

Dynamic Inventions

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of another degree or diploma or a university or institution of higher learning.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'A' followed by a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

4th October 2017

1 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following people

Ian Jervis

Dieneke Jansen

& lastly,

Mum & Dad.

Thank you.

2 **ABSTRACT**

Dynamic Inventions is a practice-based art project about identity. It manifests itself via reflexive video installations that address its questions and concerns by immersing them in the dynamic of my exploratory process as I work to unfold my own identity. It is through this reflexive art-making process that I examine the terms of my question: What might constitute identity? That is, how does identity relate to certain properties or qualities and how might these qualities be essential to identity, and how might they be revealed or represented through art? What the project reveals is that if the subject of investigation is living, growing and continually changing, in part through conducting this project, identity then is not fixed nor is it located in some essential quality, but is contingent, complex, relational and in continual change. Furthermore, a conception of identity is as much a perception from outside as it is a conception from within the subject. What started as an investigation of identity has shifted to being a project about identity that is a process of becoming-being. This process is life-long, so the question of determining identity becomes inappropriate, and redundant. What remains is the question, How am I becoming me?

3 **INTRODUCTION**

Dynamic Inventions is a project that addresses its questions and concerns by immersing them in the project, and by immersing myself in the project. It sets out to examine the terms of a question of what constitutes identity in an individual, how identity might relate to some essential properties or qualities, and how these might be revealed and represented through art. In the process of investigation, I come to question the terms in which the project is proposed. I discovered that if the subject is continually living, growing, changing then identity can be neither fixed, nor located in some essential property. Further, the conception of identity is in the person perceiving as much as in the subject of perception. What started as an investigation of being, then becomes an exploration of an unfolding of experience and its enfolding into memory, and so into my process of further research. The project becomes reflexive, as I become the non-essential focus of my question: How am I becoming me?

By just living I become me. This project becomes intensive, reflexive, inseparable from living. Art and life unfold and enfold together.

This exegesis is in two sections; the first exploring ideas that are rooted in the project's foundations, the broad concepts that inform the project's questioning. The second section observes more carefully the methodology and the ideas presented within it.

In the first half, I will begin by discussing and problematising my concerns around the notion of fixity within identity. I look into various modes of categorisation, how personality differs from identity, and how these systems operate in the sense that they further illustrate the tension between how we see ourselves and how others see us.

From here I shift the emphasis to the ideas that have informed the current project over the last while. I explore the project's current perspective, as it embraces the concept that identity could be observed here in more fluid terms, as it holds the possibility of change and continuity. I go on to look into the idea that individuals are continually engaged in the process of exchange and adaptation as a plethora of factors (groups) intermingle. I look at

how everyday interactions via the idea of role-taking inform both 'our' as well as my own identity. This section observes the concept of continuity flowing throughout every aspect of my life, always in a state of becoming.

The second half centres around the idea that my methodology acts as a process of questioning. I discuss pivotal development works and how they informed the trajectory of the current project, leading to my thoughts around the crux of the project's exploration or 'shifting', how this project considers who we are, who I am, and how you think and experience yourself.

From there I look at the studio's importance to the exploration of the project of identity. Discussing a shifting that occurs between the studio space that is seen as a site of pure production, to a studio space that is a site of actions and events, and the significance of the artist continually inhabiting such a space.

I discuss how the use of time and duration are a crucial element in my work, further discussing how this operates concerning the emergence of the viewer within the installations. I additionally look into both movement and absence as other crucial elements that flow through the work via individual experiences and processes. I contemplate on ideas around 'becoming myself', discussing my thoughts on how this notion has operated through the fabric of this document, my practice and my life.

Lastly, I have dispersed images of my work throughout the text to refer to and discuss. These explain how ideas come out of and fold back into how the work itself comes to be. These images are placed in a non-chronological order, selected for the context being discussed. Lastly, at the back of the document, is a historical or chronological documentation of work that has been made throughout this project, as similar themes run through the life of the installations.

4 PROBLEMATISING FIXITY

The etymology of the word identity “indicates a Latin root in the form of *identitas*, from *idem*, alluding a quality of ‘the same’” (“Identity,” n.d.). In one definition, identity is a concept of sameness, that is, being identical. Another definition frames in terms of distinctiveness; that is, difference that presumes a ‘self’ consistency predicated on difference from the other, a distinctiveness that is maintained over time. This immediately problematised my initial assumption that identity could be captured in a snapshot of time; it is apparent that my project must include duration. It is also apparent that there is a question of how, if identity is consistent over time, this could be possible with a living, growing being. Subsequently, the idea of identity in relation to this project suggests that the idea of sameness simultaneously establishes two possible relations of comparison between persons, in the form of similarity in one way, and difference in the other. In other words, a comparison between fixity and continuity, one that speaks of change.

Who am I? Identity implies fixity, a durational coherence or sameness that would allow simple (simplistic) categorisation. Physical appearance, for example, would serve to locate me in a crowd, yet my qualities are more than this, and so categories would need to multiply accordingly. Even so, I am still more than this; the utility of categorisation becomes inutility.

Identity is more extensive than personality. While we share personality traits with others, identity is not shared, yet is relational. Although as individual people we can take up identities actively, these identities are products of the society that we inhabit and our relationship with others; we cannot determine where identity begins or ends. Does it include the sort of people I might interact with, or environments with which I am familiar? It is so wide that it becomes impractical to explore.

In this section I reflect on the notion of ‘structure’ within the field of identity, and those forces which help shape our identities. While currently I am shy, this may change. My personality is not fixed, but responsive to how I interact with the world, and how I grow and change. Shyness may be a phase.

Identity does involve some element of choice. For instance, I am perceived, presumably, as an introvert, but sometimes I will attend football matches where I can blend in with the crowd, shout and cheer along with animated extroverts. I want to identify with a particular team, and the badges of support. I stand with this team, in opposition to others. When meeting someone for the first time, I ask questions in order to establish a profile that might reveal what we have in common, and have predictive value based on my experience of others. Are they like me, or not? Could we tend towards a shared future, or would the tendency be towards difference? How can I know without spending time with them? Identity combines elements of how I see myself versus how other people see me.

A passport presents us with information about that person's identity in an 'official' sense: to place, name, describe, and ascribe national identity. My passport photograph is black and white, my hair is tied back so my face can be seen clearly, and my expression is deadpan, as instructed. My passport has been updated several times – a succession of differences as I change continuously. The discontinuous sample (passport updates) does not represent me in continuous change, problematically suggesting that there might be a constituted, fixed, true or 'real' identity – something latent, if not apparent, that could be shown or revealed. Dr Kath Woodward echoes this by saying "the more we seek fixity and certainty the more troubling identity becomes" (Woodward, 2003, p.158). This reinforces why a shift towards a dynamic notion such as continuity is crucial to our understanding of who we are, furthermore the idea of change implies that identities are not fixed, and are in flux; they change too.

4.1 THE CUPS

The idea of 'sameness' is always under critique via individual interactions within my studio; brought to my attention via small objects which I interact with each day. I make a cup of tea in the morning, placing this cup of tea down and taking sips every so often. Having ignored or forgotten about this cup of tea, I make another, using a different cup. The two cups used are visually similar. Each has a different history of my usage attached to it. They are the same but different. One cup is blue and the other green, but the tonal value is much the same (as shows in a monochrome photograph) so that my criteria for discerning sameness and difference become complicated. As significant amounts of our

brains are dedicated to colour perception, I tend to privilege colour as a criterion. We go from sameness to difference depending on how we look at things, or ourselves.

Difference is ubiquitous. Queer theorist Timothy Morton discusses how “[i]nterdependence implies that there is less to things than meets the eye. Yet this ‘lessness’ means we can never grasp beings as such” (2010, p. 277). Based on this idea, it suggests that it is more realistic that identity is explored as continuously being modelled or presented as relational, interacting and continually unfolding. Dr Kath Woodward reinforces this by saying identity is troubling, “just at the moment when you think you have a handle on it the narrative is reframed and its structure becomes uncertain” (Woodward, 2003, p.158). The question here emerges: If there cannot be an essential ‘I’, then are we how we live in a literal sense? The modes and norms of behaviour against which one centre (the nascent self) might be framed, or differentiated, are themselves partial, contingent, contested, provisional and in change. The perception of what might constitute reasonable freedom (to behave), for example, is tested/measured against constraints/prescriptions brought from other times and places, from other cultural contexts and different situations. How to act now, is always an open question. These are the issues that my work seeks to explore. “Identity matters, but perhaps it matters because it is so troubling and so difficult, if not impossible to contain” (Woodward, 2003, p.158).



Figure 1 - Blue and green cups.

4.2 IDENTITY IS DYNAMIC

The perception that we do not have a fixed ‘self’ or a fixed identity can be both frightening and exhilarating, and in the case of this project, it is the latter that interests this particular section and has informed my practice over the last while. In this way, I’ve embraced the idea that identity is seen here in more fluid terms, as this notion holds the possibility of change. We (you) and I (myself, ‘Alex’) as individuals are continually engaged in the process of exchange and adaptation as a plethora of factors (groups) intermingle. In a sense, the forces that influence the construction of identity are not stable, suggesting identity itself is always in flux. The idea of fixity within identity is challenged here in the sense that identity itself is determined by multitudes of outside influences, making it more fluid and transformable as it changes in different contexts. Although hard to grasp initially, the notion of a dynamic, more fluid identity seems to make sense. For example, consider how you behave differently in certain situations, lectures, at home with family, on a date, or at a job interview. Are you, or am I, the same person in all of those situations or do we present a somewhat different public image in each context?

4.3 ACTING THE SELF, EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS

We as individuals proceed to use a notion of ‘role taking’¹ throughout our lives to work out our sense of self. Erving Goffman sheds light on this notion, “suggest[ing] that how we present ourselves to others [i]s rather like acting out a part in a play where the scripts are already written” (as cited in Woodward, 2004, p. 14). In this sense, we can assume that we are ‘performing’ constructed versions of our identity. These ‘characters’ work in different contexts, though none of these versions are a ‘true self’ because each identity is either transformed or abandoned in various situations. Goffman explains further “that his perspective on the self is dramaturgical – that is, based on the idea of performance. What we are is not given (that is, there already), it must be created” (as cited in Woodward, 2004, p. 14).

¹ Roles – The society into which we are born presents us with a series of functions, which are patterns of behaviour, routines and responses, like parts in a play.

I have explored that idea that we as individuals or more specifically I as a person, like an actor, am performing for an audience.² In this sense, personal characteristics like speech, acts and gestures all require someone to be listening or watching. Here these roles we play maybe already written but we bring our expectations and interpretations to these roles. For example, I employ the use of language to explore the idea of coherency within my use of speaking (Figures 3–6.) In an everyday sense and an institutional sense (art school), I have continuously struggled with coherency, that is, trying to articulate with clarity what I am saying.

In this sense, memory comes from experience. Through reading, thinking, experiencing, and living, it's a lived experience. I am a living being that continues to have new experiences thus feeding into the accumulation of new memories, and because of this build-up, I must be in the process of continually unfolding, emerging and evolving as a person. I live my life, and memories accumulate in me as memory, in this sense everything reacts, or I respond to things slightly differently because memories remind me, and influence the way I encounter things, people, situations and objects in the present.

² Although we are performing in our everyday lives to an extent, for myself within this situation it seemed to be heightened and highlighted more than usual.

Give me the gift of a grip-top sock,

A clip drape shipshape tip-top sock.

Not your spin slick slapstick slipshod stock,

But a plastic, elastic grip-top sock.

None of your fantastic slack swap slop

From a slap dash, flash cash haberdash shop.

Not a knick knack knitlock knockkneed knickerbocker sock

With a mock-shot blob-mottled trick-ticker top clock.

Not a supersheet seersucker rucksack sock,

Not a spot-speckled frog-freckled cheap sheik's sock

Off a hodge-podge moss-blotched scotch-botched block.

Nothing slipshod drip drop flip flop or glip glop

Tip me to a tip-top grip top sock. – Common articulation warm-up for actors (Charleston County School of the Arts, n.d.).



Figure 2 - Screen grabs taken from *Give Me the Gift*, 2017.



Figure 3 - Installation shot of *Give Me the Gift*, 2017.



Figure 4 - Screen grabs of myself recording various articulation exercises, St Paul St Gallery Three, 2017.



Figure 5 - Myself in studio recording articulation exercises, 2017.

Exemplified earlier in this text through the usage of language, here I understand the notion of language as an attempt to trap or to enclose me. I mentioned previously that I am an anxious and introverted person, here the phrasing of particular language brings to my attention a questioning of personal encapsulation. Does this phrase encapsulate me? And am I now contained by that word? Or defined by it? Subsequently, the answer is no, because it is dependent on the context. As I mention in the first section, if I attend football matches with family and friends, I am not presented as anxious; within that crowd of extroverts I can do something. In this sense, anxiety is shown here in more dependent, contingent and uncertain circumstances. In this way it complicates the idea of me being an anxious person because it's circumstantial, I'm not always like that, I'm a person that changes according to certain circumstances. Perhaps I am concerned now about the writing of this document, but after I finish it I might have more confidence about things. Who knows what I will be like next year – perhaps I'll become arrogant, who knows?

The idea of fixity in that sense could only be a sample. If we think of photography, and a photograph, as being a representation – if we claim that it represents something, “this stands for that”, a simulacrum, a fixed image – a photograph freezes a moment in time, in a sense it is cut out of life, and the issue that arises here is that ‘I’ as the subject matter is in life. The fundamental dislocation is that the shutter slices a little image out of life. It makes sense that I use moving image, although problematic contingencies remain present. As I read about ideas around identity, think about them, it changes the way that I think; changes me.

I think about this as I record myself in my studio; how I am changing myself through my art explorations. I am filming myself, and I am behind the lens watching what is happening, subsequently watching what I have done, analysing this and thinking about it as a spectator, gallery visitor or someone from outside. I am hanging myself; the subject matter of my investigation. Even as I look at myself, there I am wandering around the studio, shifting things, repeating and meticulously going about my work. This highlights the humorous, tragic, obsessive nature of my work. Representational modes of enquiry continually fail. How can I move forward? All that I can do is continuously update myself, continually be in the studio where the notion of repetition becomes immensely heightened. I have to be present in the studio, constantly observing myself as if I am meant to have a continuum of watching because I am always changing, all the time through acting.

I noticed on the floor of my studio a pile of cables. I could never figure out how these cables get twisted and tangled. I decided not to untangle them next time I installed. Having had this experience with the tangled cables, my perception towards tangles began to change. Previously I was annoyed that cables could mysteriously get tangled, but now I've integrated the tangled quality of the cables because I think the tangled nature of the cables is similar to the convolutions of this project in the sense that it's of myself, the convoluted evolution of myself. In this way, the twisted and tangled nature of the cables becomes part of the work itself, it stems from the process, and it has affected, to the extent that it changes, my perception of them.



Figure 6 - Pile of cables.

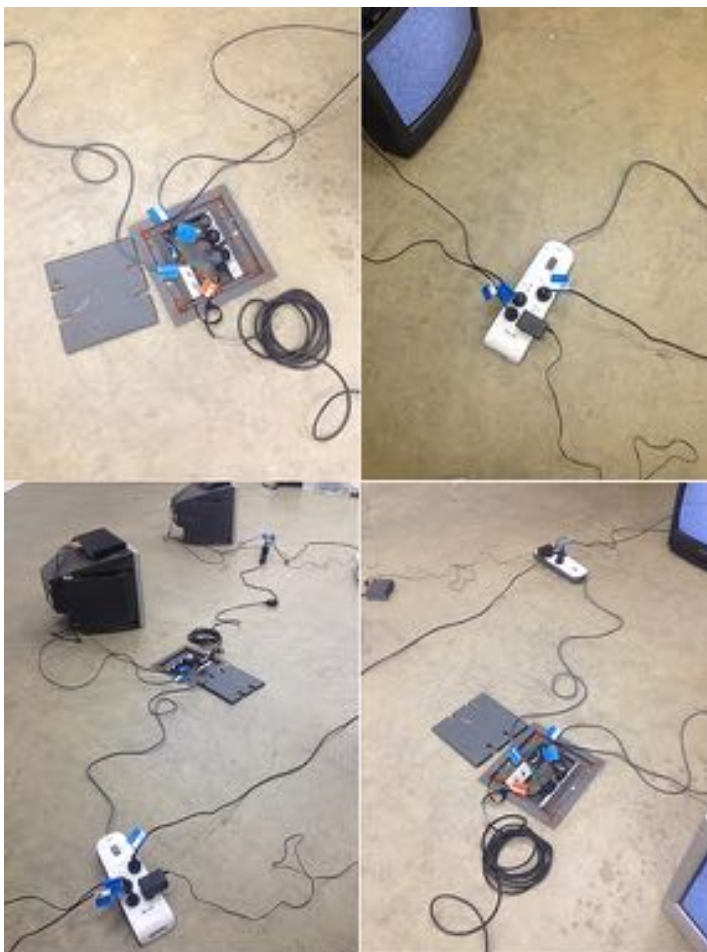


Figure 7 - Cables with blue tags.

Viewers who have not previously encountered my work generally notice things that I have not, pointing them out to me. I've become acutely aware of new things, such as the blue safety tags attached to multi-boxes and extension cables. I begin to arrange my thinking around these matters, their utilitarian function, and their ability to attract attention. These issues find their way into my decision-making when installing work. It is simply me becoming me, living, noticing, thinking, responding. It happens every day. I am not searching for the 'correct' thing, but instead I have now developed a capacity for difference, as I respond to the world differently and open up new experiences. I am presented here as a continual work in progress.

There is a strangeness to the reflexive-ness as look at myself. Whatever I have figured out about myself is now changing because of how I think about myself as having realised one thing or noticed one thing about myself. My target is shifting. A micro-gesture like a tic or twitch expressed in the work *Swipe* (Figure 8), this gesture or action does something, and the way that I think about it has changed me because I am the subject, now I'm changed. "[S]ometimes the information presented [in these gestures] inadvertently reveal[s] more about a person than the information directly or intentionally given" (Goffman, as cited in Woodward, 2004, pp. 14–15). What appears to be a mundane and contemporary everyday gesture of swiping, one that we don't take much notice of, subsequently extends beyond the gesture itself to reveal something about myself which I did not intend, it's not exactly what I'm doing, it's how I'm doing it that shows a nervousness or anxiety about the subject matter, or in this case me. The redundancy of this action has surfaced, and I have moved on. I have to do it again. What do I do? I continue to film myself, or more fittingly all I can do is just be myself.

In a sense, the continuity of this project becomes farcical, a nonsensical, ridiculous, unachievable project. In a way, this is exactly the point I believe. It's a metaphor for the contingencies of life, and this is what has emerged out of the exploration of the project. There is no such thing as a constituted identity, and there is just a performing of, for example, me performing identity; I'm always in a state of becoming, becoming myself through performing in an everyday context. The art seems to highlight the nature of this project. It might seem a pointless project but that does not mean to say that I don't keep pursuing it, we do this all of our lives.

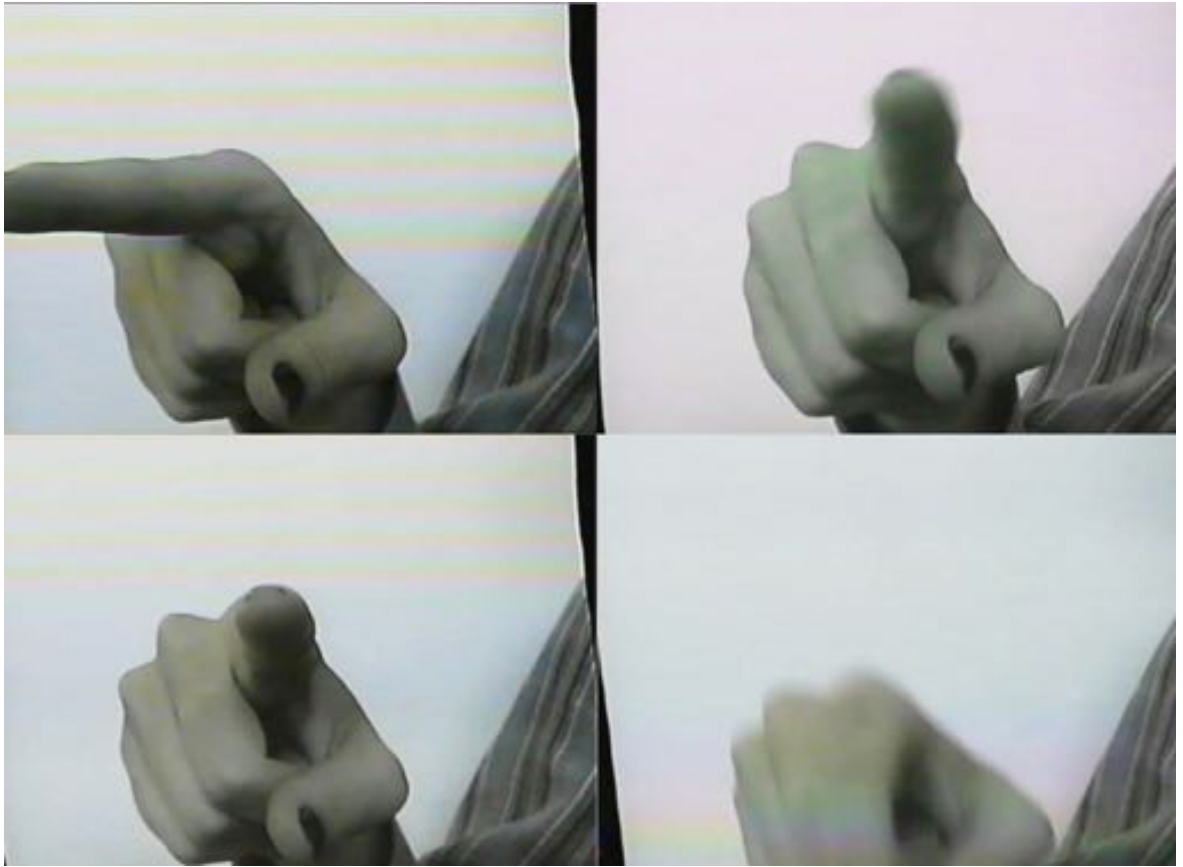


Figure 8 - Screen grabs taken from *Swipe*, 2017.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 DEVELOPMENTAL WORK LEADING INTO THIS PROJECT

The installation of the work *Eddy, Robin, Jack and Ethan* (2015), constructed as part of the *AD15* (footnote) show, was a pivotal work for me. In this work, adolescent boys are unclothed from the waist up, and watching themselves in a mirror. The work plays on stereotypical masculine ways of presentation. The installation drew on the transitional period of adolescence as a beginning point and confronted the physical and mental characteristics commonly present – observing identity specifically under the lens of this transitional period. During the beginning stages of the work, the boys appear to play into the seduction of their own image, testing their own boundaries, observing themselves, playing into their own gaze, flexing their muscles, but towards the later stages we observe the duration of the work taking its toll on the boys, resulting in a revealing of the boys' sense of confidence begin to falter for a moment, as the shift takes place from a confident reassuring self to a vulnerable introspective state. It revealed an important trait, one linked to adolescence as a process, and consisting of the struggle between the need to stand out and the need to belong.

One could assume that the boys felt a pressure to maintain their image within their particular peer group, this is presumably due to their lack of satisfaction with their outward identities (their sense of 'self'). The subjects found themselves stuck in a familiar yet unfamiliar teenage struggle, a crisis between Identity and role confusion. In other words, the boys – and their newly forming, emerging identity, we could imagine – became at odds with other people's expectations of what roles they should play. It is apparent both that what they see is unsatisfactory, and that the process of adjustment is unsatisfactory, as if some vital factor were missing in the feedback loop. As viewers of the subsequent artwork, we speculate what the factor(s) might be – although it is apparent that the mirroring of self with self, as a purely visual representation without relational information, does not provide what is needed. We see these teenagers become uncomfortably aware of this problematic nexus between self and others. Essentially young men, no matter what they are doing, remain an ineffable mystery to themselves and to us, we do not know what is going on psychologically and they (we can assume) do not know either.



Figure 9 - Installation shot of *Eddy, Robin, Jack and Ethan*, 2015.

5.2 METHOD AS QUESTIONING

In the metaphor “Trees have branches that spread out far from the trunk of the tree” the term ‘branch’ is used to indicate a part of a larger organisation. I see this metaphor in relation to my own project, in the sense that ‘tree’ could represent the notion of identity as an umbrella term in my work: a stem from which the project sprawls out. My method divaricates as the subject divaricates in its elusive ways. The lens is now turned back onto the terms of the project itself – the assumption that identity is locatable. It proposes similar questions: What is the subject? How do I address it? What is essential to it? Could I ever succeed?

The project manifests its form through a reflexive video installation-based practice, where the role of the ‘author’, for whom the notion of identity is observed, is myself. In previous works discussed above, the notion of identity was explored originally through the use of other people or other ‘authors’: I as the artist examining the notion of identity, through the lens of other people.

The shift in my practice took, firstly, the form of a realisation. This realisation consisted of an approach that observed identity under a notion of concealment. Concealment refers here to the action of hiding something or preventing it from being known, or alternatively this ‘something’ we’re acting as a hiding place; a cover. In this sense identity was examined as an entity that was somehow hidden, latent, that could be accessed or revealed. This realisation, a metaphorical curveball, complicated the original idea by suggesting the notion of identity is presented here in more dynamic terms, that it is subject to change. Here identity is porous. The essential ‘me’ that I could call identity has a boundary that is not retentive or secure. An example of this would be through the interaction of experience. Experiences enter through me as I interact with the world, the ebbs and flows of everyday action. I can be seen changing constantly, thinking, learning, reading and having every experience; that which previously was about knowing myself, could be suggested now as a notion of experiencing myself.

5.3 THE NOTION OF ‘FINISHED’ & ‘RESOLVED’

The idea of a finished or a solved work becomes complex in the sense that this project is a project without a finish. For me to produce a ‘finished’ work would unravel the project’s conceptual foundation and is not the point of it. These works are encountered as just representations of a phase, of something that is done, they’re simply a slice taken out of this process of continuum. In this way, nothing is finished, everything is provisional. The works are simply to look at, they continually shift and move on.

The works cannot be viewed in the traditional manner of most video art, that is, the video watched represents something, and all the research accumulated concludes in a resolved work. In this sense, my work straddles this notion in some way but rather alludes to the conclusion as being provisional. It always has to be in the movement because I’ve collapsed my life and art practice together. In this way, the idea of ‘resolution’ becomes problematic because within the project’s context it is never solved, and it is continually subject to change.

5.4 STUDIO

The way in which I inhabit the space of my studio, as well as the way in which I move within it, becomes necessary. My studio here shifts from an area of pure production, becoming a site of actions and events, an active extension of my artistic identity. The strategies embedded in the acts of making are employed to portray the studio, which I see as a site of action. In this sense, the studio becomes a space for this process of questioning to unfold in. The studio can be observed as a site of both physical and mental inhabitations for myself as I occupy it, shift in it, sit in it, move in it and make within.

The artist’s studio here is a site of production and flux, things are constantly subject to change and explored through the contingencies of myself within the project. The notion of the studio becomes an ideal vessel for the idea of a persistent, ever-changing identity to occupy; space which I inhabit, emerge and change in continuously both in a physical and mental sense. Shifting from previous notions of fixity, conclusiveness or ‘summed up’ ideas of what constitutes an identity as a methodology, a change occurs towards exploring

identity as a process, a dynamic and ever-changing method, reflecting the current project's constant shifting between my actions and thoughts unfolding.

The dynamic characteristics of the studio site extend into the fabric of how the installations themselves come to fruition: in a sense, closing the gap between studio as a private place of making to one of installation, (public) interaction and consumption. The act of knowing or working towards a pre-defined outcome, I see as a state of stagnation (fixity), suppression and unification. In this way, the sense of not knowing became a crucial aspect in identifying the importance of thought and action within the process in my practice. The constant shift between thought and measures or actions was distinct, reflecting the simultaneous positioning of the self in the project, as subject matter. I am not working towards a 'finished' result; I am rather working through a process, in the sense that my life unfolds naturally via my instinctive and intuitive studio acts. The way in which I inhabit the studio and move through it is important. Here it acts as more than just what was assumed as a site of production, and has shifted towards a site of action that is an active extension of my lived experience.

My studio holds a plethora of equipment readily available for use at any time, and on this basis the material traces of the continual movement shown by my occupation within the studio manifest and extend into the construction of the installations themselves. In this sense, what begins to occur during this process is a stumbling, feeling around, particular movements and occupations of space where change in practice takes place, in a sense this becomes an extension of my mind, highlighting for example 'micro gestures'. I identify this process of making an action, inclusive of thought as something that was simultaneously mental and physical. As traces of these measures, the installations are seen here as a residue of this active process, contingent installations where any aspect could change throughout each install. Television sets, projectors, DVD players, media players, plug sockets, extension cords and cables, I continually encounter them, and each time in different ways through my continuous and transitional subjective encounters, they all shift to different positions, coming together and drifting apart, constantly 'ebbing and flowing'. There is a continuity between my thoughts, actions and a desire to keep everything within the installations and my studio in movement, continuous change. A notion of roaming has remained a constant throughout the year, as much as it has been immensely reflexive for myself: continuously aware.



Figure 10 - Screens grabs taken from various studio recordings, 2017.



Figure 11 - Screen grabs taken from various studio recordings (bottom) and recordings in St Paul St Gallery Three (top), 2017.

5.5 TIME UNFOLDING

Experimenting with the spatialising of time and duration has been an essential element in my work. Here I see how this notion operates concerning viewer's movement within my work and how their emerging and unfolding of themselves persists continually. My work is a constant process of thinking and rethinking, and I want this to be reflected directly throughout the experience of the installations. I encourage a participatory questioning and engagement from the viewer while in my installations. While my work explores the dynamic characteristics of my own identity unfolding through the making process, here I additionally draw attention to the subjective unfolding of the work within the spectator.

Within Douglas Gordon's work, *24 Hour Psycho* (1993) he employs a similar tactic for his viewers, whereby he appropriates Alfred Hitchcock's classic thriller *Psycho* (1960), playing it at dramatically reduced speed. The film's traditional speed of 24 frames per second is stretched to a Warholesque duration of 24 hours. The question here is for the viewer, and how long they will stay to view the protracted projection. As implied in the title, it is quickly apparent that viewers will not be able to see the entire film. Here the anticipation inherent in the dramatic unfolding of the Hitchcock film situates the viewer in the present (What is going on now?) and the future (What is about to happen?) simultaneously.

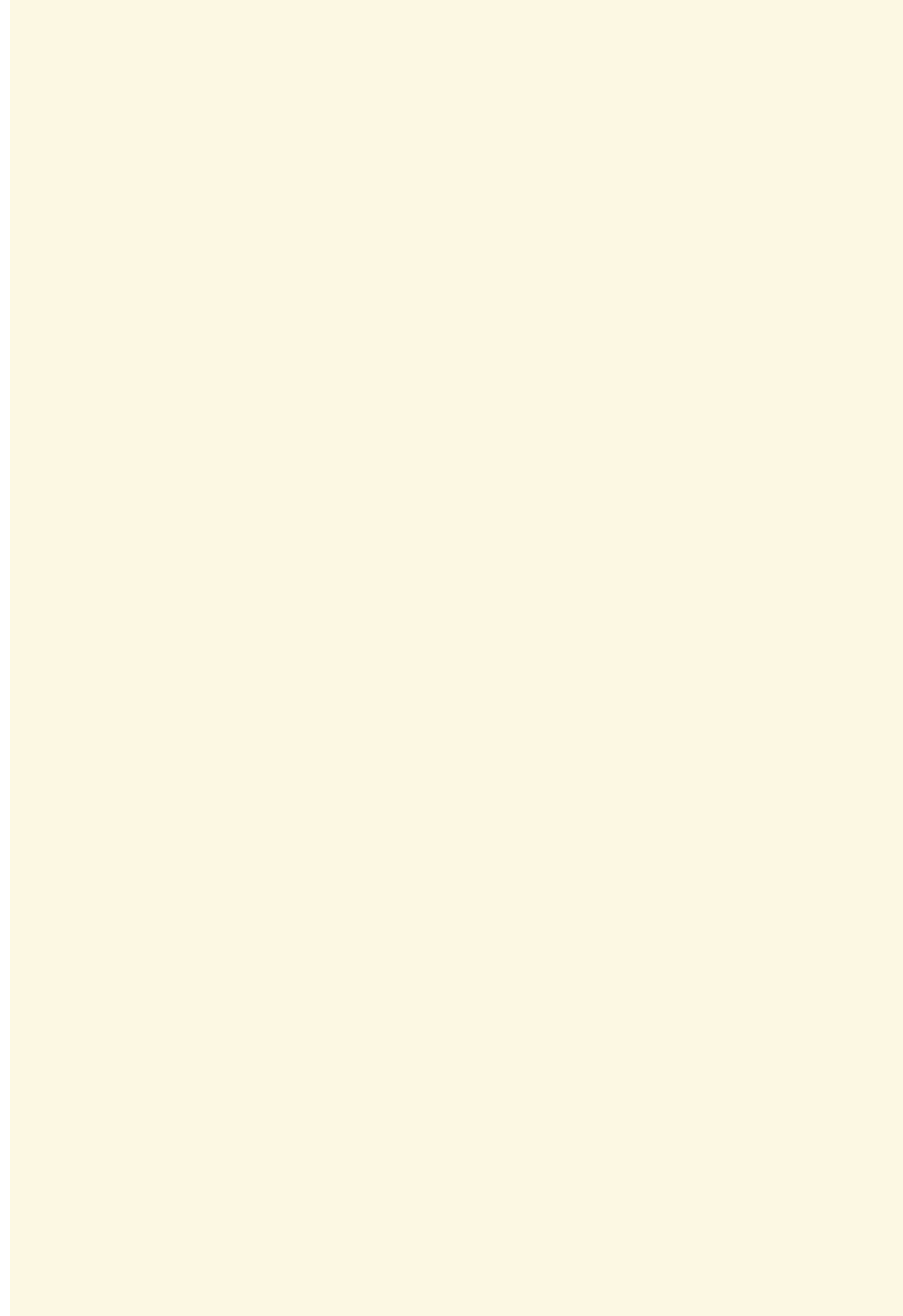
Speaking about the ideal viewer for *24 Hour Psycho*, Mondloch says: "He (Douglas Gordon)...said he thought it would be interesting for that 'someone' to imagine what is happening in the gallery right then, at that moment in time when they have no access to the work" (2010, pp. 44–45). Here in Gordon's mind, the exact duration of the viewer's experience in the here and now is subservient to the eventual remembering of the work in another time and place. I am interested in that notion that residues of the work continue to stay, or more fittingly unfold, within the viewer even after they have left the site of the exhibition space. In this sense the work is within the viewer (it is in them), they are living the experience that they are observing. For example, if we were to assume that a viewer of *24 Hour Psycho* was to sit and view the work in its entirety, for that amount of time they sit and observe the film unfolding over that time in that representation. The viewer presumably would be hardly aware that their own life is unfolding over that 24-hour period. I see this as a real-time representation, although *24 Hour Psycho* becomes slightly

complicated in a sense it is a narrative within another timeframe, the viewer is observing a film unfolding. I could view Gordon's work from the perspective that it is about Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) unfolding over 24 hours, but what is unfolding, in my eyes, is the viewers' own lives over that period.

I see this as Gordon attempting to make his viewers acutely aware of a narrative that is outside of their own experience of time, being stretched right before the viewer's eyes. Mostly what Gordon is pursuing here is to make acutely aware to the viewers that he has taken an hour of the viewers' lives, what unfolds as a result of this is the viewer's life. It reflects back, not only on the subject matter but our sense of duration, change, and our living while observing the film.

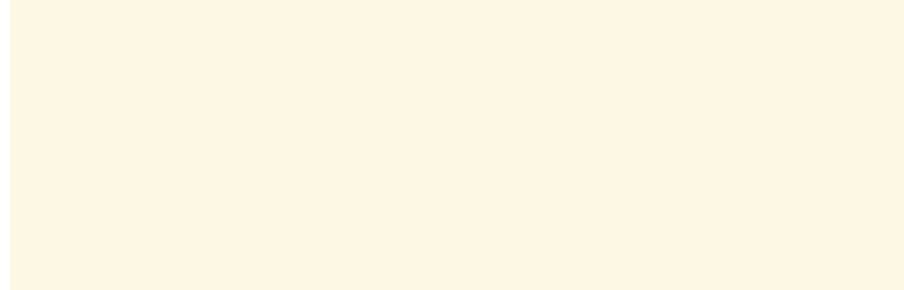
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Figure 12 - Douglas Gordon, *24 Hour Psycho*, 1993. Medium: video Installation; duration: 1440 minutes (24 hours).



"This content has been removed by the author due to copyright issues".

Figure 13 - Viewer looking at Douglas Gordon's *24 Hour Psycho*, 1993. Medium: video installation; duration: 1440 minutes (24 hours).



5.6 MOVEMENT & ABSENCE

In Bruce Nauman's 1966 work *Flour Arrangements*, that takes its reference from the traditional exercise of Japanese flower arranging, he rearranges a mound of flour over a period of one month, photographing each new configuration or iteration of the flour. Here the resulting work represents an example of a process, a process in the sense that its nature is temporary or subject to change. What interests me here is in the course of destroying the manipulated objects at the end of each procedure, the resulting work left, that the viewer experiences, is not that of the mounds of flour themselves but merely the residual documentation of thirty or so photographic images of each permutation of the pile. Nauman thereby displaces the working meaning from a centred object into a spatially and temporally dispersed field.

While the notion of movement here is heavily grounded in the process, what I see here is a 'staccato' movement, or in other words a sampling of the process. This staccato movement shows us a series of outcomes. I must reiterate the word outcome here, as it suggests fixity. The presentation of photographs, which take the form of a residual result and are, objectively, the only thing the viewer encounters, therefore removes the viewer from the in-between moments that the pictures cannot give us. In other words, we do not see Nauman dynamically presenting himself, moving, shifting and trying new these new configurations out. We, disappointingly, are only left with the outcome. The difference here, I believe, is that viewers of *Flour Arrangements* only see a resultant, which therefore suggests a fixity. Here is where my work diverges, as it observes the 'author' as a continuum rather than presenting a residual resultant. Though, yes, I must point out that in a sense we do see a resultant because of the impossibility of showing my entire life.

Through these observations, I became increasingly aware of how the notion of absence manifests in the project. I see things missing or dropping out within the installations. An example of this dropping out occurred during a critique of an installation I had made during talk week (Figure 16). A media player failed to loop the video projected on the wall, resulting in the image turning off mid-critique, leaving viewers within the installation space confronted with a black standby screen. A chance happening, but through its accidental nature it brought to my attention that chance or 'accident' reinforces ideas around the failure of technology, specifically the dropping out of information. These

occurrences are out of my control. I think that there cannot be a representation of my life, my unfolding, my becoming me, acknowledging the fact that 'I' and only 'I' can live the project. I experience it, but it reinforces the fact that it's hard to represent 'I' except in samples, but here the samples are presented in a dynamic sense, these samples are impartial and contingent.

Individual experiences within my life are unfolding that open me up to the awareness of events that I conduct intuitively, for example, the event of watching myself as I pick up a television monitor and shift it to another configuration. If I were to work in a manner similar to how Nauman worked in *Flour Arrangements* (1966) the photograph would act as the stopper, or signify the point where I stopped working on it. The act of shifting the television monitor was the event, as was Bruce Nauman's different flour configurations, the finishing of a modification; we didn't see this change in motion. Here the functionality of video outweighs that of photography, in the sense that the medium of video can show us this modification in action. I believe I'm working similarly to Nauman in the sense that I have a series of events and I am showing viewers/participants a 'process', but I am trying to make viewers acutely aware that these gaps in between present themselves continually.

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Figure 14 - Bruce Nauman, *Flour Arrangements*, 1966. Seven colour photographs, various sizes.

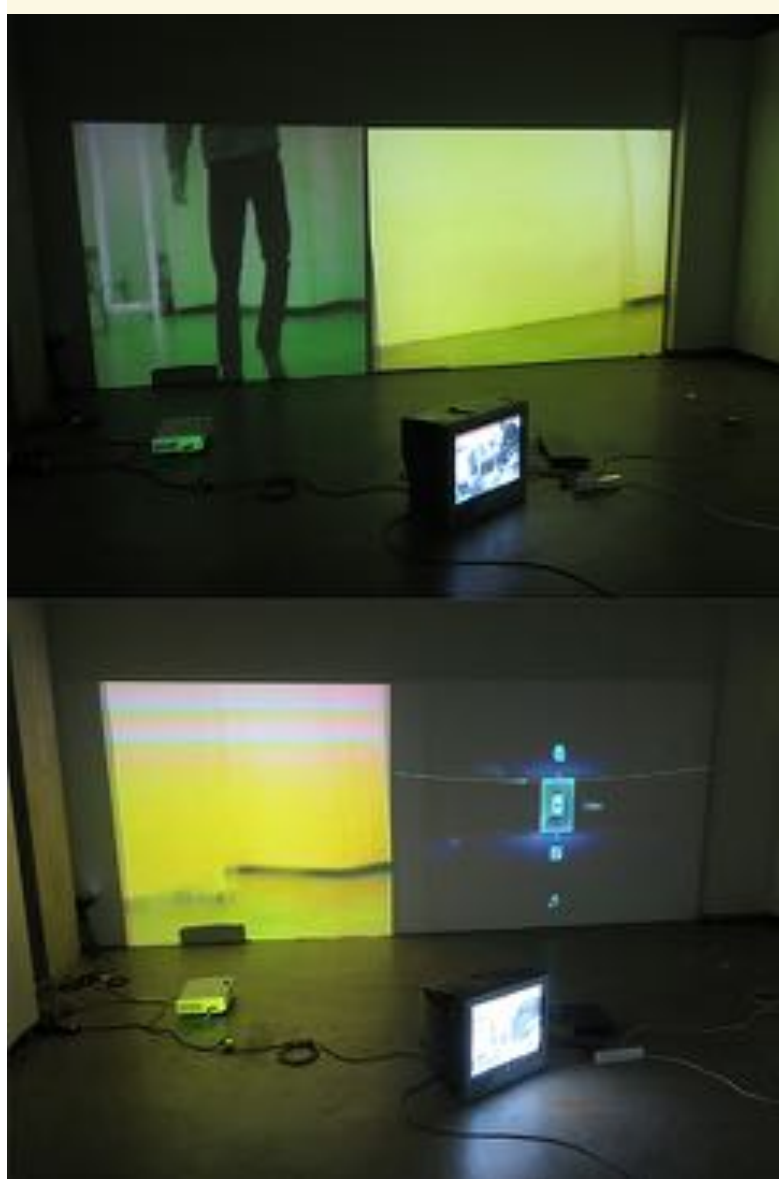


Figure 15 - Media drop-out (bottom picture), Talk Week installation, 2017.

5.7 **BECOMING MYSELF**

My initial ideas surrounding identity were that of an entity that I could sum up and present to people, the “Here I am” moment, this thing that I call me, call Alex, that I can wrap up, label, determine and define. In this sense it is presumably the way that most people think about identity, and thoughts that, for example, the boys in my previous works might have had about themselves too. This notion was ultimately complicated by the kids thinking, “I could change; I could toughen up in front of the mirror.”

As the two sections in the first part of this exegesis exemplify, one can observe in oneself the notion of determinism within identity, or a longing for it – presenting identity in more definitive terms. The fixity and determinacy around the presentation of statements like “I am this, this is where I belong, these are the ways the I think about myself and this is my stand point. This is who I am, I am this” is, in a sense, security; perhaps you know who you are, you know where you stand. The reality is that identity has to be constructed in dynamic terms, we as people are always in a continual process of change, it is provisional, temporary and always in flux. Hence part of this ‘growing up’ idea is a coming to terms with the idea of a continual identity.

It can be seen that we always have a tendency, a desire or a longing for identity within these fixed and determinant terms. The reality that can be observed here is that we have to live with the face of identity as indeterminate and always changing. The determinate presented in provisional terms, only a snapshot where it is always limited and contingent ... and the reality is that it is always changing, shifting, growing and developing. Here the notion of ‘becoming myself’ becomes one of the fundamental ideas surrounding the practice, I am becoming me.

6 CONCLUSION

This project started as if it might find a solution, as if identity could be essential somehow, that I could find these terms and categories if somehow I could encapsulate this notion of identity in some way. In this sense, this project has revealed that this is an inadequate way of thinking, and if this project were undertaken in those original terms it would be an endless project. What I at first thought was a hopeless project turns out to be, positively, an endless project. It's the realisation of the project's endlessness that gives me a new-found consolation my art and life will sustain each other. The life of the project is in its endless flowering of difference, which happens throughout life, throughout living life, and in this case throughout making.

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9 THE PRACTICE – VISUAL DOCUMENTATION



Figure 16 - Installation shot, *Swipe*, March, 2017.



Figure 17 - Studio video install detail, *Swipe*, March, 2017.

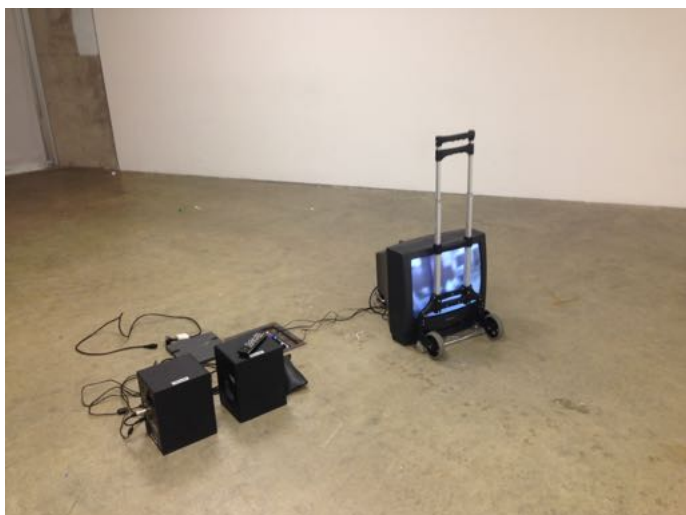


Figure 18 - Studio video/portable speakers, install detail, *Swipe*, March, 2017.



Figure 19 - Mirrored CRT television playing *Swipe*, March, 2017.

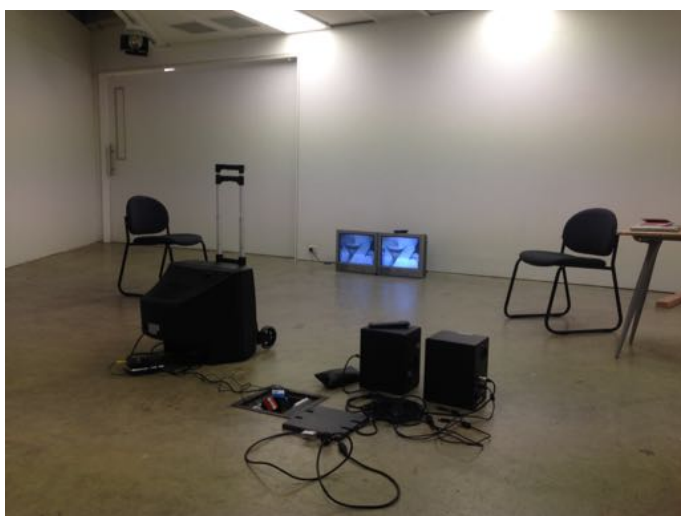


Figure 20 - Installation detail, *Swipe*, March, 2017.



Figure 21 - *Untitled*, studio videos, first projection detail, April, 2017.



Figure 22 - *Untitled*, studio videos, WM306 (test space), April, 2017.



Figure 23 - *Untitled*, studio videos (right corner), WM306 (test space), April, 2017.



Figure 24 - *Untitled*, studio videos (left corner), WM306 (test space), April, 2017.



Figure 25 - *Untitled*, studio videos (opposing wall, once entered space), WM306 (test space), April, 2017.

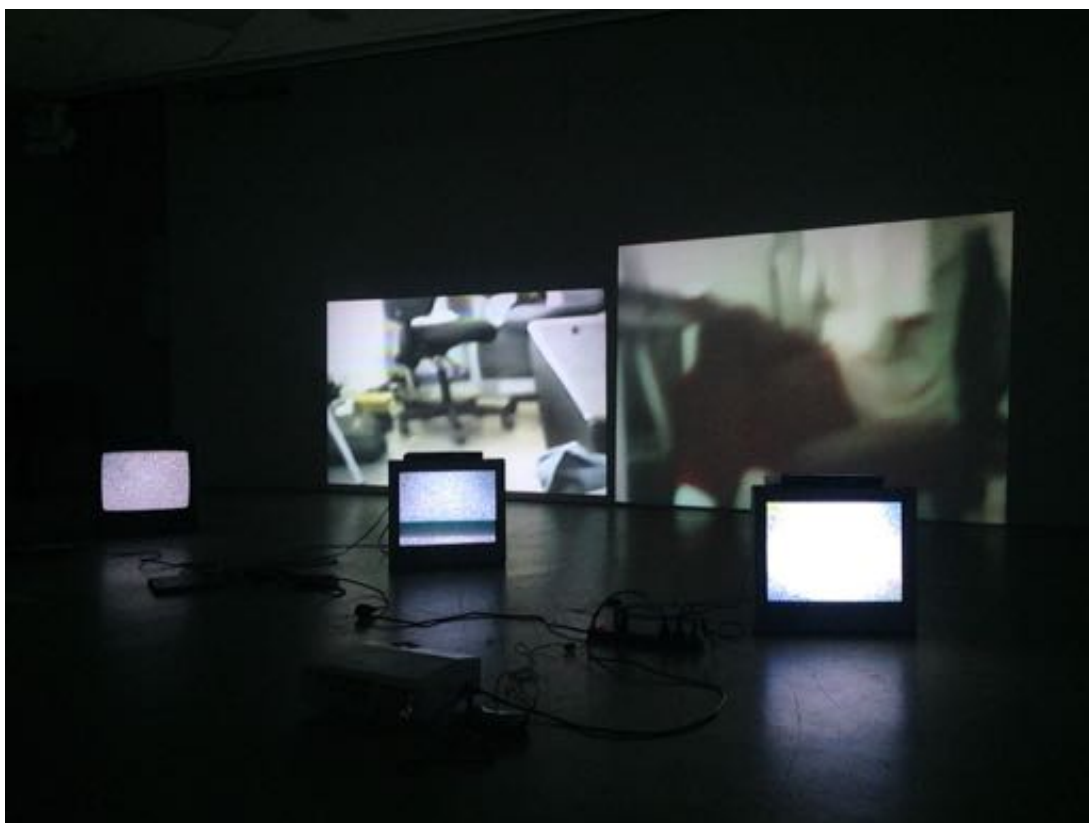


Figure 26 - *Untitled*, studio videos, three CRT Televisions playing first iterations of *Give Me the Gift*, May, 2017.

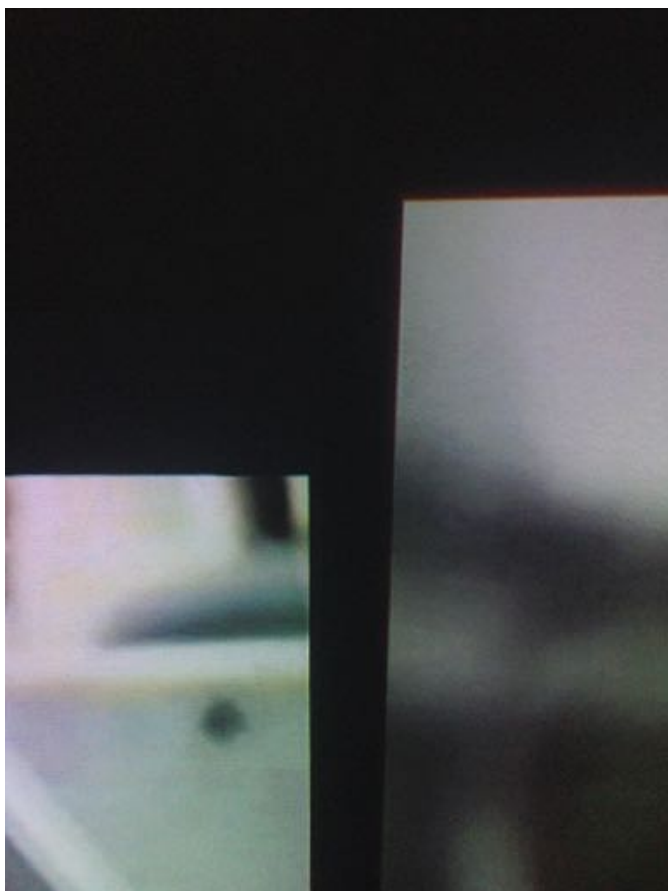


Figure 27 - Detail of aspect ratios that I couldn't line up, *Untitled*, studio videos, May, 2017.



Figure 28 - Re-install of *Give Me the Gift*, May, 2017.



Figure 29 - *Give Me the Gift*, re-install detail within projection room of St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.



Figure 30 - *Give Me the Gift*, re-install detail within projection room of St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.

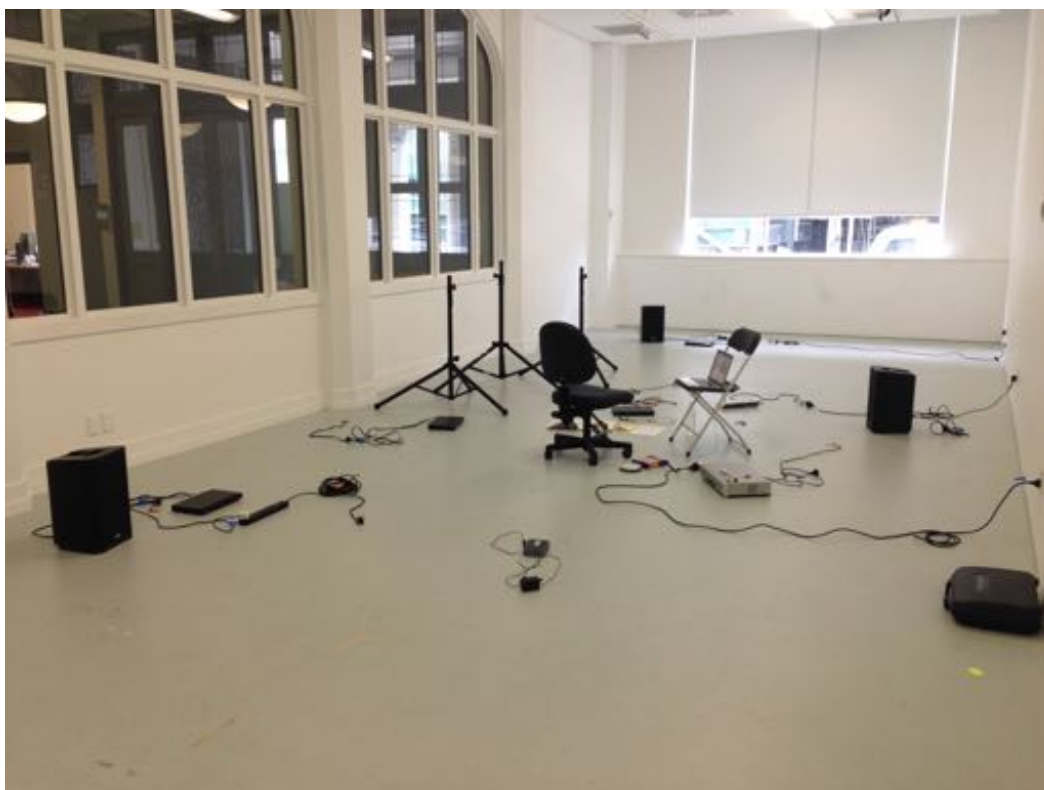


Figure 31 – 3rd inhabiting St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.



Figure 32 - Detail of unravelled cord with blue tag, St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.



Figure 33 - Detail of MacBook charger tangled around chair, St Paul St Gallery Three, 2017.



Figure 34 - Detail of semi-untangled cord (far end of gallery,) St Paul St Gallery Three, 2017.



Figure 35 - Speaker playing various articulation exercises, K8 speaker, DVD player, St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.



Figure 36 - Detail: semi-untangled cord (far end of gallery), St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.

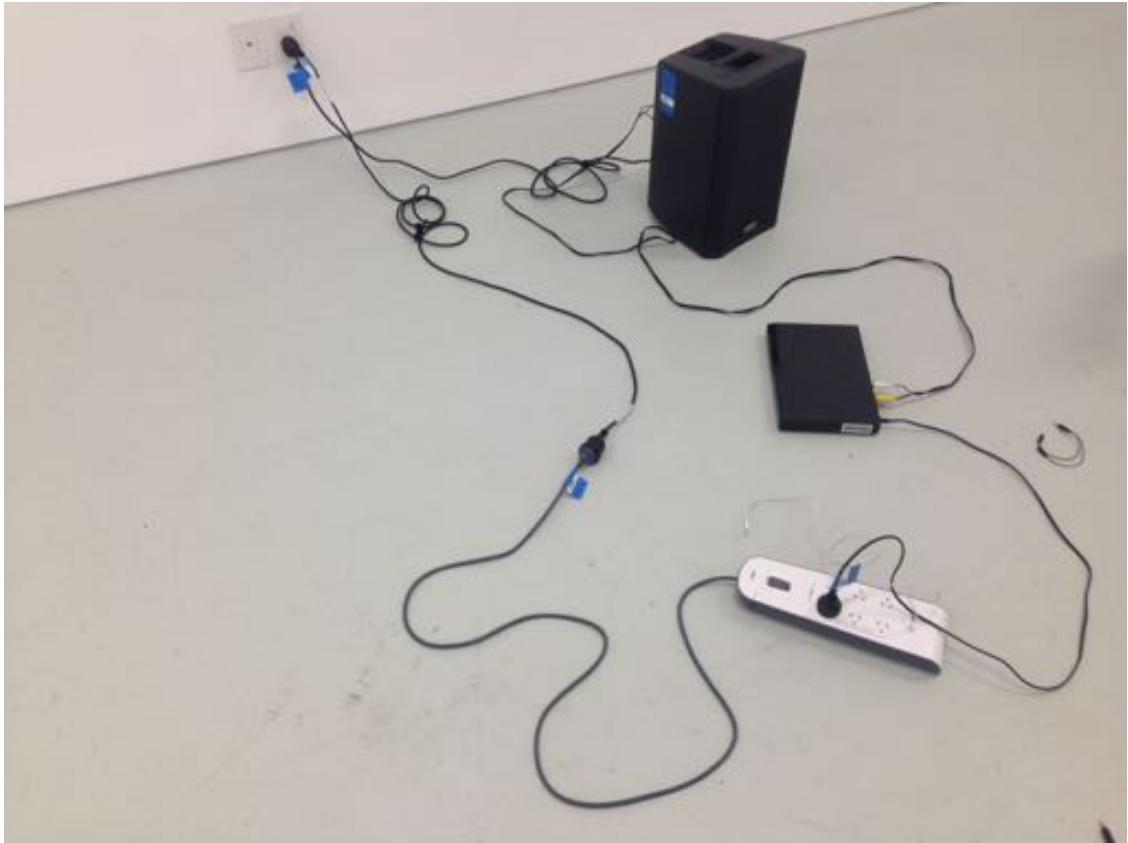


Figure 37 - Speaker playing various articulation exercises (middle of the gallery), K8 speaker, DVD player, St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.



Figure 38 - Detail: plug with two cords plugged into each other, two blue tags, St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.



Figure 39 - Provisional projector stand, St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.

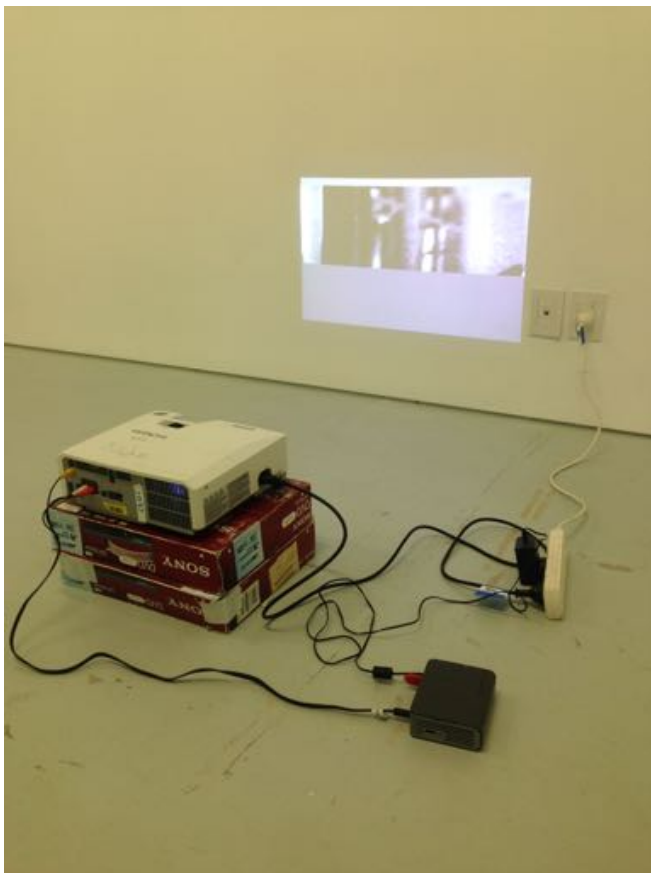


Figure 40 - Provisional projector stand (install detail), St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.



Figure 41 - Semi-untangled cord with blue tag (lower end of gallery), St Paul St Gallery Three, June 2017.



Figure 42 - Detail: VHS camera case (empty), St Paul Street Gallery Three, June, 2017.



Figure 43 - Detail: multi-box with semi-untangled cord, two blue tags, orange tag (middle of gallery), St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.

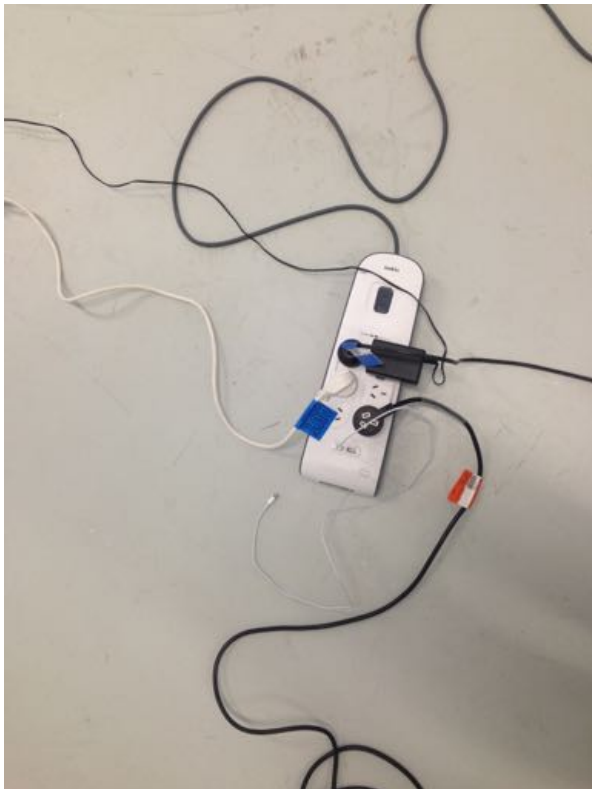


Figure 44 - Detail: multi-box with semi-untangled cord, two blue tags, orange tag (middle of gallery), St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.



Figure 45 - Various speaker tripod combinations, St Paul St Gallery Three, June, 2017.

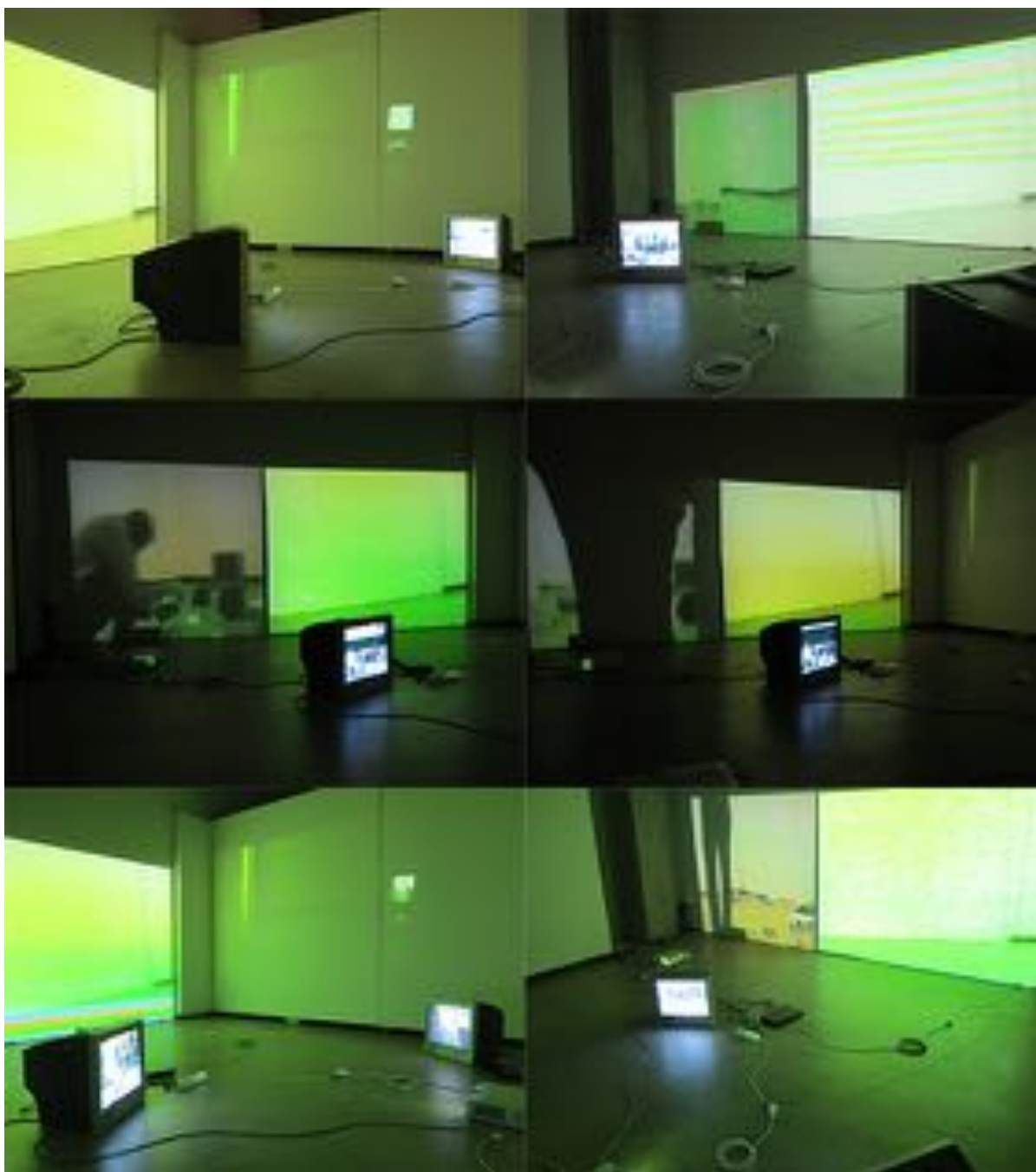


Figure 46 - *Untitled*, (Talk Week install) various installation details, WM306 (test space), August, 2017.

10 APPENDICES – AD17 DOCUMENTATION.



Figure 47 - *Dynamic Inventions*, Installation shot (AD17) November 2017

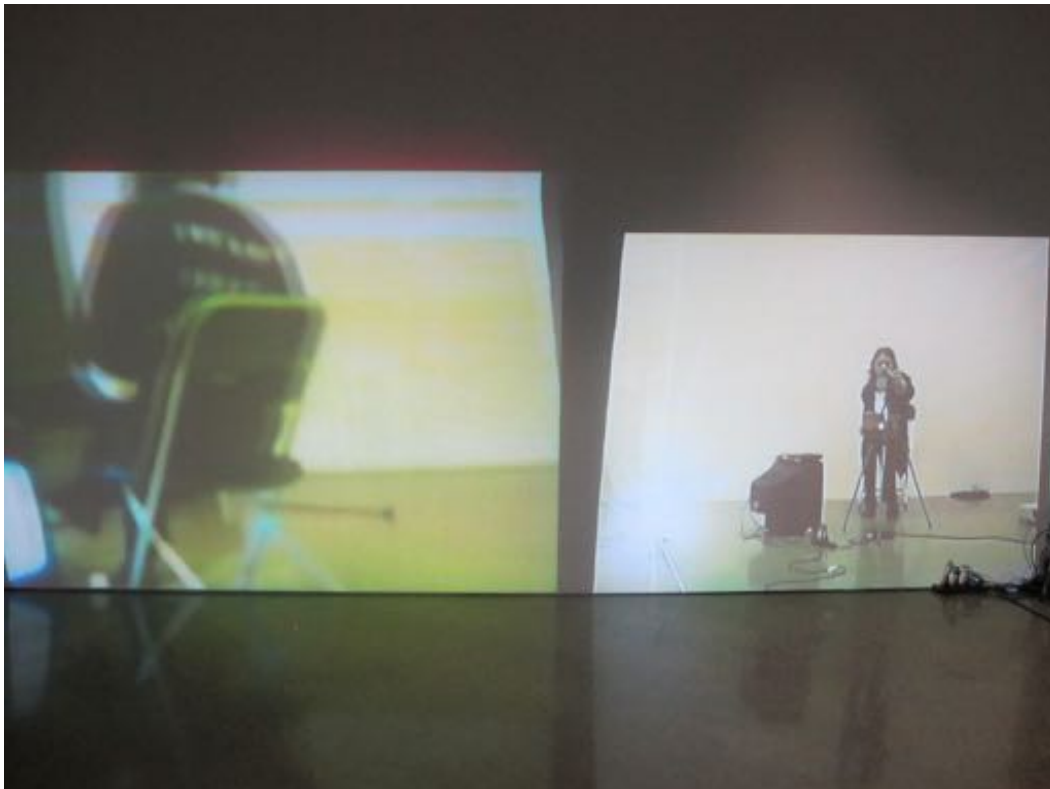


Figure 48 - *Dynamic Inventions*, Installation shot (AD17) November 2017



Figure 49 - *Dynamic Inventions*, Detail (AD17) November 2017



Figure 50 - *Dynamic Inventions*, Detail (AD17) November 2017

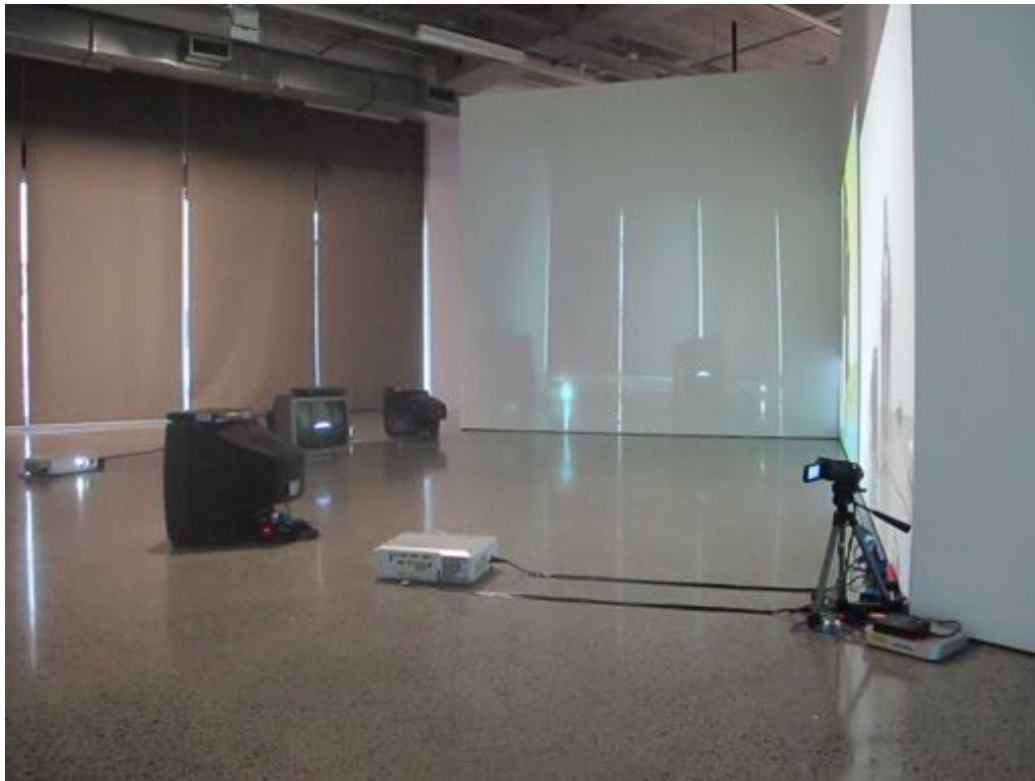


Figure 51 - *Dynamic Inventions*, Installation shot (AD17) November 2017

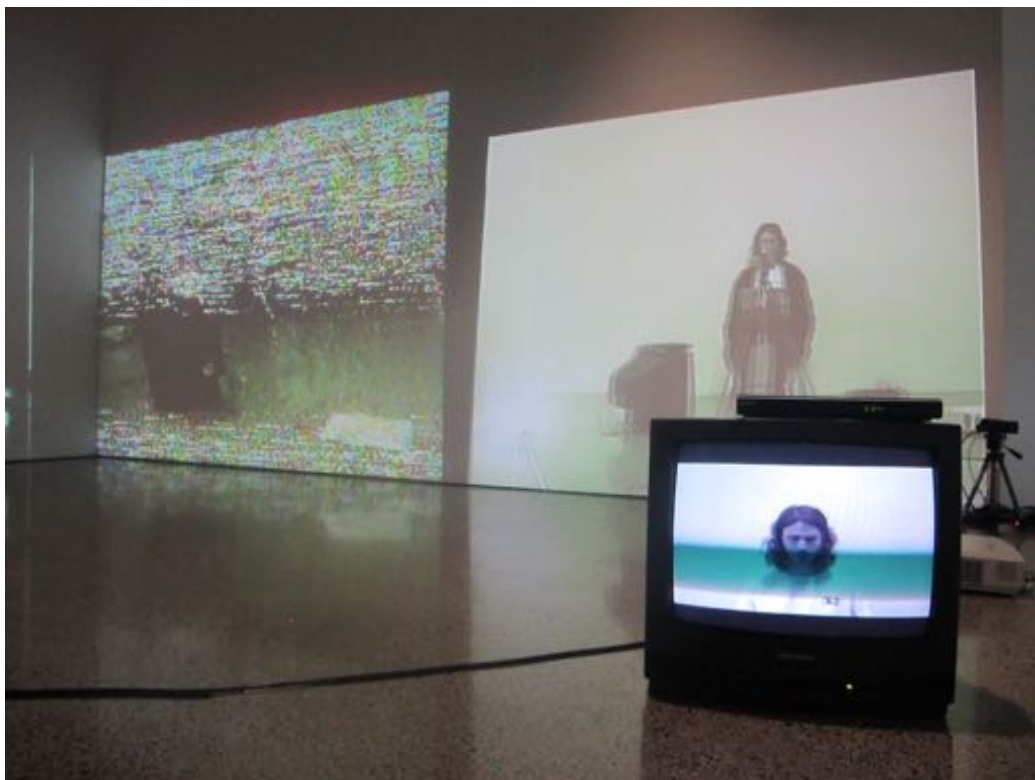


Figure 52 - *Dynamic Inventions*, Installation shot (AD17) November 2017



Figure 53 - *Dynamic Inventions*, Detail (AD17) November 2017



Figure 54 - *Dynamic Inventions*, Detail (AD17) November 2017