School of Built Environment

Memory and Urban Place: A Visual Enquiry

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature:

Date: 17.03.2014

Abstract

Memory and Urban Place: A Visual Enquiry

Urban places are typically designed and represented as static images. Yet people's dynamic engagement with city space, that includes memory of other places, is a significant factor in place-making. Current representations within the built environment profession on the whole do not seek to capture the role of people who live in cities in the place-making process. This thesis visualises urban place as a lived, shifting, interwoven place and as a nexus for communication acts. Through visual research, autoethnography and participatory exhibition of layered, malleable and fragmented representations this thesis contributes to our understandings of urban places and memory.

This thesis engages with place as defined through the specific weave of relationships that constitute it, at scales ranging from the very personal to global contexts. The specificity of a place as a moment in a global network of relationships is in part dependent on the specificity and mobility of individuals who populate these places. Thus, the personal associations of memories of other places is a particular focus of this thesis.

This thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach, building on and critiquing established methods of architectural site analysis and urban representation through the practices of visual anthropology, autoethnography and art installation. The project work involves postcard making and ficto-critical writing of urban spaces,

developed from extensive photographic and participant-observation journal writing on urban walks. The works explore the authors relationship to five locations in Perth, Australia through association of memories of living in London, Manchester, Berlin and Barcelona.

Visitors to an exhibition of the works were invited to participate in re-shaping five large representations of urban places. Analysis of visitor engagement observes elements of play, memory association, and creative engagement. The fragmentation and malleability of parts within the installations frame the actions of the participants as metaphors for acts of co-authorship in the urban realm. The relationships observed between participants and the fragmented works present a contribution to understanding the role of people in the generation of urban places.

This thesis visualises urban place as lived, shifting, and interwoven; a nexus for opaque communication acts. Thus, it positions urban design processes within an individual's personal, but nevertheless generative, experiences of the urban realm. The production of these works, and other such personal, malleable, and fragmented representations of urban places may serve as catalysts for site specific design able to encompass specificity of place as a product of the particular combination of relationships that pass through it.

Exegesis Contents

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Introduction

Memories, Postcards and the Representation of Urban Places

People make cities. This seemingly obvious statement is obscured by the way urban places, and place-making processes, are represented within built environment communications. In their production and voice, built environment documents and images generally exclude urban inhabitants. More fundamentally, place is understood with a background of philosophies that naturalise both places and populations as bounded and fixed. These static conceptions of place dominate the ideological framework of the built environment profession (Dovey [1999] 2008, 46). In particular the role of people's mobility in place-making is overlooked by perspectives that locate authenticity in deep-rooted, localised and unchanging meanings of place. In such constructions of place-meaning the diversity of the inhabitants of a place is homogenised; and personal meaning-making processes are overlooked in favour of dominant social narratives. In doing so the reality of people's experience is omitted for an idealised imagined user (Ivory 2013).

This thesis explores the potential for the counter argument, that place is made within people's experience and that this experience is dependent upon their memories of other distant places. By overlooking the memories attached to the mobility of a population—instead favouring narratives of designer-heroes, heritage stereotypes, and moral communication—the built environment professions are deaf to a significant source of information about urban experience. Using alternative perspectives presented by Lefebvre ([1974] 1991, [1992] 2004), de Certeau (1984), Massey (1994) and Derrida ([1980] 1987) this thesis comes to

understand places as lived, interconnected sites of opaque communication acts. To explore urban places in line with this alternative definition I take my immediate experience of living in Perth and my memories of living in Manchester, London, Barcelona and Berlin as a case study. To do so I supplement architectural site analysis with tactics from alternate ethnographies and installation art. I find the relationship between the memory of other places and the immediate experience of a present place to be fragmented and malleable. I find that memories of other places play a rich, continuing and dynamic part in defining place experience.

Urban places are typically understood as static and bounded rather than dynamic or outward looking (Massey 1994, 147). This misses the richness brought to the immediate urban experience of people in cities by their own memories of distant places, and through this omission the built environment disciplines are unable to engage with a significant aspect of a mobile population's inhabitation of cities. Conflating community with only their immediate locality limits an individuals' voice within urban development documents and processes. Some attempts to design for international connections have been criticised for creating placeless settings, perhaps as a result of denying the role of personal memory in search of a global aesthetic. Yet, personal memory is likewise overwritten by so-called collective memory in the static productions of place in urban visioning documents. Thus, our existing models of place attachment need challenging. The disjunction between static reactionary visions of the urban near-future and the rhetoric of creative, inclusive, global cities highlights a gap in our understanding. The question arises: What role does personal memory play within the construction of progressive urban places?

This thesis challenges static representations of place—which preclude the contribution of personal memories of other places—and instead visualises urban places as living, shifting and interwoven, and as a nexus of communication acts which can only be perceived from a limited and subjective position. I adopt postcards as a metaphor to explore memory in urban experience. The visual and

written output of this project contribute to the growing understanding of the urban inhabitant's role in creating places.

I critically engage with city visioning documents through creative site analysis, producing a counter-narrative that examines urban experience through alternative theoretical lenses. I use methods from creative practice, architectural site analysis, autoethnography and visual anthropology to examine moments of my urban experience in detail. The visual outputs of this thesis are spatial experiments which explore the city from within. In parallel the exegesis describes, locates and critically reflects upon the non-traditional component. I adopt the first person voice to accurately represent the enquiry as a bodily and emotional engagement. This scholarly voice is consistent with autoethnographic methodologies.

Postcards are a central metaphor that informs the creative enquiry. I use postcards to structure the project output, and carry theoretical concepts from the exegesis into the project works and vice versa. Postcards serve this exploration of memory within urban experience through their associations with travel, place identity, personal experience, memory, collection, and experience sharing. In this thesis a postcard is a metaphor for an experience of an urban place that becomes part of a person's self-narrative. Postcards have many qualities in which I draw parallels with contemporary urban experience. There is an attractive disposability and enduring quality to postcards. Postcards are inexpensive but meaningful; on the one hand they are consumer debris, on the other they are sentimental vessels for memory and imagination. I see strong connections with our understanding of places in picture postcards, in particular, through their role as symbols and representations of destinations. Postcards are a productive medium through which to explore the relationship between memories of other places and urban experience because of this rich web of associations, as evidenced by their history of appropriation by visual artists.

Following an autoethnographic approach, I recognises authority in the lived experience of the world; as such this thesis encounters limits defined by my

personal experience. Perth, Australia—the city I was born in, travel away from and return to—is a city of travellers and migrants.[1] Overseas travel and return is normalised in Perth through the practice of (or aspiration to) international travel. Migration, cultural displacement, unwanted relocation, dislocated ancestry, temporary working visas, permanent residency applications, gap years, working holidays, fly-in-fly out employment, international business trips, international holidays, immigration, and repatriation for family raising and retirement are just some of the themes underlying Perth's existence. This mobility is heightened by the geographic isolation of Perth. Distances are great across desert or ocean between this coastal sprawl and other major cities. My experience of Perth as both a point of departure and return was the catalyst for this enquiry, and for this reason I chose Perth as the primary case study site. I stayed in the corresponding sites for some months between 2008 and 2009 as recipient of a graduate architectural travel prize.[2] I chose Barcelona for its status as waterfront examplar in urban design literature, and because I had worked there as an architecture student in 2005. Berlin, because of the discussion of urban regeneration and cultural renewal in the decades since the fall of the Berlin wall. I chose Manchester because of my family's connection to that city as a point of immigration. London gained significance to the study as it became my somewhat accidentally adopted second home during the period of field work.

Like other architectural site analysis works, such as Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's ([1977] 1989) *Learning from Las Vegas,* this thesis tell us about the site of study and about the way we understand and experience places more generally. In particular, this thesis reveals richness not currently capitalised on by city design rhetoric—outlining an opportunity for the built environment disciplines to reflect

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[1] The population of Perth is internationally connected. "The census data of 2001 indicated that 39% of the Australia population have at least one parent born overseas. Only 36% of the population indicated Australian ancestry. That is, well over half the population reported overseas ancestry. Only 4.6% of the population did not submit a response to this question. The ABS document *Perth: a social atlas* (2006) indicates that the demographics of the city if anything are likely to be higher than the national statistics on this issue. In 2001 32.9% of Perth's population nominated as being born overseas compared to the national 21%." I previously published this note in a conference paper (Creagh 2011, 22). Percentages provided by the ABS or calculated from ABS Census data (2001a; 2001b; 2001c; 2001d; 2002).

[2] My thanks to Peter Hunt for his generous award which catalysed much of the field work of this thesis.

on and challenge disciplinary limitations to engagement with complex urban settings. In parallel, like other autoethnographic enquiries, though an exploration of details of my experience, this work visually reveals and theorises place within the experience of interconnection in our globalised world.

Clarification of Terms

The terms "place" and "space" are sometimes used interchangeably, and within writing on urban experience valid reasons are given for choosing either place or space. Within this thesis, I use the word "place" to describe lived-space. I do this to avoid the association of the word "space" with a more Cartesian or empirical understanding of a location, and the equally restrictive associations of the word space within architecture writing as being the gift of the architect to the user.[3] In this thesis, "urban place" is used to describe a location within a city understood through the lens of human experience. I use the term "city" to describe an urban organisation that includes both a built-up urban centre and suburbs.

I use the term "place-making" to refer to physical or mental acts by individuals that enable space to be understood as place. This is distinct from "placemakers," the developing profession of consultants who advise on programs of activities and physical changes to locations often as part of cultural or urban development projects. "Built environment professionals" denotes people working in professions with roles in shaping urban form such as architecture, urban design and planning.

I use the term "communication acts" to describe communication across a broad range of modes inclusive of written and verbal words, non-verbal bodily gestures or acts within space, and the visual and spatial formation of elements within space. I use the term "imperfect communication" to draw attention to the lack of clarity, reliability or intrinsic moral authority of communication acts (Derrida ([1980] 1987). These ideas are discussed in chapter 2.

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[3] See Adrien Forty (2000) *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* for a full discussion of the use of the terms "place" and "space" in architecture writing.

In this thesis "memory" is understood to be embedded in the continual construction of a personal narrative (Brockmeier 2010). This alternative narrative definition contrasts the traditional understanding of personal memory as being separate from the self, like a paper archive. In this contemporary understanding, personal memories are understood to be malleable and potentially changed by the event of a person revisiting their memories to tell the story of themselves. On the occasion that collective memory, heritage or history is referred to in this thesis it will be clearly distinguished from personal memory.

Overview of the Study

This thesis is in two parts: the project work and this exegesis. Both address the research question of this thesis, but adopt different working modes. Nevertheless, the processes of creating the two parts overlapped and intertwined. This exegesis contextualises and directly builds on the project work, while the project work visually and creatively delves into and develops the ideas in the exegesis.

The project work of this thesis culminates in the exhibition of five participatory photo-montage works.[4] In these visual productions I explore memory within the experience of urban places. In the Exhibition Folio Box which accompanies this exegesis are a short video of the exhibition experience, an exhibition catalogue, large scale reproductions of the works, selected photographs of the installed works and the exhibition opening, and sample fragments of the works. As an edited version of the exhibition itself the collected recordings convey a sense of the event and the work, and enable participatory exploration and reflection on the role of memory within urban place experience. Five process-work booklets are also included which reflect the key research tactics discussed in chapter 3.

The body of this document, the exegesis, is structured in five chapters. This introduction to the thesis outlines the impetus for the study, and identifies the aim

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[4] The exhibition *Postcards for Perth: an Exhibition of Works Exploring Memories of Place as Shapers of Urban Experience,* was shown 5–19 October, 2012, at the Australian Urban Design Research Centre. The exhibition is documented in the Exhibition Folio Box, which accompanies this exegesis, and the participatory works are discussed in detail in chapter 4.

and scope of the study before providing an overview of the work and the relationship of the parts.

Chapter 1, "Problems in Understanding Urban Places," identifies the problematic tendency within urban visioning documents to reduce descriptions of urban places to that of a designed object. Three aspects of this problematic tendency are identified. These are the user's role as agent is ignored, places are understood to be independent rather than interdependent and design is understood as one-way communication from designer to user. These manoeuvres curtail built environment professionals ability to engage with memory of other places in their understandings of urban experience. I draw examples that evidence this criticism from urban visioning documents for Perth, in particular *An Urban Design Framework: A Vision for Perth 2029* (City of Perth 2010).

Chapter 2, "Exploring Three Alternatives," overviews three distinct but complementary understandings of urban places and discusses the potential of these in exploring and representing memory of other places within urban contexts. The three alternatives presented address each of the excluding manoeuvres identified in Chapter 1. These three alternatives, as criticisms of the problematic understanding of place as a design object, provide the theoretical framework for this thesis. They are urban places as lived spaces, urban places defined through connection, and urban places as loci of imperfect communication acts. In the final section of this chapter I map each of these three alternatives, plus the problematic dominant perspective, onto a postcard metaphor. This process brings the four approaches together through a synthesis of textual and visual enquiry. The postcard metaphor bridges the project and exegetic parts of the thesis.

In Chapter 3, "Making, Framing," I present a discussion of the methodological context of the thesis before introducing some of the key methods of the project work. In the first half of the chapter this thesis is positioned within the context of architectural site analysis. The discussion of the methodology overviews how approaches from autoethnography and visual anthropology approaches are used in

studies of urban sites to extend data sources and analytic frameworks. This extension enables the discussion and exploration of urban places to be inclusive of people's memories of other, potentially distant, places. I conclude the discussion of methodology by highlighting the importance of interdisciplinarity and metaphor to this study. In the second half of the chapter I outline the key methods I used in developing the project work. Key tactics are using photography and field journals, layering of images and meanings, manipulating scale, fragmenting images and settings, and designing works to support participatory interaction resulting in modification of the work.

Chapter 4, "Production and Exhibition Outcomes," is a visual and textual outline of research exploration conducted through creative production, public exhibition and critical reflection. Each of the five participatory works installed in a public exhibition (Creagh 2013a)—*Home?, Constructed Edge, Opportunistic, Window,* and *Opening*— is considered in turn. These observations and reflections find productive parallels between the engagement of visitors to the exhibition with the works, and urban experience regarding representation, agency, connection and plurality.

These findings initiate the discussion of Chapter 5, "Discussion." The chapter is in three sections. In the first I discuss how a sensitivity to memory, appropriation and connection can be used to prioritise viewer experience in urban representations and how, with the malleability of the work, these images can be understood as places in themselves. The second and third sections of this chapter outline the significance of these findings in the context of the production of urban places and our understanding of urban experience.

The thesis concludes by looking back at the research journey and considering the significance of the findings in consultation processes, urban design and place theory. I find that personal memories of travel and dwelling in other places are part of urban experience—they are part of the process the produces urban places. Observation of people's interaction with the large participatory photomontage works, which are the primary creative outcome of this thesis, indicates that

people's memories may be catalysts for critical and creative engagement with cities. This finding calls for an increased understanding of urban locations as dynamic and networked places and the role of people and their memories in place creation.

Chapter 1

Problems in Understanding Urban Places

In this chapter I argue that the tendency of the built environment professions' tendency to understand urban places as designed objects, or static images, prioritises the idea of "collective memory" at the expense of individual memory and the dynamic role of people in making urban places. There are three perspectives underlying this tendency: writing about the built environment with authority as if from within an artist's studio, understanding place as bound to a static group of people and a bordered location, and imagining the built environment design process as flawless system of one-way communication from designer to user. Each of these perspectives act to de-authorise and silence the articulation of individuals and their memories within contemporary communication about the built environment.

To illustrate and critique this tendency I refer to extracts from the City of Perth's current urban design documents and, in particular, from *An Urban Design Framework: A Vision for Perth 2029* (City of Perth 2010). The UDF is a good case study, through both scale and scope, for interrogating our understandings of urban place-making. It sits between the city planning framework and operational policies, and embeds other relevant documents including consultation documents, corporate plans, development plans, independent studies into Perth's urban design, and local government planning studies. In this chapter I also take examples from Jan Gehl's (2009) report that demonstrate the prevailing attitudes behind current analysis of built form and which have a strong influence on the UDF. Extracts from

these documents and my commentary on the extract sit at the start of each of the

three sections in the body of this chapter.

Ignoring the User as Agent[1]
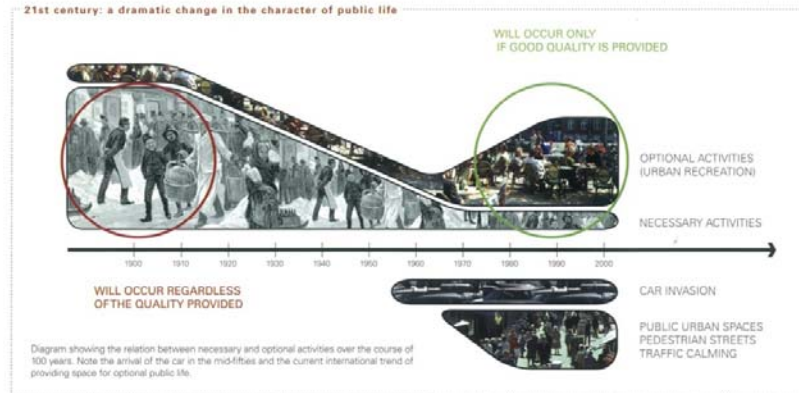
Figure 1.1: "21st century: a dramatic change to the character of public life" (Jan Gehl Architects 2009, 10).

Urban designer Jan Gehl's diagram the public life of the city is dependent on the heroic actions of the designer to provide for others. Part of the associated text reads:

> "If a modern city wants lively streets and a vibrant public realm, it has to provide public space as a fundamental prerequisite. As today's citizens have more options on how to spend their time, they will only spend it in the public realm if it is of high quality and accessibility is easy and convenient." (Gehl 2009, 10)

What is apparent in this document, and those like it, is the deauthorisation of inhabitants; the role of place-maker is granted to urban designers, planners and architects. This belies the creative role of all the other individuals who make a city what it is.

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[1] I first developed the ideas of this section for a refereed conference paper "Fragments of a scene: voicing urban memories through postcards" (Creagh 2011).

Figure 1.2: "Consider life and people activities first—turn the planning process around!" (Jan Gehl Architects 2009, 87).

With his slogan-like figure title, Gehl seeks to represent the interests of urban inhabitants. However, such good intentions can also naturalise a situation where the designer assumes power over the urban inhabitants. Gehl proposes that development of new urban spaces start by identifying the desired activities for the space and then provide architectural framework to support them—leaving silent the question of who should decide what are desirable activities. Although Gehl sees this as a positive reversal, the assumptions about authorship of space and planner's and designer's right to control urban behaviour remain unchallenged. Here, the designer is the agent of place creation. In this diagram the "life" of the city and the action of the city's inhabitants is the final artwork; however the power of creation and authorship is the designer's. Inhabitants are, in the process and its description here, de-authorised.
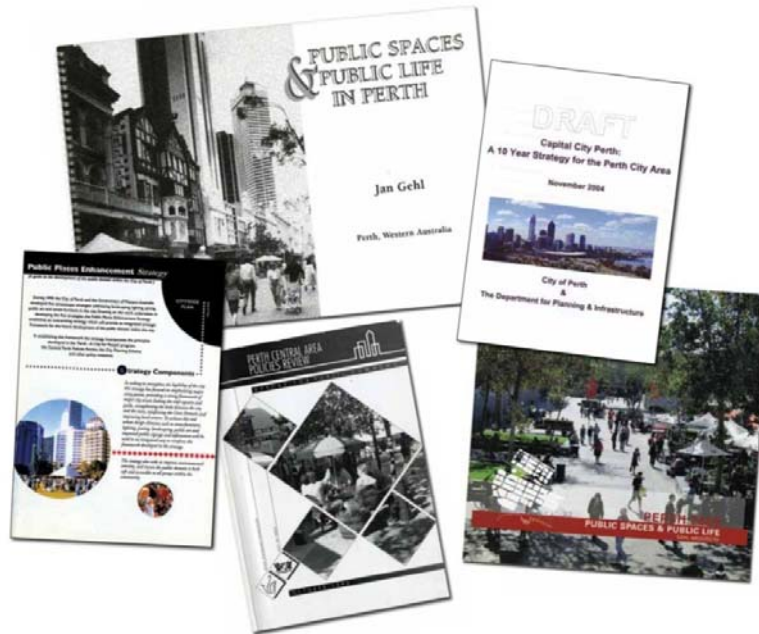
Figure 1.3: The UDF claims to speak for experts and the community (City of Perth 2010, 15).

Planning documents restrict the voice of individuals and groups through an assertion of authority and authenticity—claiming to represent the views of both experts and community. (Tett & Wolfe 1991) For example the Urban Design Framework for Perth (City of Perth 2010, 14–15) rests this claim to the authority to speak for experts and community on a compilation of existing city plans and studies, and a single limited consultancy document "City of Perth 2029 We Hear You." This consultancy document compiles the views of perhaps 600 people from a series of roundtable forums, and a feedback website. ([2008?] No Date, 7) While appearing to be inclusive this manoeuvre overlooks further contribution or criticism by members of the general public. It is part of, as Ivory (2013, 438) identifies, the construction of an idealised, or even imagined user. By responding to the needs and desires of this imagined user built environment professionals can shape the urban development narrative while appearing both removed and responsive.

A review of contemporary and historical built environment literature reveals that authors who write about the urban realm are often concerned with the heroic efforts of designers and planners. Finnegan (1998, 25) identifies a dominant "story of destiny fulfilled" in which the "glorious hero" has the transformative power that makes an urban place good (Finnegan 1998, 34). In these hero narratives users of the space are located in the wings, receptors of the activity of the design work; they are rescued and served. This separation of responsibility from inhabitation is pervasive within these narratives of place creation. For example, figure 1.1 places the responsibility of urban life in the hands of urban designers (Gehl 2009, 10). In the following section I draw the comparison between the way architecture and art are storied to highlight the tendency of both professions to separate the artist's or designer's experience from that of the viewer or user, and to prioritise the former at the exclusion of the latter.

The intent of art writing is to "uncover, record, interpret and position, from an insider's perspective and experience, the processes they use within the context of professional contemporary practices in the field" (Stewart 2003). This evaluative perspective is limited to the artist's reflection on remembered points of inspiration, the process of making, and the success of the artwork against the artist's own criteria. The presentation of art from this perspective has been criticised for its tendency to exclude the visitor experience (Gablik 1992). Art criticism has, according to art critic Suzi Gablik, been complicit in the exclusion of visitor's perception from art spaces such as the gallery and artist studio and the exclusion of connections to everyday experiences in general from our understanding of art. Gablik identifies this exclusion of the everyday realm from galleries as symptomatic of the problematic perception of artists as free agents, without responsibility or connection to social groups and individuals. Despite Barthes' (1977) introduction of the "death of the author" to literary criticism, in dominant forms of art criticism and gallery spaces the viewer is not acknowledged as a living person with memory and self-narratives which they use to complete the art work.

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Contemporary built environment discussions, such as those found in industry journals, borrows from the frameworks of art criticism and its focus on individual creativity (Markus and Cameron 2001, 112). Architectural writing that follows this model seeks to reveal the architect's process, with a focus on the internalised realm of the designer's imagination. These texts can be useful to the architectural discipline as they reveal the process of making which otherwise may not be apparent in the final hung or built work (like the texts about art-making they imitate).[2] Likewise, the lived experience of those who occupy an urban place after its construction, and importantly, the memories of other places embedded within the inhabitant's experience is typically excluded from architectural writing. Despite similar writing trends between the art and architecture, the built environment is interwoven into our everyday cultural and physical experiences rather than displayed in specially designated locations, as is the case with art works within art galleries. A good example is found in the figures 1.1 and 1.2 above, (Gehl 2009) where the actions of people in urban settings are claimed as the outcome of a designer's work, not as part of the production of an urban setting. Gehl is not unique in this approach; urban inhabitants are often excluded from narratives of urban place-making by professional documents that claim to speak for them.[3]

It is because of the complexity of making urban places—because design, construction and the continual reshaping of an urban place is a social and collective activity—that adopting the artist-in-studio focus of art criticism is problematic. Despite the prevalence of the architect-hero trope in built environment writing, a realised project cannot be considered the work of one master-authority. To adopt

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[2] Examples of this style of writing can be found in the monographs of famous architects. To take two examples, monographs on the work of architects Glen Murcutt (Beck and Cooper 2002) and Zaha Hadid (1998) focus on the design process and the named architect as the driver of this process. The intention in presenting these examples is to highlight a mode of critical engagement typical to the discipline rather than to criticise the individual architects cited here.

[3] In seeking to reposition architectural works in the context of experience and subjectivity I sympathise with the work of Andrew Ballantyne (see for example 2000 or 2011). Alison Tett and Jeanne Wolfe, (1991) and Dianna McCallum and Diane Hopkins (2011) support this analysis from a planning perspective. They observe, through a horizontal study of North American urban plans and a longitudinal study of Perth's urban plans respectively, the various means in which the authors of the plans' views are validated while the community is silenced.

this framework without mediation presents architecture, urban design and planning as something that they are not. Such a attitude limits an understanding of memory in urban place experience to the designer's perspective, the experience of urban inhabitants is muted.

By 12th August 2029, when Perth celebrates the
bicentenary of European settlement, we want
to be able to see just how far our city has come
since the day when Mrs. Helen Dance, wife of the
Commander of HMS Sulphur, cut down a tree at the
ceremony to commemorate the founding of Perth
in 1829. Two hundred years after that ceremony
we will have become an internationally recognised,
highly developed and vital capital city, within the
large, prosperous state of Western Australia.

Figure 1.4: "Bicentenary Vision—Our City in 2029" [Extract] (City of Perth 2010, 18).

The UDF provides striking examples of the silencing of Aboriginal stories about Perth in the past, present and future visioning of the city. In addition to limiting Perth's history to events since English colonisation, as above, there is no mention of indigenous people or history in the "Vision" section of the UDF. Instead, "Global Status," "Vibrancy," "Accessibility and Connectivity," "Liveability," "Attractiveness and Functionality with World Class Architecture and Design," "Response to Climate Change," "Capital City Role," "Prosperity," and "Recognition of the City's Achievements" are the values put forward in Perth's vision of itself. (City of Perth 2010, 18) It is not difficult to understand the pursuit of these ideals as exclusionary—these same strategies play out in gentrifying areas around the world. Aboriginal stories are not the only ones overlooked through this approach—memories of elsewhere held by migrants, more recent than convicts, are also excluded.
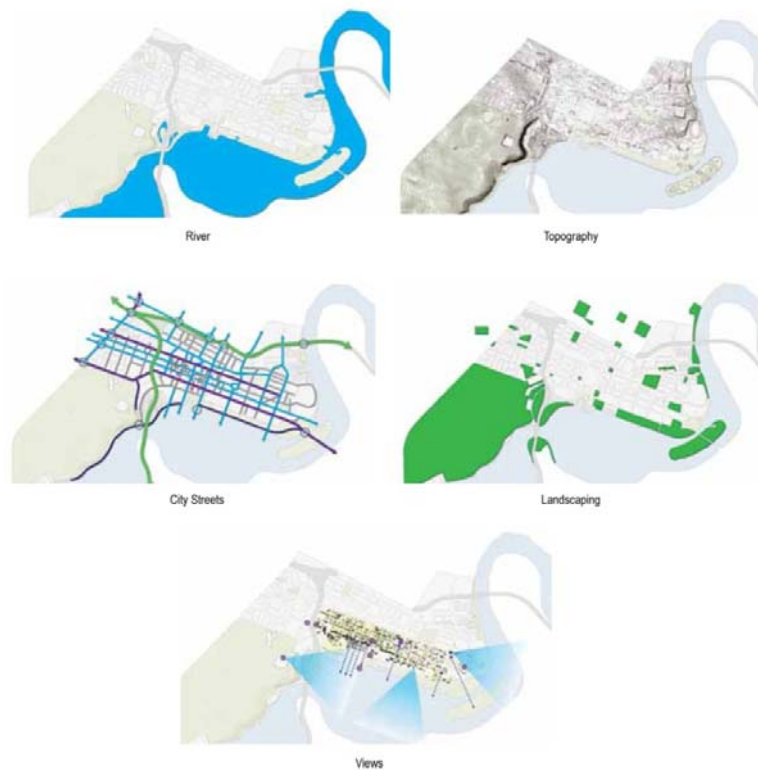
Figure 1.5: "Sense of place" (City of Perth 2010, 30).

The only possibility of reading an indigenous sense of place within the visual and textual depiction of Perth, as provided by the UDF, is to reductively associate pre-settlement culture with the natural landscape. This is a landscape that is reshaped and tamed to the colonial taste in the local history of built form. This reading excludes continuing and contemporary Aboriginal presence and culture. This exclusion helps fix the boundaries of post-settlement Perth in time and space. The prioritisation of colonial stories reinforces a "them and us" dichotomy which sublimates many differences within the lived experiences of Perth's population.

Figure 1.6: "The Masterplan" (City of Perth 2010, 81).

This proposal for Heirisson Island supported by the City of Perth is available as a design conclusion only by overlooking the un-built cultural practices and significance of the island. Dealing only with built outcomes might seem appropriate for an Urban Design Framework on first consideration, however the result of this limit can be inappropriate, as the prioritisation of physical constructions ignores contemporary spatial practices that are not housed in buildings. This is evident in the current baroque proposal for Heirisson Island which shows a lack of sensitivity for the continuing Aboriginal cultural practices in the space (City of Perth 2010, 80–81). This example highlights the built environment response to minority groups in Perth that have not, for a multitude of reasons, produced discrete building forms to house their continuing cultural practices. Over 50% of the Western Australian population are very recent arrivals, either the children of migrants or migrants themselves (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2001d).

The dominant understanding of place within the built environment professions is bound into phenomenology (Dovey [1999] 2008, 46). This attitude can be traced back to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger ([1954] 1971) and Murice Halbwachs. There are two problematic outcomes of binding our understanding of urban place to the idea of static sites and populations, especially in regards to the relationship with personal memory. Firstly, the meaning of the term "collective memory" excludes people who have not had the opportunity for a privileged relationship with a built environment over a long period of time. This results in heritage stereotypes being misrepresented as a memory in the context of urban places. Secondly, our inheritance from Heidegger that the meaning of a person's experience of a place is rooted in ideas of "dwelling" (and specifically dwelling within fixed cultural landscapes) suppresses difference, overlooks personal mobility and excludes connections to other places as sources of place meaning (Dovey [1999] 2008, 46-48; Ballentyne 2000). The crux of my argument is that memory, as embedded in urban experience, is not collective and understandings of place that start from the assumption of a homogenous collective—and the linked assumption of a fixed population group—overlook much of the richness of urban experience. I highlight these limitation through a brief examination of some points of Perth's demographics and the social understanding of travel.

Understandings of Halbwachian sense of place and Heideggerian phenomenology have, since the 1970s, become dominant ideological frameworks for understanding urban contexts in mainstream architectural literature (Dovey [1999] 2008, 46). Heideggerian phenomenology has influenced architecture through Gaston Bachelard's book *The Poetics of Space* ([1958]1994), in which Bachelard tackles the substantial challenge of mapping Heidegger's ([1954] 1971) mythic being-in-place into the architectural space of his own childhood home. French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (Forty 2000, 217-219; Hebbert 2005) constructs an understanding of cities as a strong focus of collective memory. Aldo Rossi's influential *Architecture of the City* (1982) in particular owes a direct debt to Halbwachs' work (Hebbert 2005, 587).

These phenomenological approaches are problematic in assumptions about population groups and place meaning. In particular, Heidegger's confluence of meaning as dwelling in fixed cultural landscapes is distasteful in its easy support of discrimination (Ballentyne 2000, 151). Likewise, Halbwachs' analytic approach assumes an urban setting has developed through a co-responsive relationship with a relatively fixed and stable population group over a long period of time and is therefore a legible document of a place's cultural practices (Hebbert 2005, 584). This approach limits Halbwachian readings of urban places to situations of homogenous and stable population. Rossi exacerbates this fault by misrepresenting the physical elements of a city as literal containers for collective memory (Forty [2000] 2010, 217–218). Where the Halbwachian derived notions of inhabitation, such as those of Rossi (1982) and Lynch (1960), fail in the context of this study is in their reliance on static populations as the model for urban inhabitants. This is linked to an emphasis on the visual decoding of urban form—the morphology—as indicator of sense of place. Reena Tiwari (2010, 105) draws on Stephen Pile (1996) to identify the limitation of Lynch's vocabulary which is constrained by assumptions of stasis and the dominance of visual legibility in urban experience (Pile 1996, 219).[4] Lynch's ideas were developed within writing on urban experience to the further dominance of visual analysis. Mental maps became the dominant metaphor for people's understanding of urban places (Pile 1996,27). These reductive understandings of both memory and urban experience result in the acceptance of buildings and landscapes that conform to heritage stereotypes as substitutes for any real discussion of the role of memory in the production of urban places. Within this landscape of heritage stereotypes, populations that do not have a "privileged," stable, co-responsive relationship to a particular setting are repressed.

Fixing home into one place, or as in Bachelard's ([1958] 1994) *Poetics of Space* to one building, excludes personal mobility and connections to other places as sources of place meaning. With the increased discussion of the impact of mobility across the globe, the recognition of this bias highlights a substantial tension in the way place is

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[4] Parallel, Forty (2000,103) and Marcus and Cameron (2002, 113) point out a lack of terms for social relationships with architecture communication which instead tends to focus on aesthetic issues.

understood (Sheller & Urry 2006). As a result of this tension between a mobile population and the understanding of life's meaning as rooted in a fixed location many theorists have claimed that place is no longer meaningful instead "claiming that modernity and internationalisation produce 'placelessness'… inauthentic physical environments" (Gustafson 2001, 5) citing examples such as chain stores, shopping malls and airports. Boyer(1994) searches for the *City of Collective Memory* in contemporary sites, but does not find it. Even Lefebvre (1974) 1991 and de Certeau (1984), to who I am otherwise sympathetic, call for a return to fable and local history—a heuristic population's relationship to the city and street.

Following the critical analysis of ethnographic and anthropological practices conducted by James Clifford (1997) the heralding of "placelessness" can be identified as part of the practice of naturalising the assumption that a studied population is static, and that it is normal for people to be fixed in place.[5] Yet this does not seem to have been the condition for the majority of the world's population. An understanding of people as mobile agents is reinforced by Doreen Massey from the perspective of human geography. Massey points out in "A place called home?" (1994, 165) that it is a small, privileged proportion of the global population that at any time has had the opportunity to fixed their relationship to a place and, to a degree, within time. These are the European upper and middle classes—the same perspective from which the observations of disorientation in contemporary society have been written. Thus, analysis of cities that associate stasis with objectivity are building on understandings of the world that are alien to the majority of people who do not have the privilege of constructing a fixed relationship of self to an unchanging place. Personal mobility and connections to other places are excluded from being sources of place meaning.

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[5] Clifford (1997, 22–23) uncovers these problematic assumptions paired with the practice of camouflaging or rendering unproblematic the travel between physical locations and cultural institutions undertaken by the field researchers. In practice, says Clifford, both the researcher and the researched are engaged in spatial practices of travel and dwelling. Likewise in planning and urban design both the expert and the inhabitants are mobile individuals who are concurrently engaged in travel and dwelling practices. Ignoring the mobility of both the designers and the designed-for overlooks a source of richness and empathy.

A Moving City

Let us consider these arguments in the context of Perth. A conceptual reduction of memory in urban experience to a so called collective memory encased within local historical built form is problematic in a city like Perth where a substantial proportion of the population are first and second generation migrants. Additionally, in Perth the practice of overseas travel and return is normalised through the practice of (or aspiration to) international travel, gap years, working holidays, ancestry visas, youth migration, budget tours, holidays and repatriation for family raising and retirement. The population of Perth cannot be considered to be homogenous or static, and any urban analysis focused on the present built form overlooks the mobility of the city's inhabitants. When speaking of the relationships between the built environment and the population of Perth many groups, cities, cultures, and histories need to be incorporated. The city plan of Perth does not, and cannot, carry the history of significant proportions of the population. The role of the amassed cultural capital of a mobile population is not accounted for in the models of place that seek to reduce history to heritage and individual experience to a performance of collective memory. Thus, analysis that focuses on the visual perception of a city's physicality (such as figure-ground analysis see figure 1.5 for example) requires augmentation to encompass the multiple pasts of the mobile and globally interrelated population.

In Perth, reductive ways of seeing place through the lens of heritage act to prioritise colonial stories, as is revealed in Hannah Lewi's (1999, 107–124) review of heritage industry maps of Perth. This can also be observed in the extracts from Perth's contemporary Urban Design Framework (City of Perth 2010, 18, 30, 81) (figures 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6) included here. These extracted examples concerning the (contested landscape of Matagarup, Heirisson Island located in the Swan River) evidence a problem concerning the way urban place is understood. Connections through memory and spatial practices (even those conducted in the present) are overlooked in preference for the narrative of colonial heritage. Thus, as Matagarup has already

been shaped into a more rational form, and there are no visible traces of past activity (such as buildings), the Aboriginal use of this space is effectively erased (relegated to the time before colonisation) in the text of the UDF. More broadly the present cultural use of the space is ignored to justify further spatial colonisation, both through design and policing.[6] Thus, a fixed perspective on an urban place does not present the best opportunity to address current urban experience, and memories of other places may indeed be far more valuable than dominant representations in articulating the meaning of places to those who inhabit them in the present.

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[6] For a visual enquiry into the contested representation of Heirisson Island see Creagh, Cox & Kerr 2013c. For a more detailed analysis of the 2012 media representation of the Nyoongar Tent Embassy see Kerr and Cox 2013.

A Letter from Designer to User [7]

> **Introduction: What is an Urban Design Framework.**
>
> The Urban Design Framework is a design tool that provides a physical interpretation of the City of Perth's vision and strategies. It helps to ensure that the built environment we create reflects the community's vision and the Council's strategies, and it underpins an integrated approach to better physical environments.
>
> (City of Perth 2010, 10)

Figure 1.7: "What is an Urban Design Framework." [Extract] (City of Perth 2010, 10)

In this extract from the Perth Urban Design Framework, and in planning documents more broadly, the city planning document is understood as a unimpeachable, if not perfect, form of communication. The "voice" of planning documents are constructed to speak of the plan as the best possible vision for a city, and assert that if the plan is followed, it will deliver this ideal. The UDF document opens with the text extract included here (City of Perth 2010, 10). This confidence in the efficacy of this form of communication within the built environment professions locks out other, perhaps more grounded, opportunities for communication about the built realm. [8]

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[7] I first developed the ideas of this section for a refereed conference paper "Fragments of a scene: voicing urban memories through postcards" (Creagh 2011).

[8] For further discussion of voice of urban plans see for example, Tett & Wolf (1991).

An urban designer's authority and legitimacy is reinforced by the myth of perfect communication. This myth is fundamental to the Habbermasian theories that drive ideals of consensus, which are particularly evident within the planning discipline. Parallel to this, the idea that a design can communicate a "message" prescribed by the designer is an unchallenged undercurrent in much design work. This idea of a product or structure as communication between designer and users is an adaptation of Claude Shannon's 1948 diagram of an electronic communication system (see Crilly, Good, et al 2008 for an overview). Like Habermasian consensus, understandings of design based on the transmission of a message problematically idealise perfect communication. In the context of the built environment, the idea of perfect communication reinforces the authority of the designer (as either the voice of consensus, or the artist) over someone who inhabits a place.

The signal transfer model identifies design objects as communication vectors between the designer and the user where an electronic signal stands in for the communication "carried" by the designed object between the designer and the user. Various adaptations of this model represent the impact of contextual issues on the user's interpretation of the designer's intent as "signal interference." Nevertheless the assumption is that the designer should create an object that communicates perfectly and has the moral authority to do so. Shonfeild (2000a, 383) provides British Brutalism as an example of an architectural study that is presented, within architecture writing, as communicating a philosophical "truth" about everyday life through aesthetic and structural choices. To continue Shonfeild's example, if you don't "like" Brutalist architecture then you have missed the significance of its aesthetic, that is, you have not received the message. In the signal transfer model the multiplicity of communication acts that make up the built environment and the personal memories which may be wrapped up in them are at best represented as signal interference and at worst unacknowledged.

This signal transfer model does have productive use in relating a designer's intention to user's interpretation, and some apply the model with nuance in exploring, for example, a user's desire to infer the designer's intention (Crilly 2008,

140-143). However, as an unchallenged assumption the notion that designers instil a message into the minds of receptive users is problematic. It denies the authority of users in making meaning and is paired with the assumption that the designer gets it right. If the users do not interact with the designed object or setting as expected then they are the ones who have got it "wrong."

When considered in the urban context this problematically implies the domination of the designer's will over people's experience of a place. The influence of communication models, like the signal transfer model, is evident in contemporary planning documents, including the Perth Urban Design Framework (see figure 1.7). The UDF is described within its own pages as being the facilitator of perfect communication from community vision, to council strategies through to built outcome. Such assertions are based on unachievable ideals about what communication "should" be. The idea that communication can be made to be infallible through the careful construction of a consultation setting is used to legitimise the authority of the urban planning and design documents, and to validate the notion that such documents have the power to bring about the "right" outcome for a city.

This construction of the planning document, and the built outcome, as a perfectible conduit frames communication acts outside of this framework as "noise." Again, narratives and individuals that fall outside of the document's authors' data collection are deauthorised and the multi-directionality of communication acts within an urban context is denied. This perfectibility myth can obscure enquiry into everyday relationships with place, obscuring other messages embedded in the appropriation and use of urban places. Some of these overlooked messages may be driven by memories of elsewhere more than a reading of design intent. I suggest the assumption of perfectibility of message and communication is tied to the

cultural investment in the power of the architect or planner to transform urban society through design.[9]

The notion of design objects as communication devices between the designer and user is pervasive. Built environment writing and image-making is expected to focus on the designer's role in defining boundaries and meanings of a place to some extent. As a result however, there is a gap in built environment communication in that it typically does not address the meaning-making role of the people who occupy space. There has been some recognition of this within built environment disciplines, such as Tett and Wolfe's call for planners to re-address their own practice by "breaking through their current constructions of voice to empower others discursively" (1991, 199), which is to say, by acknowledging roles of non-planners in the creation of urban places. Within geography and planning there have been calls for greater interdisciplinarity, particularly towards ethnography, with the hope of improving connections between these disciplines and the everyday experience of space (Lees 2003). Likewise, when considering urban places, the built environment disciplines could benefit from a closer examination of the role of people who use the space. In particular our understandings of the cultural and social meaning of urban places would benefit from including more fully the use of places. This will have implication for the way we understand urban design. A more complex model of communication is required to encompass the multitude of communication acts within the lived space of the city. Personal memories may be one such influence in the way places are played out.

The Problem: Missing Memory and Present Experience

In general, with built environment communication acts, individual memory is overridden by the idea of collective memory. In part this is enabled by limiting the understanding of urban places to that of designed objects. By constructing urban places as products of a designer's art-work urban settings are separated from the

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[9] Jane Jacobs presents a scathing and rapid overview of the motivation to improve moral and physical health through history of urban planning in her introduction to her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1992 (1961), 17–25).

experience of those who inhabit them. The personal memories that are called forth in negotiating place are omitted in these representations of the city in preference for one of three stories discussed in this chapter: an examination of the designer's process, a representation of heritage stereotypes, or the presentation of the perfect design message.

The substitution of a fixed narrative in place of one of change and connection is a paradoxical separation of buildings from life. Urban places are developed, controlled and inhabited by people but this contingent and ever changing narative is omitted from dominant representations. This paradox is also evident in the way geography has traditionally dealt with the world: by setting definitions of places, and to drawing boundaries around them. The use of an apparently objective definition of a place has proved effective in catalysing some positive changes in the urban environment.[10] However, this top-down view has been criticised by Carol Burns (1991) and others for oversimplifying situations and being used as tools to conquer, control and dominate.[11] Thus careful boundary drawing is not a cure-all. It is possible that restricting the terms through which urban places can be discussed within the built environment professions, in a desire for clarity and objectivity, has contributed to Carol Burns and Andrea Kahn's (2005, pviii) observation of the limited means available for architects to communicate the richness of place experience—generally speaking architects do not theorise, or articulate, their understanding of sites well. As I have discussed in this chapter, the dynamic and constant re-shaping of urban places by people who live in them are overlooked.

It becomes apparent that more applicable models are needed to include personal memory in our understanding of urban settings. In the next chapter I address the three dominant narratives highlighted in this section through the theoretical approaches of Henri Lefebvre ([1974] 1991, [1992] 2004) and Michel de Certeau

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[10] Positive changes in the urban environment such as those brought about through empirical data analysis, such as the much cited 1854 identification of the spread of Cholera through water by John Snow through a mapping process in London.
[11] See Burn's (1991, 151) comments on the colonial power of the Jeffersonian grid for example or any discussion of the colonial planning process such as Kerr 2012.

(1984); Doreen Massey (1994) and Jacques Derrida ([1980] 1987). These theoretical positions are developed in a discussion of works that operate in the urban realm. This diverse group of examples, together with the theoretical positions discussed, describe the conceptual context of this thesis. To find a position from which to explore the role of translocated memories of other places in urban experience, I must first redress the exclusion of inhabitants in readings of urban space. I seek an approach to engagement with the city that deals with inhabitation in the present, inclusive of personal memory, and sees the relationship as negotiable and somewhat uncontrollable.

Chapter 2

Exploring Three Alternatives

In this chapter I examine and synthesis several theoretical approaches to understanding urban places. This provides the background to my exploration into the role of memory in urban place experience. I introduce three alternative ways to conceptualise the urban realm, which address the oversights of the design centric approach discussed in the previous chapter. I develop an understanding of urban places as lived space, as moments in networks of relationships, and as sites of imperfect communications. Examples of projects are introduced which read the urban environment in a way sympathetic to the three alternative perspectives. These examples are included here as a series of "spot levels" rather than as a complete catalogue of relevant projects.[1] Following this, I further synthesise both the problematic understanding of urban places as designed objects and the three alternatives introduced in this chapter through the use of a postcard as a metaphor. This synthesis builds on both textual review and project based exploration. Each of the postcard metaphors presented corresponds to one of the ways of understanding urban place discussed in this chapter. They are urban place as a designed postcard, urban place as an appropriated postcard, urban place as a postcard-bridge, and urban place as an unreliable postcard.

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[1] In surveying a site one way of generating a map of the topography and building surface levels is to establish relative heights at known points on a map or plan. These spot levels are then used to make assumptions about the contours and levels of the site.

Three Alternatives

Urban Place as Lived Space[2]

This section locates a position from which to approach the built environment as part of lived experience. In this section I identify intersections between two theories of urban place and the aims of this project, and highlight some contemporary works that contribute to this strand of urban thinking. I explain how understanding urban places as "lived space" helps to address the exclusion of inhabitation from communication about the built environment.

Two influential theories of lived space, that of Michel de Certeau (1984) and Henri Lefebvre ([1974] 1991, [1992] 2004), both rely on presenting the urban everyday through two planes of experience. For de Certeau this is the "concept city" and the "lived city". For Lefebvre these are "conceived space" and "perceived space." In addition, Lefebvre introduces the potential for these two planes of meaning to be interrupted and reconfigured by "moments" of lived space—a momentary awareness of oneself in the larger context and a chance to make a change, to re-imagine urban life (Merrifield 2006, 29). De Certeau does not highlight such moments as something distinct from his lived city; instead for de Certeau, to inhabit an urban setting is to wilfully appropriate the systems and physical space of representation, commerce, and so on in a constant process of interrupting and infiltrating the concept city. What is significant about Lefebvre's moments and de Certeau's appropriations is that they use nuanced systems to conceptualise the tense and mobile negotiation of people with their urban environment, both through physical and imaginative actions.

Lefebvre's work, in particular, has been influential in critiquing piece-meal understandings of the urban context that resulted from a separation of integrated aspects of urban life into disciplinary fields, as exampled by the separation of physical analysis from social and economic analysis. Instead, Lefebvre's work looks

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[2] I first developed the ideas of this section for a refereed conference paper "Fragments of a scene: voicing urban memories through postcards" (Creagh 2011).

to conduct more holistic critical explorations of urban settings through embodied analytical methods, such as his later work with "rhythmanalysis" ([1992] 2004). Contemporary built environment studies respond to this work (such as Tiwari 2010) and to an increased focus on the everyday rather than the "exotic" in ethnographic enquiry. There are, however, also significant philosophical implications of his work which link to this study in memory in urban experience.

Henri Lefebvre's model of urban experience challenges the dialectic philosophical interrogatory model. This challenge throws into doubt the construction of oppositions as a mode of analysis, in this context questioning the constructed opposition of "design intent" to "user experience" highlighted in the previous chapter. Lefebvre's work opened up a range of possibilities for rhetoric and (as a particular interest of Lefebvre in his later works) ways of understanding urban space and its use. Lefebvre's model consists of "conceived space," "perceived space" and "moments" of lived experience. Conceived space is described in the idealised projections and abstractions of built environment professions and governing bodies. Perceived space is the way places are read within everyday life with reference to the social construction of meaning. In Lefebvre's model the conceived and perceived spaces are overlapping and interrelated, often imagined as being two axes (x and y). These planes of meaning are interrupted by radical moments of lived space or lived experience.[3] This dynamic model avoids a binary opposition of possibilities and allows for a broad zone of results within the synthesis of perpendicular fields. For Lefebve, the synthesis of this "both/and" logic does not *resolve* the tensions of these axes (or two axes and a moment) so much as bring the tensions to light, and perhaps shift the balance between the perceived and conceived marginally in the direction of the lived space (Shields (1999) 2005, 120). Lefebvre's writing can be understood as a method to observe urban situations—to reveal tensions, then shift understandings and practice toward the lived.

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[3] Lefebvre's conception of space and moment of lived experience was Marxist. Lefebvre envisions these moments as offering the opportunity for people to align more towards a society outside of capitalism. (For Lefebvre this seems to be directed back towards his nostalgic engagement with of French rural history.)

The outcome of Lefebvre's logic structure is of interest to this thesis, and to many feminist and post-structuralist positions.[4] That is, the opportunity for a tense and mobile relationship between understandings of space, interrupted by a person's experience that renegotiates the reading, leading to a new configuration of the place meaning which is shifted in a new direction. Those writing about architecture from a feminist position, such as Jane Rendell (2011, 23) use Lefebvre's theory to understand architecture through its extensions into other creative disciplines and through interdisciplinary collaborative processes. In this thesis I interrogate the binaries of "here" and "there"; "us" and "them"; "now" and "then" within an urban setting. In doing so the constructed dominance of design intent over user experience is thrown into doubt and the malleable quality of the relationship is revealed. The resulting openness to multiple understandings of urban places makes room for the experiences of urban inhabitants, including their relived and re-contextualised memories, which may sit in contrast to the designed narrative of a place.

Aligned to Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau presents a model of lived experience interrupting the static representation of urban space. He presents this in a binary logic: "concept space" and "lived space." Concept space is similar to Lefebvre's conceived space, while in the way de Certeau's lived space interrupts and infiltrates the concept space of the city, it can also be aligned to Lefebvre's revolutionary moments of lived experience. For de Certeau for a space to be habitable it must contain entries and exits. People must be able to conceptually step in and out of these places through memory and imagination (1984, 106). De Certeau sees the concept space as a tool of control, but understands it to be shot through with holes and opportunity for creative appropriation (1984, 106). These appropriations of concept space to make personal meaning are an inseparable part of living in an urban setting, and these acts make lived space. In this way within every boundary there is potentially a bridge. The same line that separates two places also draws the

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[4] The binary male or female gender definition is an example of a binary that is questioned within contemporary feminist and queer theory. As I write, the Australian government is changing the way gender is recorded on official records with the introduction of X to the existing options of M and F.

possibility of crossing between them (1984, 128). In this thinking de Certeau heralds the discussion of connected places in the next section. Both de Certeau and Lefebvre's models deal with the negotiation of people in complex subjective relationships within the urban environment's entwined cultural (social-political) and physical aspects. In an exploration of memory within urban experience such nuanced models are required.

Co-present to Lefebvre in time and space the Situationists sought to create opportunities that can be described in the same terms as Lefebvre's revolutionary moment. This thesis works in the heritage of these urban works, as with many contemporary urban art projects that work with subjective experience. However, not all take a sympathetic view of the continuation of Situationist-inspired work. Phil Smith (2010, 104) has accused architecture, along with art, as being one of the necrophiliac murderers of the Situationist project—meaning that architecture has contained and categorised the Situationists' techniques while raiding that historical archive like a dress-up box. For Smith, such treatment prevents the Situationists work from progressing through natural development (it is dead), but bits and pieces, most noticeably the "derive,"[5] turn up without political context but as an adored aesthetic within architectural enquiry (thus, architects are necrophiliacs). Smith cities the Italian group Stalker, and university courses, as culprits amongst the artists and contemporary walking groups he discusses more generally (Smith 2010, 106–107). Smith's criticism seems based in the use of the Situationist techniques for research and pedagogy rather than the political creation of "moments" or "situations" of resistance. In contrast other artists such as Laura Oldfield-Ford (2011) and Lara Almarcegui (2009) continue the politics of the Situationist project by walking and mapping liminal places as a critical work that reveal tensions between place branding and lived experience. The two examples cited here criticise big business and government in the context of the broad-scale changes to the Lea Valley, London in the lead up to the 2009 Olympics.

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[5] The derive is hard to define, but a working definition might be movement about an urban area in small groups or by yourself, typically on foot, without any thought for usual day to day activities or responsibilities, in order to observe the sense of place in which you travel (Dubord [1956] 2003).

This thesis avoids accusations of depoliticised aestheticisation of Situationist techniques by focusing on "the sensuous, emotional and passionate qualities of an environment in order to reinvigorate urban space" (Barnard 2004, 120) by creating participatory works where personal memory and experience are highlighted at the expense of Debord's "spectacle" ([1967] 1994). I borrow the anthropological (or touristic) modes of photography and journal. As such I am building from the Situationist project, rather than repeating it; seeking to understand urban experience not through binaries of work and play (the pavement and the beach) but through the influence of mobility on urban experience.[6]

As seen in this section philosophies of lived space that theorise people's negotiations of meaning in urban settings provide a perspective from which to approach the importance of personal experience in urban places. Through this perspective there is potential to address one of the omissions outlined in the previous chapter: to notice and give value to the everyday experience of urban places. Firstly, this section identified that place meaning is negotiated. Then, through the introduction of a mobile dialectics, Lefebvre and de Certeau open the door to shifting and plural place meanings between the city as it is designed or presented and as it is lived. This enables movement beyond a false opposition of either with or against the designer's intent. As the discussion of works from Stalker, Oldfield-Ford and Almarcegui show such shifting and additive understandings of the city present an opportunity to engage with the experiences of people on their own terms—enabling meaningful enquiry into the research topic.

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[6] The Situationist International are not the only historical reference in critical creative works based in urban walking. For example, in London the works of authors Arthur Manchen (1924) and Virginia Wolfe (1925), in London, were influential to the project works of this thesis.
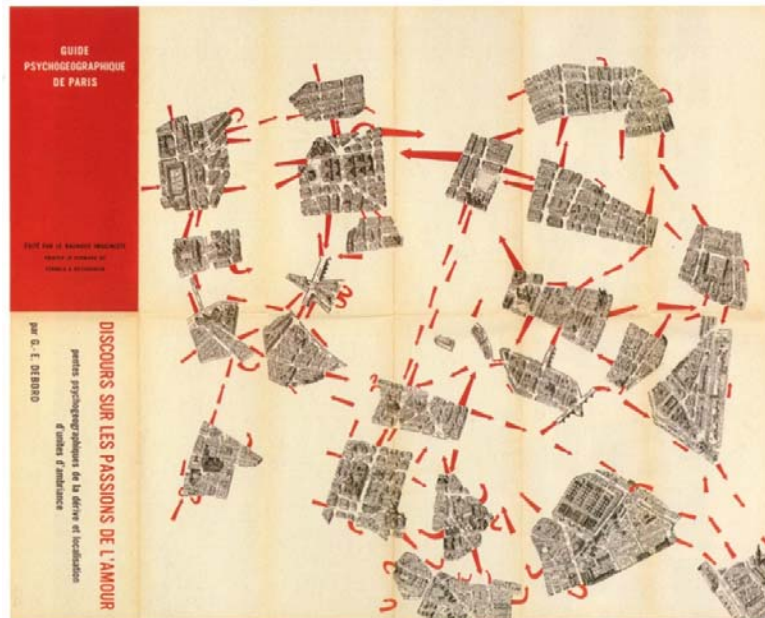
Figure 2.1: *Guide Psychogeographique de Paris* (Debord 1957).

The Situationists were an influential collective of artists, poets and theorists active between 1957 and 1972. The Situationists came to be centred (with many tensions and disagreements) around Guy Debord's ([1967] 1994, 12-24) theory of the "spectacle" and the exploration of means to resist this reduction of society to commoditified images. This effect of the spectacle according to this theory was that people become passive spectators rather than active participants in their own lives. The Situationists sought to construct moments for people to become active participants in their own lives within urban places by highlighting "the spectacle's dominance and to provide alternative ways of using and living in the [urban] environment" (Barnard 2004, 108). The four key tactis were the "derive," "detournment," "psychogeography" and "unitary urbanism" or the construction of "situations." One of the first Situationist documents was Debord's Psychogeographic Guide to Paris, which invited tourists to get lost or find their own way between curated zones of the city.
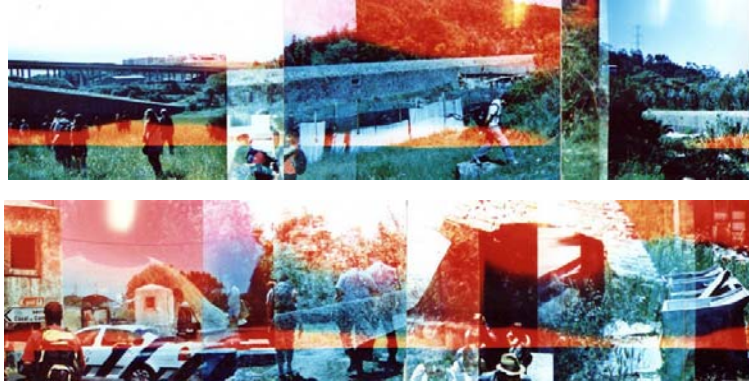
Figure 2.2: *Walkshop—Aqueduto das Auguas Livres: Across the material and immaterial realities of contemporary Lisbon* (Stalker 2009).

Political walking practices such as that of Stalker, a Roma Tre University affiliated group of architects, artists, activists and researchers group, use methodologies that build on Situationist practice. Stalker's work, and in particular the aqueduct "walkshop," traverse peripheral spaces to urban centres. By collectively walking through these spaces the group seeks to make visible social, environmental and cultural layering of spaces around cities, and to affect both spaces and walkers into new more responsive forms (Careri 2007, 179).
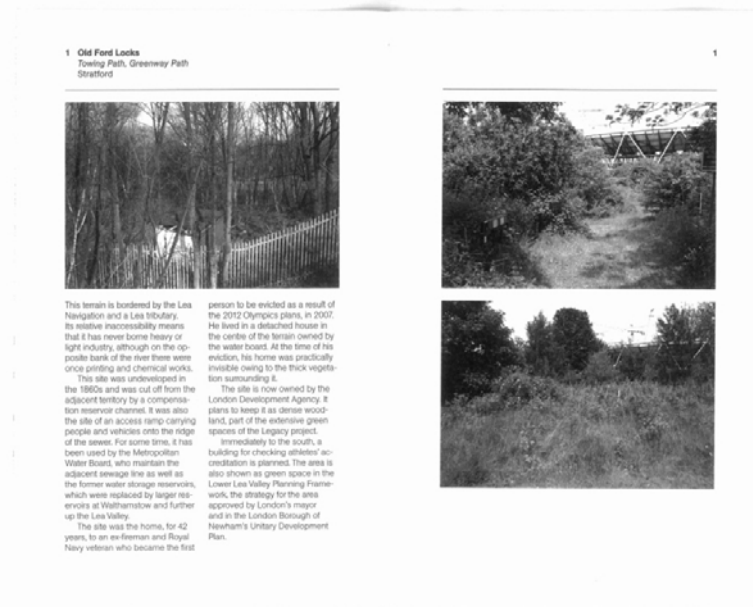
Figure 2.3: *Guide to the Wastelands of the Lea Valley: 12 Empty Spaces Await the London Olympics* (Almarcegui 2009).

Two works produced in 2009 in response to the development of the Lea Valley for London's 2012 Olympics use urban walking in different ways towards the same end: a critical focus on the construction of consumer space spectacle. Almarcegui's work (above) was commissioned as part of the Barbican Art Gallery's Radical Nature Exhibition (18–19 October 2009). Concurrently Laura Oldfield-Ford produced an "Olympic Zone" edition of her self-published zine *Savage Messiah* now published in a collection (Oldfield-Ford 2011). Both works question the assumption of empty voids in the city of London that can be filled by the building of new structures for the Olympics. Almarcegui and Oldfield-Ford tell stories through their walking guide and zine about people's existing connections to these places.

Urban Place Defined Through Connection[7]

Within the field of human geography Doreen Massey seeks to identify places through connection rather than exclusion. Of particular interest here is her work with the idea of places being networked (Massey 1994). From this perspective a place is defined not as a fixed and bounded location, but a moment in a constantly shifting network of relationships: economic, personal, political, cultural, etc. In opposition to models of modern placelessness,[8] Massey's networked places acquire their specificity from the particular combination of these relationships. This networked understanding provides the opportunity to identify the differences between places through influences and connections between them. Massey argues that places have always been interconnected with others, and that the specificity of a place comes not only from the built environment and the activities of the individuals, but also from the particular connections between that place and the rest of the world. Such relationships shift. Places are in a state of constant change and it is these dynamic relationships that define a place. Just as different individuals are involved in different relationships, the same place holds different meanings to different individuals, (see for example Massey 1991 and 1994) or the same individual over time (Grillner 2011).

More broadly however within contemporary discussion of globalisation, space and time are often reductively opposed. Space or place is associated with idealised notions of coherent and homogenous communities, while time is associated with our apparent current fragmentation and disruption. Massey (1994, 146–156) argues that this recent observation of space-time compression and dislocation is an expression of the Western coloniser's view and that mobility, which itself is not uniform across the globe, is experienced differently by different groups, and the individuals within those groups. The way in which staying still and moving between places is experienced and valued is dependent on a person's relationship to many social and economic structures and conditions. Massey cites a simple yet useful

[7] I first developed the ideas of this section for a refereed conference paper "Fragments of a scene: voicing urban memories through postcards" (Creagh 2011).
[8] See Harvey (1993, 10) for an example of the idea of placelessnes in geography theory.

example at a small scale to demonstrate the effect of privilege on the choice or lack of choice in staying still and moving between places. She elaborates that every time I drive my car, asserting my personal mobility, I reduce demand on public transport, and contribute to the lack of provision of these services on which others in my area depend (Massey 1994, 150). The complexity of these relationship webs lend themselves to metaphors of links and connections, not cartographic representations of places defined by shaded-in regions.

In "A Global Sense of Place," Massey (1994) addresses both the ingrained opposition of space/place and time in discussion of globalisation (with the resulting issues of exclusionary conservatism)[9] on the one hand, and emotional attachment of people to place on the other. In seeking to question the former while still valuing the latter, Massey asks, "Is it not possible for a sense of place to be progressive; not self-enclosing and defensive, but outward-looking?" (1994, 147). Within her essay this question is the catalyst for a model that defines the particularity of a place as a moment in a network of relationships. This she outlines in four key strokes (1994, 154-156):

1. place is "absolutely not static;"
2. "places do not have to have boundaries in the sense of divisions which frame simple enclosures;"
3. "places do not have single, unique 'identities'; they are full of internal conflicts;"
4. "none of this denies place nor the importance of the uniqueness of place."

It is this distributed and dynamic understanding of place that I adopt in this thesis. The relationship between this conception of place and the work of de Certeau and

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[9] Reactionary and nostalgic notions of place are dangerous in their ability to exclude or demonise alternatives. As singular understandings of place do not account for the reality of multiplicity of identity and the internal conflicts which must be negotiated. The reliance on a "long, internalised history" in order to construct an identity of place draws boundaries and renews opposition between groups: "them and us." Static notions of place are vulnerable to change, or invasion, and therefore defensive in a way that the notion of place as a dynamic process avoids. (Massey 1994, 152)

Lefebvre is clear; place is in a state of change which is negotiated through the actions of those who inhabit it. Thus, places are important because of a sense of attachment in individuals, and not because this sense of attachment is evidence of historical value within a homogenised collective memory. Massey concludes that "The specificity of place is continually reproduced, but it is not a specificity which results from some long, internalized history. There are a number of sources of this specificity—the uniqueness of place" (1994, 155–156). She identifies a number of nexus for the reproduction of place specificity: the mixture of social relationships at local and global scales, the unique effect of this mixture in one place, and the interactions of this unique mixture and their effects with a place's history—in which the history itself is layered over time and interlinked with the wider world within each layer. Personal memory of other places is present within each of these sets of relationships and thus is an influencing factor in how a sense of place plays out.

The works of Stampone (2011), Roeskens (2008) and Dabrowska (2009) included here (figures 2.4, 2.5, 2.6) draw attention to different aspects of the experience of interconnection. These aspects range from the sense of the influence of distant people on a place's condition, to the sense of gentrification as connected to globalisation, and at the more intimate scale the sense of self "in flux" and a personal connection to other places through memory. Like the places of these examples, L'Aquila, Marseille and London, Perth is experienced in connection with other places in the communication networks of people at the grand scale of economics and politics and in memories of other places present within the everyday activities. The boundaries, which at first seem to separate one place from another, are also the sites of connections between them. Personal memories, and the actions inspired by them, are just one of a series of connections that make meaning in urban places.

There are implications for the built environment in this thinking about place and people's relationships with places. Ways are needed to extend our traditional toolboxes to be able to engage with and communicate about places as mobile and connected, rather than distinct and discrete. What are the implications for our

understanding of urban places if they are not areas with clear boundaries? What tools do we need to understand and describe places if they are instead, as Massey suggests, (1994, 154) "imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale" than is habitually defined as a place? Andrea Kahn addresses this general issue specifically to urban sites. She seeks to find new terms to address the connectivity of urban places by exploring the implications for architectural designers in their approach to a site or lot. The complex "economic, social, historical, physical, political, haptic" dimensions of such urban sites' lead Kahn, to conclude that "Defining them in design terms thus does not come down to establishing some unique identity of a limited physical place, but quite the opposite. It involves recognising the overlay and interplay of multiple realities operating at the same time, on the same place" (Kahn 2005, 286).

Kahn provides the example of the changes required to sewerage and transport infrastructure in New York due to the construction of a dense highrise development, and highlights Time Square's and Hell's Kitchen's global, national, regional, metropolitan, and local connections as illustrations. Likewise, works such as Peter Adey (2006) and Nico Larco (2010) build on Massey's understanding of place, as defined by connections in applied studies of airport terminals and Puerto Madero in Buenos Aires, respectively. The strength of such definitions of place is in their disassociation from stasis as a source of value, instead identifying value in a place's dynamic, forward-looking, openness and connection to other places.

Kahn introduces language for place interconnection. She uses the terms "mobile ground," "site reach," "site construction," "unbound sites" and "urban constellation."[10] Here I will provide definitions for mobile ground and site construction as they relate directly to the project work of this thesis. Mobile ground is a term Kahn uses to describe a place where meaning shifts depending on who is looking. This relates to Massey's assertion that places do not have fixed identities,

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[10] For an introduction to these terms see Kahn's essay "Urban Sites" (2005).

and that these complex identities necessarily contain internal conflict. Kahn's term site construction builds on Carol Burns' (1991) earlier theorising of the constructed site by drawing attention to the role of the designer, planner, or urbanist in interpreting and defining urban places. Site construction is the process and outcome of enquiry into an urban place. The intention of this term is to highlight the role of the person who makes a site analysis in re-shaping place.

In the project component of this thesis I traverse an aspect of mobile ground in a handful of urban places, focusing on the realm of non-physical and non-proximate relations. In creating a site construction I articulate co-present fields of influence and effect brought by the memories of those who inhabit urban places. Such thinking is not limited to metropolises, and the examples of works by artists Stampone (2011), Roeskens (2008) and Dabrowska (2009) illustrate how these relationships play out in huge centres and small peripheries alike (figures 2.4, 2.5, 2.6). I echo Kahn (2005, 287) in asserting that making drawings or representations is making knowledge. In furthering Massey and Kahn's work through visual and narrative methods this thesis contributes to the field of architectural site analysis by building on traditional representation modes to include the influence of memory of other places and by offering tactics for engaging the complexity of personal experience and memory in urban sites.

Figure 2.4: *Saluti da L'Aquila* (Stampone 2011).

Postcards depicting the town L'Aquila after earthquake damage were sent by the artist to individuals of political influence. During the exhibition, visitors to the gallery could write addresses on additional cards which would also be sent. This work highlights how the condition of one place is interdependent on the actions of people in others.
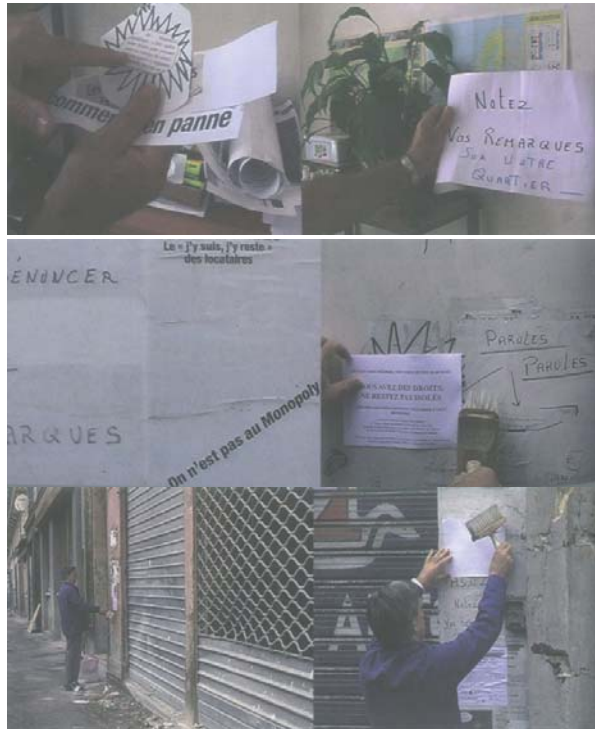
Figure 2.5: "Situation Map: Joliette [Details]" published extract from film in progress *Plan* de situation #6 Joliette (Roeskens 2008).

This work is a "nearly-documentary" recording of physical and "invisible" elements of the city block around Place de la Joliette in Marseille (Roeskens 2008). The film, and works informing the film, narrate tensions around gentrification of the area between locals, artists, activists and the development corporation Euromediterranee—tensions also revealed in Stampone's recording of L'Aquila. The impact of "invisible" systems such as the economics of multinational development groups, and global financial trends is highlighted in this work, part of which focuses on an individual living in the contested area who makes and installs posters that draw attention to the social justice issues of the development corporation's actions.
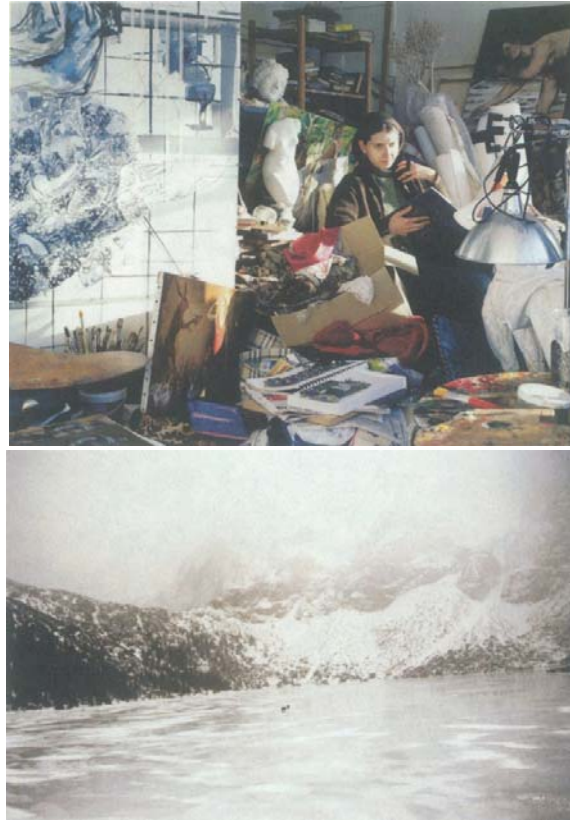
Figure 2.6: *Ulyana* (top) and *Morskie Oko 2003 for Ulyna* (bottom) (Dabrowska 2003–2007 in Naik and Oldfield 2009).

Dabrowska's (*2009, 158–167)* series chronicles the inhabitation of London with respect to people's history of migration and their connections to elsewhere. This work is about mobility, migration, and a continuing sense of a personal past. In producing these works Dabrowska interviews individuals and takes collaborative photographic portraits. *Ulyana* (top) is from this series called *You and I are in Flux* (2003–2007). Dabrowska directly responded to these works through the reflective visual collection *I Used to Skate on Frozen Lakes (2003–2007)*. *Morskie Oko* (bottom) is from this series.

Unreliable and Public Communication

In this section I present Derrida's model of communication—in which a message is a postcard, posted through an unreliable postal service—and argue the relevance of this model of communication in the exploration of the significance of personal memory to urban place. In this section I address the exclusion of urban inhabitants' voices from design discourse as part of the authorising manoeuvres of the designer. This argument does not perhaps take the anticipated route into Habermasian theory of the city square as a perfect even model of the public sphere ([1976] 1998). Instead, with Derrida, I understand that communication acts are not transparent, and that they are liable to be misunderstood or misdirected. Communication venues, like urban squares and the postal service, carry many messages in many directions at once and the significance of a given selection of these messages is subjective. Certainly some messages have more power than others, but this does not ensure their smooth and transparent transfer from the source to the intended receiver.

Derrida uses postcards as an enduring metaphor in his literary and theoretical text "Envois," the ficto-critical narrative section of his book *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond* ([1980] 1987). Envois is a fragmentary epistolary narrative, which takes the appearance of a text transcribed from many letters written on the back of postcards, which has then had large sections of the text removed. Read in relation to the urban context, Derrida's text demonstrates that communication is not like the idealised transmissions of Habermas' model. For Derrida, communication will always have the chance of failure. Like a postcard there are many ways a message can miss its mark; it may be read by someone else along the way, it may be posted to the wrong location; it may be damaged or lost on the journey, it may be long delayed.

This unreliable communication model is particularly helpful when thinking about communication between places in the context of this project as not all places are meaningful to all other places within a person's experience. Some urban messages may not be clear, may not make sense, may only come much later, or may be sent

to the wrong location (they may miss their mark). The unreliability of postcards is an important reminder that the research project itself is not an idealised communication act. Derrida's uncertain postcards remind me to be wary of my desire for neat and tidy solutions and outcomes. They are a clear challenge to a presentation of the built environment as perfectible messages between designer and users. Accepting communication as a plural and the system of communication as fallible draws attention to the mass of messages present in public space, attached to both the buildings and the inhabitants, and highlights that not all messages are clearly understood by all. There must always be a chance that a message will not get through.

The two very different examples included here (figure 2.7 and 2.8) draw attention to and mediate complex locus of communication acts within the public realm. Rendell's (2002a) wall work highlights different, and to some extent untranslatable, understandings of an element of the built environment. While McLaughlin's (2012) consultation process seeks to circumvent some of the barriers that exist between designers and clients, caused in part by specialism within architectural visual and written languages, by incorporating the familiar and casual postcard format into their consultancy methods.[11] These combination visual and text works by Rendell and McLaughlin represent different aspects of the built environment without the presumption that place is controlled by designers and, in doing so, they find a richness which may be missed in a prioritisation of a perspective that sees place primarily as a designed object. In seeking to address these gaps in the way built environment design and communication processes tend to interpret urban places, it has been fruitful to delve into theory from the social sciences and philosophy and to engage with architectural works renegotiating the way urban communication is understood.

The development of the Perth waterfront is a further example of unreliable communication on many levels, but the snapshot of media coverage included serves

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[11] Also see Marcus & Cameron (2001, 151-152) for a review of the architectural debate about whether words or images are "truer" communication acts.

as a mini-study (figure 2.9). Missed communication in this scenario revolves around the different levels of architectural literacy between the design team, the image production team, and the general public who occasionally consume these images through the popular media. The image here shows speculative forms based on initial master plan rather than an architectural building designs. The popular outcry in rejection of these "buildings" led the Government Architect to attempt to explain what is and is not resolved in an urban plan in attempt to shift the debate towards the master planning of the site. His statements were then disingenuously headlined in a way that calls the representation (and by association the scheme) a rush-job. The image caption states that the final built development may not resemble the initial render—a statement so obvious as to be amusing to people working within built environment professions but that raises more questions for a lay audience. Here visual communication has missed its mark. An image that reads as full of exciting potential to the specialists has been interpreted as grossly inappropriate and hasty by the lay audience. This case study shows that visual language is not necessarily shared between groups of people. The rendered building forms mean quite different things. The same gaps in communication exist with buildings after construction and the significance of those forms to one group cannot be assumed to be shared with another.

When considering messages sent and received in the public realm it is useful to recall Derrida's ([1980] 1987) postcard argument, which critiques any position that presents communication as transparent and infallible. It is productive to pay attention to the messages sent and received in public, but also to keep in mind that, after Derrida, this communication must be treated as inevitably unreliable. Memories are part of the messages that flow within urban places, and they play important roles in helping people negotiate, interpret and appropriate these spaces, however the importance of these memories does not mean that they are obvious. An apparently simple act such as choosing what street to walk down may be framed by the person's memory of the pavement on another street, or the smell of a particular bakery in another city, or the way that in a distant country the shops close up for lunch. These remembered places are important to people's urban

current experience, however as personal memories they are not obvious to all people who share the same built environment.

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artist, who gave me a book, *The*

POLYETHYLENE DAMP PROOF COURSE

Joint sheets with continuous strips of mastic between 150mm overlaps and seal with tape along the edge of the upper sheet, leaving no gaps. Ensure that sheets are clean and dry at the time of jointing.

the writing professes, confesses, to be a window or an opening to an

If sheets cannot be kept dry, double welted joints may be used, taped to hold in position prior to laying concrete.

interior, 4 it might better be described as a mask, 5 or a wall, 6 a boundary

Figure 2.7: *Confessional Constructions* [extract](Rendell 2002a).

In this work Jane Rendell interlaces a number of styles of writing about spaces including technical specifications and personal reflections. Pasted on a street corner, to the wall of ArtBookShop, London, the text becomes about what is concealed as well as what is revealed between writer and reader.
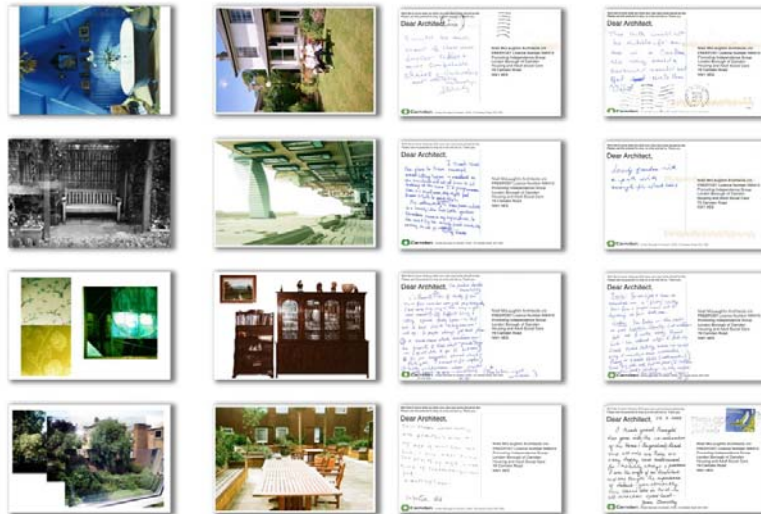
Figure 2.8: Postcards used in consultation process (Niall McLaughlin Architects 2012).

Architect Niall McLaughlin carried out three visioning workshops as consultation towards a feasibility study for aged care homes in for the London Borough of Camden. Photos taken by participants in the first workshop group were made into postcards by the architect and then distributed to the second workshop groups for their comments. The intention of this process was to facilitate communication across the subject-expert divide.

Figure 2.9: Representation of master plan for of Perth's foreshore development (Ashton Raggatt McDougall Architects 2008).

Messages can go astray within urban development projects. In the newspaper article "Waterfront plan done in a rush: top architect" (Hatch 2008) the differences between the architectural literacy of the general population and project's design team led to a public misreading of the images. The Government Architect then attempts to clarify what is and is not considered in a schematic representation of an urban plan, which was published with the image included here. This information was then, perhaps gleefully, misrepresented by the newspaper as a critical review: "The Perth waterfront plan was developed in a rush and will need to be finessed, according to State Government architect Geoffrey London." In the body of the article the selected quotes from London, such as this one, which only slightly further reveal his original meaning.

> It's a master plan and the buildings are projections of what might go on that site, they have nothing to do with the reality of what will occur... (London in Hatch 2008).

Seeing Memory in Urban Experience

The first half of this chapter introduces three alternative approaches for framing memory of other places in urban experiences. These approaches are not mutually exclusive and in the following section I consider each through the postcard metaphor that guides this project. Shifting perspectives by taking up each of these approaches in turn presents the opportunity to gain a richer understanding of urban places as occupied and to seek a mode of enquiry engaged with the multiplicity of experience within the urban realm. In this context of multiple approaches seeing the built environment as a designed object has its place alongside an understanding of urban places as lived space, as dynamic moments within a network or relationships and as nexus for imperfect communication.

Synthesising Theory and Making in a Postcard Metaphor

Mapping understandings of place onto postcards as a metaphor was a tactic I developed in reflecting upon my 2011 installation "Postcard Rack and Couch" (Creagh 2013b). Through this approach I was able to see beneath the surface of participant's interactions with the work in order to theorise around the role of memories of place in encounters with new representations of cities. Key findings from this reflective process concerned the way personal history was deployed by participants in engaging with the installation. A second key finding concerned my process of reflection itself, and it is this finding that this section formalises into a framework for analysis of place experience. Each of the three alternatives presented in this chapter—understanding urban places as lived space, as connected and dynamic and as nexus of imperfect communication—alongside understanding the built environment as a designed object are mapped onto the postcard metaphor. The published chapter referred to here is included within the appendix of this document.

In architecture the tactic of diagramming or making concept sketches is a prominent way of testing and expressing an understanding of a subject. The perception is that

if an idea can be clearly drawn and narrated then the idea has some hope of resilience within the complex negotiations of client, brief, site, colleagues, and other contextual issues.[12] In this thesis generating postcard readings of texts and sites has been my method of diagramming four theoretical positions.[13] Locating places and postcards within this field of perspectives seeks to address the limitations of only critiquing places from the perspective of designers and as designed outcomes. It is from this dominant perspective that I begin here.

Postcards are objects designed by people for mass consumption by other people.

Figure2.10: Postcard as metaphor for place design.

Urban place as a designed postcard

The postcards found on racks outside newsagents, tourist stores and information centres are designed objects. Likewise the physical aspects of urban place are designed, to a greater or lesser degree, with more or less skill, humour or seriousness—as is the case with postcards or any number of everyday objects. Postcards, like buildings, have both utilitarian and aesthetic functions. Both postcard and architectural design can be read through spatial and perceptual concerns of, for example, frame, narrative, view and image. Postcards are designed for appropriation or personalisation and this they have in common with buildings and other environments designed for living in. When introducing postcards as a

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[12] This is linked to the architectural professionals trust of drawings' clarity and neutrality over words (Forty [2000] 2002, 31). There is of course a useful ambiguity inherent in such an abstraction (Anderson 2011, 104).
[13] This approach is also philosophically aligned to Klaske Havik's (2009) use of literary modes in architecture to explore the potential for new relationships to landscape through identifying the narratives of "characters" within a setting (Havik 2006).

metaphor for urban places I think it is important to highlight the creative and potentially playful aspect of design in both; in doing so to value the creative process undertaken by designers, and the scope for humour, commentary and insight.

Postcards, like buildings, are not complete until they are taken on by those who use them, but there is an entire social process that goes into the production of these objects (Bogdan & Weseloh 2006). Postcards are typically not the work of a sole author. The photographer, copy writer, designer and printer (to name but a few) are likely to all be separate people. The same postcard may be "re-hashed" over time, adding a new set of interactions into the object found on the sidewalk stand. Postcard design is subject to trends in aesthetics and interest, to societal norms; postcards are expressions of material culture. Like postcards, the built environment has both utilitarian and aesthetic outcomes. In both, views and experience are selected and framed as a reflection of social norms and desires. In this analogy the design team of the postcard can be mapped over the design team of urban architectural projects. Perhaps it is quicker now to erect a grand building than complete a grand novel, thus "cultural trends and mindscapes" (Payne 1999, 296) are revealed in the process and forces that drive a built outcome, as in traditionally more rapidly produced social materials.[14]

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[14] Urban places operate on a longer time frame than postcards, but the analogy stands in the multiple authors, the interplay of trends, and the necessity to consider the social context that dictates the form of the designed space. Alina Payne finds the time frame and the scale of buildings "makes architecture far less useful as a snapshot of cultural trends and mindscapes" (1999, 296). Payne is, however, talking from a historical perspective, one in which buildings can take "generations to build" and where such objects may or may not reveal the culture of a, comparatively short, historic period.
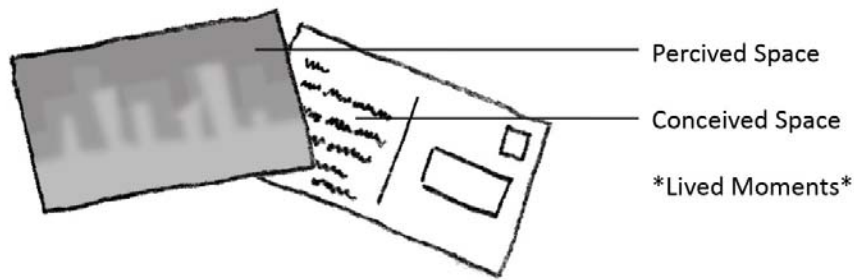
Figure 2.11: Postcard as a metaphor for lived space.

Urban place as an appropriated postcard

The postcard can be read as a metaphor for the lived experience of urban places. The two faces of the postcard lend themselves to modelling the dialectic relationship of de Certeau's lived and concept cities, and the more complex trialectic of Lefebvre's conceived, perceived and lived space. In the first, de Certeau's dialectic model, the card as purchased (blank, shiny, clean and idealised) is a representation of the concept city. The act of purchasing the card, writing a message and adding other appropriating marks to shift the original meaning are the actions of lived space. In the second, Lefebvre's trialectic, the relationship is more complex. The image again represents the city as conceived as an ideal, the written message presents the city as it is perceived—this message section is equally subject to convention and social agreement. Within this metaphor, however, the lived moment of Lefebvre's trialectic is perhaps the instant of reflective awareness that occasionally intersects the individual's experience of reading or writing the two sided postcard.

Postcards are often kept as mementos of an individual's experience of a specific place and a time. Because of this common understanding of postcards they can be read as a metaphor for an embodied experience. Following this notion an individual's spatial history can be represented as a collection of postcards—be it a pocketful or a shipping box full. With the combination of a generic image of a place

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and deliberate ellipses postcards are a good representation of an individual's memory of spatial experience within a setting, where personal interest and stories are appended to what would appear insignificant details. As fragmentary objects, a collection of postcards is subject to re-arrangement and re-contextualisation similar to the way events in an individual life are retold in shifting stories which make and re-make meaning in their own life.

This attachment of personal stories to what would appear insignificant details is similar to Roland Barthes' discussion of the "punctum" within photographs in his book *Camera Lucida* ([1979] 1993). Through the punctum notion Barthes describes the specific personal relationships individuals can have with even mass produced images. Barthes describes his relationship to a series of photographs, both from his family collection and from within the public realm by focusing in on the specific, seemingly inconsequential, detail that make each image particularly poignant to him. He populates these photographs with details from his life. Barthes' punctum allows us to see that the specific significance of a postcard (and a place) may be incidental to the designer's intent. [15]

The postcard combines writing and movement. They are a medium that recalls *embodied* place and time in a way that is perhaps only comparable to a travel diary. However, unlike a travel diary postcards are able to be rearranged, displayed, lost, relocated; they do not tell a whole story, nor do they attempt to; the epistolary postcard is more like lived experience than a diary in that it is subject to shifts in context and meaning from where it is sent to where it arrives, and perhaps where it is again encountered some time later. Different nuances of meaning can be drawn from the same postcard-moment in the way that events in a life are re-contextualised to present new life-stories as the narrator grows and changes.[16]

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[15] Fiona Willkie (2002) has pursued a reading of place based in performance theory and Barthes' use of the punctum.

[16] Akin to the connection Solnit draws between walking, writing and thinking (Solnit 2000).

Seeing places through the metaphor of postcard as expression of embodied experience shifts focus from the monumentality of urban place to the intricate and meaningful detail found in individual lives and relationships. Following Barthes in acknowledging the significance of personal detail, and allowing for the way individuals shape and re-shape life stories, the image side of the postcard—the image of the urban place—becomes the background to the small events that hold our attention and sympathies rather than the focus of our intellectual or aesthetic appreciation.
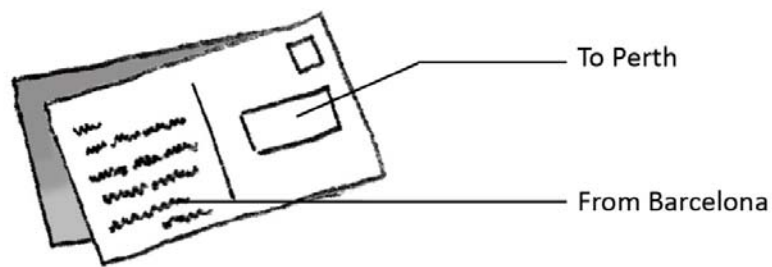
Figure 2.12: Postcard as a metaphor for urban place connection.

Urban place as a postcard-bridge between places

The postcard can be seen as a metaphor for conceptual or emotive bridges between places in the minds of individuals or groups. Earlier in this chapter I discussed the position held by Massey and others, that places are specific moments in networks of relationships. Likewise, de Certeau discusses physical and map boundaries that seem to fix the edges and identity of a place and points out that such edges create the potential for "bridging" or making a connection between two places (1984, 127). I posit that postcards sent from one place to another are like de Certeau's bridges, and can be read as a metaphor for one of the strands of Massey's networks (1994, 154).

In the moment that a postcard is received it connects the place of receiving and the place of sending depicted on the card. Like de Certeau's idea that boundaries are also bridges the postcard from abroad at once demonstrates, for instance, that

Perth is not Barcelona but also shows that there is a connection through this postcard from Barcelona to Perth. Thinking about the way place is experienced through postcards in this way focuses attention on the connection to other places that are part of urban inhabitation.
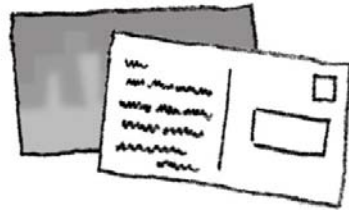
The message of the postcard designer can be reinterpreted by the sender. All the postcard's messages can be read at any point along the way and from many perspectives.

Figure 2.13: Postcard as a metaphor for unreliable communication in urban places.

Urban place as an unreliable postcard

Postcards are open messages when sent through the mail. In this they are like urban places in the multiple ways in which they can be understood as communication. First, through the framework of communication theory, a designed object (such as a building) can be read as a message between designer and user. Likewise a postcard can be seen in the same way, a message between the sender and the receiver. Second, urban environments and postcards can be seen as a nexus of communication acts subject to conventions and located within larger social and cultural conventions and structures. What is written by the sender is not significant of, nor dictated by, their whim alone. Thirdly, within these structures, the scope for resistance is mapped in de Certeau's representation of spatial occupation as language event. From this perspective, the chosen, inscribed and sent postcard is such a moment in language. Framed by social norms, the selections made by the author's resistive or creative articulation give meaning to the postcard in the same way that de Certeau's urban walking gives form to the city. Finally, when

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considering postcards as an artefact of communication, Derrida's ([1980] 1987) criticism of language models must be taken into account.[17]

Postcards too are documents that present particular positions on places—be that shorter, more personal, and seemingly more clearly authored. The postcard is an instance of communication that is considered as interwoven into larger conversations for its sense to be read. Seeing place through this postcard-communication analogy assists in searching for the threads of discussion, be they in the media, professional discourse or private conversation, within which urban places are located. Postcards like communication acts concerning urban places seek to legitimise some views and exclude others. Likewise, the message written on a postcard negotiates these patterns of communication, playing along with some and subverting others. Resistive acts and re-routed messages become possible when the production of urban places, and representations of them, are understood as unreliable communication acts.

Together

While on holiday the postcard selected from a rack of similar objects is chosen as a memento of one's experience. The role of the postcard (or any souvenir) is to act as a small piece of that other place and time, which can be experienced in miniature after the return home, opening up the sensorial memories of the individual's travel (Gordon 1986, 140). In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes ([1979] 1993, 106) bemoans the limitation of the photograph, it tells so much and no more, it can be turned over and examined from the other side perhaps to review a date or a few names. The other side of the postcard in comparison is full of information and spaces that invite participation. Even blank, the address space invites thought about locations and places of inhabitation by both the postcard sender and receiver. The message space recalls other postcards sent or purchased with the intention of sending, places

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[17] Planning as a discipline has begun to engage with discourse analysis to interrogate the documents that are constructed in the planning process of cities. The intention of this line of enquiry most often seems to be a Habermasian search for a more level playing field between figures of authority and those who occupy the end results of a planning process. From a Habermasian point of view, perhaps the postcard can be seen as a more open and egalitarian mode of communication about place, than the authoritive venue of planning documents.

where postcards were written or contemplated, perhaps even the acts of storing the cards, the good intentions of carrying them around throughout the trip, but never deciding to send them on their way. Postcards are rich vessels for metaphor comfortably holding reminders of urban place as design-object, lived space, connected place, and unreliable communication.
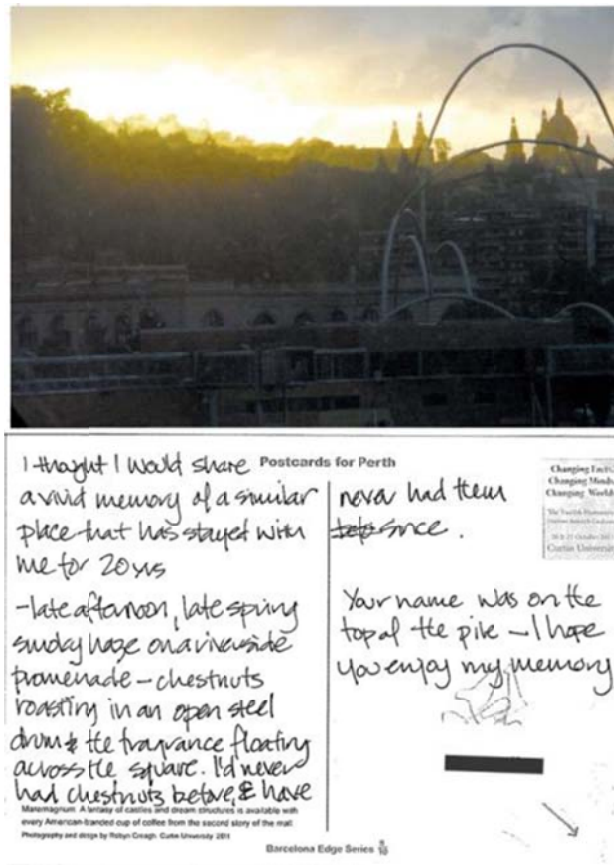
Figure 2.14: Place as Bridge (Creagh 2013b).

To draw and example from participants' interactions with my 2011 installation "Postcard Rack and Couch," this image has triggered a memory of a specific moment and place within a participant's travel history. These reactions suggest that people can, and do, relate moments in their past to other places as part of a process of engaging with a setting.

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[18] These reflections were first published as part of a chapter for the conference proceedings (Creagh 2013b). The paper is reproduced as an appendix to this exegesis.
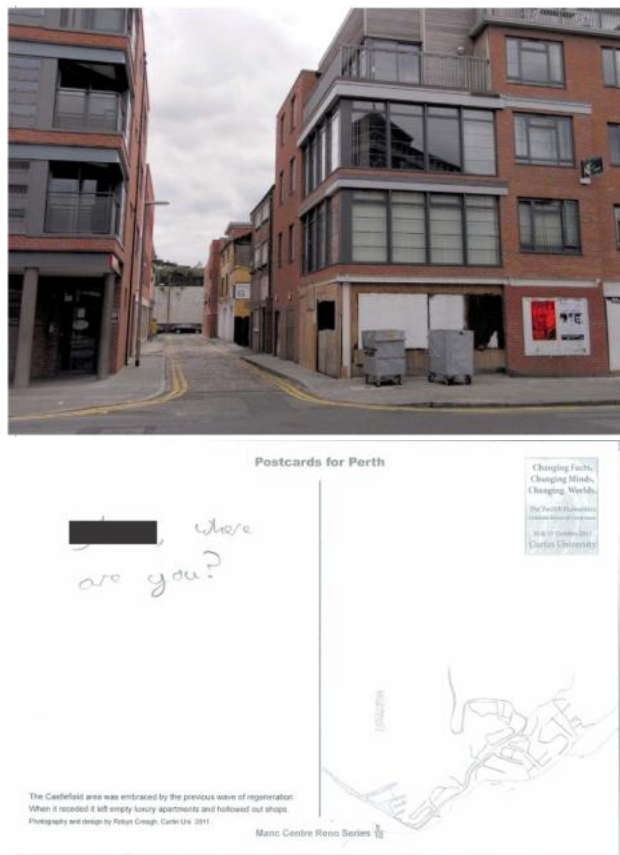
Figure 2.15: Place as unreliable postcard (Creagh 2013b).

The image of an abandoned regeneration project is here appropriated by a participant to playfully highlight the absence of a missing postgraduate friend. In the process my intended meaning (a cautionary observation about an abandoned building after a wave of regeneration) is muted.

Synthesising Alternative Perspectives and the Problem

Architectural analysis of urban places tends to focus on the action and output of designers; to lean towards morphological analysis, which naturalises homogenous and static populations; and to imagine design-work as a perfectible mode of communication between designer and user. These tendencies present a hurdle when seeking to address the role of memories of other places in urban experience. In this chapter I have sought alternative perspectives that address these limitations and found that understanding urban places as lived space, moments in networks of dynamic relationships, and as nodes for unreliable communication provides ways to explore the role of memory of other places in urban experience. These three alternatives, and an understanding of place as a design-object, can be mapped through a postcard metaphor. I present this mapping here as a synthesis of the background, and as an early outcome from research at the intersection of both project-work and literature review.

The examples in this chapter illustrate the gap between the representation of urban spaces in professional documentation of the built environment—which present place as designed object—and the alternative understandings that leave room for the personal memories of elsewhere. The cited examples for Perth's current Urban Design Framework reinforce the designer's authority as agent of place creation by ignoring the appropriations of lived space, presenting colonial history as the only recognised history of the city, and seeking to represent communication as controlled and directed by authorised bodies. Looking to visual art and the edges of architectural and ethnographic practices we find works that challenge the authority of city design documents. The works of Oldfield-Ford (2011) and Almarcegui (2009) engage with urban places in ways that build on the tradition of the Situationists and are resistive to the dominant narrative of the built environment—working to unpack the fixity of place definitions. The photographic work of Dabrowska (2009) encapsulates an understanding of individuals in place as both travellers and dwellers and finds a visual representation for the feeling of carrying memories of other places. The inter-responsive relationship between places and power

structures is highlighted in Stampone's (2011) postcard work and the nearly-documentary visual works of Roeskens (2008). Both draw attention to the relationships of economics, social groups, powerful individuals, and the multitude of factors that shape a place and shift a place's definition over time. Rendell (2000a) and McLaughlin (2012) take two different approaches, in different contexts, yet both recognise how closed to outsiders built environment professional's language can be. In their respective works Rendell (2002a) and McLaughlin (1012) seek to present ways into the texts for their targeted interlocutors. The understandings of place that inform these works are paths into exploring the role of memory of other places in urban experience and addressing the limitations of understanding cities as only design outputs.

The problems identified when limiting an understanding of an urban place to that of a designed object are addressed by introducing alternative understandings into the conversation. The built environment is the product of interconnected forces, and influences the way places are occupied. But, rather than focusing on design outcomes in isolation, or attempting to exclude the role of designers (and planners, policy makers and so on) from a conversation about urban experience, it is more productive to position the design process within the stories and acts that shape group and individual spatial understanding, the networks of influence that spread across the globe, and the imperfect messages that inform design, construction and space management process.

In this chapter I have brought together four perspectives on urban place through an analogy to postcards. The strength of developing this metaphor is that it opens-up questions about place and mobility, presents avenues to interrogate personal memory next to socially constructed meaning, and provides a tacit mnemonic on which to hang interdisciplinary approaches. This material and metaphorical approach through which to engage analytically with urban places gives room for creative and lateral thought between perspectives. This interdisciplinary approach interrogates static representations of place from several directions. The perspectives presented here, and the chosen postcard metaphor, place an

emphasis on the role people's memories of other places within their urban experience. In other contexts, the same structure could be used to interrogate static presentations of place, with or without the development of a new metaphorical conduit.

The key advantage I found in trialling this mode of analysis on my own work was the equal weighting I was able to assign to each of the perspectives on place adopted (Creagh 2013). Engaging with place through this postcard-metaphor is advantageous in de-authorising each of the positions, so that it becomes one of a multitude of voices, subject to criticism and interrogation by other voices—rather than a single perspective providing the meta narrative for the analysis. The requirement to engage with each approach brought me from the position of designer-authority on the work to participant-observer in the work. Another advantage of the postcard metaphor is the potential to accumulate viewpoints. I have identified three perspectives discussed in this thesis as forwarding exploration of memory of distant places in lived experience of the urban realm, however, for other enquires different perspectives on place may be beneficial. Doubtless future studies would call for the inclusion of other varied understandings of place. One of the strengths of this model is that this flexibility is available, but the multiplicity of viewpoints involved is a reminder that any view point cannot reveal a whole, or absolute, meaning. [19]

In the next chapter I review the methodologies and methods that facilitate an enquiry into place as a lived, interconnected site of opaque communication acts. Within a creative practice helix of creation and reflection I supplement existing approaches to architectural site analysis and design with tactics from alternate ethnographies and installation art.

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[19] For example, the notion that a place is a cultural object, an outcome and expression of a specific social construction is a productive perspective from which to engage with meaning in the public realm, however this is not an explicit theme in thesis. Here this idea is called on to draw attention to the polyphonic interconnection of society.

Chapter 3

Making, Framing

This thesis adopts a creative practice methodology to support original, grounded, and personal explorations of memory in urban places. In the first half of this chapter I introduce autoethnography and visual anthropologies as methodologies that guide the research of this thesis. In the second half of this chapter, I discuss key tactics that shape the research process. Foremost of these methods is the key metaphor— postcard as place. I highlight the significance of the postcard metaphor in negotiating the two strands to this thesis, the project and exegesis. The discussion of tactics which follows highlights four ways of working that facilitated the exploration of the role of memory in urban place. Working with pairs of photos and short texts; organising images into thematic sets of postcards; using participatory exhibition; working with layers of images of different places; and manipulating photographs through scale and fragmentation. In this chapter I include images of my research process and refer to other relevant visual works. The tactics discussed here also documented in the process booklets contained in the Exhibition Folio Box. This introduction does two things. First, I present a brief overview of some tensions within architectural site analysis of urban places, and then outline the helical structure of a creative practice research approach and how this is mapped in this thesis.

Architectural Site Analysis

Architectural site analysis is a mapping process typically undertaken through image making. In a handbook for teaching and learning architectural design skills   Jane

Anderson (2011, 82) encapsulates the discipline's approach to site in saying that there are no fixed methods for site analysis save "The Architect must visit, observe, participate in and record the site." It is useful to look at how site analysis is understood in the built environment field.

Surveying, according to Jeanne Sillett's (1999, 110) reflection, comes down to "anticipation, observation and registration." The strength of these mapped abstractions of a place are that they are in Sillett's words both a "revelation and a distortion." Subjective perceptions and decisions about technique, time, measurement and philosophy of the person undertaking the site analysis are significant factors in shaping the resulting mapped understanding of a place. It is through this abstraction that an architectural site analysis orders the mass of information and layers of co-present realities to discriminate which ones will be held as defining factors for the architectural design response. Thus, site analysis is part of the architectural design process; it already shapes (or limits) the possibilities of design outcomes (Anderson 2011, 82).[1]

There are tensions in how site is defined and mobilised within built environment communication. Carol Burns and Andrea Kahn unpick some of these issues in their book *Site Matters* (2005). They argue that site is too often approached as bound to the building lot, and propose the adoption of language that encompasses a sited work's areas of influence and effect. In effect the primacy of physical form is challenged and the flows of relationship around and through a place are brought into focus. Sympathetically to Burns and Kahn's work I seek to challenge the primacy of physical forms in site analysis.

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[1] Parallel to these shifting roles and intentions, in the fine arts, art criticism has taken a turn towards the production of new creative work as criticism. This is an expansion of the critic's role, from providing a technical critique or historical placement of gallery work, towards communicating something of the personal experience of the work. A contemporary critical piece could be said to provide a sense of the meaning that is built between the work and the critic, an act of construction in itself, as an evocative spring board for the reader's own analysis and interpretation of the artwork or architecture (Stead 2003, 52). For example Jane Rendell's (2007) spatial writing can be seen to have developed from her two practices as architect and art critic. Rebecca Solnit's (2000) writing is also located in this realm. Her writing on walking urban landscapes provides some idea of the possibilities for architectural criticism to engage with the urban realm.

In geography there is a call for a widening of focus and engagement with the qualities of lived space. Loretta Lees (2003) calls for ethnographic, methodologically transparent critical, urban studies. Likewise in architecture Katherine Shonfield (2000a) and Klask Havik (2006) identify the strengths of narrative and fiction writing approaches as methods to engage with people's understanding of place. This chapter takes on these ambitions. Adopting techniques from autoethnography and visual anthropology I seek to address the issues identified in the background chapter: the de-authorisation of occupant of space, the conceptualisation of places as bounded in space and history, and the presentation of design as a technology of perfect communication. There is potential for the communication of the built environment to engage with the richness brought to urban space through occupation.

Helix of Creative Practice Enquiry

The project and exegesis of this thesis enquire into and develop responses to the research area in different but linked ways. Both seek to address concerns about grounding the work in the experience of those who occupy urban places. This structure enables independence and freedom to the two parts, while reading (and writing and making) them in conjunction strengthens and deepens the enquiry. The project provides the opportunity through participatory exhibition and visual narratives for the viewer to place themselves in the research project and bring their own life experience to bear on the subject. This kind of engagement is crucial to the success of this project—which seeks to question and complement existing site analysis modes within the architecture discipline. Likewise the exegesis of this thesis is indispensable. This manuscript interrogates the project work. This exegesis discusses the process work of the research in a way that allows the reader (and the researcher) to critique the process and method, to draw out important external relationships, and highlight areas of applicability and potential raised by the thesis. Thus the two parts serve different and complementary purposes, both are intended to be read actively and questioningly, and were constructed in the same manner. I

cannot say that the research of this thesis sits in either one or the other, but in both.[2]

These methods and the relationship between visual and textual work overlap and interlink in a manner aptly described as helical (Marshall 2010, 79). On the project side of the helix is the creative production cycle "respond–create–reflect," while on the exegetic side is the interlocking cycle of "observe–describe–analyse" (Marshall 2010). These two cycles with their emphasis on observation, reflection, analysis and response orbit around the researcher. In this project my first hand experiences of places, and in the production of creative works, are the generators of the research; I am both participant and observer. While in the field I composed short descriptive stories as narrative analysis, and selected and edited scenes through photography. Likewise, themes from textual studies inform this process, give guidance to the making, framing and analysis. This helical process ensures the thesis remains focused, and highlights areas where the project work challenges existing literature on urban place. That is, this helical process is grounded in both theory and experience, robust, purposeful and strategic (Marshall 2010, 80).

In producing this thesis, I worked in in overlapping but chronological phases—each culminating in a work that sparks further research though the interlocking observe–describe–analyse cycle. Each phase builds on previous outcomes and processes, while the postcard remains as a consistent metaphor for place experience.[3] Pairing photographs and short texts resulted in a conference paper at *Postcards and letters: Beyond Text* at Sussex University (Creagh 2011b).[4] In making the wall hung installation *Postcard Trails* (2010) (figure 4.2) I use thematic sets to consolidate field work.[5] I piloted experimentation with participation through an installation at the Curtin Humanities Postgraduate Conference 2011 (Creagh 2013b) and developed the participatory aspects further for the AUDRC exhibition (Creagh 2013a). I built on

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[2] See also Milech and Schilo 2004.
[3] The presentation and exhibition of works at conferences opened the observe–describe–analyse cycle to the feedback of others. This opening up of the work developed into the participatory approach of the final exhibition.
[4] This paper included is the Exhibition Folio Box at the end of "Process Book 1: Image Text Pairs".
[5] This work is documented in "Process Book 2: Postcard Sets" in the Exhibition Folio Box.

the work with sets to produce a collection of collages using layering as a visual meaning making tactic. These layered sets informed the exhibition at AUDRC (Creagh 2013a) where the large scale of the works and their fragmentation enabled a visitor participation in the construction of the exhibition experience and the visual works.

Borrowing from Alternate Ethnographies[6]

Within contemporary ethnography and anthropology, the alternate ethnographies—in particular autoethnography and visual anthropology—are most appropriate to unpack memory and experience of urban place within this project. In this section I discuss ways that these methodologies enable insight into the lived experience of urban places in a way that includes personal memory. First, what is the tradition that these alternatives deviate from?

Traditional understandings of anthropology and ethnography prioritise the notions of objectivity and seek to silence the subjective articulation of the researcher's experience to give focus to the studied subject. From the perspective of many anthropologists, the narration of subjectivity has been associated with travel writing and located beyond the edges of the discipline. This distinction is evident in the repeated scenario of anthropological writing and travel writing produced by the same author about the same experiences. Historian James Clifford (1997, 53) in a discussion of travel writing, journalism and anthropology posits that these edges are not so clean cut:

> In opposition to these purportedly superficial, subjective, and biased forms of knowledge, anthropological research was oriented toward the production of deep, *cultural* knowledge. I argue that the border is unstable, constantly renegotiated (Clifford 1997, 53).

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[6] I first developed the ideas of this section for a refereed conference paper "Fragments of a scene: voicing urban memories through postcards" (Creagh 2011).

Working in the realm of this unstable border, the alternate ethnographies seek to delve into the detail that more traditional ethnographies overlook in their emphasis on empirical presentation of the research process.[7] Alternate ethnographies, including autoethnography and visual anthropology, focus on the communication of moments of embodied experience that illustrate characteristics of a culture (Ellis et al 2011).

Autoethnography takes as its stated intent the rendering of concrete moments of life to catalyse critical reflection and action (Ellis 2004, 30). In this methodology subjectivity is embraced as a critical tool, in contrast to more traditional practice of ethnography, which values presumed objectivity. Exploring the strength of subjectivity within ethnographic enquiry, autoethnographic study places one individual, the researcher, at the centre of the enquiry. The researcher's experience is used to unpack an event within its cultural context. Autoethnography sees lived experience as an interpretive story that

> lives willingly with plurality, embracing the power of language to make new and different things possible; … focuses on how we talk about the world and tries to deal with it; … recounts improvisations, changes, contradictions, ambiguities, and vulnerabilities… (Bochner [1990] 1992, 5).

Echoing this shift towards a critical engagement with the experience of the researcher within anthropology more broadly, visual anthropology has moved on from being "limited to an audiovisual aid" (Ruby 2006, 160). In the last two decades visual anthropology has increasingly explored the potential for the production of photographs and video to be part of a meaning construction process (Pink 2003). Understanding image making as the construction of meaning, focusing on the

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[7] To the logical extent in some cases of destabilising the authority of the author's identity (Gannon 2006). Within this thesis I use the tactic of drawing on "discontinuous fragments informed by memory, the body, photographs, other texts, and, most importantly, other people" which Gannon (2006, 491) identifies in the writing of Barthes, Derrida and Cixous to "write themselves as unreliable narrators… multiple selves…" to present an open, discontinuous text in which people who engage with the works can weave elements of their own self-narratives.

details of experience, and taking interest in the everyday rather than the exotic are all reasons why autoethnography and visual anthropology together are the most appropriate methodological approach for this research. The next section looks in more detail at the connections between the selected approaches and research into human experience in urban settings.

Autoethnography and Lived Places

Autoethnography, although located within the ethnographic discipline, is an interdisciplinary practice—drawing from creative disciplines (most often of writing, more occasionally of image making and performance) in a desire to augment empirical ways of knowing to provide more full accounts of the subject of interest. Bradley Garret's (2012) work with urban exploring, is one such recent example (figure 3.1). In this drive and approach autoethnographic methodologies provide a framework to extend architectural site analysis into the territory of the subjective experience of individuals.

Klasse Havik (2006), a Dutch architect, critic and educator addresses the importance of writing in her essay on the potential of urban literacy for architectural discourse. Havik adopts and expands the term "urban literacy" from Charles Landry (2000). She, like Shonfeild (2000), recalls literary fiction's evocative renderings of urban life and argues that architectural discourse has much to learn from this. Havik (2006) looks to literature in seeking to describe the relationships between people and urban places, she sees literature as being able to describe the rich and multi-sensory experience of architecture.

> Writers, after all, are uniquely qualified to *read* the space in which they move—places, buildings, landscapes—on several levels. They can formulate a spatial experience that is both highly individual and universal, in the sense that this subjective experience can be understood by others and also have meaning for others (Havik 2006, 40).

In constructing an understanding of a place and communicating it towards further action architectural site analysis has much to gain from literary approaches. No doubt building on the heritage of Hardy's (1968) work, Havik emphasises the role of narrative in engaging with the time dependant aspects of lived experience.[8] Urban environments are experienced within a temporal setting—our lives. Yet, architectural outcomes are driven towards a "final image." Literature more skilfully explores temporal themes of memory, growth, change and decay. [9] For Havik this questions the image-driven process of architectural design and reinforces the relevance to literary techniques to architecture design and critique (Havik 2006, 42). Havik's work is significant to this thesis in a shared concern for urban space as lived, and an approach to criticism and design of the built environment that includes narrative methods. [10] Katja Grellier (2003, 2011), Jane Rendell (2013) and Cathy Smith (2012) all deploy elements of autoethnographic methodologies in their interrogations of the built environment. These three draw from the alternate ethnographies to place emphasis on the way that individuals negotiate spaces and places to make sense of their life. In these works places are "told" as part of peoples' life stories (Finnegan 1998, 56). Within the frame of a life, places are connected in ways that do not conform to traditional perceptions of space. Exploring, describing and analysing these personal connections requires methods that are open to subjectivity and are able to tap into the richness of literary devices, such as autoethnography.

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[8] Barbara Hardy was crucial in developing narrative theory as an alternative analytic mode to scientism and objectivism. Narrative theory presents story telling as the dominant, pervasive form for human understanding and communication. "We dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative. In order really to live, we make up stories about ourselves and others, about the personal as well as the social past and future" (Hardy 1968, 5).

[9] "A place acquires meaning through, among other things, the memory of it, or through associations with the past of the observer. The link with the past or the future has a significant impact on the experience of architecture" (Havik 2006, 42). Such novels in the Australian context include Simone Lazaro's (2000) *The World Waiting to be Made* and recent Miles Franklin Award winner Michelle de Kretser's (2013) *Questions of Travel*.

[10] Havik's recent identification of the strengths of literature for architecture is pre-dated by Lefebvre's practice of urban writing, not just developed for works published in the posthumous *Rythmanalysis ([1992] 2004)* but much earlier as an ethnographer of rural and urban communities. Jean-Paul Sartre identifies Lefebvre's methodology as three phased. The first is a full description of the place (encompassing physical, economic, social) guided by knowledge of general theory, followed by an analytical phase, which focuses again on the reality of the day to day place, and finally a "historical-genetic" phase, which seeks to explain the rediscovered the present (Merrifield 2006, 4).

Figure 3.1: *The author experiencing the meld, the body in the city and the city in the body, the River Westbourne, London* (Garrett 2012, 263).

An example of visual anthropology and autoethnographic methodologies in urban studies context is Bradley Garrett's 2012 Doctoral Thesis in geography, *Place Hacking*. This work uses both visual anthropology and auto-ethnographic methodologies to deeply engage with a community of urban explorers based in London.[11] Garrett's experience as part of the urban explorers crew provide the primary source material for this work. His visual works and analysis show rich insight into the spatial practices of the community.

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[11] Urban Exploration is a marginal contemporary spatial practice where people enter, traverse and photograph areas that are socially and legally out of bounds. Often these are abandoned buildings in urban locations.
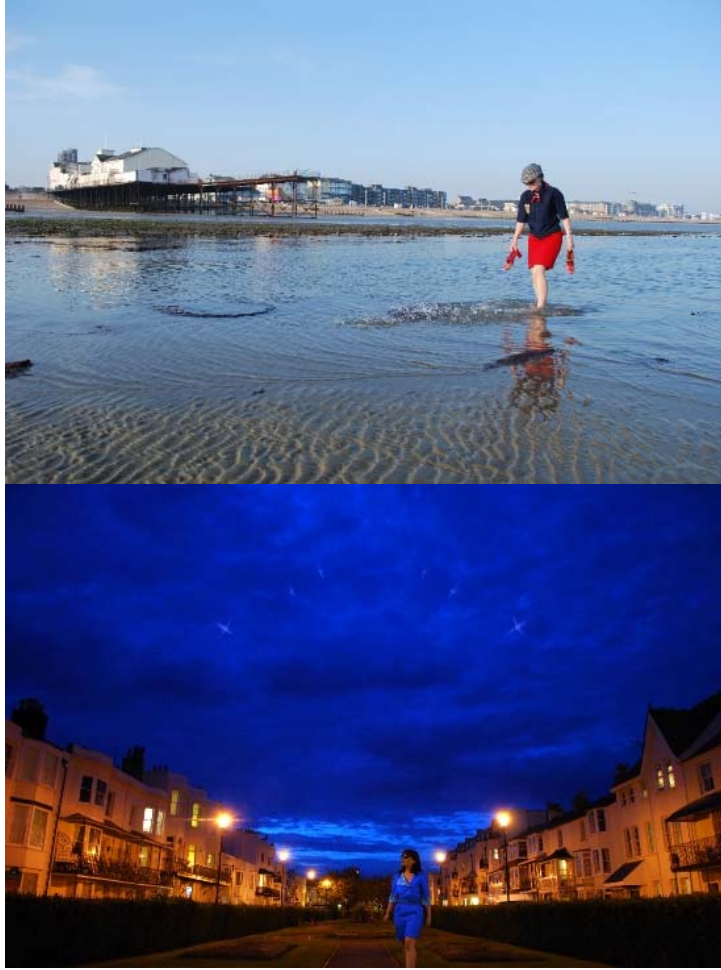
Figure 3.2: *Paddling in Michigan Militia*, (top) and *The Steyn*
(bottom)—two works from the *Brooklyn // Bognor pt.1 Series (*Locke
2008).

Locke (2008) says of these images,

> Each image is a short story. A move to the city traditionally allows
> for the creation of a new narrative, a new self. Is it equally
> possible to reverse this, to create a new narrative of place? In
> these images, the photograph is an argument—Bognor is
> redefined, and the myth of place is challenged.
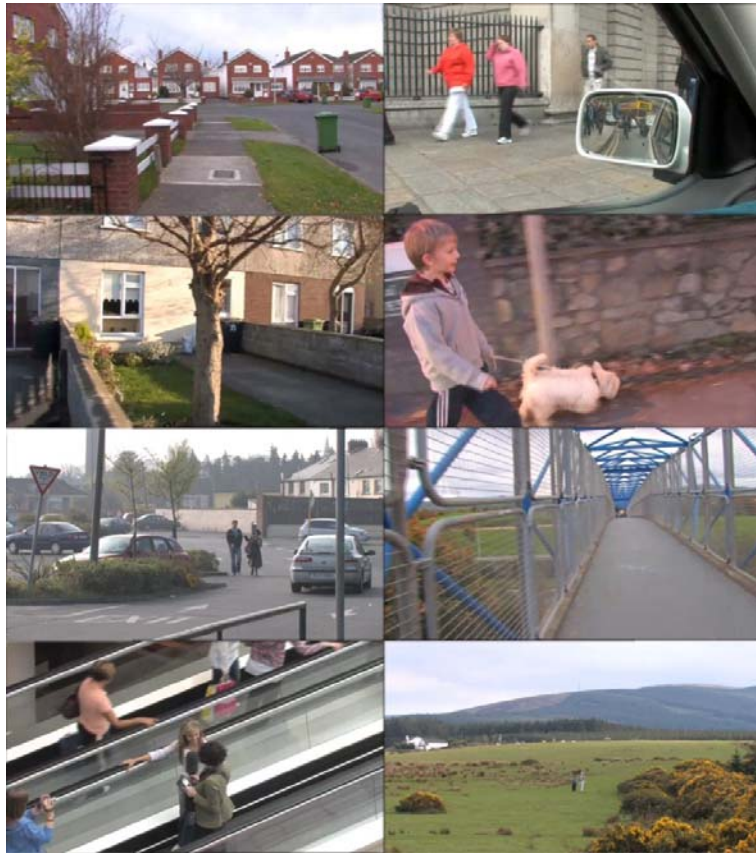
Figure 3.3: Stills from the film *Moving Dublin* (Cleary and Connolly 2009).

In this film artist-architects Cleary and Connolly collect stories of moving about in Dublin in the recent and distant past. Audio of these stories is overlaid on the corresponding video work of travelling the routes described, interspersed with long-shots of the video interviews, themselves conducted on the move. The audio and visual layering creates a reading of place that is changing, connected and yet very particular in its narrative of space and inhabitation.

Visual Anthropology and Urban Experience

Contemporary visual anthropology and auto-ethnographic methodologies have much to lend enquiries into personal experience of urban places. Bradley Garret's PhD (2012) takes both an auto-ethnographic and visual anthropology approach to research the human geography of a group of urban explorers based in London (see figure 3.1). This and the work of Cleary and Connolly in "Moving Dublin" (2009) show the advantage of first person visual enquiry into places and spatial practices (figure 3.3). Visual anthropology is understood in a contemporary context as a process of knowledge construction and no longer just visual note-taking. This intersubjective and collaborative position developed in response to the "observational" approach of 1970s.[12] In the context of this research, it is useful to understand image making as a creative and analytical process. Like the work of Garret (2012), Cleary and Connolly (2009), the visual works of this thesis are at once a mediated recording, and new visual description of place that is unfixed and changeable.

Similarly, a productive precedent for this thesis is Pink's (2008) publication of her work with visual methodologies in her urban tour of the town Mold, in the United Kingdom. In this article Pink highlights the way that walking and eating were used as tools in the co-production of place, that is, Mold as a "Slow City."[13] Pink's recording methods—note taking, audio, photographic and video recording—and her subjective and co-relational understanding of meaning making and research incorporate both visual anthropology and autoethnographic methodologies. As tactics for creative research work the urban tour with a local mediator and the associated recording and editing phases are of note for the following reasons: Firstly, Pink understands place as lived and imagined (and verifies her readings by collecting sensorial and imaginative data which is rejected or reinforced by local "mediators" who accompany her on the walks); secondly, she identifies the

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[12] Increasingly critiqued as "an objectifying practice" claims Pink (2003, 190) in critiquing more restrictive definitions of visual anthropology as a tool to record and describe of communities.
[13] Cities that are part of the Slow City or Cittaslow network aim to improve the quality cities by slowing down the pace of life and the implied flow on of an increase in consideration and appreciation of activities. The idea of Cittaslow developed out of the slow food movement.

potential for the co-creation of place through research process; thirdly, her work embraces a definition of place that is unfixed and changeable; and finally, she articulates a generative relationship between practices, imagined places and actions to make change.

Another example of visual anthropology that explores the interdependent relationship of people and places through the production of creative works is Rebecca Locke's (2008) photographic enquiry into her relationship to Brooklyn and her home town Bognor in the UK (see figure 3.2). In her photo works Locke connects two different cities and phases of her life—in doing so she presents a new reading of her home town Bognor. In these rich and surprising photographs Locke brings the urban habits, and aesthetic sense, she developed while living in New York to a seaside town. Through these images, Locke argues that her travel to the United States of America and return to England changed her, and that Bognor too is reshaped in her experience.

Reading Place Through Mixed Methods

If, as Burns and Kahn (2005, pviii) suggest, architects are poor articulators of their understanding of sites then the works of Pink (2008), Garret (2012), Locke (2008), Cleary and Connelly (2009) evidence that drawing from the alternate ethnographies is a strategic and purposeful choice in exploring and communicating new understandings of place experience. The second half of this chapter identifies key tactics within the creative practice methodology of this thesis.

Key Research Tactics

Working With the Postcard Metaphor

Like the plurality of readings of urban experience discussed in the previous chapter, no single research method results in a full reading of place. The postcard has acted as a necessary anchor while sampling and borrowing approaches from neighbouring disciplines. With this visual work I invite others to test these ideas about place by

using the postcard as a reflective tool; or indeed to develop a creative practice and mixed method approach anchored by an object with metaphoric potential.[14] Taking the postcard—a small, familiar, simple, tacit object with spatial implications—as a metaphor for place enables me to interrogate place not only through a single medium, but through a number of perspectives as described in the previous chapter and through a number of methods: photography paired with journals, sets, layered images, participation, scale and fragmentation.

Postcards are present in contemporary art. The social commentary in the Mail Art work of Ray Johnson's (2009) collages and epistolary fragments in the 1960s and the 1970s, more recent works of Stampone (2011) (see figure 2.4 in previous chapter) and the interrogation of tourist identity of Jin-me Yoon's postcard works (1991) demonstrate strong progressive and nostalgic attachments to small cardboard rectangles. The very breadth of fields of enquiry in these examples indicates the strength of the postcard to carry associations.[15] There are however, some associations that are most firmly adhered to the postcard. The artists above, as well as this project, draw on these associations to carry their ideas. Postcards are playful objects, they are associated with travel and gift-giving as a rite of passage. Postcards can be seen as mementos when kept sentimentally, and as access passes when seen in the context of social permission for travel and return (Gordon 1986, 137).

The project work of this thesis centres on making postcards of places—short fragmentary narratives, small images, incomplete framing texts—tracing out relationships between here (where I write) and there (where I address this

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[14] Such metaphoric objects, such as a box of picture postcards moved about from home to home, might help us understand progressive and mobile place attachment. In particular see Ballentyne (2000, 354) for a discussion of how Deluze's approach to philosophical tools might support progressive analysis of urban landscapes and their culture of production.

[15] In 2000 part of Australia's contribution to the Venice Architecture Biennale was Lyon's work "City of Fiction" (first shown Sydney Museum of Contemporary Art). This was a massive wall wrapping installation of postcards—take home souvenirs of the architect's vision of a future Melbourne. In this work Lyon appropriates the postcard to explore the role of architectural designers in manipulating surface and perception within temporal experience (Jackson 2000). The perspective and objective of this work differs substantially from my own, however Lyon's work is significant to this thesis in its use of the postcard form to engage the audience in considering the generators of spatial experience.

message).[16] In this thesis the postcard is a mnemonic device. It reminds of the four understandings discussed in chapters 1 and 2. The postcard metaphor is a mobile and transferable research tactic. It is an open ended approach to reading urban places that is itself subjective and embodied. In this I seek to complement existing approaches of measuring and perceiving by asking new questions and opening up new fields of enquiry.

An example of metaphor acting in this thought-provoking way is Lynette Wallworth's *Hold: Vessel 1 & 2* (2001–07) (figure 3.4), which uses a haptic metaphor to invite the viewer into both the experience of studying, and the connection between people and a fragile environment. In this work visitors to the exhibition pick up glass bowls to find and focus projections of ocean environments. The title, design and subject is the artist's, and then the visitor's, reflection on the responsible relationship of individuals to sensitive natural environments. Likewise, in this project postcards become a tactile metaphor for the exploration of individual's relationships to place dependant on their spatial histories.

In my collection of work, which skips between image and text, the postcard is a constant that helps negotiate the shifting landscape of the research field and the multiple modes of this mixed-method approach. The postcard metaphor developed within this thesis forms a dialogue between textual analysis, field work and the research outputs. The postcard became my tool to interrogate what I found both in texts and in my walks through cities. The phases of the research are described here chronologically, although there was a substantial degree of overlap and the tactics of pairing image and text, set making, inviting participation, layering and fragmenting large images are better visualised as accumulating through the research process than moved through as isolated zones.

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[16] The relationship between the writer-here and reader-there is a repeating theme of Derrida's Envois, ([1980] 1987), and in this case an opportunity for autoethnographic reflection and creative production around travelling and dwelling practices, through a process aligned to Nita Cherry's (2008) "symbolic self-curation."

Figure 3.4: *Hold: Vessel 1* (Wallworth 2001–07).

This work develops the use of metaphor as a vehicle for empathy and empowerment in interactive story telling. In this work the visitor to the exhibition picks fragile glass bowls in which, by moving themselves and the bowl about the dark room, they are able to focus projected images of marine life. Wallworth talks about the importance of the sense of emersion to this work as something she noticed from observing scientists studying—a moment where everything else drops away. The clichéd metaphor of holding the world in your hands is transformed through the haptic and the visual experience of Wallworth's work to a real sense of responsibility for natural environments far from everyday experience.

vitation to propose a travel program
to go and write about public spaces
to Perth, as a contribution to th
th's urban fabric.

erth. But there might b
the cities we desire, tra
rth's future.

travel narrative
one way of thi
help encourage

20.08.08

m,

Well, I've done it again. Packed up
and gone traveling. If I didn't get out of
the suburbs I was going to explode.
Dunno what to say about this urban
conver- sation thing, maybe it is about
time Perth grew up to be a real city.
Not sure what I can do about it either.
Still think about you all the time. I'll
keep you posted.   x r

Royal Mail
POSTAGE   PAID UK
62

Mat in Perth
Pleasant Street
Sunny Suburban Sprawl
WA 6049
AUSTRALIA

WA 6000
AUSTRALIA

through
he river. We sat with
legs over the edge of the concrete
bank and backs to everything. I hear
the foreshore development is on hold
again. I miss you.   x r

a   postcard   for
l write text for the
picture side of the p

h@gmail.com

g and encouragement of
Graduate of Architecture at Curtin

Figure 3.5: Postcards for Perth website [screen shot] (Creagh and Linder 2009).

This animated and interactive website made in collaboration with Perth based web programmer Douglas Linder was an early outcome of connecting place through a postcard metaphor. In this work the importance of connections between specific places was highlighted in the addressed locations, use of postage stamps, and the postcard messages—which sought to weave experiences of places together. In a desire to facilitate playful engagement with the work a visitor to the website was able to click and drag to move the postcards about, shuffle their order and flick between front and back.

Figure 3.6: Field note and photo pair, "We are headed for the Sea." Barcelona, 2008.[17]

Field Note: 6pm Saturday, Barcelona.

The life of the city is waking up. It feels the private roles of the day are being concluded and now the players take the stage together for the final chorus. There is a magical waking up feeling that I remember from weekends past. Lights switching on, cars roaring. Streams of voices, stretching legs, red stovepipe jeans, going out. A lazy waking up, at half pace, beer slowed or slowed by good manners, not to rush. Tourists on a different rhythm to the everyday city are also winding down after walking all day with the fading light. They are forced to put away their lists of things to see and resign themselves to just being where and when they are, in this in between time, evening.

A label on a weather wall reads: Carrer de la Boqueria. It sounds promising to take me back towards las Rambla. I'm a bit lost in the dense foot traffic. These narrow streets are so different on Sundays with the shops closed. I turn down the carrer, pulled along at the tempo of the other walkers. One twist and I can see it over bobbing heads; the gap in buildings, and the linear back and forth of pedestrians and traffic that means la Rambla.

But we're not there yet. Here balconies are overhung with plants. Down a side street, a lady peers at a magazine through glasses. She's wearing good boots, has neat hair, and is sitting on a mattress. She has a suitcase and I wonder if she is waiting to move in, or is living on the street. Outside a traveler's bar stands an English lad handing out quick-fire small, green, buy-one-get-one-free cards with white highlights which match his peroxide tips. I'm handed one with an open grin along with everyone else.

A man with a stump leg sits on a cardboard box and leans against the last building before the street opens up to the dynamic perpendicular. He staccatos painfully at me as I pass, Por Fa Vor, Por Fa Vo, and I shake my head. Two more steps and I'm on la Rambla. Sweet potatoes are cooking on a grill over charcoal.

It's raining tiny imperceptible droplets when I break cover onto la Rambla. More advertising cards are palmed but not to me. I cross into the pedestrian swarm meandering. I'm surprised to be swept up in a downhill run. There is a lady dressed as a marked stall. She has extra fruit to adorn anyone who would like to pay for a photo with her. The tide is with me, and we are heading for the sea.

Image and Text Pairs

Notes and photographs from travel and reflection were the starting points for this autoethnographic study of memory in urban experience. In conducting new field work I paired short descriptive and reflective texts with photos. Through writing I was able to capture my emotional engagement with a place, the actions of others around me and my interactions with them, in a way that did not impinge upon their anonymity or interrupt their lives in any way—issues significant to ethical intent. In the large cities visited this behaviour passed un-exclaimed. At the time writing and walking, seemed like a normal part of my life. Writing as I traveled was something I had been doing for some years, it was almost a reflex. [18]

Photography in urban contexts was also unproblematic to undertake. Taking pictures is so prevalent a pastime now, one only has to look at the dominance of camera phones, Flicker, Facebook albums and Instagram to see the place of photography in everyday life. This participant observation through photography and journaling was appropriate for gathering the contextual information that provided frameworks and checks for my experiential narrative of my own routes through the city.

The two strands to this recording phase—photography and field note—were mutually productive. I brought them together as postcard like moments. A touristic image could be questioned by text. Text that spoke of something that had happened in the past could be accompanied by photo documentation of archaeological-like traces of coal soot, or foundations. Included here is a small selection of process work providing illustration of how the image and text pairs developed from field notes and photographs, through a summary phase of postcard making, into further visual enquiries (figure 3.6). [19]

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[18] At the time I started my PhD in 2009 in the last 18 months, between a three month project in Papua New Guinea and an autoethnographic honours dissertation, I had been writing journals more months than not.

[19] Further samples of field notes can be found in "Process Booklet 1: Image Text Pairs" in the Exhibition Folio Box. More can be made available on request.

In the works exhibited at the AUDRC (Creagh 2013a) the close relationship of image and text was continued. Narratives included in the exhibition catalogue gave some background to the themes and events that generated the works, while the small elements of text on the postcard fragments themselves, provided the work's name and suggested further interactions.[20]

Sets

The postcard-pairs of image and story were furthered developed into postcard sets with a consistent theme and graphic design. Through these sets and accompanying fragmentary narratives, I analysed experiences within a place, or across places. Making sets of postcards rather than single cards was a form of visual narrative-analysis. Through selecting and ordering the images from my travels I was able to identify and articulate attitudes to place-making and experience of a place. Developing sets rather than isolated postcards reinforced the fragmentary, multi-perspective reading of a place, and opened the work to additions and modifications. As, if a new theme started to develop within one set it could be broken off into another. Likewise, I may merge two sets or work with them as complementary sets.

The primary output of this research phase was developing postcards as designed objects that present a considered and constructed representation of place, that exist in sets, and consist of both visual and textual content. The method developed here draws from narrative analysis and visual anthropology. Within this method are elements of grounded theory. In that the work develops following themes emergent within the data sets and both closed and open coding plays a role in interrogating this material incorporating the themes identified in the previous chapters.

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[20] Documentation of this exhibition is located in the Exhibition Folio Box which accompanies this exegesis and chapter 4 is a detailed discussion of the exhibition and works.
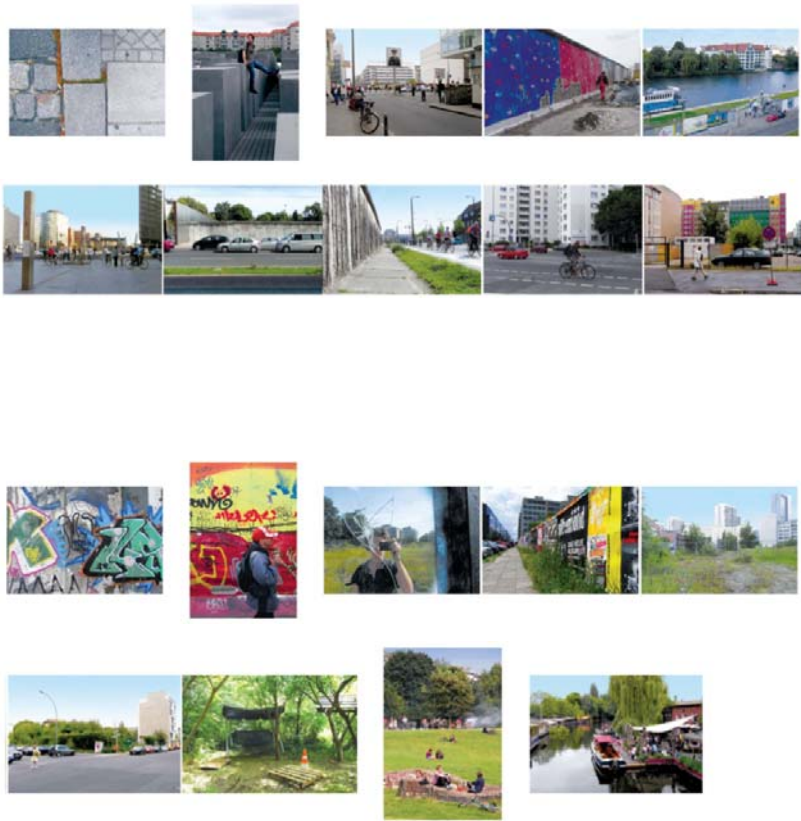
Figure 3.7: Image faces of two postcard sets from the *Postcard Rack and Couch* installation (Creagh 2013b, 158).
These two sets of postcards critically engage with the space where the Berlin Wall used to be. The first records the construction of commemorations, the second observes the appropriation of these new open spaces of the city. Considering the two sets of postcards together reveals tensions between these uses, but also overlaps.

Figure 3.8: Participants interact with part of the *Postcard Rack and Couch* installation (Creagh 2013b, 159).

This photo shows several modes of interaction within the installation. On the left a participant selects postcards from the rack. In the centre, the activity of the university infiltrates the installation area as a member of staff answers an undergraduate student's question about an administrative issue. On the top right a participant writes a postcard, either to be exchanged within the installation activity, or to be posted on to an outside location. In the bottom right of this photograph a participant is collaging several cards together in a creative reframing of the postcard installation.

Participatory Exhibition

My earlier installations and presentation were successful in presenting fragmentary moments that connect between distant places, or in presenting a narrative set—a particular perspective on a place. However, the audience's own filtering, sorting and augmentation was not highlighted within these events. At an installation at the Curtin Humanities Postgraduate Conference 2011 I was able to address this through a participatory installation. This installation left material traces of participants bringing their own travel and dwelling experiences to bear in the way they interacted with the installation as a whole, and the postcards in particular (figures 2.14, 2.15).

The general understanding of postcards as both throw-away and precious, and as playful objects rather than art works that must be treated reverentially, is crucial in the sharing and framing of my research work.[21] Through the use of a postcard format to present my work I am able to draw on these associations, the potential for personal connection and irreverent appropriation, to echo the research project's focus in exploring and articulating the role of other places within everyday urban experience, by inviting the participant audience to bring their own experience to bear on my work.

Layering Recordings of Place

A collage-like approach was taken in the process work of this research. Juxtaposition and layering were used in building relationships between images, and the narrative structures that informed them. These close and overlapping relationships between visual and textual recordings of places shifted the meanings of these works and constructed new ones. Here I will focus on the image work, but the same techniques are also at play in the process texts.[22] The tactic of layering photos has two main contributions to this research project. The first is that the obvious digital manipulation of the image overcomes the problematic association of

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[21] Lucy Lippard (1999, 137-138) points out the glossy oversimplification of the postcard is both a seductive object and comfortingly familiar.
[22] Samples of these process texts is available on request.

photography and objectivity. The second is that by layering photos of places I was able to shift the subject of the image work from the location photographed to the process of experiencing places together.

The prevalence of photo journalism and the use of photographs to "capture" important personal or family events and places builds into our understanding of photos as accurate recordings of concrete things. The digital manipulation of images (such as figure 3.9) where aspects of two places are brought together confounds the reading of photographs as accurate depictions of real things. Through this obvious layering the viewer is cued into the need to read the image as a subjective construction rather than objective recording.

The layering of two images, in addition, obscures or confuses the exact location the photograph(s) were taken. This was particularly successful in the works exhibited at the AUDRC, which are discussed in the next chapter and recorded in the Exhibition Folio Box. The image cannot be said to be from a specific place, and the layering of places dominates. The process of reading these layered image shifts from noticing the tactic of layering images to considering an understanding of urban places as similarly overlaid with memories other places.

Scale and Fragmentation
Working with postcards as fragments enabled working at a large and small scale and through this relating to the viewer individually and collectively. One postcard can be held in a hand and related to the body. While the large scale of the work as a whole, relates to a body differently—the body is framed within the installation for other viewers.[23] This dual attitude to scale, tiny and large, was trialled in the earlier work, *Postcard Rack and Couch* where the installation as a whole suggested a coffee shop interior or lounge (figure 3.3).[24] Boundaries were blurred between the work, the postgraduate conference, and the School of Built Environment in which it was

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[23] Cary Lyons makes use of these shifts in scale in his work of printed postcards "City of Fiction" shown at the 2000 Venice Architecture Biennale (Lyons 2014).
[24] Shifts in scale of the 2011 installation can be seen in the photographs of *Postcard Rack and Couch* included in "Process Booklet 3: Participation."

installed. In both this installation and the exhibition at the AUDRC visitors were able to engage personally with fragments of the works and to become part of the works—their bodies and actions were incorporated and perhaps the actions of creating the works are also recalled.[25]

The effect of scale differentials between the work as a whole and the fragment is similar in effect the early polaroid photo works of visual artist David Hockney (1982, 1983) (figure 3.10, top and middle). Collages of these polaroid's draw attention to the process of production—taking the images, having a developed stack, arranging and mounting the individual polaroid photos together to produce one image. This technique is sometimes echoed in the production of site photographs or project documentation, such as in the work of architectural practice EMBT (2013) (see figure 3.10). Sometimes the assembled fragments are used to suggest a journey, sometimes to draw attention to different aspects of the built environment, and sometimes highlight the limitation of the photographic medium in capturing an urban pedestrian experience.

How the works of this thesis differ from these existing uses of gridded and montaged images is in their mobile installation. These works take Hockney's intention (that one be able to get more detailed information from the image through multiple focal lengths) an additional step. In the works *Postcard Rack and Couch* (Creagh 2011) and those exhibited in *Postcards for Perth (*Creagh 2013a*),* visitors to the exhibition are able to engage physically, and experience the fragmented image as a series of discrete parts able to be manipulated. In existing as three dimensional composites that invite play the story of the work is not halted with hanging on the wall, it is extended through the observable involvement of participants in re-shaping the works.

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[25] The merging of bodies and installation can be seen in the short film documentation in the Exhibition Folio Box.

Figure 3.9: Process Work, "If I catch the ferry now, from this water taxi stair, will you walk down to the river and meet me after work?"
In my image and text work, the relationships of present experience and memory within space are brought together. The small insertions of memory place shift the meaning of the host place—often wistfully or playfully. In this process image I use layers to express memory of the Perth foreshore in the experience of Barcelona's port. Further examples of this digital layering technique can be seen in "Process Booklet 4: Layering."

Visual Discussion: Fragmentation

Figure 3.10: Top: *Sun on the Pool Los Angeles* (Hockney 1982). Middle: *Photographing Annie Leibovitz While She's Photographing Me, Mojave Desert,* (Hockney 1983). Bottom: fragment of EMBT's (2013) documentation of the Santa Caterina Market, Barcelona.

The technique of photographic montage used by David Hockney is also used by some architects in analysing and communicating dynamic aspects of places and buildings.

Conclusion

In this chapter I outline the methodology of this thesis and dissect the process of my research work. I borrow from autoethnography and visual anthropology to extend the traditional boundaries of architectural site analysis. In exploring personal memory and urban experience methodologies are needed that are sensitive to subjective experience, and conscious of the research as a construction of meaning. In discussing the potential of autoethnography and visual anthropology to fulfil these requirements I call on several examples of works with aligned interests.

In the second half of this chapter I discussed the particular tactics adopted in this research. Postcards are the principal metaphor for this work. As familiar objects within a culture of tourism postcards are inherently interactive. They invite the viewer to pick them up, turn them over, to take them home, or to write on them and post to a friend. This has been a driving consideration in the exhibition and presentation of this research and one that propels the project. Secondary tactics discussed here were the paring of photography with text, set making, participatory exhibition, layering of images, and the fragmentation of large scale works.

This chapter untangles and considers in a measured way the unfurling of this interdisciplinary project. Considered together with the project collected in the Exhibition Folio Box this chapter articulates the robustness of this research—it offers repeatability and explains my interpretation of the data. In the next chapter the project work is discussed in a way that reflects on the embodied exploration of my own inhabitation of Perth and of "homes" abroad.

Chapter 4

Production and Exhibition Outcomes

Postcards for Perth: An exhibition of works exploring memories of place as shapers of urban experience was held at the Australian Urban Design Research Centre, (AUDRC) Perth, in October 2012.[1] This exhibition invited the public along with people working Perth's built environment professions to engage with my on-going thesis work, and to join me in questioning the role of memory and travel histories in place making. The desire to share the work with the exhibition attendees informed the installation design. This chapter describes the exhibition as the primary creative research output of this thesis and reports the results of the visual enquiry. This chapter complements the catalogue, video, photographic documentation, and postcard fragments in the Exhibition Folio Box in describing the exhibition event. I ask that you become familiar with these documents while engaging with this chapter and the ones that follow.

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[1] *Postcards for Perth* was opened on Friday October 5, 2012 and was open to the public for two weeks during office hours (October 8-19) at the Australian Urban Design Research Centre (AUDRC), on Hay Street in Perth. On opening night 110 people attended, reaching the maximum capacity of the venue. The exhibition was opened by Richard Weller, the director of the AUDRC, Winthrop Professor at the University of Western Australia and author of Boomtown 2050 (2009), who spoke about the intention of the gallery and reflected on his observations of the *Postcards for Perth* exhibition work.

As an affiliation of the University of Western Australia (UWA) and the Department of Planning, located on the edge of Perth's Central Business District. I approached this venue because the AUDRC is a respected voice in issues of urban design and development and because, through their high-profile director Richard Weller, this organisation has a national, if not international, reputation for high quality research outputs supported by high quality visualisations. Other options for exhibition, such as commercial galleries, not-for-profit galleries, or the gallery space of the two architecture schools, do not have the authorising weight and potential for critical review of the AUDRC.

This chapter is organised in five sections, with one section for each of the large works installed. In each of these sections, a plate of the work is provided, along with the title information. A short ficto-critical narrative and several supporting images accompanies each of the works to provide the reader some insight into the meaning of the work for the author, and its significance for the research question of this thesis. I describe in more detail the ideas behind the work's production—both the image and the invited audience interaction—outlining again the relationship of each work to the area of enquiry and research. Having dealt with the history of the work up to the exhibition opening, each section then shifts to observations regarding audience interaction.[2] The implications of these observations are sketched out, for further development in the following chapter. Before examining each of the works individually, I will provide an introduction to the exhibition and discuss commonalities to the five works, such as the fragmentation and interactive installation of the works.

The exhibition contained five large-scale participatory photo montage works and some supporting materials. Each of these large works consisted of a 2m x 3m image printed across a grid consisting of 10cm x 15cm postcards. Each postcard was hand-numbered on the reverse. A backing board grid was created out of 400 nails in plywood sheets, which was painted black and mounted to the black gallery wall. A postcard rack displayed multiple copies of eight postcard designs. A preliminary catalogue containing an abstract, curator essay, and an artist essay provided additional context to the works was available for those who sought it. The artist essay was interleaved with short ficto-critical texts and reproductions of the digital

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[2] In considering the works in each of these contexts, I am aligned with contemporary multidisciplinary image analysis processes. Pink (2003, 187) observes

> recent approaches to the interpretation of visual images in anthropology, cultural studies and cultural geography have in common emphasised four areas. They insist that research pay attention to: (a) the context in which the image was produced; (b) the content of the image; (c) the contexts in, and subjectivities through, which the images are viewed; and (d) the materiality and agency of images.

The meaning of an image is, therefore, to be found in an intersection of contextual readings rather than revealed in one approach.

images printed across the wall-hung work. The full exhibition catalogue published in 2013 is included in the Exhibition Folio Box.

The unconventional installation of these works developed through a desire to deauthorise the visual outputs to facilitate the audience's comfort and enjoyment in interacting with the works. In developing these works, I installed early process images as tests in the atrium of the Curtin School of Built Environment. This is the main circulatory space of the building, and the through traffic provided an opportunity to observe interactions with my process work. Those students and staff who knew me would stop to talk about the work and provide informal but valuable feedback. I was also able to anonymously observe the people who I did not know interacting with the work. Both types of feedback proved valuable in my development of the works.

I observed that loosely pinned photographs were affected by people walking by at a brisk pace. The walls of this long gallery space are lined with pin-boards, and I used brass push-pins to pin up my process work.[3] They swung and fluttered catching the attention of others in the same space, if not the person who was walking by. Often, these flickering grids of images seemed irresistible, and people would pause to touch one or another, stepping forward and back to choose favourites. I observed that the installation of multiple images would be read together. Individuals moved from one to the other and back to the first, looking for commonalities in subject matter or technique. Partly, these images gathered interest for their use of photography in a gallery space that is usually packed end to end with architectural models and drawings and occasionally with clothing or graphic design outputs. Using feedback from passers-by (supervisors, colleagues, friends, students and acquaintances) and my observations of the reception of the works as they developed; I decided on the final format as one that playfully caught attention and inspired a tactile response in the audience. Further refining of each of the works extended this capacity, using these general responses to the format as a vehicle for specific actions. The invited participation expresses understandings of place

[3] See "Process Book 5: Scale and Fragmentation" in the Exhibition Folio Box.

developed in Chapter 2 and explored through field work, narrative, and visual production. In each of the following sections, the exploration of these themes and their interactions with the work's development will be discussed.

Plate 1:
Home?

Plate 2:
Constructed Edge

Plate 3:
Opportunistic

Plate 4:
Window

Plate 5:
Opening

Figure 4.1: *Postcards for Perth: An exhibition of works exploring memories of place as shapers or urban experience* (Creagh 2013a).
The works at the culmination of the exhibition.

Home?

Plate 1: *Home?* Robyn Creagh, 2012.
Digital photo-montage. 2m x 3m. Digitally printed over a grid of 10cm x 15cm postcards. Hung on grid of 400 nails.

Visitors to the exhibition were invited to take one of the postcard fragments of this work, *Home?* with them. In constructing the base image, a photograph of my Mother's childhood home in Salford is montaged over a suburban street in East Victoria Park, Perth. As a companion to the textual work of the same name, this work questions to what extent my Mother's childhood understanding of her urban context influences my current urban experience one third of the world away.

"Home?" Manchester, 2009

My mum's old terrace house is boarded up. The door is red. My great-auntie, who lives just the other side of the park in a street of semi-detacheds, says she thinks it's used as a builder's store now. There's often a ute parked out the front. My auntie calls it a truck. The street feels heavy and close. The grey sky is within arm's reach; it would be like coal-dust-filled cotton wool in my fingers.

This is an awkward space to pause in, although for once I feel I've got a valid reason for lurking about.

"My mum lived here as a girl, you know. I just wanted to see what it was like, take a picture for her. I'm from Australia."

No one's around to accept my justifications. Then again, I can't tell if anyone is peering out from behind that row of lace curtains.

Looking down this short street, which ends in a fence and the green leaves of a tree beyond, I'm reminded of a Lowry lithograph I saw in the gallery of Salford's regenerated dockyard. But in the print the street stops at a fence with chimneys and factory beyond. This is the way my mum remembers her street, like that Lowry. For my great-auntie this street was bustling with people: my mum's mum shouting back and forth to the other young mothers. I draw on my few episodes of Coronation Street to construct the image—she worked in a sewing factory didn't she, my mum's mum?

The summer before I finished high school, Perth expanded all the way up into the very northern suburbs— taking in the urban centre on the way as a kind of oversight. Despite this sudden expansion, I was unknowingly bounded within Salford's narrow streets. Coming home in the evening, walking through Perth's empty malls and arcades from the train station to the bus port, my mum's childhood was there with me.

Be careful, watch which way you go. Keep in the light. Be careful. Walk quickly, don't look like a victim. Don't look around too much. Don't take short cuts. Keep yourself safe.

It never made sense. But it was like a scary game I couldn't stop playing. I didn't understand until now, spending time in the UK, getting to know where she lived, that this neighbourhood and her logic has followed me around wherever I've been. Finally, walking here has started to untangle the connecting threads. From a small street in Greater Manchester, suburban Perth makes more sense.

Home? Design Exploration Reflection

Home? is a visual discussion of my relationship to Salford, Greater Manchester, in the north of England, via my mother who was born there. Through my visual and narrative explorations of Salford and Manchester I came to understand that many of what had seemed my mother's particularities were shared by those in her home town and made perfect sense in that context. I expect many children of migrants have had this experience on returning "home." What became clear was that although I had only fleetingly visited Salford as a child with my family this city had been impressed on me: transferred through the way my mum interacted with and understood urban space. (That early visit has only left an impression of floral wall paper, a magnificent great aunt, and a large window table in pub with my mother unexpectedly talking with the same strange accent as the large group of unknown adults who claimed to be family.) A second understanding I came to was of the relationship between old industrial cities such as Manchester and new suburban sprawls like Perth.

In this image, the red terraces overlay the timber cottages of a street in East Victoria Park that I share-housed in 2010 and 2011. I have positioned the image so that the perspective lines appear to match, and there is a correspondence of the vanishing point of the low brick wall in the foreground of the East Victoria Park image and the road markings and roof lines of the street in Salford. The red of the brick contrasts the glare-whites, pale burnt grass, blue sheet metal, and green peppermint gum leaves. The bottom third of the image is filled with dried leaves, dead grass, and a concrete footpath. The strong leading lines of this centralised path give the viewer a feeling of movement into the image stepping from the footpath of East Victoria Park and into the street in Salford. When the image is installed at full size on a wall, this feeling is augmented as the ground coverings are adjacent to the viewers' feet and lead away in the direction of viewing.

Most of the East Victoria Park photo is obscured by the overlay of Salford. This is intended as a representation of my realisation that, even before I realised it, Salford was guiding my interactions with urban space. Many my understandings of urban

places were inherited from Salford through my mother's concern for personal safety. This is reflected in the restricted vision of the East Victoria Park street in the work. In a sense, the viewer may wish to see more of East Victoria Park, but this is not possible, it is only visible in glimpses through and around the edges of the Salford screen.

Perth's sprawling urban form makes little sense as a typology in the context of our current global interest with urban vibrancy and dense living. It is only when one considers Perth's form as a reaction to the industrial cities, which generated much of Perth's migrant populations, that the sprawl makes a lot of sense. People coming to Perth have continued the impassioned exodus of the new middle-class factory barons of Friedrich Engels' 1840s Manchester to the hygiene of the just-conceived suburbs. Now, of course, the dirty industrial centre is distant in space and time and the ever expanding suburbs have a new set of health issues—the potential for inactivity and isolation. In the visual juxtaposition of my mother's childhood home and the street in East Victoria Park I explore these two linked understandings of urban space—danger and dirt—and start to untangle the effect of this on my occupation of Perth.[4]

Some comparisons are enabled, but some information is obscured in this work. The differing effects of zero setback or a large verge are clarified in lining up the facades of both the Salford terraces and the East Vic Park cottages. The width of the street in Salford sits within the front yard and verge space of the homes in Perth. Despite some connections, despite reading one through the other, Perth is not Manchester. Acknowledging the links between two places does not make them one place.

The restricted view emphasises the personal and subjective nature of place experience. Although I make an argument for Perth as an outcome of industrial towns like Manchester, this understanding is not available to everyone. Even those who share it will have different geographic and housing typology backgrounds with

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[4] For discussion of the exclusion of danger and dirt from the urban realm see Shonfield (2000a, 371-372).

which it is conceptualised. The terrace streets of Liverpool and Newcastle are each (I am told) different to those in Salford. The significance of these differences is most likely held by those more personally involved with them. These images do not make places homogenous. Contrast is still observable. Physical differences are evident and can serve to challenge a heritage reading of an individual; reinforcing the proposition that you are not just your ancestry.

Figure 4.2: *Postcard Trails* [detail] (Creagh 2010).
Thematic postcard books sprawl and entwine across the wall, cut into framed enclosures, echoing the fragmentary capture of experience in travel photos.

Dear Mum,

Been walking round Manchester a lot the last couple of days. Reckon you wouldn't recognise a lot of it. But some bits look like they haven't changed. Specially your old hood. Walking round those slightly coal stained streets – suddenly my own childhood movements in all those different suburbs made sense. Salford must have rubbed off on me than you.

love
robyn

Farringdon Street, Salford, Greater Manchester, UK

Robyn's Mum

WA
AUSTRALIA

Figure 4.3: Extract from "Fragments to tell a story" (Creagh 2011).
A group of children kick a ball up a quiet street towards the park where my mother used to play with her dog as a child.

The fragmentation invited interaction and manipulation.

The works framed figures within them.

Visitors to the exhibition were selective about which fragment of the work they chose to take away.

Figure 4.4: Visitors to the exhibition on opening night interacting with the work *Home?*

Figure 4.5: *Home?* [Detail].
As fragments the layers of images created new abstracted, compositions.

Home? Exhibition Reflection

Home? started the exhibition opening evening with all 400 postcards hanging on nails. Visitors to the exhibition were invited, through the work's title card and my introductory talk, to take a piece of the work with them. As a result, the work partially dispersed over the night as some participants carefully selected the postcard images that appealed to them. Some chose figurative objects, others chose by composition or by colour and visual texture.

The selected pieces were carried away from the exhibition to either become part of the throw-away debris of contemporary life, or a memento of the evening's event. I have encountered these postcards a couple of times, in friends' houses displayed on the fridge, and on office doors in university corridors. How long they will stay there, and where they will move to cannot be known—perhaps a postcard collection, perhaps to mark a page in a book, perhaps sent to a friend, or to be recycled into other paper products.

These moving postcards imply a metaphorical exploration of the ways that memory works to take away a fragment of a place.[5] Sometimes, memory fragments will be of great importance, and we will refer to them often or feel an intense emotional reaction when we are reminded of a place and a time from our past. The question of which moments of our spatial histories carry significance, and why, was also an issue that was apparent in a reflection on visitors' interactions with this work.

The interactions I observed with this work were quite slow and selective. People carefully chose which postcard they would keep, embedding their choice with personal meaning. Sometimes, an individual would select one card from the wall, look at it more closely in their hands, and then continue holding the card while they searched the work to check if there was a better card. Details barely visible in smaller reproductions of the work became dominant patterns or objects framed on the postcard faces (see figure 4.5 for example). When removed from the wall, each

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[5] This builds on Gordon's (1986, 140-144) discussion of postcards as memento of extraordinary place.

postcard in itself became a miniature found artwork. People selected postcard mementos as symbolic reflections of themselves. Two instances I observed of this were the selection of leaves and building materials compositionally balanced on a card as a representation of her philosophy of sustainability, and the selection of chimneypots as a syncondine symbol for a childhood experience. Some decisions seemed based on aesthetic appeal; I observed one careful selection of a composition of overlaid car windshields entirely abstracted by lack of context.

This choosing of visual details either for their symbolic or aesthetic value suggests that Barthes ([1979] 1993) "punctum" is a useful model to understand attachment to fragments of image of place and to understand individual's attachments to fragments of urban places themselves.[6] People's responses to the images can be considered both as a response to the whole and as a response to the parts. This thinking runs contrary to much architectural criticism and pedagogy, which emphasises cohesiveness as an expression of mastery and refinement of taste.[7] The way visitors to the exhibition interacted with this large work questions assumptions about the way that space is experienced. Perhaps an understanding of place experience can be found in personal responses to details, perhaps we can conceive of architecture as a framework or web to hold these moments.

Could understanding attachment to detail help us understand place attachment better? Perhaps only personally significant aspects of place are carried with us, not entire places. Perhaps places are not remembered as wholes—but as significant details. If urban place representations seek to provide meaningful information or spark a useful conversation with a non-specialist, it would seem that acknowledgement must be given to these details as access points to understanding place.

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[6] Fiona Wilkie (2002) applies some of Barthes' thinking about the punctum of a photographic to reading place and people's behaviour.

[7] For example see the way Anderson describes the development of an architectural design "The concept can be expressed right down to the last bolt" (Anderson 2011, 126).

Home: Summary of Key Findings

Key findings from reflection on the production and response to *Home?* relate to urban experience and memory. There are influences of other places in urban experience. These include personal or family-based influences and cultural influences reflected in built landscapes. Memory might be kept like a souvenir fragment of a place. It seems that people respond to more than entire images of places. Both wholes and details are meaningful. Perhaps this reaction to images of places may be true of experience in place, thus place experience maybe understood as both an engulfing experience and as a series of detailed fragments.

Constructed Edge

Plate 2: *Constructed Edge,* Robyn Creagh, 2012.
Digital photo-montage. 2m x 3m. Digitally printed over a grid of 10cm x 15cm postcards, and distributed as invitations to the exhibition. Hung on grid of 400 nails when returned to the gallery.

This work was distributed as invitations to the exhibition. Invitees were encouraged to return the cards to the gallery by hand or post to complete the work. The image is an overlay of a photograph of the port development in Barcelona on to a photo of Barrack Square in Perth. Barcelona is an often heralded example of a city that embraces the water at its edge. This work askes, to what degree does the experience of these edge-spaces depend of the spatial practices of the population and to what degree is this inter-dependant on the physical and cultural construction of a space "outside the city"?

"Edge-like," Barcelona, 2008

The jetty-bridge widens out and steps down. The city is behind me, stopped at the line of traffic and water. Wooden boards fan out towards the mountain over the harbour. The jetty stretches out sinuously towards the port authority buildings. Benches are aligned to the view over water. I'm not the only one drawn to the edge. On the perspex windbreaks, the silhouette of the mountain and city are reflected, layered over the arm of the port. But the juxtaposition locates me outside all of them.

Sit down on the edge, cling to it, legs dangling over. Fish parade below waiting for spilled and scattered scraps. There's a few of us touristic types lined up with point-and-click cameras to take photos of the sun, half set behind the mountain, next to the city and over the port. People are still flooding out this way from the land. Behind us, suspended in the harbour, a mall-thing glows in the growing darkness, like Christmas, like a backyard party. It smells like popcorn, the yellow light that spills out is the same buttery colour. But, I hate malls. I get up, not to enter, but to follow this edge to the end.

The path wraps around the outside of the building. There is a staircase that descends to water level. A couple dressed elegantly for dinner step up out of a water taxi. At the end of the boardwalk, the furthest point perpendicularly from my starting point, I can see the horizon. But rather than feeling the expected expansion and exhalation, I have a strange moment of claustrophobia. The distant dash of the horizon is a tiny gap between the two arms of the harbour. Far from being outside the reach of the city, I am still encircled in the harbour's arms.

Standing here, watching the movement of water, sky, boats and people, I wonder where the sun seems to set from the Perth foreshore? Can you have this same view? The sun setting behind Mt Eliza, the last light making the city glow gold? I'm musing about jetties and edges and sunset ferries to Barrack Street Square departing here and now from that water taxi stair. A man in a suit hurries out of my peripherals with a disposable camera.
"Hello. You take photo with ship," he tells me.

Constructed Edge: Design Exploration

In making the image for *Constructed Edge* I reflected on the connections drawn between the design aspirations of the Swan River waterfront, Perth, and Barcelona's Port Vell.[8] The image I composed contains a smaller image of the edge of the Barcelona Port, which includes: a woman sitting alone, with her back to the camera, on a bench at the water's edge; a view out along the sinewy Rambla del Mar; and in the distance behind yacht masts, some of the bulk of the Mararium, which is a large shopping mall and entertainment complex. Behind this Barcelona "postcard" image is a view from the Perth foreshore out across the Perth Waters. The bottom third of the image contains wooden decking. The right side of the image contains the water-side of the Barrack Square buildings, including the sun umbrellas of the Lucky Shag's beer garden. The left hand side of the image contains the distant skyline of South Perth apartments on the opposite bank. The top third of the image is a deep and uninterrupted blue sky. The light of the Perth and Barcelona images are quite different. A softer evening light and clouded sky illuminates the inset Barcelona image, while the Perth photo was taken in full summer sun. The two images have been aligned so that there is sufficient similarity in the perspective lines, for the viewer to almost read the two together as a new place. Their differences are brought back into focus through the difference in light.

Barcelona is an often-heralded example of a city that "responds well to its water" (for example FORM 2008). In my comparative explorations of Barcelona's and Perth's waterfronts I question how much this was dependent on Barcelona's population density, distribution and existing cultural practices (figures 4.6 and 4.7). I wanted to avoid the selected blindness of the design perspective discussed in Chapter 1. Barcelona, like many southern European and Mediterranean cities, has an established tradition of an evening walk in the main streets of the city. La Rambla, in Barcelona is one of the most famous of these streets. As is suggested by

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[8] Hillier (2013a, 2) points out a "cargo cult" tendency within Australian urban design discourse to import urban models from cities such as Barcelona. For foreshore urban design proposals see the *Perth City Foreshore Design Competition* (Western Australia and Perth 1991) and *What If: ideas for the City of Perth* (Perth Council 2010). And, for a review of Barcelona's urban public space projects see *City and Port*, (Meyer 1999).

its name, La Rambla del Mar (the new jetty-bridge described in my short narrative "Edge-like") is able to tap into this tradition by connecting to the famous La Rambla and providing a new appropriate setting for an extension of the evening walk out onto the water—magnificent views are to be had of Monjuic and back into the city from its wooden decks.

Barcelona's population is concentrated at a much higher density than Perth's. The two have similar numbers of residents, but Perth envelops a much larger surface area, and has an urban core that has been hollow for many years. Unsurprisingly then, the foreshore of the Swan adjacent to the Central Business District is sparsely inhabited. The emptiness of this image *Constructed Edge* is a reflection on this issue. It questions the ability of physical changes to the water edge, alone, to bring a dramatic shift to the use of the area.

There is a second issue of social construction of space that this image reflects on. It is these two meanings of "construction" that the title of the works plays with. Where is the edge of a city? Part of the enjoyment of Barcelona's waterfront is the hard edge transition between the dense city and the open water. The contemporary materiality of the Mararium and its Rambla del Mar contrasts the adjacent much older fabric of Barcelona's heart. Perth, on the other hand, is a city adorned with many open spaces. They are part of the composition of the city. Massive verges, road reserves, median strips, large open spaces around tall buildings, a plethora of public parks and sporting grounds; Perth is a sparse city (George 2009). Escape from work-day existence is found in the suburban home, which is a tiny seemingly autonomous oasis like the Smithson's House of the Future (Colomina 2004). Consider again the urban context of Barcelona. The majority of accommodation available is comprised of small apartments. As restful a haven as an apartment interior can be, I would argue that it rarely gives the impression of an escape from the city. The waterfront of Barcelona—the port, the beach, and the mountain— serve different roles for the cities' population than Perth Waters and King's Park. Through a sharp contrast in aesthetic experience the Barcelona Waterfront provides the sense of being outside the city and the feeling of relief and release that comes

with an escape from one's everyday environment. Such an exploration of a place is significant in moving beyond a comparative analysis of waterfront design that is devoid of social context.
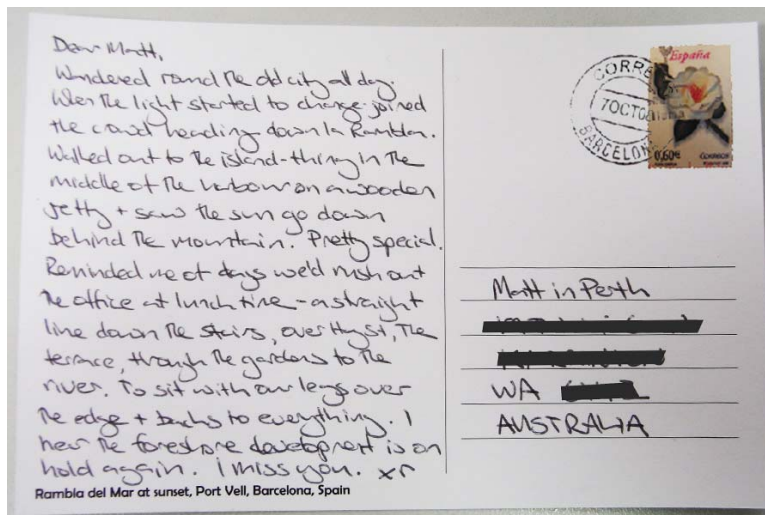
Figure 4.6 Extract from "Fragments to tell a story" (Creagh 2011).
An escape from the city into a romantic water side setting recalls another journey with the same theme.

Figure 4.7: Process work montages of Perth and Barcelona's waterfronts.
These images explore the aspiration of Perth's waterfront to the success of
Barcelona's through the idealisation of postcard imagery.

Fragments returned to the gallery via mail prior to the opening.

Many people worked in pairs or small groups.
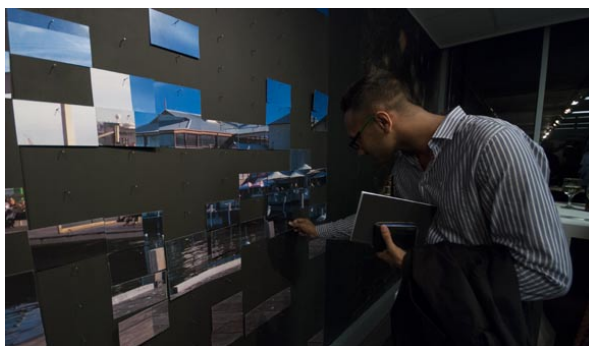
An invitation postcard carefully returned.

Figure 4.8: Visitors to the exhibition on opening night place their invitation postcards into the work *Constructed Edge*.

Figure 4.9: Constructed Edge [Detail].
An invitation to exhibition, sent to the UK is returned by post, and
hung as part of *Constructed Edge*.

Constructed Edge: Exhibition Reflection

The 400 postcard fragments of *Constructed Edge* were distributed in the weeks before the exhibition as invitations. In the week leading up to the exhibition opening, some of these cards were returned by post to the gallery. Many more arrived on the opening night with those attending, some were forgotten, misplaced or discarded, and some arrived by post or hand after the exhibition opening (figure 4.9). 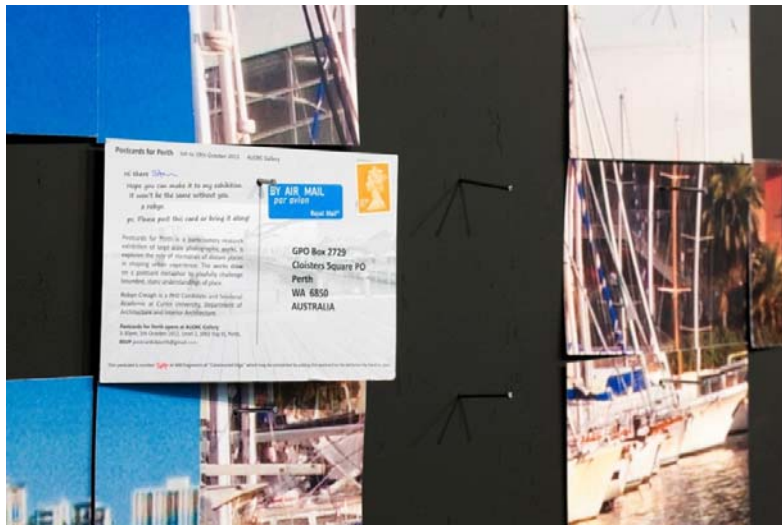All those cards arriving at the exhibition were included in the wall-mounted grid of 400 nails. The work was partnered with a title card inviting the visitor to the gallery to include their invitation-postcard in the work and a brief explanation of the numbering location system.

An observation of visitors' interactions with the work is that during the opening insufficient cards were returned for visitors to be able to read the image as a whole; it functioned as a jigsaw puzzle (figure 4.8). Some individuals made the connection between the fragment of colour image on the front of the card and the black and white of the whole image in the background of the text side of the postcards. While some relied on the numbering system to position their postcards.

This system of distribution and return was an exploration of two concepts developed in Chapter 1: firstly, that people bring fragments of other places with them that contribute to what makes a place, and secondly, that all communication is unreliable and as such, the communication acts that contribute to place are also unreliable. In addition, this work can be read as an exploration of the tensions between social and physical construction of place, as I outlined above in my discussion of Perth and Barcelona's waterfronts. These two ideas come together to express through the resultant incompleteness that place-making is not an infallible, nor even a reliable process. The design and construction work of this spatial experiment is complete at the moment the nail grid is on the wall and the invitation postcards are distributed. The resulting incomplete image at the end of the exhibition is evidence of the complexity and unreliability of processes involved in lived space, an issue not evident in less temporal and bounded productions such as

artist's impressions included in urban design visioning and planning documents.[9] Even buildings and construction drawings are less fixed than vision images. Both buildings and construction drawings shift with time and with different people's contributions.

Within this context, it can be argued that it is in the developer's interests to present urban design and place-making to investors as processes that do not contain risk. Likewise, the semblance of consultation and participation without the complexity of the real people would be more desirable through decreased risk. There is some evidence of management of the consultation process to this end in practice (Ivory 2013, 428). Images of speculative places that are unfixed and represent unreliability such as *Constructed Edge* would not be desirable representations for risk-adverse business models. They may, however, have serious productive roles in participatory planning or co-design processes.

Constructed Edge: Summary of Key Findings

Cultural context influences our understanding of a place, rather than physical constructions being the sole determinant. Thus, it would seem that a comparative analysis of urban places needs to be located in the broader cultural context of the places being compared. Place-making is not an infallible or indeed a reliable process; it is dependent on participation and contribution of those within the space. There is a significant mismatch between the fixed certainty of "typical" representations of urban development compared to the complex and unreliable interactions with the works in this exhibition and the real life processes they reflect. This disconnect may be, in part, because of the financial interests of developers to represent place-making processes as being reliable, controllable, and risk free.

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[9] These are renders that proceed construction. For an example see the "Implementation" chapter in the UDF (City of Perth 2010, 86-91).

Opportunistic

Plate 3: *Opportunistic*, Robyn Creagh, 2012.

Three variations of a digital photo-montage. 2m x 3m. Each digitally printed over a grid of 10cm x 15cm postcards. Hung in sets of three on a grid of 400 nails. Work manipulated by exhibition visitors.

Visitors to the exhibition were invited to reorder the sets of three cards to bring details of Perth or Manchester to the foreground. In generating the base images, a photograph of New Cathedral Avenue, Manchester has been overlaid on William Street, Perth. New Cathedral Avenue was carved through the city centre as part of the re-shaping of Manchester after IRA bombings. It is a fashion and shopping boulevard. The presence of the Corn Exchange Building, (now a theatre) in this image is a reference to Engels (1844) "hypocritical city" evaluation of Manchester. This criticism is echoed by some contemporary analysts (Mellor 2002). To what degree are these same arguments relevant to Perth?

"Hypocritical Streets", Manchester, 2009

The end of the development zone. The edge is striking standing on Todd Street. The urbis centre seems to draw a line, and turn its back rather than create new connections, and invite the North into the city. Perhaps Engels' criticism of hypocrisy, of hiding and shielding reality of poverty with a glossy coat of wealth, is still applicable? Not that poverty is the same now, as it was in the Industrial Revolution. I turn around, and head back through the park, back to New Cathedral St, walking towards that giant map-pin tower building.

One author who thinks Engels' comments still have teeth for Manchester is Mellor. Let's take this new street for example. What is this street? What is the intentionality of it? Is it a gathering place for the life of the city, a chance to see and be seen as part of the public? People walk past, up or down the street. In or out of shop doors. Window displays are taken in at a fast walking pace, there's not much dawdling here today. No one stops. There is nowhere to stop. There are no seats, no benches, not even really any walls one could lean against, out of the way. The street facades are all shop front. This is a street for shopping, or for passing through. Pause, dawdling, dare I say loitering is not encouraged. By the time I've reached the intersection with Market St I've seen no one sitting down. I sit on the steps here, at the corner to watch the passers-by, and I wonder how long before I'm moved on.

Ahead is the yellow stone facade of the corn exchange, a theatre since the 80s it is once again in the centre of the city, but is it again a nexus for hypocritical streets?

Opportunistic: Design Exploration Reflection

The work *Opportunistic* is produced as a series of three images where the opacity is altered on an overlay of an image of Manchester's New Cathedral Avenue upon one of Perth's William Street. In each of the three the Manchester image increases in density gradually blocking (or revealing) the image of Perth. This combination interrogates gentrification in both areas. Large amounts of repair to building fabric and substantial new works, such as the large chequered technical college, which dominates the left side of the image, are occurring along William Street, Perth. Space is being made for small bars, boutique shops, restaurants, and cafes. Perhaps a far cry from the big brand stores of Manchester's New Cathedral Avenue, but in bringing the two together I ask if there are any common concerns: What is being displaced in this place-to-image transition? This work does not dictate a "correct" response to these situations. Indeed, in the layering of images, I have sought to avoid opposing "authentic" and "gentrified" to avoid the suggestion that there are insiders and outsiders to this process. Instead, in the opportunity to pick and choose between details of two cities, I open up the work to the possibility of individual agency in complex and nuanced responses, and the multiplicity of readings of change.

New Cathedral Avenue is a recent addition to the built fabric of Manchester, or perhaps a subtraction, as it was cut through the bomb-damaged inner city fabric in the 1990s. The rundown markets and some homeless services have been replaced by a fashion and shopping boulevard. Some argue that this is part of a systematic displacement of the large unemployed population of Manchester from the city centre as the city is re-imagined as a place of consumption and leisure (Mellor 2002). In this image the Corn Exchange building (crowned by the clock tower) is a reference to the problematic relationship between these economic priorities and the people whose lives they shape. Manchester is again accused of being a hypocritical city. In 1844, the time of Engels' publication of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, the Corn Exchange stood as the centre of commerce and the point from which Manchester's gilded streets radiated, creating a stage-set facade which concealed the working slums that supported them. Now, the same

building is the Exchange Theatre and indicative of a shift in function—towards entertainment, leisure and consumption—that is symbolic of the new capital drivers. The rhetoric surrounding the urban re-development is about connection and inclusion;[10] however, my observation of this street and the surrounds did not support this. Simple infrastructures such as benches, which allow inexpensive participation in the liveliness of a city centre, are not present. In more complex semiotics, the new Urbis building (a museum of the city) turns a large sweeping blank wall to the north of Manchester, seeming to turn its back to adjacent disadvantaged areas.

A more nuanced discussion about urban development is needed. In the work *Opportunistic* the option of three levels of opacity to the overlaid images of Manchester suggests more than the polar opposition of yes or no to the question of gentrification. There are aspects of Manchester's "regeneration" that are desirable; however, aggressive exclusion will limit the richness of place experience. *Opportunistic* explores the possibility for a more complex responses.

The figures in the foreground of the work, located in the central lower half, stand in for us in negotiating an urban renewal process. They appear not to belong to either Manchester or Perth, like ghosts. They seem out of proportion, diminished by the scale of buildings in the Manchester overlay, and yet they walk down the centre of the Perth street, appearing to follow the cars ahead of them towards the city centre. By shuffling the cards forwards and back, it is possible to bring their figures more into a dominant position in the composition. I took a series of photographs while I was installing this work that shows the rippling shift between the two places more than the final sate of the work (figure 4.11). There is potential for further work with stop-motion video around the temporal aspects of this negotiation. Conversely, the most dominant moves in the completed work were the additional parts brought to this work or unanticipated uses of the postcard components—

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[10] In the words of architect of the master plan, Ian Simpson, "I just thought—as an idea—to spread the value from south to north you needed a physical and visual means of linking the old Mediaeval quarter around the Cathedral, which was a great asset, to the rest of the city" (Simpson in King 2006, 144).

reshaping the vision of the city with external referents. A discussion of this follows in the next section of this chapter.

The Urbis building
it appears to turn its
back.

Cathedral   Gardens,
towards   Victoria
Station.

Exchange Square has
been regenerated
since the bomb blast.

The Corn Exchange
building is now a
theatre.

Figure 4.10: Process work (2008–9) exploring narrative of Manchester's central redevelopment. The Urbis building (top) seems to turn its back on areas excluded from the urban redevelopment project—bringing to mind the Royal Exchange Theatre, then the Corn Exchange, as the centre of Engle's ([1844] 2008) hypocritical city.
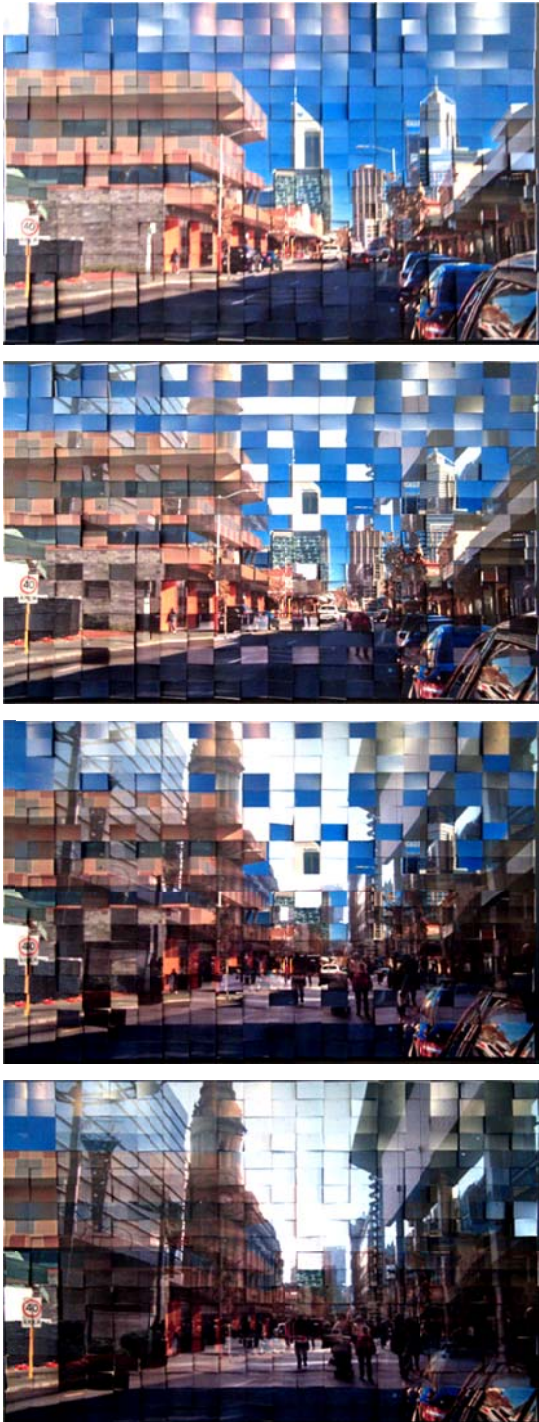
Figure 4.11: Photos taken during installation of *Opportunistic* showing the differences in the three layers.
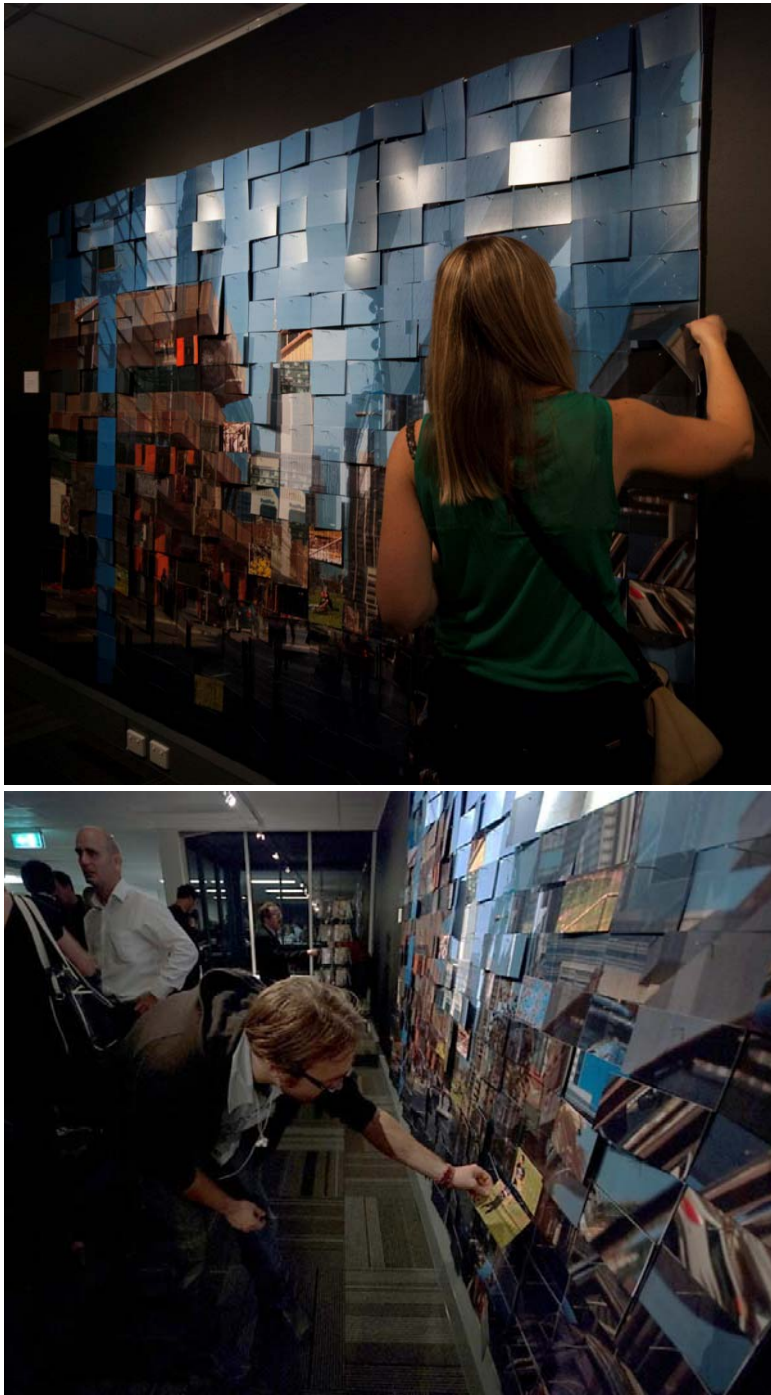
Figure 4.12: Visitors to the exhibition add cards from *Opening to Opportunistic*.
The re-ordering of sets of cards did not have as great an impact on this work as the interruption of cards from other works, such as the fragments of *Opening* seen here.

Figure 4.13: Visitor to the exhibition on opening night re-orders a set of *Opportunistic* adjacent to an unanticipated use of the postcards within the work.

Opportunistic: Exhibition Reflection

When installed, the work *Opportunistic* was comprised of 1200 postcards, which hung on 400 nails. Sets of three postcards were placed on each nail. The first layer of each set, at the back, had the William Street, Perth image. The second postcard layer contained the Perth image and a light 30% overlay of New Cathedral Avenue, Manchester. The third postcard layer had an even heavier 60% overlay of the Mancunian mall (figure 4.11). Visitors to the exhibition were invited to reorder the postcards within their sets, in this way bringing aspects of Perth or Manchester to the foreground. The effect of one person shifting one set was not at all dominant in the reading of the image overall. However, rule-breaking moves (the blue line and the swapping and doubling of the bank tower branding to a lower level in the city centre skyline) were more visible. Collectively, the additions to the image (predominantly cards from the work *Opening*) have a strong visual effect. Figures sitting on a grass incline and throwing a Frisbee were included into the image by exhibition visitors. Rough and natural textures were added to the more modern materials that dominate this image.

The way this work was manipulated by visitors to the exhibition was surprising in its assertiveness. Given the framework in which to interact with the works and suggested approaches, it is evident that some participants adopted these suggestions, while others used the grid framework and mobile pieces to engage with the works in innovative ways. A success of the gridded format of the installation of the exhibition works is that the disruptions to *Opportunistic* contributed to the aesthetic appeal and interest of the image; the works act as frames open to the visitor's introduction of new narratives. Through invitation and careful framing, rule-breaking in these works was not perceived as damage or graffiti but commentary and contribution. The most dominant aspect of the final image are the changes made by breaking the rules. So, the findings regarding this work as exhibited differ somewhat from the exploration in making the work. Or, perhaps more accurately, these are a reminder of the complexity of the processes involved in the negotiation of urban places.

The implications of this finding are twofold. Firstly, there is the suggestion that some people engage with images of public places themselves through creative rule breaking. This may highlight some tensions between a public place that facilitates social behaviours that build the sense of place, and the tactics of the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design school of thought. Secondly, there are implications for the representation of public spaces. People's interactions with images of place can, like their lived contributions to cities, renegotiate the expectations of the social context to make their own point, and through this shift others' understandings of the place.

Opportunistic: Summary of Key Findings

It seems possible for individual agency to negotiate and play a part in the complex processes of urban place-making, both through actions in place and through interactions with representations. Rule-breaking had a dominant effect on these works, as did the transfer of cards between images. This suggests place is not as fixed as typical representations. The combination of grid and mobility of pieces enabled even rule-breaking interactions to be read as contributions to the works, rather than damage. The form of this work highlights the potential to make representations that enable contributions that, like lived experiences, negotiate urban place, thus accentuating a tension between "normalised" urban space and these representations.

Window

Plate 4: *Window*, Robyn Creagh, 2012.
Digital photo-montage. 2m x 3m. Digitally printed over a grid of 10cm x 15cm postcards. Three-dimensional wall-hung installation. Work manipulated by exhibition visitors.

The three-dimensional installation of this work invited the visitor into the image, as if the montaged insertion could be stepped into. The title panel asked, "where can you see from your street?" In the base image, a photograph taken from inside a flat in Mornington Crescent, North London, has been montaged into a photograph taken from a street in Mount Lawley, Perth. This unfolding of space highlights the proximity to an urban centre. What influence has past accommodation had on current choices?

"Gray's Inn Road Part One," London, 2008

Where Gray's Inn Road meets Euston Road at Kings Cross it is all traffic noise. The only footsteps audible are those with heels or those that scuff. Bags on wheels articulate concrete pavers and then cobblestones. Rain falls so lightly it's like single nerve endings misfiring on the backs of my hands. On this confused corner, the fast food giants have congregated. They are joined by other greasy take away—kebabs, pizza, fish and chips—chain coffee shops and an Indian restaurant.

My back is to the British Library, where a small pile of books will wait until tomorrow. The noise in my head drove me out into the street, into traffic and the density of bodies. Out into the now, where I must look and feel and dodge and weave and contextualise. The earth vibrates. Perhaps I am only imagining that vibration as sound. A train approaches and recedes somewhere unseen along tracks that could lead anywhere from here: Camden, the centre of London, Paris, and less directly to Manchester, Barcelona, Perth, and even eventually to a particular bit of jungle in Papua New Guinea.

Bus brakes squeal painfully as they slide to a stop next to me. Accents are from everywhere. Old and young. Working and begging. The clouds are rushing over the sky as one mass and the rain falls harder. The traffic is all surging towards me. Most of the pedestrians are headed to the transportation hub.

Wind shakes the tree behind me and two more leaves fall to join those discarded at my feet. I know there are canals just a few streets over; but for the quaking earth, I would believe this present moment unquestioned and continuous. The shaking reminds me that the city is a surface treatment. It has edges, it changes, and there is something different below, above, along the sides, and running all through it.

Window: Design Exploration Reflection

The image is a visual exploration of a moment when a friend visiting from France stepped out into the daylight from my current home after arriving at night and saw the towers of Perth CBD and the proximity to Beaufort Street down an access laneway. This friend had known me for some years and in some of my previous accommodation: a shared rear triplex in suburban Perth, a room in a flat in the gothic quarter of Barcelona, and a room in an ex-council flat in North London, and a strange rambling share-house behind a shop and next to a nightclub in Brixton, London, and my current flat in Mount Lawley, Perth. "But I didn't think Australians liked to live like this," he said. "Or do you miss Europe so much?"

An early version of *Window* was one of the first images I enlarged to a floor-to-ceiling scale and fragmented into postcard sized pieces. The generative ideas for the image itself are about where I choose to live and what influence my previous accommodation has had on these choices. On reflection, I had thought about where I would live in Perth based on habits developed elsewhere. I like to be able to walk into town, I like to be able to cross the street to pick up groceries when I feel like cooking, and have a good choice of where I can eat when I do not. I like to have a local pub, coffee shop, bookshop and bakery. So, in composing this image I montaged my window in that North London flat, where I cemented these habits, into the Perth street of Mount Lawley. Towers and an unusual dome replace the row of galvanised steel roofed cottages across the road. A window pane vertically bisects the verge of the Mount Lawley street, the strongest visual cue that two images have been combined. Adjacent to this a rough-edged rectangle of lighter sky indicates the boundary of what has been merged.

This substitution is not immediately apparent, and moves from the middle ground to the background. The suggestion of this image and the reflection around making the image is that the distant places that contribute to our urban experience need not always be in the forefront of our minds to have an effect. As I describe in the paragraph above, I know that I have chosen this Mt Lawley home based on accumulated habits, but the other places that have guided this decision do not

overwhelm the specificity of this place—such as the large wattle tree and scruffy garden that my ground floor flat opens into. In this image, as in my experience, Mount Lawley does not become North London (how could it?) but a sense of relative proximities to similar services and continuation of accumulated habits is maintained.[11]

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[11] For a more full discussion of architecture, inhabitation, and habit see Ballantyne, 2011.
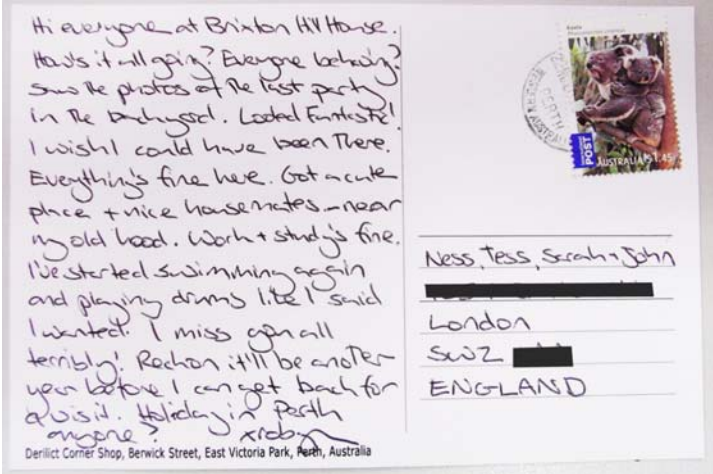
Figure 4.14: Extract from "Fragments to tell a story" (Creagh 2011).

Bricks from Mandurah in London.

Flats from Mount Lawley in Mornington Crescent.
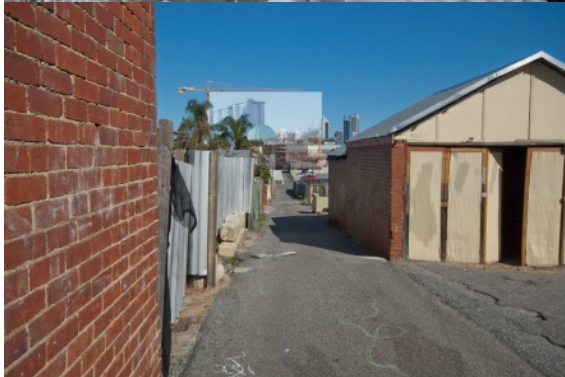
Skyline from North London in Perth skyline.

Street from Mornington Crescent in Mount Lawley.

Figure 4.15: Process works exploring connections between Perth and London.

In these process works parallels are drawn between building forms, construction materials, and spatial relationships in parts of the two cities.

Figure 4.16: *Window* (detail) before the exhibition opening and during the opening night. The centre of the work *Window* was a focus for visitors to the exhibition to add cards from other works.

Figure 4.17: *Window* [detail]. The strong colour differences of the
works *Opportunistic, Window*, and *Opening* are evident in this
detail photo. The yellow wattles are interrupted by the green
(and red shirt) of *Opening* and the blue of *Opportunistic*.

Window: Exhibition Reflection

Window was not designed with the same element of interactivity in mind. Unlike the other works, here the postcards were not pre-punched. In each case they were nailed through in order to mount on the wall. This enabled them to be arranged at more fixed angles, as if frozen in the breeze the other works fluttered with. A range of nail sizes was also used to alter the distance of the postcards from the backing board. I mounted this work over two days by laying out the entire image on the floor and then selecting the nail for each postcard as I went. The decisions about depth and angle—the relationship of each card to those already on the wall and those to come—felt like painting with thick gesso and a large pallet knife. This three dimensionality emphasised the depth of the composite image. The window frame that is the visual key to this image was strongly angled and protruded as if swung open. Perspective lines were emphasised by extruding their end points at the edge of the image to the maximum nail length and decreasing the distance of the cards from the back board along these lines, until the vanishing points of the image were flat against the board. The postcards that comprised the image of North London rooftops were pinned flat against the backboard (the only cards to be installed in this way) and their resemblance to casually displayed postcards seemed emphasised through this. Surprisingly the flat pinned cards seemed more flimsy through this pin-board association than the cards that swung with air movements on their nails in other works. *Window* was accompanied by a title card asking the viewer what locations they could see from their street. Over the opening night the work became scattered with often figurative details from the last work *Opening*.

Perhaps one could say these works resembled architecture in their scale and detail. The *Window* postcards were installed at fixed angles and on nails of different lengths. They did not flutter in the breeze or swing on nails when touched. The strong perspective, emphasised by the differing depths of the postcards contributed to the feeling that you could step into the image. The undulating fractured surface printed with wattle flowers reminded a few people of contemporary building facades. Scale and image content are of course also important in factors in the way people responded to the work as something that could be inhabited.

Perhaps the scale of an image affects the manner in which people are able to relate to it, and to mentally inhabit it. In developing the works I responded aesthetically to the different scales, finding that the largest and smallest reproductions "worked" the best. The smallest because they could be held close, and the largest because they seemed to frame or hold a body. Perhaps one aspect of architectural drawings that exclude participation is the difficulty in negotiating the difference in scale between the representation and the viewer's own embodied experience. Indeed the ability to produce, read, and use scale drawings as a critical design tool is one of the key skills learnt in an architectural school. These large fragmented images were something that could be related to, without years of training, and changed as one might the interior of a home. This finding holds implication for scale drawing as communication with different audiences.

Visitors to the gallery apparently felt quite free in manipulating the image despite the title card suggesting, to my mind, a more reflective response. *Window* become scattered with elements of *Opening*, postcards were pulled from nails, and on in at least one case the nail was pulled from the board with the postcard. As a result pieces of this work are scattered lightly through the other works. In the context of the exhibition opening *Window* became an interactive piece. I think it is likely that in a more traditional gallery setting, if the work was re-displayed by itself for example, this would not be the case.

This speculation emphasises the importance of the social context of participatory works, or any kind of visual work. The notion that a drawing or image carries the same meaning in different contexts is disputed. This observation is significant to urban design and planning processes when participation is sought. In the context of the contribution of memory in place making there are two implications. Firstly, the sensitivity to context suggests that establishing conditions where the contributions of place memory become physically manifest could be quite tricky given the controlled image of many urban centres. That place is made more specific by shifts in its image and relationships is counter to the place-image-making mentality that

has dominated. Secondly, in engagement or co-design processes it is not just the visual (or written) documents that are significant in establishing a participatory environment. Careful consideration must be given to the social context of these processes; otherwise the role of memory places may not be observable.

Reflection on this work highlights that scale and social context play important roles in how visual works are received and related to by viewers. Although the importance of scale is something that is well understood in the design of urban space, the importance of the scale of the representations of urban proposals for lay audiences is perhaps under-examined. Similarly this assertion could be repeated for the significance of socially framing space and representations of space. Through the extent of urban events planning and place branding, to crime prevention measures, the significance urban centre's social framing is understood. However, arguably the social context of urban place representations receives less attention—traditional visual architectural analysis focuses on what is represented and how, rather than the context in which it is framed and received.

Window: Summary of Key Findings

Habits picked up overseas (in other places) can influence how we live at "home." These other places need not be at the front of our mind to have an effect. That is, they do not overwhelm the specificity of place. Likewise, meaning is not fixed to an image but dependant in part on its context. For example, it seems likely context will influence how interactive people will be with a representation. These works had a resemblance to architecture in scale and detail. They share a feeling of being able to step in and inhabit.

Opening

Plate 5: *Opening,* Robyn Creagh, 2012.
Digital photo-montage. 2m x 3m. Digitally printed over a grid of 10cm x 15cm postcards. Hung on grid of 400 nails. Work manipulated by exhibition visitors.

Visitors to the exhibition were invited to use fragments of this work to "interrupt" the other works installed. To construct the base image, a photograph of a group moving a bbq into Gorlitzer Park, Berlin (on the site of a train station demolished as a result of the partitioning of the city) was overlaid on a photograph of a vacant lot on William Street, Perth. The roles of governance and grassroots appropriation in space use are both highlighted through this comparison.

"Gap in the Fence," Berlin, 2009

I accept the invitation of a gap in the fence and walk off the street and into tall grass and weeds. The green of the young trees was irresistible. I climb in feeling a bit dodgy. After a few steps my trousers are getting just a bit damp. After a few steps more they are wet all the way to my knees. The middle of this here-for-the-moment gap is hard and flat. It seems either half prepared or, more likely, it is smooth and compressed because it is part of the old patrol strip between two Berlin Wall barriers. Weeds break through in patches and flower, yellow, white and purple. The sky is wide and blue overhead. Some handmade banners are hung out of windows and from balconies of apartments already constructed in this zone.

Two segments of internal mesh fence have been pushed apart. A soft trod green path leads off from the opening through semi-dense growth. I worry as I push through, my eyes adjusting to the dimmer light, that I'll stumble on someone's day camp still occupied. As my eyes adjust I see that the path divides. I take the right leg. After a few steps I see that this green space is not very deep, there is perhaps only 20 meters between the first street fence I pushed through, and the one ahead. There is a bit of a clearing. Plants have been squashed flat from this hang out. Ahead, a bright street in the old east is only meters away on the other side of another chain link fence.

On my left a tiny oasis is set up. The swing chair faces into the greenery and the blank grey end of a new building. Although this space is tranquil and welcoming I feel like I'm trespassing in someone's back yard. Not the same person that I expect owns the property, but the someone/s who have inhabited it. I take photos to try and capture the feeling of domestic invitation. I imagine that this is the phase before the sponsored deck chairs, imported sand and pricey drinks. This gap between torn down walls questions the perceived sacredness of cleared and un-built land like nothing else I've known. I don't take a seat on the swing chair.

Opening: Design Exploration

Opening was composed of two images, one a vacant lot of William Street, Perth, into which I montaged a photograph taken in Gorlitzer Park, Berlin. This park was formed when a derelict train station was demolished. The train station had stopped functioning, and fallen into disrepair because of the adjacent construction of the Berlin Wall. There are no people visible in the William Street photograph, but in Gorlitzer Park a group of young people wheel a bbq and picnic supplies along a foot path. Others lounge and play frizbee in the background. The remains of the demolished train station are visible and heavily graffitied. The thick trees around the edge of the Berlin Park contrast with the sparse trees, open sky, and bleached fence and grass of the Perth vacant lot. This work compares the use of open space between places: bringing together a section of open space resultant from the segregation of Berlin, and one of Perth's unbuilt spaces.

The space where the Wall was in Berlin is subject to top-down and bottom-up forces. It makes an interesting case study of economic and social influences on urban space. In my work *Postcard Rack and Couch* (2011) I documented the monumentalisation and appropriation of the ex-wall space in two sets of postcards (figure 3.7). I found that rather than existing in isolation the "beach" bars and other semi-formal canal-side leisure enterprises of Berlin existed on a spectrum of borrowed or appropriated spaces in the ex-wall zone, which included well organised community parks at one end and assemblages of outdoor furniture or tree houses in small cleared areas surrounded by young trees adjacent to very recent residential apartment developments, at the other. Intersecting this grass-roots development was the legal formalisation that protected parks, overlooked beach-bars, authorised monuments, encouraged residential development and facilitated large scale shopping and business developments to fill in the urban gaps.[12]

Conversely, Perth has been criticised for being a "city that says no" (Landry 2007). Although moves are being made to reduce red tape, Perth has a history of being a

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[12] For a more in depth examination of a section of the former site of the Berlin Wall, the Ost Strand, than I have space for here see Sandra Pauquet (2006).

strongly planned city and this impacts on the perceived ability of bottom up organisations to take root, and gain social legitimacy in a city where development is driven by the big players—government and large speculative developers. The intention of this work is to contrast the two approaches to space. A picnic in a vacant lot in Perth is an absurd idea (figure 4.18). Hosting a party, let alone a regularly opening bar in an unlicensed space, is a formidable challenge of pollution, sanitation and planning regulations.

The implication of this work is that the inhabitation of place is a negotiation between the desires and habits of the people who go there and the social context, which includes regulations (and attitude towards regulations), that govern the use of that space. My suggestion is that Berlin's beach bars, for example, cannot be lauded in isolation from other factors within the city.

Vacant suburban lot, Perth.

Vacant inner suburban
lot with picnic, Perth.

Ex-death zone adjacent
Berlin Wall Memorial, Berlin.

Ex-death zone adjacent new
residential developments, Berlin.

Figure 4.18: Vacant suburban lots, Perth (top pair) and Ex-wall zone,
Berlin (bottom pair).

Figure 4.19: Digitally enhanced photograph of an ex-fortified canal in Berlin. In this image I play with the super saturated aesthetic of postcards to convey the sense of idealisation of Berlin's dynamic and semi-legal social enterprises in ex-fortified spaces.

Figure 4.20: *Opening* [details] prior to exhibition opening (top) and at the culmination of the exhibition (bottom).

Opening: Exhibition Reflection

Opening, the last of the five works, was accompanied by the invitation to take a postcard from it to place into another work. Over the course of the night many of the postcards containing figurative objects were moved into the other works. For example, people lounging, people moving their picnic, or a fragment of graffiti well framed on a card. Suburban roof forms from *Opening* contrast the sleek city forms of *Opportunistic.* Bright-coloured postcards also made a big impact when shifted into areas of contrasting colours. For example, rectangles of brilliant blue with unadorned branches from *Opening* stand out in the heavy yellow wattle blossoms of *Window*.

Arguably, it is the suggestion that visitors take cards from this work to go and place into other works that caused the greatest shifts in the visual works, and seems to have sparked a chain reaction in the movement of postcards between the other works as well. The use of figurative cards showing people engaged in leisure activities to alter the meaning of other works is reminiscent of co-design and planning strategies (see plate 3 and figure 4.12). The implication is that figurative images carry important meanings. Those meanings cannot be read by a third party, they need unpacking by the participant. To hold back from assumptions about what is unknown is a challenge, but a productive one.

Opening: Summary of Key Findings

Larger cultural, economic and planning systems influence the way vacant space is used. Meaning attached to figurative objects or symbols needs to be unpacked. It cannot be automatically read by others.

Present Memories of Other Places

Memory of urban experiences in other places plays a significant role in understanding the outcomes of this thesis. The works themselves rely on visitors' memories of urban experiences to be read. The architectural scale of the images builds upon the viewer's memories of standing on urban streets, while the fragmentation into details facilitates the viewers' inclination to attach memories to this or that detail[13] and the use of photography and postcards were adopted to build on visitor's experiences of recording their own travels or engaging with other's stories of distant places.

The *Postcards for Perth* exhibition relies on memory-narratives at two levels: my memories in the initial construction of the images, and those of the visitor in completing them. Memories of other places can provide frameworks for action, and may support actions that challenge the dominant construction of a place. People bring their memories of other places, and these memories play a part in present experience. Within the exhibition memories filter an experience of a place, support habits developed elsewhere, inform comparisons of present place and past experience, and provide rational and support for creative acts. Memories are, as de Certeau (1984) highlights, some of the stories that lay the ground for place-making actions.[14]

Memory of other places is a significant element to personal connections between locations, and thus a significant aspect of place experience. Observing the interaction of visitors to the *Postcards for Perth* exhibition with the fragmented details of the works, it seems likely that memories of places may be attached to specific details of interactions between people, or between people and elements of the built environment, as well as the broad idealised vistas found on postcards.

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[13] As Roland Barthes' observes ([1979] 1993, 49).
[14] See De Certeau (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. In particular the following pages: movement's connection to memory, p106; memories as stories, as travel stories, p115-116; stories making the way for social practices p125.

Finally, memories of distant places held by inhabitants of urban places are opaque rather than transparent. They cannot be read simply in an overview or mapping of a place. These diverse memories of distant places are held with the minds of people who dwell in a specific location, but are at the same time travellers in connection with other places. Memories of other places are like postcards held in the hand or kept in pockets, and as Derrida (1987) posits, even when they are shared publicly and contribute actively in the re-shaping of urban places the transparency of their communication cannot be assumed.

Chapter 5

Discussion

In this chapter I discuss the *Postcards for Perth* exhibition in the context of memory within architectural representations, lived space, connected place and imperfect communication. I find that personal memory can transform images of urban settings into places. In the first section of this chapter I discuss how images can be constructed to prioritise viewer experience (including memory) through scale, fragmentation and photography. These visual tactics act to produce a place as defined in chapter 2. The works are a lived space (produced through place-making such as creative acts, choices and rule breaking), a connected place (generated through sentimental attachment to detail, and the layering of one place into another), and a site of opaque communication acts (which is thick with personal memories). The second and third sections of this chapter identifies these findings as significant in two contexts: the production of progressive places is supported by tactics of fragmentation and malleability, and our understanding of urban experience can be enriched through an increased recognition of the significance of personal memories.

The postcard plays a vital role in structuring this thesis. The conventions of the postcard act as a frame on which disparate methods are interwoven. Textual enquiry, ethnographic field work, visual and narrative analysis, creative production and exhibition are all approached through a postcard metaphor. The strength of this approach is in highlighting multiple perspectives and readings of place through a subjective, grounded and interdisciplinary stance. The static representations of

place that have long featured in architectural site investigation can and should be interrogated through interdisciplinary, analytic and creative means as an extension to current architectural site analysis. The postcard metaphor discussed here is one such route; it is a creative site-analysis method to engage with the other places of everyday life through urban inhabitants' personal histories of mobility.

Moving beyond Urban Place as a Design-Object

The first chapter of this exegesis outlined the limitations of the dominant descriptive mode of urban places. If approaching an understanding of places as designed objects it is a struggle to engage with personal memory. In the second chapter three alternative perspectives were discussed, which redressed this oversight. The exhibited *Postcards for Perth* works resisted the dominant narrative, moving beyond an understanding of place as a designed object to include personal memory in lived space, connections between places and the opacity of communication in the urban realm. This section addresses the project work through these lenses. I start by looking at the visual tactics that resisted the dominant designed object perspective. I then discuss the works in relation to ideas of lived space, connection and opaque communication.

Prioritising personal memory

The legibility of the exhibition at different scales through the fragmentation of large photographic images supported visitors' participatory engagement. In doing so, my traditional authority as the work's creator was challenged. My selection of photography of everyday settings as a representational mode enabled visitors to the exhibition to engage with the works as a reflection of urban settings within their own lives. The choice of photography as the mode rather than say architectural perspective or section drawing was made in order to speak in the visual language of the day-to-day. The resulting legibility of the work as fragmented digital photographs printed on postcards identifies a tension between these works and more typical representations of the built environment professions, such as more

"architectural" drawings found in urban planning guidelines, which seem to seek to fix the image of a place and control possible behaviours.

The scale of the works enveloped the human figure on the one hand, and through fragmentation enabled attachment and tactile experience with postcard-fragments on the other. The works (and *Window* is an apt example, see plate 4) shared the scale and detail of architecture. People visiting the exhibition had the feeling of being able to step into the works and, in addition, works were often viewed with other visitors standing between the viewer and the work as if they were part of the scene themselves. The twinned scale of the works—building and detail, rather than a mid-scale of a traditional wall hung painting—enabled peoples' visits to the exhibition to focus on their own experience with the works, and their own construction of urban place. This experience authorises the participant as co-author and de-authorises my own role from sole-creator to co- author. For example, in response to the invitation of the work *Home?* (plate 1) people carefully considered the work to establish which postcard-fragment they would keep. The play on words in the didactic panel suggests that they select "a piece of *Home?* to take with them." The enthusiastic response to the works as both a larger whole and smaller fragments, suggests that both general setting and detail are important factors for urban representation that seek active engagement.

Scope for Lived Space

The exhibited works are, in de Certeau's terms "habitable spaces" (1984, 106), which enable and evidence meaning-making actions. As such, the uncontrollable and unpredictable actions of visitors played a significant role in the place-making of the works and the exhibition event. For example, by intention the work *Constructed Edge* (plate 2) depended on postcards returned by invitees for its construction, while the works *Opportunistic* (plate 3) and *Window* (plate 4) were re-shaped through unexpected visitor interactions. These works question urban places and place-making practices rather than presenting a static proposition or solution.

The visitor contributions, alterations, and subversions reflect the diverse place-making actions of individuals negotiating complex urban processes to pursue their specific interests. In these works the creative choices, and rule-breaking actions, of visitors to the exhibition were framed as part of the works themselves. The visual design of the works, and their installation, aided in highlighting the movement of cards from one work to another and framing the shifting cards. The gridded structure in particular resulted in changes to the works being read as contributions rather than as damage. The potential for rule-breaking shifts in cards to be understood as damage is most apparent in the works *Opportunistic*, with the addition of a substantial vertical blue stripe is at odds with the suggested interaction, and *Window*, where cards firmly fixed to the wall were removed and replaced with others. In both cases what may have been considered "vandalism" in another situation added to the aesthetic and conceptual readings of the works. In conjunction with the visually-incomplete work, *Constructed Edge*, these participation dependent works reflect that the process of making place is fallible and unreliable, and as products of these processes urban places are unfixed and changing.

Noticing Place Connections

The works represent urban places as interlinked to other places, and refer to my memories of other places and times. A photo of an urban setting gained specificity through the layering of particular experience from elsewhere. For example, the photo of a Perth street in the work *Window* (plate 4) becomes particular to my experience through the insertion of the London skyline. The resultant image is shifted from the seeming neutrality of a photograph of a Mount Lawley street to instead be an image of a place woven into my history of travel and dwelling. Like the many postcards added to the work by visitors over the course of the exhibition the remembered aspects of elsewhere make the image more unique, rather than making it more homogenous or generalised. Such layering of places was evident in all the works, and brought an element of time to the representations of place. Visitors to the exhibition added extra layers of meaning to the works through their personal interactions with single cards, or handfuls of cards.

The idea that memories of place may be fragmentary, rather than encompassing, is reflected in visitors' deliberate interactions with the work *Home?* (plate 1). Visitors to the exhibition typically took time and care while selecting which postcard from the work *Home?* to keep. These personal relationships with individual postcards were observable across the exhibition, in the works *Opportunistic* (plate 3), *Window* (plate 4) and *Opening* (plate 5) which shared one wall. Each of these works was dominated by one colour: blue, yellow or green respectively. Thus, viewing the three together the movement of cards between them was quickly apparent and reflected the movement of individuals between urban places—the collection and then wilful juxtaposition of remembered elements of urban experience into new contexts. A critical reflection on these works suggests that comparative analysis of places cannot be separated from the people who inhabit them, and that these inhabitants themselves must be understood as mobile and wilful agents.

Seeing place as dense with personal memories

The tactics used in the development of the works, and the playful acts of visitors to the exhibition, ensures these works are located in the messy realm of personal communication, where meaning is not fixed but is instead dependent on who is speaking and who is listening. The exhibition event was successful in opening up a contingent place within a traditional gallery setting, which like development documents and mall-like city squares tend to represent space as fixed. Using postcards, fragmenting images into mobile parts, and inviting people to interact with the works were key in this achievement. An example of this re-conception of the gallery space was the freedom of visitors in interacting with the work *Window,* which (unlike the other works) gave no specific instructions on how to move postcards.

The meanings of the postcards that were moved within the exhibition are apparent only to the individual who moved them. At times, decisions seemed to be based on an aesthetic judgment, such as the introduction of a bright blue card into the yellow wattle tree flowers in *Window*; at other times figurative elements seem to have

been moved to challenge or shift the reading of one of the works. The introduction of figures playing with a frisbee or reclining on grass from *Opening* into the dense urban image *Opportunistic* seems to be an example of this (figure 4.12). However the meaning attached to these potentially symbolic actions cannot be conclusively read. The unknowable and imperfect aspects of urban communication are encapsulated in the work *Constructed Edge,* which still remains incomplete. Many of the invitation fragments that comprise this work were never returned to the gallery.

This discussion has thus far focused on developing an understanding of the relationship of personal memory and place by reflecting on the role of individuals' place-making actions in their observable (but unknowable) interactions with fragments of the works in the *Postcards for Perth* exhibition. Through the production and reflection on the *Postcards for Perth* exhibition I have come to a more nuanced understanding of personal memory's role in urban experience. Personal memory drives individual acts of place-making. This finding is significant to the production and understanding of the built environment. In the following sections I will first discuss ways in which the role of personal memory in urban place-making could be better supported in the development and representation of the built environment, before highlighting the contribution of this thesis to the theoretical understanding of urban places.

Moving Beyond Static Place

As visual tactics, fragmentation and malleability have significance to the way urban locations are understood on the ground, and could support novel engagement with urban design processes and outcomes. Within the exhibition these tactics were key in recognising and supporting visitors' wilful appropriation of organising structures, connection to other places on a global scale, and imperfect communication. As such these tactics may be transferable to further work within the urban realm.

This thesis contributes to the contemporary discourse of how to engage with, analyse and design for contemporary urban places by introducing two indicators of progressive urban places: fragmentation and malleability. I will consider three occasions where valuing these qualities could contribute to development within built environment—during the consultation process, in forming the urban design, and in the management of urban places—before considering the potential for the tactics of fragmentation and malleability to contest problematic static representation or urban places.

Methods of representation that are sympathetic to contemporary understandings of urban place are beneficial to the urban design processes. In particular, malleable and fragmented representations may be useful during consultation with shareholder groups through collaborative image construction. Representations of urban places that seek to present place as unfixed and are open to the complexity of the public sphere of communication may help participants within the consultation to visualise two important things: first, the unfixed and changing nature of design proposals, and even built objects; second, the participants' own ability to shape and reshape urban places outside of a consultation process. The key significance in this shift in representational focus is the authority given to the participant as co-author in the work. A setting of shared responsibility breaks down the power-authority of the expert in a way that may enable more authentic discussion of the issues. I am not suggesting that this way of working with images of proposed developments, or existing urban spaces, will create a level playing field between lay people, designers, and planners, but that some degree of shared authorship may help support realistic expectations about roles, responsibilities and outcomes. Further exploration of this avenue must acknowledge the shift from a controlled gallery setting to the complexities of working with the less predictable and more diverse groups which comprise the general public (inclusive of greater variation in class, ethnicity, economic agency, and degree of social inclusion). In this context the opaque meaning of some interactions with the images highlight the need for facilitators to ask rich questions about how people inhabit urban places. I

feel that making use of collectively authored fragmented images of urban places could be valuable as a tool in the community planner or co-designer's kit.

Fragmentation and the malleability may also be useful design strategies in designing for urban places. If, as this research suggests, people's attachments to urban places are at least partially formed through details and moments of personal significance and scale then it is at least as important to design for peoples' engagement with detail as for Kevin Lynch's (1960) urban image-ability. A key idea from this thesis is that the ability to see how a place is changed by the people who occupy the space may relate to the observer's understanding of that place as authentic. An attempt to support the visualisation of a place as being subject to inhabitant's actions might be supported by design strategies that consider the framing of groups and individuals. An example of this could be the considered break-down of urban spaces into areas that are of a scale that can be perceptually transformed by a group or person's behaviour in this space. This approach would pose a substantial challenge to embedded ideas about the control of crime and pollution (in effect the policing of difference) within urban planning and management.[1]

Breaking the rules in urban places need not be construed as vandalism. As these works demonstrate it is possible to use visual and organisational approaches that enable changes and additions to an established image to be read as contributions, even when the motive and meaning of actions are unclear. Urban spaces are part of the public realm of unreliable communication and uneven power relations. This thesis identifies the possibility for an alternative approach to the design and management of urban places that is in-line with this understanding. To achieve a desirable outcome it is not necessary to propagate either the myth of a perfect public realm where all voices are equal and intelligible to all others, or the myth that a lively city is the sole responsibility of the designer. This thesis concludes that

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[1] Exploration of the tactics of fragmentation and malleability in urban design are beyond the scope of this thesis, but I note that further work in this direction will require consideration of the economic structure of urban context. In particular the relationship of government and private ownership in contemporary urban place marketing.

it is possible to construct representations, and through these to construct places, that tolerate (or even celebrate) inconsistency and difference as contributions.

The mobility of parts within representations of urban places deploys a visual metaphor to challenge the fixity of both place branding, such as the construction of reliability found in urban development documents, and the bounded definitions of place deployed by conservative forces that seek to restrict definition of place to exclude difference. William Street, Perth, is rapidly changing. It is being cleaned-up by the actions of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority (MRA)—a government department exempt from normal planning procedures, able to make their own regulations within their (ever increasing) jurisdiction, and answerable only to the state Premier (Hillier 2013b). In this context enabling fragmentation and malleability of parts within representations of urban places would be to produce a counter narrative to the narrow definition of clean, safe, aesthetically pleasing urban space that of the MRA and urban re-formers the world over provide. This fragmented and malleable representation has the potential to remind the viewer of the contested ability of urban inhabitants to disrupt the impression of a static image onto urban places. Personal memories provide a postcard box of experiences to guide a person's action within urban places around what is permissible, what behaviours may push social bounds, and to imagine shifts in the dominant construction of place. A fragmented and malleable place is a game board that invites play and is open to rule breaking.

Figure 5.1: Barking Town Centre, MUF Architecture/Art 2010 (Creagh 2013).
This contemporary folly is part of a recent urban design project. The construction of an imaginary past for this place invites the action of mind and body.

Figure 5.2: Tourists outside London Court, Perth (Creagh 2014).

In contrast, London Court creates an assumed collective heritage of colonial Perth, and succeeds primarily in inviting touristic photography.

Overcoming Static Images

Understanding the city through the invitation to bring with you memories of other places may counter ideas about alienation in contemporary urban spaces. In this way the "placelessness" criticism of contemporary space can be understood as a criticism of aesthetic approach rather than a reactionary position against an apparent acceleration of globalisation. It is possible to identify a desire for fixed spatial representation in many contemporary urban developments. Perhaps it is possible to attribute this noticeable lack of dynamic malleability to a missed opportunity for people in these spaces to overlay their own memories and reshape the space. Hermetic spaces of malls and new mall-like urban shopping streets (such as Manchester's New Cathedral Avenue) act to restrict the inhabitant's role in place-making as part of the marketing strategy. A consistent, pleasant, no-risk aesthetic is required by the investors. These spaces are not place-less because they are connected to the world but because they restrict the performance of place-making actions informed by people and their memories of other places.

Recognition of a fixed aesthetic approach to design does not counter the argument that urban place is connected. Instead, what is recognised is the tension between contemporary progressive definitions of place, and the experience of settings lacking connection and openness to change. This is a criticism of contemporary urban design approaches, from large development organisations to the consultants they employ as professional placemakers. Such developments seek to disconnect these spaces from the lively, perhaps unpredictable or undesirable, processes of lived space. Perhaps this desire for a spatial image to be independant and monumentally resilient are the outcomes of Modernist architectural approaches, where the total aesthetic of a space was the responsibility of the designer and user modifications were to be discouraged. For some the Modernist's search for an aesthetic that fits everyone within an international, or global, identity continues. In contrast to this position, and seemingly in conflict with the approach of urban image-making in the present, this thesis suggests that the success of an urban development's perception as an authentic place depends on the opportunity for

inhabitants' to layer memory of other places into current experience, and the observable change brought by this process.

Perhaps this unresolved tension between the desire to create urban places and the reality of inauthentic-feeling constructions is due to a misunderstanding of the scale of attachment. Influential architectural and urban theory about the inhabitation of cities has focused on legibility, navigation and history (Lynch 1960, Rossi 1982). Monuments and architectural styles have come to be understood as the proper containers of place-meaning. In contrast, this thesis suggests that detail and personal story are significant in place-making, especially when urban populations are understood to be diverse, mobile and connected. This thesis identifies moments of personal memory as a source of richness in place experience. The augmentation of what is "here" with what was "there" (and so an imagination of what may be) are stories that enable place-making action (de Certeau 1984, 123). Thus the production of authentic space must deal with the particular and leave room for the personal, rather than rely on the reconstruction of forms selected from cultural history or so-called collective memory. Like selecting, sending, and keeping postcards, place-making is a sentimental process. Inhabiting urban places we project memories into locations to make sense of our surrounds, and in doing so we re-write these spaces—like the reader of a novel we complete the creative act.

Malleable Fragments

The key to the reflection of place experience in visual representation of urban settings is in inviting place-making through fragmentation of the image and the malleability of parts. By establishing a setting where place-making can happen the *Postcards for Perth* works become places in themselves. As place is increasingly understood to be a nexus of processes, rather than the material container or geographic location, so too can the visual representation of places come to reflect the sense of continual renewal and becoming. Firstly, the fragmentation and the malleability of these parts enables the images at the heart of this thesis to become

lived spaces as sites of place-making.[2] Individuals' attachments to details within a larger image are unusually observable, while the shifting of these small pieces of the whole between the works reflects metaphorically the connections between globalised locations. Secondly, the movements of these fragments captures the narrative driven interactions of people with the works. The stories that shape urban places are notoriously difficult to observe, so it is significant that the *Postcards for Perth* works were successful in capturing something of this process. Finally for this discussion, is the acceptance that not all motives at play in making the works can be determined.

Malleable fragments frames individuals' attachment to detail. Like Barthes' ([1979] 1993) recognition of his own past in mass produced photographs, inhabitants create place in urban spaces through the recognition (or recreation) of moments of their own past (including distant places).[3] I find a memory of London when I step out of the door of my flat in Mount Lawley to see the city towers to my left. I am reminded of Berlin sitting out the back of a small urban bar in Northbridge all the while knowing the association is a chance connection of air movement, light, cigarette smoke, and tree branches above an unfinished brick wall. When I stop to think about these places I know that the physical distance across the surface of the globe is not the only difference between these places. Yet these associations shape my understanding of Perth, and support a feeling of potential within these spaces (the door to the street from my flat, the light evening of a backyard bar). I associate a power to change the urban realm in myself, and those I share these two spaces with. It seems likely that tiny stories like these guide more steps and gestures than my own. In each relocation of a fragment of the works in the *Postcards for Perth* exhibition I read a small story like these, perhaps half formed, perhaps in glowing detail; likely I shall never know. This is not a failing, but another reflection the experience of public spaces.

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[2] Walter Benjamin theorises fragmentation as a condition of modernity. See for example his notion of constellation in "Theses on the Philosophy of History ([1940] 1968).

[3] Barthes recognises shoes like his aunt's in a photograph of individuals entirely unconnected to him and feels a great, otherwise inexplicable, sense of attachment to the photograph ([1979] 1993, 44).

In the relocated postcard fragments within the *Postcards for Perth* exhibition it is easy to read the cross relationship of urban places. Seeing the displaced postcards, like receiving a postcard from a holidaying friend, recalls to mind the place of sending, and the journey through the postal service to arrive at its destination. I recently received postcards from my father and his partner as they visited Athens for the first time. Receiving these cards recalled my own tourist experience in that city, and from there my mind wandered to the location of the trip in my life, re-writing again that section of my autobiography and repositioning it within my current inhabitation. This last week, as the sun has emerged from the rain, I have thought occasionally of a Café Freddo (a Greek sweet milk-less iced coffee). Despite the dominant acceptance of the heritage value of Greek art and philosophy and ruins, little holds my attention from my visit to Athens. Perhaps this will shift, and a new connection will be made, or an old one take new significance in the way I locate myself in the world that starts at the edge of my skin. In the shifted fragments of *Postcards For Perth* such relationships of connection, and their varying, fluctuating significance can be read.

Conclusion

Memory in Malleable and Fragmented Place

I began this thesis in Perth, back home for a few years and screaming to get out of the suburbs. I have a cyclic relationship to this city; the pattern of going away to live and returning started with my parents. Now I am finishing this thesis in Perth, home again for a few years, itching to get out and knowing I will keep returning in one way or another. Collecting postcards as the layering of memory and experience associated with moving between cities, is the metaphor through which I have examined urban places. Perth is the case study for its personal significance to me as a site of departure and return, and for its larger relevance as a city of migrants. Through the visual works of this thesis I explored part of my inhabitation of this city through a handful of places I also called home in 2009–2010: London, Manchester, Barcelona and Berlin.

In bringing together these places in the production of visual works, and the opening of these images to further manipulation by others, the works convey a sense of place that is dynamic and interlinked. This in itself is a worthwhile contribution to the discourse and visualisation of place and identity, offering an understanding of the relationship between personal memory and place-making as open, connected and changeable. Turning to the potential application of this research some of the same tactics—fragmentation and malleability—used to support the transformation of images into lived space, have relevance in challenging the static construction of place in existing urban settings, and informing design processes towards the construction of progressive urban places.

Reflecting on the Thesis Journey

Representations of place such as those typically found in urban development documents seem inauthentic because they depict place as a static image and not as a process. These representations are at odds with contemporary definitions of place as the shifting outcome of relationships and connections.[1] Thus, it seems a gap has emerged between what is said, and presumably understood, and what is shown about authorship of urban places in built environment communication. Visual representations lag behind our understandings of urban place. This thesis addresses this lag by contributing visual works that represent a progressive understanding of urban place, exploring the role of memory of other places in people's place-making processes, and examining the tactics of production in these works.

One of the ways that people engage with urban place is to bring their experience of other places to bear. This is an imaginative and sentimental process rooted in memory but equally grounded in the space occupied. In people's everyday life their travel history and present dwelling experiences are brought together. Thus, memories of other places are part of the framework that supports and informs actions in the now. In particular experiences of distant places can be drawn on for comparison and evaluation in reading an urban location; to support decisions about what actions are permissible in a place and what social boundaries may be pushed; and to imagine what changes could be made to a place through momentary and accumulative actions. However, unless verbally articulated, the role of memory in place-making processes is not evident in itself, memories exist in the realm of opaque and imperfect communication. Stories of personal place-connection lay under inhabitants' actions. Individual actions within the public realm are place-making both to the actor and those who observe them and are significant in the

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[1] Why does the built environment profession reproduce outdated definitions of place? One answer may be that these static images authorises built environment professionals as the creators of urban spaces, and it is in the interest of the industry to continue this self-legitimising. This response seems problematic given the progressive position for meaningful engagement of community planning processes. This is echoed in architectural design in co-design processes and the desire for collaborative client-design relationships.

feeling of a place being dynamic and malleable and for these reasons feeling authentic.

How do we identify openness in urban places and representations? What approaches may guide design to support this kind of urban place-making? This research project has found that visually perceptible fragmentation and malleability may indicate a place's openness to connection and change. These two qualities are overlapping and inter-reactive. In the examples of the exhibition *Postcards for Perth* the works respond to the scale of a person's body. The malleability of the works was enabled by fragmentation into pieces that fit easily into a hand. It is these two qualities in conjunction that creates a framework in which the changes and connections brought by people to the work can be observed through the modifications to it.

Considering alternative visual tactics in making representations of urban places seems a productive direction of further enquiry. This potential for meaningful engagement initiated through collaborative image construction would be of interest to those working with communities or client groups. In consultation, participatory planning, or co-design processes changeable and connectable place representations may invite more full responses than static images. Reflecting on visitor engagement with the installation *Postcard Rack and Couch* and the exhibition *Postcards for Perth* I propose further exploration of urban representations that can parallel place-making process by inviting people to overlay their own memories into the works as part of a sense-making and aesthetic re-shaping process.

Considering fragmentation and malleability in urban space design may result in places that invite, and celebrate, the place-making actions of individuals and thus feel authentic. Contemporary urban spaces have been criticised for being placeless within the built environment disciplines and popular media. To date a strong reaction to this criticism has been a focus on the heritage of places. This is a reactionary gesture, which excludes much of the diversity of urban populations by defining communities as tied exclusively to local history and "valuable" built

outcomes. Dynamic and interconnected definitions of place in urban design may present a viable alternative to the exclusion of multiple other stories of place and people for the preservation and reproduction of heritage objects. Fragmentation and malleability could be tested, as design tactics, within an action research cycle in new urban development, or the redevelopment of urban places. Project briefs such as the recent competitions for Flinders Street Station in Melbourne and Kings Square in Fremantle highlight the need for the built environment to support urban "life" and present the opportunity for real life testing of the findings of this thesis.

This thesis has explored personal memories of other places as one of the factors in urban experience and place-making. In doing so I found tactics such as fragmentation and malleability to be productive as indicators of inhabitable place, and productive tactics in the representation of urban places as connected, changing, sites of unreliable communication. There is further scope for analysis of new and existing urban places to test the reliability and practical use of these tactics in evaluating approaches to and furthering our understanding of built environments. We might ask questions about what constitutes an observable change in different cultural settings? What degree of fragmentation and malleability will be interpreted as an invitation for participation in re-shaping of urban place? All of which build from the conclusion of this thesis that enabling personal memories of other places to inform inhabitation and understanding supports diverse, inclusive, global and changing communities.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of this thesis we see that urban places are not containers for passive bodies. Urban places are malleable, mobile, layered, and opaque. They exist in the place-making of individuals driven by sentiment, association and desire, and in interpretation just as subject to partial or total misunderstanding. Urban places are, in short, dependent on people. This is why it is so important that people are understood as travellers, and dwellers. A source of richness in our growing understanding of urban experience is to recognise the influence of personal memories and attachments formed in disparate parts of the world. If seeking to

facilitate the growth of authentic places, built environment disciplines would benefit from critical engagement with malleable, fragmented, layered, and opaque conditions of urban place.

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Chapter 1

Figure 1.1,   Jan Gehl Architects. 2009. *Perth 2009: Public Spaces and Public*
Figure 1.2   *Life.* Perth: City of Perth and Department of Planning and
                Infrastructure.

Figure 1.3,   City of Perth, 2010. *An Urban Design Framework: A Vision for*
Figure 1.4,   *Perth 2029*. Australia: City of Perth.

Figure 1.5,

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Chapter 2

Figure 2.1   Debord, Guy. 1957. *Guide Psychogeographique de Paris*.
                http://c4gallery.com/artist/database/guy-debord/guy-
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Figure 2.2   Stalker. 2009. *Walkshop- Aqueduto das Auguas Livres: Across*
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                Event held at the conference of the same name, September 27-
                30. Images accessed online 2013.
                http://www.flickr.com/photos/walkshop_aqueduto/39251078
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Figure 2.3   Almarcegui, Lara. 2009. *Guide to the Wastelands of the Lea*
                Valley: 12 Empty Spaces Await the London Olympics. London:
                Barbican Art Gallery. Artwork commissioned by the Barbican
                Art Gallery for the exhibition *Radical Nature – Art and*
                Architecture for a Changing Planet 1969-2009. June 18-19
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Figure 2.4   Stampone, Giuseppe. 2011. *Saluti da L'Aquila.* Shown in the exhibition *Non tutto è in vendita,* held via Farini 33, Bologna- promoted by OltreDimore gallery for the Circuito Off/Arte Fiera, January 28.

Image Source: Raffaele Gavarro. 2014. "Saluti dall'Aquila cinque anni dopo e saluti dall'Italia di oggi." [Greetings from Aquila five years later and greetings from Italy today.] *Exhibiart. http://www.exibart.com/notizia.asp?IDNotizia=41688*

Figure 2.5   Roeskens, Till. 2008. "Situation Map: Joliette [Details]" in *Urban Makers: Parallel Narratives of Grassroots Practices and Tensions*, edited by Emanuele Guidi, 198-213. Berlin: b_books.

Figure 2.6   Dabrowska, Ania. 2009. *You and I are in Flux & I Used to Skate on Frozen Lakes,* (2003-2007). In *Critical Cities: Ideas, Knowledge and Agitation from Emerging Urbanists,* Vol 1, edited by Deepa Naik and Trenton Oldfield, 158-167. London: Myrdle Court Press.

Figure 2.7   Rendell, Jane. 2002a. *Confessional Construction.* Text installation curated by Brigid McLeer, BookArtBookShop, London. http://www.janerendell.co.uk/textworks/confessional- constructions#3

Figure 2.8   Naill McLaghlin Architects. 2012. "Postcards returned to us with residents' comments" from the consultation process for the Camden Care Homes project published on the Niall McLaughlin Architects website. http://www.niallmclaughlin.com/projects/care-homes- camden/

Figure 2.9   Ashton Raggatt Macdougall Architects. c 2008. Image produced for Department of Planning of Perth Waterfront masterplan. Published in: Hatch, Daniel. 2008. "Waterfront plan done in a rush: top architect" The West Australian March 10, 15.

Figure 2.10,   Images by author.

Figure 2.11,

Figure 2.12,

Figure 2.13

Figure 2.14,   Creagh Robyn. 2013b. "Place Perspectives on a Postcard
Figure 2.15   Installation," in *Changing Facts, Changing Minds, Changing Worlds: Selected Papers from the Curtin Humanities Graduate Research Conference, October 20-21,* edited by Julie Lunn, Stephanie Bizjak and Sue Summers, 156-184. Perth: Black Swan Press.

Chapter 4

Note on images in Chapter 4: In this chapter all figures expect 4.3, 4.6, 4.7, 4.10, 4.14, 4.15, 4.18 and 4.19 are of my exhibition catalogued in *Postcards for Perth: An exhibition of works exploring memories of place as shapers or urban experience*. Perth: Australian Urban Design Research Centre (AUDRC). Catalogue of the exhibition of the same name, shown at the AUDRC, Perth. October 5-19, 2012.

Figure 4.1   Photo by Bo Wong.

Figure 4.2   Creagh, Robyn. 2010. *Postcard Trails.* Wall hung work installed at the School of Built Environment, Curtin University, 2010-2014. (Photo courtesy of Helen Creagh.)

Figure 4.3   Creagh, Robyn. 2011b. "Fragments to tell a story – Postcards from Interconnected Places." Conference paper presented at *Picture this: Postcards and Letters Beyond Text.* March 24-26. UK: Sussex University.

Figure 4.4   Photos courtesy of Hannah Gosling, Ella Mac, and Hannah Gossling.

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Figure 4.15   Images by author.

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Figure 4.18   Photo by author 2009, 2012, 2009, 2009.

Appendix A

Published Pilot Study "Place Perspectives on a Postcard Installation"

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Creagh, R. 2013. "Place Perspectives on a Postcard Installation," in *Changing Facts, Changing Minds, Changing Worlds: Selected Papers from the Curtin Humanities Graduate Research Conference*, October 20-21, edited by Julie Lunn, Stephanie Bizjak and Sue Summers, 156-184. Perth: Black Swan Press.

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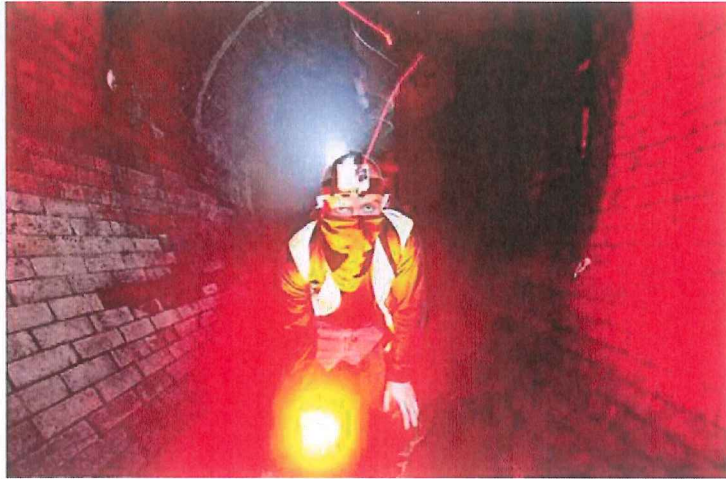
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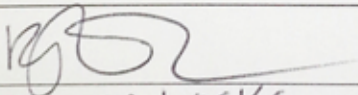Permission to use this material is subject to the following conditions (if applicable):

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