

*Rafting-with...*

# Choreography of Participatory Ecologies

An ethico-poetics of everyday survival

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A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) 2018

School of Art and Design





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## Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that the submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), or material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

### Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Houghton', written in a cursive style.

Christina Houghton

March, 2018



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## Abstract

The aim of this practice-led research is to explore how a Choreography of Participatory Ecologies (COPE) reveals an ethics distilled from a poetics of everyday life. This choreographic practice describes a relational *ethico-poetics* composed through an assemblage of tactics that work towards a deconstruction of grand Anthropocene survival narratives: from those that promote heroism and rescuism productive of instrumental attitudes toward life as resource. This *ethico-poetic* ecology of choreographic practice assembles around conceptual guides in relation to these key terms: *ethics*; *poetics*; *everyday*; *survival* and *choreographic object*. The work locates poetic forces within Martin Heidegger's *destruktion* forwarding concepts of *poetic-dwelling*, *truth-as-unconcealing* and *being-with*, and Jacques Derrida's *living-on*, as a poetics of non-mastery in the face of dominant strictures of life within our epoch of technicity. In an existential, ontological and *deconstructive* way, the research locates these concepts in relation to its Choreography of Participatory Ecologies (COPE). The *ethico-poetics* manifests *minimal* and *minor* narratives of belonging with all species, releasing (attitudes of) hierarchical control and guides the research deeper toward its ethical focus in relation to narratives of the Anthropocene. Joanna Zylińska's *minimal ethics* and Erin Manning's *minor gesture*, move toward fracturing grand narratives through thought-in-action as choreographic methods attuned to speculative pragmatics. The final conceptual coupling within this research exists across William Forsythe's *choreographic object* and André Lepecki's *afterlives* toward an un-mastered release for choreographic thinking-in-action, which lingers, hangs on, or survives after the choreographic event. Here an everyday poetics envelops in the way relationally distributed bodies of choreographic objects survive.

The practice itself is structured by a closer understanding of performative modes of participating as a release from narratives of survivalist mastery. It works across three relational plateaus, Land, Sea and Aftermath—described as *agencement*—through the practice of *Rafting-with* for attuning to its PhD survival structure or 'narrative': The first series of events and processes circulate around land-based participatory ecologies, eliciting a significant understanding of choreographic controls—structured by drills, tours and instructive modalities; the next plateau moves into more fluid and familiar environs provided by (my own regional) oceanic experiences including sailing voyages that move (with the) participation of *others* further into enigmatic off-shore encounters—structured by wayfaring, storytelling, DIY tactics that are ritualised through *rafting*, *resting* and *recovery*; the *third* and final plateau is the site of *aftermath* as a fragmentary archive of trace-structures that has survived *on* from land and sea. The *aftermath* envelops these distributed environmental relations as fractured tellings, re-written in material 'code' from *choreographic objects* of technological 'reliance' or belonging. The *choreographic object* survives as an unofficial archive that we come to survey and *know* as the culminating PhD (thesis) performance housed within its Black Box site.





*Figure 1. Desperado, 1983, Nelson, New Zealand, Photographer unknown.*





## Introduction:

### An Ethico-Poetics of Everyday Survival—as *Choreographic Object*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A note on the legibility or syntactical arrangement of the hyphen in this writing, which follows in Heidegger's assemblage of language as an existential poetics-in-thinking: That is, when reading Heidegger in English, there is a stylistic trait whereby translators string together compound German words with hyphens. For example, I will be discussing a series of Heidegger's terms such as being-in-the-world, being-with, being-in-itself, ready-to-hand, present-to-hand, challenging-forth, bringing-forth and truth-as-unconcealing. There is more than just convenient translation going on here. Heidegger does not intend us to read a phrase that is empirically or objectively understood but rather existentially encountered. For example, being-in-a-world is not intended for us to think the putting of some entity called 'being' into a 'world' as, for example, a vase placed inside a cabinet. Rather, being-in-the-world is an existential concept that I continue with as a poetic strategy for existential encounter so-that-a-reader encounters an existential phenomenological aspect that is attuned to becoming, under-way-ness and moves beyond the objective understanding of subject-consciousness encounter. In this thesis it is important to reveal truth or understanding as a unconcealing (Heidegger calls this notion *Aletheia* – borrowing from Ancient Greek understanding of truth-as unconcealing in difference to truth-as-correctness) and so the hyphenating of expression shifts from an understanding that presents a world and poses entities asking how one is in the other as though things are in a measurable container. Rather, Heidegger's existential phenomenology will think belonging through an understanding of entities that are disclosive of worlds and worlds disclosive of entities. Existentially being-in is not about showing how we are ontically belonging IN such and such world, rather being-in unconceals a pre-categorical or primordial structure for the interval, joining, or relational conditions for entities-together. I would like to acknowledge the work of my PhD colleague Julia Reynolds for assisting my understanding here. For further reference please see Reynolds, J. *A World's Return: A Phenomenological Encounter with Film Worlds*, (PhD: AUT University, 2016). This research project attempts to reveal or disclose the agencement, joining, relations of belonging-together in and of an ecology-of-practices that are still in formation. It does not refuse the ontic categories of instrumental and objective logic, even the grand narratives of survival, but rather enquires into the more pre-categorical ontological differences of those structures (their logic and attitudes).



*Figure 2. Raft Expedition, Justine Kurland, 2001, Terrains of the Body exhibition Whitechapel Gallery, London 18th January-16th April. Chromogenic Print from National Museum of Women in the Arts.*

*I help one of the participants climb into the semi-inflatable Personal Floatation Suit (PFS) and they unexpectedly lie back. I pump the foot pump that slowly inflates the folded lilo<sup>2</sup> operating as the leg of the suit, that provides comforting pressure around the calf muscle. I then move onto the hand pump that inflates the back lilo. As the air pushes their body up from the floor of the Black Box they fold the inflated silver pillows over their face in a kind of enclosed tomb. I leave them for a while before I invite them to raft in the middle with us. Afterwards they exclaim what an immersive somatic experience that was. I take this reflection on board and then in subsequent performances I suggest to others that they lie back and enjoy the experience discovered on that first iteration.*

The above piece of writing is a reflection from RAFTING the final suite of rafting tours that made up the final performance examination work for this PhD research. Each group of participants *rafted* through the archives of my research located in the Black Box theatre space in the basement of the WG building at AUT University. Throughout this final work I asked myself what is this practice of *Rafting-with* that has emerged from this project that spans almost four years. The archives installed in RAFTING, as do these words, attempt to weave together many moments, turns and assemblages of thought, conceptual detours and contours that have accumulated throughout this project. It is these that form the conceptual *Raft* (Kaupapa)<sup>3</sup> for this project that tethers together (through *rafting*) conceptual and virtual bodies of thought, each being vital to the survival of the other, yet open to shifting changing formations as each iteration or section of writing unfolds throughout this project. The final performance work marks a point for reflection, at the same time revealing Choreographies of Participatory Ecologies that are *still-in-form* and will continue to be long after the completion of this exegesis.

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<sup>2</sup> Lilo, A type of inflatable mattress used as a bed or for floating on water.

<sup>3</sup> Kaupapa in te Reo Māori (the Māori language) also translates as: (noun) theme, proposal, agenda, initiative. For example Kaupapa Māori refers to Māori ideology. Kaupapa also translates as: (noun) floor, stage or platform. English Māori Dictionary and Index, s.v. “Te Aka: Māori English,” <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>.

## The Raft

*It is a vessel hand made*  
*It has materiality*  
*Tethered to others*  
*Bodies of thought*  
*Bodies and objects*  
*Being with others*  
*Choreographing objects*  
*It moves through place*  
*It moves through time leaving traces*  
*Collects stories images*

The aim of this project is to explore participation in performance as a way to critique instrumental ways of being-in-the-world in relation to environmental issues of the Anthropocene. I wanted to understand how or if performance practice might assist to challenge the grand narratives of survival that I could see had emerged surrounding this newly termed era.<sup>4</sup> The idea was to challenge the instrumental rhetoric

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<sup>4</sup> The term ‘Anthropocene’ for this research holds with it an ethical imperative in a similar vein to Zylinska. The term itself unfolds a history that, like all history, is contestable: “Proposed by the Dutch chemist Paul Crutzen in 2000, the term ‘Anthropocene’ (from anthropo, man, and cene, new) serves as a name for a new geological epoch that supposedly follows the Holocene, ‘the epoch that began at the end of the last ice age, 11,700 years ago, and that—officially, at least—continues to this day’ (Kolbert 29). The need for the new term is being justified by the fact that human influence upon the geo- and biosphere via processes such as farming, deforestation, mining and urbanization, to name but a few, has been so immense that it actually merits a new designation in order to address the challenges raised by that influence. Even though the term has not been universally and unquestioningly adopted by all geologists, its use has significantly increased over the last decade—and has been popularized beyond the professional scientific community thanks to the 2011 article on the topic by Elizabeth Kolbert in the National Geographic magazine. Yet even amongst those who are sympathetic to the

that helps to construct these narratives of survival. My tactics attempt to foreground audiences as participants, as co-creators of Choreographies of Participatory Ecologies that opens to a conceptual and physical *agencement* of an encounter expressing itself as *still-in-form* and aims to move towards a release, a letting-go construed as a poetics of non-mastery. These Choreographies emerged from a series of performance iterations (survival tours) that became part of a critical and conceptual performance practice. The practice is situated within choreographic and participatory performance paradigms that revealed tactics for ways to de-authorise the artist, handing over the work to participants and the choreography to the affects of place and weather. The subsequent practice that I termed *Rafting-with* emerges from the accumulation of what survived from each survival tour as a continually changing process.

By introducing this research through the key conceptual term *still-in-form*, I introduce its agency up front, within the very fabric of this project. The significance of *still-in-form* is housed within the term *agencement*, inherited from artist and philosopher Erin Manning—as used by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (yet contentiously translated by Brian Massumi to the english word ‘assemblage’). I, as Manning, return to the french use of the term which according to Manning “carries within itself a sense of movement and connectibility, of processual agency”.<sup>5</sup> As the quote below infers, my research engages a spatial dynamics through choreographic performance art, suggesting that a participatory mode of art practice may offer something *still-in-form* as a detour away from instrumental mastery. I describe

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term there is widespread doubt as to which moment in time should serve as a beginning of this epoch: some point to the early days of agriculture some 8,000 years ago, others to the Industrial Revolution or to the last fifty years of excessive consumption, while still others see the Anthropocene as an epoch that is yet to come.” Joanna Zylińska, *Minimal Ethics for the Anthropocene* (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press, 2014), 18-19. Zylińska quotes Elizabeth Kolbert, “Enter the Anthropocene - Age of Man,” in *Making the Geologic Now: Responses to Material Conditions of Contemporary Life*, ed. Elizabeth Elsworth and Jamie Kruse (Brooklyn: Punctum Books, 2012), 29.

<sup>5</sup> Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 123. The term translated by Brian Massumi as assemblage in Brian Massumi, “Translators Foreword: Pleasures of Philosophy,” in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). Manning leans on Felix Guattari’s invention of the term signifying the engagement of cleaving with experience.

my practice as an *agencement* of conceptual frameworks that turn or cleave experience by attempting to refrain from closure, mastery or stasis through multiple iterative events. That is, my participatory practice attempts non-closure through working with others (theorists, artists and colleagues alike)—these assemblages make up my practice of participatory ecologies as inferred by the PhD's thesis title—*always-already, still-in-formation*:

*Agencement* produces ways of becoming, to invent new modes of existence moves away from subject based identity towards an ecology of practices where “*agencement* speaks to the interstitial arena of experience of the interval, an interval not of category but in the pre-category where that field is still in formation”.<sup>6</sup>

By exploring fundamental concepts pertaining to *ethics; poetics; everyday; survival* and *choreographic object* I attempt to reveal how these concepts gather or assemble as a belonging so that they perform strategically as enlivened processes, methods, compositions and tactics within my research performance practice. The practice itself brings together somatics and participatory art practice as an interdisciplinary choreographic practice that focuses on performing with others and moving through place. Survival technologies (safety codes and equipment) that are instructional (gestural, spoken, written) and material (survival equipment as protection) offer both costuming and actions that evoke the experience and aesthetics of ‘states of emergency’. Performance tactics are assembled in a way that activates a relational field at its point of inflection, keeping difference alive as Choreography of Participatory Ecologies. The attempt of such assemblage exists in the spirit of a ‘fruitful questionableness’ (*poetically-dwelling*) as manifest in pre-categorical fields of formation as the *assemblage* or *agencement* of an approach to thinking performed both in the practice and in the writing of this exegesis.

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<sup>6</sup> Manning, *The Minor Gesture*, 123-24.

The other half of my title infers both poetics and ethics within scenes of everyday life, themed through survival within registers of the Anthropocene. I came to this research concerned (as many are today) by the increasing urgency for maintaining environmental and ecological balance through mitigating the acceleration of effects in relation to planetary degradation. The term ‘Anthropocene’ has, for at least a decade, become increasingly used as the universal and totalised rhetoric associated with resource depletion, climate change, deforestation, melting ice-caps, increased water-levels, increased natural disasters and a host of other cues into environmental collapse due to humans’ instrumental relations with technological progression. The Anthropocene is a term that traces a (still-contested) history that ‘starts’ with the last ice age and moves onto the introduction of agricultural life, industrial revolutions, and the last fifty years of increased consumerism. In this, the question of *survival* arrives at the forefront or, rather, is now hoisted up in neon by rhetorical ideals circulating around the promotion of *heroism* and *rescuism*: in these ideals survival presses more acutely into a future that feels ever-present, weighted by an increasing rhetoric, which espouses global life as imaginably knowable through the increase of fatalistic narratives pertaining to extinction, global disaster and the end of sustainable life on the planet. Throughout the research, analysis is brought to the effects and affects of these global narratives with respect to how they produce distance, apathy, fear and hysteria. The totalising of the term Anthropocene, placed within the context of these narratives, does not assist life but rather paralyses living—in recognition of this, I have begun to question *whose* and *what* life is being *saved*, *heralded* and brandished here?

In focusing on survival drills (that include drills of failure and impossible preparations) this performance practice brings my own sense of attention to contemporary society’s obsession with disaster (shipwrecks), states of emergency (tsunamis/floods) that I combine with my own autobiographical narrative of ‘survival at sea’. I find myself gravitating to safety codes and wall posters for evacuations wherever I go, sifting through articles of misfortunate accidents and acts of survival. As the journey progresses I adapt these stories and actions through a number of performance tests in different locations, moving across and through numerous locales. The performance content responds to stories and narratives



specific to each place and the people who join the performances as participants. It is within the actual performance events that the performance tactics emerge to be developed and re-introduced into the subsequent performances. This enfolding of multiple narratives and experiences of place morphs the work, challenging the structures of performance preparations (such as the instructions and intentions). Embracing the uncertainty of weather, site and participants, this practice holds a space of survival in whatever shape or form that may take.

I have further realised that language reveals itself as a technological device for building narratives that serve up fear and urgency within global agendas for rescue. If built by instrumental rhetoric, then these narratives also are open to deconstruction for potentially offering other paths.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the philosophical work of Martin Heidegger on technology, language and poetics has opened up the most fecund deconstructive research pathway (that picks up Jacques Derrida and Joanna Zylynska along its way) for being-with technology poetically. In saying this, I realise too that my own practice comes to its being through gestures of local, immediate, minimal and playful engagements with geo-politics of belonging: a practice that is only sustainable through those local *everyday* performance-based peer groups that similarly quest for their contribution to a sustainable and genuine ecological-thought and community-based, political life. Poetics and ethics coalesce to give the research practice its ground for deconstructing survival within the existing everyday milieu of my performance-based community. I have thus embarked upon this PhD, to acknowledge my practice as a consolidated Choreography of Participatory Ecologies.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, a path I'd like to bring some awareness to here is with respect to my own performative and deconstructive writing in relation to the layout and length of the footnotes within the PhD exegesis. These footnotes perform a minor gesture within the conceptual aims of the PhD. That is, they gesture toward a deconstruction and economy for reading grand narratives, whereby here these notes commonly hold deeper analysis and thus promote a kind of reading across bodies and their 'bloods' to destabilise more orthodox hierarchies of reading: a minor key in operation to promote hangings, lingerings and afterlives (that I shall come to speak of later in relation to the final Black Box performance event) that enmesh iterations of tellings that make authorial telling less discernable and promote the sharing of ideas, albeit expressed differently, across different spaces, times and names.



Within these four years of further consolidation and homage to participatory ecologies, that my research is part of, the practice has tested out its hypothesis through working with many local performance-based communities around the world—namely, Umeå Sweden, Prague Czech Republic, Melbourne Australia, London England, Lisbon Portugal, Rarotonga Cook Islands, Dunedin and Auckland, New Zealand Aotearoa. It has been important to ‘test the waters’ of these different locales to test non-instrumental performative gestures for poetic survival within today—as that which marks out my worlding or scene of association to—‘our’ Anthropocene. Thereby, the thematic of survival in this research folds ecological thinking with performance thinking—operating as an interval between *ecology* and *performance still-in-formation*, before mastery, closure and arrest—open to the other as an ethical arrival in living now. It may seem out of place to put now an acknowledgement to those of my performance-based peers, including other participants and passersby, who are as much a part of this research practice as I. This *acknowledgement* is the site of my ethics. I thank ‘my’ others for what they reveal to me as a poetic and sustainable way, untethered from the strictures of my own *mastery*.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> One of the most acute understandings throughout this research journey has been the appearance of my own desire for mastery or control over performance-based situations. It is no coincidence that this thematic of mastery has worked its way so deeply into the practice. Throughout my performance practice I have attempted to locate different tactics, approaches and conditions for *release*—for letting go of the ego formation and surrendering to the wisdom of participation with others. The concept of mastery is therefore mined throughout the practice and reflected on, through both my encounters with philosophical material and artistic practices, and the iterations of my own performance events throughout the duration of this PhD. An example, of release within my own practice has been in distributing my autobiographic storytelling into the fabric of others’ stories of ‘survival’. That is, the stories of mine and others become woven into a more enmeshed and fragmented narrative that do not start with origins or finish with conclusions but rather live on *still-in-formation* so that a less discrete or known border of where one life starts off and another finishes is thereby performed. These stories were enlivened by the random assemblage of audience members (participants) that consisted of a diverse range of both invited and ‘those roped or reeled in’: friends whānau/family, art-audiences, students, dancers, conference participants, strangers, passers-by, traditional owners of the land (in Rarotonga) - including the chance arrival of a bull, as well as the elements (ie. extreme wind at Māngere bridge). Survival tours were often entwined within the other performance events that occurred within the same festival/conference offering further *release* of my choreographic control. These were conditions

## Whakapapa (genealogies) of practice<sup>9</sup>

Ka Mua, Ka Muri.<sup>10</sup>

I embark on this research following the Māori proverb that describes an image of a person walking backwards into the future as a way of being in the world. I forge into the future with my back facing forward, looking back over the past as a way to recognise the present. I thus provide pointers to these in recognition of the origins, genealogies of my whakapapa starting with who I am, where I come from, my connections to land (whenua)<sup>11</sup> and family (whānau). I then give context to the whakapapa of my practice, that of dance, the body and somatics<sup>12</sup> that has led me to my current practice. I also acknowledge the other practitioners in my field and those that in branching out from their disciplines influence my practice from participatory art, performance art and everyday life. I then situate this research in the realm of academia, performance studies and philosophy which has its own genealogy of thinkers in relation to sensing and being in the world. It is within these thinkers that my practice of rafting is supported by an intricate web of tethered ropes. Some connections are tighter than others, some might be trailing behind but they are all part of the Raft as it has formed throughout this research project. It is the surviving with these others that holds true to the ethico-poetics of this project.

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of performance that I continually embraced throughout this research.

<sup>9</sup> Whakapapa in te Reo Māori (the Māori language) means from where I come from: (noun) genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent - reciting *whakapapa* was, and is, an important skill and reflected the importance of genealogies in Māori society in terms of leadership, land and fishing rights, kinship and status. English Māori Dictionary and Index, s.v. “Te Aka: Māori English,” <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Mua: “In front of or before”, Muri: “the rear or behind”- Muri also means “to grieve or mourn” as well as: “The north of departed spirits”, that refers to Cape Reinga the northern tip of Aotearoa New Zealand.

<sup>11</sup> Whenua also means Placenta.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Hannah, “What Is Somatics?,” *Somatics Autumn - Winter* (1986). ‘Somatics’ the practice of mind body integration developed by Thomas Hannah in 1976 that he described as experiencing the body from within.

Closest to me is the practice at this point in time, having completed the final examination work RAFTING (a series of *Rafting survival tours* held in the Black Box of WG, AUT University, November, 2017) and this body of writing. The furthest being the origins of the concepts I have entwined into the practice of *Rafting-with*. I therefore ask you the reader to wade through this initial shifting waters in the effort to understand both the journey the practice has taken and its tethering to the origins of philosophical thinking as part of the flotation for this artistic work. I will also reveal, in the details of the investigatory performance works, the points in which realisations were made that accumulated as the project progressed. Some of these are captured as glimpses in the archival remains of RAFTING. As the exegesis progresses you will come closer to the final encounter that will hopefully activate the residue of the live experience that we encountered together as we rafted-through the archives of this research—activating *Rafting-with* as a moving destabilising force akin to the chaos of survival, the flights of birds, voyages of boats and shifting weather patterns.

My background as an ecologist (with a Masters in Zoology)<sup>13</sup> a choreographer (Masters in Creative and Performing Arts)<sup>14</sup> and a costume designer, gives me a unique perspective to this research incorporating somatic dance practice, craft and technique, both objective and subjective perspectives to systems in nature as an interdisciplinary practice. My dance practice was influenced by somatic practice

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<sup>13</sup> Christina Houghton, “The Meta Population Dynamics of Two Endangered Lizard Species *Oligosoma Otagense* & *Oligosoma Grande*, at Macraes Flat, East Central Otago” (Masters thesis, Otago University, 2001). I studied two endangered lizard species in the South Island of New Zealand between 1997 and 2001 with the Department of Conservation and Otago University. Interestingly I was looking at the movements of animals between small isolated populations of lizards that live on rock tors that tower above tussock grasslands. It was the dynamics of these moving populations that lead to the survival or extinction of each individual group and consequently affected the survival of the species.

<sup>14</sup> Christina Houghton, “Testing Waters: Ecological Becomings and Liquid Perceptions” (Masters thesis, University of Auckland, 2013). An investigation into kineasthetic sensing of sites next to water developed into a solo performance presentation.

when I discovered contemporary dance at Otago University in Dunedin.<sup>15</sup> Somatic practices such as Feldenkrais (Fredrich Feldenkrais), Body, Mind, Centering BMC, (Bonnie Bainbridge-Cohen), Skinner Releasing Technique SRT (Joan Skinner), and Shin Somatics (Sondra Fraleigh) that encourage fluidity of movement and bring attention to the physical, sensorial and emotional realities of human bodies have since then been part of my choreographic practice. Each of these practices use guiding instructions and witnessing (as opposed to observing), and focus on being process-orientated attuning/listening to external environments, rather than being concerned with the final product (or spectacle). These practices advocate sensing of the body from the inside out, and are useful as choreographic tools for creating performative images of the strange.<sup>16</sup> In the context of the ethics of this project, somatic practices that prioritise the slowing of the sensing body as it engages with the immediate environment (both technical and biological) provide a reprieve from the fast-paced nature of our contemporary world. Somatic practices can therefore be seen as an act of recovery in response to instrumental ways of being in the world.

### Sailing Vessels and Rafting Survival

In researching a range of local and international locations and associated stories for performance in relation to environmental issues of water, I embarked on a personal journey regarding my own *tūrangawaewae* (in Māori terminology, a place to stand, a homeland) and my sense of belonging (or not belonging).<sup>17</sup> As a Pākehā descendent from English and Scottish immigrants to New Zealand (1860-

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<sup>15</sup> With tutors and mentors Warwick Long (Feldenkrais Dance practitioner), Sylvie Fortin (Somatic Education) and Ali East (Eco Dance).

<sup>16</sup> See Christina Houghton, "Somatic Choreography Blog Memories," *Millicent Diaries*, 2011, accessed 17 March, 2018, <http://millicentdiaries.tumblr.com/somaticchoreography> for examples of earlier practice-led research into the Somatic Image.

<sup>17</sup> My interest in water as a performative site began during my masters research in 2011, which resulted in a performance about the kinesthetic sensing of sites around Auckland. It also happened to align with the illness and loss of my father





1930s) aspects of this discovery revealed my relationship to the geographic location of the island nation New Zealand Aotearoa. In this journey of discovering my origins I found that my early associations with water took me back to childhood memories of sailing on board the boat that my father built, *Desperado*.<sup>18</sup> The maritime motif was further developed in response to the call for performance work in relation to *Isle& Perform Pacific\_Ecology* the first Oceanic Performance Biennial held in Auckland in 2013. Upon deciding (along with my collaborator Johannes Blomqvist from Sweden) to create a performance on a boat, I began to think about my memories of boating, the feelings they evoked and how they had affected me. I wondered how the threat of a changing climate would affect the way the sea might be experienced by our children.<sup>19</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that haunting this research project and its Choreography of Participatory Ecologies has been the figure of the sea holding my envelopes of familiar and familial milieus, specifically the leitmotif of our sailing craft *Desperado*. As a performance narrative, *Desperado* works within the realms of 'boat mastery' that draw on the protocols of survival that are intrinsic to this boat's operation

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earlier that same year. This significant event in my life resulted in the previous work *I am Still Here* (2011), a choreographic somatic exploration in moving backwards for which I created an imaginary diary (Millicent Diaries) and a performance to record dialogue about my Grandmother (my father's mother) struggling to survive in isolation. I see now that I was processing my own trauma in everyday life through performance as a ritual for grieving. I see that this has influenced the creating of this work in a similar fashion, yet it represents the ongoing chronic struggle of grief and loss as a lived process. This project represents the bringing together of the somatic and the stories of water and place.

<sup>18</sup> *Desperado* was a 36-foot (11m) yacht built by my father in the late 1970s in our backyard, in Nelson, a small town at the top of the South Island of New Zealand. The event was a family affair with my mum, two brothers and I helping with sanding and painting. It took three years to build, in the evenings and weekends when Dad wasn't at work. It was eventually launched in 1981 and it marked the beginning of many sailing adventures around Golden Bay and the Marlborough Sounds. See Photo of *Desperado* Figure 1. and Figure 3. Photo of Boat Charts.

<sup>19</sup> *Sharing Waters Part 1* (2013) was the first performance where I shared stories of my father as we crossed the Waitematā Harbour on the Half-Moon Bay Ferry. I told the story of scattering his ashes in the Tāmaki Estuary, the most polluted part of the harbour. *Sharing Waters Part 2* saw the work redeveloped in Umeå Sweden (2014) as part of this research project, and the film *Islands Seas and Connectivity* from Part 1 was shown at the Survival Kit, Umeå (2014).

and navigation. This is due to the technical complexities of being on water and the required self-sufficiency that is needed while being away from land. The performativity of boats at sea is entwined with life itself, thus enacting performances at sea by Polynesian navigators, and alludes to an empty ocean, a limitless expanse that holds no traces.<sup>20</sup> It recalls heroic *sailors* (or mad men) that abide by the laws of boats and the philosophy of the sea, such as German explorer George Dibbern a self declared ‘citizen of the world’ (who created his own passport), whose manifesto involved breaking free of conventions, sending messages of peace, ‘brotherly love’ and world citizenship during times of crisis<sup>21</sup> Or the story of Dutch artist Bas Jan Ader’s final performance that ends in him never returning from his intended solo voyage across the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>22</sup> Finnish artist Antti Laitinen’s *Voyage* (2008, see *Figure 4*) and *Bark Boat* (2010) proliferate such man-alone narratives, by his DIY (do it yourself) crafting of ocean-going vessels—the first being a *rowable island* that he rowed up the River Thames in London,<sup>23</sup> the latter a self-made pine-bark boat that he sailed into the Baltic Sea. The notions of both handcrafted vessels attempting to navigate the laws of boats at sea and survival of the individual over durational experiences emphasise the fragility of these ocean-going vessels yet become part of the absurdity of such journeys. Furthermore, I acknowledge that in Māori culture the voyaging waka is a significant link between the ancestral homeland of Hawaiki and the shores of Aotearoa.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> K.R. Howe, *Vaka Moana, Voyages of the Ancestors: The Discovery and Settlement of the Pacific*, ed. K. R Howe (Auckland: David Bateman, 2006), 30.

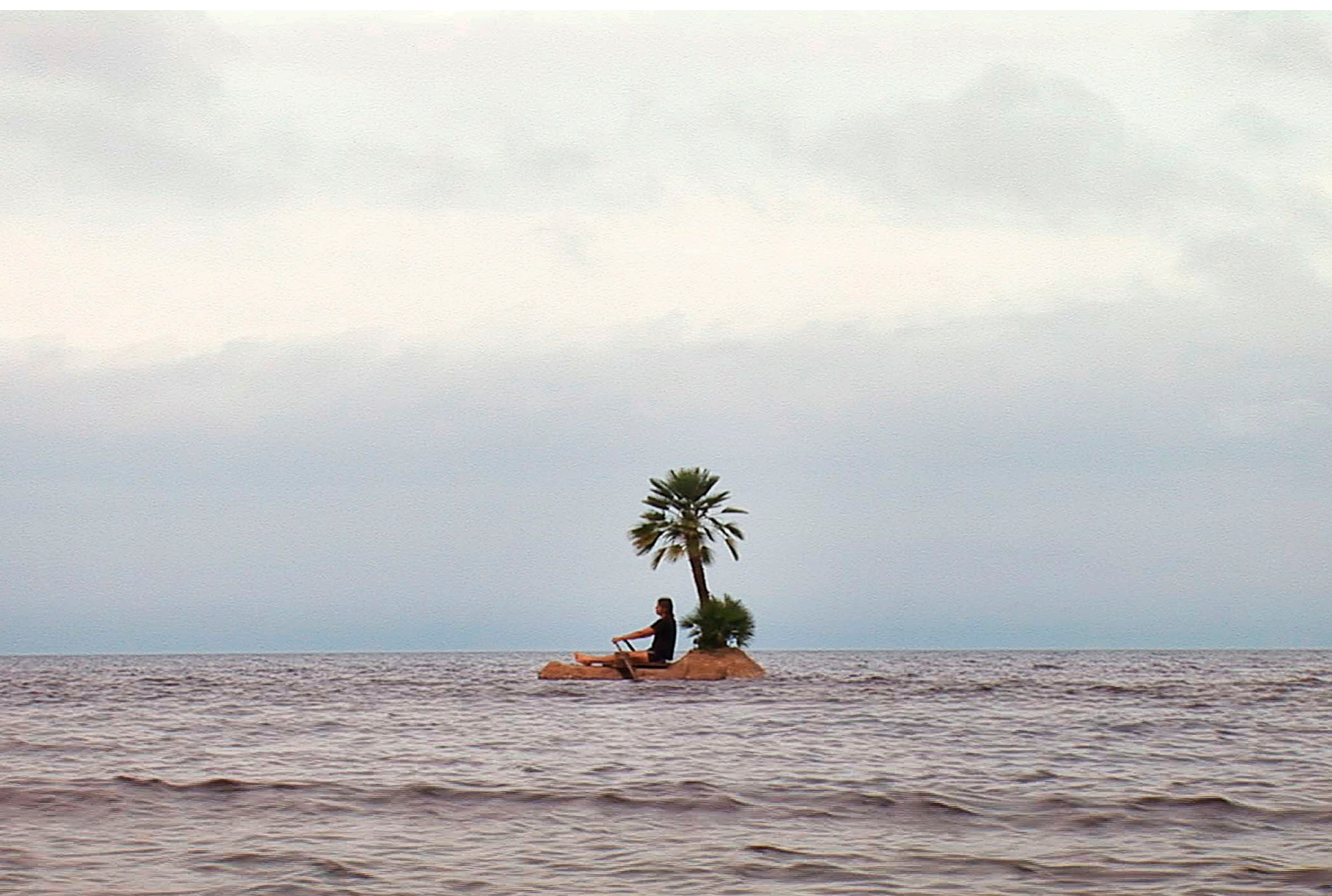
<sup>21</sup> Erika Grundmann, *Dark Sun: Te Rapunga and the Quest of George Dibbern* (Auckland: D. Ling, 2004). However, the inspiring story holds the reality of Dibbern leaving his German family behind and spending time incarcerated on Somes/Matiu Island (in the Wellington Harbour) after sailing his 32 foot Ketch Te Rapunga (Dark Sun) to New Zealand due to the onset of WWII.

<sup>22</sup> Tiernan Morgan, “In Search of Bas Jan Ader the Artist Who Disappeared at Sea,” *Hyperallergic* (November 30, 2016), accessed 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Voyage 2008, Laitinen was challenged by the authorities when rowing his island up the River Thames in London due to strict regulations on boat traffic.

<sup>24</sup> Narratives are often entwined with the crafting of Māori Waka (canoe) from a certain tree to stories of the islands from which they depart. Māori associate their lineage to the names of waka which landed in various locations on the shores of





*Figure 4. Voyage, Annti Laitinen, 2008, 4 min 30 secs HDV. Video Still, Courtesy of artist.*



*Desperado's* narrative lives on through multiple performances through storytelling, actions and the wearing of survival gear borrowed from what we used to wear while sailing (yellow PVC jackets, and hats and sunglasses). The performance archives aimed to encourage reciprocal survival stories from participants and became a strategy for exploring a sensory experience of survival. Underlying narratives of my experience of *Desperado* were revealed as a commemoration and memorial through the transformation of sailing gear into that which represented 'states of emergency.' As I land at the end of this research I ask myself how *Desperado* has become an island. Upon its return to the safety of the harbour, it docks alongside this philosophical jetty, yet holds itself as an artwork with its own autonomy.

*These watery memories were located in my body, affecting the sense of where I had come from and where I was going, evoking a bodily experience of being a child at play, in submission to the powers of the ocean in an open way that has no fear: a release from control of our land-based existence.*

*Desperado*, my waka, was built from an individual kahikatea (New Zealand native tree) selected by my father from the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand. It was felled from a sustainable forest, laid to dry and then milled into planks that he pain-stakingly curved and nailed in place by hand over the upturned frame of the boat hull. I now peel back the layers of *Desperado's* construction to its origin and sail this journey in the skeletal frame of *her hull* within which I situate the remains of my father's memory.

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Aotearoa (Such as the Tainui waka in the Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau region) that reference the arrival of pre-european Māori to the shores of Aotearoa. Tainui waka was named after the tree planted in memory of a lost child which was then felled and crafted into the great waka sharing concepts of the integrated nature of narrative, human action and rites and rituals in relation to relationships and whakapapa (ancestry). Howe, *Vaka Moana*.



*Figure 5.* Upturned Hull of *Desperado*, 1978, Nelson, New Zealand.

Rata: The great canoe builder. Rata goes to the forest to cut down a tree to build a canoe and avenge the death of his father. Forest guardians re-erect the tree, he captures the guardians and they inform his actions were due to him failing to perform the appropriate rites. Rata apologises and the guardians assist in building the canoe. He then sails forth, and ambushes and kills Matuku at a bathing pool before retrieving the bones of his father.<sup>25</sup>

*The upturned hull then transformed into an arc within which the narrative of our survival, to live on, might be contained.*

The location of the research beginnings in New Zealand is situated within the wider Oceania of the Pacific region and embraces the whakapapa of the New Zealand Māori of Aotearoa as first discoverers of this land (whenua). I thus acknowledge my position as one of the coloniser in my connection to this place—a result of a human nature for progress and mastery. Part of this is situating the work within the Pākehā middle class position of privilege (that we could actually own our own boat) yet reveals the underlying trauma of climate change and its perceived threat to our lives of comfort. However, I also embrace the technical know-how (and responsibility) of a captain in charge of a seagoing vessel, and the interconnected intuitive technical operations of navigators and crafts of seafaring through *oceanic ways of knowing*.

In more traditional Polynesian navigating apparatuses we learn that the crafts they used for discovering the Pacific (including Aotearoa) were humble in comparison even then to European navigation crafts.<sup>26</sup> The point I allude to here is that Polynesian sailing relied more fully on a wider-concept of environmental cues than living-with (being-with) birds, sea, clouds, stars, night, waves etc., for living. Their marine

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> I take on ‘board’ my vessel the conceptual question as to how much *mastery* is prefigured in my nominated performance boat *Desperado*. That is, today our waters are littered with different kinds of marine crafts, from jet skis to gin palaces.

life already survived beyond the predetermined rehearsal mode of drills, health and safety regulations and technological machines with complex built-in crash scenarios described by Paul Virilio in *The Original Accident*, (2007).<sup>27</sup> My family boat *Desperado* was a humble sailing craft by comparison to many yachts today and its familiarity I use to draw on the notion of an ocean-going vessel in describing performance as *techné*. Furthermore, the dramaturgical condition of *Te Moana nui a Kiwa* (the great ocean of explorer Kiwa) as described by Dorita Hannah<sup>28</sup> situates this work in Oceania, connecting local contexts with international locations—as I take survival tours across borders and into unknown waters I discover the poetic draw of Moana/Ocean as a vast, fluid always moving body of dark waters. It is these depths that bring my performance practice into more complex shifts of tides and surges as I navigate unknown territories and foreign customs. This research thus navigates through theories and practices of choreography, place making, body politic, extending beyond shared histories that recognise difference. I become the guide for performance encounters that enact social, cultural, political terrain of participatory practice operating in spatial and temporal realms of the personal, imaginary, political, and speculative as a Choreography of Ecologies of Practice.

### Surviving with Others - *A Contextual Review*

The following literature review is guided by key thinkers for unveiling the concepts of its performance toward *an ethico-poetics of everyday survival—as choreographic object* beginning initially with the question concerning poetics as a possible ethics for understanding another path to thinking and being within the epoch of technology. It unfolds a driving of one's own Dasein (*There Being*)<sup>29</sup> (and hopefully

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<sup>27</sup> Paul Virilio, *The Original Accident*, trans. Julie Rose (Cambridge, Oxford, Boston, New York: Polity Press, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> Dorita M. Hannah, "Fluid States Pasifika: Spacing Events through an Entangled Oceanic Dramaturgy," *Global Performance Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017), <http://gps.psi-web.org/issue-1-1/fluid-states-pasifika/>.

<sup>29</sup> *Dasein* is Heidegger's pre-theoretical condition for being-there or "Presence"; a term for human beings' inherent social-everyday primordial essence or way that reveals structures or modes of Being. See: Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*,

that of others who come along its way) into a releasing force of fruitful questionableness through an overarching concern or seeking for inhabiting the enigmatic space of non-mastery.

### *Paternal Figures*

Heidegger's thought on poetics as a *bringing-forth*, *being-in-itself* and *being-with*<sup>30</sup> is in direct understanding to human beings' fundamental shifting relationship to technology within our contemporary age (discussed in Chapter 1). As this research focuses on 'our' Anthropocene epoch—a (dynamic) geo-bio-historical period signifying human-life as the biggest threat to all forms of life on earth—it is primarily questioning our time or time as a human phenomenon that marks its understanding through epochal shifts. Heidegger's work on the essence of technology specifically draws out or un-conceals human beings' relation to technology as a temporal difference from that of the ancient Greeks. He returns to early Greek pre-Socratic thinking that shows a way that is now lost or covered over to contemporary human beings. In his seminal essay on technology, *The Question Concerning Technology* he will ultimately conclude on a cross-roads<sup>31</sup> that positions *us* paradoxically on a 'fruitful questionableness' as to how we are to understand our attitudes in being-with technology: a way of understanding that offers 'ethical'

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trans. John Macquarrie and Edward S. Robinson (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell, 1962), 95.

<sup>30</sup> In Heidegger's essay *The Questions Concerning Technology* he develops his key terms, *challenging-forth* and *bringing-forth* I develop an understanding of the terms with respect to my research for different ways that our living in-situ unfold worlds. For example, *challenging-forth* suggests that we perceive the world as being in taxonomies, compartments or 'boxes' for storing. Whereas *bringing-forth* unfolds perceptions for how release allowing our mutual dependence on our worlds to unfold without mastery or controlling. These terms, alongside *being-in-itself* and *being-with* will be discussed further in this research in relation to my ecology of practices.

<sup>31</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, First edition, 1977), 313. Heidegger philosophically offers us a *cross-roads* conundrum describing this as a possible path toward non-mastery, evoking the poet's language—he draws out the paradox of the *saving power*: The saving power has a poetic agency, by evoking these (paradoxical) poetic words of the German poet Hölderlin: "*But where danger is, grows / The saving power also.*"

potential down a road less-mastered. I connect this philosophical view-point on my task at hand to that of the Anthropocene through the specific discussion on Heidegger and his work on poetics, art and technology in relation to nature, fostered further by contemporary thinker Warwick Mules.<sup>32</sup>

The question of inside/outside borders or binaries that arises in Heidegger's technology critique is explored more specifically through Derrida's thinking on technology, memory and mourning in relation concepts of *echography* and *hauntology* that reveal 'spectres-in-machines' that produce diversification or destratification of experience. These spectres are alive in archival technologies and multiply as we increase technological archiving. These concepts lend themselves to performing the thinking of fragmentation with respect to stable narratives for an understanding of being human, forwarding instead release of life into poly-vocal and poly-local everyday encounters.

In order for these paternal figures (Heidegger, Derrida and their others) to inhabit as ghosts in my own ecology of performance practice for the PhD proper, a logic emerges whereby these paternal figures of thinking un-conceal a leitmotif that doubles or echoes its being into my own ability to move (my practice) from a solid ground toward a more fluid and pre-theoretical (ontological) space. At one level this might appear as an artificial conceit, as the practice actually tracts or traces my land-based performance works in relation to a kind of mastery (sure-footed and authorial in its initial iterations)<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Warwick Mules, *With Nature: Nature Philosophy as Poetics through Schelling, Heidegger, Benjamin, and Nancy* (Bristol, UK; Chicago, IL: Intellect, 2014).

<sup>33</sup> Crucially here is the movement of this research from control to release. The artifice or strictures of the early land-based iterations of this practice did not *consciously intend* controlled tactics. Rather, methodologically my practice shifted as I learned the stakes for letting be as a fundamental ethics key to the thesis question: allowing the *ghosts* to speak for themselves has been a constant challenge in the research—revealing my own controls, strictures of performance behaviour and ultimately revealing to me a far deeper *arche-trace* of belonging in the ontological unconcealing passivity for enabling things to be what they are. The narrative of *Desperado* is haunted with the ghost of my familial, authorised by my (now deceased) father—this work has been signed by the father in my initial telling and yet as I've moved through







that then moves into more non-mastery understandings or sophistications of the practice as it inhabits the sea. This artifice is also ‘housed’ within a grand-yet-personal-narrative of the father; my father and the family sailing boat, *Desperado*, that he built for us. *Desperado* becomes a key signifier or leitmotif; gathering other ghosts for assembling an approach that leads my *survival practice* from safe, secure, controlled grounds to the fluid and ultimately off-shore uncharted territories of this practice-based PhD research. This ecology of practices ultimately finds its resolve or dis/placed bearings in the survival of flotsam and jetsam,<sup>34</sup> a space-time coincident to an enigmatic space that cannot quite be known or structured (still-forming). It is a space of *agencement*, a time of *living-ghosts*—an after-mathing of fragments, forensic evidence and dark matter as the *choreographic object* of and as survival: A choreographic object housed within the unofficial archive that we will (have) come to survey and *know* as the final PhD performance presentation housed within a Black Box site for the ‘official’ purpose of its PhD examination.<sup>35</sup>

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the significance of its telling, other voices, marks, narratives have arrived in the multiple archives of others who have participated in my Choreography of Participatory Ecologies—the practice for this PhD.

<sup>34</sup> Flotsam and Jetsam are the terms used for debris that is from maritime vessels each has a very different meaning in Maritime Law. Flotsam derives from the French word *floter*, to float. It is the debris that has fallen off a ship due to shipwreck or accident. Jetsam describes items deliberately thrown overboard to lighten a ship’s load.

<sup>35</sup> The descriptive details, analysis and archiving of this ecology of practices is discussed in Part 2: moving from solid land, to sea, to uncharted off-shore waters; to an after-mathing enigmatic space of survival as *living-ghosts in the fragments, forensic offerings and dark matter* of the unofficial archive. This final stage, housing the unofficial archive of this PhD’s ecology of practices as thetic resolve, was housed within a Black Box—a site, in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand that was encountered in November 2017 for the purposes of the final performance of the PhD for examination purposes. The unofficial archive of forensic after-mathing as the grounds of an ecology-of-practices forwarding a poetics of ethics as survival now lives on in this writing; it *survives* after all this time, acting as a final witness to the journey. The demand here and now therefore is to say something *fruitfully question-worthy* that lives on or survives any complete understanding or closure to meaning. Something in its conclusion aims toward this choreographic object of *survival*.



### *Maternal Ship Mates*

Erin Manning's work circulating around *the minor gesture* located with Joanna Zylińska's work on minimal ethics will be discussed in Chapter 2. The assemblage or rapport builds in the *agencement* between minimal and minor as to their existentials for un-building grand survival narratives in our Anthropocene epoch. How does life live *on* under the paralysing affects of grand narratives of extinction? Zylińska suggest these narratives predetermine life, in as much as we become preoccupied thinking about living life rather than being underway with living. These narrative formations; the stories we live by open up her ground or context for understanding biological and social behaviours: How do ethics avail within this epoch? Zylińska *thinks-Anthropocene-as-ethics*—as an *agencement* spacing and temporalising for the potentiality of all life forms as agents living now: human and non-human life is scaled across plateaus of life enmeshed in a poetic-sensibility that speculates rather than provides didactic or authorial telling, and in doing so performatively in-thought practices its thesis. The minimal at the heart of her thesis aligns here across fracturing narratives in methods of relations for releasing thought into fields of formation of thought.

Manning's minor gesture exists as an imperceptible pre-category of forces that transform fields of relations. Minor gesturing prompts thought-in-action as an intervention to orthodox or closed thought on human agency and action: what she describes as *neurotypical* imaging of human behaviour that devalues alternative ways for being moved and moving through the world. This PhD locates its rapport or point-of-turning in an enmeshed minor gesturing and minimal ethics precisely in speculative compositions of telling-acting-performing. Zylińska and Manning both practice speculative affirmations of minor connections that aim for alternative politics, which scale (up, through and *toward*) in affect and effect in the acts of their tellings. Gestures toward are not prefigured in instrumental planning, rational programmes and propositional logic based on neurotypical images of understanding—rather,

they open our horizons<sup>36</sup> for being-in-toward without its conception of pre-mapping-forward, offering actions for living *now-still-in-formation*. Manning and Zylinska curate *agencement* for moving through my ecology-of-practices curating its poetic-ethical relations.

### *Choreographic Object/Afterlives*

As my research practice coalesces around a body of thought on thought-in-action (*choreo-graphics*) as a field in formation, the *agencement* of Manning and William Forsythe leads my thesis *toward* its choreographic object(s). What is an object within the speculative pragmatism of *this* choreography? This question unfolds in a minor gesture of the ‘choreographic object’ as an *after-math* or lingering affect of a work, or an event, that ultimately survives on after (and *as*) the event in its absence. Lepecki’s concept of *afterlives* witnesses a kind of lingering atmospherics or molecular hanging-on resonant with Manning’s distributed relations.

The proximity of Manning here is enlivened through my reading of Lepecki’s seminal text on the archive, choreography and bodies specifically in my conceptual performance of the ‘choreographic object’ in (and as) the final event. For Lepecki, as well as Walter Benjamin, the archive is a thing absolutely alive in and of itself born(e) from out of the work of art. In this temporality of “unmetaphorical objectivity”

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<sup>36</sup> As the term ‘horizon’ appears throughout this exegesis, we interpret it through a Heideggerian lens. As Christopher S. Yates explains “‘Horizon’ is akin to ‘situation,’ the locus of understanding in terms of our own projects and questions. Being situated in a horizon thus means we have certain interpretive ‘dispositions’ that we carry with us...”. Christopher S. Yates, “A Phenomenological Aesthetic of Cinematic Worlds,” *Contemporary Aesthetics* (2006), non pag, <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=394>. For Heidegger, horizons of disclosure is embodied in the language we speak, representing the ultimate limit of what is intelligible to us. See John Sallis et al., “Introduction,” in *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Text of Jacques Derrida*, ed. John Sallis (Chicago, IL; London, UK: The University of Chicago Press, 1987).



*Figure 7. Rafting-with lilos—Whau (Lo) Ting, 2016, Whau Arts Festival Avondale. Photo: Melissa Laing.*

what lives on—what survives—is life-living in distributed arrangements *as* an ecology of relations.<sup>37</sup> The most significant aspect here is with respect to the ‘object’ of Forsythe’s ‘choreographic object’<sup>38</sup> as I advance it as a work of deconstruction. This is, as an object that is not static and rather moves *us* as we move through time and space. Each time we might encounter an artwork, we do not encounter the same object. That is, we encounter a reading or relational experience *with* the work as expressed through the tissues or ecologies of associations that come with us. The boat *Desperado* (as seen at the beginning of the Introduction) is not the same image as I first encountered: it now triggers feelings of loss, mourning and other associations that overhang it—*still-in-information*.

The schematic contextual review of literature (Part 1: Chapters 1 & 2) will thus act as a kind of scene setting for introducing significant conceptual personae and relations that manifest through my Choreography of Participatory Ecologies (moving through to Parts 2 & 3) giving life generously and affirmatively toward its future. Chapter 3 provides a Review of Artists that gives the context of my practice and explains how it tethers in similarities and differences in this expanded field of choreographic practice.

## Ecologies of Participatory Practice

I frame my work as an Ecology of Participatory Practice, drawing on Erin Manning and Isabelle Stengers’ Ecology of Practices,<sup>39</sup> likening it to philosophical and ecological systems that describe dynamic working

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<sup>37</sup> André Lepecki, “The Body as Archive,” in *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2016), 4.

<sup>38</sup> William Forsythe, “Choreographic Objects,” in *William Forsythe and the Practice of Choreography: It Starts from Any Point*, ed. Susan Broadhurst (New York: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>39</sup> I have drawn on Ecology of Practices, described by both Isabelle Stengers and Erin Manning as practices that come together in difference; while Stengers focuses on specific practices such as science and philosophy, Manning’s use encompasses the relationality of environments. However, what they have in common is (as Manning says) not straining



systems that are dependent on each other. Bringing together somatics and choreographic thinking, I develop the concepts of *rafting*, *resting* and *recovery* through everyday actions and walking performances. These practices relocate subjectivities within minor contexts creating pre-categorical assemblages; these practices were activated through a series of survival tours on both land and water. These assemblages exist in an open-system where feedback loops allow for knowledge to be discovered and fed-back into the research process in a processual, accumulative manner. Choreography of Participatory Ecologies (outlined in Part 2: Design of Study) cross temporal and spatial scales enfolding accumulative methods and philosophies through movements and rhythms and temporalities of bodies as open dynamic systems of exchange. I referred to a code of practice through the acronym COPE that aimed to be a critical and conceptual performance practice within choreographic and participatory performance paradigms. The underlying aims of COPE were to:

1. De-authorise my position as the artist as expert, handing over the work to the participants and the choreography to the spontaneous affects of place and weather.
2. Challenge notions of performance as spectacle or entertainment, bringing attention to that which goes unnoticed.
3. Challenge my own habits of performance practice, attempting to create work that is sustainable, small, requires little preparation, and can merge into everyday life.
4. Evoke collective experiences of survival that embrace difference.
5. Bring attention to the code of mastery in everyday life and create interactive environments that activate a release of control through destabilisation and the unknown.

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toward homogeneity but to bringing in relation of difference. My addition of the word 'Participatory' brings to the fore the tactics of performance participation as creating new participatory performance compositions within a relational field that is capable of keeping difference alive. See Isabelle Stengers, "Introductory Notes on: An Ecology of Practices," *Cultural Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (March 2005), and Erin Manning, "Introduction: In a Minor Key," in *The Minor Gesture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

6. Investigate site responsive performance and contrast with performative frames of darkness in digital and theatrical environments as affective, immersive, interactive and archival.

In developing a code, it may seem that this project was falling into the instrumental nature of survival codes and safety protocols that hold us in our cautionary protective lives, however these tactics gave rise to further *ways of doing* as the research unfolded. Such a way of working was integral to Choreography of Participatory Ecologies that formed the un-Code/or the COPEing for undoing instrumental codes for performance and survival towards discovering ways of living life collectively or socially. Just like the operation of a sea-going vessel, COPE revealed practices for preparation and action in case of disaster, that transformed into actions that give attention to, take care of, self/other and environment (these are described as *Actions for living*). Further actions and tactics emerged during each survival tour through the participation and innovation of the participants responding to the task at hand. This practice operates within a Practice of Everyday Life where everyday people operate within the forces, structures and networks of a society, thus creating tactics for 'making do' in order to survive with a sense of an autonomous self.<sup>40</sup> COPEing Choreographies also aimed to create the experiencing, sensing of survival and disaster, sharing stories of survival that created new stories/performances for the Anthropocene. Choreographies emerged through the subsequent tactics of rafting, resting and recovery as a collective practice that I term *Rafting-with* (Chapter 4).

*Rafting-with*, participatory in action, not only provides an innovative strategy for performance practices but spills over into a code for everyday life, humanities, culture and science as we establish how we might participate in the future of the Anthropocene. The collecting of performance actions and instructions as *Actions for living*; as well as props and survival gear, *Technologies for listening* as a 'Survival Kit' (Chapter 4) enabled the accumulation and transformations of actions from one performance iteration to the next, with each re-telling enfolded the experiences from the participants into a new expression. Furthermore, the mapping of *Actions for living* on sites with specific environmental issues enacted *Somatic rituals*, responding specifically to place, engaging with boats and lilos (Part 3: Chapters 5 & 6). These somatic rituals were *memorialized* through actions of being-with others as a practice towards living life collectively or socially.

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<sup>40</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA; Los Angeles, CA; London, UK: University of California Press, 1988).

## From Land to Sea

Seventeen performance events—2 x interactive performance installations; 20 x Survival tours, 3 x Lilo Floats, 1 x Lilo Lecture, 5 x Rafting lilo tours, 1 x Instructional video, 1 x one-to-one experience offer an accumulative experiment moving from land-based performances towards the more fluid or liquid terrains of water and darkness, including the final performance 5 x Rafting survival tours (in RAFTING—*through the archives of my research*). These will be discussed in a sequential and topographical manner relating to the unfolding of the practice itself moving from solid land, (Part 2: Land, Chapter 4) to sea, (Part 3: Sea, Chapters 5 & 6) to uncharted off-shore waters; to an after-mathing enigmatic space of survival as living-in the fragments, forensic offerings and dark matter of the unofficial archive—offering an enigmatic space of release that can never be known. This space can only be known as fragmented, poetical dwelling, enigmatic and forensic—after-mathing all that *lives on—suvivre* (including backwash, fallout, trail, wake).

This final site becomes the unofficial archive of this PhD's Ecology of Practices as thetic resolve, held within a Black Box site—in Auckland, Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa New Zealand that was encountered in November (2017) for the final performance of the PhD for its examination.





## PART 1: RAFTING - *through the Literature*

## Chapter 1 – Surviving with others

*Agencement—un*

*Cicadas singing*

*storms approaching*

*weather-beaten skin*

*sea gulls cry*

*batten down the hatches*

The research is grounded in its aim toward a poetics as ethics for everyday release in relation to choreographic practice. At its heart a writing determined by movement (thought-in-action) is inferred by spatial and temporal difference as existential readings that manifest as everyday conditions. This is the ongoing primordial experience of presence and absence that reveal relations that mark our bodies and our everyday perceptions of living.

This first chapter on Heidegger rests on the logic of survival as an everyday phenomenon—a phenomenon productive of supplementary, fragmentary and lingering trace-structures poetically dwelling, ethically released. His discourse provides an opening to Zylinska's poetics and being-with technology and Derrida's echography as ghostwork as ethics for living with others (not controlling them). Heidegger and Derrida both work to expose the vulnerabilities of mastery through complicating biological determinants in relation to cultural and social contexts, thereby revealing ontological differences that place human beings in-situ or being-in-the-world where borders of belonging become complex, nuanced and poetically revealed through deconstructing instrumental logic. Their spatial and temporal deconstructions find strong resonance with pre-theoretical or pre-categorical understanding that moves away from subject-based identity categories and propositional logic—in this sense there exists resonance to Mannings' *agencement* in the oceanic poetic narratives performed throughout this PhD research.

Heidegger's ontological difference locates difference between Being and beings, locating Dasein as thinking-acting in modes of participation that express structural understanding for how we exist—*germane* here is our existence within an epoch of advanced technological progression. A series of Heideggerian concepts that reveal our attitudes of mastery in acts of *destruktion* provide this research with alternative poetic and non-instrumental paths for being-with-others (human and non) with technology. *Poetic-dwelling*, *truth-as-unconcealing*, *being-with*, *being-in-the-world*, *present-to-hand*, *ready-to-hand* and *gelassenheit* are some of the key Heideggerian modal structures and concepts that enliven my ecology of participatory practice. Each concept can only become meaningful as it coalesces around the other by way of a practice

that asks what it means for an artistic practice to be an agential force in the coming-to-presence of others, whereby alternatives to grand narratives of survival might seed their destruktion or *deconstruction*—a deconstruction that might emancipate other routes (modes of existence), less grand (minor and minimal) yet more ethically potential.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The terms *destruktion* and *deconstruction* sound like heavy-weighted methodological procedures unearthed from a Western metaphysical legacy manifest in poststructuralism and posthumanism from the existential phenomenology of Martin Heidegger (*destruktion*) and after him, Jacques Derrida (*deconstruction*). It is important to note that neither Heidegger nor Derrida was comfortable with perceiving their thinking as methodological for they ultimately revealed that any given *subject* of thinking was not *objectively knowable (totalisable)* especially through perceiving an *object* statically imaginable—but rather concepts are dynamic enterprises, productive of our own *belonging-with-knowing* as an ultimately emancipated condition: untethering or un-building belonging from any biased or hierarchical position. That is to say, deconstruction is not a method or procedure that can be thought of universally or without context, but rather is a performative alive (everyday) encounter conditioned by different contexts (different assemblages of being)—a spatial condition *differing* in every reading, citation and repeat of every possible encounter: For example, each encounter by different readers (say different examiners) construes a dynamic difference for meaning to occur—with each reading a new signing is performed. Deconstruction dismantles the notion that ‘I’ am a stable and knowable entity—this has provided me great release from the control over my own stories as statically imagined and in relation to performing myself and with others.



*Figure 8. Tethered Rafting, Other Waters/Survival Tours, 2014, Art on the Manukau, Māngere Bridge, Auckland. Video Still.*

## 1.1 Everyday—*Thought-in-Action*

This research asks how we come to understand Heidegger's philosophy of Being and the Being of beings, or existential phenomenology as a philosophy of the everyday. This might offer insights into my practice of *Rafting-with* as it manifests being-in-the-world through everyday actions: following instructions for survival that in turn become Choreography of Participatory Ecologies.

Heideggerian philosophical concepts of poiesis, techne and the Opening of being in relation to our modern epoch are relevant to this research through his later-philosophy or thinking on everyday proximity, art and technology. They thus bring us closer to the concept of being-with as a primordial authentic mode of Dasein: Revealing structures or modes of Being—Through such terms as *Being-in-the-world*; *being-with*; *being-in-itself and bringing-forth*, as a pre-intended openness to other beings that brings-forth how we might be with technology and nature.

Firstly, I describe Heidegger's earlier concepts of Truth Unconcealing, Thinking in Action, and Dasein as a primordial state of being underway in the everyday that brings proximity to the anxieties and grand narratives of the Anthropocene. These are the fundamentals behind being-with and *Rafting-with* as ways of moving through the world. Heidegger's own writing attempts to produce a thinking-in-action within the (post)structural performance in and of (his) language—an attempt at releasing philosophical propositional statements from mastery through discussing everyday structures of being human.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> I have already mentioned the use of the hyphen as an example of the poetic performance of Heidegger's language that foregrounds the event-like occurrence of language. "To develop in more detail poetic thinking after Heidegger, we must consider the pivotal role assumed in Heidegger's work by hyphens and colons, especially the function of hyphenation in bringing to the fore and amplifying a play on prefixes into a resonant nexus of possibilities for transformative turns of thinking. While traditionally the focus in philosophical thought falls on concepts and argument, I propose to evolve Heidegger's insights by stressing his language inventions, which I regard as providing his most critical momentum to his poetic recalibration of thinking." Krzysztof Ziarek, *Language after Heidegger* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 174.

Thinking is thought-in-action that shifts away from ‘philosophy’ and toward ‘thinking’.<sup>3</sup> This ‘thinking’ activates a bringing-forth toward a more primordial or authentic mode for questioning before propositional logic calculates (its) answers. Thinking becomes thought-in-action: a process; an under-way-ness for Dasein’s own most possibility to be within its average-everydayness. This everyday significance lifts philosophy out of a disciplinary epistemological framework and releases it into the everyday life of Dasein as a thinking being. For example, Heidegger’s term Dasein is one he uses for the being-there of human beings—human beings are underway in the (everyday) existence of their world. Human beings are immersed in our world and are underway with their projects, engaged within the facticity of our being, using tools and entities fundamental to our understanding of this immersive everyday world—hence, Heidegger’s concept of Dasein is his attempt to move beyond the philosophical construct of a subject that masters or sits outside of a world it objects, situating it within close proximity of Being-with. Heidegger is un-building or destrukting the philosophical binary of subject/object, as he suggests in the under-way-ness of Dasein’s being-in-the-world: “Dasein finds ‘itself’ proximally in what it does, uses, expects, avoids—in those things environmentally ready-to-hand with which it is proximally concerned.”<sup>4</sup> Heidegger goes on

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<sup>3</sup> Heidegger’s philosophical stance on thinking in his 1964 essay “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking” is aligned to an ancient Greek concept of truth as unconcealing, known as *aletheia* (implicit in Heidegger’s earliest writings from 1926 onwards). Truth-as-unconcealing or *aletheia* is a pre-philosophical way of understanding truth and cannot be translated by the episteme (or logos) of ‘truth’ by way of philosophy proper or truth-as-correctness. If the essence of truth that straightaway comes to reign as correctness and certainty can subsist only within the realm of unconcealment, then truth indeed has to do with *aletheia*, but not *aletheia* with truth. Heidegger thinks truth (*aletheia*) as more originary whereby unconcealing is a primordial disclosure—an ontology of thinking—that arrives without mediation by propositional truth. “Letter on Humanism” in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, trans. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1993), 141-81.

<sup>4</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 155. ‘Ready-to-hand’ and ‘present-at-hand’ are terms Heidegger uses to understand Dasein’s being in the world. Ready-to-hand reveals how Dasein uses things and in our projects we use things and they go unnoticed such as a hammer hammering a nail. We don’t notice the hammer unless it breaks, or we hit our thumb i.e. when the useful thing breaks. Ready-to-hand discloses an ontological structure for Heidegger as Dasein’s interpretative and understanding of its project or own most possibility to pro-ject. Like the hammer breaking example, this can help us

to suggest that human beings default to a more objective understanding of the world particularly when our worlds are ‘broken’ (Heidegger uses the term ‘conspicuous’ or ‘obstrusive’). This objectification of our world creates separation and dis/places human beings from its everyday situatedness.

## 1.2 Proximity & Distance: *Authentic and Inauthentic Everyday*

Heidegger’s everyday thinking on the *da sein* or *there-being* of human existence is an attempt to bring us closer to the affects and effects within our surrounding world—a world attuned<sup>5</sup> to our historic, cultural, social and economic proximity. Our world worlds us in the (attuned) associative equipmentality of our under-way-ness: if things break (become obstrusive or conspicuous)—such as a power-failure in our home, we are faced with our understanding toward the reliance of electricity in living our lives. That is, Heidegger suggests that when things become obtrusive or conspicuous it reveals our experience of being human in the proximate mode of our everyday encounter. Such an encounter reveals to us numerous aspects of human existence such as: reliance on things; objective experiences out of threat; and that we are thrown into a world—which is to say, we are born into a particular historic time, place and culture that determines our line of flight(s) from birth to death. Each and every one of us is drawn according to this set of everyday circumstances of *thrownness* and within these everyday conditions, Heidegger suggests a kind of emancipation exists in the reality for our own most possibility to be—that is to say, the temporality of Dasein for each and every moment offers us a potentiality.

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understand Heidegger’s Present-at-hand—the hammer presents an object – we take notice of this thing called hammer. In objectifying it rather than being underway with our projects, it sits up against a backdrop of other things (we don’t notice). The hammer does this through scenarios like breaking, or we don’t need it for our purpose—it might become outdated technology and we objectify it in terms of historicizing it (putting it in an objective state such as a ‘museum’s vitrine’).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 126-31. By “attuned” or “attunement,” we are referring here to Heidegger’s reference to one of the primordial disclosures of Dasein’s being. Also see Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude, Studies in Continental Thought* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 58-168 for a vital entry into understanding attunement and fundamental attunement in relation to the fundamental disclosure of Dasein.



This is significant for this project with respect to how survival narratives—narratives of survivalist mastery—produce effects and affects on a grand scale that contribute to fear-based conditions via scaling through distancing. Narratives of the survivalist mastery with respect to the Anthropocene construe intensive cause and effect narratives that produce overwhelming readings based on themes of catastrophe and extinction—narratives we will come to explore in relation to eco-criticism and artistic practices which critically and poetically respond to these mastery-survivalist-propositions whereby we imagine the fatality of human and all forms of life on earth. This thesis attempts to show that narratives of survivalist mastery, in their appropriation of homogenous grand rhetorical modalities (grand styles),<sup>6</sup> aid impotence, drawing despair as a detached and distancing im/possibility. Heidegger describes a fundamental relation here across the *inauthentic* and *authentic* that I discern in relation to these narratives of instrumental (inauthentic) mastery and poetic (authentic) potentiality.<sup>7</sup> Such as our everyday existence is caught up in that which Heidegger describes as inauthentic Dasein construed out of everyday collective norms of under-way-ness. Heidegger will describe this inauthentic Dasein (without judgement and as an ordinary fact of being) as

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<sup>6</sup> Martin Heidegger, “The Grand Style,” in *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1991), 124-37. Heidegger wrote on Nietzsche’s ideas of style such as: “The Grand Style.” Heidegger thinks through this “Grand Style” as something that captures all of artistic expression from the skill in which we are beholden by beauty in its presentment and our taking it in as we receive it: “the grand style; the essence of art becomes actual,” suggesting this would be the proper ‘place’ of artistic expression or art. And further: “art places the whole of Dasein in decision and keeps it there (the unification of flagrant contradictions in Dasein).” Heidegger holds the fundamental understanding of Dasein, like Nietzsche’s art does in some space of holds i.e. in perpetual in decision—a holding that holds “flagrant contradictions” marking art ‘form-giving’ as a ruse or repressive space too.

<sup>7</sup> It is significant to note here that these relations are not thought as binary or dialectical. In as much as I’ve disclosed the concepts of ontic and ontological relations in Heidegger’s thought, the relations of *authentic* and *inauthentic* Dasein; mastery survivalist narratives and poetic de-distancing narratives are disclosive relations unconcealing how we are being in this world. This research project attempts to reveal or disclose the *agencement*, *joining or relations of being-with* and *belonging-together* in and of an ecology-of-practices that are *still-in-formation*. It does not refuse the ontic categories of instrumental and objective logic, even the grand narratives of survival, but rather enquires into the more pre-categorical ontological differences of those structures (their logic and attitudes).

*they-self* (*das Mann*) which is a way of being: leveled out by such everyday tendencies as fashions, styles, modes of communication, behaviors of social connectivity etc. While Heidegger will suggest that we cannot or should not avoid the average-everydayness of living life as part of inauthentic Dasein, it is also productive of an understanding of living that becomes uncritical and reductive to homogenous beliefs and values.<sup>8</sup> Thus narratives of survivalist mastery that exist as ungraspable imaginings of global warming, climate change, resource depletions and extinction, envelops the ‘nobody’ of us as masses collected under dominant registers of surrender—mastery survives us in this ‘nobody’ or disembodied objective and distancing reality.

### 1.3 Two Fogs – *Rising Anxieties*

Dasein becomes alienated from its more authentic self, reduced to the genuine possibility for us to be. That which is also productive of a kind of fog, a calm—or in Heidegger’s language, a tranquility whereby all is fine with the world, our more fundamental attunement would suggest an unease (or in Heidegger’s language: anxiety). In bringing us closer to our concerns, the fundamental attunement of authentic Dasein is ‘anxiety’ (or *angst*), as the grand mood (or *grundstimmung*) alerts us to when our own most possibility to be is paradoxically closed off. This is due to existing too much in the average everydayness of *they-self*. Paradoxically it is this same sense of unease that occurs as this fog or *they-self* starts to fall (away). At this cross-roads of being (across authentic and inauthentic Dasein) we stand with an acute understanding that our world is in crisis—it is the cross-roads that I will refer to as we move closer to poetic thought-in-action in relation to our technological understanding and possibility to be in the movement from a mastered relation with technology and one of release. In this cross-roads moment Heidegger suggests:

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward S. Robinson. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell, 1962), 165. Heidegger says: “The ‘they’, which supplies the answer to the question of the ‘who’ of everyday Dasein, is the ‘nobody’ to whom every Dasein has already surrendered itself . . .”

“the world has the character of completely lacking significance”.<sup>9</sup> It is a (lack of) significance based upon what Dasein thought it valued but no longer finds engaging or sustaining for its possibility. It is a world lacking significance based upon how this individual Dasein thought it fitted (within the public sphere of belonging). Heidegger will also describe this experience as being stranded, cut adrift in a world it can no longer quite make sense of—separated out from the *they-self* of social-cultural ways of average leveled-out ways of knowing. This lack of significance or being stranded is significant for this project in that anxiety is common and human beings are commonly fleeing from this kind of fundamental *attunement*. Heidegger’s position would attempt a thinking that stays or endures this fundamental *attunement* as it provides a genuine questioning as to our most possibility to be in the world.

#### 1.4 CARE Proximity

The metaphors or metamorphors of being stranded or cut adrift should not equate with an anxiety construed as a grand act of worrying. Rather, it is a subtle and gentle mood—it arrives rarely attuned to the calm of a very different sensibility to the general malaise of inauthentic *das mann* yet is unconcealed within this fog: it frees us as our authentic self comes into existence and does not reside in the mood of fear.<sup>10</sup> Anxiety emancipates and brings us closer to Heidegger’s ontological structure of ‘care’ (*sorge*) as the Being of Dasein—it is the withdrawal from the world as a totalisable entity asking the non-mastered question of how being-in-the-world as a whole is disclosable. This is a fundamental question released in non-mastery as anxiety-produced care for our own understanding or distinct way of being in the world emerges. In this subtle and rare mood of anxiety that enables us to withdraw and see the inauthentic

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>10</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 187-88. Heidegger will distinguish between fear and this more primordial disclosure or *grundstimmung* of anxiety. He will suggest fear is of some particular thing in the world that if removed will cause the fear to disappear e.g. a fear of snakes—if the snake is removed from my path (by another) I will no longer feel fear. Yet anxiety for Heidegger is about nothing in particular—it is indeterminate and is not directed at anything in particular. Anxiety is about being-in-the-world as such: As Heidegger suggests: anxiety is “nothing and nowhere”.

spectacle of a world as hectic activities, our everyday world becomes strange to us—uncanny—or what Heidegger calls unhomely or *unheimlich* (un-building). We no longer see the point of participating in hectic life: I become relevant in my own conspicuousness as I drift, become stranded, and yet with this subtle, more basic mood myself becomes self-aware distinguishing itself from the world—what Heidegger refers to as becoming individual; where I become free from other people and other things, where I find my own freedom to think for myself.

In my own Choreography of Participatory Ecologies there exists a movement from being-in-a-world that is caught up in the spectacle of dominant flows charted by controlled measures of drills, leadership, signage and tours that demarcate the participatory masses following a dominant lead. Heidegger would suggest that the *they-self* reveals an average reduction of thinking and here my practice traverses this reduction (via tours, drills and instructions of authorial intent) thereby critiquing the affects and effects of averaging out human understanding within the spectacle of grand survivalist narratives that circulate homogenous, monolithic and normalising concepts of climate change, extinction and survival of the planet. As the practice evolves within the PhD research it strives for individuals to reach their own states of self-awareness—that cannot be predetermined or forcefully noted—whereby a release or withdrawal might show (initially an uncanny being) toward a less mastered and thus authentic mode of participation in the world as a survival (mood) of everyday release. *Rafting-with* thus participates in difference and through *agencement* that emancipates a release from strictures of control as a drift without fear yet with heightened self-awareness. Dasein (Being-there) brings moments of authentic being through close proximities rejecting scientific and objective paradigms.

The practice thus attempts to open up release from more distancing affects and effects in order that a proximate and inhabitable scale relating to Dasein's own most possibility to be (unconceals) itself. A scale of proximity that de-distances our worlding from the totalisable objectivity of world—an agency that this project attempts in its Choreography of Participatory Ecologies instantiated in minor assemblages of participation for fracturing grand survivalist narratives of unimaginable presentation. According to

Steven Shaviro, such scales and distancing contribute to the Earth's environmental status as a long-term slow-motion catastrophe as opposed to a crisis (a short sharp event that is recovered from). His discourse implies that we are already over the tipping point as far as being in a permanent environmental predicament and our state of denial is only postponing the inevitable catastrophe as the distant future remains a concept beyond imagination.<sup>11</sup>

Artists such as those involved in *The Distance Plan*<sup>12</sup> suggest thinking across vastness—spanning across vast distance or time can allow for people to come to terms with the concept that the climate is changing rapidly—and attempts to map “the distance to unimaginable futures” through making small plans at an everyday scale. In this respect, the distance unimaginable in New Zealand artist Amy Howden-Chapman's work *They Say Ten Thousand Years* (2014)<sup>13</sup> where “Howden-Chapman draws comparisons between New Zealand's Nuclear Free movement –a successful political action– and the contemporary fight against

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<sup>11</sup> See Steven Shaviro, “Accelerationist Aesthetics: Necessary Inefficiency in Times of Real Subsumption,” *e-flux Journal*, no. 46 (June 2013) and Steven Shaviro, *No Speed Limit: Three Essays on Accelerationism* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Press, 2015). Shaviro's argument is that neo-capitalism has rendered the inability to imagine a future resulting in sensationalised apocalyptic science fiction novels and movies that attempt to imagine a world beyond such constructs. However it is such imagination that draws on *minimal accelerationism* theory that suggests that society might be able to move beyond the economic and political structures that lead to inequality through a decoding, a de-territorialisation and, re-territorialisation (Deleuze cited by Shaviro, 2013). Thus the imagining of a new future that uses technology for *good* rather than going back to old ways of pre-technology.

<sup>12</sup> Abby Cunnane and Amy Howden-Chapman, *The Distance Plan (Journal Series and Exhibitions)*. (St Paul St Gallery, AUT University, Auckland, NZ: DP Press, 2013-2016.). A published journal of conversations between artists around distance and climate change and an exhibition held at Favorite Goods Gallery, Los Angeles, 2012. See <http://thedistanceplan.org> for contributing local and international artists.

<sup>13</sup> Amy Howden-Chapman, *They Say Ten Thousand Years* (Exhibition), *The Distance Plan* (Auckland: Te Uru Gallery, 2014). Howden-Chapman explores concepts of distance in this work that explores New Zealand's 1990s anti-nuclear movement. The figure 10,000 denotes the time in years it takes nuclear waste by-products to break down in the environment. Her concern is that it is unfathomable, immeasurable to our imaginations for this figure to be of significant impact on





Figure 9. The Distance Plan, Series of journals, ST PAUL St Gallery, AUT University, Auckland, NZ: DP Press, 2013-2016.



climate destabilization”,<sup>14</sup> *exists* as *imaginable* in the very construct of images described by catastrophe and disaster discourses from such sources as images, films, art, multi-media, etc. The sensationalism of disasters that seem beyond our immediate imaginable futures is however ironic, as it appears today that those in their safe contained societies are no longer safe—however, the successful capitalists are already planning their escape to the hills from the threat of rising sea levels.

Here lies the question of how we might locate authentic and subtle moments of unease within or out of these grand scales as they accelerate in perpetuation of distancing scales and abyssal dimensions: How is it possible to reveal authenticity as a research possibility in light of the fact that authenticity is a self-awareness revealed at any given time and situation within ordinary everyday activities (reading a book, waiting for a bus, watching a scene) by each individual in their own relationship to the world? While I will hold this difficult question-worthy mark for now, I can reveal that the attempt for any release from mastered spectacle will arrive through my eco-poetics of critical re-telling in direct relation to the dominant story of scientific objectification.

Timothy Morton, in his text *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*, describes the distancing affect as rhetoric such as global warming (a scientific objectification or grand survivalist narrative) inters itself as a ‘hyper-object’; an entity of vast spatial and temporal dimensions that encourages a distancing from the everyday and the actual event of a changing climate. Morton’s eco-criticism (concerned with an environmental aesthetics) argues that distance occurs in our contemporary

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our everyday consciousness. It becomes a mythic figure; distance beyond comprehension. The term ‘break down’ in the environment could also be thought for this research as a serious *breaking down OF* the environment. Ironically, perhaps, 10,000 years is the time humans have experienced stability up until the recent present. See the essay by Victoria Wynne-Jones, *Rainbow Warriors of Light* in Exhibition They Say Ten Thousand Years, Amy Howden-Chapman (2014). (Auckland, NZ: McCahon House Trust, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Victoria Wynne-Jones, “*Rainbow Warriors of Light*,” 1.

environmental rhetoric through a romanticism of environment leading to ideals, representations and less tangible understandings of everyday or more “properly ecological forms of culture, philosophy, politics, and art”.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Warwick Mules points out that the arts and humanities are often reduced to a supplement to science and economics;<sup>16</sup> as Susan Stewart has noted:

emphasizing the centrality of aesthetics seems more and more to be a matter of wishful thinking—the aesthetic seems to set sail and disappear over the horizon while the sea of discussion churns beneath the winds of cost-benefits analyses. Over and over, sustaining the biodiversity of nature is put in conflict with the needs of economic development: efficiency and a certain form of blunt pragmatism (as if bluntness were a form of pragmatism) reign. Indeed, the selfishness of the instrumental comes into relief in its full impracticality: calculating our approach to natural resources as a matter merely of current economic pressures, acting within a framework of rationality that is in truth irrational when one takes the long view, valuing false needs as if they were vital to our existence all create an atmosphere of emergency that obscures the true unfolding disaster of our relation to nature’s finitude.<sup>17</sup>

Stewart’s rhetoric in this instance performs a kind of tragic storm caused by the instrumental nature of economic pressures that reveals much the same marine metaphors that this practice engages with. Stewart goes on to point out that the valuing of aesthetics in relation to environmental policy is more of an “insistence on taking time, appreciating, refusing to skip a step or fall into practices [...] without

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<sup>15</sup> Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: Harvard University Press, 2009), 1.

<sup>16</sup> Warwick Mules, *With Nature: Nature Philosophy as Poetics through Schelling, Heidegger, Benjamin, and Nancy* (Bristol, UK; Chicago, IL: Intellect, 2014), 4.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Stewart, “Response to Brady, Phillips and Rolston,” *Environmental Values* 15, no. 3 (2006): 317, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30302162>. Cited in Mules, 215.

consideration of their outcomes.”<sup>18</sup> This *time taking* is of relevance to this project suggesting that perhaps what art has to offer are everyday practices that encourage ways of being-with the environment rather than against. In fact what this might suggest is grand narratives of survival and disaster can be brought closer through everyday artistic encounters that attune us to the anxieties of contemporary existence, revealing how we might be with-nature in a non-instrumental way.

### 1.5 Rafting as an Artistic and Poetic Event

Heidegger will bring emphasis to proximity in that we need to take more care in looking at what is close to us (what is everyday), in the things that command our attention. Art is one such thing that draws us in closer and in my ecology of practice or poetic-aesthetics I have expressed this (in part) through a DIY aesthetic (as described earlier) as a performative agent evoking a kind of realism and proximity that deconstructs phantasmagoria of instrumental survival narratives.<sup>19</sup>

In today’s world we live with modern technology in such a way that its dominance in our life reveals a double-illusion of being. That is the illusion that technology delivers a brilliance as phantasmagoria or spectacle, as the immediacy and hiddenness of algorithms magically connect social spaces, events, calendars, us, in an accelerated fashion—a magic that diminishes when ‘our’ frustrations emerge due to the breakdown of technology—when it becomes obtrusive or conspicuous—‘broken’. In this illusion modern technology hides or (in Heidegger’s terms) enframes us as our perception with it appears as ‘nature’, as a natural phenomenon, part of contemporary life in our going-along-with it.

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<sup>18</sup> Stewart, “Response to Brady, Phillips and Rolston,” 317.

<sup>19</sup> Take as an omnipotent example of this phantom of rescue, those tranquil representations of cartoon figures on airplane emergency information paraphernalia that ‘assure’ us of safety void of trauma in the narrative of a plane crash. Rather, my DIY aesthetic attempts to counter the grand distant narratives in putting together its makeshift and thrifty ways of proximity for revealing an open possibility for opening re-assemblages.

Heidegger's analytics of poetics and modern technology opens up perceptions to a broader horizon in terms of the destining of Being. His seminal essay on technology and poetics, *The Question Concerning Technology* puts into practice the revealing of Cartesian subjectivity perception as that perception limited by "truth" of calculation—Heidegger calls toward another unconcealment of technology as poetic. Our vision is limited by a certain subjectivism produced by Cartesian thought—reducing things to representational objects, instrumentally 'using' things as projections onto an already enframed (*Ge-stell*) or pre-conceived world—what Heidegger refers to as the (age of the) 'world-picture'. In this enframed subjectivity we (humans) "miss Being altogether (we 'forget' Being)." Being's horizon is too broad (distant) "it overshoots the mark, it looks over things instead of with them."<sup>20</sup> Heidegger's later critique focuses on technology as belonging to a phase where he privileges the 'event' of Being itself (*Ereignis*)—this is where we get to for discussing how art can be the poetic unconcealing of the event of Being.

## 1.6 Bringing-Forth as Contemporary Poetics

Following Aristotle's theory of causality, Heidegger evokes the four(-fold) causes of becoming as bringing-forth in his example of ancient Greek *techne* or being-with technology in making the artwork come to appearance. *Poiesis* is a bringing-forth of *techne* and not a force of nature operating on things—rather this bringing-forth is that working through things themselves: *poiesis* shapes things according to their immanent possibilities, in the way they come forth and appear through time and space as a singular thing. In terms of *poiesis*, the thing is art ... "what is brought forth by the artisan or the artist".<sup>21</sup> Art

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<sup>20</sup> See: Warwick Mules, "Heidegger's Thing," in *With Nature: Nature Philosophy as Poetics through Schelling, Heidegger, Benjamin, and Nancy* (Bristol, UK; Chicago, IL: Intellect, 2014), 113.

<sup>21</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, First edition, 1977), 10-11. Cited in Mules, "Heidegger's Thing," in *With Nature: Nature Philosophy as Poetics through Schelling, Heidegger, Benjamin, and Nancy*, 113. One specific example is of the silver chalice that comes to appearance as it gathers its artisan, its material and its future usage as a chalice, moving its static being into futural becoming. The silver chalice has the bursting open belonging to bringing-forth not in itself, but in another (*en allio*), in the craftsman or artist.





*Figure 10. Under the Sail, Weathering the Whau, 2014, Whau Arts Fest, Avondale, Auckland.*  
Photo: Jody Yawa McMillan.

shines, commanding our attention and we draw closer to the relationality of an immanent becoming—an ‘infinite’ creation of the world (re)played. Poiesis is not ‘in’ the artwork as confined as object or ‘in’ the artist—it is rather the “bursting forth” that is part of both—relationally construed.

Heidegger’s questioning of the essence of technology reveals poiesis of bringing-forth—that Gilles Deleuze will term ‘prehension’ in his essay *The Event*, describing the poetic interconnection “as something more than a connection or conjunction”.<sup>22</sup> As Warwick Mules advocates, Heidegger’s Being is not a mystical totalising schema that envelops us or is some ‘mystical plenum’ (or horizon) that shapes existents or beings. Rather, Heidegger’s questioning of technology or technologically mediated life reveals us in our historical finitude—a prehended existence that cannot be totalised as this history or that history but rather historicity as that revealing to us (of) Being as poiesis in its shining.<sup>23</sup> It would be problematic to align ‘nature’ as an interconnected system tending toward balance as ecological thought has done in its approximation of Heidegger’s work.<sup>24</sup> Rather Heidegger thinks of technology and nature as that which ‘stirs and strives’<sup>25</sup> in encounters with things. Nature for Heidegger is not a homeostatic model (coming out of some classical-mechanistic present-to-hand model), but rather is hidden from us when we ‘see’ nature as present-to-hand—as an objective ‘thing’ in scientific terms, or as ready-to-hand equipment for use.

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<sup>22</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 78. Cited in Mules, *With Nature: Nature Philosophy as Poetics through Schelling, Heidegger, Benjamin, and Nancy*, 239, Note

<sup>11</sup> A ‘prehension’ connects parts without a prefigured whole. Without preconceiving this thing as a totality—and rather prehension releases the infinite completion as open possibility aligning this concept to Nancy’s (re)playing of the creation of the world as infinite movement and relationality.

<sup>23</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Thesis on the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations* (London, UK: Pimlico Edition, 1999). Walter Benjamin would suggest that this revealing is “a chip of messianic time” revealed to us in the shock of recognition for how we have come to be in modes of historic revealing.

<sup>24</sup> Mules, “Heidegger’s Thing,” in *With Nature: Nature Philosophy as Poetics through Schelling, Heidegger, Benjamin, and Nancy*, 114. For an ongoing discussion of this predetermined balance or equilibrium espoused by ecology in some uptake of Heidegger’s work see Note 12 on pp. 239-240.

<sup>25</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 100.



I move closer to understanding Heidegger's analysis of modern technology in relation to nature and his correspondence to art. Modern technology orders nature into 'standing reserve' (*Bestand*) for material made ready for technical use. We can see this clearly in an example of oil ready-made as fossil fuel—reserved and stored for motor engine usage. Nature is 'set upon'<sup>26</sup> and our relationship to technology becomes instrumentally perceived as a means-ends relation: fossil fuels for human ends in transportation requires that lands and oceans are captured and fought over under all guises of all rhetorical types, enframing (*Ge-stell*) our relation to technology as instrumental. Heidegger's caution of 'danger' lies in our inability to see the essence of technology in the face of a mastered normative (*they-self*) perception of technological means as standing reserve. This is the otherness to technological enframing, whereby time as an epochal shift such as today's consciousness around the Anthropocene as an historical (existing) era is within our political imaginary now (evidenced by climate change, etc.) and offers us this 'moment' of 'saving power' as poesis.<sup>27</sup> Heidegger sees this historical contemporary moment as the epochal event of opening in the technology itself (*Ereignis*), where "another destining, yet veiled, is waiting".<sup>28</sup> "But where danger is, grows the saving power also".<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> I have previously discussed Heidegger's notion of being stranded when we feel cut adrift from the normative social and cultural *they-self* (*das Mann*) and the liberation (releasement) that opens forwarding our own most possibility to be. This same 'moment' of release is inferred at the conclusion to Heidegger's analysis as intimated by the 'saving power' here.

<sup>28</sup> Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 37.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 28. Another beginning that is elicited (poetically) in Heidegger's use of Holderlin's poem or poetic stanza. Heidegger also wrote *The Question Concerning Technology (and other essays)* in 1949-1955 after the devastating instrumental effects and affects of an epochal shift in world history with respect to WWII. He is aware of the future and strives forward, stirs and strives for another 'saving power' as the 'other beginning' within and through technology, calling for a 'free relationship to it. Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy: From Enowning, Studies in Continental Thought* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 289. See Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 3.

In survival tours throughout this research the focus on costumes as technologies for survival (which I describe in Part 2), that include equipment and action, not only explores how we are with such technologies in a non-instrumental way, but reflects on the use of technologies as a means to an end. Heidegger's critique of modern technology asks us to think of our relation as one of poiesis (referring to the Greek concept of bringing-forth). This concept of poetics does not construe a coming prior to an instrumental cause-effect relation with modern technology, but rather infers a trans-immanence<sup>30</sup> located in things as part of their way of being. This is the truth of unconcealing (*aletheia*)<sup>31</sup> as the showing of Being itself; what Heidegger refers to as the openness in Being. Art contributes to this openness or event of being in the way it announces a different kind of ordering with technology beyond means-ends attitudes—that opens to a different possible encounter of technology. In relation to my ecology of participatory practices and *Rafting-with* I consider here Heidegger's thinking of bringing-forth as poetic trans-immanence as the event or showing of a non-instrumental way with and through modern technology.

The question of trans-immanence also implicates a question of spatiality, which holds a key concern in relation to installing the Black Box site (for the final performance event: RAFTING). This called for infinite variation (*agencement*) of each singular encounter. Heidegger will suggest that art affirms such a technologically ordered space as well as resists these orders or strictures: I take the Black Box with its strictures, codified by spatial programmes that purpose build for fields of theatre and performing arts. It is his concept of *gelassenheit* or the 'letting be'<sup>32</sup> that releases things from technological enframing in

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<sup>30</sup> Poetic immanence is not a substrate of Being with its own internal dynamism that pushes things along, but an 'event' of the openness in Being itself.

<sup>31</sup> Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 11-12. As indicated already (in earlier footnote), *aletheia* is the ancient Greek term for truth as unconcealing.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 144. *Gelassenheit*: 'letting be' or releasement, where "freedom now reveals itself as letting beings be". The concept of 'gelassenheit' can be traced back to Nietzsche and Schelling. Heidegger's critique of Schelling is a crucial moment in his philosophical development, as it marks the point at which Heidegger ceased thinking of freedom in terms of human *Dasein* as the ultimate good, and rather allowed him to think freedom in terms of the co-existence of good

readiness for poetic (or poetical) becoming otherwise. If Heidegger's concept of *gelassenheit* serves as a kind of ethical dwelling that affirms technological order within modern technological frameworks, at the same time resisting it, he is alluding to the other opening of technology that does not require us to travel back to classical antiquity or a romantic concept of nature free beyond [our epochal] technological framing. Rather, his spatial analytics influence temporality of today insofar as we become open to the other of technological instrumentality in the between or relationality of a thing's trans-immanence or bringing-forth.

If my Ecology of Participatory Practices hosts its 'final' showing for the PhD in a normative performance space of the Black Box architecture, it does so for two key reasons: i) to reframe the practice away from any romantic notion of nature or ecology that espouses nature as a homeostatic and distant (free) object contained within the strictures of grand mastery narratives of rescuism—i.e., as in the mythos or existence of pristine technologically-free places (as *natura naturans*); and ii) to question survival in terms of today via one of the most technologically strictured places for my kind of art practice: the Black Box.<sup>33</sup> In doing so, I hope to reveal other ethical and poetic modes for encountering this other way for being-with our highly mediated technologically *enframed* worlds. Heidegger will lean on art as the most possible poetic call or event for opening us to this 'other beginning' of human destiny.<sup>34</sup> As Richard Rojcewicz has concluded in his work on Heidegger and technology<sup>35</sup> "art awakens trust" in Being as something other

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and evil as absolute possibility. See Mules, "Heidegger's Thing," in *With Nature: Nature Philosophy as Poetics through Schelling, Heidegger, Benjamin, and Nancy*, 117, & 249, Note 11.

<sup>33</sup> Within this there is also the poetic analogy at play of a Black Box (the object that tells the narrative post-disaster of what went wrong; the Black Box recovered from an airplane crash or ship wreck) that will be discussed more explicitly in the Design of Study section.

<sup>34</sup> See Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 25-26, and Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy: From Enowning*.

<sup>35</sup> See Richard Rojcewicz, *The Gods and Technology: A Reading of Heidegger* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 206.

than technological production. This would suggest that art to be poetically open and ethically dwelling, it exists free of instrumental imposition. Rojcewicz thus continues to impute that art might ‘save us’ because art brings home to us poiesis, the showing of our technologically enframed (*Ge-stell*) attitudes and in doing so reveals another path: this other path, another showing, another unconcealing as in the truth-of-un-concealing or *aletheia*. It is significant to mention that truth-as-unconcealing is not that of a hidden past chipped away at to reveal a prior condition, rather for Heidegger being is given in the trans-immanence or ‘thinging’ in the gathering capacity of a thing—it is a futural possibility of bringing-forth that comes out of withdrawal.<sup>36</sup> This future-possibility does not exist within a totalised framework of a thing destined for (its means to) its ends, as perceived in instrumental design for obsolescence. For just one explicit example of this instrumentality, we might take the successive rate at which Apple technology revises its generational products (iPhones, MacBooks, iMacs, iPads, iPods, iTunes, incompatible Apps ...) at an accelerated rate whereby each new generation requires new tethering devices, software and hardware alike, for everyday use. This accelerated generational ‘updating’ prefigures a predestined and instrumental commodity-fuelled attitude toward technology in the service of economic gain—under rhetorical guises

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<sup>36</sup> Aletheia’s truth-as-unconcealment is also a movement of withdraw as in the withdrawal or exhaustion of an instrumental or mastery attitude in the letting be or thinging of things. However, Heidegger will suggest that in the age of modern technology things cannot thing, because *poiesis* is concealed from them: the withdraw of poiesis concealed by the dominance of enframing (*Ge-Stell*). Withdrawal is future-orientated, opening into possibilities of appearing yet to take place. Things are singular yet possess being through gathering of other beings—as discussed earlier in relation to the silver chalice and the four-fold. As Mules describes, Heidegger also gives analysis with an earthenware jug for the way it gathers other things to it: wine, someone to pour the wine and all other things that allow the jug to be the jug that it is, including the earth on which it stands and the sky that opens up space to allow it to volume forth in its particular shape and size, as well as the use to which it is put, perhaps to provide refreshment, to give thanks to the gods or to share social time with others. There is no inner ‘jugness’ concealed by the appearance of the jug, but simply a range of uses whereby the jug can be the jug that it is. That is, the jug’s thing-being is ineluctably future orientated in the opening of the ‘void’ of possibilities: “the vessel’s thingness does not lie at all in the material of which it consists, but in the void that it holds.” Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, 169. Cited in Mules, “Heidegger’s Thing,” in *With Nature: Nature Philosophy as Poetics through Schelling, Heidegger, Benjamin, and Nancy*, 120.

for being contemporary, being (as) economically, commercially, innovatively, imaginatively—viable within the normative standards of expected neoliberal, globalised and cosmopolitan life. The narrative arcs contained within these rhetorical guises veil (albeit thinly) predestined technological being as totalised things, made within instrumental attitudes evidenced by successive obsolescence. However, in many new media art practices these kinds of devices are revealed otherwise to instrumental contexts brought-forth into new ways for showing ourselves to ourselves, bringing ourselves along another poiesis path for reconsidering our destining with these objects.

Canadian artist Janet Cardiff is known for video and audio walks (often archival) that create a layering of scenes over other shifting temporal realities. Her downloadable audio narratives follow journeys that require no maps or guides—such as Audio Walk: *The Missing Voice (Case Study B) (Part One)*<sup>37</sup> situated at the former Whitechapel Library in East London (now Whitechapel Gallery), which I have personally experienced—taking the listener (connected via iPod and headphones) on a walk through East London. The layering of the narrative from 1999 and the present creates a disrupt of a double world between imagination, past and present, where characters (and some long-gone places) are described and appear as ghosting figures as you walk along. The instrumentality of the technology is transformed into an enveloping scene/soundtrack that allows for technological becomings that open into a poetics of place, yet the listener merely appears as one of the many people listening to headphones as they walk along the city streets. The experience is one of being connected to those in the story yet separated from the everyday world around you.

In my practice of *Rafting-with* I similarly embrace technology in its most domestic use where we carry a phone in our pocket or take photos on our iPad when on holiday. Such use of technology requires minimal skill or at least slow accumulation of skill that is learned over time. As it is integrated into society

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<sup>37</sup> Janet Cardiff, *The Missing Voice (Case Study B) (Part One)*, Audio Walk (Whitechapel Gallery, 1999).





Figure 11& 12. Participating in *The Missing Voice*, Janet Cardiff, 1994, East London.  
Photos: Christina Houghton March 2017.







it thus changes who we are (in relation to it) through social adaption and ways of being in subtle ways that are not always immediately obvious (i.e., social etiquette changes over time so is now quite normal for people to be looking at their phones while waiting for someone in a café). These types of technology are now extensions of our bodies as we virtually and somatically experience part of our lives through them. Instrumentally they can tell time and measure our levels of activity yet at the same time they provide a portal to poetic ways of living such as access to music, video and art as well as social interaction. Local Auckland choreographer Becca Wood describes somatic thinking and the technological body through *choreoauretics*, in her work *Listening for Disappearing* (2015).<sup>38</sup> This piece combines audio listening with concepts of disappearing and walking as an act of recovery for the St James Theatre (an old derelict theatre in Auckland that is being developed into city apartments). At this site her choreographic thinking is transferred to sensory audio encounters that provoke a shift in thinking towards alternative experiences of subjectivity in the city, connecting people via technological listenable apparatus. Meeting under the statue of Aspiration at the top of Lorne Street, I follow her recorded instructions for performer/participant<sup>39</sup> and take actions when instructed. The difference between each participant and their responses (performance) is both temporal and choreographically constructed (due to different sound tracks and errors in pressing play). What remains is a collective of individuals acting out rituals of recovery in spatial and temporal scales that bring attention to the scales of institutional bureaucracy affecting the long-term survival of the St James Theatre. As I recently walked past the now half-demolished St James I am again reminded how these works are a mark for changing physical and technological landscapes. Wood suggests that her

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<sup>38</sup> Becca Wood, *Listening for Disappearing*, Audio Walk (Auckland University, 2015). Live audio performance. See Becca Wood, "Listening for Disappearing—a Choreoauretic Practice," *Choreographic Practices* Volume 8, no. 2 (2017), [https://doi.org/10.1386/chor.8.2.333\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/chor.8.2.333_1).

<sup>39</sup> I spent a number of months, with another two performers, with Becca as participants in her PhD project responding to sound scores and improvising actions at the site. I thus became a performer/participant on the day of the performance, having a slightly different sound score to the participants that arrived on the day. This temporal shift help blur differentiations and boundaries between performers and audience with an ambiguity of not knowing who had previous experience. This allowed for Becca to diffuse her role as being the solo artist, destabilising hierarchies of artist as author.



Figure 13 & 14. *Listening for Disappearing*, Becca Wood, 2014. St James Theatre Lorne St. Auckland.  
Photos: Becca Wood.

*choreoauretics*, that activate a prosthetic listening and choreography as a spatial critical practice, evoke participatory choreographies that work “poetically towards a recovery of the imperceptible, disappearing and the lost”.<sup>40</sup> As each performance disappears it reminds us that this world is also disappearing and it is these moments of encounter that allow for art to really attune to both the senses and that which usually goes unnoticed.

Both Cardiff and Wood illustrate ways of working with technology that reveal our instrumental being, yet also offer another opening for future possibilities when investigating in between spaces of reality both virtual and actual, individual and collective. While I am only able to speculate as to how Cardiff created her work, my experience of it felt present to its creation in the moment through the immediacy of the recorded voice. Yet ironically my experience of Wood’s work differed, due to being part of the whole process. I thus felt excluded from the collective first experience of the St James site with those who were new to it on the performance day. Alternately I felt also distanced from Cardiff due to the temporal shift from the 1999 recording to experiencing it in the present day. These experiences however gave me insight into how I might gather the archives for my final installation as marker points for future possibilities rather than a mere repeat or re-enactment of performances since passed. (See Chapter 3 for more examples of artists and their use of somatics and technology.) This future-possibility is gathered in the spaces of in-between things as gatherings or happenings. If truth-of-unconcealing withdraws the thing as a fixed and totalisable thing it is because it opens up the ‘voided’ spaces of its future-possibility. In my ecology of participatory practices this voiding occurs in the multiple juxtapositions of things (especially performance events recorded and archived during the research phase of this PhD). The poetic narratives become future possibilities in the re-telling, re-joining and future-gathering of my work recombined within the Black Box. These gatherings open onto new future assemblages whereby (for example) a performance in Prague upon the Vltava River carrying participants in river boats recorded by a GoPro and other smart-devices

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<sup>40</sup> Becca Wood, “Listening for Disappearing—a Choreoauratic Practice,” *Choreographic Practices* Volume 8, no. 2 (2017), 333. [https://doi.org/10.1386/chor.8.2.333\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/chor.8.2.333_1).





*Figure 15.* Overlaying Archives, RAFTING 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.

(shared via Instagram and other social media) gathers anew in its re-telling. In superimposition relations exist with other archived material from elsewhere: for example, a sound-recording from Auckland's Hauraki Gulf, at the performance scene of another floating work aboard lilos (Motutapu Island), now overlays upon the visuals of Prague. This reveals the open possibility of technological poetics as new connections coalesce in the voids or spaces in-between.<sup>41</sup>

## 1.7 Opening and Being-with Technology

In being-with-technology, of interest here is Heidegger's observation that equipment is often revealed to us as being for the sake of (the lives and projects of) other Dasein. The metaphor of the boat in this research aligns with the following quote as my performance practice develops survival technologies that require the activation of Others—and how these Others are instrumentally construed in order that I might reveal another truth (as *aletheia*) in the work's minimal gesture of bringing-forth or poesis:

The boat anchored at the shore is assigned in its Being-in-itself to an acquaintance who undertakes voyages with it; but even if it is a 'boat which is strange to us', it still is indicative of Others. The Others who are thus 'encountered' in a ready-to-hand, environmental context of equipment, are not somehow added on in thought to some *Thing* which is proximally just present-at-hand; such 'Things' are encountered from out of a world in which they are ready-to-hand for Others—a world which is always mine too in advance.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Mules, *With Nature: Nature Philosophy as Poetics through Schelling, Heidegger, Benjamin, and Nancy*, 243, Note 30. When Heidegger infers the 'void' of the jug's open possibility to be, he is therefore not suggesting a 'void' space is an empty abstraction of absolute nothingness; it does not negate being. Rather it is the in-between of being and not-being; we can 'tarry' in the void. Heidegger also uses the term the Open, borrowed from Rilke, to describe this openness to being.

<sup>42</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*.



This quote goes to the heart of the thesis in relation to poetics as an ethical strategy and my concept of the Raft that tethers together conceptual terrain for the practice of *Rafting-with*. It reveals the everyday associative context of encountering the familiar—a boat anchored at the shore—as a being-in-itself. It marks a distinction between observation or the for-itself as equipment that is non-instrumental as ready-to-hand. Heidegger will make the distinction between ready-to-hand and present-to-hand with the former as the showing of something in and of itself, in its own way without prefigured, predetermined theoretical or technological lensing. Present-to-hand brings separation to what something is through lensing it objectively as in a scientific, objective and measurable reality of truth (truth-as-correctness). The quote demarcates the two different possibilities of encounter but gives emphasis to a kind of poetic understanding of temporality whereby the boat has arrived out of a world that is associated with human voyaging and the way it is of its being-in-itself already with-Others. While the quote does not lead onto a more instrumental or calculated way of understanding the boat as instrumental technology, this does not exclude the possibility of relating to boats as technological enterprises present-to-hand. Take for example ships that are designed to hold as many shipping containers as physically possible. They are designed for the sole purpose of transporting storable goods (including ocean liners), which makes some environmental contexts more instrumentally resource-plundering in focus—such as liners entering the intensive waterways of Venice—than the sailing boat anchored along a shore. However, the key import of the quote is to reveal an associative worlding of being-with, whereby we are already (immersed) with and not separated out from: the latter occupies a dominant master discourse of human beings as the master species.

This PhD aims to shift the master discourses of Anthropocene survival narratives that in turn privilege human beings as the species above all others, and through master discourses create narratives that distance and disconnect human agency further through the large-scales of their telling: climate change and environmental effects, as noted earlier through Morton and others. As part of the artistic practice the analogy of the Raft forms a temporary vessel formed through tethering of participatory bodies and survival equipment that reveals in itself (the research aims for) being-with as a temporality out-of-a-world



in which they already exist—which they are ready-to-hand for Others—a world which is always mine too in advance. This is a temporality of truth-as-unconcealing (*aletheia*). Furthermore, what emerges from this concept of the Raft in its rafting (as human activity) is the notion of *Rafting-with* that encompasses the poetics of the technical operations of my participatory actions as well as the technical requirements of the body in creating Choreographies of Participatory Ecologies (described in more detail in Part 2, Design of Study).

Technology as a human activity considers how participating bodies can become agents for action, reconfiguring the modernist subject as an ethical operation of self or ‘technologies of the self’.<sup>43</sup> André Lepecki’s ‘Expanded field of dance’ describes performance as a dynamic form of subjectivity: indexing modes of agency (political ones, desiring ones, affective ones, and choreographic ones) that reveal “*a process of subjectification*, that is the production of a *way of existing* [my italics] (that) can be equated with the subject”.<sup>44</sup> With my emphasis on a *way of existing* here I note the correspondence to Heidegger’s thing that reveals itself in its own way as a truth-of-unconcealing (*aletheia*) that occurs prior to (or without) any

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<sup>43</sup> André Lepecki, “Introduction to the Political Ontology of Movement,” in *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (New York; London, UK: Routledge, 2006), 6-8. The modernist subject is described by Lepecki in relation to the formation of choreography as an invention of the major project of the West, Modernity, as a technology that creates a body disciplined to move according to the commands of writing. He goes on to say that dance and Modernity intertwine in a kinetic mode of being in the world. Foucault’s “technologies of the self”, which he defines as an operation, is closely aligned with Deleuze’s concept of subjectivity. “Technologies of the self, permit individuals to affect by their own means (...) a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness.” Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 225. Deleuze further extends Foucault’s discourse stating that subjectivities are always processes of subjectification, active becomings, the unleashing of potencies in order to create for oneself the possibility of “existing as a work of art”. Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 95. Both cited in Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement*.

<sup>44</sup> Deleuze, 98. Lepecki’s emphasis added. Cited in Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement*, 8.

theoretical or predetermined figuring—always becoming it its own most possibility to be—always its in-situ everydayness arriving through primordial structures of being (for example, worlding, atmosphere, mood or attunement, care). Furthermore the ‘performance encounter’ is also considered to have the potential to ‘affect’ through a subjectification with an ethico-aesthetic dimension. Subjectification is described by Guattari as the nexus of a series of affectual connections made through and beyond the immediate sensual experience—an ongoing emergence of new affective connections opening to the outside of a subjective ‘I’. The affect of an artwork thus sticks to the subjectivity of the utterer as much as the addressee.<sup>45</sup> Subjectification as an affectual aesthetic dimension is an autonomous self-organising process that is always coming in to being, assembling itself or becoming. The understanding of such a becoming is both ethical and aesthetic, addressing the subject object co-ordinates of traditional aesthetics.<sup>46</sup> The autonomous conjoining of utterer and addressee forms a worlding that is disinterested in ego interpretations and hence an aesthetic-ethics for its release from a mastery position of meaning. Choreography of Participatory Ecologies thus embrace performative practices that enable subjectification through technical operations of the self that are non-instrumentally construed through being-with-others, bringing-forth of a poesis of the political (as a truth of unconcealing), which arrives in everyday social worlding.

The politics of being-with are extremely relevant in relation to the problematics of instrumental challenging forth<sup>47</sup> within dominant neo-liberal contemporary society that calls upon the world to perform, or else as

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<sup>45</sup> Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington, IN: University Press, 1995). Cited in Stephen Zepke, “Songs of Molecules: The Chaosmosis of Sensation,” in *Art as Abstract Machine: Ontology and Aesthetics in Deleuze and Guattari* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 152.

<sup>46</sup> Zepke, *Art as Abstract Machine: Ontology and Aesthetics in Deleuze and Guattari*.

<sup>47</sup> Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*. Heidegger describes this challenging forth as creating an unreasonable demand on the Earth’s resources that are extracted and stored (as “standing reserve”, as objects that call on subjects as challengers) rather than “channeling the authentic bringing-forth of sky earth, gods and man.” Cited in Jon McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2001), 156.



conceptualised by Jon McKenzie.<sup>48</sup> McKenzie has already recognised the paradox of world ‘performance’ in that it can be seen as experimentation as well as normativity.<sup>49</sup> Influenced by Heidegger’s work on technology, he describes the assimilation of performance into realms of technical scientific industry and performance management, drawing on creativity and intuition in creating performance for representational knowledge that requires a performance that meets goals of growth and progress. McKenzie realises this challenging-forth falls into an inauthenticity that promotes the intricacies of the power of performance and he goes on to suggest performative resistance channels ‘minor’ histories and ‘minor’ anachronisms [assist] as a rehearsal of a general theory of performance.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore Mackenzie, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘Geology of Morals’<sup>51</sup> suggests global performance that engages in destratification as a resistant force through an atmosphere of forces and intensities might be a way of undoing through bringing-forth alternative rehearsals of performance theory.<sup>52</sup> Lepecki goes on to suggest that the fusion of “cultural performance” and “organizational performance” is central to neoliberal societies. Performances are revealed through a “cornucopia of techniques of the self” in permanent self-display (re-presentation) and movement of self(ie) images disseminated through a controlled and monetised cyber-platform.<sup>53</sup> He then asks the *choreopolitical* question that proposes something else.

In this research, performance encounters experienced through the senses are described in the context of techne (evoking ancient know-how) and poesis (art-revealing in-its-way) as a way towards a being-with within the temporal nature of the event. My performance practice attempts encounters that include

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<sup>48</sup> McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., ix. Cited in André Lepecki, “Introduction: Dance in the Age of Neoliberal Performance,” in *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2016), 8.

<sup>50</sup> McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, 26.

<sup>51</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MA: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

<sup>52</sup> McKenzie.

<sup>53</sup> Lepecki, “Introduction: Dance in the Age of Neoliberal Performance,” in *Singularities : Dance in the Age of Performance*, 8-9.

minor codes of operation as a bringing-forth, as opposed to challenging forth, to take up the theme of 'survival' performatively destratifying—questioning our subjective existence in relation to others through a mode of survival-in-being-with as a 'new' modality for living.<sup>54</sup> Being-with reimagines our attitudes as given above with respect to the example of the boat (or raft) whereby the temporality of any event of being-with engages out-of-a-world present-to-hand with Others (human and non), locatable in an attuned scale that exists as the 'everyday living' productive of ethical relations. Being-in-the-world is seen by Heidegger as existing in an authenticity of thrownness (*geworfenheit*) or projection of Dasein into the world or fallen-ness (*verfallen*) that means an absorption of being-with-one-other as an everyday being in relation to other, described as disposeness, understanding, fascination that brings us into the notion of care.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the philosophical thinking of Heidegger's everyday life (*alltäglichkeit*) when in relationship to *umwelt* (environment: the world closest to us in everyday existence) resonates strongly with the critical discourses of Manning, Zylinska and others discussed here in relation to eco-criticisms of the Anthropocene. Heidegger's care of the self provides agency (or perhaps agencement, in relation to Manning) for bringing forth our technological relationship, destratifying mastery of a challenging forth of resources through technological advances—thus we begin to see that what is most close (our everyday habitual modes of living) begins to slow and de-accelerate revealing our primordial ontological difference in relation to being-with-others. Thus being-with in context of this research offers potential critique of modernity and subjectivity in relation to historic modes of dance and performance through its practice as a 'slower ontology'<sup>56</sup> out-of-a-world in which we are already situated within a temporality of understand as unconcealing (*aletheia*). Furthermore, embracing being-with as a 'thrown into the world'—a world that is

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<sup>54</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*.

<sup>55</sup> Wheeler, Michael. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy online*, Fall 2017., s.v. "Heidegger," (Stanford, CA: Metaphysics Research Lab Stanford University, 2011). <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heidegger/> (accessed March 1, 2018).

<sup>56</sup> Lepecki, "Introduction to the Political Ontology of Movement," in *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement*, 15. In choreographic-dance studies, the work of Lepecki describes this 'slower ontology' (a term borrowed from Gaston Bachelard) in the acts of everyday pedestrian life that evoke stillness and provide a critique of presence in the absence of the "kinetic excess" of the modernist subject (drawing from Peter Sloterdijk's description of modernity's propensity to motion as fundamentally kinetic).



mine too in advance of an ‘ego’ and is relationally construed as being-with-Others—exists in a ‘fallenness’ of being-in-the-world.<sup>57</sup> In the context of the everyday, performance contributes to methodologies of undisciplining though both motion and stillness as a divergent destratifying creative practice.

So far I have attempted to draw out the way language operates as an instrumental force in the construal of eco-narratives specific to heroic and mastering survivalist narratives that work on creating effects and affects of distance. In the work of Heidegger I have laid the ground for how his thinking construes everyday as proximate or de-distancing, releasing instrumental understandings of life-living into poetic-dwelling for individuals’ own most possibilities to be. These poetic-dwellings are conceived in his concepts of living with technological know-how through less instrumental ways moving from a challenging-forth of life as a standing-reserve and endless resource toward a bringing-forth as things reveal themselves in being-in-itself and being-with as a poetics of non-mastery.

How do we arrive at a place where release and *letting be* of being might dwell-poetically without the weight of meaning, linguistic appropriation and semantic proliferation. The path of *poetic release* in the letting-be of dwelling might be in the place of everyday survival in the here and there of time-space-history, that is essentially different in each movement of our dwelling-in-time. Let us move closer to *choreographic* poetics as the poetic writing of bodies in relation to the poetic release and letting be of dwelling which name truth-as-unconcealing or Aletheia.

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<sup>57</sup> See Mark Harvey, “Promises Promises,” *Performance Research* 18, no. 4 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2013.814336>.

## 1.8 The Logic of Survival—*Remaining Days*

Then too, I ask you, what kind of dance would there be, or would there be one at all, if the sexes were not exchanged according to rhythms that vary considerably? In a quite rigorous sense, the exchange alone could not suffice either, however, because the desire to escape the combinatory itself, to invent incalculable choreographies, would remain.<sup>58</sup>

It is here that I now ask the question: How might choreography survive as incalculable choreographies? Writing, marking, tracing; carry, divide, multiply—these fragmentary concepts provide our survival logic, outside binary or dialectics and culminate in the concluding aftermath of this thesis. It is the logic of pre-linguistic movement that always-already exists in the logic of survival, beyond the exchange, entering into the survival of that which remains in the fragment, the dream, the invariable (incalculable) rhythms escaping (pre-scripted) combinations. This invention is the logic of poetic remains. A survival that is a choreographic writing scored from remainders that exceed combinations.

This incalculable movement is also present in the (logos) of survival's etymology—as Derrida remains in our thought here, he is always-already present in this etymological dance, calling us in the saying of language:

What calls? Time calls in this always-already and the logic of survival remains in these 'aftermath' things that live-on ultimately in their call. Derrida draws attention to the conceptual call of the word survival in his text *Living On: Borderlines*<sup>59</sup> whereby in French etymology the term 'living on' translates as *survivre*

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<sup>58</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Interview: Choreographies," in *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation: Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida*, ed. Christie McDonald (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 184-85.

<sup>59</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Living on: Borderlines," in *Deconstruction and Criticism* ed. Harold Bloom, Paul de Man,

or *surviving*. The word doubles paradoxically as living ‘on’ that is also spatially and temporally construed as both above and beyond. An ambiguous space exists on the ‘living on’ insofar as human beings survive parasitically on things—both in a sense of mastery as a way of survival and more poetically-dwelling ready-to-hand as described earlier with respect to the image of the boat anchored by the shore in a revealing of the way it is of its being-in-itself already with-Others. Another innumerable choreography exists in the temporal difference of living-on (or beyond) in the realm of ghost-work (memory-work) that lives-on in afterlife. This latter kind of survival is here conceived in relation to technologies that multiply the innumerable choreographies of objects in their coming to appearance beyond knowledge or mastery of how history assembles itself beyond our individual thrownness. This innumerable choreographic assemblage that will be discussed and witnessed in the final aftermath site of this thesis draws out and ‘on’ conceptual thinking of Derrida on the multiplying affects modern-day technologies have in the accrual of ghosts, alongside the work of Walter Benjamin’s historic materialism.<sup>60</sup>

The ethical question arising in this research is how do we (humans) come to live with all forms of life proximate to our everyday lives, construed as poetic release. How might we live among the existing remains of human mastery contained within the narratives of survivalist mastery, yet without control? This research-practice harbours multiple choreographic tactics through scoring fragments of these survivalist mastery narratives. I have located these fragments of dominant (rhetorical) strictures of survival among such genres as tour and guide; drill; instructions; authorship; and commander. These roles and their manifest play, tactically assemble, curate and choreograph exchanges through a range of

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Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey H. Hartmann and J. Hillis Miller (New York: Seabury Press, 1979).

<sup>60</sup> Walter Benjamin’s *historic materialism* describes the juxtaposing of artefacts and how they rearrange our perceptions of relation in each and every living-on appearance/history/moment that they come to inhabit through time. For example, placing a manual (ribbon) Olivetti typewriter next to a contemporary Apple MacBook computer in an ordinary everyday office-studio scene, juxtaposes our reading of then and now in terms of the production of writing. Linear chronological time is not the order of the everyday here, rather Benjamin would suggest a *shock of recognition* is produced in this moment where diachronic time comes.

new media technological recording devices. For example, the instructional survival mode has, through iterative processes, staged innumerable techno-exchanges including the production of an instructional video-work *Lilo Safely* (described in Part 3; see *Figure 17*), archiving somatic performances for surviving. See *Lilo Safely* instructional video (in Rafting Archive 1, see Rafting Archives – video and sound files that accompany this exegesis, also listed in Appendix 2 & 3). What is key here is that the work appropriates a master survival discourse produced through generic instructional safety protocols such as those we receive on airplanes prior to any flight's departure, and yet produces innumerable exchanges for being-with (its) immediate everyday surround(s) as choreographed survival aftermath. The video works on us somatically in a series of exchanges between its two central 'props' (a human being and a yellow lilo), moving from a more formal predetermination for how exchanges are expected to occur across the two choreographic objects, toward exchanges of release that go beyond expectations. The work is set among a black backdrop, hinting at outdoors at night (via sound and impaired vision)—and yet, the scenographic mise-en-scène is also strangely uncanny (*unheimlich*) due to its formal codes of instruction, eliciting an intensive enclosure or interiority. These exchanges across the mastery of instruction (genre) and release of darkness adds a mysterious quality—and in the final site of the PhD Black Box performance there exists an attempt for an eerie resonance across the overly formal instruction tenor, tinged with humour, contrastive colors (or emergency yellow and fatalistic black), which combine in an envelope of atmospheric temporal, spatial and historical abstraction (or lingering) performing its doubling: enveloping and enveloped within the site of this surviving Black Box. This enveloping upon enveloping works choreographic objects into the still formation of (Manning's) *agencement* and Derrida's 'living-on' performed through its dark aesthetics-as-poetic release.

We return therefore to the pressing question of how we come to live with all the ghosts of our technocratic legacy? What constitutes the poetic-with or being-with beyond controls of mastery? The ethical impulse that resides in the thesis is assisted by Derrida (again) and his conceptual understanding of the question



*Figure 17.* Lilo Actions, *Lilo Safely: Instructional video*, 2016, Camera Rob Linkhorn, Auckland, New Zealand. Video Still.

of ghost-being as hauntology—(or ghost-ontology).<sup>61</sup> Derrida's spectral (and temporal) analysis is tied to that of memory, history, writing and archiving. He suggests the past construes the 'present' and haunts the 'future' via an ontology of writing. That is to say, lived-memory has always-already been a writing or inscriptive force and thus technical memory is embodied in what constitutes our living memory.<sup>62</sup> The analysis of this primordial disclosure to writing that is technical and lived resides in Derrida's expanded concept of writing as *archi-trace* or *arche-writing* (mark, trace, inscription) and with it comes the logic of survival as the remainder, reserve and supplement. It is important for this thesis that the research finds proximity with Derrida's *arche-trace* within the logic of that which remains in the always-already of survival (as fragment).<sup>63</sup>

Derrida's spectral analysis or hauntology will suggest that with each living moment our past lives and changes according to logic of interpretation and representation. This suggests something about

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<sup>61</sup> Derrida evokes a poetics with the joining and sounding of ontology within his portmanteau *hauntology*—literally in the coming to being-with of ontology and spectre, or ghost.

<sup>62</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, *Routledge Classics* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>63</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 1-65 & 141-65. *Archi-trace or arche-writing*: Survival and its associated traumatic remains links to our discussion with Derrida on writing and its temporality housed within his concept of *Arche-writing*. In the start of writing within his concept he infers a kind of tearing or ripping away from something to become a more formalized inscriptive pattern or marking i.e. a writing machine. But given this 'something' cannot be arrived at, or made present, Derrida is deconstructing writing as self-presencing of any fixed meaning and hence he locates a relationship between a traumatic scenario and marking's history of writing or technology of writing. In this process Derrida draws our attention to the impossibility of writing referring to a static thing or identity. Derrida's well-cited term *différance* is invoked as a performance between writing and meaning. As soon as we have arrived at what writing is pointing to we realize it has not presenced anything except the referral process and deferral process. . This instability or constant referring and deferring contains traumatic effects: For further insights see: "Différance," as his deconstruction of speech and writing as well as Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* Ed. Garver Newton (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 60-70.



the impossibility of origin as events are stirred (anew) by disjunctive temporal, spatial, historical and (ontological or epistemological) understanding. This disjunctive condition resonates with Benjamin's historic materialism that will come to fruition as the logic of survival develops deeper throughout this exegesis—specifically in our reading of the choreographic objects' aftermath as fragmentary survival. Benjamin's dialectic image is a critical constellation of images that come together in a relation despite having no prior relationship. Once they come together they activate: "transmissibility and servitude, between movement and historical experience, agency and history find their political expression, as well as their political unconscious, in the figure of an angel".<sup>64</sup> The figure of the ghost is that non-original being, neither present, absent, alive or dead. Those phantoms continuously disrupt our modes of address, resulting in shifting landscapes and viewpoints. Most significantly for this analysis is that we cannot control our ghosts as they survive in the various technological inscriptions of their archiving. They appear without warning and take us hostage in their uncanny disruption of any preconceived understanding we have of our world.<sup>65</sup> Derrida too lives on in the YouTube clip where he speaks directly on this point, of how ghosts

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<sup>64</sup> André Lepecki, "Choreographic Angelology: The Dancer as Worker of History (or, Remembering Is a Hard Thing)," in *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2016), 143.

<sup>65</sup> Here we are evoking both Freud's psychoanalytic concept of the *return of the repressed*, whereby that which has been controlled/repressed by the individual's psyche comes into being via the unconscious at moment of release, where individuals are 'caught off-guard' triggered by moments of trauma such as mourning, betrayal, and a myriad of other transference encounters. See Sigmund Freud, "Return of the Repressed" and "The Interpretation of Dreams" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, Anna Freud, and assisted by Alex Strachey and Alex Tyson (London, UK: Hogarth Press, 1974/1953). The other evocation comes via our term 'hostage' that resonates ethically with the work of Emmanuel Levinas, philosopher of ethics. Levinas' ethics comes with a concept of hospitality (which Derrida is indebted to) whereby our relationship to the Other is firstly an ethical relationship before anything else. He construes ethics comes *before* ontology or metaphysics. This *before* is a radical temporality whereby in our coming into being we are already *with Others* (mother, world, etc.). Human beings are constituted first by their *relational* being. In his concept of hospitality Levinas suggests that we are taken *hostage* by the other—we welcome the stranger into our home and they take it over. This is our ethical relationship to *welcoming* in that we give ourselves over to their (strange) ways. We do not attempt to control them in this genuinely ethical notion of

proliferate in the technologies of their ‘capture’.<sup>66</sup> If narratives of survivalist mastery survive then they do so with the minor innumerable choreographed ghosts speaking on environmental and ecological everyday contexts. Derrida cautions us that any attempt to control, especially in today’s technological diversity, is mythic. Further, Derrida’s hauntological approach underpins this research in the sense that it is concerned with enabling poetic-release inhabited within mastered structures of telling. In part the deconstruction of survivalist narratives comes in a critical logic of hauntological affects—if these dominant narratives hold a concern with the future extinction of life then their future pines for catastrophe at a distance. Here hauntology (ghosting-ontology) would pose the question of the future through its liminal spaces always-already in the ‘unspoken and neglected’ pockets of these futures that insist life is already ‘dead’. Hauntology poses the question of the future to these grand narratives, suggesting that ‘death’ is not a possibility in the living on traces we humans are—and alternatives always-already ex-ist within mastered positions that presuppose large mass-distant-scale extinction is imminent.<sup>67</sup> Rather, these ‘spectres’—let us name them as ghosts of everyday proximate life—while seemingly oppressed or repressed by such grand narrations arrive in everyday technologies of innumerable exchange, encouraging contemporary inhabitation of being-with and living-on. The proliferation of stories and their innumerable tellings reside

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hospitality. See Emmanuel Lévinas, *Otherwise Than Being, or, Beyond Essence* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998). And Emmanuel Lévinas, “The Dwelling,” in *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2001/1969). The hauntology of Derrida’s ghosts that arrive without warning is hereby a moment of us allowing them into our being—an unrepressed site of encounter if we truly avail ourselves to allowing their arrival without control. The control they have over us is not seen as one of mastery but goes toward Heidegger’s attunement of anxiety and unease that would make us rethink our own most possibility to be. See also Jacques Derrida, *Adieu To Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas in *Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

<sup>66</sup> Jacques Derrida, (1983). “The science of ghosts” Derrida in *Ghost Dance*, directed and written by Ken McMullen, (Great Britain: Looseyard Ltd for Channel 4 Television in collaboration with ZDF, 1983), accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nmU3uwqzblI>

<sup>67</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Routledge: New York, 1994), 79.

in the proliferation of ghosts as inscription and recording practices multiply. My choreographic practice throughout the PhD's duration has been prolific also. There has been a genuine attempt to multiply numerous iterative exchanges through multiple performance events (both nationally and internationally located, which will be discussed in greater detail in Part 2 of this exegesis). Derrida's ethical hauntological import for this research allows ghosts to speak without any desire to control or speak on their behalf. As in his dream of the innumerable sexes, ghosts cut or mark various rhythms of everyday life, escaping combinations, remaining incalculable.<sup>68</sup>

### 1.9 Echography—*Ghostwork as Ethics for Living*

Writing, environment and technologies of everyday come through in the echography of today's economy. One could say that the ghosting from the sea inscribes an ethical poetics for how we survive. Echography spatio-ethical and *inscriptive* concept is located in the *Oikos* of economy and ecology encompassing the laws of conservation and capitalism; a double-entry accounting of 'good' versus 'bad' life, even life opposed

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<sup>68</sup> Derrida, "Interview: Choreographies," in *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation: Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida*, 184. The truth of unconcealing for Derrida aims for that which differentiates the predetermined logic of binaries and works into a kind of poetic-dream logic that exists choreographically: "As I dream of saving the chance that this question offers I would like to believe in the multiplicity of sexually marked voices. I would like to believe in the masses, this indeterminable number of blended voices, this mobile of non-identified sexual marks whose choreography can carry, divide, multiply the body of each 'individual', whether he be classified as 'man' or as 'woman' according to the criteria of usage." The choreography is the score or writing of multiplicity, stirring up mobiles of non-identified marks that in their very indeterminable force multiply individuals—thus *still in formation*. Derrida's thinking suggest something originary is occurring in this 'place' of choreographic mobility by installing his response as coming in a dream that *exists as the poetic place* prior to the predetermination of binary logic: "Tragedy would leave this strange sense, a contingent one finally, that we must affirm and learn to love instead of dreaming of the innumerable. Yes, perhaps; why not? But where would the dream of the innumerable come from, if it is indeed a dream? Does the dream itself not prove that what is dreamt of must be there in order for it to provide the dream?"

to death.<sup>69</sup> Kamuf connects Derrida's term *echography* to *habitagraphy* in relation to Rousseau's scriptural nature of social spaces. This brings attention to our proximity to inscription as habitation. Derrida goes on to describe eco-habitagraphy as a science that extends beyond the ecosystem of biological life to include the most advanced human technologies.<sup>70</sup> This concept encompasses the scale of this research and the ethical potentiality that it contains in its paradoxical understandings. Spatial, temporal, ethical and technological—particularly in relation to the accrual of ghosts in storytelling methods, as well as other technological apparatuses my practice adopts—bring past inhabitants into the performance practice and complicate ecologies of place and notions of survival. The echo-choreo-graphy of this practice-led research *performs-with* Heidegger's Dasein (being-there), being-with and being-in-the-world, and by correspondence inflects upon Jacques Derrida's echography as it is taken up in contemporary scientific discourses in relation to the spatio-temporal inscription of life. However, what is key is the legacy of Heidegger's post-humanist thinking on Derrida's thinking with respect to an ethics of deconstruction that is mined as ethically thought in this thesis. Heidegger's thinking on the essence of technology as revealing an instrumental way of human attitude and Derrida's furthering of instrumental *techné* picks up on how the diversity of technological apparatuses are productive of ghosts or hauntological effects. Choreography of Participatory Ecologies (COPE), in its 'inscription and habitation' brings attention to the codes within which we live our lives, specifically the instructive codes intended to give us a sense of security, or intended for our own health and safety (as I will discuss in Chapter 4). While this exegesis will go deeper into these connections in relation to storytelling (Chapter 5), I wish for the reader's understanding here to note my practice is guided by the being-with and letting-be of ghosts or hauntological effects, whereby technologies of expression are not sought as controlling or objective instrumental means but rather evoke an ethics of telling and becoming.

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<sup>69</sup> Peggy Kamuf, "Of Grammatology as a Positive Science," in *Reading Derrida's of Grammatology*, ed. Sean Gaston and Ian Maclachlan (London, UK; New York: Continuum, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> Peggy Kamuf, "Of Grammatology as a Positive Science," in *Reading Derrida's of Grammatology*, 92-93.



*Figure 18.* On board *Desperado* (Me, Dad & Phil), 1983, Nelson, New Zealand. Photo: Lesley Houghton.





## Chapter 2 – A logic of survival – Linger On

### *Agencement—deux*

#### 2.1 Zylinska: *Minimal Ethics as an Aesthetic Critical Dimension*

Zylinska's legacy comes out of post-structuralism and deconstruction and she has honed her philosophical ideas in relation to sexual difference, new technologies and new media, ethics, photographic and curatorial practices. It is specifically her conceptual grounding in *minimal ethics* and *aesthetics* in relation to narratives on the Anthropocene with respect to human extinction that mobilise this research. How does life live *on* under the paralysing affects of grand narratives of extinction? Zylinska suggests that these *grand* narratives predetermine life in as much as we (humans) become preoccupied by thinking about living life, rather than being underway with living. These narrative formations, the stories we *live by*, open up her ground or context for understanding biological and social behaviours. How does ethics avail within this epoch? Zylinska *lives-Anthropocene-as-ethics*—as an *agencement* spacing and temporalising for the potentiality of all life forms as agents *living now*—a now that is durational, moving and constantly fluid as dynamic process. Human and non-human life is *scaled* across plateaus of life enmeshed in a poetic-sensibility that speculates rather than provides didactic or authorial telling. Her ethics comes to live across her philosophical acumen and aesthetic practice (specifically that of an expanded photographic practice)—and this dynamic process fosters a generative framework for the poetico-ethics at the heart of this PhD practice. The minimal at the core of her thesis aligns here across fracturing narratives in methods of relations for releasing rigid-thought into fields of formation of varying perceptive-thought-encounters. Zylinska's methods include aesthetic relations in her ethico-poetics, specifically photographic 'writing' (—as a fossilised process and condition) in relation to textual writing (critical prose) for opening up these relations of formation. Her curatorial practice is also at the heart of how she *assembles* her *minimal scales*<sup>1</sup> for ethical connections to unfold.

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<sup>1</sup> Joanna Zylinska, *Minimal Ethics for the Anthropocene* (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press, 2014), 25. While I have discussed the problematic relation of distance with respect to proximity, the terms 'scale' that Zylinska discusses in her *Minimal Ethics* text opens with a straightforward address on the necessity for engaging with the 'largest' universal scale

## 2.2 Wayfaring Poetic-Ethics: *Remediating our Course*

Zylinska's minimal ethics mobilises a deeper question for this research into the place of aesthetics as ethics in relation to deconstructive forces of rhetorical excesses at play in survivalist narratives of the Anthropocene. Aesthetics becomes critical or a deconstructive tool toward the (repression of a) moralistic foci overloading materiality with respect to this 'geological turn'. Zylinska's own aesthetic practice provides my practice with insight into this critico-aesthetic deconstructive approach. Her approach turns around the concept of *remediating*<sup>2</sup> in aesthetic practices (specific to photography and new media), whereby we rethink these media not just as objects but as participants in events, given the multitude of activities they engage. That is to say, *remediation* deconstructs concepts of art object/everyday event; artist/amateur; art history/social practice; commercial enterprise/free source—remediation mobilises these (art versus social practice) binaries to address beyond the “artist-professional-amateur triangle”<sup>3</sup> into an unbounded mobile object—Zylinska's remediation is more precisely interested not so much in the (art) history of the photograph as an *image* but as an *object* that *cuts* into multiple scenes or flows of living: “Photography can therefore be seen as an active practice of cutting through the flow of mediation, where ‘the cut’ operates

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first up. That is to say, in thinking at a universal scale she suggests a shared materiality of the universe, which is another way of saying that everything is made of the same stuff—although not necessarily in the same way.

<sup>2</sup> Joanna Zylinska, “Photomediations: An Introduction.” *Photomediations: A Reader* (London, UK: Open Humanities Press, 2016), 10. Zylinska opens up aesthetics in relation to the hybrid practices encompassing any one artist or practitioner, extending artistic practice to an everyday practice as well. She suggests in relation to photography (as a general term) that we have become “distributors, archivists and curators of the light traces immobilised on photo-sensitive surfaces,” largely due to a shifting ontology of photography via the ubiquity and economic cost-effectiveness of broadband, data storage (devices) and network distribution ease. We will go onto to discuss the links between this new ontology of ‘photographic practice’ in relation to the ontology of survival as part of my own Choreography of Participatory Ecology practice gains momentum through its iterative formation remediating, redistributing, archiving and curating the final work. (Zylinska's reader is a reworked version of the introduction from the online project, Joanna Zylinska et al., *Photomediations: An Open Book* (2016), <http://photomediationsopenbook.net/>).

<sup>3</sup> Zylinska, “Photomediations: An Introduction,” 9.

on a number of levels: perceptive, material, technical, and conceptual.”<sup>4</sup> This remedial *cut*, I read together with the pre-linguistic always-already ‘cut’ of the trace, mark, inscription and incision of being. Where mediation as a general aesthetic condition of ‘representation’ and its immanent ‘technological’ condition of *cutting* flows (duration and time: life itself) “always-already entangled and networked across various platforms and scales.” This ‘new’ ontology extends this research towards my choreographic poetics as this process of cutting coincides conceptually with my previous discussions on arche-tracing and bringing-forth in relation to Dasein’s open possibility to be with *things* on a poetic path in the relation of technology and human being. Being as event (*Ereignis*), in Heideggerean terms, is this opening to the truth of what is in the epochal moment of technologies’ event. Mediation is not perceived as something to be refused or resisted but rather is an opening to poetic destining—perceived as remediation by Zylinska and bringing-forth by Heidegger. Both thinkers think technology as an open and free-relation or participant in life (as multiple and all-encompassing). Cutting becomes a mediation between living differentiators, as Claire Colebrook suggests:

All life ... can be considered as a form of perception or “imaging” where there is not one being that apprehends or represents another being, but two vectors of creativity where one potential for differentiation encounters another and from that potential forms a relatively stable tendency or manner.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 13. And she continues on to say: “In other words, photography can be described as a practice of making cuts in the flow of imagistic data, of stabilising data as images and objects. Performed by human and nonhuman agents alike, with the latter including the almost incessantly working CCTV cameras, Google Street View equipment and satellite telescopes, those cuts participate in the wider process of imaging the world. In its coupling with movement, the notion of photomediations foregrounds another key aspect of photography: its embeddedness in the flow of time, duration and hence life itself.”

<sup>5</sup> Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze and the Meaning of Life* (London, UK; Oxford, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010). Cited in Zylinska, “Photomediations: An Introduction,” 13-14.

The encounter exists as the cut or event of life (in the process of living)—and in this research these concepts of cut and event occur as survival in choreographic objects that remain as ‘relatively stable’, always potentially remediated, cut and differentiated. In the ‘final’ iteration of the creative works component of this research, the Black Box corporeal archive hosts multiple remains, which attempt to participate as witnesses of (re)mediation via traditional or mastered genres of survival and other release-modes of being-with. In this sense my practice is highly ‘mediated’ through new media, including photographic mediation, wherein the practice choreographs survival movements of tours, instructions, drills and narratives through different geography and topology; from Europe, Australia and Oceanic Pacific Islands including New Zealand—all are ‘captured’ and ‘stabilised’ in events as new mediations only to remediate themselves anew in relations of juxtapositioning and ongoing assemblage or photomediations living on. That is to say, within these processes of mediation for release as poetic survival, stories are *remaining* on—always-already living in their potentiality as differentiators. What gets produced in the final choreography of participatory ecologies is a way for *cutting* or understanding our being in, and becoming with, the technological world.<sup>6</sup> The final Black Box encounter houses multiple *cuts* in and of the entire duration of the PhD creative-works of the choreographic practice. The flows participating in the final presentation of this practice do not suggest a mastery of closure, but rather a release for future reconstitution *as* live participants co-

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<sup>6</sup> “Mediation does not serve as a translational or transparent layer or intermediary between independently existing entities (say, between the producer and consumer of a film or TV program). It is a complex and hybrid process that is simultaneously economic, social, cultural, psychological, and technical. Mediation, we suggest, is all-encompassing and indivisible. This is why ‘we’ have never been separate from mediation. Yet our relationality and our entanglement with nonhuman entities continues to intensify with the ever more corporeal, ever more intimate dispersal of media and technologies into our biological and social lives. Broadly put, what we are therefore developing in *Life after New Media* is not just a theory of ‘mediation’ but also a ‘theory of life’, whereby mediation becomes a key trope for understanding and articulating our being in, and becoming with, the technological world, our emergence and ways of interacting with it, as well as the acts and processes of temporarily stabilizing the world into media, agents, relations, and networks. Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylinska, *Life after New Media: Mediation as a Vital Process* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012), xv. Cited in Zylinska, “Photomediations: An introduction,” 12.



minge with the remediated *choreographic archive*. How each individual participant encounters the work survives them insofar as we live on always-already (hauntologically) and thereby *already-after* the Black Box event itself, carrying with us our own survival through our own vector of creativity that differentiates our life from out of the dark poetics of this work's release. Ultimately at stake here is the intensification of remediating ourselves in the coalescing of prior mediated events such as those *witnessed* by smart-phone video, photographs, voice-memos etc., of prior survival events (tours, drills, instructions, storytelling, wayfaring), afloat in Prague, Rarotonga, Lisbon, Sweden, Auckland, curated, choreographed, distributed and networked on iPads, Airbooks, speakers, ubiquitous monitors and projectors, each providing a cut in time only to cut into the Black Box event as choreographic objects participating in another durational flow. This intensification relays the intimate dispersal of media into our biological and social lives—it undoes any separation of being and technology: archiving and living. As Zylinska puts it: “‘mediation’ is also a ‘theory of life’, whereby mediation becomes a key trope for understanding and articulating our being in, and becoming with, the technological world, our emergence and ways of interacting with it, as well as the acts and processes of temporarily stabilising the world into media, agents, relations, and networks.”<sup>7</sup> Her concept of mediation is thereby a concept of living—mediation is no longer a wall or a filter, but a bio-socio condition that exists for this thesis as a cut, insofar as breathing is cut by rhythmic drawing, or writing is a cut between space and time (arche- trace); between graph and gram or indivisible vector-swarm-ation. This may seem a simple hypothesis—and it is, for the sake of *simplicity* as a vector of creativity within an ethos of release; a process of cutting; fragmenting and simultaneously reconnecting to the flow of life; a path of least resistance in the aim of *living well*—Rafting beyond mastery, beyond resistance.

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<sup>7</sup> Kember and Zylinska, *Life After New Media*, xv.



*Figure 19.* Black Box remediations, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Maria O'Connor.

In her ethical call she asks what it is to *live well*<sup>8</sup>—for and with all forms of life (human and nonhuman entities and processes). Living well takes into consideration a minimal injunction that firstly reveals mastery as a biased human-centricism at work, the programmes and attitudes of human beings revealed as instrumental controlling, evaluating and privileging of life forms that lead life into an object, separated out from us humans. It is a privileging that places a generic good under the auspices of protection. It totes a heroic rescuism within its narrative “so that we can offer it protection, while equipping us with a God-like fantasy that we can indeed control and regulate it”<sup>9</sup>—In this generic assumption *life* becomes a static and immense schema for our protection and control under the rhetorical guise of a moral imperative. As this research unfolds through participatory encounters that enable both a *Mastery* and *Release* in *rafting* together, through wayfaring and storytelling, it thus reveals possibilities of living life collectively and socially in accordance with the ethics behind Zylinska’s ‘living well’.

Tim Ingold’s work becomes a deconstructive source of inspiration for Zylinska’s minimal ethics as she locates reflections on this immense schema of classification that leads to her own critical and ethical assaying toward *wayfaring our lives* without controls, and rather as part of durational passing—life as process and not privilege:

An understanding of the unity of life in terms of genealogical relatedness is bought at the cost of cutting out every single organism from the relational matrix in which it

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<sup>8</sup> Zylinska, *Minimal Ethics for the Anthropocene*, 13. The book is inspired by Theodor Adorno’s *Minima Moralia* that persists with locating life amongst apocalyptic events—Zylinska’s *minimal ethics* differs in context from Adorno’s but embraces his ‘critical spirit’—whereby she engages the Anthropocene and locates within various philosophies of life including feminist thought, forwarding questions around the (im)possibility for life to go on affirmatively within the our time where life is said to find itself under threat on a planetary scale. She suggests that her aim is to consider “to what extent we can make life go on and also how we ourselves can continue to live it well, while interrogating what it means ‘to live life well’, and whether such a consensus can actually be reached.”

<sup>9</sup> Zylinska, *Minimal Ethics*, 44.

lives and grows. In this understanding, life presents itself to our awareness not as the interlaced meshwork, famously invoked by Charles Darwin in his image of the “entangled bank” (Darwin 1950: 64, see Chapter 6, p. 84), but rather as an immense scheme of classification—nowadays going by the name of “biodiversity”—in which every individual is assigned to a specific taxon (species, genus) on the basis of covert attributes, comprising the genotype, that it is deemed to possess in advance of their phenotypic expression in a real-world environment.<sup>10</sup>

Life as dynamic movement, process, durational and relational signals in both Ingold’s and Zylinska’s work the minimal ethos at the core of my artistic intent. For example, my participatory practices ‘strive’ for a non-interventional script or choreography whereby participants locate their *Actions for living* within a DIY aesthetic, scripted or authored by my persona as low-key, down-to-earth and non-threatening. In part, my persona plays or (unintentionally) inhabits a colloquial cue, whereby drills, tours, instructions are delivered within a sense of play, humour and camaraderie. My personae are not works of cultivation or caricature, but rather reside within the imbrication of forces—creative vectors— that have gathered in me over time. The stories I narrate start from the deeply poignant, (yet ordinary) everyday, biographic details of my life sailing with family. They are processes and forces that have produced an idiosyncratic life, entangled by the interlacing meshwork of dynamic movements, processes, durations and relational differentiators. The final creative work draws together these vectors and traverses them into yet another choreographic swarm that could be perceived as a grand schematic. However, as discussed already, this grand assemblage or embodied archive presents instead the *remains* (*—without ends*), which act as a kind of bricolage composition that renews itself as release back into flows of life. The Black Box gathering exists as minimal ethics as its agenda is one that is process driven: It exists as modest in its wayfaring

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<sup>10</sup> In Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (London, UK: Routledge, 2011), 163. Cited in *Ibid.*, 44-45.

strategy composed via different formations of stories that my Choreography of Participatory Ecologies manifests:

Minimal ethics can therefore be said to refer loosely to a set of actions we can undertake once we have intuitively grasped this constant movement of life, of which we are part, and then turned to our compromised and imperfect faculty of reason—which is perhaps primarily a *story-telling* [my italics] faculty—in order to tell better stories about life in the universe, and about life (and death) *of* the universe.<sup>11</sup>

In my attempt at ‘telling better stories’ about life and death, the practice also attempts to move my authorial position to one of release among the everyday dynamic flows of others—human and non—in an attempt to manifests my idiosyncracies into becomings: fragmentary, darker, transient and recessional within their telling, within habitus<sup>12</sup> of its Black Box site. As one enters the site they are soon introduced to the leitmotif, or central protagonist, *Desperado*—this is my most connecting, paternal, familial and nonhuman infrastructural being remediating me now. It is a story that unfolds participants into how this sailing craft has carried us, through me, haunting my being, in the stories of my durational habitus. Throughout the Black Box ‘performance’ the centrality of this voyaging motif becomes darker, as other fragments interlace and remediate any static or neatly orchestrated schema. Rather the craft becomes a *wayfaring* passage for the transversality of any one participant’s ecology of thought, perception and ethos. This process continues *after* the bow (denouement) and into the very future horizon, forwarding the potentiality to be.

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<sup>11</sup> Zylinska, *Minimal Ethics*, 46.

<sup>12</sup> Habitus comes from the Social Theory of Pierre Bourdieu—It is deemed an ambiguous concept that refers to the physical embodiment of cultural capital, to the deeply ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that we possess due to our life experiences. Social Theory Re-wired, “Habitus: Peirre Bourdieu,” accessed Jan 10, 2018. <http://routledgesoc.com/category/profile-tags/habitus>.





*Figure 20. Desperado, Marlborough Sounds, Marlborough, New Zealand. Photo: Unknown*

This questioning wayfaring ethos doesn't culminate just in the literary agency of storytelling as writing proper but addresses 'art' in everyday life as process.<sup>13</sup> Zylinska's work on photography and new media<sup>14</sup> as suggested above is most fecund for my research, including her curatorial approach in relation to a question for living well 'now'—a proximate perspective—in her analysis for how extinction exists as a process with respect to understanding life as an evolutionary drive unfolding across millions and millions of years hosting multiple extinctions. Zylinska reports that we have always(-already) lived after extinction yet extinction as a conceptual field has only come into our consciousness since the 18th century when the collecting of fossils entered history as a biological fact or data process.<sup>15</sup> According to Zylinska's (thinking)

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<sup>13</sup> It seems significant to emphasise that the impulse of minimal ethics within this tactic of wayfaring and in general makes no apology for its minor or minimal injunction. Rather it becomes a genuine dynamic question of philosophy as a question-worthy act: "Such ethics may seem terribly ineffective but, given the ineffectivity of the more grandiose sounding programs and undertakings as described above, perhaps a modest experiment in reimagining life—and in thinking and living critically—can actually be seen as a viable and vital alternative?" Zylinska, *Minimal Ethics*, 45.

<sup>14</sup> Zylinska reports that she attended art school approximately eight years ago (in around 2008) after 'practicing' philosophy for most of her academic career. There, she found herself drawn to photography as a medium most connecting her to her philosophical acumen—a medium most everyday in its intrinsic ubiquity that provides *us* with non-stop attention. In her book *Photomediations: A Reader*, she opens with the provocation that photography might be the contemporary way of life: "It is perhaps not too much of an overstatement to describe photography as a quintessential practice of life. Indeed, over the last few decades photography has become so ubiquitous that our very sense of existence is shaped by it." See Zylinska, "Photomediations: An Introduction," 9. She has found in her art practice that her approach to philosophy has transformed whereby each practice provides the other with something wholly other—a kind of spatial opening where aesthetics becomes a philosophical thinking and philosophy becomes a richer aesthetic possibility in the proximity of how questioning happens. This research finds inspiration in Zylinska's minimal ethics for the way it holds open the possibility for aesthetic encounter in rethinking contemporary ethical and political issues.

<sup>15</sup> For more on Zylinska's thinking on extinction see "Joanna Zylinska—"Photography after Extinction" Speaking at the Centre of 21st Century Studies "After Extinction" Conference University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee". (Video) Posted May 7th, 2015. Accessed March 1, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnfV05JCiHg>. To be published as Joanna Zylinska, "Photography after Extinction," in *After Extinction*, ed. Richard Grusin (Minnesota, MN: University of Minnesota Press, [forthcoming]).

human beings have a very short experience for understanding or perceiving extinction and therefore we are limited in terms of how we live with this relatively new phenomenon of environmental degradation. Themes such as climate change, global warming and mass-human-extinction produce, Zylinska suggests, a cognitive paradox of knowing-within-unknowing: a knowing that measures objectively yet fails us in our immediate proximity. Scientific objectification does not enable us to ethically approach life as a series of material conditions. This is where Zylinska's approach to aesthetics as ethics comes into being as an affecting material process, enabling the potentiality of a human perspective that is proximate, everyday and enables us to think *after-anthropocene*—and that persists in this research as the always-already affective embodiment of pre-theoretical (or pre-cognitive) as discussed earlier.<sup>16</sup>

### 2.3 Transience as Aesthetic Trace Structure

Questioning deep-time or historical life processes with respect to how mediation occurs across bio-geo life processes brings aesthetics to a new ontology. The past 'photographs' itself: imprints in rocks, scribes a deep history and light from the sun's energy, photographs or cuts life in time—into-time as manifestations of earth as a 'recording medium' an 'archiving machine'—or as Zylinska has noted, "a distorted text that comes from afar exists as a hermeneutic object par excellence."<sup>17</sup> In this new ontology of art as primordial earth-writing participation, this research finds lingering processes of inscription as poetic thought-in-

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<sup>16</sup> In Zylinska's paper presented at the "After Extinction" Conference, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, May 1, 2015, Zylinska gives the analogy—(referencing Elizabeth Kolbert)—for how in 100 million years from now, all great works of human art and culture including buildings, cities, etc. may form only a geological layer of sediment no thicker than a cigarette paper. This proximity of scale (a cigarette paper) puts into perspective a physical geological mark for measuring human life as a condensation of cultural artifact made minuscule. The scale analogy addresses the paradox of measuring life from sublime proportions made literally hand-able and yet reveals also a geological activity of material archive. Zylinska makes the point that there exists something coincidental to photography as a material *geo-writing* and the telling of human cultural expression *in* and *through* time. Zylinska, "Photography after Extinction" (Video).

<sup>17</sup> Zylinska, "Photography after Extinction" (Video).

action. This does not reduce the earth to writing as textuality proper, rather the poetics on offer here exists with respect to the universe as inscription, presenting itself to us through the media, tropes and art that we have forged as us becoming human. This new ontology of media as mediation reveals in its concept, *us becoming human*, as we increasingly mediate. It is at this point I would stress the depth of my understanding for this project as a poetics—that ontologically locates life, art and release as imbrications of process and transience—moving human and art away from instrumental categorisation objectively construed, and into a ‘bio-geo-logics’ whereby process arises out of process—and ultimately construes this research thematic of survival as arising out from this new ontology of human becoming (alongside all the other same stuff the universe is made of) as a life-giving agent. I wish to emphasise here how mediation as process arising from process forms within a conceptual framework of ethics and poetics.<sup>18</sup> The emphasis on life-affirming insofar as process arises out of process projects a different future with respect to how we

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<sup>18</sup> Zylinska’s minimal ethics forms around an ethos of life-giving and locates this in her practice of photography: with respect a new ontology of aesthetics a different line of flight, that foregrounds life-living in affirmation. She locates this in difference to other discourses on photography that associate it with death. She discusses how photography and geology inhabit different temporal impressions across alchemical processes where light acts on bodies. She links this to heliography as a joining across photography and geological processes with respect to recording by light, and other processes of recording light on stone such as lithography. Extinction is also there as a ‘photographic’ process whereby non-human inscription always existed—geology and photography are the condition of impressions of softer organisms onto harder geological forms, thus it is not a new process but a modern mediated extension of the ancient long impressioning activity enabled by light, soil and minerals. Death becomes an ontology of photography when photography is invented as a ‘proper’ medium: André Bazin (20<sup>th</sup> century French film critic) announces that photography is the last word in the argument *before death*. This set the tone for the dominant discourse on photography as that which is in a struggle with death-to-out-live-death. As Zylinska suggests, no text makes this discourse more prominently than *Camera Lucida*, in which Barthes engages in a meditation on his mother after her death prompted by a photographic image that Barthes sees of his mother that we never see in his discussions. Images become affective devices for melancholia and mourning. Yet this narrative, as well as the very choice of image, consigns photography to a permanent struggle against death. The photographic medium becomes a memory aid and mausoleum with light preserved as a death mask. This discussion comes out of Zylinska’s work on new media and extinction; see for example *ibid.* and Zylinska, “Photomediations: An Introduction”.

live in the present. The ethical impulse here suggests that life is not construed in terms of mortality and the hysterics ensuing around extinction. Rather death, extinction and life become a process arising out of process, perceived proximally and affirmatively. If art makes a contribution toward shifting perceptions from that of 'death'—as life projecting or hurtling toward death as finitude, completeness, teleological and a preservative (as in the concept of the mausoleum)—toward life as 'simply' process arising from process always-already durational (indifferent to any hierarchy of one species over and above another), then perhaps this minimal ethics might assist release from control and mastery over life forms. What survives within minimal ethics is a shifting attitude toward living life as transience, dynamic, durational, transformative—without struggle.<sup>19</sup> Zylinska's own reframing of photography is as a new historic phenomenon whereby photography's history arises out of geological processes<sup>20</sup> and is deconstructive of dominant 20th century discourses that disseminate a permanent struggle with death—and thereby transcends human desires and needs. Earth becomes a source of invention through the entanglements of form and matter, and the sun a form of energy whereby we can read photography as life giving (ethics) rather than light being preservative (a stasis if you like). The deconstruction between life and death occurs when photography is taken out of the hands of the human: Zylinska suggests photography reveals us looking toward the past and a looking toward the future:

photography as an embalmer as a carrier of imprints, testifies to the continuing existence of solar energy and to its photosynthesis enabling experiences. To say this is not to re-write the traditional narrative of photography as being about life rather than death—in any straightforward way—but

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<sup>19</sup> I would suggest here that the term 'struggle' contains a psychology—and thereby presides human interests at the center. I would rather suggest a post-humanism arises in this ethics and deploy Heidegger's notion of 'strife' between world and earth as a far more poignant concept for addressing this life-affirming attitude.

<sup>20</sup> Zylinska reviews the work of Harrison's *History of Photography* with its geological import, to make her own case for thinking photography as something that comes from earth recording itself via form and matter-sourced energy from the sun—as the ultimate life-giver par excellence.



rather rhetorically placing photography under the horizon of extinction, as a horizon that has arguably unfolded on a material level since memento mori has allowed us to come out on the side of life and to think fossils beyond fossil nihilism<sup>21</sup>—fossils as photographs can be seen as more than just forms of memento mori as they are also an ethical injunction pointing and reaching out to life within realms of both virtual and actual.<sup>22</sup>

Zylinska's ethical injunction implied by her link to fossils suggests that photography is a process of fossilization that keeps a record of time through 'a counter mourning' as the casting of light and becomes an ethical task. In which if we look to the sun we can form an ethical relationship to fossils as ancient non-human death. She also acknowledges that photography is often now entwined with global electricity so we may also engage with this light (depending on oil) that is a light borrowed from death.<sup>23</sup>

## 2.4 Aesthetics Anaesthetic Distance

This research works deconstructively for undoing the mastery (position) within survivalist narratives and takes art as its poetic and ethical force. It is therefore significant to review the contexts of art forms and

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<sup>21</sup> The term fossil nihilism suggests that the black fossil sun (oil) dominates modern Western existence and that humans have forgotten that life comes from the sun itself. Not to mention that fossils and oil lead to plastics, which in their current form are having a devastating effect on our planet.

<sup>22</sup> Zylinska, "Photography after Extinction" (Video).

<sup>23</sup> Zylinska, "Photography after Extinction" (Video). Zylinska also suggests that we can learn to grieve better within the minimal ethical schema of living better as discussed earlier. In her lecture "Photography After Extinction" she cites Greek counselor and philosopher Thom van Dooren, *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014). "That in order to grieve actively, we come out on the side of life, we choose life." She goes on to say that photography is a process of fossilisation that keeps a record of time through 'a counter mourning' as the casting of light becomes an ethical task, in which if we look to the sun we can form an ethical relationship to fossils as ancient non-human death. She also acknowledges that photography is often now entwined with global electricity so we may also engage with this light (dependent on oil) that is a light borrowed from death.

forces proximate to this research question in order to focus the research as to how art carries both mastery and non-mastery agents within its processes of dissemination. Working with Zylinska's minimal ethics and her work within new media and photography, I have located steps toward deconstructing my own practice in close inspection of others. For example, in the survivalist genres of photographic and new media practice, Zylinska draws attention to the representational art of environmentalism, which reveals a temporality of the unseen to be seen. There is a critique at stake with respect to the plethora of these images of suffering and ruin on a mass-media scale<sup>24</sup> that now saturate our everyday consciousness. Albeit these images attest to the damage humans have done to the environment, therein lies a danger of *forgetting* in the process of aesthetics serving us an anesthetic in the overcoming or overwhelming of these sublime representations. That is to say, oversaturation of these visual means does not evidence catalysts for action (particularly ethical action) but they can lead to apathy. Evolution has made it impossible for us to truly see evolution and thus extinction. Zylinska argues that photography beyond "ruin porn" is a quintessential practice of life, not just in the sense of the everyday being an act for recording our everyday, but in the deeper philosophical sense producing an ontology of life as *cutting, marking, inscription and deep time*. Photographs (and not just photographs used with the sun but other media) incise life; capture life and act upon life's surfaces producing affects and effects of deep-duration-encounters. In the sense that it makes incisions in life—capturing life and acting upon surfaces acts as a cue for the going on of deep time—well beyond human *control* and human existence. In this age of fossil nihilism, photography reminds us to turn back towards the sun.<sup>25</sup> In the work *Lilo Safely* a solar float/sun worshipping experience, we lie in the sun

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<sup>24</sup> Zylinska uses the term 'ruin porn' to describe the recent movement of photography that uses the images of ruined cities and buildings as its subject. In her chapter "Poetics" Zylinska disseminates a series of narratives such as Demise and Apocalypse, and "Extinction Porn" (referring to the TV series *Life after People* aired on the History Channel 2008-2010 that shows what the world would be like after an apocalypse) which she describes as a celebration of human grandeur and thus a futile exercise in triumphalist survivalism. Zylinska, *Minimal Ethics*, 106-07.

<sup>25</sup> Zylinska, "Photography after Extinction" (Video). On the geological stratigraphy of photography as a material becoming: fossil fuels and fossils—this idea that photography mobilises it as an attempt to think about the sun—photographs not just used with the sun but other media. Fossil fuels have kinship in the imprint ... While there is a danger that Zylinska is



*Figure 21. Lilo Safely, Choreographic Lilo Float, 2017, French Bay, Titirangi, Auckland. Video Still.*

(on plastic lilos) collecting positive ions from UV light in a quest for well-being. Bodies transform solar particles through our skin, warming dark places of the planet's despair. Choreographic interventions from light-minded human/non-humans become tactics for being-with others and the environment, allowing us think about the earthly processes (and human productions) that keep us afloat.<sup>26</sup>

## 2.5 Manning and the Everyday—*Choreographic Everyday Participation*

Mutating environments envelope us everyday—air conditions, time of day, quality of space, the last instant, envelope us, mutate us—and carry (us) out (into) our participation in the everyday of life. Yet what does this ongoing participation teach us about living today? How does this *everyday participation* contribute to my practice as a choreographer of participatory ecologies? These questions (already deepened by aforementioned philosophies on everyday life), when encountered alongside Erin Manning's concept of minor gestures open up an ethical and poetic call for this research, with respect to how choreography in the scene of everyday participation (or theatrical space) works with distributed relational forces that are borne from out of these participatory everyday milieus:

While movement techniques for the stage might seem to be primarily focused on the individual body outside of the everyday, and techniques for participatory installations might seem to emphasize a group body (the subway, the sidewalk, the classroom), in fact both build on the associated milieu of relation. There is no arabesque that does not immediately and

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aware of setting up metaphors between fossils and photography, her aim is rather to set up a material connection between fossil fuels and fossils and then photography: that is, fossils start as fossils and then go into fuels and photography does the same; becoming, moving from geological stratigraphy into what humans are doing with them as 'photography proper'. Yet changing our relation to fossil fuels in this way, i.e. as an *art practice* and *philosophical enquiry*, suggests limits but also there is an act of playfulness that might have some benefit while there is time!

<sup>26</sup>Christina Houghton, *Lilo Safely*, 2016. A choreographic lilo float performance. Discussed in more detail in Part 3. Video footage is captured and remediated as part of Lilos (video media player loop) in the final performance installation. RAFTING. See Lilos video loop in Rafting Archive 2.

significantly entail the enveloping of a milieu into the movement: the air, the time of day, the quality of the space, the last arabesque, all of these shape this arabesque. Every movement is a relational movement. Whether choreographing for the stage or for participatory movement events, what must be honed is therefore a distributed relational body.<sup>27</sup>

Here I ask what are the conditions that sharpen the distribution of relations choreographing this research: the overarching condition would be that most closely aligned to Heidegger's inauthentic and authentic Dasein (as mentioned earlier) whereby the edge condition for our own most possibility to be dwells at the limits to mastery (as instrumental logic) and aletheia (truth-as-unconcealing). This own most possibility to be is distributed relationally across ontic and ontological differentiators—it is relational insofar as in my own most possibility to be exists as an 'I' individual that 'also' participates as an 'ego' in the 'They-self' of inauthentic Dasein. Manning's everyday participatory ecologies, as relational attuning that envelopes human and non-human, resonate here with the posthuman ecology of Heidegger's underwayness construed as non-instrumental *ready-to-handness*. That is to say, we are simply underway as our own most possibility to be through habits, wayfaring, projects and encounters accrued as durational movement—'on the street'. Manning's everyday choreography of participation suggests honing distributed relations which already-always exist 'on the street' and exist in 'fields of movement' buried unconsciously or within under-wayness. In our *thrownness* we accrue patterns of behaviour that we go along with, with very little reflective consciousness. Manning's suggestion for a choreographer is that we become precise in our attuning to these 'wider fields' of everyday movement in life living. This precise attunement is something that my own practice has attempted to hone in two ways. The first circulates around a practice characterised by everyday participation in its appropriation of sites of encounter (the urban street; public parks; public gatherings such as festivals; public waterways; suburban shops; industrial parks; shop frontages; and night-lit busy streets). Along with these everyday public locales the practice appropriates everyday techniques

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<sup>27</sup> Erin Manning, "Choreography as Mobile Architecture," in *Always More Than One: Individuation's Dance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 121-22.



construed as DIY (Do It Yourself) within its overarching narrative style or vernacular. There is a colloquial stereotypical national representation of ‘Kiwi’ culture as a culture of DIY Kiwi ingenuity that encompasses a ‘make do’ mind set of using what resources are available and developing ‘new ways of doing’.<sup>28</sup> The practice imbricates stereotypical associations linked intimately to my own historic thrownness as a strategy for the research to discover what it is to put into play these inauthentic they-self modalities for building ‘instant’ rapport across a Choreography of Participatory Ecologies formed out of the material pre-given processes of everyday life. Establishing a heightened Kiwiana vernacular through familiar rituals and codes provides ease, humor, play and a sense of comfort within the invitation to participate.<sup>29</sup> It also draws attention to how these forms of representation trace a genealogy of national and cultural belonging productive of mastery of *das mann* or inauthentic *Dasein*. I became more conscious of how my own auto-biographical life-world, governed by sailing stories and family rituals and associations—manifest as the central narrative thread for gathering my participatory ecologies—revealed the subtle mastery of its telling over myself and over my participants. Throughout the research I witnessed accounts from others (particularly those who were involved in critiquing the practice in relation to research aims) that the very autos of my stories produced forms of control and exclusion. This directed my work towards a release of the autobiographical telling, in the final assemblage of artefacts, that allowed stories to settle and re-emerge as tracings through the actions undertaken in RAFTING. The final iteration in the Black Box site attempts to perform these moments of release in the cuts or markings and remediations choreographed

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<sup>28</sup> See earlier footnote on DIY Kiwi ingenuity in Introduction.

<sup>29</sup> Participants specifically from New Zealand (which is where the most sustained iterations of the PhD creative practice endure, especially at the initial phases and carried over into the Black Box final work) have familiar associations in rituals of drinking Raro (a brand of powdered ‘cordial’ drink, that due to its preservative content and constitution availed itself to camping and sailing holidays in my childhood through to teenage years); blowing up and participating with lilos (a familiar object, again, while on holiday camping, beaching and sailing-boating trips); wearing raincoats (often yellow PVC) over shorts and T-shirts, as well as gumboots, for outdoor activities in all weather (particularly for N.Z. farmers); picnics and cooking your own meals and making cups of tea (with biscuits) on a camp stove; creating your own shelters from tarps and old sails—all common activities in 1980s New Zealand.

and curated through the remediation of archival material—this assemblage forms distributed relations collaged out of generative remains collected throughout the duration of this PhD. These remains *live on* here, mutating their environment in ways beyond mastery, beyond measure and into *release*. As Manning suggests, these familiar scenes of collective attunement cannot be mastered into scenes of predictable closure given that all environments mutate regardless of where and how they are staged and formed in relation to prescriptions or improvisations within their choreographic intent:

One of the ways of becoming attuned to distributed relational movement is to become sensitized to the collective attunements activated by cues and alignings in everyday movement, thus learning to work with the array of decisions in that wider field of movement, human and non-human. This involves working with a modality of attention that lurks below reflective consciousness. For it is impossible, even in the most organized choreographic process, to map-out every possible alignment. A choreographer of participatory ecologies, let alone a choreographer for the proscenium of the theatre, cannot predict how the environment will mutate. Much can be gleaned from participating in moving sidewalks. As with the cooking example, it is striking how rarely rapidly moving bodies run into one another or into open doors, garbage cans, or bus stops as they walk on busy streets. In preparation for a participatory choreographic event, time on the sidewalk is key.<sup>30</sup>

## 2.6 Schizo-Poetics—*Autistic Perceptions are Needed*

Poetics would then be the mutating unconcealing of environments, familiar, busy and underway—a choreographic movement of relational distributions. In this everyday pattern how does this research come to understand its poetics of mutation? My analysis unfolds being and its belonging in relation to the *techne* and *poiesis* of language, primarily through Heidegger's subtle joining of our thrownness

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<sup>30</sup> Manning, *Always More Than One: Individuation's Dance*, 122.

into history distributing a life across moments of poetic release or *agencement*. These ontological joins are subtle attunements forwarding movements of poetics opening to Dasein's authentic disclosure (as discussed in Chapter 1) the meaning of being here resides in a poetic language that speaks being as it arises beyond the technologies of language as that which is only referential and instrumental. Mutation happens in the flows of immediate exchange on the street and beyond the regulatory frameworks of master planning's predictions—what Michel De Certeau has described as *pedestrian utterances* that arise out of a sieve or meshing across master planning and the *dérives* of everyday passing.<sup>31</sup> What forms these pedestrian utterances beyond the controls of master planning is the variety of lives and milieus that occupy the street—enveloped in specifics of time, light, air, movement and the last arabesque.<sup>32</sup> The 'street's' syntax does not refer to this or that individual life but rather a collective distribution of 'bodies' (human and non) that envelop each other through the poetic idiosyncratic thrownness of their own worlding and attunements. That is to say, the street only becomes 'obstrusive' 'instrumental' and 'restricting' when Dasein becomes 'stranded' as spoken of earlier with respect to Dasein being separated out from the *they-self* that belongs to social-cultural ways of average leveled-out ways of knowing.<sup>33</sup> At these subtle moments Dasein experiences the detachment and instrumentalism of the street. Yet poetic mutation unfolds (or folds us) in the cutting inscriptions from out of instrumental planning and being-stranded. These moments arise out of our originary (pre-categorical) historiography of bodily inscription, which returns us to the original place of being as dwelling—a *here*—a being *there* of Dasein that exists as our historiography of being thrown into a world dwelling somewhere, always-already. Poetic mutation

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<sup>31</sup> Michel de Certeau, "Walking in the City," in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA; Los Angeles, CA; London, UK: University of California Press, 1988).

<sup>32</sup> See earlier quote where Manning suggests that focusing on everyday techniques and movements will discover the same qualities as the formation of the 'arabesque' (a classic position in ballet that has a single leg raised behind the body and the arms outstretched) and in actual fact the relations of everyday pedestrian utterances form their own choreographic formations (as in the last arabesque).

<sup>33</sup> We have all experienced those moments (literally on the street) when our attunement with others/to the crowd

construes itself out of the historiography of our individual lives, cutting time (cutting as time) and gives rise to our hauntological effects—those other voices cutting into us—distributing us relationally.

If Manning's *agencement* is the concept opening this writing—that “begins in the ecology of practices where there is still room for new modes of existence to be invented” where “*agencement* speaks to the interstitial arena of experience, an interval not of category but in the pre-category where that field is still in formation”<sup>34</sup>—then my poetic mutation exists as pre-categorical. I would like to mobilise this pre-categorical poetic mutation further by discussing the import of schizoanalysis<sup>35</sup> for this research, precisely as the cut that arrives from elsewhere haunts and reveals an ontology of the *still-in-formation* movement from individual to participatory collective ecologies. This would be an ‘ego’ formation cut by multiple voices, *still-in-formation* as the ongoing distribution of relationality, still in formation of a minor key.

## 2.7 Maritime Ghosts: *Voices from Across the Sea*

*Agencement* indicates form going beyond itself in the becoming, preserved in sensations construed by relational forces. The question here, for this research, arises out of what *gives* this work its *becoming* in its refrain from the mastery of form? What makes this particular practice work on its *becoming*—its *surviving* as aesthetic working:

The question of what makes a work work, it seems to me, is the question of how an artwork evolves to exceed its form, to create from its force-of-form a more-than that can be felt, if not easily described.<sup>36</sup>

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surrounding us, becomes obtrusive and we would prefer not to be there. Yet this is not the poetic mutation that I’m getting to, rather it leads to it.

<sup>34</sup> Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 123.

<sup>35</sup> Manning, *The Minor Gesture*, 6. Schizoanalysis as an emergent ecology is at the heart of Manning’s *Minor Gesture*, centralising neurotypicality as a grounding structure for existence.

<sup>36</sup> Manning, “Choreography as Mobile Architecture,” in *Always More Than One: Individuation’s Dance*, 101.

As described earlier, the Haunting of this Choreography of Participatory Ecologies has been the figure of the sea within all its envelopes of familiar and familial milieus, specifically the leitmotif of our sailing craft *Desperado*. In the four-year duration of my PhD candidature *Desperado* has carried me (and my participatory ecology) around many parts of the world (Auckland, Cook Islands, Melbourne, London, Lisbon, Umeå, Prague) as a hauntological figure. In the earlier iterations of the practice *Desperado* gathered herself more literally into choreographic events, whereby participants listened to explicit accounts of sailing trips with my family; witnessed old photographic representations of sailing voyages; tasted specific foods and drinks also eaten and drunk by our family during voyages; tried on items of sailing attire (sunglasses, life jackets, wet-weather gear, etc.). These items still remain in the trace-structure of the final Black Box work, yet the question of what survives me became a pressing one in relation to the mastery of *Desperado* in my own becoming. That is to say, the structure of *Desperado* lived within the sensations preserved in these stories, objects, rituals and embodiments—as the ghost of the paternal. In one sense the figure of *Desperado* was a deeply personal discovery about how one carries the ghost of one's paternal life source. I acknowledged early on in this research that the work of survival was just as much a work of mourning (for the loss of my own father in 2011) as mourning was a becoming *still-in-form*ation of myself. Each sailing has mobilised a pre-categorical poetic mutation of *Desperado's* discrete (literal) milieu or habitus. She is no longer just with my family, sailing around Nelson, New Zealand circa 1980s-2000. Rather she is the differentiator that marks my becoming with my father through the foreign voices that inhabit her-me-him. It is this mutation of environments by the passenger-utterances; foreign and affirming<sup>37</sup> that aligns this research to the schizoanalysis in the choreographic *agencement* of Manning (and before her Deleuze and Guattari). Manning describes a working definition of schizoanalysis as:

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<sup>37</sup> At a number of locales those onboard the choreographic figure of *Desperado* spoke a different language from myself. The practice transformed at these times, as the literal stories I spoke of in English were translated through my gestures and those responses by participants—it was, perhaps, at these times that the environment mutated in the most profound poetics of release as my own becoming formed out of forces more estranged, unknown and open. These were often playful and fulfilling moments as those others (from Lisbon, Umeå, Prague, etc) came with me *without* certainty or familiar codes to anchor them. I felt a genuine or authentic rapport build simply in and on these 'foreign' shores.





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the active operation that creates schisms, in an ecology of practices, opening up the event to its potential for a collectivity alive with difference. A concept that composes well with the activity of this cleaving is *agencement*. *Agencement*, as Guattari writes, is a junction that “secretes [its own] coordinates, [that] can certainly impose connections, but [does] not impose a fixed constraint” (2013: 24). Mobilizing the cleave of the event, its internal schism, *agencement* foregrounds not the agency of an individual acting on the event, but those very operations that “secrete their own coordinates” *in the event*, affecting how it comes to expression.<sup>38</sup>

A schizoanalytic approach foregrounds becoming multiple in an emergent ecology. Thus Desperado’s ghosts and lingering agents are present in this work, teaching me to recognise the *schisms* in my own embodiment and rather give over to process that forms around a social, political and collective ecology of choreographic practices. For example, processes such as *rafting*, *resting* and *recovery* (The Three R’s explained in Part 2) are taken from schisms within the master discourses of choreographic traditions and survival rhetoric. That is to say, the un-disciplining of dance through rafting, resting and recovery embraces a politic of performance that is social and collective, and gives priority to the processual where bodies in motion (bodies that come together) bring to the fore the sensory and the experiential via personal stories of place, thus relocating our survival from mastery of the environment through instructions for living. Manning’s minor gesture brings attention to ritualistic aspects of performing objects: in what an object can do and how it becomes part of an event’s felt experience. In performing a mobile procession of bodies in motion, my concept of *Rafting-with* survives as an interstitial modality for being-with others, through a technology of sequencing bodies and rituals whereby a community of difference begins to emerge. For example, this sequence might appear such: *story-telling—rafting; somatic rituals—resting; recovery—failure*.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, somatic rituals bring attention to loss and reclamation through the failure of spectacle where in the absence of dance something else may arise. Manning suggests that the

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<sup>38</sup> Manning, *The Minor Gesture*, 24.

<sup>39</sup> These sequences will be fully discussed as to their methodological procedure in Part 2, Design of Study.

spectacle is not to be rejected fully, rather a new appreciation of the grand gesture can form out of multiple ‘differentiated’ perspectives that recognise the materiality of the performance event. A walking performance is choreographic in the movement of bodies through space, ritualistic in the attention given to the tasks and memorialised through the intention of the community action and story-telling.<sup>40</sup> These temporal acts, within an ontology of performance as ‘live’, hold tentative and ethical potentiality for perceiving its ‘disappearance’ as acts for living on and beyond oneself within everyday rituals of remembering. Memorials become remediated and respond to a ‘failure’ of everyday survival with respect to tragedy or personal loss yet enable the hope of living on beyond oneself.<sup>41</sup> Minor gestures as an aesthetic-ethics within ritualised performances arise in consideration to the Anthropocene as we plan our monuments in the face of human extinction. Borrowing from Rancière and Heidegger’s concepts of poiesis indicating a threshold state, a ‘bringing forth’ or a state of ‘becoming’, Sara Jane Bailes suggests embracing a *poetics of failure* as a performance practice that is processual, that “challenges cultural dominance of instrumental rationality and the fictions of continuity that bind the way we imagine and manufacture the world.”<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, in creating ‘memorials for lost environments’<sup>43</sup> this research suggests ambiguity within grand narrative

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<sup>40</sup> This research acknowledges how a space opens here to indigenous issues regarding loss of land and culture and reclamation, where indigenous forms of knowledge can contribute to these ecologies or practice. An *ethico-poetics of survival* in its relation to grief and mourning gives potential for how art and performance might provide moorings from which to moor alongside others in times of crisis.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 3 for examples of artists engaging in rituals for the Anthropocene.

<sup>42</sup> Sara Jane Bailes, *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 2. 38. Cited in Melanie Bennett, “Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, and Elevator Repair Service,” *Performance Research* 19, no. 1 (2014): 126, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2014.908092>. See Chapter 3: Review of artists engaging in failure through Somatic Rituals.

<sup>43</sup> Also the name of an article I published during this research period. See Christina Houghton, “Memorials for Lost Environments: Participatory Performance and Minimal Ethics,” *Dance Research Aotearoa* Vol 4 (2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.15663%2Fdra.v4i1.50>.

rhetoric that projects both Dystopian and Utopian ideals simultaneously: opening poetic utterances from local and foreign shores allowing for us to face the reality that we are all “about to lose what we hold most dearly to our survival—‘the world with which we live’.”<sup>44</sup>

In this sense the work has picked up on these foreign utterances as a minor gesture corresponding marine rhetoric to a survival beyond the certainty of terra firma. The minor key works the major from within as Manning’s minor gestures infer, and significant here for my research is that the major or master rhetoric (of survivalist narratives) is not fixed in advance—rather, “the major is a structural tendency that organizes itself according to predetermined definitions of value.”<sup>45</sup> The minor gesture works within these structural tendencies pushing towards the limits-to-(its)-thinking—as thought-in-action—as it activates a tendency already in germ and emboldens it toward an altering of what that tendency can do.<sup>46</sup> Ultimately minor gestures are movements within the structural tendency of certainty (or mastery, major) that are as-yet-unformed yet are resident forces within it. We find proximity here to the ontological difference of Heidegger in relation to our discussions on the ontic-ontological relations of inauthentic-authentic Dasein. *Desperado’s* structural (major) tendency occurs through a past horizon partitioned by a discrete time-space-family world set-upon a set course of charted (New Zealand) waters—and yet, this horizon of disclosure that exists within the master or major tendency comes adrift through (its minor) poetic release of this sailing vessel through voyaging invitations boarded by other foreign ghosts (alive, survived and

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 89. This paper was written in the early part of this research, following a conference presentation at *Moving Communities Dance Symposium*, Otago University (November 2015) and *Be for Barefoot*, a performance walk on Ocean Beach, Dunedin (See Part 3).

<sup>45</sup> Manning, *The Minor Gesture*, 1.

<sup>46</sup> See Manning, “Preface,” in *The Minor Gesture*, x. Manning is describing the very act of writing this book via the review process before publication. In it she recounts how the reviews opened up her own thinking beyond what it had thought and enabled her thinking to reach a new limit. Writing brings to the fore thinking-in-the-act. This is a collective process that moves beyond “certainty of what it knows [and] is more open to the minor in thinking, more open to the force of the as-yet-unformed coursing through it.”



*Figure 23. Desperado's Charts, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.*  
Photo: Rob Linkhorn.



living on). The ethics onboard *Desperado* come in the minor gesture for living with ghosts without any attempt to control their saying—to be-with them without speaking on their behalf (as I discussed earlier in relation to Derrida's concepts of echography and hauntology).

The voices of ghosts from past and present cut open any linearity of mourning or static concept of history. Here the minor gesture cleaves major survivalist narratives, splitting any teleological trajectory that is forwarding end-game homo sapiens as the master discourse. This cutting or cleaving splits open neurotypical programming of human existence as an existence that is set apart without any relational need for other minor forces (of live living). I have found that the ghosts arriving (without warning—like unpredictable weather patterns) have secreted themselves into my ecology of participatory practices without prior programming or easily decipherable coordinates. Ghosts set my practice adrift so that I learn to live within the unpredictable flows of life and my practice coordinates with relations of force that bring quality of expression to living live. As a practised sailor I have, for the most part, been a 'second-in-command' or passenger upon a skillfully mastered voyage with my father as 'the skipper' of *Desperado*. While this research has little to do with gendered difference in the sense of a desire to invert masculine control by replacing it with the control of a woman, it does acknowledge the structural (major) tendency of masculinity at work in seafaring culture and its surrounding rhetoric.<sup>47</sup> One of the key major tendencies residing in the 'post-masculine' ethics of a minimal ethics arrives through a deconstruction of the major tendency (or neurotypical image) of (Western) language as being inherently gendered and I find minor gestural poetic resonance for releasing myself into the foreign (role of 'skipper'). That is to say, in order for the research to secrete its minor coordinates there have been times where *Desperado* is cut adrift as

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<sup>47</sup> Zylinska uses the term "Post-masculinist rationality" to describe a more speculative, less directional mode of thinking and writing. It is developed from Darin Barney's concept of 'post-masculinist courage', which is not necessarily feminine but often feminist. Barney is inspired by political theorist Wendy Brown, who outlined a vision for a "Post-masculine politics" in which freedom is reconciled with love and recognition, and politics requires "much courage and willingness to risk." Wendy Brown, *Politics out of History* (Princeton, NJ; Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2001), 202. Barney

my surviving participants become associated with their own narratives of survival. I therefore take on the ‘courage’ to hand over this narrative to that of the participants, releasing them into role of performer/storyteller. One key schism at work here is the deployment of the lilos for coupling participants, which allows them to locate their own distributed relations offshore, off-the-main-vessel. The lilo I see as an island from which I observed (as a child) the entirety of my world from a tethered distance—In *Lilo Safely* lilos as islands thus secrete their own coordinates into the event and complexify the ecology of the event as participants literally become adrift from the dominant land formations and secure seafaring vessels. As participants couple the(ir) lilos (sharing blowing tasks for inflating the yellow plastic ‘air mattress’) they invent their own coordinates for becoming-with and affirming their own gestural approaches (or acts) for life in this in-the-event. It doesn’t operate in the event as control for knowing exactly how things will turn out, rather the minor gesture is an operation that affirms its force of its secreted traverse but does not affirm guaranteed safety. The lilo operates as a force along the dominant lines of survivalist heroism and rescuism through siting these playful and ‘unsafe’ objects among the geo-logics of (foreign) islands, uncharted waters, adrift seaworthy vessels<sup>48</sup> and ultimately open to the possibility for each coupling (lilo-

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encourages a courage that is outside that of “the sort of bravado whereby men seek to obtain control over everything around them by the force of instrumental rationality” (non pag.). This involves “the courage to face the uncertainty of that which we cannot control [...] the courage to be let go into action that begins with something truly new and unpredictable” (non pag.). Barney Darin, “Eat Your Vegetables: Courage and the Possibility of Politics,” *Theory and Event* 14, no. 2 (summer, 2011), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/tae.2011.0023>. Cited in Zylinska, *Minimal Ethics*, 14.

<sup>48</sup> While some of these locales inhabit actual islands (as named: Rarotonga, Holmön, Rangitoto-Motutapu) and other actual seas (French Bay, Titirangi; or Auckland Central Warehouse; the main street of Avondale, Auckland; or a museum in Lisbon), all inhabit the actual lilos, albeit seaworthy vessels, and waters are also evoked as a poetic affect of de-distancing. The term de-distancing is a Heideggerean term akin to spatial and temporal difference whereby we could be sited in one physical locale, but our being-with is actually closer to another locale due to attunement and surrounding-world situatedness. For example, *Desperado* may exist moored in Nelson, New Zealand, but for participants of my Choreography of Participatory Ecologies she is de-distanced in their own associations of sailing aboard vessels from their own discrete life-worlds: *Desperado* becomes a fluid entity coordinating others’ imaginations as she couples with their own ‘boats’ and ‘seafaring’ encounters—*she* becomes a minor gesture for traversing their own survival stories, cutting

plus-two) where the restricted lines of major tendencies are lived—traversed—*still-in-information*. See Lilos video loop (in Rafting Archive 2).

Lilos become a playful and unsafe rhetorical device within the dominant tendency for surviving, asserting another marine ecology into the legible discourse of sailing as a master imperial rhetoric for saving worlds (indigenous worlds by colonisers; protecting life through scattering humans across the globe and into prior pristine ecosystems; exploiting seas for fuel from fossils, etc.). The lilos seep into Luce Irigaray's "mechanics of fluids" cutting up the rhetorical dominance of mastery upon the sea—moving fluidly instead toward another language that might suit the term 'feminine'. This language draws our imagination toward a language outside of masculine sameness — a language Irigaray calls 'parler-femme' that resonates with the *still-in-information* experimental perception that she brings to a writing and reading scenario in relation to sexual difference. Irigaray's experimental space of writing and reading works into syntax, stalling its same rhythms, allowing for the rhythms of difference to speak (as) woman.<sup>49</sup> Irigaray's theoretical resistance of geometric-scientific-technical-mathematical discourses for measuring bodies locates a fluid mechanics that deal with a "form of analysis to progress, while losing a certain relationship to the reality of bodies

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into durational flows, setting forth movements *still-in-information* without closure on disaster or life-living.

<sup>49</sup> Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 222. Speaking (as) woman (*parler-femme*): Not so much a definitive method as an experimental process or a discovery of the possible connections between female sexuality and writing. "[Sp]eaking (as) woman" would try to disrupt or alter the syntax of discursive logic, based on the requirements of univocity and masculine sameness, in order to express the plurality and mutuality of feminine difference and mime the relations of "self-affection." Irigaray's discourse is an *Écriture Féminine* that cuts or cleaves through proximity—inhabiting the rhetoric without concluding on where dis/location relocates *her*; it only dislodges the dominant tendency. Here her proximity moves off-shore and into the islands where exile might find its own coordinates in the event of being a woman *dislodged* from masculinist language, in "such close touch with itself that it confounds your discretion" ... of a self-confounded by not having yet understood everything. In Luce Irigaray's text "Mechanics of Fluids" she closes with a dis/location of a partial exile that exiles the ruling symbolic (of masculinist discourse)—moving fluidly into a feminine language that *ex-ists* somewhere beyond comprehension, *still-in-information*. Luce Irigaray, "Mechanics of Fluids," in *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).





*Figure 24. Lilo Safely, Rafting in the Carmo Museum, 2017, Lisbon, Portugal. Photo: Becca Wood.*





Figure 25. The Last Exhale, *Lilo Safely*, Choreographic Lilo Float, 2017, French Bay, Titirangi, Auckland.  
Video Still.



in the process.”<sup>50</sup> Irigaray’s work helps to reconceive bodies in a pluralized way instead of repeating the same descriptive representation of a single body in its normal pre-figuring of ‘the’ (body), as though there is still the one, the same, the universal body. The lilos (and other hybrid-cuts-and-joins in my distributed relational practice) become hints at the poetic release as discussed in relation to Heidegger’s *gelassenheit* (*letting be*) of multiple bodies (human and non) with others for the suspension of all mastery or rule for territorial cuts.<sup>51</sup>

Zylinska’s poetics brings our attention back to this BODY, suggesting that if acting ethically involves making cuts in the flow of life, then we need to acknowledge these might be material (involving the cutting and splicing of genes and or cells) and rhetorical.<sup>52</sup> In seeing life as a dynamic force of unfolding potentialities that carries a suspension of ontological uncertainty then there is an ethical imperative to cut into life, to make good of it.<sup>53</sup> While life is being increasingly instrumentalised and isolated from its

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<sup>50</sup> Irigaray, *Mechanics of Fluids*, 109.

<sup>51</sup> This fluid and accrued cutting resonates with Giorgio Agamben’s paradigmatic figure of dis/placement in the figure of the refugee as discussed in his text *Beyond Human Rights*. Agamben brings the refugee as an ‘identity’ that stands in for many displaced peoples around the globe. He suggests this increase of displaced peoples is now becoming the norm. His critique is largely of sovereignty and rights deconstructing a humanism that would put right as the rightful center determining normal identity. Instead he expresses a term ‘denizen’ in spatial terms offering a cut that builds another space between borders. His ‘extra-territoriality’ offer a third space between borders, widening and exceeding the static border per se—allowing for a letting go or release point from capturing identity in the concept of sovereign right. Giorgio Agamben, “Beyond Human Rights,” in *Cities without Citizens*, ed. Eduardo Cadarva and Aaron Levy (Philadelphia, PA: Slought Books, 2003).

<sup>52</sup> Zylinska, *Minimal Ethics*, 115-17. As an example of (bio) ethics Zylinska uses Australian artists Catts and Zerr, Stelarc and Sellars who are gathered under the term ‘Bio Art’, engaging in life in a “fleshy material way” through biochemistry and molecular biology. For example, Catts and Zurr grew a semi-living coat out of cell lines that formed a living layer of tissue.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-18. Zylinska draws on Rosi Braidotti’s argument that life is a “fundamentally amoral force, the true nature of which is best expressed in its relentless generative power. There is no implicit a priori difference between cancer and birth,

original context to become a product for human manipulation, matter—whether living, semi-living or non-living—is attributed with vitality and agency. Life therefore becomes a minimal condition of any ethical framework. And “it is the protection of that condition of the possibility of life’s unfolding—rather than protecting this or that life form—that constitutes a minor injunction for the ethics for the Anthropocene.”<sup>54</sup>

## 2.8 Agencement and Choreographic Object

### *Lingering—What Else*

As we advance further the ‘release’ points for this research hypothesis, as marked in the choreography of its aftermath site, my focus lingers on signs of *after*, *else* or *remainder*—that provide this site with its fundamental poetic discourse of release. This is an ecology of participatory practices that is “not for the body itself, but for the relational force of movement-moving in an ecology of life-living.”<sup>55</sup> The *lingering affect* that so inspires this research (discussed previously) construes a final point in the logic of survival—culminating around Manning’s ‘autistic perceptions’ as pre-categorical relational fields of awareness. It moves (perceptions of the work) from its formal recognition to assemblages or fragments, which are yet to re-form except in the imaginary speculation of singular encounter. William Forsythe’s thesis on choreographic objects<sup>56</sup> as speculative in nature attests to a kind of schizoanalysis of choreographic (data) relations that are organised around visualisations of data in motion from multiple cross-disciplinary discursive frames.

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or between a malignant proliferation of cells in cancer and the benign proliferation induced by pregnancy.” Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions on Nomadic Ethics* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2006), 223.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>55</sup> Manning, “Choreography as Mobile Architecture,” in *Always More Than One: Individuation’s Dance*, 100.

<sup>56</sup> William Forsythe, “Choreographic Objects,” in *William Forsythe and the Practice of Choreography: It Starts from Any Point*, ed. Susan Broadhurst (New York: Routledge, 2011).

We open lingering toward a paradoxical coincidence in Manning's 'autistic perceptions' as the temporalising of temporality that holds us *still-in-formation, suspended-in-process* in an unformed facilitation of direct experience with the complexity of any field.<sup>57</sup> What this suggests for this research practice is a neuro-diverse image of fragmentation in the after-math Black Box site. That is, the fragmentary remains of my ecology of participatory practices remediate an experience of complexity direct in its reliance on multiple facilitating archival devices: iPads, monitors and projectors; collection of sailing attire and assorted paraphernalia; lilos, ropes and sails; colours of 'emergency' yellows and 'recessive' blacks; sonic and solar sounds; participating bodies tethered and released; rooms of light enveloped by a Black Box entry and exits; a guide who becomes divisible. All these elements coalesce into a field of complexity that attempts to direct without direction into an ongoing and non-hierarchical choreography for participatory ecologies—lingering now without totalisation, a neuro-diverse image of an extended 'autistic' lingering:

Autistic perception is the opening, in perception, to the uncategorised, to the unclassified. This opening, which is how many autistics describe their experience of the world, makes it initially difficult to parse the field of experience. Rather than seeing the parts abstracted from the whole, autistic perception is alive with tendings that create ecologies before they coalesce into form. There as here as yet no hierarchical differentiation, for instance, between color, sound, light, between human and nonhuman, between what connects to the body and what connects to the world.<sup>58</sup>

We are tethered in this final Black Box site by the lingering on of non-differentiation between site and world; human and non—extending our ethico-poetics for survival into a temporalising of temporality

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<sup>57</sup> Manning, *The Minor Gesture*, 6. Manning's 'autistic perceptions' activate an 'ontology' of relationality for opening up and deconstructing the restricted tendency of perceiving life as neurotypical images. Manning will discern that the autistic way is one that lives on facilitation of diverse relations in contradistinction to the neurotypical body that imagines itself *independent, normative* as an able-bodied existent—within the neurotypical schema, (autistic) facilitation is perceived on the side of lack.

<sup>58</sup> Manning, *The Minor Gesture*, 14.





*Figure 26.* Sails in Black Box, RAFTING, 2017, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.





*Figure 27.* Dual Jackets, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.



inviting movement-moving where the cut of this choreography makes its mark not in differentiating this subject from that object, this body from that world, but in an attempt for reimagining the ‘fragment’ of this after-math site. This poetic refrain is hosted within the final Black Box choreography marked out or cut by what (neuro)typically is described as transitional points or interstitial points between blocked scenes or tableaux—in film one could also think of how scenes are montaged, whereby the crucial agent for affecting perception is the cut or join between shots and scenes. Such montages appear projected on the wall of the Black Box, encapsulating survival as a nostalgic remembrance of performances since gone. See Rafting Projection video (in Rafting Archive 2).

Neurodiversity requires that the arrangement of aftermath scenes, shots, tableaux and other remediated choreographed objects linger elsewhere, releasing participants from parsing through the Black Box site according to programmatic codes of proper syntactical arrangement—a refrain is choreographed into the participating ecology moving away from controlled sequencing, movement and events of survival based only on linear closure. Rather, an ecology of choreographic objects composes its archive of survival with a focus that lingers in the atmosphere of the site through residing or hovering within these elsewhere points. This next section addresses the tactical arrangement or programming of these elsewhere tendings (subsumed by process), with the assistance of William Forsythe and Andre Lepecki.

## 2.9 Agencement—trois Choreographic thinking?

### *Elsewhere—Spatio-Temporal Remains*

William Forsythe alludes to a temporalising of temporal choreographic works-as-ideas organised and organising themselves as alternative sites for acting<sup>59</sup> and coincident here to Manning’s thought-in-

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<sup>59</sup> William Forsythe, *William Forsythe and the Practice of Choreography: It Starts from Any Point*, 92. Forsythe states “Are we perhaps at the point in the evolution of choreography where a distinction between the establishment of its ideas

action. Forsythe's choreographic thinking requires a persistent vigilance soliciting diversity in reading. This would suggest that what is at stake is a 'new' kind of reading, requiring a new kind of attention that this research locates in the 'autistic perception' discussed prior. This new kind of reading-attention-vigilance is pre-categorical or pre-conscious process—before apprehension, resolve or conclusion as to the formation of experience—and thereby evokes Derrida's deconstructive thinking; that which desires innumerable choreographies that survive on (*suvivre*) through everyday remediated hauntologies. Forsythe's choreographic objects allude also to 'innumerable remains' beyond the exchange of human bodies, as they work their logic into objects that provide thought-in-action. This coincidence on the 'innumerable' field of objects is significant for the remains of the site of aftermath.<sup>60</sup>

Firstly, I ask the spatial question as to how 'we' witness the coalescing of innumerable choreographic objects in the staging of this Black Box site. Forsythe's methods for analysing choreographic objects are taken from a range of disciplinary fields<sup>61</sup>—hinting toward a schizoanalytic process. My own choreographed objects are

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and its traditional forms of enactment must be made? Not out of any dissatisfaction with the tradition, but rather in an effort to alter the temporal condition of the ideas incumbent in the acts, to make the organising principles visibly persist. Could it be conceivable that the ideas now seen as bound to a sentient expression are indeed able to exist in another durable, intelligible state.”

<sup>60</sup> Without being too 'conceited' the research alludes here to the speculative pragmatics of a 'new' matheme or physics in the vein of the supplement or remainder coincident to the use of the term 'aftermath'. In this way it takes the language out from its objective scientific law and into the chemistry of speculative combinations. The etymology of the term *aftermath* suggests English *after*; German-to-English math *mowing*; German *Mahd* as in mowing an area of ground—'area of ground cleared by a sickle': *Aftermath* late 15<sup>th</sup> century and has grown in usage exponentially with it peaking in common usage from 2010 onwards. The term thereby implies a spatial connotation that aligns to this research in relation to a clearing or opening for thought-in-action. It implies action (or a verb) in relation to body-with-object for the sake of clearing ground. This conjures up paradoxical associations on one hand with an image of ecological damage and, on the other, a more fecund image of renewal.

<sup>61</sup> Architecture; performance installations; interactive digital installations working with media specialists and educators; the 1994 computer application *Improvisation Technologies*: a tool for the analytical dance eye developed with ZKM/Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe. 2009 marked the launch of *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing*,

taken from survival discourses ordered around a logic of human-centered mastery—a mastery as discussed earlier that is coated in hubris toned by a concept of ‘protection and preservation’ of all species by humans, as well as preservation of human beings over and beyond all others. Survival (for the Anthropocene) is thus packaged in discourses disseminated by the regulatory ‘militant’ frameworks of neurotypical beings, for neurotypical bodies, carrying out drills, instructions and tours that map assemblages or fields of programmed uniform behaviours (as discussed in detail in Part 2 of this exegesis). These uniform patterns enact choreographic objects across different spatial terrains: land, air and sea. They are then reworked into remediated objects for distribution as thought-in-action within the Black Box. It is important to mention now that the ‘motif’ of the Black Box enacts a thought-image for the concept of housing the remaining clues, crypts and explanations for how scenarios of disaster occur. This image distributes an attitude of control, suggesting a prefigured belief that disasters are avoidable through human control, and result only through human error. The Black Box (if located in relation to air-disasters and ship-wrecks) cyphers a space of mourning that holds ‘survivors’ (on and off site) as a cohesive narrative for ‘what happened’ is pieced together. The linear narrative installed in the technological logos of the Black Box is refuted in my *Choreography of Participatory Ecologies*, suggesting that remediated devices such as a plane’s Black Box house hauntological affects that remain other to a closed narrative of survival—these effects and affects live on after, inscribing new perceptions of experience as contestable, contingent and innumerable stories live on after its retrieval. In my own final Black Box site, the crypt of what survives and lives on is its Black Box rather than any locatable discrete/whole technological construction. This Black Box exists in the ecology of participants—in actions of rafting, resting and recovery—and their singular poetic cyphering;

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reproduced, a digital online score developed with Ohio State University that reveals the organisational principles of the choreography and demonstrates their possible application within other disciplines. *Synchronous Objects* was the pilot project for Forsythe’s Motion Bank, a research platform focused on the creation and research of online digital scores in collaboration with guest choreographers. See William Forsythe, “Biography: William Forsythe Choreographic Object,” accessed February 18, 2018. <http://www.williamforsythe.com/biography.html>.

recording their own ethical desires' *still-in-form* release. The final choreography (in November 2017) staged rafting, resting and recovery modalities with remediated archival material. Participants were 'tethered' along a journey, cut between remediated archives that transitioned or punctuated any authorial narrative to which I've composed. The ecology of participants literally cut up my own authorial intent as I re-staged tableaux of prior encounter through remediated archive objects. In narrative logic the telling would be inter-textualised in order to present an extended process, rather than a denouement.

### *Afterlives*

While my ecology of practices might add something to the field of choreographic thinking—to one such manifestation—it is, perhaps, the alternative site as everyday milieu working across multiple locations and ultimately, leading on to the fragments toward those which create atmospheric lingering, speculative in nature, poetic in assemblage. While this kind of choreographic thinking or manifestation might construe an abstraction of the everyday, it is precisely the survival of the everyday within my nominated aftermath site that ultimately performs the logic of the everyday survival: Manning has insisted that all choreographic work coalesces through different associate milieus, all manifesting relations through movement—the “enveloping of a milieu into the movement: the air, the time of day, the quality of the space ... Every movement is a relational movement.”<sup>62</sup> This concept of enveloping is a key spatial figure toward the aftermath site of the Black Box. Each milieu of everyday survival contained within each and all performance-ecology or participatory-ecology of my performance work envelops and redistributes itself across the assemblage of this final destination. It sends its material traces; archives them; poetically releases them—each performing toward new relational movements, which inscribe the logic of where they have come from. Ultimately, this kind of survival does not inscribe any master plan that forwards a hierarchy of species survival (i.e., with human designated master species and so on ...), rather it proffers a poetic writing contained within each and every milieu of distributed relational bodies (human and non).

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<sup>62</sup> Manning, “Choreography as Mobile Architecture,” in *Always More Than One: Individuation's Dance*, 122.

In bringing together Manning's conceptual choreographic thought into the milieu of Forsythe and André Lepecki a further consolidation of poetics-as-ethical-assemblages exists for this research. In coincidence to aftermath, Lepecki mobilises the concepts of afterlives as a kind of lingering atmospherics, molecular and resonant to Manning's distributed relations. Lepecki describes how choreographers create choreo-political actions in performance that result in singularities of strangeness that de-authorise the artist, subverting neo-liberal hegemonies of colonisation through a disassembling of the expected.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, these ways of working precipitate a transformation at the level of the body as choreosomatic resistance. I test this in my own practice and investigate historical and contemporary examples of this (in the following Chapter 3). In rethinking subjectivity in relation to participatory performance, performing with others, rafting and resting, create 'somatic rituals of recovery' (through choreosomatic resistance) and form an ecology of interdependence and co-dependence. Participating bodies move together through place as a political agential resistance to hegemonic ways of being.

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<sup>63</sup> André Lepecki, "Introduction: Dance in the Age of Neoliberal Performance," in *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2016), 5. Lepecki describes the work of a number of choreographers and artists that "refuse conformed conducts, recognizable forms, and identifiable performance genres, including recognizable 'transgressive' forms (ie., they refuse choreopoliced performances) and, nonheroically, almost modestly, matter of factly propose, instead, unexpected and improbable practices, extemporaneous modes of dissent, and momentary zones of freedom (i.e., they embrace choreopolitical actions)." For a description of *Choreopolice* and *Choreopolitical* see André Lepecki, "Choreopolice and Choreopolitics: Or, the Task of the Dancer," no. 4 (2013).



*Archive—ArcLive*

*Desperado—she arrives  
from endemic Kahikatea,  
Reforested in Grey-mouth  
Spoken for by father  
Upside-down, built  
Desperado—she arcs wooden-ribs  
around my playful child<sup>64</sup>*

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<sup>64</sup> A poem, which communicates the origins of my family sailing yacht *Desperado*, whereby my father chose the actual tree—an endemic kahikatea grown in Greymouth in the 1970s, replaced when cut down for timber—for building the yacht. The Black Box performs the origins of this story, locating participants under the imaginary hull of the boat, just as I, as a child, use to inhabit the upside-down hull of *Desperado* during the process of her being built by my father. The kahikatea was sourced in New Zealand's South Island, in the West Coast forest and mining town of Greymouth.

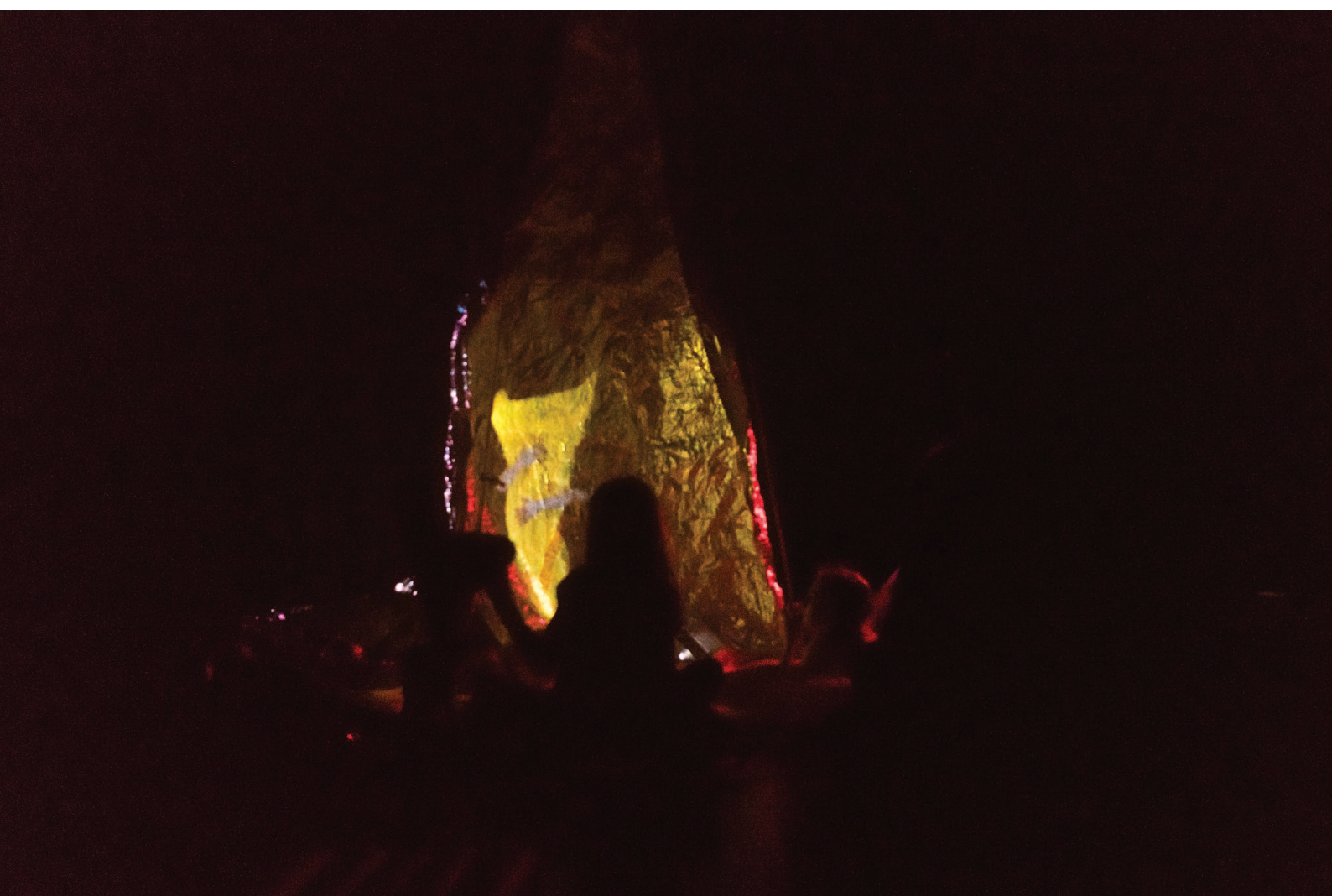
However, it is the work also of Walter Benjamin in relation to his writing on history, archiving, aesthetics and technological reproducibility that finds a deeper everyday envelope in the scene of choreographic object relations. What marks (or inscribes) out this 'space' between without-enduring and the overhanging-afterlives or aftermath of survival narratives will be our action for living toward. As Lepecki states, with the assistance of Michel Foucault and Benjamin, the archive or afterlife acts, writing difference, transforming (our) limits:

For if choreography knows something, it is that an archive does not store: it acts. And its actions take place primarily by delimiting zones of temporality and rhythms of presence—just as choreography must: “The analysis of the archive, then, involves a privileged region: at once close to us, and different from our present existence, *it is the border of time which surrounds our presence*, which overhangs it, and which indicates its otherness; *it is that which, outside ourselves, delimits us*” (Foucault 1972, 130; emphasis added). These zones, or regions, or dimensions form and transform not only our notions but our very *experiences* of time, presence, identity, alterity, body, memory, past, future, subjectivity. The archive as border becomes the vertiginous skin where all sorts of onto-political “re-writings” (Foucault 1972, 140) take place, including the re-writing of movement, including the re-writing of the archive itself.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> André Lepecki, “The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances,” *Dance Research Journal*, no. 2 (2010): 38, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5406/danceresearchj.42.2.0028>. Quoting Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London, UK: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 130 & 40.

I propose that the site of the final presentation will attempt to re-write the archives of grand survival narratives located in our Anthropocene epoch, working with the objective material enveloped and re-enveloped so a choreographic redistributed relationality offers something toward a future that, as yet, cannot be named: a space that remains enigmatically coded or inscribed, beyond control, beyond mastery.



*Figure 28.* Lilo Dance on Sail, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Rob Linkhorn.





*Figure 29.* Rafting in the Black Box, RAFTING, 2017, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Rob Linkhorn.





## Chapter 3 – Review of Artists

### *Ecologies of Participatory Practice*

The aim of this chapter is to draw together performance practices that operate through the collective experience of performance and participation. Those that activate a poetics through interactive costumes/technologies, somatic actions, rituals of care and collective ceremonies, that evoke both memorial and tragic humour, are of interest to this research. As are the artists who have moved out of the proscenium theatres and the white cube galleries to perform in stairwells, city streets, on river banks, in pools and parks; at localities often in states of disrepair or degradation. These performances and artworks foreground practices that aim to reprioritise life as a minimal ethical concern, bringing attention to the complexities of life as relational and connected. I also include further artworks that respond to ‘grand narratives of survival’ (as described earlier) through scale, temporal performances and installations—particularly those that find a tendency toward intimacy and proximity highlighting the distance between everyday actions and their affects at a planetary scale.

#### 3.1 Shelters, Prosthetics—*Body Extensions for Social Experiences*

Evocative of a poetics that challenge grand narratives of survival at the turn of last century is the work of Bill Burns and his *Museum of Safety Equipment for Small Mammals* (1994-2006).<sup>1</sup> This work encapsulates a post-human narrative through tiny garment technologies (including kits, instructions and drawings) for being-with small animals, evocative of the themes of my own research (see *Figure 30*). The poetic-

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Burns, *Safety Gear for Small Animals SGSA*, (1994-2006), ¾ scale models of safety gear for the protection of small animals Toronto. These works are also accompanied by the publications: Bill Burns, *Safety Gear for Small Mammals (Green)* – *Équipement De Sécurité Pour Petites Animaux*, trans. Johanne Sloan, Annette Hurtig, and Beth Seaton (Toronto: MOCCA, 2005) and *Safety Gear (Boxed)*. See “Bill Burns,” accessed March 2018. <http://billburnsprojects.com>.

aesthetics of scale affects the imagination and plays with perceptions, acting as sculptures and skeletons for the participation of small animals. Presented as archives of animal actions we don't actually see, but can imagine, the observer is left wondering whether any animals have actually taken part in the work (and would they even want to). The humour of such poetic imagery allows for a release from the serious nature of survival in the Anthropocene. In contrast, Lucy Orta's iconic social protective clothing *Refuge Wear* (1996-2007)<sup>2</sup> evokes an experiential aesthetic of collective bodies and ritualistic experiences that speak of a new relationship with the body that relies on another, through warmth and protection. In wearing the protective items 'you' share a sleeping bag with another, or collectively share a garment that the whole family fits into. Paul Virilio in his review "Urban Armour" suggests, "At a time when we are told men are free, emancipated, totally autonomous, she tells us that, on the contrary there is a threat and man is regrouping".<sup>3</sup> These garments are suggestive of social and participatory actions, and in her performance series *Refuge Wear City Interventions* (1993-1998)<sup>4</sup> Orta highlights "[s]urvival as the new slogan of the decade," encouraging individuals in difficulty, isolated or in a group, to participate in collective actions of creating survival kits and *Refuge Wear*.<sup>5</sup> Orta's work inspires performative actions of participation as a way to invite us into the work. Interestingly enough both Burns' and Orta's survival safety gear is displayed in the manner of the exhibits of survival gear of early explorers that can be seen in any museum, also existing as an online archive through high quality photographic and film documentation (see *Figure 31*). I see this archiving as perhaps re-distancing the participant to the position of an observer. However, the archival nature of these exhibitions both reminds us of the bodily experience of the past and

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<sup>2</sup> Lucy Orta, *Refuge Wear* (1996-2007), social protective clothing, Studio Orta-Les Moulins, Sainte Marie, Paris, France.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Virilio, "Urban Armour: Observations on the Work of Lucy Orta Recorded During an Interview in December 1995," in *Refuge Wear Editions* (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> *Refuge Wear City Interventions* Lucy Orta, series of public interventions (1993-1998), London's East End, U.K., Commissioned by Dazed and Confused, photographed by John Akehurst.

<sup>5</sup> *Refuge Wear Video*, 1998, Lucy + Jorge Orta. Produced by Pascal d'Horaene for Dazed & Confused Channel 4 commission. London U.K. <https://www.studio-orta.com/en/video/16/Performance-Refuge-Wear>.

highlights the eventual outcome of technologies through the ages. This brings into contention the fast-paced acceleration of technologies, their uses and the disposable nature of contemporary society, as the obsolete quickly flattens to become a thin geological layer in the passing of the world's geological history.<sup>6</sup> The works of both these artists encompass themes of the social, shelter and protection (for animals and humans) that I have explored in my *Choreographies of Participatory Ecologies*, providing contrasts and differences and raising the question of how work like this can be further activated by participants invited to be part of the immersive performance experience.

Participation is at the forefront of Tracey Emin's work *Everyone I have ever slept with* (1995)<sup>7</sup> which is a performance installation that is both immersive and experiential (see *Figure 32*). The tent (evocative of the tent I used in my exhibition *Actions for Living* (2014)<sup>8</sup> is an item of temporary protection and shelter: a provocation for participants to embody the experiences of the artist as well as bringing their own personal experiences to the surface. In crawling through the tent, 'the audience' sees the names of anyone that Emin had ever slept with or had been intimate with (not necessarily in a sexual sense), embroidered in patchwork on the inside. Hand-crafted as a painstaking durational effort for the artist, it allowed

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<sup>6</sup> Zylinska describes (in Chapter 2) the flattening of this geological period to a thin layer, bringing attention to the scale of human existence. This period from the early nineties, described by Claire Bishop as the beginnings of the social artistic movement, has since seen both Orta and Burns moving into more social terrains. Orta has continued her theme of survival through performance, *Nexus Architecture* (1994-2002); connective wearable sculptures, *Life Guards* (2004-ongoing) sculptures using boating survival equipment; video and installation and social events around themes of water, clouds, food, mobility, Antarctica and the Amazon. See "Studio Orta," <https://www.studio-orta.com/en/artworks>. Whereas Burns continues his interest in the post-human through *Bird Radio for Afganistan* (2010) and *Dogs, Boats and Airplanes Choir* both in collaboration with children from local schools in Toronto (2013) as well as a series of poetic art books. See "Bill Burns," <http://billburnsprojects.com>.

<sup>7</sup> Tracey Emin, *Everyone I have ever slept with* (1998), appliquéd tent, mattress and light, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK.

<sup>8</sup> Christina Houghton, *Actions for Living* (2014), interactive performance installation, Gallery Three, AUT University, Auckland (which I discuss in Part 3 of the exegesis).

for the experiencer to think about all those they them-selves had been intimate with while evoking the vulnerability and fragility of a personal connection.<sup>9</sup> The fragility of Emin's story was further emphasised in the unfortunate event of a warehouse fire in 2004, and the tragic loss of the artwork. However, it later rose like a Phoenix (it was unofficially re-created) in a Chapman Brothers homage.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> I have experienced this work also as an archival image online "Saatchi Gallery: World's No. 1 Museum on Social Media," accessed March 2018, [http://www.saatchigallery.com/aip/tracey\\_emin.htm](http://www.saatchigallery.com/aip/tracey_emin.htm) and an online clip, "Tracey Emin," *TheEYE* (Illuminations Media, 2003), accessed March 23, 2018 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=15jVnBl6e0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15jVnBl6e0).

<sup>10</sup> Mark Brown, "Tracey Emin's Tent Rises up Like a Phoenix in Chapman Brothers Homage," *The Guardian: International Edition* (online), October 24, 2014, accessed March 23, 2018 <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/oct/24/tracey-emin-tent-chapman-brothers-hastings>.





*Figure 30.* Floatation Device #1 (9.5 x 6.5 x 2 cm) 1994/2006; Floatation Device #2 (12 x 6.5 x 2cm), 2003; Floatation Device #3 (11 x 9 x 1.5 cm) 2004/2005, Bill Burns, Safety Gear for Small Animals, 1994-2006.



*Figure 31. Refuge Wear City Interventions, Lucy Orta, 1993-1998, series of public interventions, East London, UK. © Lucy Orta/ADAGP. Copyright Agency, 2018.*





*Figure 32. Everyone I have ever Slept with, Tracey Emin, 1995, appliquéd tent, mattress and light, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK. © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved/DACS. Copyright Agency, 2018.*

### 3.2 Scores, Notations—*Task-based Choreography*

Instructions and choreographic scores are an important aspect to this research, in the way they expand territories between artist/choreographer and audience/performer, through the process of creating non-authoritarian art, questioning both who is the ‘performer’ and what can be considered the final work. André Lepecki discusses how dance’s deep relationship to scoring or choreography reveals a system of command that can result in “the formation of obedient disciplined, and preformatted bodies—technically and subjectively fit to produce and (more importantly perhaps) to reproduce certain staged images conveyed by an authorial will.”<sup>11</sup> However, the risk of certainty of outcomes in the ‘act of dancing’ means that a certain amount of freedom still remains. Choreography thus is an ideal site for investigating the agency of the body through what Fred Moten calls “nonperformance” which he describes as:

a qualified, highly strategic and political refusal to perform under normative (ir)rationalities that condition and impose their own (i)logics as the only possible/permissible/acceptable ones under which performances can take place, and in taking place, are validated as being (the only) valid performances.<sup>12</sup>

Lepecki goes on to say, this ability to present the body negotiating its participation in a disciplined world as a political gesture has enabled choreography to cross over to contemporary art practices. Also the ability for choreography to be scored, or for scores to be used in creating response to instruction means that it can be connected to conceptual art and artists who use scores and instructions for performance, such

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<sup>11</sup> André Lepecki, “Introduction: Dance in the Age of Neoliberal Performance,” in *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2016), 14.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Fred Moten quoted by Lepecki from a lecture “Blackness and nonperformance” delivered at MoMA, New York, September 2015.

as Yoko Ono, George Brecht, Vito Acconci and Allan Kaprow,<sup>13</sup> who were associated with the Fluxus movement.<sup>14</sup> These early participatory artworks and choreographies can be experienced even today as traces through instructions or video recordings, opening potentialities for live reenactments.<sup>15</sup> In some cases the instructions are the only recorded archive of the performance event ever happening. For example Allan Kaprow's *2nd Routine* (1974), *7 Kinds of Sympathy* (1976) and *Comfort Zones* (1975)<sup>16</sup> were documented at the time through photographs and the written instructions (using new technology of Xeroxing and recorded on video), returning in the present as an archive of the genealogy of participatory art practices through to the present work of Lee Mingwei as part of the exhibition *Lee Mingwei and his Relations: The Art of Participation*.<sup>17</sup> Kaprow's work, alongside Lee Mingwei's *The Letter Writing Project*<sup>18</sup> (1998/2014)

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<sup>13</sup> Lepecki, "Introduction. Dance in the Age of Neoliberal Performance," 16.

<sup>14</sup> The Fluxus artists were a group formed in the 1960s with artists such as John Cage and George Brecht, working with music scores and performance, new media art and performance art. Influenced by the technology of Xerox machines, they created self-published booklets of performances and scores. See Ken Friedman, Owen Smith and Lauren Sawchyn, eds., *The Fluxus Performance Workbook* (Performance Research ePublications, 2002), accessed March 23, 2018, <http://www.deluxxe.com/beat/fluxusworkbook.pdf>. (Figure 33).

<sup>15</sup> See Lepecki, "The Body as Archive," in *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance*. In relation to choreographic works these reenactments (described by Lepecki, drawing on Walter Benjamin's *Task of the Translator*) act as translations of the original work where the body acts through the 'will to archive', carrying the work to an afterlife beyond the its original limits, reflecting back into the original, changing it forever.

<sup>16</sup> Allan Kaprow, *2nd Routine* (1974), printed catalogue, Stefanotty Gallery, New York and Allan Kaprow's *2nd Routine* (1974), *7 Kinds of Sympathy* (1976) and *Comfort Zones* (1975), 16mm film & video tape transferred to digital film, DVD.

<sup>17</sup> Allan Kaprow's work presented as archival instructions and video as part of *Lee Mingwei and His Relations: The Art of Participation* (2016/2017), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. His genealogy goes back further, having been tutored by Suzanne Lacy, a student of Kaprow's. This exhibition shows how relational art has developed over the last 50 years. Kaprow's interest in pure movement and pedestrian actions is more in line with that of the minimalist movement (that is, perhaps more in line with a masculine instrumental way of making art) although this rejection of art at the time reflected the politics of the day in relation to the Vietnam War, among other factors. Lee Mingwei's work reflects the way participatory practices have evolved towards actions of care and coping in times of trauma.

<sup>18</sup> Lee Mingwei, *The Letter Writing Project* (1998/2004), mixed media interactive installation, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo.



and *The Mending Project* (2009/2016),<sup>19</sup> gives a perspective of participatory practices since the 1960s in the context of Lee Mingwei's work that responds to the notion of 'Relational Aesthetics', termed by Nicolas Bourriaud in 1998<sup>20</sup> (see *Figures 34 & 35*). Lee Mingwei draws on concepts of meditation and stillness (having studied Buddhist meditation) that reveal the personal and autobiographical with concepts of wellbeing and participation into a communal healing experience.

Part of this genealogy are the choreographers and artists, considered part of the minimalist art movement in 1960s New York, who emphasised the connection between everyday performance and the politics of the day.<sup>21</sup> It was Ann Cooper Albright who pointed out in her book *Choreographing Difference*<sup>22</sup> that alongside this minimalist art movement there developed a greater anatomical awareness, and techniques such as the emergence of contact improvisation that also reflected the social and aesthetic revolution

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*The Letter Writing Project*, which emerged from the death of his grandmother, invites participants to write a letter to someone saying something they have always wanted to say.

<sup>19</sup> *The Mending Project* (2009/2016), mixed media interactive installation, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. *The Mending Project* emerged from the aftermath of 9/11 in New York City: the action of 'doing the mending' during the aftermath of the fall of the twin towers of the World Trade Center created intimate spaces for conversations to deal with personal trauma, which he restaged as an interactive experience in the gallery itself.

<sup>20</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Paris: Les Presses du Réel, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> Ramsay Burt, *Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2006), 53. Choreographers Trisha Brown and Yvonne Rainer used pedestrian and minimalist functional movement, not to reduce the body to objectified movement but in an effort to bring attention to the materiality of the body both emotive and physical. These practices followed Rainer's statement, "NO to spectacle" which was partially due to her bodily response to seeing a Vietnamese person shot on television and her state of mind of horror and disbelief in the fact that the television could then be turned off, yet: *My body remains the enduring reality*. This highlights the connection between performance and the politics of the day.

<sup>22</sup> Ann Cooper Albright, *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1997), 53.

the **Fluxus** Performance **Workbook**  
edited by Ken Friedman, Owen Smith and Lauren Sawchyn



a **Performance Research** e-publication 2002

*Figure 33.* The Fluxus Performance Workbook, 2002.

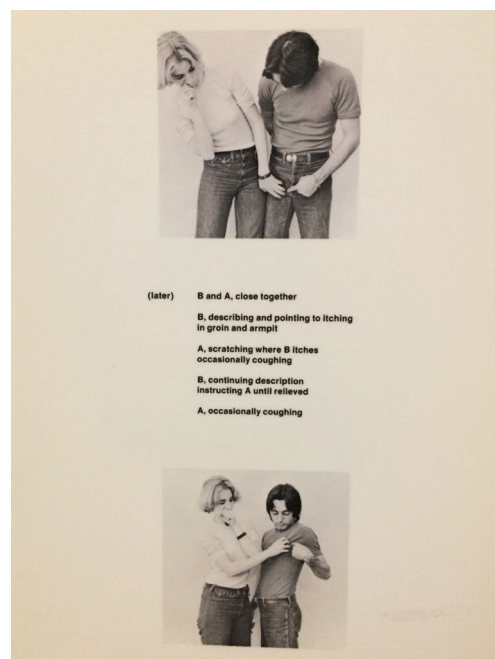
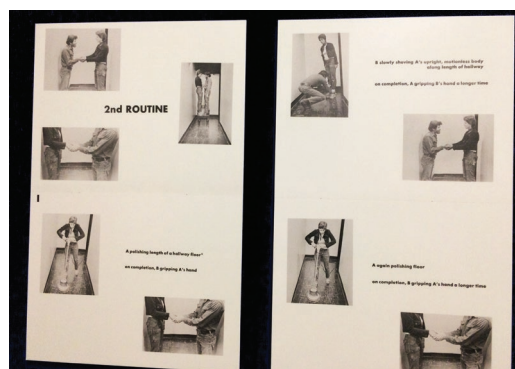
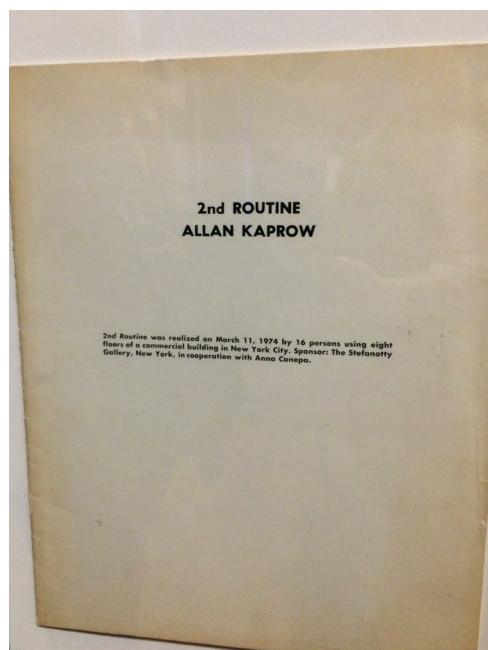


Figure 34. Allan Kaprow's *2nd Routine* (1974), *7 Kinds of Sympathy* (1976) and *Comfort Zones* (1975). Printed publications, *Lee Mingwei and his Relations: The Art of Participation*, Exhibition at Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tāmaki. Photo: Christina Houghton.



*Figure 35. The Letter Writing Project, 1998/2014, Lee Mingwei, Lee Mingwei and his Relations: The Art of Participation, exhibition at Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tāmaki. Photo: Maria O'Connor.*







of the times.<sup>23</sup> This development of neuro-skeletal and muscular sensitivities allowed for new kinds of embodied sensitivities, witnessed by the audience, which acknowledged the body in ways that departed from the mainstream spectatorship of dance. Choreographers were also informed by the emergence of other somatic practices emerging around this time such as Body Mind Centering (as I mentioned earlier) that focused on touch and the senses as a way to give agency to the dancer and thus create new democracies of practice. Furthermore, performances informed by these practices engaged with preparation as mind body connection through sensations, as well as relational practices that embodied the notion of audience as witness rather than spectator. This turn towards the senses in minimalist choreographic work was seen to contribute not only to the revolution against the spectacle, but to the feminist art movement by promoting “a criticism of the status quo in terms of gender relations.”<sup>24</sup> However, minimalism was also criticised as being cool and impersonal as male artists adopted instrumental ways of working while any autobiographical or expressive art (by females artists) was considered lesser.<sup>25</sup> However, this period saw many choreographers collaborating with contemporary visual arts. An example of such was work that emerged from the collaboration of Robert Rauschenberg and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in the 1960s, which included Yvonne Rainer, Simone Forti and Trisha Brown.<sup>26</sup> This was shown in the exhibition *Robert Rauschenberg* at the Tate Modern in London, 2017,<sup>27</sup> as a collection of films and transcripts. The documentation of these works (as black and white film clips; see *Figure 37*) reveals surreal costuming, objects, technologies and repetitive instructions for movement, complete with hand-

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. The somatic dance practice Contact Improvisation is a touch-based technique devised by Steve Paxton (who also worked with the likes of Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown) that uses weight and risk, through falling and catching. The ethos behind the dance form is formulating democratic ways of being with others, realised in the negotiation between two people dancing.

<sup>24</sup> Sally Banes, *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 1998), 216-17. Cited in Burt, 55.

<sup>25</sup> Anna. C. Chave, “Minimalism and Biography,” *Art Bulletin*, March, LXXXIII (2000). Cited in Burt.

<sup>26</sup> As part of the collaborative group Judson Dance Theatre.

<sup>27</sup> *Robert Rauschenberg* (2016-2017), Exhibition, Tate Modern, London UK.

*Figure 36. The Mending Project, 2009/2014, Lee Mingwei and his Relations: The Art of Participation, exhibition at Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tāmaki. Photo: Christina Houghton.*

scribed maps and drawings describing the structures behind the work. The aim of this work was to utilise what's available and use restrictions as limitations.<sup>28</sup> This has relevance to many artistic practices today as both a survival tactic (for an artist with limited resources) and a response to the contemporary world of excess. Focusing on small performance projects that draw on minimal resources and utilise DIY tactics means that artists become very resourceful, as well as creating possibilities for focusing on audience and performer relations through intimate and personal encounters that otherwise may not have arisen. I see this way of working as a move towards making work that 'means something' as the world becomes more fragmented, degraded and primed for states of emergency. Claire Bishop describes how artists engaging in activities that are social, cultural and political, and that de-authorise the artist aim to create work that contributes to social change as an ethical artistic practice. She goes on to suggest that participation is important for "rehumanizing a society numbed and fragmented by the repressive instrumentalism of capitalist production."<sup>29</sup> Artworks like this encourage people to take notice of forgotten spaces and the social nuances of participation—an essential practice for artists and everyday people. This type of work represents a social and ethical shift that gives art a more inclusive approach to both art-making and everyday life.

### 3.3 Somatic Rituals—*Listening Attuning*

*They Come from Far Away: a Performance Festival* (2016, at Te Uru Gallery) co-curated by Mark Harvey, (an Auckland-based performance artist) with Leena Kela (Finland) and Christopher Hewitt (Germany) brought together international and local artists.<sup>30</sup> I participated as a reviewer, participant and observer

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<sup>28</sup> Steve Paxton, Tate Modern, *Live, Rauschenberg: Tate Modern 1 Dec-2 Apr 2017* (London, UK: Tate Modern, 2017).

<sup>29</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London, UK; New York: Verso Books, 2012), 11.

<sup>30</sup> *They Come from Far Away: A Performance Festival*, Te Uru Gallery, Titirangi, Auckland, New Zealand. Feb 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> 2016



*Figure 37.* Peter Moore, Photo of Robert Rauschenburg performing his piece *Pelican* (1963), First New York Theatre Rally, New York, May 1965. © Barbara Moore/ Licensed by Untitled Press Inc./VAGA. Copyright Agency, 2018.

over the three days, which opened the opportunity for critical reflections on my research into somatics and failure (and resting and recovery)<sup>31</sup> as part of my practice Choreography of Participatory Ecologies. Sean Curham (a choreographic artist) enacted his work *Resting Comfortably on the Bonnet of a Popular Car*,<sup>32</sup> addressing modes of active and passive performativity (see *Figure 39*). Described as one of his more passive performances, he used yoga props and blankets to make people comfortable while resting on the bonnet of his car; he then drove the car gently around the car park or revved the engine. Curham's ceremonies of urban culture are interested in the everyday and the mundane (the body and technology), exposing our fragility through reckless/careful acts of risk. In *Flying Object*<sup>33</sup> he throws a stage light off the roof of the gallery in a site-responsive action to the fact that Titirangi (Auckland, New Zealand—the location of the gallery) was the site for many UFO sightings in the 1990s, as well as the location of the fine set of weaponry held at the local RSA (Returned Servicemen's Association). These works reveal everyday actions as 'art event', as did his other community event, a dog-walking project *Four Legs Better Than Two* (as part of the Caroline Plummer Fellowship 2009).<sup>34</sup> All aim to engage the audience as participant, thinker and public body. Mark Harvey, whose work investigates rituals of risk and idiocy in relation to politics of identity and attitudes to climate change, becomes a *Welcome Mat*<sup>35</sup> at the door of the gallery allowing those passing through to measure their carbon footprint (see *Figure 40*). Harvey's performance (like many of his others that I will mention) aims to disrupt and subvert while engaging in long durations

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<sup>31</sup> See Christina Houghton, "They Come from Far Away —Part 1 Live Performance," *Theatreview* (Feb 10, 2016), <https://www.theatreview.org.nz/reviews/review.php?id=8809>; Christina Houghton, "UFO Sightings and Singular Encounters—Part Two," *Theatreview* (Feb 17, 2016), <https://www.theatreview.org.nz/reviews/review.php?id=8841>.

<sup>32</sup> *Resting Comfortably on the Bonnet of a Popular Car*, Sean Curham, interactive performance, Te Uru Gallery Carpark, Titirangi, Auckland. Feb 12, 2016.

<sup>33</sup> *Flying Object*, Sean Curham, live performance action, Te Uru Gallery Carpark, Titirangi, Auckland. Feb 10, 2016. See review, Houghton, "Ufo Sightings and Singular Encounters—Part Two."

<sup>34</sup> See Sean Curham, "Welcome to *Four Legs Better Than Two*," *Four Legs Better than Two*, 2009, accessed Feb 23, 2018, <http://fourlegsbetterthantwodunedin.blogspot.co.nz/>.

<sup>35</sup> *Welcome Mat*, Mark Harvey, live performance action, Te Uru Gallery Foyer, Titirangi, Auckland, Feb 10, 2016.





**THEY COME FROM  
FAR AWAY:  
a performance  
festival**

*They come from far away* is a live performance series featuring a mixture of visiting artists from Finland, Germany, the UK, across Aotearoa and other places. The series will explore notions of the familiar/unfamiliar, being alien/belonging, being foreign/local and being seen/unseen.

Co-curated by Leena Kela (Finland), Christopher Hewitt (Germany), with Titirangi's Mark Harvey, the series will be situated in and around Te Uru, as well as in locations plotted around the surrounding environment.

*They Come From Far Away: a performance festival* is kindly supported by the Chartwell Trust, FRAME, Arts Promotion Center Finland and TINFO.

*Figure 38. They Come from Far Away, Feb 2016, Festival Brochure, Te Uru Gallery, Titirangi, Auckland.*





*Figure 39. Gentle Resting on a Bonnet of a Popular Car, Sean Curham & Meiosis, val smith & Kristian Larsen, 2016, Te Uru Gallery, Titirangi, Auckland. Photo: Christina Houghton.*

that activate some kind of ritual: the dis-illusional commitment of his body to these actions creates a personal encounter that holds presence in a world of internet and documentation. I see Harvey's position on the floor as a subversion of the eco-preacher as he points out the failure of these efforts. In asking for help he puts the participant in a position of agency, encouraging an act of kindness in 'taking care of him' contributing to the work and the themes that are raised."<sup>36</sup>

val smith (lowercase intentional), who previously explored differences in gutters in various cities—connecting sites of unseen with the politics of gay shame and visibility as *Gutter Matters* (2014) and *Ecologies of the Gutter* (2012)<sup>37</sup>—infuses Te Uru Gallery with a somatic experiment. In *Meosis* val and choreographic artist Kristian attempt the impossible, as a durational experience of kinesthetically 'becoming each other' they move through Te Uru Gallery finding hidden spaces and crossing with other performances. In this performance they experiment with a range of different somatic practices they are both familiar with, and compare and contrast during the performance. Playing with queer politics, they explore pride, shame, power, vulnerability as a somatic transformation of space and relations between inside and out.<sup>38</sup> As participants we follow along, intercepting their conversations as critics and performers, somatically sensing their awkwardness when cameras from the gallery 'hijack' their performance in the small space of the toilet cubicle. They cross paths with Curham's work, engaging in *Resting Comfortably* in a dual action: a somatic ritual of resting (see *Figure 39*). More recently I experienced val smith's work *Queer Dating Sites* (2018)<sup>39</sup> as part of the 2018 Auckland Fringe Festival.<sup>40</sup> This work continues the

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<sup>36</sup> Houghton, "Ufo Sightings and Singular Encounters—Part Two."

<sup>37</sup> *Gutter Matters*, val smith, performance with city gutters, New Performance Festival, Turku, Finland, October 2014 and *Ecologies of the Gutter*, val smith, solo performance, Maidment Studio Theatre, Auckland University, 2012.

<sup>38</sup> See val smith, "Meiosis," *valvalvalsmithsmithsmith: Choreographic Artist*, October 3, 2016, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://valvalvalsmithsmithsmith.blogspot.co.nz/search?q=meiosis>.

<sup>39</sup> *Queer Dating Sites*, val smith, participatory performance, AUT University, Auckland. March 8, 2018.

<sup>40</sup> Auckland Fringe Festival, Feb 20-March 4, 2018, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.aucklandfringe.co.nz/>.



*Figure 40. Welcome Mat, Mark Harvey, 2016, Te Uru Gallery, Titirangi, Auckland.*  
Photo: Christina Houghton.

concept of sensing sites through queer perspectives as a group of us follow valvalval/Fefe,<sup>41</sup> to a grimy site under a university stairwell where we enact relaxation techniques for anxiety (while wrapped in pink bed sheets) and take each other on blind(folded) dates (see *Figure 41*). While engaging with touch to explore sites of the 'built architectural' body, concepts of consent, safety and past dates rise to the surface. The work primarily articulates the idea that we are all collectively dealing with the anxieties of social interactions and everyday existence, and that we can help each other through techniques and strategies of being-with *other*. val's work brings concepts of care for the environment to the surface through gentle suggestions and underlying narratives. The plight of the kauri tree (and the issue of kauri dieback disease) became part of the encounter, as the performance couldn't take place in the originally intended location of a Titirangi site in the Waitakere forest. Instead it was moved to the urban location of the university. So there we were, hugging grimy buildings instead of trees. Ironically the final performance was closed down by security, who found the subversive actions of people behaving strangely to be outside to confines of allowable performative actions in public spaces.

Harvey has extensively explored the notion of *hosting* or *welcoming* as a part of his performance practice with environmental intentions. In works such as *Reception Party* (2015),<sup>42</sup> a durational and endurance performance, he welcomed visitors to the exhibition Āhua o te Rangi, NZPQ15 (New Zealand Prague Quadrennial 2015) and invited them to argue about climate change (see *Figure 42*). In this work he draws on the Māori notion of pōwhiri and the welcome party of kaupapa Māori (where visitors are welcomed

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<sup>41</sup> val describes these performance personas as being in a liminal state somewhere between valvalval and Fefe. Smudging between these two realities and subjectivities and also not yet both (personal communication March 21, 2018).

<sup>42</sup> *Reception Party*, Mark Harvey, interactive performance, NZPQ15 Āhua o te Rangi, the New Zealand Pavilion exhibit for the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space PQ15, Prague, Czech Republic, June, 2015. I was also selected as part of the costume section for NZPQ15, with the performance work *Still Sailing—A Guided Tour and Boat Trip of the Flood Plains of Prague*, which I describe later in the exegesis, Parts 2 and 3.





*Figure 41. Queer Dating Sites, val smith, 2018, site responsive performance, AUT University, Auckland.*  
Photos: Peter Jennings (top left and bottom right) and val smith, courtesy of artist.



onto the Marae or tribal meeting place).<sup>43</sup> This appropriating of Māori traditions is something that I think is becoming more associated with artists from Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific region, and is a way to make social and cultural connections beyond those of the hegemonic colonial regime. Harvey offers a place where your opinion matters, acting as expert yet subverting this through changing sides mid argument; this performance is derived from *Political Climate Wrestle* (2013)<sup>44</sup> where he wrestled participants after arguing about climate change. Harvey's ability to invite people to participate though an enforced intervention is a strong aspect of this type of work, which he carries through other works such as *Welcome Mat* (2016) that I mentioned earlier and *Joy Ride* (2016),<sup>45</sup> where he offered to carry participants between lecture theatres at the PSI (Performance Studies International) conference in any way they chose (I was carried with the Firemans' hold). Harvey's work draws on physical connectivity, touch and sensitivities from the somatic practice of contact improvisation as part of his dance background, and includes his research into rituals of 'white man's' identity (such as machoism) within which he plays with realms of idiocy. Although in the ambiguous aspect of hosting and the offering to 'take care of things' his performance plays into the heroism of the rescuer which can often be the case for those who take on the role of dealing with the issues of climate change as the themes for their practice. However, it is at this

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<sup>43</sup> Hosting and guiding follows traditions of guided tours for locations of interest for tourists, or for ecological and scientific excursions where interested participants learn about the flora and fauna and ecological issues of a specific area. Such tours involve safety briefings, local knowledge and stories of place. Guides can be transmitters of knowledge, experts in their field or locals with intrinsic knowledge of place, such as the 200-year whakapapa of Māori wāhine (women) working as guides, as protectors and transmitters of Māori culture at the famous Whakarewarewa Village in Rotorua (and originally the surrounding area) where the prestigious position of guide for geothermal areas sees these women perform the graceful navigation between English and Māori languages and culture. Meet the People—The famous Guides of Whakarewarewa, the Living Māori Village, [www.whakarewarewa.com](http://www.whakarewarewa.com).

<sup>44</sup> *Political Climate Wrestle*, Mark Harvey, interactive performance, Maldives Exodus Caravan Show, Venice Biennale, 2013. See The Maldives Exodus Caravan Show, "Mark Harvey: Political Climate Wrestle," last modified March 2017, accessed March 23, 2018, <http://the-maldives-exodus-caravan-show.com/climate-wrestle/>.

<sup>45</sup> *Joyride*, Mark Harvey, interactive performance, PSI #22 Performing Climates Conference, Melbourne University, Melbourne, Australia, July, 2016.

point where the failure of his actions reveals the futility of the actions at an everyday level, offering both advice yet agency to the participant by undermining the underlying message through humorous antics, thus relieving any anxieties about having the ‘hard’ conversations.

Harvey’s later work *Turquoisisation for the Coming Storm* (2016) that was commissioned for Te Tuhi Gallery *Share/Cheat/Unite*<sup>46</sup> and performed throughout Auckland City as a series of performance actions, tends more towards the social format of participation described by Bishop as providing an ironic sensory ‘feel good experience’ for the participant, and aimed to include those who were committed. A group of performers dressed in turquoise offer sensory touches and comfort within their mobile walking shelter, encouraging those who join to relax and go with the action.

Through participation the turquoise fabric draws together passersby in a Turquoise Nation (that also has an instructional video for conformist actions). This world touches on notions of shelter and new worlds but warns of the projections of colonialist and neo-liberal concepts of sameness in creating utopian worlds.<sup>47</sup>

Moving through performances from the horizontal to that in motion follows the exchange between movement stillness, resting and mobility as a practice described by Lepecki as the transformative system of excorporations and incorporations:

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<sup>46</sup> *Turquoisisation for the Coming Storm*, Mark Harvey, performance and video, *Share/Cheat/Unite*: August 13-October 23 (2016) Exhibition at Te Tuhi Gallery, Pakuranga, Auckland. I was part of the review team reviewing *Turquoisisation* and also wrote an article: Christina Houghton, “Shades of Turquoisisation,” in *Share/Cheat/Unite: Volume 3*, ed. Bruce Phillips, (Auckland, NZ: Te Tuhi Gallery, 2018), [https://issuu.com/tetuhiart/docs/scu\\_vol3\\_ebook](https://issuu.com/tetuhiart/docs/scu_vol3_ebook). Also see the review Christina Houghton, “Touched by Turquoisisation: Turquoisisation for the Coming Storm,” *Theatreview* (2016), <https://www.theatre-view.org.nz/reviews/review.php?id=9472> ; Houghton, *Shades of Turquoisisation*.

<sup>47</sup> The image of a group dressed in blue (although a different shade) has since been appropriated for the New Zealand National Party television campaign for the 2017 New Zealand general election.



*Figure 42. Welcome Party, Mark Harvey, 2015, New Zealand  
Prague Quadrennial 2015, Prague, Czech Republic.*







This kind of dynamics founds particular economy, where bodies entwine or intermingle, across time-in an endless chain of reciprocal emissions, transmissions, receptions, and exchanges of times, gestures, steps, affects, sweat, breathing, historical, and political particles.<sup>48</sup>

This research considers participants as active agents in the processes of performance making, who often super-seed the intentions of the choreographer as guide and transform the experience into one of individual agency and fragmented/collective outcomes. In particular this type of work finds an affinity with the Dada season (1916 Zurich and wider Europe) and Situationist psycho-geographical maps (1957-72 France, influenced by Guy Debord's seminal text *The Society of the Spectacle*, 1967)<sup>49</sup> that created political activist actions investigating art that meets everyday life and the everyday becoming art. In particular the ceremonies and actions that occurred under socialist regimes in the Czech Republic by Fluxus artist and musician Milan Knížák, as described by Claire Bishop,<sup>50</sup> may have had a similar response of minimal actions in times of unimaginable regimes. o staged a number of ceremonies and demonstrations between 1960 and 1970 in Prague and New York. Describing Kaprow's Happenings as excessive theatricality he believed that his work was "more 'natural' and closer to the reality of human life" than that of the Fluxus artists in the United States who (as he suggested) were tied to format of conventional stage performance.<sup>51</sup> These works included *Lying Down Ceremony* (1966-68) and *A Walk Around Nový Svět (A Demonstration for All the Senses)* (1964).<sup>52</sup> Bishop points out Knížák's disinterest in the political with his work tending

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<sup>48</sup> Lepecki, "The Body as Archive," in *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance*, 129.

<sup>49</sup> Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith (New York: Zone Books 1994).

<sup>50</sup> Claire Bishop, "The Social under Socialism," in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London, UK; New York: Verso Books, 2012), 132. Knížák accused the work of the Western Fluxus movement to be more concerned with the spectacle, with the participants themselves falling readily into a more traditional framework of projecting their uniqueness and drastic impact. Also for Fluxus scores see Friedman, Smith, and Sawchyn, *The Fluxus Performance Workbook*, 63-68.

<sup>51</sup> Bishop, "The Social under Socialism," 132.

<sup>52</sup> *Lying Down Ceremony*, Milan Knížák, Douglas University, New Jersey, 1968. *A Walk Around Nový Svět*

towards generating new territories of free expression within an oppressive state, changing one's everyday life into art as a poetic gesture.<sup>53</sup> His reflexive subjective experiences that privatised spectatorship are of interest to this research. There may be a similar response by artists today in reaction to the oppressive reality and disillusion from the enormity of the Anthropocene. I suggest that artists today are bringing together art and life as a way to reject the spectacle of climate change and the Anthropocene in a similar way to early participatory performance that encompassed an ethical turn towards efficacy and sustainability.<sup>54</sup>

### 3.4 Off Shore

Humour or absurdity is often a catalyst for dealing with issues that are out of our control. The work of Antti Laitinen (who represented Finland at the 2013 Venice Biennial)<sup>55</sup> allows a poetics that evoke the reality of our tragic everyday efforts to be more than ourselves, revealing that a singular performance action can reveal political and territorial legislation that represents the controls that we negotiate every day in a neoliberal society. In *Voyage* (2008/2009),<sup>56</sup> as mentioned earlier, Laitinen shares with us a visual concept: a solo man rowing an 'island' has an immediate connection to the casting free of Arctic islands due to ice melt or rising sea levels (see *Figure 45*). Laitinen professes that his work is not a statement about climate change, being more concerned with the doing rather than the message. (Yet there were definite

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(*A Demonstration for All the Senses*), Milan Knížák, Prague, 1964.

<sup>53</sup> Bishop, 132.

<sup>54</sup> Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*.

<sup>55</sup> He also performed his work *Tree Reconstruction* as part of *We Come From Far Away*. See Te Uru Gallery, *We Come from Far Away: A Performance Festival* (Auckland, NZ: Te Uru Gallery, 2016).

<sup>56</sup> *Voyage*, Antti Laitinen, performance at Athens Biennial and Performance on Thames, 2008/2009. Documented through photographs and video. See Antti Laitinen, "Antti Laitinen—Visual Artist," last modified 2018, accessed March 23 2018, <http://anttilaitinen.com/works/>.



*Figure 44: Lying Ceremony*, Milan Knížák, Douglas University, New Jersey, 1967-68. © Milan Knizak/VG Bild-Kunst. Copyright Agency, 2018.

political repercussions when he rowed his island up the River Thames in London.) *It's my Island* (2007),<sup>57</sup> where he built his own island and sat on it until the tide swallowed it and himself (see *Figure 46.*), has been described by Peter Suchin as absurdist, informed by a Dada-like aesthetic:

Building his own micro island (or rather, the visual stereotype of such thing) is the case in point; the labour involved in this task being potentially immense, and the choice of the sandbags is key component of the structure's physical construction adds to the silliness of the project. Will the sandbags hold back the water? The project is doomed to failure from the start, yet there is also something heroic, noble, and possibly a little selfish about manufacturing your own island.<sup>58</sup>

However, in this action of doing/making, or in the case of *Voyage* rowing a boat that looks like an island, he evokes an ethico-poetics that captures multiple layers of 'a man living with nature' rejecting the neoliberal life that the rest of us are living. Suchin goes on to say that Laitinen is commenting on the 'authentic' and the special status of the artist and in actual fact may be practising a form of realism. The absurdity is perhaps capturing a more real image of everyday life struggling to achieve the impossible in face of the immensity of the outdoor environments within which he creates his work. Although the imagery of these works is inspirational and strongly activates the themes that Laitinen is interested in I do however feel excluded by his solo antics. Perhaps the feeling is that I have been left on the shore of a deserted island longing to hear his stories yet having to fend for myself while he rows off into the distance.

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<sup>57</sup> Antti Laitinen, *It's my Island* (2007), solo exhibition, Nettie Horn Gallery, London, UK, presented as a series of photographs and a video installation. See <http://www.nettiehorn.com/>.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Suchin, "Antti Laitinen," *Nettie Horn* (2008), accessed March 23, 2018, [http://www.nettiehorn.com/AnttiLaitinen\\_Texts.htm](http://www.nettiehorn.com/AnttiLaitinen_Texts.htm)



*Five Short Blasts* is an immersive boating experience that I participated in on the Vltava River at the Prague Quadrennial (2015).<sup>59</sup> My experience of *Five Short Blasts* (2015)<sup>60</sup> started early on a freezing cold morning (see *Figure 47*). Described as an “encounter with a city on a flotilla” it references the international maritime sound signal of five short blasts meaning “I am not sure of your intentions and I am concerned I am going to collide,”<sup>61</sup> drawing attention to the shared experience of uncertainty navigating among the many boats crossing the river. There is a local (student) rowing the boat with two-to-three passengers on board following a line of similar row-boats (these boats are the same as the boats I have been using in my own work *Still Sailing* each afternoon as part of the same festival. There is a recording of an Australian voice, from Melbourne, telling stories of another place, overlaying in a meandering soundscape played on portable radios under the seat of the navigator. These stories echo the stories of loss, reclamation and recovery, becoming another layer in the lines of flight crisscrossing the Vltava River at any one time. In *Five Short Blasts* I find it hard to focus on the recorded stories that fade across the still water and I am intrigued with the person rowing the boat, yet he reveals nothing of himself, he is a docile body playing a version of a man rowing a boat. While this adds to the mysterious nature of the work I am left wanting that human contact from someone I am sitting so close to. However, I do appreciate the warm blanket on my knees as well as the cup of tea and biscuits produced from under his seat as we float aimlessly under the bridge. This work has the ability to connect cultures across nations through the ocean and the universal nature of boating.

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<sup>59</sup> Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design & Space PQ15, Prague, Czech Republic.

<sup>60</sup> Originally created in Melbourne Australia. See *Five Short Blasts*, participatory boat performance. Created by Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey in collaboration with Bec Reid, City of Melbourne Arts Participation Program, Lower Yarra River, Melbourne Australia, 2013.

<sup>61</sup> “About 5 Short Blasts,” *Five Short Blasts Prague*, accessed March 2018, <http://fiveshortblastsprague.com/>





Figures 45 & 46. *Voyage* Antti Laitinen, 2008, Performance on the Thames in London, UK. Photo: Courtesy of artist. *It's my Island*, Antti Laitinen, 2007, Diasec Mounted C-type print, 115 x 115 cm. Photo: Courtesy of artist.





*Figure 47. 5 Short Blasts, 2015, Performance on the Vltava River, Prague Quadrennial 2015, Prague, Czech Republic. Photo: Christina Houghton.*

### 3.5 Environmental Concerns

Many of the artists that I have mentioned already have had their work shown in festivals that have environmental themes. Certainly, when work is situated at a location the stories of site rise to the surface, relating to colonisation, urbanisation and degradation. Such was the case for *Sea Change* the 2nd Oceanic Performance Biennial held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands (2015),<sup>62</sup> that resulted in a range of performances located all over the island. Artists responded to environmental threats of sea-level rise through duration, breath and endurance as well as mobile performance walks. These captured the cultural term of ‘island time’ that exists slightly outside the clock-watched times but is more of a temporal synch with the position of the sun, the tides or the hunger in the stomachs of the locals. Kalisolaite (Ite) ‘Uhila (a New Zealand artist of Tongan descent) passes us by on his durational work circumnavigating the island as he walks anti-clockwise against time in *Tangai One One*. He has been carrying a bag of sand with a hole in it, leaving a trail behind him as a ritualist action for the environment. Zahra Killeen-Chance’s *Breath of Air* reminds us that breath is the fundamental action that brings us all together, particularly in a low-lying coastal nation; as her blue-sleeved body sways in the palms we hear her submerged recorded breath echoing through the trees like a haunting of a future yet to come. Breath is also part of the emotive *In Paradisum (Into Paradise)* of Olivia Webb, who walks into the sea at Muri Beach Resort while singing the Latin Catholic Requiem Mass, surrendering to the “rising sea levels as her voice was absorbed by the wind and washed away by water.”<sup>63</sup> Latai Taumoepeau (Australia, Tonga) performs *Stitching (up) the Sea* on the beach at dusk wearing white as in mourning; she takes on the concept of “who will take on the hard labour of repair” in relation to climate change. A choreographer and performance artist, Taumoepeau’s body is her site for identifying the vulnerability of island nations in the face of sea-level rise. She is an ambassador for

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<sup>62</sup> Which I also participated in, see Part 3. The conference was also reviewed by Dorita M Hannah, “Fluid States Pasifika: Spacing Events through an Entangled Oceanic Dramaturgy,” *Global Performance Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017), <http://gps.psi-web.org/issue-1-1/fluid-states-pasifika/> and Margaret Werry, “Sea-Change: Performing a Fluid Continent,” *Performance Research* 21, no. 2 (2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2016.1173926>.

<sup>63</sup> Hannah. “Fluid States Pasifika: Spacing Events through an Entangled Oceanic Dramaturgy.”



bringing attention to the issues of climate change through durational performances that deal with survival and action, and this evening she smashes glass with a rock, turning glass back into sand and then walking on it with her feet ‘climate change’ is slow pain is what the work is saying. As witnesses to this quiet ritual we are necessary supporting her in her actions as the sun goes down. She inspires more than imagery that affects us; we are there with her as part of the performance.

Back onshore in New Zealand, Artist Brydee Rood’s work moves between site-responsive solo performances as video installations and participatory performances evoking rituals towards environmental issues in connection with the elements of earth, water, fire, air, soil—creating actions with recyclable objects such as flags, wearable inflatable garments and the material presence of earthly elements. Particularly significant to this research is her *Survival Water Series: Whanganui Gold Waters*<sup>64</sup> where she floats with gold survival blankets in the water of the Whanganui River, becoming a caretaker for the fragility of water and the pollution that infuses it (see *Figure 49*). I experienced her work *Please Return Me to Earth / We are Weather Part 1 & 2* as part of TEMP 2017<sup>65</sup> where 10.8 tonnes of Huntly coal,<sup>66</sup> the average amount of a single New Zealander’s carbon footprint, was installed in the centre of Corbans Art Estate to the iconic musical score *The Dark Island* by Iain McLachlan (1963: see *Figure 50*). Each participant in a ritualistic ceremony is seated around the pile, witnessing the moving of coal from pile, to person and back again. Handling the coal gave a sensation of the weight and materiality of fossil fuels and evoked a sense of care towards what had been taken from the earth. The coal was then transported across the city to Freemans Bay’s Western Park and installed as the words ‘Please Return Me to Earth’, with the help of locals and passersby in a day-

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<sup>64</sup> *Survival Water Series: Whanganui Gold Waters*, Brydee Rood, Te Whare o Rehui Whanganui, Sargeant Gallery Whanganui, New Zealand, 2016.

<sup>65</sup> *Please Return me to Earth / We are Weather Part 1 & 2*, Brydee Rood, interactive performance installation, TEMP 2017, a biannual art science climate change event, Corbans Art Estate, Auckland. March 16-April 8. A range of collaborations between artists and scientists around the themes of water, food, air, weather, shelter. I also participated in this with a Wild Walk—a non-guided listening walk next to the Opanuku Stream. See “Wild Walks,” [www.milicentdiaries.tumblr.com](http://www.milicentdiaries.tumblr.com)

<sup>66</sup> Huntly is a small town in New Zealand, home of the country’s largest thermal power station.



Figure 48. *Breath of Air*, Zahra Killeen-Chance. *Paradisum (Into Paradise)*, Olivia Webb; *Stitching (up) the Sea*, Latai Taumoepeau. *Tangai One One*, Kalisolaite (Ite) 'Uhila, *Sea Change: Performing a Liquid Continent*, 2015, Rarotonga, Cook Islands. Photos: Christina Houghton, Solomon Mortimer and Natalie Robertson.

long durational activity. This work represents the effort taken in transporting such resources from place to place in order to facilitate our ongoing need as humans to have a fossil-fuel-driven economy.

Another work by Rood *We Come from the Sea, We Seek Higher Ground* (2017)<sup>67</sup> that gives ode to the Ocean and its environmental issues was installed in Durham Street, Auckland as part of Auckland Art Week's *Changing Lanes* where artists install art works in the city lanes, and saw Rood fill a red kayak with oyster shells, with flags made from Bear Grylls' survival blankets hanging above (see *Figure 51*). The kayak, however, was stolen only three days into the exhibition, leaving the shells strewn on the city streets. The council wouldn't allow for the shells to remain, so cleaned them away. The anonymity of the thieves as participants added to the sense of the invisibility of human affects on the planet and the disappearing affects of sea-level rise.<sup>68</sup>

In her work Rood offers small gestures towards environmental concerns involving local issues and people opening spaces for dialogue and movement with the elements of the earth as a relational, ecological practice. Although Rood's practice traverses many offshore locations her reflections on performances that connect her practice with the land and the Whanaungatanga (relatedness of all things) bring people together in a way that acknowledges that of the local community yet draws on the space of a ritual. In this work the participants can feel a sense of agency in the given action (holding the flag)<sup>69</sup> or placing coal into letters as mentioned before. These works are specifically activated in public spaces working within

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<sup>67</sup> *We Come from the Sea, We Seek Higher Ground*, Brydee Rood, *Changing Lanes*, Auckland Art Week, Durham Lane, Auckland. October 2017.

<sup>68</sup> Adam Jacobson, "Red Kayak in Auckland Installation Vanishes in the night." *Central Leader*, October 13, 2017. Accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/local-news/central-leader/97809165/red-kayak-in-auckland-artweek-installation-vanishes-in-the-night>  
See "Brydee Rood," Brydee Rood Blogspot, November 24; November 30, 2017, accessed March 2018, <http://brydeerood.blogspot.co.nz/>.

<sup>69</sup> See *Ibid. In between Future Worlds*, Brydee Rood and Harpreet Singh, a guided performance walk from Auckland



environmental constraints, both physical and financial—all factors that have contributed to the very issues they aim to daylight through ritualistic actions of everyday preparation or artistic practice.

Alternatively these rituals *live on* as archives or instructions for living, as video works offering a quiet space for reflection and becoming a ceremonial object for worshipping. When experiencing the video work *Rain Maker* as part of *Sacred Economies*<sup>70</sup> I am aware of the gallery space (within all the hierarchies of the observer and artist). However, in this quiet space of reflection I feel witness to the rituals being enacted and thus part of what is being evoked as the artist enacts her own daily rituals towards recovery of the planet (see *Figure 52*).

### 3.6 Social Ecological Practice

Baz Kershaw (performance practitioner and writer) recognises the ‘performance compulsion’ of people in relation to the continual repetition of human behaviours that contribute to climate change despite increasing evidence that *they have an effect*. Thus humans are adapting environmentally in order to create their own extinction event. Real-life scenarios were explored in the durational performance installation *Green Shade*, testing how humans fare under worst-case scenarios of global warming.<sup>71</sup> Undertaking a durational performance the performers engaged in physical *practices* for making post-human hope, using repaired materials, maintaining and operating survivalist contraptions and engaging in more playful actions that required a practice of working together. The performance considered the philosophical

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Diwali Festival to The Story of Rama exhibition at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2015.

<sup>70</sup> *Sacred Economies*, Exhibition curated by Balamohan Shingade, Malcolm Smith Gallery, Howick, Auckland, September 12-October 22, 2016.

<sup>71</sup> Produced by Sandra Reeve and Baz Kershaw with students of the drama department of the University of Bristol, situated on Bristol Downs, high ground overlooking the River Avon that has the highest tidal range on Earth and is subject to risk of flooding due to sea-level rise.





*Figure 49. Survival Water Series: Whanganui Gold Water, Brydee Rood, 2016, Te Whare o Rehui Whanganui, Sargeant Gallery Whanganui, New Zealand. Video Still: Courtesy of the artist.*





*Figure 50. Please Return Me to Earth*, Brydee Rood, TEMP 2017, Corbans Art Estate, Auckland. March 16 - April 8.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.



concepts of Giorgio Agamben's biopolitics<sup>72</sup> in relation to this new scenario where nothing that is living is excluded from runaway climate change, thus finding ways of "performing as critical agency of creative evolution among all earthly things."<sup>73</sup> This performance aimed to create critical engagements with what Kershaw termed eco-lacunae, describing what happened during *Green Shade* as futuristic environmental lacunae that aimed to re-imagine the nature of performance scenarios. Kershaw further suggests that in performing ecology perhaps we can discover what it is that we are being performed by that causes us to continue our everyday actions that are contributing to the problems of the environment.<sup>74</sup>

Although I haven't experienced *Green Shade* in person it resonates with a similar work *Refuge* (2016),<sup>75</sup> that I participated in at the Melbourne Town Hall, which was set up as a refuge centre. This participatory performance weekend was an enactment of the 'actual' refuge centre that would be created should there be an 'actual' disaster, and had a number of participatory activities that could be rehearsed throughout the weekend, including a sleepover in emergency sleeping bags and mattresses. The activities ranged from actions that generate power to creating huts and leaving messages and music tapes for others (see *Figure 53*). What it did reveal for me was that a State of Emergency requires being with others in close quarters and that those activities that involve creativity through art, creating fun and thoughtfulness towards others, were important to the 'success' of temporary communities. As a participatory artwork it revealed high levels of resilience and duration required for social practice that perhaps mimic the durational qualities of survival in the face of climate change. It however reveals the usefulness of participatory artworks

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<sup>72</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>73</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). Cited in Baz Kershaw, "Projecting Climate Scenarios, Landscaping Nature, and Knowing Performance: On Becoming Performance by Ecology," *Green Letters* 20, no. 3 (2016): 274.

<sup>74</sup> Kershaw.

<sup>75</sup> *Refuge, Your Local Relief Centre*, Arts House Melbourne, North Melbourne Town Hall, Melbourne, Australia, July 9 & 10, 2016.



*Figure 51. We Come from the Sea, We Seek Higher Ground, Brydee Rood, Changing Lanes, Auckland Art Week, Durham Lane, Auckland. October 2017. Photo: Brydee Rood, courtesy of the artist.*





*Figure 52. Rain Maker. Sacred Economies, Malcolm Smith Gallery, Howick, Auckland, September 12 - October 22, 2016. Video Still: Courtesy of artist.*

(perhaps even as opposed to practising drills) in creating the familiar out of the unknown through creative thinking, providing a more realistic engagement with potential disaster-emergency scenarios (that are more organic than organised). It also revealed the effort required to get the full experience from a project like this, as staying for the weekend in my sleeping bag would have provided me with a fuller immersive experience of what it is to survive in a refuge centre.

This final project that I mention here is a social performative and poetic experience submerged in the medium of water. The *Salamander*<sup>76</sup> community project facilitated by Petra Kuppers is a collaborative water workshop described by Kuppers herself as “swimming with disabled people.” This workshop/performance takes people under, to find out disabled beauty, emerging from the deep, the wild aesthetic, of water, deforming ourselves through “sleek unhinged control”—the water is the director and the choreographer and the performers must release a sense of control to become one with the watery ecology of sea creatures and seaweed<sup>77</sup> (see *Figure 54*). The experience was also accompanied by a communal reflective writing experience and published article<sup>78</sup> that has a similar wilding affect, breaking the boundaries of usual academic writing towards a more poetic collective voice. This project opens the concept of performance in water as a wild space where animals and disability fall towards the turbulent messy nature of experience over aesthetic, challenging usual ways of measuring success in art and academia:

A prescriptive definition of success appeals to conservative ideology and the normative ambitions that consolidate its ideals, whilst the altogether messier *undisciplined* tactics that failure permits

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<sup>76</sup> *Salamander*, Olimpias Artist Collective: A group of disability activists and their allies, Women’s Studies Gallery, University of Michigan, 2013.

<sup>77</sup> “Salamander”, The Olimpias Performance Research Projects, University of Michigan English Department accessed March, 2018. <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~petra/salamander.html>

<sup>78</sup> Petra Kuppers, “Swimming with the Salamander: A Community Eco-Performance Project,” *Performing Ethos: International Journal of Ethics in Theatre & Performance* 5, no. 1 (2015), [http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/peet.5.1-2.119\\_1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/peet.5.1-2.119_1).





*Figure 53. Refuge, Your Local Relief Centre, Arts House Melbourne, North Melbourne Town Hall, Melbourne, Australia, July 9 & 10, 2016. Photo: Christina Houghton.*

contribute to an anti-conformist ideology, one that seeks to redefine and loosen the boundaries that determine lived experience and representations that chase after it. Human subjectivity is challenged in being out of its depth a relationship between labor and failure (survival)—the intellectual and physical operations that the failed condition creates—becomes intriguing in terms of its material and metaphysical effects, and its orientation towards a/the future.<sup>79</sup>

As a choreographer and interdisciplinary artist who is attempting to create work that is meaningful in times of environmental crisis, I am increasingly drawn closer to those encounters between audience and performer and less interested in the spectacle of dance and its modernist tendency towards discipline and homogeneity. Intimacy and personal connection facilitates encounters for reducing distance between audience and performer within performance and its reach into everyday practices. In this way spatiality and temporality are transformed offering an alternative to the increasing distance or desensitising between (impending and live) disasters and our everyday experiences. Here between everyday and performance we might access spaces for experiencing difference in a non-neurotypical world. These art works and practices that I have discussed aim to give some grounding context for my own Ecologies of Participatory Practice. In doing so, it aspires to provide tethering between this floatational Raft of knowledge and my practice of *Rafting-with*, as we drift towards its Part 2 (Design of Study).

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<sup>79</sup> Sara Jane Bailes, *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 3.





*Figure 54.* Petra Kuppers and Sunny Taylor, animal rights/disability activist, *Salamander*, 2013. The Olimpias Performance Research Project, University of Michigan, English Department.  
Photo: Group of participants.



## PART 2: LAND *Agencement*

*Design of Study*

*Ko au te whenua, Ko te whenua ko au*  
*(I am the land and the land is me)*

## Chapter 4 – Choreographies of Participatory Ecologies

*Do you remember that time? Do you remember how once we all got together to think about how we will survive-on in the future? I shared with you my experiences of survival and the skills I had learned growing up, going camping and the family holidays on Dad's boat. You joined me on a slow walk around the city and as we hopped between islands of vegetation sprouting between asphalt and concrete roads we noticed the small details. We looked out to sea and created dances together on street corners. Following the flight lines of bees we also remembered them. We lay under flapping nylon sail-cloth and you added your survival tips to our kit.*



My practice is structured by a closer understanding of performative modes of participating as a release from narratives of survivalist mastery. It works across three relational plateaus: Land, Sea and Aftermath—described as *agencement*—for attuning to its PhD survival structure or ‘narrative’. The first series of events and processes however circulate around land-based participatory ecologies eliciting a significant understanding of choreographic controls—structured by actions with equipment, drills, tours and other instructive modalities. It finds itself wayfaring on a trajectory that begins on land where performances (and potential disasters) are activated through improvisations that occur with weather, and landscapes that appear as large scale and illuminated. In beginning from the position of the choreographer/guide in a drill for emergency, I maintain a sense of authority as the deliverer of instructions and actions based around my autobiographical story of *Desperado*. The overall structure of this section (Part 2 – Land *Agencement*), moves through the concepts of *Mastery*—where land-based works reveal the tactics that are more loaded in authorial intent, mastery and control. Here I describe how the undoing of codes of survival forms Choreographies of Participatory Ecologies through tactics of rafting, resting and recovery.

Now that the Raft has been formed in the literature review, I will gather together the concepts and structures needed to create site-responsive performances that follow a specific route, with stops along the way. The Raft forms a Choreography of Participatory Practice, which I refer to with the acronym ‘COPE’, that tethers the stories and actions of *Desperado* to the poetics of place as codes for living life collectively. COPE is a relational, and ethical practice that hinges on my own ‘rule of threes’: rafting, resting and recovery. In this section I compile a survival kit that is cumulative, gathering together survival tips, codes and instructions for performance and survival technologies that are crafted with DIY methods. Each of these create possibilities for listening and attuning, as playful actions, with the potential to release us from the controlling social codes which possess our bodies in daily life. The critical terms of my Design of Study, including the concept of *Rafting-with*, will be further elucidated through the survival narratives of my performances. Performance practice and writing come together by *Rafting-with* and rafting-through-place where moving bodies (both biotic and abiotic) activate wild choreographies in iterative encounters.

#### 4.1 COPE—The Three Rs and *Rafting-with*

First I focus on performance tactics and strategies/mechanisms that contribute to Choreography of Participatory Ecologies (COPE). COPEing mechanisms are not static objects, rather they are codes that emerge from the research as an event or encounter that is *still-in-information*; one that activates *agencement* as an ecology of participatory practice. These participatory choreographies produce ways of becoming, and inventing new modes of existence where we may experience an interval that is pre-categorical (*still-in-information*). I draw on choreographic codes as practices that can activate responsibility in our everyday lives—and be fluidly customised, or entirely undone. These codes, or tactics, investigated as survival tours and drills, became integral to Choreographies of Participatory Ecologies that form the anticode (or the COPEing), for undoing instrumental codes for survival. In doing so I asked: How might we counter the anxieties that prevent us from connecting to others, ourselves and the environment around us?

In developing the survival tours I considered that a code or an instruction for performance acts as preparation for event yet also outlives the performance itself. I wanted survival codes/performance instructions to act as the floatation devices for minor encounters with other that evoke a slowing, a taking care of: a *Poetics* that can contribute to multiple scales of survival. The COPE choreographies drew on the actions of rafting, resting and recovery which became the techniques that activated the technicity of *Rafting-with*: techniques that deconstruct, undo, through action, being-with technology, story-telling and somatic rituals. COPE recognises that bodies are coded within the realms of everyday signs and restrictions that direct the way in which we move through the world. It also recognises the historical context of choreography as a modernist technology, and its relationship to the horizontal plane that creates a body disciplined to move according to the commands of writing.<sup>1</sup> COPE choreographies resisted modernist subjective scripting by de-authorising the choreographer-artist, within collaborative performance experiences in public space.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> André Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (New York; London: Routledge, 2006), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, 1st edition. (London, UK; New York: Verso, 2012).

As a relational practice, *Rafting-with* crosses temporal and spatial scales, from bridges to boats to tsunami evacuation routes, accumulating methods and movements, rhythms and temporalities, where bodies and things enter a dynamic system of exchange. To share stories of survival and to create new story-performances, to COPE, to move away from instrumental notions of heroic survivalism (i.e., asking who survives or not) and aim to keep difference alive. The thematic of survival in this research folds ecological thinking into performance thinking—operating as an interval between *ecology* and *performance still-in-form*, before mastery, closure and arrest—open to the other. In developing this practice, I invite others to join me in participatory encounters, forming temporary communities in a shared questioning of the dominant narratives of survival.

The autobiographical threads of narrative in my somatic performance actions of rafting, resting or floating respond to a wider social need for recuperation. In the opening chapter I introduced the concept of a Raft as a vessel one tentatively tethered together through childhood stories of sailing and my relationship to the ocean. The Raft is only able to float due to its connective structure, it is able to transform into new formations when needed; made from found and recyclable materials, it is an adaptable choreographic object *still-in-form*. *Rafting-with* is a practice that forms relations in-between, allowing me to dwell non-hierarchically with others, often on or beside shared waterways. The ethico-poetic survival methods of rafting, resting and recovery, are co-developed; I am decentred as the performer or expert (in survival), rather in the company of others contribute to the performance encounter, each different to the last. *Rafting-with* is also a response to my own daily practice of staying connected to my body as a mid-career dancer. Social choreography and performance become a mode of survival, a method for rafting-through theory and practice, a kind of moving through place—a wayfaring, enabling a way for my practice to live-on<sup>3</sup> through and with others.

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<sup>3</sup> *Rafting-with* enfolds my practice with the philosophy of Martin Heidegger's being-with, thus embracing the concept of Manning's Thought-in-action that describes creative practice as a form of thinking where philosophy and aesthetics, artfulness and thinking are inseparably entwined. See Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, *Thought in the Act: Passages*

In general, Aotearoa New Zealand is a safe place, where we have become inured to the disasters that seem to occur more frequently in other parts of the world. Most of us only understand disaster through the lens of the media from the distance from the safety of our islands. Yet the imminent threat of volcanic eruption, earthquake, fire and flood, particularly since the 2011 Christchurch earthquake, has resulted in an excessive attention to Health and Safety requirements in all industries. Safety briefings point out the possible disasters at each given moment. Furthermore, the performance of such briefings, such as the flight attendant's emergency drill that we endure every time we embark on a commercial flight, is a fascinating phenomenon. Whereas the safety drill on a ferry or boat, where a voice over an intercom might point out that the life jackets are under the seat or way up high in the overhead lockers, suggest there are hierarchies involved, contributing to determining which form of transport is more closely monitored. Humour, in the face of disaster, allows us to work through everyday anxieties about our shared ecology, starting with catastrophic climate change. My participatory performance practice of *Rafting-with* reveals social choreographies in a performance encounter of the Survival tour-walk or drill. Survival drills are transformed through playful improvisations and 'activities to do with a friend' as a way to move through places together. Somatic rituals of resting at various points within the tours subvert normative modes of behaviour in public settings.

This research is interested in creating performance tactics that unsettle the control and mastery implicit in survival drills, codes and restrictions. In city environments, at sea or in forested terrains, we are increasingly kept contained and controlled. We are told that the world we live in is full of hazards and dangers (particularly as extreme weather increases).<sup>4</sup> Outdoor adventuring in New Zealand is a popular pastime, where we like to think of ourselves as being able to live off the land, yet it is mostly a leisure

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*in the Ecology of Experience* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> See Charlie Dreaver, Climate change making storms 'more intense' says scientist, RNZ, Radio New Zealand News, 2 Feb, 2018, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/349537/climate-change-making-storms-more-intense-says-scientist>



activity, accessible only to the wealthy. ‘The great outdoors’ is considered an adventurous yet dangerous place. From a young age, ‘Bush Safety’ is something that in New Zealand is part of the school curriculum and it is even stressed that a day walk in the bush could go seriously wrong (so you must be prepared to survive the night).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Safety Codes and survival training give practical tips needed for being prepared, replacing the intuitive survival instincts that were once passed down from parents to children (such as the indigenous knowledge of *te ao Māori*—the Māori world) in relation to fauna and flora of the local environment. These codes range from avoidance of disaster through being prepared and staying within your limits, including responding to a situation/accident where you may find yourself far from home (or without a home in case of an emergency). These codes represent the disconnection of city dwellers from the natural environment as well as the impression that the likelihood of natural disasters and states of emergency are increasing. Furthermore these protocols adhere to the shifting political climate where risk and accidents are measured through a cost-based system (such as the ACC levy). This research is also interested in the health and safety codes that emphasise the need to be prepared (something that is becoming less necessary in city life). Avoiding accidents (staying safe at all times) and being prepared for natural disasters seems to be of utmost importance in the city.

[illegible]

Five simple rules to help you stay safe.

1. Plan your trip—Seek local knowledge and plan the route you will take and the amount of time you can reasonably expect it to take.
2. Tell someone your plans and leave a date for when to raise the alarm if you haven't returned.
3. Be aware of the weather—New Zealand's weather can be highly unpredictable. Check the weather forecast and expect weather changes.
4. Know your limits—Challenge yourself within your physical limits and experience.
5. Take sufficient supplies—Make sure you have enough food and equipment, clothing and emergency rations for the worst-case scenario. Take appropriate means of communication.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Know Before You Go, "The Outdoor Safety Code," [www.adventure smart.org.nz](http://www.adventure smart.org.nz)

*I will be guiding you on a survival tour today sharing survival tips learned from camp week when I was 10 years old at my primary school and tips my father taught me when we went away sailing on Desperado.*

We are not free from such safety codes when moving from place to place in everyday life in the city either. Codes and protocols that surround us in cities and urban areas such as those constructed for ‘your own health, safety and security’ control our everyday movements within city structures and across nations. These protocols and ‘ways of behaving’ are fueled by a hegemonic conformity, as described by Lepecki, where we are experiencing a shift in contemporary modes of spectatorship and performance.<sup>7</sup> I specifically adopt the performativity of survival tours and survival drills to bring attention to and address concerns of coded forms of social control, reshaping them through ironic somatic actions for relaxing or being calm as well as actions for being-with others and survival gear. Improvisations with weather and wayfaring move towards a dwelling or drifting rather than a short sharp tidy response. The aim is to collapse the master narrative through failure of orderly and conformed behavior.

*Rafting-with* as a method for release brings together these tactics to create experiential encounters that highlight experiences of survival such as preparation, risk, duration, disaster and aftermath. I will explain these in more detail throughout the next section.

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<sup>7</sup> Lepecki describes a new kind of rationality as part of the Age of Performance that promotes the production of the subject (through selfie networking) that has permeated our flesh through a kind of ‘Body Snatching’, holding subjectivity to ransom. André Lepecki, *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2016), 3.





Figure 56. Whakatupato Ahi, Fire Evacuation sign, 2018, AUT University, Auckland. Photo: Christina Houghton.

## 4.2 Rafting-with—*Create your own Rule of Threes*

*The Rule of Threes is a code for survival in the case of an accident. You can only survive without: Air for 3 minutes, Clothing and Shelter for 3 hours, Rest for 30 hours, Water for 3 days, Food for 3 weeks.*<sup>8</sup>

This prescriptive code for survival has a very specific scientifically proven outcome in relation to linear time expectancy for survival. The code is instrumental in the fact that the body has been broken down to distinct times for mechanical shutdown in response to exact conditions. To measure the fragility of the human body suggests that rules need to be followed in order to survive. Such master body-scripts designed to protect and preserve, suppress the instinctual ability of the body to self-regulate to survive extreme conditions and for the individual to adapt to changing conditions. If the body's survival can be measured and given a time limit then why can't we make sense of the fact that a degrading climate may actually have significant impact on our long-term survival? This research suggests survival of the body can no longer be regarded as separate from planetary survival.

In developing *Rafting-with* I challenge such prescriptive codes for survival of the body under extreme conditions by creating a *Plan to Survive* that involves my own rule of threes.

The Three Rs.

1. Rafting—movement, being-with (preparation, practice, rehearsal, drills)
2. Resting—stillness, horizontality (risk, duration, disaster)
3. Recovery—somatic rituals, choreographic survival (documentation, the aftermath, archive)

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<sup>8</sup> Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand, "The Power of Being Prepared," in *Survival Brochure* (Wellington, NZ: CAA, 2011), 10.

I further developed rafting, resting and recovery as methods for *release* from codes of survival (with definite outcomes), creating performances that were mobile, durational, slow and restorative, that prioritise sustainable systems of exchange as a Choreography of Participatory Ecologies (COPE). *Rafting-with* and COPE are thus an interdependent relational system. Rafting is a movement with a social, philosophical orientation, resting reconnects the self-body to place through stillness, and recovery restores survival and difference and acts as an archive of experience.

The Three Rs have a conceptual alignment with a precedent in Baz Kershaw's Earthrise Repair Shop and the Five Rs for sustainability that reach beyond the worn-out human ways of *refracting*, *revering*, *rejuvenation* and *responsibility*, *revitalizing* life on Earth.<sup>9</sup> Kershaw believes the durational aspects of survival can be addressed by focusing on everyday human actions rather than long-term future-modelled environmental predictions. He suggests that the more the climate scientists prove that climate change exists, the less humans behave as though their actions are to blame. By highlighting the relationship between our actions and ecological systems, Kershaw suggests, humans are in actual fact 'performed by ecologies'.<sup>10</sup> If we recognise that we ourselves are 'performed' rather than performers, then the three Rs might offer a means to move out of a dualistic framework. The third space is an emancipatory (emanci-participatory) release from subject/object structures of being.

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<sup>9</sup> Baz Kershaw, "Earthrise Repair Shop," <http://performancefootprint.co.uk/projects/earthrise-repair-shop/>.

<sup>10</sup> Baz Kershaw, "Projecting Climate Scenarios, Landscaping Nature, and Knowing Performance: On Becoming Performance by Ecology," *Green Letters* 20, no. 3 (2016). Kershaw's ongoing research foregrounds the concept that creative transformations of human and animal perceptions are crucial to ecological renewal.

### 4.3 Rafting, Resting & Recovery

In unravelling the concepts behind *Rafting-with* I will first describe the processual nature of rafting. Rafting can be described as the research methodology for this Design of Study, moving through theory and practice, gathering what has gone before and developing each concept as an accumulative, processual practice. It encompasses moving through place, exploring ecological issues and belonging, that reveal concepts of survival in everyday life. My practice begins with the moving body, drawing on my own life experience of dance and choreography.<sup>11</sup> My movement practice as preparation for improvisation and the development of choreography has also served me well in everyday life as a practice that notices choreographic patterns and performance in the everyday. It also allows me to move through my day with a fluidity that can absorb the unexpected with minimal impact on my wellbeing and those that surround me. At least this is what I hope for most of the time. So, I ask what are the everyday practices, preparations and rituals that enable us to survive, be well, connect with others and become agential individuals within communities that care? The emergency apple I put in my daughter's lunch box every day, or my daily practices that might range from dropping the kids at school, running, walking, yoga, writing. Most of these activities require some kind of movement or mapping of the mind and body within a home-range territory.

Rafting also rafts-through multiple narratives of survival. From everyday survival to the deeper themes of climate change that relate to personal loss and despair and bring attention to that which is local and

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<sup>11</sup> I studied ballet from the age of seven in Nelson, around the same time Dad was building the boat. When the boat was launched there was always a conflict around Saturday morning dance class and going away on the boat for the weekends. I discovered contemporary dance at Otago University at the age of 23, when I moved back to Dunedin from Auckland (to do a Masters in Zoology). It was here in Otago that I attempted to integrate my interest in ecology and dance, creating dances around the research hut at Macrae's Flat on grassy tussock lands surrounding the rock tors of my lizard subjects. The fact I was studying science and dance was a great source of teasing from my family. At the wedding of my husband Rob and I my dad, in his speech, tried to identify whether I was a scientific dancer or a dancing scientist.



ignored (by those who aren't affected). These and Oceanic themes of ocean-going travelers and maritime misfortunes combined with the autobiographical story of sailing from my youth, aboard *Desperado*, all inform the underlying theme of *survival at sea*. These narratives entwine as a minimal ethical epoch that suggests that perhaps, due to the current state of planetary predicament, we *are* all in the same boat, taking into consideration Dipesh Chakrabarty's statement that "Unlike in the crisis of capitalism, there are no life boats for the rich and privileged..."<sup>12</sup> Rafting also refers to the performative action of *Rafting-with* yellow lilos in the later iterations of my performance work, where rafting requires participants moving together as a single multiple-bodied choreographic object (see *Figure 57*).

Resting draws on somatics as a movement practice that prioritises a mind body connection and an awareness of the body in relation to the environment, as I have previously described. It also addresses my interest in deconstructing classical dance technique (that can adhere to instrumental techniques requiring mastery and perfection) as a way to move towards a more inclusive and wider context for my dance practice. The resistance of somatic practices in terms of the current predominant issues of place, displacement, migrations and refugee crises is described by Katja Kolcio in *Somatics and Political Change*.<sup>13</sup> In creating historical memory, cultural narratives and a quest for human rights through a passive resistance of resting and reflection, she describes how a practice of self-awareness somatics (that focuses on breath and connecting with one's physical self) can allow a person to notice subtleties of feelings and experiences that are often overlooked, becoming more aware of dis-ease before it becomes acute or chronic. Somatics also asks how we orient ourselves personally and politically in the world, extending that out into our environment and then surrounding community. As a social movement, Kolcio asks what if individual and political orientation was seen as a fluid practice without territory, state or ethnicity; through exploring physical and social possibilities there might be a way to create new possibilities away

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<sup>12</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry*, no. 2 (2009): (non-pag.). Cited in Joanna Zylińska, *Minimal Ethics for the Anthropocene* (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press, 2014).

<sup>13</sup> Katja Kolcio, "Somatics and Political Change," *Contact Quarterly*, Summer/Fall (2016).



Figure 57. Rafting the Whau, *Whau (Lo) Ting*, 2016, Whau Arts Fest, Avondale, Auckland New Zealand.  
Photo: Melissa Laing.

from fear, discrimination and oppression that are globally persuasive. “This is a battle for hope—an effort to create a wholly new world.”<sup>14</sup>

Resting and/or stillness as a choreographic practice has potentiality to critique modernity and subjectivity in relation to historic modes of dance and performance, as I have mentioned earlier, where dance’s relationship to movement is being exhausted through a re-negotiation of dance’s relationship to its coming into presence.<sup>15</sup> Acts of the pedestrian and stillness provide a critique of presence in the absence of the movement. As described by Emylin Claid, “As a neutral movement, stillness is full of past, present and future action; a practice of body intelligence that is as busily worded internally as it is visually silent in appearance. ... [T]he neutrality here finds parallel with Derrida’s concept of difference referring to a place of departure: ‘an absolutely neutral receptacle –khôra is its surname– that suppresses nothing, releasing the innumerable, the unforeseeable, the invention of the other’.”<sup>16</sup> In this context I refer to my own dance history and my desire to move away from the ‘spectacle’ through everyday, minimal gestures, activating an empty space where dance once was. Resting bodies evoke the notion of ‘the fall from spectacle’ in opposition to the vertical, active nature of progress and instrumentalism. The act of lying down ‘when there is work to be done’ offers an oppositional, horizontally-orientated resistance as opposed to the vertically orientated-pursuit of success.<sup>17</sup> Lying down is also a reference to the yogic ‘corpse

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>15</sup> André Lepecki, “Choreopolice and Choreopolitics: Or, the Task of the Dancer,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 57, no. 4 (2013).

<sup>16</sup> Emylin Claid, *Yes? No! Maybe: Seductive Ambiguity in Dance* (Milton Park; Abingdon; Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006), 198-99. Quoting Jacques Derrida and John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 105. Refers to Derrida’s khôra or khôral space developed from his reading of Plato’s Timaeus. Derrida describes it as a great abyss, a void, an untranslatable in between space, a mid place, a milieu.

<sup>17</sup> Sara Jane Bailes, *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 167.



pose', Shavasana, that revitalises the mind and body when completely exhausted, while at the same time refers to the final resting pose after death. This action brings attention to environmental fragility and fatigue, due to the challenging-forth of human society (that often involves the depletion of the world's resources) and fatigue from trying to deal with the reality of this (see *Figure 58*).

This practice recognises that the wellbeing of the planet is interlaced in the wellbeing of the social body as a thinking body and is therefore crucial for the recovery of the planet. These actions of rafting and resting as rituals for taking-care-of each other, as well as the environment, become easy-to-follow actions that can be enacted by participants as acts of *recovery*. Recovery might be considered also in relation to fall and recovery as a body practice encompassing the ethos of risk, creativity and sustainability.<sup>18</sup> Falling, for performers, can often be a "sense of release, of letting-go, intended and empowering, or unintended or ambivalent" encompassing notions of failure or shame. Falling may also suggest Heidegger's inauthentic sense of Dasein such as falling into average everydayness.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, rafting, resting and recovery can be considered everyday tactics for surviving the everydayness of the contemporary world. The method of *Rafting-with* spills over into a code or anti-code for everyday life in the Anthropocene. The collecting of performance actions and instructions (as well as props and survival gear explained in the next section) enable the accumulation and transformations of instructions from one performance iteration to the next. Each re-telling of the instruction or story enfolds the experiences of the participants, responding specifically to place, into a new expression of the action as a methodology of poetics, lingering and wilding. An ecology of practice, closer to Manning's *agencement* as a pre-categorical field *still-in-form*ation albeit a different one to Stengers ecologies of practice, considered a tool for thinking of disciplines as divergent interdependent entities that can produce a habitat of practices through co-existing and co-becoming.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Mark Harvey, "Promises Promises," *Performance Research* 18, no. 4 (2013).

<sup>19</sup> Harvey, "Promises Promises," 83-84.

<sup>20</sup> Erin Manning, "Introduction: In a Minor Key," in *The Minor Gesture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016). and Isabelle Stengers, "Introductory Notes on: An Ecology of Practices," *Cultural Studies Review* 11, no. 1 (March





Figure 58. Forest Resting, *Sharing Waters*, 2014, Holmön Island Sweden.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.



My series of survival tours further drew on actions of rafting and resting moving through specific sites in need of recovery. When I create performances for outdoor locations I am faced with an array of codes for safety and warnings of impending disasters (if the codes of survival are not followed) as well indicators of environmental issues associated with each place. The collection of information relating to the conditions of the site informed what actions and equipment was required for each survival tour which I retrieved from the Survival Kit which I will now describe.

#### 4.4 Survival Kit—*Collect and Accumulate*

In preparation for survival tours I developed a Survival Kit of instructions for somatic actions, survival gear, shelters and clothing as well as props items that initiated stories of *Desperado* and encouraged reciprocal stories from participants. The Survival Kit became a location for initial archiving of actions and equipment required for each performance, such as instructions, equipment, and protective gear (costumes), video, sound, and autobiographical stories of sailing. The Survival Kit became a vessel for collecting practical and creative ideas and concepts of surviving into the future from the past, present and future as a virtual ‘time capsule’. This virtual (and material) kit became a way to archive stories and actions, acting as ‘the hold’<sup>21</sup> for potential social, participatory encounters. The aim was to collect starting points for performance encounters that are ethical and active and have the ability to affect social, political and cultural change in the face of uncertain times.<sup>22</sup> Spatially and temporally it provided a marker for the

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2005). Stengers responds to Brian Massumi’s proposition of a political ecology as a social technology of belonging. In the introductory handout for the ANU Humanities Research Centre Symposium 2003.

<sup>21</sup> The hold is a nautical term for below deck, specifically a storage area.

<sup>22</sup> This was the theme of the Survival Kit Festival in Umeå Sweden in 2014, where the video *Sharing Waters* (2013) was selected for the Maskinen Art Boat Event. See Appendix 1. Performance Map. See *Sharing Waters* video (in Rafting Archive 1). This was the same festival that we originally wrote a proposal to for the inclusion of *Sharing Waters* Part 2—the reciprocal guided performance experience to *Sharing Waters* Part 1 that took place on the Half Moon Bay ferry in Auckland, 2013. *Sharing Waters- A personal boating experience about islands, sea and connectivity*, Christina Houghton and Johannes Blomqvist, video, performance documentation of *Sharing Waters*, 2013, Auckland, New Zealand,

actual and imaginary distance between pre-disaster preparation and the event of an actual disaster, as well as the holder of archives for the final examination performance in the Black Box theatre space. However, the Survival Kit was never really intended to be useful in the case of an emergency or the aftermath of a disaster, it was more a location for the equipment (survival technologies) needed for a performance about disaster, or what I termed as a *performance disaster*.

My concept of the performance disaster draws on a poetics of failure as a creative practice, that “emerges from an in between place, from between the folds of disappointment and political, social, cultural and artistic disillusion ... But in part this poetics also reveals itself through the reinvention of mastery and the willful disruption of preordained conventions.”<sup>23</sup> This type of practice sees the accidental, the amateur and the performance misfire as a creative process for making work that challenges the instrumental ways we live our lives. A performance disaster (as an actual virtual space) embraces the scale and duration of the live performance event: it asks what actually happens between the instruction and action? In relation to a performance score, instruction acts as a starting point for repeatable improvisations with unknown outcomes, yet the instruction can remain static as a poetic beginning and archive after the event. Safety codes and what they outline are a far cry from the actual experience of survival, as are many of the safety codes I come across. I think about what these codes symbolise. An act of prediction and action of being prepared, and then an archive to an experience been had. What these codes fail to mention is the unpredictability of human responses at an individual level that affect the ability of group harmony. It is in this space of ‘in between’ instruction and action that we can experience the distance between everyday life and climate change through durational experiences of place. A safety code for action (either a drill for a ‘state of emergency’ or a performance) involves a distance between possibility and actuality as an

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<sup>23</sup> Bailes, *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure*, 11. Failure as a creative practice draws on performance tactics of improvisation that consist of impossible actions, such as performing an activity that “undoes things”, a hollowing out of gesture and expectation that opens potentialities. Impossibility positions the performative gesture (its articulations of doing) as always immanent as always-to-become.

impossible action, encompassing accidental somatics and misfires. Furthermore, the parody of a Survival Kit aimed to bring attention to the futility of our everyday actions in saving the planet (such as recycling plastics). It was this sense of play that I wished to evoke throughout the work and became the underlying performance tactic of COPEing.

The Design of Study thus unfolds as part of the Survival Kit and its relationship to each performance. Initial performance tests determined what would be put into the kit and what could consequently be re assembled in following performances. The stories of *Desperado* and the activation of somatic rituals became the threads that held together the disparate nature of the lists of actions and equipment as a mode for survival. The personal stories that emerged as part of the reciprocal nature of the performance encounter revealed the discursive nature of the participants' involved. I decided early on in the research process that I did not wish to record, scribe or capture these stories verbatim. This was significant for the methodology as I did not wish to mediate the participants encounter through formal constraints. Personal stories were not significant for the research in relation to the material survival kit, rather they revealed what might remain, as a trace or living archive in the memories of those who took part. Stories that appear in this exegesis as part of the reflection process are therefore reconstructed as indicative anonymous remembrances, transcribed from my own recollections of performance events. On the other hand, consent was gained for use of photography for the final exegesis and video documentation of performance encounters that were subsequently captured and edited into the video loops and installed as part of the final work, RAFTING. See gained documentation of this consent form (see Appendix 3 & 4 Rafting Archives).

As you read through this next section please refer to the video documentation, video works and sound files that relate to each performance work that can be found in the video and sound files that accompany this exegesis as Rafting Archive 1, Rafting Archive 2 and Rafting sound files. Details are listed in Appendix 2 & 3 and are also in the Performance Map (Appendix 1). See also accompanying notes, maps and programmes (Appendices 4 -10).



1. Breathe
2. Feel your feet on the ground
3. Feel the reach of your self
4. Notice the other bodies in space
5. Open your eyes and notice what you see
6. Notice how you move through the environment
7. Breath with me
8. Walk with me
9. Sit with me
10. Talk with me
11. Dance with me



Figure 59. Eco Shop, 2014, eight hour performance, Fishbowl—community art gallery window, Dunedin Fringe Festival, Dunedin, New Zealand. Photo: Rob Linkhorn.



## 4.5 Instructions for Everyday Actions for Rafting

*I began with a list of survival tips written in reverse on the community gallery window over an eight-hour day. Many of these are actions were to do with a friend and some were to do with looking back to a place that connects you in some way to Whanaū (Family) and Whenua (Homeland) as a form of Kaitiakitanga (guardian protection of the environment from a Māori world view). Some of these actions I considered somatic actions for resting, others were the everyday actions we undertake to 'get us through the day'; all were part of an ongoing practice of creating a poetics of everyday survival. I asked myself how might we follow instructions for living life socially or collectively in the face of the newly-termed era of the Anthropocene. How might these instructions offer ways of being-with as an interconnected dynamic relationship between body, place and technology? These became the threads of my Raft as I tried to keep my head above water in a world where catastrophe appears imminent. Yet being in a shop window reminded me how easily our actions can be commodified by a neoliberal lens that takes the somatic body and offers it back to us in easily packaged tips for living life well.<sup>24</sup>*

This list of survival tips became important for the initial development of instructions and actions that were explored in the following series of Survival tours. The actions that specifically related to *Desperado*, such as the sachet of Raro (the powdered orange drink we used to drink on *Desperado*) and cups, the packet of Minties (chewy mint lollies), sunglasses and the yellow PVC jacket rose to the surface as the dominant aesthetic of the work. These props/archives, along with family photos of boating, provided a tethering of memories to the present. The collection of sound recordings *Archipelagos*, and *Sun Sand Sea* (which is an instruction for a dance) and the song *Sailing* that we used to play on *Desperado* drew together narratives of the sea and actions in response to sea-level rise. These archives, recordings, photos, maps and narratives emerged in and out of each survival tour.<sup>25</sup> As each survival tour was assembled I delved into

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<sup>24</sup> *ECO SHOP: 100 survival tips for recuperation in the face of environmental uncertainty*, Christina Houghton, durational performance in a shop window of the Dunedin Community Gallery, Dunedin Fringe Festival—Fish Bowl event, March 13, 2014. See Appendix 1. Performance Map & List of Survival tips Appendix 6.

<sup>25</sup> See *Instructional Booklet*, maps and scripts in Appendices.

the Survival Kit for stories and associated actions that could be retold in a new environment. A list of equipment and sometimes a map with instructions guided each performance. I maintained my position as guide of each tour although I attempted to let this be a slippery attachment as I join the participants in each of the activities or actions. Actions associated with stories were sometimes told and sometimes not. These unfolded through a poetics of non-mastery that embraced a 'way of dwelling' within open-ended statements or subtle references.

The first set of survival tours, performed at the *Festival of Uncertainty* (2014)<sup>26</sup> moved through the backstage spaces of the Auckland Old Folks Association (OFA).<sup>27</sup> Bodies moved through confined spaces enacting somatic actions, being-with others through the social act of showing photos (of family holidays) and drinking tea (see *Figure 61*). Outside we listened to the song *Sailing* on a street corner while looking at photos of future sea-level rise and Dad building *the boat*.<sup>28</sup> I mapped it on my Nike iPhone app and posted it on Facebook. The community aspect of the festival infused the performance experience and each survival group each felt like they had become intimate friends through acting out some of the actions together. See FOU Survival Tours video (in Rafting Archive 1).

The next survival tour *Going Bush—Survival Strategies*<sup>29</sup> raised the notion of survival in the city relating to concepts of homelessness and states of emergency. I expanded the survival kit to include multiple yellow

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<sup>26</sup> *Festival of Uncertainty FOU*, Christina Houghton, a guided night tour of the hallway and the kitchen and outside spaces, Old Folks Ass., Auckland, March 22, 2014. See Appendix 1. Performance Map.

<sup>27</sup> A community-operated performance rehearsal venue and also an Old Folks Association hall. <http://www.ofa.org.nz/category/events/performance/>

<sup>28</sup> My family referred to *Desperado* as *the boat* in an everyday context. For example, "Let's go out on *the boat* this weekend."

<sup>29</sup> *Going Bush—Survival Strategies*, Christina Houghton, a guided tour/performance walk somewhere around AUT, Action Delay Symposium (2014), AUT University, Auckland, May 30, 2014.



and green PVC jackets, which the participants wore while navigating a tethered walk (with a yellow rope) from the university over the over-bridge to Albert Park. Drinking Raro on the way, participants framed city streets with gold-painted telescopes and used the iPad video to navigate to the highest point. At the top we created temporary shelter with tarpaulins that flapped in the wind while we took turns to lie beneath (see *Figure 60*). We listened to *Archipelagos*, *Sailing* and *Sun Sand Sea* as a soundtrack while we walked. See Going Bush video (in Rafting Archive 1).

Each of these performances responded to invitations to present work at conferences and festivals and galleries that fell in line with my research themes. I thus followed these opportunities as they arose, taking onboard the restrictions and limitations that each event provoked, each offered varying conditions for participation of others.

## Going Bush—Performance Check List

Items in North Sails boat bag:

10x yellow and green PVC jackets

8x cardboard telescopes

2x tarps

1x picnic blanket (from Onehunga Wool Mill)

2x blue sleeping bags

1x Raro packet, 10x cups, Tupperware container of water

Coffee pot and cups

iPad with navigation videos

CD player with CD (list of tracks, *Archipelagos*, *Sun Sand Sea*, *Sailing*).

Listen to tracks (in Rafting sound files).



Figure 60. *Going Bush—Survival Strategies*, 2014, Guided survival tour, Action Delay Symposium, AUT University and Albert Park, Auckland. Video Still.



*Figure 61. Survival Tours—FOU, 2014, Festival of Uncertainty, Old Folks Association, Newton, Auckland. Video Still.*

The actions mapped in each survival tour were further developed in relation to specific stories and performance archives (costumes and props) as 'actions for living' in the interactive performance installation *Actions For Living* (2014).<sup>30</sup> I experimented with various items for actions such as tents, tarps jackets and bags, moving towards the idea of mobility, compactability and temporality. Within these items their function revealed a narrative of adventure and extreme weather conditions as well as preparation for expected and unexpected events. When I gather these materials together I am reminded of childhood experiences of camping and sailing: the midnight feast in the tent in the back yard and the sleeping bag monster in the hallway that worms towards you with flapping corners. As well as those activities and survival tips taught on school camps, making bivouacs in the bush and cooking pikelets on a hobo stove. I also came across a bag of woollies that Mum used to keep on the boat. A striped jumper, grey flecked socks and of course the yellow PVC jackets that were heavy and that smelled of the strong chemical properties that give them a half-life of over 100 years.<sup>31</sup>

Responding to acceleration and technological evolution, performance tactics that prioritise a slowing down encouraged attunement or listening as a way of undoing hegemonic instrumental safety codes and codes of practice. Props and costumes that had an autobiographical-archival origin as remnants from *Desperado* were installed as interactive installations that encouraged participants to join in one-to-one performances. The main desire was to bring attention to the embodied experience through interactive activities. In developing actions for living I aimed to re-interpret challenging-forth ideologies and embrace survival technologies in their domestic use. For example the design of a jacket or tent houses a code or an instruction in terms of its function in preparation for action and outlives the action itself as a material

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<sup>30</sup> *Actions for Living* (2014), interactive performance installation, Gallery Three, AUT University, Auckland. August 12-15, 2014. See Appendix 1. Performance Map.

<sup>31</sup> PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride) is also one of the most controversially debated plastic materials with regard to hazardous impacts to the environment. European Commission, *Report from the Commission Convergence Report 2000* (Luxembourg: European Economy 2000).



archive. A jacket will have its potential environment in mind while taking into consideration the needs of the body it aims to contain. It maintains not only the conditions (as a micro-climate) needed for survival, but what is required in the minimal effort for everyday actions (such as hiking and sailing, and including the ease of carrying equipment needed). In particular, survival equipment (for camping) has a distinctive aesthetic, with brightly-coloured nylon, padding and zips as well as the more extreme silver SPACE/survival blanket. The shared process of 'working out' the operation of equipment and costumes with-others became a poetic action in which stories of survival could arise. Each survival costume or prop became a vessel for an action related to an autobiographical story associated with *Desperado*. These actions and stories act as portals for time travelling such as the sunglasses from the 1980s (that can look to the future) and the hats that determine what position you might take on board this vessel (first mate, second mate and captain). The survival blankets made from a technology designed by NASA for space travel, also have a strong narrative (both silver and gold). Now seen in every news article about emergency or disaster, covering rescued refugees from overloaded boats or evacuees from fire-stricken houses. No one knows whether these blankets actually work but they are an essential part of any survival kit.

I consider these 'survival technologies' such as survival clothing and fabric shelters as extensions or prosthetics in the way that everyday technologies become part of the extended body. I thus developed the conjoined survival jackets as a vessel for intimacy, with a survival-blanket lining that could be pulled out into a sail. Other items developed were wearable sleeping bags and woollen blankets 'upcycled' with silver survival blankets. I also set up recording devices to capture survival stories and a number of installations, *Island geography*, film installation *Weather walks* and *Canopy walks* that were part of the *Walk with me* experience, wearing the conjoined jackets<sup>32</sup> (see *Figure 62*).

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<sup>32</sup> See *Actions For Living* (2014) in Appendix 8.

In *Actions for Living* performance instructions were assembled as a daily menu aimed to encourage participation. Some activities were guided with vocal instructions and at other times the instruction was written. The natural tendency for people to be stand-offish in a gallery meant that I spent most of my time guiding people through the activities, making it a communal experience. For example, in the tent I invited participants to join me for 'Tent Chats' and activated the upcycling activities as one-to-one performances.

Today's Actions for Living

Wednesday 13th August 2014

11:00 Survival up-cycling activity begins (continuous)

Survival stories (continuous)

12:30 temporal warm up

11:45–1:00 Walk with me (one-to-one ongoing)

1:00 Tent Chats

Instruction No. 6 Tent Chats

Take someone into the tent.

Read aloud to each other,

Or play some music,

Tell your own stories,

Listen to someone talking for one minute without interrupting,

Interview each other with questions provided.

Play a round of any type of game.

Record on sound recorder.



Questions for interview

What are we prepared for?

How does equipment help us?

Do skills and rules of practice help us?

Or is it creativity and the calm state of mind that will see us through in the end?

Are you ready to leave?

If you're not afraid to leave what you have, do you have nothing to lose?

After all are we not all living survivors?

For *Walk with me* I took one person at a time on a walk around the gallery space dressed in the conjoined jackets. We placed sunglasses on each other with one hand (the other being behind the others back) and fed each other Minties. The aim was to follow the rope around the concrete space and past a video and to the collection of viewing tubes (of the boat). At the end I pulled one half of the jacket up on a pulley while I told the story about Dad and the 'rough trip around Port Jackson'. We sheltered underneath that sail and shared survival stories. The close proximity of myself and the participant opened conversational dialogues about boats and survival (both my experiences and the participant's) as we negotiated the difficulty of walking while attached to each other. Holding both the cups of Raro and the rope that guided us created a comical experience that bordered on both humour and tragedy as we awkwardly followed the rope like a Burma trail.<sup>33</sup> On the one occasion that there were three of us in the jackets, the person in the middle became totally reliant on those either side to feed them Minties and put on their sunglasses. The conjoined jackets as a prosthetic outer skeleton provided an immersive experience that also involved a code of operation in relation to the performance journey and narrative. This was an example of the way survival technologies became a way to perform minimal operations of being-with. When the sail was hoisted on the pulley and the participants gathered underneath the sail shelter they were invited to share survival stories within a tent-like structure. At this point the intimacy of the walk and the close navigations meant that they felt confident with each other, revealing that survival is a collective and personal experience. See *Walk with me* video (in Rafting Archive 1).

In listening (attunement) we can bring attention to the relations between ourselves and other, the human, animal and abiotic. Also in listening to survival stories (of my own and participants') individuals are given agency or *agencement* to tell their own story no matter how minor: with no fear of competing against the dominant tales of survival. In this minor gesture dystopian and utopian stories can exist simultaneously as multiple realities, they therefore live on beyond the performance encounter (in the aftermath) to become traces or *ghostings* of the shared experience of survival in its diversity. *Technologies for listening*, as an

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<sup>33</sup> A game where you follow a rope, usually through the bush, wearing a blindfold.



*Figure 62. Conjoined Sails—Actions for Living, 2014, Gallery Three AUT University, Auckland.*  
Photo: Becca Wood.







ethico-poetics of everyday survival, reveals a slowing through the ‘conversational’, opening possibilities for testimonials of survival. They hold a safe space for narratives to be told that possibly require attention of care and support, as survival can often be a vulnerable experience. Lepecki suggests that the audience as a witness becomes itself not at the moment it witnesses the event but when it gives to another audience its testimony of the event. He goes on to suggest that the “affective-political dimension of storytelling in relation to history and futurity is crucial in the age of selfies.”<sup>34</sup> (And the ‘forensic devices’ of the contemporary sociability of Instagrams and images that implicate our participation as silent accomplices in the vast crime scene of modernity.) Therefore, in telling stories of *Desperado* I offer ‘testimony’ of lost environments and ways of being (rather than performing them), as do my participants revealing the everyday survival of the individual, i.e., what it really feels like to survive with others or lose someone you care for. Thus, the performances of the stories shared in these encounters are witnessed by those who are present (not as spectators), remaining within the performance never to be re-told.

The jackets and silver sail lining adapted, transformed and multiplied throughout the research process as they become one of the central actions for future survival tours.<sup>35</sup> For example the jackets became separated in later tours so that the sail would be free to capture the winds. I also developed another jacket that also had a sail that could be hoisted independently. Furthermore, activities under the hoisted sail shifted between dancing, sharing survival stories, singing and sheltering (see *Figures 64 & 65*). Performing with others in outdoor locations opened space for duration, uncertainty and improvisations that brought attention to how we work with performance technologies through accidental ways of working. The ethics emerged via stories and images through art as a world-making rather than just representational.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> André Lepecki, “After Thought: Four Notes on Witnessing Performance in the Age of Neoiberal Dis-Experience,” in *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2016), 173.

<sup>35</sup> When I hoisted the sail, I would play the song that we played at my father’s funeral—*Sailing*—which added to the spectacle of the moment of ‘reveal’. This also became the moment that I referred to as a ‘memorial’ as it evoked an emotional connection to that memory, yet it transformed into multiple meanings throughout the survival tour series. Listen to *Sailing* (in Rafting sound files).

<sup>36</sup> Zylinska, *Minimal Ethics*, 105.





Figure 64. *Survival Stories, Actions for Living*, 2014, Gallery Three, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.





Figure 65. Dancing under the sail, *Weathering the Whau*, 2014, Whau Arts Festival, Avondale, Auckland.  
Photo: Maria O'Connor.



## 4.7 Recovery through Somatic Rituals

Actions for living that drew together somatic actions as rituals of taking-care-of each other were further tested as part of a collaboration between Johannes Blomqvist and myself and the development of the work *Sharing Waters* (2014)<sup>37</sup> that took place in Umeå, Sweden the first year of this research. The theme of the work ‘island, seas and connectivity’ became a way to connect our work across the sea. The uncertainty of the unstable place in-between islands was evolved into the metaphor for the grounding of self, through storytelling, resting and recovery. The aim was to recognise the differences in our daily survival and artistic practice, and find a common place to begin. As I crossed narratives from Waitemata Harbour in Auckland, New Zealand and the Norrfjärden-Holmön ferry crossing. We marked or traced previous ocean-going journeys through storytelling, video, photos on the iPad and actions that were specific to the stories of place. To get to Holmön Island we had to take the Holmön ferry, the same one that had been shown on video by Johannes in the previous performance of *Sharing Waters* (2013) in Auckland the year before.<sup>38</sup> The journeys that we had taken in preparation for this one became the inscriptions for narratives of belonging. In Auckland Johannes had spoken wistfully of Sweden and here on the Holmön ferry, I was now speaking of Auckland in a similar way. What had once been present was now an arche-trace of the initial journey searching for belonging in an act of moving between island and mainland. See Boats and Ports video loop (in Rafting Archive 2).

The isolation of the island released our connection to our everyday lives and everyday worries dissolved into a state of becoming as we walked together, rested together and ate together, creating new maps as we

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<sup>37</sup> *Sharing Waters—A guided boat tour and island adventure to Holmön Island*, Christina Houghton and Johannes Blomqvist, a full-day performance with actions and conversation, Umeå, Sweden, October 5, 2014. See Appendix 1. Performance Map.

<sup>38</sup> *Sharing Waters—A guided trip on the Halfmoon Bay ferry*, Christina Houghton, Auckland, November, 2013. Also the subject of the video *Sharing Waters* (2013) that was shown as part of the Maskinen Art Boat event, Survival Kit Festival Umeå. See *Sharing Waters* video (in Rafting Archive 1).



walked (see *Figure 67*). These virtual maps suggested a different existence, as a different kind of human, with a different kind of new-found and 'fuelled' energised perception for inhabiting life, highlighting the importance of material-difference as an ethical challenge to being human. We mapped somatic actions along the route as rituals to the summer activities that were absent in this place at that time of year.<sup>39</sup> Somatic rituals emerged when Johannes Blomqvist led us in *Forest Resting* that related to his recent experience with depression, when he had felt as though he was sinking below the surface or drowning and he had found sanctuary beneath blankets in his bed. The action was to lie together, gently wrapped in survival blankets for 20 minutes listening to the sounds around us. Listen to Tūi (in Rafting sound files).

*Johannes suggests lying down in the base of the boat to feel the sensations of hiding and safety, however the boat ride is rough and I feel seasick we decide to lie in the forest instead. Resting in the forest has a material sensation of lying with the moss and lichen; such actions involving unusual rituals that lie outside usual everyday actions can be deemed subversive to a usual guided tour yet are inclusive of all flora and fauna.*

Furthermore, somatic rituals allowed for me to reflect on my use of the autobiographical in my performance and the concept of performance as a mobile memorial as I enacted rituals towards the environment through the memorialising of *Desperado* as a performance motif. Such as the action where I guided a sightless dance under an open-air pergola (see *Figure 66*), a bodily archive of dancing with my father while standing on his feet when I was little transformed memory into a shared bodily experience of dancing with someone I had just met. Tracings of *Sharing Waters* became part of the video projection in the final performance in the Black Box. See Rafting projection video [click here](#).

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<sup>39</sup> Holmön Island is a typical destination for families to go camping on summer holidays. We were there in October, which is the time of year when temperatures begin to drop below freezing.

1. Contemplation—Sit on a small mat facing the sea on your own and contemplate life (20 mins).
2. Forest resting—Lie next to others wrapped in silver survival blankets (20 mins).
3. Waiheke picnic—Take foods from an island near your own home town and share it with others on the other side of the world.
4. Dance with each one of your companions while they are blind-folded, to the song *Sailing*—the song you played at your father's funeral.



*Figure 66. The Last Dance, Sharing Waters, 2014, Holmön Island, Sweden.*  
Photo: Johannes Blomqvist.





*Figure 67. Walking and Waiheke Picnic, Sharing Waters, 2014, Holmön Island, Sweden.*  
Photos: Christina Houghton.



## 4.8 The Survival Tours

*Weathering strong wind in matching yellow survival jackets, carrying yellow rope, white fishing sticks and water containers. We fish for messages from the harbour. I share childhood memories of sailing holidays as DIY tips for surviving shared histories of colonisation, consumption and environmental change. Tasks become rituals that conjure familial relations that encourage attention in taking care of the harbour, each other and our selves. Humans transformed through the materials of performance, becoming part of the silver lining of the jackets, flailing and torn by the wind as it whips them around—becoming one with the forces of nature. Sheltered, lying beside orderly posts and beneath survival blankets, they listen to the plight of this marginal site, where the material forces are one of contamination, backwaters and extreme weather conditions.<sup>40</sup>*

In creating survival tours I responded to each location and the environmental issues that needed addressing.<sup>41</sup> I selected actions and narratives that aimed to evoke ethical operations of self and others that had potential to reveal connections to place that were personal and cultural as well as those that embraced subjectivities of post-human. *Rafting-with* and *rafting-through* place embraced concepts of weathering and wayfaring, following meandering pathways, slowing and attuning to the environment around us. *Rafting-through* and *with* moved towards a worlding practice, such as walking on land, adventuring on water and submerging or floating in water. The affects of weather patterns unfolded as a poetics of dwelling, revealing an eco-poetics, as narratives emerged that were multiple in their origins. Moving bodies through place activated processual discoveries and created choreographies as an ecological relational experience that encaptured durations, allowing participants to release from an instrumental nature of measuring time and

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<sup>40</sup> Reflection from *Other Waters/Survival Tour*, Christina Houghton, guided walk along Māngere Bridge, as part of Art on the Manukau, Māngere, Auckland, November 28-30, 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Guided survival tours moved through specific locations of ecological interest such as Te Wai Horotiu stream (Auckland City, *Going Bush & RAFTING*) Te Whau River (Avondale, *Weathering the Whau*), Manukau Harbour (Mangere Bridge, *Other Waters*) and offshore, Vltava River (Prague, *Still Sailing*), Muri Lagoon (Rarotonga, Cook Islands, *In Between Future Islands*). See Appendix 1. Performance Map.

distance. The worlding and wayfaring of weathered worlds through somatic everyday actions and story-telling became a performative tactic that aimed to create encounters situated in the realm of the minor that prioritised difference, the common people and the abiotic.<sup>42</sup> The sharing of stories as actions helps with this wayfaring, situating us within the environment of our stories and reducing objectification or separation.<sup>43</sup> Focusing on actions based around sites of water, each 'tour' responded to the site of interest as a survival drill, showing evacuation routes and potential hazards through navigation, conversation and actions, stories and props from *Desperado*.

As I walk through a new location for the first time I notice the places that connect us to waterways. The water quality and access to water are important elements in relation to survival and are intrinsic to our wellbeing. Water quality is an indicator of environmental degradation, and access to clean water for swimming and drinking as a commodity is part of the politics of water. These actions bring to the fore the connection of bodies to the awa (river) or moana (sea) that in Māori world view act as a reminder of the river or ocean that might be important to them,<sup>44</sup> and that we might need to be a voice for the ocean or rivers that we walk beside. For example in *Weathering the Whau* (2014)<sup>45</sup> (See *Figure 65*) the nearby

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<sup>42</sup> Tim Ingold suggests that humans do not live *in* the world but rather move *through* it as a wayfaring—a worlding of stories under construction. The practice of wayfaring is a moving through place seeing with new eyes. Noticing the sameness between us, nature, animals, etc. Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (London, UK: Routledge, 2011). Cited in Zylinska, *Minimal Ethics*, 42.

<sup>43</sup> Moments of encounter that might move towards that of emergent collectivities and the art of wayfaring as described by both Manning and Ingold that both draw on Alfred North Whitehead's idea that "the world we inhabit is never complete but continually surpassing itself. 'Creativity inheres in the movement of the world's self-surpassing, or in what Whitehead called 'concrecence (Whitehead 1929: 410).'" Ingold, "Being Alive," 13. Quoting Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1929).

<sup>44</sup> The Māori perspective on water is expressed in the proverb, Ko au to awa ko au, ko te awa ko au, I am the river and the river is me.

<sup>45</sup> *Weathering the Whau*, Christina Houghton, guided walk around the Whau Festival, Avondale, Auckland, October 19, 2014.

river, the Whau (that runs through the Avondale New Lynn area of Auckland), became the inspiration for stories of boats that remembered this waterway as once a main portage for transportation by water.<sup>46</sup>

*The survival tour encapsulates protection, shelter and survival, creating an engrossing sensory experience of crinkling foil and weighted discomfort. Mapping actions of ritual and care onto site, the participatory act of being-with-others became an emergency response to rising sea levels, turbulence and extreme weather conditions. Operating within mis-predictions and unusual weather conditions the survival jackets and sails became unpredictable participants in the actions with weather and changing climates.*

Survival tours aimed to explore both the unpredictability of guiding and non-guiding as the mobile group submitted to the further uncertainty of the weather. In *Other Waters/Survival Tours* (2014)<sup>47</sup> a participatory performance evoking *becoming other*, the experience had the potential to challenge our habitual human arrogance thus shifting our perceptions to become more than what we know, shifting the limits of our skins so that we become adaptive and reframe our perceptions of master species, becoming other to our representational selves. The idea of a survival drill as ‘a performance disaster’ (that involves a series of unpredictable events) does not live up to the spectacle of theatre or the drama of survival but follows pathways that lean towards the uncertain, the misrepresented and the unexpected, and opens spaces for the unknown to unfold during the live performance encounter. An immersive experience for participants meant that the experiences had by individuals were as multiple, diverse and unrepeatable as the number of elements that partook in the encounter (both material and immaterial). As one of the participants expressed:

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<sup>46</sup> The lilo rafting performance *Whau-Lo-Ting* (2016) also referenced this same waterway.

<sup>47</sup> *Other Waters/Survival Tours*, Christina Houghton, guided walk along Māngere Bridge, as part of Art on the Manukau, Māngere, Auckland, November 28-30, 2014. See Appendix 1. Performance Map. See Other Waters video (in Rafting Archive 1).

*At its culmination, as we stood inside our expanded costumes of rain slickers and hypothermia blankets, seeing and hearing the wind whip them around us, I truly felt that I'd taken part in an artwork which had built meaningful connections between the artist, the site, and the participants in ways I'd not experienced before...I'm beginning to feel that such singular, unrepeatable acts present a direction for art that exposes a different potential, where art becomes creative, political and available through being always underway in spite of any effort to define, corral, package, sell or celebrate its volatility.*

The use of the yellow PVC coats with the extendable sail shelter, as costumes that participants were asked to wear began as an important act of protection from the unpredictable Auckland Weather (Auckland has a temperate rainy climate in winter). This proved to be an important indicator of the unpredictable nature of outdoor performance and weather forecasts yet also became a catalyst for 'working together' when the conditions were not as predicted. The sail/shelter, for example, required wind to 'perform' yet often there was not enough wind to inflate it. This provided an opportunity however to engage the participants in holding the sail as a shelter. On the other hand, high winds in *Other Waters* tore the original sail to shreds, providing a dramatic improvisation with the forces of nature, as later seen projected on the wall of the Black Box in the final performance presentation<sup>48</sup> (see *Figure 68*). See Rafting projection video from 27:10 min (in Rafting Archive 2).

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<sup>48</sup> When taking the survival tours offshore, in preparation for each location I had to allow for variations in season and temperature dramatically changing both the preparation and the experience. In preparing to take four jackets to Prague for NZPQ15 I was constantly reminded that there had been a heatwave the previous year and that the participants were bound to melt in the heat. I consequently crafted an ice-pack lining that was to hold refreezable icepacks in pockets to create a cool experience in the heat of the European summer. However, there was a cold snap that week of June and the jackets proved to be essential in protecting the participants from rain and hail as we floated out on the Vltava River. For *Be for Barefoot*—a memorial walk along St Clair Beach in Dunedin (in the south of the South Island), I prepared for a desolate beach with oncoming cold winds (within which I was to hoist the sail from my jacket)—these winds are notorious for Dunedin where in November it can often be snowing regardless of being close to summer solstice. That week there was heat and no wind. Sunbathers looked on as an overheated group shrouded in jackets and survival blankets gathered under a limp sail. See Appendix 1. Performance Map.



The nature of weathering in this process brought attention to the unpredictability of expectation and the act of preparation. These experiences were a way to bring the spectacle of disaster and survival back to the experiences between people and environment in a way that operates as a bringing-forth of authentic experiences. It was also a way to release from control as choreographer/artist as master of site, and allow for the winds and weather to perform (and us with it) in a symbiotic participatory minor gesture that recognises the relationships between events and things that have a life of their own. As another participant expressed:

*In summary the processes of composition I see in her work draws on things and events that have a life of their own—and as such are already underway. I believe the themes of survival and the concepts she is dealing with are particularly relevant to current contemporary practices of ecological and trans-disciplinary performance.*

As a guide I offer directions for actions, stories and conversational antics that express the themes of the work, crafting a narrative for which the environmental concerns can be discussed. The loss of my father, and the survival tips I learned as a child sailing, are part of the paradox of this work. These actions and narratives rest on an ideology that environmentally seems out of date, as I realise (in horror!) that my way of surviving was based on a false economy of ideals that support the progressive economics of the country and the failings of its 'Clean Green' image. I acknowledge that most of us are still performing such actions, compulsively supporting these ideologies based on the intuitive sense that we love the outdoors. Furthermore, in telling stories of tragedy and loss on these survival tours, stories of the site rose to the surface, such as the Manukau Harbour as the 'lesser sister' of the twin harbours of Auckland (Waitematā & the backwaters of the Manukau).

*In taking charge as the captain of the mythical sailing of Desperado I evaluate the nature of the captain as authoritarian. I now take the role of captain in the place of my father (who always maintained control of our family sailings yet at the same time existed within his own contradictions). As I embark on this journey I question my own relationship with my father as a metaphor for a patriarchal system that I now subvert through a post-masculine sailing. I also use the term 'boat master' in relation to the mastering of sailing and technology as a place from which the performance can evoke utopian and dystopian hopes for the future. The metaphorical link between Desperado, the survival walks and somatic actions aims to develop a critique of the mastery of survival and situate our true survival within the space between our individual experiences and actions, and our perception of survival.*



*Figure 68. Sails on the Bridge, Other Waters/Survival Tour, 2014, Art on the Manukau, Māngere Bridge, Auckland. Video Still.*

The tour guide is the holder of a lived knowledge that can be passed down. I attempt to adapt my own life story into one that reveals a truth-unconcealing, a way of being that allows for my story to become another, through the position of a non-guide that allows for others' stories to reveal themselves within the structure of the tour. In offering a safe personal space to dwell within the durational nature of the performance journey, participants are lulled upon the winds and waves into a relational space where perhaps an unguarded moment dissolves my position as expert and replaces it with an interchangeable space of participant and witness. It was my intention on the survival tours to relinquish my position as expert or even guide. In basing this work around an autobiographical narrative I addressed the notion of the familiar and familial, and transformed it through an invitation. This became a crafting of invitation and open spaces for conversation and dialogue that was allowed through the dwelling in place, a slowing that was encouraged through the temporal nature of outdoor locations.<sup>49</sup>

*The one thing that will help you the most in a survival situation is a positive mental attitude... You may be the only positive one but you will have a positive effect on your passengers as they see you handling the situation well...*<sup>50</sup>

Throughout the survival tours I explored both my role as guide or non-guide through many types of guiding that involved gesturing, reading through an instructional booklet, following maps and recorded instructions and leading holding a flag above my head. What was discovered was that no matter how specific the instructions or the leading there was a range of diverse ways of operating within the structured

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<sup>49</sup> I quickly realised that I needed to allow a good couple of hours for any walk that took people from one location to another and back again. Part of this process was in the letting go (by myself and the participants) of fitting a performance walk into a sharply coded timeframe.

<sup>50</sup> Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand, "The Power of Being Prepared," in *Survival Brochure* (Wellington, NZ: CAA, 2011), 3.



realm of a guided tour (which was within a familiar terrain) that was open to accommodating a range of behaviours and protocols. The tours reveal multiple 'ways of doing' both inclusive and non-inclusive in following instructions, thus revealing archetypes of behaviour associated with 'the rebel', 'the anarchist' as well as the 'over-achiever' or 'know-it-all'. The outcomes of such wilding behaviours became the material of *wild* choreographies. The uncertainties created by these behaviours often felt like disasters or failures in the sense of a successful tour where everyone followed instructions in the same manner. However, it was these discrepancies in behaviours of participants and equipment (such as the lilo that refused to be inflated or the individuals who lagged) that contributed to the everyday poetics from 'everyday tactics' for operating within codes of conduct and activating an eco-poetics of the place that the tour moved through.

By creating choreographic ways of moving through place and actions for taking care of the environment, somatic rituals further emerged; in each tour in *Other Waters/Survival Tours* participants collected waters of the Manukau in plastic bottles and coloured them with Raro to make them smell better and look nicer. This action became a way to recognise both the tragedy of the 'Grade D' waters of the Manukau Harbour, the value we place on the aesthetics of a place and our willingness to attempt to remedy this by artificial means. We also made a circle and performed the dance *Sun, Sand, Sea* (that followed recorded instructions)<sup>51</sup> as an ode to all those who have been lost or forgotten, bringing attention to the forgotten waters of the Manukau Harbour. Actions such as writing messages to the sea and fishing them with bottles into the harbour waters aimed to evoke an *eco-poetics* as a potential sustainable practice<sup>52</sup> (see *Figures 69 & 70*). See *Other Waters* video (in Rafting Archive 1).

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<sup>51</sup> Listen to Sun Sand Sea (in Rafting sound files).

<sup>52</sup> Michael Peters and Ruth Irwin, "Earthsongs: Ecopoetics, Heidegger and Dwelling." *The Trumpeter* 18, no. 1 (2002). Peters and Irwin in response to Jonathan Bate's book *The Song of the Earth* discuss the sustainability of an *eco-poetics* as being needed more now in the new millennium as technology threatens to rule us more and more. However, they point out that sustainability can contribute to many believing that the possibility of a technological fix relieves them of needing to take action. And sustainability merely points to the possibility of a static regeneration of the resource base of capitalism. Eco-poetics is described as more of a phenomenological revealing of dwelling. Concerned with consciousness, eco-poetics requires the imagining of a place in an original state before it falls to ownership.

## 4.9 Choreography as Archive

As an ethico-poetics of everyday survival *Rafting-with* embraced actions and stories as somatic rituals. Through the experience of being-with others, with weather and oceanic sites we became aware of atmospheric lingerings or a poetics of assemblage. Relations between the moving elements of air, water and bodies were sensed. I recorded the survival tours on my GoPro camera, capturing the wind in the sails and the close encounters between participants. These documentations aim not to reduce these experiential choreographies to the representation of being-in nature or choreographing bodies in space but hope to capture the random chaos of moving with weather and the intimate conversations between each of us. This documentation does however reveal my desire for capturing the work and retrieving past experiences. Yet it also holds potentialities as instructions or statements for future actions.<sup>53</sup> The many iterations of my performances that harnessed the COPE choreographic strategy and the three R's of rafting, resting and recovery, created opportunities for testing and capturing, actions for being-with others and technologies for listening in an everyday way. These materialise into kinetic events or anti-codes, as systems of participatory transformation. Consequently presenting these images/experiences in the final performance RAFTING as archives of the performance research becomes a system of transformation of the past, present and future, into choreography.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> i.e., in the Black Box the video documentation of this site is installed and projected on the wall as an instruction for experiencing the sail jackets along with the wind from the fans as well as an immersive experiential environment. As seen in the Rafting projection video from 27:10 min.(in Rafting Archive 2).

<sup>54</sup> Lepecki, "The Body as Archive." Lepecki referring to Deleuze and his definition of statements as multiplicities, the archive is further described by Foucault as "a *system of transforming* the past present and future-that is, a system for recreating a whole economy of the temporal." The archive turns "statements" into "*events*" and "*things*'.



*Figure 69. Lying on the Bridge, Other Waters/Survival Tours, 2014, Art on the Manukau, Māngere Bridge, Auckland. Video Still.*





Figure 70. Fishing off the Bridge, *Other Waters/Survival Tours*, 2014, Art on the Manukau, Māngere Bridge, Auckland. Video Still.





*Figure 71.* Sails Projected in the Black Box, RAFTING, 2017, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Rob Linkhorn.



## PART 3: SEA *Agencement*

*Ko au te moana, Ko te Moana ko au*  
*(I am the sea and the sea am I)*

## Chapter 5 – Rafting-with Offshore Navigations

### 5.1 Islands, Seas and Connectivity

In taking the work offshore, moving from its origins in Aotearoa New Zealand, my perspective shifts towards seeing and being-in-the-world from a ‘borderless oceania’ as a ‘liquid continent’. Dorita Hannah describes this as “‘Oceanic-spacing’—in relation to both ocean and Oceania—where we find ourselves productively ‘all at sea.’”<sup>1</sup> This perspective resolves in an oceanic condition, as Sam Trubridge describes, “where coastlines are no longer visible, where the self becomes indistinguishable, where our humanity and subjectivity is challenged the most and where we struggle to survive or even stay in one space.”<sup>2</sup>

In this section I describe the transition from land to sea as a release from the code-based structures of the instructional drills that had framed earlier performances. Through foreign waterscapes and wet

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<sup>1</sup> Dorita M. Hannah, “Fluid States Pasifika: Spacing Events through an Entangled Oceanic Dramaturgy,” *Global Performance Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017). <http://gps.psi-web.org/issue-1-1/fluid-states-pasifika/>. Proposed by PSI’s (Performance Studies International) *Fluid States* project, a “liquid continent” borrows this spatial concept of Oceania from Epeli Hau’ofa. The concept shifts the economistic, geographic and deterministic view of the islands of Polynesia as small, isolated and vulnerable through oceanic perspectives that encompasses not only the lands, which the people inhabited, but also the vast oceans surrounding as far as could be traversed via sea vessels. Viewing their world as a ‘sea of islands’ rather than islands in a sea far away (as from a colonial perspective), he goes on to say the oceanic way of seeing their universe was far from small, suggesting that smallness is a state of mind. Seeing the world in this way was/is also inclusive of the lands, oceans and all those who inhabit them with fluid boundaries; people and cultures moved and mingled unhindered by boundaries drifting between lands to explore, trade, marry and so on. See Epeli Hau’ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” *The Contemporary Pacific* Vol. 6, no. 1 (Spring 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Sam Trubridge, “On Sea/at Sea – an Introduction,” *Performance Research* 21, no. 2 (2016): 2. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2016.1173903>.



ontologies,<sup>3</sup> navigating through place and between islands evokes a space for remembering (through story telling) and forgetting (release of codes and strictures of mastery) as we embrace new concepts of oceanic navigation. I forego the concepts of mastery and control of boats, embracing the techniques of Polynesian navigation “based on non-instrument observations of stars and other heavenly bodies, as well as of the changing wind and sea states, the patterning of clouds, the flight of land nesting sea-birds and other facets of the marine environment.”<sup>4</sup> I also embrace the wildly inaccurate technique of ‘dead reckoning’ where positions are estimated via a compasses and an hourglass from the last point where land was seen, often with disastrous outcomes.

Survival strategies further unfold over the following survival tours—*Still Sailing* (2015)<sup>5</sup> on Vltava River, which meanders through the flood plains of Prague; *In Between Future Islands* (2015)<sup>6</sup> following an evacuation route in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, South Pacific; and *Be for Barefoot* (2015),<sup>7</sup> a memorial walk along Ocean Beach in between St Kilda and St Claire in Dunedin, New Zealand.

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Steinberg and Kimberley Peters, “Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces: Giving Depth to Volume through Oceanic Thinking,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 33, no. 2 (2015). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1068/d14148p>.

<sup>4</sup> Ben Finney, 2006 in K. R. Howe, *Vaka Moana, Voyages of the Ancestors: The Discovery and Settlement of the Pacific* (Auckland, NZ: David Bateman, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> *Still Sailing*—A guided Survival Tour of the Vltava river in Prague, Christina Houghton, a performance for 3-4 people in a row-boat as part of NZPQ15, Prague Quadrennial of Performance, Space and Design, Prague, Czech Republic. June 18-25, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> *In Between Future Islands*, Christina Houghton, a walk along a Tsunami Evacuation route and through the abandoned dystopian Sheraton Hotel site in Rarotonga, as part of *Sea Change- Performing a Fluid Continent*, Oceanic Performance Biennial OPB conference, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, July 8-11, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> *Be for Barefoot, A Memorial Walk along Ocean Beach*, Christina Houghton, a guided sensory walk along Ocean Beach in Dunedin, *Moving Communities Dance Conference*, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, November 2015. See Appendix 1. Performance Map.

As I developed each work in offshore locations there were opportunities to test what should remain in the work and what should be let go. I was interested in how this might shift in foreign locales. What unexpectedly transformed through the act of guiding (as in taking a tour) was the capacity for cultural exchange. This revealed the dominant voice of colonial history, the specificity of techniques and practices and the recognition of universality of human relationships to water. The narrative of *Desperado* was instrumental in moving further towards the site of water as minor gesture towards everyday survival.



*Figure 72.* Yellow Dinghy, Christina, Mum and Nana, 1983, Able Tasman, Nelson, New Zealand,  
Photo: Peter Houghton Slide Collection.

## 5.2 Oceanic Survival Stories—*Living-on*

*On Desperado the dinghy was a vessel for going between the larger boat and the land, a transitional vessel for short journeys. For me the dinghy (built by my brother) was my escape from the family, a place I would dream and create my own world. In that sense I realise that my memories of Desperado are a construction of my own world that would be different from that of any other member of my family. As were most of my early memories, when I viewed the world from below looking up to my towering family, desperate to keep up as they strode ahead. I sit here in the dinghy, being faithfully pulled along, able to be lost in my own imagination without any real sense of responsibility.*

### Boating Safety code<sup>8</sup>

1. Life jackets. Take them—Wear them.
2. Skipper responsibility—Be responsible for the safety of everyone on board. Keep within the limits of the vessel and your experience
3. Communications—Take two separate waterproof ways for communicating
4. Marine weather—Check the local forecast
5. Avoid alcohol

*Still Sailing* took place on the Vltava River in Prague as a series of boat tours over eight days of the Prague Quadrenniel. The performance was for 3-4 people and tours took two hours, leaving from NZPQ15 pavilion each day at around 4pm. The restrictions of the performance parameters, being the size of a small row-boat or pedal-boat and only four jackets (which the participants wore), contributed to an intimate setting for story telling and being-with others. This performance took the participants away from their

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<sup>8</sup> “Know Before you Go: The Boating Safety Code,” <https://www.adventuresmart.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Boating-Safety-Code.pdf>. It was apparent that these rules from New Zealand were not adhered to in Prague. There were no life jackets available for the adults at the boat hire venue and there was beer available to purchase for your trip.



usual experience of the city streets to see the city from the water. This is something I like to do whenever I go to a new city<sup>9</sup> (see *Figure 73*). Together we chatted enacted actions as I played songs we used to listen to on *Desperado*, *Sailing* and *Soft Sounds from the South Seas* as well as the *Coastal weather forecast for New Zealand June 2015* and *Long range weather forecast june 2015* from Radio New Zealand broadcasts. Listen to Coastal weather forecast (in Rafting sound files).

The urban river the Vltava, experienced from a row-boat, produces destabilising affects. Jacquie Clarke suggests that a “living waterscape” that evokes a liquid state of perception experienced through bodies and psyches.<sup>10</sup> Clarke describes the poetic re-imagining of cities in this way as “fluid urban cosmology,” “one that is experienced from moment to moment through multiple layers of knowing, rather than being defined by a specific geographic location.”<sup>11</sup> *Still Sailing* is such a world for those on board, it is an intimate experience, an encounter that holds us in a particular spatial configuration for at least an hour, although we change our seating arrangements as we take turns at rowing. In this close encounter we become familiar with each other in a way that is essential to our survival for the duration of the performance (see *Figure 74*). As we experientially navigate the river slowly and perceive the city without the solidity of ground we take time away from the tasks of working life to recover a non-material sense of wellbeing. We

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<sup>9</sup> For the Prague Quadrennial I proposed a walking performance with the yellow jackets, performing with weather in a spectacle suited to the call of the festival. This original proposal aimed to live up to the inspirational aesthetic of theatre drama and spectacle and scenography in line with the scenographic history of both the city and the Performance Space and Design Quadrennial. However, once I got there I responded to the busy tourist city of Prague in my usual way, I headed towards the water. Drawn by the yellow pedal-boats on the shore I decide to divert the performance away from the central location of Charles Bridge and take the audience on a boat trip on the Vltava River.

<sup>10</sup> Jacquie Clarke, “Living Waterscapes: The Practice of Water in Everyday Life,” *Performance Research* 15, no. 4 (2010): 115-16. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2010.539890>. Clarke draws on Deleuze’s concept of liquid perception in his description of a group of early French film-makers using a liquid theme. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (London, UK; New York: Continuum, 1986/2005).

<sup>11</sup> Clarke, “Living Waterscapes: The Practice of Water in Everyday Life,” 121.



Figure 73. Telescope in Prague, *Still Sailing*, 2015, Prague, Czech Republic.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.





Figure 74. In a Boat, *Still Sailing*, 2015, Prague, Czech Republic.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.



are in a sense part of the watery 'womb' of the city where; "anatomies, physiologies and psychologies have dissolved into incessant urban streaming."<sup>12</sup>

*I can see the jackets and the costume reflecting the colours and sensations of the water. I see the circle we have travelled around the island and the circle of how we met just an hour or so ago.*

During the tours the yellow PVC jackets, silver foil and ropes became shifting landscapes for improvisation from within which sea shanties and tales of the dark ocean were told. The landscape of objects can create a world within to imagine where "People act upon their world and are acted upon by it, a constant dialogue."<sup>13</sup> Stories of the participants arose in response to the jackets, hats and sunglasses we wore and the ocean-going narrative of *Desperado*. Each jacket had added technologies attached, to enable water to be carried as well as the hat that became a rain catcher. Water was an important part of the Raro narrative shared from *Desperado* as it related to the need to carry water on board. We used to add the orange powdered drink Raro to the water to cover the bad rubber taste of *Desperado's* water tank.<sup>14</sup> Raro also brought attention to the development of dehydrated food products as a technology for survival yet also highlights the instant *just add water* experiences of the contemporary world.

My attention is drawn to the hierarchies of the performance, where I begin as a guide and a captain yet the roles shift throughout as we change positions in the dinghy. Conversations feed concepts and ideas

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<sup>12</sup> Brian McGrath describing the city of Bangkok, in Brian McGrath, "Bangkok: Liquid Perception," *Architectural Design* 73, no. 5 (2003), cited in Clarke, "Living Waterscapes: The Practice of Water in Everyday Life," 117.

<sup>13</sup> Miranda Tufnell and Chris Crickmay, *Body Space Image: Notes on Improvisation and Performance* (Alton, Hampshire, UK: Dance Books, 1993), 121. Tufnell and Crickmay describe objects as 'Landscapes for improvisation'. Oversized costumes, a pile of chairs, an object you can pick up and carry as well as assembling of a kit all are examples of the types of landscapes that can be created.

<sup>14</sup> I discovered there is a similar type of powered orange drink in many different countries. In the Czech Republic they have *džus* and in Australia they call it Tang, see next section for the origins of Raro.



into the performance as it unfolds. Russell reveals that he is the descendant of Captain Scoones, a tug-boat master in Dunedin (see *Figure 80*). On another tour Ian becomes the dad and Marianna the mum while David and I are the siblings. The photographs we take at the end of each performance become a series of family photos as we stand dishevelled by the winds and water at the end of a long sailing holiday (see *Figure 75*). The position of 'tour guide' falls away through the familiarity of proximity of the conversation and the survival drill becomes a trace of what never came to be.

*We moved from Nelson in the South Island (where Desperado had been launched) to the North Island for Dad's job when I was still at school and again a few years later. I realised that when looking back for a place that I called home, Desperado was the only place that was consistent throughout this period. In my search for my own sense of belonging I am in search of an island upon which to moor my identity in a changing world. I offer this experience to those who wish to join me. It seems that those who make the decision to join the tour have a moment where they let go afternoon plans and surrender to the unknown. Some are enticed by the idea of sailing and boats, and most have their own stories to tell.*

The stories that begin with personal experiences of boating and survival reveal an incidental observation of the environment and everyday practice that surrounds the experience itself. This gives insight to the changing nature of our worlds, some familiar and some unfamiliar. The concept of distance and proximity were addressed through the familiarity as an everydayness. By telling my own stories of *Desperado* I share the experience of what it is to discover a place by boat, an experience common to my ancestors and peoples of Pacific nations. It is perhaps the desire to re-experience a memory from my childhood that leads me to tell these stories. Furthermore, the voices of participants in both the performances and in this reflective writing appear as tracings from my own recollections that further enables a de-authorization of myself as the centre of this research and allows for a diversification or destratification of experience as we discover shared experiences of water bodies and islands.<sup>15</sup> [Click here for Soft Sounds from the South Seas sound file.](#)

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<sup>15</sup> I noted down stories in a notebook from memory after each performance and requested permission to include them in



Figure 75. Family Photo, *Still Sailing*, 2015, Prague, Czech Republic. Photo: Passerby.

*“My dad loved sailing but my mum not so much. Our boat was called Nervous Wreck—we all decided on this name as a family.”*

These stories evoke connective *agencement* through story-telling that becomes the tether on our raft, rafting-with others, forming small rituals through memory and mourning to those friends and families who are absent, as an act of recovery for ourselves and the environment. Such as one participant, when she writes her ‘message to the sea’ has tears in her eyes and says misses her mother, and another who tells me how they had a family boat that they also went out on after his mother passed away (see *Figure 76*).

*“I lived by the coast as a child and I really miss it. I used to also go sailing with my family but now I live by a lake in Switzerland.”*

It was at this point that I realized that the stories of *Desperado* were the catalyst for the somatic ritual of slowing down and taking notice of the present moment. By interacting with the archives from the boat the past came into the present allowing for a time travelling between what was being heard and the actions we undertook together. Such as tasting the Raro mixed in the plastic Tupperware<sup>16</sup> container from *Desperado*, touching a manuka branch and smelling manuka oil. Acting out these everyday actions with others became an act of recovery, a passing on of what remains from the original encounter.

*As I pull the rope to hoist the silver sail from the back of my jacket I play the song we used to play on Desperado—Sailing. This is the song that we played at Dad’s funeral. This action I repeat in each survival tour as a memorial to my father. This is often the moment of spectacle in the survival tours, however the ritual of repetition activates a sense of living-on and becomes a survival action for living-on and remembering.*

*“It made me think about performance and memory in a whole new way. The stories of sailing and your father took me immediately to a place that I might remember.”*

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my research as anonymous reflections. All stories included have been given approval by those that told them.

<sup>16</sup> An American brand of plastic containers, common in New Zealand.



The waka/boat in this performance acted as a vessel for bodies both present and absent, hosting lost and found items or bodies as flotsam and jetsam and the ghosts of all those lost at sea.<sup>17</sup> This vessel also held the ghostings of my family's *practice of everyday life*, revealing in its reflection of attitudes towards the environment. For example Dad used to cut the bottoms out of cans and say, "Homes for fish!" before he tossed them overboard. More stories were revealed in the messages we left to the river. All that remained at the end of the day were the messages written on the 'Mintie' lolly wrappers that I collected. Katarína, one of the participants, sent me a photo of the one she still keeps in her purse over two years later (see *Figure 77*).

In relation to survival, the boat is also an important vessel in times of flood. The city of Prague has flooded regularly over the last 700 years according to the written historical record. In such times of flood, the Vltava River causes the cityscape to disappear underwater and it becomes a water world of inflatable rescue boats and wooden home builds. This is also reflected in the disappearing affects of this type of work. In the absence of a choreographed artist-centred performance, the performative qualities of the boat trip reside in story-telling, listening, witnessing and noticing the un-noticed between participants. The flows and circuits of the city, weather and the changing flows of the river channels are consistently on the move, the performance can thus easily disappear within the everyday flows of the city. The recovery of what has disappeared is in the re telling here in this writing of how we rafted and rested together, floating with the currents of the river, as well as the archives that remain in the final performance RAFTING (see *Figures 78-80*). For video footage of performance see Being-with video loop (in Rafting Archive 2).

*What shall remain*—The capturing of these survival tours on GoPro video, posted on Instagram and social media, became part of a DIY method of capturing the experience through close proximities and social platforms. As I collect footage from exotic locations with people from many different cultural backgrounds, I am aware of the cultural appropriation of these images, yet the proximity of intimate encounters brings-

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<sup>17</sup> From early ocean-going voyagers who were forced leave islands in search of resources, to the recent tragic sea crossings between Turkey and Greece by human traffickers, with Syrian Refugees fleeing their war-torn country in inflatable boats.



forth a poetics of being-with rather than creating the spectacle of entertainment. Footage from these survival tours became part of the interweaving of the video montage created in the final performance (RAFTING) projection, as well as the other video installations, *Boats & Ports*, *Being-with*, and *Lilos*.<sup>18</sup> The cinematic style for these tended towards that of liquid perceptions,<sup>19</sup> capturing narratives that embrace the three-dimensional turbulent materiality of the river, which thrives on a perspective of a world of flows. Oceanic thinking in terms of the temporal, spatial practice of *Rafting-with* moves a poetics of release from instrumental codes of survival through the afterlives of performance as archive. I draw together video, documentation as a method for rafting-through, and handing-over of the work in the final installation of the Black Box. This marks the threshold in this research where performance at sea shifts towards fluid unknowing terrains that delve into dark spaces of reflection.

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<sup>18</sup> See Boats and Ports video loop, Being-with video loop and Lilos video loop (in Rafting Archive 2). See Appendix 1. Performance Map and Appendix 3.

<sup>19</sup> See Clarke, “Living Waterscapes: The Practice of Water in Everyday Life,” and Steinberg and Peters, “Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces: Giving Depth to Volume through Oceanic Thinking.”





*Figure 76. Marianna under the Sail—Still Sailing, 2015, Prague, Czech Republic.*  
Photo: Christina Houghton.



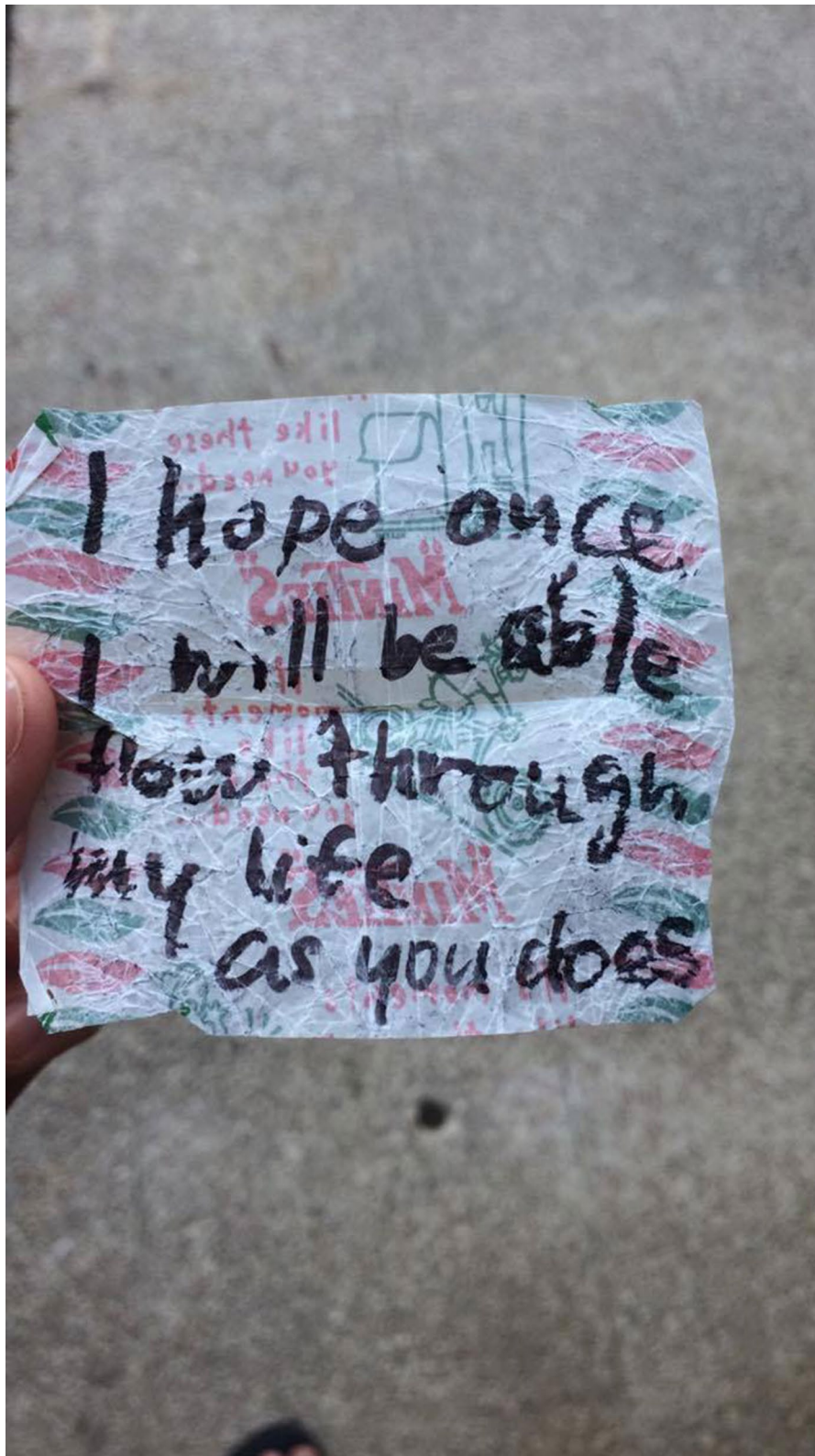


Figure 77. Message on Mintie Wrapper, Still Sailing, 2015, Prague, Czech Republic. Photo: Katarína Málíková.





Figure 78. Fishing Messages, *Still Sailing*, 2015, Prague, Czech Republic.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.





*Figure 79. Watching for Boats, Cassidy and Rafe, Still Sailing, 2015, Prague, Czech Republic*  
Photo: Christina Houghton.







### 5.3 Evacuations, Migrations—*Oceanic Communities*

The Pacific Island location of Rarotonga and the *Sea Change* Oceanic Performance Biennial OPB (2015) revealed the opportunity to explore notions of survival in small island communities in relation to oceanic ways of knowing. *In Between Future Islands*<sup>20</sup> began as a guided walk along an evacuation route. The aim was to map future coastlines created by climate change through the re-enactment of a dry run of a tsunami evacuation drill. In researching Rarotonga as a place for a performance about disaster I was drawn to narratives of post-disaster isolation, limited resources, risk of tsunami and disappearing shorelines due to rising sea levels, as well as the emergence of climate-change refugees. I came upon PAC WAV, the international coordination group for tsunami warnings in the Pacific that had been developed in 1965 following the devastating earthquake in Chile that year.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, tsunami evacuation signs and sirens had recently been installed at locations around Rarotonga, however what happens in the case of a tsunami warning appeared to be the responsibility of the local community. In creating this survival tour, I wanted to take participants up an evacuation route to investigate temporal and collective discrepancies between drills and reality (see *Figure 81*). This particular evacuation route also lay next to one of the sites suggested for performance as part of the Performance Symposium—the dystopian abandoned Sheraton Hotel site.<sup>22</sup>

Recognising the contradiction between notions of the fragility of islands as isolated, and yet connected (through oceanic thinking), the performance walk aimed to bring-forth oceanic ways of navigating

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<sup>20</sup> *In Between Future Islands*, Christina Houghton, a walk along a tsunami evacuation route and through the abandoned dystopian Sheraton Hotel site in Rarotonga, as part of *Sea Change—Performing a Liquid Continent*, Oceanic Performance Biennial OPB Conference, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, July 8-11, 2015. Curated by Dorita Hannah, Amanda Monehu Yates and Ani O'Neill. See Appendix 1. Performance Map.

<sup>21</sup> UNESCO, *Exercise Pacific Wave 15. A Pacific-Wide Tsunami Warning and Enhanced Products Exercise*, (Paris, France: UNESCO/IOC, 2015).

<sup>22</sup> The site of the Sheraton Hotel, Wigmore's Waterfall Road, Vaima'anga Tapere, is an unfinished hotel that was halted in production due to financial issues for the construction company.

through the dystopian abandoned site for the future Sheraton Hotel. Playful interventions from participants dressed in survival blankets as well as the other performers and performances (that were part of the performance walk for that day) revealed the active role that artists can play in response to sites of disrepair. The performance became a ritual towards transforming a forgotten place into a place of re-imagining.

*At the start of the survival tour I have a few stories to tell: one is the tsunami evacuation drill undertaken by the Tereora School and the other an actual midnight evacuation in the wake of the Chile earthquake in 2012.<sup>23</sup> Ani O'Neill (local artist and event navigator) revealed to us her presence at both of these occasions and describes the school evacuation as a bunch of kids with no water bottles, on a hot day full of complaints and apathy. The other was a midnight drive in their van to their friends in the hills and the acknowledgement that it was a big ask for those in the hills to put up all those from the coast.*

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<sup>23</sup> Discovered from articles in local newspapers.





*Figure 81. Tsunami Evacuation Route, In Between Future Islands, 2015, Wigmore's Waterfall Road, Vaima'anga Tapere, Rarotonga, Cook Islands. Video Still.*

1. Walk with your local community along a tsunami evacuation route.
2. Tell stories of failed evacuation drills and false alarms.
3. Wear survival blankets, disposable raincoats, hats and sunglasses from *Desperado*.
4. Walk through a forgotten site and transform its purpose through ritual and empathy.
5. Witness the spontaneous performances around the site.
6. Stand in a circle and listen to the roar of the waves threatening to break through the reef.
7. Serve water flavoured with Raro drink powder, and hear about the origins and demise of the orange industry in Rarotonga.
8. Play the song *Sailing*, hoist your survival sail from your jacket and lead everyone back to safety.

These stories revealed the vulnerability of these communities should a tsunami ever occur and remind me that survival is a personal experience. I follow these tales by distributing items from my own survival kit. Silver survival blankets, sails, disposable raincoats, hats and 1980s sunglasses from *Desperado* are handed out. Many have their own hats and raincoats, and a multi-coloured plastic aesthetic is created within the group. Within the tropical environment of the Rarotongan island sunglasses fogged up and the heat rose under the plastic sheaths as we prepared for the dry run (rehearsal) of a tsunami evacuation drill. With the knowledge that no emergency was to happen we were able to safely imagine what we might do in a future scenario.

The evacuation survival walk began along the road labeled as an evacuation route, and onto the abandoned site of the Sheraton hotel. This walk through the site might also be considered a search for an evacuation camp. Cook Islanders are proud of their beautiful islands and this particular site is one of sadness and abandonment. I became aware that the stories that surround this site are multiple. The half-built hotel is the result of miscommunications, bad management and embezzlement, and has many myths and tales surrounding the origins of the cessation of development. The site of the Sheraton Hotel was beautiful—although overgrown with weeds it had a wide-open area between the buildings and tropical coconut palms were dotted around. It had a sense of a forbidden playground due to the risky materials that lay around, such as broken tiles and wiring. As artists who take it upon themselves to breathe new imaginings into place, we often consider ourselves to be helping those that need help through hope and transformation, yet I am aware of the feeling of being an outsider to the history of this place. I welcomed the presence of Ani O' Neill in welcoming us onto the land, acknowledging those whose land it was. Margaret Werry, performance reviewer of *Sea Change*,<sup>24</sup> acknowledges Ani O' Neill's role as local artist and facilitator of the event for participating artists. Ani continuously reminded us to ask Whose land are we on? and Whose house are we in? By acknowledging those that host us we honour aspects of Pacific culture of such as kaitiakitanga (guardianship), whakapapa (genealogy), manaakitanga (hospitality) and whanaungatanga

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<sup>24</sup> Margaret Werry, "Sea-Change: Performing a Fluid Continent," *Performance Research* 21, no. 2 (2016). Accessed March 23, 2018, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2016.1173926>.

(the relatedness of all things). These principles are philosophically complex, inherently untranslatable.<sup>25</sup> It was these concepts that shaped *Sea Change* in a way that prioritised these fundamental ways of doing as imperatives to forging relationships and artistic collaborations in discussion of environmental issues and towards nurturing that which might disappear.

... mingling her stories with local accounts of cyclones and tsunamis. Clad comically in sombreros and foil blankets, we walked past concrete pillars marked with the sea-level in ten years, in twenty, fifty, a hundred, two hundred ... too soon mounting above our heads.<sup>26</sup>

*In guiding the group I ask everyone to slow down and take notice, pausing in a circle formation we close our eyes for a minute as I tell everyone of the time I visited this island after my father had passed away. We listen to the roaring of waves on the distant reef and imagine what an approaching tsunami might sound like.*

This action of sensing and attuning is a somatic ritual towards this site, asking us to take time to recognise the relationship between body, land and water. The performance as a “walk to higher ground” acted as an investigation into time, duration and geographies of the walking route. The setup of the survival drill as a performance rehearsal provides a temporal place for a social gathering that exists between the present and the future. As we get together to drink Raro<sup>27</sup> I am reminded that it is the small actions of being-together

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 94-95.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 94. The performance walk also connected other performances at the site on that day of the conference: Richard Downing’s *It Worked Yesterday*, Amanda Yates’s *See Level* and Dorita Hannah and Henry Ahfoo Taripo’s *Island Bride*.

<sup>27</sup> As I have already mentioned, Raro is the name of an orange-flavoured drink we used to drink on our boat *Desperado*, it covered the rubber taste from the water tanks. In Rarotonga and New Zealand the powdered drink Raro is a remnant of the thriving Rarotongan orange industry of the 1960s, another archive of New Zealand’s colonial presence in the South Pacific representing the squeezing of resources from colonised nations for export profits. I share Raro from the water bladder that has been carried on this walk—it represents the need for carrying water when one evacuates, this is more profound due to the water quality issues that the island is having due to tourism. It also preempts the last sailing of



that tether this raft, evoking but a temporary community in difference one that can only occur in the creative vortex of the performance encounter (see *Figure 82*). *Rafting-with* each other becomes a ritual, a memorial for this forgotten site. For video footage of performance see Being-with video loop from 18:45 min (in Rafting Archive 2).

*Sea Change* became a space of the imaginary within customary ways of being in the local Rarotongan community, where *Desperado* as an island or waka was re-imagined in an oceanic context. *In Between Future Islands* provided an alternate setting for concepts of islands and oceanic thinking, embracing notions of communities and culture and their differing responses to oceanic disasters. This methodology forges its way through colonial and instrumental ideas of islands as minoring the marginalised, isolated and fragile through the notion of mapping connections, diverse ecological systems. The aim was to navigate and undo hegemonic relations and instrumental constructs through oceanic wayfaring, rafting, story-telling and somatic rituals.

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*Desperado* as I hoist the silver sail from the jacket and lead everyone to higher ground. In my discovery of the origins of Raro, I realise that my origins will always be tainted with the taste of our colonial history.

## Raro Island Groove

1. Take your orange flavour packet and mix in water—1 teaspoon per cup.
2. 1 packet per litre in a water bladder (not too sweet like my mum used to make it).
3. If on a boat, one hand for the Raro, one hand for the boat and one hand for your hat.
4. Fill a plastic 2-litre milk bottle and fill it with harbour waters.  
Add a packet of Raro to it to make it smell sweeter and look nicer.



*Figure 82. Sharing Raro, In Between Future Islands, 2015, Abandoned Sheraton Hotel site, Rarotonga, Cook Islands. Video Still.*

In enacting a dry run or a rehearsal for disaster, I asked the question; What is it to perform disasters? Via participatory performance I aim to contribute to the undoing of the disaster spectatorship through the experience of a 'performance disaster' by attuning to the senses and the body. Chance or accidental occurrences on the drill also challenge the viewer's position as simply a spectator. This process aims towards an undoing of neoliberal "dis-experience" (as described by Lepecki)<sup>28</sup> and creates close encounters of dystopian realities. The wearing of survival gear as costumes became a 'fun' activity and an awkward, uncomfortable experience at times. The costumes became an uncomfortable ally in dealing with the underlying potential of a tsunami wave; encouraging the strange and ridiculous, the participants willingly followed my lead to play with a rehearsal of a disaster, thus lightening the message beneath the work. Near the end of the drill participants had to skirt their way cautiously around a stray bull; this came just after the point in the performance where I mentioned my father and hoisted the sail (see *Figure 83*). This moment became a memorial for lost and neglected environments, bringing the specific to the universal.

Through stories of place, the contemporary reality of climate change and the escalation of cyclonic disaster transcend cultural and economic barriers. However, at the same time there are differences in response to such events across geographic, ecological and social spatialities.<sup>29</sup> *In Between Future Islands* encouraged a release from the mastering of survival through technologies, such as survival drills, equipment, and lists of procedures and strategies, and the reality of the unpredictable, turbulent, changing climate of the Anthropocene. It revealed that the act of a drill as a fun activity can treat serious concerns with a sense

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<sup>28</sup> André Lepecki, "Introduction: Dance in the Age of Neoliberal Performance," in *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>29</sup> In the proposal I proposed walking the new coastlines of the future, however in terms of the notion of how sea-level rise might displace people I decided that moving up the seashore to higher ground had a more specific action in relation to an incoming wave or rising sea levels. The Cook Islanders were hill dwellers before the arrival of the European missionaries in the 1800s, and were encouraged to move to the shoreline for ease of access to the people. They subsequently lost touch with hilltop marae where most of the island's politics and cultures were upheld. The shoreline thus represents the



of play; being-with each other in case of an emergency. Yet it also reiterated for me the importance of the artistic community, as well as whānau (family) and whenua (land), in bringing people together in a hospitable way that can evoke performance rituals and the sharing of knowledge towards environmental issues.

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colonial space of the privileged, however now that it is under threat it is those with connections to the hills (those who have friends there) who have a location to evacuate to should a tsunami occur.



*Figure 83. Sail and Bull, In Between Future Islands, 2015, Abandoned Sheraton Hotel site, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, Video Still.*

#### 5.4 Memorials for Lost Environments—*Temporary Communities*

I further considered concepts of mobile performances and somatic rituals towards the environment back on shore in Aotearoa New Zealand at Moving Communities Dance Conference in Dunedin (November 2015). The performance walk *Be for Barefoot*<sup>30</sup>—along St Clair Beach in Dunedin—further released my role as guide and choreographer through the concept of a memorial walk. Both a survival tour and a ritual for forgotten places, this performance was commemorative to the story of the late Caroline Plummer, the founder of the Caroline Plummer Fellowship (and a friend of mine).<sup>31</sup> The walk drew on the somatic embodied article “Boost” (2003) that Caroline had written in relation to somatics and dance as a mode for healing.<sup>32</sup> My survival story of *Desperado* and the environmental status of the beach (at risk of erosion) became a mode for rafting, resting and recovery as the walk re-begins in the afterlife of those who have walked along this beach before.<sup>33</sup> This performance aimed to activate a temporary community through a minimal ethic of being-with, and evoked the concept of “Memorials for Lost Environments.”<sup>34</sup> This walk

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<sup>30</sup> *Be for Barefoot—Survival Walk on Ocean Beach*, Christina Houghton, a walk along Ocean Beach between St Kilda and St Clair, Dunedin, New Zealand. See Appendix 1. Performance Map.

<sup>31</sup> Moving Communities Dance Conference, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. This conference was also a reunion for the Caroline Plummer Fellowship, celebrating 10 years. Many of the participants of the conference had also worked with and been friends (including myself) with Caroline Plummer, who had sadly died of cancer at a young age in 2003.

<sup>32</sup> “Boost” was Caroline Plummer’s paper written as part of the B-Project, a post-graduate somatic research paper led by Sylvie Fortin at Otago University in 2002, which I took part in. It resulted in an unpublished book, *B-Book*. Caroline’s paper “Boost” was later published as Ralph Buck, Sylvie Fortin and Caroline Plummer, “Boost: A Healing Narrative through Somatics and Dance,” (2003), accessed March 23, 2018, [http://www.carolineplummer.org.nz/writings\\_boost.htm](http://www.carolineplummer.org.nz/writings_boost.htm).

<sup>33</sup> André Lepecki, “The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances,” *Dance Research Journal*, no. 2 (2010): 115.

<sup>34</sup> Christina Houghton, “Memorials for Lost Environments: Participatory Performance and Minimal Ethics,” *Dance Research Aotearoa* Vol 4 (2016), accessed March 23, 2018, <http://dx.doi.org/10.15663%2Fdra.v4i1.50>, a paper written in response to the Moving Communities Conference.

represented a further release from that of a survival drill or me as a guide, with the only instruction being to carry a pile of sand up the length of the beach (see *Figure 84*). However, I handed out survival blankets and raincoats, to be worn as a gesture towards the efforts we take to survive on a daily basis.

Performance that becomes ritualistic or ceremonial in response to the violent conditions of the Anthropocene exists in the sites away from the spectacle of theatre. However, the memorial or the monument has a certain amount of spectacle associated with it. In this context the experiential aesthetics of a memorial might in fact be related to the spectacle of failure, where a celebration of life through loss exists as the dualism of hope and despair, and the tragedy of human existence.

*Halfway along the beach I lie down, in the hope that the group will join me. There is something about the group action of lying down side by side that I find interesting, experiential and choreographic. A community rest in times of struggle? Might this be the response I am advocating for when times get tough? Recuperating our energies in the face of uncertainty. Most of the group joins me and we spend a moment looking up at the blue sky, listening to the sea and the rustling of silver survival blankets.*

As I observed previously, the act of lying down can be seen as an act of falling or failing (giving up). However, the action of rafting and resting on the beach evokes my choreographic code COPE as a release from codes of survival (with definite outcomes). Resting is slow and restorative, it undoes any expectation that something *else* should be happening. It is these small rituals of failure that are the minor gestures that contribute to the minimal ethics that my performance work engages with. Through engaging with failure as a creative practice that embraces the unstable or unknown, performance actions might actually activate the impossible. This may be a way of engaging with people on a level that activates agency or agencement, bringing attention to the ludicrous way we treat the planet we live on and the futility of our everyday actions. Thus resting as an act of recovery can be seen as a social, political action.



*Rafting-with* others along the beach tethers the group together as a collective Raft through storytelling and actions. As we walk together we consider what it is to survive beyond one's self to live on this planet. The temporal nature of live performance and its tendency for disappearance suggests living on<sup>35</sup> and beyond oneself might be discovered in everyday rituals of remembering. Memorials that lie in the remains of performance respond to the failure of everyday survival and the tragedy of personal loss, yet enable the hope of living on beyond oneself. Performance as ritual could in fact be considered even more relevant in today's times as we plan our monuments in the face of human extinction. Furthermore, creating performance as "memorials for lost environments" aims to give *agencement* to face the reality, that we are about to lose what we hold most dearly to our survival—"the world with which we live."<sup>36</sup>

Sharing of stories and actions become survival tactics for being-with others and the environment, allowing us to rethink human subjectivity from an oceanic perspective. In relation to survival and preparation in today's society, I ask what are we preparing for? The inevitable disaster of the end of life as we know it? As Richard Schechner says, "the act of making performance itself is in response to the temporality of nature, the act of a performance is the anticipation of its end."<sup>37</sup> Perhaps it is in this anticipation of our own death or extinction that performance rituals become memorials, providing a common thread throughout this performance research that allows for us to see what survival means in terms of performance as mourning.

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<sup>35</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Living on Borderlines," in *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979). The term 'living on' draws from Jacques Derrida's discourse on *Survivre* "living on" and the ambiguity between "living on" and "on living" that might suggest "life after life" or "life after death". I am also referring to "Who is talking about living?" in that I am talking about "living on" from the perspective of "the one who survived"—a survivor.

<sup>36</sup> Houghton, "Memorials for Lost Environments: Participatory Performance and Minimal Ethics," 89.

<sup>37</sup> Richard Schechner interviewed by Anne Heller in, "Austin Film Society & Rude Mechanicals Present Performance Director Discussing Dionysus in 69 after Screening at Alamo Ritz. Dec 6 (Part One)," (video) Directed by Anne Heller, 2009, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NghHToM1yr8>

In developing the choreographic structures of the survival walk that exists as a map with a series of instructions that can be followed (or not), I attempted to create a temporal in-attention or non-performance as a way to shift attention from the performing body to *other* within the location of the performance. For example, in mentioning at the beginning that this was a memorial walk for both Caroline and the sand dunes many of the participants, including Caroline's parents, took the opportunity to tell stories about her while on the walk. While others enacted actions such as attempting to restore the dunes with sand. Thus, the walk transformed the concept of a memorial into a collective act of repair.

*Be for Barefoot* is also a ritual for remembering and a reenactment of those who had walked before, echoing Rebecca Schneider's commentary in *Performing Remains*,<sup>38</sup> "the monumental and the passing live co-constitute each other in a relationship that can be as much about forgetting (bypassing) as commemorating (monumentalizing)."<sup>39</sup> The individual agency and experience of each of the participants contributes to the survival of the performance as they translate their experience into other language and other bodies as archive.<sup>40</sup> The particular survival, the afterlife of a performance event is "not a liveness that is considered in advance of death, nor in some after death [...] rather it is more a constant (re) turn of, to, from and between states in animation—an inter-(in)animation."<sup>41</sup> The *agencement* of survival tours as participatory might therefore be in the afterlife of the performance through the translation of the work beyond the work's original limits, as bodies reflect back, changing the original forever.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, forgetting and commemorating, sensing and moving through place, could in fact mobilise thought on

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<sup>38</sup> Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2011).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>40</sup> Lepecki, "The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances."

<sup>41</sup> Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*, 7. Cited in Lepecki, "The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances." 116.

<sup>42</sup> Described in Lepecki, "The Body as Archive."

being-with-care as ‘collective thinking’ through action; thus contributing to a minimal ethical gesture for environmental wellbeing.

*At the end of each performance I engage in the re-enactment of ‘The Last Sailing of Desperado’, an action I have repeated in previous survival walks as a memorial to my father. I hoist the silver sail from the lining of my survival jacket, along to the recording of the song my father used to play on Desperado (the instrumental version of the song Sailing).<sup>43</sup> This is usually a theatrical moment where the wind grabs the sail and creates a dramatic spectacle of silver and sail crinkling loudly and flapping. In Rarotonga a cheer went up that upset a local bull, making it a precarious return passage, and today here on the beach in Dunedin the sail is somewhat deflated due to the lack of breeze. The hot still air heats up my body inside the yellow PVC jacket and the speaker doesn’t work. I gather everyone under the sail as a kind of protection and start singing the song instead. Everyone joins in but I feel somehow that I should have mentioned the story behind the song to give a deeper context. I do, however, remember that Caroline’s family have a sailing boat so I see the connection for her family is there in this song. The unexpected failure of the hoisted sail reminds me of the methodology of failure that embraces uncertainty, unknown outcomes and the sense of deflation when performance doesn’t live up to expectations (see Figures 85 & 86).*

My Choreography of Participatory Practice (COPE) aims to reduce the separation between audience and performer. Part of this is making the experience less about me as the performer and more about the entire experience of the performance encounter. Drawing on participatory performance from dance and theatre, the blurring between performer and audience moves towards a non-hierarchical experience. Attempts to shift the authorship of the performance towards a democratic and social experience meant

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<sup>43</sup> The last sailing of *Desperado*—when playing this song I usually tell the story of the day we scattered my father’s ashes and reveal that the song was played at my father’s funeral. It gives the song a loaded performativity that I find participants connect with. However, in *Be for Barefoot* I resolve to keep this information to myself and allow the song and the sail to speak its own physical narrative.

participants shifted between performer, guide, storyteller and witness in unpredictable ways. Furthermore, the choreography was revealed through the movement of bodies through place and the transformative ritual that occurred as a result. In the absence of dance a 'slow ontology'<sup>44</sup> unfolded, and uncertain and unknown worlds occurred. In making a spectacle of the participants they appeared to engage in a ritual procession in hope for the environment and their own survival. Survival tours evoked a coexistence of hope and despair, spectacle and failure, as we walked along shifting sands of disappearing dunes exposed to the impending storms that never arrived. These factors allowed for this performance to tread the shoreline between performance and ritual, where the everyday becomes performance and performance becomes a meaningful action. Furthermore, in the attempt to ground ourselves through rafting and resting our perspectives may shift from an anthropocentric view of the performing body towards noticing the movement in the non-human world, such as the gentle breeze, the rolling waves of the ocean and the shifting sands beneath our feet that may yet carry us out to sea. Thus our performative actions would leave but a 'temporary memorial' of imprinted footsteps, only to be washed away by the rising tides to come.

These performance encounters in Rarotonga and Dunedin formed temporary communities, bringing people together as participants engaging in conversation and story-telling; performing place as a being-with and moving through or towards. Parallels between performance and risk management emerged and safety protocols became performance structures to be undone. Risk is encouraged in the performance experience as we encounter that which is unexpected (such as the bull in Rarotonga) and survival is the performance outcome (the aftermath). Embracing risk has political connotations in performance that promote mobility through improvisation, uncertainty and the unknown.<sup>45</sup> As part of my Choreographies of Participatory Ecologies these performances of survival aimed to activate moving bodies through place, as playful choreographic interventions comprised of small rituals for the environment. Stories evoke

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<sup>44</sup> André Lepecki, "Introduction: The Political Ontology of Movement," in *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (New York; London, UK: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>45</sup> Sara Jane Bailes, "News from Nowhere, Goat Island Performance Group," in *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service* (New York: Routledge, 2011).





somatic rituals of failure as a means for re-territorialising both the spectacle of disaster and the anxieties associated with it, as well as solidifying the performance practice of *rafting-with* that ethically hands over the performance to the participants through actions of attunement, listening, stillness and slowness. The politics of which give bodies *agencement* to sense, feel and mourn through everyday acts of survival. See video footage as part of the montage in Rafting projection video from 25:32 min (in Rafting Archive 2).





*Figures 85. Under the Sail, Be for Barefoot, 2015, Ocean Beach, Dunedin, New Zealand.  
Photo: Sean Curham.*





*Figures 86. Under the Sail, Be for Barefoot, 2015, Ocean Beach, Dunedin, New Zealand.  
Photo: Sean Curham.*



## Chapter 6 – Rafting-with Lilos and Archives

### 6.1 Sites of Water

*My relationship with water began early. There was the yellow plastic paddling pool that came out on summer weekends when I was about 4 years old that matched my yellow bikini. Then there was learning to swim at the local school pool in my yellow plastic arm 'floaties'. As well as the time I was landed on in the pool by a miss-timed bomb that pushed my goggles to the side, which I considered a 'near-death experience'. Then of course there was swimming off the side of Desperado and thinking of the sharks that might bite my toes. There is also the story about my grandfather who lost his brother to drowning off the coast at Abbotsford in Devon, England and the time my Dad almost drowned upside down in a bucket when he was a child. I have always considered myself a strong swimmer, due purely to time spent in the water and also my experience as part of the New Zealand Novice Synchro-Swimming team for Nelson and Whangarei in the late 80s.*

## Water Safety Code<sup>1</sup>

1. Be prepared—Learn to swim, always use the correct equipment
2. Watch out for yourself and others—Swim with others
3. Be aware of the dangers—Beware of shallow waters, obey safety signs and warning flags
4. Know your limits—Challenge your physical limits, learn safe ways of rescuing others

Water Safety is considered a high priority in New Zealand. We live so close to many beaches and rivers and spend a lot of time near the water in the summer. Learning to swim is a big deal in New Zealand. Most kids are taught to swim when they are small. New Zealand has a high level of drowning, which is increasing more recently as more immigrants move into the island nation without the skills of swimming. I remember water-safety days at school, where we would learn how to rescue someone in the water and perform CPR. The ability to be able to rescue someone from drowning is considered part of life in New Zealand.

### 6.2 Float and Breathe

To submerge I must hold my breath—in the space of not breathing I somehow feel connected to those creatures living under the sea, or is it only when I inhale water into my lungs that I truly become one with the sea? To submerge I submit to the dangers of the sea, but only for a moment. Yet it might be in floating, existing in the place between in breath and out breath, air and water, that balance can be found. Floating also takes a particular skill. In performance the release of the body to the conditions of the sea—waves, tides, viscosity—embraces a ‘wet ontology’ introduced in the previous chapter. A performance-orientated

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<sup>1</sup> “Know Before you Go: The Boating Safety Code,” <https://www.adventuresmart.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Boating-Safety-Code.pdf>.

wet ontology expresses a fluidity that is multi-dimensional and turbulent, and encounters the materiality of water and waves “enlivening our understanding of space and time and motion.”<sup>2</sup> Performing the horizontal plain of floating on a lilo brings down the vertical nature of cities in relation to geographical studies of place, territories and time. This ontology draws on qualities of the ocean and water moving towards a liquidity, fluidity and flow in the reconceptualisation of territory as volume, time in relation to the volume of the earth and the Anthropocene that is expressed through assembled matter, nonlinear and fluctuating, mutable and leaky. In this part of the research a lilo was found to host each of the three ‘R’ actions of rafting, resting and recovery.

*I remember swimming off the boat and spending hours out in the sun. The many hours of play where I tested my breath and body through various tricks using inflatable toys and games, was where I developed all the survival skills I needed to be a strong swimmer. I used to play on a lilo, floating on it for hours creating my own imaginary world or island away from the family. As the youngest child I guess the lilo was my friend.*

The discovery of the lilo represented an anchor for the research, an object that had a strong connection to my memories on *Desperado*. It is a floating buoy that allows for a bodily sensation of release. The lilo became an extension of my body in the water and required a certain amount of play to accept the difficulty of operating it with ease. A material companion in developing my concept of *Rafting-with*, it also marks the fine-tuning of the conceptual terrain of the mastery release continuum informing my practice and the final investigations that led to the structure of the final performance piece RAFTING.

*The lilo is narrow, plastic and slippery, buoyant with a floppy pillow at the head. You need to straddle the lilo with your legs while lying on your tummy to prevent sliding off it. It is yellow and stands out on the landscape, object performativity, intersecting landscape. The materiality of the lilo adds to its performativity. Its material is cheap, PVC, plastic and inflatable.*

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<sup>2</sup> Philip Steinberg and Kimberley Peters, “Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces: Giving Depth to Volume through Oceanic Thinking,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 33, no. 2 (2015): 249.

### 6.3 Lilo Safely Drill

*Lilo Safely brings our attention back to the breath, reminding us to slow down and breathe.*

*The lilo represents our last breath—breathing life into other, creating something more than ourselves, a floating bed to give our bodily weight to.*

*But this is not a life-saving device.*

Lilo research, within the social ecologies forged in my COPE methodology, was carried out through a series of playful investigations in water and on land (including inflation, floatation and deflation) as a series of *Lilo Safely* drills, including *Lilo float workshop*, *Choreographing Lilos and Life Rafts*, *Whau Lo Ting*, and the *Lilo Safely: Instructional video* (and rafting lilo tours).<sup>3</sup> My own experience with the lilo led to this series of participatory performances that evoked the multiple concepts of demonstration, play, mastery, failure and connectivity and survival in times of sea-level rise. The lilo is a symbol of unlikely survival. Yet the lilo, under our recent health and safety protocols, is considered a death trap; an object that is cause of definite drowning, blowing out to sea and extremely unsafe in any water environment. It is also the most un-ecological object that exists, produced from plastic PVC at a low-grade level, not made to last longer than one outing. Yet market forces mean that the disposable lilo is still produced alongside a myriad of other plastic inflatable and non-inflatable products deemed necessary for beach outings. In the summer season they are in high demand. *Lilo Safely Drill* also marked a further release from the narrative of *Desperado*, opening the experience up to the present experience of sensations, body and breath. It was this experience of bodily survival that I considered the most important survival skill for responding to the anxieties of everyday existence.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1. Performance Map. *Lilo float workshop*, a collective lilo-floating experience, Motutapu Island; *Choreographing Lilos and Life Rafts*, a lecture demonstration, Auckland University; *Whau (Lo) Ting*, a rafting lilo tour, Avondale; *Lilo Safely: Instructional video* and rafting lilo tours, Lisbon Portugal & Central Auckland.





*Figure 87. Lilo Float workshop, 2016, Motutapu Island, Hauraki Gulf, Auckland. Video Still.*

LILLO FLOAT—Breathing and floating exercise with a friend (or group of 10).

Warning: This lilo is not a safety device it will not save your life in case of emergency. It is also extremely dangerous when used by children without supervision.

1. Take your yellow lilo.
2. Blow it up with a friend, create a lilo of shared breath.
3. Hold the lilo for a hug or between you and a friend.
4. Balance the lilo above you and your friend to create shade, or you can hold it under your arms.
5. Run or walk down to the water.
6. Float your lilo—one person mounts the lilo and lies on their back, fully relaxed into the float.
7. The other acts as guide, standing at the bottom—give your friend a gentle float around.
8. If you have a number of pairs of friends, make a floating raft and a star to a favourite song (see suggested photo *Figure 87*).
9. Catch a wave, ride lilo in—lying longways or sideways with a friend.
10. Alternatively, float out to sea

### Demonstration

The next 10 minutes could save your life! This is an emergency drill. Please give your guide your full attention as they demonstrate to you our emergency evacuation procedure. Long-term hazards have been identified for onboard this vessel. Sea-level rise and risk of Tsunami is possible. Accidents of all kinds may also occur, including accidents with chairs, technology misfire, miscommunications and professional shipwrecks. In the case of an emergency remember to breathe.

1. In the case of an emergency you will find an inflatable safety device under your seat.
2. If your device is absent then you will have to befriend someone who has one.
3. Remove the safety device from the packet and hold the end of it above your head so the device unravels. Like so... Unfold the device and hold like so...
4. Warning! This product does not avoid drowning. Reserved to swimmers. The using like boat is at own risk of users. Be careful of winds and running waters.
5. However, the safety device can also be used as a relaxing leisure device during times of climate change denial.
6. There are two valves, use your blowing tube to release the valve and then blow and blow again. Like so...
7. You must blow the head up separately from the body of the device, you may wish to do this with a friend.
8. The device may be useful draped around the shoulders for additional warmth. You can also inflate your device from this position with your friend.
9. In the case of rising sea levels or a Tsunami wave. You will hear the Tsunami siren and you will need to evacuate and move to higher ground (raise arms).
10. Please evacuate the building through the indicated exits, and follow your guide and her friend. You can inflate the device as you evacuate with your friend.
11. Your guide will lead you to an assembly area where you must follow their actions.
12. Once your device is fully inflated you can mount the lilo and paddle to safety. If you have a friend, they can guide you to safety.

It is useful to repeat these actions many times to ensure you are familiar with the evacuation procedure. If you have been watching until now it is time for you to participate in the emergency evacuation drill practice. Follow your guide.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Script from a participatory performance lecture at the “Undisciplining Dance Symposium,” 2016 (Recorded announcement). See Christina Houghton, “Don’t Hold Your Breath: Choreographing Life Rafts and Lilos,” in *Undisciplining Dance in Nine Movements and Eight Stumbles*, ed. Carol Brown and Alys Longley (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2018).

## 6.4 Rafting Tours

The lilo drills were iteratively performed in a number of locations and contexts where the salvaging of performance remains (actions and narratives) from the flotsam and jetsam of each performance was transferred into the next.<sup>4</sup> For the rafting tours the group enacted lilo actions of protection, visibility, connectivity and resting (see *Figures 88 & 89*). I was interested in facilitating a participatory experience that was site specific that tested social and spatial choreography through somatic actions of rafting. *Rafting-with* yellow lilos in the city streets brought participants into close proximity to each other, and the lilos became an important non-human participant in the work, often becoming a useful companion, a friend or a lover. In *Whau (Lo) Ting* we formed a different configuration of a raft at each pedestrian crossing while enacting actions in response to nautical landmarks such as the Sea Wave hair salon and the Fish Shop:

We form sail-boats, tethered Māori waka, and life-rafts, referring to the layers of nautical histories of this location and forming protection against falling buildings and crashing waves. Past the Avondale Fish Shop, we float by the \$2 shops with tacky Pasifika items and The Yacht Chinese Restaurant. Someone yells from their car, “are you the float club!?” Perhaps these run-down shops reveal a layering of lost culture along this imaginary coastline that represents a failure to survive or thrive.<sup>5</sup>

The night walk gestures to the overlooked or the forgotten as “the gestural force that opens experience to its potential variation.”<sup>6</sup> The lilo partnerships where breath is shared to inflate a survival partner are minor

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<sup>4</sup> *Whau (Lo) Ting*, Christina Houghton, rafting lilo tour through the Avondale shops, Whau Arts Festival, Avondale Auckland, October 2016, and *Lilo Safety Drill*, Christina Houghton, rafting lilo tour through the stairwell and basement of 1 Cross Street, Somewhere Series #10 // Live Art Funfair / Sideshow Alley, Auckland. See Appendix 1. Performance Map.

<sup>5</sup> Christina Houghton, “Whau (Lo) Ting—a Night Walk in Avondale (Auckland, New Zealand),” in *Carmo, Chiado E a Republica Litteraria, Arts in the Public Sphere* (Lisboa, PT: Artes na Esfera Pública, 2017), 273.

<sup>6</sup> Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).



gestures that activate collectivity while at the same time embracing a wildness or unrigour that is open to flux. *Rafting-with* in public spaces became an act of recovery for those on edges of urban spaces, suggesting new narratives for thinking and survival in the present and the future<sup>7</sup> (see *Figure 90*). See Whau Lo Ting video (in Rafting Archive 1).

It is this act of *Rafting-with*, both human and non-human that holds true to the ethics of this performance practice as creative, imaginative that evokes the choreo-somatic that Lepecki suggests challenges hegemonic codes of the body. Future performance iterations are captured as a choreographic object, through everyday survival that forms in the aftermath of the event. Each raft holds the archives of previous performances and the actions specific to each site with new actions appearing at each encounter. For example, in *Somewhere Series* individuals experimented with the multiple levelled ‘sandwich’ which allowed for intimacy, with the breath and air of the lilo creating ‘safe distance’ between bodies—an action that until that moment had not been invented. Participants thus became co-creators of actions that contributed to those that ended up in the *Lilo Safely* instructional video (see *Figure 91*). *Rafting-with* lilos expanded into watery and sub-tidal terrains through present sensation and the local experience of survival in further iterations of *Lilo Safely*<sup>8</sup> as a choreographic lilo float, ‘a sun-worshipping experience’ and a riverbank performance. Documentation of the actions of floating and rafting were edited into the video installation *Lilos*<sup>9</sup> that captured these experiences as archives for RAFTING, the final performance for examination. See Lilos video loop (in Rafting Archive 2).

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<sup>7</sup> Houghton, “Whau (Lo) Ting—A Night Walk in Avondale (Auckland, New Zealand),” 274.

<sup>8</sup> *Lilo Safely*, Christina Houghton, choreographic lilo float, HEAT Solar Revolutions, French Bay, Titirangi, Auckland, February 2017, and *Lilo Actions*, Whau River bank, Flotilla Whau 2017, HEAT Solar Revolutions, Whau River, Auckland, March 5, 2017. See Appendix 1. Performance Map.

<sup>9</sup> *Lilos* (digital video media) in RAFTING. See Appendix 1. Performance Map and Appendix 3. Rafting Archive 2.





*Figure 88.* Lilo stack, Flotilla Whau 2017, Whau River, Avondale, Auckland. Photo: Rob Linkhorn.





*Figure 89.* Riverbank lilos, Flotilla Whau 2017, Whau River, Avondale, Auckland. Photo: Rob Linkhorn.





Figure 90. Night Rafting, *Whau (Lo) Ting*, 2017, Whau Arts Fest, Avondale, Auckland. Photo: Melissa Laing.





*Figure 91. Lilo Safely Drill, 2016, basement of 1 Cross Street, Somewhere Series #10 // Live Art Funfair / Sideshow Alley, Auckland. Photo: Sean Curham.*





*Figure 92.* Rafting and resting with lilos, 2016-2017, Auckland. Photos: French Bay, Rob Linkhorn; Whau Fest, Jody Yawa McMillian; Somewhere Series, Sean Curham.



## 6.5 Lilo Safely (Instructional Video)

In context of the *Lilo Safely* drill I created *Lilo Safely*, an instructional video.<sup>10</sup> *Lilo Safely: Instructional video* framed in darkness, moved the practice into liquid terrains of night-scapes, leaving the illuminated nature of previous iterations behind (see *Figure 93*). The instructional video captured the performance of survival as instruction for action that activates multiple mediated bodies as virtual, past and present. *Lilo Safely* was located in the ephemeral dark space of my backyard in West Auckland. The video, accompanied by the sounds of mosquitos buzzing and the lonely call of the *ruru/morepork*, a native owl, was first played on an interior wall of the Carmo Museum in Chiado, Lisbon, Portugal.<sup>11</sup> The frame of the film draws this work into a space with no boundaries, where I perform as a guide. I appear in blackness hovering within the square of the video frame. The video instruction brings into presence a live performance (as part of the exhibition's opening-night event; see *Figure 94*.) encouraging the locals to re-enact the *Lilo Safely* drill in the courtyard of the Carmo Convent ruins. In the location of the ruins of the Carmo Convent (a memorial to those who lost their lives in the 1755 earthquake) the ephemeral archive of lilo actions lived on through the re-enactment of the *Lilo Safely* drill, yet actions were readapted to reflect the site itself; therefore the action of *Rafting-with* became a live performance memorial in response to those who lay resting in the tombs of the museum. See *Lilo Safely* instructional video (in *Rafting Archive 2*).

*We stack the lilos into a tomb-like structure and walk slowly along the open forecourt of the ruined convent. The performance mirrors the many horizontal tombs in this place, and the ghosts of those lost float along with the inflated luminescent PVC.*

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<sup>10</sup> *Lilo Safely: Instructional video*, (2016), Christina Houghton, camera Rob Linkhorn, West Auckland, (12 mins).

<sup>11</sup> Exhibited as part of *Carmo, Chiado e a Respublica Litteraria, Artes na Esfera Pública Lisboa/Paris/Auckland/Granada/Lódź Carmo Chiado and the Letters of the Republic, Arts in the Public Sphere*, (Exhibition), 2017.

*Rafting-with* enacts rafting, resting and recovery, transforming the instruction for safety into a performance archive from what remains (as ruins) long after the action/performance is over. Considering the ephemeral nature of live performance and its tendency for disappearance (described by Peggy Phelan as existing always at the vanishing point) and performance as the antithesis of preservation or saving,<sup>12</sup> instructions for performance can exist as survival or recovery of performance that can be repeated over and over again. Lepecki suggests that the ‘will to archive’ reveals re-enactments of choreography that do not aim to imitate but that activate “creative (yet virtual) potential already lodged into the artwork itself” and that they are an “unmetaphorical actualization of an artwork’s afterlife.” He goes on to say that “re-enactments as ‘a will to archive’ invest in creative returns precisely in order to find, foreground, and produce (or invent, or ‘make’ as Foucault proposed) difference.”<sup>13</sup> I draw on Lepecki’s insight into choreographic re-enactments in the context of the *Lilo Safely* drill in that the choreography happens in the live encounter as re-enactment without rehearsal. As a result, the choreography becomes a wilding of everyday pedestrian actions and moving bodies through place, following the nature of weather and wayfaring, through dark spaces. It is in the nature of the instructions as modes for re-enactment that are specifically designed as deauthorising as “a singular mode of politicising, time and economies of authorship via the choreographic activation of (the dancers’) bodies as an endlessly creative, transformational archive.”<sup>14</sup> The final affects of this work lie beyond *Lilo Safely: Instructional video* as the remains (ruins) of the live performance actions. The archive remains, holding creative virtual potential for further performance disasters yet to happen in a co-composition with those that choose to participate. *Lilo Safely: Instructional video* thus becomes integral to the final performance iteration that gathers together archives in the Black Box space for the examination

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<sup>12</sup> Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2011). Quoting Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London UK; New York: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>13</sup> André Lepecki, “The Body as Archive,” in *Singularities : Dance in the Age of Performance* (London UK ; New York: Routledge, 2016), 139-140.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.



performance. Furthermore, the personal floatation suit (PFS) that appears in the video and the Black Box, also remains as an archive for later performance iterations.<sup>15</sup>

## 6.6 Rafting into Darkness—*Assembling Digital Archives*

Digital technologies became a mode of producing multiple modes of performance and instruction as well as mapping multiple scales of survival and disaster footage as archive. These digital archives included the accumulation of stories/experiences of survival (from my performance research) and documentation from previous survival tours. The ability for performance to live beyond the *live* encounter through video images enabled small intimate experiences of each performance to be shared again in subsequent performances as a haunting but also as an act of recovery—in the context of the ephemerality of live performance (always acting in the face of its own disappearance) and survival with the human race facing the real possibility of its own extinction. Recovering experiences of survival (through instructions and documentation) might enable the possibility to realise that survival (although often a solitary experience) also can remain in a collective memory. I gathered together footage and documentation of my research within the critical framework of investigating how we see disaster and survival through mediated realities. These contributed towards the final archive as the practice rafted-towards the final installation of RAFTING in the Black Box at AUT University. See Rafting Archives 1 & 2 for list of video works in Appendices 2-3.

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<sup>15</sup> Such as the performance at the Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, for the opening of the exhibition, Carmo, Chiado and the letters of the Republic. See Performance Map Appendix 1. See PFS one to one experience (in Rafting Archive 1).



*Figure 93. Lilo Safely: Instructional video, 2016, camera: Rob Linkhorn, West Auckland, New Zealand.*

*Figure 94. Rafting the Carmo Museum, performance at the opening of Chiado e a Respublica Litteraria, March 2017, Lisbon, Portugal. Photo: Becca Wood.*







In the context of this research, the performance was documented with phones, iPads and GoPros, in much the same way that we document our daily lives with equipment that can capture our adventures as easily as being worn around the neck. I fastidiously record each performance in an everyday way, capturing the live action, as acts of survival and disaster as each performance occurs. This documentation is made in a hand-held manner and aims to reflect how we are with technology and its everyday use (such as taking a group photo at the end of the performance and posting it online).<sup>16</sup> In using the documentation in this way the outcome aims to be as documentation of real life rather than a stylised production of an event, which has the potential to become part of the representation of the dominant Anthropocenic narratives or a spectacle of performance. Furthermore, the notion of documenting the last days or last hours, before a 'disaster' becomes a strong aesthetic in the images captured. In this work I specifically used old photographs (from my dad's slide collection) for delving into the autobiographical stories of my survival history on *Desperado*. The iPad became a tool for showing maps, photos and video in numerous ways. I also experimented with hiring videographers. These allowed for the capture of the aesthetic of the participants moving through the performance in context of the environment, revealing the choreographic aspect of the work. I found that capturing only small cuts of the actual event gave clues to what had actually happened, rather than using full documentation for my final installation. The still photos both record and highlight the immediate loss of the live moment of a performed disaster, like photographs in the aftermath of a real disaster. However, I became more interested in capturing the actual experience of being close to conversations with participants, and the sensory experience of each encounter was a useful quality of video. I found that the shaky, noisy GoPro footage gave a sense of the crazy situation of an emergency, yet at the same time was it really just bad photography? I decided that this video footage was useful in re-presenting the liveness of each experience.

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<sup>16</sup> This recognises the historical context of amateur photography with the development of early snapshot cameras promoted as taking the camera out of the hands of the professional and into the hands of the amateur, easy to use with processing available onsite and an instruction manual that gave insights into what makes a good photo. This type of photography in everyday life has also been appropriated by the neoliberal powers; for example, the 'Kodak smile' that was promoted in the late 1800s and early 1900s that means smiles are in every photo now taken.



The dark space of the Black Box created a backdrop for further filming of choreographic actions that had eluded the camera until then. I put on my black dress (which I bought for my father's funeral) and made a video recording of the instructional actions of *Sun, Sand and Sea* and the *Lilo Dance* in the Black Box itself. As I imagine this space as an upturned hull I try to imagine what is the voice that emerges from within. As a final release of the controlling nature and mastery of the instructional video I offer a soundless gesture of hands and a slow dance with the lilo. *Lighthouse—Sun, Sea and Sand*, became the final video that somehow captured how the space of the Black Box made me feel, as a upturned hull, a crypt and the archival site of the aftermath. The gentle moving image of my body laps across the silver sails, revealing an ephemeral image that creates a doubling of moving image upon moving material, evocative of my feelings of mourning. See final lilo dance in Rafting projection video from 28:30 min (in Rafting Archive 2).

In curating these videos for the Black Box installation I aimed to investigate how multiple small experiences of survival or survival drills contribute to a larger experience of *Rafting-with*. Digital media in performance, when used in an intimate way, has an ability to entwine “contemporary experiences of the screen and the real as well as the tales we tell each other [...] providing a provocative potentiality of the world as a mediated virtual experience.”<sup>17</sup> The experience of the Black Box aimed to evoke a release of the instrumental capture of documentation, as tracings that gave clues to actual events as both real, and virtual bodies rafted with each other in the dark.

Thus these archival materials (along with those that have become part of my Survival Kit) were installed in a way that would reveal, in their relationship to instruction and action, an atmospheric lingering as *Afterlives of survival* in the final performance iteration.

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<sup>17</sup> As described by Helen Paris, “Below the Surface—Part Iv Blurring the Boundaries,” in *Identity, Performance and Technology: Practices of Empowerment, Embodiment and Technicity*, Palgrave Studies in Performance and Technology, eds Susan Broadhurst and Josephine Machon (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Lilo Dance (for one or two)

1. Take your lilo into your arms, hold the lilo like a long-lost lover.
2. Slow dance with your lilo, you may do this with a friend.
3. Feel the PVC on your skin, feel the world slow down all around you.
4. Hold the lilo above your head... you are sinking under the surface.
5. Walk slowly in a large circle.
6. Slide the lilo down along your body and lay it down like an injured friend.
7. Lie face down and relax into the suspension of a breath shared.
8. Roll over and over with the lilo.
9. Finish on your back on the lilo and imagine you are floating out to sea.
10. Practise your gentle paddling technique.
11. You have completed your lilo dance.
12. Reach over your body and undo the valves, feel your lilo in a long exhale.
13. When your lilo is completely deflated you may fold it up again and place it back into its package, ready for the next survival drill.

*(Light House Dance—Sun, Sand, Sea in Lilos, video, 10mins).*

## 6.7 Installing an Archive

The Black Box is highly coded within its bodily spatial syntax or programming, specifically in relation to performance and theatrical disciplines. The final performance event (which included a week of tours) participated with the site's spatial syntax poetically for deconstructing the authority of the site. It did this both allegorically and objectively—as in the 'object-ness' of choreographic objects.<sup>18</sup> The spatial programming of the Black Box performance site is re-inscribed as a darkened installation space that includes the archives of prior iterative survival tours undertaken throughout the journey of the PhD, as well as the series of iterative and lingering tours within the final week (November 19-27, 2017). This site performed as an un-metaphorical object of encounter as participants entered 'it' via the external and internal prosaic or everyday infrastructural edges and 'backstage' service programmes of the site. For example, the tour included the wider external edges, as it commenced at the outdoor Hikuwai Plaza (see *Figure 95*) which activated a threshold to an internal foyer, then it moved more discretely internally for inhabiting the 'Green Room-kitchen-space', 'dressing room' and corridors before entering into the Black Box (see *Figure 100*). Each of these spaces are Rafted in order to fragment programmes and their inscribed orthodox narratives, and instead offer a prudent tenor of invitation for the participation of minor gestures

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<sup>18</sup> The allegorical association here is with respect to the survival status of an airplane's Black Box as the final recording device for carrying a potential message (by the pilot) for what went *wrong*—the foretelling of the event just prior to the culminating disaster and its aftermath. The Black Box is a carrier of a rational message for how flight-disasters happen (it is here deployed as a metonymic figure for all technological apparatuses that offer *forensic*, rational disaster findings for narrating happenings). The rationality of this technological archiving device reveals the failure of survival, in the sense that it cannot offer a host of experiences lived through any given disaster, it can only hint at rationalising how a disaster occurred. But we ask, Who exactly does the Black Box serve? Insurance companies? Survivors? Engineers? Airlines? How does the Black Box predetermine the behaviour of pilots, crew and passengers? How does it mediate their lives? These are questions that are explored tangentially through this PhD in relation to the instrumental nature of technology and the poetic release of technologies as we encounter them over different times and spaces. This connects directly to the "unmetaphorical objectivity" of the choreographic object discussed via André Lepecki, with the assistance of Michel Foucault, and taken up as a key insight into this PhD.

and minimal ethics.<sup>19</sup> The spatial fragments of the work, that operate and move through the actual (at the meeting point and the walk to the studio space), the imaginative (in the space preparation of survival in the Green Room) and the virtual space of the Black Box.

The site of performance pragmatically gathered up my installation and performance documentation over the course of four years of research. The unofficial archive was speculatively distributed across scores of choreographic objects from slide telescopes and boat charts; video documentation of collective actions (on media players); sound recordings and objects from previous tours such as fishing sticks and notes to the sea; costumes, jackets with silver linings, hats and sunglasses and safety gear; Raro in a Tupperware container with cups (some installed in the Green Room along with *Lilo Safely: Instructional video*). Each installed with sounds of sea and boats and DIY lights (such as torches, see *Figure 96*. RAFTING Black Box Map).

These objects risked failure by relying on lighting and technology, combined with an element of uncertainty about whether details would be encountered at all in the darkness by participants. The experience of bringing the outside environment to the inside space was created by fans blowing the sails and a wall projection of flapping silver jacket-linings, enhanced by cooling the temperature of the space (see *Figure 97*). Participants encountered cuts in time and space as past iterations of performances were re-assembled in remediated forms.

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<sup>19</sup> This practice, in its slow and iterative approach, can be conceived as *prudence* as derived from Manning's minor gesture that states: that it is not the *figure* of the marginal, though the marginal may carry a special affinity for the minor and wish to compose with it. The minor gesture is the force that makes the lines tremble that compose the everyday, the lines, both structural and fragmentary, that articulate how else experience can come to expression. To compose with the minor gesture requires, as Deleuze cautions, *the prudence of the experimenter*, a prudence awake to the speculative pragmatism at the heart of the welling event. The minor gesture is the activator, the carrier, it is the *agencement* that draws the event into itself. It moves the nonconscious toward the conscious, makes felt the unsayable in the said, brings into resonance field effects otherwise backgrounded in experience. It is the forward-force capable of carrying the affective tonality of nonconscious resonance and moving it toward the articulation, edging into consciousness, of new modes of existence. Manning, *The Minor Gesture*, 7.



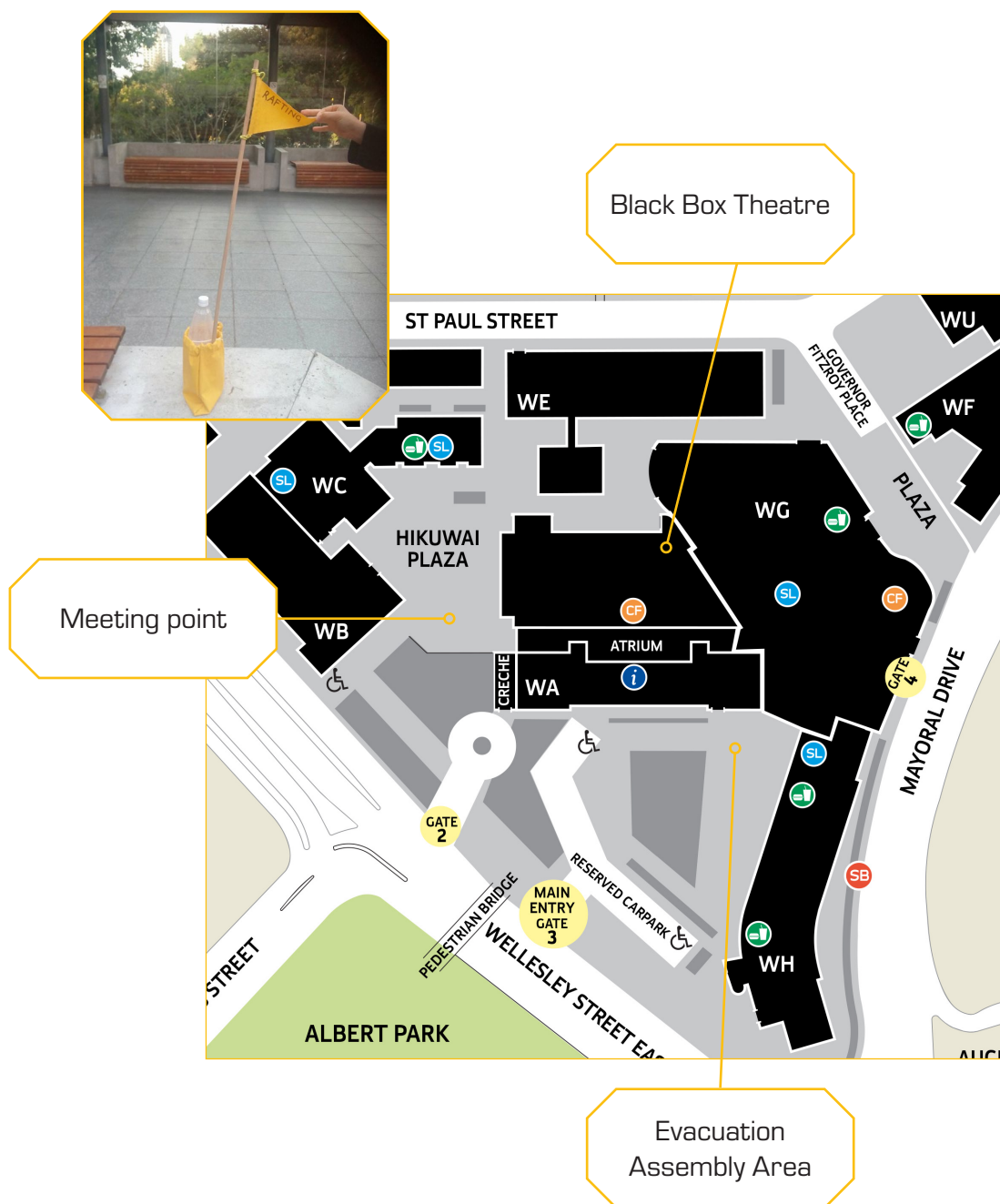


Figure 95. RAFTING Location Map 1- AUT University, Auckland.



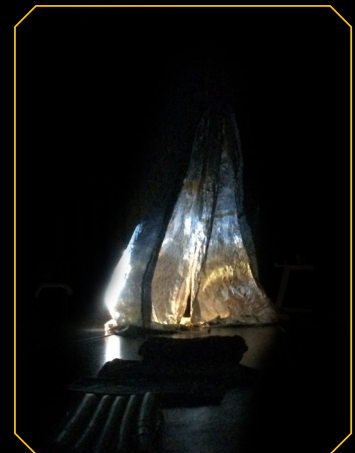
*Lilos video box  
(video media player)*



*Rafting projection video  
(projection on wall).*



*Water bladder  
anchor weight*



*Dual Jackets with Silver Lining  
(on Pulleys).*



*Evacuation exit*



*Rafting projection video  
(projection on yellow box).*

Bow (North)

*Figure 96. RAFTING Black Box Map.*

*Enter the Black Box here.*



*Being-with video box  
(Video Media Player)*



*Rafting on lilos in center.*



*PFS Personal Floatation Suit*



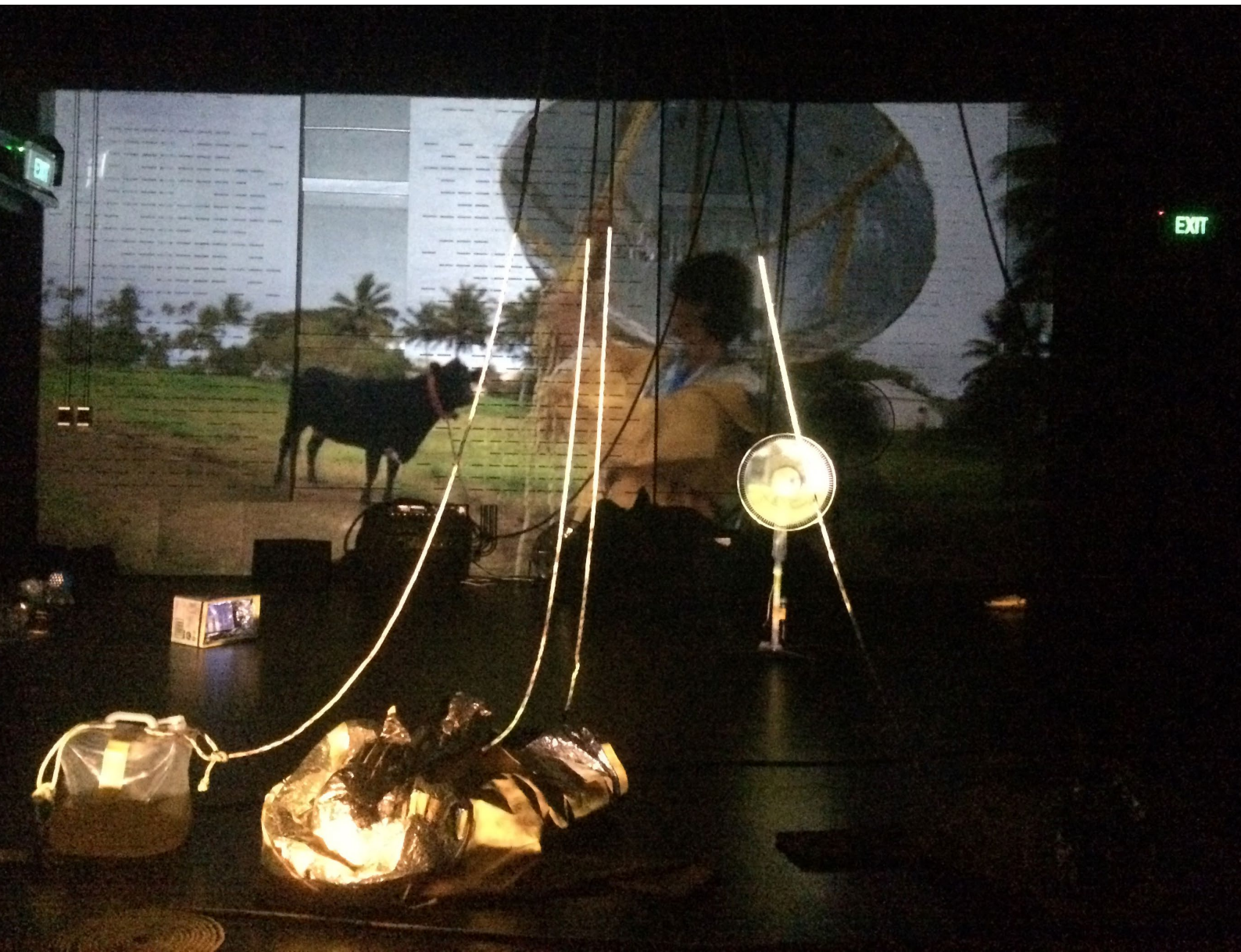
*Desperado chart table*



*Desperado's Stories  
(mixed CD)  
Telescopes and Boat model*

Stern (South)





*Figure 97.* Black Box projection, RAFTING , 2017, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.



These disembodied stories were enveloped by their new housings and the assemblage of new participants on tour—guided by the obscurity of personae that shift in and out of its frame of composition.<sup>20</sup>

In this Black Box theatre space new performance encounters, video works and archives work as fragments of forensic dark space, fusing into an aftermath and archive (See *Figures 98 & 99*). In the re-enactment of a potential disasters through a survival drill we replicate and deconstruct evacuations, and safety protocols towards an ethico-poetics of everyday survival. The Black Box represents my temporary return to a theatre space: the chaos of the outdoor performance encounters are translated through the complex activities involved in the final archive of works. Lepecki describes how theatre space in its usual context (of illusion and theatrics) offers an illuminated clear image that could be seen to contribute to a neo liberal drive for enlightenment that aims to fix or define.<sup>21</sup> Instead this Black Box is dark and difficult to make into a clear narrative. Internal spaces become external, offering sensations of what it is to survive in the confusion of a disaster. The move into the dark space of the Black Box theatre immerses the participant in the matrix (womb) space<sup>22</sup> by prioritizing the senses and enfolding the practice back to its beginning, bringing attention to the sensations of survival.

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<sup>20</sup> The Black Box as corporeal archive hosts multiple remains, which attempt to participate as witnesses of (re)mediation via traditional or mastered genres of survival and other release-modes of being-with. A strategic tactic is the hosting of multiple iterations of the final Black Box site over the week of the examination. Each participant can experience their own poetic reverie (or narrative) in relation to surviving something and living on from this thing—the living on is not something that is mastered; it just exists in the poetic economy of the work. I anticipate or hope for their agency to emerge as they move into reflexive spaces—these reflexive spaces can never be predetermined before they enter, they just arrive. Each iteration, each group of participants, produces differences, different group dynamics, different atmospheric tensions, points of release, and different singular attunements.

<sup>21</sup> André Lepecki, “In the Dark,” in *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>22</sup> Dorita Hannah, “(Im)Material(ity) and the Black Box Theatre as an “Empty Space of Reproduction’.” *IDEA: Interior Design Educators Association: QUT* (2003): 4. Dorita Hannah explains how the Black Box is historically considered a primordial space suggestive of both a void space (immaterial) and a womb space (abject materiality). The Black Box

The five participatory tours in the week leading up to the final examined encounter enabled the work to be in a state of activation at the time of the examination (see *Figure 102*), opening opportunities for the development of the intricacies of structure, placement, and my performative personae (also improvised in the live moment). The performance tours were controlled by my guide persona from Hikuwai Plaza to the Green Room, but the authority of the guide slowly fades after participants are released into the Black Box. The minor gestural force opens the participant's experience to variation, where I too am subject to the wildness of the experience itself. This minoring has been a large part of the practice so far in that the experimentation of the work always occurs within the realm of the live performance encounter, embracing a precarious space of difference and variation. See documentation of RAFTING Nov 19-27 2017 (in Rafting Archive 2).

## 6.8 Multiple Voices

The multiple iterations of the *Rafting survival tours* enabled constructive feedback loops where participants' responses and my experiences were reflected upon and then taken onboard in the subsequent performances (see *Figure 101*). Throughout this research I have benefitted from an open feedback loop that allows for an incorporation of many voices into the realisation of what each work might be for others. These reflections were then considered in the editing of the work for the final performance series. I acknowledge the participants of all the performance works as integral to the creation of the work itself, both in the live encounter and the conversations following the aftermath of each experience. This aspect of the Design of Study opened the work up to the ethical arrival at a poetic and sustainable release from any sense of total authorship. Those that participated did so as invited public therefore offered their reflections in conversational manner. This occurred after each event and seemed to be part of the overall *survival* of

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as a space of human creation and participation can be realised through Plato's 'Chora', an in-between space where, "perhaps we can find a resolution between the technological abyss and more embodied spatiality; where the virtual and the visceral can be simultaneously housed."

the performance experience. I therefore acknowledge that what I write here is multiple in authorship to a certain extent (just as the live performance itself) but only so in as life is a shared social experience. These multiple voices reveal themselves through my reflections on this final performance event in the final section of this exegesis, as do the atmospheric lingerings of my practice in the aftermath of the Black Box.

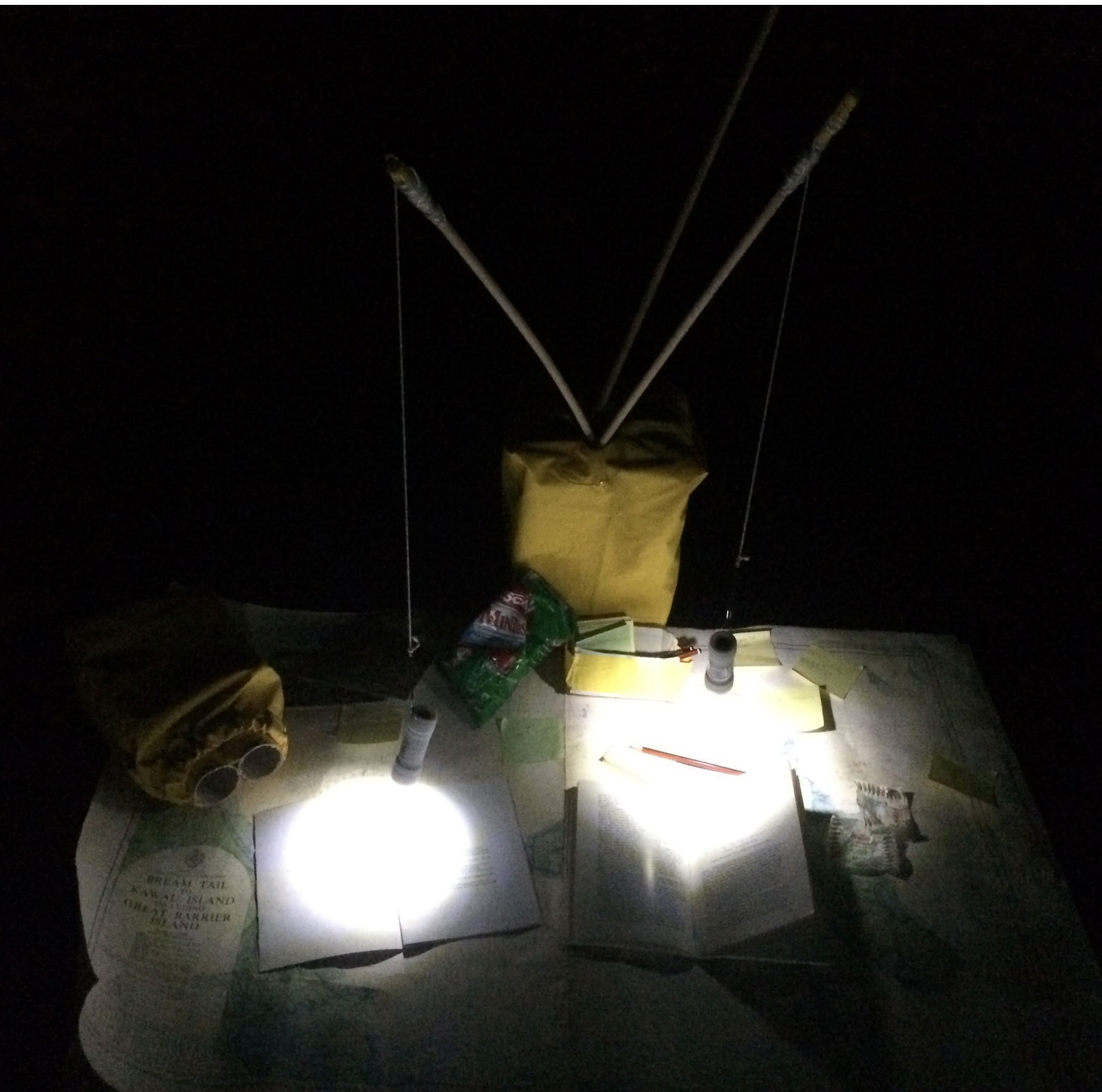
The aftermath exists as a fragmentary archive of trace-structures that have survived on from land and sea. It is in this transformative space, that my performance expectations of the participants shift, such as the sea becoming the metaphor for unknown territories of performance that bring into appearance that which is more fluid obscure and porous. That which marks (or inscribes) out this 'space' between without-enduring and the afterlives *or aftermath* of survival narratives will be our action for living toward.





*Figure 98.* PFS—Personal Flotation Suit, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.





*Figure 99. Desperado's Charts, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.*



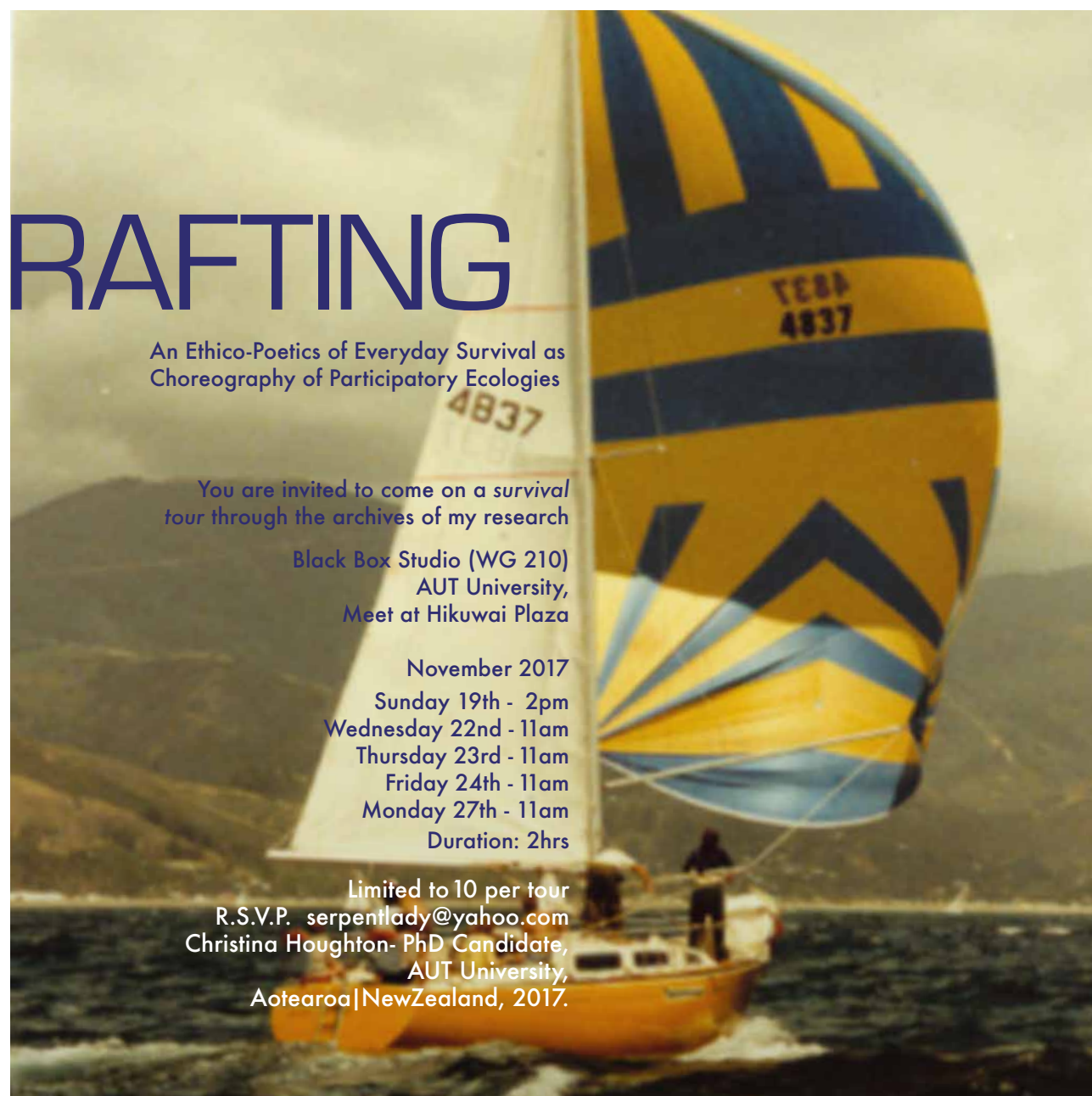


*Figure 100.* Assembling in the corridors, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Maria O'Connor.





*Figure 101.* Discussing rafting strategies, Black Box tests, 2017, WG evacuation assembly area, AUT University, Auckland. Photo: Rumen Rachev.



*Figure 102.* Rafting Poster, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box Studio, November 19-27.  
AUT University, Auckland.



## Aftermath—Epilogue

*Hikuwai (source of a stream, glassier or headwaters)*<sup>23</sup>

*In these rapid climate shifts, you will need to understand these are sites of imminent danger. It is important that we are prepared for all kinds of scenarios—such as flooding—there is also the possibility that sea levels may rise one day. If we are prepared for each and every one of these scenarios we will have the ability to respond in an appropriate manner. If we are not prepared we will be washed away or drowned.*

I place my yellow flag in the designated spot and wait up in the gantry under the Hikuwai sign. I wait for all the participants to arrive and greet each other before I head down at exactly 11 am. I click everyone off on my counter to make sure they are all present and then proceed into my introduction.

*We gather here at Hikuwai, it is an evacuation site—located on higher ground for this university. It is the source of the mighty Wai Horotiu; the legendary lair of the taniwha; the significant culverted-stream tributary that courses its way into the main valley of the city—the valley which is now named Queen Street. Increased Pākehā settlement in the 1800s caused Wai Horotiu to become a festering canal full of polluted water so it was turned into a sewer, severed from the spring from which it sprang. It is now exists as a matrix of stormwater systems hidden under the pavement beneath our feet where we stand today. In times of heavy rainfall the river seeps into the surrounding buildings, including the Black Box where we will be going today.*

*Tēnā Koutou    Tēnā Koutou    Tēnā Tatou Katoa*  
*Haere Mai      Haere Mai      Haere Mai*

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<sup>23</sup> John C. Moorfield, “Te Aka: Māori English,” in *English Māori Dictionary and Index* (Auckland, NZ: Pearson Longman, 2005), accessed March 23, 2018, <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>

Setting the scene for this performance as an emergency evacuation drill I point out the dangers for the area due to floods and sea-level rise. I ask the participants to take notice of the emergency signs we will see on the way down to the Black Box (see *Figure 104*). Greeting the group as a host, I take on a certain responsibility to present or offer something for the day (particularly relating to a tour, as the promotional material states)—there is anticipation in the air. One individual comes expecting a boat trip and a few others go directly to the Black Box studio, missing the meeting point, while one or two miss the initial introduction. I need to adapt to all of these usual shifts and flows of everyday life and incorporate them into my initial meeting. Taking on my persona as a calm drill sergeant, I breathe and breathe again, directing individuals to where they should stand and marking their presence on the roll. I give some sense of order to the beginning of this experience.

From the participants' perspective they (the group), upon meeting, are able to establish a community (see *Figure 103*). In this context of an examination performance at the university it brings together many who are also in the performing and visual arts, most of whom are friends and family, some of whom have participated in the work previously, re-iterating the accumulative ongoing nature of my practice. For some, the meeting is with old friends, others who are new to this place are meeting for the first time. They exchange names and chit-chat about artistic interests and check in on everyday details about friends and family. The size of the group of 6-13 individuals has already created a certain proximity to each other yet also provides some anonymity to those who arrive late and others who bring along an extra participant at the last minute.

The site of Hikuwai has resonance with some more than others, with some finding the experience intriguing yet disturbing. My Drill persona convinces the participants that this is a site of imminent disaster. For those who knew about the history of the river (Wai Horotiu) there was a feeling of foreboding in relation to the conservation of the stream and the catastrophe I spoke of (flood). Those who were unfamiliar with the story were interested to hear about Te Wai Horotiu and it made them look for cues in the Black Box for the flooding of the river.

When we all met I greeted them, bringing attention to the relationship between guest and host. Some found this sense of community an interesting part of the experience, one that made the introduction more possible to bear as they knew they were surrounded by others, as well as the host who made them feel safe by appearing to know what to do.

The possibility of a severe climate emergency rises as we move into the ante-room, where we have to blow up lilos. It is a tight space where I file everyone in one at a time to sit together on the couches, facing the instructional video *Lilo Safely*. The Green Room is set up with survival gear from the survival kit, hats, jackets, sunglasses, lilo torches, etc. Each participant is handed a survival pack, which consists of a lilo, a blowing tube and a pair of sunglasses from the 1980s (sealed into a zip-lock bag), as well as one of the hats from the *Desperado* collection. They are left to decide when and whether to follow the instructions from the video although I suggest that they sit quietly and take notice of the instructions they encounter. See documentation of RAFTING Nov 19-27 2017 (in Rafting Archive 2).



*Figure 103.* Hikuwai Plaza meeting point, RAFTING, 2017, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Jemma Jean Nissen.





*Figure 104.* Walking down to the Black Box, RAFTING, 2017, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Maria O'Connor.

### *The Green Room—Antechamber*

*Welcome to the preparation room. This is where we keep the survival gear and where we will watch the instructional video before we enter the Black Box.*

The 'lilo body' reminds us that we have a body that requires breath to survive, bringing attention to our own body and senses. There is a likeness to the safety video on an airplane and everyone follows my directions. As I assist with the initial blowing up of lilos I am bordering, in my performance, between the slick survival drill video and the awkwardness of being there in the present dressed in the same way. I see people looking at me for performative gestures or clues to how they should be interacting. This intimate setting is hot and uncomfortable. Here we are together on the threshold between the actual, the performative and the experiential. The video affects each in a way that evokes the somatic affects and choreography of the safety drills we are familiar with yet with an undertone of ridiculousness. See Lilo safely instructional video [click here](#).

One participant mentions to me later how the beautiful luminescent video with the black and the yellow makes her think of the choreography of the air hostess in relation to the hyper-stylised videos. She is reminded of some of the smaller airlines that are so old school, they still have the ill-fitting uniforms and the pretend performance of blowing into the tube, as well as their specific hand gestures. I embrace that kind of performativity of awkwardness at the edge of serious but not serious, and it's not quite clear. It's many things at once, like a satire.

Initially I resist showing people how to blow up the lilos, and leave the room. Later upon looking at the GoPro footage I see everyone following the video to a point where they struggle with the blowing tubes and I return to find everyone as I left them. For some iterations I assist when needed. Other times there are individuals familiar with the lilos so they forge ahead, blowing them up and putting on hats and glasses.

The experience of this room differs for each individual; some find it frustrating and claustrophobic. With uncertainty rising there is potential for rebellion and anarchy. On the day the kids are there they all want their own lilo; on other days some wish to share blowing efforts with others. Some are more successful than others, which I find interesting in relation to ideas of survival of the fittest. Often the affective survival in this room ranges between that of the individual and the group, revealing the differences in the way instructions can be interpreted. Participants have the choice to take whatever they feel they might need for the Black Box, such as an extra survival blanket or a head torch. They are asked to leave their belongings behind in an effort to really experience what it might be like to be in a survival scenario. Yet I forget to mention that they should take their reading classes if they need them<sup>24</sup> (see *Figures 105 & 106*). See RAFTING Nov 19-27 2017 from 4:32 min (in Rafting Archive 2).

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<sup>24</sup> See Appendix 4. RAFTING Program An unofficial archive for list of archives in Green Room.





*Figure 105.* Entering the Black Box, RAFTING, 2017, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Maria O'Connor.





*Figure 106.* The Green room, RAFTING, 2017, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Maria O'Connor.

## *Black Box*

*The Black Box is a space for ritual, a sacred space that holds the archive of this performance research. Within this space you will encounter events that have since past and you will have new experiences. You may wish to enter the space with a partner or as a group. Please look out for each other and should you find yourself in a state of emergency please let me, or one of the other people, know. Should you wish to contribute to the performance a memory or something that has affected you in regards to your own survival please do. I am a guide, though I don't wish to assert any authority or specific knowledge towards the survival of this experience; however, there are parts of it that are more familiar to me than they will be to you.*

*Explore the space and materials in your own terms, Tread carefully, Take your time, Look closely, Stick together, Trust your senses...*

The space is only lit by video light, hanging torches that illuminate archival placements (see RAFTING, Map 2) and the videos *Lilos* and *Being-with* (see *Lilos* video loop and *Being-with* video loop in Rafting Archive 2). These are played on small media players placed in boxes with silver linings, laid on their sides to encourage participants to lie down to view. I place these next to a bean-bag and blankets to enable comfortable viewing. The video projector is initially projecting onto a yellow transparent box that offers a reverse image of the video projection (see Rafting projection video in Rafting Archive 2), but has potential to eventually be removed in order for the image to flow into the studio wall and onto the silver sail that is rigged on a pulley at the north end of the room. There is a yellow rope placed on the floor in the shape of an island and there are piles of extra blankets, sleeping bags and already-inflated *lilos* placed in the centre of the space. In one location there is the upturned hull of the model of *Desperado* next to a box of viewing telescopes with slide images from the building of the boat. Behind the curtain recorded stories play, spoken by my daughter and me. In another location there is pile of charts mouldy from salty waters and many years of use. Here are messages from previous performances that can be added to, a packet of

*Figure 107. Writing Messages in the Black Box, RAFTING, 2017, AUT University, Auckland. Photo: Maria O'Connor.*





Minties (to be eaten) and postcards from Portugal (see *Figure 107 & 108*). There is also the iPad playing the boat journeys from Half Moon Bay and Sweden. See Boats & Ports video loop (in Rafting Archive 2). Gentle sounds fade in and out of the space, a wooden sailing ship and seagulls are heard, and waves crashing on the shore are played over a small square speaker box attached to the projector. As people enter, head torches light the space further with shards of directional beams; sounds of crinkling silver survival blankets, squeaking lilos and quiet audible chatting between individuals all add to the soundscape. The exchanges across the mastery of instruction (genre) and release of darkness add a mysterious quality—and in the final site of the Black Box performance there exists an attempt for an eerie resonance across the overly formal instruction tenor, tinged with humour, contrastive colors (or emergency yellow and fatalistic black), which combine in an envelope of atmospheric temporal, spatial and historical abstraction performing its doubling: enveloping and enveloped within the site of this surviving Black Box.

The Black Box space it is a space for theatre drama and production of theatre. This is the in-between space with the haunting of theatre, that evokes a place between instruction and action. The participants are able to negotiate how they spend time in the space with minimal pointers that evoke a multiplicity of responses from each of them. There are multiple layers of archive, the documentation of previous performances, the costumes and survival technologies that bring us into the present, and the nostalgic content from the stories and archives directly from *Desperado*. These multiple layers of meanings are reflected in the varied responses from participants. I see this as an indication of life lived socially or collectively where we recognise our difference in experiences and embrace them as part of the creation of the final RAFTING. It is these multiple voices and responses echoing through the work that contribute to the ethico-poetics of everyday survival, as we COPE we create Choreographies of Participatory Ecologies in the relational ecology of each live encounter with-in the archives of this research.

### *Ambiguities*

When participants entered the Black Box some felt a sense of not knowing what to do and sometimes felt they were missing things. This allowed them to discover the space themselves, taking notice of what cues were available and what others were doing in the space. This aspect of the space was a navigation and a mapping where each individual had to physically map and make decisions and navigate through the information, making decisions about what to do and make sense of them. As a result, there may have been aspects of the work that were not encountered by everyone. Yet the work was dependent upon the actions and engagement of the individuals of the group itself. See RAFTING Nov 19-27 2017 from 9:50 min (in Rafting Archive 2).

It appeared in the conversations afterwards that most realised that this unknown space allowed for participants to discover it in their own way. Which I saw as the handing over. It was a strange thing where not quite knowing what to do meant that they modelled themselves on what the other people were doing. Creating the space for others' comfort gave permission to lie on the lilo and relax. As well as seeing others, using the kaleidoscope for example, made them realise that this was something that could be engaged with. Others didn't feel like they were missing out on anything and felt that it was a really rich experience, with so many things to access they engaged with their own experience and own narrative, totally free to roam. My gentle reminders or requests could be followed or not depending on the individuals own free will.

*I became mesmerised by how the group was folding and unfolding among the emergency lights, elevating the darkness with their bodies and embodying a playful attitude with the props. What I was witnessing was not distress in the darkness, but playful engagement with feeling safe in the face of the end of times.*

One participant made the decision to stay in her wheelchair as opposed to lying on the lilos with us, as that was easier. She pointed out that she often feels that these are the decisions she has to make when



participating in her everyday world. Another liked the immersive feeling of being on a boat, the feeling of loss of balance, some things being high, others being low; feeling safe in the dark space as opposed to the Green Room, that had felt too closed in. However, someone else stated that she had been on too many boats to think this was like a boat—there was too much space. She didn't feel any sense of being unsafe or in an emergency but realised that the gentle actions were offered as a way of being in an interactive environment. Others felt affected by the layers of the sound and video, such as the clear projection of documentation on the silver sail and the double movement of the moving image projected upon the moving sail. The children liked eating the Minties and rafting with everyone in the middle. With the torches they activated the space in a chaotic social way, fighting for the best spot, and arguing over who handed out the Minties. They noticed the video in Rarotonga where they had last seen each other and it reminded them that they were part of the work. Other participants were encouraged to play in a spacious way due to the anonymity of the dark space and the costumes that allowed a forgetting of the body (see *Figures 109 & 110*). Such as wearing the sleeping bag giving the sensation of a genderless body and childhood memories. On the other hand, the Black Box reminded others that they had a body through the phenomenology of the space. See RAFTING Nov 19-27 2017 from 26:00 min (in Rafting Archive 2).

One participant mentioned enjoying the spaciousness of the emptyish sections of the lapping water and felt really dreamy and drifty, almost drifting off. They also enjoyed the collective lying down when we were all grouped at the bow, really closely, commenting on how it was a really lovely moment. Another felt the performance reminded him of his lungs through blowing up the lilo and liked how he could move around and touch things if he chose. He realised how this was a different experience from usual in the visual arts that is more about the head and eyes and he felt like he could also relax while listening to the soundscape.



*Figure 108.* Rob and Suzanne, RAFTING, 2017, AUT University, Auckland. Photo: Maria O'Connor.

### *Taking Care Of*

As the host I became responsible for everybody's welfare in the space (see *Figure 109*). Part of that was evoked in the details of our material experience and what might happen if a huge environmental disaster occurs. So, then responsibility becomes a planetary terrestrial kind of thing. If this group of people had come around to my house they wouldn't consider this a possibility. The care and responsibility was extended into thinking about this potentiality. This taking care is a kind of becoming something more than you think.

I enact my performing body in its role as guide, offering direction and focus points towards survival preparations and initial encounters of the installation. Yet once we enter, the participants are able to engage within the archival construct in a way that allows for a survival with *others*. I (as do the participants) act as activator of the archival materials, however my role aims to be minor as I tend to the materials as DJ/VJ of the space, operating an accumulation of states throughout the entire journey in the dark. My improvisations act in response to the instructions for action that have emerged throughout this practice, offering and inviting participants to become operators within the work itself. The space created, although risky, aims to be a safe space for *agencement* to emerge through the relationships between the archival materials and the live bodies in the space.

*I am here, attentive in the darkness, available for moving props and offering blankets. I remove my shoes, my feet become silent, I eventually dissolve into the darkness. At times I switch my light on to see, I use the red light when I am not moving. Sometimes I join others and interact with the archives and other times I activate a change in the state, for example moving the rope into the shape of the boat and removing the yellow box. Halfway through, I invite everyone to raft with me in the centre and activate the sails to capture the dancing virtual bodies projected. I am your guide, your friend, your companion, another participant. We are here together in this timeless space for but a moment until I ask you to Please Evacuate!*

*Figure 109.* Handing out blankets, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland. Photo: Maria O'Connor.





Because it was a dark space it felt more precarious. I found it hard to recognise each individual and I hoped that I was treating everyone equally, with handing out blankets and inviting each and every one to engage with the activities. Each day someone would follow my invitation to try on the Personal Floatation Suit (PFS). I later asked the first person who had got into the suit if he had seen me pumping it up. He replied that he had seen the suit and then a pump and saw it as an invitation (see *Figure 113*). Similarly, on other tours others hovered nearby while I pumped it up, until I offered for them to try it out. Each responded in a different way; standing, lying down, completely covering their eyes inside the silver pillows, and stumbling around or relaxing into a complete somatic experience. I found this interesting as I had always found being in the suit a claustrophobic experience that I wished I didn't have to endure. The image of the PFS was captivating, an inflatable moving body that became bigger than that of the body inside, suggesting the monstrous body that is leaky, hissing air and sucking in the dark space surrounding. See RAFTING Nov 19-17 2017 from 21:20 min (in Rafting Archive 2).

### *Handing Over*

The Black Box released the control structures of the survival drill through the transformation of my performance persona from guide to invisible attendant or assembly monitor; all aimed to transition the experience from mastery to release. The props and actions aimed to encourage *agencement* of bodies, materials and technologies in a posthuman experience. I gave careful consideration to the cues that were given in 'inviting' participants via the gestures within the props themselves. Thinking this invitation through provided an investigation into the different ways that interaction with the archives could be encouraged, and returned my thoughts to the instructional component of the work. These connections between the instructions, videos, narratives and costumes became an act of choreographing the potential agency of the participant, leaving the final action open to potentialities of all kinds. An example of the unknown aspect of this work was when one participant wanted to raise the sail, even though I had invited her to sit down. She was making heaps of noise with the silver sails, putting on the sail jacket when the

others were rafting, so I decided to join her for a while. Afterwards she expressed how great it was that she could do what she wanted. This challenged my preconceived ideas of what I was hoping for the experience to be. It also revealed how individual agency can often be different to *agencement* as a collective productive experience. In moving towards this minor role as facilitator or assistant (with some know-how) I handed over the work into the hands of the participants. It was here that I had to give my trust to the others I was *Rafting-with*. The participants would then be in a position to take-care-of each other and the space and I would (hopefully) become the receiver of gentle acts of kindness. As the experience in the Black Box progresses through the immersive encounter it evokes the handing over, or transferral, from a personal to an agency of the individual participants, who find spaces to locate their own poetic. The handing over that took place reveals the necessity for the work to move from authorial to non-mastery. The underlying narrative of *Desperado* reveals my autobiographical story of survival as a work of mourning, one that I hand over as a catalyst for release in recognition of life as a force of uncertainty.

### *Space & Time travelling*

The thread of multiple stories measures time passing, noting genetic tracings from maternal instincts, caring for a dying father, passing from mother to daughter to son, changing climates, all create markers for measure. Patriarchy moves towards matriarchy, light moves to dark, live archive transforms into moving memorial. As we raft through the archives there is a sense of the history of things that allows us to look into the future with care. I use my daughter Isabella's voice for the stories and there is a temporal shift. My mum (Lesley) was really blown away after her experience, it made her remember all the good times and we realised that I was now the age she had been when building the boat, and Isabella was now at the age I was when we launched it. This time travelling became a tracing, a catalyst for participants to perhaps think of their own history, how it was the same or how it differed. Portraying a sense of history of past, present and future, it asks how we relate to time passing in relation to our future selves. A past future temporal folding that portrays a loss and a discovery.



Some participants are transformed or transported back childhood imaginations and embodiment, where anxieties are allayed in relation to environmental disaster. The space of childhood can be seen as a place both regressive and successful in its regression of time, as well as evoking a sense of play and humour. To engage in the work there has to be a point where each individual *hands-over* to the playful nature of the work. Most see that humour plays an important role in the piece, because of my deadpan delivery. I use humour as a tool for delivering serious content making it accessible and enjoyable and easy to engage with. The really heavy topic of environmental crisis is made aware of along with the anxiety that is perpetuated all around us in the guise of safety. If people feel safe you have to remind them that they are not safe.

*The position of humour in the work is difficult for me to define. I feel like it is intrinsic in the way I deal with anxieties facing such huge issues that could affect my/our future. Incorporating it into my artistic practice of Rafting-with is a natural strategy for me, yet I hope that others don't see it as playing down the seriousness of how I see the world. This type of humour is perhaps indicative of the teasing and joking I endured on Desperado as the youngest to two older brothers, where any sign of fear was seen as a sign of weakness and jokes reduced any real danger to that of a game.*

*My eight-year-old son Austin liked the Minties, the Raro and the biscuits, he really liked the dark space where he felt like he could play.*

One participant detected a bourgeois (New Zealand middle-class) narrative embedded in the privilege of boat ownership, yet, for him the DIY aesthetic of the performance, deconstructed this middle-class privilege in the face of disaster. As part of New Zealand identity, we play with environmental dangers in our pioneering adventurous personae, but we live in a reality largely immune from real danger. So, like children, we are acting out our fears in ways that are playful and family-orientated by camping or other outdoor ventures. Yet we are all equal (stripped of class, culture and social privilege) in the face of any real disaster, especially given the stakes or odds of being thrown into worlds with strangers. Furthermore, it seems that as a working mother and artist the opportunity to play is a rare event, yet I always feel like it is



*Figure 110.* Rafting in the Black Box, RAFTING, 2017, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Rob Linkhorn.







the most valuable part of a performance encounter, where we release our everyday worries of the future into the present moment and the enjoyment of being with others.

Another participant found the Raro reminiscent of urine. Raro is nostalgic and fun but it also brought attention to bodily wastes and how if you were lost at sea you would have to drink your own urine. He got lost in the cycle of how many times you could drink your own urine. It seemed for him that there were lots of moments like this that had the tension between funny and tragic. Another friend loved the way that we worked the items we wear, such as the way that someone became a lilo person. The coat made someone become another kind of body, as well as the hats and the glasses. These things are also survival things but they are also full of history and smells of the past and the taste of the Minties. This all allowed us to do some time travelling back into, our own history of being a child in Aotearoa, New Zealand in the 1980s. The archives allowed history to be present in a way that wasn't named necessarily but that was evoked, so you had a sense of the history of stuff and that time moves through all of this.

### *Release—Afterlives*

*In the Black Box I see the image of the upturned hull of Desperado, a space I used to explore as a child. It was a reality of the future inverted, I could see the galley, the forward bunk and everything was all laid out above us in its build. It was a curved space compartmentalised for efficiency in everyday life. I now see it as an ark, a curved space built from a lone kahikatea from the west coast of the South Island where my father was from. He selected the tree himself on a trip down south and had it felled, milled and waited for it to dry before he could use it. It is now a sacred space, where we enact rituals towards memories of places lost as an act of mourning.*

The final video work *Lighthouse Dance (Sun, Sand, Sea and Lilos)*<sup>25</sup> projected on the raised silver sail brings to the fore the mourning of the work. See RAFTING Nov 19-27 2017 from 30:40 min (in Rafting

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<sup>25</sup> See Rafting projection video from 28:45 min.

Archive 2). My dancing body clings to the lilo as long-lost lover, lying in a tomb-like manner under the lilo, wrapped in the body-bag of rolled-up survival jackets, capturing the horizontal image of the corpse pose.

As the participants move through the transitions of the Black Box there are shifts from chaotic peaks in activity and slow contemplative sections, where there seems more time to ponder, interact and take their time. As time progresses, I hope that the outside world slowly falls away and the participants appear to me to submerge in a the world of dark, aqueous perceptions that hold the volume and mass of fluid watery ontologies; where all they need to think about is what is needed for survival, a blanket, a lilo, warmth and support. The final release of the lilo dance in the dark represents a return to autonomy, or the simple self-contained body in its everyday survival of breath, warmth and comfort, floated by others surrounding. Slippery concepts of *living on* and living together emerge. The lilo floating on top, I am beneath, submerged, in darkness. Yet as we evacuate we are again brought to the light and the space of the actual, where we are again asked what we can do in our everyday lives to re-imagine the world we would like to live-on beyond our presence on the planet (see *Figures 115-118*).

In *not* making a performance where everyone knows what to do, (where it's all very clear) the participant is placed in an unknown environment in an ambiguous space that is vacuous. Even though my intention was to create a safe space, where I take care of my guests as the host, it became a space of unknown outcomes and destabilising affects. I wanted participants to sense that I was there to assist yet the aim of the work is not to entertain. You are on your own, or at least with the others, you are choosing when to raft, move and when to rest, when to be ready or not for the next action, or when to release all sense of control to the world of the Black Box. However, It wasn't about making a safe space but a destabilised world, which is what it would be like in an emergency, where you are listening to the radio for updates and maybe the electricity goes down. So we just have to wait here. Or can I leave the building and go into the city centre, and how do I find my children? In this scenario I imagine there would be a lot of waiting, feeling destabilised and traumatised.





*Figure 112.* Viewing telescopes, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland. Photo: Rob Linkhorn.





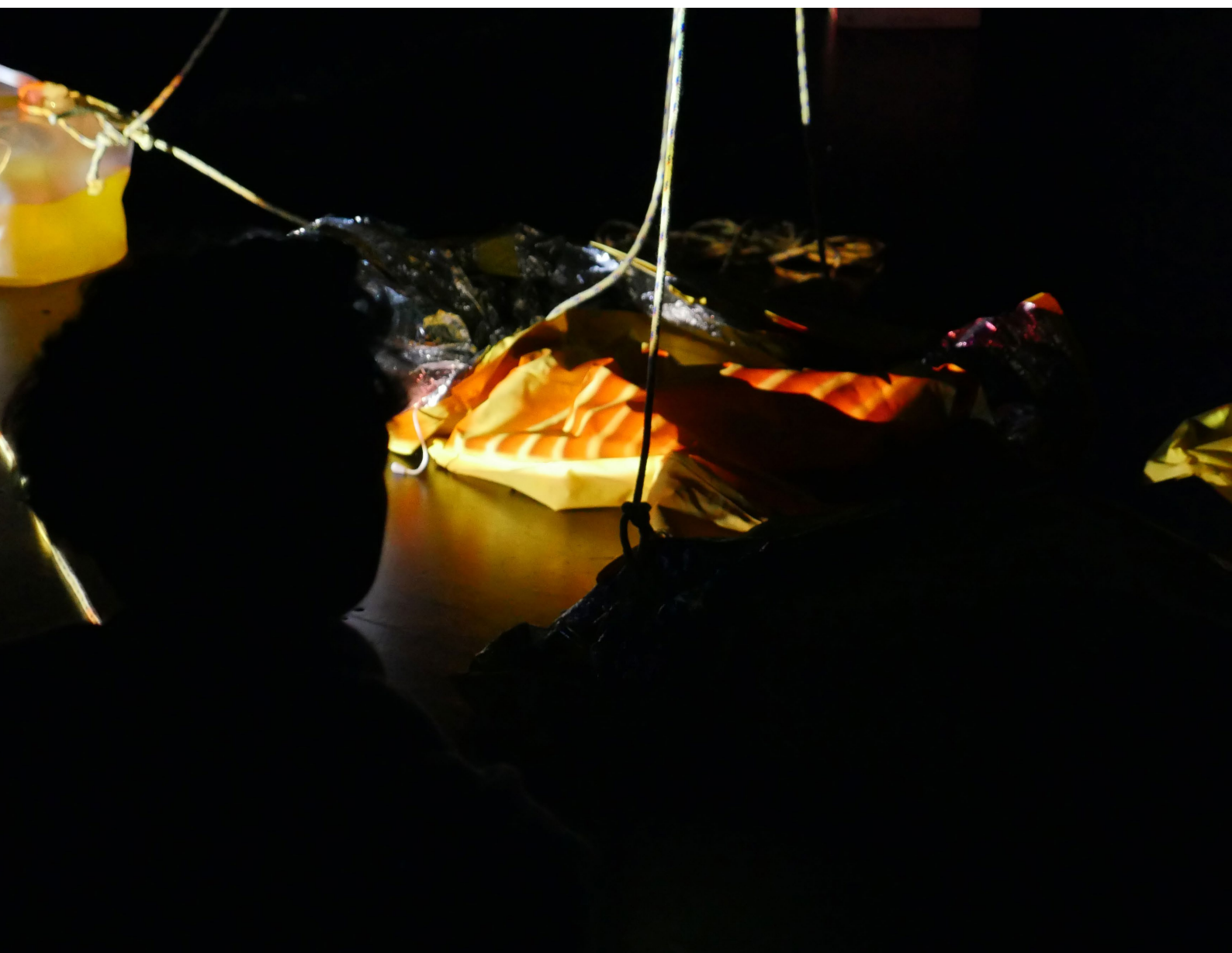
*Figure 113.* Geoff in the PFS, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Maria O'Connor.





*Figure 114.* Layne and Scott in jackets, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.





*Figure 115.* Horizontal with lilos, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Maria O'Connor.

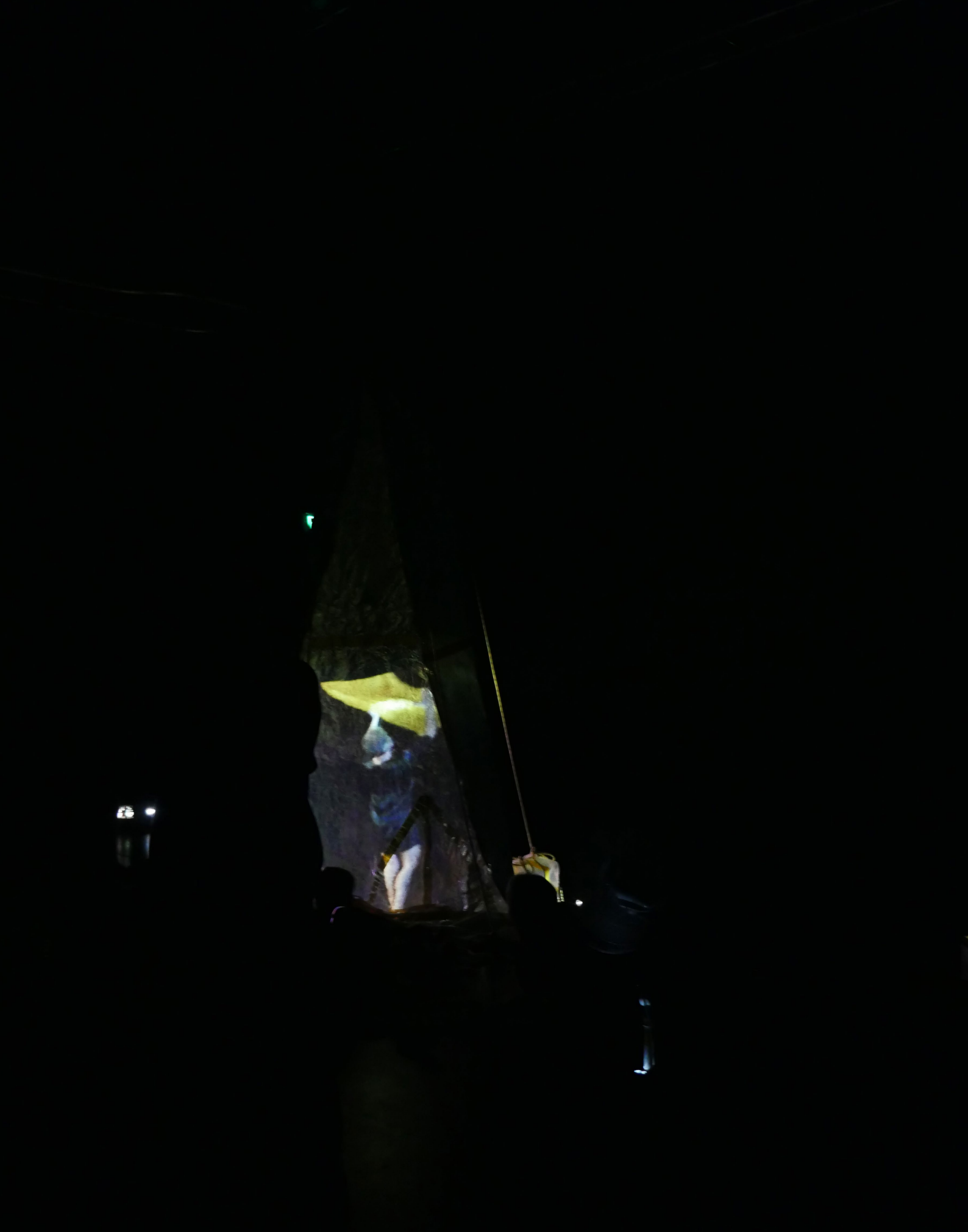
### *Evacuation*

The evacuation is slightly different at each iteration. Once I go around and warn everyone we are about to evacuate and to get ready, another time I flash a red light behind a lilo shouting, “Evacuate! Evacuate!” or I turn up the volume of the siren and just open the door and see who will follow my lead. The main issue is that there is no real sense of urgency. While I wait for the group to hear the siren and take the cue they remain lulled into the sensory experience of lying in the dark. Someone says he thought it was a bird sound and others are just waiting to see what I do. It reminds me of all those fire drills that they have in buildings, where the drill desensitises the occupants to the reality of an actual disaster. As I emerge each day into the bright sunlight I see the beautiful image of a group gathered with randomly assembled rectangles of yellow on blue sky, an image that is now imprinted on my brain. This is the end of RAFTING for today and I invite everyone back for a cup of tea, and no one seems to want to leave (see *Figures 118-120*; RAFTING Nov 19-27 2017 from 33:15 min, in Rafting Archive 2).

### *Surviving-on*

Each iteration had its intricate details and revealings. The series began with my family, with children, joining friends on a quiet Sunday afternoon. Later iterations during the week required spontaneous negotiations with conference gatherings and AUT maintenance work. As the week progressed my performance persona solidified as a confident drill-master, and release into the Black Box became a smooth operation that held the participants on each particular day. My relationship with the work seeped into my every waking moment, as I inhabited the space for the month leading up to the final performance series—the laying out of archives and the memories evoked from this research journey represented the letting go of my father’s world and the transformation into this world of RAFTING.

For me RAFTING solidified to a certain extent the action of *Rafting-with*, which has become synonymous with COPEing as the catalyst for new knowledge through practice-led research. Moving-through minor



*Figure 116.* Lilo dance on sail, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.





*Figure 117.* Sun, Sand, Sea. RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.

EXIT



gestures and hauntings of survival allowed us to see how, in being-with others, we might COPE in times of constantly changing climates. In conclusion I refer to the concept of the Raft that tethers together performance tactics discovered in the final performance work (and throughout this research project), drawing together modes of choreographic thinking through creative practice that emerges as the ethico-poetics of this research. This Raft crafted through DIY materials, skills and actions sometimes requires a captain or someone in charge, or at other times could just be floating, drifting with no destination. Yet rafting bodies thinking together in difference, reminds us that participation both active and passive has a part to play in the unfolding of the end of the world.

There is no doubt that this experience of RAFTING made unexpected connections, unknown to me, that can only be known by the individuals who encountered the work. It is these *affects* of the work that accumulate as residues from watery experiences, settling in our muscle memory. Returning as fleeting sensations that flow in and out of our consciousness, visiting us as we go on to survive in our everyday lives—fragmented, poetically dwelling, enigmatic and forensic, aftermathing *lives on: survivre* (backwash, fallout, trail, wake). The performances can never be fully recovered from the documents' and objects' pre-disaster to post-survival phase; survival lives on without return to what was before; always *still-information*.





*Figure 119.* Evacuation complete, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.



*Figure 120.* Returning for debrief, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Maria O'Connor.





## Conclusion:

### Aftermath: an Unofficial Archive

—*A speculative pragmatic contribution to the field*

*And what remains...*

*At the end of this project I now return to the conceptual idea of the Raft...*

*The experiences that have been encountered through multiple stories, sensory encounters and actions to do with survival have tethered together conceptual and virtual bodies of thought, practice and theory; each being vital to the survival of the other, yet open to shifting changing formations as each iteration plays out.*

*Rafting-with...*

*A beginning*

*A marker*

*A trace*

*A reflection*

*A connection*

*A sensation*

*An encounter*

*A handing over*

*A release*

### *Rafting-with—Failure and Survival*

In the conclusion of this project I return to the original intentions of the research in its aims to re-inscribe or fracture grand narratives of the Anthropocene through performance encounters that allow for a poetic dwelling, or a way of being-with that challenges our ideas of performance as spectacle. The ethico-poetics of this project lie in the tactics of participatory performance—to deconstruct, de-authorise, challenge the spectacle is to focus on the everyday, the small and the unknown as a way to critique instrumental ways of being-in-the-world in relation to environmental issues of the Anthropocene. It is to ask the question, what is it to survive beyond oneself in terms of a practice, to let go of an artwork and hand-it-over to the participants involved. The idea was to challenge the instrumental rhetoric that creates grand narratives of survival towards a release, a letting-go as *a* poetics of non-mastery through creating participatory performance encounters as Choreographies of Participatory Ecologies that opens the *agencement* of an encounter *still-in-information*.

This site of the ‘final’ presentation (staged within a Black Box) activated survival props, costumes and objects as archives in the *aftermath* of this performance research. In the final performance the image of the Raft returned as a choreographic object formed via those that participated. *Rafting-with* forged an experiential temporary community that was activated through the materiality of the archives and felt through the senses. The video, sound and objects and lights enveloped the dark space of the Black Box and the audience-performers. Through a choreographic redistribution the multiple afterlives of my performances were mobilized;<sup>1</sup> in a kind of lingering atmospherics, as molecular and resonant to distributed relations.<sup>2</sup>

Installing archives as *memorial* induced affective archi-traces of something yet to begin. The process of moving from the guided safety drill to the open investigation of the installation became an act of mastery

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<sup>1</sup> André Lepecki, “The Body as Archive,” in *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, UK; New York: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

and release that revealed itself through a *handing-over*. The giving over of the helm after much preparation felt like an act of care, so that those who were there on the day could safely perform their own acts of survival. The site of the Black Box folds into the living archive of this practice, performing anew each and every time it is encountered, both in the iterations of my *Rafting survival tours* and on into its future activations—overhanging the future’s present. In this sense *knowing* ‘what happened’ can never fully restore those who survive back to the same place that their lives were pre-disaster. Those who survive are changed forever. Surviving is therefore an ontology of *change* and *adapting to change*—for release and not *return* to the nostalgia of what once was. Similarly, the site of this final work can never return to the place of previous performance iterations, yet fragments *live-on* through an assemblage of archival instructions, codes for ‘living life well’ and they live-on in those who decipher them.

### *Rafting Resting and Recovery*

*Rafting*, *resting* and *recovery* became the remains of the schisms within the master discourses of choreographic traditions and survival rhetoric, relocating our own survival from desire to be master of the environment through instructions for living life collectively or socially. Participating audience became invested members of the mobile performance, as a wild choreography that refers to re-wilding, a restoring of the environment or one’s self to its original wild state.<sup>3</sup> Yet this Choreography of Participatory Ecologies might also encompass a failure to survive or thrive. Considering that *the minor* represents the wildness, the un-rigor, it is open to flux, it includes the overlooked or the forgotten. How can this be channeled into ‘living a good life’ as mentioned earlier? It is these wild spaces in between that hold resonance for this research, contributing to the undoing and destabilising of instrumental structures of theatre and dance in an expanded field of performance studies, at the same time COPE*ing* (joining) the human environmental attributes of each discipline as a temporal spatial praxis.

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<sup>3</sup> A contentious term, as many deem the re-wilding of the United States to mean letting the wolves run wild. This point raises the concern that narratives of wilding wolves are dominant, due to fear of wild animals, yet they are scientifically unproven. George Monbiot, “Feral: Rewilding the Land, the Sea, and Human Life,” *Publishers Weekly* 261, no. 32 (2014).



In RAFTING, narrative and aesthetic evoked a political and imaginative response and poetic reverie. An emergent poetics of release rose to the surface as narratives merged between visual cues and codes for action that are undone in the temporal duration of a confined space, with certain conditions that heightened the senses (that of a dark space). As being-with-care is enfolded into the narratives of instruction prioritised, witnessed without judgment, attuning to the senses, relaxing into the floor, the layers of poetics that work to produce moments of release and non-mastery through different spaces of narrative and/or narratives of spaces emerged. This structure aimed to be true to the fact that the work is never finished and each day of the performance installs new unofficial archival encounters. Through iterations of performance, different agencies come to the fore—this is a survival structural intent of the work *still-in-formation*. Drawing on the *Choreographic Object* as *Everyday Survival* this site became the space for diversification of choreographic ecologies as bodies are put into action in relation to other bodies, technologies, and mediated virtualities.

Somatic actions and my autobiographical story of *Desperado* became a way to bring attention to what lies closest to us, countering the distancing effects of climate change, offering an alternative to narratives of disaster and despair. *Desperado* guided my practice through concepts of being-with and letting-be of ghosts or hauntological effects whereby technologies of expression are not sought as controlling or objective instrumental means, but rather evoke an ethics of telling and being. The significance of such an artistic approach attempts to break us out of a distinctive mastered way of living, through activating art as an *average* everyday modality; designing *marine* situations that are easily accessible for sharing *survival*. Folding in macro sites of marine encounter literally and metamorphically—such as urban, thalassic human-made water sites, natural islands and bodies of water—within Oceanic life with micro-autos experiences such as autobiographical experiences of sailing in particular, and the survival technology of protection and shelter. Poetic strategies bring-forth inventions for destabilising instrumental discourses

of control, dominance and master-species narcissisms,<sup>4</sup> and thereby evoke narratives of potentiality from which living modalities become ethically offered. These narratives describe a way of telling a new story, one that provides an ethics of living life collectively or socially—when life itself is under a unique threat at this precarious geo-historical moment. In adapting Zylinska's living life well, to living life collectively or socially I thus consider what it is to participate in life—with-others and what that might mean ethically as a way of being-in—the-world today through a sensory somatic experience of being attuned—as well as offering a unique perspective on the creation of performance as distinctly participatory, thus contributing to the de-authorisation of art practice without total dissemination of the artist's ability to disrupt or challenge hegemonic controls.

### *Relevance to Climate Change and the Anthropocene—Small beginnings*

To a certain extent I intended to bring awareness to the issues of climate change (or solutions to it) through experiences of survival and discomfort, ritual and memorial that were to create understandings of dystopian futures yet to come or reminders of what we had lost. Although, in the creation of the work, my survival had much to do with my relationship to my autobiographical story which affected my own journey in a specific way. I would however, not now claim to have affected each participant in a similar way to myself, or claim that anyone was in fact affected at all. What I believe is most successful from this research is the continuation of a practice that offers small interventions in everyday life that might cause potentialities of a shift or rift in hegemonic structures that surround us. At the same time, I don't wish to make any grand claims that this work achieved the change, which is so urgently needed. Yet for me as a practitioner the opening of potentialities for such shifts is where I create small beginnings—those that offer alternatives to control-based instrumental narratives that constantly surround us. Thus, I hope this work contributes to our attunement to the issues at hand.

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<sup>4</sup> In which humans (as the master species) are obsessed with their own sense of importance above all other species and the environment.

The research had the intention to offer a distinctive poetic and ethical exploration into fields of performance and installation art—as a hybrid or rafted methodology; an assemblage of practices from performance art, video media art and the everyday that allows for a thinking that is choreographic in nature; that which is based in movement, bodily senses and relational connectivity. It acknowledges inter- and trans-disciplinary paradigms for their agency in the redistribution of knowledge in order to enliven participatory or collaborative agency with respect to our contemporary existence. In relation to performance practices this practice reveals a type of performance that foregrounds participation within a material choreographic field. Setting itself apart from other forms of performance art and dance work it situates itself within current contemporary performance practice as a ‘Choreography of Participatory Ecologies’—a collective and social choreography.

As a methodology I believe this practice is strongest in its potential variation through collective actions with costumes and props. This artistic practice offers ways of working that are part of the increasing social practice that is common for artists working within community settings (kids, schools, community groups). In moving the position of the artist to the facilitator and back, the artist can move between social practice, community work and art practice for galleries and theatres as a mode of survival. However, what interests me in this research moving forward is how the artist can work within the fields of film, exhibition, costume and live practice, moving between presence and absence, questioning the necessity of each. I ask how far can I go towards absence before I (as the artist) completely disappear: Where lies the vanishing point of the artist’s idea and emergence of the participant’s experience, at which point does my practice disappear? I conclude that in creating an ethico-poetic environment for others to experience, the *agencement* of individuals will constantly shift and fluctuate at an individual level. It is this constantly shifting potential that can keep the work alive beyond what it set out to do. It is within this context that my practice further expands the constantly shifting borderlines between audience/performer; theatre/performance art; performance /everyday life—I do not suggest these fields are static but that they are moving shifting borders in between people and disciplines (each recognising the other) evoking levels of



participation or interaction (depending on who is participating) with theatrical devices that evoke images (or experiences) of the strange or awkward. It is this shifting field that is of interest to this research, offering the permission to experiment (and fail) along the way. Herein lies the main outcome of this research, that which remains and lives on. Despite the increased attention to audience interaction in art and theatre, there still are many occasions that I have experienced work that could have thought more about the position of the audience as participant. This research may influence, or in fact contribute to influencing, other practitioners in both visual arts, performance practice, dance and theatre to rethink who the audience is to them, and suggest that in offering a minor gesture of care towards the individual's experience that a small shift might occur in *agencement* in our everyday lives. In handing over the work to others our bodily inscription can diffuse mastery through participating at everyday and local levels—towards releasing control of mastery that privileges human beings as the master species and by its inference hierarchically places all other life forms into distant, lesser and separate categories. This research works through categories by deconstructing borders of inside and outside—deconstructing binaries that operate in language, coincident here to choreography or the writing of bodies as inscribed, and then released through *unofficial archives*. The practice also acknowledges that life is not a totalised entity but lives on in our past and opens into future projections for understanding that we are a part of something vital, a choreographic relational redistribution that might activate something *toward* a future that, as yet, cannot be named.



*Figure 121.* Lilos and Conferences, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.





*Figure 122.* Grassy Evacuations, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.





*Figure 123.* Survival Pack Down, RAFTING, 2017, Black Box, AUT University, Auckland.  
Photo: Christina Houghton.

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## Appendix 1. Performance Map

Event	Date	Name of Work	Type of work	Location/Journey	Duration	No. of participants required	No. of iterations
1	March 13, 2014	Eco Shop: 100 Survival Tips for Recuperation in the Face of Uncertainty.	Interactive performance installation	Dunedin, N.Z.	8 hours	Unlimited	1
2	March 20-24, 2014	Survival Tours FOU	Survival tour	Auckland, N.Z.  Through the back spaces, hallway, kitchen space of the Old Folks' Association.	4 hours	10	3 tours
3	May 30, 2014	GOING BUSH Survival Strategies	Survival tour	Auckland, N.Z. AUT University Auckland. Meet at Governor Fitzroy Place. Walk up Te Wai Horotiu Stream, across bridge to Albert Park—finish at highest point under the flagpole.	1 hour 30mins	10	1 tour
4	August 12-15, 2014	Actions For Living	Interactive performance installation	Auckland, N.Z. Installed in Gallery Three AUT.	5 days	Unlimited	5
5	Sunday October 5, 2014	Sharing Waters	Day trip.	Umeå Sweden Ferry boat journey on the Norrfjärden-Holmön and day trip to/on Holmön Island.	9 hours	6	1 trip
6	October-November 2014	Sharing Waters	Video	Umeå, Sweden Video (12 mins) of Sharing Waters Part 1—guided trip on the Half Moon Bay ferry in Auckland, 2013.	12 mins		
7	October 19, 2014	Weathering the Whau	Survival tour	Auckland, N.Z. Avondale. Guided tour around the plantation site of the Whau Festival.	40 mins	10	1 tour
8	November 28-30, 2014	Other Waters/ Survival tours	Survival tour	Auckland N.Z. Old Mangere Bridge.	1 hour	4	2

Institution/Festival/Context	Conditions of Site	Documentation/Archives See Appendix 2 - 10 for RAFTING Archives - Lists and links for Video and Sound files that accompany this exegesis and additional documents.
Fish Bowl Event Dunedin Fringe Festival, March 13-23, 2014.	Enclosed shop window space. Duration 8 hours (full working day).	List of Survival Tips, see Appendix 6.
Festival of Uncertainty (FOU) Old Folks Association, March 20-24, 2014, Auckland.	Busy backstage area, low light, night street, busy Saturday night crowd.	Video: FOU– Survival Tours. Sound files: Archipelagos; Sailing. Instructions—script, see Appendix 6.
Action Delay Symposium—A symposium on the temporality in performance and media arts. May 30-31, 2014, AUT University, Auckland.	Busy city streets and park. Moving through university buildings.	Video: Going Bush. Sound files: Archipelagos; Sailing.
Testing Student Exhibition Series (AUT).	Gallery Space at AUT University, unusual spatial configuration. Participants able to join at any time of day for 5 days.	Video: Walk with Me. Instructions, see Appendix 7.
Umeå2014—Capital of Culture Festival, linked to Survival Kit through Maskinen Art Boat Trip.	Cold temperatures, rolling seas.	Video: Rafting projection; Boats and Ports. Sound files: Tūi: Sailing; Soft Sounds from the South Seas.
Shown on Maskinen Art Boat 17, 18, 19 Oct, 2014 as part of the Survival Kit Festival. Art Boat travelled between Umeå and Vassa (Finland) with live performances and video showings.	Festival of films and performances on a large ferry boat.	Video: Boats and Ports.
Whau Arts Festival, 2014 Avondale, Auckland.	Plantation site location (Avondale car park), puddles in cracked concrete, with weeds pushing through.	Video: Rafting projection video. Sound files: Sailing; Sun Sand Sea.
Art On The Manukau—Old Mangere Bridge. Hosted by Te Tuhi Gallery Nov 15, 2014-Feb 15, 2015. Bridge Event Nov 28 & 30, 2014.	Blustery winds blowing from the Manukau Harbour	Video: Rafting loop, see RAFTING Archives. Sound files: Sun Sand, Sea. Digital Survival Guide, See Appendix 9.

9	March 2015	Still Sailing	Survival tour	Performance test for Prague. Sir Paul Reeves Atrium, AUT University.		3	3
10	June 18-25, 2015	Still Sailing	A guided survival tour of the Vltava River in Prague. A performance for four people in a row-boat.	Prague, Czech Republic Riverside walk and row-boat ride loop around Střelecký ostrov (island).	2 hours	1-4	8
11	July 8-11, 2015	In Between Future Islands	A walk along a tsunami evacuation route and through the abandoned dystopian Sheraton Hotel site in Rarotonga.	Rarotonga, Cook Islands A performance walk through the Sheraton Hotel site that connected a number of performances for that day of the conference. Richard Downing 'It Worked Yesterday', Amanda Yates 'See Level' and Dorita Hannah and Henry Ahfoo Taripo, 'Island Bride'.	2 hours	30	1
12	November 2015	Be for Barefoot	A survival walk on Ocean Beach (memorial walk)	Dunedin, N.Z. A walk along Ocean Beach between St Kilda and St Clair, Dunedin, New Zealand.	2 hours	30	1
13	February 2016	Lilo Float Workshop	A collective lilo floating experience	Auckland, N.Z. Motutapu Island, Hauraki Gulf.	2 hours	20	1
14	June 2016	Choreographing Life Rafts and Lilos	Lilo Safely. Lecture and demonstration	Old Government House, and the assembly area outside, Auckland University.	1 hour	20	1
15	October 21, 2016	Whau (Lo) ting	Rafting lilo tour.	Avondale, Auckland, N.Z. Night walk—Rafting through Avondale, Auckland.	1 hour	10-20	2
16	November 2016	Lilo Safely drill	Rafting lilo tour	Auckland, N.Z. In and around the stairwell and basement of number 1 Cross Street.	2 hours	10-20	2

White Nights NZPQ15 Sir Paul Reeves Building, AUT, Auckland.		
The costume selection for NZPQ15 New Zealand Prague Quadrennial, ĀHUA O TE RANGI.	Cold rainy weather as opposed to predicted heat of mid summer.	Video: Being-with. Sound files: Coastal weather forecast for New Zealand, June 2015 (Radio New Zealand RNZ); Long range weather forecast (RNZ); Sailing; Soft Sounds from the South Seas.
Sea Change—Performing a liquid continent, Oceanic Performance Biennial OPB Conference, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, July 8-11, 2015. Curated by Dorita Hannah, Amanda Monehu Yates and Ani O'Neill.	Tropical climate, site of disrepair, broken glass and walls, a space for play.	Video: Being-with. Sound file: Sailing.
Moving Communities Dance Conference, University of Otago, Dunedin. & Reunion for the Caroline Plummer Fellowship.	Hot still day as opposed to predicted cold winds.	Videos: Being-with and Rafting projection Map, see Appendix 10.
Motutapu Island, Hauraki Gulf, Auckland a performance research camp Pflab Auckland University, AUT & RMIT	Warm weather, water cold for the Australians.	Video: Lilos.
Undisciplining Dance Symposium Auckland University.	Lecture theatre protocols such as no loud sirens.	
Whau Arts Festival 2016. Twenty Whau Seven—24-hour Festival, Avondale, Auckland.	Friday night at the local shops, cars cruising, people chilling.	Videos: Whau LoTing (Documentation) & Lilos.
Somewhere Series #10 // Live Art Funfair / Sideshow Alley.	Small intimate performance evening, navigated stairwell and basement.	



17	February 2017	Lilo Safely	Choreographic lilo float	Auckland, N.Z. Guided lilo float at French Bay, Titirangi.	2 hours	10	2
18	March 5, 2017	Lilo Safely	Performance at Flotilla Whau 2017	Auckland, N.Z. Lilo actions on the Whau River bank. With val smith, Tru Paraha, Jess Quaid, Anya Peckham.	2 hours	5	1
19	January 2017	Lilo Safely	Instructional video	Auckland, N.Z.	12 mins		
20	March 23, 2017	Lilo Safely	Rafting lilo tour, video & night walk	Lisbon, Portugal	1 hour	10-20	1
21	September 2017 October 2017	RAFTING Tests		Auckland, N.Z.			1 2
22	November 2017	RAFTING  Choreographies of Participatory Ecologies—An Ethico-poetics of everyday life	Series of rafting survival tours through the archives of my research	Auckland, N.Z. A guided survival drill from Hikuwai Plaza through AUT to a performance installation in Black Box studio.	2 hours	50	5
23	December 2017/ January 2018	Lilo Safely	PFS: One-to-one experience  Video & live performance	Auckland, N.Z. Gus Fisher Gallery.	1 hour	20	1

HEAT Solar Revolutions—3 <sup>rd</sup> Oceanic Performance Biennial at Te Tuhi Gallery, Auckland.	Waters warm, heavy rainfall required cancellations (postponements) due to dangerous water quality.	Video: Lilos.
Flotilla Whau 2017, HEAT Solar Revolutions—Oceanic Performance Biennial at Te Tuhi Gallery, Auckland, N.Z.		
Carmo, Chiado e a Respublica Litteraria, Artes na Esfera Pública Lisboa/ Paris/ Auckland/ Granada/ Łódź Carmo Chiado and the Letters of the Republic, Arts in the Public Sphere, 2017.	Cool summer night in the back yard of my house, mosquitoes buzzing, morepork calling.	Video: Lilo Safely: Instructional Video.
Carmo, Chiado e a Respublica Litteraria, Artes na Esfera Pública Lisboa/ Paris/ Auckland/ Granada/ Łódź Carmo Chiado and the Letters of the Republic, Arts in the Public Sphere, 2017.	Cool night, atrium of open-air museum, busy opening night of exhibition.	Video: Lilos.
AUT preparation for Examination Performance series.		
AUT University PhD Examination Performance series.	Busy outdoor spaces with a range of conferences and presentations to move through. Black Box – dark ephemeral space.	Video: RAFTING Nov 19-27 2017. Final series of Rafting survival tours.  Rafting Archive 2 see Appendix 3. (Video media player) <i>Being-with</i> <i>Lilos</i> <i>Boats and Ports</i> Projection: Rafting projection. See Appendix 3.
Carmo Chiado and the Letters of the Republic Exhibition. At the Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland.		Video: PFS one to one experience.

## Appendix 2. RAFTING Archive 1.

Videos and Sound Files from performances and survival tours

[these files can be found in the media folders that accompany this exegesis].

1. FOU Survival Tour video. FOU—Survival Tours (10 min video clip).
2. Going Bush video. Going Bush—Survival Strategies, Camera Matt Cowan (5 min video clip).
3. Walk with me video. Walk with me—Actions for Living, Camera Becca Wood (3:25 min video clip).
4. Sharing Waters video. Sharing Waters (Maskinen Art Boat cut) Christina Houghton and Johannes Blomqvist, documentation of Sharing Waters Part 1, Auckland. (5 min video).
5. Other Waters video. Other Waters/Survival Tour. Mangere Bridge. Camera Rob Linkhorn and Ziggy Lever. Nov 2014 (5 min video).
6. Whau Lo Ting video. Whau (Lo) Ting, Rafting lilo tour—night walk through Avondale (video documentation, camera Rob Linkhorn), Whau Arts Festival, October 21, 2016. (9 min video).
7. PFS one to one experience video. PFS (Personal Flotation Suit) one-to-one experience, Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, February 10, 2018. (Documentation, 10min video).

### Rafting sound files:

1. Tūi
2. Archipelagos
3. Sun Sand Sea
4. Coastal weather forecast for New Zealand June 2015 (Radio New Zealand RNZ)
5. Long-range weather forecast June 2015 (RNZ)
6. Sailing
7. Soft Sounds from the South Seas, The Royal Tahitians

## Appendix 3. RAFTING Archive 2.

Documentation and video work from final performance installation RAFTING Nov 2017.  
[these files can be found in the media folders that accompany this exegesis].

1. RAFTING Nov 19-27 2017. RAFTING through the archives of my research—final series of Rafting survival tours, November 19-27, 2017. (Documentation, 38 min video).
2. Lilo Safely instructional video. Lilo Safely, Christina Houghton, instructional video, Camera Rob Linkhorn, Auckland, New Zealand (11 mins).
3. Being-with video loop. Being-with (video media player loop). Weathering the Whau, Still Sailing, In Between Future Islands.
4. Lilos video loop. Lilos (video media player loop).
5. Boats and Ports video. Boats and Ports (iPad).
6. Rafting projection video. Rafting projection—combination of documentation from works, Sharing Waters, Other Waters/survival tour, In between Future Islands, Still Sailing, Weathering the Whau, Be for Barefoot, Light House Dance (Sun Sand Sea and Lilos). Sounds: wooden ship creaking, ocean waves, national weather forecast (Radio NZ News) (45 min video).

### Rafting sound file:

8. Desperado Stories. Narrated by Isabella Linkhorn and Christina Houghton (played on CD player).



## Appendix 4. RAFTING—Other Documents and Materials.

# RAFTING

An unofficial archive



Throughout the past week (19th—24th November) a suite of five Rafting iterations choreograph an emergency drill in-formation. Rafting builds upon multiple elements such as different groups of participants, times of day, spaces of encounter including exterior and interior sites, video works, documentation, interactive archival materials, costumes and narratives.

The aim of this unofficial archive catalogue is to provide some kind of witness to the multiple assemblages that make up Rafting's suite of iterations. The work of Rafting assembles not only documentation as 'participatory' work reflecting on three to four years of PhD research, it also re-assembles work produced over the past week of iterations. Further, new works such as video, sound and 3-D works have been assembled/produced over the last month for Rafting's installation.

In performing Rafting over this past week I have consistently reflected and reimagined tactics for allowing the scope of the work to assist participatory release and agency. This has resulted in a constantly shifting encounter with participants materials and space that has developed throughout the week. Of which this performance today is the final encounter.

## Videos: projections, screens, iPads

Lilo Safely Instructional Video (12 minute video: Camera Rob Linkhorn).

Rafting Loop (Projection) - Sharing Waters Umeå Sweden - Survival Tour Other Waters, Old Mangere Bridge Auckland (Camera Rob Linkhorn & Ziggy lever), Holmön Ferry Boat, Whau Festival Avondale, Vltava River Prague, Rarotonga, St Claire Beach Dunedin, Chiado Museum Lisbon, Whau Lo Ting Avondale shops French Bay Titirangi (26 minute Video documentation, Camera Rob Linkhorn and Christina Houghton)

Lighthouse Dance (Sun, Sand Sea and Lilos: 10 minute video)

Being-With (Video media player) - Still Sailing Prague Quadrennial 2015, Between Future Islands 'Oceanic Performance Biennial', Rarotonga 2015, Weathering the Whau, Whau Festival 2014, be for barefoot Dunedin (7 minute documentation).

Lilos - (Video media player) Lilo Float Test Motutapu Island Hauraki Gulf Auckland, Lilo Float French Bay Titirangi Auckland in HEAT Oceannic Performance Biennial Te Uru Gallery Auckland., Lilo Safely Tour in Chiado, Carmo Letters of the Republic Lisbon Portugal, Whau Lo Ting Whau Festival 2016 (Video Documentation).

Boats and Ports - (Video ipad in PVC cover) Ports of Auckland Tour (Video Documentation) - Sharing Waters Half Moon Bay Ferry (Video work for Maskinen Art Boat Survival Festival Umea 2014), Boat Leaving Sharing Waters Umea 2014 (Video Documentation).

## Sound works

Desperado Stories - (Mixed CD) Coastal Weather Forecast for New Zealand June 2015 (Radio New Zealand National, Weather forecast), Stories of Desperado spoken by Isabella Linkhorn and Christina Houghton, Long range Weather forecast (Radio New Zealand National Weather forecast), Soft Sounds from the South Seas by the Royal Tahitians, Sailing - Guitar Instrumental.

Wooden Sailing Ship on Sea Ambience, Creaking wood, sound of waves, seagulls to relax your mind. (Youtube.com Relaxing Soundzz 2014.)

Ocean Waves (Free download, Sound Bible.com)

## Installation Props

### Preparation Room (Green Room).

Survival Kits: x 10 (Lilo, blowing tube, sunglasses from Desperado)

Hats x10 (selection of hats from Desperado)

Survival Jackets with silver lining, 2x Yellow PVC, 2x green PVC, 1x Clear PVC

Assortment of Recycled Disposable Rain Jackets in net bag

Lights 4x head lamps 3x rechargeable torches

Life Jacket (expired 1980's)

Inflatable children's swim vest (not to be used as a safety device)

Survival Blankets x2

Dads water proof overalls

Bailer and rope

Sunglasses basket

Kids Floaties x3  
 Oxygen Mask (Kids)  
 Flootation Device for small children and family pets (Tweetie Inflatable and ropes with Floaties)  
 Raro in Tupperware container and cups  
 Survival Kit Box -first checked 15th June 2016, recently checked 16th Nov 2017 (Contains, Survival snow boots, white sneakers marker pen, foam sitting mats, zip lock bags, Dads sailing jumper navy blue 100% wool, Striped hoody jumper from 1981 purchased by my grand mother for Desperado (100% wool 1 of 4), Orange Emergency Jumper (100% Acrylic)  
 Lilo hamper (also useful for mobile boat trips)  
 Fishing sticks and bottles from Mangere bridge  
 Ready inflated lilos x5

### **Black Box**

Desperados Stories: (Mixed CD see sound work)  
 Wooden boat model of Desperado Built by Phil Houghton in 1981 materials Balsa Wood, fibre glass and fabric off-cuts from kitchen curtains  
 Fishing Stick light in yellow PVC covered box.  
 Telescope Transparencies from Houghton slide collection of the building of Desperado 1978-1981 in Zip Box used for photo slides from Lesley and Peter's toaster (wedding present 1965)  
 Yellow Blanket from Houghton family collection and used on Desperado.

Charts from Desperado: New Zealand North Island East Coast: Bream Tail to Kawau Island including Great Barrier & Tamaki Strait and Approached including Waiheke Island.  
 Fishing stick lights x 2 in yellow PVC covered boxes (off-cuts from Survival Jackets)  
 Writing messages to the sea (Box Cardboard and Yellow Duct Tape) post it notes  
 Pencils and Marker pen, Packet of Minties/Minty wrappers, (Messages from final performance week accumulative)  
 Weather for New Zealand Sailors by Kenneth Brierley M.B.E., B.Sc. Endeavour Press. Borrowed item. AUT Library  
 Photo from Launch of Desperado Self and Grandmother Mary Houghton.  
 Veiwing Box post cards from Carmo Museum Lisbon. Earthquake 1755  
 Blankets: x 7 x2 Sleeping bags modified arm holes.  
 P.F.S. Personal Flotation Suit (Yello PVC Jacket, Water Bladders, Yellow Duct Tape, foot pump and hand pump Dolphin Torch  
 Fans x3  
 Water bladder, duct tape water level mark, filled with Raro.  
 Sail Jackets, solar shower, clear pvc sail bag, silver survival sail, yellow duct tape, rope and pulleys  
 Yellow box and survival blanket. (with projection)

Blankets x 8 from Houghton family used on Desperado  
 Modified sleeping bags with arm holes x2

## Participants

Geoff Gilson, Mark Jackson, Maria O'Connor, Janine Randerson, Hazel Randerson-Johnston, Melissa Laing, Lesley Houghton. Suzanne Cowan, Cambell Larsen, val smith, Rob Linkhorn, Isabella Linkhorn, Austin Linkhorn, Lyn Wilson, Zahra Kileen Chance, Alfredo Gutiérrez Borrero, Becca Wood, Franca Wood, Diane Blomfeld, Ash Turner, Rebecca Hobbs, Mark Harvey, James Charlton, Kathy Waghorn, Narjis Mirza, Emily O'Hara, Layne Waerea, Sean Curham, Jemma Jean Nissen, Scott Creighton, Jennifer Nikolai, Susi Gorodi, Rumen Rachev, Carol Kaoru Kodama, Carol Brown, Parisa Mor, Ali Taheri, Diana Albarren, Kate Alison, Alys Longley, Richard Orjis, Brent Harris, Elizabeth Presa, Cheryl Stock, Kate Diesfeld. Previous participants in Video Documentation – Participants of Whau Arts Festival - Prague: Jose Alejandro Gonzalez, Cathy Hunt, Shannon Loughnane, Juzzy Mandro, Justin Hunt, Cassidy Scoones, Rafe Scoones, Russell Scoones, Teresa McDougal, Katarína Máliková - Rarotonga: Participants of Sea Change/Oceanic Performance Biennial- Lesley Houghton, Tia Reihana, Piripi Morunga. Kauri Te Piha, Latai Funaki Taumoepeau, Margaret Werry, Moko Smith, Rosanna Raymond, Zahra Kileen-Chance, Ani O'Neil, Olivia Webb, Janine Randerson, Hazel Randerson-Johnston, Solomon Mortimer, Austin Linkhorn, Isabella Linkhorn. Motutapu Island: Roseanne Bartley, Caroline Vains, Julianna Preston, Saskia Schut, Mick Douglas, Ceri Hann, Amaara Raheem, Lyn Wilson, Kathy Waghorn. Dunedin: Participants of Community Dance Conference Dunedin, Sophia Kalogeropoulou, Karen Barbour, Lynne Pringle, Aaron Blaker, Esme Blaker Liesbeth, Ali East, Alys Longley, Sharlene Lewis, Jan Bowell, Clare Battersea, Kerry Stanton, Forbes Williams, Tony Plummer, Sean Cuhram, val smith, Hannah Briggs - Mangere bridge: Eu Jin Chua, Melissa Laing, Sean Curham, Mark Jackson, Maria O'Conner, Marieke Numan. Lisbon Portugal: Participants of Opening night for Chiado, Chiado Letters of the Republic.

## Acknowledgements

Val Smith, Jemma Jean Nissen (tech assistance).

All participants

Camera people, Rob Linkhorn, Maria O'Connor and Jemma Nissen.

Lisa Dreyer (WG210 facilitator)

Maria O'Connor

Janine Randerson

Rob Linkhorn, Isabella and Austin and Nana Les.

The Houghton Family.



# RAFTING

*Instructional Booklet*

*Weather Walking*

1. Put on a Yellow Survival Jacket and button it to your friend's jacket
2. Put on sunglasses from the selection we used to wear on Desperado and see the world through a 1980's lens
3. Protect yourself from the 21<sup>st</sup> century sun with a hat from Desperado the boat my Dad built in our backyard
4. Take the expired sunscreen and rub it on the back of your friends hand, let the smell remind you of summers in the sun and salt and the tan lines on your legs

### *Water Carrying*

*We used to drink water with Raro (Orange flavoured powdered drink) to cover the flavour of the rubber water tank from Desperado.*

1. Take your orange flavour packet and mix in water – 1 teaspoon per cup
2. Mix 1 packet of Raro per litre in a water bladder (not too sweet like my mum used to make it) and carry it with you
3. If on a boat one hand for the Raro , one hand for the boat and one hand for your hat
4. Fill a plastic two litre milk bottle and fill it with harbour waters add a packet of Raro to it to make it smell sweeter and look nicer
5. Carry water in the solar shower on the back of the survival jacket and capture rain in the hat to replenish your store

Navigation- Know where you are going tell someone where you are going

1. Follow a prerecorded video of the ground or the sky through a particular location
2. Play the New Zealand Long Range Weather forecast as you walk along a river
3. Hold a yellow rope in a line and follow your guide



The one thing that will help you the most in a survival situation is a positive mental attitude... You may be the only positive one but you will have a positive effect on your passengers as they see you handling the situation well...

STAR: From Video

IF THINGS GO WRONG, THINK STAR

1. Stop: Take a breath and sit down
2. Think: Look around you, listen and brain storm options
3. Assess: Evaluate the options and their potential consequences
4. Respond: Choose the best option.

*Write messages for the Sea*

1. Take the fishing pole connected with string and empty bottle and Pencil and paper
2. Write a message to the water you are beside or to a body of water dear to your heart (out it in an empty bottle)
3. Fish your message in a bottle off a bridge or a boat and take time to contemplate the future of this water body
4. Pass your fishing rod to your friend to pull in and share your stories of seas, rivers lakes.

#### Island Imaginings

1. Play the recording of Archipelagos while imagining you are geomorphically an island in creation
2. Imagine you're an island and create an Archipelago with others in your group
3. Everyone brings along a dish that has a personal memory to share at the Island picnic
4. Remember Island bush walks in Aotearoa through the sensing of Manuka oil and a branch from a tree

#### Forest Resting

(for 1-5 people useful in times where you need to get away - Sharing Waters – Umeå Sweden)

- Take a nice walk with a friend/s into a picturesque area
- Take your folded survival blanket and fashion it into a sleeping tube your friend may tape you in with duct tape
- Lie next to your friend so you are touching like a raft of bodies
- Set a timer and lie listening to the sounds of birds for 20 minutes



*The last Sailing of Desperado*

*We all loved eating Minties on our boat Desperad...*

- Pull out a packet of Minties and offer them to everyone
- Tell the story of the last time we went sailing on *Desperado* when we scattered Dad's ashes in the most polluted part of the Tamaki Estuary
- Play the song my Dad used to play on *Desperado* - *this was the song we played at his funeral*
- Stand holding the Boom Box while the song is playing as you look out at the boats and families sailing by
- Hoist the silver sail from the yellow survival jacket and sing along to 'Sailing'
- Play *Soft Sounds of the Pacific* and ask each person to dance with you one to one
- Dance while blindfolded with each person one by one
- Dance with each person under the silver sail of the survival jacket

Potential Hazzards

High winds

Storms

Drought

Flood

Actions:

Hoist a storm jib

Carry Water

Take a walk that is in relation ship to a water body: (for two people)

- A walk to higher ground.
- In search of water towards a body of water
- along side a water body
- To an Island for a day

*Do you remember that time? Do you remember once how we all got together to think about ecological action and survival tips for the future. I shared with you my experiences of survival and the skills I had learned growing up, going camping and the family holidays on Dad's boat. You joined me on a slow walk around the city as we hopped between Islands of vegetation sprouting between asphalt and concrete roads we noticed the small details. We looked out to sea and created dances together on street corners. Following the flight lines of bees we also remembered them. We lay under flapping nylon sail-cloth and you added your survival tips to our kit.*

*Take a Walk to higher ground (Going Bush)*

- Sit on a bench in the city and imagine it's a boat.
  - Drink water with Raro to cover the flavour of the rubber tank from Desperado
  - Walk to higher ground and look back to where you began
  - Create a temporary site with only what you can carry
  - Take a friend into a tent play music and share survival stories



*Take a walk at night* (Survival Tours Old Folks Ass.)

*A walk at night, destabilising vision like black water surrounding a small group gathered outside the main event, we stand on the footpath to listen to my voice recorded in low-grade quality describing the definition of an Archipelago and play the song my dad used to play on the tape-player on Desperado*

*Beach Walk*

Potentialities

Eroding sand dunes

Water:

Pollution

Water quality

Floating islands of plastic

Drowning

Interrupted beach walking

1. *Take a walk along a beach in bare feet (Be for Barefoot- A survival walk along Ocean Beach Dunedin)*
2. *See different scales, under foot, looking out, as you walk, you float, drift. this is your island, in your hands,*
3. *as you walk let the sands of time tell your story, it disappears, it may last the whole length of the beach or part of it, it will become part of all the stories of this beach.*
4. *Join me in my actions as I enact a ritual towards the eroding and disappearing dunes, while remembering all those who have walked this place.*

### *ISLAND EVACUATIONS*

#### Potential Hazzards

Cyclone

Tsunami

Sealevel Rise

#### Actions:

Evacuations

Emergency camps



*Walk to the water fall*

1. Walk with your local community along a Tsunami Evacuation route  
(*In Between Future Islands – Rarotonga, Cook Islands July 2015*)
2. Tell stories of failed evacuation drills and false alarms
3. Wear survival blankets, disposable raincoats and hats and sunglasses from *Desperado*.
4. Walk through a forgotten site and transform its purpose through ritual and empathy witnessing the spontaneous performances around the site.
5. Stand in a circle with eyes closed and listen to the roar of the waves threatening to break through the reef
6. Serve water flavoured with Raro and hear the origins of the failed orange industry in Rarotonga
7. Play the song 'Sailing' and hoist your survival sail from your jacket and lead everyone back to safety

*Boating Sailing*

Possible hazards

Storms

High seas

Drowning

Blown out to sea

Cabin Fever

Actions:

Jump ship

Jump over board

Pull the Bloody Rope

Fish Messages to the sea

*Take three people at a time out in a row boat on the Vltava River in Prague  
(STILL SAILING – A Guided Survival Tour of the historic Flood Plains of  
Prague)*

Equipment- Installation of Still Sailing Survival Jackets. Four Yellow PVC parkas with survival blanket linings and additional survival items.

1. Hats with water catching abilities
2. Sunglasses from *Desperado*
3. Yellow Rope to maintain connectivity
4. Jacket 1- Compact sail bag on back and Wi-Fi speaker in Pocket operated via smart phone in opposite pocket
5. Jacket 2- Solar Shower water catcher
6. Jacket 3 – Water Carrier (Water Bladder attached by carrabina)
7. Jacket 4 – Weather Catcher.

SURVIVAL TIP NO. 1

Embrace all unexpected encounters even if safety is threatened

SURVIVAL TIP NO. 2

Wear survival jackets and hats and sunglasses for protection.

SURVIVAL TIP NO. 3

Experience the city from the water.

SURVIVAL TIP NO. 3

Share stories about family sailing holidays.

SURVIVAL TIP NO. 4.

Write messages to the River and fish them in plastic bottles attached to sticks so as not to lose them to the rivers currents.

SURVIVAL TIP NO. 6 Create a world surrounding what you know of life senses and memories and see what happens.

SURVIVAL TIP NO. 7

Take notice of that what goes unnoticed

*Floating*

*Site:* Water

List of potential Hazards

Water quality

Floating islands of plastic

Floating out to sea

Submersion/Drowning

Risk of Rescue



*Lilo Safely drill*

This is an emergency drill please give your guide your full attention as they demonstrate to you our emergency evacuation procedure. Long-term hazards have been identified for aboard this vessel. Sea level rise and risk of tsunami is possible. Accidents of all kinds may also occur including, accidents with chairs, technology misfire, miscommunications and professional shipwrecks. In the case of an emergency remember to breathe. Remember to breathe.

- a. In the case of an emergency you will find an inflatable safety device under your seat. If your device is absent then you will have to befriend someone who has one.
- b. Remove the safety device from the packet and hold the end of it above your head so the device unravels. Like so...
- c. Warning! This product does not avoid drowning. Reserved to swimmers. The using like boat is at own risk of users. Be careful of winds and running waters. However, the safety device can also be used as a relaxing leisure device during times of Climate Change denial.
- d. There are two valves use your blowing tube to release the valve and then blow and blow again. Like so...
- e. You must blow the head up separately from the body of the device, you may wish to do this with a friend.
- f. The device may be useful draped around the shoulders for additional warmth. You can also inflate your device from this position with your friend (demonstrate blowing).
- g. In the case of rising sea levels or a Tsunami wave. You will hear the Tsunami siren and you will need to evacuate and move to higher ground (play Siren)
- h. Please evacuate the building through the indicated exits, and follow your guide and her friend. You can inflate the Device as you evacuate with your friend.
- i. Your guide will lead you to an assembly area where you must follow the actions of your guide.
- j. Once your Device is fully inflated you can mount the lilo and paddle to safety. If you have a friend they can guide you to safety.
- k. It is useful to repeat these actions many times to ensure you are familiar with the evacuation procedure.
- l. Refold and replace your device into the packet and place under the seat for the next participant.
- m. If you have been watching until now it is time for you to participate in the emergency evacuation drill practice. Follow your guide.

### *Lilo Float*

Breathing and floating exercise with a friend (or group of 10) - Warning : This Lilo is not a safety device it will not save your life in case of emergency. It is also extremely dangerous to be used by children without supervision.

Take your yellow Lilo

1. Blow it up with a friend create a Lilo of shared breath
2. Hold the Lilo for a hug or between you and a friend
3. Balance the Lilo above you and your friend to create shade or you can hold it under arms
4. Run or walk down to the water
5. Float your Lilo - One person mount the Lilo and lies on their back fully relax into the float
6. The other acts as guide standing on the bottom- give your friend a gentle float around
7. If you have a number of pairs of friends make a floating raft and a star to a favourite song (See suggested photo)
8. Catch a wave, Ride Lilo in - lying long ways or sideways with a friend
9. Alternatively float out to sea...

*Lilo Dance(for two)*

(to be performed in the case of an evacuation with a friend)

1. Take your Lilo into your arms, hold the Lilo like a long lost lover
2. Slow dance with your Lilo, you may do this with a friend.
3. Feel the P.V.C on your skin feel the world slow down all around you
4. Hold the Lilo above your head...you are sinking under the surface
5. Walk slowly in a large circle
6. Lay down your lilo gentle slowly
7. Slide the Lilo down along your body and lay it down like an injured friend
8. Lie face down on your lilo and relax into the suspension of a breath shared
9. Roll over and over with the Lilo
10. Finish on your back on the Lilo and float out to sea
11. Practice your gentle paddling technique
12. Reach over your body and undo the valves, feel your Lilo deflate in a long exhale
13. When you Lilo is completely deflated you may fold it up again and place into its package ready for the next Lilo Safely drill



*Lilo Dance reflection*

*Give the Lilo the kiss of life*

*May I dance with you?*

*I lay thee down with gentle care*

*I lie under you, you are as light as a feather*

*I lie on you my weight supported by your pillow of breath*

*Then we float out to sea together*

*Water Safely*

Pool performance with a friend (or 4 people).

Equipment:

1. Go to your local pool with a friend with a life jacket whistle and matching costumes
2. Stand at opposite ends and gesture to each other what you plan to do
3. Hold top edge of jacket and Pin jump simultaneously or as canon
4. float scull head first until you line up in a raft (side by side) holding each other's ankles
5. Scull along together bring arms together and legs apart and then opposite
6. Come to upright and tread water in a circle.

Rafting 2017

An Ethico Poetics of Everyday Survival through a Choreography of Participatory  
Ecologies- Christina Houghton - AUT University - NOV 2017

## Consent and Release Form (for over 16s)

Project title: **Rafting: An Ethico-Poetics of Everyday Survival as Choreography of Participatory Ecologies**

Project Supervisor: **Maria O'Connor**

Choreographer: **Christina Houghton**

### Dear Audience,

Kiaora, my name is Christina Houghton, I am a PhD student at AUT University, completing my PhD in Art and Design this November (2017). As my invite to you to attend this event suggests, my performance work involves *audience* members participating in performance art based events. I choreograph these events and this process involves invitations to audience members to enter my participatory practice performance events. Audience members are encouraged to participate at their own individual pace, comfort of interaction and invention. The ethos is based on conditions without demand, without coercion. Audience members are free to associate (or disassociate) with the event however they feel comfortable.

Any single choreography of participatory ecology will take no longer than 2-hours maximum.

### What is the purpose of this project?

The project explores ways people engage with themes of survival within our contemporary age. In this creative and practice-led meaning, I use choreographic and performance art methods together with relevant theory to engage my topic.

Having audience member's participate in my events allows me to understand collective actions as part of more local and discrete narratives on survival. This opens my project up into more philosophical questions around human and non human survival with respect to ecological issues.

### What will happen in this project?

My performance work is built on *iterative* performances. *Iteration* is important as it allows me to *slowly* build up an archive of material to reflect on. Performances are thereby recorded live with photography and video. These recordings may then re-appear in future *iterations* of my participatory performance events. The recordings may also appear in discussions on my work such as in public art presentations and to write academic articles and in my PhD thesis.

## Consent + Release for Audience:

- ☐ I understand photographs will be taken during the participatory performance events and permit **photographic documentation** of those events I attend, and their use including any reproductions or adaptations from these photographs, either complete or in part, alone or in conjunction with any wording that does not identify me personally, solely and exclusively for:
  - (a) the choreographer's/candidate's portfolio; and
  - (b) educational exhibition and examination purposes and related creative works; and
  - (c) use in conference presentations or other public talks presented by the candidate
- ☐ I understand that any copyright material created through the **photographic documentation of the performance events** is deemed to be owned by the candidate and that I do not own copyright of any of the photographs.
- ☐ I understand that if there is a wish **to withdraw any photographic representations** of your self that may be used in this project that he/she/I should email the candidate at [serpentlady@yahoo.com](mailto:serpentlady@yahoo.com) and ask for its withdrawal.

Audience member's signature: ..... Date: .....

Audience member's name: .....

Contact Details (if you wish to receive summary of this project in relation to future public presentations of the project):  
.....

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee



## Appendix 5. Exhibitions and Presentations

Blogpost link—<http://millicentdiaries.tumblr.com/archive>

*ECO SHOP: 100 survival tips for recuperation in the face of environmental uncertainty*, Christina Houghton, durational performance in a shop window of the Dunedin Community Gallery. Dunedin Fringe Festival—Fish Bowl event, March 13, 2014. (Blog post March 2014).

*Going Bush—Survival strategies*, Christina Houghton, a guided tour/performance walk somewhere around AUT. Action Delay Symposium (2014), AUT University, Auckland, May 30, 2014. (Blog post June 2014).

*Survival Tours*, Christina Houghton, a guided night tour of the hallway and the kitchen and outside spaces. Festival of Uncertainty FOU, Old Folks Ass., Auckland, March 22, 2014. (Blog post April 2014).

*Actions for Living* (2014), interactive performance installation. Gallery Three, AUT University, Auckland, August 12-15, 2014. (Blog post August 2014).

*Sharing Waters—A guided boat tour and island adventure to the Holmön Island*, Christina Houghton and Johannes Blomqvist, a full day performance with actions and conversation. Umeå, Sweden, October 5, 2014. (Blog post Oct 2014).

*Island Seas and Connectivity*, Christina Houghton and Johannes Blomqvist, video—performance documentation of *Sharing Waters*, 2013. Auckland, New Zealand.

*Weathering the Whau*, Christina Houghton, guided walk around the Whau Festival. Avondale, Auckland, October 19, 2014. <https://whauthepeople.com/projects/2014-2/>

*Other Waters /Survival tours*, Christina Houghton, guided walk along Mangere Bridge. Art on the Manukau, Mangere, Auckland, Nov 28-30, 2014. (Blog post Nov 2014). <http://www.tetuhi.org.nz/whats-on/exhibitiondetails.php?id=149>

*Still Sailing—A guided survival tour of the Vltava River in Prague*, Christina Houghton, performance test lab. St Paul St Gallery, January 2015. (Blog post January 2015).

*Still Sailing—A guided survival tour of the Vltava River in Prague*, Christina Houghton, performance test lab. Sir Paul Reeves Building Atrium, White Nights, Auckland Arts Festival, March 2015.

*Still Sailing—A guided survival tour of the Vltava River in Prague*, Christina Houghton, a performance for four people in a row-boat. NZPQ15, Prague Quadrennial of Performance, Space and Design, Prague, Czech Republic, June 18-25, 2015. (Blog post June 2015). <https://www.instagram.com/nzpq15/>

*In Between Future Islands*, Christina Houghton, a walk along a Tsunami evacuation route and through the abandoned dystopian Sheraton Hotel site in Rarotonga. Sea Change-Oceanic Performance Biennial OPB conference, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, July 8-11, 2015. (Blog post September 2015).

*Be for Barefoot—A memorial walk along Ocean Beach*, Christina Houghton, a guided sensory walk along Ocean Beach in Dunedin. Moving Communities Dance Conference, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand, November 2015. (Blog post April 2016).

*Lilo Float Workshop*, a collective lilo floating experience. Motutapu Island, Hauraki Gulf, Auckland, New Zealand, February 2016.

*Choreographing Lilos and Life Rafts*, Christina Houghton, a lecture demonstration. Undisciplining Dance Symposium, Auckland University, Auckland, June 2016.

*Whau (Lo) Ting*, Christina Houghton, Rafting lilo tour—night walk through Avondale. Whau Festival 2016, Avondale, Auckland, New Zealand. (Blog post December 2016). <https://whauthepeople.com/projects/whau-arts-festival-2016/>

*Lilo Safely*, Christina Houghton, choreographic lilo float performance. HEAT: Solar Revolutions, 3rd Oceanic Performance Biennial, Te Uru Gallery/French Bay, Auckland, February, 2017. (Blog post February 2017).

*Lilo Safely*, Christina Houghton, lilo actions riverbank performance, with val smith, Tru Paraha, Jess Quaid, Anya Peckham. Flotilla Whau 2017 as part of HEAT: Solar Revolutions, 3rd Oceanic Performance Biennial, Te Uru Gallery/Avondale, Auckland March 4, 2017. (Blog post April 2017) <http://www.teuru.org.nz/index.cfm/whats-on/calendar/heat-solar-revolutions/>

*Lilo Safely: Instructional video* (2016), Christina Houghton, camera: Rob Linkhorn. West Auckland, New Zealand. Exhibited as part of Carmo, Chiado e a Republica Litteraria, Artes na Esfera Pública Lisboa/Paris/Auckland/Granada/Lódź Carmo Chiado and the Letters of the Republic, Arts in the Public Sphere, Lisbon, Portugal, March 23, 2017.

*Lilo Safely*, Christina Houghton, rafting tour as part of the opening of Carmo, Chiado e a Republica Litteraria, Artes na Esfera Pública Lisboa/Paris/Auckland/Granada/Lódź. Carmo Chiado and the Letters of the Republic, Arts in the Public Sphere, Lisbon, Portugal, March 23, 2017.

*Lilo Safely*, Christina Houghton, PFS (Personal Flotation Suit) one-to-one experience. Opening of Carmo, Chiado e a Republica Litteraria, Artes na Esfera Pública, Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, February 10, 2018. <http://www.creative.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/galleries-and-collections/gus-fisher-gallery/ExhibitionCurrent.html>

## Conferences Presentations

*Survival Strategies* (Performance), AUT Action Delay Symposium, AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand, 2014.

*Poetics of Survival*, Sea Change—Performing a Liquid Continent, 2nd Oceanic Performance Biennial 2015. Rarotonga, Cook Islands, South Pacific.

*Memorials for Lost Environments*, Moving Communities Dance Symposium, Otago University, Dunedin, New Zealand, 2015.

*Choreographing Lilos and Life Rafts*, performance lecture, Undisciplining Dance Symposium, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand, 2016.

*The Art of Survival—Participatory Practice and Minimal Ethics*, Social Climates (Panel), Performing Climates PSI # 22, Melbourne University, Melbourne, Australia, 2016

## List of articles published

Christina Houghton, “They Come from Far Away—Part 1 Live Performance,” *Theatreview* (February 10, 2016), <https://www.theatreview.org.nz/reviews/review.php?id=8809>.

Christina Houghton, “Ufo Sightings and Singular Encounters—Part Two,” *Theatreview* (February 17, 2016), <https://www.theatreview.org.nz/reviews/review.php?id=8841>.

Christina Houghton, “Memorials for Lost Environments: Participatory Performance and Minimal Ethics,” *Dance Research Aotearoa* Vol 4 (2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.15663%2Fdra.v4i1.50>.

Christina Houghton, “Touched by Turquoise: Turquoise for the Coming Storm,” *Theatreview* (August 15, 2016), <https://www.theatreview.org.nz/reviews/review.php?id=9472>.

Christina Houghton, “*Whau (Lo) Ting*—A Night Walk in Avondale (Auckland, New Zealand),” in *Carmo, Chiado e a Respublica Litteraria, Arts in the Public Sphere* (Lisboa, Portugal: Artes na Esfera Pública, 2017).

Christina Houghton, “Don’t Hold Your Breath: Choreographing Life Rafts and Lilos,” in *Undisciplining Dance in Nine Movements and Eight Stumbles*, ed. Carol Brown and Alys Longley (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2018).

Christina Houghton, *Shades of Turquoise*, ed. Bruce Phillips, vol. 3, *Share/Cheat/Unite* (ISSUU: Te Tuhi Gallery, 2018), [https://issuu.com/tetuhiart/docs/scu\\_vol3\\_ebook](https://issuu.com/tetuhiart/docs/scu_vol3_ebook).

## Invited Lectures

Performing Ecologies 2017, Year 2—School of Performing and Screen Arts, Unitec, Auckland.

Performance and Public Pedagogy, School of Critical Studies in Education, May 2017, The University of Auckland.

Survival Workshop, Tertiary Dance Festival, June 2016, The University of Auckland.

Performing Ecologies 2015, Year 1 & 2. School of Performing and Screen Arts, Unitec, Auckland.

## Professional Performance Development 2014-2017

*Flood*—Carol Brown, Russell Scoones, Dorita Hannah, Ambulatory performance around Prague along the banks of the Vltava River, New Zealand Prague Quadrennial NZPQ15, (performer).

*Listening for Disappearing*—Becca Wood, Auckland University, (participant, performer).

Efva Lilja, Artist as Activist—Undisciplining Dance Symposium, Auckland University, Auckland, June 2016, (workshop participant).

DANCERS —Performance Lab Sonia Gomez: Dancers, A performance created in her bedroom on low resources, Toynbee Studios, Artsadmin, London, March 2017, (workshop participant).



## Appendix 6. Eco-Shop (2014).

### Survival Tips (an example)

#### 100 Survival Actions for Recuperation

1. Breathe—breathe on window—yoga
2. Slow down
3. Notice the cells in your body
4. Listen
5. Notice the world around you the microscopic (improv on window space)
6. Notice the world around you the macroscopic (improv outside the window space)
7. Connect with nature—look out window
8. Go on a nature walk
9. Connect with science—what is my ecology?
10. Become non-human
11. Drink water—drink coffee
12. Act local
13. Connect with others
14. Have a conversation through a window
15. Have a coffee date
16. Feel—feel nature in your gut—sensations of wind, sand, sea, barefoot walking on St Clair Beach with Caroline
17. Explore your local environment
18. Become a bee keeper
19. Become bee
20. Share stories, personal memories, collect stories
21. Create family memories—campervan
22. Share small spaces with family members—show photos of the camper trip

23. Visit the habitat of an endangered species
24. Connect with others
25. Take a coastal walk with someone
26. Remember someone you used to know—beach walk with Lisa
27. Will you take a walk with me?
28. Take a walk with me—take a long walk, Dunedin walk with dialogue and Dunedin t-shirt
29. Go on a slow nature walk, images on iPad of New Lynn
30. Go on a boat trip to where I used to live as a teenager
31. Make oceanic connections with Johannes
32. Take a boat journey
33. Share stories of the ocean, leaving Half Moon Bay, wearing hats and sunglasses, drinking Raro
34. Remember someone who loves/loved sailing
35. Dance the last dance
36. Imagine—imagine you are an island
37. What are your skin surfaces, what is your coastline? Surfaces topography, proximity to others
38. Notice the sea level rising
39. Have a picnic on every birthday
40. Become blanket
41. Share a cup of tea
42. Discover your blanket's origins—Onehunga
43. Slow dance—will you dance with me?
44. Send a message in a bottle

## Appendix 7. Festival of Uncertainty (2014).

Festival of Uncertainty (2014)  
Letter of Proposal and Script

Christina Houghton  
30 Raroa Terrace,  
Waiatarua,  
Auckland 0604,  
02102237414  
serpentlady@yahoo.com

Feasting House  
P.O. BOX 106-687  
Auckland City  
Auckland 1143  
New Zealand

Re: Festival of Uncertainty

Dear Nisha, Stephen, Sean, Josh and Jeff,

In response to the call for the *Festival of Uncertainty* to be held in the certain place of *The Old Folks Assoc.* on an uncertain date during the four days of and between dates of March 20th and 24th 2014 I would like to offer a structure for the gathering of individuals as a participatory performance/guided tour of the site of the festival noting both historic and present points of interest or disinterest. This site being the Old Folks Hall itself including the stage, behind the curtain, perhaps under the stage, the amenities behind the stage area, the kitchen and the courtyard out the back and on the street out front. I am interested in survival strategies both personal and ecological that may be discovered and re-enacted on this performance journey that move towards sustaining an uncertain future in opposition to a sustainable future. This idea of course aims to develop and manipulate forms of community action as opposed to individual actions such as co-ordination and co-operation of social activities and group conversation/story telling and how this might be both successful and unsuccessful. I hope that you are also interested in opening a space for this to occur during the festival as perhaps a repetitive event with small groups of people that might occur a number of times throughout a day/evening in between or during other activities in a random way that creates unknown intersections with other artists in the space (ie “oh god there go the in appropriate tourists again!”).

This work will follow *Eco-shops- 100 survival tips for recuperation* a durational performance piece that I will be performing in the Fish Bowl Gallery window for the Dunedin Festival March 13th. This work also aims to open space for audience participation and imagination while attempting to un-perform in the display area of a gallery window. You know the rest...

<http://millicentdiaries.tumblr.com/>

Kind Regards  
Christina Houghton  
(Amateur Professional Artist)

*Performance Script*—I have invited you here to help action 100 survival tips that I have been working on. I would like you to listen to my instructions and follow my lead and respond to each as closely as you can or as much as you want. Together I hope for us all to be part of a moving performance around the hall. Are you ready prepare and begin.

<p>Sound- Breathing close your eyes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connect to internal body systems</li> <li>2. Breathe</li> <li>3. Engage in cellular breathing</li> <li>4. Notice the flows of energy</li> <li>5. Move in response to sensation</li> <li>6. Action your daily practice</li> <li>7. Unfold into the evening</li> <li>8. Map the shapes of nature</li> <li>9. Map bones, muscles tissues tendons</li> <li>10. Think feel move</li> </ol> <p>Sound- Nature sounds</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Connect to external landscapes open your eyes</li> <li>12. Look around you</li> <li>13. Take notice of the microscopic</li> <li>14. Move into nooks and crannies</li> <li>15. Sense spaces in between</li> <li>16. See feel hear</li> <li>17. Move in this environment</li> </ol> <p>Usually I do a run at this point but this evening ill show you some photos from a recent run I did in Te Anau.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. Exercise in the great outdoors</li> <li>19. Run to feel better</li> <li>20. Run to keep warm</li> <li>21. Run with a friend</li> <li>22. Run rather than walk</li> <li>23. Run like a four year old</li> <li>24. Run like a 40 year old</li> <li>25. Run in a place you have just arrived in</li> <li>26. Document your progress in mins and speed</li> <li>27. Map your distance covered</li> <li>28. Connect to the present</li> <li>29. Notice where <u>you</u> are</li> <li>30. Notice someone who stands near you</li> <li>31. Say hello to a stranger</li> <li>32. Make eye contact</li> <li>33. Stand silently with someone</li> </ol> <p>Then action Nike App for the tour. Move into the hallway. Photos of Dunedin at one end photos on the wall. Walk up and down.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>34. Connect to the city</li> <li>35. Visit a place you use to know</li> <li>36. Walk up and down pass people</li> <li>37. Be a tourist in your own town</li> <li>38. Be a local in a new city</li> <li>39. Notice places not meant to be noticed</li> <li>40. Move with the flows of the city</li> <li>41. Connect with people on the street</li> <li>42. Invite someone to walk with you –play iphone update</li> </ol> <p>Move into Kitchen pour tea someone holds ipad flics through pics and plays road videos</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>43. Connect to spaces in between cities</li> <li>44. Take a family road trip</li> <li>45. exist in small intimate spaces</li> <li>46. determine your journey at each cross road</li> <li>47. camp only in lake side holiday parks</li> <li>48. stop regularly for cups of tea and snacks</li> <li>49. open all the windows</li> <li>50. take a walk along a lake</li> <li>51. take a run along the lake edge</li> <li>52. map it draw it connect it- Play iphone update.</li> </ol>	<p>Play slide show walk out back entrance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>53. Connect to the nature of the city</li> <li>54. Go on a slow nature walk</li> <li>55. Walk through suburban back yards</li> <li>56. Notice the over flows of domesticity</li> <li>57. Follow pylons and shopping trollies</li> <li>58. Search for lost swimming holes</li> </ol> <p>Put on yellow jacket</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>59. Connect to coast lines</li> <li>60. Walk along coast lines</li> <li>61. Walk barefoot in the sand</li> <li>62. Remember someone you once knew</li> <li>63. Draw this coast line</li> <li>64. Join it to the beginning</li> <li>65. Look out to sea – play sun sand sea</li> <li>66. Imagine you are an island</li> <li>67. Notice other islands</li> <li>68. Make oceanic connections</li> <li>69. Notice what happens when the sea levels rise</li> </ol> <p>Show sea level pics play archipelago – then sun sand sea</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>70. Map shipping lines between islands</li> <li>71. Take a boat trip to somewhere you once lived</li> <li>72. Remember holidays on the family boat</li> </ol> <p>Show boat pics wear glasses eat minties</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>73. Play the song that dad used to play</li> <li>74. Slow dance to the rocking sea journey</li> </ol> <p>Head to final room put on white suit- someone reads and we all vibrate to Beez.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>75. Connect to others</li> <li>76. Remember the past</li> <li>77. Live in the present</li> <li>78. Imagine the future</li> <li>79. Share a picnic on your birthday</li> <li>80. Notice a tree blooming on your sons birthday</li> <li>81. Know where your food comes from</li> <li>82. Investigate the cycles of nature</li> <li>83. Make scientific enquiries</li> <li>84. Explore possibilities</li> <li>85. Look to nature for solutions</li> <li>86. Tune into vibrations of nature</li> <li>87. Follow the flight lines of bees</li> <li>88. Allow for transformations</li> <li>89. Takes tips from children</li> <li>90. Fill in gaps on lists</li> <li>91. Wear plenty of warm clothes</li> <li>92. Include john at your dinner party</li> <li>93. Eat broccoli all the time</li> <li>94. Don't eat cake all the time only sometimes</li> <li>95. Don't kick dogs in the shins</li> <li>96. Hold onto the wheel at all times</li> <li>97. Make you way home at the end of the day</li> <li>98. Take a tour through the old folks hall</li> <li>99. Take many friends when you go</li> <li>100. Keep an eye out for tomorrow...</li> </ol>
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## Appendix 8. Actions For Living (2014)

### Instructions (Example)

#### **Instruction No. 1. Walk with me:**

**Items:** Two jackets attached assorted items in pockets, iPad in protective cover.

Put on the jackets for two—one person hold the end of the rope.

Take a slow walk with guide through the space. Experiment with slow walking, straight or bent pathways. You may want to respond to the weather walks projection.

Follow instructions for action in right-hand pocket.

Walk with me—Hi this walk you're taking with me is a chance for me to share with you some of my own survival history.

It is this history that has provided me with skills and experiences that enable me to survive in everyday life in urban and wild spaces. PERHAPS these are the experiences that I draw upon when making decisions that will affect the future. Or if I was to need extreme survival action measures.

#### **Music Sailing CD Player**

**Playing *Sailing* and hoisting a sail turns into a tent.**

**Tell the survival story of Port Jackson.**

My earliest memories were of my dad building a 36-foot boat out the back of our house in the late 70s. He laid out bits of wood in the shape of an upturned boat and this was the start of a three-year journey building the family yacht. We spent many years sailing around NZ coastlines. Sailing with the family was a durational experience in intimacy. We would watch the scenery go by and spend time practicing our knots (attempt to tie a knot between you with end of rope). We would always wear protective gear to keep dry but would always have bare legs and arms (apply sunscreen on back of hand) and we had a collection of cheap sunglasses that you could choose from if you forgot yours or lost them over the side.

#### **Instruction No. 2. Navigation:**

**Items:** Map in right-hand pocket. Draw a line of your walk on the map, it may overlap with previous ones. Add any symbols for points of interest.

In Standard Four camp-week I enjoyed the navigation tasks using the rope where you were blind-folded, and followed along until you found a special prize.

View the navigational video *Canopy Movie* and walk the small circle with your partner.

View the ground-walking movie and walk larger circle.

Draw a diagram on your map of the position of your rope. This is your island.

We looked forward to weighing anchor at one of the many islands and walking to the top to look back to the tiny boat in the bay (walk towards the binoculars and look back to where you came from) make an island with the rope.

Appendix 9. Other Waters/Survival Tour (2014)

*Title:*

*Other Waters/Survival Tour*

*Mangere Bridge*

*2014*

Briefing.

Survival for ourselves and the planet.

*I have been researching what survival means for ourselves and the planet. What are the things that are important to our own survival and what might be important to the survival of the Manukau harbour.*

*The forgotten harbour seemingly takes second place to the sparkling waters of the Waitemata. How can our increased awareness of this place change the way we think about it.*

*I decided to create this interactive walk that is a cross between a guided sensory walk, a survival drill and a ritual. It moves along old Mangere bridge and back again.*

*I will be your guide and we will also be guided by this digital booklet that aims to situate this walk in time as part of an accumulative survival kit for future presence. So essentially today I'm speaking from the past to the present and back again.*

Some of these ideas for survival are:

*Being prepared for the short term and the long term.*

*Being ready for possibility of small and large events.*

*Drawing on past experiences as skills for adaptability.*

*Enacting small acts of survival. Evoking care and empathy for ourselves and the environment.*

*Risk Assessment - Survival Tour/ Other Waters November 28 and 29<sup>th</sup> 2014*

Specificity to Site.	People	Resources/ Equipment	Environment	2. Risk Management 3. Coping with emergencies
1. Risk Identification				
Think about the risks of the site through time.	Boat Safety Falling off the bridge/drowning Being blown away	Loss of habitat Loss of lifestyle	Emergency air-vents that release trapped air bubbles.	Long term degradation. Bad smells. Bad experiences
Sun Wind and storms. FLOODS	Un-even terrain/ broken limb Polluted waters affecting fish	Loss of bridge Dropping fishing rod	Increased pollution due to rain overflow from central Auckland.	<u>Tactics</u> Be careful!! Look out! Don't worry about it!

## Appendix 10. Be for Barefoot (2015).

### Be for bareFoot

#### Survival walk on Ocean Beach Dunedin

Thursday Nov 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 Duration: 1 Hour  
(Finish with a swim at the salt water pool optional).  
Performed by Christina Houghton and participants.

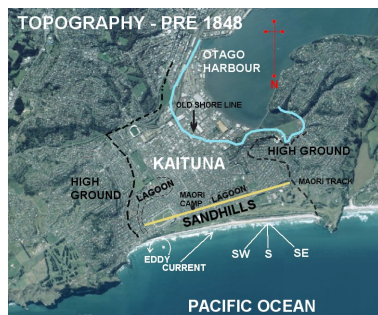
*Take a walk along the beach in bare feet*

*See different scales, under foot, looking out, as you walk,  
you float, drift.*

*this is your island, in your hands, as you walk let the sands of  
time tell your story, it disappears, it may last the whole length  
of the beach or part of it, it will become part of all the stories  
of this beach.*

*Join me in my actions as I enact a ritual towards the eroding  
and disappearing dunes, while remembering all those who  
have walked this place.*

*Be for barefoot* is a performance event that brings people together in a barefoot walk along Ocean Beach from St Kilda to St Claire in Dunedin. It is inspired by the B project (2002) that involved Caroline Plummer marking this special occasion of the reunion of the Caroline Plummer dance fellowship. Friends of Caroline and Ocean Beach invite others to take a walk with us as a participatory performance event. Performance Ecologies and performance tactics enable us to survive in today's ever shifting and changing world. Negotiating shifting sands underfoot we need tactics and strategies to navigate through uncertain times. The only certain thing about the future is change. How can we live today with a minimal ethics that brings us together. *Be for Barefoot* traces cartographies of those who have gone before and those who follow, peeling back the layers to the basics of who we are, animal, human, material. We feel the sand of Ocean Beach between our toes and take care into our soles. *Be for Barefoot* encourages a slowing down, noticing textures of terrain, encouraging us to notice where we place our feet. This performance aims to be an accumulation of multiple walks: a walk for the environment, a walk to remember, a walk to forget, a walk towards somatic well-being, a survival walk. Bring your own motivation for walking as we all walk bare foot to bring us closer to Earth to feel our soles with our soles and inspire fluid ways of being together and bringing-forth a moving community.



**Kaituna** – Ocean Beach is a highly modified environment. The normal activity and moveability of sand has been replaced and stabilised. The former back dune areas have been extensively mined and became recreation areas. The coastline still stretches from the St Clair cliffs in the west to Lawyer's Head in the east, but the sand dunes have become much thinner and steeper. In 1848 in the west around St Clair the sand hills were much smaller and lower, the mouth of a lagoon ran through these dunes. The dunes accumulated and grew as you moved east towards Lawyer's head. High ground was in the west at the St Clair hills and in the east at the beginning of the Otago Peninsula and beyond them Otago Harbour and its extended tidal areas. Between these features was a low-lying wetland named Kaituna. It was covered with silver tussock, rushes and flax and was an area of traditional food gathering for Maori who sought tuna (eel), pukeko and weka. There is also evidence that the Kaituna area was once thick with trees, probably Kahikatea. They lay buried under the surface of the wetland and were often dug up and used as firewood by early settlers. A significant feature was the track along the inner edge of the sand hills which provided easy access to Kaituna.

(Armed for the fray – The Mining of St Kilda, [dunedin-amenities-society.org.nz](http://dunedin-amenities-society.org.nz), July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015)

Earthing or Grounding (described by Ober, Sinatra & Zucker, 2010) is where walking in bare feet allows the soles of the feet to absorb negative ions from the earth. In cultures around the world such as the Native American Indians and Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine it is considered a healing practice that connects humans to the soil of the earth. Furthermore, it is considered that sand beside water is the ideal location for walking barefoot as sea-water is a great conductor for good connections to the body that contains mostly water.



St Claire 1880's

The recent damage of the sea wall at St Clair Esplanade is a pertinent reminder of the power and ferocity of the ocean and the continuation of an issue that has been prominent in Dunedin since the beginnings of colonial settlement. The extension of physical occupation of coastal areas by people and the development of infrastructure around that occupation has been fraught with problems. Worse still has been the undermining of the important protection afforded to the city by the St Clair and St Kilda beach areas.

(When History Repeats [dunedin-amenities-society.org.nz](http://dunedin-amenities-society.org.nz), May 29 2015)

### Otago Daily Times

#### Rising sea levels: Thousands of homes at risk

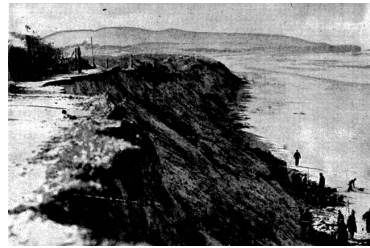
Created 19/11/15

A new report on rising sea levels claims 9000 homes are at risk nationally, including 2600 in Dunedin.

The report, from Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Jan Wright, also says the Government needs to start preparing for the huge potential cost of rising oceans driven by climate change, which could lead to the "managed retreat" of coastal communities to higher ground. "Continuing sea level rise is not something that might happen - it is already happening, will accelerate, and will continue for the indefinite future," Dr Wright wrote in her report. "Homes, businesses and infrastructure worth billions of dollars have been built on low-lying land close to the coast," she said. A total of 9000 homes nationally were less than 50cm above spring high tides, Dr Wright's report said, 2600 of which were in Dunedin. Thousands more were within a metre of this threshold. "Rising sea levels will have major impacts in many places. In time, coastal land will become uninhabitable." Published on [Otago Daily Times Online News](http://www.odt.co.nz) (<http://www.odt.co.nz>)



By 1876 the urban growth of Dunedin had pushed housing to the edge of the sand hills at Ocean Beach. Sand was being removed constantly by the householders to raise the level of their sections. Occasional floods are reported in the 1870s, but mostly from the harbour, into South Dunedin. On one occasion a Mrs Rae and her two daughters were rescued by a gasworks boat crew from Rankieor Street. The dog was reportedly was left behind! The coach-builder for Cobb & Co in Reid Road built a flat-bottomed boat in which he used to paddle to the nearest dry land in times of flood. There was once reported nine inches of water in the Hillside Railway Workshops wagon shop that stopped work for several days.



St Claire 1939

Dunedin's various local authorities have struggled for the last 140 years to manage the coastal issues at St Clair and St Kilda. Sadly, it is a historical record of failure to understand the natural processes of the dune and coastal environment that affects the coastline that we perilously live beside. Perhaps this latest failure is an opportunity to rectify that understanding and restore the coastal environment to ensure its long term functionality as an ecological asset that provides both protection and pleasure for our city. The problems with the wall and the wider erosion issues of Ocean Beach Domain cannot be dealt with in isolation, but must be integrated into a programme that deals with the coastal environment as a living entity rather than as an engineered solution. That may also mean making changes to our thinking and use of this area in the long term. History has shown our failures let's hope that we don't continue that trend.

(When History Repeats [dunedin-amenities-society.org.nz](http://dunedin-amenities-society.org.nz), May 29 2015)

Tonight I walked the lengths  
of St Kilda and St Claire,  
those two beneficent, oceanic sisters  
whose sands have long grounded and  
caressed my feet,  
whose hazy pastel light and eternal  
fluid breathing  
have long felt like home.  
Tonight, as I walked  
I gathered my cloaks of determination  
and of faith  
and wrapped them tightly around  
myself  
against which no wind, no matter how  
cold nor cruel,  
could stop me in my march.  
St Kilda and St Clare let forth their  
waves,  
pounding a rhythmic battle song  
that now sings in my heart.  
When I stood  
energised and exhilarated  
on a sand hill and saluted my leave  
I knew that I was ready.

Caroline

(Boost 2003– A Healing Narrative through Somatics and Dance, Caroline Plummer Ralph Buck Sylvie Fortin)