



# **Junctures for knowing what you know: Installation, site, process, material and object**

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## Contents

Attestation of Authorship.....	4
Acknowledgements. ....	5
Abstract.....	6
Notes on Image Titles.....	7
Section 1 Introduction.....	9
Section 2 Meshwork of Making.....	12
Method and play.....	12
<i>Work, Reflection Circle 2012</i> .....	14
emptiness[2] .....	16
<i>Work, Drawing experience Testspace 2012</i> .....	17
YES .....	20
Knowing what you know .....	21
<i>Work, Ait, white 2013</i> .....	23
Why Awkward.....	25
Awkward and Intention.....	27
Casting as everyday process.....	28
<i>Work, Slow slump cast</i> .....	29
Host moulds and constructed moulds.....	32
Casting and scale and the hand.....	33
Making present and absence.....	34
<i>Work, Outside in 2013</i> .....	36

Section 2 Continued

Approach to site.....	40
<i>Work, Outside in wall 2012, Drawing experience column,</i>	
<i>Drawing experience skirting, Drawing experience crack, and</i>	
<i>Lack of good sense.....</i>	42
Object into site.....	49
<i>Work, Indeterminately short but significant.....</i>	49
Material property versus quality.....	51
Completing the object.....	52
Return to the material to get an answer.....	52
<i>Work, Residue of thought.....</i>	55
Collapse and gravity.....	59
<i>Work, Without purpose.....</i>	60
Section 4 Conclusion — pausing before moving forward.....	65
Moving the knowing on, waiting for site, <i>Play Experiences</i> and	
<i>Drawing experiences: Images .....</i>	68
Section 5 Final Installation.....	76
Section 6 References.....	86
Section 7 List of images.....	90
Section 8 List of illustrations.....	91

### **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, 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 any other degree or diploma of a university or institution of higher learning.

Harriet Stockman

8 October 2013

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## **Abstract**

*Junctures for knowing what you know: Installation, site, process, material and object* is a reflexive studio based project that embraces human experiences of familiarity, anxiety, and awkwardness in an attempt to seduce the viewer/ participant to question assumed knowledge. Each installation, within the larger research project, looks to develop from a permission to 'play' as method of approach. Within such play, this project's intention is to respond to previous works within the project and the relationship between the objects placed into a space, the history and use of that space and the architecture of site. Consideration will be given to my hand and its touch and its role as the unconscious assimilator through which the osmotic process of collecting and receiving information from a selected site and materials takes place. Accordingly, this research proposes that the hand contains the potential to translate and map the body's movement back into a selected site and material establishing a reflexive rhythm of work. Materials are selected because they have a history that merges with both architecture and sculptural casting practice. This research aims to tease out moments prior to a collapse within each installation as a tantalizing encounter so that potentially the viewer/participants 'knowing' meshes with the experience of the encounter thereby triggering a sense of re-knowing.

## Notes on Image Titles

*Play experience* in a title:

Indicates works that are in the explorative and beginning stages of making or thinking about them, either in materials, processes or sites. I see these as rudimentary drawings.

*Drawing experience* in a title with a comma:

Relates the work more to a site and tends to be more exploitative in nature, a fine-tuning of making and thinking, but still seen as a drawing.

*Drawing experience* in a title with no comma:

If there is no comma between *Drawing experience* and the rest of the title the works are considered finished works.

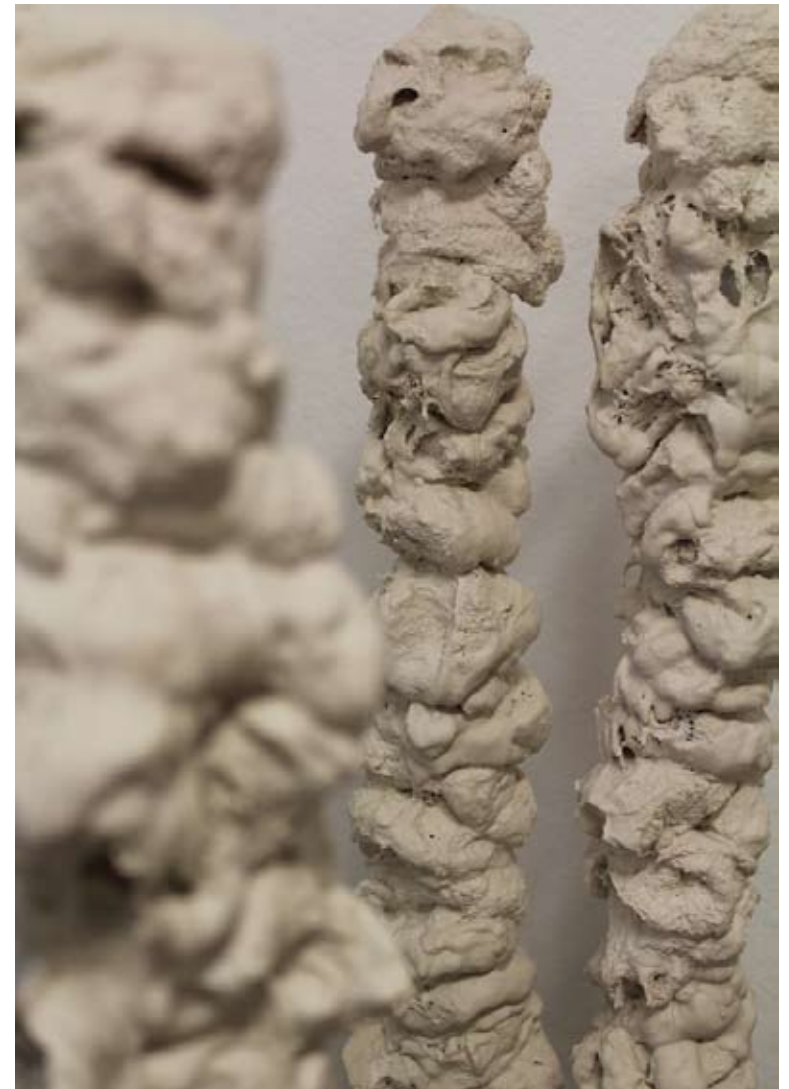




## Section 1 Introduction

This project has been a conversation between a group of materials, processes, sites and methods of engagement that all serve to research a suffuse thought that a viewer/participant may *re-know what they know*. This umbrella of thinking allows no fixed point in which to anchor the research, rather it offers a meshing of entangled lines, a collection of enquiries that interweave with one another and with each generation of making and exhibiting, simply to allow you to re-know what you know. There has been no desire for a specific end point or conclusion, more a continual crossing of lines of subtle reflexive discovery.

The meshing of entangled lines has had threads of similar conversations running through them. A heuristic approach coupled, with experienced knowledge could be considered the core conditions of the project. There has been no particular hierarchy of decision-making in this project. I respond to the conditions in front of me as they arise. Touching and making and re-making allowed for a familiarity, sensitivity and responsivity to the processes, materials and sites. This familiarity gave space for reaction and direction to move the project forward.



Top **Harriet Stockman**

*Play experience red, objects for testing subtlety of awkward, attempt 2 2013*  
odd red boots, worn for 5 hours

Bottom **Harriet Stockman**

*Play experience black, objects for testing subtlety of awkward, 2013*  
odd black boots, worn for 8 hours

Firstly, I will discuss some of the methods that I have appropriated to allow me to examine and think about this project. I will introduce Alison Gopnik's theories on play and learning as a way to approach practice (Gopnik, 2012). Architect Michael Benedikt's *emptiness*[2] theory allowed me a method to approach the engagement of the viewer/participant through the use of the seductive pause (Benedikt, 1988). The strategies for the enrolment of the viewer/participant will be further elaborated by introducing Olafur Eliasson's notion of YES (Your Engagement Sequence) that encourages the viewer/participant to consider knowing what they know and to reconsider it (Eliasson, 2009).

To intensify the experience of recognising or re-knowing the strategy of awkward is imbued into the work. 'Awkward' has been considered both as noun and verb. It names the strategy used, but is also embedded in the selections made around situating and making of works. While it is not the most dominant feature of the project, it is an important thread and tool.

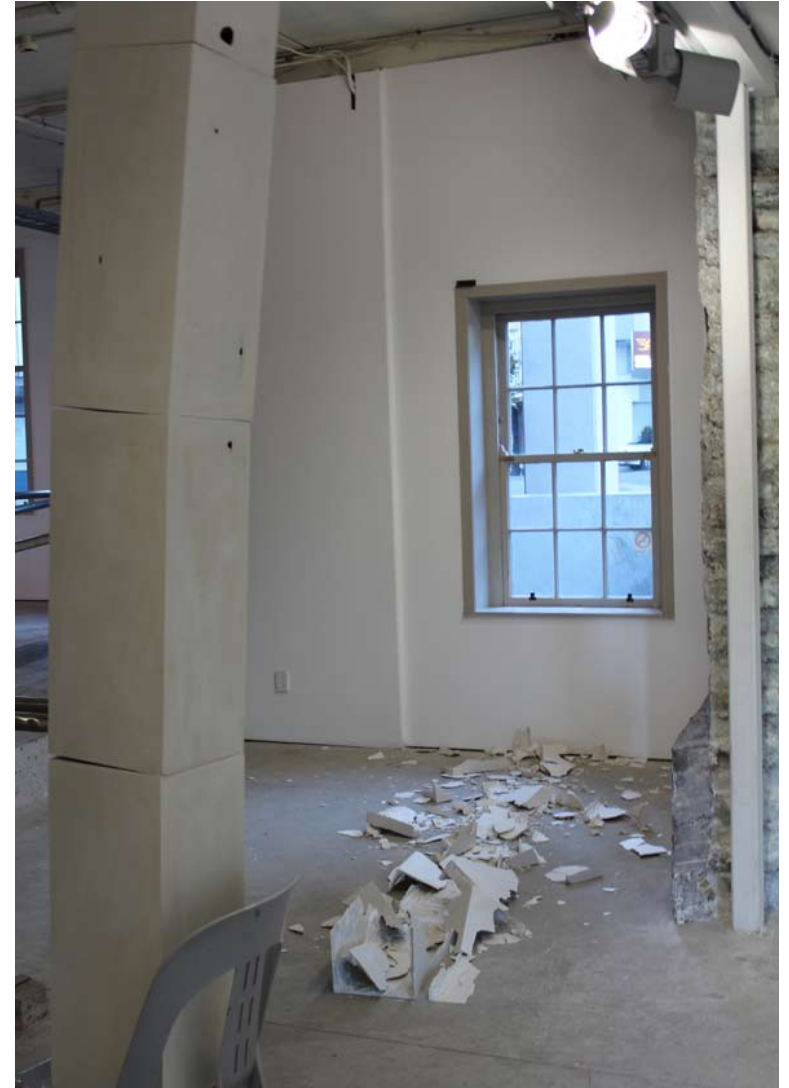


**Harriet Stockman**

*Drawing experience, lack of good sense, 2012*  
plaster of paris, plastic chair

Stretching the notion of casting and welding processes, classic casting sculptural materials, site and scale and gesture are pivotal threads/tools that repeatedly resurface to form the language that allows me to present my ideas. It is a struggle to try and clearly separate them into autonomous discussions and in reality, as discussed above, they interweave their way through all areas of my practice. Some of this intertwining will therefore be reflected in this discussion to reinforce or explain different ideas.

If there was a concept that did rise above the other threads/lines of enquiry, it was the idea of extending the moment of familiar anxiety before spectacular or gradual collapse. William Wegman writing on his work *Bad News* provides a simple and direct clarity, recognition of the fact that most of the works that I am interested in within this project are works that have this potential (Wegman, 1971). The extension of the moment of potential failure in a work is a central tenant of my process. It is the works' voice and attracts the viewer/participants tensivity through the imagined collapse. Interrelated with the collapse is the force of gravity; the works continue to be ephemeral and experience-based as a result.





## Section 2 Meshwork of Making

### Method and play

The idea to create permissions to 'play' materially, technically, spatially, physically is a key driver within the project. Professor Alison Gopnik aligns the way babies learn through play with the most brilliant scientific minds. I like the idea of extrapolating the ideas she is talking about and have them provide a paradigm to think about art practice. She uses the terms for play - *explore* versus *exploit*. The exploratory play is the physical exploration of the world... 'What will happen if I move this finger here, or what will happen if I jump off this table, what will happen if I do whatever...' this exploration often appears haphazard and non-sequential in it's approach (Gopnik, 2012).

Explore is the learning for its own sake and is exogenous. It tends to be wide-ranging. Exploit is learning focussed on a particular goal and is endogenous. Children tend to explore their environments widely first with no set goals in mind whereas adults have a more goal orientated way of learning. When either of these modes is in action the other is inhibited. Thus, the 'explore' or unstructured mode allows for lack of inhibition, less control and lack of focus allowing for a wide range of results. It is a mode of practice that is necessarily unaccountable to allow for spontaneous discovery. As we mature the exploit mode becomes more dominant which enables focus and intention, but at the cost of exploration and sensory learning.



Top **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, attempt two*, 2012  
plaster of paris, plastic pipe, car

Bottom **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Play experience, attempt two*, 2012  
plaster of paris, plastic pipe, car

I have made use of both forms of learning. Without the endogenous exploitative, the explorative discoveries (though fascinating) are not placed into a context that allows the viewer to receive. However, too much of the exploitative mode closes down possibilities and assumes unchallenging outcomes. The way I have worked with this within my practice is to have the explorative first and then the exploitive focussed decision-making bringing the work to fruition. I also posit that not only can it be a method for making but be a reason to make and a possible frame for practice. It could be used in a way to think about materials and concepts so that the project can explore seemingly random combinations of thoughts, materials and selection of spaces. The notion of the exploitative will come into its own with the way I choose to deal with space, as I will discuss later in relation to *emptiness*[2] and YES (Your Engagement Sequence).



On the next page **Harriet Stockman**  
*Reflection Circle*, 2012  
plaster of paris

Top to bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
Video stills, *Drawing experience*, *Reflection Circle*, 2012  
plaster of paris, cattle, car

### ***Reflection Circle 2012***

This work was created from two modes of making and lots of explorative play being acted out between those modes. One mode was of casting; the other was using the car as a vehicle to make works. I put the two together and played, 'what if?'. What if I used the car to draw in space, what if I drew with chalk (which became plaster) behind the car and continued exploring these possibilities? Logic told me that dragging plaster wouldn't work. I played in the explorative manner not only in the act of drawing on the road, but also through my engagement with the use of the large network of roads. The exploitative play came once the drawing device had been finalised and the network of roads had been narrowed to local locations. *Reflection Circle 2012* was an ephemeral act of drawing in a moment in time. The photograph exhibited captured the trace of plaster marks left on the ground made through a journey of repetitive navigation. The circular line established within a previously empty car park a delineated space of something, of emptiness within the emptiness. It was fleeting in its existence, removed from its locale by rain and wind and time – leaving us this moment in which to experience it.



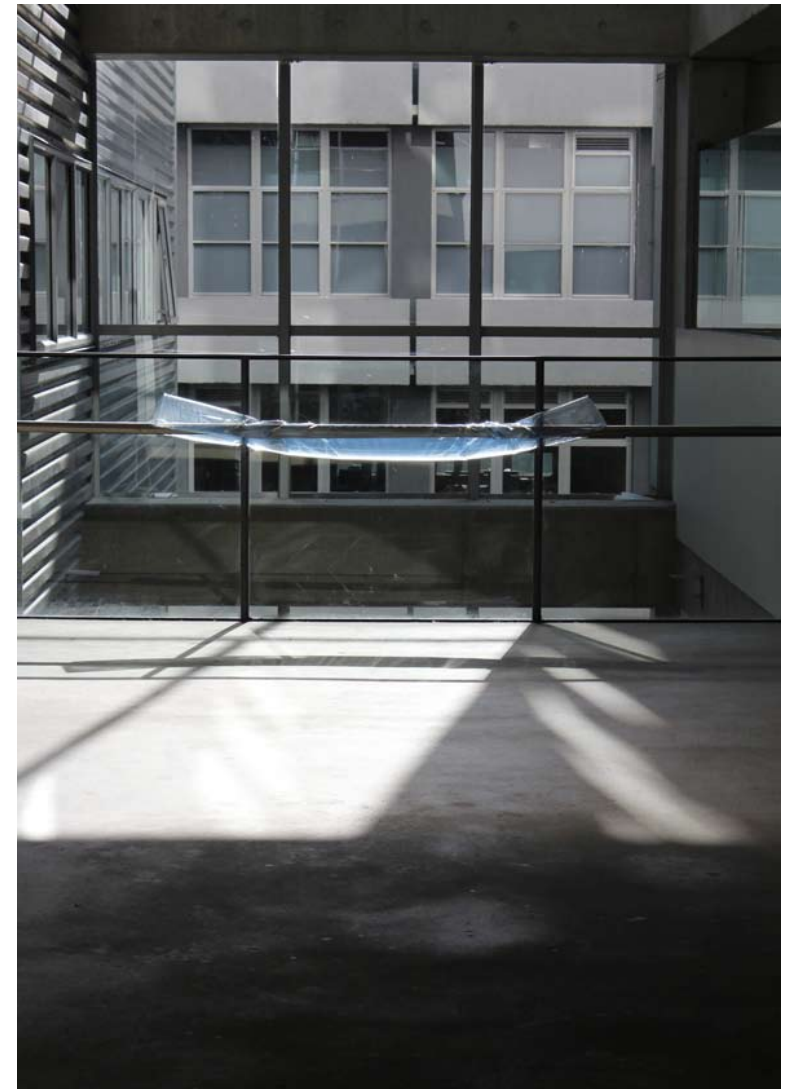






## emptiness[2]

Benedikt's *emptiness[2]* is a concept that I have continually attempted to use in a two-fold manner. I have used it primarily as a way to seduce the viewer/participant into the space and as a layering of a kind of mnemonic to re-know a known. *emptiness[2]* uses the Japanese concept of *Ma*. *Ma* is the concept of absence and the in-between. It does not privilege the tangible. It is also referred to in relation to time. In Japanese belief there is not a distinction between space and time. *Ma* essentially refers to an 'interval' between two (or more) spatial or temporal things and events. Thus it is not only used in compounds to suggest measurement, but carries meanings such as gap, opening, space between, time between, etc. It has been described as "when a child's swing reaches the point of neither rising nor falling and is momentarily weightless" (Benedikt, 1988). "Benedikt's *emptiness[2]* is both *Ma* and something else. That being, the 'draw' of a good fireplace or the pull of an empty room enticing us to enter and dwell, and when we see something incomplete and the chance for continuation, there is *emptiness[2]*" (Benedikt, 1988). I have utilised these concepts of emptiness within the spaces I interact to heighten or reveal a sense of calm or undisturbed reality. In reality I will have just applied shifts to the architecture or objects within. This occurs through creating simulacra or follies in the form of material or object intervention with similar forms, tonal values and material to that found in the space they are in. I am continually teasing this out further through conceptual, spatial and material means.



Top to bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience Test Space*, 2012  
plaster of paris

On the next two pages, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, Test Space*, 2012

### ***Drawing experience Test Space 2012***

Spaces and objects and their relationships are the core of the work I am making- allowing other ideas to circle and arise engaging the explorative. Leading from my previous enjoyment with casting and plaster in the *Reflection Circle 2012* works and looking at the ground's horizontal plane as a place to work, I used the next space that provoked me. This work *Drawing experience, Test Space* developed distinct modes and, indeed, moods. When it was full of people, the cracking of the tiles drew people in and engaged them — and when it was empty the entropy of the surface, the light across it, the silence, the trace of previous activity, became a pause.









## YES (Your Engagement Sequence)

In the use of the physical space I am attempting to create the gaps and silences that allow the viewer to re-know what you already know and for the YES your engagement sequence awareness to seep in. Artist Olafur Eliasson argues that...

*"YES attunes attention to time movement and changeability. It makes relative what is often considered to be true. Whenever a so-called truthful statement is made, you have to add YES in order to relate to, see through and make use of the statement. By regarding YES (Your Engagement Sequence) as a central element of our perceptions you can negotiate the governing dogma of timelessness and static object-hood, thus emphasizing your responsibility for the configuration of the concrete situation."*

He goes on to say,

*"If we accept and implement the relativity of the so-called truth by using YES, a general sense of responsibility in our relationship to our surroundings may be achieved. In other words, engagement has consequences and these entail a heightened sense of responsibility."*  
(Eliasson, 2009).

I install configured objects and materials in a space, but the actual work only realizes wholeness when experienced and viewed having the YES element added. The initial encounter with the installation puts this process in motion for the viewer/participant. Works are not only viewed in time, but the actual



work exists only in the becoming until this element YES is added and then with every viewer its completed form changes. In placing importance on the YES aspect formalizes an approach to life in general and making work. The acknowledging of the individual's responsibility and own truth completing a work allows for multiplicity in the voice of the work - and no concrete truth to its meaning. Its truth becomes what you know it to be.

### Knowing what you know

The concept of the familiar or in this context 'knowing what you know' is derived from an essay written by artist John Ward Knox titled, *Things You Didn't Know You Were Already Enjoying* (Ward Knox, 2008, para. 1). This paragraph from his essay resonates with a way of functioning in the world:

*Recently I was listening to music, music I had once enjoyed a great deal, but had since neglected. At one point of my life I would have known all of the lyrics, but now everything was vague. As I listened, I knew that I knew the songs already, but couldn't make them out ahead of time, so was always suspecting what was to come next, a sort of slow burning, exciting anxiety which is like flirting, or waking up from a good sleep.*

Whether this is a fleeting experience or if you live in this half remembered world on a continual basis, re-contextualizing it and accepting it in Ward Knox's manner of being, as *a sort of slow burning awareness, exciting anxiety*, and a waking up slowly, as opposed to being anxious about forgetting is



quite liberating. A space emerges for re-understanding or a new understanding of how the material or object or space functions.

Ward Knox's approach is built around a faded memory, a knowing that is no longer in your grasp, but its trace remains in the slow burning awakening or familiar anxiety applied to objects and space. Another way of negotiating knowing what you know is to use Roberts Fritz's idea of successful creators being not the people with the answers, but those that have an inclination to 'unknow'. (Fritz, 1991). Fritz suggests that instead of filling space with speculation about what it is and presumption of understanding if you:

*"Practice observing reality objectively. Avoid attempting to fill spaces with theory speculation or plausible conjecture."*

And as a maker if you ask the questions,

*"What do I know and what do I not know that I might need to know? Do I need to gather more information, test my assumptions, reorganise my plans?..."*

He goes on to say that,

*"...it may be an uncomfortable place to reside in as there will be unresolved tensions and loose ends" and "reality is an acquired taste, but it is the best foundation upon which to base your creative process. All else might be quicksand". (Fritz, 1991, p. 64).*

In Fritz's approach, the engagement with the unknown can be partially answered through the act of making; however a space for the unresolved still resides and the viewer can inhabit this.



Harriet Stockman  
(installation view) *Ait, white 2013*  
dicot weed, soil, ceramic  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, April, 2013, Auckland  
(Signe Rose works in left and foreground)

### ***Ait, white, 2013***

This work was not immediately visible when entering the gallery space. As you moved past a video work on a chair, there was a white, hand-thrown, luncheon-sized plate on the floor with a fresh green dicot weed growing up through a hole in the plate's otherwise pristine surface. There was some dark soil visible in the hole. The plate is high gloss white and reflects light and shadow on its surface. Below these reflections are runs of glaze, all running in one direction to the edge of the plate. Below the runs, the circular marks of the wheel throwing are also just visible. When viewed from a distance the warped lift of one side of the plate is very noticeable.

*Ait, white 2013* has a pathetic melancholic quality. It appears as a tiny island on the floor with a young weed attempting to grow from its body. Yet while it is pathetic and very easily overlooked and sometimes stood on, especially when the room is crowded with people, it has a robustness to it. As plates go, *Ait, white 2013* is quite clunky and chunky in its thickness. White glaze of this nature is normally attributed to finer boned china or if the glaze is used on hand thrown work it generally is altered further with painted or dropped marks on its surface.





Harriet Stockman  
*Ait, white 2013*  
dicot weed, soil, ceramic  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, April, 2013, Auckland

So while there is a sense of the 'every' plate, this is subverted in its glazes relationship to a slightly ungainly handmade form.

Plates don't normally have holes with dirt in them and so this hole reads as deliberate. The weed may have made its way into the hole on its own, but if the plate has been treated as a typical plate then this is unlikely.

While this reads very much as a plate it is also not a plate, but perhaps an island of pathetic-ness or sadness, or maybe hope, with the weed pushing up against the odds. The placement on the floor shifts the plate's normal purpose of being eaten from, questioning its function further. Aerial perspectives of viewing from the standing position augment the of viewing of 'Ait' as a landform as opposed to being a plate and conversely adds to the vulnerability of the plate on the floor.



## Why Awkward

*Cheese is awkward or so my 90-year-old father-in-law says.*

*Why? I asked him, the other day, when we were discussing this exegesis.*

*"Well you slice a bit off the block and it sticks to your knife.*

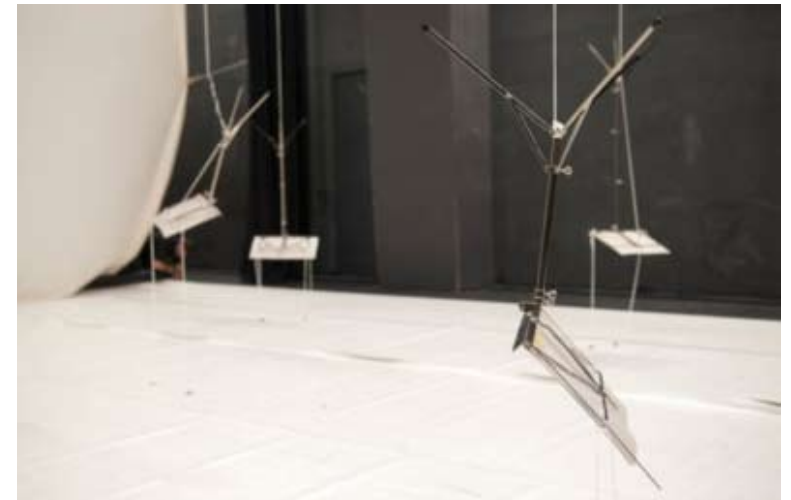
*You carefully move the knife from the block to the plate and get ready to deposit the slice of cheese onto the plate. It won't budge, it's stuck to the knife, you shake the knife and it still won't budge". (How he gets it off the knife he didn't divulge). "So then, in the next attempt you decide to bypass the plate and go straight to the bread you are intending to put the cheese on, and, as the knife passes over the plate towards the bread, the cheese drops onto the plate and never makes it to the bread. That's why cheese is awkward." (R.Swannack, personal communication, July 20, 2013)*

This conversation is a good analogy for the thinking around 'awkward' that I use when creating works. It speaks to social etiquettes and to inept handling and application of material — and to a clumsiness that in the end is accepted. I view this as a low grade kind of awkward. In using the term, 'low grade' I mean, reduced in degree or intensity as opposed to low quality.



The awkward is more commonly related to social constructs and situations and often to performance and objects that tend to be quite bodily in nature. Artist Alicia Frankcovich's primary practice is centred on performance events using the body. The body is often pushed to its extreme reflecting in part her previous role as a gymnast. The residue from these performances is left on display and within them the traces of strained action.

The work *Floor Resistance*, 2011 at Hebbel Am Ufer, HAU 3. utilised a white mat, which resembled a kind of martial art stage. Both the audience and performers sat on or performed on the mat. Chairs spread off the stage, and the main group of seats at ground level was roped off. A series of acts were performed, which included a quintet playing string instruments whilst lying down and moving on the floor. The performers also read from musical scores, which were attached to music stands hanging upside down from the ceiling. A jumping sculpture in the arena interacted in close proximity to the viewers. A performer made movements in relation to the kinetic sculpture. The sculptures jumped maniacally, repetitively, or apathetically (Rodrigues, 2011).



As part of the work Frankcovich also performed a rutting type of move, *Bisons*, that involved her pushing against an audience member until one of them surrendered. Socially it is unacceptable to push a female down or tussle publicly and as the opponent adhered to these social etiquettes Frankcovich regularly won; a sometimes-humiliating experience for less than willing participants in this performance, often only participating due to random selection and social conventions that deem we should, if we are attending such an event. Frankcovich combines both the explicit, in the performance, and the low grade awkward, in the debris or the objects left behind. I am interested in Frankcovich's pushing of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour or misbehaviour and the awkwardness this produces – in this project I have attempted to use awkward in relation to ideas of inept and clumsy applications of materials, processes and spaces.

## Awkward and Intention

*Awkward* has a communal sense of familiarity.

The definition of awkward is more easily defined by understanding what it is not. The opposite of awkward is straightforward, cooperative, compact, graceful, and comfortable. "Awkward comes from Old Norse *awk*, "perverse" and *ward*, "in the direction of", i.e. "turned back upon itself". Its meaning also emerges in the use of materials and placement, "...not appropriate in application; defective..." (Awkward, n.d). Awkward can create a way of



being that makes one open to both the social and physical world, and although this awkward understanding is actually familiar to lots of people it isn't necessarily divulged, or even acknowledged, or understood, by them. So therefore objects and spaces that carry this awkwardness and ambiguity can be at once uncertain and familiar. I do not view the awkward as a primary strategy of the project, but as only a part of a conversation that acknowledges the idea of a way of understanding and re-knowing what you know. By using a low grade type of awkward as described earlier and applying this awkward to material or process, subverts the familiar or known slightly and opens up a space to experience the work.

### **Casting as everyday process**

Casting or moulding is an everyday process; your body indentation left in sheets as you get out of bed, pushing yourself into clothes that fit and mould to your body — each material that touches the other leaves a cast or impression. Some are fleeting, others more permanent. Think of a cake baked into folds of baking paper or fitting tightly into the round of a tin. There is instant gratification when pulling a facsimile of an object made in another material out of a mould. A simple understanding of casting in traditional sculptural terms is to give a shape to a substance, by pouring liquid form into a mould and then it letting harden. This project uses the slippage around this definition of casting to explore knowing what you think you know within given exhibiting and installation spaces.





Top left and right and bottom , **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, collapsible casting attempt , 2012*  
ice, found ceramic,

Bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, collapsible casting attempt , 2012*  
ice, found ceramic

The process of casting is crucial as a strategy for the realisation of this project. It has historical ties in sculptural practice, is intrinsic to architecture and its historic and contemporary use as a process through which to make objects comfortably recognisable. Tied to the act of casting is the selection of materials, which again have an embedded expectation in regard to their final forms once they have completed the applied casting process. Materials utilised in this project are generally classic sculptural materials with a varied and rich history attached to them. Plaster, clay, plastic, heat and water. As a maker, I also have a long understanding of working with them as a potter. In this project, using low grade awkward as a strategy, I have attempted to push them just beyond their suited purpose. The interruption to both material and process is again a considered strategy to provide a sense of tension.

### ***Slow slump cast***

This work is stretching the notion of the cast and casting to its limit, as there is no obvious casting language evident. It is the result of wanting to use water in its continually shifting state to speak about the extended moment of collapse (which I will discuss later). I had been using casts of ice as moulds or support to hold objects or material either on, apart ,or within and then to explore the collapse, either from under or around them. Its translucent property gives the viewer/participant a window into the working of mechanics within and around the mould. It exposes the direct relationship between the mould and the cast.



On the next page, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Slow slump cast*, 2013 (detail)  
polyethylene plastic, water

Top left and right, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, slow slump cast*, 2013  
polyethylene plastic, water

Bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Slow slump cast*, 2013  
polyethylene plastic, water

Ice and melted ice, water, finds its way to the lowest point as soon as it can, then it spreads and disperses through the space potentially corrupting other things in its surroundings. While I like this very immediate and direct way of connecting site and object, practicality demanded that I needed to contain the water (both mould and material) in another mould. This resulted in a mould of a mould of a mould. Malleable clear polyethylene plastic formed into cylinder/pipe moulds contained the water (this was achieved through yet another metal mould and electrostatic welding). Over time the light and heat of the day affect the internal cast material (the water) of *Slow slump cast* causing it to evaporate and cling to the internal surface of the plastic and again slide back into the main pool of material, only to repeat this process again and again throughout its life time.

*Slow slump cast* drapes and folds itself onto and into the space of the rail (host mould) it inhabits and at any moment it could slide and ooze off its support to flop to the ground. The collapse is a gentle harmless one. The plastic is clear with a slight tinge of blue (the water reacts with its internal surface) and you can see and almost feel the connection between the two, plastic mould and host mould. Once removed from the rail, the cast returns to its floppy state only to take on the form of the next support that holds it.









## Host moulds and constructed moulds

The moulds I use in this project range from the actual architecture of a space I am exhibiting in, to constructed moulds. They are thought about in two categories, host moulds and constructed moulds. Host moulds are often the wall, floor, corner ceiling, architrave, etc. Moulds I have constructed have ranged from cottles<sup>1</sup> to form further walls or skins to smaller hand-thrown or found objects. These constructed moulds are most often made to produce repeated objects, which can serve as foils or *placeholders*<sup>2</sup> to the other potential readings of the works installed. The host moulds are used to think more directly about the space, and gesture within that space.

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<sup>1</sup> Cottle is a ceramic related term that applies to the band or outer wall containing the mould material. Traditionally it was clay, but now refers to any materials used, e.g. wood, or flexible materials such as lino, waterproof paper and clay. It operates like a flask in metal casting.

<sup>2</sup> *Placeholder* is a name I give to objects in the installation that tend to sit autonomously in their appearance and role, but in fact have relevance either conceptually or aesthetically to other objects in the space. The combined association of the placeholder and other objects allow a reading of a work to open further into other fields of thought.



## Casting and scale and the hand

Artist Ann Hamilton in her 2011 lecture at National Gallery of Art, Washington, USA, asks, "What does it mean to make by hand in the age of technology? What is most important in an age of amplification? How important is the reach of touch and the immediate surrounds?" (Hamilton, 2011). She discusses the scale of the hand in relation to the scale of the space in which she is making, and the notion of the individual gesture being repeated and accentuated to fit the scale of that space. These questions are of value when thinking about the processes undertaken in the construction and making of work within this project. They bring to the dialogue not only the action of making, but also a way of receiving the work into the immediate space and therefore directly relating to the senses of the viewer/participants.

The hand in my practice makes the direct gesture within the work. It is a tool that translates the body's movement into the material and space, but also it is the receiver and unconscious assimilator of information. Touch instigates an osmotic process of collecting and the responding creating a rhythm of work where each action becomes altered through the haptic information the hand gathers.



## Making present and absence

Using a structure that is the actual space you are exhibiting in allows for large-scale casts and provides an environment to submerge the viewer/participant into, allowing for experience to occur prior to cognition. Synonymous with this type of casting practice is British artist Rachael Whiteread. *Damon Hyldreth* discusses her extensive casting practice, as casting an absence or a memory and “affirms a connection to the world of objects and space” (Hyldreth, n.d. , para. 13 ) whereas I am more interested in revealing or acknowledging a presence or understanding within the object or space. Through the act of casting my works also acknowledge a memory or absence with the intention of revealing an understanding of the object or space. Whiteread often makes use of very large scale that demand physical negotiation or response from the viewer/participant. My works inhabit a smaller scale and the way I situate them in the site makes use of the vertical and horizontal planes, so to be viewed fully requires specific body movements of the viewer participant.

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Top, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, drawing warmth*, 2013  
clay, wooden cottle, electrical element

Top and bottom right, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Drawing experience, drawing warmth*, 2013  
clay, wooden cottle, electrical element

Traditionally casting produces an exact replica of the original form that is being cast, resulting in detachment and minimal sense of the maker. Scale plays a part in subverting this casting norm when it is coupled with the way in which the material being cast is applied. In a small-scale mould, as in a plate the liquid clay is poured into an enclosed two-piece mould and the result whilst still hand made is more likely to be truer to the original as there is less risk to exposure of the outer variations that can occur. For example, cast is less likely to warp as it hardens, as the forces upon it are smaller.

When you increase the scale of the mould, especially in the case of the host mould, the outside variants and forces are more accentuated and affect the resulting cast. My hand is used to shovel (plaster) or work (clay) material handful by handful into the mould. The moulds, due to their large size have been open on one side and therefore the side of the cast that eventuates directly from the host is true to its original in form; the other side of the same cast leaves the gesture of the artist's hand captured in a hardened state as the material has dried, exposing the action present within the work. A tired hand does not push the plaster as far in a stroke as does a fresh hand. A fresh hand can also be lighter in movement than a tired hand — this gives the resulting object a mash up of minimalism's detachment and human expression re-affirming a closer connection with the viewer/participant.



### ***Outside in 2013***

In the space at RM gallery there had been two works presented immediately prior that had occupied the wall where *Outside-in 2013* was installed. These were a clock by Boris Dornbusch, placed inside the wall cavity and still there ticking really slowly as the battery ran down and a small painting by Ian Jervis that drew you right up to the wall to receive its sumptuous surface. The wall itself was movable and pushed right back to the front edges of the gallery space so that upon entering the gallery you almost didn't notice *Outside in 2013*. Lighting was such that this side of the space was left without immediate artificial light and tended to be bypassed in the initial encountering of the space.

The casting process was one of using a host support (the wall) and an introduced support (a cottle) whose size was directly related to the height of my knees. The intention with the width was to start with the idea of comfortable personal space and narrow it so that it was slightly awkward. The overall height was determined by the gesture of an easy upward sweep of my hand through the plaster. Relationship to the corner was determined by the previous occupation of the site (the clock mark on the wall) and a width left between *Outside in 2013* and the corner of the wall that made it 'just okay' to move into but not quite. Therefore the viewing was constrained to the front or the left side of the work.



Top and bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Outside in 2013*  
plaster of paris  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, April, 2013, Auckland

Using the body, arm and hand, directly working onto the host support and the introduced support, the plaster is pushed into surfaces, bucket load by bucket load until the site is plastered with a thick self-supporting skin. The expanse of plaster across a large plane causes the plane of skin to pull away from its support, arching its back almost to the point of breaking. The mark of the gesture is very evident on the surface and each movement is visible. The skin then rolls across the floor and up into an almost shelf-box-mini wall-drawer at about knee height with a clean crisp formal surface (much like a traditional plaster wall), facing outwards, with small imperfections, such as holes left by air bubbles in the casting process. This surface operates in contradiction to the expanse of plaster skin up the wall. It is smooth like gib-board and appears to sit on the floor as an independent object — it is more contained and sturdy than the sweep up the wall — and yet they are one in the same — actions and materials executed in the same timeframe.

It felt like this was a 'slow to receive' work, you could almost miss it in the space, as at first glance it seemed simple, a plaster block and wall skin. The connection between these two components is awkward. You can't quite understand them with viewing ease. An intimate viewing occurs only with your body side on to the wall, and very close to the wall. This viewing position reveals that the almost shelf-box-mini wall-drawer is in fact not solid as first thought, but is also a skin-like structure standing in the space, free of any support other than that of its structural makeup, the corner, where three



Over the page, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Outside in 2013 (installation view)*  
plaster of paris  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, April, 2013, Auckland  
(Signe Rose work in right foreground)

**Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Outside in 2013*  
plaster of paris  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, April, 2013, Auckland

of the planes of plaster meet. The use of monotone materials belonging to traditional architectural coverings creates a subtlety and yet it's not subtle. The work is rough and slightly haphazard in its appearance; there is both precision and inaccuracy in its execution. The work has ungainliness, yet it also has a tight correlation with the gallery's spatial sensibilities. There is a gentleness of unfolding and revealing. The most alluring aspect for the viewer is the tension between the plaster and the wall; its ability to hang suctioned onto the wall at the top and bow out through the middle; its fragility on the edge implicating the potential for the paper thin plaster skin to snap. This draws the viewer into the work. The other understandings and observations tend to follow.









## Approach to site

The works in this project predominantly arise from the spaces in which they are going to exist. The space's history, architecture and use all infiltrate my works and even if the works do not develop out of a site the install of pieces into the site is as important an element as the materials and forms. Gillian McLver points out that "site responsive work create fresh interventions into "everyday life" while at the same time universalising through art the concerns that are, at their base, bound in human time and space. ... So a consciousness not only of time, but of change or flux is at the very foundation of this type of work." (McLver, 2004, para. 7). She sees them as the reintegration of fragments whereas I see them more as a combining of fragments "historical time (the lived experience of the site); material time (the materials used); experiential time (the actual period of the intervention)" to create a new possibility of knowing (McLver, 2004). Flux is an adjunct that filters through all the modes of thinking and making that occur and is especially important when it comes to site.

When approaching a space, artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster looks at its prehistory and asks, "What is missing in the space?" (Morgan, n.d., p. 162) This is an approach she uses predominantly in architectural situations, not in a gallery or outdoor type of space. She has over time developed an interest in space that is read as an in-between space, so the spaces tend not to be

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domestic or smaller enclosed spaces, but spaces that allow for the ability of the participant to move through it. The object/viewer relationship is not the primary relationship. It is the space around the object — objects are infused with atmosphere from the history and scale of the site.

These spaces, as Gonzalez-Foerster points out, tend to be large and have been purpose-built for activities other than exhibition (Morgan, n.d.). This adds another dimension to the installation, raising issues around what is being viewed; an exhibition or something else, a heterotopic kind of space. My project has developed a similar engagement with space, as it has evolved over the last year. The sites I am attracted to are not the classic white cube gallery spaces<sup>1</sup>. This engages with the idea that the object is not immediately visible to the viewer and yet is often right in front of them in a peripheral sense, which is discovered only when moving through the space.



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<sup>1</sup> Whilst I have exhibited in spaces that nod to conventional gallery spaces in that they acknowledge attributes of the white cube, they would not be considered classically conventional, for example unpolished concrete floors with holes in them, dual levels, concrete walls and lino floors. These choices are also influenced by my association with Parlour, an artist run group interested in creating alternative spaces and places in which to participate and think about art. Parlour has used gardens, living rooms, other artist run spaces, vehicles, markets, etc.

On the next two pages **Harriet Stockman**  
*Outside in 2012*  
plaster of paris  
AD12, AUT University, 2012, Auckland

**Harriet Stockman**  
*Outside in 2012*  
plaster of paris  
AD12, AUT University, 2012, Auckland

***Outside in wall 2012, Drawing experience column,  
Drawing experience skirting, Drawing experience crack and  
Lack of good sense***

*Outside in wall 2012* presented for AD12, was a large 3m x 2.6m self supporting Plaster of Paris wall that mimicked the moveable walls in the studio space in which it was exhibited. Although, there was only one entry point into the space, *Outside in wall 2012* was intended to be 'kind of peripheral' in its immediate experiencing. This did occur even though it was positioned directly in front of you when you entered the room. The height of ceiling, the space around the work, the fact that it mimicked the other moveable walls that held the other artists works being exhibited and divided the space, all helped in the subterfuge. As you drew closer to *Outside in wall 2012* it became apparent that the piece (object) was an artwork, that there were holes in it and that it sat directly on the ground unlike the other walls around it (which were on wheels). You became aware of it's material difference and its apparent fragility (it was paper thin in places). So the work built on the space's current history, revealed through its otherness to the real walls — and the way that you progressed through the space to other exhibited works, which in turn, led you to discover that it wasn't what it appeared to be.









On the next three pages, **Harriet Stockman**

*Drawing experience skirting*, 2012

Olivia Barnes work on the wall

*Drawing experience crack*, 2012 (detail)

reconstituted hand ground plaster of paris

*Transitions*, SPS Gallery III, 2012, Auckland

*Lack of good sense*, 2012

plaster of paris, plastic chair

*The Ineluctable Modality of the Visible*, SPS Gallery III, 2012, Auckland

**Harriet Stockman**

*Drawing experience column*, 2012

reconstituted hand ground plaster of paris

*Transitions*, SPS Gallery III, 2012, Auckland

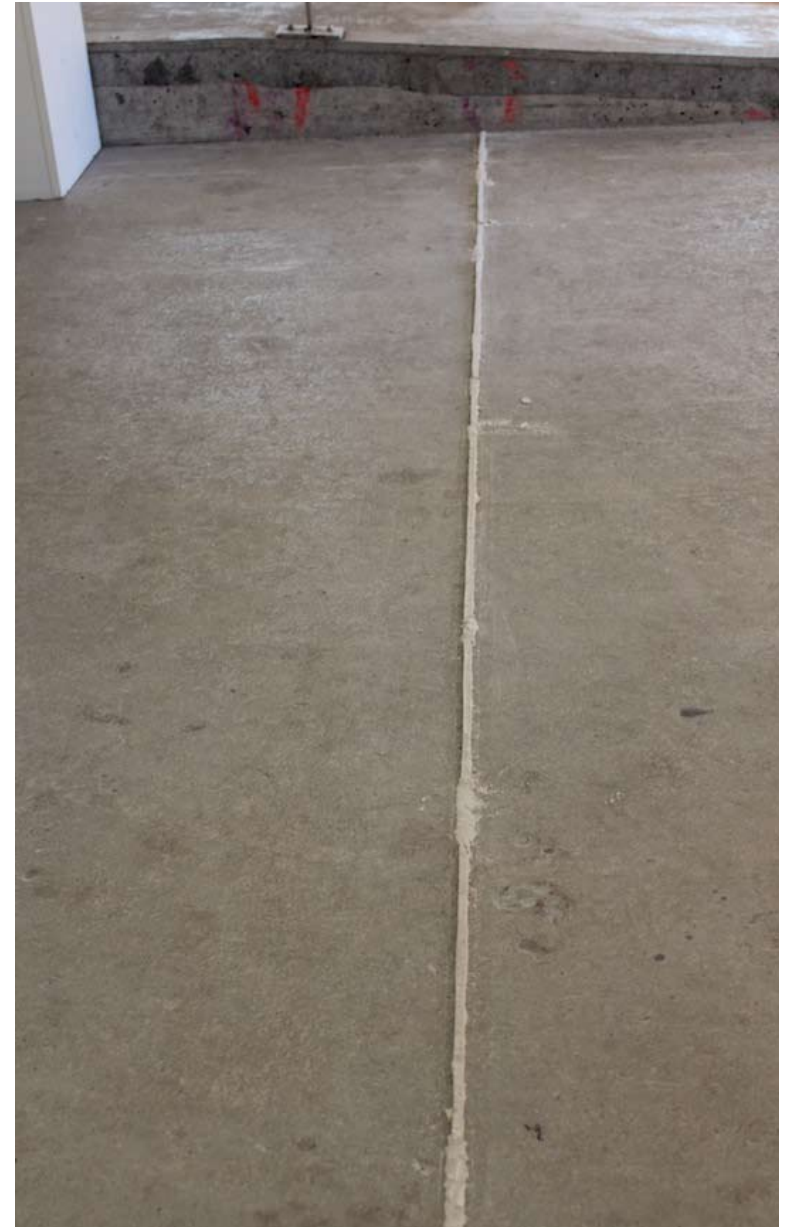
Being 'kind of peripheral' in their immediate experiencing also occurred with *Drawing experience column*, *Drawing experience skirting* and *Drawing experience crack* in SPS Gallery III 2012. These works all required that the viewer, as a participant in the work, must move to fully receive the work. There was an indirect invitation to use this movement to engage directly in the breakdown of the work. They quietly crumbled as the viewer/participant inadvertently knocked them having not been fully aware that they were there.

*Lack of good sense* also shown in SPS Gallery III 2012 was a teetering column of plinth like forms stacked on a flimsy plastic chair. It was regularly overlooked in the initial encounter of the space that it was in, however it did not relate to the architecture directly as the other works had. The objects that made up *Lack of good sense* were cast off site but were installed to semi mimic a feature of the site. Upon noticing the work as the viewer/participant got nearer to it, the potential for collapse was realised and consequentially invoked a haptic reaction.

All of these works responded directly to the architecture and to previous works in the space, establishing an initial camouflage that was disrupted through unintended interactions, which then made the works visible as artworks.











Harriet Stockman  
(installation view) *Indeterminately short but significant*  
polyethylene plastic, clay, condensation  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, April, 2013, Auckland

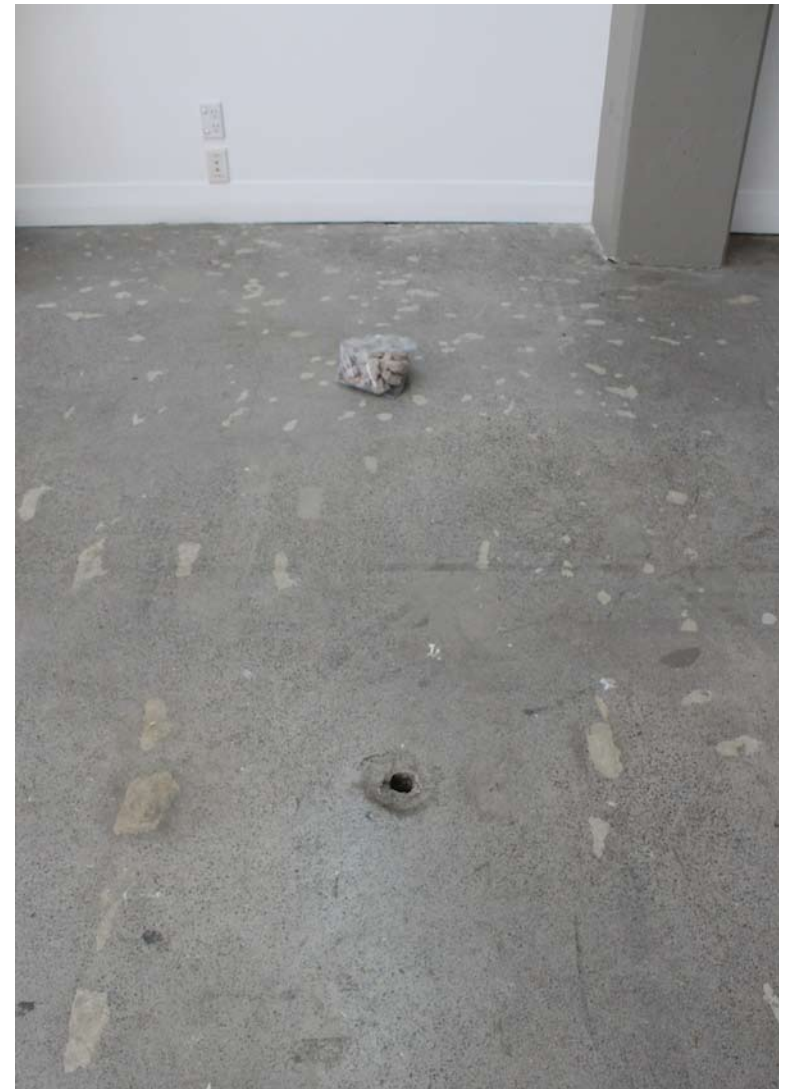
## Object into site

The previous discussions around the works in this project talk to the infiltration or flow of the site into the development of the objects to be installed. I next discuss site and it's relationship to objects that are made autonomously, but when they are introduced to the site they become richer signifiers.

### *Indeterminately short but significant*

*Indeterminately short but significant* sits in the middle of the expanse of a concrete floor mottled with pockmarks of creamy coloured cement filler. There is also a stiff, clear vinyl bag or container about 200mm in diameter. The vinyl container looks like it has been made by hand with the seams around its circumference uneven and over-melted in places. Inside the bag are golf ball sized lumps of white clay slightly oval in shape with deep finger indents on one side and flat on the other. The clay is unfired and wet with a similar creamy-ness to it as the filled pockmarks. There is condensation in patches on the inside of the container/bag. The container/bag is not sealed shut, but the open end is tucked under the clay forms inside so that the weight of the clay holds it closed.

*Indeterminately short but significant* initially was purely a case of introducing material to form and space, just to see what happens. It was a seduction by the wetness of the clay and a 'what if' potential that was a curiosity without structured intent of uncertainty, disquiet or awkwardness.





Top to bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Indeterminately short but significant*  
polyethylene plastic, clay, condensation  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, April, 2013, Auckland

The work became a suspended moment of process, a moment of pause, captured yet continually and slowly changing as it reacts to the temperatures of the day, in its hot house of plastic. The condensation tells us that something dynamic is occurring inside, alluding to a notion of 'mauerfrass', (Jarzombek, n.d.) the exchange of water through an architectural body, normally brick, exposed to temperature change eventuating in a white efflorescence surface.

The floor marks are fillers, perhaps attempts at levelling the floor after a previous purpose for the space has been removed leaving damage. The marks are cream in colour, smooth in texture and about the size of a variety of small balls. The marks are tentative and yet through the sheer number of them, they have quite a dominating presence. The clay in the bag/container has the same provisional quality as the mark, yet there seems to be purpose to their collection in the bag. Are they left from the mark making or floor filling? Are there more holes to be filled?



## Material property versus quality

In *Indeterminately short but significant* there is explicit discussion of material and its relation to object-ness. I have been using casting processes of varying degrees of completeness to explore relationships to do with a material's inherent properties and the notion that these properties can be expressed or suppressed in the completion of an art object. David Pye, a design theorist, argues that we as artists are more interested in the qualities of material and not the properties. He cites, for example, "... the rounded form of a clay pot, formed while the material was damp and pliable, can hardly be said to bring out the brittleness of clay that has been baked in a kiln." (Pye as cited in Ingold, 2011, p. 29). Discussions around materiality, material culture, agency, becoming, ontology, reality and animism all intrigue me and the best way to engage these ideas is to return to working with materials themselves, to work through small windows of understanding. In order to untangle, I chose a single chapter heading from Anthropologist Tim Ingold's book, *Being Alive; Essays on Movement Knowledge and Description* (Ingold, 2011). Chapter two's title *Materials Against Materiality* was used as a very literal mantra or base from which to approach the materials and work for the project. It was simplified further to a single question; 'at what point do the properties of the material give way to qualities of the object?'. Or vice versa. By using varying degrees of material states, cast states, form states, etc. I am playing between material property and quality to attempt to provide a suspended state in between the object and the material.



## Completing the object

Nina Canell who's sculptural practice sits on the "border between 'tangible and intangible' is permeable and constantly shifting. This confounding of stability or what Canell prefers to call the "denial of the finished or finite form"." (Mac Giolla Leith, 2010, p.36) is explicitly evidenced in her work *Perpetuum Mobile* (2400 kg, 2009, which used sound to turn water into vapour that was then solidified by being absorbed into open sacks of cement over the time of the exhibition. Cannell's interest is in the less tangible (wave form, electricity, vapour) as the primary voice occurring in her work; I am more interested in the approach of tangible material and touch leading to the less tangible. Hers might be the denial of a finished form whereas I do not want to deny the finishing of a form, but to leave it open or suspended in certain states to allow the re-knowing to occur.

## Return to the material to get an answer

The maker may approach the material with a concept of outcome; however through the nature of the material's physical make up, the material dictates an action from the maker. For example, clay can be squeezed by hand into a mould to a certain thickness, in a determined amount of time before the clay will dry, crack or collapse in on itself. To work clay into your perceived outcome with ease you must know and understand how to act with it. This knowing is achieved through repeated observation and movement.



Touch the clay in a certain way, evaluate this touch, re-touch, observe and adjust your movements in relation to the clay in the environment around it (air temperature, porosity of the mould, etc.). This sequence of actions allows the clay to tell you, the maker, what to do next. As the maker you may have a plan for the clay, but it also has a say in the plan. After you have spent time with the clay and a given environment you build up a rhythm of understanding. "Rhythmicity," Lefebvre maintained (ibid.: 90) 'implies not just repetition but differences within repetition. Or to put it another way, fluent performance is rhythmic only because imperfections in the system call for continual correction.'" (Ingold, 2011, p. 60).

With practice, "awareness seems to retreat [and] movement flows involuntarily" (Paul Connerton, 1989 as cited in Ingold, p. 61). Ingold argues the opposite occurs and that awareness does not retreat but grows with intensity, with fluency of action. "This is not the awareness of a mind that holds itself aloof from the messy, hands-on business of work. It is rather immanent in practical, perceptual activity, reaching out into its surroundings along multiple pathways of sensory participation." (Ingold, 2011, p. 60).

This way of thinking about perception and movement when making allows me as the maker to be focused in the moments surrounding the making forgetting the larger plan, and on occasions leaving the big picture behind, staying with and using the moments that have occurred along the way. Awkward is often mingled in these unforeseen fortuitous conclusions.



**Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Play experience, throwing pots*, 2013  
clay, water

It is occurring sometimes with infelicitous application of material, often brought about by a movement not previously used. Not always, but more readily the circumstance of the site of making tends to have the greatest influence on this. Pertinent to this influence and going back to my pleasure in the direct integration of object/material and site *Residue of thought* not only in its making, but during its time in exhibition speaks of returning to material and awkwardness.





### ***Residue of thought***

This work was the result of an end of a period of time spent with metres and metres of clear polyethylene plastic and an impulse heat sealer machine, hours of movement and reflection on that movement, and water. The 'what if' was could I make water self support itself in a cylindrical form that stretched to the height of the room it was in. Water made up the majority of the material in the incipient research. Clear polyethylene plastic was viewed as a flexible mould that held the water.

The rhythm of making a length of a cylinder/mould by joining straight edges could look like this; Fold and insert two edges of polyethylene plastic into the impulse heat sealer, line up the edge to the machine, lift right foot, depress machine pedal, clamp polyethylene plastic, wait for light to go off, slide polyethylene plastic through impulse heat sealer, realign polyethylene plastic, depress, clamp, wait, slide, realign, depress, clamp, wait, slide, realign, depress, clamp, wait, slide, realign, and so on. Eventually an integrated and fluid understanding of what was needed by material, tool and maker transpired, that is, until the circle of polyethylene plastic at the base of the cylinder needed to be welded<sup>1</sup> into place.



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<sup>1</sup> Welding may not be the technically correct term for this type of join in plastics, but it is a term often used for joining plastics and how I think of the join.

The curves of the circle were at odds with the machine, rhythm was lost and the 'welds' became awkward and unruly and potentially unreliable. The cylinder/mould no longer had precision in the base causing an uneven contact to the floor. It had taken on a life of its own.

Another rhythm was; fill the mould with water and watch it settle while holding the mould/cylinder upright, let it go, grab it as it began to topple, remove water, and repeat the process until the mould/cylinder remained upright wavering on the brink of collapse, but not realising it. The relationship of the volume of water to the height and circumference of the slouchy mould/cylinder quickly dictated that only a shallow depth of water would stay upright and not collapse. There was an inversion of the balance of polyethylene plastic to water, the plastic took the more dominant volume in the work, however the water's presence still held its own. Time was spent adjusting the right amount of water to reach the brink but not the collapse. I left behind the big picture and embraced the melancholic corollary.

Perfected and shipped to the installation site, a bowed wooden floor in a 100+ year old building on the side of a road in Kohu kohu, Hokianga, with rumbling logging trucks passing by. *Residue of thought* performed for 2 hours as expected before the vibration of people moving within the space caused a mould/cylinder collapse. The water (preciously collected from a neighbor with some supply after the long drought) streamed to the lowest point in the floor and luckily out into the parched ground below. Again it



Over the page, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Residue of thought*, 2013  
polyethylene plastic,  
tank water various sources  
Ching Ming, April 2013,  
Black\_space Gallery, Hokianga

**Harriet Stockman**  
*Residue of thought*, 2013  
polyethylene plastic, tank water various sources  
Ching Ming, April 2013, Black\_space Gallery, Hokianga

was carefully refilled to a slightly lower point and the work performed a further 18 hours before a logging truck rumbled by and a different mould/cylinder collapsed. The precious water levels were lowered further. In this particular time frame, the work deviated from the initially perceived outcome, but instead a work surfaced that spoke just as well if not better to the kaupapa<sup>1</sup> of the space it was exhibited in.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Kaupapa means principles and ideas, which act as a base or foundation for action. A kaupapa is a set of values, principles and plans, which people have agreed on as a foundation for their actions." (Te Ahukaramu, 2012, para. 2).

<sup>2</sup> The Ching Ming Exhibition was held at Blackspace Gallery, Kohukohu, Hokianga and was arranged to coincide with the Ching Ming Festival, April 2013 when approximately 100 people of Chinese descent travelled to the Hokianga to pay respects to iwi and to their Chinese village ancestors. When the SS Ventnor sunk in 1902, off the entrance to the Hokianga Harbour it was carrying the remains of 499 Chinese that were being returned to families in China. Most were old gold miners from the Otago / Greymouth area who had not been able to make enough money for their return passage home. Many of the Chinese bones were washed up on the Hokianga coastline and were interred and cared by the people of Te Roroa and Te Rarawa. Until this visit the dead had not had the traditional offerings normally given to them. The offerings were made at or near the sites where the bones were interred. There were also unveilings of memorial plaques at the marae /sites. The plaques were to thanks to the people of Te Roroa and Te Rarawa. The exhibition looked at ideas of connection, memory and loss (Wong, 2012).







## Collapse and gravity

Collapse and gravity perform an important part in this project. We are bound by rules and structures to operate in relationship to society; conversely we are drawn to sites and situations that offer us the potential of the opposite; as “Collapse therefore offers a tantalizing encounter with disorder, experience of lack of pattern, which may heighten our awareness of the system we inhabit” (University College of London, 2012, para. 4). William Wegman when describing his work *Bad News*, discusses how funny it is to knock things over and that knocking things over is predictable and familiar. He sets about stretching or teasing the point of collapse—the point where he talks about his anxiety being at its greatest and yet familiar. (Wegman, 1971). It is this suspending of the time prior to collapse rather than the actual collapse that intrigues me. Variations of these combinations of ‘suspended collapse’ and gravity play out through all of the works. However the use of gravity is played out more explicitly in *Without Purpose*.





**Harriet Stockman**  
*Without purpose*, 2013  
plaster of paris, clay, polyethylene plastic, water

### ***Without Purpose***

A thin horizontal cottle of wood was nailed to the wall. Using small handfuls of plaster, I carefully cast a linear plaster mould along its surface. Each gesture remained as part of the cast, creating a small tight waveform along a 6m stretch of the wall. The cottle was then removed. Roughly grabbed handfuls of wet white clay decided the volume of material smeared, which were pushed into underside of the plaster cast and directly onto the wall's painted surface. This dictated the depth of form along the horizontal plaster cast.



Top, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Drawing experience, Without purpose*, 2013  
plaster of paris, brown clay, polyethylene plastic, water

Bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Without purpose*, 2013  
plaster of paris, clay, polyethylene plastic, water

Through the nature of clay and its exposure to air, the fact it shrinks and dries out coupled with the suction that happens with its wetness, friction and static friction created a type of 'cold weld'.<sup>1</sup> Over time the potential for this 'weld' to fail under the force of gravity created a tension in the work. The 'weld' may not fail for many years or could fail at any moment. I am not interested in recording the moment of failure or having evidence of the failure necessarily, but in suspending the tension that occurs before gravity wins. This is done using the inherent material qualities and processes associated with these materials. Gravity needs time; the action of gravity does not need completion for the viewer's consideration of the work, however the work grows into itself over a length of time — and this needs contemplation and pause by the viewer.

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<sup>1</sup> This is technically incorrect; it may be ionic charges as opposed to a cold weld, however I like 'cold weld' as a way of thinking about the hold. A cold weld is technically; when rubbed together "... two pieces of flat metal are made progressively smoother, you will reach a point where the resistance to relative movement increases. If you make them very flat and smooth, and remove all surface contaminants in a vacuum, the smooth flat surfaces will actually adhere to each other, making what is called a "cold weld"." (Nave, n.d. para.1)..



In *Without Purpose* there was a purposeful twist of the roles of mould and cast and space in which the work was installed.<sup>1</sup> Making the cottle as thin as possible to hold the plaster mould was an attempt to acknowledge the wall as a vertical surface and play up tension.<sup>2</sup> Having done this, I was concerned that the whole work would read pictorially and not integrate into the foyer space. In an attempt to shift the pictorial landscape reading, another cast of clay was made. It was low and circular, flat and horizontal. The same rough grabbed handfuls of clay were smeared, and this time, dragged up over a wobbly moving yet relatively horizontal host form, resulting in a manhole sized gestural circle on the foyer floor. This circle was centred in front of the empty wall space where the horizontal cast was not.

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<sup>1</sup> *Without Purpose* was discussed in a critique as having a correlation to Bruce Nauman's *Space Under My Hand When I Write My Name*, 1966 (Destroyed), not only in its formal aesthetic, but also in relation to the gesture as the mark of maker. "The relationship between hand and name forms the central theme of a whole series of works by Bruce Nauman. Word, action and object are linked via the artist's signature. Instead of exploring the difference between name and work, Nauman merges the two aspects into one." (Daniels, Ormand, 1996, para. 25).

I had no interest in the signature, but can draw a relationship with trace of action and object. I am more interested in the works from the same time frame in Naumans practice that were concerned with a "congealing of space" (Krauss, 1996, para. 3) or a parodying "of the minimalist obsession with the formal organization of space." (Morgan, 2002, p. 120) such as *Shelf Sinking into the Wall with Copper-Painted Plaster Casts of the Spaces Underneath* (1966) and *Platform Made up of the Space between Two Rectilinear Boxes on the Floor* (1966). I see these two works as providing a historical context that helps to inform my thinking regards gravity, collapse and space or site.

<sup>2</sup> I didn't want a shelf reading.



**Over the page Harriet Stockman**

*Without purpose*, 2013

plaster of paris, clay,  
polyethylene plastic, water

**Harriet Stockman**

(detail) *Without purpose*, 2013

plaster of paris, clay, polyethylene plastic, water

I had anticipated the drying shrinking process of the clay would form cracks along the surface of the cast and that the edges of the cast would remain 'welded' to the floor. Foolishly I hadn't taken into account the porous nature of the concrete, so the weld actually separated and the clay cast formed a scab-like surface pulling up and away from the floor in an anti-gravity fashion — and hovered slightly, barely exposing the wobbly host mould of plastic and water beneath.

This opposite reaction of material and process acted to create a question of relationship between the object on the wall and the floor, and drew attention to the space between these objects. The work talked to the temporal potential and gravity, however the intent to have an area of tension and activity that radiates out to the edges of the space and employ the architectural features not directly surrounding the objects, such as the height of the railings at either end of the space, failed. The concrete pillars and the egress way voids framed the objects and contained them, breaking their integration into the space beyond.









## Conclusion — pausing before moving forward

The approaches utilised to develop this project were introduced as an entanglement of lines or working methods that allowed for reflexive discoveries in regards to my making. This has been focused on developing sites where the viewer/participant was provided with the space and suspended moments to 're know' their existing knowledge. Working with a gentle re-aligning and re-discovery, I have played with and varied notions of material and object roles of completeness, material in relationship to architecture, casting as process or object, casting and architecture, awkward and suspending the moment of collapse, site and object relationships and the hand's role in making and experience of installation.

Ingold's concept of 'meshwork' envisions a richer way of thinking about the entangled lines of my practice. Meshwork describes our outward extension of growth and movement, which is predicated on the ingestion of the world that surrounds us, "an atmosphere of light, sound and feeling." (Ingold, 2012, para. 2). Ingold argues that we are "alternately both the extension out of ourselves of movement/growth and the internalizing of our sensual reading of the world and importantly 'that' each is a prerequisite for the other... Indeed their rhythmic alteration is fundamental for animate life." (Ingold, 2012). It feels fitting to collect all of the threads of entangled lines and methods the project has developed and think about them coming together through this meshwork—and in turn (my) installations become absorbed into the



Harriet Stockman

*Drawing experience, drawing warmth*, 2013  
plaster of paris, wooden cottle, electrical element,  
polyethylene plastic, yellow masking tape

invading lines of sensual information for viewer/participant to interpret, re-know and then become part of their outward lines of growth and movement.

The 'play' I have been engaging in leading up to the final installation has involved thinking about heat/warmth as a drawing tool. Subtleties of heat have been present throughout my processes bubbling away quietly as an aside. Clay absorbs warmth in an endothermic fashion causing evaporation of the water from its body (as in *Ait, white 2013* and *Without purpose*) to dry and transform from wet and malleable to hard and fragile, yet unyielding. Water also absorbs energy (heat) to overcome molecular bonds that hold it together as a liquid to become vapor. An environment can only contain so much vapor before the proportion of gas must shift back to liquid again (as in *indeterminately short but significant* and *Slow slump cast*), or in the exothermic reaction and release of heat when mixing the plaster (as in *Outside in 2012*, *Outside in 2013*). With the introduction of lengths of electrical elements to provide a direct heat source, the responding forms have been long and vertical. It is not my intention to make heat a primary discussion for the final installation, but to use it as a tool to expand the sensorial experience of the installation.

At this juncture the rhythm translated through the hand and material to the body and mind is now a comfortable one; it is time to move this comfort,



**Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Play experience, drawing warmth*, 2013  
red clay, electrical elements

to shift this 'knowing' on. The introduction of the final installation space will determine to a large degree which way to move. However, sitting at a point without a specified site has allowed a pause in the entanglement to review materials, processes and object forms.

Following Images

**Moving the knowing on, waiting for site, Play Experiences and Drawing experiences**



Below and Left, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, drawing warmth*, 2013  
plaster of paris, wooden cottle, electrical element,  
polyethylene plastic, yellow masking tape, condensation water



**Harriet Stockman**

*Play experience, slump mould attempt, 2013*  
plaster of paris, polyethylene plastic, water

Over the page, **Harriet Stockman**

*Drawing experience, corner, 2012*  
reconstituted hand ground plaster of paris







Left, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, skinny corners, self supporting*, 2013  
plaster of paris

Below, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Play experience, skinny corners, self supporting*, 2013  
plaster of paris



Studio shot, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, drawing warmth, 2013*  
*Play experience, throwing pots, fallen, ordered, 2013*  
*Play experience, throwing pots, wall, 2013*  
red clay, plaster of paris, wooden cottle, electrical element,  
polyethylene plastic, yellow masking tape, condensation, water



Left and below, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, throwing clods, 2013*  
clay, water

Over the page, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, throwing pots, 2013*  
red clay, water











**Previous page, Harriet Stockman**

*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts  
Graduating Exhibition 2013*

Object: *Drawing heat*, 2013

plaster, electrical elements, hdf cottle

Object: *Untitled*, 2013, Dacron, plaster

Object: *Outside in wall sweep* 2013, plaster

Object: *Lack of good sense* 2013, red clay

Object: *Slow slump cast*, rail, polyethylene plastic, water

Installation view, **Harriet Stockman**

Object: *Drawing heat*, 2013

Object: *Untitled*, 2013

Object: *Outside in wall sweep* 2013

## **Final installation**

***Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts Graduating Exhibition 2013***

### **Concluding comments**

The final installation was a continuation of the process of placing and making objects that create a direct conversation with the space that they inhabit. My allocated exhibition space within St Paul Street Gallery was a rectangle that had ranch sliders with windows down the short side of the rectangle and on the long side there was a white wall. The five metre high concrete ceilings and a concrete column were also dominant features of the space, as well as the long entrance to the space, which was also a thoroughfare into the rest of the gallery. In my search to draw out a relationship with the space to focus the final installation on I thought about the fact that it is a space designed by Jazmax specifically for art and design purposes. I am not convinced of the success of the design however I have childhood memories of Jazmax as my father worked there and was interested in making a link to them. Accordingly, I chose to respond to aspects of the architecture itself.

Whilst the work was to be examined as autonomous in the space the relationship to the others works, from my fellow student-colleagues, exhibited alongside was an important consideration within the objects I chose to install. I wanted to attempt to maintain the notion of Benedikt's emptiness [2] within my work in a space that was busy with others objects, movement and sound. The monochromatic nature of the selected objects along with their lack of fast movement established a sense of stillness. The initial brief experience of the works suggests potential and contain pause. However the ability to return to view the exhibition intermittently, over a



**Over the next three pages, Harriet Stockman**

*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*

*Graduating Exhibition 2013*

(detail) Object: *Slow slump cast*

(detail) Object: *Lack of good sense 2013*

(detail) Object: *Lack of good sense 2013*

Object: *Lack of good sense 2013,*

**Left, Harriet Stockman**

*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*

*Graduating Exhibition 2013*

Object: *Untitled, 2013*

Object: *Outside in wall sweep 2013*

Object: *Slow slump cast*

the environment to become apparent. Continual change occurred within each object over the duration of the show; for example condensation in water, clay drying out and gradually changing colour, a line appearing and darkening in the plaster cast due to the heat of the element running through its' body. This play between material property and quality provided a suspended state between the object and the material along with a denial of completion.

The large ranch slider windows and the exterior visual noise that fluctuated between being very present during the day and then receding at night provided an interesting installation challenge. The decision to place many of the objects towards the window allowed for pause in the rest of the space and while the objects were quite minimal in their volumes, they held up well against visual noise outside the window. By placing them close together tighter spaces were created around fragile objects, which intensified the viewing experience. Relationships between the objects in the window area heightened the understanding of the individual objects within the space, such as the voluptuous slumped water work *Object: Slow slump cast and vertical*, on the edge of tipping tight, tenseness of the thin plaster wall *Object: Outside in wall sweep* or in the stilled blobby-ness – yet firmly vertical in its presence *Object: Untitled* Dacron/plaster stack that stood behind the wall sweep and near the water rail work.

The scale and height of the ceiling and cavernous nature of the room also influenced the objects I chose to make and as a result tended towards the vertical with the exception of the rail/water work which responded to the long reach of the ranch sliders.















Left, Harriet Stockman  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts  
Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
(detail) Object: *Slow slump cast*  
photo Holli McEntegart

Gravity and the potential for collapse remained a strong discussion in the installation. Gravity tipped past the point of potential in the case of making the clay work *Object: Lack of good sense 2013* and then continued to assert itself in a quieter manner with the graceful tear of clay gently arching away from the body of the column teasingly balanced between being attached and falling away.

All the objects were made in the gallery space with the exception of the 6.5metre rail installed in front of the ranch sliders at about hip height in front of square window safety decals. *Object: Slow slump cast* perhaps played most successfully into the notion of 'knowing what you know' and slightly shifted the roles of the host and introduced supports. In past iterations of *Object: Slow slump cast* the host object has been a functioning part of the building itself and the introduced support has been used to create the cast then removed. In this installation the host support was introduced and remained. Viewer/participants that knew the gallery well queried when the gallery had had the rail installed and those that didn't know the gallery well just assumed the rail was part of the architecture.



Over the next three pages, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*

(detail) Object: *Drawing heat*, 2013

(detail) Object: *Untitled*, 2013

Installation view, photo Monique Redmond

Object: *Untitled*, 2013

Object: *Lack of good sense* 2013

Object: *Slow slump cast*

*Object: Drawing heat* an internally heated cast plaster plank hung centrally in the installation and the HDF cottle it was made from leaned precariously against the wall behind with ample space between them and the surrounding space. The subtlety of change and the appearance of the line drawing occurring within the plaster cast worked beyond my expectations and the fact that everyone I spoke to had assumed the HDF cottle was plaster and they were expecting the bend in it to break at any moment was in line with rethinking the known.

*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts Graduating Exhibition 2013* was a momentary conclusion of a project that set out to explore a process of making that embraced the notion of play as a research methodology. The exhibited works related to previous work as well as the space they were exhibited in. Materials were selected due to their relationship to architecture and historical art practices and were often explored and presented in ways that pushed them beyond the known. The combination of these tactics was to create pause in viewers/participants, which quietly added curiosity and shifted their experience of the familiar.

Left, installation view, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*

Object: *Drawing heat*, 2013

Object: *Lack of good sense* 2013













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## Images

- Pg. 21 **John Ward Knox**  
*Steel Wire, Silver Chain*  
*Things You Didn't Know You Were Already Enjoying*, Window Onsite, 2008, Auckland  
<http://www.johnwardknox.com/projects/things-you-didnt-know-you-were-already-enjoying/>
- Pg. 26 **Alicia Frankcovich**  
*Floor Resistance*, 2011  
Hebbel Am Ufer, HAU 3, Berlin, 2011  
[www.aliciafrankovich.com](http://www.aliciafrankovich.com)
- Pg. 27 **Alicia Frankcovich**  
(performance) *Floor Resistance, Bisons* 2011  
Hebbel Am Ufer, HAU 3, 2011, Berlin  
[www.aliciafrankovich.com](http://www.aliciafrankovich.com)
- Pg. 33 Top to bottom, right, **Ann Hamilton**  
*mattering*, 1997-1998  
Part of the exhibition *Ann Hamilton: Present-Past, 1984-1997*  
Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, France  
<http://www.annhamiltonstudio.com/projects/mattering.html> Photo credit: Moma
- Pg. 39 **Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster**  
*Nocturama*, 2008  
MUSAC, Leon, Spain [17/05/08 - 7/09/2008]  
<http://www.dgf5.com/picturama/t2/nocturama>
- Pg. 51 **Nina Canell**  
*Perpetuum Mobile*(2400kg)  
*Five Kinds Of Water*, Kunstverein, Frankfurt, 2009  
<http://www.canellwatkins.org/older> Photo credit: Kunstverein, Fred Dott
- Pg. 34 **Rachel Whiteread**  
*Untitled (Paperbacks)*, 1997  
Part of the exhibition *Out of Time: A Contemporary View*, 2007  
Moma, New York  
<http://www.moma.org/collection>

## List of illustrations

- Cover **Harriet Stockman**  
*Slow slump cast*, 2013 (detail)  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Inside Cover **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Ait, green*, 2013  
dicot weed, soil, ceramic
- Pg. 8 **Harriet Stockman**  
Studio Shot
- Pg. 9 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, untitled* 2013  
plaster of paris, dacron
- Pg. 10 Top **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience red, objects for testing subtlety of awkward, attempt 2* 2013  
odd red boots, worn for 5 hours  
  
Bottom **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience black, objects for testing subtlety of awkward*, 2013  
odd black boots, worn for 8 hours
- Pg.11 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, lack of good sense*, 2012  
plaster of paris, plastic chair
- Pg 12 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, throwing pots*, 2013  
clay, water
- Pg. 13 Top **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, attempt two*, 2012  
plaster of paris, plastic pipe, car  
  
Bottom **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Play experience, attempt two*, 2012  
plaster of paris, plastic pipe, car
- Pg. 14 Top to bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
Video stills, *Drawing experience, Reflection Circle*, 2012  
plaster of paris, cottle, car
- Pg.15 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Reflection Circle*, 2012  
plaster of paris
- Pg. 16 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Slow slump cast*  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Pg.17 Top to bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience Test Space*, 2012  
plaster of paris
- Pg.18 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, Test Space*, 2012
- Pg.19 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, Test Space*, 2012
- Pg.20 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, drawing experience attempt two, drains* 2013  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Pg.22 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, outside in*, 2013  
plaster of paris
- Pg. 23 **Harriet Stockman**  
(installation view) *Ait, white* 2013  
dicot weed, soil, ceramic  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, April, 2013, Auckland
- Pg. 24 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Ait, white* 2013  
dicot weed, soil, ceramic  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, April, 2013, Auckland

- Pg. 25 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, water attempt 11, 2013*  
polyethylene plastic, water, pot
- Pg.28 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, lack of good sense, 2012*  
plaster of paris
- Pg.29 Top left and right, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Play experience, collapsible casting attempt , 2012*  
ice, found ceramic
- Bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, collapsible casting attempt , 2012*  
ice, found ceramic
- Pg. 30 Top left and right, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, slow slump cast, 2013*  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Slow slump cast, 2013*  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Pg. 31 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Slow slump cast, 2013 (detail)*  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Pg. 32 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing Experience, outside in, 2013*  
plaster of paris
- Pg. 30 Top left and right, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, slow slump cast, 2013*  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Slow slump cast, 2013*  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Pg. 31 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Slow slump cast, 2013 (detail)*  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Pg. 31 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Slow slump cast, 2013 (detail)*  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Pg. 32 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing Experience, outside in, 2013*  
plaster of paris
- Pg. 30 Top left and right, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, slow slump cast, 2013*  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Slow slump cast, 2013*  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Pg. 31 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Slow slump cast, 2013 (detail)*  
polyethylene plastic, water
- Pg. 32 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing Experience, outside in, 2013*  
plaster of paris
- Pg. 35 Top, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, drawing warmth, 2013*  
clay, wooden cottle, electrical element
- Top and bottom right, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Drawing experience, drawing warmth, 2013*  
clay, wooden cottle, electrical element
- Pg. 36 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Outside in 2013*  
plaster of paris  
*Circuit, RM Gallery, 2013, Auckland*
- Pg. 37 Top and bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Outside in 2013*  
plaster of paris  
*Circuit, RM Gallery, 2013, Auckland*
- Pg. 38 **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Outside in 2013*  
plaster of paris  
*Circuit, RM Gallery, 2013, Auckland*
- Pg. 39 **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Outside in 2013*  
plaster of paris  
*Circuit, RM Gallery, 2013, Auckland*



Pg. 31 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Outside in 2013 (installation view)*  
 plaster of paris  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, 2013, Auckland

Pg. 41 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, thinking of maverfrass*, 2012  
 digital drawing

Pg. 42 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Outside in 2012*  
 plaster of paris  
*AD12*, AUT University, 2012, Auckland

Pg. 43 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Outside in 2012*  
 plaster of paris  
*AD12*, AUT University, 2012, Auckland

Pg. 44 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Outside in 2012*  
 plaster of paris  
*AD12*, AUT University, 2012, Auckland

Pg. 45 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience column*, 2012  
 reconstituted hand ground plaster of paris  
*Transitions*, St Paul St Gallery III, 2012, Auckland

Pg. 46 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience skirting*, 2012  
 reconstituted hand ground plaster of paris  
*Transitions*, St Paul St Gallery III, 2012, Auckland

Pg. 47 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience crack*, 2012 (detail)  
 reconstituted hand ground plaster of paris  
*Transitions*, St Paul St Gallery III, 2012, Auckland

Pg. 48 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Lack of good sense*, 2012  
 plaster of paris, plastic chair  
*The Ineluctable Modality of the Visible*, St Paul St Gallery III, 2012, Auckland

Pg. 49 **Harriet Stockman**  
 (installation view) *Indeterminately short but significant*  
 polyethylene plastic, clay, condensation  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, 2013, Auckland

Pg. 50 Top to bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Indeterminately short but significant*  
 polyethylene plastic, clay, condensation  
*Circuit*, RM Gallery, April, 2013, Auckland

Pg. 51 **Harriet Stockman**  
 (detail) *Drawing experience, drawing warmth brown clay*, 2013  
 clay, wooden cottle, electrical element

Pg. 53 **Harriet Stockman**  
 Studio shot, Individually cast tiles for *Drawing experience Test Space*, 2012  
 plaster of paris

Pg. 54 **Harriet Stockman**  
 (detail) *Play experience, throwing pots*, 2013  
 clay, water

Pg. 55 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, residue of thought, attempt 5*, 2013  
 polyethylene plastic, tank water various sources

Pg. 56 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, residue of thought, attempt 3*, 2013  
 polyethylene plastic, water

Pg. 57 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Residue of thought*, 2013  
 polyethylene plastic, tank water various sources  
 Ching Ming, April 2013, Black\_space Gallery, Hokianga

Pg. 58 **Harriet Stockman** (detail) *Residue of thought*, 2013  
polyethylene plastic, tank water various sources  
Ching Ming, April 2013, Black\_space Gallery, Hokianga

Pg. 59 **Harriet Stockman**  
Video stills, *Play experience, lack of good sense*, 2012  
plaster of paris

Pg. 60 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Without purpose*, 2013  
plaster of paris, clay, polyethylene plastic, water

Pg. 61 Top, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Drawing experience, Without purpose*, 2013  
plaster of paris, brown clay, polyethylene plastic, water

Bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Without purpose*, 2013  
plaster of paris, clay, polyethylene plastic, water

Pg. 62 **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Without purpose*, 2013  
plaster of paris, clay, polyethylene plastic, water

Pg. 63 **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Without purpose*, 2013  
plaster of paris, clay, polyethylene plastic, water

Pg. 64 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Without purpose*, 2013  
plaster of paris, clay,  
polyethylene plastic, water

Pg. 65 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, drawing warmth*, 2013  
brown clay, wooden cottle, electrical element

Pg. 66 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, drawing warmth*, 2013  
plaster of paris, wooden cottle, electrical element,  
polyethylene plastic, yellow masking tape

Pg. 67 **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Play experience, drawing warmth*, 2013  
red clay, electrical elements

Pg. 68 Below and Left, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, drawing warmth*, 2013  
plaster of paris, wooden cottle, electrical element,  
polyethylene plastic, yellow masking tape, condensation water

Pg. 69 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, slump mould attempt*, 2013  
plaster of paris, polyethylene plastic, water

Pg. 70 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience, corner*, 2012  
reconstituted hand ground plaster of paris

Pg. 71 Left, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, skinny corners, self supporting*, 2013  
plaster of paris

Pg. 72 Bottom, **Harriet Stockman**  
(detail) *Play experience, skinny corners, self supporting*, 2013  
plaster of paris

Pg. 73 Left and below, **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, throwing clods*, 2013  
clay, water

- Pg. 74 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Play experience, throwing pots, 2013*  
 red clay, water
- Pg. 75 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
 Object: *Drawing heat, 2013*  
 plaster, electrical elements, hdf cottle  
 Object: *Untitled, 2013, Dacron, plaster*  
 Object: *Outside in wall sweep 2013, plaster*  
 Object: *Lack of good sense 2013, red clay*  
 Object: *Slow slump cast, rail, polyethylene plastic, water*
- Pg. 76 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Installation view, Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
 Object: *Drawing heat, 2013, plaster, electrical elements, hdf cottle*  
 Object: *Untitled, 2013, Dacron, plaster*  
 Object: *Outside in wall sweep 2013, plaster*
- Pg. 77 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
 Object: *Untitled, 2013, Dacron, plaster*  
 Object: *Outside in wall sweep 2013, plaster*  
 Object: *Slow slump cast, rail, polyethylene plastic, water*
- Pg. 78 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
 (detail) Object: *Slow slump cast, rail, polyethylene plastic, water*
- Pg. 79 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
 (detail) Object: *Lack of good sense 2013, red clay*

- Pg. 80 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
 (detail) Object: *Lack of good sense 2013, red clay*  
 Object: *Lack of good sense 2013, red clay*
- Pg. 81 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
 (detail) Object: *Slow slump cast, rail, polyethylene plastic, water*  
 photo Holli McEntegart
- Pg. 82 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
 Object: *Drawing heat, 2013, plaster, electrical elements, hdf cottle*  
 Object: *Lack of good sense 2013, red clay*
- Pg. 83 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
 (detail) Object: *Drawing heat, 2013, plaster, electrical elements, hdf cottle*  
 (detail) Object: *Untitled, 2013, Dacron, plaster*
- Pg. 84 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
 Object: *Untitled, 2013, Dacron, plaster*  
 Object: *Lack of good sense 2013, red clay*
- Pg. 85 **Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience AUT Visual Arts*  
*Graduating Exhibition 2013*  
 Object: *Untitled, 2013, Dacron, plaster*  
 Object: *Outside in wall sweep 2013, plaster*  
 Object: *Slow slump cast, rail, polyethylene plastic, water*  
 photo Monique Redmond
- Back Page  
**Harriet Stockman**  
*Drawing experience skirting, 2012*  
 reconstituted hand ground plaster of paris  
*Transitions, St Paul St Gallery Ill, 2012, Auckland*

