

With Fluidity audio walk

Christopher Cottrell and Susie Pratt

With Fluidity;

Physics Room gallery;

12/07/2015;

2015;

<https://physicsroom.org.nz/events/with-fluidity>

RESEARCH BACKGROUND: This project responded to and built upon the work of artists such as Janet Cardiff ('The Missing Voice' 1999, Artangel London) and Circumstance ('A Hollow Body' 2014, Museum of London) who have been working with two-channel audio to choreograph participant movement while merging narrative and physical environments. Cottrell and Pratt's project responded to post-earthquake Christchurch, New Zealand. Specifically, the tensions between Ōtākaro/Avon River as a founding icon of the city, and as a major contributor to the city's destruction through liquefaction. **RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION:** The audio walk 'With Fluidity' invites participants to be guided along the river while listening to audio that includes found sounds, manipulated sounds and fragments of spoken text. The artists take Ōtākaro/Avon River as a model to propose alternative ways of thinking about and inhabiting Christchurch. Cottrell and Pratt researched the various histories of the river and distilled these into short spoken stories that raise questions about the relationship between the river and city. These are woven into the acoustic and imaginative space of the listener, allowing them to consider their implications. The project proposes an original and innovative model for urban design, embracing ideas of fluidity and contingency, in response to a tightly scripted urban masterplan that consists of neatly delineated precincts that emphasise stability. The audio walk extends Cottrell's research into threshold conditions to aural and narrative realms, and extends his conception of architectural contingency to an urban scale. **RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE:** Physics Room Gallery is one of two top-ranked independent art spaces in New Zealand. It is funded by Creative New Zealand (the Arts Council of New Zealand), Christchurch City Council, Asia New Zealand Foundation and 10 other partners. (cont. on coversheet)