore in Chapter Three.

In the publication *Paul Cullen: Building Structures ++* (2021), curator Marcus Moore writes about Paul's Ilam graduation exhibition and first solo show, *Of Possibilities and Probabilities* at Centre Gallery, Christchurch (1975) (figure 12). Moore proposes that in this installation, Paul uncovers the hidden logic present in the natural environment, noting that the artist's approach draws on his knowledge of biological science and thinking about structures at a molecular level.¹¹ He describes Paul's arrangement of natural materials in the gallery space, placing them at "acute gravitational fulcrum points" to achieve structures in balanced equilibrium, and articulating the latent energies embodied in the play of opposing forces.¹² Moore observes: "Rather than singular and discrete sculptures, Cullen regarded these constructions as parts of an energy continuum, as an ecology of interlinked components of art and physical context."¹³ This perspective formed a foundational concept that Paul continued to explore throughout his career.

Paul's approach embodies principles Burnham articulated in his essay "Systems Esthetics" in *The Great Western Salt Works: Essays on the Meaning of Post-Formalist Art* (1974). Burnham argues, "The specific function of modern didactic art has been to show that art does not reside in the material entities, but in the relations between people and between people and the components of their environment."¹⁴ This methodology resonates with the shift towards conceptual, process-oriented art in the 1960s and 70s. Paul's *Of Possibilities and Probabilities* installation and his provisional, in situ installations in the landscape exemplify Burnham's emphasis on processes, interactions, and dynamic systems over static forms. In distinguishing a systems-oriented culture from an object-oriented approach, Burnham emphasises, "Here change emanates, not from *things*, but *the way things are done*."¹⁵

10 Paul Cullen, "A Notebook Of Sculptural Ideas" (Artist's workbook, 1974).

11 Moore, "Reconstructing Building Structures," 27–28.

12 Moore, 27.

13 Moore, 28.

14 Jack Burnham, "System Esthetics," in *Great Western Salt Works: Essays on the Meaning of Post-Formalist Art* (New York: Braziller, 1974), 16.

15 Burnham, "System Esthetics," 16.

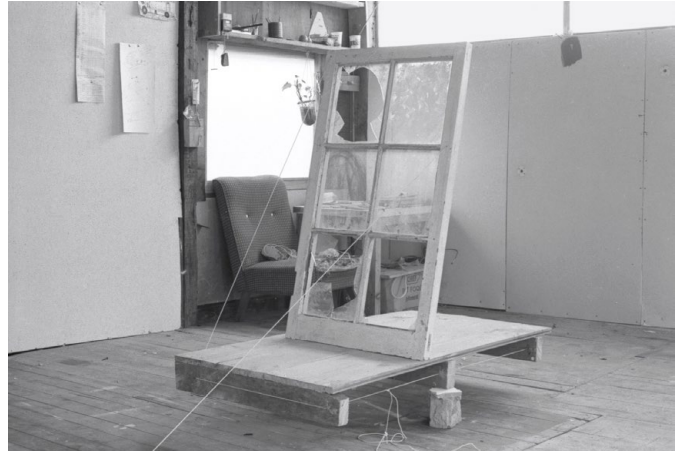


Figure 11: Paul Cullen, *Untitled [window frames]*, the artist's studio, Christchurch Arts Centre, c. 1974–75. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 12: Paul Cullen, *Of Possibilities and Probabilities*, 1975 (installation view and details), Centre Gallery, Christchurch. Photographs by the artist.

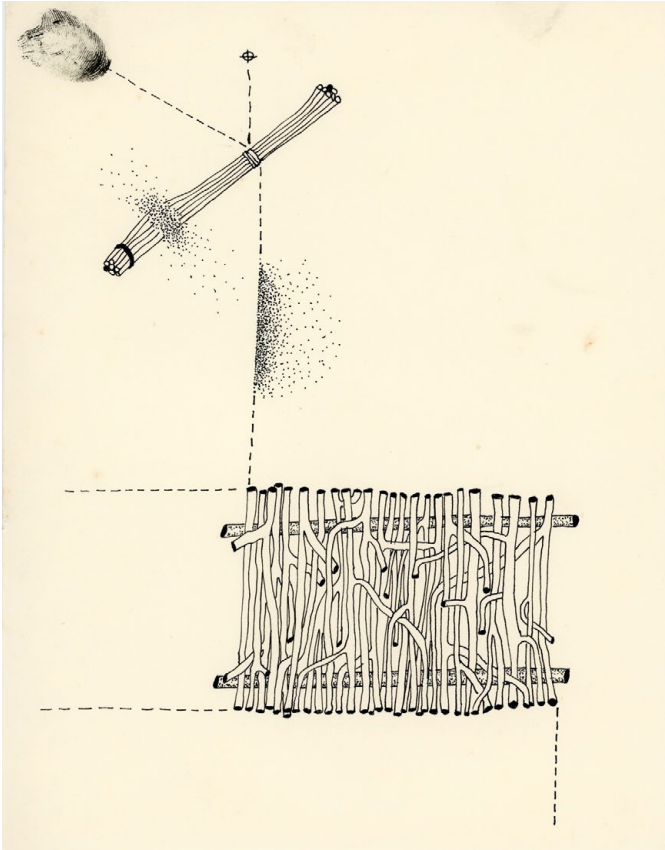


Figure 13: Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, c. 1975–76.

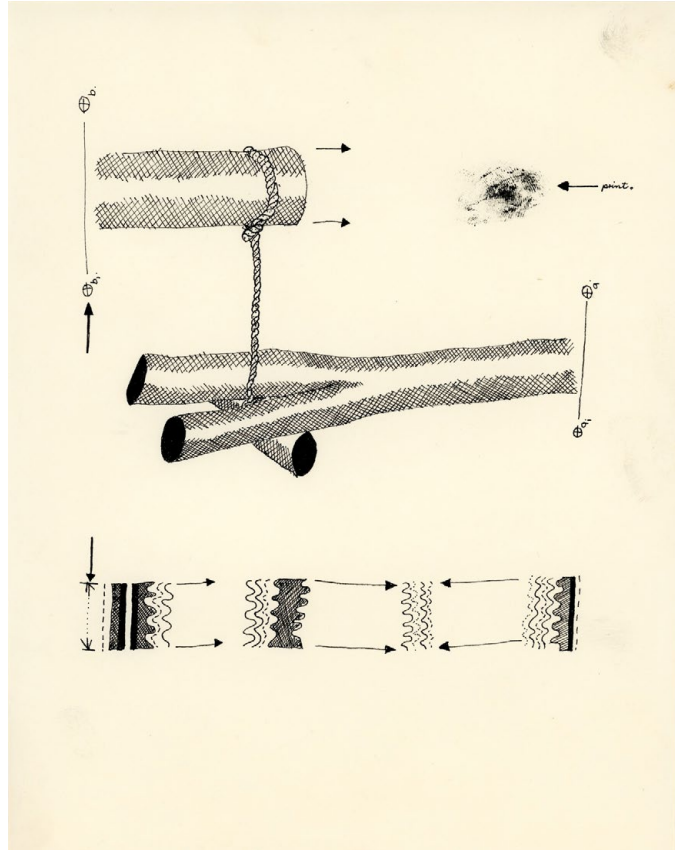


Figure 14: Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, c. 1975–76.

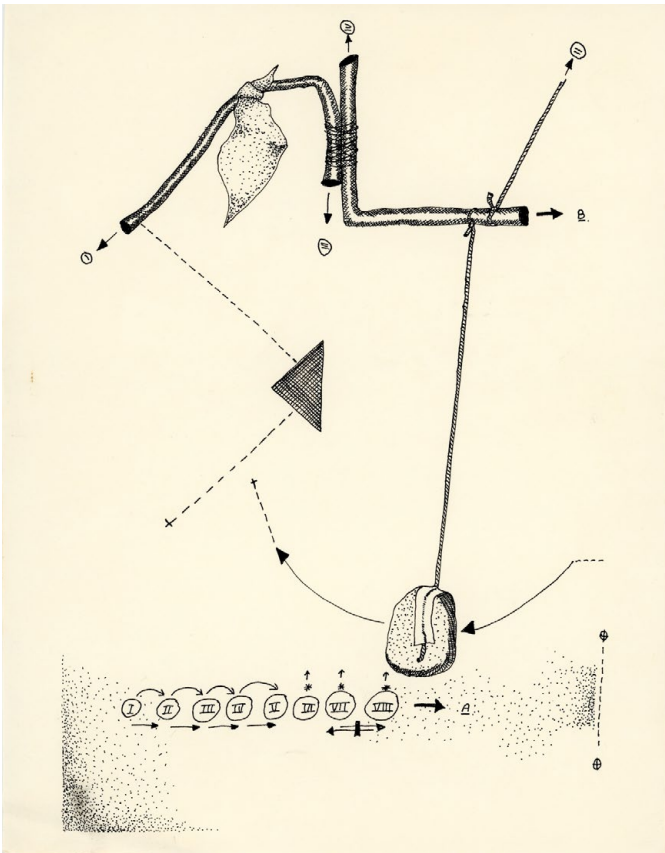


Figure 15: Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, c. 1975–76.

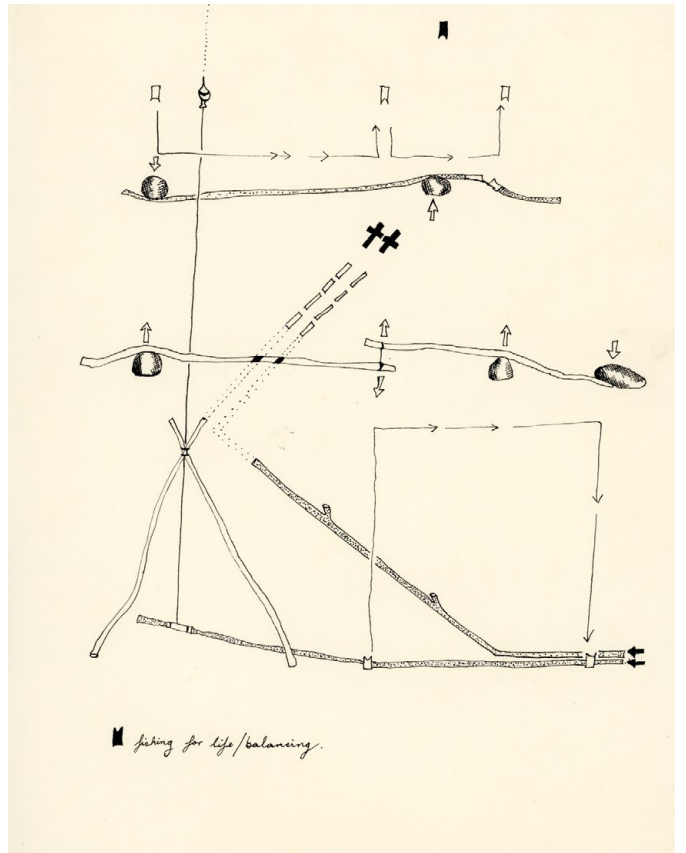


Figure 16: Paul Cullen, *Fishing for life / balancing*, c. 1975–76.

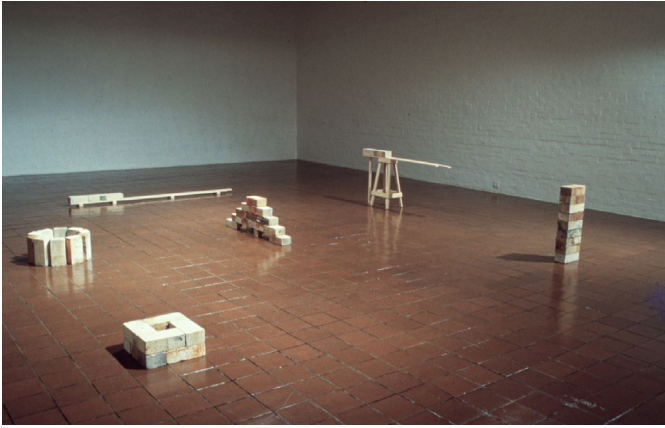


Figure 17: Paul Cullen, *Constructing the process/logic by which we build*, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1985–86. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 18: Paul Cullen, *A Structural Situation*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton, 1986. Photograph by the artist.



Figure 19: Paul Cullen, *Constructed Architectural Drawings*, 1985 (left), 1984 (right).

After graduating from Ilam in 1975, Paul moved to Auckland and participated in significant group shows, including the Auckland City Art Gallery's *Young Contemporaries* in 1977 and the Mildura Sculpture Triennial in Victoria, Australia, in 1978. In 1986, he presented a series of installations titled *A Structural Situation* at the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) in Hamilton (figure 18), and *Constructing the process/logic by which we build* (1985–86) (figure 17) as part of the exhibition *Aspects of Recent New Zealand Art: Sculpture* at the Auckland City Art Gallery (ACAG). Both installations incorporated firebricks repurposed from a dismantled kiln in the power station building where we were living at the time, which Paul and my mother were in the process of renovating. In the 1986 ACAG exhibition catalogue, curator Alexa M. Johnston remarks on *Constructing the process/logic by which we build*, observing that Paul's arrangement of bricks and wood in basic geometric shapes, including a square, a circle, and a tall stack, represent "archetypal forms made from simple units", noting that the artist's temporary construction methods "ensure that the possibility of rearranging the elements is always present."¹⁶ This potential for rearrangement, a key aspect of Paul's work, is also evident in later installations I discuss in my exegesis, including his *Provisional Arrangements* series. A selection of drawings initially shown in the 1986 CCA exhibition was included in the 2022–23 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki exhibition *Walls to Live Beside, Rooms to Own: The Chartwell Show*. An image of *A Structural Situation* is also included in the exhibition catalogue, where curator Natasha Conland highlights Paul's "preoccupation with the structures of habitation, often rendered from available materials with disharmonious lightness, imbalance and the miniaturised scale of model building."¹⁷ Paul's engagement with traditional sculptural elements such as balance, gravity, tension, weight, and counterbalance in this installation also persist throughout his practice over time.

0.1.2. Projects in the 1990s

During the 1990s, Paul began integrating found materials into his practice, including books, furniture, model globes, and cardboard boxes. However, images of his early work at art school also show him using found architectural elements such as windows and door frames in sculptures he erected in his studio. In a series of installations titled *Science (Inconclusive evidence)*, presented at CCA (1993) (figures 21, 148) and then at Artspace in Auckland (1994) (figure 149), Paul softened the boundary between where the artwork started and ended, removing

16 Alexa M. Johnston, "Paul Cullen," in Alexa M. Johnston, Rodney Wilson, and Priscilla Pitts, *Aspects of Recent New Zealand Art: Sculpture 1* (Auckland: Auckland City Art Gallery, 1986).

17 Natasha Conland, "Walls to Live Beside, Rooms to Own," in *Walls to Live Beside, Rooms to Own* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2022), 8.



Figure 20: Paul Cullen in his studio, Devonport, 1985.

internal doors and leaning them against the wall—transforming them into sculptures for the exhibition’s duration. He also rolled up sections of carpet to expose wooden flooring, created temporary sculptures from stacked gallery plinths, and positioned works outside the gallery space, including blackboard works on a roof visible from a window at Artspace, and in an outdoor swimming pool at the CCA. Electrical cords powering speakers, a motorised spinning globe, and a light suspended through a chair seat ran through the gallery space, accentuating the positioning of power points around the room. Writing about the project, Paul reflects, “It becomes difficult to know what is and is not the artwork—so by implication, all contents of the space can be considered part of the installation.”¹⁸ This comment underscores the complexities inherent in archiving Paul’s practice that I explore in this research. I return to *Science (Inconclusive evidence)* in Chapter Four.

Curator Lara Strongman writes about *Science (Inconclusive evidence)* and Paul’s *Recent Discoveries* (1994) at the Fisher Gallery (now Te Tuhi), likening his installations to backyard science experiments, noting, “While they appear to reference rational and empirical thought processes, they exist in a subjective realm outside common sense.”¹⁹ She further states that his use of *science* as a central concept “positions the gallery as a site for speculation, an experimental laboratory where ideas and meanings are given new congruences.”²⁰ In *Recent Discoveries*, Paul once again extended the work outside the gallery to utilise an outdoor courtyard. On the gallery foyer’s ceiling, he mounted a chair fitted with a speaker broadcasting sounds. Below, a water pump in a waterproofed cardboard box circulated

18 Paul Cullen, “Notes for: Science (Inconclusive Evidence)” (Exhibition concept, including hand-written notes, 1994), 5.

19 Lara Strongman, “Weird Science,” in Lara Strongman and Paul Cullen, *Paul Cullen: Recent Discoveries* (Auckland: Fisher Gallery, 1994), 2.

20 Strongman, “Weird Science,” 2.



Figure 21: Paul Cullen, *Science (Inconclusive evidence)*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton, 1993. Photographs by the artist.

water between the indoor space and an outdoor courtyard through plastic tubing connected to a glass vitrine. He explains, “Water sounds generated by the ‘fountain’ attached to the table were relayed via an amplifier to speakers in a cardboard box in the foyer.”²¹ Paul’s addition of small potted plants in the courtyard, on a table and in an area where he had exposed sand by removing several concrete pavers, exemplifies his exploration of complex systems and interactions within his work. In Chapter Two, I examine a selection of Paul’s later installations that incorporate plants, focusing on the challenges of archiving such transient works and the inherent paradoxes they present.

21 Paul Cullen, “Paul Cullen: Slide List” (Slide list for an artist talk, no date).



Figure 22: Paul Cullen, *Recent Discoveries*, Fisher Gallery (now Te Tuhi), 1994. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 23: Paul Cullen, *Recent Discoveries*, Fisher Gallery (now Te Tuhi), 1994. Photographs by the artist.

0.1.3. Projects in the 2000s/2010s

In the last two decades of his career, Paul created itinerant projects in non-art contexts in numerous locations in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas, including Manchester, London, Halifax, Stockholm, Sydney, Melbourne, Seoul, Chung-Buk, São Paulo, Cheongju, Alabama, Los Angeles, Marfa (Texas), Munich, and Berlin.²² In his ongoing *Attempts* project (figures 27, 29, 30, 138, 139), an ordinary pencil was installed in various situations, including on the Pantheon steps in Paris, in the garden of the Château de Courances in France, and on a café table in Amsterdam.²³ Similarly, in the *Situations* series (figures 25, 26, 28), he utilised pencils or fragments of rulers to construct ephemeral installations with materials available on site or with furniture he brought with him, creating works in the landscape, city streets, and hotel rooms. Paul's *Falsework* series (figure 24), produced in a gallery context, also utilises found materials such as furniture, which he propped against the ceiling with timber.²⁴ Reflecting on this series, the artist observes that gravity has traditionally been a fundamental concern in sculpture, with its history of heavy materials like stone, bronze, and timber, and its frequent use of monumental forms.²⁵ He further notes:

Mass, volume and weight, in combination with form and structure, determine what can and cannot be done; requiring consideration of balance, composition and stability. The *Falsework* sculptures address these formal concerns; treating in a tautologically direct manner the existing objects from which they are

22 Moore, Smith, and Paul Cullen Archive, *Paul Cullen: Building Structures ++*, 87.

23 Paul photographed the Amsterdam iteration of the *Attempts* project on a trip to visit me while I was living in the city. He took the image in a café where we stopped for coffee, his image caption reads "June 2002: After an afternoon of failed attempts I made this installation on a table in a bar on the corner of Singel and Torensteeg (Centrum), Amsterdam."

24 Paul Cullen, "The Chemistry of Familiar Objects" (DocFA exegesis, The University of Auckland, 2007), 3.

25 Paul Cullen, "Chemical Objects" (Funding application, 2013).

composed as ‘raw materials’ to be shaped and formed. But formal issues in a traditional modernist sense are not a primary concern in these sculptures, which engage with a complexity of issues arising out of the materials and methods employed: the diagrammatic and model-like modes, the makeshift do-it-yourself approach; the use of humour.²⁶

0.2. Navigating Terms: Sculpture, Installation Art, and Site Engagement

In Paul’s workbooks and writings, he continues to use the term ‘sculpture’ to describe his work, despite his exploration of the expanded field of sculpture and discursive site specificity—significant shifts in contemporary art practice that have seen sculpture evolve from autonomous stand-alone objects to encompass installations, environments, and engaged social practices (I explore these concepts in more depth in Chapter Three). The artist’s usage of the term ‘sculpture’ underscores a critical aspect of his practice: an exploration of the dynamic interplay and ongoing dialogue between the historical foundations of sculpture and its evolving futures within a landscape where physical form and discursive engagement are inextricably linked. In this exegesis, I also adopt the term ‘sculpture’ to describe the artist’s work, aligning with his conceptual framework while acknowledging the breadth of his practice that extends from traditional to contemporary modalities.

To contextualise my use of the terms ‘installation art’ and ‘site-specific installation art’ within this exegesis, I draw on archivist and conservation scholar Tatja Scholte’s work. Scholte highlights the emergence and the inherent ambiguity of ‘installation art’ since the 1960s, originally denoting artworks that use the entirety of the gallery space.²⁷ She further notes the evolution of this term, explaining how ‘site-specific installation art’ has broadened to consider an artwork’s physical placement within a specific locale, the importance of temporal dimensions, and the viewer’s direct interaction as integral components of the artwork’s meaning.²⁸ Scholte’s insights provide a helpful framework for understanding the overlap and divergence between these categories, framing the complex interplay of artwork with its environment. I also draw on art historian and theorist Miwon Kwon’s theories on the discursive and relational aspects of site specificity and use the term ‘site-related installation’ as an encompassing descriptor that acknowledges a spectrum of engagements with space, extending beyond the physical to include social, historical, and contextual interactions. This multi-faceted approach informs my creative practice in this research.

26 Cullen, “Chemical Objects.”

27 Tatja Scholte, *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums: Staging Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), 23.

28 Scholte, *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums*, 23.



Figure 24: Paul Cullen, *Falsework* (above: installation view; right: detail), Conical Inc., Melbourne, Australia, 2007. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 25: Paul Cullen, *Situations*, Panmure, 2005. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 26: Paul Cullen, *Situations*, Panmure, 2005. Photograph by the artist.



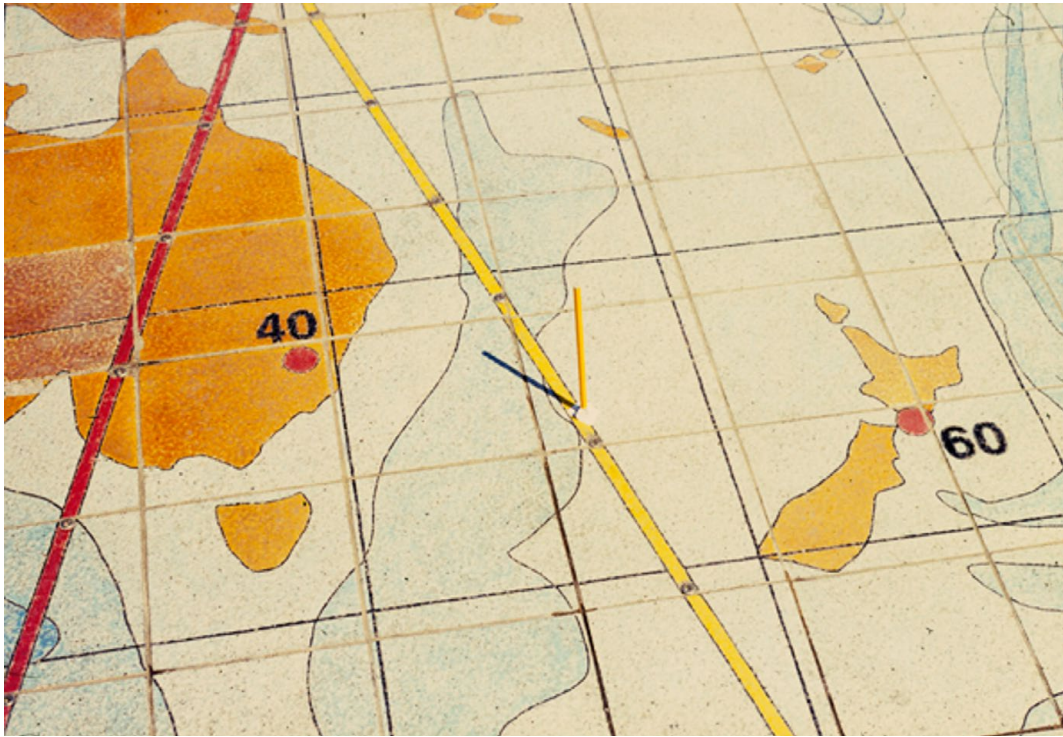
Figure 27: Paul Cullen, *Situations*, Mariatorget, Stockholm Sweden, 2007. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 28: Paul Cullen, *Hotel Attempts*, 2005. Photograph by the artist.

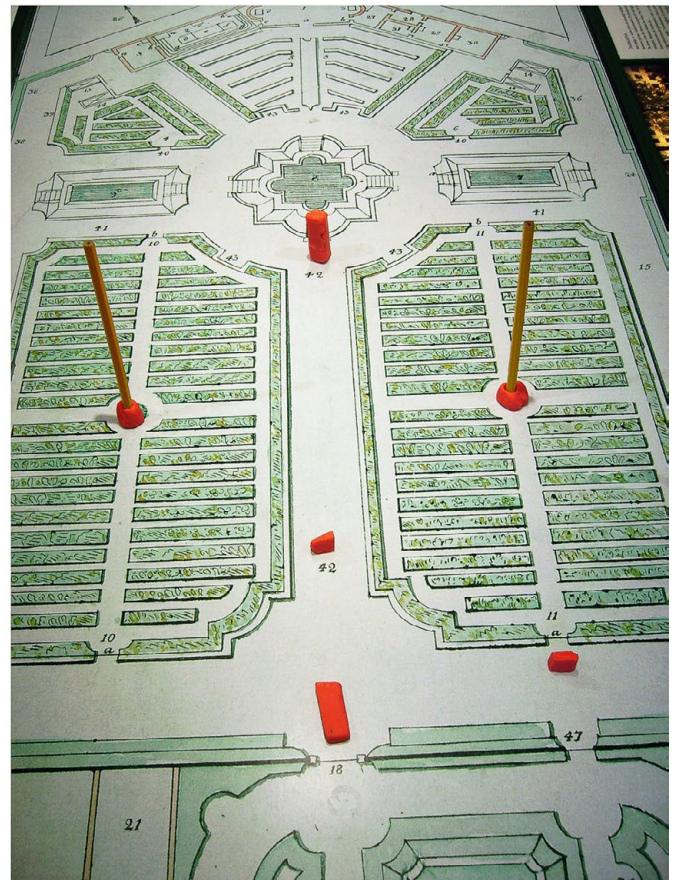
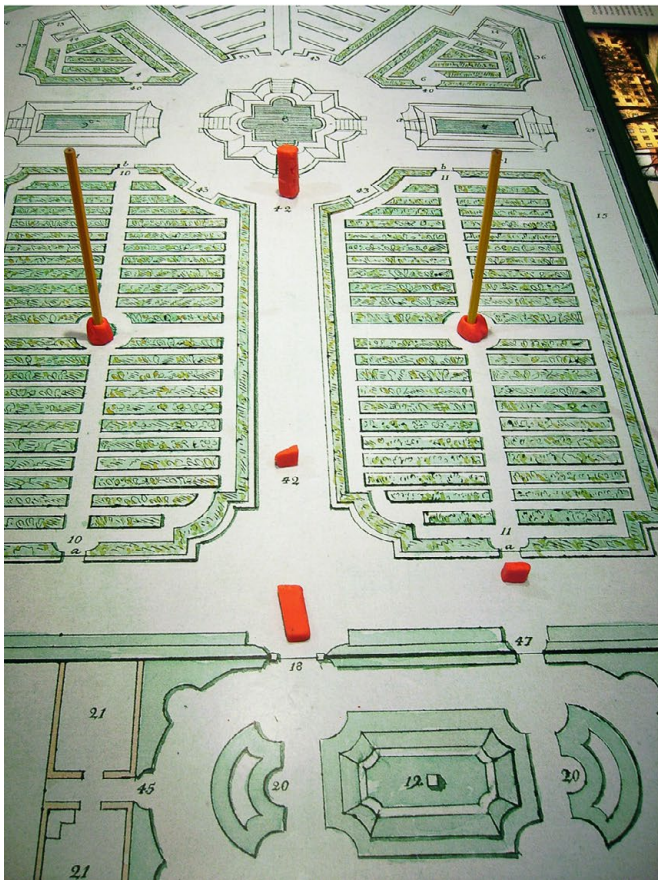


Figure 29: Paul Cullen, *Hotel Attempts*, 2005. Photograph by the artist.



May 2003

Installation between Australia and New Zealand on an outdoor map in Seoul. Buddha's birthday was being celebrated at the time.



September 2007

Installation in the Linnaeus Garden Museum, Uppsala Sweden.

Figure 30: Paul Cullen, selected *Attempts*, 2003 / 2007.



Figure 31: Paul Cullen, *Weather Stations*, 2009, as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf, Waiheke Island. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 32: Paul Cullen, *A Diagram*, 2011, as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf, Waiheke Island. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 33: Paul Cullen, *Things from Geology (Underworld)*, 2017, as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf, Waiheke Island. Photographs by Marie Shannon.

0.3. My Creative Practice: A Multidisciplinary Approach

My creative practice has its foundations in graphic design but extends beyond the traditional boundaries of the discipline and incorporates writing, editorial and curatorial work, and publishing. In this practice-based investigation, I further expand my repertoire by assuming the roles of archivist and archivist-researcher.²⁹ My expanded and interdisciplinary approach to design is influenced by my design education in the Netherlands and a diverse range of professional experiences. I completed a Bachelor of Design (BDes) at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and a Master of Arts (MA) at the Werkplaats Typographie in Arnhem. Through this experience, I was exposed to a dynamic design culture that encouraged experimentation and pushed the boundaries of conventional design practices. Beyond academia, my varied roles in research, curation, publishing, and design have further shaped my approach. I am the co-founder and director of a project space and publishing venture called split/fountain (S/F) and have worked with a wide range of contemporary artists, designers, and galleries. I also have experience working as an in-house designer at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, USA, and at the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira. In the following section, I will provide a brief overview of this experience and discuss a selection of projects that I have worked on that I consider relevant to this research.

0.3.1. Dutch Design Education

The Rietveld design department is renowned for its strong connections with the Dutch design community.³⁰ The programme's approach marked a departure from traditional, commission-based graphic design, shifting focus to self-directed content creation encompassing a range of activities from editorial and curatorial work to visual production. In this context, we determined suitable formats for our projects, engaging in everything from editing and production to self-publishing. This environment fostered a culture of design authorship and independent thinking. One of my Rietveld graduation projects was a 294-page publication titled *Cities and Eyes: Bronnenboek*, subsequently published by the University of Amsterdam Press (2005). This project, from over nineteen years ago, parallels my current research into structuring and organising information, and underscores my longstanding interest in collaborative work.

29 I am adopting the term 'archivist-researcher' from Lynée Lewis Gaillet's essay "(Per)Forming Archival Research Methodologies," *College Composition and Communication* 64, no. 1 (2012): 35–58, and elaborate further on this concept in Chapter Two.

30 At the Rietveld, my tutors included Will Holder, Julia Born, Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey, Joke Robaard, Linda van Deursen, and Marieke Stolk and Danny van den Dungen from Experimental Jetset.

In the collaborative project *Cities and Eyes: Bronnenboek*, developed with three fellow design students, we assumed the roles of contributing editors, designers, and project managers, collectively shaping the content and design. A selection of images from Paul's *Attempts* project is featured in this publication, which displays a yellow pencil temporarily installed in sites across London, Amsterdam, Seoul, Sydney, Napier, and Courances. A central element of the book's concept was the creation of three indexes—names of people, names of cities and other geographic locations, and an alphabetical A–Z index—initiated from the front cover. To create connections and a network of relations, we included index entries on every page where a specific entry word appeared, such as a city's name, and listed page numbers for every other instance of that word throughout the book. I also created an experimental typeface presented as a series of posters interspersed throughout the publication. There were twenty-four versions of the same basic font, each embodying an alphabetical progression. For example, the 'A' font incorporated a modified 'a' that adhered to the grid but introduced various irregularities, followed by a similarly adapted 'b' in the 'B' font, and so forth. Initiated with a simple grid structure, every new typeface iteration in the series introduced a variation of a single letter characterised by shifting weights and line thicknesses. This design approach was inspired by the protagonist of Paul Auster's *City of Glass* (2009), who wanders the streets of New York, tracing the shapes of letters with his path.

At the Werkplaats Typografie I participated in more collaborative projects, including a publication as part of the Chaumont Graphic Arts Festival in France (Festival International de l'Affiche et du Graphisme de Chaumont), *Dutch Resource: Collaborative Exercises in Graphic Design* (2005), and an alternative guidebook for visitors to Manifesta 6, a nomadic biennial of contemporary art held in Nicosia, Cyprus, that year, which was unexpectedly cancelled.³¹ As part of this project, I travelled to Nicosia to attend the Manifesta Coffee Break conference for research and to engage with artists and curators. I was a co-editor and -designer of the resulting publication, *Nicosia This Week: An Unofficial Guide to the Biennial That Never Was* (2006) and contributed various texts and drawings that explored the political tensions and controversy surrounding the event's cancellation.

For *Dutch Resource*, the entire Werkplaats Typografie school relocated to a municipal garage in Chaumont's town centre to stage the exhibition and design the publication. Eleven Werkplaats Typografie participants, including myself, collaborated with a

31 The Werkplaats Typografie is centred around practical assignments and self-initiated projects. Though affiliated with ArtEZ University of the Arts, WT is housed separately in a repurposed radio station building. In a two-year programme fostering a tight-knit atmosphere with communal meals and round-the-clock access to a shared workspace, I was one of six participants in my year group. Tutors included Karel Martens, Paul Elliman, Maxine Kopsa, and Armand Mevis. We also had a regular programme of guest lectures and frequently travelled to visit exhibitions across the Netherlands and in nearby countries.

Dutch or Netherlands-based designer or design studio to represent their work across thirty-two pages. I worked with Roma Publications, an art publisher, and this engagement expanded my project into a broader enquiry into independent publishing. My research towards this project led me to interview various artists, designers, and writers actively involved in different facets of publishing. The collective process of creating the book in Chaumont served as the exhibition itself, conducted in a makeshift workspace created from cardboard boxes designed by Next Architects and Claudia Linders. These modular boxes were adaptable, serving as workstations, displaying works in progress, and showcasing pieces by the designers and studios with whom we collaborated. The exhibition's layout was dynamic, with boxes regularly rearranged to meet the evolving needs of our publication's development.

0.3.2. The Walker Art Center

After graduating from the Werkplaats Typografie, I moved to Minneapolis, in the United States, to take up a year-long design fellowship as an in-house designer at the Walker Art Center, an institution renowned for its multidisciplinary programming and in-house design department. The department is recognised for its progressive approach to design, demonstrated through design and architecture-focused exhibitions, events, initiatives, and its award-winning in-house design studio, along with influential fellowship and publishing programmes. In my role, I designed graphic identities, publications, and posters for exhibitions and programming.³² A project highlight at the Walker was collaborating with artist Catherine Sullivan on a publication for her exhibition *Triangle of Need*, curated by Doryun Chong.

In *Graphic Design: Now in Production*, published by Walker Art Center in 2011 in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title, editors and curators Ellen Lupton and Andrew Blauvelt (who was the Design Director and Curator at the Walker Art Center when I was a Design Fellow) survey “the vibrant landscape of graphic designers who have seized the means of production.”³³ The editors contextualise this trend in the publication by exploring how increased access to software, tools, and technology has driven the shift towards independent publishing over the past ten years. Their insights reveal how the democratisation of design has empowered designers, writers, artists, and others to take control of the creative production process, subsequently enhancing the impact and reach

32 I also managed the production process, including press checks, and overseeing graphics installation in gallery spaces. In this role, I worked under the Design Director and Curator, Andrew Blauvelt.

33 Andrew Blauvelt, Ellen Lupton, and Rob Giampietro, eds., *Graphic Design: Now in Production*, 1st ed. (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2011).

of graphic design in recent years. This analysis resonates with my engagement with independent publishing as a means to assert agency, collaborate, and have a voice beyond traditional client-driven projects.

0.3.3. Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira

Returning to Aotearoa, I spent six years as a designer at Tāmaki Paenga Hira, working across departments such as History, Marine, Māori, Sciences, Pacific, Pictorial, Display, and Lighting. My engagement with the museum’s collections was guided by te ao Māori (Māori worldview) through He Korahi Māori principles, developed by the Auckland War Memorial Museum to achieve the institution’s bicultural aspirations. These principles include: first, Mana Whenua, acknowledging the voice of iwi with tribal links to Tāmaki Makaurau and the role of ahi kā, which loosely translates as the burning fires of occupation or continuous occupation; second, Manaakitanga and the importance of fostering a reciprocal and respectful host–visitor relationship central to the visitor experience; third, Kaitiakitanga guides the care and accessibility of taonga for present and future generations and advocates for a bicultural approach in collaboration with iwi, hapū, whānau, and communities.³⁴ This approach reshaped my understanding of taonga (treasured objects or cultural items), recognising them as part of a living culture rather than isolated, autonomous artefacts.³⁵ At Tāmaki Paenga Hira, the museum positions itself as the caretaker rather than the owner of the taonga it houses, aiming to reflect a shift away from Western-centric models where museums are viewed as the ultimate authorities and owners of their collections. This perspective seeks to respect the mana (authority and spiritual power) of these items as belonging to the iwi (tribes) from which they originate, affirming the importance of Māori determining how their taonga are presented and interpreted. However, despite these intentions, the museum’s role as a caretaker is not always perceived as such by all stakeholders, highlighting the ongoing challenges and complexities in managing these culturally significant items.³⁶ This awareness informs my PhD research and my effort as a Pākehā New Zealander to respectfully include Māori perspectives, honouring the mana whenua of iwi and hapū connected to whenua (land).

34 According to *Te Aka Māori Dictionary*, “ahi kā” means “burning fires of occupation, continuous occupation—title to land through occupation by a group, generally over a long period of time. The group is able, through the use of whakapapa, to trace back to primary ancestors who lived on the land. They held influence over the land through their military strength and defended successfully against challenges, thereby keeping their fires burning.” *Te Aka Māori Dictionary*, s.v. “Ahi Kā,” accessed June 3, 2024, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/74>.

35 Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, *He Korahi Māori: Strategic Pathways* (Auckland: Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 2016), 4, <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/getmedia/016605a4-9609-4b1c-8849-352a12dcd7a6/auckland-museum-he-korahi-maori-strategic-pathways-2016.pdf>.

36 Conal McCarthy, *Museums and Māori: Heritage Professionals, Indigenous Collections, Current Practice* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2011), 69.

0.3.4. split/fountain

In 2009, the same year as starting my position at Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, I co-founded S/F, a project that has operated variously as a design studio, project space, curatorial office, niche publishing house, and laboratory for urban aesthetics and collaborative thinking.³⁷ Building on my experiences creating and researching independent publishing overseas, I established S/F as a platform for collaboration among artists, writers, and designers while generating opportunities for experimental publishing projects and creative agency. When first conceptualising S/F, I was interested in developing a project that could remain in a state of transition, continuing to evolve and make regular changes in response to a particular project's requirements.³⁸ A valuable reference was Marcel Broodthaers's itinerant Musée d'art Moderne, Département des Aigles, a nomadic, temporal space that only existed in the time or place where appropriate conditions allowed for one of its 'sections' to take place. S/F started as a bookshop, primarily representing small independent art and design publishing initiatives, before broadening its scope to include events, exhibitions, and the establishment of a publishing imprint.³⁹ As the director, I curated the public programme, which focused on cross-disciplinary practices operating at the point of intersection between art and design.⁴⁰

The S/F project space and exhibition programme ran between 2009 and 2016.⁴¹ Exhibitions frequently incorporated a publication as an integral component. However, rather than make conventional exhibition catalogues, I sought to

37 I co-founded split/fountain with gallerist Michael Lett, after collaborating on a publication project with The Estate of L Budd. I took full ownership of split/fountain in December 2010.

38 I have discussed my aspirations behind founding split/fountain in various published sources, including a 2019 interview in *On Publishing: Graphic Designers Who Publish*, edited by Christopher Yamamoto and Jon Suede, SFMOMA, 2019. <https://onpublishing.page>. Another source is 'split/fountain' in *Temporary Art Review*, available at <https://temporaryartreview.com/split-fountain/>.

39 S/F publishing projects take a range of forms, including publications, posters, newspapers, and artists' editions.

40 The programme included collaborations with local artists, designers, and collectives, including Xin Cheng, Fiona Connor, Wytan Curnow, Ilke Gers, Fiona Jack, Vivienne Plumb, Zac Langdon-Pole, Jack Hadley, Nell May, The National Grid, We Should Practice, Blaine Western, and the et al. collective. The programme also involved international practitioners, including Paul Elliman (UK), Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries (KOR/USA), Sandra Kassenaar (NL), Gregory Maass & Nayoungim (DL/KOR), and Radim Peško (NL).

41 In 2015 I resigned from my role at Auckland Museum to concentrate on S/F full time, taking on additional design and lecturing work. During 2016, my father became increasingly ill and I assisted with his care. I decided to discontinue the project space and not take on any publishing work. During this time, I struggled to maintain a viable design practice, heightened by the fact my background was in print design and the world was increasingly turning to digital. Between 2018 and 2019, I upskilled in UX (user experience) and UI (user interface) design before redirecting my focus to this scholarship-funded PhD research.

reframe these publications above simple documentation by framing each as a distinctive project, inherently linked to the printed format. In some instances, documents were generated collaboratively to create connections between people or performed by producing a document at a specific site, such as in the nomadic project *Temporary housing + shelter*, presented as part of the 2012 Tokyo Art Book Fair (created in collaboration with Japanese art and design collective Whatever Press), and at the Physics Room gallery in Ōtautahi Christchurch, Aotearoa (2013).⁴² Each issue of *Temporary housing + shelter* was printed and produced with a varying group of contributors in the city where the exhibition took place.⁴³ In Tokyo we worked with over thirty collaborators and utilised Riso and office printers throughout the city. The pages were produced in a variety of formats and the publication was unbound, enabling it to be added to over time or recompiled in different ways. For the Tokyo and Christchurch exhibitions, artist Xin Cheng created furniture from found materials, including rope, buckets, and bales of paper for visitors to utilise and as support structures for the publications we presented. This PhD research builds upon the methodology I developed through the S/F project.

0.3.5. Collaborations with Paul

As a designer and as part of the S/F project, I collaborated with Paul on various publication and exhibition projects. I designed a small publication to accompany his 2007 exhibition *Falsework* at Conical Inc. gallery in Melbourne, Australia. I designed two issues of *Z/X* journal, including issue #3, *Contemporary Landscape* (2007), and #4, *Situations* (2008), a journal he co-edited while a lecturer at the Manukau School of Visual Arts. I also collaborated with him on the publication *r/p/m*, documenting a series of his works, which we launched at S/F in 2011 with a unique poster edition we printed for the event (I discuss the *r/p/m* publication further in Chapter Four). Paul was a strong supporter of the S/F project, and on one occasion he developed a series of bookstands constructed from books that I took to the New York Art Book Fair in 2010 to display S/F publishing. In 2016,

42 Nomadic split/fountain exhibition projects presented overseas include *Temporary housing + shelter* at the Tokyo Art Book Fair (produced in collaboration with Whatever Press, Tokyo), *S/F project at the Physics Room* in Christchurch, and *distracted-workshop* at the 26th International Biennial of Graphic Design Brno in the Czech Republic, and an exhibition of split/fountain publishing at C7C Gallery in Nagoya, Japan.

43 *Temporary housing + shelter* (Tokyo) was published by split/fountain and Whatever Press, 2012, and edited by Bopha Chhay, Masashi Kido, Asumi Mizuo, Momoko Usuda, and myself. I designed and developed the publication concept, and the design of inserts and Japanese typesetting was done by Toshimasa Kimura, Toshiaki Koga, and Masashi Kido. *Temporary housing + shelter*, also known as *Work-book*, was published by split/fountain and the Physics Room (2013) and edited by Matthew Galloway, Melanie Oliver, Luke Wood, and myself. I designed the publication with Henry Babbage.

I designed a pocketbook documenting a collaborative and evolving group exhibition titled *Weakforce4* by UFT/Universal Field Theory umbrella, an art collective he was a member of. In 2017, I collaborated with Paul, my brother Ry, and filmmaker Alyx Duncan to create a short film about his site-related installation *Things from Geology (Underworld)* that was part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf, Waiheke Island.⁴⁴ In 2015, Paul and I began planning a second monograph of his work with the working title *Provisional Arrangements*, but, sadly, we did not complete this project.⁴⁵

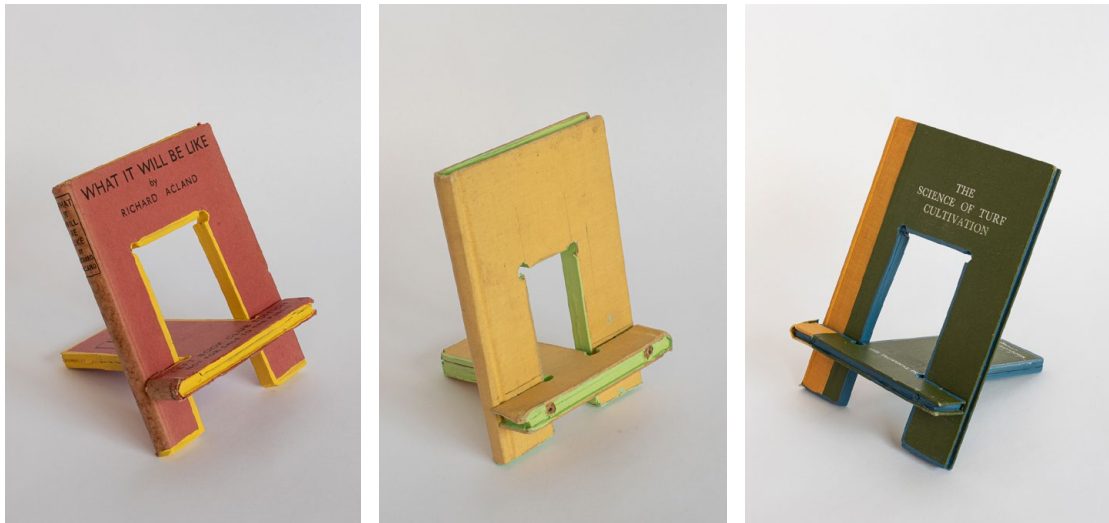


Figure 34: Paul Cullen, bookstand edition for split/fountain, 2010. Photographs by Marie Shannon.

0.3.6. Projects with the Paul Cullen Archive

Alongside my PhD research, in my capacity as caretaker of the Paul Cullen Archive, I have worked with curators towards solo and group exhibitions featuring Paul's work at various galleries, which include the following projects: *Paul Cullen: Building Structures* (solo show), curated by Marcus Moore, The Engine Room, Massey University, Wellington, 2018; *Paul Cullen: Building Structures +* (solo show), curated by Marcus Moore and Allan Smith with the Paul Cullen Archive, ST PAUL St Gallery, Auckland, 2018; *Paul Cullen: Building Structures ++* (solo show), curated by Marcus Moore and Allan Smith with the Paul Cullen Archive, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2020; *Thinking About Thinking About the Future* (group show), curated by Chloe Geoghegan, Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery, Auckland, 2020; *Paul Cullen: Illustrating Reason* (solo show), curated by Mary-Louise Browne, Two Rooms, Auckland, 2021; *Finders* (group show), curated by Greg Donson,

44 Paul Cullen et al., *Paul Cullen: Things from Geology (Underworld)*, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMeudMZFk1A>.

45 Paul and I had planned to work with Allan Smith on this project.



Figure 35: Filming *Things from Geology (Underworld)*, Waiheke Island, 2017. Featuring, left to right: Alyx Duncan, Layla Tweedie-Cullen, Ry Tweedie-Cullen. Photograph by Paul Cullen.

Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery, Whanganui, 2021–22; *Walls to Live Beside, Rooms to Own: The Chartwell Show* (group show), curated by Natasha Conland, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2022–23; *Huarere: Weather Eye, Weather Ear* (group show), curated by Janine Randerson, Te Tuhi, 2023; *Eight Thousand Layers of Moments* (group show and publication), curated by the artists for Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, 2024.

Another significant project I worked on with curators Marcus Moore and Allan Smith was the publication *Paul Cullen: Building Structures ++* (published by S/F in 2021) (figure 181), which documented the series of exhibitions titled *Building Structures*, as listed above, held between 2018 and 2020 in three New Zealand galleries. My role encompassed archival research, proposing, sourcing, and digitising archival materials for the curators, which culminated in adding the Paul Cullen Archive as an author. This decision shifted the archive’s role from a passive collection to an active contributor. I was responsible for fact-checking artwork dates and titles and designing the publication, which included image editing and managing the print production process. Although this publication and the exhibitions I have listed above are not part of my PhD research per se, my involvement has influenced my approach to the archive and understanding of Paul’s work.⁴⁶

46 Alongside my academic research, I continue part-time work with S/F, managing Auckland Council’s City Spaces programme in central Tāmaki Makaurau. In this role, I collaborate with artists to activate vacant storefronts, fostering community and cultivating dynamic urban spaces.



Figure 36: Film projection by Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, split/fountain, Karangahape Road space, 2010. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.



Figure 37: Posters by Fiona Jack, split/fountain, Karangahape Road space, 2009. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

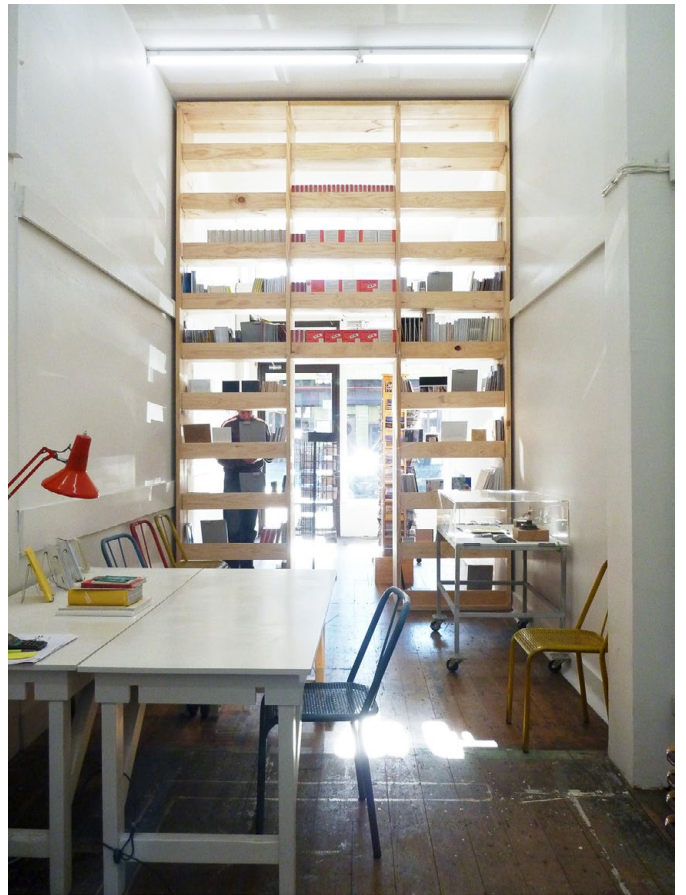


Figure 38: split/fountain, Karangahape Road space, 2010. Photographs by Asumi Mizuo.



Figure 39: *The Loft Was Made for No One*, Michael Parr and Blaine Western, split/fountain Dundonald Street space, 2012. The table and seating booth on the left were built to facilitate a second artwork, *The Newspaper Reading Club Daily*, by Fiona Connor and Michala Paludan. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo.



Figure 40: *The Loft Was Made for No One*, Michael Parr and Blaine Western, split/fountain Dundonald Street space, 2012. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo.

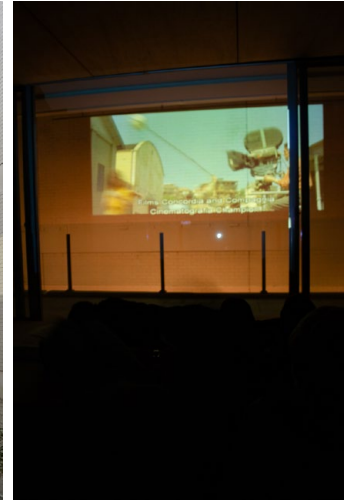


Figure 41: Film screening on the neighbouring building wall as part of *The Loft Was Made for No One*, Michael Parr and Blaine Western, Dundonald Street space, 2012. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo.

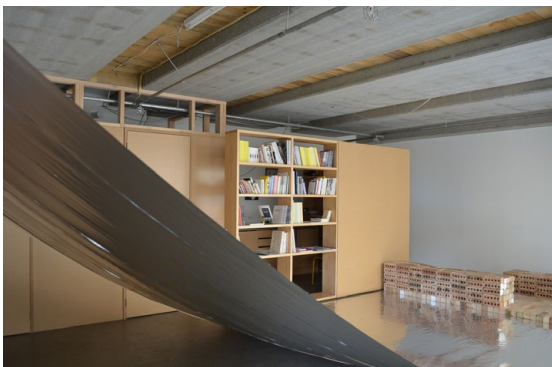


Figure 42: *Bare walls, empty room*, installation by Dino Chai in the split/fountain Dundonald Street space, 2012. Photographs by Asumi Mizuo.



Figure 43: *Art Hotel* reading by Wystan Curnow in *Bare walls, empty room* installation by Dino Chai, split/fountain Dundonald Street space, 2012. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo.



Figure 44: split/fountain bookshop and an installation by Xin Cheng, Dundonald Street space, 2012. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo.



Figure 45: Wall painting by Glenn Otto, split/fountain Dundonald Street space, 2017. Photograph by Alex North.

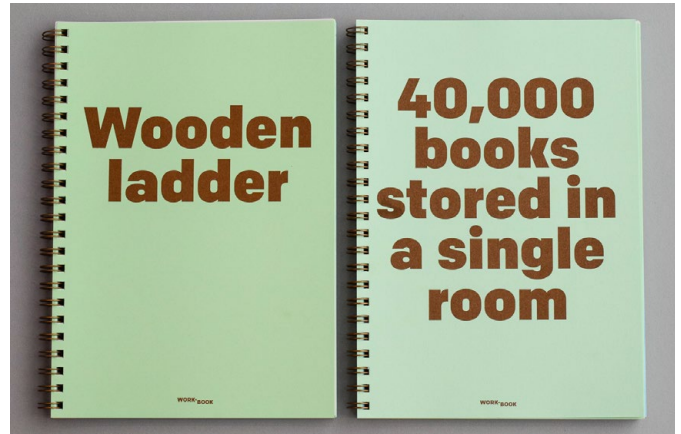
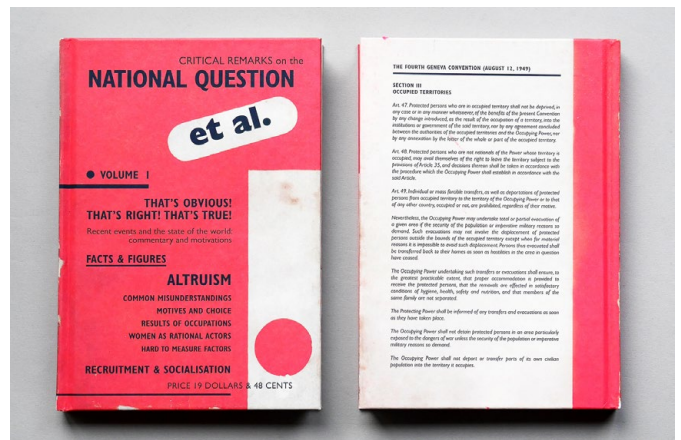
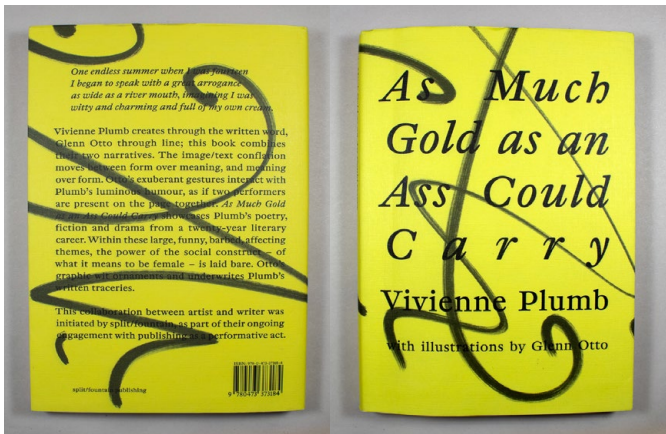
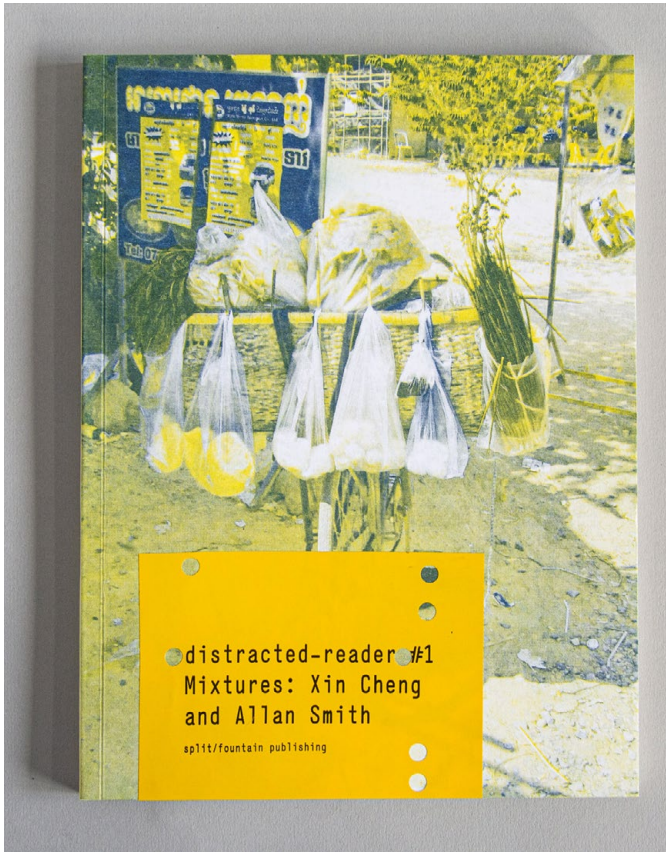


Figure 46: Selected split/fountain publishing projects, various dates. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.



Figure 47: Selected publication projects created in collaboration with Paul Cullen. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

0.4. Positionality and Voice: A Multidimensional Narrative

In *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process*, Professor of English Lucille M. Schultz distinguishes between ‘history as event’ and ‘history as account’, noting that after an event has occurred, it is likely to be recalled, recounted, or reconstructed in different ways depending on the subject position of the writer or speaker.⁴⁷ Engaging with my father’s archive, I am conscious of the subjective nature of this research and my intimate, entangled relationship with the materials. Sorting through the items in Paul’s studio, I have uncovered photographs of myself as a child mingled with documentation of his artworks and exhibitions. My childhood scribbles are saved amongst his papers and drawings, and many of the artist’s workbooks from the 1980s are hand-bound by me with marbled covers and handwritten birthday greetings or Father’s Day messages. These discoveries brought back memories of the houses we lived in and the pets we had, while also illustrating how my age at various times is interwoven with the periods of my father’s work. Among these finds was a note on a tiny scrap of paper written by my brother Ry when he was ten and I was thirteen, which marks the day we lost our pet guinea pig, Flora, to a cat. I can recall, several years later, friends’ bewilderment at seeing chairs fixed to the ceiling of our living room when visiting our house. When I explained that my father was an artist, it only contributed further to their confusion. Growing up around Paul’s art practice, I took for granted that contemporary art can manifest in diverse forms.



Figure 48: Drawing by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, date unknown.
Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2022.

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Lucille M. Schultz, ‘Foreword.’ In *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process*, ed. Gesa Kirsch and Liz Rohan, VII. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008.

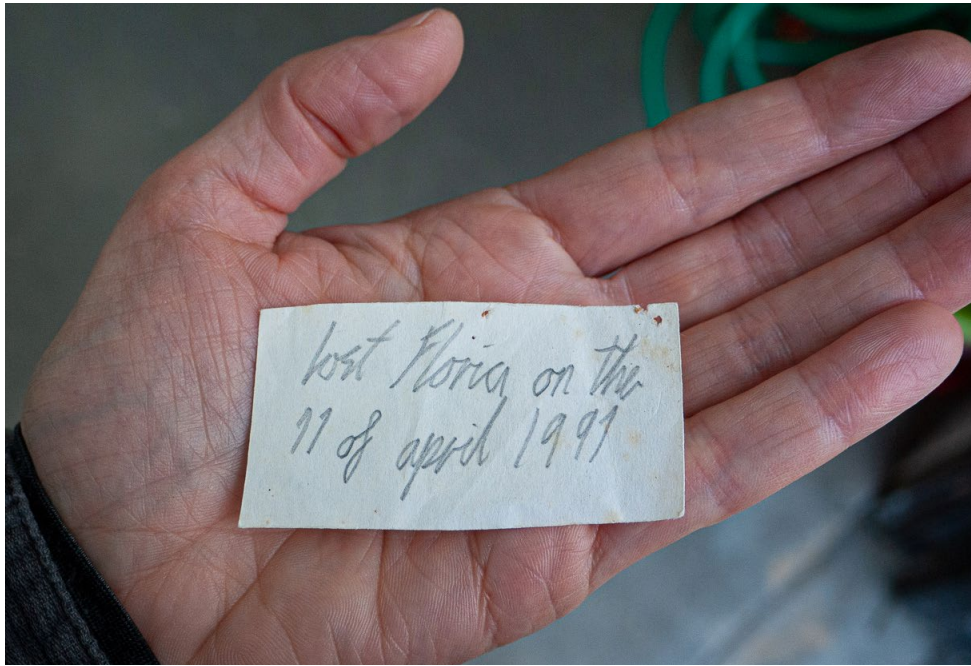


Figure 49: Note by Ry Tweedie-Cullen, 1991. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2022.

Embarking on this research, I decided to interview a small selection of art professionals who had worked closely or collaborated with Paul, including Jane Sanders, his former art dealer who established an artwork database with him in late 2016, curator and writer Allan Smith, and artist and photographer Marie Shannon, whom Paul had engaged to document his work in the studio between 2016 and 2017. I also wanted to draw on the insights and memories of my brother, Ry. This necessitated going through a university ethics application process, which classified me as an ‘insider researcher’ due to the familial connection to my subject of study. This classification prompted me to consider potential biases, recognise the possibility of professional conflicts of interest, and acknowledge that as a daughter-archivist, I might have preconceived ideas about how I wanted my father’s work to be presented and perceived.⁴⁸ This led me to reflect on the broader implications of my practice-based research, and evaluate the inherent risks associated with my aim to engage my father’s archive through a design-led approach. On the one hand, my research holds the potential to foster engagement, explore new trajectories, and open pathways for understanding the artist’s work, aligning with my research aims. On the other hand, there is a risk that I may inadvertently produce outcomes that do not align with my original objectives. The methods I use to catalogue, present, or activate archival materials and artworks could dominate, distort, or misalign with the artist’s conceptual framework. I recognise that this could lead to representations of the artworks that diverge from their intended meanings and context, potentially undermining or misinterpreting Paul’s intent.

48

To address these ethical concerns, I ensured that all participants in my research conversations were clearly aware of my goals and objectives. If they chose to participate, I provided them with the option to edit or remove any material I planned to include in this exegesis.

Adopting a reflexive approach during this research has been a critical component in mitigating these risks, and includes situating my investigation within a specific context of knowledge production and acknowledging my limitations and biases as a researcher. In this approach, I draw on the ideas and methods of academic Shaun Wilson (Opaskwayak Cree) in his book *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (2008). Wilson proposes an Indigenous research paradigm rooted in principles of relationality and relational accountability.⁴⁹ He contends that when taken out of its relational context, an idea cannot maintain its integrity, asserting that “Relationships do not merely shape reality, they *are* reality.”⁵⁰ Wilson’s emphasis on the personal and emotional connection to research resonates with me as I explore my father’s archive.

Wilson begins *Research Is Ceremony* by stating his intentions to build a relationship between “the readers of this story” and himself as the storyteller and the ideas he presents, underscoring the significance of storytelling in Indigenous research.⁵¹ He asserts that the nonlinear nature of stories and the interconnected layers and meanings found within them allow listeners to arrive at their own conclusions, arguing that “By getting away from abstractions and rules, stories allow us to see others’ life experiences through our own eyes.”⁵² He quotes Dr Terry Tafoya, who writes, “Stories go in circles. They don’t go in straight lines. It helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside and between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. Part of finding is getting lost, and when you are lost you start to open up and listen.”⁵³ Stories inherently embrace subjectivity, acknowledging and valuing the unique perspectives and experiences they represent rather than claiming to portray an objective truth.⁵⁴

Drawing upon the principles and methods outlined by Wilson in *Research Is Ceremony*, I implement a similar dual approach in my writing in this exegesis, oscillating between an academic voice and a personal, introspective style, the latter taking the form of shorter interstitial texts. I experiment with different narrative

49 Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2008), 7.

50 Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony*, 7–8.

51 Wilson, 6.

52 Wilson, 17.

53 Wilson, 6.

54 Advocating for relational accountability, Wilson highlights the limitations of a conventional academic writing approach that addresses an anonymous reader. He explains, “I was faced with the problem of trying to define or describe the ideas when doing so would take them out of their relational context.” Wilson’s way around this is to address parts of his writing to his three sons, Julius, Max, and Falco: “Instead of writing directly to readers, which is difficult without knowing their culture and context, I chose to write to my children. I further develop the relationships I have with the ideas through my relationship with my sons” (Wilson, 17). Using this literary device, Wilson enables readers to forge their own connections with him and the ideas presented in his book (Wilson, 9).

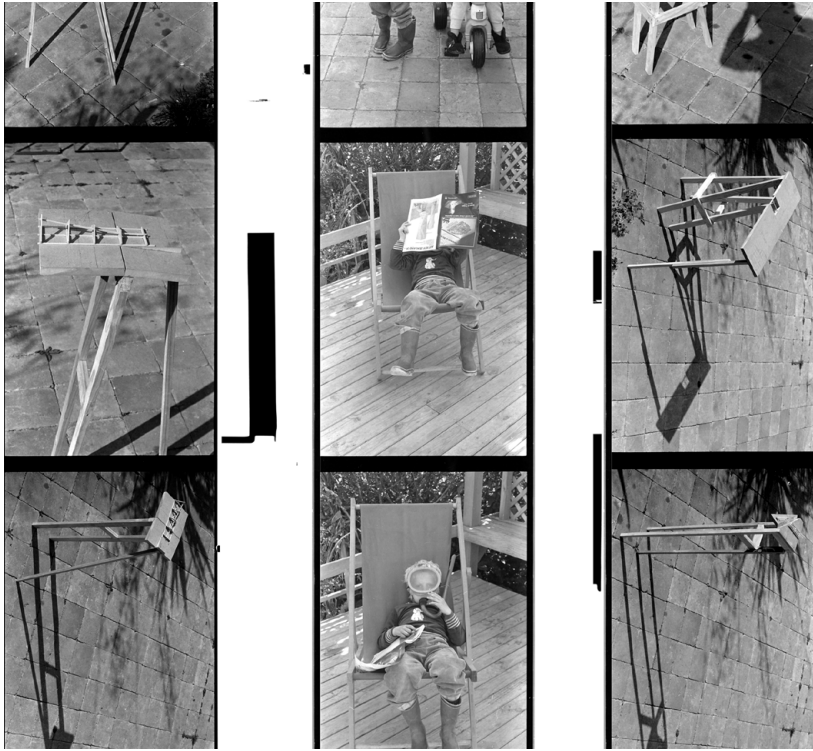


Figure 50: Paul Cullen's work installed in the garden in the house we lived in on Church Street, Devonport, Auckland, 1983, featuring Layla Tweedie-Cullen. Photographs by Paul Cullen.

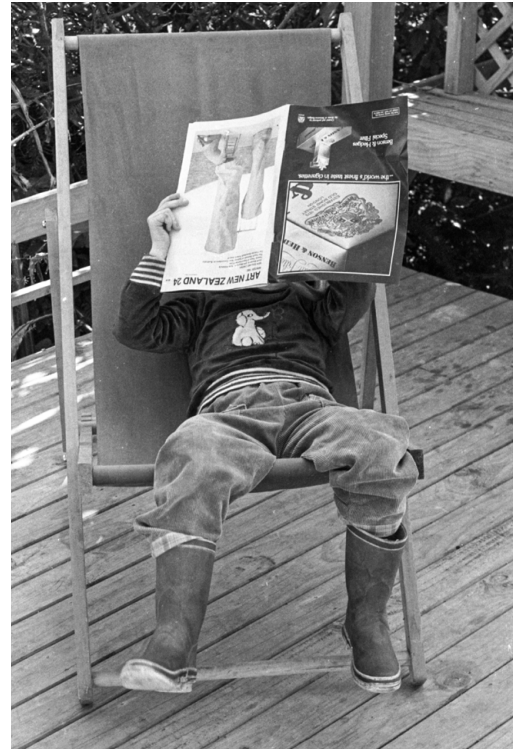


Figure 51: Layla Tweedie-Cullen reading *Art New Zealand* (upside down), Devonport, Auckland, 1983. Photograph by Paul Cullen.



Figure 52: Paul Cullen's works installed in the garage space of our residence, a converted power station unit, featuring Ry Tweedie-Cullen. Photograph by Minerva Betts.

possibilities within these segments, transitioning between first-, second-, and third-person perspectives. In the Preamble, I address Paul directly to root this research in my relationship with the artist. Following this introduction, I present my second reflection to Paul, “Denial”. In this short text, I revisit memories of my father’s terminal diagnosis of motor neuron disease (MND) and recount experiences we shared in the final year of his life. I also reflect on the rapid progression of this disease and how it impacted his ability to continue his art practice.⁵⁵ I continue this approach in the third reflection, but in subsequent texts I shift to directly address you, the reader or listener, prompting you to consider your interpretive role in the archive and the artist’s practice. In Chapter Four, I narrate events that I have initiated as part of my practice-based research, written in the third person, in the style of a performative log and script format, integrating these texts within my academic analysis to create a dialogue between the contrasting approaches. These shifting textual forms allow for deeper reflexivity as I grapple with questions about approaching, translating, activating, representing, and narrating the archive of my father’s work.

My writing methodology also draws on historian Arlette Farge’s *The Allure of the Archives* (2015), in which she explores two-hundred-year-old judicial records preserved in the archives of the Bastille, a historic state prison in Paris. Farge blends scholarly research with an evocative and narrative-driven writing style that draws attention to the intimate and overlooked aspects of archival materials. She argues, “To feel the allure of the archives is to seek to extract additional meaning from the fragmented phrases found there. Emotion is another tool with which to split the rock of the past, of silence.” In her writing, she describes the physical and sensory experiences of working with archives and focuses on the human stories and emotional resonances behind them, proposing that “Narration and fiction are woven together. The resulting cloth is fine-spun, and one cannot easily spot the seams.”⁵⁶ This perspective highlights the dynamic interplay between factual detail and creative interpretation in engaging with archives.

0.5. Defining an Expanded Field of Archiving, and Framing Questions

In this exegesis, I view my writing as a method of archiving, examining how archival processes shape the interpretation of an artist’s practice through various narrative perspectives. I understand ‘archiving’ not merely as the physical storage and

55 Revisiting and writing about this time was difficult, and I wish to acknowledge the poet and writer Vivienne Plumb, who mentored me in the creative writing segments of this exegesis, for her support and encouragement to give voice to this experience. Plumb draws on personal experience in her book *Scarab: A Poetic Documentary* (2005), reflecting on her son’s cancer diagnosis and death at age 27.

56 Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, trans. Thomas Scott-Railton (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 31.

cataloguing of items but as any method of preserving, organising, and interpreting materials and experiences. However, while my connection to Paul and his work is a deeply embedded aspect of this research, it does not solely define its trajectory. Alongside exegetical writing, my practice-based research includes the creative writing sections in this document. My research also includes various practice-based outputs such as publications, exhibitions, performances, and digital repositories, all aimed at exploring diverse approaches for archiving, activating, and distributing his work, and examining the interplay between these elements. I have presented documentation of this material on the [Paul Cullen Archive](#) website that I have created. The methods I employ encompass design, cataloguing, digitising, documentation, image editing, and publishing. Curation and editorial decision-making are also integral methods of my work. I refer to curation as the selective organisation, exhibition, and interpretation of artworks or materials, and to editing as the focused selection and arrangement of content. These techniques have been critical in shaping the presentation and narrative of my various research outputs, including this document.

My interaction with the archive in this research is multifaceted: it encompasses establishing and developing an artist's archive, utilising archival materials and resources, as well as actively contributing new materials and interpretations. An integral component of my work is an online repository of Paul's practice, which I established at the start of my PhD journey. Initially, this replaced a website the artist had already created, which was hacked not long after he died. However, over the past four years, I have continued to evolve and adapt the site, adding new content. A significant aspect of this work has involved digitising content, assigning accurate titles and dates to artworks and installations, and providing contextual information to elucidate their significance. Another critical task has been the selection of works and projects for inclusion on the website. Although this repository is not the primary focus of discussion in this exegesis, it plays a critical role in disseminating and facilitating engagement with Paul's work, concepts, and methods. I also use this website to present practice-based research outputs, including publications, performative events, and re-stagings that I have initiated and produced as part of this work.

Several key questions have driven this PhD research: (1) How do archiving and cataloguing practices shape, redefine, or influence our understanding of Paul's work? (2) How should his work be archived and exhibited in order to resonate with and extend the conceptual underpinnings of the practice? (3) How might a practice-led process activate the archive, fostering engagement, new trajectories, and continuous emergence, while opening novel pathways for understanding the artist subject incumbent in the archive? The creative-practice component of this PhD research is contained in this exegesis as documentation, writing, [appendices](#), and hyperlinks to the [web-based archive](#).



Figure 53: I interact with artwork components in Paul Cullen's archive, Henderson, 2020. Photographs by p. mule.

0.6. Exegesis Overview

Chapter One examines three pivotal aspects shaping archival theory and practice: paradigm, technology, and historiography. Drawing on archival scholars Terry Cook and John Ridener, I consider how these contexts and methodologies influence the field, including the role of the archivist. I reconsider the archive as a site of power, moving away from the traditional perception of it as an objective, neutral, and impartial source of knowledge. While many artists and authors have scrutinised the limitations of archives and official records, in this chapter I specifically highlight the work of two artists, Ruth Buchanan and Paul Soulellis. Their work challenges normative narratives and exemplifies contemporary methods of subverting the archive to reveal omissions of knowledge, such as the exclusion of narratives and perspectives of women, and Indigenous and LGBTQI communities.

Following on from the reflections that frame each side of this introduction (discussed above), in my third reflection addressed to Paul, I discuss the challenges I faced sorting through and ordering the contents of his studio. I describe a practice-based research output: compiling and binding a large stack of photocopied and

printed documents collected by the artist, including texts on design, science, philosophy, and architecture, into fifteen hardcover volumes. I reflect on my rationale behind this project, drawing inspiration from Jorge Luis Borges's short story "The Library of Babel" (1941), a copy of which I found amongst Paul's papers. This infinite library is simultaneously highly organised, structured, and incomprehensible, filled with 410-page books containing all possible combinations of letters. My writing style reflects this contrast. I begin with simple, structured sentences, but as my narrative unfolds, I transition into a more poetic and disorderly form.

In Chapter Two, "Archiving Paradoxes," I consider the multifaceted activities that Paul initiated in his studio between 2016 and 2017, which included cataloguing work with dealer and archivist Jane Sanders, documentation of artworks with artist and photographer Marie Shannon, and preparation for two exhibitions, including *Provisional Arrangements*, developed with curator and writer Allan Smith. Drawing on art historian Mathias Winzen, I delve into the contradictory nature of collecting and archiving practices, unpacking three collecting paradoxes he highlights: (1) *Available Material, Unavailable Future*; (2) *Similar Dissimilarity*; (3) *Protective Destruction*. I also consider an additional paradox, which I term *Static Continuity*, emerging from the dynamic qualities inherent in Paul's practice, exemplified by his incorporation of living plants. I explore the conceptual and practical significance of these paradoxical processes and their influence on interpreting and comprehending Paul's work through the archiving process.

In "Pataphysical Musings," I recount a visit to Waiheke Island with Paul to set up his *Things from Geology (Underworld)* installation in early 2017. In a workbook dated 2016, the artist outlines his concept: "My project will take the island's geology as a starting point, building on this to create a fictional geology/archaeology that reveals a part hidden beneath the surface."⁵⁷ A component of this installation was an abstracted map available for visitors to take away, on which Paul had reduced the lineaments and place names to single letters, which he refers to in his notes as a "Pataphysical Map of Waiheke."⁵⁸ During our visit, Paul shared Georges Pere's definition of pataphysics from Andrew Hugill's book, *Pataphysics: A Useless Guide*. I revisit this quote six years later and contemplate its relevance to my present circumstances.

In Chapter Three, I address the archival challenges posed by remnants of Paul's site-specific installations, focusing on his *Provisional Arrangements* series (2015–16) and *Object/Anti-Object 1* and *Object/Anti-Object 2* (2013) installations.

57 Paul Cullen, "Notes" (Artist's workbook, 2016).

58 I assisted Paul with laying out and co-ordinating the printing of this map.

My analysis incorporates insights from art historian Alex Potts, who examines the fluid boundary between artwork and archive in post-conceptual art, highlighting how artworks are often understood through their traces across various media. This perspective aids in exploring how the archival materials and remnants serve as primary means for engaging with and interpreting Paul's installations. Additionally, I examine Paul's notes, writings, and the theories of influential scholars, including Rosalind Krauss, Miwon Kwon, and James Meyer, to further inform my archival and presentation strategies. Their theoretical frameworks are pivotal in aiding my examination of Paul's expanded understanding of 'site' within his practice, helping delineate the boundaries of the artwork within the context of site specificity.

In "Digital Transmutations", I explore the use of LiDAR and photogrammetry as creative research strategies to assess the potential of creating interactive, three-dimensional models of Paul's artworks to enhance the accessibility and engagement of the archive. LiDAR is a technology that employs laser light to generate 3D models by measuring distances and capturing detailed information about objects' shapes and surface characteristics. Photogrammetry amalgamates multiple photographs to form detailed 3D representations based on visual data. These models facilitate interactive features such as zooming and rotating, and they can be recontextualised into the real world using augmented reality (AR) or integrated into a virtual environment. My exploration focuses on the latter, and in this text, I elaborate on how I used this technology to digitally realise a series of hypothetical site-specific installations proposed by the artist in 2011. This involved positioning a selection of Paul's *r/p/m* (revolutions per minute) sculptures in various sites dedicated to scientific observation in Europe and Aotearoa. To capture the immersive experience of exploring these virtual environments, accessible via Mozilla Hubs, I describe them in a second-person narration.

In Chapter Four, "Staging the Archive—Intersecting Narratives on Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point", I discuss two events I instigated at this location. The first is my physical staging of four *r/p/m* sculptures at the Musick Memorial Radio Station on Te Naupata Reserve, which builds on the virtual realisation I discuss in "Digital Transmutations". This project emerges from my practice-based research and enquiry into how I might re-exhibit Paul's site-related projects in a manner consistent with the conceptual underpinnings of his practice. To identify factors that influence site-specific installation artworks and their presentation over time, I look to art historian and conservation scholar Tatja Scholte. She proposes viewing site-specific installations, which are often intentionally ephemeral or performative, as dynamic relational networks.⁵⁹ Her approach

builds on the theories of Henri Lefebvre, who argues that space and time are deeply interconnected and that the creation of space is always anchored in a particular moment and interlaced with historical traces left behind.⁶⁰

The second event I discuss is a dawn fire ceremony held during Matariki in June 2023, a period marking the Māori New Year, led by artist and orator Pita Turei. I consulted Turei, a descendant of the Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki tribe, the original inhabitants of Te Naupata, searching for methodologies that would foster a deeper connection with the site’s social, spatial, and historical dimensions. Assuming the role of curator, I wanted to integrate the Māori histories inherent to this site into the narrative and framing of my realisation of Paul’s *Musick* concept. Turei proposed hosting a fire ceremony next to the station as a way to connect with the whenua (land), wairua (ancestors), and atua (deities, ancestors). His approach resonates with Wilson’s view that ceremonies serve to “build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between aspects of our cosmos and ourselves.”⁶¹

Before I consider the dynamic nature of archival theory and practice in Chapter One, I reference a quote from Paul’s writing, in which he describes his work as reflecting “an interest in transdisciplinarity and in the complex web of environmental, scientific, political, and social factors framing and linking spaces and objects.”⁶² He further notes his intention to generate projects that are “experimental and investigative, opening up new avenues and approaches to practice.”⁶³ These insights echo the essence of what I explore this exegesis: the archive as a living, evolving entity, not just a repository of the past but a space influenced by a myriad of factors. In this research, I navigate this interplay of factors, drawing parallels between the artist’s philosophy and the transformative nature of archival practice.

60 Scholte, 89.

61 Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony*, 11.

62 Paul Cullen, “Research Plan,” (Document, 2013), 2.

63 Cullen, “Research Plan,” 2.

Reflection to Paul: Denial

I couldn't say *motor neuron disease (MND)* out loud for a long time.⁶⁴ I buried the information pamphlets the nurse gave me about the journey from diagnosis to end of life at the back of my cupboard, the one you helped me build, under a pile of papers. I don't remember much of that day she broke the news to us over a cup of tea in your eleventh-floor apartment, just her suggestion that we plan a trip together while we still could. But I recall the fleeting moments in the hazy space between sleep and wakefulness before the weight of remembering settled upon me again each morning, in the weeks and months that followed. Sometimes emotions erupted out of nowhere. I got upset seeing a man in a wheelchair in the park, then angry at you for using that foul-smelling psoriasis shampoo after I'd read that toxins and chemicals might cause MND. When Ry returned from overseas, we took you to the hot pools and planned a holiday in Rarotonga. The airport terminal concourse felt endless on the way to catch that flight. Despite the increasing difficulty, you were determined to walk, and there was never anywhere to sit, or if there was, no one got up. On the plane, we were warned about a turbulent landing, and I tried some of your midazolam to relax, before promptly dozing off.

The day you came out to meet me with a walking stick is seared into my memory. I actively resisted envisioning the future, tried to remain in the present, but it became necessary to consider and plan for what lay ahead. A few months later, we went wheelchair shopping, and you zoomed around the aisles, trying out different models, making us laugh. But the rapid progression of the illness was painful to witness, making it increasingly difficult for you to talk, then walk, then eat, then breathe. I can organise my memories of the excursions we embarked on in chronological order, based on whether you were on foot or in a wheelchair, the places we visited, the distances covered, the equipment we needed, and the pain or discomfort you endured from bumps in the roads and footpaths. The walk we did in Cornwell Park couldn't have been long after we purchased the wheelchair because we ventured off the pavement onto a dirt

64 Motor neuron disease (MND) is a group of neurodegenerative disorders that affect motor neurons, the cells responsible for controlling voluntary muscle activities such as speaking, walking, breathing, and swallowing. As MND progresses, individuals lose the ability to walk, use their hands and arms, speak clearly or at all, swallow, or hold up their head. Weakness of the respiratory muscles complicates breathing and coughing. Pain can be a significant issue, with musculoskeletal pain and muscle cramps being common. MND does not affect sensory functions such as touch, sight, smell, hearing, or intellect. The exact cause of MND is unknown, it can affect adults of any age, and is more common in older individuals. There is no cure for MND, and treatments focus on managing symptoms and improving quality of life. This definition was written in February 2024 by Dr Ry Yves Tweedie-Cullen (BSc., MSc.Hons., MBChB., PGDipTravMed., Dr.sc. ETH Zürich).

track running through a paddock. I was struggling to manoeuvre you in the chair, and because my attention was focused on the ground, I inadvertently steered us towards an electrified fence. Despite your alarmed noises, I remained oblivious. You communicated through an iPad by then, so you couldn't call out, and there was insufficient time to type out a warning and play it back. Fortunately, Ry noticed and intervened just in time. Later on, you jokingly suggested I take you for a walk up Maungawhau Mount Eden. Initially, I mistook your computerised voice as serious and imagined pushing you in your chair up the steep pedestrian-only road to the summit. You must have noticed because you added, in a deadpan American accent, that you'd meant this in jest.

In group situations, you typed out a comment to respond, but the conversation had already moved on by the time you hit play, your short utterance now out of context. Eating lost its pleasure; food had to be softer, then liquefied, then eventually replaced with Fortisip (chocolate, strawberry, or banana) until eating was a perfunctory action, relieving the sensation of hunger and administered through a gastrostomy tube. Of course, you didn't lose your sense of smell, but now a delicious food aroma elicited not only anticipation but a craving that could never be satisfied, and once, not thinking, I arrived with takeaways and ate them in front of you. You shared that you wished you could eat some, too.

I texted Ry, asking, "What if Paul loses the use of his hands?" or something along those lines. But I accidentally sent it to our group chat. You remained silent. I felt terrible, but I suspect you had already thought about this, too. Now, sorting through your work in the studio, I am confronted by its physical presence and volume. I reflect on how the loss of your mobility and dexterity greatly impacted the continuation of your practice, especially when so much of your work explores sites and situations, the temporary and the improvised, and engages with sculptural concepts such as tension, balance, and gravity. I remember that moment in the studio: while assisting you in packing small artworks, I accidentally knocked you off balance, and you started to fall, but I managed to catch you, relieved, then shocked by how light you were.



Figure 54: Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2022. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

1. Shifting Perspectives in Archival Theory and Practice

1.1. Initial Rotation: The Circle Pivots

Archives, as repositories of information, collective memory, and cultural heritage, play a crucial role in shaping our understanding of the past and guiding present and future research. This interplay between evolving societal dynamics, technological advancements, and changes in contemporary theoretical discourse has brought about a transformative shift in our perception of archives and the responsibilities of archivists. In this context, the term ‘archive’ is multifaceted: as a noun, it refers to a physical space or repository; as a verb, it involves the practices and processes of organising, structuring, and arranging materials and records, allowing materials to be searched, accessed, interacted with, and disseminated. In his influential work “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression” (1995), philosopher Jacques Derrida observes, “Nothing is less reliable, nothing is less clear today than the word *archive*”, emphasising the complex and ambiguous nature of the term.⁶⁵ This multifaceted character of the archive becomes even more complex in the evolving digital landscape due to factors such as the sheer volume of digital data, the rapid pace of technological change, and the challenges of digital preservation. These elements not only strain traditional concepts of organisation and accessibility, but also introduce novel opportunities for the creation, curation, and sharing of archival materials.

65 Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,” *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (1995): 57, <https://doi.org/10.2307/465144>.

Exploring evolving perspectives in archival theory and practice is crucial for my research, which investigates how collecting and archiving processes shape the form and structure of an artist's archive and influence the interpretation and comprehension of an artist's work. In the first section of this chapter, I establish a contextual framework for understanding shifts in the conceptualisation of archives and archivists, drawing on the insights of John Ridener in his book *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory* (2009). Ridener emphasises the influence of context on archival theory, highlighting three key dimensions: paradigm, historiography, and technology.⁶⁶ Paradigm, when positioned as context, relates to the dominant ideas, principles, and standards that guide archival practices during specific periods, reflecting socially constructed knowledge and widely held theories.⁶⁷ The historiographical context involves the study of historical writing and how historians interpret, analyse, and present the past using archival resources.⁶⁸ Lastly, the technological context encompasses the tools and methods employed in creating, preserving, and accessing archival materials, with different media shaping the character and form of the archive.⁶⁹ Ridener's analysis highlights that in the contemporary context, the role of the archivist has been significantly influenced by a new understanding of records as dynamic entities.⁷⁰ Archivists are no longer regarded solely as custodians of fixed documentary residue, but as active participants in shaping archival heritage.⁷¹ This paradigm shift embraces active verbs such as curating, preserving, digitising, interpreting, engaging with communities, deconstructing traditional narratives, advocating for inclusivity, and reimagining archival spaces, moving the discourse from static practices associated with *archives* to the more dynamic process of *archiving*.⁷² In exploring the evolving roles of archivists within these changing contexts, I also draw on the theories of archival scholar Terry Cook, who proposes four archival paradigms that have impacted the responsibilities of archivists. Additionally, I consider the perspectives of scholars Benjamin Zachariah and Lynée Lewis Gaillet, archivist Laura A. Millar, and self-proclaimed archival futurist Devon Mordell.

In the second section of this chapter, I explore the archive's role as a site of power, examining the work of two artists, Ruth Buchanan and Paul Soulellis. Instead of conducting an exhaustive survey of artists who have engaged with the archive,

66 John Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory* (Duluth, MN: Litwin Books, 2009), 7–8.

67 Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism*, 8.

68 Ridener, 8.

69 Ridener, 8.

70 Ridener, 132.

71 Ridener, 132; Terry Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms," *Archival Science* 13 (2013): 102, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-012-9180-7>.

72 Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism*, 132.

I narrow my focus to a selection of their projects that specifically address issues of power, exclusion, and representation within archival systems. I focus on Ruth Buchanan's exhibition, *The scene in which I find myself / Or, where does my body belong* (2020), which I had the opportunity to visit and engage with on multiple occasions. This project illustrates the potential of design in establishing and framing conditions for engagement within the archive while shedding light on the transformative power of language in shaping people, culture, and reality. Other artists and projects that have been important to my research include Marcel Broodthaers's *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* (1972), Ilya Kabakov's *The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away* (1977), Thomas Demand's *Archive* (1995), Zoe Leonard's *The Fae Richards Photo Archive* (1993–96), Andrea Fraser's *Information Room* (1998), Richard Bell's *Embassy* (2013–), Mindy Seu's *Cyberfeminism Index* (2020), and projects by the Atlas Group, Otolith Group, Rosanna Raymond, and Forensic Architecture.



Figure 55: Large works on paper, in the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2022. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

1.2. Three Contexts: Paradigm, Historiography, Technology

1.2.1. Paradigm

In *From Polders to Postmodernism*, John Ridener identifies *paradigm* as the first contextual factor influencing archival theory and practice. A paradigm is a framework or model that guides understanding, interpretation, and organisation in a specific subject or domain, shaping individuals' perceptions and approaches to

a field of study and influencing their assumptions, beliefs, and methodologies. Philosopher Thomas Kuhn (1922–1996), known for his theories on paradigm changes, posits that scientific knowledge is socially defined, with a paradigm representing a socially constructed agreement.⁷³ Ridener references Kuhn’s perspective to underscore the critical impact of paradigm shifts on the evolution of archives and archivist roles.⁷⁴ These shifts, driven by changes in intellectual thought, have shaped the archival field.⁷⁵ Additionally, Ridener cites philosopher Karl Popper (1902–1994), a critic of Kuhn, who proposes that professional trends in the field are the product of empirical experimentation, not mere consensus among professionals on definitions.⁷⁶ Ridener contends that the concept of paradigm change offers a valuable analogy for understanding the evolution of archival theory, highlighting the socially constructed nature of archival knowledge, records, and materials.⁷⁷

He identifies the *Questioning* archival paradigm as the most contemporary approach in archival theory.⁷⁸ This paradigm emphasises the archivist’s role as a critic of records, challenging traditional archiving practices and interrogating the power hierarchies embedded within archives.⁷⁹ According to Ridener, archivists working under this paradigm do not accept materials at face value, but question the assumptions and biases embedded within archival collections.⁸⁰ He asserts, “Rather than a simple accumulation of material, the archive itself is assumed to be an expression of the archivist’s point of view.”⁸¹ Scholar Benjamin Zachariah offers a complementary perspective in his essay “Travellers in Archives, or the Possibilities of a Post-Post-Archival Historiography” (2016), conceptualising the archive as a *rhetorical move*.⁸² He argues that the archive is a collection of materials accessed, interpreted, and presented by historians in response to specific research inquiries: “We invent an archive every time we have a question to answer, and then someone reinvents the archive in the service of a new question.”⁸³ However, Zachariah distinguishes between *inventing* the archive by deliberately shaping

73 Ridener, 9.

74 Ridener, 8.

75 Ridener, 8.

76 Ridener, 10.

77 Ridener, 10.

78 Ridener, 112.

79 Ridener, 151.

80 Ridener, 151.

81 Ridener, 151.

82 Benjamin Zachariah, “Travellers in Archives, or the Possibilities of a Post-Post-Archival Historiography,” *Práticas Da História: Journal on Theory, Historiography and Uses of the Past* 3 (2016): 14, 27, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110643404>.

83 Zachariah, “Travellers in Archives,” 14, 27.

material as evidence and *reading* the archive, which he argues involves diverse interpretations of pre-existing archival material by different historians.⁸⁴ In my research, I specifically focus on the dynamics of an artist's archive, applying the principles of the *Questioning* archival paradigm to examine how my interactions and interpretations influence the archive's structure and content. Following Zachariah's insight, I consider my role not in terms of scrutinising power structures but in actively shaping the archive through my inquiries and the materials I select or emphasise, thereby acknowledging the subjective nature of archival work as it pertains to the artist's practice I am examining.

Expanding upon the archival approaches proposed by Ridener and Zachariah, Terry Cook offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the development of archival theory and practice over the past 150 years in his essay "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms" (2001). He asserts that archival paradigms have undergone a series of transformations, progressing through four distinct stages: juridical legacy, cultural memory, societal engagement, and community archiving (which he refers to as the paradigms of *Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community*).⁸⁵ These paradigm shifts align with broader intellectual changes, encompassing the transition from pre-modern to modern to postmodern to contemporary perspectives.⁸⁶ Cook traces the evolution of archivists' roles throughout these phases, illustrating their transition from impartial custodians of records to active appraisers and selectors, mediators of societal identity, and, ultimately, facilitators of community-driven archiving.⁸⁷ Cook's four paradigms offer valuable insights into the challenges faced by archivists, the ever-changing nature of their work, and the ongoing discussions and debates within the field regarding purpose, scope, and professional parameters. Cook's *Evidence* paradigm prioritises the preservation of *natural* residue. In an evidence-led paradigm, archivists act as unbiased custodians and are primarily focused on arranging and describing juridical legacy.⁸⁸ Their goal is to provide context for future use and validate these as authentic, dependable documentary sources.⁸⁹ This approach underscores fundamental archival principles, including provenance, which concentrates on the history or biography of the creator, and

84 Zachariah, 27.

85 Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community," 95.

86 Cook, 107–8, 112, 113–14; Gijs Aangenendt, "Archives in the Digital Age: The Use of AI and Machine Learning in the Swedish Archival Sector" (master's thesis, Uppsala University, 2022), 16, <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1675361&dswid=-8150>.

87 Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community," 107–8, 112, 113–14; Aangenendt, "Archives in the Digital Age," 16.

88 Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community," 107.

89 Cook, 107.

original order, which maintains the creator-established arrangement of records.⁹⁰ According to Cook, the concept of *evidence*, pivotal to the first paradigm, dominated professional archival discourse until the 1930s and remains a significant archival concern.⁹¹

The *Memory* paradigm, which emerged during the 1930s to the 1970s, centres around the pivotal role of archives in shaping collective memory.⁹² During this period, marked by two world wars, the Great Depression, and the introduction of new social programmes, archives witnessed an unprecedented surge in the volume of state records.⁹³ Archivists played a critical role in selecting and appraising records to condense this large volume into a smaller percentage worthy of preservation as archives.⁹⁴ Cook argues that this appraisal process became the defining characteristic of this second paradigm, stating, “The resulting archive, retained by archives, was no natural residue, therefore, but a deliberate and conscious creation by the archivist, who made that critical selection decision.”⁹⁵

Influenced by postmodernism, the *Identity* paradigm emerged in the late twentieth century, rejecting the notion of a singular *truth* that could be found or protected in archives.⁹⁶ Instead, the *Identity* paradigm accentuates the multitude of truths, voices, and perspectives, leading to a redefinition of the archivist’s role as a mediator who reflects the complexities of society, encompassing its pluralism, diversity, and contingent nature.⁹⁷ The appraisal of records expands to encompass diverse human experiences, incorporating marginalised communities and dissenting voices. This paradigm, adapting to the fluidity of digital records, challenges conventional archival notions and underscores the archivists’ role in promoting accountability and justice.⁹⁸ Archivists, influenced by postmodernism, also challenge traditional principles such as original order, recognising that the organisation of archival information is socially constructed.⁹⁹

Finally, the *Community* paradigm proposes a radical shift in archival practice, embracing the democratising influence of digital technologies on preservation and record creation. Cook observes: “With the Internet, every person can become

90 Millar, *Archives: Principles and Practices*, 46–48.

91 Cook, “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community,” 107.

92 Cook, 107–9.

93 Cook, 107.

94 Cook, 107.

95 Cook, 107.

96 Cook, 110.

97 Cook, 110.

98 Cook, 111.

99 Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism*, 135.

his or her own publisher, author, photographer, film-maker, music-recording artist, and archivist.”¹⁰⁰ This emerging paradigm places a strong emphasis on shared stewardship and collaboration, promoting archiving as a participatory *process* that actively engages multiple members of society.¹⁰¹ Cook contends that this new model empowers communities to maintain their records independently, particularly in the digital realm, allowing them to take control of their heritage.¹⁰² Furthermore, it underscores the crucial role of professional archivists as mentors and facilitators within communities. According to Cook, the *Community* paradigm advocates for a “total archive” that integrates contributions from diverse sources, reimagining the purpose of archives toward a more democratic, inclusive, and holistic approach.¹⁰³

Cook extends his discussion to assert that the archival profession suffers from an “identity crisis”, noting the abundance of labels and debates in the literature surrounding the archivist’s role and the nature of archiving itself.¹⁰⁴ These discussions raise questions about whether the archivist can be characterised as a “keeper, undertaker, or auditor; monk, knight, or artist; curator, manager, or activist; editor, translator, or advocate.”¹⁰⁵ There are also ongoing deliberations about whether archiving should be regarded as an art or a science, a modern or postmodern endeavour.¹⁰⁶ The very composition of the archival profession is also under scrutiny, with ongoing deliberations about whether it should be populated with “archivists, or with recordkeepers (in alliance or merged with records managers), or with informational professionals (in alliance with librarians, and possibly museum curators).”¹⁰⁷

Cook’s insights guide my investigation into how collection and preservation strategies influence the interpretation of Paul’s work and help shape archival practices and methods that are conceptually aligned with his approach. In my PhD research, I employ a multifaceted approach that identifies archival modes of operation drawing on all four of Cook’s paradigms. Although Cook does not provide direct implementation methods, his frameworks can be adapted into practical tools or methodological approaches that can help archivists make informed decisions. However, while Cook observes that strands from all four

100 Cook, “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community,” 113.

101 Cook, 114.

102 Cook, 116.

103 Cook, 113.

104 Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory,” *Archival Science* 2, no. 1–2 (2002): 112, <https://oae.ovid.com/article/00130816-200202010-00001/HTML>.

105 Schwartz and Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power,” 112.

106 Schwartz and Cook, 112.

107 Schwartz and Cook, 112.

mindsets are interwoven within the profession, noting that paradigm shifts create tension among archivists, who must continuously renegotiate their role, in my research I avoid framing these debates as an “identity crisis”.¹⁰⁸ Rather, I contend that the challenge lies in managing the coexistence of multiple paradigms across diverse archival contexts and adapting strategies to suit each unique situation. For example, while a museum archive might use evidence-based record keeping and incorporate community-driven metadata or storytelling methods, an artist’s archive must necessarily capture process, interpretation, and fluidity. In working with Paul’s archive, preserving “truth” (i.e., evidence) is useful to an extent, but capturing artistic intent, memory, and creative context is also essential.¹⁰⁹

To further develop my proposal that a flexible, context-sensitive archival strategy is needed to capture the full spectrum of Paul’s creative practice, I also devise modes of operation informed by Ridener’s *Questioning* paradigm and Wilson’s Indigenous *Relational* research paradigm in this PhD research.

To broaden my discussion around the evolving roles of archivists, I also draw on the work of Laura A. Millar. In her guidebook *Archives: Principles and Practices* (2010, 2017), Millar emphasises that while theory is critical, “in the end, archives exist to be used,” thereby reinforcing the need for practical, adaptable approaches to archival work.¹¹⁰ While Millar acknowledges the impact of postmodernist thought on archival theory and the malleability of truth, her approach emphasises traditional archival principles such as appraisal, provenance, and original order.¹¹¹ She argues that when archivists capture evidence, they produce a record that carries documentary value: “This record purports to be objective. In other words, the record claims to represent actual decisions or opinions or experiences, not fictionalised descriptions.”¹¹² However, her delineation of the archivist’s role—as encompassing key responsibilities such as auditor, protector, historian, and advocate—underscores the diverse functions archivists perform in transforming

108 Cook, “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community,” 117.

109 In my initial cataloguing work with Sanders (discussed in the next chapter), we adhered primarily to the *Evidence* paradigm. In subsequent work with Paul’s archive, I acknowledged multiple perspectives—aligned with Cook’s *Identity* paradigm—by acknowledging various truths and taking a subjective stance that informs the experimental writing I have generated as part of this exegesis. I have further incorporated elements of the *Memory* and *Community* paradigms through the creation of a digital repository for Paul’s work and by involving artists in engaging with the archive.

110 Millar, *Archives: Principles and Practices*, 65. When I decided to continue archiving Paul’s work, I turned to this practical guidebook for a comprehensive understanding of archival concepts and methods. The book purports to present “an international perspective on archives management, providing authoritative guidance relevant to collections-based repositories.” Millar, back cover.

111 Millar, 5–9, 17–18, 180–82. Millar underscores the archivist’s responsibility in transforming data into evidence and incorporating it into archives, asserting that information, such as documents, artefacts, letters, and images, should only be included if it possesses enduring value and potential use as evidence. Millar, 6–7.

112 Millar, 7.

data into evidence and contextualising archival material.¹¹³ Millar further proposes that designating something as archival is not science but an art, describing the path from data to archives as perilous and observing that archivists base their decisions on the values and goals of their affiliated institutions, which might include governments, religious bodies, historical societies, universities, museums, galleries, private collections, and community or family archives.¹¹⁴ Consequently, she recognises that the criteria for determining enduring value and significance may vary depending on the specific context.¹¹⁵

Expanding upon Millar's emphasis on the archivist's role as a historian, considering the influence of historiography on archival theory and practice is particularly pertinent to my research as it informs how I approach writing about the artist.

1.2.2. Historiography

Historiography encompasses the study of how history is written and constructed, and represents the second context identified by Ridener as shaping the archival discipline. He highlights that throughout most of the archival profession's history, archivists have been professional historians who were relied upon for their expertise in selecting records of enduring value.¹¹⁶ This aligns with Millar's perspective on the importance of archivists taking on the role of a historian within their responsibilities. However, Ridener observes that in recent decades, archivists have developed their own professional theories and practices, leading to the establishment of archival theory and appraisal as an independent discipline.¹¹⁷

Scientific history previously sought to present objective facts, drawing on archival records as evidence, corresponding with Millar's perspective. However, following World War I, Ridener argues that historians challenged this empirical approach and advocated for subjectivity in historical interpretation.¹¹⁸ He further highlights the significance of the linguistic turn in history—a shift that foregrounds the

113 Millar, 98–99. As auditor, the archivist manages the care of archival materials and establishes standards, systems, and infrastructure for records management and conservation. As protector, the archivist focuses on describing, arranging, and preserving documents and artefacts. As historian, the archivist documents organisational, administrative, technological, and personal histories that grant an archive meaning, capturing significant knowledge and contributing to the contextualisation of archival material. Lastly, as advocate, the archivist supports the value of archives as tools for individual, social, and collective memory. Millar, 99.

114 Millar, 17, 93.

115 Millar, 93.

116 Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism*, 14.

117 Ridener, 14.

118 Ridener, 15.

role of language and narrative in constructing historical knowledge. This turn is exemplified by historian and literary critic Hayden V. White's influential publication *Metahistory* (1975). White's work rejects the notion of causality and asserts that history is a form of communication susceptible to multiple interpretations.¹¹⁹ Ridener highlights that with the linguistic turn and subsequent postmodern approaches to history, the role of the historian is redefined as one of interpreting signs (semiotics) and the meaning of history rather than simply presenting a chronological account of events as they occurred.¹²⁰ This perspective guides my integration of personal and academic writing styles within the exegesis, wherein I refer to Paul by his first name and adopt a first-person narrative in places. My aim in adopting this approach is to signal a personal relationship with the artist and to introduce an element of informality and intimacy into the academic discourse.

In her essay "(Per)Forming Archival Research Methodologies" (2012), academic Lynée Lewis Gaillet introduces the term *archivist-researcher*, emphasising this role's active contribution to shaping historical understanding. Gaillet describes the *archivist-researcher* as a "new breed" who actively engages with existing materials and artefacts while creating or compiling materials into new collections reflecting specific scholarly interests, providing another perspective on the multidimensional role of the archivist.¹²¹ She argues that critical archival research shifts the perspective of archives from being storehouses of information to "primary sources for creating knowledge."¹²² The *archivist-researcher*, aware of their performative role as interpreter and co-creator of historical narratives, engages with history to remap and respond to perceived gaps or injustices, which might involve revisiting historical archives with new questions, challenging canons and grand narratives through a more diverse range of sources, contributing new knowledge to existing archives, or creating new ones to amplify marginalised voices.¹²³ She cites scholars Cheryl Glenn and Jessica Enoch, who argue that "histories do change—in response to the dominant values of institutions, cultures, and historiographers."¹²⁴

1.2.3. Technology

Technology is the third significant context Ridener identifies as driving shifts in archival theory and practice, emphasising its unprecedented impact on the current

119 Ridener, 108.

120 Ridener, 109.

121 Lynée Lewis Gaillet, "(Per)Forming Archival Research Methodologies," 50.

122 Gaillet, 39.

123 Gaillet, 36.

124 Cheryl Glenn and Jessica Enoch, "Drama in the Archives: Rereading Methods, Rewriting History," *College Composition and Communication* 61, no. 2 (2009): 321, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40593445>.

archival paradigm.¹²⁵ He argues that the methods used to produce records significantly influence archivists' work in appraising, preserving, and making records available.¹²⁶ Additionally, technology can substantially impact the number of records received by archives, either significantly decreasing or increasing their numbers.¹²⁷ This shift is exemplified by the transition from traditional tools like typewriters, cameras, and audio recording equipment to digital tools such as computers, digital cameras, and audio/video editing software. Furthermore, storage and retrieval technologies have transformed from physical media like books, prints, films, and paper documents to digital media such as hard drives, cloud storage, search engines, and databases.¹²⁸ These changes have led to a complete questioning of nearly all concepts in archival theory.¹²⁹

Ridener's observation regarding the impact of technology aligns with Derrida's perspective that the structural framework of an archival system not only determines the form and arrangement of the content that can be archived, but also influences its interpretation and significance within future contexts.¹³⁰ He asserts that "archivization produces as much as it records the event", highlighting the active role of media technologies in shaping and generating archival content rather than simply acting as passive carriers of information.¹³¹ This perspective challenges the notion of technology as neutral and underscores its impact on the archival process.

The evolving understanding of archives is being further influenced and reshaped by the increasing prominence and widespread adoption of multimedia and interactive technologies, including code, blockchain, virtual reality, and digital gaming, as well as advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine-learning-based computational tools. Devon Mordell, in her essay "Critical Questions for Archives as (Big) Data" (2019), extends the archival paradigms introduced by Cook, proposing the *Archives-as-Data* paradigm as a fifth addition.¹³² This paradigm explores the reimagining of archives as data and its implications. Mordell examines the historical and cultural understandings of data and its association with objectivity and neutrality.¹³³ She challenges this

125 Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism*, 10, 102–4.

126 Ridener, 8, 10.

127 Ridener, 10.

128 Ridener, 103–5.

129 Ridener, 102–3.

130 Derrida and Prenowitz, "Archive Fever," 17.

131 Derrida and Prenowitz, 17.

132 Devon Mordell, "Critical Questions for Archives as (Big) Data," *Archivaria* 87 (2019): 140, 146–47, <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13673>.

133 Mordell, "Critical Questions for Archives as (Big) Data," 147–48.

concept by considering data as a “discursive construct”, emphasising that software and algorithms, designed by people with hidden intentions, shape data.¹³⁴ Mordell also explores the concept of data as *raw material*, drawing parallels to past ideologies that viewed archival fonds (the entire body of records created and accumulated by an entity, showing the creator’s functions and activities) as possessing an inherent or natural order that the archivist merely discerned or restored, and argues that perceiving data in this way has the potential to undermine the active role and agency of archivists.¹³⁵

In my research, I also explore new and emerging digital archiving techniques, such as generating 3D models of artworks using LiDAR and photogrammetry. Mordell’s critique of data as a ‘discursive construct’ shaped by the implicit design architectures of the applications is relevant to this work and underscores the potential for biases in technology use. Later, between Chapters Three and Four, in *Digital Transmutations*, I examine how the transformation of physical artworks into digital models composed of code not only alters or removes the original contexts of the artworks but also reshapes their potential interpretations when displayed in virtual environments.

Since Mordell theorised the *Archives-as-Data* paradigm in 2019, the rapid advancement of AI and the emergence of sophisticated AI-generated content, such as highly realistic images and deep fakes, have further compounded the challenges to the integrity of digital archives. Although my research does not explicitly focus on this topic, it is crucial to acknowledge the profound and far-reaching impact this technology will likely have on the archival landscape in the future.

1.3. The Archive as a Site of Power

1.3.1. Ruth Buchanan: Uncovering the Politics of Institutional Collections

I will now transition from examining the various contexts that shape archival theory and practice to a series of practical explorations by artists. The first project I explore is *The scene in which I find myself / Or, where does my body belong* (2019–20) by artist Ruth Buchanan (Te Ātiawa, Taranaki, and Pākehā descent) at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and Len Lye Centre in Ngāmotu New Plymouth, Taranaki.¹³⁶ Commissioned by the institution’s former directors,

134 Mordell, 149, 152.

135 Mordell, 150–51.

136 I visited *The scene in which I find myself / Or, where does my body belong* twice in 2020, and also attended the *Uneven Bodies* symposium (6–8 March 2020) organised by Ruth Buchanan as part of the exhibition project.

Aileen Burns and Johan Lundh, the exhibition was part of the gallery's fiftieth-anniversary celebration, marking its establishment in 1970. Described on the gallery website as an excavation of the Govett-Brewster Collection, the exhibition presented nearly 300 works by 190 artists, taking over the entire museum.¹³⁷

Buchanan's project unveils the politics ingrained within institutional collections and highlights the underlying dynamics involved in the curation and management of archives. She asserts in the exhibition catalogue, "Collections are very much spaces where versions of power are played out, as they become a tool to visualise the folding of today into history."¹³⁸ Buchanan's approach resonates with Ridener's *Questioning* paradigm and Cook's *Identity* paradigm. She challenges the notion of archives as objective and all-encompassing representations of the past, prompting visitors to contemplate a central question underlying the exhibition: Where does power reside now? In her foreword to *Uneven Bodies (Reader)* (2021), which the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery published as part of a symposium organised by the artist as part of the exhibition, Buchanan poses additional questions: "What would it take to access what we need? How are our abilities to speak, be seen, view, move, create, even to think shaped by authoritative forces and forms of regulation? How could we shape them anew through the penetrating of language, of space, of bodies and where they meet?"¹³⁹

Buchanan's stance is influenced by feminist post-structuralism and postmodern thinkers who critically examine historical archives' monolithic and hegemonic nature, challenging their perceived neutrality and impartiality. This critique aligns with feminist scholarship from the 1970s and 80s, which argues that archives have historically marginalised women's voices and experiences, reflecting a broader systemic bias in the preservation and recognition of historical contributions. Derrida famously argues, "There is no political power without control of the archive," stating that democratisation can be measured by access and participation in the archive's constitution and interpretation.¹⁴⁰ In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, philosopher Michel Foucault views the archive as the "system of discursivity" that regulates what can be expressed.¹⁴¹ He argues that the archive is

137 "Ruth Buchanan: The Scene in Which I Find Myself / Or, Where Does My Body Belong," Govett-Brewster Art Gallery | Len Lye Centre, 2019, <https://govettbrewster.com/exhibitions/2019/ruth-buchanan-the-scene-in-which-i-find-myself-or-where-does-my-body-belong>.

138 Ruth Buchanan, *The Scene in Which I Find Myself / Or, Where Does My Body Belong* (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2019), gallery guide, front cover.

139 Ruth Buchanan, "Foreword: Uneven Bodies," in *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, ed. Ruth Buchanan et al. (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021), 3.

140 Marlene Manoff, "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines," *Libraries and the Academy* 4, no. 1 (2004): 9–25, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2004.0015>.

141 Manoff, "Theories of the Archive," 18; Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 129.

not simply a collection of texts or an institution for preservation but encompasses the discursive practices, relations, and regularities that shape discourse.¹⁴² He illustrates this through examples such as academic disciplines, which function as discursive formations, defining their own truth criteria.¹⁴³ Foucauldian thought has laid the foundation for much contemporary discourse surrounding the archive.

Buchanan's practice is also informed by and explores decolonising methodologies. The *Uneven Bodies* symposium, which the artist initiated, considered questions raised by the exhibition and included discussions on collecting Māori and Indigenous art, institutional responsibility, repatriation, cultural ownership, and alternative approaches to collecting. Distinguished theorist Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou), author of *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), delivered the keynote address. In her contribution to *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, Smith asserts: "Cultural institutions are deeply implicated in the making and sustaining of colonialism as a structure of power and control and as the guardians of national culture/s."¹⁴⁴ She further argues that knowledge-based institutions, such as universities and schools, "consciously protect, create, sustain, reiterate and store the cultural memories, motifs and artefacts, national stories and mythologies, and the attendant discursive apparatus that supports concepts of *culture*."¹⁴⁵ In doing so, they serve as custodians and interpreters of national cultural meaning and identity.¹⁴⁶ Another contributor to *Uneven Bodies (Reader)* is curator and researcher Clementine Deliss, author of *The Metabolic Museum* (2020). Deliss critically examines narratives prevalent in ethnographic collections and museums, highlighting the retention of master–slave terminologies that align with the language of seclusion and control, identifying terms such as "the keeper", "the custodian", and "the conservator".¹⁴⁷ Her analysis echoes Smith's critique of cultural institutions and their role in upholding colonial power dynamics, emphasising the need for decolonising methodologies and alternative approaches to museum practices.

In *The scene in which I find myself / Or, where does my body belong*, Buchanan implemented a systematic approach to select artworks for inclusion in the exhibition, which avoided her making subjective and aesthetic choices. She chose to exhibit the first artwork acquired from an artist by the institution during each decade since 1970. If an artist's work had been collected in multiple mediums such

142 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 128–31.

143 Manoff, "Theories of the Archive," 18.

144 Ruth Buchanan et al., eds., *Uneven Bodies (Reader)* (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2021), 6.

145 Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "Foreword: Decolonising Cultural Institutions—An Urgent, Necessary, Challenging yet Hopeful Journey beyond Colonialism," in *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, 6.

146 Smith, "Foreword: Decolonising Cultural Institutions," 6.

147 Buchanan et al., *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, 76.

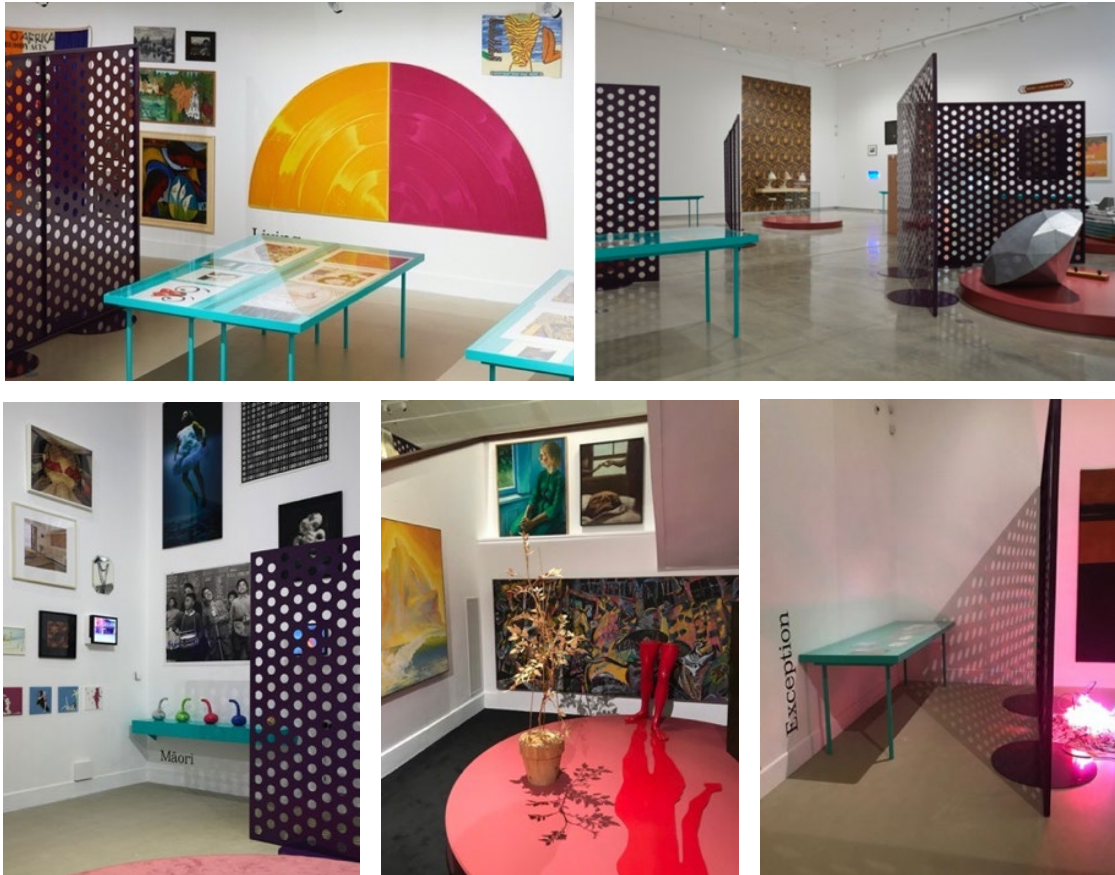


Figure 56: Ruth Buchanan, *The scene in which I find myself / Or, where does my body belong* (installation views), Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 2019. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

as sculpture, painting, photography, or print, she presented multiple works by that artist, always prioritising the first work obtained in each medium. This method resulted in a wide-ranging, eclectic presentation of work, heightened by her unconventional layouts and salon-style arrangements that appeared to lack a discernible underlying grid structure. Resisting gallery conventions for hanging work, Buchanan made use of all available space.¹⁴⁸ Artworks were intentionally positioned high on the walls, making some male artists' work challenging to view, such as a small Colin McCahon painting. Other pieces were squeezed into corners next to light switches, fire extinguishers, and vents. To support the display and presentation of works, Buchanan introduced a range of structures that included “care green vitrines”, “tongue-coloured” low circular plinths and purple screens punctuated with “fist-sized holes” (as described by the artist).¹⁴⁹ These elements also

148 After working for six years as an in-house exhibition designer at the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira (2008–15) and working with curators on the layout for several exhibitions at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, I am attuned to exhibition conventions. For example, in a design I made for Auckland War Memorial Museum, artworks had to be centred at 1500mm high to match the average eye height, and small framed photographs were restricted to being stacked three high to enable visitors to view all works easily. A certain amount of space was required in corners, without any obstructions, to allow for smooth visitor flow, and labels were necessary to avoid any confusion or misinterpretation. Buchanan purposefully disregarded all of these conventions.

149 Buchanan, *The Scene in Which I Find Myself*, 3.

functioned as barriers or dividers, often directing or restricting movement through the gallery spaces. By doing so, Buchanan actively inserted herself into the gallery's collection, thereby giving presence and significance to her art practice within the exhibition. She also underscored her role in shaping the archive, drawing attention to the curator's influence and her framing of the exhibition's narrative.¹⁵⁰

Notably, artworks were exhibited with no accompanying captions or wall numbers. Instead, visitors had to identify artwork positions on gallery floorplans in an exhibition guidebook and match numbers to information on corresponding pages to determine authorship or an artwork title.¹⁵¹ Buchanan allocated distinct linguistic categories to each decade represented in the exhibition. 'Exception' was the only repeating category, appearing in every gallery. The categories were as follows: for the 1970s, 'Legs' and 'Female'; for the 1980s, 'Living', 'Body work', and 'No longer living'; for the 1990s, 'Politics' and 'Pairs'; for the 2000s, 'Male' and 'Māori'; for the 2010s, 'Hands', '20th century', and 'In or around the Pacific'. Notably, 'Voice' was absent, perhaps signifying the silence or marginalisation of personal narratives and individual experiences that often go unexpressed or unrecognised in identity categorisation. These keywords were applied as cut vinyl onto the gallery walls, positioned low to the ground above the skirting boards. 'Māori' and 'Politics' were obscured and easy to miss, fixed to the wall under display shelves, while the 'Exception' titles were applied sideways, pointing upwards. Buchanan's keyword system (also included in the exhibition guidebook) makes visible the patriarchal power of naming to describe and categorise work, drawing attention to the role of language in the canonisation and creation of history.¹⁵² Buchanan argues that the deployment of language in this context can be liberating or marginalising.¹⁵³ She further explains her conceptualisation of keywords in *Uneven Bodies (Reader)*, stating:

These categories held concepts of identity formation open and enacted them, often uncomfortably, through a limiting system of key wording – language used to categorise us as individuals: our gender, our ethnicity, our place of origin; language that privileges particular points of centre:

150 As a female artist of Māori heritage from Taranaki, where the Govett-Brewster is located, Buchanan has a significant art practice and an international presence, yet her work is absent from the gallery's collection.

151 When I visited the exhibition with three art professionals, we spent two days in the gallery identifying works and consulting the guidebook. The design of this booklet often led to disorientation and difficulties in matching artworks with their corresponding information. This was compounded by the artwork numbering restarting at one for each decade. My experience of identifying works and locating information proved challenging and demanded focused attention.

152 Buchanan, "Foreword: Uneven Bodies," 3.

153 Buchanan, 3.

hands, legs; language used to compress our work as artists into single lines of thought: political, erotic; language used to articulate our position in a linear concept of time: living, no longer living; and language that acknowledged its own inadequacies: exception.¹⁵⁴

Buchanan's cataloguing, as documented in the exhibition guidebook, provided an inventory of artists, including their names, iwi affiliations, and birthplaces. This information revealed an apparent gender and cultural disparity within the Collection. Male Pākehā artists were prominently represented, overshadowing the presence of women, Māori, and Pacific artists, resulting in a narrow representation of contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand art. For example, in the works Buchanan included from 1970, representing the first work acquired by this institution per artist during this period, the Govett-Brewster acquired sixty-eight works by forty-four male artists and fourteen works by thirteen female artists. Out of these acquisitions, only three were by Māori artists.¹⁵⁵ This biased trend has endured over time. The 2010s section includes twenty-seven works by twenty-seven male artists and seventeen works by seventeen female artists. Out of these, four works were by Māori artists. Additionally, the gallery acquired four works created by collectives or by collaborations between male and female artists.

In the exhibition guidebook, Buchanan included acquisition notes from past directors, which provided their justifications for purchasing or acquiring artworks, something not typically made public. These notes provided insight into the institutional decision-making process that influenced the Collection, prompting reflection on the museum's role in reinforcing power structures. Male artists received preferential attention, often collected over several decades to represent different facets of their practice and career. This deliberate approach was acknowledged by multiple directors, who highlighted the intention to build a "comprehensive collection" or a "comprehensive representation" of a specific male artist's work.¹⁵⁶ One director, rationalising the acquisition of an artist's work already featured in the gallery Collection, observed that most artists were only represented by one or two pieces, which he considered as a "token sampling rather than any in-depth study of individuals or styles of contemporary New Zealand painting developments."¹⁵⁷ The same director defended another acquisition proposal in 1980, highlighting that the piece would serve to update, though not comprehensively represent, the artist's work in the Collection while noting the absence of his earlier constructivist and

154 Buchanan, 3.

155 Six works by artists whose details are not recorded were also collected by the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery during the 1970s.

156 Buchanan, *The Scene in Which I Find Myself*, 29, 34, 45.

157 Buchanan, 46.

“Cezanne type” paintings.¹⁵⁸ In 2009, a director argued for acquiring additional pieces by a prominent artist, stating, “Each work represents a particular strain of the artist’s practice, making the gallery’s collection more reflective of his oeuvre while continuing to develop a strong local influence on the work we hold.”¹⁵⁹

In contrast, artworks by women, Māori, and Pacific artists seemed to primarily address specific gaps in representation and align with thematic considerations. They were also unlikely to be collected for their oeuvre over an extended period. Directors made statements such as “the inclusion of these works will significantly enhance the representation of contemporary taonga in the Gallery’s collection” and that “the acquisition is a timely reflection of the Govett-Brewster’s involving itself in such community debates and linking its activities to Treaty of Waitangi commitments.”¹⁶⁰ Another director noted that the proposed work related directly to other Pacific and Australian Indigenous textile-based works in the Collection, while one suggested that the acquisition “demonstrates the Gallery’s commitment to purchase works by artists working in the Pacific Rim.”¹⁶¹ In 1993, a director made a case for acquiring pieces by a female photographer, emphasising that “the acquisition of the works will also help to address the relative scarcity of work by women artists in the Collection, and its rather patchy representation of contemporary New Zealand photography.”¹⁶² Other directors drew parallels between the works by woman artists they proposed to acquire and the work of Len Lye, with one observing that the artists shared similarities because they both worked with moving image and sculpture. Another noted that the proposed work “responds to the *Totem and Taboo* sketchbook Lye created in the 1920s.”¹⁶³ The inclusion of acquisition notes and the revelations they provided sparked debate and discussion about the politics of institutional collecting at the *Uneven Bodies* symposium.¹⁶⁴

Buchanan’s exhibition, *The scene in which I find myself / Or, where does my body belong*, demonstrates that archives, marked by gaps and omissions, represent absence as much as presence, often reflecting societal biases and power structures. Historian Jake Hodder also underscores this understanding, emphasising

158 Buchanan, 47.

159 Buchanan, 83.

160 Buchanan, 74, 77. The wider context, indicated by the director in the second quote, is that, “at this moment when the New Plymouth community is reassessing its relationship with Māoridom, related to the issue of the local government Māori Wards, the acquisition is a timely reflection of the Govett-Brewster’s involving itself in such community debates and linking its activities to Treaty of Waitangi commitments.”

161 Buchanan, 66, 81.

162 Buchanan, 55.

163 Buchanan, 72, 80.

164 The exhibition and the exhibition guidebook provoked extended discussions with the three artist professionals I visited the exhibition with.

that “if archives are spaces of a society’s collective memory, so too are they sites of loss, effacement and forgetting, where some voices are silent or silenced.”¹⁶⁵ This position resonates with Foucault’s perspective that archives emerge “in fragments, regions and levels.”¹⁶⁶

1.3.2. Paul Soulellis: Documenting Omissions and Absences

American artist and graphic designer Paul Soulellis has also explored the limitations of official records through his project *Queer.Archive.Work 2 (1923 Internet Archive Edition)*, developed from a residency at the Internet Archive in San Francisco in 2019. The Internet Archive is an online digital library of websites and cultural artefacts established in 1996, advocating a free and open Internet, and claims to provide “universal access to all knowledge.”¹⁶⁷ According to Wikipedia, as of January 1, 2023, the Internet Archive holds more than 36 million print materials, 15 million audio files, 4.5 million images and over 808 billion web pages.¹⁶⁸ The Internet Archive aligns with Terry Cook’s *Community* paradigm by fostering diverse participation in its creation and enabling organisations and the public to contribute and upload material to the platform.

Invited by the Internet Archive to engage with 26,000 digital artefacts from 1923, Soulellis noticed a persistent bias within the Archive’s data. Although the Internet Archive’s content was predominantly generated automatically by web crawlers, the 1923 records held by the Internet Archive were notably lacking in representation of marginalised groups, including people of colour and the queer community. In response, Soulellis actively sourced diverse content featuring African American, Indigenous, and LGBTQI voices to challenge and disrupt the prevailing narratives in the Archive.¹⁶⁹ He contributed twenty-four new records that included an excerpt from *Guide to Racial Greatness* by African American author and activist Sutton Elbert Griggs, a digital copy of *On a Grey Thread* by Elsa Gidlow, the first book of openly lesbian poetry ever published in North America, and 1923 covers of *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*, the official magazine for the American organisation National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).¹⁷⁰ Soulellis argues: “Histories aren’t discovered in archives; rather, we

165 Jake Hodder, “On Absence and Abundance: Biography as Method in Archival Research,” *Area* 49, no. 4 (December 2017): 452, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45172089>.

166 Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 130.

167 “About the Internet Archive,” Internet Archive, accessed February 24, 2020, <https://archive.org/about/>.

168 “Internet Archive,” in *Wikipedia*, May 29, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Internet_Archive&oldid=1157497655.

169 Eyeo 2019, *Paul Soulellis: URGENTCRAFT*, 2019, <https://vimeo.com/354276810>.

170 “Paul Soulellis,” Internet Archive, n.d., <https://archive.org/details/soulellis?tab=collection>.

use archives to actively construct versions of history, stories that accommodate our own subjectivities and ideologies.”¹⁷¹ Soulellis’s approach in *Queer.Archive.Work 2* resonates with Gaillet’s concept of the *archivist-researcher*, who actively engages with history to address gaps and injustices, and amplify the voices and experiences of marginalised communities.

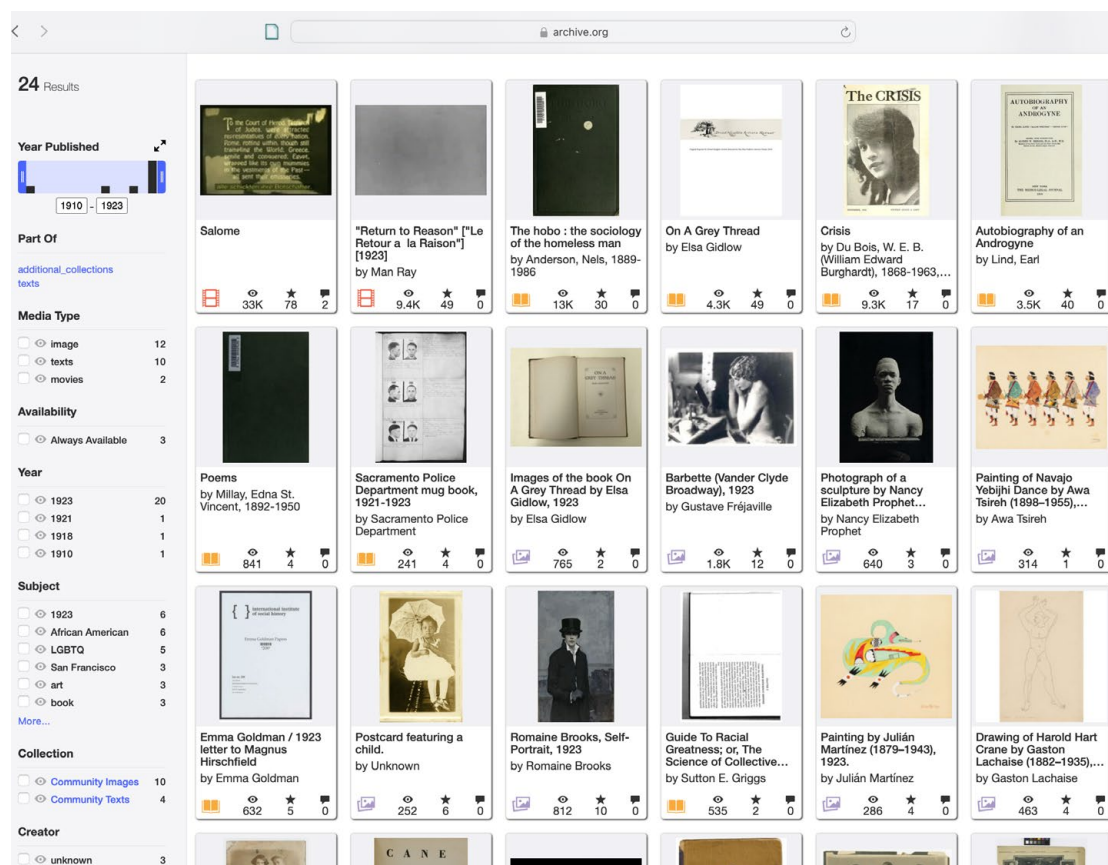


Figure 57: Contributions by Paul Soulellis to the Internet Archive, 2019. Screenshot by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

In another project titled *Thank you for your interest in this subject* (2017), Soulellis utilised the Wayback Machine, an online tool provided by the Internet Archive, to expose the erasure of information from the Whitehouse.gov website immediately after the Trump inauguration in 2017.¹⁷² The Wayback Machine, a vital component of the Internet Archive, allows users to access archived versions of websites as they appeared in the past. To document this erasure, Soulellis created a zine available in both printed and digital formats that included twenty-two web pages capturing the last view of the website during the Obama administration and the first view under the Trump administration, as cached by the Internet Archive on January 20, 2017. Soulellis’s research reveals that information

171 Paul Soulellis, “Queer.Archive.Work 2, 1923 Internet Archive Edition,” Internet Archive Blogs, January 25, 2019, <https://blog.archive.org/author/paulsoulellis/>.

172 The Wayback Machine is a digital archive of the World Wide Web, founded by the nonprofit organisation the Internet Archive based in San Francisco.

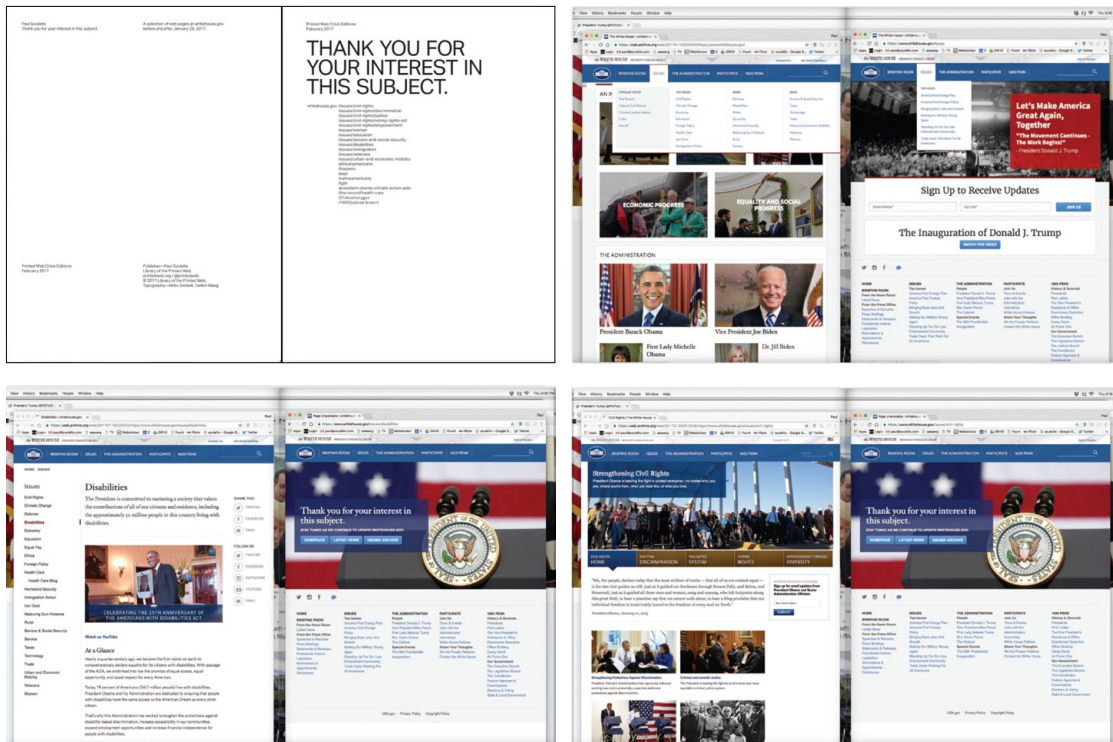


Figure 58: Spreads from Paul Soulellis’s publication, *Thank you for your interest in this subject*, 2017.

related to African American, Asian American, Hispanic, and LGBTQI communities, women, seniors, children, veterans, and people with disabilities had all been removed from the site at approximately 5 pm that day. The deleted content was replaced with the message “Thank you for your interest in this subject.”¹⁷³ This project is a powerful illustration of how decision makers can shape and manipulate information, with far-reaching consequences for collective memory, historical knowledge, cultural or gender identity, and citizen rights.

Buchanan’s and Soulellis’s projects provide vital revisions to historical archiving practices, which have informed the experimental and critical approach I employ in working with my father’s archive. While these artists and the theorists discussed in this chapter mainly focus on institutional or historical archives, the principles they reveal are useful to my research because they establish a foundation for viewing the archive as a dynamic, fragmented entity subject to diverse interpretations and biases. Soulellis’s and Buchanan’s use of design to frame and present the archive is also relevant to my approach, offering a helpful connection point. However, unlike cultural and historical archives that strive to capture and chronicle specific communities or entities, artist archives are inherently subjective, often comprising a seemingly random and idiosyncratic collection of materials. I argue that the distinctive nature of artist archives necessitates a unique approach to archiving. In this research I focus on how collecting and archiving processes influence the

173 Paul Soulellis, “Thank You for Your Interest in This Subject,” accessed June 3, 2023, <https://soulellis.com/work/whitehouse/index.html>.

interpretation of an artist's practice and how archiving methods might respond to an artist's practice and conceptual methodologies.

1.4. Reflecting and Looking Forward

In this chapter, I have established a foundation for examining the archiving of an artist's practice, exploring how shifts in archival theory and practice have been shaped by societal changes, technological advancements, and evolving theoretical perspectives. This exploration considered the evolving role of archivists in shaping archive structures, content management, interpretative frameworks, and their impact on cultural and historical narratives. Specifically, I analysed how the archive functions as a site of power through the works of artists Buchanan and Soulellis. The projects I have discussed explore the inherent power dynamics in archives and advocate for more inclusive narratives and methods, redefining our perception of archives as dynamic contributors to the construction of history. Buchanan's project reveals the entrenched power dynamics in museum and collection practices, highlighting patriarchal influences and racial biases through a decolonial lens, and questioning language's power and influence in categorisation, canonisation, and interpretation processes. Soulellis's work confronts and challenges the often-assumed authority and objectivity of archival materials. He draws attention to how archives can act as sites of erasure by excluding certain voices while amplifying others, particularly those associated with oppressive power structures such as patriarchy, whiteness, and capitalism.

Ridener's insights into the evolution of historiography and its shift from chronological recounting to interpretive analysis are particularly pertinent to my practice-based research. This scholarly shift, underscored by the changing perspectives in historical studies, resonates with the writing methodologies I adopt to contextualise and interpret my father's archive and artworks. Influenced by Shaun Wilson's ideas on the inseparability of ideas from contextual relationships, as presented in this exegesis introduction, my approach responds to and reflects these theoretical developments. By integrating creative writing techniques between chapters, I embed the research within my personal connection to the artist and subject, thus exemplifying a contemporary, interpretive approach in historiography. This synthesis of theory and practice underscores the relevance of the discussed theoretical frameworks, and demonstrates how they inform and shape my archival exploration.

My discussion in this chapter reveals that contemporary archival theory and practice are shaped by the coexistence of multiple paradigms rather than a single fixed approach. I argue that archivists and archival institutions must remain

flexible, adapting strategies and methods that are appropriate to the specific characteristics of the materials and the broader intentions inherent in their context. I have proposed that this context-sensitive approach is essential for developing conceptually relevant methods for archiving Paul's art practice.

In the next chapter, I revisit the archival work undertaken with Paul in his studio between 2016 and 2017 in collaboration with gallerist Jane Sanders, considering their methods through Cook's archival paradigms. I examine Sanders's cataloguing process, resonating with Cook's *Evidence* paradigm and Paul's simultaneous disruption of conventional categorisation methods within his practice, reflecting a postmodern perspective on the evolving nature of knowledge. My discussion of the changing role of the archivist in this chapter frames my personal positioning within this research. Building on Gaillet's perspective and concept of *archivist-researcher*, I approach the archive not as a repository of established information but as a primary source for generating new knowledge.

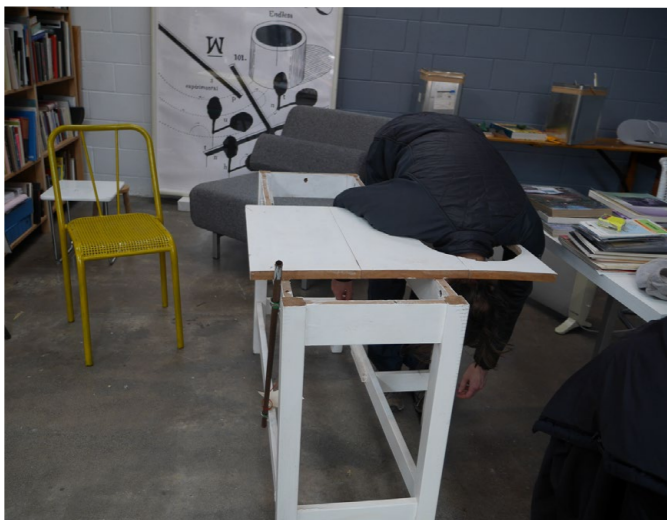


Figure 59: I interact with artwork components in Paul Cullen's archive, Henderson, 2020. Photographs by p. mule.

Reflection to Paul: Excessive Acquisition

I'm a hoarder, hesitating to part with the myriad contents within the Henderson warehouse. My PhD research, focused on archiving and activating your work, means everything assumes significance—it could be an artwork, a component, or provide valuable context. I remember the neighbour offering you the use of their skip bin, parked conveniently outside your studio roller door, but you declined, claiming you had nothing to throw away. I wish you had accepted their offer because now the task of determining what to retain and discard rests with me, and sometimes I struggle to distinguish between what's art and what's not. For organisation, we've installed extra shelving and built a mezzanine to move items off the floor. Sorting through materials, I try to establish patterns and organising principles, but every category I attempt to define seems to open up another. I've sorted plastic fruit, vegetables, and world globes into containers. Three large storage tins hold mostly yellow pencils (I've counted over 500) but a few other sorts, too: red, green, and orange builder's pencils, and pencils you've fixed together, dipped in paint, or drilled with holes. Another tin contains rulers, ruler pieces, Meccano, model trees, and pick-up sticks. Yet, they occupy minimal space compared to the artworks, components, and paper documents in boxes. I've found a ticket from the New Zealand National Airways Corporation dated 30 August 1965, priced at 28.16 pounds. Your name is on the back, listed alongside eleven others from Otorohanga College, and enclosed within that ticket was another for a voyage from Wellington to Lyttelton with the Union Steam Ship Company. I've also amassed a substantial stack of photocopied and printed documents from various corners of the warehouse, reaching nearly a metre high, covering topics from art, science, and philosophy, to architecture, horticulture, and cosmology. Initially, I considered discarding them due to their dusty, musty condition, which made them uninviting to read. But I changed my mind, recognising their research value, and instead opted to bind them into fifteen hard-cover volumes in a traditional library style, A4 format trimmed down. They have gold-yellow buckram covers, similar in colour to the yellow pencils in your works. I've marbled the edges with swirling red, blue, yellow, and black inks, muddy in places, and tallied the pages using a self-stamping numbering machine: 1–5,740. Each volume has 410 pages, the exact page count as the books in Jorge Luis Borges's "The Library of Babel" found in your collection, now included in Volume 12 (pages 4,987–4,996). You know the story: the infinite library housed in identical hexagonal galleries, each containing twenty shelves, each shelf accommodating thirty-two standardised books, and each book featuring forty lines per page with eighty letters per line. But despite this highly ordered and systematic arrangement, the library is incomprehensible. I draw parallels to my experience in this warehouse, where order and knowability

seem perpetually out of reach. I've left the covers blank but have added page ranges, volume numbers, and archive catalogue numbers on the spines. There are no contents pages—each search becomes a journey through them all, a loop of rediscovery. It's a labyrinth, these books that look like library volumes but aren't quite. Inside, the structure breaks down. This recurring search inevitably leads to rediscovering other texts, a serendipitous, somewhat inefficient process. Page numbers skip, vanish, or barely appear—just a faint ink mark. Two volumes split A3 pages, read together, side by side. Pages missing, pages jammed in the university printer, ripped, damaged, were lost in the process—an echo of my attempts to impose structure where it resists.

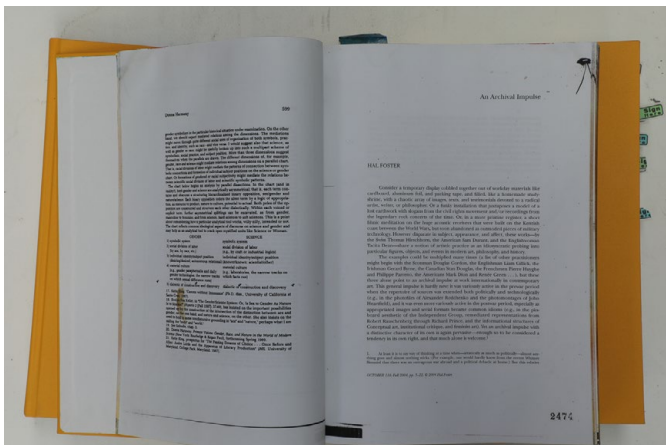
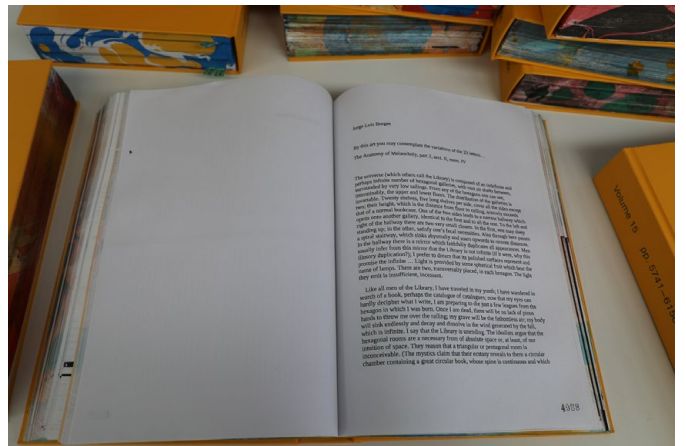
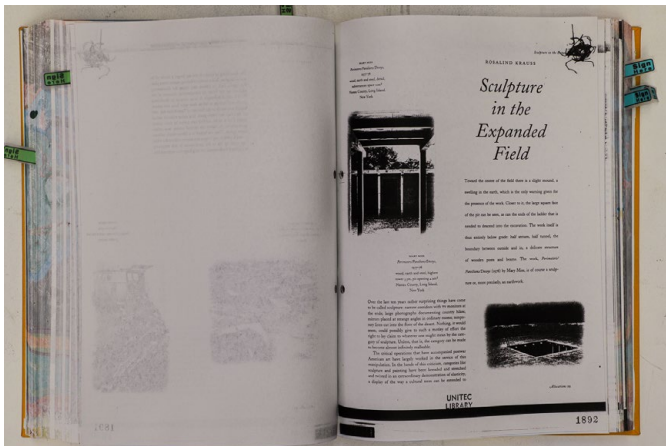


Figure 60: Layla Tweedie-Cullen, *15-Volume Reader*, 2022. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.



Figure 61: Paul Cullen, studio installations for documentation, Henderson, 2016. Photographs by Marie Shannon.

2. Archiving Paradoxes

2.1. Early Revolutions: The Circle Spirals

Diagrams, model-making, and various forms of temporary support structures pre-occupied artist Paul Cullen for almost four decades. Cullen was interested in graphic and three-dimensional diagrams of the world and its busy retinue of things. He was drawn to the systematic—to a world of organised complexity and accented differences—but also to forms of systemic collapse and categorical absurdities. This fascination with objects, their modes of representation, and their precarious lives in time, coloured the artist's abiding interest in architecture, gardens, landscape design, technological illustration, systems of measurement, domestic furniture, and philosophical fictions in which things and spaces tell strange stories of inversion, suspension and irrational propagation.¹⁷⁴

In this chapter, I reflect on the period before Paul's death, from mid-2016 to March 2017. During this time, he began archiving and documenting work in his Henderson studio with his former gallerist Jane Sanders, and artist and photographer Marie Shannon.¹⁷⁵ While undertaking this work, he simultaneously continued his art practice, working towards several exhibition projects, including *Things from Geology (Underworld)* as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf (which opened in January 2017) and *Provisional Arrangements* at Two Rooms, an installation that he developed with writer and curator Allan Smith that opened in February 2017. During this phase, Paul struggled with motor neuron disease, which severely impacted his mobility, dexterity, and energy levels, eventually confining him to a wheelchair. The condition also resulted in the loss of his voice, necessitating reliance on text-to-speech technology and complicating communication. Unfortunately, he did not complete the archiving work he had begun with Sanders. At the time of his death, the artwork database held 272 records. It has now grown to include over 1,800 entries and remains an ongoing project. In July 2018, Ry and I joined Sanders in continuing to catalogue Paul's work.¹⁷⁶

174 Allan Smith and Marcus Moore, "Paul Cullen: Building Structures +" (Exhibition room sheet, ST PAUL St Gallery, Auckland, 2018), 1.

175 Marie Shannon was Paul's partner from May 2015 until he died in March 2019. Jane Sanders represented Paul from 2001 until 2012, initially working without a gallery before opening Art Agent in 2002 at 40 George Street. The gallery later moved to the Blakett's Building, situated at the corner of Shortland Street and Queen Street in central Auckland. The gallery closed in May 2012. Sanders first encountered the artist's work in 1986 at the Auckland City Art Gallery during the exhibition *Aspects of Recent New Zealand Art: Sculpture*.

176 Sanders volunteered to work with Paul on archiving his work and generously offered to continue this collaboration with Ry and myself after his death. She expressed her desire to continue the work she had started with Paul, driven by her admiration for him as an artist and the trust he had placed in her to represent his work. However, she highlighted the enormity of the task, advising us on the significant commitment and responsibility involved in caring for Paul's work and maintaining the archive.

As a part of this practice-led investigation, I have examined how methods of archiving and cataloguing shape our perception of the artist's work and consider the inherent paradoxes in these practices. My analysis and application of theoretical frameworks are grounded in my direct engagement with Paul's artworks, database entries, and archival efforts. His practice, characterised by continual adaptation and recontextualisation, contrasted with the archival drive for stability and permanence. However, he actively participated in an archiving process with Sanders, creating an interplay of divergent and seemingly contradictory processes within his studio. This interplay, marked by concurrent artistic production and systematic cataloguing of artworks, underpins the central theme of paradox in this chapter. In the opening section, "Ordered Disorder", I delve into the multifaceted activities occurring in Paul's studio during this time, drawing from conversations with Smith, Sanders, and Shannon. I also reference Smith's writings on the *Provisional Arrangements* exhibition at Two Rooms and the first iteration of this exhibition a year earlier in Christchurch. The concept of paradox, associated with rhetorical and analytical ideas such as irony, aporia, ambivalence, and dialecticism, encapsulates scenarios that, despite contradictory elements, coexist and challenge conventional logic.¹⁷⁷

To understand the paradoxical nature of collecting and archiving, I draw on insights from art historian Mathias Winzen in his essay "Collecting – So Normal, So Paradoxical" (1998), in which he argues that these practices are inherently contradictory. In this chapter, I unpack three collecting paradoxes Winzen identifies—*Available Material*, *Unavailable Future*, which highlights the contrast between the tangible present and the uncertain future; *Similar Dissimilarity*, where diverse items are grouped together; and *Protective Destruction*, where efforts to preserve can inadvertently alter or damage—and apply them to the context of archiving Paul's work. These paradoxes form a framework for my investigation, complemented by academic Samuel Frederick's perspectives in *The Redemption of Things* (2021), which provides additional dimensions to understanding the complexities of archiving.

In the final section of this chapter, I turn to the posthumous continuation of archiving the artist's work and the challenges this entails. I introduce an additional paradox I have called *Static Continuity*, rooted in the dynamic qualities of Paul's practice. This is underscored by his incorporation of living plants into installations, which exemplify the evolving, organic nature of the materials he used, creating a tension between their growth and decay, and the static goals of conventional archival methods. Expanding on the concept of records as dynamic entities, I perceive the archive not merely as a static collection but as an active, evolving process. This perspective is informed by the theories of Terry Cook and John Ridener, which

177 Elizabeth S. Anker, *On Paradox: The Claims of Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022), 4.

I examined in the previous chapter. Further, I apply a systems-thinking mode to archiving, considering the archive as a system marked by interconnectivity and dynamic interactions.

2.2. Ordered Disorder: The Convergence of Creation and Cataloguing in Paul's Studio

Paul's studio was an environment where materials, artworks, and various components coexisted, each holding potential for future repurposing. In this workspace, items at different stages of completion were not just stored but were seen as integral to his ongoing creative process. As Smith observed during a 2022 conversation, "For Paul, any sort of organised storage or partially organised material was always jumping, twitchy, garrulous with potential and twittering with possibility."¹⁷⁸

In his work, Paul navigated the liminal space between permanence and impermanence, demonstrating an enduring preoccupation with the dynamics of transformation. He often subverted the conventional roles of everyday objects, rendering them obsolete or redefining their functions. For instance, he might transform an ordinary chair into a support structure for a spinning globe, destabilise it by preventing its use as a seat, or incorporate it into a water-circulation system. While Paul might deem a work finished at the point of an exhibition, he often continued to rework or repurpose pieces over time, sometimes even during the exhibition itself. He frequently repurposed components from previous installations or evolved them into entirely new works, embodying a process of continuous evolution.

The artwork database that Sanders and Paul established in mid-2016 is a modified version of a system Sanders previously built in FileMaker Pro to track sales and inventory in her former gallery. This adapted version categorises items as either an *artwork*, a *component* (of an installation), *evolved* (from a previous work), or *no longer existing*. The system records titles, dates, mediums, dimensions, and provenance. It also tracks whether artworks are signed and dated by the artist, enables condition reporting, and captures the location and status of each piece—whether sold, consigned, or stored at the Henderson warehouse. Each entry comprises photographic documentation and a textual description to facilitate identification.¹⁷⁹

178 Allan Smith, A Conversation in the Henderson Warehouse, in-person interview by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2021.

179 In a 2022 conversation, Sanders explained that the photos she added to the database while working with Paul were "quick, informal shots from various angles, intended as a tool for entering information into the database and showing the correct orientation for presenting the works. If a work was displayed incorrectly, Paul would correct me, and I adjusted my photographs accordingly. Since Paul communicated through his iPad, we didn't have the luxury of long conversations. Thus, our primary focus was on accurately capturing information about each artwork we entered into the database."

An additional exhibitions database establishes connections between works and components recorded in the artwork database to exhibitions and associated texts. However, due to the labour required to compile this supplementary data, the primary focus to date has been on populating the artwork database and cataloguing materials in the Henderson warehouse. In a 2022 discussion, Sanders outlined her plans for the databases, emphasising that they were designed to complement each other. This design allows for components to be searchable by medium, materials, location, and subject matter, and enables the linking of artworks and components to exhibitions, reviews, press releases, and documentation, as well as the artist's drawings and workbooks.¹⁸⁰ She also highlighted the significance of this interconnected information for curators, viewers, and buyers, contributing to a greater understanding of Paul's work, and its importance in gifting or selling works to galleries and institutions, which often seek detailed provenance. Sanders stressed that works with thoroughly documented histories are more likely to be collected or acquired, serving as evidence of the artist's relevance and offering insights into the artwork's significance, the contexts it has been part of, and the artist's contributions to contemporary art.

Sanders conveyed that Paul was actively involved in selecting works for the database and noted that alongside his contributions, she added pieces that had been sold or exhibited through her gallery. Paul also contributed contextual information about the artworks, including provenance, and assisted with measuring. On occasion, he would sign, title, or even re-sign and re-title works, engaging in an ongoing process of artistic reinvention. Most artworks he selected to include in the database were small sculptures and components—a decision that was perhaps influenced by his declining mobility; smaller pieces would have been more manageable for him to transport, measure, and catalogue from his wheelchair. Sanders further indicated that the artist had already systematically organised many of these works into boxes and collections. Reflecting on their process, she shared:

We re-boxed and re-wrapped the artwork, and for each box, I printed a sheet from the catalogue to identify the contents and assigned it a number. Our goal was to simplify the process of finding work in the future. When it's your space, you instinctively know where things are, something we often take for granted. Working with Paul, we aimed to develop a system that would assist those around him when he could no longer do so himself. I certainly hoped we would have had more time together.

180 Jane Sanders, A Conversation, phone interview by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2024.

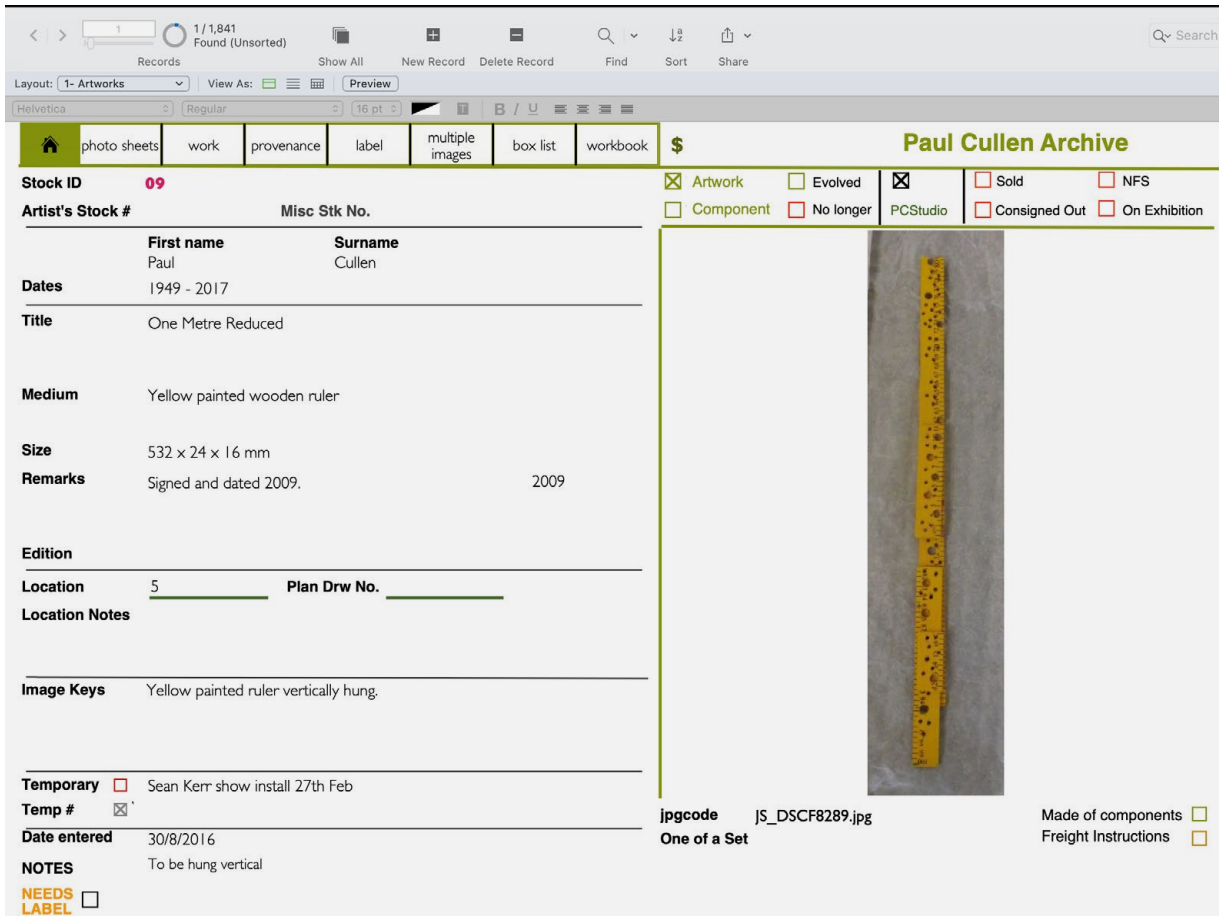


Figure 62: Screenshot of the artwork database, 2024.

Sanders's archival method is influenced by her work as a gallerist and the cataloguing of complete bodies of work produced by several artists over their careers.¹⁸¹ Though not formally trained as an archivist, her approach echoes Cook's *Evidence* archival paradigm. As detailed in the previous chapter, this approach prioritises preserving records in their original context, ensuring their authenticity and reliability. By meticulously capturing the multifaceted details of each artwork in the database, Sanders's method aligns with this paradigm's commitment to maintaining records as trustworthy documentary sources for future validation and interpretation.

While working with Sanders to catalogue artworks in his studio, Paul was also collaborating with Smith towards his upcoming exhibition titled *Provisional Arrangements*.¹⁸² This project was a continuation of an installation with the same title that he worked on with Smith for the Ilam Campus Gallery at the School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, in 2016. This evolving project serves as a good

181 Sanders stated that a component of running a gallery is the need to maintain stock records of the artwork a gallery represents. She has also worked with Jan Nigro's family to develop an archive of her work, and with the Edmiston Trust.

182 Allan Smith was a long-time friend and supporter of Paul's work, having written about his practice and curated exhibitions that included his work. They first met at a Warren Viscoe exhibition at the Claybrook Gallery in 1990.

example of the artist's fluid and metamorphic approach to art making. Reflecting on his involvement in preparations towards this project in Paul's Henderson studio, Smith described the experience as akin to "duettists in an improvised pipe-organ recital."¹⁸³ He likened these *studio rehearsals* to "a slow/fast game of clattering sticks and moveable furniture", arranging and rearranging components on a room-sized gaming board with rules they could never entirely figure out.¹⁸⁴ Smith further commented that the artist's concrete studio floor transformed into a support surface for a multi-part apparatus, fluctuating between states of disarray and resolution, underscoring the continual interplay of order and disorder in this creative process.¹⁸⁵ According to Smith, they also conducted *rehearsals* in the Henderson studio towards the Two Rooms iteration of this installation.

Alongside cataloguing work and improvised *rehearsals* with Smith in the studio, Paul also engaged artist and photographer Marie Shannon to document artworks. This project was independent of Sanders, but many works he and Shannon photographed were also captured in the artwork database.¹⁸⁶ Conversing with me in 2022, Shannon described using two documentation strategies driven by expediency and the size of an artwork. For smaller sculptures, they constructed a cyclorama using paper and white-painted plywood that they installed on a movable scaffolding unit, allowing reorientation for optimum natural light. Shannon describes documenting these pieces as if they are on display in a gallery space rather than as part of the continuity of the studio, adding, "It felt as though it was a cataloguing of the works because Paul was not selecting, he was not pulling out key pieces of work that he had; we would do one type of model, photographing multiple examples of it, then move on to another type of model and do the same."¹⁸⁷

For larger works, the artist would install works on the studio floor, and then Shannon would walk around the space to document these. She reflected, "Paul didn't tidy up the studio or look at things on a shelf in the background and say, oh, we need to take those out, but rather allowed for incidental elements to be

183 Allan Smith, *Provisional Arrangements: Paul Cullen* (Christchurch: Ilam Campus Gallery, School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, 2016), 1.

184 Smith, *Provisional Arrangements*, 1.

185 Smith, 1.

186 In my 2022 conversation with Jane Sanders, she shared, "I knew that Marie Shannon was coming in on separate days to photograph artworks, both small and large. This allowed me to view the larger works, measure them, and take my own quick snaps. It also ensured that we didn't handle the artworks more than necessary. I was looking forward to incorporating her photographs into the database—a task for the future."

187 Marie Shannon, A Conversation, online interview by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2021.

incorporated into the images.”¹⁸⁸ This approach aligns with the artist’s interest in the interplay between artworks, presentation sites, and the pre-existing elements within a space, highlighting the dynamic relationships between them. Some of the larger works they documented in the studio were also included in the *Provisional Arrangements* exhibition, so there might have been some overlap between Paul’s arrangements of works on the studio floor for Shannon to document, and the arrangements he made with Smith towards the Two Rooms exhibition.¹⁸⁹

2.3. Available Material, Unavailable Future: Cataloguing Artworks

Winzen’s first collecting paradox, which he defines as the interplay between “available material, unavailable future”, highlights the challenge of reconciling the tangible present with the intangible future.¹⁹⁰ This paradox revolves around the transformation of time, an inherently ephemeral and uncertain entity, into material form. According to Winzen, this endeavour represents “a defensive act intended to lessen the fear of the future and to confront what is unpredictable.”¹⁹¹ In essence, it is an attempt to render the future more concrete and predictable by accumulating physical objects, reflecting a human inclination to seek certainty and tangibility in the face of inherent unpredictability and intangibility. He also suggests that if we shift our attention away from the objects being collected and focus instead on the persons doing the collecting, it becomes clear that the act of archiving is not only protective but also *anxious*, because there is concern about past losses and future uncertainties.¹⁹²

In a 2022 discussion with Sanders, she reflected that her primary goal in establishing the database was to preserve Paul’s artworks and legacy. Recognising the urgency of capturing the artist’s voice while it was still possible, she acknowledged that his MND diagnosis had been a crucial motivator for initiating an archival process with the artist. Sanders also highlighted the challenges and, in some cases, the impossibility of identifying artworks, discerning their completeness, and capturing titles, dates, stories, and provenance without the artist’s direct

188 Shannon, A Conversation.

189 All of the activities in the studio during this period contributed to a dynamic studio environment. But as Paul grew more unwell, this manifested in the space becoming increasingly disordered due to the physical challenges he faced. This situation became more pronounced following his death after we moved the contents of his house into the warehouse, further emphasising the contrast between the disorder of the space and the order represented by grey archival boxes containing carefully wrapped and catalogued artworks.

190 Matthias Winzen, “Collecting – so Normal, so Paradoxical,” in *Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing, and Archiving in Art*, ed. Ingrid Schaffner et al. (New York: Prestel, 1998), 22–23.

191 Winzen, “Collecting,” 22.

192 Winzen, 23.



Figure 63: Paul Cullen, *Newton's Bucket Theory*, 2015, the artist's studio, Henderson, 2016. Photograph by Marie Shannon.



Figure 64: Paul Cullen, *Newton's Bucket Theory*, 2015, the artist's studio, Henderson, 2016. Photograph by Marie Shannon.



Figure 65: Paul Cullen, studio installation for documentation, Henderson, 2016. Photograph by Marie Shannon.



Figure 66: Paul Cullen, studio installation for documentation, Henderson, 2016. Photograph by Marie Shannon.



Figure 67: Paul Cullen, *Green Block Table*, 2016, the artist's studio, Henderson. Photograph by Marie Shannon.



Figure 68: Paul Cullen, *Things on my table*, 2016, the artist's studio, Henderson. Photograph by Marie Shannon.



Figure 69: Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, 2016, the artist's studio, Henderson. Photograph by Marie Shannon.



Figure 70: Paul Cullen, *Everything*, 2004, *After Tatlin (yellow)*, 2015, *Untitled [deckchair]*, 2007, the artist's studio, Henderson. Photograph by Marie Shannon.



Figure 71: Paul Cullen, studio installation for documentation, Henderson, 2016. Photograph by Marie Shannon.

involvement. The archival objective of Sanders can be viewed as a manifestation of Winzen's paradox, where her effort to document and preserve Paul's artworks becomes a means to solidify his contribution to contemporary New Zealand art, thus confronting and mitigating the unpredictability of the future.

Continuing the cataloguing of artworks with Sanders after Paul's death, I embraced the rationale she emphasised for maintaining such an inventory. This approach served as a method for minimising the handling of artworks to prevent physical degradation, securing the archive's holdings, and tracking artwork locations in the warehouse. Sanders underscored the significance of these practices for future exhibitions, loans, gifts, or sales, and enabling research and scholarship on the artist. In this context, our archival process transcends mere record-keeping, transforming time and human presence into a lasting, tangible heritage. These objectives echo Frederick's observation that we collect "in order to halt—even temporarily—things' tendency to fade, fall apart, become lost, or lose their significance."¹⁹³ Thus, the artwork database is not just a tool for organisation; it is a form of future-proofing, ensuring the artist's oeuvre is logically preserved and accessible.

In the years following Paul's death, the imperatives of archival preservation assumed greater importance in Sanders's approach. The absence of the artist underscored the urgency to protect the artworks now that no further contributions were possible. Her strategy evolved to reflect the practices typical of a gallery archive. She implemented measures to mitigate risks from human and environmental factors, such as damage to artefacts and degradation of materials due to insect infestations, temperature, and humidity, and recommended that artworks and boxes remain in fixed positions. Her approach and sense of archival responsibility resonated with archivist Laura Millar's principles of a trustworthy and accountable *archival service*. As Millar outlines, such a service should provide "a safe and stable environment for the receipt, storage and handling of archival holdings, regardless of form and medium" and "protect the content, context and structure of archives during any work to arrange, describe, preserve or provide access to holdings."¹⁹⁴

Winzen further suggests: "The systematic accumulation of objects is, among other things, always intended to secure the symbolic continuity of the collecting 'subject' in the future."¹⁹⁵ Archiving Paul's collection symbolises this idea, as it

193 Samuel Frederick, *The Redemption of Things: Collecting and Dispersal in German Realism and Modernism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press and Cornell University Library, 2021), 35.

194 Millar, *Archives: Principles and Practices*, 95.

195 Winzen, "Collecting," 22.

extends the artist's presence by enabling the ongoing exhibition of his work. Yet, this approach introduces another paradox because, as sociologist and philosopher Niklas Luhmann cautions, "attempts to reduce risk are themselves risky."¹⁹⁶ Winzen echoes this sentiment, noting that "in order to reduce risks in the future, the future is mortgaged according to specific expectations that can come true –or not."¹⁹⁷

Archiving an artist's practice is fraught with potential misinterpretations, selection biases, and preservation challenges. These factors, combined with evolving cultural contexts and resource limitations, mean that our efforts to protect and perpetuate Paul's work are subject to uncertainties that may or may not align with future interpretations and values. Some of these factors may include decisions made by us, as well as factors outside our control, such as technological advancements, prevailing historical contexts, and shifting archival paradigms. In the introduction of this exegesis, I discussed the distinctive challenges of being a daughter-archivist and recognised the inherent risks in my objective to activate the archive and foster engagement through practice-led research.

To date, Ry, Sanders, and I have voluntarily dedicated our time to the development of the Paul Cullen Archive. Unlike more commercially viable art forms such as painting, Paul's work does not generate enough income to cover the archive's costs—a challenge exacerbated by the limited scale of Aotearoa New Zealand's art scene. Fortunately, our circumstances have allowed us to continue this work, and during this research I have been supported by a scholarship stipend. However, despite our ability to contribute at this time, the long-term financial sustainability of the archive remains uncertain. In their essay "Approaches to Dealing with Artists' Estates", Loretta Würtenberger and Karl von Trott Zu Solz highlight that "The monetary value of most estates is not significant at the time of the artist's death, and in the vast majority of cases this will not change. The probability of the work of an artist becoming relevant only post-humously and consequently gaining value, à la Vincent van Gogh, is, in reality, extremely small. Neither will its monetary or cultural value necessarily increase if the estate is left to a museum."¹⁹⁸ As the archive's steward, the temporary nature of my role, bounded by the limits of my own lifespan and potential shifts in my circumstances, underscores the archive's uncertain future and highlights the transient nature of my guardianship, too.

196 Winzen, 23.

197 Winzen, 23.

198 Loretta Würtenberger and Karl von Trott Zu Solz, "Approaches to Dealing with Artists' Estates," in *Artist, Authorship & Legacy: A Reader*, ed. Daniel McClean (London: Ridinghouse, 2018), 244.



Figure 72: Paul Cullen, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series, 2010–15. Photographs by Marie Shannon, 2016.



Figure 73: Paul Cullen, *One Metre Reduced*, 2009, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series. Photograph by Marie Shannon, 2016.

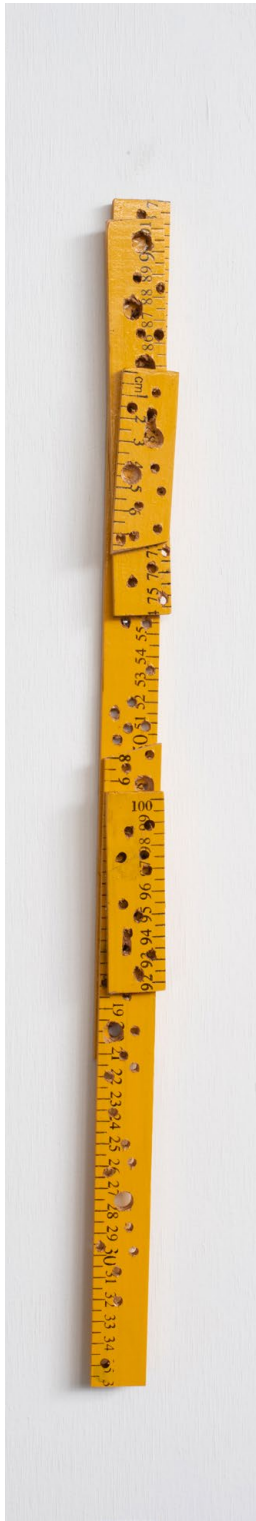


Figure 74: Paul Cullen, *One Metre Reduced*, 2009, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series. Photograph by Marie Shannon, 2016.



Figure 75: Paul Cullen, *Ruler Reduction*, 2009, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series. Photograph by Marie Shannon, 2016.



Figure 76: Paul Cullen, *One Metre Reduced*, 2008, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series. Photograph by Marie Shannon, 2016.



Figure 77: Paul Cullen, *One Metre Reduced*, 2008, *Models, Methods and Assumptions* series. Photograph by Marie Shannon, 2016.

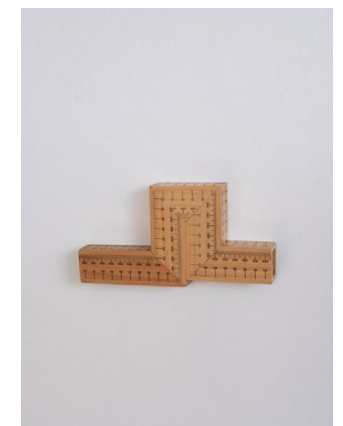
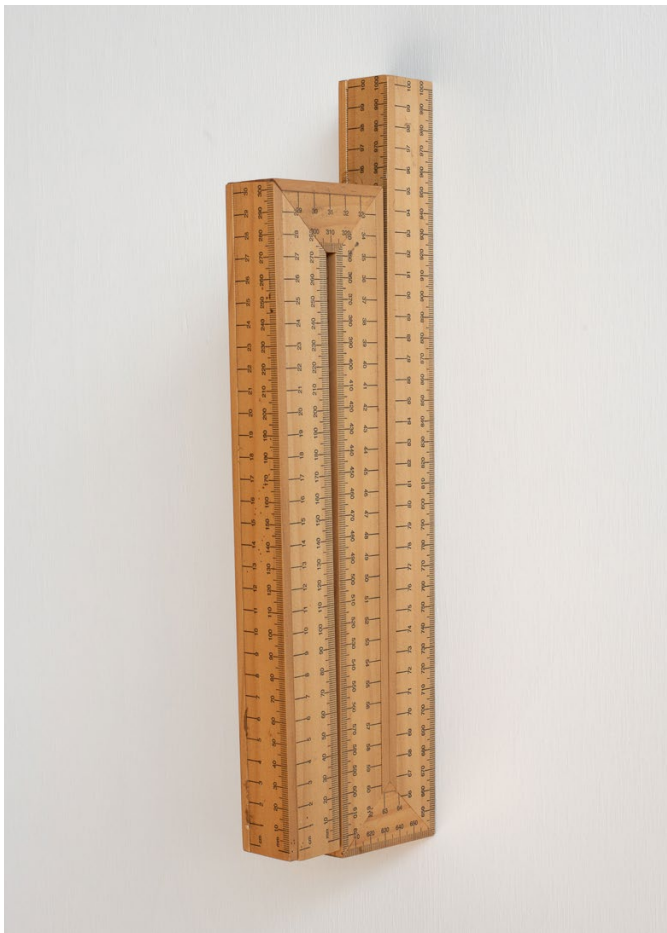


Figure 78: Paul Cullen, *Untitled Models*, 1997–2005. Photographs by Marie Shannon, 2016.

2.4. Similar Dissimilarity: *Models, Methods and Assumptions*

Winzen argues that archiving and collecting practices bring “meaning, order, coherence, and reason into what is disparate and confused, without contours and is contingent or threatening.”¹⁹⁹ However, he points out that the act of collecting alters an object or artefact, turning a once-unique item into just another specimen in a collection.²⁰⁰ This leads to what he calls the collecting paradox of *Similar Dissimilarity*, where a singular object is expected to display its uniqueness while aligning with other objects. Using examples like the Wunderkammer cabinet of curiosities and significant public art collections, Winzen illustrates how this paradox diminishes each item to merely “another expression of those objects which surround it”, thus undermining the distinct qualities that initially warranted its collection.²⁰¹

The database of Paul’s work serves as a practical example of this paradox. It catalogues numbered boxes, each containing small works organised by distinct physical characteristics, such as *Rulers, Lightbulbs, Book Works, Pencil Works, Glass Works, Metal Stairs, Wooden Models*, and so on. This categorisation, though suggesting physical similarity, overlooks the varied historical contexts of each work, including their roles in different projects, exhibitions, and diverse production periods. The focus on surface attributes leads to the neglect of each piece’s unique history.

In boxes #2 and #3, designated as *Book Works*, the artworks exhibit significant variations. Some incorporate books with sections removed, while others include elements such as pencils, rulers, and synthetic grass, or are painted with different colours by the artist. The books in the works also bear distinct titles, spanning from *The Gardener’s Week-End Book* to *Handbook of Practical Bacteriology, Experimental Science, The Planet Mars, Extraterrestrial Encounter, Teach Yourself Books: Sculpture*, and *Introduction to Physical Chemistry*. This diversity within a single category points to the potential for various classification methods. In an undated workbook, Paul acknowledges the challenges and nuances of organising knowledge, writing out a quote from Georges Perec that reads, “My problem with classifications is that they don’t last; hardly have I finished putting things into an order before that order is obsolete.”²⁰²

199 Winzen, “Collecting,” 23.

200 Winzen, 23.

201 Winzen, 23–24.

202 Paul has written out this quote in an undated workbook. Quote originally from Georges Perec, “Think/Classify,” in *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, ed. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 196.

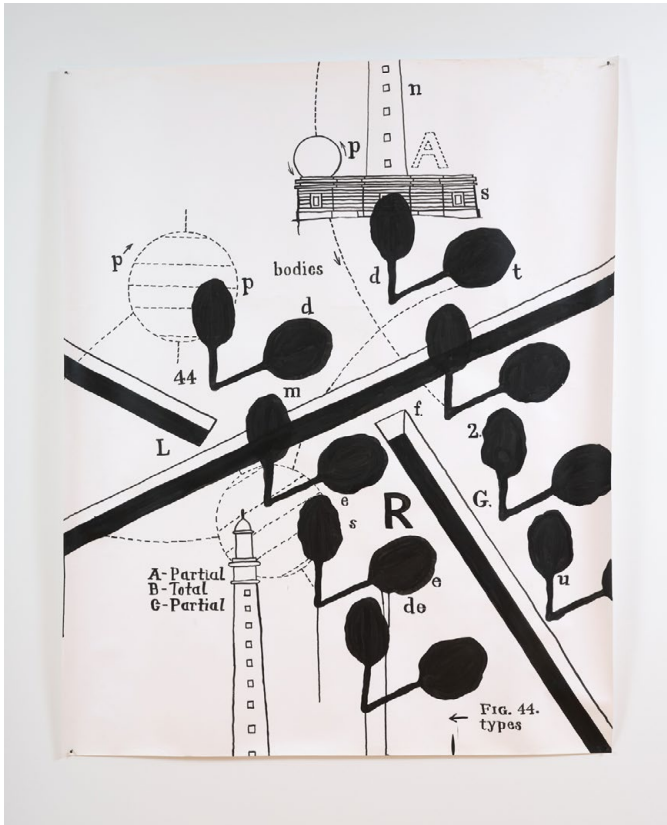


Figure 79: Paul Cullen, *Untitled (R)*, c. 2002–5.

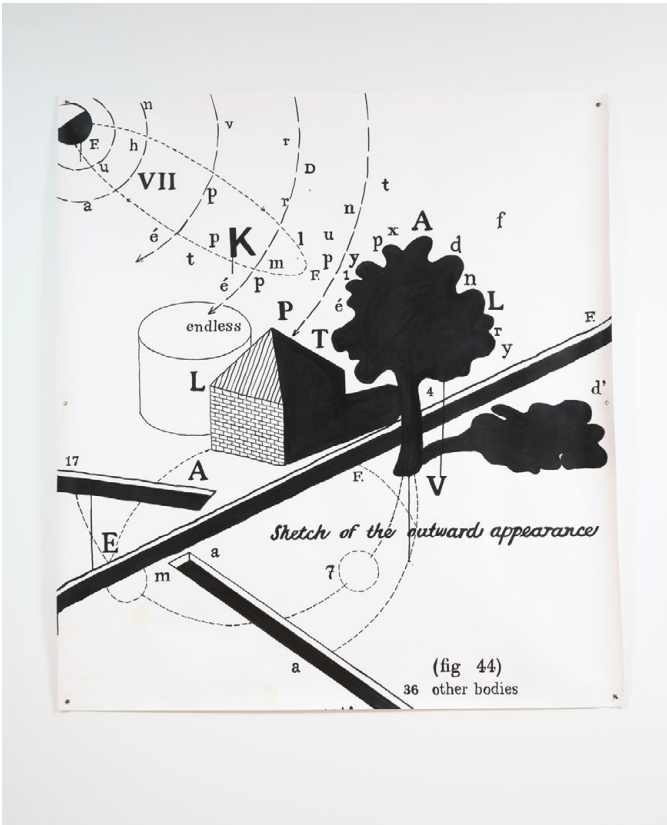


Figure 80: Paul Cullen, *Sketch of the outward appearance*, c. 2002–5.

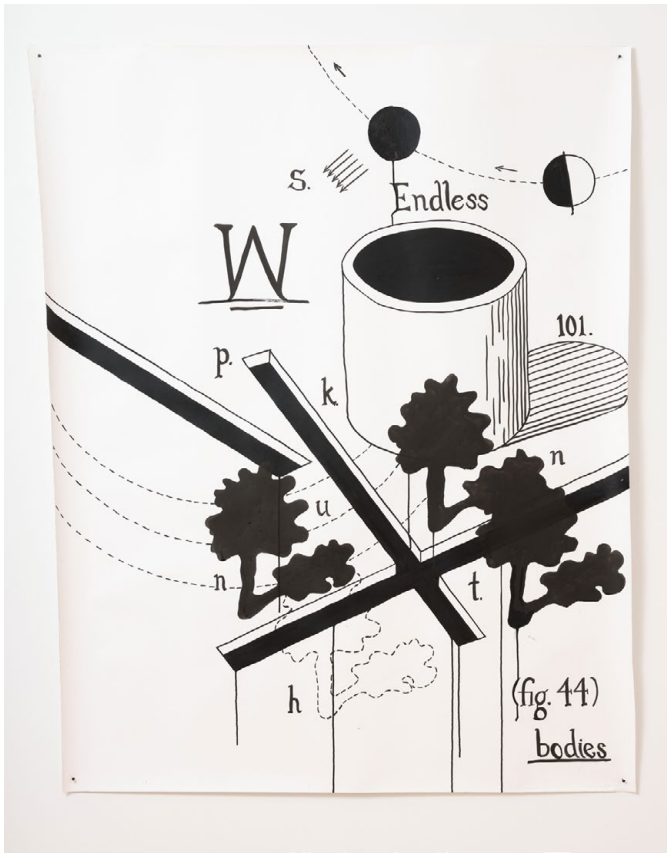


Figure 81: Paul Cullen, *Endless (W)*, c. 2002–5.

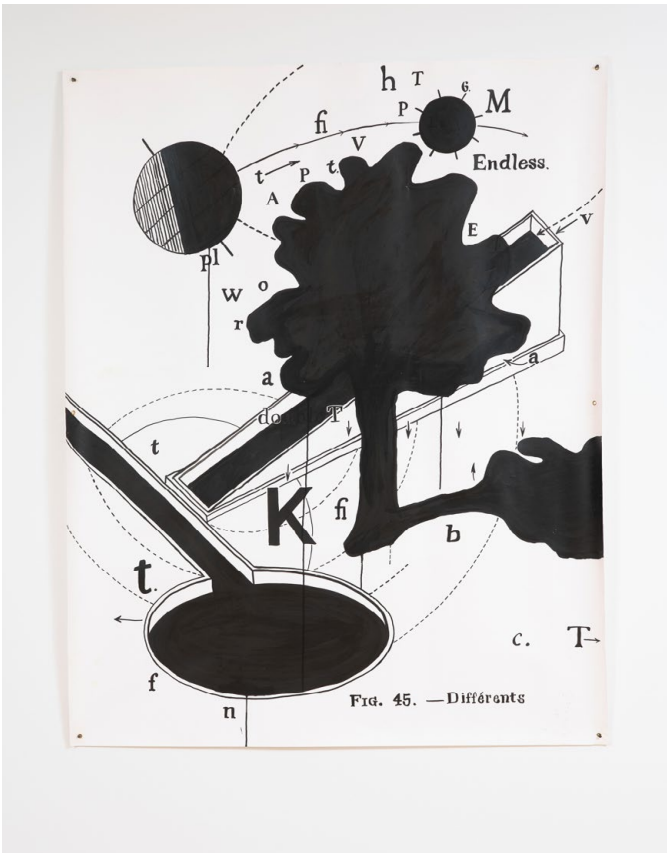


Figure 82: Paul Cullen, *Endless (K)*, c. 2002–5.

Box #5, categorised as *Rulers*, houses works made between 1998 and 2009, constructed from rulers that Paul has altered and modified. With titles like *One Metre*, *One Metre Reduced*, and *Ruler Reduction*, these pieces are transformed from their original linear form into more complex structures. Some of these pieces have pencil insertions, are perforated with numerous drill-holes or are constructed into three-dimensional, four-sided forms. The artist's alterations, rendering them non-functional as measuring tools, make their categorisation as "rulers" paradoxical. The dimensions of each of these works, including height, width, and depth, are recorded in the database (a process that Paul participated in). This recording introduces further paradoxical absurdity and humour, as it contradicts the works' subversion of conventional measurement and categorisation. Imagining a scenario in which Paul's adapted rulers are used for measuring all artworks in the archive, the resulting dimensions would be nonsensical and inaccurate. However, such a situation would align with the artist's methodology that emphasises the fluidity and adaptability of objects, challenging static categorisations and accommodating the ongoing evolution of artworks.

In a 1996 workbook, Paul cites philosopher Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things*, in which he discusses a fictional Chinese encyclopaedia imagined by Jorge Luis Borges. This encyclopaedia defies conventional European taxonomy by organising animals into an array of incongruous categories: "(a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) suckling pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies".²⁰³ Reflecting on this eccentric typology system, Paul notes the malleability of systems and structures used to interpret reality. He writes, "Science, landscape, architecture are all constructed approaches to dealing with the world and become subject matter for my work. They are systems of thought which can be altered, recontextualised; their function changed."²⁰⁴

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault explores the deeper implications of Borges's taxonomy, highlighting its potential to challenge established frameworks of knowledge. He contemplates a more unsettling form of disorder than that of the incongruous, or the linking together of things that are inappropriate, describing a disorder "in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry, of the *heteroclite*."²⁰⁵ This heteroclite, as Foucault explains, represents a state where things are so diversely

203 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 2007 [1966]), xvi.

204 Paul Cullen, Artist's workbook #377, 1996.

205 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xix.

“laid, placed and arranged” that they defy any common categorisation.²⁰⁶ Through this analysis, Foucault suggests that what we often perceive as *disorder* might actually reveal a more complex and rich mosaic of understanding, disrupting our conventional notions of order and logic.²⁰⁷

In Paul’s database, artworks or components are systematically classified using titles and terminology derived from his practice. These classifications serve to group and organise the works, including categories such as ‘Everything’, ‘Diagrams’, ‘Fish House’, ‘Line Diagrams’, ‘Building Structures’, ‘Models and Methods’, and ‘Models, Methods and Assumptions’. While coherent within Paul’s conceptual framework, this terminology is obscure, even nonsensical to those unfamiliar with his work, mirroring the peculiar taxonomy in Borges’s encyclopaedia. Both instances demonstrate how categorisation, though internally logical, can appear arbitrary or absurd to an outsider, emphasising the subjectivity of ordering systems.

In the database, Paul used the title *Models, Methods and Assumptions* to categorise a range of works from c. 1987 to 2015, including the *Book Works* in boxes #2 and #3 and the *Ruler Works* in box #5. In his DocFA exegesis (2007), Paul elucidates the concept of a ‘model’, writing:

A model is that form of representation which purports to reveal a reality without being the real thing; it makes sense through addressing the existence of something outside itself. That something to which it refers could already be in existence or might be yet to come, and is therefore anticipated by the model. A model may be a ‘trial’ version of something which does not yet exist and may never exist.²⁰⁸

Paul’s reflection on the nature of models as representations aligns closely with contemporary theoretical discussions about simulation and anticipation in the works of theorists such as Bruno Latour and Jean Baudrillard, who consider how models not only depict but also shape reality.²⁰⁹ I touch on these ideas in relation to Paul’s work again in Chapter Four. In the context of the artwork database,

206 Foucault, xix.

207 Paul’s library contains a copy of Michel Foucault’s *The Order of Things*.

208 Cullen, “The Chemistry of Familiar Objects,” 21.

209 A key work in which Latour theorises is *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society* (1987). Graham Harman discussed this work in the essay “Science in Action”, in his book *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* (Melbourne: re.press, 2009). A copy of *Prince of Networks* is in Paul’s library. Jean Baudrillard also theorises concepts of simulations and hyperreality, where the distinction between reality and its representation begins to blur. His theories suggest that in a postmodern society, simulations do not just represent reality but can precede and shape it. These ideas are central in his book *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981), which Paul also has a copy of in his library.

Paul's use of the term *Models* suggests he positions the artworks as conceptual frameworks or experiments that explore potential realities, rather than viewing them as definitive statements. His use of the term *Methods* might refer to an investigation of techniques and processes, highlighting the experimental aspects of art creation, and *Assumptions* perhaps points to underlying beliefs and principles that underpin broader cultural and intellectual paradigms. By challenging established norms and exposing underlying biases, Paul's use of these categorisations perhaps encourages critical engagement with the artworks and the archival processes applied to them.

During my conversations with Smith, he highlighted Paul's fascination with the language of archiving and organisation, a theme that was integral to his artistic practice, suggesting that "He would have been entirely happy with the frayed, or inconsistent, relations between his work and the strict inventory of Sanders."²¹⁰ Sorting through Paul's studio, I have discovered various collections of objects and materials that he likely compiled for use in sculptures and drawings. Amongst his research, I uncovered a collection of coloured-paper folders labelled with the categories listed below:

- Gardens
- Cartographic
- Alphabetic & Numeric
- Animals & Plants
- Architecture
- Geology, Chemistry, Physics
- Planets, Solar, Astronomy, Orrery
- Water Devices & Hydraulics
- Devices: Measures
- Devices: Equipment, Ladders, Scaffolds, Handcarts, Furniture

Each of the folders contains an assortment of maps, images, drawings, pamphlets, printouts, book pages, and photographs compiled by the artist. The folder *Alphabetic & Numeric* contains a compilation of cut-up maps, Letraset packets, a *Rock Gardening* book cover, and an index page torn from *150 Years of Building Experience: Patman and Fortheringham Contractors*. Smith observed that Paul's work frequently appears driven by a need to calculate, inventory, label, and classify. His interest in typology meant he often drew materials from other organisational subcultures, such as the ones listed above. However, he continually disrupted these systems, deeming them illogical or absurd. Paul's approach to collecting was not about completeness. As Smith pointed out, Paul never aimed to get every item

210 Smith, A Conversation in the Henderson Warehouse.

or type in a set of something; he was interested in “the quasi-collection or the incomplete collection that had the potential for wayward branchings.”²¹¹

Smith further posits, “Paul’s work is a sober delirium of rationalist, object-oriented technology, full of the rhetorics and devices of Western scientism—cutting up, measuring, codifying the totality of the physical world into quantifiable units—riddled with registration marks that tie the drawing board to the building site, and that keep the X/Y axes as true as possible.”²¹² However, he argues that the artist’s constant pointing up of this language ensures it is always unstable, “nothing ever quite fits properly.”²¹³ Paul confirms this observation in his DocFA exegesis (2007), stating that his artworks “express scepticism towards any overtly confident scientific rationalism.” He further proposes that our understanding of the world is not objective and universal but is shaped by the collective assumptions and practices of a community of scholars and thinkers. Our understanding of the world is not fixed, but subject to change based on the frameworks we use to represent and interpret it.²¹⁴ In an essay on the exhibition *Paul Cullen: Illustrating Reason* at Two Rooms gallery (2021), landscape architect Rod Barnett writes about a selection of Paul’s drawings (figures 79–82), observing:

Cullen plays with the quantity concepts that make this world possible, such as weight, height, length and width. He tinkers with the relationships between the instruments used to gather, transmit and evaluate data and questions its faithfulness to “actual” objects and their relations. He draws our attention to the possibility that our world now is simply a consensus amongst an epistemological community about representing stuff with system A rather than with system B.²¹⁵

2.5. Protective Destruction: *Southern Cross*

Winzen’s third collecting paradox, *Protective Destruction*, arises because “the transplantation of a concrete individual piece into a collection means that this piece partly or completely perishes in favour of its documentability (i.e., its presence in a collection).”²¹⁶ In this context, ‘documentability’ refers to the capability or quality of an item to be documented, catalogued, or recorded as part of a

211 Smith.

212 Smith.

213 Smith.

214 Cullen, “The Chemistry of Familiar Objects,” 48–49.

215 Rod Barnett, “Paul Cullen: Illustrating Reason,” Two Rooms, 2021, <https://tworooms.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/paul-cullen-2021.pdf>.

216 Winzen, “Collecting,” 24.

collection. According to Winzen, the displacement of the collected object from its natural context results in it being damaged or diminished. This phenomenon is echoed in Frederick's observations, which further explore the inherently destructive aspect of collecting and archiving. He contends: "For even though the activity aims to suspend an object's life by halting its inevitable deterioration or assuring order and meaning where these are in decline or missing, it still exerts violence in the process."²¹⁷ This paradox is apparent in museums that collect cultural artefacts or biological specimens, because, as Frederick argues, collecting "doubly imposes a loss: first, on the object, which must become a thing—losing its life, usefulness, or immediate meaningfulness—in order to enter the collection; and second, on the place in which that object was found, where—the object having been extricated from it—it is now missing."²¹⁸

Frederick's approach expands on his "inquiry into the peculiar status and even power of things."²¹⁹ He incorporates Martin Heidegger's analysis of objects losing their functional context, Hannah Arendt's insights into how human activities shape and are interwoven with the world of human-made objects, Jane Bennett's vital materialism highlighting the life force of objects, and Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, which emphasises the interconnectedness and dynamic relationships within networks that include both human and non-human actors. Frederick observes, "The world, it turns out, is not so easily divided up into subjects and objects, the human and nonhuman, active agency and passive inertia."²²⁰

Frederick further suggests that collecting and archiving are forms of mediating loss, both conveying and coming to grips with it. He argues that in attempting to overcome loss (to fill the gaps, to restore things to a state of wholeness), the collector makes that same loss palpable.²²¹ He argues that collectors seek to curate collections specifically with items that are, paradoxically, at their most incomplete—those that have ceased to move, function, or live.²²² He invokes writer and critic Susan Sontag's concepts to illustrate this point further, observing that photographs are also collectable "because that which it presents has been lifted out of time, suspended, and arrested."²²³ In *On Photography* (1997), Sontag asserts, "To collect photographs is to collect the world."²²⁴ Frederick builds on this idea, arguing that photographs capture and preserve moments of loss or

217 Frederick, *The Redemption of Things*, 36.

218 Frederick, 38.

219 Frederick, 23–24.

220 Frederick, 23–24.

221 Frederick, 51.

222 Frederick, 102.

223 Frederick, 102.

224 Frederick, 101.

cessation.²²⁵ Paradoxically, this medium immortalises these moments, enabling us to maintain a tangible connection with what is otherwise lost or gone, which he suggests is akin to preserving a dead flower.²²⁶

The *Protective Destruction* paradox also plays out in the archiving of Paul's work. On the one hand, our wrapping of artworks in tissue and Tyvek, cataloguing, numbering, labelling, and packing into archival boxes is protective because it keeps them safe and enables identification. On the other hand, this process is inherently destructive because it imposes control, isolation, classification, and definitive boundaries on works through numbering and dimensioning. Such rigid structuring might preclude certain interpretations and the potential for further evolution or transformation in varying contexts. However, for Paul, the archival process was likely not as violent and final as Winzen and Frederick suggest because the archive remained in the studio, giving him access to works and the ability to reactivate or transform these as he pleased. Artworks continued to exist within this relational context despite displacement from situations and environments where the artist had initially created, presented, or installed them. For instance, Paul reintroduced the ruler works from Box #5 into his *Provisional Arrangements* exhibition in early 2017, creating new dialogues with other artworks (figure 83).

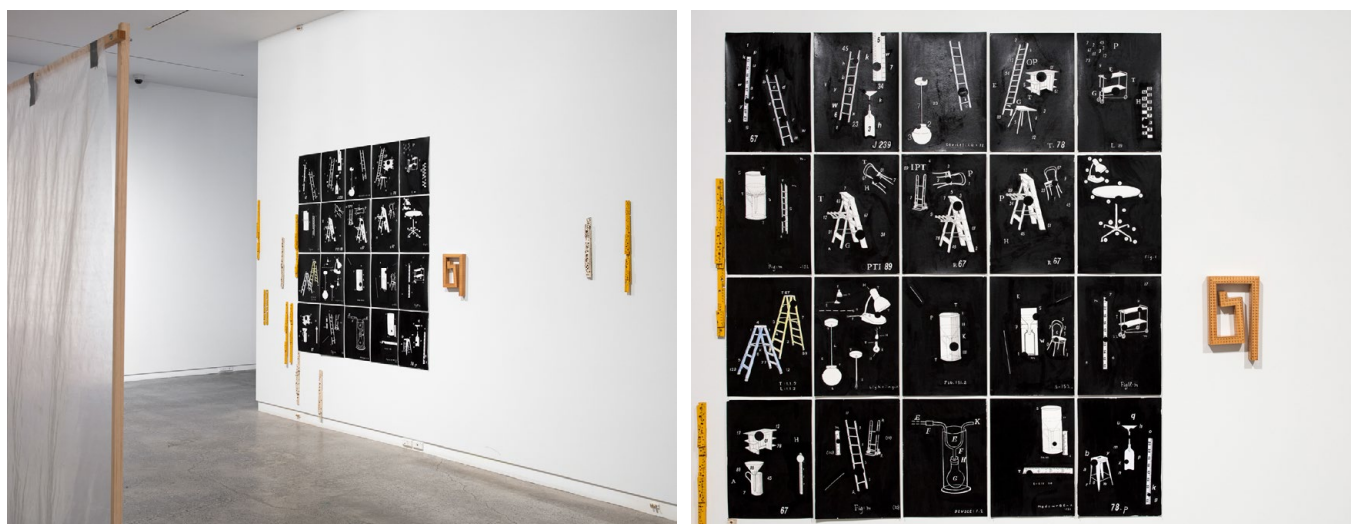


Figure 83: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements* (installation detail), Two Rooms, Auckland, 2017. Photographs by Sam Hartnett.

While reviewing Paul and Shannon's documentation of small artworks installed on the cyclorama, I was struck by how these images visualise the *protective* aspect of the *Protective Destruction* archiving paradox. The documentation of each piece against a pristine, white background creates an uncluttered, gallery-like

225 Frederick, 103.

226 Frederick, 103.

setting, isolating individual artworks and positioning them as complete and autonomous. This controlled environment highlights the work's formal qualities and the sharpness of Shannon's images; her attention to detail and careful lighting choices further accentuate the material and formal aspects of the objects. One of the works they documented in this way is *Southern Cross* (1990) (figure 84), an arrangement of three components: a balsa-wood aeroplane, six model trees fixed to a circular base, and a wooden house-like structure with a gable roof, which Paul had drawn on with pencil and Letraset. However, in several images, Shannon pulls the camera back to expose artwork components and materials piled up behind the staged backdrop, extending out of the frame: tables stacked on tables, chairs, boxes, motors and globes in plastic tubs—seeming chaos compared to the starkness of the staged gallery-wall-like backdrop. The scaffolding unit and the sheets of plywood on which the work is installed are also visible. In this way, the photograph reveals the construction involved in the image-making process, making apparent the careful framing-out of the disorder that has taken place.

On seeing the images in 2022, Smith suggested that the juxtaposition of *Southern Cross* with the studio setting reflects Paul's fascination with the way components can be "sharpened" by being drawn out from the complexity of a workshop or building-site scenario, where there are random or accumulated materials, and then transformed into provisional, discrete organisations.²²⁷ He argues that a certain sitelessness is implicit in any contemporary gallery context. However, he suggests that, for better or worse, objects taken out of the flow of life generate a new sort of intensity or energy. In the case of *Southern Cross*, visible against the backdrop of the cyclorama and scaffolding, Smith posits: "You get the sense that the selection and isolation of an exhibited artwork is always temporary, that the chaos and profusion of the excised storage and studio spaces are still playing in the background."²²⁸ This interpretation is mirrored in documentation Paul took of a studio rehearsal towards the Christchurch iteration of his *Provisional Arrangements* installation developed with Smith, which was used in the gallery's promotion and exhibition catalogue (figure 85). Several components are positioned in front of a makeshift division wall constructed from timber, clamps, and drops of translucent plastic. This structure forms a screen between the works in the foreground, serving to accentuate or separate them from various objects and materials stacked up behind it, which are just visible through the plastic.

227 Smith, *A Conversation in the Henderson Warehouse*.

228 Smith.



Figure 84: Paul Cullen, *Southern Cross* (1990), the artist's studio, Henderson, 2016. Photographs by Marie Shannon.

2.6. Static Continuity: The Carpark Garden

Taking cues from Winzen's archival paradoxes, I find the phrase *Static Continuity* useful in addressing the challenges of archiving Paul's practice. This paradoxical phrase encapsulates the complexities of documenting his engagement with entropy and change, especially evident in his work with plants and his continual repurposing of artwork components and found materials. Reflecting this, in 2016 Shannon photographed a selection of larger works where plants were integrated into installations on the studio floor (figures 63–71). In one, a cactus planted in a terracotta-coloured pot is placed through a circular hole cut into the metal shelf of a shelving unit. The hole is just large enough to accommodate the body of the pot while the rim sits atop the first metal shelf, preventing it from falling through, and the body of the cactus extends through holes cut into the two shelves above. Two additional cacti, originating from the artist's first iteration of the *Provisional Arrangements* installation in Christchurch, are on the floor. In that setup, the cacti were placed through holes in two camping tables, secured by wooden support poles and clamps, with the pots rested on the table surfaces, elevated above the ground. While these cacti were not included in the Auckland *Provisional Arrangements* installation, the camping tables with holes were leant against the gallery wall with their legs folded (figure 105).

Frederick argues that the precondition for something to be collectable is that it be tangible and immobile.²²⁹ He observes that “flowers, when kept and kept alive, make up a garden. Only when dead and dried out or pressed—their perishability simultaneously affirmed and overcome—can they assume their place in a collection proper.”²³⁰ Consequently, Paul's incorporation of living plants in his works renders traditional archiving or collection of these pieces impractical. Living organisms, with their cycles of growth, change, and decay, challenge the archival impulse for fixity and stasis, also presenting concerns that galleries and archivists must consider, such as insect infestations, the potential for mould growth, humidity control issues, and the need for ongoing maintenance and monitoring. Of course, the cacti-shelf work depicted in Shannon's 2016 documentation no longer exists in this same state. The plant continued to grow, increasing considerably in height and thickness, until we eventually had to cut it from the shelf because the sharp edges of the hole were slicing into the cactus flesh. We destroyed the shelf in this process to rescue the cactus, which is now supported by a long metal pole sourced from Paul's materials and propped against a wall in the warehouse.

229 Frederick, *The Redemption of Things*, 102.

230 Frederick, 102.



Figure 85: Paul Cullen, studio rehearsal for the *Provisional Arrangements* installation at the Ilam Campus Gallery in the artist's studio, Henderson, 2016. Photographs by the artist.

Another instance of Paul's use of cacti was in his 2017 site-specific installation *Things from Geology (Underworld)* on Waiheke Island (figure 33). After Paul's death, when the installation's components were returned to the Henderson warehouse, Ry and I planted the cacti in the upturned cast rocks from the same project and created a garden in the carpark space outside the unit (figure 89). Because *Things from Geology (Underworld)* was thoroughly documented and filmed, we decided to forgo storage for future reinstallation due to the space required and the complexity of reinstalling the work (and potentially limited opportunities to do so). Over time, this arrangement has grown and evolved, and the cacti have more than doubled in size. This act resonates with Paul's ethos of reusing components in new formations. However, as caretakers of the artist's estate, our reason for this action differs; we have repurposed these pieces for practical use. In one sense, our approach is protective, preserving the plants and echoing the artist's approach. Yet it is simultaneously destructive, as the components have undergone degradation due to weathering and plant growth, and our action has resulted in the components transitioning from artworks to functional elements of the garden.

2.7. The Archive as a System

In the artwork database, Paul had begun to capture details about the progression and changes of larger artworks over time. For instance, he notes that *Darwin's Desk* (record #273, dated 2015) has transformed into *Green Block Table* (270#,

dated 2016) (figure 67). The entry states that the original desk has been cut in half, leaving two legs now supported by a modified chair that was previously part of the artist's installation *Motel* at Te Tuhi (2011). Such details now have to be pieced together from various documentation materials. To support this work, I have compiled an image library using Lightroom Classic, a digital photo management and editing software. This resource includes digital images from Paul's laptop, hard drives, and photos that I digitised from slides and negatives uncovered in the studio, dating back to the 1970s. Between 2016 and 2017, Paul started chronologically organising documentation of his work, labelling exhibitions and files for my reference as part of a publication project we were planning. We also conducted several photoshoots of his large drawings in 2016. I have incorporated all these materials into the library.



Figure 86: Cactus plant from Paul Cullen's work, the Henderson warehouse. Photograph by Marie Shannon, April 2017.



Figure 87: Cactus plant from Paul Cullen's work, the Henderson warehouse. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, January 2020.

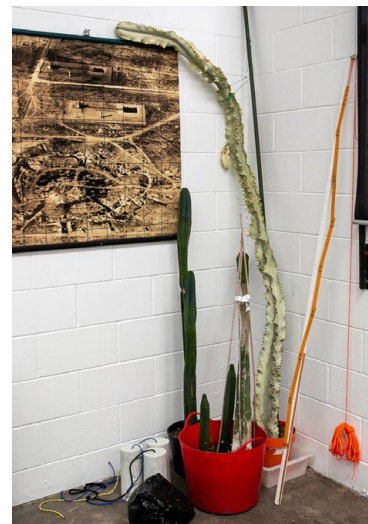


Figure 88: Cactus plants from Paul Cullen's work, the Henderson warehouse. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, February 2023.

The image library complements the databases Paul and Sanders have established, offering the potential to map out links and relationships between artworks, components, and exhibitions. Expanding the exhibitions database will further enable us to connect these elements to writing by curators, press materials, and the artist's workbooks and concepts. This system helps document and illustrate the dynamic relationships between different components across various exhibitions and projects, aiding in archiving and cataloguing of Paul's practice.

Although the image library is stored locally on my computer, Lightroom Classic has been instrumental in organising and processing image materials, selecting and exporting images for use in this exegesis, providing them to curators, and uploading a selection to the Paul Cullen Archive website I have established. This image resource, a component of my practice-based research, has been crucial in

creating a comprehensive overview of Paul's work and practice, and has enabled me to identify artworks and components in the studio. In many cases, components were part of site-based or site-responsive projects, posing further archival challenges and questions, which I discuss in the following chapter. This library enables me to see, understand, and track the use and transformation of materials and objects in the artist's work, providing evidence of his practice of reusing, repurposing, and reassembling across various exhibitions and settings. This transformative aspect of his work, where elements continually find new contexts and configurations, prompts me to draw parallels with systems thinking.

Paul's artistic methods resonate with the concept of an open system, characterised by ongoing interaction and adaptation to the environment. This aligns with the principles of Buckminster Fuller, a notable architect and futurist known for his systems thinking. In his book *Synergetics: Explorations in the Geometry of Thinking* (1979), which is in Paul's library, Fuller discusses the dynamics of order and disorder, including entropy (locally increasing disorder) and syntropy (locally increasing order).²³¹ He argues, "Order is obviously the complement, but not mirror-image, of disorder."²³²

In Paul's studio, the ever-changing state of materials and artworks exemplifies entropy, while his approach to exhibition, documentation, and the cataloguing work undertaken with Sanders exemplifies syntropy. The presence of plants in his studio further underscores the balance between entropy and syntropy. This dynamic, where elements are constantly changing yet maintain some structure, characterises Paul's studio as an evolving yet organised open system. Although the concept of *Ordered Disorder* is paradoxical, considering the artist's studio through the perspective of systems thinking enables me to understand order and disorder not as opposites but as interconnected elements within complex systems in a perpetual state of change, akin to those found in nature.

After Paul died, Ry and I became active participants in the ongoing *system* of his art. In this role, we strive to make decisions that conceptually align with his practice and approach, balancing practical constraints with curatorial considerations. The carpark garden project, which emerged from our decision to repurpose these components, exemplifies a case where something entirely new and unrecognisable was created, effectively erasing the original work. I acknowledge that this is neither a sustainable archival practice, in terms of maintaining the integrity of the work over time, nor an appropriate presentation strategy when collaborating with curators.

231 R. Buckminster Fuller and E. J. Applewhite, *Synergetics; Explorations in the Geometry of Thinking* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 418.

232 Fuller and Applewhite, *Synergetics*, 418.

2.8. Continuing Conversations: Disordered Order

In this chapter, I have examined the paradoxical nature of collecting and archiving, drawing on the theories of Winzen and Frederick to highlight the complexity of these processes. I have considered how collecting and archiving simultaneously involve preservation and destruction, accumulation, and loss, and reduce unique objects into generic types. Winzen underscores the emotive aspects of archiving, portraying it as an 'anxious' and 'destructive' process. Both theorists point to the inherent violence in extracting objects from their original contexts, imposing new interpretations or values upon them, and systematically categorising them in ways that may obscure or undermine their uniqueness. However, they also acknowledge the stabilising effect of archiving, noting its capacity to bring meaning, order, and coherence to collections that might be otherwise disparate and chaotic. The analysis of paradoxes in this chapter has been instrumental in moving beyond simplistic binary oppositions, uncovering the complex and contradictory relationships between the archival process and Paul's practice.

As a daughter-archivist, Winzen's and Frederick's emotional framing of archiving and collecting processes is particularly resonant for me, and challenges the conventional perception of archiving as a purely objective activity. Managing the materials and artworks in Paul's studio posthumously, the immense volume and disarray of these materials was not only an archival challenge but also a personal one, intertwined with my grieving process. This emotional overlay likely contributed to the stress I felt when confronted with the substantial body of knowledge that my father left, driving my need to impose order and understanding. The cataloguing process I participated in, including the continuation of the artwork database and my establishment of an image library, provided a practical strategy for bringing order and clarity to these materials, helping to manage the chaotic and overwhelming aspects of the collection as I perceived it.

At the start of this chapter, I described Paul's studio as a space of *Ordered Disorder* to capture the intrinsic, often chaotic creativity that defines many artistic processes. An artist's studio is typically a place where materials, ideas, works in progress, and completed pieces coexist in a state that might seem disorderly to an outsider but holds a certain order known to the artist (the artist's conceptual framework also serves as the ordering principle). In this context, there was a dynamic relationship between Sanders's systematic cataloguing approach, designed to definitively document and capture the artist's work in a style reminiscent of Cook's *Evidence* paradigm, and Paul's fluid, evolving creative process. However, as noted by Smith and as I have discovered through my research, Paul was fascinated with the language of archiving and likely found intrigue in the tensions and paradoxes generated by Sanders's inventory, where his artworks and methods frequently

subverted and complicated the classification systems applied to them. Yet despite the seeming contradictions between Sanders's approach and aim for permanence and timelessness, and Paul's embrace of the provisional and contingent, their methods nevertheless coexisted.

In systems thinking, *Ordered Disorder* suggests a system where chaos or randomness is an inherent part of its structure—a scenario where disorder is not only expected but is systematically organised or planned. This could apply to natural phenomena, such as weather patterns, where what appears chaotic still follows certain predictable principles. Similarly, in the artist's studio, the seeming chaos of creativity is punctuated by periods of order, such as archiving, artwork documentation, or during exhibition preparations, where the inherently disorganised creative process is temporarily structured into coherent, systematic forms. Paul's proactive involvement in cataloguing and documenting his works during a period when he was increasingly unwell suggests a foresight in facilitating the future exhibition and interpretation of work.

I conclude this chapter with the title *Disordered Order* to underscore the inherent challenges in fully capturing or representing Paul's practice through archival means. The archive, in striving to impose order on his oeuvre, invariably encounters the disordered, multifaceted nature of his creative output and conceptual nuances. Within the context of Paul's active studio, the dynamic environment facilitated a living, evolving interaction with his works. However, in the absence of the artist, the archive inevitably shifts to a more static form. Without Paul's direct input, replicating the same level of spontaneity and conceptual fluidity risks creating outputs that diverge from the core of his practice, as I demonstrated by our creation of the carpark garden. This situation highlights the challenges of representing his practice in a conceptually relevant manner while also appropriately reinstalling his work.

Viewing Paul's archive as a system led me to consider my role in this dynamic, and the potential impact I might have on it. By flipping the titles from *Ordered Disorder* to *Disordered Order* I highlight the realisation that the archive can never fully encapsulate the depth and breadth of Paul's practice. The archive can only offer a partial, curated view of his work, influenced by the biases of archivists, curators, collectors, and the limitations of archival practices. The complexities of archiving Paul's work, like a spiral, have the potential to be ever-evolving. In the following chapter, I build on my research in establishing the image library, revealing Paul's deep engagement with place and context. I examine remnants from a series of his site-related installations and further explore his conceptualisation of artwork as extending beyond the physical materiality of individual or semi-independent objects.



Figure 89: Carpark garden, Henderson, 2019–23. Photographs by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Pataphysical Musings

I started writing these reflections to Paul, but now I'm addressing you, the reader or listener. This shift isn't just a change in address; it's part of the story, a contemplation on absence, how an artist can be present through their work yet missing in reality. This raises a question about your role—do you step in to fill this void, or do you remain a distant observer? I recall a trip Paul and I made to Waiheke Island in early 2017; the memory feels far away, viewed through the wrong end of a telescope, causing an ache and a fondness. We crossed the water by car ferry, transporting two-metre-tall San Pedro cacti loaded into the back of the car, their tops poking out of the boot, and two boxes of maps that Paul had removed the road and place names from, leaving a nonsensical mix of letters and numbers. They were components from his *Things from Geology (Underworld)* installation that we were travelling over to install, part of the outdoor biennial Headland Sculpture on the Gulf (HSOTG).

We stayed with Rupert*, a friend of Paul's, on a secluded property in the island's southern area that extended to the waterfront. The site around the house, cleared of bush, was strewn with an extensive array of materials and detritus: heaps of shovels, chains, and ropes scattered among various pieces of lumber, rusting machinery, and old car parts. Behind the house stood an aircraft hangar crammed with an assortment of fridges, furniture, planes, and a camper van. Rupert shared with us his plans to construct a greenhouse from the large pile of glass bottles he had gathered over the past decade. I mentioned we needed a shovel for the installation, but he didn't offer one from his pile; instead, suggested we request one from the HSOTG office the next day. The house, perched on stilts, was accessed via steep steps leading up to the entrance. The shower was under the house with a dirt floor, and I stepped out fresh with muddy feet.

Paul brought two books with him: *Sculpture Unlimited: Materiality in Times of Immateriality* and *Pataphysics: A Useless Guide*. He was sitting in his wheelchair when he read me a quote from the latter, a passage by Georges Perec describing the differences between science, metaphysics, and pataphysics. Emerging from his bedroom and wheeling into the kitchen where I stood, he typed the quote into his iPad and, once he had my attention, pressed play: "If science proposes you have a brother and he likes cheese, then metaphysics replies if you have a brother, he likes cheese. But pataphysics says, you don't have a brother, and he likes cheese."

* Name changed for privacy.

Six years on, as I write these memories, with a warehouse full of artworks, components and materials brimming with potential, the pataphysical logic Paul once shared seems more relevant than ever. What once held true, *I have a father, and he makes art*—has now evolved into a more complex reality: *I don't have a father, and he makes art*. Continuing this pataphysical vein, I might have once said, *I have a father who collects maps, globes, and papercraft models—from the Alhambra in Spain to buildings of the Gyeongbokgung Palace complex in Seoul*. Now, in Paul's absence, the truth has morphed: *I don't have a father, and he collects maps, globes, and papercraft models from all over the world*. Similarly, *I had a father, and he created three-legged table art*, but now, *I don't have a father but have art on three legs*. And just as I was musing over these ideas, I was interrupted by a text from Allan Smith exclaiming: "Paul is speaking to us!" with a link to a [news article](#).²³³ The headline read: "Mystery chair appears on side of Auckland Harbour Bridge: A curious case of obscure art? A prank? Vandalism? That is the question."

The report is accompanied by an image of a white chair, angled so that two of its legs appear to be submerged into the bridge's concrete wall. This chair, placed high on the bridge's underside, has, according to the article, baffled observers with no evident means of positioning—defying simple explanation. The story ends with a question: "Do you know anything about the mysterious chair?" and lists an email address for readers to get in touch. The chair on the bridge bears a striking resemblance to some of the chairs Paul has used in his work, such as a 2005 piece from his *Situations* series (figure 25). In this work, a white chair is balanced on two legs, supported by a small orange ruler against a bus-shelter wall, achieving a precarious equilibrium. Throughout this series, Paul repurposed everyday objects into unusual arrangements outside traditional gallery settings, placed in dynamic interaction with their surroundings, whether on city streets, in hotel rooms, at his studio, or during his travels, spanning from cafés to public buildings and monuments. In a later installation titled *Motel* (2011), another white chair is propped, in an inverted position, against the ceiling by several wooden support structures. Three of the chair's legs pierce the surface of a table suspended above, anchoring it in an unexpected, gravity-defying arrangement.

I have a father, and his studio holds an upturned chair, a globe off-axis, a pile of yellow pencils → I don't have a father, and his studio holds an echo, a shifted perspective, globes in a box and a pile of pencils.

I have a father, and he balances tables on three legs with counterweights → I don't have a father, and the counterweights balance memories.

233

The chair first appeared in November, 2023, fell down in December 2023, and then reappeared in January 2024.

3. Archiving Provisional Arrangements

3.1. Initiating Turn: The Circle Expands

In this chapter, I explore the question: How should Paul's work be archived and exhibited in order to resonate with and extend the conceptual underpinnings of the practice? Building on *Archiving Paradoxes* and my development of an image library, I delve into his site-specific and concept-driven approach, and his conceptualisation of the 'artwork' as extending beyond the physical materiality of independent objects. In particular, I focus on a selection of Paul's site-related installations, specifically his *Provisional Arrangements* series (2013–16) and *Object/Anti-Object 1* and 2 (2013). Throughout this chapter, I adopt the artist's practice of using the acronym 'O/AO' for the installations *Object/Anti-Object 1* and 2. The *Provisional Arrangements* series I discuss here are temporary outdoor installations, conceptually linked but distinct from the gallery installations with the same title I referred to in the previous chapter.

In a 2016 document I found on Paul's laptop, he outlined a publication project titled *Provisional Arrangements*, which I was to design. He described this project as challenging and expanding on traditional sculptural perspectives, including space, gravity, materiality, and presence, stating that the works he proposed for inclusion in the publication "operate across the expanded field of sculpture to include objects, found sculptures, gallery installations, and temporary projects in outdoor locations."²³⁴ Central to his practice, the concept of 'provisional arrangements' merges an engagement with location and exploration of processual and temporary modes of working. Similarly, the O/AO installations reflect the ethos of 'provisional arrangements', demonstrating a consistent application of site-specific and adaptable methodologies. Paul has detailed his practice as spanning a wide range of projects, grounded in physical objects and shaped by the specific environments or situations they inhabit, and reflecting diverse strategies and techniques. He further elaborates on a series of works titled *Situations* (c. 2005–17), closely related to *Provisional Arrangements*, embodying "an engagement with everyday things and varying degrees of improvisation or adaptation. Trial and error are fundamental, as is an engagement with familiar objects repeatedly re-deployed in different ways, in different circumstances, and in different places."²³⁵

234 Paul Cullen, "Provisional Arrangements Publication: Synopsis." (Funding application, 2016), 1.

235 I sourced this quote from a Word document on Paul's computer, which he had titled as the press release for his *Situations* exhibitions at Jane Sanders gallery in 2009. He further elaborates on the *Situations* series, stating that these installations are "temporary works generally made during travel and documented photographically. They are sculptural investigations into space, site, objects, and materials. Characterised by improvised means and the repetition of objects from one installation to the next, the project points up a relationship with the everyday world but attempts a disruption of ordinary space."

The working methodology outlined by Paul introduces complexities in archiving his work, a challenge I examine in this chapter. To frame my analysis of the archival dimensions of the *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements* installations, I draw on art historian Alex Potts's essay, "The Artwork, the Archive, and the Living Moment" (2008). Potts theorises a selection of works from the 1960s, including Allan Kaprow's Happenings, where the boundary between artwork and archive is ambiguous or even negligible, and the artwork is defined by the traces or records that persist.²³⁶ He observes: "We live in a postconceptual cultural environment where artworks often take the form not of single objects but of phenomena existing in several different media (textual and visual as well as performative)."²³⁷ In such instances, texts and photographic records serve as more than auxiliary aids or descriptions; they often represent our primary means of engaging with artworks, which might be inaccessible or impossible to experience directly in their physical form.²³⁸ This perspective is particularly relevant to my research because I have never witnessed any of the installations discussed in this chapter. My knowledge, engagement, and interpretation of the *O/AO* installations and *Provisional Arrangements* series rely on the archival materials and installation remnants that remain. While physical components from these projects do exist—setting them apart from many of Kaprow's ephemeral Happenings—Potts's analysis still provides invaluable insights into interpreting these works through their archival presence.

To further understand Paul's intentions and conceptual framework, and uncover his perspective on what constitutes the 'artwork' in the projects I focus on in this chapter, I have examined his notes, writings, and workbooks. I also draw on contemporary theorists that he has cited as influential who have theorised shifts and transformations in site-specific or site-related artworks, specifically Rosalind Krauss, Miwon Kwon, and James Meyer (all of the books and texts I reference in this chapter are in the artist's library).²³⁹ The writings of these theorists have assisted me in unravelling Paul's conceptualisation of 'site' in his practice. However, my aim is not to provide a comprehensive analysis of the artist's site-specific practice, contribute directly to art history, or evaluate how the international movements I mention have been received or interpreted in Aotearoa New Zealand. Instead, I utilise these theoretical perspectives to inform the archival and presentation strategies for the specific projects I have developed in this research.

236 Potts, "The Artwork, the Archive, and the Living Moment," 119.

237 Potts, 119.

238 Potts, 119–20.

239 Paul's copy of Rosalind Krauss's book *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, which contains her essay "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" (1978), has a handwritten note on the inside cover: "Nov '88 love from Ry and Layla." Paul's birthday is in November, so the book was likely a birthday gift to him.

Krauss's influential text, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" (1978), provides a critical perspective on the breakdown of traditional notions of sculpture starting in the late 1960s, positioning it as a helpful reference for contextualising the archival challenges presented by Paul's practice. In her essay, Krauss acknowledges the massive change that occurred in the late 1960s and continued throughout the following decade. She observes that the category *sculpture* had become infinitely malleable and difficult to pin down, now encompassing disparate practices such as video, ephemeral and time-based art, photo documentation, Happenings, land art, and site-specific installations.²⁴⁰ Krauss focuses on theorising land and environmental art by artists such as Mary Miss, Alice Aycock, and Robert Smithson, arguing that these works derive their meanings from a network of structuralist oppositions between sculpture, landscape, and architecture.²⁴¹ Her exploration of the 'expanded field' remains relevant today, providing a pivotal framework to understand how art has evolved into the twenty-first century. Potts's reference to a 'postconceptual cultural environment' can be contextualised within Krauss's framework of broadened art practices and blurred categories. Paul's description of his work as operating "across the expanded field of sculpture" echoes Krauss's foundational ideas, demonstrating how his practice is rooted in these historical and theoretical discussions. Her perspective has been helpful to me in navigating the spatial and conceptual layers of Paul's site-related projects and has guided my interpretation and archival strategies for his *Provisional Arrangements* and *O/AO* installations, highlighting their dynamic interplay with space and concept.

Paul's workbooks and writings reveal his evolving approach to site and space, indicating a shift in his conceptualisation of site that extends beyond Krauss's concepts. Kwon's publication *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (2002) provides a critical framework for understanding these changes, charting the evolution from a sedentary to a nomadic model of site-specific installation art since the 1960s. She identifies three key paradigms to understand the varying approaches: phenomenological/experiential, social/institutional, and discursive site specificity, each reflecting distinct conceptual shifts in the practice over time. However, Kwon observes that the development of site-specific art is not a linear trajectory but rather consists of "competing definitions, overlapping with one another and operating simultaneously in various cultural practices today."²⁴² Paul's *Provisional Arrangements* and *O/AO* installations exemplify this overlapping approach, incorporating elements of both her phenomenological and discursive paradigms.

240 Paul was beginning his career as an artist during this period of radical change, graduating with a DipFA from Ilam School of Fine Arts in 1975.

241 Jon Wood, David Hulks, and Alex Potts, eds., *Modern Sculpture Reader* (Leeds; Los Angeles: Henry Moore Institute; J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012), 333.

242 Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 30.



Figure 90: Paul Cullen's studio, April 2017. Photograph by Marie Shannon.

3.2. Foldable Furniture and Perforated Stretchers

My investigation into Paul's *O/AO* installations and *Provisional Arrangements* series was prompted by the discovery of various remnants from these works in his studio. Sorting through the contents of the warehouse, I earmarked a collection of foldable furniture for donation to the Salvation Army Store, initially assuming the artist had collected these pieces for future projects. However, upon opening and inspecting two camp stretchers, I noticed circular holes cut into the green and red-striped fabrics, and a foldout table concealed items within its structure: yellow plastic pegs, bundles of marine rope, a circle of blue transparent plastic and timber battens of various lengths painted with black-and-white or back-and-orange stripes (figures 91, 92). Cross-referencing these items with documentation confirmed their roles in the above installations. This discovery led me to identify additional unaltered camping furniture in my pile—such as tables and deckchairs—that were also part of these projects. Paul had also utilised several orange clamps and a small step-ladder in the *Provisional Arrangements* series, which he had since returned to functional use in the studio. Other components from these projects had been added posthumously to the artwork database by Sanders, including a weather balloon, sculptural assemblages incorporating chairs or tables, longer striped-timber battens, cast-concrete weights of various sizes and colours, and several concrete-filled metal buckets with wooden projections, one of which had an expandable ruler appendage.

The array of materials Paul integrated into the site-related *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements* projects underscores the complexities in archiving and defining his

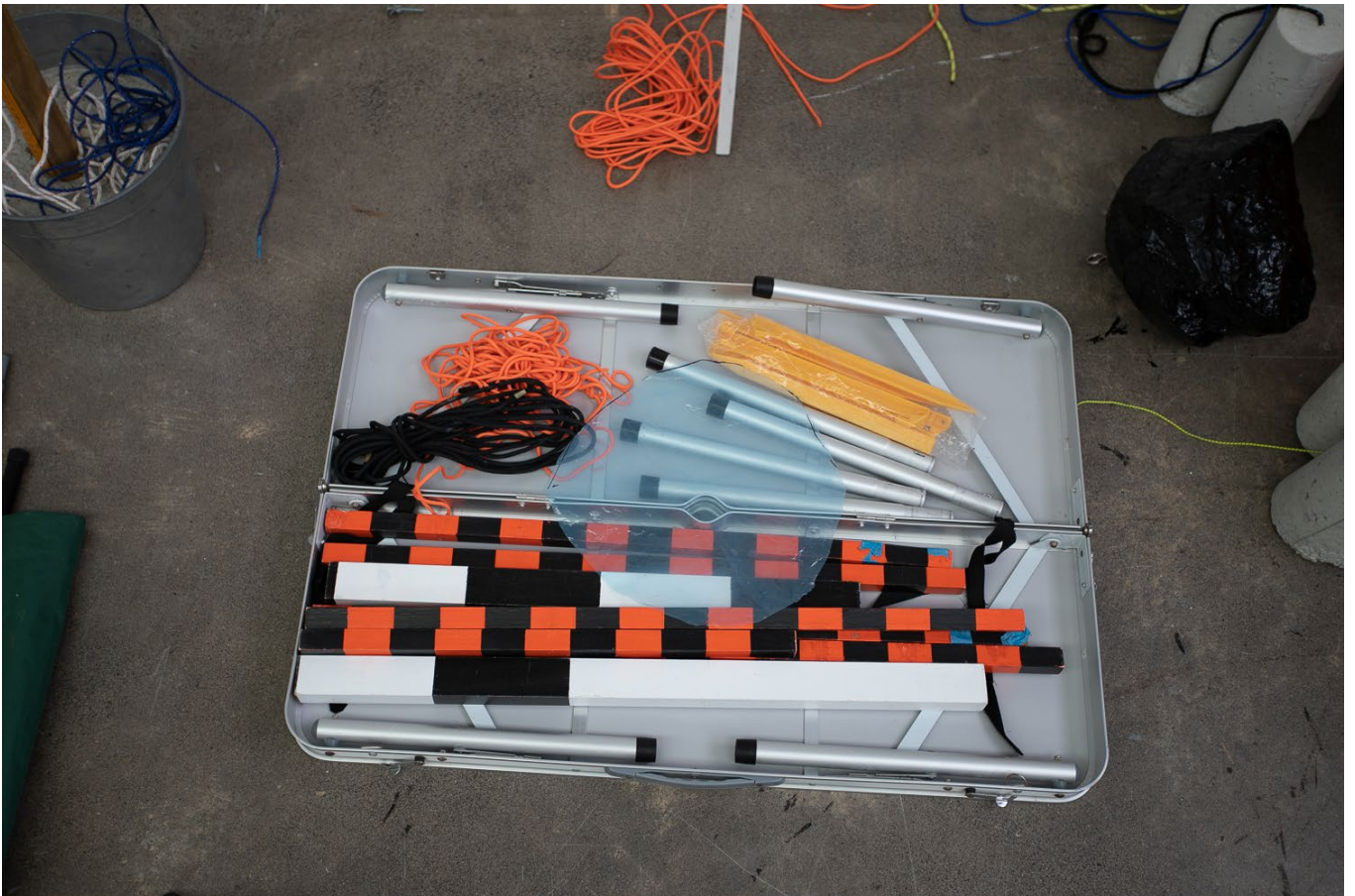


Figure 91: Components from *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements*, the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2023. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.



Figure 92: Components from *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements*, the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2023. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

work. Within these installations, the artist's inclusion of both found items and sculptural components serves dual functional and conceptual purposes, contributing to the ever-changing nature of his work. Paul's practice and his incorporation of materials inherent to the installation sites challenge the conventional conceptual separation between utilitarian objects and sculptural forms. My research also reveals that he reused some components across both projects, exemplifying his ongoing practice of repurposing objects across multiple exhibitions or installations. This process underscores his dynamic approach to material use, reflecting a continuous dialogue between past and present works. This understanding guides my examination of the *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements* projects in this chapter, where I consider how the transformation of components underpins the conceptual narratives and intersects across these works.

Paul installed his *Provisional Arrangements* series at various locations in Aotearoa and overseas without an invited or formal audience, constructing in-situ temporary outdoor installations incorporating the dynamic array of props and objects I have discussed above. Writing about this series, Paul explains, "Objects are configured spatially in response to features at the sites which have been selected based on the potential offered for sculptural engagement."²⁴³ His use of folding furniture in this series was practical, for ease of transport, and conceptually significant, reinforcing the installations' transient nature. In a 2016 workbook, Paul reflects on his conceptual approach, stating:

The space that is sculpted—i.e. space materialised through sculpture—is not a tabula rasa, an empty vacuum—it is already occupied by any number of realities, rules of gravity, moisture, dust, discourse about art, social relations, money problems, memories, hopes ... Each space prescribes its own possibilities and limitations: a train compartment implies different possibilities to an outdoor swimming pool.²⁴⁴

Discussing the *Provisional Arrangements* series, Paul notes that the installations might appear to serve a rational or scientific purpose, but elucidates that they are guided by Alfred Jarry's pataphysics, described as "a science of imaginary solutions."²⁴⁵ Pataphysics explores the laws governing exceptions and the hypothetical, focusing on the unusual, the irregular and the paradoxical, frequently employing satirical or unconventional thinking.²⁴⁶ This concept underscores his engagement in the *Provisional Arrangements* series with the realms of the absurd and the speculative.

243 Cullen, "Provisional Arrangements Publication: Synopsis," 2.

244 Cullen, "Notes," 21.

245 Cullen, "Provisional Arrangements Publication: Synopsis," 2.

246 Andrew Huggill, *Pataphysics: A Useless Guide* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 1–6.



Figure 93: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Rentons Beach Reserve, Ihumātao, 2015. Photograph by the artist.

Paul's documentation reveals that he utilised the folding camping table and the various items stored in its interior that I found in his studio in several iterations of his *Provisional Arrangements* series installed on Rentons Beach Reserve at Ihumātao, close to Auckland Airport. One of these arrangements was installed on the sand flats during low tide. The time stamp on the images documenting this work indicates they were taken on Friday 27 June 2015, from about 1:38 pm. Several photos show the camping table, piled with a mound of wet sand, erected on a blue plastic drop-sheet pegged at the edges. Sections of this groundsheet are trodden on or appear transparent, soaked with seawater or moulded by patterns in the sand, and segments billow in the wind. Two orange-and-black-striped battens are clamped together to create a longer length, substituting one of the table legs and extending into a dug-out hole in the sand, penetrating the groundsheet. In one image, the yellow pegs lie on the ground unused (figure 93).

The positioning of this work in an intertidal area, fluctuating between land and sea, references Paul's conceptual engagement with liminality, which he describes in a workbook (2012–13) as “a transitional state filled with ambiguities and contradictions.”²⁴⁷ He further notes that *limen*, meaning ‘threshold’ in Latin, allows

247 Paul Cullen, “2012/2013 1” (Artist's workbook, 2012–13), 65.

for the “fluid moving of or weaving between worlds.”²⁴⁸ As a littoral zone, which is defined as the area near the shore of a body of water, encompassing the region between the high and low water marks, the sand flats at Rentons Beach Reserve are continually in flux, impacted by weather and the tides’ ebb and flow. The extreme flatness of this beach results in the exposure of extensive sand flats at low tide, making it possible to walk out a long distance. At high tide, the area shifts from exposed sand flats to a submerged state, becoming flooded and inaccessible.

The same folding table is utilised in an additional installation erected at high tide along a narrow strip of beach, which Paul installed several hours later the same day (figure 94). In his records, I discovered a tide chart showing that on June 27th of that year, high tide occurred at 5:32 pm, matching the timing noted in the image metadata. During this month, sunset occurs at approximately 5.15 pm, suggesting that the artist’s works were likely created as daylight began to fade. This is evidenced in several images, where Paul’s artist assistant is seen in silhouette against the darkening sky, shovelling sand onto a table.²⁴⁹ Unlike the clumped, mud-like sand from the tidal flats, the sand in this part of the beach was dryer, coarse, and interspersed with white cockle shells, introducing natural variations to the works. In one arrangement, a table laden with sand spans a ledge of eroded sedimentary rock; one leg rests directly on the raised rock edge, while two others are elongated with orange-and-black-striped battens. The remaining leg is propped up by a step ladder, with an additional batten bridging it to the ledge for support. In another iteration, Paul incorporates a different folding camping table, adding a makeshift plywood extension propped up by battens and a book, which he has piled with rocks in one version and sand in another. Behind the table, he has constructed a freestanding screen made from the same transparent blue plastic he had laid out on the sand flats, which, in one image, partially frames the work and the view of the landscape beyond.

These temporary, makeshift arrangements might be better characterised as situations, actions, or events—dynamic occurrences within specific spatial and temporal contexts.²⁵⁰ They persist only long enough for Paul to document them before he transformed the components into new formations. In these images,

248 Cullen, “2012/2013 1,” 65.

249 Ryder Jones, who was both a student of Paul’s at AUT and his assistant during this period, is featured in this image.

250 “Situations” in this context might evoke a distinct historical and conceptual lineage, particularly linked to the French Situationists, whose practices and theoretical underpinnings Paul has shown interest in. Additionally, Paul created a series of works titled *Situations*—akin to the *Provisional Arrangements* series—which involved the creation of temporary installations using found or everyday materials in non-art contexts. The phenomenological aspect of being “in situation” also resonates with Paul’s work, emphasising how our engagement with the world is shaped by our physical and social contexts, a perspective that informs the experiential and situational nature of many of his installations.

objects appear static and inert, seemingly conforming to conventional expectations of materiality in art, which is commonly associated with solidity, durability, and an unchanging physical presence. However, when viewed in a broader temporal framework, the works emerge as temporary pauses in an ongoing process of movement.



Figure 94: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Rentons Beach Reserve (featuring Ryder Jones), 2015. Photographs by the artist.

Paul also captured instances of the *Provisional Arrangements* series on the foreshore of Whatipū Beach and at the Alexandra Redoubt in Pirongia in the Waikato, an earthwork fortification constructed by European settlers in the mid-1800s (figures 97, 98). Here, he introduced a dynamic event by tossing a silver polyhedral object into the air, capturing its descent in a series of images (figures 100, 113). He also installed works on Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, including on the concrete roof of a World War II emergency radio bunker constructed in 1942 and atop a concrete base formerly supporting a radio broadcasting mast (figure 99).²⁵¹ Additionally, he expanded this series to locations in the USA and Australia (figures 95, 96).

251 I sourced information on the radio bunker and identified the mast bases in the following sources: Matthews & Matthews Architects, “Te Waiarohia o Ngai Tai Paa, Te Naupata Musick Point, Manukau City, Auckland: Conservation Plan September 2008,” 2008, 59, 61, 63, <https://ehive.com/collections/3000/objects/1090687/te-waiarohia-o-ngai-tai-paa-te-naupata-musick-point-manukau-city-auckland-conservation-plan-appendix>; and Geoff Fairfield, *Te Waiarohia o Ngaitai: The Story of the Bucklands Beach Peninsula* (Auckland: Tamaki Estuary Protection Society, 1995), 64.



Figure 95: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Leura, Australia, 2016. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 96: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Joshua Tree National Park, California, USA, 2016. Photographs by the artist.

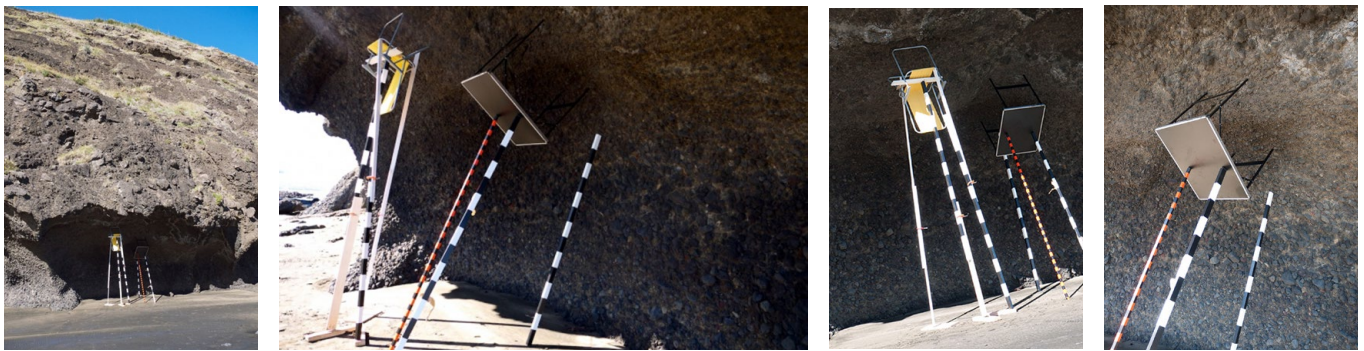


Figure 97: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Whatipū, 2015. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 98: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Pirongia, 2015. Photographs by the artist.

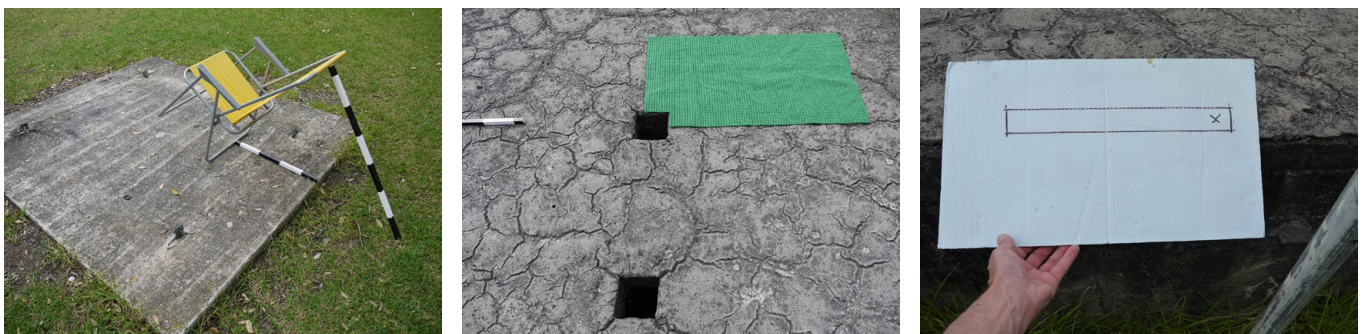


Figure 99: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2016. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 100: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Pirongia, 2015. Photographs by the artist.

In January 2014, over a year before his installations on the tidal flats of Rentons Beach Reserve, Paul executed a series titled *Provisional Arrangements: Operative Structures* in this location (figures 101, 102). However, he deliberately left these pieces in situ, allowing them to be submerged by the incoming tide. Among them were modified chairs and tables engineered to stay upright in water. Another component, an orange-painted assembly with a buoyant polystyrene base and a flat wooden top, functioned like a buoy or marker. Anchored by a concrete weight and joined by a hinge, this piece pivoted with the tides, standing vertically as the water rose and tilting horizontally as it receded.

Paul's exploration of tidal dynamics continued with a work installed in December 2014 (on a beach at an unidentifiable location) (figure 103). Here, an assemblage with a hinged yellow ruler, fixed to a white post set in a concrete-filled metal bucket (similar to a component I located in the studio), is tethered by an orange cord to a floating polystyrene block, which is similarly tethered to a second concrete-filled bucket. The system harnesses the tidal movements to animate the piece: as the tide rises, the floating block ascends, tightening the cord and causing the ruler to stand vertically. Conversely, as the tide lowers, the cord's tension lessens, and the ruler falls back into a zigzag configuration. The ruler and the floating block are dynamic elements, moving in response to the tide, while the concrete-filled buckets remain stationary, grounding the installation. While suggestive of measuring water depth, this process does not produce any useful or accurate measurements.

In a 2021 conversation with curator Allan Smith, he suggested categorising components from Paul's *Provisional Arrangements* series by their potential movements rather than their physical characteristics, such as their likelihood to fall, sink, or float. In reviewing Paul's documentation, he also emphasised the value of diagramming the positioning of objects based on their arrangements, such as those that lean, are inverted, balance precariously, or rest on uneven surfaces.²⁵²



Figure 101: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements: Operative Structures*, Rentons Beach Reserve, 2014. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 102: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements: Operative Structures*, Rentons Beach Reserve, 2014. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 103: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements: Operative Structures*, unknown location (featuring Ryder Jones), 2014. Photographs by the artist.

Smith further proposes that the material components of the *Provisional Arrangements* series are inseparably intertwined with and influenced by a series of external forces:

The weight of gravity, the movement of the tides and air currents, the gradual erosion of tidal zones, the attrition of rock, and the fluctuations in season and air temperature all interact with, move, and exert influence on these elements. We could interpret the works as highlighting these forces or perhaps as subordinating or utilising them. Alternatively, we might view the components of these works as only incidentally solid, visible, and recognisable—temporary agglomerations within a broader system of dynamic conditions.²⁵³

3.3. Excursion into Ihumātao

My investigation into Paul's *Provisional Arrangements* installations, particularly those installed on Rentons Beach Reserve at Ihumātao, has revealed the extensive scope of his research. Paul engaged deeply with sites he interacted with as part of his practice, exploring Indigenous and archaeological histories along with contemporary understandings of place.²⁵⁴ His research materials indicate that he was aware of the long history of Māori settlement on Ihumātao Peninsula, dating back to the 1450s.²⁵⁵ My brother Ry also recalls visiting the Ōtuataua

253 Smith.

254 A folder of research connected to his installations on Rentons Beach Reserve at Ihumātao, which included digital texts on his laptop and printed documents, demonstrates the depth and diversity of his research and includes the following reports, articles, and publications: Stephen Boatright, "A Review of an Atlas of Radical Cartography," *Hyperion* 5, no. 1 (2010); Lize Mogel and Alexis Bhagat, eds., *An Atlas of Radical Cartography*, (Los Angeles: Journal of Aesthetics & Protest Press, 2010); Matthew Campbell and Louise Furey, *Archaeological Investigations at the Westney Farmstead, Mangere*, Report to the New Zealand Historic Places Trust (Auckland: CFG Heritage, 2007); Glen Farley et al., *Archaeological Investigations at Timberley Road, Mangere* (Auckland: Clough & Associates, 2015); Jessica J. Hayward and Bruce W. Hayward, "Fossil Forests Preserved in Volcanic Ash and Lava at Ihumatao and Takapuna, Auckland," *Tane* 35 (1995); Peter Reed, Kate Schoonees, and Jeremy Salmond, *Historic Concrete Structures in New Zealand: Overview, Maintenance and Management*, ed. Geoff Gregory (Wellington: Science & Technical Publishing, Department of Conservation, 2008); Agnes Sullivan, "Maori Gardening in Tamaki Before 1840: Volume I, Traditional, Ethnographic and Other Historic Documentary Sources". (Unpublished manuscript, Department of Maori, Victoria University, Wellington, 1983); Louise Furey, *Māori Gardening: An Archaeological Perspective* (Wellington: Science & Technical Publishing, Department of Conservation, 2006); P. R. Moore and R. J. McKelvey, "Pliocene and Quaternary Sediments From Weymouth, Auckland," *Tane*, no. 17 (1971); Matthew Campbell, *The NRD Site: The Archaeology*, Report to the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and Auckland International Airport Ltd (Auckland: New Zealand Historic Places Trust and Auckland International Airport Ltd, 2011).

255 Various texts in Paul's collection discuss Māori settlement at Ihumātao, including Campbell and Furey, *Archaeological Investigations at the Westney Farmstead, Mangere*, 11–12; Campbell, *The NRD Site: The Archaeology*, 59; Farley et al., *Archaeological Investigations at Timberley Road, Mangere*, 115.

Stonefields with Paul in 2008 and his recounting how Māori had extensively cultivated the lava fields for gardens, expounding on the role of volcanic rocks in creating a favourable microclimate—scoria, a type of volcanic rock present in the region, could trap and retain heat and was likely used to protect crops from the damaging effects of winter ground temperatures.²⁵⁶ His files and writing also reveal his interest in the remnants of a petrified fossil forest on the foreshore at Ihumātao, estimated to have formed over 29,000 ago.²⁵⁷ Paul’s conceptualisation of site and space extended beyond a purely physical definition, and he engaged with the ways in which notions of site, place, and space evolve and shift throughout time and across cultures.²⁵⁸ In his writing, he references the philosopher, sociologist, and political activist Henri Lefebvre, who critiques static and rigid conceptions of space in his influential book *The Production of Space* (1974). Lefebvre envisions space as a network of productive forces—physical (or ‘conceived’ space), social (or ‘perceived’ space), and symbolic (or ‘lived’ space).²⁵⁹ In a 2016 workbook, Paul outlined one of Lefebvre’s concepts, noting, “Every society produces its own space. i.e. culture is spatial, it is experienced spatially.”²⁶⁰ Paul’s installations at Ihumātao emphasise notions of provisionality and transience, reflecting his intention not to permanently alter or occupy these sites but to highlight their layered and dynamic nature.

256 While Paul did not create work on the Ōtuataua Stonefields, his interest in and knowledge of gardens informed many of his projects.

257 Texts in Paul’s research discuss the archaeological history of Ihumātao, including Hayward and Hayward, “Fossil Forests Preserved in Volcanic Ash and Lava at Ihumatao and Takapuna, Auckland,” 127. Paul also references the fossil forest on Rentons Beach Reserve in his writing on the *Provisional Arrangements* series, including in a 2016 funding application titled “Provisional Arrangements Publication: Synopsis.” Paul’s 2017 site-specific work *Things from Geology (Underworld)* on Waiheke Island is another example of a project where he engages with geological processes. In a video documenting the project I was involved in filming and producing, he states that he aimed “to direct attention to the material world and to encourage reflection on the active participation of the forces of vibrant matter and events” (Cullen et al., *Things from Geology [Underworld]*).

258 A critique of Krauss’s “Sculpture in the Expanded Field” is that she conceives of a site solely in physical terms, and in doing so, she overlooks Indigenous understandings of place and the cultural significance of particular sites. In this essay, Krauss prioritises the physical and spatial aspects of a particular location, creating a definition of ‘site’ based on its material and observable attributes—she fails to recognise the intangible and cultural dimensions of a site. Her theoretical approach to site and spatiality is illustrative of a Western understanding that characterises space as static or divorced from time, a view that Māori theorist Linda Tuhiwai Smith critiques in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2012), arguing that this generates “ways of making sense of the world as a ‘realm of stasis,’ well-defined and without politics” (pages 52–55.) She further contends that, when compartmentalised, space can be better defined, measured, and controlled: “There is a very specific spatial vocabulary of colonialism which can be assembled around three concepts: (1) the line, (2) the centre, and (3) the outside. The ‘line’ is important because it was used to map territory, to survey land, to establish boundaries and to mark the limits of colonial power” (pages 53–55.) According to Smith, the Māori word for time or space is the same, standing in contrast to the Western conceptualisation of space as a commodity to be owned and controlled (pages 53–55).

259 Quoted in Scholte, *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums*, 78–81.

260 Cullen, “Notes,” 22.

In the years following Paul’s death in 2017, there has been growing awareness of the political complexities surrounding the colonised land at Ihumātao, which was confiscated by the colonial government after the Waikato War ended in 1864, including the area now known as the Ōtuataua Stonefields.²⁶¹ This historical context has contributed to the area gaining increased attention and media coverage, due to large-scale protests that took place in 2019 in response to a planned housing development by a private company on land adjoining this historic reserve.²⁶² The demonstrations highlighted the historical and cultural significance of this whenua (land) for Māori, including the ongoing and far-reaching consequences of this act of dispossession. In her book *Shifting Grounds: Deep Histories of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland* (2021), historian Lucy Mackintosh examines the history of the Stonefields and the larger region of Ihumātao, spanning from the arrival of the first Polynesian settlers through to the 2019 protests. She argues that studying ‘deep time’ and the area’s early histories is crucial to understanding Auckland in the present day, proposing that the material and human worlds are entangled and inseparable, both “active participants in the creation of history, materiality and memory.”²⁶³ She further asserts, “At Ihumātao, the written and spoken histories, the rocks, the gardens, and the spaces in between all reveal multiple and overlapping forms of knowledge, many of which have been overlooked by historians.”²⁶⁴

The 2019 protest at Ihumātao illustrates how readings and interpretations of artworks can also shift and change over time, prompting questions about the evolution of the relationship between the artwork and its site.²⁶⁵ Archivist and art historian Tatja Scholte addresses this question in *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums: Staging Contemporary Art* (2022), considering how the identity of a site-specific installation may be affected when the sociocultural context in which it is situated changes, particularly if this context is closely tied to the artwork’s significance.²⁶⁶ I return to these ideas and to Scholte’s text in Chapter Four.

261 Farley et al., *Archaeological Investigations at Timberley Road, Mangere*, 12–13; Lucy Mackintosh, *Shifting Grounds: Deep Histories of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Ltd, 2021), 110.

262 Mackintosh, *Shifting Grounds*, 13–14.

263 Mackintosh, 14.

264 Mackintosh, 23.

265 Scholte, *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums*, 20.

266 Scholte, 20.

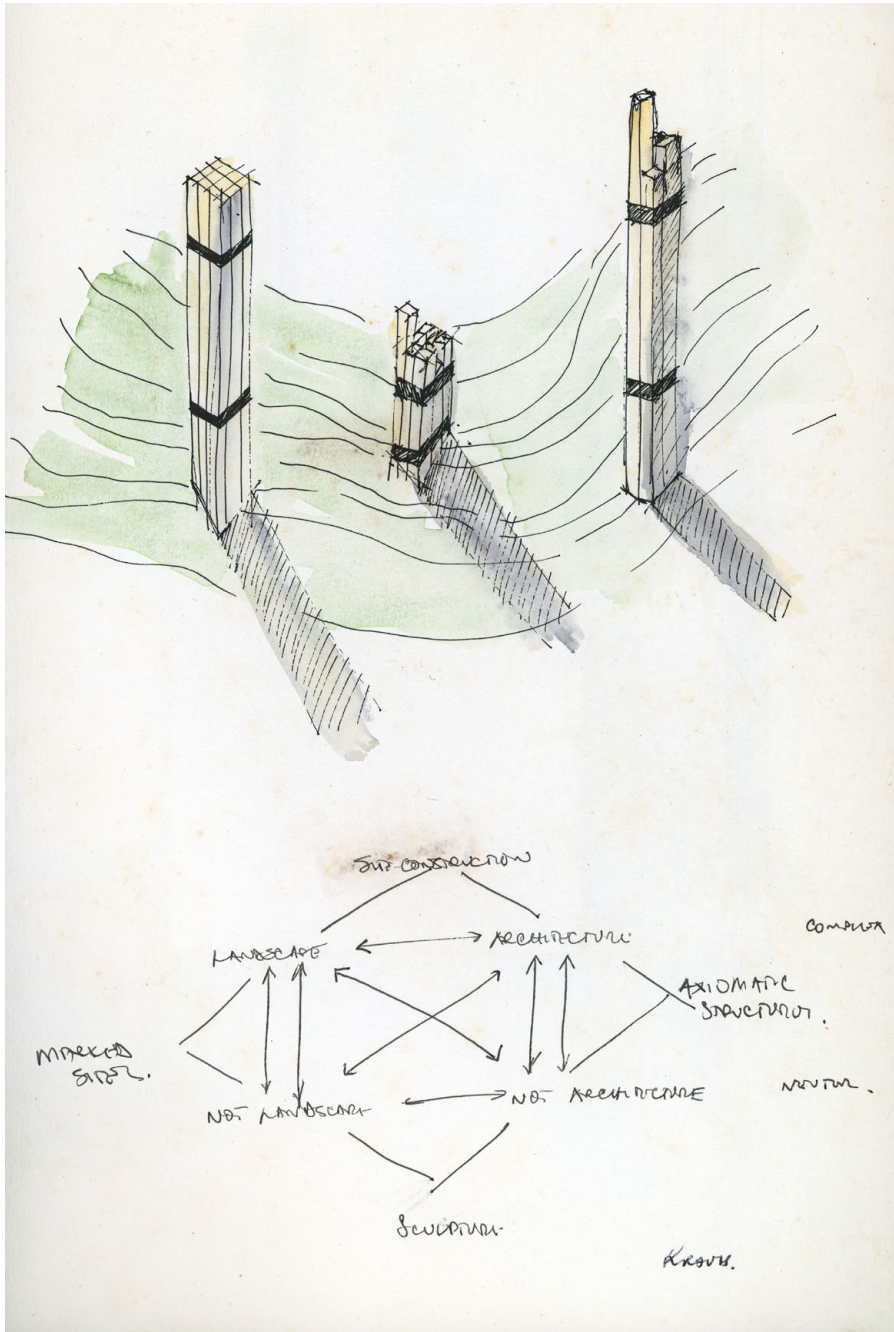


Figure 104: Page from Paul Cullen’s workbook, 1985, featuring a transcription of one of Rosalind Krauss’s diagrams mapping the expanded field of sculpture.

3.4. Temporal Narratives: Phenomenological and Discursive Site Specificity

Krauss’s concepts of ‘marked sites’ and ‘site-construction’ in her essay “Sculpture in the Expanded Field” offer a valuable lens through which to understand the dynamic interplay between the *Provisional Arrangements* series and the sites where Paul installed them. In a workbook dated 1984, he transcribed one of the series of diagrams Krauss created to map the expanded field of sculpture (figure 104). This diagram visually represents her argument that the expanded field is generated by artists problematising the sets of oppositions between which the

modernist category *sculpture* is suspended.²⁶⁷ Krauss outlines these conceptual shifts using a series of schematics, illustrating how the structural oppositions of landscape/not-landscape and architecture/not-architecture expand into “a quaternary field which both mirrors the original position and at the same time opens it.”²⁶⁸ Her diagram classifies works that explore a combination of landscape and not-landscape as “marked sites”, works that explore the possibilities of architecture and not-architecture as “axiomatic structures”, and works that are simultaneously landscape and architecture as “site-construction”.²⁶⁹

Paul’s installations on the foreshore at Whatipū Beach and Rentons Beach Reserve, encompassing works on the sand flats during low tide, the beach at high tide, and within the water itself as the tide came in, exemplify ‘marked sites’ in Krauss’s framework because they are integrated with their surroundings rather than standing apart; they are simultaneously landscape and not-landscape. His installations on the World War II bomb-shelter bunker on Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point and at the Alexandra Redoubt in Pirongia are examples of ‘site-constructions’ because the site’s architecture also becomes a crucial aspect of these works.

Through this direct connection to the site, where the works are entangled with and dynamically influenced by their surroundings, the *Provisional Arrangements* series encapsulates Miwon Kwon’s concept of phenomenological site specificity. She characterises works within this paradigm as “grounded, bound to the laws of physics”, and inextricably tied to their location.²⁷⁰ However, when viewed as a whole, the *Provisional Arrangements* series also resonates with Kwon’s discursive site-specificity paradigm. Kwon uses this term to describe contemporary site-based practices that extend the definition of an artwork’s site beyond a physical location. She argues that in this paradigm, “the site is now structured (inter)textually rather than spatially, and its model is not a map but an itinerary, a fragmentary sequence of actions and events *through* spaces, that is, a nomadic narrative whose path is articulated by the passage of the artist.”²⁷¹ This concept is exemplified in the *Provisional Arrangements* installations, charting the myriad places the artist has interacted with and placed works, effectively creating a narrative journey through space. This understanding of site as both physical and discursive, intertwined with the dynamic, transient nature of these artworks, underscores the challenges of archiving contemporary site-related projects, requiring innovative strategies to capture their ephemeral and context-dependent qualities.

267 Rosalind E. Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 283.

268 Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” 283.

269 Krauss, 284.

270 Kwon, *One Place after Another*, 11.

271 Kwon, 29.

3.5. Blurred Boundaries: The Artwork–Archive Continuum

Paul's *Provisional Arrangements* series, which unfolded without a formal audience and was typically witnessed only by the artist, survives exclusively through its documentation. Consequently, our access to and understanding of this project depends entirely on the artist's records, which are the crucial link between these private occurrences and a public audience. In "The Artwork, the Archive, and the Living Moment", Potts explores the blurring of artwork and archive in event-based works, citing Kaprow's Happenings as examples where "The boundary between artwork and archive is irrelevant, and the artwork is constituted primarily, or at least in significant part, through the traces and records of it that remain."²⁷² He observes that in art-historical practice, archival materials are usually considered distinct from the artwork itself, "even if an intertextual approach is taken and such materials are seen as fundamental to the interpretation being offered."²⁷³ Artworks are typically viewed as tangible objects or phenomena, whereas the traces and information about them, sourced from archives and enhancing our understanding of their significance, are deemed secondary.²⁷⁴ The blurring between artwork and archive, as exemplified in Kaprow's Happenings, finds a parallel in the *Provisional Arrangements* series. Here, the ephemeral nature of Paul's events leads to a similar dependence on the residual documentation left behind.

Potts emphasises that for art to engage a public, it needs to exist in a material form accessible to an audience, whether through media, exhibitions, text or images in an essay, article, lecture, or some combination of these.²⁷⁵ This ensures the art's presence extends beyond its original context.²⁷⁶ He further elaborates:

Even when the originating object or event no longer exists, it has to be a phenomenon that an audience can apprehend and evaluate and discuss. This is the democratic dimension to what we do as art historians: after our research on a work, we need to come up with something that endows the work with a relatively autonomous if often hybrid substance, capable of being responded to and interpreted in very different ways from our own.²⁷⁷

The image library I have compiled enables me to view the artist's ephemeral and site-specific projects, such as the *Provisional Arrangements* series, as well as

272 Potts, "The Artwork, the Archive, and the Living Moment," 119.

273 Potts, 119.

274 Potts, 119.

275 Potts, 131.

276 Potts, 131.

277 Potts, 131.

related projects like his *Situations* and *Attempts* series, where he similarly engaged everyday objects in fleeting activations within non-art contexts. Through these images, I can trace the evolution of recurring components across different installations, providing insight into the interconnectedness and temporal nature of his work. For example, the yellow deck chair that I initially included in my pile for donation to the Salvation Army Store was included in various iterations of the *Provisional Arrangements* series at Whatipū, Rentons Beach Reserve, and Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, and appears in *O/AO 1*, which I discuss in the next section. Before these projects, the artist incorporated an identical yellow chair in his 2011 evolving installation *Motel* at Te Tuhi.²⁷⁸

Paul's documentation of *Provisional Arrangements: Operative Structures* provides essential context for the existing sculptural assemblages that were part of these events. Examining Paul's archive of images and components, I deduce that he likely constructed the tidal bucket assemblage from one of the components included in his *O/AO 2* installation.²⁷⁹ Marie Shannon's 2016 photographs show some of the tidal pieces, or parts of them, erected in the artist's studio. One of these components was also included in his 2017 *Provisional Arrangements* installation at Two Rooms, suggesting that Paul likely considered these sculptures in their own right, regardless of their removal from the original site and context of the series. However, without the documentation of works installed in the beach context, the narrative of how Paul envisaged these pieces interacting with the sea and tides would be lost.

The concept of 'living sculpture' in this context, reminiscent of Fluxus artist Marisa Merz's work *Untitled (Living Sculpture)* from 1966—made from malleable aluminium, embodying a 'living' aspect through its potential for transformation—resonates with the dynamic nature of Paul's tidal works.²⁸⁰ Drawing on this concept, I photographed the surviving bucket–ruler assemblage and a similar piece featuring a yellow-hinged ruler attached to a wooden rod and connected to the same orange marine rope as in the original work. For each image, I reconfigured the hinged ruler into a new shape, aiming to capture the artwork's ability to transform, mirroring the constant changes induced by the tidal environment

278 Describing his *Motel* installation in 2016, Paul writes that the project was “Developed in situ over an almost six-month timeframe. Motel was a work in progress undergoing change from week to week involving a marking out of the space by various means and propping of furniture against the ceiling.” This quote is drawn from: Cullen, “Provisional Arrangements Publication: Synopsis,” 2.

279 In the *O/AO 2* installation, presented on the Athfield property in Khandallah, Wellington, he presented a series of similar sculptural assemblages that consisted of wooden rods embedded into concrete-filled metal buckets.

280 “Untitled (Living Sculpture), Marisa Merz, 1966,” Tate, accessed February 8, 2024, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/merz-untitled-living-sculpture-t12950>.

in the original *Provisional Arrangements: Operative Structures* events.²⁸¹

However, the physical remnants from the *Provisional Arrangements* series vary considerably. While the tidal works, as more complex assemblages, retain their sculptural integrity beyond the event, continuing to exist as sculptures, other components have a more ambiguous character as the artist continued to reconfigure them into new arrangements. The painted striped battens employed in the installations on Whatipū Beach, the Pirongia Redoubt, and Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point act as support structures for various furniture items and, at other times, delineate a site. Likewise, cast-concrete weights have diverse purposes, such as balancing arrangements or anchoring a helium balloon. Some components have undergone minimal modifications by the artist, such as a blue plastic drop-sheet with a circular cut-out in the Joshua Tree National Park location, or the removal of an edge from a section of green rubber mat installed on Te Naupata Reserve. Additionally, the series incorporates unaltered found materials, including the furniture components I have identified.

The fluctuating roles of many components in the *Provisional Arrangements* series, serving as temporary props in the artist's installations, lose their status as 'art' when disassembled and removed from their original location and context. This process transforms them back into materials with potential for future use by the artist. This cycle underscores a crucial aspect of the series: the essence of the work lies not in the objects themselves, but in the transient events they enable. This dynamic echoes Potts's argument that "There is no work of art, however object-based, whose identity can be reduced entirely to its status as a material thing, in isolation from the mind-set that constitutes it as art."²⁸² He observes that an object transitions into a work of art through its perception and projection as such in the viewer's encounter, coupled with its acceptance as art in the culture at large.²⁸³ In Paul's practice, this is evident; the significance of an object is often fleeting, tied to its specific role in a given installation. In this way, the object's art status is not inherent but is temporarily assigned and revoked, highlighting the fluidity between 'material' and 'art' in his creative process.

281 The component depicted in Figure 106, consisting of a white wooden rod marked 'T67' and embedded in a bucket of concrete, appears to have originally been part of the *Provisional Arrangements: Operative Structures* assemblage, which Paul installed at two different beaches in 2014 (figures 101, 103). However, Paul has since removed the ruler appendage (figure 106). This modified piece was later displayed as part of the *Provisional Arrangements* exhibition at Two Rooms in 2017 (figure 105). A piece very similar to the full component Paul installed on Rentons Beach Reserve, also shown in figure 106, includes an expandable ruler but has slight variations, such as an unpainted wooden support and different-coloured rope.

282 Potts, "The Artwork, the Archive, and the Living Moment," 119.

283 Potts, 119.

This raises the question: Can the components from the *Provisional Arrangements* series be re-exhibited in the future without the artist's direct involvement? To explore this inquiry, I looked at the gallery exhibitions with the same title that Paul developed with curator Allan Smith at the Ilam Campus Gallery in Christchurch (2016) and Two Rooms in Auckland (2017), which I discussed in the previous chapter. These exhibitions offer insights into the potential for future displays of these components, as they included various elements previously utilised in the outdoor installations as part of the *Provisional Arrangements* series. In the Christchurch exhibition, Paul displayed the long black-and-white-striped battens, similar to those used at Whatipū Beach, as a continuous line across the gallery floor. In Auckland, a broader selection, including orange-and-black-striped battens, was arranged against one wall. Concrete weights, akin to those in the Pirongia setup, were positioned on steel shelves and the floor, some next to or on a folding camping stool. The Christchurch exhibition included a yellow deck chair identical to those in the Whatipū and Rentons Beach Reserve installations, leaning against a black folding table also used in his in-situ arrangements.

Reflecting on his collaboration with Paul in the *Provisional Arrangements* exhibitions, Smith detailed how they included a spectrum of formats and components in varying degrees of modification and reuse. He highlighted Paul's intent to foster ambiguity in the displayed objects, illustrating this point by noting how components—such as concrete slabs leaning against the wall—could be perceived in various ways, as mere materials or as artworks, within the gallery context. He noted, “The play between the different ways of seeing was really important.” Smith further described how Paul gave him permission to select and enlarge images from his workbooks and research materials, allowing him to shift their perceived value and status within the gallery context. This underscores the dynamic and evolving nature of Paul's practice, where the artwork is not fixed, but is continually reshaped by its context and mode of presentation, further dissolving the boundary between the artwork and archive.

The *Provisional Arrangements* exhibitions suggest that components from Paul's in-situ events could be reintegrated into future shows with appropriate contextualisation and understanding of his conceptual motivations. I argue that one approach to reactivating the suspended animation of the archive might involve inviting curators or artist-curators to stage new groupings, rearrangements, or recombinations of the components. In this situation, Paul's documentation and prior works can provide valuable insights into methods for repurposing components and navigating his conceptual framework, and serve as a guide for their re-exhibition.



Figure 105: Paul Cullen, *Provisional Arrangements*, Two Rooms, Auckland, 2017. All photographs by Sam Hartnett, except for the bottom right image, which is by Marie Shannon.



Figure 106: Components from Paul Cullen's *Provisional Arrangements* series (2013–16), the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2023. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

3.6. *Object/Anti-Object (O/AO) 2*

I now turn to Paul's *O/AO 2* installation on the Athfield property in Khandallah, Wellington. Like the *Provisional Arrangements* series, my comprehension of this project depends on a constellation of disparate materials; I have similarly analysed Paul's notes, sketches, and writings in his workbooks, looked at documentation, and located and identified physical components from this project in the studio.²⁸⁴ This situation contrasts with the interpretation of artworks typically defined by a singular object, illustrating how the *O/AO* installation softens the line between the artwork and the archive. Potts articulates this evolution in many contemporary art practices, stating:

This is not to claim that we live in a post-medium world where the art object and its materiality have become redundant, or where the artwork as a totality of some kind has been dispersed and consigned to the realm of myth. Rather, the artwork has become more insistently hybrid, and its phenomenality more readily seen to reside in several different registers of experience.²⁸⁵

Paul's *O/AO 2* installation was situated in Khandallah, Wellington on a property designed by the renowned New Zealand architect Sir Ian Athfield (1940–2015). This site encompasses a complex of buildings, courtyards, and terraces stretching down a steep hillside overlooking the harbour. Pathways and staircases connect houses, workspaces, observatory towers and idiosyncratic outdoor spaces spanning various levels.²⁸⁶ According to the Wellington City Heritage website, the complex is the home of Athfield Architects, with forty people working there and some twenty-five living in houses on the site.²⁸⁷

Construction on the property began in 1965, but the project has remained in a state of continuous progression. Athfield described having no fixed end-point for the project; instead, he envisioned that "like a Mediterranean village, it would grow down the Khandallah hillside and accommodate a community rather than a nuclear family."²⁸⁸ In *World Architecture Review* (1993), he is quoted as having asserted, "Buildings form part of the earth, they move from the earth. You should

284 Potts, 131.

285 Potts, 131.

286 Paul's work also sits within the broader context of Athfield Architects' engagement with and advocacy for artists and graphic designers, including artists such as Fane Flaws, John Scott, Paul Dibble, and Catherine Griffiths. However, Paul's project is unique because he created a site-responsive installation and interventions in the outdoor spaces across the Athfield property.

287 "Athfield House," Wellington City Council Me Heke Ki Pōneke, accessed March 2, 2023, <https://wellingtoncityheritage.org.nz/buildings/301-450/380-athfield-house>.

288 Julia Gatley, *Athfield Architects* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2012), 27.

be able to add to them, change what you use them for. They should always be an adaptable and ever-changing resource rather than a completely renewable entity.”²⁸⁹

Athfield’s philosophy aligns with Paul’s interest in and use of provisional and processual working methods in dynamic environments, exemplified by his installations in the tidal zones. Paul’s files indicate that he visited the Athfield property in 2012 and went on to approach Athfield Architects to propose developing a site-specific installation on the grounds as part of a curated exhibition by Fieldwork for 30upstairs gallery. In a Radio New Zealand interview with Lynn Freeman, conducted in 2013 while the installation was open, Paul expressed his fascination with the site for its ongoing evolution and transformation. He noted, “It’s in the process of being built, it’s incomplete ... there are parts of the complex that are finished and other parts that they’re working on and renovating so that spaces can be used, other parts ... are just unfinished.”²⁹⁰

Paul describes the *O/AO 2* installation as “an investigation of object, anti-object and site”, noting the influence of Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, who coined the term ‘anti-object’ to refer to his aspiration for a site and building to be read as a continuum rather than as separate entities.²⁹¹ Kuma critiques ‘self-centred’ object-orientated architecture that is purposefully distinct from its surroundings, arguing that “architecture is always situated in—and connected to—the world.”²⁹² The interconnected buildings and courtyards across the Athfield property can be viewed as embodying Kuma’s concept of ‘anti-object’ because the architecture and the site are integrated. Living spaces open out onto terraces and rooftop gardens, and the buildings, sprawling down the hillside, are integrated with the natural topography of the environment. Architect Clarence Aasen writes, “Almost all of Athfield’s work has no clear differentiation between inside and outside, house and garden, building and landscape.”²⁹³ He further observes that Athfield replaces traditional, abstract, static, reposing geometries of architecture with concretely experienced, dynamic, vital elements and forms, noting that his projects are compositionally “seldom simple or singular formal structures, but in the manner of a collage create a complex juxtaposition of ideas, elements and materials.”²⁹⁴

289 Clarence Aasen, “The Architecture of Ian Athfield,” *World Architecture Review* 37 (1993): 21.

290 Thank you to Jane Sanders for her research and for uncovering a recording of this Radio New Zealand interview from 2013.

291 Cullen, “Chemical Objects.”

292 Kengo Kuma, *Anti-Object: The Dissolution and Disintegration of Architecture*, AA Words (London: Architectural Association, 2010), 2, 35.

293 Aasen, “The Architecture of Ian Athfield,” 17.

294 Aasen, 17.

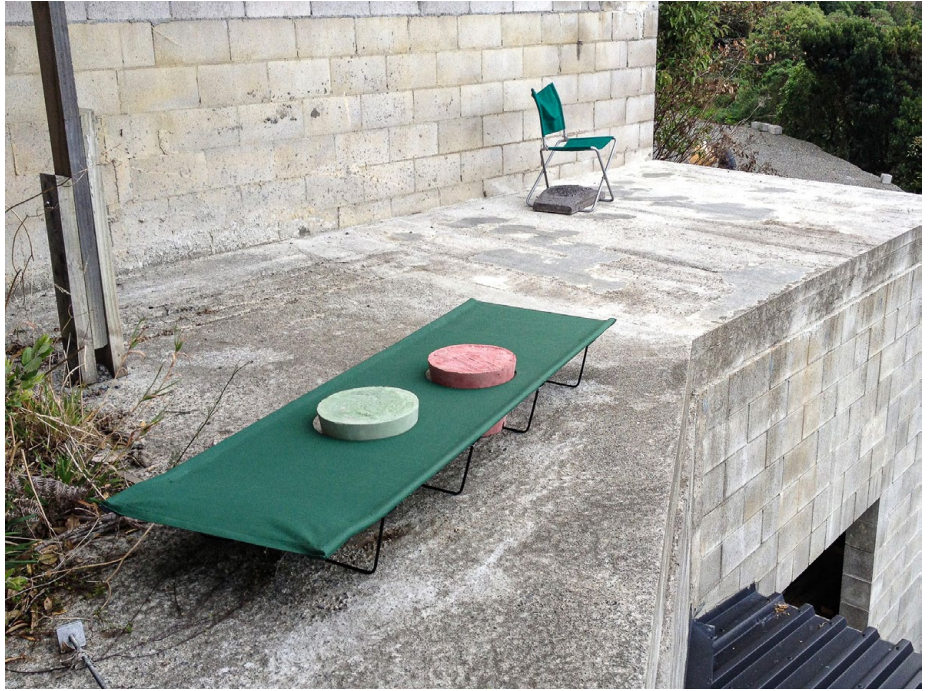


Figure 107: Paul Cullen, *O/AO 2* (installation details), the Athfield property, Khandallah, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by the artist.

Paul's *O/AO 2* installation included a playful arrangement of objects and furniture across the Athfield property, including the yellow deckchair and the camp stretchers with holes that would later be in my pile for the Salvation Army Store. Items of portable furniture were anchored in place with cast-concrete weights in shades of grey, green, yellow, and terracotta, removing their usual transportable functionality and rendering them site-specific for the exhibition's duration. Four frustum-shaped weights (cast from buckets) protruded through circular holes cut into the fabric of the two camp stretchers, positioned over the leg bases, preventing them from being blown away. Paul's placement and displacement of objects around the property encouraged exploration and movement but also interrupted visitors' paths through these spaces, prompting them to pay fresh attention. His incorporation of chairs, some with seat coverings removed and rendered unusable, invited visitors to interact with the architecture and surrounding views from specific vantage points. In this way, the artist actively engaged with the site's inherent character and agency, establishing a dialogue with the surrounding environment. This interaction is underscored by drawing on Krauss's schematic and positioning *O/AO 2* as an example of 'site-construction', where the surrounding landscape and architecture become integral components of the project.

In introducing objects to the Athfield site, Paul intended to create a high degree of ambiguity between what was pre-existing and what was a sculptural intervention, challenging our perceptions of where the artwork begins and ends.²⁹⁵ This ambiguity partly arises from his utilisation of commonplace furniture, incorporation of existing materials and objects on the site, and use of concrete, a building material prevalent at the Athfield property. Through my research, I determined that a selection of red metal sled-base chairs depicted in the installation documentation are the property of the residents, not items introduced by the artist. However, in some cases, Paul designed custom weights for these chairs, too. In one image, a weighted red chair oriented towards a gap between two buildings frames a view of the harbour, while another captures this chair next to an identical one, left without sculptural intervention. This juxtaposition subtly challenges our perceptions of what defines an art object, dissolving the lines between art and everyday utility.

In another instance, Paul placed a slatted folding table and two stools on a raised concreted area, approximately one metre square and 100 mm high, located near the edge of an empty swimming pool. At first, I mistook this concrete support structure as a pre-existing element of the site; it was not out of place in an area littered with building materials, including bricks, timber, and a stack of scaffolding



Figure 108: Paul Cullen, *O/AO 2* (installation details), the Athfield property, Khandallah, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by the artist.

platforms. However, examining the images more closely, I realised the table and stools were embedded into the concrete base. The assemblage was, in fact, immovable and non-functional; one stool was lodged under the table, and the other fixed half on and half off the concrete platform. This was confirmed by Paul's documentation, which shows him casting the concrete base on-site. This intervention gives the impression of a durable sculpture and a sense of permanence, contrasting with the installation's temporary presence during the three-day exhibition.

Paul's work-in-progress documentation also reveals his process of fabricating concrete weight components in the studio. He designed these with grooves on the bottom, cast directly from the furniture, allowing them to fit snugly over aluminium-tube leg bases and rest flat on the ground. These images and his workbook entries suggest a premeditated approach to object placement on the Athfield site, with rough sketches and notes for locations such as "In pool @ end" and "Roof viewed from the drive at the top."²⁹⁶ Nonetheless, the artist's installation photos show a degree of improvisation at the site, documenting adjustments he made to the arrangement of sculptural objects and the incorporation of existing materials, including ladders, furniture, a rusted wheel, a woodpile, and empty paint buckets.



Figure 109: Paul Cullen, work in progress for the *O/AO* installations at the artist's studio, Henderson, 2013. Photographs by the artist.

296 Paul Cullen, "2013 *O/AO*" (Artist's workbook, 2013), 45–53.

3.7. Documenting the Sculptural Experience

O/AO 2 differed from the *Provisional Arrangements* series in that it was part of a public exhibition that could be visited, making the experiential aspect of this work important. Thus, the project aligned with Kwon's phenomenological site-specific paradigm, where the work must be "experienced in the here and now through the bodily presence of each viewing subject."²⁹⁷ While documentation is now the primary avenue for engaging with the *O/AO 2* installation, it was not the sole means at the time it was first exhibited, as is the case of *Provisional Arrangements* installations. The three-day duration of the project allowed for a temporal encounter, emphasising the role of direct, physical engagement as an essential facet of the viewer's experience. In discussing the role of physical engagement in artworks in "Some Notions of Site", Paul cites artist Richard Serra, who asserts, "The dialectic of walking and looking into the landscape establishes the sculptural experience."²⁹⁸ This reference underscores the active and participatory nature of visitor interaction relevant to the *O/AO 2* installation, contrasting with more passive forms of art engagement.²⁹⁹

Paul's documentation of the installation at the Athfield property shows a careful consideration of how visitors navigated the site, and the potential for objects and sculptural assemblages to be experienced or viewed from multiple angles and positions. In one image, he documented a yellow deck chair weighted down with a terracotta concrete block from a close-up perspective. In another, he changes position, revealing the chair's location on a roof terrace overlooking a road. In subsequent photos, he documents the rooftop arrangement from further away, climbing higher up the site until the chair becomes a dot of yellow (figure 110). Similarly, his photographs of a sculptural assemblage consisting of a wooden post set into a concrete-filled bucket (which I have linked to the tidal work) on a steep flight of outdoor steps also capture it from different perspectives: from below, beside, and above (figure 111).

297 Kwon, *One Place after Another*, 11.

298 Paul Cullen, "Some Notions of Site" (c. 1993–94), 2. This quote is from Richard Serra, *Writings/Interviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

299 In "Some Notions of Site", Paul references Shiah Armajani's *Study Garden* (1987), a temporary installation the artist created at the Garden of the Geologisches Museum at Münster University, which included tables, chairs, and stools used to create a contemplative space for visitors. He also discusses Mary Miss's large-scale earthworks *Field Rotation* (1980–81) and *Pool Complex* (1982–85), emphasising the significance of directly experiencing these works. Miss created *Field Rotation* in Laumeier Sculpture Park in St Louis, Missouri, where she uncovered the remains of an abandoned swimming area from 1929, including the remnants of walkways, stone walls, and a curvilinear concrete-lined pond. The artwork features a series of pavilions, platforms and staircases made from Wolmanized pine integrated around these historical fragments. Visitors can climb and explore the site, engaging directly with the layers of history embedded within the landscape (Kwon, *One Place after Another*, 11). Miss emphasised the role of the viewer's memory in making connections between the work and familiar sources, describing it as a place to spend time: "It is not possible to see or understand the project without moving through the whole area—it is revealed piece by piece." This quote was sourced from the artist's website: "Pool Complex: Orchard Valley," Mary Miss, accessed February 23, 2023, <http://marymiss.com/projects/pool-complex-orchard-valley/>.

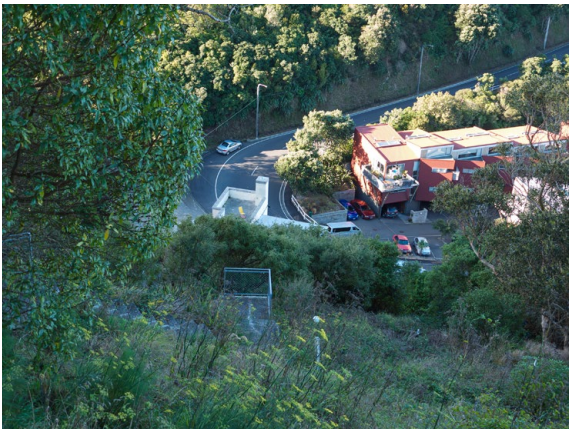


Figure 110: Paul Cullen, *O/AO 2* (installation details), the Athfield property, Khandallah, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 111: Paul Cullen, *O/AO 2* (installation details), the Athfield property, Khandallah, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by the artist.

Paul's documentation is performative, part of how he understood the work would be received later in the archive. In another series of images, he captures a scaffolding unit in the disused swimming pool (figure 108). Further images show it moved to a narrower section of the pool, where it obstructs access to a reclining lawn chair secured in place with three concrete slabs. Paul likely orchestrated this placement, though it remains uncertain; this situation would have forced visitors to engage with the work from a distance through the scaffolding bars, prompting contemplation of both the object and its environment. The mottled blue walls and floor of the pool are flaking and marked by the effects of weather and age, accumulating dirt and debris, with parts now sprouting grass.

Responding to Paul's documentation approach and the dynamic quality of his images, I have aimed to present this project both in this exegesis and on the Paul Cullen Archive website to show the artist's strategy. However, while this documentation effectively captures aspects of the installation, it has limitations; notably, it fails to capture the sensory, affective, and phenomenological aspects integral to the work. In these images, our perspective of the installation is constrained to the photographer's framed viewpoint: we cannot wander or explore. Ultimately, the photograph displaces the work, which derives meaning from the context and location in which it is situated. In "Some Notions of Site," Paul acknowledges this dilemma, again quoting Serra, who states, "If you reduce sculpture to the flat plane of the photograph, you're denying the temporal experience of the work, you're not only reducing the sculpture to a different scale for the purposes of consumption, but you're denying the real content of the work."³⁰⁰ Paul reflects, "Of course, one can fill in a lot of the gaps with imagination and obviously it is possible to discover a lot through reading and examination of the ideas contained or expressed."

300 Cullen, "Some Notions of Site," 5. This quote can also be found in Yve-Alain Bois and John Shepley, "A Picturesque Stroll around 'Clara-Clara,'" *October* 29 (1984): 1, <https://doi.org/10.2307/778306>.

Theorising the documentation strategy for Kaprow's Happenings, Potts emphasises the goal of enabling nonparticipants to imagine the event's nature. However, he highlights the artist's deliberate choice to limit documentation to just "one or at most three or four photographs to represent a Happening, thereby making it clear that the photos should in no way be seen to encapsulate the main features of the event."³⁰¹ Kaprow's selective photographic approach underscores the fundamental challenge of capturing the immersive and experiential qualities of art through documentation. This is a challenge that Paul also acknowledges, affirming the complexity of conveying the full scope of an installation's impact through photographic means alone. The physical components of these installations, found in Paul's former studio, offer a tactile understanding of their construction, colours, textures, and materials, complementing the insights gained from documentation and deepening our comprehension of the artwork. However, when viewing these disparate materials—installation documentation and the decontextualised components—an element of interpretation is involved, requiring us to fill in the gaps with our imagination.

3.8. *O/AO 1 or The Odessa Project*

The complexities of archiving the *O/AO 2* installation are further increased by its relationship with the *O/AO 1* exhibition at 30upstairs gallery in Wellington.³⁰² These projects, which ran concurrently for three days with a shuttle service connecting them, expand the notion of 'site' beyond mere physical space. Paul describes *O/AO 1*, which in his files he also refers to as *The Odessa Project*, as emerging from an amalgamation of research and documentary material gathered from a 2012 site visit he made to the Odessa Meteor Crater in West Texas.³⁰³ He further states that his aim was "to conflate the Texas and Athfield sites through a suggestion of material and functional relationships established by the photographs

301 Potts, "The Artwork, the Archive, and the Living Moment," 121.

302 The exhibition press release reads: "The basis of Cullen's newest work is a conflation of scientific speculation and a dislocated narrative lifted from a meteor crater in the USA. ... Over the dual Wellington sites, his working physics experiments, diagrammatic maps and unattended viewing stations borrowed from the West Texas setting all act to validate the occurrence of a meteor event that may or may not have transpired."

303 In 2012, Paul took sabbatical leave from his lecturing position at AUT to spend four months in the USA, supported by a Senior Fulbright Award. He collaborated with Dr Rod Barnett, a landscape architect at Auburn University, Alabama, to develop a site-based outdoor project. During his stay, Cullen also visited three key art research centres in the US: High Desert Test Sites in Joshua Tree, California; the Chinati and Judd Foundations in Marfa, Texas; and the Centre for Land Use Interpretation in Wendover, Utah, which is one of six locations across the US with its headquarters in Los Angeles. In a Radio New Zealand Interview with Lynne Freeman (2013), Paul describes chancing upon the Odessa Meteor Crater in 2012 while driving to the Chinati Foundation, a contemporary art museum created by Donald Judd in Marfa, Texas.

and objects.”³⁰⁴ This deliberate merging invites viewers to explore and uncover the connections and relationships between these disparate locations.³⁰⁵ To appropriately represent these projects, the archive must therefore capture not only the physical components and documentation of the *O/AO 1* and *2* installations but also the conceptual connections and inter-site relationships they establish.

According to Paul’s notes, research, and information he included in a dossier as part of the exhibition, geologists estimate that the Odessa crater, approximately 168 metres in diameter, was formed around 63,500 years ago when a large octahedrite (a kind of iron meteorite) struck the Earth’s surface.³⁰⁶ However, a shaft dug into the centre of the crater revealed no evidence of the meteor, and scientists speculate that either the object disintegrated on impact or struck the ground with such force that it bounced back into space.³⁰⁷ Paul describes the *O/AO* project as formulating “a propositional space” that includes versions of objects from the crater site, along with photographs, maps, and charts.³⁰⁸

The *O/AO* project resonates with Kwon’s discursive site specificity paradigm, in which she posits that the concept of ‘site’ is unhinged from a physical location and gives way to a “*discursively* determined site that is delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, or cultural debate.”³⁰⁹ She observes that in discursive site-specific works, the site is no longer defined as a precondition; instead, it is generated by the work (often as ‘content’) and then verified by its convergence with existing discursive information.³¹⁰ Unlike the direct experience offered by the installation on the Athfield property, the sites referenced in the *O/AO 1* exhibition were mediated by the artist through a curated collection of materials, weaving together a narrative from factual, fictional, and speculative threads.

O/AO 1 featured an assortment of elements: a collection of images pinned on the gallery wall, a sepia-toned chart of the Odessa crater with a superimposed grid that was erected on a stand, a rotating bucket attached to a ladder with an orange power lead connecting to a power point, and a stack of dossiers on the floor

304 Paul Cullen, “Research Plan” (Funding application, 2013–15), 3.

305 This artist also notes his interest in the discursive nature of projects by Robert Smithson, observing, “Place for Smithson is a vectored relation, the physical site a place to be seen and left behind, represented as maps, drawings, films, photographs, collected materials and textual accounts” (Cullen, “The Chemistry of Familiar Objects”). During his 2012 trip to the USA on a Fulbright award doing site-related research, Paul visited the sites in Texas, Utah, and California indicated above, and also visited Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty*.

306 Paul Cullen, “2012 & 2013” (Artist’s workbook #410, 2012–13), 78–80.

307 Cullen, “Provisional Arrangements Publication: Synopsis,” 1.

308 Cullen, 1.

309 Kwon, *One Place after Another*, 26.

310 Kwon, 26.

(I have located the dossiers, images on the wall, and the Odessa chart in the archive). Each dossier was unique, stamped with “O/OA”, and included a variety of materials such as maps, images, texts, and handwritten notes by the artist. These documents related to various subjects, including holes, the Odessa meteor crater, Newton’s rotating bucket theory, and Kuma’s concept of anti-object.³¹¹ The images Paul presented on the gallery wall were printed with visible striped banding, typically resulting from a blocked, dirty, or damaged print head, which had the effect of accentuating the photographs’ flat surfaces.

The documentation of the Odessa meteor site presented on the wall was not comprehensive, but rather consisted of isolated snapshots of the locale: rocky soil adorned with desert shrubs and a rim of earth protruding slightly above the ground—the sole indicator of a crater’s presence. Paul also includes duplicate images that vary in crop, colour, and ink coverage, four of which show a “Crater 2” sign. Text on this sign explains that a smaller crater was formed by a small mass of meteorites hitting the earth without sufficient speed to vaporise, and an estimated six tons of meteorites were found under the earth at the site.³¹² The presence of multiples challenges the notion of a singular, unique image, instead highlighting the potential for infinite reproducibility, and also the necessarily fragmentary nature of recording a specific place or site. Paul’s addition of letters and numbers to the images further suggests myriad possibilities for analysis and interpretation, and causes them to read more like diagrams (figure 113).

311 In the Radio New Zealand interview with Lynn Freeman, conducted in 2013 while the *O/OA* installations were open, Paul refers to a sculpture he exhibited at 30upstairs as *Newton’s Bucket* (2013). This piece, featuring a seven-step wooden ladder with metal support fitted with a rotating bucket, is highlighted by Paul as a deliberate *misinterpretation* of Newton’s ‘rotating bucket’ argument. Isaac Newton (1643–1727), a mathematician and physicist, had an ‘absolutist’ conception of space, maintaining that “space has an ‘absolute’ existence over and above the spatial relations between objects.” Newton proposed the bucket experiment, consisting of a spinning bucket of water suspended by a rope, to demonstrate that space is an infinite and a priori representation that had existed before any material objects. In his sculptural *misinterpretation*, Paul has removed the bottom of the bucket, preventing it from holding any water. The galvanised metal bucket he uses in this work is identical to the ones he has incorporated into assemblages introduced into the Athfield property. These objects appear to be positioned to influence the way visitors move through the space, such as a makeshift barrier he has constructed by stringing a rope between two wooden posts embedded in buckets of concrete. Samir Okasha, *Philosophy of Science: A Very Short Introduction*, *Very Short Introductions* 67 (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 95–96.

312 All images displayed by Paul were photographed by him. I have located these images in his photo documentation files, which include images from his 2012 USA trip.

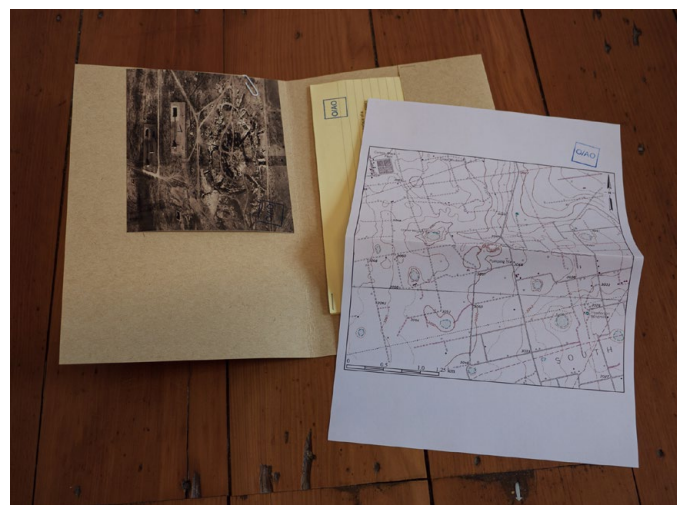
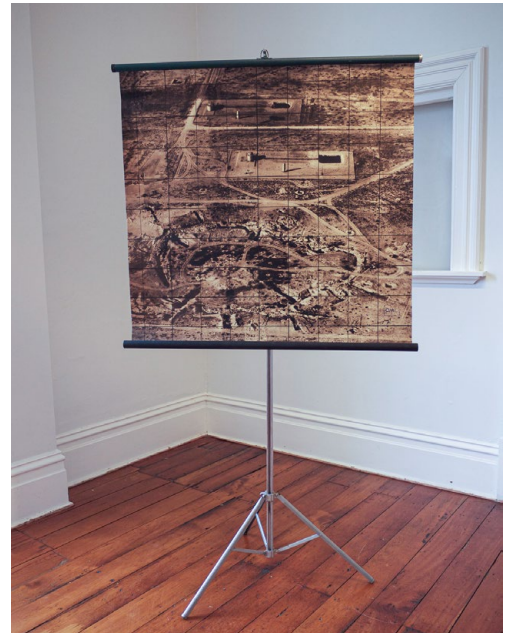


Figure 112: Paul Cullen, *O/AO I* (installation details), 30upstairs, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 113: Paul Cullen, *Odessa Field Notes*, 2013, *Provisional Arrangements*, Pirongia, 2015.

Note: The arrangement of images above is laid out differently and includes variations from Paul's *O/AO 1* installation at 30upstairs, Wellington, (2013). The two images from the *Provisional Arrangements*, Pirongia, that Paul included in the *O/AO* installation were annotated with Letraset. However, I was not able to locate these images, so I have reproduced two similar images from Paul's digital files on this page.

NOTES

1. A hole is something where there is nothing, an immaterial body located at the surface of a material object. (Casati R., and Varzi A. *Holes and Other Superficialities*. Boston (MA): MIT Press, 1994).
2. Newton's rotating bucket argument was designed to demonstrate the existence of absolute space. According to Newton absolute space and time are independent aspects of objective reality.



3. In *Anti-Object* Kengo Kuma critiques buildings "tainted by the disease of objectification", he proposes another form of presence, the anti-object. Preventing a thing from becoming an object is a far more difficult task, he maintains, than making objects. (Kuma K. *Anti-Object*. London: Architectural Association Publications, 2008)

Figure 114: Page from Paul Cullen's dossier as part of his *O/AO I* installation at 30upstairs, Wellington 2013.

Intermingled with the Odessa images, there is an image of a Texas roadside rest station and two shots of the McDonald Laser Ranging Station (MLRS) at the University of Texas McDonald Observatory.³¹³ Although Paul did not specify these locations in the exhibition, I have pieced together these details by studying his notes, documents, and photographs in the archive. The University of Texas Center for Space Research website outlines the MLRS's functions for a variety of scientific pursuits, including the study of Earth's gravitational field, plate tectonics, Earth's orientation in space, high-precision time transfer, relativity, lunar dynamics, and solar-system dynamics.³¹⁴ The station's white-domed roof shares a visual affinity with the Athfield property's architectural features, notably the white plaster finish of the twelve-metre-high observation tower and circular window projections. There were also two images from the *Provisional Arrangements* series at the Alexandra Redoubt in Pirongia, capturing the silver polyhedral object mid-flight, which I discussed earlier in this chapter (figures 100, 113). Paul's notes frame this act as a fictional re-enactment of a meteor strike.³¹⁵ The dossiers in the exhibition included an aerial view of the Alexandra Redoubt from Google Maps, which Paul describes as suggesting "a kind of readymade sculptural earthwork" (figure 116).³¹⁶

Expanding on the concept of discursive site specificity, Kwon references James Meyer's *The Functional Site* (2000). Meyer distinguishes between a *literal* site (an actual location or a singular place) and a *functional* site, which he conceptualises as a process or operation occurring between sites that may or may not incorporate a physical place.³¹⁷ He further conceptualises the functional site as "a mapping of institutional and discursive filtrations and the bodies that move between them (the artist's above all)."³¹⁸ Paul echoes this sentiment in a 2014 project proposal for Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik (ZK/U) in Berlin, Germany, describing his relationship with 'site' as comparable to Meyer's *functional site*, citing Meyer in the following quote, "It is an informational site, a palimpsest of text, photographs, video recording, physical places, and things ... The functional work refuses the intransigence of literal site specificity; it is a temporary thing, a movement, a chain of meanings and imbricated histories: a place marked and swiftly abandoned."³¹⁹ This concept of imbricated histories—overlapping layers of meaning, influence,

313 The Texas roadside rest station was an in-between location he documented on his journey between the Odessa Meteor Crater site and the McDonald Observatory. I found these images in Paul's files in a folder labelled "Marfa".

314 "McDonald Laser Ranging System," University of Texas, accessed June 3, 2024, <https://www.csr.utexas.edu/mlrs/>.

315 Paul Cullen and Charlotte Huddleston, "Proposal for 56th La Biennale Di Venezia 2015," n.d.

316 Cullen and Huddleston, "Proposal for 56th La Biennale Di Venezia 2015."

317 James Meyer, "The Functional Site; or, The Transformation of Site Specificity," in *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, ed. Erica Suderburg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 25.

318 Meyer, "The Functional Site," 25.

319 Paul Cullen, "ZKU – Application Notes Towards 'Open Lab – Third Space'" (2014).

and context—contributes to our understanding of Paul’s installations as spaces where meanings are continuously shaped and reshaped by diverse contexts, influences, and interpretations.

Within the framework of Kwon’s discursive site specificity and Meyer’s functional site, the *O/AO* installations and *Provisional Arrangements* series emerge as a dynamic ensemble characterised by interconnected dialogues and evolving narratives. Paul’s practice involved repurposing and recontextualising materials, revisiting themes and concepts, and integrating documentation within exhibitions. Over time, the components of his artwork have developed their own histories as they have been incorporated into multiple projects. This methodology established his installations not merely as individual projects but as parts of an expanded discourse. As such, these works—and their parts—extend beyond the physical form to include traces and materials integral to the artist’s creative process. This complexity further softens the traditional boundaries between artworks and archives, shifting the archive from mere repository or storage space to an active participant in the artist’s narrative, continually interacting with and influencing the interpretation of the works.



Figure 115: Buildings on the Athfield property, Khandallah, Wellington, 2013. Photographs by Paul Cullen.



Figure 116: Google Maps images of Alexandra Redoubt in Pirongia, sourced from Paul Cullen’s files.

3.9. An Open Ending: The Archive as a Discursive Site

In this chapter, I have examined Paul's *Provisional Arrangements* series and *O/AO 1* and *2* installations, highlighting his exploration of processual and temporary modes of working and engagement with site and place. I demonstrated how archiving these projects presents challenges and complexities due to Paul's diverse use of materials, ranging from unaltered found objects to sculptural assemblages, and his integration of these elements within ever-evolving contexts. Drawing from Krauss's and Kwon's theories, I proposed that these installations emerge as 'marked sites' and exemplars of 'site-construction,' epitomising phenomenological site specificity. The surrounding landscape and architecture of the locations where these projects were installed are integral to the installations, which are further shaped by external forces such as wind, gravity, weather, and tidal movements.

In conceptualising the *O/AO 2* installation, Paul intended to blur the boundaries between pre-existing architectural elements and his sculptural interventions, influenced by Kuma's concept of anti-object. This methodology suggests a deliberate attempt to challenge traditional perceptions of what constitutes the artwork, underscoring a fundamental aspect of *O/AO* and the *Provisional Arrangements* series: the installations are not confined to the physicality of objects or components but engage dynamically with their context. This situation led me to propose viewing these installations as 'events'—transient interactions within an ongoing environmental and material dialogue, marking them as live, time-bound engagements with their sites and surroundings.

Although the *O/AO* installations and the *Provisional Arrangements* series initially varied in accessibility, visual records now serve as the primary means for understanding both these projects. However, I have illustrated how documentation falls short of conveying the full experiential quality of the *O/AO 2* installation on the Athfield property. I described how my comprehension of the wider *O/AO* project and *Provisional Arrangements* series has involved studying a wide range of documentary traces that remain in the archive. Alongside project documentation and work-in-progress shots, materials I drew on comprised of the remaining installation components, Paul's notes, drawings, and workbooks, and theorists he has referenced in relation to these works. Thus, I suggested that the archive emerges as an integral extension of these projects, serving as a tangible link connecting to the artist's conceptual groundwork.

Examining *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements* through Kwon's concept of discursive site specificity has further highlighted the challenges and complexities involved in archiving these projects. This theoretical framework challenges the

conventional understanding of a 'site' as merely a physical location, conceptualising it as a dynamic entity shaped by discourse, cultural exchange, and the artist's interaction with various spaces. I have demonstrated how Paul's expansive definition of 'site' in the *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements* installations encompassed the physical locations where the works were installed, the conceptual themes and narratives they explored, the sites he documents or alludes to within them, and the relationships between the various sites where these works take place.³²⁰

Paul's inclusion of documentation of the Odessa Meteor Crater site in the *O/AO 1* exhibition, interspersed with a fictionalised meteor event in Pirongia from the *Provisional Arrangements* series, invites further engagement with intersections of reality and fiction within a broader relational context. This dialogue between reality and fiction is deepened by exploring temporal aspects within the artworks, which include the passage of time, potential future scenarios, or transient moments that the installation evokes or references. From an archival perspective, these projects necessitate a method of documentation that goes beyond mere physical preservation to actively contextualise the site's narratives and relationships as defined and reinterpreted by Paul through the installations.

Building on this multifaceted understanding of 'site' as encompassing physical, conceptual, and temporal dimensions, I suggest considering Paul's archive, located in the Henderson warehouse, as a discursive site. This concept moves beyond viewing the archive as a storage repository, framing it as a dynamic space for ongoing dialogues, interpretation, or reinterpretation of Paul's artworks and practice. The archive emerges as a discursive entity when different artwork components are utilised in various contexts—whether represented independently, in combination with other objects, or reinstalled in new settings—maintaining their identity while contributing to distinctly different ensembles. Embracing the inherent stasis of the archive in this way also aligns with crucial elements of Paul's practice, including his abiding interest in provisionality and the contextual specifics of an artwork's presentation. Allowing such provisionality to take concrete form in some way 'after the event' enables a new event to partially emerge, which positions the archive as active. The participation of artists, curators, and researchers, including myself, who engage with and contribute to this material, underscores the archive's role as a dynamic site that facilitates ongoing dialogue about the artist's work. However, the potential future developments cannot be fully known until an invitation acts as either a permission or a catalyst for reformulation or reinterpretation of works and components in the archive.

320 Drawing on Kwon's concept of social/institutional site-specificity in *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, where the site is "constituted through social, economic, and political processes", 3, the curatorial framework of Paul's *O/AO* exhibition is defined as a 'site'.

Conceptualising the archive in this way transforms the archival process into a living, evolving entity that has the potential to influence or reshape the ways in which Paul's work might be perceived, discussed, and understood.³²¹ However, such a condition of the present and active archive is only attained over many years and exhibitions, through numerous variations on well-known or emergent themes. The pragmatic and economic rationale for the re-use of extant components or materials does not subtract from this condition of ready adaptability; rather it can add to the temporal and semiotic resonances of mutability and improvised applicability. The new work or installation ensemble can potentially grant a fresh mien or character to the old or pre-used components. While these components are now decontextualised from the original sites where Paul installed them, they remain anchored to their past through concrete documentation, which provides clear historical context.

From this discussion of the archive as a dynamic, evolving entity, in the next chapter I discuss my reinstallation of a series of Paul's *r/p/m* (revolutions per minute) sculptures at the Musick Memorial Radio Station on Te Naupata Reserve and further consider how shifting contexts affect potential interpretations of these artworks. Drawing on Tatja Scholte's approach to site-specific installations as dynamic relational networks and Henri Lefebvre's theories on space and time, I examine how the meanings of site-related works are constructed and evolve over time.

321 An example of a collaborative re-exhibition of Paul's work that continued a dialogue 'beyond site' or beyond the archive was an installation titled *Weather Stations*, presented as part of a group exhibition *Huarere: Weather Eye, Weather Ear* at Te Tuhi gallery, Auckland (2023). *Weather Stations* was an outdoor, site-specific installation that Paul originally developed as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf on Waiheke Island. However, re-presenting *Weather Stations* posed challenges, because Paul developed it as site-specific project and because some of the original components were missing.

To address these complexities, I drew on a theoretical framework put forward by historian and conservation scholar Tatja Scholte in her book *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums: Staging Contemporary Art* (2022), in which she conceptualises site-specific installations as events or performances. I discuss Scholte's theoretical framework in more depth in Chapter Four. Rather than determining a conceptual strategy for the exhibition myself as the 'Paul Cullen Archive', I invited two emerging artists, J. A. Kennedy and Ammon Ngakuru, to collaborate with the Paul Cullen Archive to reconfigure the installation for Te Tuhi's courtyard. Ngakuru worked with Paul as an artist assistant between 2016 and 2017, participating in the installation of his *Tidal* series (c. 2015–16) and his installation *Things from Geology (Underworld)* in 2017 as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf on Waiheke Island. Between 2020 and 2022, J. A. Kennedy worked with me in the Henderson warehouse, assisting with archiving and the reinstallation of Paul's *Discovery of Oxygen* series.

Digital Transmutations

You're standing in a virtual space ☐ constructed from countless data points ☐ this is the Henderson warehouse where Paul's archive is stored ☐ a world where past and present converge ☐ you are standing with your back to the entry door and to the left ☐ there's a tall industrial shelf laden with textures and materials ☐ a patchwork of precision and distortion ☐ blue rocks ☐ boxes ☐ houses with roseate roofs ☐ step back ☐ black-and-white square wooden poles visually mirror the horizontal orange shelf-beams with regularly spaced rectangular stickers creating a visual symmetry ☐ below ☐ a yellow zigzag foldout table with a circular hole morphs into a long white mass held in with clamps on a middle shelf ☐ everything is interconnected ☐ a continuous field in this reconstructed reality ☐ objects that should stand alone blend into one another ☐ their boundaries lost ☐ turn to the left ☐ walk past the legless table towards the roller door and the pile of green hose twisting in and out of the concrete flooring ☐ into the narrow passage flanked by more shelving ☐ past grey ☐ numbered archival boxes ☐ now look up ☐ see the artwork components on the top shelf ☐ the tallest extending ☐ merging into silver mesh islands separated by white voids ☐ keep walking to the kitchen ☐ there's the table where I'm writing this ☐

I started exploring photogrammetry and LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) during a COVID-19 lockdown, thinking it might offer interesting possibilities for archiving and activating Paul's work online. These processes involve capturing the object from multiple angles, allowing for a detailed and accurate representation in digital form. While these technologies are not new, Apple's launch of its first LiDAR-capable device in March 2020 (the iPad Pro) democratised them, making them accessible and affordable. I wondered whether a digital model of an artwork could substitute for the real thing. Although I suspected it couldn't fully replicate the experience of the actual artwork, I was curious to explore its potential to enhance archival processes. Unlike a single photograph, a digital 3D model can offer a multifaceted view, providing a broader perspective of the artwork. Through my direct experimentation with creating scans, I also became aware of the complexities involved in accurately capturing objects in 3D and the potential for shifts and distortions to occur during this process. The optical properties of some materials, including patterns, transparency, reflectivity, light absorbency, or surface irregularities, increase the chance of warped textures, phantom forms or anomalies in the 3D mesh. These issues are evident in scans I've made of a piece from Paul's *Discovery of Oxygen* series that incorporates a glass tank and a waterproofed cardboard box sitting on a white metal sup-

port structure. A motorised water pump in an upturned table facilitates water circulation through plastic tubing connecting these different components.

In an early LiDAR scan, the work appears shattered, marked by blank spots, misalignments, and haphazardly dispersed surface artefacts, parts of the box, tank, and tubing appear embedded into the floor and concrete-block wall. In another scan, only the edges of the tank are visible, where strips of silicone used as a sealant and the overlapping glass sides create distinct areas that the LiDAR technology can detect. A bulkhead fitting that Paul installed on the bottom of the tank for the tubing to pass through is suspended in mid-air without support. In the shiny, resin-coated interior of the cardboard box, a dark shadow is baked in, capturing the moment of scanning when bright sunlight was streaming through the warehouse skylights. Attempting to improve on my scan and better capture the transparent glass surface, I improvised fiducial markers by wrapping clear tape around the tank sides, drawing dots using a black vivid marker, producing yet another translation: a glass-tank-turned-solid-mass with large, irregular holes.³²² Next, I tried a 3D scanning spray, which leaves a thin frosted coating on the surface, resulting in a model with fewer holes but more significant warping, rendering the top of the tank undulating yet rigidly frozen.

Of course, with proficiency in Blender or other 3D modelling software, I could refine these models, smooth out the warped textures and erase the visual imperfections, the holes, and the tape marks to achieve a perfect-looking model and a deceptively glass-like surface for the tank. These software tools, adept at rendering and sculpting, enable meticulous editing and enhancement. But technical perfection seems contrary to what I imagine Paul's approach might have been had he worked with these technologies. His interest in the unpredictable and the imperfect would likely have found a resonance in the distortions emerging from my scanning attempts. I think he would have been more fascinated by the transmutations, the merging of objects and spaces, the shifting textures, the missing parts, and the models with impossible balance. This realisation led to a dilemma: If every scan I make produces a unique model, influenced by external factors and my methodology, how do I choose which distortions or imperfections to preserve if I am not striving for a perfect replica of an artwork? Have I transitioned from archiving to art making?

I decided that the most conceptually relevant aspect of this technology for archiving Paul's work was its potential to recontextualise digital models of

322 Fiducial markers are specific reference points that assist in aligning and tracking objects during the 3D scanning process.

artworks within an environment. This presented an opportunity to realise in virtual reality five hypothetical site-specific installations that Paul proposed in 2011, part of a publication we collaborated on called *r/p/m* (revolutions per minute). These were envisioned for locations in Spain, Sweden, England, Aotearoa, and the Netherlands. Ry and I scanned the proposed artworks in the studio, but all of the works had elements that rotated or moved, so we engaged a 3D artist to animate these for us. The next step required us to source collaborators in each city to create LiDAR scans of the specified sites. Unfortunately, finding a collaborator in Spain to scan the Court of the Lions (Patio de los Leones) at the Alhambra proved challenging, so we left this one out. But we created the other four with the assistance of our associates over ten months. When all the models were complete, I placed the finished location scans into Mozilla Hubs rooms, which are virtual spaces designed for interactive online collaboration, and then positioned the artworks.³²³

You are standing in Linnaeus Garden in Uppsala ☐ Sweden ☐ right beside *Table: R2* ☐ where a continuous stream of water flows from a copper pipe attached to the top of this structure into the pond ☐ entering without a splash ☐ the blue hose you see carries water up to the museum ☐ delivering it to an inverted table on the floor that is always three-quarters full ☐ an overflow hose carries excess water out ☐ maintaining this constant state of equilibrium ☐ but of course this is an illusion ☐ in his *Linnaeus* concept Paul indicates that the water would be propelled through these pipes by gravity and electricity ☐ there would be an electric pump installed in the pond ☐ but in this virtual world these forces don't exist ☐ or at least don't operate in the way we know them to in the outside world ☐ gravity here can be manipulated ☐ depending on your intention ☐ activate fly mode and you'll see what I mean ☐ you can soar as high as you wish ☐

Our next stop is the Musick Memorial Radio Station in Tāmaki Makaurau ☐ Aotearoa ☐ you land in a room that leads to several other rooms filled with equipment ☐ maps and photographs adorn the walls and in the centre of the space you see *r/p/m [3]* ☐ the table with the rotating bucket ☐ this is a reconstruction I've created because we don't hold this work in the archive ☐ the bucket is one we use for cleaning ☐ it is soiled and marked ☐ but you don't see this in scan ☐ the table is from an artwork called *Moon* ☐ on the table's

323 *Digital r/p/m proposition*: four virtual installations, was included in *Huarere: Weather Eye, Weather Ear* at Te Tuhi, part of the World Weather Project, 2022–2023. I developed this digital project under the Paul Cullen Archive. It was realised with the assistance of contributors from around the world. For the contributors' list, funding details, and more information about the installation please see the Paul Cullen Archive website. Unfortunately, Mozilla Hubs was shut down on May 31, 2024, so the four virtual installations can no longer be viewed.

surface ☐ there's a circular imprint created by the half-model moon from the original work ☐ its diameter is wider than the bucket ☐ with the bucket now rotating slightly off-centre compared to the central axis of the moon ☐ you can walk through the walls here ☐ try it ☐ you'll emerge into an alien landscape outside the building ☐ fly out further and you'll see that the radio station model is situated on the *r/p/m* publication cover ☐ the green plant forms protruding through the blue image make it seem as though the land the station sits on is submerged in water ☐



Figure 117: Screenshots of a LiDAR representation of the Paul Cullen Archive in the Henderson warehouse, created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2023.



Figure 118: 3D models of components from Paul Cullen's *Discovery of Oxygen*, created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2023.



Figure 119: Multiple views of 3D models created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen, 2023, based on Paul Cullen's artworks: *The Orange Theory* (top), *Fox Circle* (middle), and *Geographer [1]* (bottom).

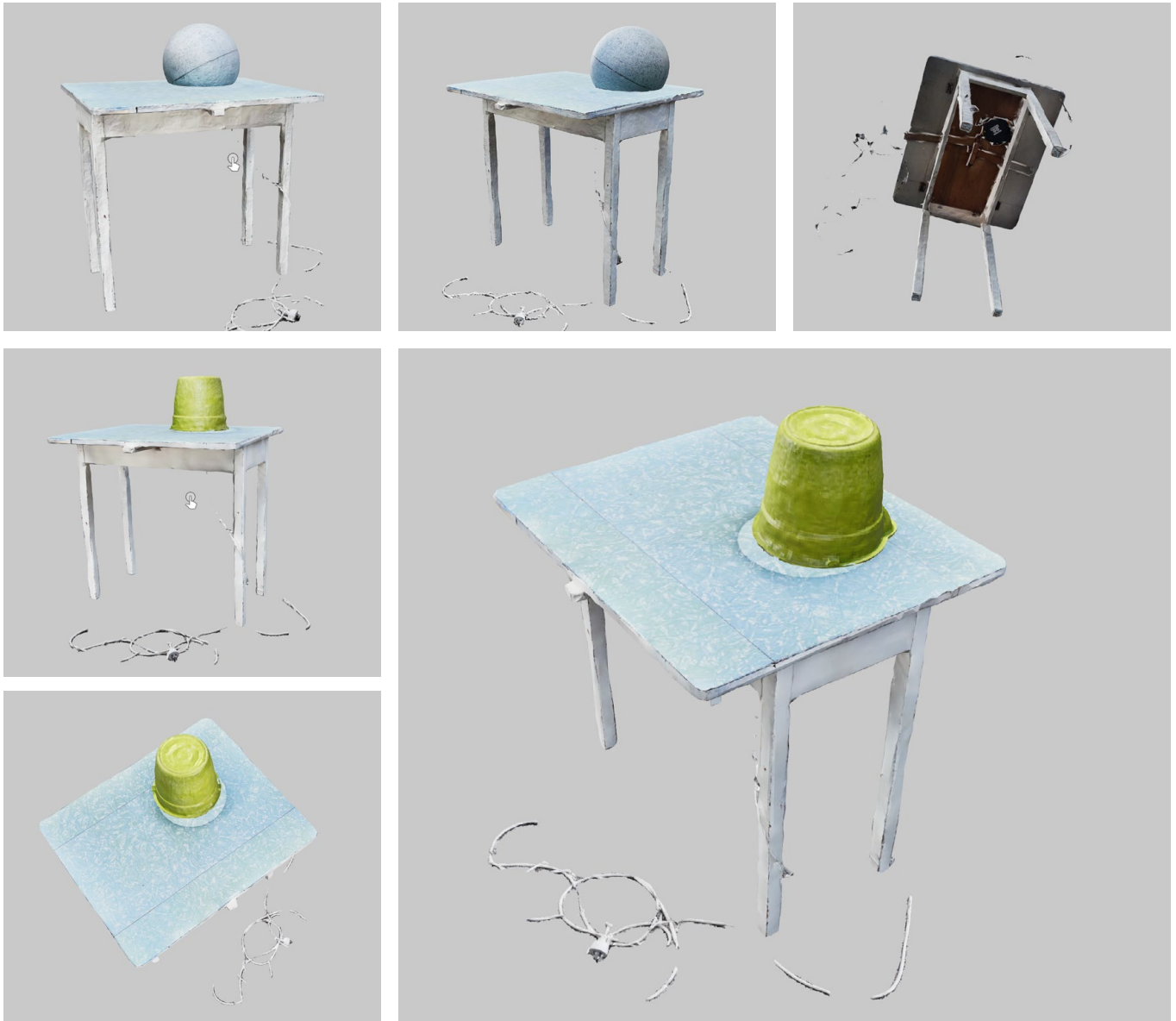
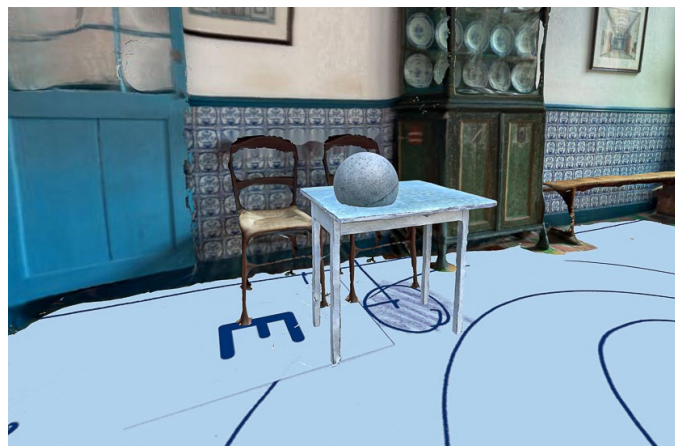
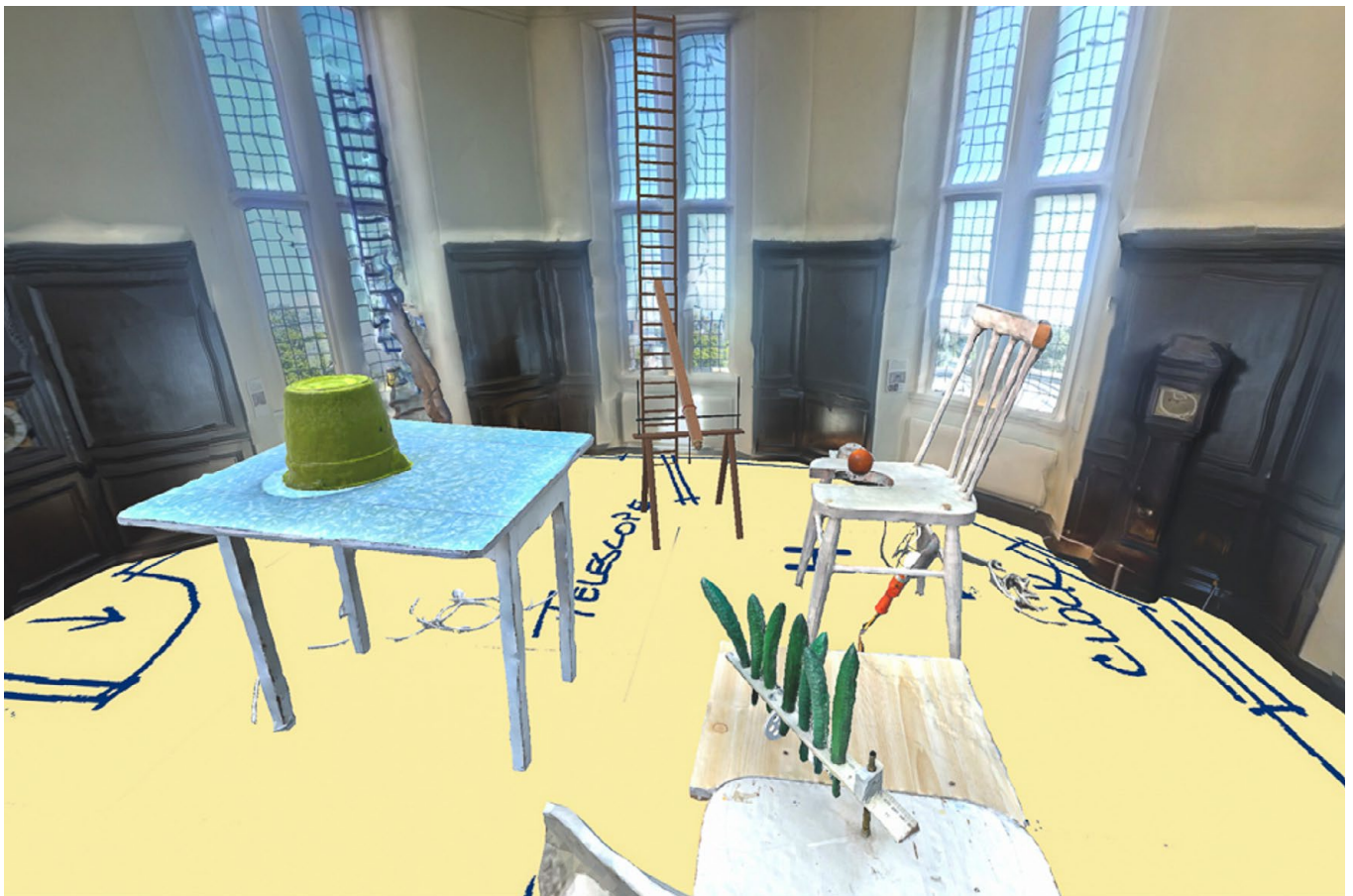
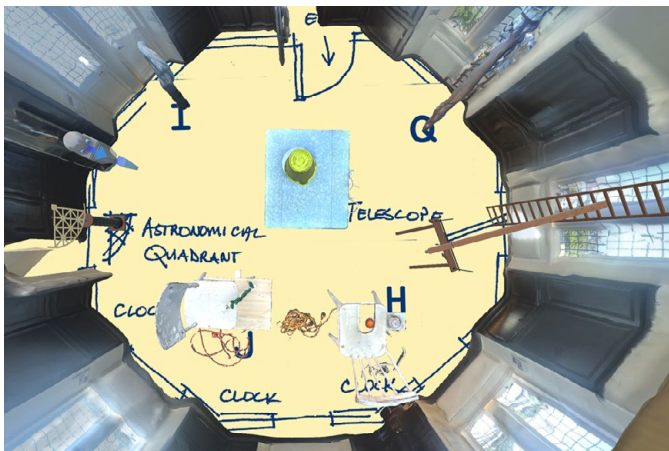
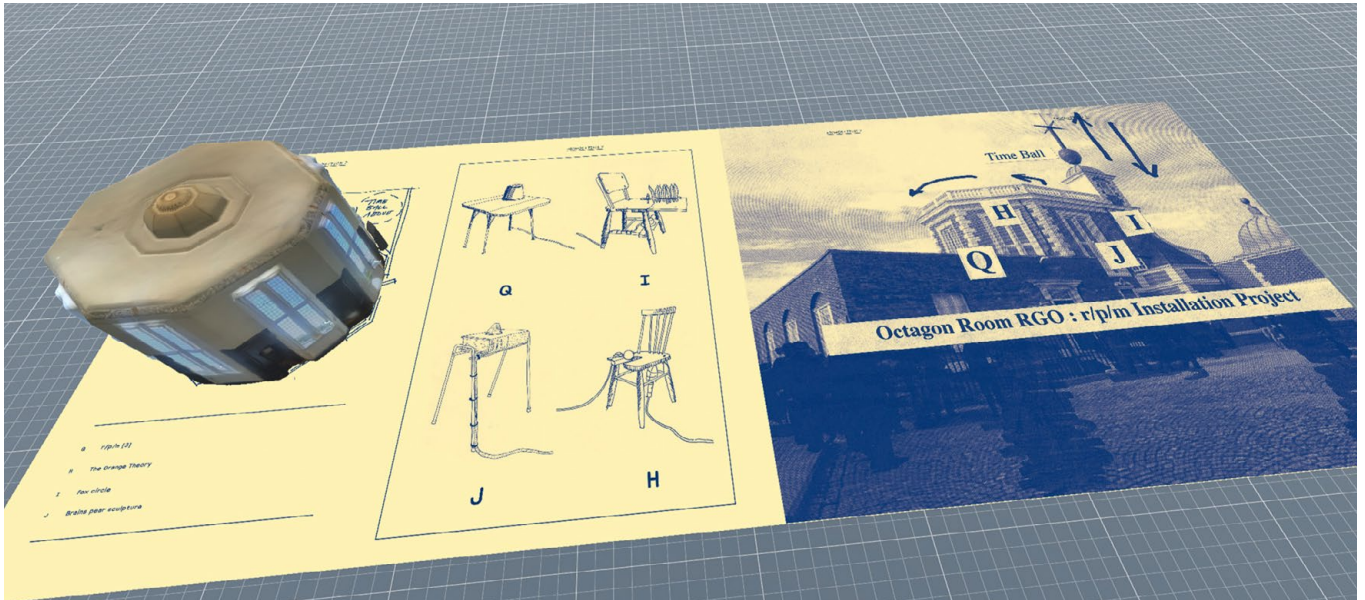


Figure 120: Multiple views of 3D models created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen, 2023, based on Paul Cullen's artworks: *Moon* (top) and *r/p/m [3]* (bottom).

Figure 121: (page 180) The *Planetarium* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring a digital models of Paul Cullen's *Moon* and *The Orange Theory* positioned in a 3D scan of Eise Eisinga Planetarium, completed by Tomek Dersu Aaron. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 122: (page 181) The *Octagon Room* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring a digital models of Paul Cullen's *The Orange Theory*, *r/p/m [3]*, and *Fox Circle* positioned in a 3D scan of the Octagon Room, completed by Phoenix Tui. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.





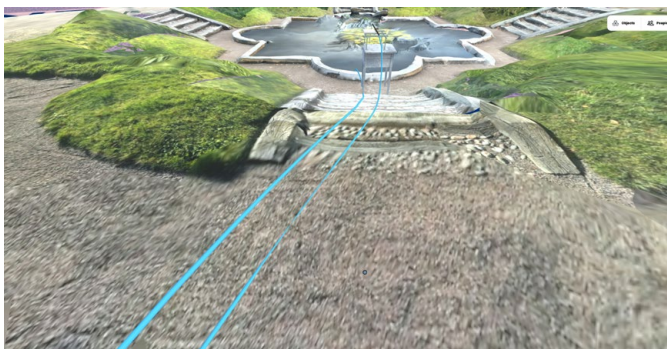
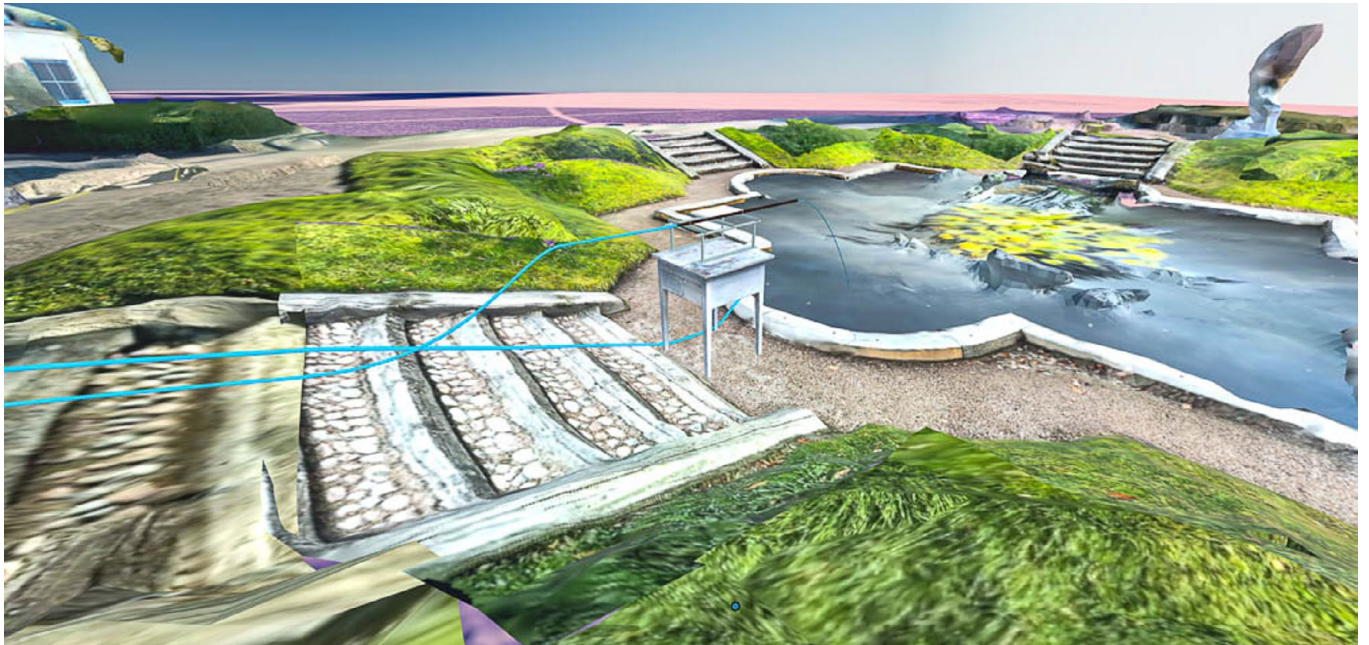


Figure 123: The *Linnaeus* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring a digital construction of Paul Cullen's propositional *Table: R2*, 2011. This 3D model, derived from the artist's drawing, incorporates a table component from *Discovery of Oxygen*, scanned by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. The model also includes hose and water animations, built by Felipe Pulfer in consultation with Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen, and is positioned in a 3D scan of the Linnaeus Garden created by Biyanto Rebin. Model positioned on the cover of Paul Cullen's *r/p/m* Proposition #4: *Linnaeus Project for the Linnaeus Garden, Uppsala, Sweden*. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

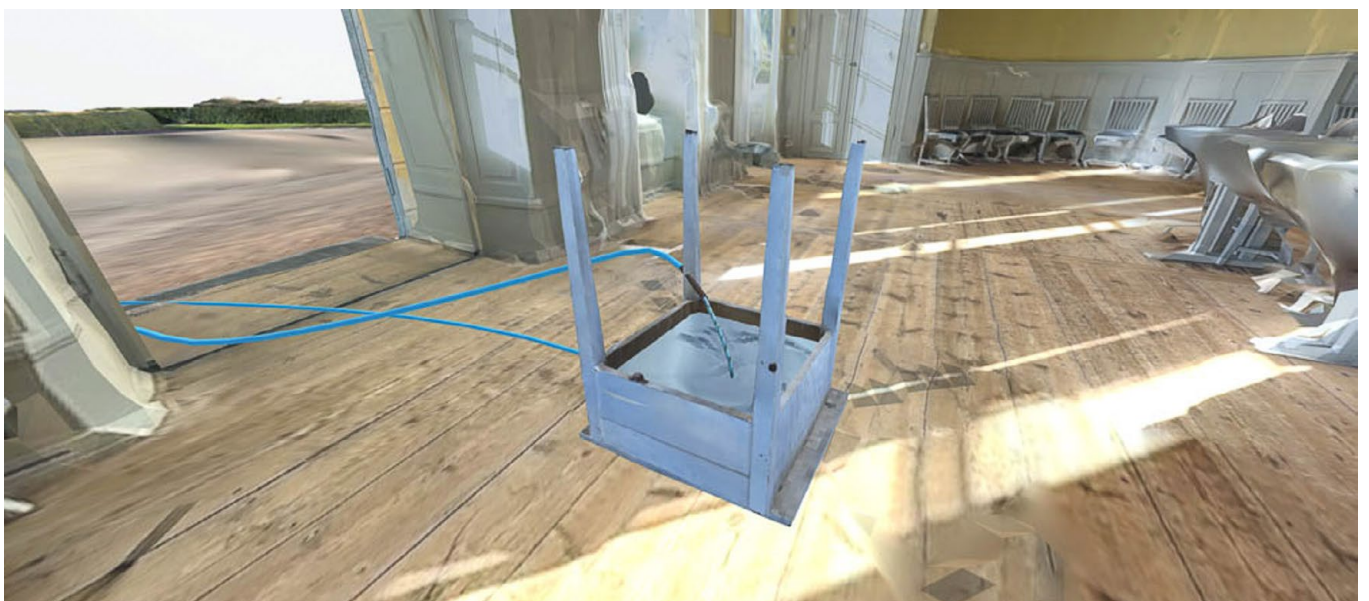


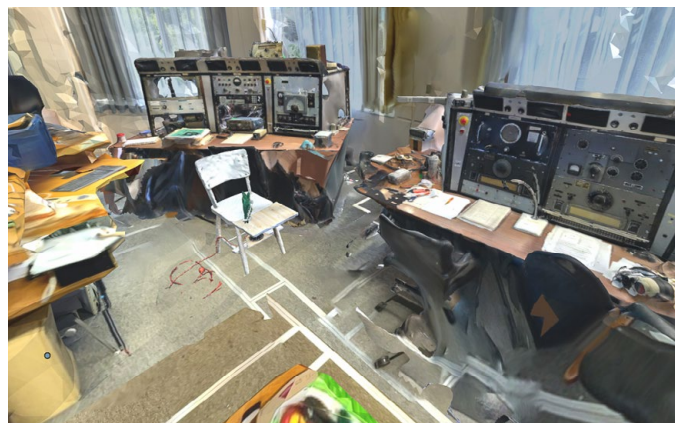
Figure 124: The *Linnaeus* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring a digital construction of Paul Cullen's propositional *Table: R2*, 2011. This 3D model, derived from the artist's drawing, incorporates a table component from *Discovery of Oxygen*, scanned by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. The model also includes hose and water animations, built by Felipe Pulfer under the supervision of Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen. *Table: R2* model positioned in a 3D scan of the Linnaeus Museum created by Biyanto Rebin. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

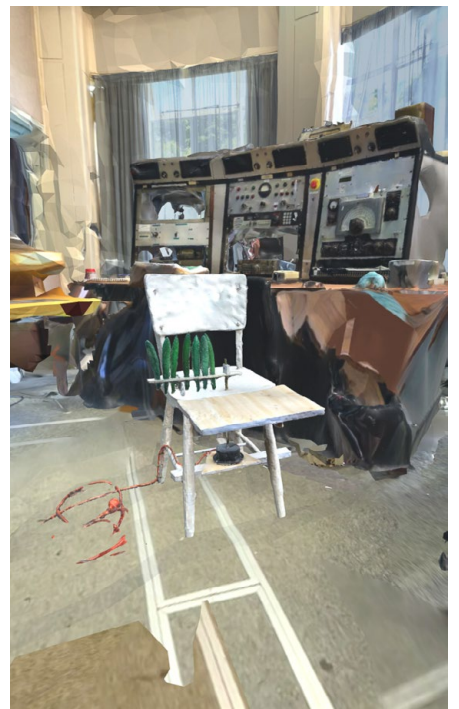
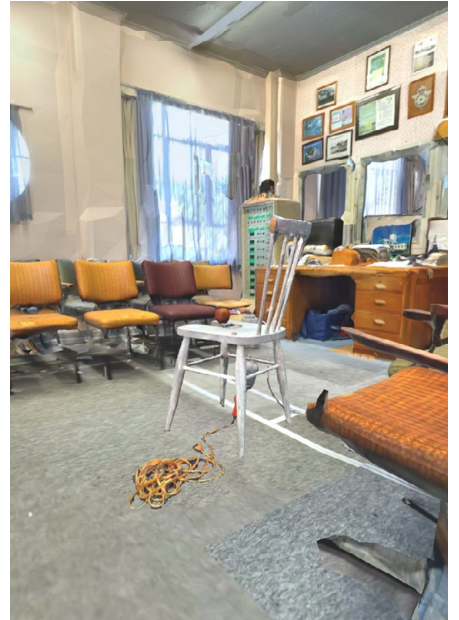


Figure 125: Digital model of the Musick Memorial Radio Station and adjacent trees on the cover of Paul Cullen's *r/p/m* Proposition #3: *Musick*, created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2023.

Figure 126: (page 185) The *Musick* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring digital models of Paul Cullen's *Geographer* [1], *The Orange Theory*, and *r/p/m* [3] positioned in the Musick Memorial Radio Station Meeting Room, and *Fox Circle* positioned in the Operating Room. D models and location scans created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 127: (page 186) The *Musick* installation in Mozilla Hubs, 2023, featuring digital models of *The Orange Theory* and *r/p/m* [3] positioned in the Musick Memorial Radio Station Meeting Room, and *Fox Circle* positioned in the Operating Room. 3D models and location scans created by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Ry Tweedie-Cullen. Screenshots by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.





Musick Memorial Radio Station Level One Operating Rooms



Meeting Room

Figure 128: Digital model of the Level One Operating Rooms and Meeting Room at Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata / Musick Point. Created by Ry Tweedie-Cullen and Layla Tweedie-Cullen using LiDAR, 2023.

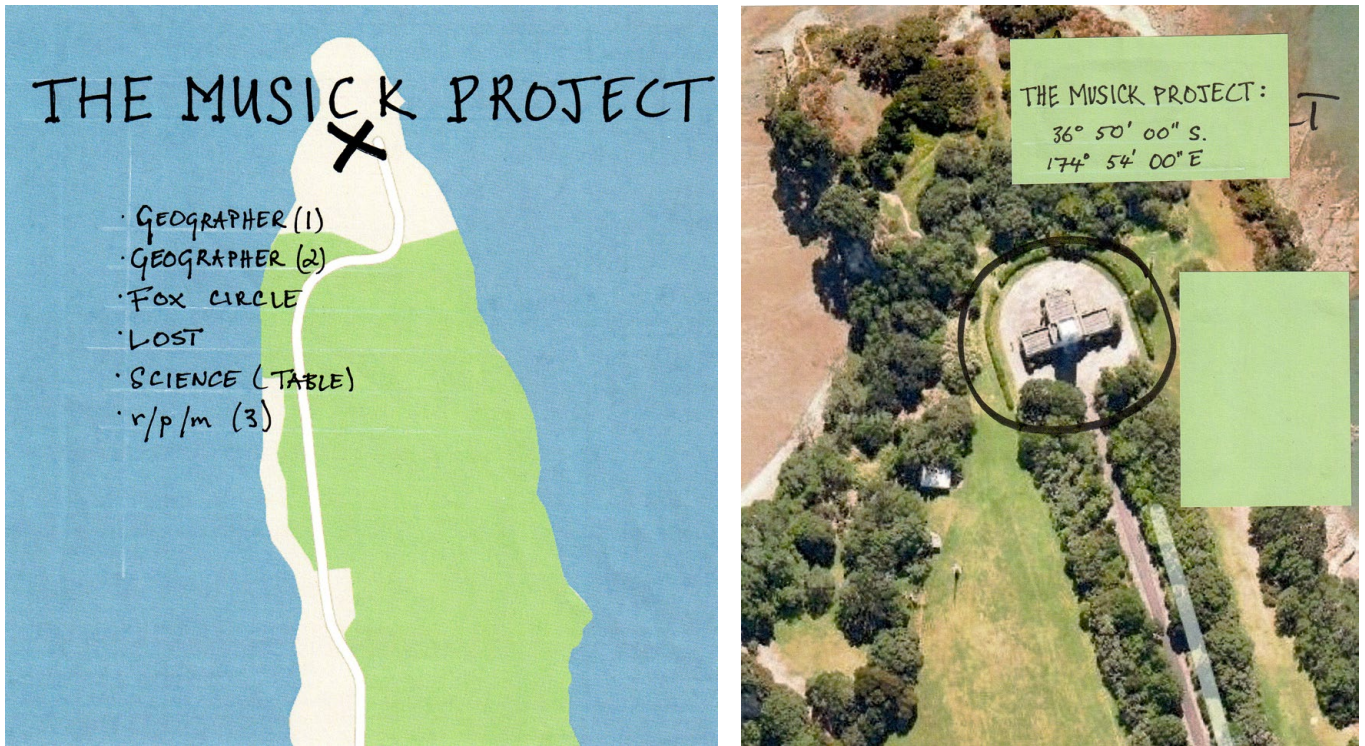


Figure 129: Paul Cullen, drawings for *r/p/m* publication Proposition #3: *Musick* cover, 2011.

4. Staging the Archive—Intersecting Narratives on Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point

4.1. Setting the Scene: The Circles Tangle

This chapter unfolds the narrative of two distinct yet interconnected events I orchestrated in 2023 at Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point—a reserve on the headland of a narrow peninsula in East Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. The first event was a practical and performative execution of Paul’s 2011 speculative proposal to install a selection of his *r/p/m* (revolutions per minute) sculptures in the Musick Memorial Radio Station on Te Naupata Reserve. This hypothetical installation was presented as one of five gatefold covers, wrapping the publication *r/p/m*, a project Paul and I collaborated on. The second event was a dawn fire ceremony led by artist and orator Pita Turei (Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, Ngāti Pāoa, Ngā Rauru Kīitahi). Turei’s twenty-year-long practice of fire ceremony is deeply rooted in the Māori concept of *ahi kā*, which loosely translates as the burning fires of occupation or continuous occupation.³²⁴ However, before I examine these accounts, I will first set the scene, akin to a prologue for this chapter. This section

324 According to the *Te Aka Māori Dictionary*, “*ahi kā*” means “burning fires of occupation, continuous occupation—title to land through occupation by a group, generally over a long period of time. The group is able, through the use of *whakapapa*, to trace back to primary ancestors who lived on the land. They held influence over the land through their military strength and defended successfully against challenges, thereby keeping their fires burning.” *Te Aka Māori Dictionary*, s.v. “*Ahi Kā*,” accessed June 3, 2024, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=ahi+ka>.

will include a brief site history and outline Paul's longstanding interest in this location. I will also recount my first visit there with Paul in 2011, when I first became aware of this unique site while we worked on the *r/p/m* publication project. This prologue lays essential groundwork for the narratives and analyses to follow.

Te Naupata, located within the rohe (territory) of the Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki tribe, holds deep cultural significance for the kaitiaki (guardians) or tangata whenua, the original inhabitants of this land. Ngāi Tai tradition ties the iwi's lineage to the arrival of the Tainui waka (canoe) from Hawaiiiki in the fourteenth century. This waka journeyed up the Tāmaki River, traversed the portage to the Manukau Harbour and then moved along the west coast, eventually arriving in Kawhia on the west coast of Aotearoa. A significant marker of this legacy is the presence of the rare tainui tree (*Pomaderris apetala*) at Te Naupata and on the North Island's west coast, said to have sprouted from the waka's cross-beams. Notably, a 2018 Treaty of Waitangi Settlement has facilitated the return of the peninsula's end section to Ngāi Tai Ki Tāmaki and the reinstatement of the Māori place name Te Naupata, which I will use throughout this chapter. However, when I visited with Paul, he referred to the site's traditional name, Te Waiarohia, which historically encompassed both the headland and a Māori pā (fortified village). This pā is believed to have been established around 900 AD. I have since learned that an earlier name for the pā was Te Waiarohia o Ngariki, which had evolved by the eighteenth century to Te Waiarohia o Ngaitai.³²⁵

During my visit to Te Naupata with Paul, we walked out to the headland's northern tip. From there, we could see the Tāmaki River to the west, the coast to the south, and to the north, Motukorea (Browns Island) with Rangitoto in the distance. I recall Paul's fascination with this place and its history. He shared insights about the promontory's past as a pā, Te Waiarohia, noting the location's strategic outlook, proximity to the water, and natural fortification due to its elevated position. He explained that the headland was renamed Musick Point in the mid-twentieth century after Captain Edwin Musick, a pioneering Pan American World Airways aviator who established the first airmail and passenger flight from the USA to New Zealand in 1937.³²⁶ Through my research, I have learned that tragically, Captain Musick and his crew died in 1938 when their flying boat, *Samoan Clipper*, exploded en route to New Zealand from Pago Pago in

325 Matthews & Matthews Architects, "Te Waiarohia o Ngai Tai Paa, Te Naupata Musick Point, Manukau City, Auckland: Conservation Plan September 2008," 1.

326 I have verified this date in the following sources: Fairfield, *Te Waiarohia o Ngaitai*, 59; Matthews & Matthews Architects, "Te Waiarohia o Ngai Tai Paa, Te Naupata Musick Point, Manukau City, Auckland: Conservation Plan September 2008," 59–61.

American Sāmoa.³²⁷ In recognition of his contributions, the Musick Memorial Radio Station was built on the site, commencing operations in January 1942. I also remember Paul commenting on the architectural design of the building, thought to echo the aesthetics of an aeroplane: the two-level section facing the sea represents the aircraft's nose or cockpit, the lateral extensions evoke wings, the central tower suggests the fuselage or main body and vertical stabiliser, and the formal gardens to the rear of the building create an impression of a runway or a jet stream trailing a plane.³²⁸



Figure 130: The Musick Memorial Radio Station Tower Room (window looks south over the road leading to the station entrance), Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point. Photograph by Paul Cullen, 2011.



Figure 131: The Musick Memorial Radio Station Operating Room, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point. Photograph by Paul Cullen, 2011.



Figure 132: The Radio Maintenance Depot, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point. Photograph by Paul Cullen, 2011.

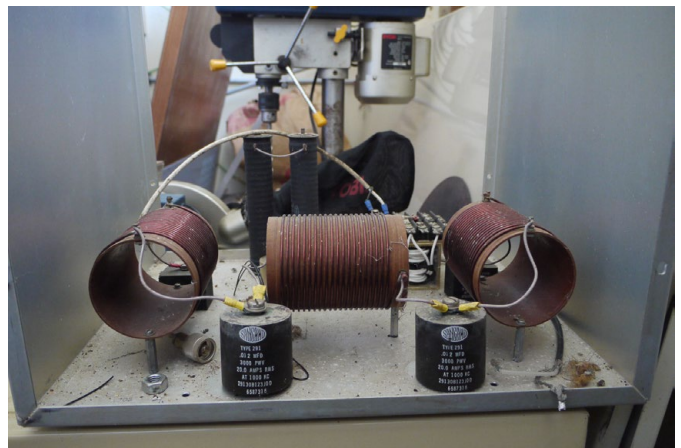


Figure 133: Component from a transmitter or receiver at the Musick Memorial Radio Station. Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point. Photograph by Paul Cullen, 2011.

327 Fairfield, *Te Waiarohia o Ngaitai*, 59–61; Matthews & Matthews Architects, “Te Waiarohia o Ngai Tai Paa, Te Naupata Musick Point, Manukau City, Auckland: Conservation Plan September 2008,” 1.

328 I have cross-referenced the information I remember Paul telling me in the following sources: Fairfield, *Te Waiarohia o Ngaitai*, 64; Matthews & Matthews Architects, “Te Waiarohia o Ngai Tai Paa, Te Naupata Musick Point, Manukau City, Auckland: Conservation Plan September 2008,” 63.

Musick Memorial Radio Station initially provided twenty-four-hour regional and international maritime, emergency, and aeronautical radio services.³²⁹ However, by 1972 long-range aviation communication had moved to Māngere Airport. Auckland Radio ZLF operated at the site until 1966, and Auckland Radio ZLD, which focused on marine communication, continued until New Zealand's coastal radio system closed in 1993.³³⁰ The building is now used by the Musick Point Radio Group (MPRG), an incorporated society of licensed amateur (ham) radio operators interested in protecting and maintaining the facility.³³¹ This volunteer group, which has permission to occupy the building from Spark (formerly Telecom), a telecommunications and digital services company, is dedicated to preserving the vintage radio equipment and maintaining the facility. They use the callsigns ZL1ZLD and ZL1ZLF.³³²

On our visit, Paul and I were given access to the Musick Memorial Radio Station building, which is typically closed to the public. This opportunity arose after he initiated a conversation with an MPRG member near the building entrance, leading to an impromptu guided tour. We explored rooms containing significant collections of historical radio equipment, archives, and materials relating to the station's activities and former operations. We later incorporated documentation Paul took during this visit into the *r/p/m* publication project. Paul returned to Te Naupata in 2016 to make a series of temporary installations around the radio station building as part of his ongoing *Provisional Arrangements* series (c. 2014–17).³³³

I found a spread titled *Musick Attempt* in an undated wordbook by Paul (c. 2010–11).³³⁴ On the left page, he has listed eighteen physical features and structures. Opposite this, he has sketched a map of Te Naupata peninsula, which he has

329 Matthews & Matthews Architects, "Te Waiarohia o Ngai Tai Paa, Te Naupata Musick Point, Manukau City, Auckland: Conservation Plan September 2008," 2.

330 "Welcome to Musick Point," Musick Point Radio Group, accessed October 12, 2023, <https://musickpointradio.org/>.

331 "The Group," Musick Point Radio Group, accessed October 12, 2023, <https://musickpointradio.org/the-group/>.

332 "Welcome to Musick Point."

333 In Paul's files, I have found documentation of a series of temporary installations he later made at Te Naupata Reserve in 2016, as part of his *Provisional Arrangements* series. He also made notes and sketches towards these in a workbook dated 2015. These works, which exist solely as documentation, incorporated a yellow deckchair, green rubber mat and black-and-white-striped sticks he used in the installations on Rentons Beach at Ihumātao (discussed in Chapter Three). Some of these arrangements were installed on the concrete roof of a World War II emergency radio bunker constructed in 1942, located about two hundred metres south of the Musick Memorial Radio Station building. Others were sited on a concrete base that once supported a radio broadcasting mast. I sourced information on the radio bunker and identified the mast bases in the following sources: Matthews & Matthews Architects, "Te Waiarohia o Ngai Tai Paa, Te Naupata Musick Point, Manukau City, Auckland: Conservation Plan September 2008," 59, 61, 63; and Fairfield, *Te Waiarohia o Ngaitai*, 64.

334 Paul Cullen's workbook #420, undated.

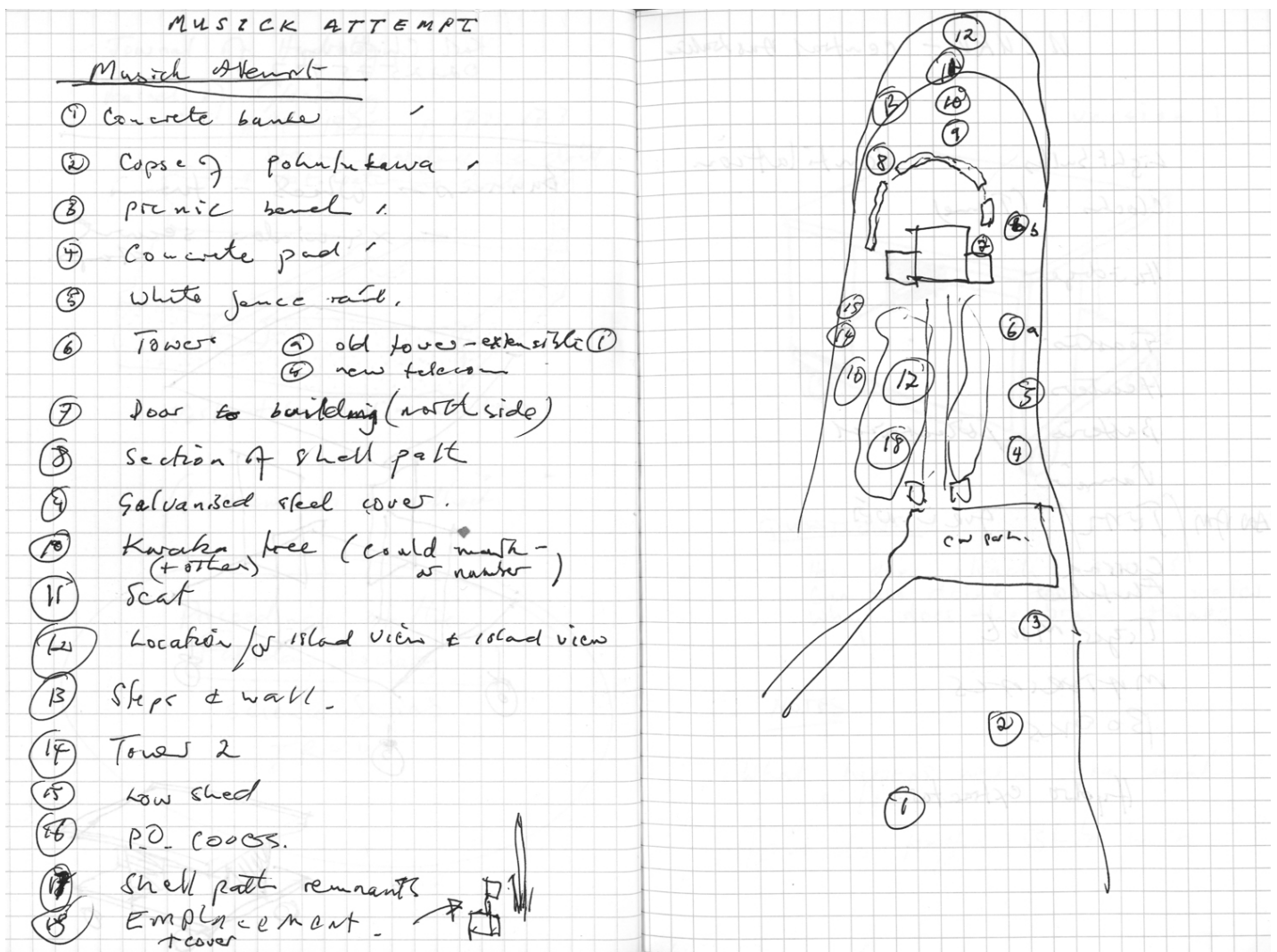


Figure 134: Page from Paul Cullen's workbook, c. 2010–11, featuring an annotated drawing of Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, including the Musick Memorial Radio Station.

annotated with the numbers 1–18, implying that the list identifies potential sites for sculptural installations. The map provides reference points for orientation, featuring elements such as the carpark, contour lines near the peninsula tip, the Musick Memorial Radio Station building, the semi-circular hedge at the station's front, and the runway driveway. His layout suggests a detailed plan for situating artworks in relation to the landscape and architectural features.

In his 2007 Doctor of Fine Arts (DocFA) exegesis, "The Chemistry of Familiar Objects", Paul outlines *Attempts* as a project rooted in a diagrammatic concept, integrating textual and photographic elements to document each installation. His captions for each of the photographs documenting an *Attempts* action include the location and date it took place, thereby charting the project's geographical and chronological sequence (figures 30, 138, 139). He elaborates that each new addition to *Attempts* retrospectively expands the 'virtual diagram', emphasising

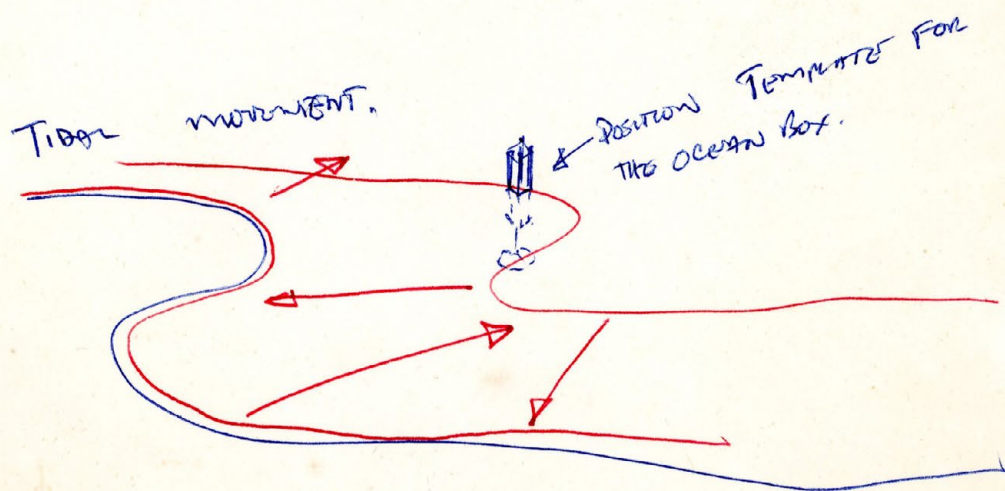
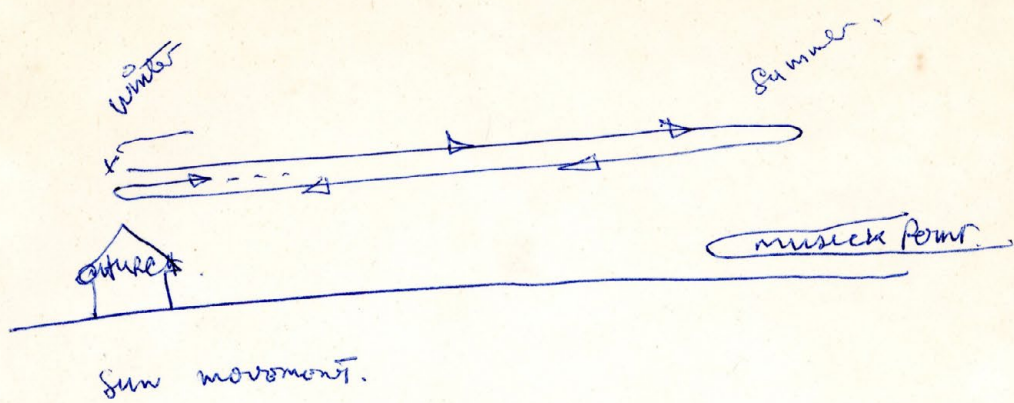


Figure 135: Paul Cullen, drawing from "Notes towards the Ocean Box", a folder of twenty-two loose pages containing sketches and notes, 1978–80.

that “The site is defined by relations of proximity between points or elements.”³³⁵ In the workbook containing the *Musick Attempt* spread, Paul has also made notes and sketches towards the *r/p/m* publication project and the propositional installations on the covers, indicating that *Musick Attempt* might represent an initial exploration towards the *Musick* cover concept. In his exegesis, Paul includes “Musick Point” in a list of nineteen local and international locations where he had previously installed temporary works as part of the *Attempts* series between 1999 and 2006. His intervention at Musick Point was realised in December 2002 (figure 138).

I have uncovered further evidence of Paul’s longstanding interest in and awareness of Te Naupata / Musick Point in the Henderson archive. Amongst his drawings, I found a brown manila folder with a handwritten title, “Notes towards the Ocean Box”, dated 1979–80. Inside, there were twenty-two loose pages of notes, sketches, and illustrations. On one page, he had drawn a diagram illustrating the cyclical movement between summer and winter, which he had annotated with “Musick Point”, “Church”, and “Sun Movement”. Another diagram illustrates the *Ocean Box* and its relationship with tidal movements. *Ocean Box* seems to be a speculative sculptural installation designed to interact with the tidal movements, responding to the ebb and flow of the water, though its exact function or form is unclear. In several other drawings in the folder Paul indicates its placement on the foreshore of King Edward Parade in Devonport, close to where we lived on Church Street. The label “Church”, written over a house-like form (a square with a pitched roof), perhaps references the Holy Trinity church that was directly opposite our house. Alternatively, it might denote the 1890 Presbyterian church in Devonport that was relocated to Mount Cambria Reserve in 1978 and turned into the Devonport Museum the year before Paul began working on his *Ocean Box* concept.

King Edward Parade, connecting with Church Street and running along the waterfront, extends towards and terminates just before Maungauika (North Head), a volcanic headland situated on the northern shoreline of the Waitematā Harbour, west of Te Naupata / Musick Point. While Paul’s sketches in the folder don’t elaborate further on his reasons for including Musick Point, I infer from this material his interest in the spatial relationship between Maungauika and Te Naupata / Musick Point, which stand as headlands on opposing sides of the Waitematā Harbour, framing the harbour’s expanse that includes the Tāmaki River entrance. The positioning of these headlands is one factor that can influence tidal patterns within these waters, suggesting that Paul may have been attuned to such geographical landmarks and other environmental factors that play a role in the region’s tidal dynamics.

D Geographer [1]
Metal chair, wooden stool, globe, electric motor and cord. 195 x 400 x 400 mm. 2007.

E Geographer [2]
Metal chair, wooden stool, globe, electric motor and cord. 195 x 400 x 400 mm. 2007.

The Orange Theory
Chair, artificial orange, aluminum foil, cable ties, rubber bands, electric light and cord, electric motor and cord. 825 x 400 x 350 mm. 2007.

Loak
Modified hull table, one electric motor, cable ties, electric motor and cord. 825 x 400 x 350 mm. 2007.

PROPOSITION 1

PLANETARIUM

an INSTALLATION

for the EISE EISINGA PLANETARIUM,

FRANKER, THE NETHERLANDS

BY PAUL CULLEN

WORKS situated

in Geographer [1]
in Geographer [2]
in The Orange Theory
in Loak

r/p/m
SPLIT/FOUNTAIN PUBLISHING

PROPOSITION 1

The Eisinga Planetarium is an ornate, a moving model of the solar system, built between 1781 and 1810 by the Dutch astronomer Johann Franz Bode. The mechanism, designed and constructed by the astronomer, is the only one of its kind in the world. It is made of brass, wood and steel, and is a masterpiece of mechanical engineering. The planetarium is a masterpiece of mechanical engineering, and is a masterpiece of mechanical engineering.

The proposition locates four of the Revolution per minute sculptures in the shape of the Planetarium: one in Geographer [1] and Geographer [2], one in The Orange Theory, and one in Loak. The sculptures are made of brass, wood and steel, and are a masterpiece of mechanical engineering. The sculptures are made of brass, wood and steel, and are a masterpiece of mechanical engineering.

PAUL CULLEN
2011

PROPOSITION 1

H

D

PROPOSITION 1

PROPOSITION 1

E

K

PROPOSITION 2

I: Fox Circle

H: Orange Theory

Q: r/p/m [1]

J: Brains Pear Sculpture

Octagon Room RGO : r/p/m Installation Project

r/p/m [1]
Plastic bottle, wooden stool, cable ties, electric motor and cord. 195 x 400 x 400 mm. 2007.

The Orange Theory
Chair, artificial orange, aluminum foil, cable ties, rubber bands, electric light and cord, electric motor and cord. 825 x 400 x 350 mm. 2007.

Fox circle
Chair, wooden stool, brass table, plastic foil, plastic bottle, cable ties, electric motor and cord. 825 x 400 x 350 mm. 2007.

Brains pear sculpture
Chair, wooden stool, rubber bands, electric light and cord, electric motor and cord. 825 x 400 x 350 mm. 2007.

PROPOSITION 2

OCTAGON ROOM

for the OCTAGON ROOM

of the ROYAL OBSERVATORY,

GREENWICH, ENGLAND

BY PAUL CULLEN

WORKS situated

in r/p/m [1]
in The Orange Theory
in Fox circle
in Brains pear sculpture

r/p/m
SPLIT/FOUNTAIN PUBLISHING

PROPOSITION 2

Established in 1775 the Royal Observatory Greenwich was the first observatory built in Britain, and was the first observatory to be built in the world. It is a masterpiece of mechanical engineering, and is a masterpiece of mechanical engineering.

The proposition locates four of the Revolution per minute sculptures in the Octagon Room: one in r/p/m [1], one in The Orange Theory, one in Fox circle, and one in Brains pear sculpture. The sculptures are made of brass, wood and steel, and are a masterpiece of mechanical engineering.

The Royal Observatory Greenwich is in southeast London and has the coordinates 51° 28' 38" N, 0° 00' 00" W. The location of the observatory is the basis for the International Greenwich meridian, which is the basis for the International Greenwich meridian.

PAUL CULLEN
2011

51° 28' 38"
0° 00' 00"

PROPOSITION 2

I

Q

J

H

r/p/m [1]

The Orange Theory

Fox circle

Brains pear sculpture

PROPOSITION 2

PROPOSITION 2

Time Ball

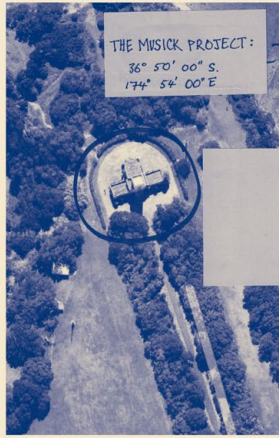
H

I

J

Q

Octagon Room RGO : r/p/m Installation Project



MUSICK

an INSTALLATION
in the MUSICK POINT RADIO
COMMUNICATION BUILDING, AUCKLAND

by PAUL CULLEN

WORKS situated

- B: Science
- D: Geographer [1]
- E: Geographer [2]
- I: fox circle
- K: Lost
- Q: r/p/m [3]

r / p / m
SPLIT/FOUNTAIN PUBLISHING

PROPOSITION 3

For Musick, six *r/p/m* sculptures would be installed amongst existing equipment in rooms of the Radio Communications building. These *r/p/m* sculptures would be: Science (Table), Geographer (1), Geographer (2), Fox Circle, Lost, and *r/p/m* (3).

The Musick Point Radio Communications building houses equipment once employed in monitoring the communications and movements of aircraft and shipping in the Waitemata Harbour and Hauraki Gulf area. Much of this equipment dates back to the middle of last century and, although mostly still functional, is now obsolete.

Musick Point is the headland of a peninsula that forms the eastern shore of the Tamaki River at Bucklands Beach, a suburb of East Auckland. The headland is also known as Te Waiarohia, after an ancient Maori stronghold of the Ngai Tai Iwi tribe.

Coordinates: 36° 50' 00" S, 174° 54' 00" E

PAUL CULLEN
2011

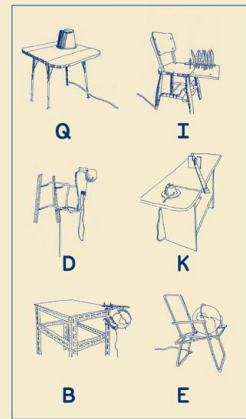
PROPOSITION 1



- B: Science (Table)**
Steel frame tables, wood and wood table, wood table, electric motor and coil, quarter platey functions, glass, glass/metal on glass, drawings on blackboard, installation variable dimensions, 2007
- D: Geographer [1]**
metal chair, wood, wood table, motor, electric cord, 750 x 800 x 600 mm, 2007
- E: Geographer [2]**
metal chair, wood table, cable ties, motor and electric cord, 750 x 800 x 600 mm, 2007
- I: fox circle**
Cable, wire, wood, brass tube, plastic, fly, plastic, drawing, cable ties, electric motor and cord, 825 x 415 x 130 mm, 2007
- K: Lost**
Rooftop hall table, one metre wooden table, new, electric motor and cord, 800 x 400 x 120 mm, 2007
- Q: r/p/m (3)**
Cable, table, wire, motor, electric motor and cord, 780 x 400 x 165 mm, 2010



PROPOSITION 1



MUSICK

an INSTALLATION
in the MUSICK POINT RADIO
COMMUNICATION BUILDING, AUCKLAND

by PAUL CULLEN

WORKS situated

- B: Science
- D: Geographer [1]
- E: Geographer [2]
- I: fox circle
- K: Lost
- Q: r/p/m [3]

r / p / m
SPLIT/FOUNTAIN PUBLISHING

PROPOSITION 3

For Musick, six *r/p/m* sculptures would be installed amongst existing equipment in rooms of the Radio Communications building. These *r/p/m* sculptures would be: Science (Table), Geographer (1), Geographer (2), Fox Circle, Lost, and *r/p/m* (3).

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Musick Point is the headland of a peninsula that forms the eastern shore of the Tamaki River at Bucklands Beach, a suburb of East Auckland. The headland is also known as Te Waiarohia, after an ancient Maori stronghold of the Ngai Tai Iwi tribe.

Coordinates: 36° 50' 00" S, 174° 54' 00" E

PAUL CULLEN
2011

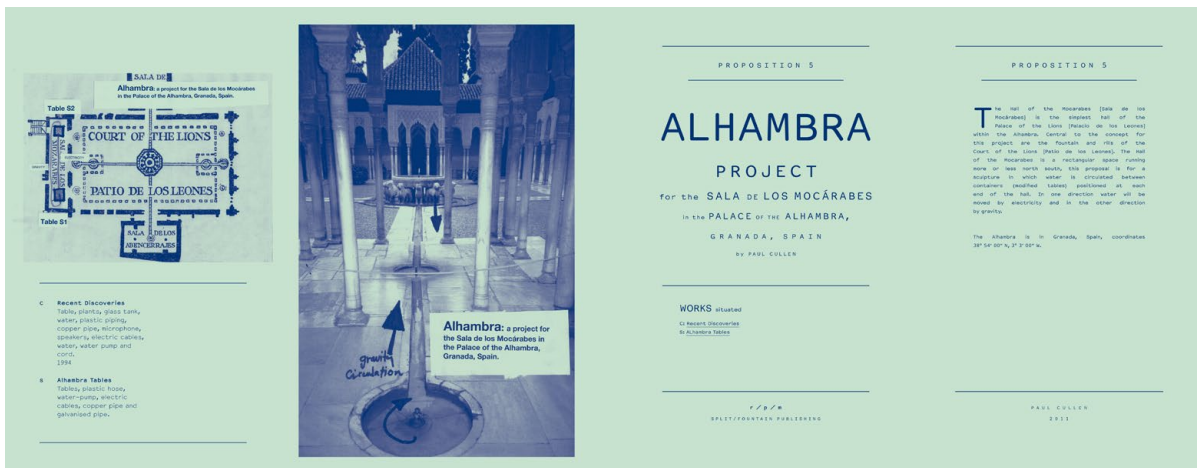
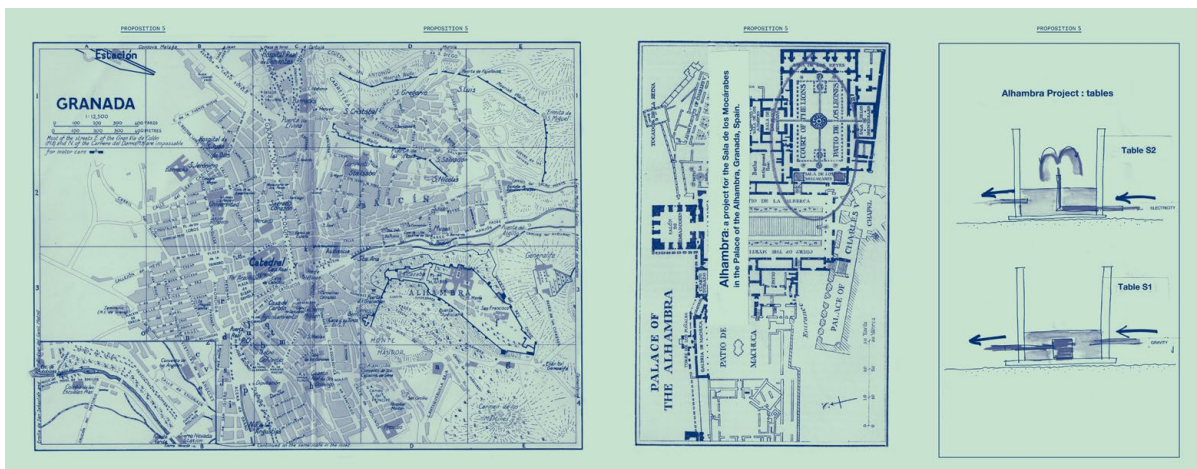
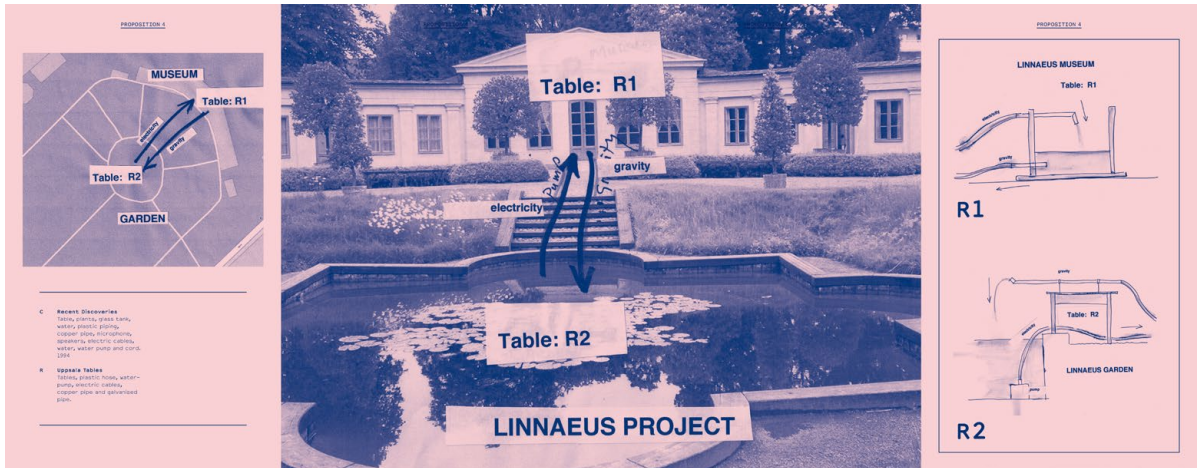


Figure 136: Gatefold covers for Paul Cullen: *r/p/m*, Propositions #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5 (2011), featuring artwork on both the exterior and interior sides. Artwork by Paul Cullen, graphic design by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and Jayme Yen.

4.2. Choreographing Narratives

With this context in place, I will now turn to the focus of this chapter: my realisation of Paul's *Musick* proposition and the physical placement of four *r/p/m* sculptures within the Musick Memorial Radio Station on Te Naupata Reserve. This action extends my practice-based research as discussed in *Digital Transmutations*, where I brought to life four out of five of Paul's propositional *r/p/m* installations in virtual reality: at the Eise Eisinga Planetarium in Franeker, the Netherlands; the Octagon Room in the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England; Linnaeus Garden in Uppsala, Sweden; and the Musick Memorial Radio Station. As archival actions, the virtual propositions manifest an unrealised proposal in a virtual space. However, in adopting a medium not used by Paul, I concluded that these digital renditions diverged too significantly from his practice. Therefore, I decided to revisit the Musick Memorial Radio Station and position the sculptures on-site to align with his working methodologies and deep engagement with site and place, which I have discussed in the previous chapter. This process included two main tasks: the physical transportation and installation of the sculpture at the site and documentation to include them in the archive.

Paul characterised his *r/p/m* sculptures as makeshift assemblages constructed from repurposed furniture, echoing scientific data collection and experimentation processes.³³⁶ The artworks incorporate motorised buckets, model globes, and plastic fruit. Additionally, some sculptures pump water through hosing, buckets, glass tanks, and cardboard boxes that he waterproofed with resin. However, the *Musick* proposition only includes pieces with motorised elements, excluding those with water-based systems. Paul posits that the sculptures not only occupy but actively "configure" the environments in which they are situated.³³⁷ Referencing philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre's conceptualisation of space as a contingent and dialectic entity, he argues, "The social forces that are at work within the spatial field change momentarily, and so it follows that the resulting space, as constituted from these forces and projections, is in a process of negotiation and renegotiation."³³⁸ Paul envisions the sculptures not as static objects but as dynamic participants that continuously redefine spatial interactions.

Through my positioning of *r/p/m* works in situ in the Musick Memorial Radio Station, I aim to facilitate a deeper inquiry into methodologies for genuine interaction and resonance with the site's social, spatial, and historical dimensions. This consideration prompted me to consult with Pita Turei, who has ancestral

336 Paul Cullen, "Paul Cullen: R/P/M Project" (2010), 1.

337 Cullen, 1.

338 Cullen, 1.

connections to Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki, the original inhabitants of Te Naupata, who proposed hosting a dawn fire ceremony near the radio station. Turei’s practice is rooted in ancestral ties to whenua (land). He looks beyond colonial narratives, offering contemporary interpretations of place interlaced with Māori narratives and histories inherent in the landscape. His approach, akin to that of an oral historian, intertwines cultural, environmental, and historical elements, both human and non-human, revealing a multifaceted and experiential narrative of place, which I propose is a performative form of archiving. In this research, I suggest a synergy between Turei’s approach and Paul’s concept of sculptures as active participants in spatial contexts, as both envision an interactive, dynamic environment.



Figure 137: Framed image of the Musick Memorial Radio Station building, c. early 1990s, in the Meeting Room of the Musick Memorial Radio Station building. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen, 2023.

Central to my exploration in this chapter is the work of Tatja Scholte, a historian and conservation scholar. In her book *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums: Staging Contemporary Art* (2022), Scholte proposes a conceptual framework for analysing site-specific installation artworks and factors that influence their presentation.³³⁹ She examines the strategies employed by artists, conservators, and curators to activate what she terms a “network of site-specific functions”, which foregrounds the issue of the artwork’s presentation in diverse contexts.³⁴⁰ She asks: “What are the parameters steering these decisions”

339 Scholte, *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums*, 20–21.

340 Scholte, 20.

and “What is gained and what can be considered as lost in the artwork’s site-specific functions?”³⁴¹ Central to her discussion is the reinstallation or continuity of site-specific installations previously executed by artists in new, altered or evolving spaces. While my undertaking differs from the examples she provides, as I materialise Paul’s previously unrealised installation concept, Scholte’s perspective remains relevant, providing a valuable framework to assess how my installation aligns or misaligns with Paul’s original concept.

Scholte’s analysis is anchored in Henri Lefebvre’s spatial theories, resonating with Paul’s exploration of space and interaction in his *r/p/m* series.³⁴² Lefebvre posits that space is produced through a triadic network of functions: physical, social, and symbolic. These functions highlight the nuanced interplay between the physical attributes of a space, the social activities a space accommodates, and the symbolic values it embodies. Following this perspective, spaces not only guide specific activities but are also fluid constructs shaped by societal values and ideologies. Building on Lefebvre, Scholte puts forward a similar triadic distinction for examining and evaluating site-specific installations, which I will unpack in this chapter. A central aspect of her framework is Lefebvre’s concept that space and time are inseparable, and that every space inherently implies time and vice versa.³⁴³ He argues that the creation of space is rooted in a particular moment and simultaneously interlaced with historical traces left behind.³⁴⁴

Another critical component of Scholte’s framework is an emerging discourse in art conservation, where installation artworks are compared to *performances* or *live events*. She posits that an artwork’s meaning is produced when installed at a particular place and moment in time, and underscores the significance of intentional presentation choices, drawing parallels with terms from the performing arts, such as *script* and *actor*.³⁴⁵ This perspective draws on philosopher and sociologist Bruno Latour’s Actor Network Theory (ANT), especially his assertion that “things and human beings are equally important participants of a productive network—of science, art or the social world.”³⁴⁶ Scholte further proposes that a

341 Scholte, 20.

342 I briefly touched on Lefebvre’s theory in the previous chapter; he is a theorist Paul was also influenced by and whom he has frequently cited in writing and workbooks. Paul also drew inspiration from his ideas and had a copy of the author’s influential book *The Production of Space* (1974) in his library.

343 Scholte, *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums*, 89; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 118.

344 Scholte, *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums*, 89.

345 Scholte, 36, 122.

346 Scholte, 99.

researcher takes on the role of an *actor* when studying the artwork in action.³⁴⁷ She argues that this perspective aids in understanding the “complex relationships between people and things, ideas and intentions, spatial conditions and visitors’ behaviour, instructions, agreements, decision-making processes, and so forth, at specific places and moments in time.”³⁴⁸ In alignment with this performative framework, I interpret Paul’s *r/p/m Musick* cover as a script, guiding my decisions around the installation within the radio station. I position my staging of the *r/p/m* sculptures in the station as a three-hour-long *event* or *performance*.

Building on Scholte’s performative model, I integrate two textual forms within my academic writing in this chapter. The first, a performative log, captures my staging of the *r/p/m* artworks within the rooms of the Musick Memorial Radio Station. The second, written as a narrative script, focuses on the fire ceremony held outside, close to the station. This form specifically incorporates Turei’s voice, reflecting his identity as an artist and orator and drawing on Māori oral tradition. I have also used this approach as it enables the personification of the wind, rain, and fire as embodied manifestations, aligning with *te ao Māori* (Māori worldview).

4.3. The *r/p/m* Covers as Script

On each of his five *r/p/m* covers, Paul proposes a different installation at a historical centre for scientific study, reflecting various locations he had visited and researched. For Proposition #1: *Planetarium*, Proposition #2: *Octagon Room*, and Proposition #4: *Linnaeus*, he provides details of the intended artwork placements, including floor plans and marking proposed positions. However, Proposition #3: *Musick* is less prescriptive. He outlines in the written concept: “Six *r/p/m* sculptures would be installed amongst existing equipment in the rooms of the Radio Communications building”, listing the artworks as *Science (Table)* (1993), *Geographer [1]* (1995), *Geographer [2]* (1995), *Fox Circle* (2007), *Lost* (2007), and *r/p/m [3]* (2010). On the *Musick* cover, he includes a drawing of each sculpture, a map of the peninsula showing the position of the Musick Memorial Radio Station, an image of the building, and interior photos of a selection of rooms. These photographs highlight the first-floor Meeting Room, the first-floor Main Operating Room (eastern side) and the second-level Tower.³⁴⁹ In the concept, Paul acknowledges Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki as the land’s original

347 Scholte, 99.

348 Scholte, 99.

349 I confirmed the original names of these rooms in Matthews & Matthews Architects, “Te Waiarohia o Ngai Tai Paa, Te Naupata Musick Point, Manukau City, Auckland: Conservation Plan September 2008,” 146–47.

inhabitants, referencing the site's traditional name, Te Waiarohia. He also highlights that the mid-twentieth-century equipment housed in the radio station that was once used to monitor the movements and communications of aircraft and shipping in the Waitematā Harbour and Hauraki Gulf, while mostly still functional, is now obsolete.

In examining the five hypothetical *r/p/m* covers through the lens of Scholte's performative framework, I suggest that Paul's proposition to stage a selection of his *r/p/m* sculptures in diverse centres for scientific research is a performative gesture in itself. Within this context, the sculptures 'act out' various roles depending on their proposed setting. This approach echoes throughout his artistic practice, notably in his *Attempts, Situations, and Provisional Arrangements* series, where he reassembled components, often incorporating unaltered, found materials, into changing configurations in varied sites and situations. In these temporary works, which only survive as documentation, the components' value is rooted in their role as contributors to ongoing interactions rather than their standalone attributes. The fluid, relational approach in Paul's work implicitly aligns with the performative framework I draw on in this exploration. Citing performance scholar Richard Schechner, Scholte argues that artworks, even those not traditionally viewed as performances, can be analysed as such, provided that the manifestation is framed by space and time co-ordinates.³⁵⁰ Schechner's analysis, which includes the visual arts and architecture, considers these forms not merely as *things* or *objects* in themselves "but players in ongoing relationships, that is 'as' performances."³⁵¹

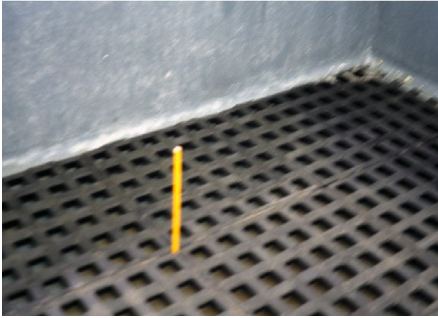
Interpreting the *Musick* cover as a *script* is particularly useful in my case, where my placement of sculptures in the radio station represents my second interpretation of the artist's concept—the first being the virtual *Musick* installation I presented on Mozilla Hubs. Referencing media art conservationist Pip Laurenson, Scholte underscores the inherent variability in performance, acknowledging the gap between a work as presented in its score and its actual execution.³⁵² However, as Laurenson points out, "Performances can occur in different times and different places with different performers and still be authentic instances of that performance ... This allows us to speak of good and bad performances while still being able to say that a work is the same work even if badly performed."³⁵³ This insight permits evaluations of installation quality—acknowledging that while they can differ in execution, each remains an authentic interpretation of

350 Scholte, *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums*, 91.

351 Scholte, 91.

352 Scholte, 94–95.

353 Scholte, 94–95.



November 1999

Installation near Como in Italy, birthplace of Alessandro Volta. Volta invented the battery and had a unit of electricity (the volt) named after him. Strangely, on my first night in Como, there was a power cut.



December 1999

Pencil installed in the hedge of the Freud Museum, London. Entry to the museum is through a gate in this hedge, which I think is formed from the plant *Buxus sempervirens*.



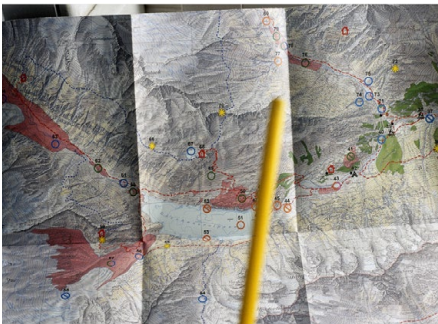
July 2000

Installation on Monte Urgull, Donostia-San Sebastián, Spain. Shortly before completing the installation, I was excited to discover that the Museo del Cemento Rezola (The Museum of Cement) had recently opened in the city. Had I been staying on, I would have visited, but the next day I had to catch a train to France where I was meeting a friend.



December 2000

Installation on the uplifted foreshore, Napier, New Zealand. During the 1931 earthquake, the whole area around the city tilted upwards by about 2 metres.



January 2000

Installations made while travelling in Switzerland. Of these, installations 67, 40, and 74 were probably the most successful. As I was crossing the border back into Germany, I discovered that this region was the former home of William Tell. I wondered if, like Hegel, Tell had been an idealist and pondered on attempts to translate the sublime vision into everyday life; in short, to practise utopia.



December 2002

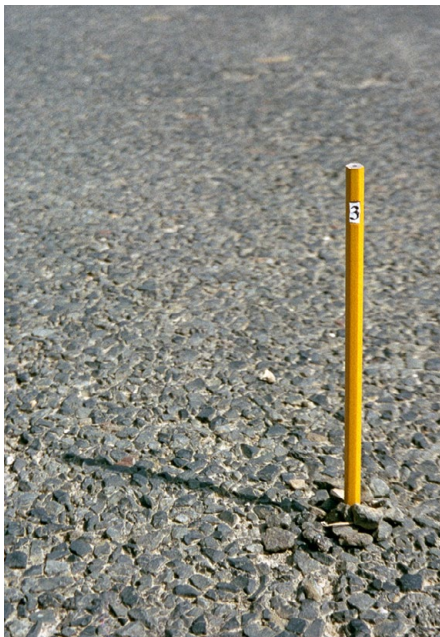
Installation near the Musick Point Radio Station, Auckland, New Zealand. Musick Point was named after the pioneer aviator Captain Musick and is said to have been one of the haunts of Mr Asia, who did some of his drug dealing in the car park. In my opinion, this could be the reason the council now closes the gate at night.

Figure 138: Paul Cullen, selected *Attempts*, 1999–2002.



December 2001

Installation made adjacent to the East Cape Lighthouse, New Zealand, during a severe tropical cyclone. The lighthouse building was originally established on the neighbouring island but had to be relocated to its present position when the island began to collapse.



October 2003

Installation made on the roadway near Circular Quay, Sydney, Australia. About half of Sydney Harbour has a depth of 9 metres or more at low water.



June 2002

After an afternoon of failed attempts, I made this installation on a table in a bar on the corner of Singel and Torensteeg (Centrum), Amsterdam.



June 2003

Installation on the site of the prime meridian, longitude 0°, Greenwich, England. I took a train from London Bridge Station to Greenwich, on what is said to be the world's oldest suburban line. The train was very late arriving at London Bridge, but the driver said it wasn't his fault; a strike on the tubes had caused unforeseen problems.



May 2003

Installation on the roof of the Sa Rang Bang Motel, Seoul, South Korea. A woman in the hotel told me that the CIA had an office nearby.



June 2004

The installation in the Jardin Botanique, Bayonne, France. The home of Roland Barthes for much of his adolescence, Bayonne is also known for the Jambon de Bayonne or Bayonne ham. Jambon de Bayonne was apparently discovered after a wild boar fell into local saline springs and was preserved by the salt.



July 2004

This failed installation took place on the steps of the Panthéon in Paris, France. Two security guards with machine guns told me that installations were forbidden there. I had gone to Paris hoping to see Foucault's Pendulum, which is installed in the Panthéon; however, the guards insisted that I leave.

Figure 139: Paul Cullen, selected *Attempts*, 2001–5.

the original script. This understanding of performance variability resonates with my earlier reflection on my first interpretation of *Musick*, i.e., that my initial digital rendition on Mozilla Hubs may have diverged significantly from the artist's intended approach. Yet this work remains valuable for this thesis as a creative exploration of a new approach to archiving using contemporary digital tools.

In preparing to stage the *r/p/m* works at the Musick Memorial Radio Station, I considered Paul's interest in placing his artworks amongst the obsolete yet functional equipment in the Musick Memorial Radio Station, and surmised that this approach likely builds on concepts he investigated in his DocFA exegesis. In this document, he references Peter Schwenger's essay "Sculpture and the Broken Tool" in *The Tears of Things: Melancholy and Physical Objects*. This reference is in a chapter titled "Models", in which Paul discusses a range of sculptures, including several pieces from his *r/p/m* series.³⁵⁴ Schwenger argues that altering or obstructing the use-value of objects in art can stir feelings of loss, anxiety, and new potentialities.³⁵⁵ Paul notes that this aligns with Martin Heidegger's concept of the "ready to hand."³⁵⁶ For Heidegger, objects seamlessly integrate into our daily activities and remain largely unnoticed until they malfunction or are taken out of context.³⁵⁷ When functioning smoothly, they are "ready to hand" and integral to our tasks. Only when they are out of place or "break" do they force us to see them anew.³⁵⁸ Building on Heidegger's insight, the idea of the "broken tool" further illuminates how objects, once they deviate from their primary function, command a distinct type of attention, becoming more conspicuous in their altered state.

In a 2013 funding application for a sculptural research project titled *Chemical Objects*, Paul outlines his intention to investigate the latent and manifest agency of objects and spaces within landscapes, referencing Bruno Latour's ANT as a key theoretical influence. ANT is also a framework Scholte utilises in her analysis of site-specific artworks as active networks. A fundamental principle of ANT, as Scholte highlights, is that both humans and non-humans can possess agency.³⁵⁹ Latour encapsulates this idea in his statement, "An actant can literally be anything provided it is granted to be the source of an action."³⁶⁰ Scholte emphasises this

354 Cullen, "The Chemistry of Familiar Objects," 32.

355 Cullen, 32.

356 Cullen, 32.

357 Cullen, 32–33.

358 Cullen, 33–34.

359 Scholte, *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums*, 99.

360 Scholte, 99.

point, stating that agency emerges from relationships and interactions, not as an inherent attribute of entities.³⁶¹ Paul's explanation in the application document is similar: "ANT considers the agency of things: a thing is nothing more than the effects it has on other things."³⁶² Additionally, he references Latour's critique of the artificial separation of nature and culture in *We Have Never Been Modern*, noting the influence of this notion on his thinking. Paul's copy of Graham Harman's *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* in his library further indicates a continued engagement with these concepts, potentially informing his work beyond the grant application period.³⁶³ Within the Musick Memorial Radio Station, Paul's positioning of artworks amidst the radio equipment prompts a twofold shift: firstly, a re-evaluation of the dated equipment as aesthetic subjects, and secondly, aligning with Latour's theory, suggesting that his artworks become 'actants,' bridging the gap between aesthetic appeal and functional utility. In this light, his conceptual exploration in the *Musick* proposition considers how objects continue to shape and interact with their environment regardless of their functional status.

In interpreting Paul's concept, I have relied on textual and visual cues from the *r/p/m* cover, combined with insights from my background research and the narrative I am constructing in this exegesis. This progression from Paul's original ideas to my tangible realisation, and subsequently to others' perceptions, forms a dynamic interpretive continuum. One dilemma I encountered in actualising *Musick* was the unavailability of some of the artworks. Of the six sculptures Paul proposed to install, only *Geographer [1]* (1995) and *Fox Circle* (2007) are held within the archive. *Geographer [2]* (1995) and *r/p/m [3]* (2010) have since been collected by the Chartwell Trust, a privately managed public collection. *Science (Table)* (1993) and *Lost* (2007) no longer exist, likely repurposed by the artist. This raised questions about whether to substitute missing pieces and, if so, how to select appropriate replacements within the project's conceptual framework.

Casting the artworks as *performers*, I decided to substitute two of the missing works with similar pieces from the *r/p/m* series held by the archive and stage only four works in the radio station instead of six. I selected *The Orange Theory* (2007), which Paul had included in Propositions #1 and #2, and *Moon* (2013), created after the *r/p/m* publication's release. *The Orange Theory* exhibits model-like and planetary qualities similar to the omitted sculptures—a chair fitted with

361 Scholte, 99.

362 Cullen, "Chemical Objects," 2.

363 Note: I acknowledge that Bruno Latour has evolved his perspective on Actor–Network Theory (ANT) over the years, refining and sometimes critiquing certain aspects of the theory in his later works. For the purposes of this chapter and in the context of my analysis, I discuss the theory as it was initially formulated and as it relates to the specific analysis presented here.

a motorised rotating plastic orange. *Moon* aligns with *r/p/m* [3]; both works are constructed from found tables with Formica laminate surfaces and a marble-like pattern. However, while *r/p/m* [3] has a motorised green plastic bucket rotating on the table surface, the former features a rotating model moon. My decision to include *Moon* in my *Musick* installation was guided by its alignment with the themes of scientific exploration, communication, and the passage of time that correspond with the radio station's history, as well as its connection to my collaboration with Pita Turei and his proposal to host the fire ceremony at Te Naupata during Matariki—a time marking the Māori lunar calendar's new year.

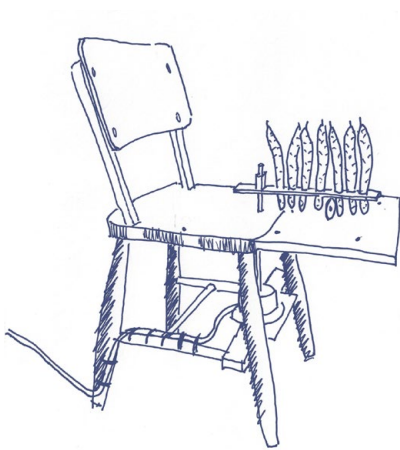


Figure 140: Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication covers #2 and #3, 2011, referencing *Fox Circle*, 2007.

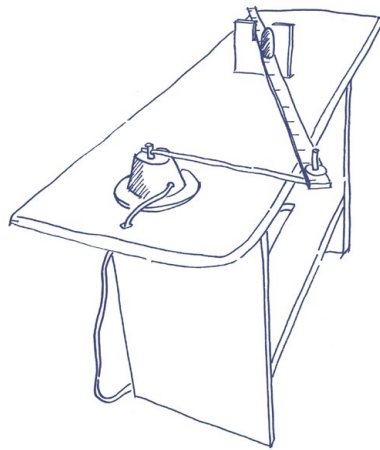


Figure 141: Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication covers #1 and #3, 2011, referencing *Lost*, 2007.

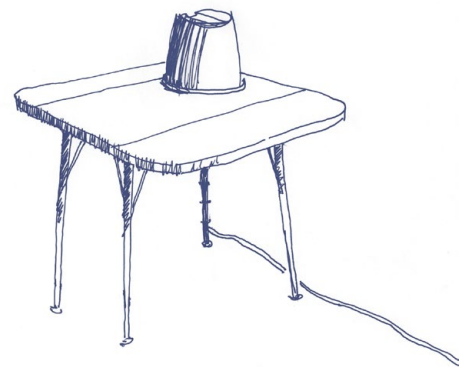


Figure 142: Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication covers #2 and #3, 2011, referencing *r/p/m* [3], 2010.

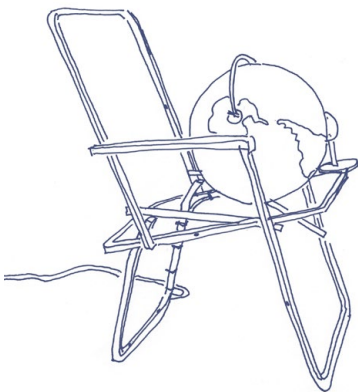


Figure 143: Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication covers #1 and #3, 2011, referencing *Geographer* [2], 1995.

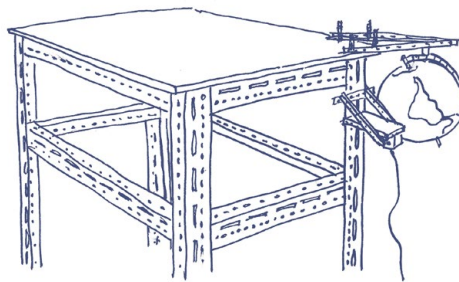


Figure 144: Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication cover #3, 2011, referencing *Science (Table)*, 1993.

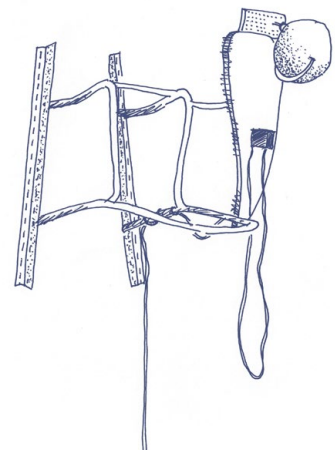


Figure 145: Paul Cullen, drawing for *r/p/m* publication covers #1 and #3, 2011, referencing *Geographer* [1], 1995.

4.4. The Absent Audience

Before delving into my placement of works in the Musick Memorial Radio Station, I want to examine *Science (Table)* (1993), one of the pieces Paul included in his *Musick* proposition. A sketch of *Science (Table)* on the *r/p/m* cover closely resembles a table and globe assemblage that was part of *Science (Inconclusive evidence)*, a 1993 installation at the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) in Hamilton (figures 21, 148). The consistent title and date affirm this link. Reviewing his notes on this work uncovers parallels with the *Musick* proposition's themes and ideas. In the CCA installation, *Science (Table)* was constructed from slotted angle-shelving uprights with an attached motorised spinning world globe, and a microphone that amplified sounds through a speaker box on the table's surface. Facing this assemblage were two rows of gallery chairs. Paul presented a second iteration of the CCA installation at Artspace in Auckland (1994), retaining the same title (figure 149).³⁶⁴ In this second version, he reconfigured the table assembly, removing two legs and balancing it on an existing gallery table, arranging four narrower rows of gallery chairs to face towards it.



Figure 146: Paul Cullen, *The Orange Theory* (2007), the artist's studio, Penrose, 2011. Photograph by Asumi Mizuo.



Figure 147: Paul Cullen, *Moon* (2013), the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2023. Photograph by Marie Shannon.

The rows of empty chairs in the *Science (Inconclusive evidence)* installations evoke the empty chairs that line the Meeting Room walls in the photograph Paul included on the *r/p/m Musick* proposition cover. Additional images Paul took of this space,

364 Writing about *Science (Inconclusive evidence)* in a workbook from the time, Paul notes: "the title reflects the inevitable inadequacy and speculative nature of our attempt at understanding or explaining knowledge and experience."

which I have uncovered in his files, show it has remained largely unchanged since our 2011 visit (figures 130–133, 150). When I returned to scan the station with LiDAR in early 2023, I found that the Meeting Room was still cluttered with the same vintage chairs (figures 126, 127, 128). An arrangement of two rows along the western wall further reinforced the resemblance to the chair configuration in Paul’s *Science (Inconclusive evidence)* installations, emphasising the parallels for me. By 2011, the CCA version of *Science (Table)*, which Paul had sketched for the *r/p/m* cover, no longer existed. After initially reconfiguring this work for the Artspace installation in 1994, it is plausible he repurposed elements from *Science (Table)* the following year for *Geographer #1*, another work Paul included in *Musick* (and included in my stagings), which is currently housed in the Henderson archive. *Geographer #1* incorporates a similar-sized world globe with a base made from slotted angle-shelving uprights, identical to those in *Science (Table)*.

In a 1994 document titled “Notes for: Science (Inconclusive Evidence)”, Paul refers to his arrangement of gallery chairs facing *Science (Table)* in this installation as *Lecture*.³⁶⁵ He notes that the title references Joseph Beuys’s lecture performances from the 1960s and 1970s, which blurred the lines between art and discourse about art.³⁶⁶ His positioning of the chairs underscores their functional role and positions them as instruments for pedagogical and art-historical engagement.³⁶⁷ He proposes, “The chairs for *Lecture* will be the gallery chairs performing their intended utilitarian function, which is to facilitate the *looking at* of art.”³⁶⁸ He further asserts, “Chairs imply human presence or absence and may have strong anthropomorphic connotations.”³⁶⁹

In the same document, he considers the conceptual role of the gallery. He describes it as “a locus for art and the conventions and methods adopted in order to achieve this function”, emphasising “location and community, including the location of this work in an art context.” For Paul, space was manifested through a dynamic network where art, influenced by conventions, practices, and community, is intrinsically linked to its context. Art is not an isolated entity; it is continually shaped and redefined by space and discourse. From Paul’s perspective, the gallery does not simply house art but actively influences its creation, presentation, and interpretation.

365 Cullen, “Notes for: Science (Inconclusive Evidence),” 1.

366 Cullen, 1.

367 Cullen, 1.

368 Cullen, 4.

369 Cullen, 4.



Figure 148: Paul Cullen, *Science (Inconclusive evidence)*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton, 1993. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 149: Paul Cullen, *Science (Inconclusive evidence)*, Artspace, Auckland, 1994. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 150: The Musick Memorial Radio Station Meeting Room, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2011. Photographs by Paul Cullen.

Placing the *r/p/m* sculptures in the Musick Memorial Radio Station suggests a conceptual reorientation; the artist prompts us to view them as models, devices, or apparatuses. Writing about the *r/p/m* series, Paul suggests that “each sculpture proposes, though fails to perform, some kind of rational purpose such as demonstration, observation or measurement.”³⁷⁰ However, his acknowledgement of failure is not a critique but instead underscores the complexities and inherent biases embedded in scientific knowledge. His commentary on *Lecture* in “Notes for: Science (Inconclusive Evidence)” further supports this view; he proposes that the installation alludes to the “potential” (absent) audience and our attempts to promulgate information which may be “partial, speculative, inadequate, subjective, and meaningless.”³⁷¹ His statement highlights the challenges and uncertainties in communicating complex or nuanced ideas, emphasising the potential disparity between the artist’s intention and the audience’s reception or individual perception.

I propose that the arrangement of empty chairs in the Meeting Room might have influenced the artist’s decision to include *Science (Table)* in the *Musick* proposition. Positioning this work in the middle of this space would evoke similarities to *Lecture in Science (Inconclusive evidence)*, as rows of empty chairs are already oriented towards this central area. However, the non-art setting of the Meeting Room creates a shift in interpretative frameworks, inviting a departure from traditional art discourse and prompting us to engage with the *r/p/m* sculptures in a broader dialogue. In this new context, the vacant chairs evoke discussions centred on communications, navigation, mapping, and broadcasting, which were crucial to the station’s former operations, historical pursuits, or the current conversations of the MPRG members.

370 Cullen, “Provisional Arrangements Publication: Synopsis,” 2.

371 Cullen, “Notes for: Science (Inconclusive Evidence),” 1.

In the following text, which functions as a performative log, I chronicle the unfolding events at the Musick Memorial Radio Station while placing the four *r/p/m* sculptures. Initially, I positioned them in the three rooms depicted on the *r/p/m* cover, aligning with the artist's original concept. However, I have also situated them in additional areas of the station not featured on the *Musick* cover. To differentiate these, I refer to placements in the depicted rooms as "Original Placement" and those in the new areas I have selected as "Variation Placement". Since the station is not open to the public, only a select few experienced this performance first-hand: the radio group members present that day, Ry—who helped with installation, photography, and transporting the works—and myself. Like Paul's *Attempts*, *Situations*, and *Provisional Arrangements* series, this event is preserved through documentation and the text I have compiled that follows.

The Musick Project: A Performative Log

Monday 22 May 2023

10:45: RY and I arrive at Te Naupata carpark. I walk on foot down the runway driveway, blocked to vehicles by a chain secured with numerous padlocks, to the Musick Memorial Radio Station. The MPRG MEMBER I've emailed with, who helped with our LiDAR scanning visits, greets me. He suggests driving to the entrance to unload, advising that the chain can simply be lifted off.

10:50: We unload MOON, FOX CIRCLE, GEOGRAPHER [1], and THE ORANGE THEORY into the Memorial Hall, the entry foyer of the building. The MPRG MEMBER inspects the works, showing friendly curiosity. He then grants us permission to freely explore the station and place the artworks anywhere we like, saying, "You know your way around now."

11:00: We carry the artworks up to the level one Operating Rooms but find the MPRG MEMBERS actively using both spaces, making it impractical to place works here. These rooms are equipped with an array of radio receivers and equipment racks containing control units once central to the station's communication services, enabling operators to monitor ship distress frequencies, handle small-ship telephony services, and exchange flight and meteorological information with distant terminals.³⁷²

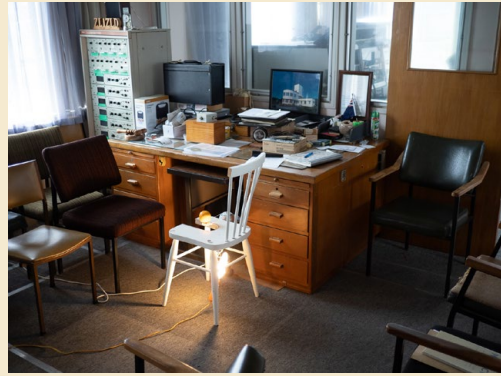
THE MEETING ROOM, Level One [Original Placement]

11:05: We position the four sculptures in the Meeting Room, a room leading off the Operating Rooms, linked to the hallway and central stairs. Ambient sounds of radio static, Morse code, and distant communications permeate the space, channelled through the equipment the MPRG MEMBERS are using. Snippets of conversations drift in and out of hearing. Chairs line the walls, a layout that maximises space for access to the Operating Rooms and the former Morse/Teleprinter Room (now used for storage), which all lead off from this room.³⁷³ I position THE ORANGE THEORY to face two rows of chairs.

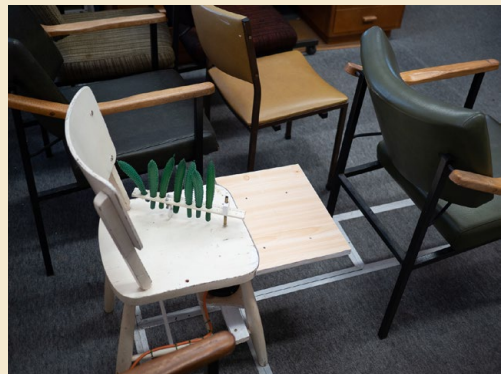
11:10: I adopt an improvisational method—moving the artworks around in response to objects and elements in the room, making subjective determinations about their optimal placement while navigating practical constraints, such as the inability to make structural alterations to the walls and allowing for the movement of MPRG MEMBERS through the spaces as they work.

372 Matthews & Matthews Architects, "Te Waiarohia o Ngai Tai Paa, Te Naupata Musick Point, Manukau City, Auckland: Conservation Plan September 2008," 147.

373 Matthews & Matthews Architects, 148.



11:20: I move the existing chairs around and place FOX CIRCLE in different positions. The kinetic R/P/M sculptures introduce a dynamic contrast, positioned amongst the existing furniture, activating the room's narrative.



11:30: Of the works we have transported to the station, MOON most resembles SCIENCE (TABLE). Both pieces incorporate a table and model globe. However, I decide not to replicate the dynamic of *Lecture* by placing this work in

the centre of the room. Instead, I position MOON against the Meeting Room's southern wall, creating a visual dialogue with three framed charts. An upside-down map of the South Pacific Ocean is leaning against the wall.



11:45: I hang GEOGRAPHER [1] on the wall above MOON using a pre-existing hook near a bookshelf full of radio manuals and reference materials.

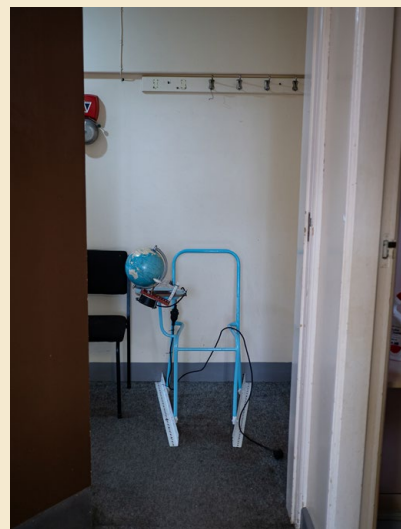


12:00: I discover that many power points in the building are non-functional, leading me to document the artworks in their unplugged states, too.



MEZZANINE LANDING [Variation Placement]

12:10: I decide to document the works in transitional spaces as we transport them between rooms.



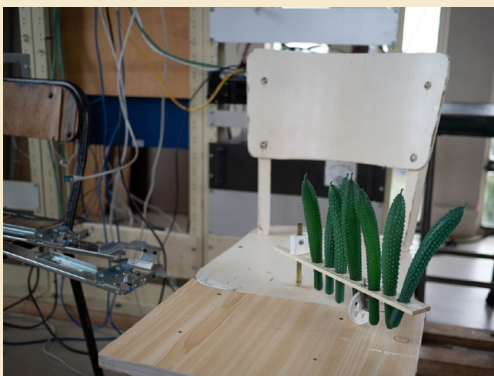
TOWER ROOM, Second Floor [Original Placement]

12:25: Paul's documentation of the Tower Room in his *Musick* concept shows the opposite side of this room. However, the empty chair in his image faces the area where I have positioned FOX CIRCLE. The green plastic gherkins you can see inserted into the rotating ruler create a gentle scraping sound as the device moves.

In the past, this room echoed with teleprinters generating weather reports, connecting with Mechanics Bay meteorological office, Airways Companies Offices, and the Auckland

Telegraph Office.³⁷⁴ It also housed tape preparation apparatus and radio receivers for long meteorological reports. Now, it stores functional and non-functional equipment, including devices enabling amateur radio operators to connect from Auckland to anywhere in the world.³⁷⁵

underground conductive wires installed for signal reception in the ground around the Musick Memorial Radio Station building. After he leaves, I place ORANGE THEORY on the table.



RADIO MAINTENANCE DEPOT, Ground Floor [Variation Placement]

01:00: I carry ORANGE THEORY back down the stairs to the Radio Maintenance Depot on the ground floor. The walls of the stairwell are pink and display two small framed documents: a drawing by R. G. Kirkwood (1942) from a sketch by archaeologist Geoff Fairfield (1906-1995) of Te Waiarohia o Ngariki pā and a photo of a manuscript by ethnographer George Graham (1874-1952) titled "Ancient Maori Occupation of Musick Point." Fairfield's sketch identifies possible sites of whare, rua kai (kūmara pits), terraces, fortifications, shell heaps, and middens (refuse areas).

MEZZANINE KITCHEN [Variation Placement]

12:40: I initially set up this work on the floor beside the other chairs around the table. As I am doing so, an MPRG MEMBER enters to make a cup of tea. He shows me a drawing pinned to one of the walls that maps a network of



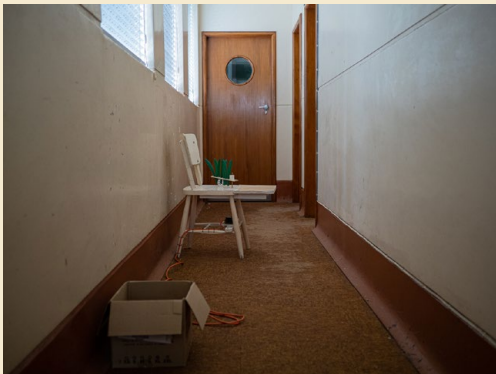
374 Doug Morris, ed., *The Story of Auckland Radio: In Memory of the Staff Who Served with Dedication, 1912-1993* (Auckland: Copy Out West, 2002), 58-59; Matthews & Matthews Architects, "Te Waiarohia o Ngai Tai Paa, Te Naupata Musick Point, Manukau City, Auckland: Conservation Plan September 2008," 147.

375 Matthews & Matthews Architects, 149.



WEST CORRIDOR, Ground Floor [Variation Placement]

01:10: Opening off this corridor are several locked rooms: the former operators' kitchen, a bathroom, and a space previously utilised as a sick bay and bedroom.



THE MEMORIAL HALL, Ground Floor [Variation Placement]

01:20: We assemble the works here in preparation for loading them back into the van for transport to the Henderson warehouse. The works are disconnected from a power source and are arranged pragmatically, without deliberate placement. A sign on the wall, "Coast Radio Service Auckland Radio", highlights the station's former mission and operations. A chart maps the locations of the former New Zealand Post Office coast radio stations: Auckland Radio/ZLD (Musick Point), Awarua Radio/ZLB (near Invercargill), Chatham Islands Radio/ZLC, and Wellington Radio/ZLW. A display case contains a model of the *Samoa Clipper* aeroplane and a photograph of Captain Musick.

Out of frame, a table introduced by the MPRG MEMBERS displays various publications and documents pertaining to the station's history. Among them is Geoff Fairfield's *Te Waiarohia o Ngaitai: The Story of Bucklands Beach Peninsula* (1995), featuring his sketch of the pā site and commentary on the significant damage to archaeological features he witnessed during preparations for the Musick Memorial Radio Station's construction in the late 1930s to early 1940s.³⁷⁶ Fairfield also indicated that remnants

of the pā are evident today, including large depressions in the ground near the current carpark, interpreted by Fairfield as *rua kai*. These depressions, now filled with *harakeke* (flax), can also be seen on the western and northern headlands.³⁷⁷



01:30: We load the artworks back into the hired van.



01:45: We depart.

376 Fairfield, *Te Waiarohia o Ngaitai*, 59–61.

377 Fairfield, 12.

Figure 151: *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 152: *Fox Circle*, 2007, and *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 153: *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 154: *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 155: *Moon*, 2013, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 156: *Moon*, 2013, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 157: *Geographer [2]*, 1995, and *Moon*, 2013, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 158: *Geographer [2]*, 1995, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 159: *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Meeting Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 160: *Geographer [2]*, 1995, on the Mezzanine Landing, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 161: *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the Tower Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 162: *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the Tower Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 163: *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the Tower Room, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 164: *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Mezzanine Kitchen, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 165: *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Mezzanine Kitchen, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 166: *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Radio Maintenance Depot, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 167: *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Radio Maintenance Depot, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 168: *Fox Circle*, 2007, in the West Corridor, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 169: *Moon*, 2013, *The Orange Theory*, 2007, *Fox Circle*, 2007, and *Geographer [2]*, 1995, in the Memorial Hall, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 170: *The Orange Theory*, 2007, in the Memorial Hall, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 171: *The Orange Theory*, 2007, and *Geographer [2]*, 1995, in the Memorial Hall, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 172: Ry Tweedie-Cullen loading artworks into the van outside the Musick Memorial Radio Station, Musick Memorial Radio Station, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

4.5. Site-Specific Installations as Networks in Action

In this section, I return to Scholte's theoretical framework to untangle the intersections and departures between Paul's *Musick* concept and my interpretation. Building on Miwon Kwon's typology of site-specific art, which I discuss in Chapter Three, Scholte adopts an expansive definition of site-specificity, conceptualising it as a network of interconnected functions.³⁷⁸ Her approach aligns with a current shift in conservation discourse, transitioning from an object-centred perspective to a more relational one. In the case of site-specific installations, this involves considering the relationships between objects, places, and people.³⁷⁹ In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, I note that these considerations might extend to potential intersections and negotiations with mana whenua (hapū or iwi members with customary land rights in a defined area).³⁸⁰

Expanding upon Henri Lefebvre's theory, which posits that space is constituted by a triadic network of functions—physical, social, and symbolic, Scholte argues that the network of site-specificity is a conglomerate of three primary functions: “the physical relationship between the artwork and its surrounding (in concept and realisation), the social spaces in which the artwork is produced and experienced, and the symbolic (representational) context in which the artwork is presented.”³⁸¹ She further argues that these functions are susceptible to the contingency of the site, which may not have been taken into account in the artist's original concept or spatial design. She observes: “Usually, there is a time gap between iterations—when the artwork is dormant in a storage room or physical constituents no longer exist; museum buildings may be renovated, museum policies may evolve, and audiences may change.”³⁸²

In order to apply Scholte's framework to my installation of *Musick* and compare the artist's concept to my staging, it is crucial to consider the original context in which the *Musick* proposition was presented. Paul conceived the five *r/p/m* cover propositions for a publication format. He never intended to actualise his *Musick*, *Linnaeus*, *Planetarium*, *Octagon Room*, and *Alhambra* propositions; instead,

378 Scholte, *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums*, 75.

379 Scholte, 21.

380 This conceptual framework's applicability extends beyond conventional art settings to encompass practices on Indigenous lands internationally. Recognising the dynamic and relational nature of space on Indigenous territories involves considering not only the physical, social, and symbolic dimensions of these lands but also the historical, cultural, and spiritual significance embedded within them. Such an extension invites a nuanced understanding of site-specificity that will honour all Indigenous epistemologies and the complex layers of connection between people, place, and the more-than-human world.

381 Scholte, *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums*, 35, 76.

382 Scholte, 96.

these installation concepts *were* the artwork. The impetus for the publication to have five interchangeable gatefold covers stemmed from a collaboration between Paul, graphic designer Jayme Yen, and myself, and responded to Paul's engagement with site and space in his practice. We aimed to shift the publication beyond mere documentation, conceptualising it instead as a unique project that could provide an alternate viewpoint on the artwork. The propositional covers frame the publication's content, which includes documentation of *r/p/m* sculptures installed in Paul's Panmure studio, his sketches, diagrams and research towards the project, and four essays by invited writers and artists.³⁸³

Paul created his *r/p/m* studio installation and documented it specifically for inclusion in the publication. He erected temporary, provisional plywood walls to obscure artworks stored in the space, which he pushed to one end, directing focus to the exhibited *r/p/m* pieces (although stored artworks are still visible above and through gaps between the partitions in the documentation). He also intentionally left certain parts of the studio exposed, revealing workbenches and several sculptures in various stages of completion, situated adjacent to shelves stacked with tools, wood, and metal. Tripods, lighting equipment, and extension cords weaving through the studio space amidst the artworks are also captured in the documentation. While the sculptures appear static in these images, situated within this active studio environment, they retain the potential for modification, positioning them as evolving entities within a dynamic network. This approach resonates with the principles of Latour's ANT, underscoring the interconnected roles and influence of human and non-human entities within the studio.

The hypothetical installation propositions relocate the *r/p/m* sculptures out of the artist's studio to sites of scientific observation in Franeker, Greenwich, Uppsala, Granada, and Auckland. This transition aligns the works with fields of knowledge represented by these locations, including astronomy, botany, ecology, taxonomy, physics, geodesy, astrophysics, radio astronomy, and atmospheric science. The five covers situate the sculptures in an interlinked array of locales and accentuate the crucial role of context in shaping how an installation is perceived and interpreted, aligning with James Meyer's concept of the *Functional Site*, which Paul has acknowledged as influential in his writings. Rather than being anchored to a singular locale or a fixed notion of place, the *Functional Site* encapsulates a dynamic spatial perspective, unfolding as a narrative across a

383 We also included thumbnail images of book covers selected by Paul to reference theories and texts influential to the project and his thinking generally. These included Georges Perec's *A Void and Life: A User's Manual*, Gustave Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, *Equilibres* by Peter Fischli and David Weiss, and Alberto Pérez-Gómez's *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*. Paul also incorporated the covers of three texts I draw on in this chapter: Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, Peter Schwenger's *The Tears of Things*, and Martin Heidegger's *The Question Concerning Technology*.

sequence of locations. In the context of the *r/p/m* publication project, the Musick Memorial Radio Station is just one of an itinerary of sites the artist proposed for installing artworks and the only easily accessible site for my tangible realisation.

I will now apply Scholte's three core functions—the interaction with physical surroundings, both conceptual and actual, the social spaces of production and reception, and the symbolic context of presentation—to my realisation of the *Musick* installation. Through this analysis, I aim to identify important shifts between my performance of *Musick* and Paul's concept.



Figure 173: Paul Cullen's *r/p/m* sculptures installed in his studio, Panmure, 2011. Photographs by Asumi Mizuo.

4.5.1. Physical Dimensions: Concept to Realisation

Paul's 2011 documentation of the interior rooms of the Musick Memorial Radio Station shows that remarkably little physical change has occurred within the rooms of the building since this time. Any alterations in the rooms are superficial, involving only minor rearrangements of content rather than structural transformations. Despite the building showing signs of wear and limited maintenance, there is a pervasive sense of disordered timelessness. This is echoed in a 2008 conservation report by Mathews & Mathews Architects for the building and Te Naupata Reserve, which observes the station's enduring structural integrity, noting, "The interior of Musick Memorial Radio station remains in very original condition."³⁸⁴

However, a notable physical shift occurs in my installation compared to the original proposition, in which Paul delineates a clear boundary between hand-drawn sketches of proposed artworks and the documentation of specific rooms where he proposes positioning the works. In contrast, my on-site positioning of the sculptures forges a tangible connection with their surroundings, opening up possibilities for new meanings and interpretations to emerge. Another change is my positioning of four artworks instead of six, including two works not included in the artist's concept, marking an evolution in the physical aspect of this project.

4.5.2. Social, Familial, and Symbolic Shifts

The repositioning of the *Musick* installation from the artist to his daughter (me) as the installer marks a notable social shift. This transition introduces a personal and familial narrative, intertwining my experiences and perspectives with Paul's original intent. My engagement with this project as part of PhD research around the archive also introduces an academic context, representing another significant transition. This scholarly perspective has the potential to reshape audience perceptions, transitioning the work from a conceptual artist's project to a subject of academic inquiry. My objective in staging this project was to contribute to a broader discourse on the perpetuation of site-specific installations and explore how their meanings can evolve and be reinterpreted over time. Paul's investigation was already deep and durational with *Musick*, but I have extended this in a new context to further explore how the reception of artworks might shift when positioned in varied functional contexts.

384 Mathews & Mathews Architects, "Te Waiarohia o Ngai Tai Paa, Te Naupata Musick Point, Manukau City, Auckland: Conservation Plan September 2008," 140.

While the physical context of the Musick Memorial Radio Station building has changed little, the station's functional purpose and symbolic value have undergone significant transformations since the 1940s. Historically, the station played a pivotal role in New Zealand's international and wartime communication systems, reflecting the forefront of global communication technologies. However, with the advent of satellite communications and digital technology in recent decades, the station's contemporary relevance, along with the legacy of Captain Musick, has diminished. This shift is most apparent in the Memorial Hall. Once a symbol of the station's foundational principles, characterised by its formal symmetry, terrazzo flooring, and eagle plaques above bronze memorials honouring Captain Musick, it now assumes a more pragmatic role. The hall, with few outside visitors, now primarily functions for practical uses, evidenced by the MPRG members' additions of a club noticeboard and a hand-sanitising station. However, these shifts were already apparent to Paul in 2011, when he was drawn to the outdated radio equipment as a contextual premise for situating his artworks within the space.

The most significant symbolic and tangible or reparative change since 2011 is the 2018 Treaty of Waitangi settlement, which resulted in the Crown returning land near the tip of Te Naupata peninsula to Ngāi Tai Ki Tāmaki. The settlement included historical recognition, a formal apology, and cultural and financial reparations.³⁸⁵ However, since then, there has been little physical change either within the radio station or on the surrounding whenua returned to Ngāi Tai. The settlement stipulated that the area remain a reserve and the radio station building continues under Crown ownership, with Spark retaining a lease that includes rights to renewal. However, the Musick Memorial Radio Station's location on historically contested whenua entangles it with colonial legacies, positioning it as a symbol in the broader discourse on land rights and post-colonial negotiations. It is within this context that my performance in the Musick Memorial Radio Station unfolds. However, by actualising only Proposition #3 from Paul's quintet of installation concepts, I have accentuated the symbolic significance of this location and also its current atmosphere of stasis in a rapidly shifting cultural climate.

In my practice-based research, I expanded the *Musick* installation to include a collaboration with artist and orator Pita Turei. This collaboration, featuring a fire ceremony, played a crucial role in engaging with the site's history and incorporating Māori narratives intrinsic to the location. In response to my project, Turei suggested aligning the fire ceremony with Matariki, a time of growth and renewal that honours the cycle of life and death. This period involves remembering those who have passed, celebrating the present, and preparing for the coming year.

385 "Ngāi Tai Ki Tāmaki Deed of Settlement Summary," New Zealand Government, November 17, 2020, <https://www.govt.nz/browse/history-culture-and-heritage/treaty-settlements/find-a-treaty-settlement/ngai-tai-ki-tamaki/ngai-tai-ki-tamaki-deed-of-settlement-summary/>.

The Fire Ceremony

At 5:30 am, the first participants gather in Te Naupata Reserve carpark, located at the tip of a peninsula within the traditional rohe of Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki. The area is shrouded in near-total darkness, further accentuated by the overcast sky, heavy with rain clouds. When everyone has arrived, the shadowy assembly of figures (ten in total) walk down the path leading to the Musick Memorial Radio Station. Upon reaching the building, they veer right through a gap in a hedge into a grassy clearing. The ground is sodden. This location, historically significant, was the site of Te Waiarohia pā, abandoned over 200 years ago. This area where the group gathers was used by the pā for kūmara cultivation. The fires of ahi kā once burned here continuously, signifying occupation and the Ngāi Tai tribe's enduring kaitiakitanga (guardianship) over this whenua. PITA: Puts down a box of rākau (sticks) and turns to address the group. Kia ora, everybody. We're in the darkest hour. This night is worth acknowledging. I'll start with a dark karakia, and then we'll light the fire.

PITA and LAYLA walk a short distance from PITA's Corban Estate Arts Centre studio to a café. LAYLA: Could you share your journey of when you first began practising fire ceremony and the significance it holds for you in continuing? They arrive at the café and sit down inside. PITA: My first experience with the Māori tradition of ahi kā, or lighting fires, was at Āwhitu in 1989. I was invited to an event observing Matariki and commemorating Te Wherowhero's signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1835. The occasion also acknowledged Kaiwhare, the taniwha and protector of Manukau Harbour. Participating in this customary fire ceremony prompted me to ask: where do we do this in my rohe in Tāmaki? Pauses a moment. In the Reserves Act, there's a provision for customary practice, but no park manager I spoke to knew what that meant. So, I started practising fire ceremony as a demonstration. At that time, I had begun working as an iwi representative, and when I attended DOC meetings, I'd light a fire on the side and put a fish on it. This initially amused them but also heartened them; I could see it resonated on many levels and brought additional context to our discussions.



On Te Naupata, everyone gathers around in a circle. PITA: Now, this is the traditional way of lighting fires by rubbing sticks together. *Sounds of wood clinking and the snap of a cigarette lighter. Everyone laughs.* This ceremony is an adaptation of our traditional rituals, marking the end of one cycle of growth and the beginning of another. FIRE: *Flickers, bursts to life, quickly becoming vibrant and lively.* Haere, haere, crack, crackle. PITA: We give our thoughts first to those who have passed on. *He begins handing out rākau.* In the darkness of this dawn, we release our grief for them, as well as our disasters, mistakes, and regrets. I invite you to surrender your rākau to the flames, symbolising the letting go of these burdens. FIRE: *Embodying the spirit of Mahuika, Goddess of Fire, flickers wildly as participants step forward to add their rākau.* Hisss! Pop! *She roars.* Crackle, whakarongo mai! WIND: *Gentle, rhythmic, encouraging the flames.* Whooshh, whhooshh. PITA: In te ao Māori, we have a practice called whakawhanaungatanga, relating to others, we'll go around the circle; if you'd like to, please introduce yourself and share your intention for being here.

Home, Land and Sea by Trinity Roots plays on the café sound system. A WAITRESS delivers two steaming cups of black coffee to the table. LAYLA: Do you consider your practice of fire ceremony as a revival of traditional Māori healing practices? PITA: When we first began publicising Māori customary practices, many exclaimed, "They're coming back; we're reviving them." However, these practices were never gone, we just had to conceal them; they were forced underground because they were outlawed. LAYLA: Outlawed? PITA: The Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907 was designed to curtail the use and practice of traditional Māori healing rituals, particularly those that incorporated supernatural or spiritual aspects. The act was eventually repealed in 1962, but the information wasn't widely disseminated; no one told us. *Pauses.* That's why it's important to bring them back into the light. LAYLA: You've referred to occasions where you've been harassed by DOC or council park rangers for lighting fires. Can you tell me about one of those incidents? PITA: I was in the Domain, and I'd lit one for Matariki; it was just a little fire and safe, contained in a metal fire bowl. That year, I thought the most appropriate fuel for the fire was all the newspaper pages detailing all the education cuts that were happening. As I was reciting my closing karakia, a council ute pulled up, and a Māori woman got out. She said, "That's disgusting!" and stamped the fire out with her feet. LAYLA: *Raises her eyebrows.* How many people were with you? PITA: Shrugs. Only me. I've done more alone than I have with people. I was almost finished anyway. There's poetry in how the fire was snuffed out. I just went with it—she saved me the trouble of putting it out myself.



Since the group's arrival, the clouds have shifted, ushered along by the wind, revealing a starry sky. Where they are gathered has an unobstructed view towards the east, making it an ideal spot for viewing the approaching sunrise and the emergence of Te Kāhui o Matariki, a cluster of stars also known as the Pleiades, signifying the Māori New Year. It's nearly 6 am. PITA: Pointing upward. There's VENUS up there, do you see? LAYLA: Is that it, near the horizon, straight ahead? PASCALE: It's just above the cloud. VENUS: Yes, here I am, fools. RY: Where's Pleiades? MARIE: See those three bright stars? That's Orion's Belt. Now, look a bit to the right and upwards from there—see that faint cluster of stars? As the group is looking for Matariki, it begins to RAIN: Pitter-patter-pitter-patter. Becoming heavier. PITA-PATA-PITA-PATA. Forcing the group to take refuge under a nearby tree.

It's lunchtime, and more people are entering the café. The whirr of the coffee grinder can be heard in the background. LAYLA: What have you discovered or learned through your fire ceremonies? PITA: Initially, my focus was on studying the stars and determining the locations where our ancestors might have observed Matariki. But then I started looking down as well, realising that the land and the fire, too, hold valuable insights and connections. I started observing the tohu—the signs these elements reveal and the reactions of the inhabitants: the birds, the lizards, the spiders, the fish, and the eels. These aspects, though often esoteric and easily overlooked, are profoundly significant. When you understand and read a whare whakairo or kōrero tuku iho, our histories, you see the importance of any intentional action or event. By exploring the places where our ancestors once were, we can find references to their time embedded into the whenua; we can observe what they were looking at, put our feet where their feet were, witness the same geophysical or celestial events, recite the same karakia with the same intention. By observing the customary practice of lighting fires, we can anchor ourselves in a place just as our ancestors did. We can nourish other principles within ourselves and strengthen our connection to the whenua.

As the group is sheltering, PITA begins to recount the arrival of Māori in the area over 600 years ago. He tells them the story of Hinerehia, a patupaiarehe woman who transforms into the MIST and drifts across the moehau, the water. PITA: The patupaiarehe were light-sensitive people, supernatural beings, who conducted their business at night for protection from the Sun. After storms, the mist that rises off the moehau when we first see Matariki is called 'te Ahua o Hinemairangi', or the mists of Hinemairangi. FIRE: Hiss, Crack, Fizzle! Burning steadily, unfaltering, bending, and twisting.

The café has emptied after the lunchtime rush. PITA: What I've come to understand is that if we start in the darkest hour and emerge into the light of day, it allows us to experience the landscape and to better understand the ancient narratives embedded within these places, stories that form a vital part of our oral culture. Some say this is when the ghosts are out, and I think they are. In this transitional period, we hear the last breaths of the night species before they retire and the first breaths of the day species, the sounds of the birds and other creatures around us. PITA and LAYLA prepare to leave, getting up from their seats. LAYLA: On Te Naupata, during the ceremony, as the light grew sufficient to see, I remember looking around the site where we'd been sitting for the past few hours as if seeing it for the first time. I noticed the towering radio-wave transmitter right beside us—something hidden in the darkness when we arrived. I thought about how, in that darkness, I was more attuned to the tactile sensations and the sounds around me—to people's voices and the elements, carried not by electromagnetic waves like radio waves, but through mechanical vibrations moving through the air. They leave the café and start walking back in the direction of PITA's studio, where LAYLA has parked her bike. LAYLA: Kia ora, PITA, thank you very much for your time and for sharing your knowledge. LAYLA and PITA exchange farewells.



On Te Naupata, at 7:47 am, the dawn is gradually breaking, and the ocean emerges before them. PITA: I dedicate this closing karakia to Paul and our intentions today, to the recognition of Paul's contribution as an artist, to the work he did here, on this site. And for the support we want to give, whether we know how to or not. Sometimes, just being present and willing to offer support, should it be needed, is enough. *He begins to sing:*

*Tihore mai te rangi
tihore mai
mao mao mao te ua
whiti mai te rā,
mao mao mao te ua
whitimai te rā.*

*Clear up Sky
clear up
stop stop stop Rain
come out Sun
stop stop stop Rain
come out Sun.*³⁸⁶

Figure 175: (page 224) Ceremony attendees gathered around the fire, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 176: (page 226) Pita Turei (second from right) and attendees observing Matariki, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 177: (page 227) Ceremonial fire at dawn, marking the observation of Matariki, Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

Figure 178: (page 228) Sunrise over Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point, 2023. Photograph by Ry Tweedie-Cullen.

386 Hirini Melbourne, "Tihore Mai Te Rangi," NZ Folksongs, accessed June 3, 2024, <https://folksong.org.nz/tihore/print.html>.

4.6. Echoes and Reverberations: Lasting Impressions

Turei's fire ceremony outside Musick Memorial Radio Station immersed us in elemental forces, drawing attention to the direct and tangible influence that these natural phenomena have on human experiences and interactions. Over time and across cultures, these forces have shaped traditions, rituals, and belief systems. As a symbol of renewal, purification, and transformation, fire holds a primeval allure. Flames can be calming, even hypnotic, drawing people together with warmth and a sense of security while serving practical needs like cooking. Yet fire embodies a duality: like Mahuika, the fire goddess, it commands both fear and respect for its potential destructiveness. Turei's narration and philosophy resonate with Lefebvre's notion of the interconnectedness of space and time, where space is more than a physical entity but is actively influenced and shaped by human practices and interactions. Similarly, Māori cosmology intertwines land and people, emphasising this connection through ancestral narratives and a deep relationship with the whenua. This perspective positions space as a dynamic entity woven with cultural narratives, spiritual connections, and ancestral ties.

In this chapter, I have drawn on Scholte's conceptual framework to dissect site-specific installations, examining them through an interpretive framework that considers their physical relationship to their environment (in concept and realisation), the social contexts of creation and reception, and the symbolic or representational context in which the work is presented. Considering these dimensions has enabled a deeper understanding of how an artwork dynamically interacts with these physical, social, and symbolic functions, revealing the nuances and transformations from Paul's original idea to my rendition of the *Musick* installation. Scholte's framework also posits site-specific installations as akin to *events* or *performances*, highlighting their dynamic, interactive, and temporal characteristics. Viewing the *r/p/m* project through this lens, I interpreted the artist's propositional covers as a script. This methodology helped me understand how my staging of *Musick* was shaped by the various participants, including myself, and the actants—the non-human elements and forces—involved in the installation. This approach also underscores the potential for this work to continue to evolve and change with each new iteration of the script, drawing attention to how the sculptures dialogue with their surroundings and alter or are altered by their spatial context. The interweaving of Paul's realised and unrealised artworks within this temporal framework captures the ongoing dialogue between past intentions and present interpretations, reflecting how these elements continuously reshape the exhibition space and our understanding of it.

In my analysis of *Musick*, I have observed notable changes between Paul's original concept and my realisation. These shifts occurred in my placement of the

artworks within the radio station, establishing concrete relationships with the space and surrounding objects. By positioning four works instead of six and introducing two pieces not included in the artist's original proposal, I introduced further alterations to the *Musick* proposition. However, I argue that these variations are still conceptually aligned with the artist's original intention. A more pronounced change is inherent in my implementation of just one of Paul's five proposed *r/p/m* installation ideas. This decision placed increased emphasis on a single location, marking a departure from the artist's reference to Meyers's concept of the Functional Site, which is concerned with the dynamic interplay between multiple locations.

In my *Musick* realisation, the radio station takes on increased significance as it is the only one of Paul's five speculative installation concepts that I physically realised. This shifts the focus exclusively to this single location, rather than the sequence of locations presented as publication covers. I have suggested that my placement of works in the Memorial Hall, which was not a space Paul proposed for installing works, gives further emphasis to this location—a room dedicated to Captain Musick, symbolising the station's foundational aspirations. While I observed minimal physical changes in the radio station between 2011 and 2023, I have proposed that the symbolic meaning of this location has evolved following the 2018 Treaty settlement that returned the land the station sits on to Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki. This context entangles the site within broader narratives of colonialism and land rights. However, within the station there is no formal recognition of the settlement or the land's change in ownership, and the Māori histories inherent to Te Naupata have minimal reference, except for two small, framed pieces in the stairway corridor and a publication in the Memorial Hall.

To address the station's shifting context, the scarcity of markers of Māori history or representation inside the building and grounds, and my focused implementation of only one site out of the five locations proposed by the artist to install the *r/p/m* sculptures, I initiated the collaboration with Turei. Assuming the role of a curator and incorporating the fire ceremony into my framing and narration of the *Musick* project, I have invited a reflective comparison of these two events. Through this act, I have also highlighted the impact a curatorial or research context can have on our perception or interpretation of a work and encouraged readers to trace the shifting temporalities and evolving narratives that shape perceptions of space and place. In writing about these two events on Te Naupata Reserve, I have also revealed a dynamic interplay between the site's past and contemporary realities, suggesting that its significance may not necessarily increase; in fact, it may now be perceived as less solid and immovable, while in contrast Turei's worldview assumes permanence.

While Paul's *Musick* installation took place inside the radio station, the *r/p/m* (revolutions per minute) sculptures draw on his deep fascination with the dynamic interplay between environmental forces and weather conditions, and their potential to impact or transform an artwork. The concept of *revolutions per minute*, traditionally a scientific measure of rotational speed, is expanded in Paul's project to explore broader celestial rhythms. The *r/p/m* series references planetary and atmospheric dynamics, themes he has explored in his work since the late 1970s, influenced by his study of biology. His *Discovery of Oxygen* works, also part of the *r/p/m* series, function as water systems, which, when positioned outdoors, are impacted by rain and weather conditions. These pieces, linked to another series Paul installed in littoral zones subject to tidal movements, underscore a key concept in his practice: that the artworks are not just passive, autonomous forms but actively engage with and are influenced by their surroundings. Similarly, the rotating moon in one of the *r/p/m* works I placed in the radio station reflects this interactivity, mirroring the natural lunar cycles outside that influenced the timing of our Matariki fire ceremony and the rhythms in the natural world.

Using the third person in my narration of the fire ceremony creates a sense of objectivity and allows me to step back. Reflecting on this experience and its potential contribution to my research questions, it occurs to me that ceremonies are a form of archiving, encapsulating key aspects of a cultural heritage, history, and identity through songs, chants, or storytelling—essentially serving as an oral archive of a community's past. In this way, ceremonies serve to preserve and transmit knowledge, ensuring the continuity of cultural memory and tradition. The tradition of *ahi kā* can also be considered a form of archiving that looks backwards and forward. Participating in one of Turei's ceremonies anchors the experience in our memory and, in doing so, keeps the oral tradition alive. His dedication of the fire ceremony at Te Naupata to Paul illustrates how individual memories can be preserved within the broader tapestry of ancestral connections. This stands in contrast to empirical and secular *Pākehā* (New Zealanders of European descent) customs, which tend to discourage open discussions of death and emphasise moving on. However, in Māori culture, the act of remembering and reflecting on the departed is an integral part of traditions and celebrations such as Matariki, and is practised repeatedly.

In conversation with Turei, he recommended I read *Establishing Kaitiaki: A Paper*, a text authored by Māori leader Nganeko Kaihau Minhinnick of Ngāti Te Ata (1939–2017). Minhinnick interprets the term 'ahi kā' (spelled 'ahi kaa') not just as a noun meaning 'to keep the home fires burning' but also as denoting the individuals who maintain these fires. She explains that this act ensures that when whanaunga (relatives) return home, "someone is there to welcome them, to pass on history,

the traditions, the customs, the genealogy etc.”³⁸⁷ Minhinnick emphasises that tangata whenua and mana whenua may fulfil the role of ahi kā, entrusted with preserving both oral and written aspects of cultural heritage.³⁸⁸ Interpreted this way, Turei embodies ahi kā in his continuation of this custom, incorporating waiata, karakia, and whaikōrero in his fire ceremonies.³⁸⁹ However, he expands on this traditional role, sharing Indigenous knowledge with not only tangata whenua but also Pākehā and international visitors, enabling a broader audience to cultivate a deeper connection with the whenua of Aotearoa and the world of te ao Māori.

This chapter’s examination of my *Musick* installation through Scholte’s performative lens highlights the complexities involved in documenting and archiving site-specific projects and events. The full scope of these works resides in their temporary, interactive nature, which can be challenging to capture and preserve. Beyond the documentation I have compiled of the *Musick* installation and the fire ceremony, my narration of these projects adds another layer to the archival process. These texts draw attention to the act of installation, and my curatorial and decision-making processes, and anchor this multifaceted project in specific moments in time.

387 Nganeko Kaihau Minhinnick states that, traditionally, the ahi kā will have been appointed by the tribe, and “entrusted and taught the oral (and sometimes written) history, genealogy, traditions, customs, etc.” However, Pita Turei has stated that he is self-appointed as ahi kā. Nganeko Kaihau Minhinnick, *Establishing Kaitiaki: A Paper* (Auckland: N. K. Minhinnick, 1989), 3.

388 Minhinnick, *Establishing Kaitiaki*, 3.

389 Minhinnick, 3.



Figure 179: Paul Cullen with his installation *Things from Geology (Underworld)*, as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf, Waiheke Island, 2017. Photograph Marie Shannon.

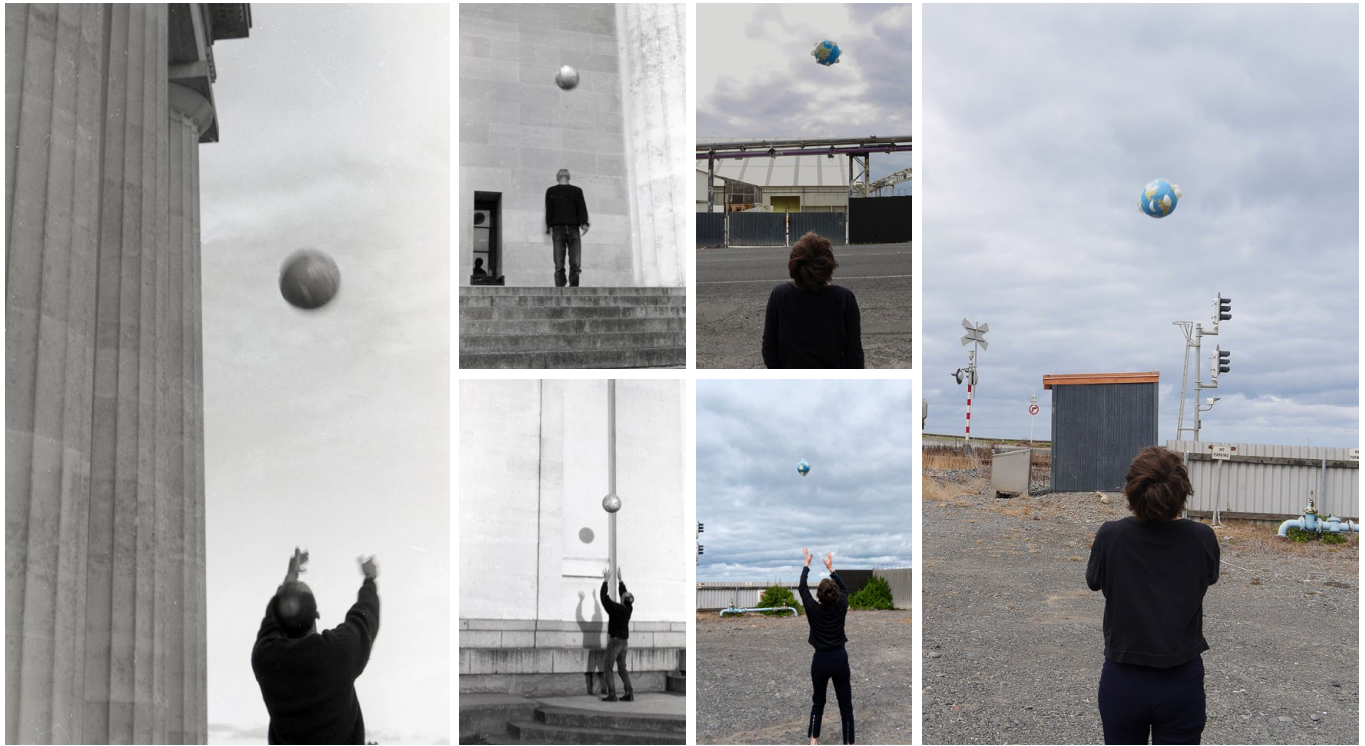


Figure 180: Black-and-white images: Paul tosses a globe from his studio in front of Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1995. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen. Colour images: I re-enact this event in Napier with a globe from Paul’s archive, 2020. Photographs by p. mule.

5. Circling Back: Concluding Reflections

As I draw this study to a close, I return to an early moment in my research, depicted in a series of photographs produced in 2020. These images show me tossing a world globe from my father’s collection into the air. This re-enactment mirrors a 1995 event I documented for a high school photography project in black and white, featuring Paul tossing a similar but different world globe skyward.³⁹⁰ Rediscovering the negatives of these images in the Henderson warehouse prompted me to restage this event. In the 1995 images, I was exploring shutter speed, capturing the globe sharply and as a blur, aiming to depict Paul with his arms at his sides and the globe seemingly suspended above his head.³⁹¹ This exercise drew inspiration from John Baldessari’s conceptual piece *Throwing Three Balls in the Air to Get a Straight Line (Best of Thirty-Six Attempts)* (1975), which explored the interplay between control and serendipity in structured attempts to capture chance moments.³⁹²

390 This project took place outside the front entrance of Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira.

391 Looking through the image library I have compiled, I deduce that the globe Paul tossed into the air in my 1995 images was perhaps the same one he later incorporated into his *r/p/m* sculpture *Geographer (2)*, created the same year—the size of the two globes is consistent. *Geographer (2)* was one of the pieces that the artist proposed for inclusion in his *Musick* installation proposition. However, this work is not held by the archive but is in the collection of the Chartwell Trust; therefore, I excluded it from my realisation of *Musick*.

392 This was a work that Paul had introduced me to at the time.

Reflecting on these images, separated by a quarter of a century, prompts me to consider the profound transformations in the global landscape and my personal experience over this time. The recurring motif of the globe being tossed—first by Paul, then by myself—marks a transition in roles and viewpoints across time. These changes mirror broader shifts in technology, politics, and the environment in Aotearoa and internationally, elements that are inevitably intertwined. Amid these shifts, I have navigated the absence of my father, with the materials, artworks, and components he compiled in the warehouse serving as tangible connections to him and his art practice. The act of tossing the globe in 2020, during an uncertain period of my research and in the world, notably marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, has come to embody the core themes of this practice-based exploration. These images, showing different world globes suspended outside the Auckland War Memorial Museum in 1995, and on Waitangi Road in Napier in 2020, demonstrate the evolving temporalities and interpretations, or subjectivities, held in objects, shaped by the perspectives and contexts of those interacting with them. This evolution underscores that the meaning of objects and spaces is not fixed but is shaped and reshaped through engagement, reflecting the interconnected relationship between experiences, perceptions, and interpretations. In a perpetual feedback loop, artefacts or artworks, contexts, people, and the world mutually influence and transform one another. Thus, shifting roles, ongoing dialogues with the past, and understanding artefacts as dynamic underline a broader realisation: spaces are continually constructed and navigated based on our experiences, perceptions, and interpretations.

In the first chapter of this exegesis, I laid the groundwork for understanding how changes in archival theory and practice reflect broader societal transformations, technological advancements, and evolving theoretical perspectives. I unpacked Terry Cook's four archival paradigms—*Evidence*, *Memory*, *Identity*, and *Community*—demonstrating how each paradigm offers a distinct lens through which to view the complex roles archives play in documenting and shaping our historical, personal, and communal narratives. My investigation revealed that archival practice is inherently complex, requiring archivists to navigate multiple paradigms simultaneously. In archiving Paul's art practice, I argue that a context-sensitive, multifaceted approach is essential. This thesis contends that addressing the archival challenges of his work requires reconciling diverse methods of evidence capture, accommodating evolving cultural narratives, and managing the unique materialities of his ephemeral, site-based, and process-driven practice.

I also suggest that this framework prompts an ontological reconsideration of what constitutes an 'artefact' or 'object' within an archive. In the context of Paul's practice, artworks and components emerge as dynamic entities—continually shaped by their process, context, and the experiences they evoke. However, in

broader terms, institutions should re-evaluate the nature of archival materiality. For example, a museum in Aotearoa with a bicultural commitment might approach an object or tāonga by considering both European and Te Ao Māori understandings of value and meaning. This stance challenges the conventional assumptions of Western archival practice and calls for a more considered understanding of what defines material traces and their significance, including their cultural, relational, historical, and contemporary dimensions.

In cataloguing Paul's artworks and components within the Henderson warehouse, I employed methods aligned with the *Evidence* paradigm. These techniques proved useful for creating accurate records that support locating pieces, recording dimensions, and facilitating curator collaborations. Additionally, my documentation and 3D modelling of artworks captured their physical characteristics, highlighting the practical benefits of these tools in an artist's archive. However, I argued that these methods also pose challenges, as they primarily address tangible attributes while often neglecting the dynamic, process-driven aspects of Paul's work.

My establishment of an image library and online digital repository illustrated the *Memory* paradigm, highlighting how archives not only preserve factual data but also shape collective and individual narratives, influencing how history and memory are constructed and perceived. My personal reflective writing and narration in this exegesis further contribute to curating memory. Similarly, my creation of the *15-Volume Reader*, which compiles the artist's research into bound volumes, served to organise and capture the intellectual context in which Paul operated.

My practice-based research methodology also reflected *Cook's Identity* paradigm as I have conceptualised the archive as a dynamic, fragmented entity that continuously evolves, marked by inherent fluctuations between loss and abundance, and vulnerable to interpretation and bias. This is exemplified in my editorial engagement with Paul's work, demonstrating how editorial decisions, resonating with postmodern theory's complication of authorship, significantly shape the archive's structure and content interpretation.

I considered the *Archives-as-Data* paradigm proposed by Devon Mordell, which examines the transformation of archives into data and the implications of this shift. My experiments with LiDAR and photogrammetry, transforming physical artworks into digital models, exemplify this paradigm. These mediated forms of digital archiving illustrate how technological advancements are reshaping approaches for archives, redefining how they are accessed, interpreted, and interacted with across diverse platforms. However, I demonstrated that this

process also risks distorting or decontextualising the original artworks, reducing them to data that may not fully reflect their physical presence and historical context.

I proposed that interpreting Pita Turei's fire ceremony as an unconventional form of archiving aligns with the *Community* paradigm by engaging diverse groups, fostering dialogue, and promoting understanding across different social strata. However, while Cook's model emphasises inclusivity and the reflection of community identities, I suggested that practices like Turei's fire ceremony generate a continuous narrative shaped by the ongoing convergence of memory and interaction. Recognising traditional Māori practices such as ahi kā as forms of archiving challenges the Western focus on tangible records and underscores the importance of preserving intangible cultural expressions. This dynamic process of narrative formation aligns closely with Shaun Wilson's Indigenous *Relational* research paradigm, which foregrounds the interconnections among people, practices, and contexts.

In discussing various archival paradigms and through practical experiments, I have demonstrated that archives do more than preserve history—they have the potential to mediate between tangible records and intangible narratives, engage in dialogue among artefacts, contexts, and people, and respond adaptively to the evolving needs of diverse communities. Building on my definition of the archive as both a physical repository and an active set of practices in Chapter One, I propose repositioning it as a dynamic cultural actor. This reconceptualisation redefines the archive's role—not merely as a storage space or archiving process, but as an active force in shaping and sustaining our collective memory.

In this exegesis, I have positioned myself as daughter-archivist and *archivist-researcher*—drawing on Lynée Lewis Gaillet's term. This designation underscores the archivist's active role in shaping historical understanding and viewing archives not as static repositories but as dynamic spaces for generating new knowledge. In my engagement with the materials and Paul's artworks in the warehouse, I have recognised that impartiality and objectivity as an archivist are unattainable. The archival process remains inherently interpretative, influencing what is maintained, preserved, or prioritised, actively shaping cultural narratives and our understanding of the past. Expanding on this perspective in this exegesis, I have adopted a personal writing style in which I directly address Paul, interspersed with the more academic writing. These texts highlight my relationship with him and instill an emotional dimension into the archival process, traditionally perceived as a perfunctory task aimed at objective preservation. Through this writing and my reference to Paul by his first name within the academic text, I have positioned this PhD research as a deeply interpretative act.

My writing reflections addressed to Paul were influenced by Shaun Wilson's

Indigenous research paradigm, which is grounded in principles of relationality and relational accountability. Wilson contends that an idea loses its authenticity when detached from its relational context, and asserts that relationships do not just shape reality, they constitute reality.³⁹³ In Wilson's framework, the circle metaphor is crucial for understanding the interconnectedness and equal importance of all ideas within an Indigenous research paradigm. He describes the circle as a space where ideas are interrelated, flowing from one to another in a cyclical pattern, where a change in one part affects all others.³⁹⁴ This circular interdependence emphasises that no part is superior to another, and every part is essential for the whole.³⁹⁵ Dr Terry Tafoya's observation, as referenced by Wilson, that stories move in circles, not in straight lines, further supports the non-linear nature of Indigenous knowledge and narratives.³⁹⁶ This circular storytelling perspective is evident in the creative writing sections. Unlike the formalised chapters, which adhere to a linear structure with clear introductions, conclusions, and sequential arguments, these narratives embrace circularity, offering snapshots of my memories and experiences.

I further drew on Wilson's circle metaphor in the title of my PhD, "Circles Within the Archive", and also extended this thematic representation to the chapter introduction titles, using them to delineate how my research narrative progressed and evolved. The introduction title "Initial Rotation: The Circle Pivots" in Chapter One sets the stage for examining the dynamic nature of archival theory and practice. In this contextual review, I argued that archival practices are not static but constantly shifting and evolving, reflecting the cyclical and interconnected insights promoted by the circle metaphor. In Chapter Two, "Archiving Paradoxes", I considered inherent paradoxes in archiving and collecting practices and within Paul's work. The introduction, "Early Revolutions: The Circle Spirals", served as a signpost for how these paradoxes initiate feedback loops, contributing to the increasing complexity and dynamic transformations within these systems. Chapter Three, "Archiving Provisional Arrangements", focused on a series of Paul's temporary, site-related installations, which involved his continual repurposing and reuse of components. The introduction title, "Initiating Turn: The Circle Expands", symbolises the non-linear and emergent behaviours of systems as they adapt to changes, or how modifications might trigger cascading effects within them. In Chapter Four, I titled the introduction "The Circles Tangle" to emphasise the interconnected narratives and events I focused on in this section. Finally, I titled this conclusion "Circling Back" to indicate a form of closure for this research while also demonstrating how the circle metaphor captures the tension between continuity and discontinuation. In archival

393 Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony*, 7–8.

394 Wilson, 70.

395 Wilson, 70.

396 Wilson, 6.

practices, there is a continual push and pull between the need for continuity, such as preserving historical materials over time, and the reality of closure, where certain narratives or perspectives might be excluded or minimised. This duality is also relevant to my research narrative, which is focused on my subjective engagement with Paul's archive and represents just one of many possible interpretations.

5.1. Navigating Archival Paradoxes in Paul's Practice

In Chapter Two, "Archiving Paradoxes", I addressed my first research question: How do archiving and cataloguing practices shape, redefine, or influence the understanding of Paul's work? Engaging with theorists Mathias Winzen and Samuel Frederick, my study revealed inherent paradoxes within these practices, demonstrating how they are simultaneously protective and destructive. On the one hand, archival methods aim to preserve materials or artefacts, effectively removing them from the flow of time to mitigate deterioration and prevent damage. On the other hand, these processes strip these items of utility and isolate them from their original relational contexts, which once imbued them with meaning. Consequently, the significance of once-unique artefacts is now derived from their relationships within the collection. I argued that the 'destructive' aspects of archiving and cataloguing are particularly pronounced in the context of Paul's work, as his practice is defined by the continuous reuse and repurposing of materials and an engagement with the dynamic relationships between components and the sites and contexts in which he installed them. Traditional archival methods, which emphasise the singular object, impose a static state on components that Paul previously positioned as transient and evolving, negating the inherent fluidity and interactivity fundamental to his work. I coined the term *Static Continuity* to describe the challenges of capturing the dynamic aspects of Paul's work through traditional archival methods, exemplified by his use of living plants in installations.

Despite the apparent contradictions between Paul's working methodology and traditional cataloguing practices, he collaborated with Jane Sanders to begin archiving his work between 2016 and 2017. They established two related databases: one to record individual artworks and components and another for public installations and exhibitions, although neither of these were completed. While undertaking this work, Paul was also collaborating with artist and photographer Marie Shannon to document artworks in his studio, and working towards several exhibition projects. I suggested that these activities resulted in a simultaneous ordering and disordering of his studio, involving the systematic organisation, documentation, and labelling of smaller artworks and components and his creative process of preparing for the upcoming installations.

I proposed systems thinking as a framework to grasp the paradoxical dynamics in Paul's studio, reflecting on Buckminster Fuller's principles that suggest order and disorder are complementary in any system. I posited that Paul's creative methodology—reusing, repurposing, or rearranging materials, artworks, and components—exemplifies entropy while cataloguing, documentation, and exhibition processes exemplify syntropy. This shift from initial disorder to the refinement of a final work is an inherent part of any creative process, yet disorder remains an active force throughout. Paul's work explored this dynamic, embracing both the instability of entropy and the structuring forces of syntropy. Systems thinking is also deeply embedded in the conceptual foundations of his work, which was shaped by his background in the biological sciences before he attended art school. This influence is visible in his early landscape projects, in which he used natural materials to highlight a symbiotic relationship between his sculptures and the natural world, emphasising the interconnectedness of human and non-human elements.

Considering Paul's studio context through the lens of systems thinking highlighted how his interactions with various individuals and elements within this system influenced his creation and development of artworks and projects. While Paul was at the centre of his art-making system, his actions and choices drove the dynamics and outputs of this structure, and the archiving and cataloguing process he undertook became an extension of his practice. In this way, the destructive aspects of archiving that Winzen and Frederick identify were less pronounced: catalogued components and artworks remained in the context of Paul's studio, and he had the potential to reactivate these as he wished. I also suggested that his interest in the language of archiving and the categorical absurdities present in his practice continue to disrupt the systems and categories applied to works in the artwork database. Despite only formally beginning the cataloguing of his work in the last year of his life, I posited that the collection of works and materials in his studio effectively functioned as an archive throughout his career, serving as a resource he could consistently draw upon.

After Paul passed away, Ry and I took his place in the system of archiving his work, marking a shift from the artist defining which works were catalogued and how they were categorised to us assuming these responsibilities. This transition is crucial for addressing the question of how archiving and cataloguing practices shape our understanding of Paul's work, demonstrating that these impacts depend on who is involved, the technologies used, and the time and resources available. With Paul no longer present, I took on the challenge of distinguishing artworks from other materials in his studio, and piecing together the history and provenance of artworks and components, which included tracking how he evolved and changed pieces over time. To accomplish this, I relied on available

documentation and Paul's writings, drawings, and workbooks. However, I demonstrated that this reliance on subjective materials is prone to misinterpretation, underscoring another archival paradox: although archival processes are designed to safeguard information for the future, the future value and relevance of this information is unpredictable and varies over time.

5.2. Beyond the Physical Object

Chapter Three addressed my second research question: How should Paul's work be archived and exhibited to resonate with and extend the conceptual underpinnings of his practice? This inquiry focused on a series of site-related works, including *Provisional Arrangements* (2013–16) and *Object/Anti-Object (O/AO) 1 and 2* (2013). My study revealed that the residual components from these projects pose unique archival challenges because Paul's conceptualisation of the artwork extended beyond the physical limits of individual objects. To determine suitable archival methods and assess whether it was conceptually appropriate to re-exhibit these components, I examined Paul's writings and workbooks and drew on critical theorists he has referenced who have shaped contemporary understandings of site-related art practices. Rosalind Krauss's concepts of 'marked sites' and 'site-construction' were crucial for understanding how the environments of the *O/AO 2* and *Provisional Arrangements* installations became integral to these projects. Given their entanglement with their surroundings, I argued that these works also resonate with Kwon's concept of phenomenological site-specificity, which emphasises the role of viewer engagement and contextual conditions in shaping the perception and experience of art.

I further proposed that the *Provisional Arrangements* series and *O/AO* installations exemplify Kwon's concept of discursive site-specificity, extending the site beyond traditional spatial boundaries to include textual and interactive engagements.³⁹⁷ In *O/AO*, Paul conflated diverse sites—real, conceptual, and fictional—while in the *Provisional Arrangements* series, he installed works across Aotearoa, Australia, and the USA. In positioning these installations as exemplars of phenomenological and discursive site-specificity, I found that their meanings emerge not solely from individual components or environments but from the interconnected dialogues and narratives across their various sites, which dynamically interacted within broader textual and social contexts. In the case of the *O/AO 2* installation, physically experiencing the work was also important.

5.3. Reconceptualising Archival Strategies to Capture Dynamic Art Practices

In my discussion, I have argued that traditional archiving strategies, which treat artworks as discrete and autonomous objects, are inadequate for fully capturing Paul's work because they do not capture the interconnected and evolving nature of his practice. The *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements* series, ranging from unaltered found objects to constructed sculptural assemblages, illustrate this complexity. The roles of components used by Paul in these works often changed; they sometimes served as props or support structures in temporary site-specific installations and reverted to everyday objects once dismantled. Other components, which Paul had partially modified, were more ambiguous. Meanwhile, the tidal assemblages maintained their status as 'sculptures', even after being removed from the dynamic and shifting environments Paul created them for. This fluidity and reassignment of roles within Paul's works emphasise how my understanding of these installations has depended on documentation and archival materials. Without these resources, grasping the full scope of the projects from only the remaining components would have been challenging. This insight led me to argue that Paul's practice softens the boundary between artwork and archive. This argument drew on Alex Potts's theories about the blurring of these concepts, as seen in Allan Kaprow's Happenings.

Paul's deinstallation of the *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements* installations effectively destroyed them, although they live on through the various archival materials that remain. I have argued that the diverse components from these projects could be re-exhibited as a collection and reintegrated into future gallery exhibitions with appropriate contextualisation. One approach I identified was to involve curators or artist-curators to propose new groupings, rearrangements, or recombinations of components and artworks, drawing on Paul's documentation and prior installations as reference points. The artwork database, established by Paul and Sanders, is helpful in this scenario because it provides an inventory of artworks and components held by the archive and tracks their location in the studio, thereby facilitating and streamlining collaboration with galleries and curators.³⁹⁸ The exhibitions database, while not complete, has the potential to

398 A recent example of an artist responding to Paul's work was in the group show *Eight thousand layers of moments* (Gus Fisher Gallery, 15 March–11 May 2024). In this exhibition, artist Sean Kerr selected eleven works from Paul's *Reductions* series (2009) and presented a new work titled *Eleven sound compositions*. Kerr's compositions were inspired by Paul's eleven ruler works, which are constructed of pieces of ruler with drilled holes. Kerr translated the drill holes into musical instrument digital interface (MIDI) notes resulting in eleven sonic compositions. "The final audio arrangements are unable to be predicted and by embracing the unknown and unexpected, humorous moments may occur in the compositions structure. The artist states that 'If certain sections sound discordant, they will remain so; if others seem awkward or funny, they will embrace that quality too.'" Gus Fisher Gallery, "Eight Thousand Layers of Moments" (Exhibition room sheet, Auckland, 2024), 6.

track publication and exhibition histories, providing curators with essential context about how an artwork or installation has been received and interpreted. Complementing these tools, the image library I have established provides a visual reference and is crucial for contextualising components and artworks.

My research has primarily focused on the archival challenges of Paul's site-specific and outdoor installations. However, he also presented exhibitions in galleries throughout his career, often displaying autonomous or semi-autonomous artworks. As discussed in Chapter Two with the example of *Southern Cross*, Paul was also interested in how materials and objects are shaped and drawn out of complex environments. I argue that in the context of his practice and methodology, works presented as finished in galleries or documented as isolated pieces, such as *Southern Cross*, represent temporary pauses in an ongoing process of movement—similar to his documentation of the *Provisional Arrangements* series. After public exhibitions, Paul often continued to adapt or modify these items once they returned to the studio. The precedent Paul set through his gallery exhibitions, his artwork database inventory, and his photographic collaboration with Shannon suggests he deemed it appropriate to independently present particular works and sculptures. However, I argue that this approach is unsuitable for all components, such as remnants from the *O/AO* and *Provisional Arrangements* series, which should be presented as part of a compilation that includes artworks, sculptural assemblages, or components in various stages of alteration or modification.

To return to the question of archiving Paul's work in a way that aligns with the conceptual underpinnings of his practice, I propose that the artwork and exhibition databases would need to be adapted to better accommodate the dynamic aspects of his work. While these databases effectively manage inventory and facilitate logistical co-ordination, they do not adequately capture the full spectrum of conceptual linkages between sites, concepts, and components in his work. The initial design of the database, created for Jane Sanders's gallery, focused on a static inventory for sales and therefore emphasised the commodification of objects. The database required that the catalogued artworks be autonomous, consistent, and unchanging. However, considering the complexities involved in establishing or updating the current databases to document and capture Paul's body of work comprehensively, I concluded that expanding them is not feasible due to the labour-intensive process required to record the complexities of his work and to capture the conceptual connections within and between installations. This would require carefully reviewing images and documentation to identify components and changes Paul made to these, which would be time consuming and prone to error due to reliance on

incomplete or subjective records.³⁹⁹ Capturing all the variables at sites where he installed works, including the distinction between materials found on-site and objects he introduced, the documentation process would inevitably shift into interpretative territory. His continual modification and adaptation of components also complicates tracking the provenance of these items within a database structure and raises the question: at what point does a component lose its original identity due to these transformations?

Instead, in this research, I have argued for an expanded concept of archiving that goes beyond mere physical storage and cataloguing to encompass a range of different practices and methods to preserve, organise, and interpret materials and experiences. I have reimagined Paul's archive as a discursive site—a living entity that facilitates dynamic discourse and dialogue, and supports ongoing conversations and reinterpretations of his work and broader practice. This conception lays the foundation for the practice-based research outputs I have developed as part of this PhD thesis.

5.4. The Creative Artefacts

In this research, I have defined my creative practice as rooted in graphic design but expanding beyond the discipline's traditional boundaries to incorporate writing, editing, curating, publishing, archiving, and performance. I have used the term 'curation' to refer to the selective organisation, exhibition, and interpretation of artworks and components, and have considered the role of curation in shaping narrative, context, and engagement. I have used editorial methods to refer to content selection and arrangement, which is essential for structuring information. The creative artefacts I developed as part of this research are presented in the web-based archive of Paul's work that I have created and are also contained in this exegesis as documentation, writing, and appendices. All of these outputs contribute to establishing the archive as a discursive site, fostering diverse interpretations, critical thinking, and ongoing dialogues. These outputs directly address my third research question: How might a practice-led process

399 Another complexity not captured effectively in these databases is the distinction between installations where the viewer's experience is an essential aspect of the work versus installations he conducted in private, such as the *Attempts*, *Situations*, and *Provisional Arrangements* series. For example, because images are now the sole means of comprehending works such as the *O/AO 2* installation and the *Provisional Arrangements* series, this results in a blurred distinction between public and private works within the database. Additionally, the database does not account for materials or objects that Paul incorporated or engaged with at an installation site, nor the impact of environmental elements like wind, tide, or weather. These factors are crucial in works from his *Operative Structures* series, significantly influencing the positioning and perception of the remaining components.

activate the archive, fostering engagement, new trajectories, and continuous emergence while opening novel pathways for understanding the artist subject incumbent in the archive? I have found that 'activate' denotes a more interactive and dynamic engagement with the work beyond mere display, and involves recontextualising a work and emphasising its relevance within contemporary discourse and environments.

The creative writing interspersed throughout this exegesis is one component of my practice-based research outputs, and includes: "Preamble to Paul: Overwhelm", "Reflection to Paul: Denial", "Reflection to Paul: Excessive Acquisition", "Pataphysical Musings", "Digital Transmutations", "*The Musick Project: A Performative Log*", and "The Fire Ceremony". I view this writing as a method of archiving that explores various narrative perspectives. In the first three texts, I address Paul directly, engaging in a personal dialogue. In the fourth and fifth texts, I shift to directly addressing the reader, involving them in the interpretative process. In the sixth text, I use a performance log to record and timestamp my placement of artworks within the Musick Memorial Radio Station. In the final text, I employ a third-person narrative script, emphasising the performative aspect of storytelling.

Another practice-based research output is a series of photographs that documents my direct engagement with artworks and their components. These include the images depicting me tossing components into the air within the warehouse and on Waitangi Road in Napier, as shown at the start of this conclusion. Further images of my interaction with the artwork components can be seen in [figure 59](#) and in [Appendix C.2](#).

15-Volume Reader, which I discussed in "Reflection to Paul: Excessive Acquisition", is another research artefact. This collection comprises photocopies and printouts compiled by Paul for research and teaching purposes that I gathered from throughout his studio and bound into fifteen yellow-covered volumes. By binding this material, which might typically be overlooked in traditional archival practices, I elevated its status. This act aimed to underscore the importance of this content in deepening my understanding of Paul's work while also expanding my scholarly exploration. Engaging with these materials introduced me to relevant texts and authors, and organising them into a sub-archive has been a critical resource throughout this research.

The development of a [web-based archive](#) of Paul's work has extended its reach beyond its physical confines of the Henderson warehouse, facilitating broader access and contextualising components through documentation. This platform has also contributed to generating interest in Paul's practice and, as I mentioned

in “Starting the Circle: An Introduction”, the archive has been involved in numerous exhibitions of Paul’s work since 2017.⁴⁰⁰ I have organised this web-based archive into sections titled ‘Documents’, which includes the subsections ‘Selected Projects’, ‘Work Series’, ‘Artwork Components’, and ‘Drawings & Concepts’; ‘Interpretation’, which contains the subsections ‘Archive Projects’ and ‘Library 3D Models’; and an ‘About’ section. In ‘Selected Projects’, I have uploaded documentation of installations dating back to the mid-1970s, when Paul was at art school. I created the ‘Drawings & Concepts’ category to present Paul’s drawings, materials from his workbooks, and other documents relevant to the projects presented and overall practice.

In ‘Artwork Components’, I have added images of individual works and components that still exist, which I have determined can be shown independently or as part of a compilation. This includes the documentation of smaller artworks installed on the cyclorama that Paul and Shannon took between 2016 and 2017, as well as the larger sculptures on the studio floor, which I discussed in Chapter Two. In this section, I have included images of sculptures in the archive consisting of more complex assemblages, such as the *r/p/m* sculptures with rotating parts or water-circulating systems embodying inherent change. I have included my documentation of components from the *Provisional Arrangements* series and *O/OA 2* installations on the website, drawing on Paul and Shannon’s in-situ documentation approach. I arranged these components on the studio floor and leant pieces against the wall, incorporating incidental elements and the surrounding context. For the tidal-works components, I documented adjustments I made to the ruler appendages to form different shapes and show how these pieces might be displayed in changing formations.

Under the ‘Interpretation’ section, I have included projects and exhibitions of Paul’s work that have taken place since 2017, clearly distinguishing them from those created during his lifetime. This section also features the artefacts generated for this thesis, including *Digital r/p/m Proposition*, which includes four virtual exhibitions and documentation of the *15-Volume Reader*. I included the ‘Library 3D Models’ in this section to underscore that these are archival interpretations of Paul’s work—I also consider these models as creative artefacts of this PhD research. ‘Texts & Research’ lists selected writings on Paul’s work, while the ‘About’ section provides information about the Paul Cullen Archive initiative, Paul’s biography,

400 The curated selection of projects I have added to this site is sourced from the image library I have compiled, which includes images from slides, negatives, and archival materials that I have digitised, as well as documentation I have sourced from Paul’s computer and hard drives. This image library has grown throughout my research, incorporating photographs I have taken or commissioned, and documentation of exhibitions of Paul’s work since 2017. However, while the image library is a crucial component of my practice-based research, it remains a private resource, and I do not include it as one of my creative artefacts.

and a history of selected exhibitions. I have established links between all of the content on the site, listing related works or texts under selected projects and linking projects to components or 3D models.

Another aspect of my practice-based research was devising a conceptual strategy for documenting components from Paul's installations *Explaining the Results of Observation* at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton (1991), and *Moon/Navigation* at Artspace, Auckland (1991). Paul had labelled groups of components from these projects, numbering them and assigning them with unique titles. By digitising images from these exhibitions, I observed how he arranged and hung components—model moons, wooden boats, papier-mâché landforms, and building structures—and noted the changes he made between the two installations in response to the gallery's architecture. My strategy for reinstalling these groups of components drew on Krauss's concept of 'axiomatic structures'. Mirroring Paul's approach, I installed the components in the studio, treating walls as landscapes and responding to architectural features such as door frames and existing wall fixtures. Documentation of this installation is included in [Appendix C.4](#) and on the web archive.

For the *Weather Stations* installation, included in [Appendix C.5](#), my exploration of Scholte's conceptual framework informed the project. This framework analyses site-specific installations by considering their physical relationship to the environment, both conceptually and physically, alongside the social contexts of their creation and reception, and the symbolic or representational contexts in which they are presented. This project was a collaborative restaging of Paul's 2009 site-related installation *Weather Stations*, which he originally presented as part of Headland Sculpture on the Gulf on Waiheke Island. In the new version, components from the previous work were installed in an outdoor courtyard space at Te Tuhi gallery, Auckland, as part of the group exhibition *Huarere: Weather Eye, Weather Ear* (2023). I invited emerging artists J. A. Kennedy and Ammon Ngakuru to collaborate with the Paul Cullen Archive in reconfiguring the installation. My goal was to emphasise the performative act of re-presenting the installation in a new site and context, thereby highlighting the processes of reinterpretation.

Digital r/p/m proposition: four virtual exhibitions was another practice-based research output, which I discussed in *Digital Transmutations*. This interactive project brought to life four of the five speculative proposals Paul created in 2011 to install works from his *r/p/m* sculpture series around the world at sites of scientific observation. These sites included the Eise Eisinga Planetarium in Franeker, the Netherlands; the Octagon Room in the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England; Musick Memorial Radio Station on Musick Point, New

Zealand; and Linnaeus Garden in Uppsala, Sweden.⁴⁰¹ These components were integrated into the open-source platform Mozilla Hubs, accessible via the archive website. The *Digital r/p/m proposition* was also part of a commissioned public exhibition by Te Tuhi and was exhibited internationally on the World Weather Network platform, a constellation of weather stations set up by arts agencies around the world.⁴⁰² Unfortunately, Mozilla Hubs was shut down on May 31, 2024, so the four virtual installations can no longer be viewed.

My exploratory process began with the use of photogrammetry and LiDAR to generate 3D models of smaller artworks and components, starting with a series of creatively altered globes and extending to Paul's cast rocks and concrete pieces. After experimenting with positioning these initial 3D models in augmented reality to simulate their placement in actual environments, this led me to the conceptual development of realising the *r/p/m* installation propositions in a virtual environment. Examples of the 3D models I generated can be viewed on the Paul Cullen Archive website.

Finally, my orchestration of the two events on Te Naupata Reserve / Musick Point became a research event and included my physical staging of *The Musick Project* and the fire ceremony led by Turei. These events are recorded through documentation and the two texts presented within Chapter Four, which I have discussed earlier. I have also included the narrative log on the web archive in the 'Archive Projects' section.

5.5. Contribution to Expanded Archival Practices: A Discursive Approach

In this research, I have contributed new knowledge and insights into Paul's practice and working methodologies, and incorporated perspectives from conversations with creative professionals whom Paul collaborated with. I have positioned the archive not merely as a static repository of materials but as a dynamic space for dialogue, interpretation, and interaction. By conceptualising the archive as a discursive site, I argue that it becomes a place where meaning is actively constructed and reinterpreted through ongoing engagement and discourse. My practice-based research outputs, including documentation and exhibition

401 I initiated the idea to realise Paul's concepts virtually and collaborated with Ry Tweedie-Cullen to bring this vision to fruition. We also engaged offshore creatives to scan the international locations and animate the digital models of the artworks, which Ry and I scanned in the archive using LiDAR and photogrammetry.

402 "World Weather Network," World Weather Network, accessed May 25, 2024, <https://worldweather-network.org/?desktop=1>.

strategies for artworks, physical and virtual installations, the creation of connections between concepts, projects, and components, the development of an online web archive of Paul's work, and the orchestration of events on Te Naupata Reserve, all contribute to this dynamic approach. The written exegesis also serves as an activation of multiple voices within the discursive approach I am advocating. These contributions transform the archive into an interactive and evolving entity that I hope will foster a continued dialogue around Paul's work. In this way, my research redefines the conceptualisation of the archive as a site of active engagement and discursive practice, thus expanding the traditional boundaries of archival methodologies. This practice-led process responds to my research question, activates the archive to foster engagement new trajectories, and continuous emergence, while also opening novel pathways for understanding the artist subject within the archive.

In Chapter Four, I proposed that traditional Indigenous ceremonies, which Turei's fire ceremony draws on, function as a form of archiving through the passing on of stories, traditions, and histories that are kept alive through active engagement. This concept of embodied archiving parallels the non-traditional archival methods I have developed in this research, revealing similar paradoxes when viewed through conventional archiving practices. Conceptualising Indigenous ceremonies as a form of archiving challenges traditional archival objectives by emphasising the transmission of intangible elements—such as rituals, emotions, oral traditions, spiritual connections, and communal participation—that are inherently fluid and dynamic and, therefore, difficult to preserve in any concrete form. Practices like Turei's fire ceremony embody a continuously evolving narrative, highlighting a living memory reshaped by each participant's unique experience. This approach contrasts with traditional archiving, which focuses on preserving static physical records, documents, and artefacts. Similarly, by positioning the archive as a discursive site, my research integrates events and practices into the archival process, redefining archives from musty, file-bound repositories into rich, engaging spaces of interaction and meaning making. This highlights the need to expand archival methodologies to accommodate the dynamic and experiential nature of event-based art practices and cultural practices, aligning with the discursive and interactive framework I am advocating.

5.6. Further Research in Archiving and Publishing

This research has concentrated on a small selection of projects, opening up numerous avenues for further exploration. Future research could expand the databases and further investigate artworks and components within Paul's archive. Building on my analysis of *O/AO 2* and the *Provisional Arrangements*

series, a further avenue might involve creating conditions for active engagement—inviting artists and curators to interact with components and artworks and contribute their own interpretations. I hope that future scholars and practitioners will find this PhD research a valuable foundation for further investigations into Paul’s work, expansive archival practices, artist narratives, and the interconnections between creation and preservation.

I am also interested in further exploring expanded forms of publishing to represent the integration of artwork and archival materials within Paul’s practice in a publication or exhibition context. This might include developing publishing systems that move beyond traditional paper and digital dichotomies to establish publications as dynamic discursive sites linking various works and contexts. This includes collaborating with other artists and designers to explore publishing as a form of archiving and to further extend the concept of the archive as a dynamic, discursive space. In addition, I plan to explore methods for both archiving and extending the split/fountain project.

Through this research, I have become aware of how much is lost when an artist dies—not just their artworks but also the context, relationships, and processes that shaped them. Archiving an artist’s or designer’s practice is complex, requiring significant time, funding, and infrastructure, resources that are often scarce in a small country like Aotearoa New Zealand. This urgency is heightened in a media-saturated environment where art and design work is increasingly shaped by instant visibility, interaction, and digital circulation—often at the expense of deeper engagement and critical reflection. In this context, it seems more necessary than ever to look both backwards and forwards—to critically engage with past practices while ensuring contemporary work isn’t lost in the acceleration of digital culture.

Having the time and space to work with Paul’s archive has been a rare privilege. Many artists and designers lack the resources or institutional support to deeply engage with their archives while they are still alive. Whether a body of work is meaningfully archived or disappears hinges on a complex set of dynamics—financial, institutional, and relational—that determine what is preserved and what is lost. Further reflecting on this PhD research, I am considering the development of collaborative, intergenerational archiving approaches that actively transmit and capture knowledge, processes, and artistic intent, rather than reconstructing them later.

I began this PhD journey in July 2019, building on my work with Paul’s archive from 2016–17 while he was alive, and continuing after his death. The completion of this research in August 2024 represents not only the culmination of an

academic investigation but also a deeply personal exploration, manifesting as an embodied form of archiving. Through my installation of Paul's works at the Musick Memorial Radio Station and realisation of his conceptual installation proposition from a collaborative publication project we worked on in 2011, I have established an embodied connection with Te Naupata Reserve. My participation in Turei's fire ceremony outside the station deepened this connection, further entangling my memories with this site. Engaging with my father's work has been an intimate journey involving personal interaction with his materials and artworks, the discovery of family photographs, revisiting memories that these encounters have stirred, and the time and emotions invested in this process. These aspects are inherently intangible and cannot be fully captured in a database or in this exegesis. I have conveyed elements of these experiences through creative writing; however, the translation from the experiential to the concrete remains partial and incomplete.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

Appendix B: Tools

Appendix B.1: Participant Information Sheet

Appendix B.2: Consent Form

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

17 August 2020

Janine Randerson
Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies

Dear Janine

Ethics Application: 20/237 Running Circles Around the Archive: indexing, listing, arranging, digitising, performing, writing, interweaving, drifting through, publishing, and conversing with the Paul Cullen Archive

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review. We are pleased to advise that the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK) approved your ethics application at their meeting on 10 August 2020, subject to the following conditions:

1. Provision of the notice that will be displayed at the entrance to the exhibition;
2. Provision of the indicative questions;
3. Revision of the Information Sheet as follows:
 - a. Use of more conversational and friendly language;
 - b. Consistent use of the first person when referring to the researchers and the second person when referring to potential participants;
 - c. Provision of at least one month for potential participants to decide whether or not they wish to participate in the research;
 - d. Inclusion of clear advice about what will happen in the research
 - e. Removal of the references to anonymity;
4. Removal of the references to anonymity in the Consent Form.

Please provide us with a response to the points raised in these conditions, indicating either how you have satisfied these points or proposing an alternative approach. AUTEK also requires copies of any altered documents, such as Information Sheets, surveys etc. You are not required to resubmit the application form again. Any changes to responses in the form required by the committee in their conditions may be included in a supporting memorandum.

Please note that the Committee is always willing to discuss with applicants the points that have been made. There may be information that has not been made available to the Committee, or aspects of the research may not have been fully understood.

Once your response is received and confirmed as satisfying the Committee's points, you will be notified of the full approval of your ethics application. Full approval is not effective until all the conditions have been met. Data collection may not commence until full approval has been confirmed. If these conditions are not met within six months, your application may be closed and a new application will be required if you wish to continue with this research.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

We look forward to hearing from you,

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEK Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: , layla.tweedie-cullen@aut.ac.nz.

Participant Information Sheet: Interviews

8 January 2021

Project Title

Running Circles Around the Archive: indexing, listing, arranging, digitising, performing, writing, interweaving, drifting through, publishing, and conversing with the Paul Cullen Archive.

An Invitation

Kia ora koutou, my name is Layla Tweedie-Cullen. I am a PhD candidate (practice-based) at Auckland University of Technology in the faculty of Design and Creative Technologies, School of Art and Design. I am warmly inviting you to participate in my research. The information below outlines my project, my reasons for doing it, and what you can expect if you do decide to take part. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

What is the purpose of this research?

My research focuses on the extant body of New Zealand artist Paul Cullen's work (1949-2017), currently located in his former studio in Henderson, Tāmaki Makarau (Auckland). Paul Cullen is also my father.

The following questions guide my research:

- How might an Archivist-Researcher structure, create conditions for, and continuously generate the Paul Cullen Archive to allow for multiple histories and temporalities emerge?
- How might a design-led process activate the archive to facilitate engagement, new trajectories and the archive's continuous emergence?
- How might the archive reflect the artist-subject incumbent in the archive?

Underpinning this research is an assumption that the conservation of cultural heritage is a necessary and important part of civil society. Arts and culture are an integral part of our individual, community and national identity. Conservation shapes the society of which it is part of, and in turn, is shaped by the needs and dynamics of that society. Culture is a process, it is not merely a set of objects, artefacts and taonga, but rather is continually recreated through social relationships.

How was I identified, and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

As part of this research, I am seeking to conduct a series of interviews with approximately 10 art and museum professionals. This will include archivists, art historians, curators, and artists such as yourself who have specialist knowledge and expertise. The interviews I intend to conduct will focus on two main areas of research:

1. Interviews with art historians, curators and artists who have collaborated or worked closely with Paul Cullen, to gain perspectives on projects and broader interpretations of this artist's work.
2. Interviews with archivists, art historians, curators and artists on different artist archive models and approaches to writing or designing artist narratives.

I hope to ask questions relating to your particular knowledge and experiences which may fall under either or both of the questions above. The information generated through this process will be drawn on and referenced in my written PhD exegesis and may also be used in a series of publishing projects I intend to produce over the next two years. Interview material may also be referenced in academic publications and presentations.

Transcripts of any recorded material will be provided to you for vetting and approval before it referenced or used. I will also seek your permission in writing before any content is published or preserved as a public resource.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you would like to participate in my research, please read and sign the attached [Consent Form](#) and return this to me by email. If you have further questions that you would like addressed before signing this form, I would be pleased to answer these by email or have a conversation with you on a video conferencing platform such as Zoom, Skype, Jitsi Meet. I am also happy to meet you in person at AUT (city campus) but this will of course depend on what COVID Alert Level we are currently at in Auckland.

Please indicate your preference for how you would like the interview is conducted in the consent form. You may choose for the interview to be done in person at the Paul Cullen Archive, or by writing, with questions sent to you by email. You may also request for the interview to happen on a video conferencing. Please note that interviews conducted in person, or via a video conferencing platform, will be recorded and notes are taken. Transcripts will be sent to you for approval before being quoted or used. You are of course, not obliged to answer any questions that you do not wish to.

Interviews will only take place if you have provided written consent. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You can withdraw from the study at any time. If you do decide to withdraw from the research, you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you being removed or allowing it to continue to be used.

What will happen in this research?

Interviews with participants will commence in early 2021 and I plan to interview around 10 participants over the course of the year. If you agree to taking part, I will contact you individually to arrange a time that works best for you.

The questions I am proposing to ask you will focus on your knowledge, in this case, specialist knowledge of art history, contemporary art, artist archives), and experience of exhibition curating, work with artist archives, conservation, or particular artistic approaches, for instance.

The information generated from interviews conducted as part of this research will be drawn on in my written PhD exegesis. Material may also be used in a series of publishing projects that I intend to develop over the next two years that will take both printed and digital forms.

There is an option in the Consent Form for you to request a digital copy of my final exegesis (planned completion date is early 2023), and copies of any publishing work I produce that references material from your interview.

What will happen with this research?

Interview material generated from interviews may be used by me in following ways with the participants consent:

- Quoted or discussed in my PhD thesis dissertation document
- Quoted or discussed in printed and digital publication projects
- Journal articles I may write about my research

What are the risks?

Key challenges for insider researchers, such as myself, include: minimising the potential for implicit coercion of participants; privacy and confidentiality; identifying potential biases and ensuring trustworthiness, transparency and rigour; acknowledging any preconceived ideas or the desire for positive outcomes; and being aware of the potential for professional conflicts of interest. I will address these challenges by ensuring the following:

- That you freely consent to your participation in the research study, and your consent is informed by relevant information provided by myself in the Participant Information Sheet.
- Clear communication of the goals and objectives of my research.
- Acknowledgment of my position as Paul Cullen's daughter.
- Disclosure of any potential benefits (financial and/or personal) that I might receive from your participation in this research.
- I will respect your opinions in a two-way dialogue that supports a sense of partnership that acknowledges your specialism and provides opportunities to share information relating to your field, work and research to further disseminate your knowledge.
- I will respect and support your capacity for self-determination, while recognising that you will provide me with valuable material for my PhD research.

What are the benefits?

This research will be beneficial as a contribution to Aotearoa's cultural heritage. You will be contributing to a broader discussion around what constitutes an artist archive, why they are important, what we should be seeking to store for future generations, and how conservation and the interpretation of art are connected. There may be potential benefits for you to be referenced in academic research, such as mine, because of the recognition of your practice and research. On a more personal level, I hope you will enjoy sharing stories of Paul with me.

This research will be beneficial for me in terms of obtaining a PhD. I hope to bring more exposure and awareness of Paul Cullen's life's work, making it accessible both for our family and for future generations.

How will my privacy be protected?

I will ensure the following to support the participant's privacy:

- Exercise the concept of Kaitiakitanga: care for and protect the stories entrusted to the researcher by you.
- Actively protect individual and collective rights, data, culture, cultural concepts, values, norms, practices and language in the research process.
- Protect your rights as a participant, including voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time.
- Any recorded contribution, in written form, on tape etc., or in notes taken from the interview by the interviewer, will only be used in accordance with the wishes of the interviewee.
- Transcripts of any recorded material will be provided to you for vetting and approval before it referenced or used.
- Permission will need to be explicitly given in writing before any material is to published or preserved as a public resource outside of my PhD.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Depending on whether you opt for an oral or written interview, time spent will vary. The time required for an interview done in person, or on a video conferencing platform, will likely be 1-2 hours (including breaks), and anywhere between 2-5 hours if you choose to provide a written response. However, the length of time you spend writing up your answers will be left entirely up to you. There is no monetary cost.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Please take your time to consider this invitation, and if possible, let me know your decision within four weeks' time. However, if you need more time or have further questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch. By agreeing to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. At any time up until and including the interview, you may withdraw your participation if you wish to. If you have any questions about the research or your participation in it (either before or after contributing), please contact me or my supervisor, Dr Janine Randerson (Associate Professor in Art and Design at AUT). Our contact details are:

Layla Tweedie-Cullen: layla.tweedie-cullen@aut.ac.nz

Dr Janine Randerson, janine.randerson@aut.ac.nz, phone: 9219999 extn 6261

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

The information generated from these interviews will be drawn on in my written PhD exegesis (planned completion date is early 2023).

Material from Interviews may also potentially be used in a series of publishing projects that I intend to develop over the next two years (in this instance, you will be contacted for consent before any material is used or quoted).

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor: Dr Janine Randerson, janine.randerson@aut.ac.nz, phone: 9219999 extn 6261

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28 September, 2020. AUTEK Reference number 20/237.

Consent Form

For use when interviews are involved.

Project title: *Running Circles Around the Archive: indexing, listing, arranging, digitising, performing, writing, interweaving, drifting through, publishing, and conversing with the Paul Cullen Archive*

Project Supervisor: *Dr Janine Randerson*

Researcher: *Layla Tweedie-Cullen*

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 2/10/2020.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- How would you like your interview to be conducted? (*Please tick one*):
In writing with questions sent by email or In person at Paul Cullen Archive or Video conferencing platform
- In the case of an interview being conducted in person or on a video conferencing platform, I understand that notes will be taken during this interview and that it will also be recoded and transcribed.
- I wish to receive a copy of the transcript of my interview for vetting and approval before it referenced or used, or to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality.
- I permit the researcher to contact me after the interview to clarify information and/ or ask further questions.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a digital copy of the researcher's final exegesis (planned completion date is the end of 2023), and copies of any publishing work produced by the researcher that references material from my interview. (*please tick one*): Yes No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Postal address (only provide if you would like hard copies of any publishing produced by the researcher sent to you):

.....
.....
.....

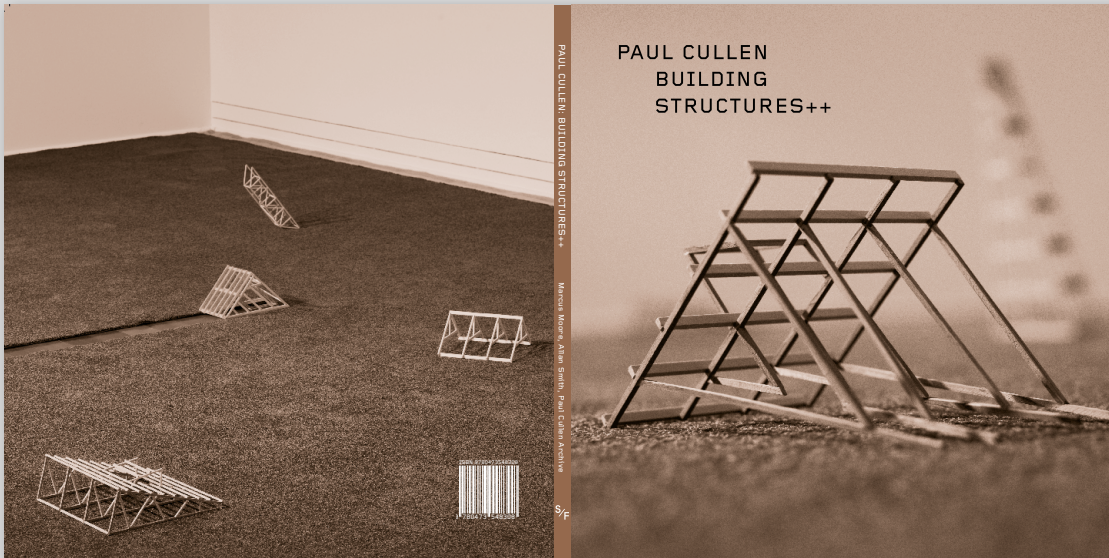
Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28 September, 2020. AUTEK Reference number 20/237.

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix C: Research Outputs

Appendix C.1: *Building Structures* ++ Publication



CONTENTS

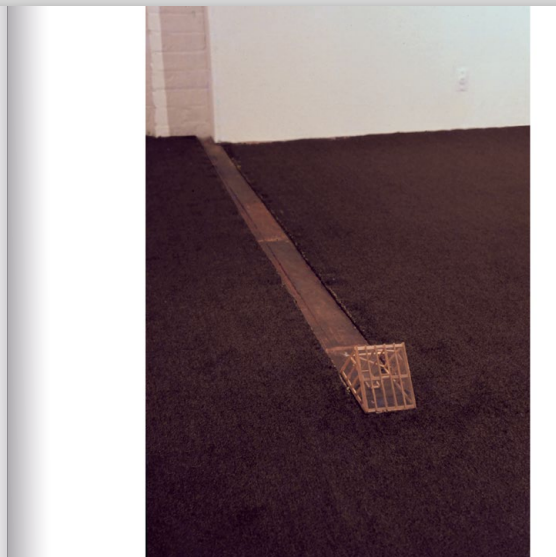
FOREWORD 7
Christina Barton

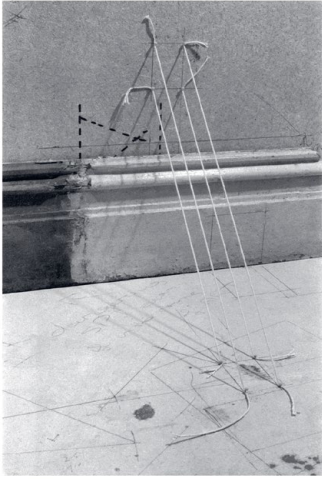
RECONSTRUCTING BUILDING STRUCTURES 21
Marcus Moore

PAUL CULLEN AND THE TROUBLED CONSCIOUSNESS OF MODERN THOUGHT 37
Allan Smith

INSTALLATION IMAGES 55-66
Paul Cullen: *Building Structures* ++ ST PAUL St Gallery, Auckland
Paul Cullen: *Building Structures* ++ Dunedin Public Art Gallery

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY 67





Untitled construction, 1980
string, nails, pencil and pon on wall and floor
dimensions variable

36

PAUL CULLEN AND THE TROUBLED CONSCIOUSNESS OF MODERN THOUGHT

Allan Smith

You could start from anywhere ... right up to the weighty error storm deriving from the cult of measurements ... because I attack gravity, I attack the entire absurdity of the observation of time ... tens of thousands of misapprehensions ... sprawl out along the base of our cognition, and they smirk at us.
—László Krasznahorkai, *Baron Wenckheim's Homecoming*

Although these models are approximations, their imprecision cannot be seen as a problem if it is true that even in the 'exact' sciences the perfection of any theoretical model is conditioned by a work of interpretation, abstraction, simplification, and even distortion. —Hubert Damisch, "The Space Between"

When Marcus Moore curated Paul Cullen's *Building Structures* 1979 for Massey University's The Engine Room gallery in 2018, he installed a platform ladder to one side of the main exhibition area, providing viewers with a potentially portable makeshift-mezzanine. From here, if visitors wished, they could look down on a widely spaced set of small balsa wood structures on the carpeted floor. The ladder's height increased the sense that, though we were in the same room as these fragile models, their downsized scale made them slightly elsewhere; they contracted space around them. They tipped us almost imperceptibly into their own Lilliputian force fields, pocketed inside the metrics of the gallery. This was something felt bodily, not just registered optically. Our sight lines felt the tug of each model's specific gravity.

By keeping the installation crew's ladder in the exhibition area, Moore was augmenting a remark Wytan Curnow had made after seeing Cullen's original 1979 *Building Structures* show at the Barry Lett Galleries in Auckland. With no stepladder in sight, what struck Curnow at the time was how "We look down on what is ordinarily over one's heads. We are inhabitants of sky-space." Curnow was taken with the observational intrigue the objects offered the viewer; how they obliged viewers to crane their necks, or stoop to peer inside the models' structural latticework. Most tellingly, Curnow read the self-aware bodily adjustments that the models elicit as both "encouraging and discouraging our ability to rationalize the structures."¹

In Cullen's art, the prospect of definition and explanation is no sooner declared than it accedes to a perverse irrationalism. Sometimes this slue to the irrational

¹ Wytan Curnow, quoted in Marcus Moore, "Paul Cullen: Of Building Structures," *Hackaday: Journal of New Zealand Art, Media and Design History* (July 2018): 81.

37



Above and page 69: Model (New Standard), 1995/2010, (*Building Structures* (reconstruction) 1979/2018), selected drawings, various dates (installation views and details)

68



69



Untitled, 2001
pencil, ink and collage on
black warded paper
467 x 291mm

50



Untitled, c. 2001
ink on paper
322 x 226mm

51

Figure 181: Selected page spreads from *Paul Cullen: Building Structures ++* (Tāmaki Makaurau, split/fountain, 2020).

Publication title: *Paul Cullen: Building Structures ++*
Authors: Marcus Moore, Allan Smith, Paul Cullen Archive
Image Editing and Archival Research: Layla Tweedie-Cullen, Marcus Moore, Allan Smith.
Publisher: split/fountain
Publication Date: 2021
ISBN: 978-0-473-54830-8
Pages: 88
Print Run: 500
Contributors: Artist: Paul Cullen. Writers: Marcus Moore, Allan Smith
Publication Design: Layla Tweedie-Cullen
Publication Design Contributor: Alice Moore

Contents:

- Foreword by Christina Barton
- “Reconstructing Building Structures” by Marcus Moore
- “Paul Cullen and the Troubled Consciousness of Modern Thought” by Allan Smith
- Installation Images
- Artist’s Biography

My role encompassed archival research, proposing, sourcing, and digitising archival materials for the curators, which culminated in the addition of the Paul Cullen Archive as an author. This decision shifted the archive’s role from a passive collection to an active contributor. Additionally, I was responsible for overseeing the publication’s design, which included image editing and managing the print production process.

Back cover blurb: “Paul Cullen’s art, spanning over forty years, constructs and tests relations between materials, objects, and processes, marking him as one of New Zealand’s most esteemed sculptors and installation artists. In today’s precarious global context, the fragile and whimsical connections in his work gain poignant relevance. *Building Structures ++* offers a selective survey of Cullen’s captivating work, from early exhibitions like *Of Possibilities and Probabilities* (1975) and *Building Structures* (1979) to his later installations like *Gravity (Model for a Hypothetical Space)* (1999) and *Fainting Couch* (2012). The book features new essays by Marcus Moore and Allan Smith, with a foreword by Christina Barton, examining the significance of Cullen’s practice. It includes over 100 images from thematic exhibitions at ST PAUL St Gallery, Auckland (2018), and Dunedin Public Art Gallery (2020), alongside unseen drawings, models, and maquettes from his archive. This informative publication offers deep insights into Cullen’s experimental installation-making, establishing its vital place in the visual arts of Aotearoa New Zealand.”

Appendix C.2: Tossing Components

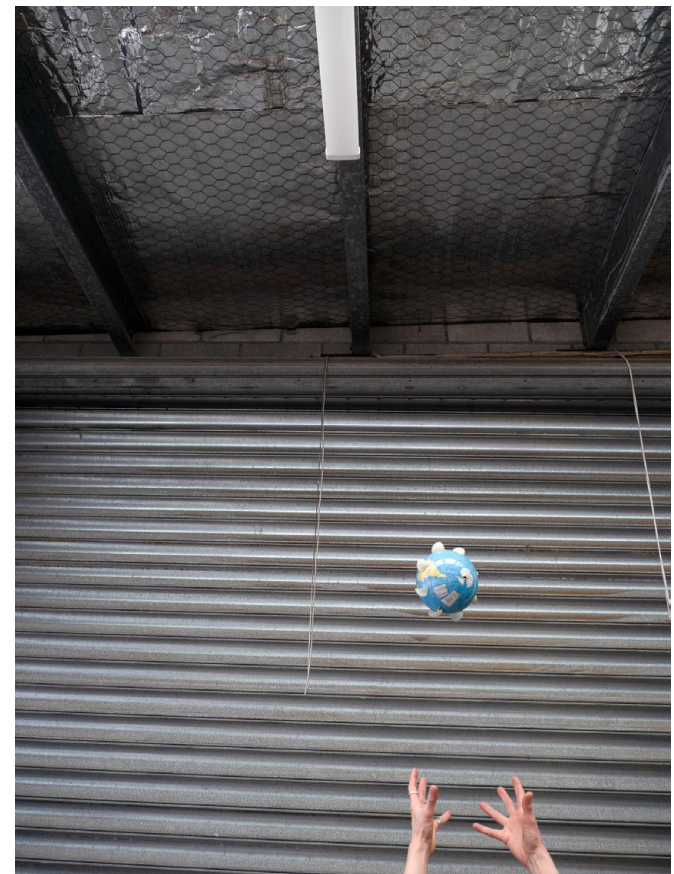
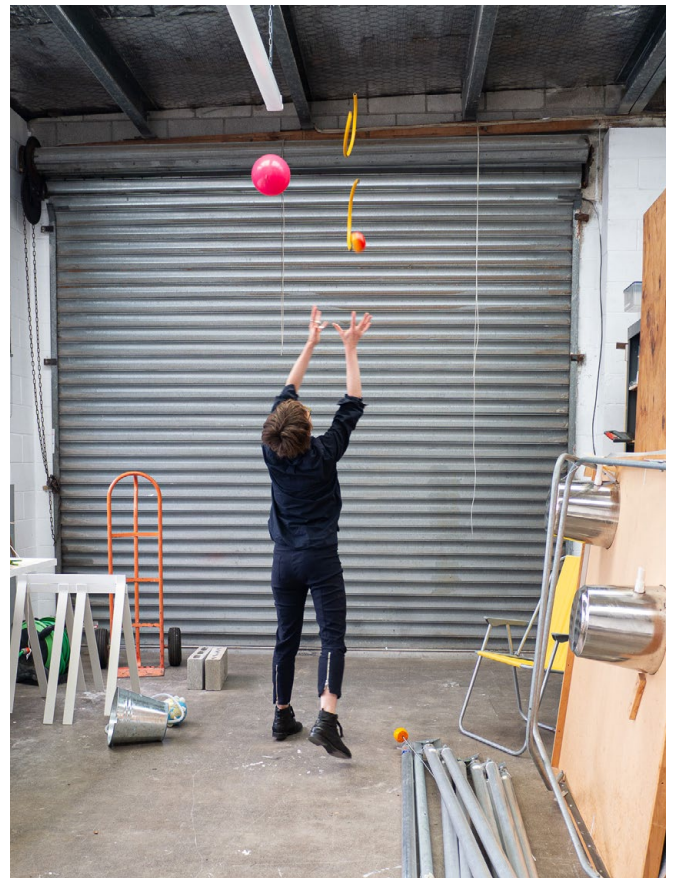


Figure 182: In the Paul Cullen Archive, Henderson, 2020, I toss artwork components into the air. Photographs by p. mule.

Appendix C.3: Installing *Discovery of Oxygen*



Figure 183: J. A. Kennedy installing Paul Cullen's *Discovery of Oxygen* (1996) in the Henderson warehouse, 2021. Photographs by Layla Tweedie-Cullen.

I captured these images of J. A. Kennedy while we were installing *Discovery of Oxygen* (1996), in the Henderson warehouse. The work is part of Paul's *r/p/m* series, and involved the circulation of water through various components, including pipes, vessel, and a waterproofed cardboard box, achieving equilibrium. Paul first exhibited this work at Artspace, Auckland, in 1996. During the studio installation, Kennedy and I were assessing the presence and completeness of this work and a related series of works also from the *r/p/m* series. Kennedy later wrote a text about the work and the experience of working with Paul's archive in *Art News Aotearoa* (2023). He observed:

Due the iterative nature of Cullen's arrangements, much time was spent determining what works were complete, which had been altered, and which discarded—though I have since come to understand Cullen's work as an example of Paulo Freire's term, *the uncomplete*, a reminder that neither humans nor reality are ever finished, but continually in a processes of becoming. Cullen's practice posed and reposed the question: what is next, what line of sight will be sought out in this always-changing reality?⁴⁰³

Appendix C.4: An Installation Strategy for *Explaining the Results of Observation* and *Moon/Navigation* Components

After Paul died, Jane Sanders archived components from two of his installations: *Explaining the Results of Observation* at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton (1991) and *Moon/Navigation* at Artspace, Auckland (1991). In these installations, Paul rearranged groupings of components in response to the architectural features of each gallery space, which included a model moon, wooden boat forms, papier-mâché land formations, and generic building structures marked with pencil and Letraset. He also positioned model trees, balsawood aeroplanes, and railway-track sections on the walls and floor, creating a landscape that viewers perceive from an aerial perspective. Paul labelled the groups of components, numbering them and assigning them with unique titles.

Paul has written about the project in a document titled “Some Notions of Site” (c. 1993–94), which appears to be a compilation of speaking notes towards a lecture. In this, he references “Sculpture in the Expanded Field”, reflecting his engagement with Rosalind Krauss’s concepts. Paul begins the paper by outlining his interest in “sculpture that is instrumental in a particular sense of place and which is engaged with its location.” Further on, he discusses his installation *Moon/Navigation* at Artspace in Auckland, framing it as “an attempt to create site-related work that leverages and develops the gallery space’s architectural or physical features.”⁴⁰⁴ This installation closely relates to *Southern Cross*, which I discuss in Chapter Two, in terms of materials, construction, and time period.

In “Some Notions of Site”, Paul notes that *Moon/Navigation* references Miss’s large-scale outdoor work *Field Rotation* (1980–81) in Park Forest South, Illinois, which he observes must be experienced by “looking, seeing, walking into and through.”⁴⁰⁵ He goes on to discuss how he incorporated a white square on a relatively level part of the floor in the gallery as the central focus of his installation:

A globe of the moon hovers above the white square, which contains a house, a tree, a piece of railway line, plus various pencil marks and bits of Letraset. This grouping is located within a relatively vast field (landscape) of space. I had *Field Rotation* in mind because it has a central locus of activity and is situated in the landscape. Adjacent to this but articulated on the wall plane are further groups of similar elements: model trees, a generic house, a landform (hill), a boat. Pencil lines and Letraset are again used as a further means of defining the site.⁴⁰⁶

404 Cullen, “Some Notions of Site,” 3–4.

405 Cullen, 1.

406 Cullen, 3–4.

Paul's transformation of the gallery space into an immersive field or landscape resonates with Krauss's concepts of 'axiomatic structures' and 'site-construction'. The architectural elements of the space become integral to the work, blurring the boundaries between the artwork and its environment. In both *Explaining the Results of Observation* and *Moon/Navigation*, Paul did not merely display sculptural components but envisioned them coexisting within the same space as the viewer.

In my research into appropriate strategies for reinstalling the groups of components from *Explaining the Results of Observation* and *Moon/Navigation*, I utilised Krauss's concept of 'axiomatic structures' as a framework. To decide on the arrangement of these components, I consulted documentation from previous exhibitions and found that the artist had adjusted the formation of each grouping in response to the different spaces where he installed them.

Considering the wall as a landscape or field offered a conceptual approach for reinstalling the pieces in the studio, leading me to position them in response to door frames and existing holes or nails in the walls. I also expanded the installation to the walls of the neighbouring unit and studio, occupied by artist p. mule, a member of the et al. collective. In this space, one wall was painted in dark brown, introducing further variations into the 'landscape'. I commissioned Marie Shannon to photograph the installations and have added the resulting images to the archive.⁴⁰⁷ I have also uploaded images to the Paul Cullen Archive website. This documentation will serve as a reference for future exhibitions of these works.

407 I also invited Shannon back to document a selection of works I had installed on the studio floor, including one of the pieces found under Paul's house, which I mentioned in "Preamble to Paul: Overwhelm".

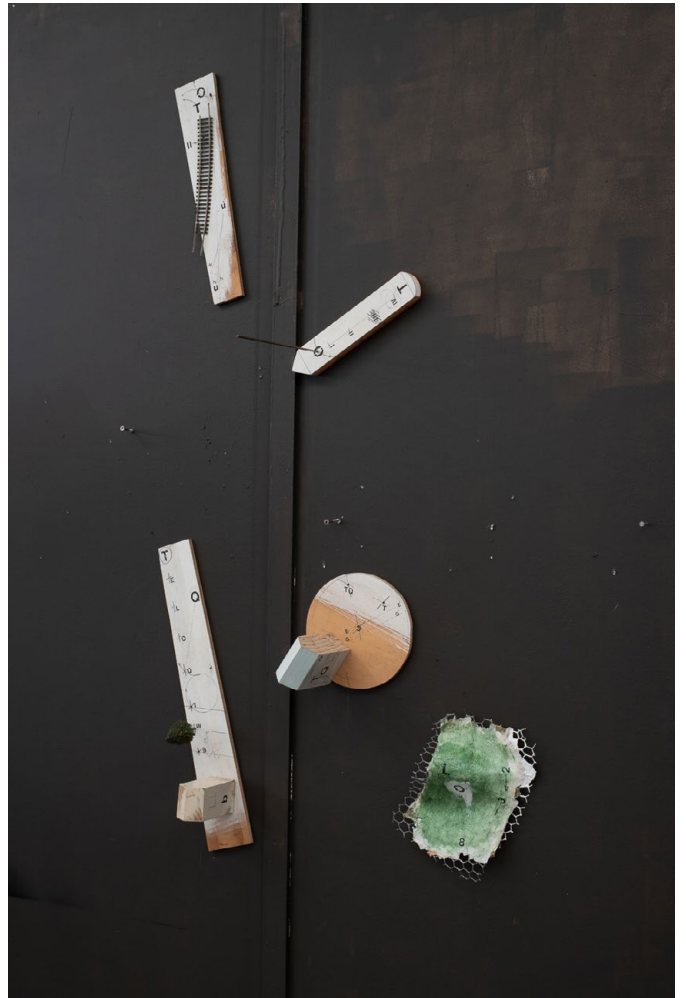


Figure 184: Components from *Moon/Navigation* and *Explaining the Results of Observation* (1991), installed by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and J. A. Kennedy in p. mule's studio, 2022. Photographs by Marie Shannon.

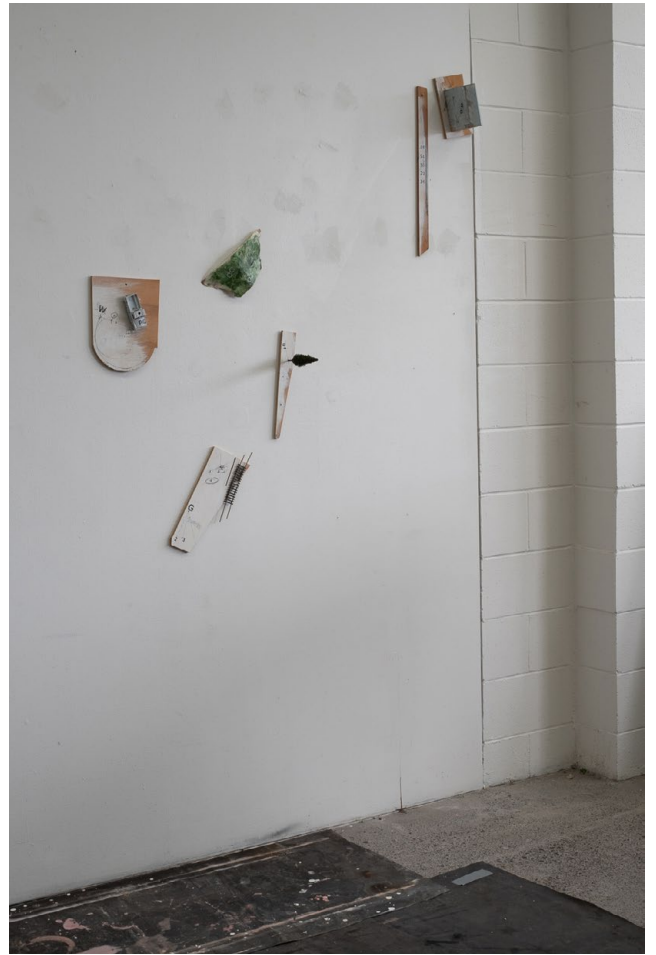


Figure 185: Components from *Moon/Navigation* and *Explaining the Results of Observation* (1991), installed by Layla Tweedie-Cullen and J. A. Kennedy in p. mule's studio, 2022. Photographs by Marie Shannon.



Figure 186: Paul Cullen, *Moon/Navigation*, Artspace, Auckland, 1991. Photographs by the artist.

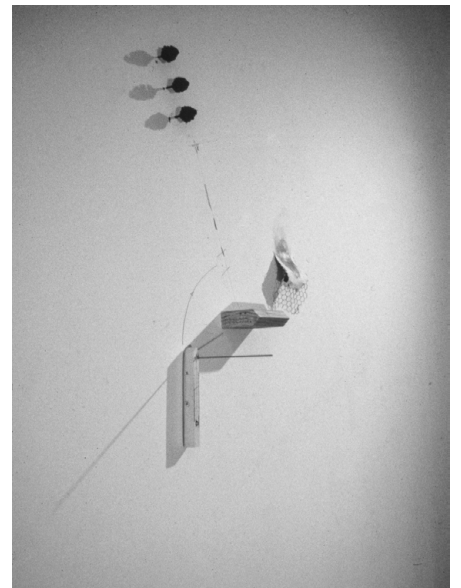
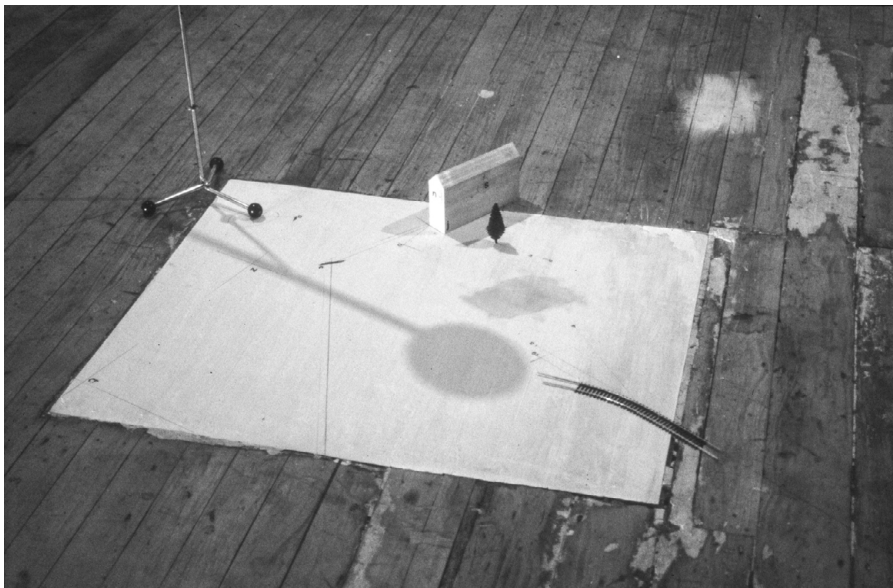


Figure 188: Paul Cullen, *Moon/Navigation*, Artspace, Auckland, 1991. Photographs by the artist.



Figure 187: Paul Cullen, *Explaining the Results of Observation*, Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton, 1991. Photographs by the artist.

Appendix C.5: *Weather Stations*

An example of a collaborative re-exhibition of Paul's work that continued a dialogue 'beyond site' or beyond the archive was an installation titled *Weather Stations*, presented as part of a group exhibition *Huarere: Weather Eye, Weather Ear* at Te Tuhi, Auckland (2023). *Weather Stations* was an outdoor, site-specific installation that Paul originally developed as part of *Headland Sculpture on the Gulf on Waiheke Island* (2009) (figure 31). After viewing the documentation of the project that I had uploaded to the Paul Cullen Archive website, Janine Randerson, the curator of *Huarere: Weather Eye, Weather Ear*, requested to re-present the work at Te Tuhi. I proposed installing the work in an internal but outdoor courtyard space at the gallery. In this position, the work would be exposed to the elements, and it was also a space Paul had previously utilised as part of his 1994 installation, *Recent Discoveries* (figure 22). However, re-presenting *Weather Stations* posed challenges, because Paul developed it as a site-specific project and because some of the original components were missing.

To address these complexities, I drew on a theoretical framework put forward by historian and conservation scholar Tatja Scholte in her book *The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums: Staging Contemporary Art* (2022), in which she conceptualises site-specific installations as events or performances. Rather than determining a conceptual strategy for the exhibition myself as the 'Paul Cullen Archive,' I invited two emerging artists, J. A. Kennedy and Ammon Ngakuru, to collaborate on reconfiguring the installation for Te Tuhi's courtyard. Ngakuru worked with Paul as an artist assistant between 2016 and 2017, participating in the installation of Paul's *Tidal* series (c. 2015–16) and *Things from Geology (Underworld)* in 2017 for *Headland Sculpture on the Gulf on Waiheke Island*. Between 2020 and 2022, Kennedy assisted me in the Henderson warehouse with archiving and the reinstallation of Paul's *Discovery of Oxygen* series.

By involving Ngakuru and Kennedy in the project, I aimed to underscore the performative act of restaging the installation, highlighting the processes of reinterpretation. This approach also parallels how Paul worked with curator Allan Smith in his *Provisional Arrangements* installations at the Ilam Campus Gallery in Christchurch (2016) and *Two Rooms* in Auckland (2017), where he granted Smith agency to determine how components were installed and presented (discussed in Chapter Two). In his *Weather Stations* installation on Waiheke Island, Paul created para-functional structures made from concrete and steel, reminiscent of meteorological rain gauges, which were sited on paved sections on a sloping bank. In this updated version of *Weather Stations*, the concrete tiles that functioned as the base in the original installation on Waiheke guided the dimensions of a new support structure within Te Tuhi's courtyard, accomplished by reusing the current concrete

pavers on site. The steel frames were mounted on these modified bases to closely mirror the original Waiheke Island layout, except for several steel frames that no longer exist. Incomplete components were leaned against an external wall.

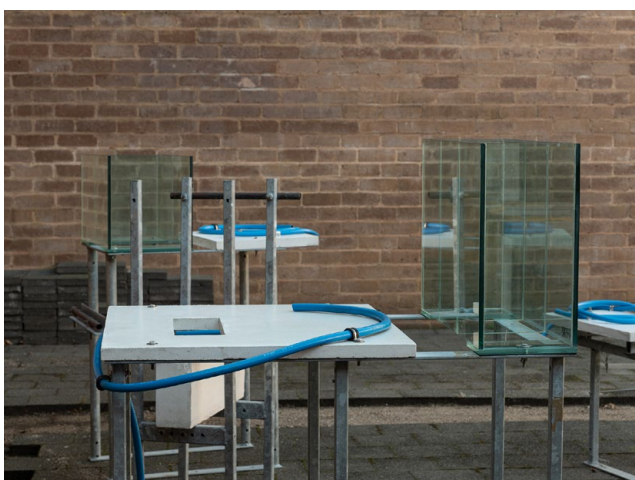


Figure 189: Paul Cullen, *Weather Stations*, 2009, installed by Ammon Ngakuru and J. A. Kennedy with the Paul Cullen Archive (Layla Tweedie-Cullen) in the courtyard of Te Tuhi, 2023. Photographs by Sam Hartnett.

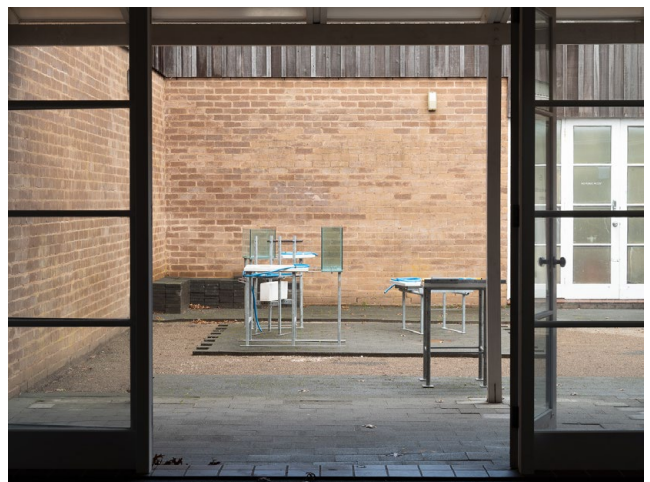


Figure 190: Paul Cullen, *Weather Stations*, 2009, installed by Ammon Ngakuru and J. A. Kennedy with the Paul Cullen Archive (Layla Tweedie-Cullen) in the courtyard of Te Tuhi, 2023. Photographs by Sam Hartnett.