



2010 | Armory Gallery, Sydney Olympic Park

Memory Flows, a project of the Centre for Media Arts and Innovation, UTS, culminated in an exhibition entitled 'Memory Flows: rivers, creeks and the great artesian basin' which examined the concepts of 'water, flows and memory'. Curated by Sophia Kouyoumdjian, Norie Neumark and Deb Turnbull, it featured fifteen media artworks by twenty CMAI members and affiliated artists: Ian Andrews, Chris Bowman, Chris Caines, Damian Castaldi, Sherre DeLys, Clement Girault, Jacqueline Gothe, Ian Gwilt, Nigel Helyer, Megan Heyward, Neil Jenkins, Solange Kershaw, Roger Mills, Maria Miranda, Norie Neumark, Shannon O'Neill, Greg Shapley, Victor Steffensen, Jen Teo and Jes Tyrrell. The exhibition, open for 15 days over two months with a public forum on June 20, included video and audio installations, interactive media works, mobile devices, projections on surfaces and through water, and an array of river related artworks and artefacts. Audience numbers totalled 2,700 visitors.

'Collecting Places' is the outcome of a collaboration between Jacqueline Gothe and Shere Delys from ABC Radio and Executive Producer of POOL, http://pool. abc.net.au/. The installation is a chalk drawing on a brick wall with a sound scape. The image resulted from Gothe drawing in the studio as DeLys meditated at the Coorong in South Australia, the place where the Murray River meets the ocean. The outcome of the collaborative process contributes to Gothe's participatory practice, Drawing Country, an ongoing research project that advocates an examination of the ways to enhance connectedness and connection to place through visual communication.

Memory Flows 2009-2010, a distributed media art project of the CMAI, was funded by the Inter-Arts Board of the Australia Council for the Arts.

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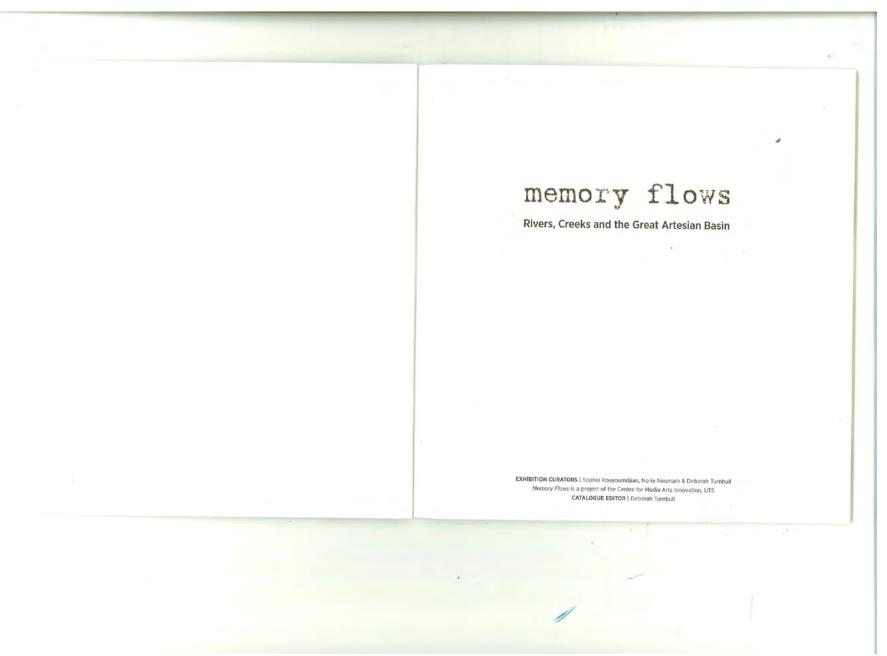
Original creative work

@ Newington Armory Gallery



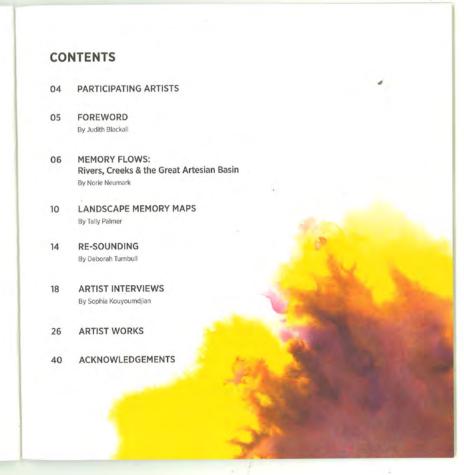


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For further information regarding the project please visit: http://memoryflows.net/













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PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Ian Andrews

Chris Bowman

Chris Caines

Damian Castaldi

Sherre DeLys

Clement Girault

Jacqueline Gothe

Ian Gwilt

Nigel Helyer

Megan Heyward

Neil Jenkins

Solange Kershaw

Roger Mills

Maria Miranda

Norie Neumark

Shannon O'Neill

Greg Shapley

Victor Steffensen

Jennifer Teo

Jes Tyrrell



FOREWORD

By Judith Blackall (opening speech excerpts)
 Launch Event | Friday May 14 2010 | 6-9pm

It gives me great pleasure to be here this evening. Before I begin, I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and waters we meet upon, the Wann-gal people of the Darug nation.

Artists, philosophers, scientists, musicians, poets, writers and thinkers have been greatly procecupied, particularly in recent years, by the climate and life-giving significance of water. Australia is one of the driest places on earth, and water shortages, water rights, water purity, sallinity, de-salination, contamination, water levels, abuse, saving and wasting, flow - and lack of - depth and surface, accessibility, are critical. It's an issue that is bothering a great many people, including artists, who are inevitably at the forefront of thought and social responsibility.

It's appropriate that an exhibition about water, flows and memory is presented at an important site in close proximity to water - Sydney's beautiful waterways are so important to the context of this city, and I am not speaking of harbour views.

It's an important time for artists in Sydney with the Biennake, and it's great that art is currently being experienced and enjoyed by so many national and international visitors in the context of the beautiful waterways around Sydney's harbour, Cockatoo Island, the shoreline at MCA, Pier 275. The Botanic Gardens, Artspace. And this fantastic project to be found along the reaches of the Paramatta River - artworks which seem to tap into a deep well, a kind of underground psyche or conduit of ideas, sounds, impulses, vibrations, words, song, the disturbing bubbling up of noise, I enjoy leaving the city and coming to see art in unexpected places; as I walked to the Armory this evening I relished the fresh air, and tasted the humidity in the air as it rises from the river and the bush.

I think it is the role of artists and curators to question our world and what we are doing to it. In my view art is best when it relates to our reality and causes us to think, act, respond and examine our own approaches. Art has the power to do this...and I congratulate the artists who through their work tap in to a great reservoir.

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Like water, memory meanders and pools. It can dry up or surge forth. Memory flows in and out of the folds of time and place, carrying the waterways' knowing. secrets, and hauntings. As memory ebbs and flows across moments of stillness, it animates and unsettles a sense of place and it disrupts and disjoints a sense of time - it refigures our understandings of nature and culture. And already and always, in Australia, an Indigenous sense of the liveness of country inhabits the memories flowing in waterways and land.

This exhibition works with the figure of memory to suggest that we are in an active and ethical relationship with our waterways. If we think of rivers as having memory - as an affordance we can connect to - we can sense their 'otherness' calling out to us, provoking desire and curiosity about our relations with such natural others. We can sense the flow of memory between ourselves and rivers as a network of complex relations.

We've moved past the time when nature and culture were seen as starkly divided and when nature had "nothing to say for itself."

How can we encounter rivers and their memories? How can we attend to our own personal, cultural and historical memories of rivers? Memory Flows artists explore these two-way encounters in various ways. Ways which come from and lead to new ways of knowing memory and rivers, at their points of networking and confluence. To begin to frame our thinking about memory flows between artists, audiences and rivers, we can turn to Indigenous culture. Aboriginal culture has always intimately known country, thickening the text of Australian landscape for us all, safeguarding the memories, and, as Deborah Bird Rose reminds us, 'nourishing' its 'terrains:'

Country in Aboriginal English is not only a common noun but also a proper noun. People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a person; they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, feel sorry for country, and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry or happy. Country is not a generalised or undifferentiated type of place, such as one might indicate with terms like 'spending a day in the country' or 'going up the country'. Rather, country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life. Because of this richness, country is home, and peace; nourishment for body, mind, and spirit; heart's ease.1

Rose cites Matthew Dhulumburrk of Milingimbi on sea country:

"... The earth and the sea, the water is not empty... We got something in it, we always have it and we'll be having it all the time...The land and the sea not empty sheds that man has built. There's something in it."

This Aboriginal knowledge, where "country has its own life, its own imperatives, of which humans are only one aspect,"3 deeply imprints Australian rivers and memory, inscribes our broader cultural understandings and invites an ethical relationship to our waterways. MEMORY FLOWS -- NATURE AND CULTURE REWORKED

We've moved past the time when nature and culture were seen as starkly divided and when nature had "nothing to say for itself." Performative knowledges, made at the moments of encounter between humans and nonhumans, are now reframing our sense of the relationship between nature and culture. Cultural geographer Sarah Whatmore describes this as the "relational achievement spuri between people and animals, plants and soils, documents and devices in heterogeneous networks which are performed in and through multiple places and fluid ecologies."

Whatmore's hybrid geographies provoke us to engage ethically with the "inter-corporeal intimacies" between the human and the nonhuman. Following Alfred North Whitehead's idea that "'the body is only a peculiarly intimate bit of the world," Whatmore suggests that "the corporeality of the body and of the world fold through each other." And through these folds there can emerge a new ethical sense of the ways in which emotions and connections flow between these different bodies, these diverse subjectivities.5

The reworking of nature and culture through hybrid geographies resonates with the Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) for which Bruno Latour is well known. ANT describes contingent and performative social networks where actors include humans and nonhumans. With its refusal to accept the conventional wisdom that "things don't talk" 'fish nets have no passion', and 'only humans have intentions." ANT speaks directly to the premises of Memory Flows. Bringing waterways literally into his rewritten social, Latour offers a way to

... begin to draw another landscape which cuts through the former pathways going from the local to the global and back, and that

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In Memory Flows, artists remember the local flows of the rivers, as they pass through the global and back, the Indigenous sense of country, and that things do talk and fishnets do have passions.

runs, so to speak transversally to all of them as if, through some odd cartographic operation, we had slowly morphed the hydrological map of some water catchments into another one. It is as if we had made a west flowing river run along a north-south gradient?

ANT's proposed re-drawing of social landscape sits well in a country where our rivers already demand a redrawing of a European logic, both to remember their flow to the centre rather than the sea, as well as their place in an older and still vital Aboriginal knowledge. In Memory Flows, artists remember the local flows of the rivers, as they pass through the global and back, the Indigenous sense ocuntry, and that things do telk and rishnets do have passions.*

MEDIA, MEMORY, PLACE

Human memory also has its ebbs and flows. And media plays a crucial part in them. Memory flows via media and is itself "always mediated," as Susannah Radstone explains of personal memory:

Even involuntary, personal memory, in the sense, that is, of those unspoken memories that seem to emerge spontaneously and that accompany and give depth and texture to everyday life in the present, are mediated. These apparently natural and uncontrollable ebbings and flowings of personal memory. are complex constructions in which present experience melds with images that are associated with past experience, as well as with what Paul Antze has called the 'scenes' or fantasies that shape our inner worlds... So even personal memory flashes, in all their apparent immediacy and spontaneity, are constructions mediated by means of complex psychical and mental processes."

Through the mediation of memory, we know place, we know country, we know rivers. Mediated place and memory intersect and disturb each other. It's uncanny the way you can be physically in a place, directly experiencing it through your senses, but at the same time 'know' it illhough somene elses' memories or through media — books, films, radio or music. You are there and not there, placed and displaced. It is a haunted disjuncture, where you experience other people's memory of a place as your own and your own memory as "Othist."

Cultural memory, like personal memory is also mediated: memories flow through the cultural imaginary, itself always and already mediated. The borders between 'public' cultural memory and 'private' personal memory are fluid and porous, and their moments of confluence are the subject of debate for historians, cultural geographers, and philosophers. Engaging with these debates John Frow argues that it is important to understand memory – and forgetting – not as "immediate" or "authentic," but as itself a mediation. He asks, "how can memory be thought of as tekhné, as mediation, as writings" for Frow such a textual figuring of memory has implications for a sense of time "where all moments... are co-present," ¹⁰ Past and present, personal and cultural – all flow together in the depths of the rivers tax Memory. Flows artists engage with.

HAUNTING TIME, REMEMBERING PLACE

We have, then, moved past the time when memory only looked backward and time only moved forward. Rethinking time and memory and the places they inhabit, we might turn finally to the idea of haunting—which suggests a ghostly and disjointed temporality, a simultaneity of presence and absence. ¹¹ To engage with haunted waterways is to immerse ourselves in their hidden and secret depths, where traces of memory sediment out and return into the flows... it is to render the virtualities of their memories actual.

Brunc Latour sees the rendering virtualities actual as a challenge to find the right sorts of texts. ¹² The media art works of *Memory Flaws* would offer such texts. They perturn and apitate everyday perceptions and ways of knowing our waterways. They explore "liminal spaces" and "hybridized methods" to speak from and to the hidden places of memory. ¹³ The art of memory flows is a work of art, of media art. As artists access the flow of memories from above, from the shoreline and along the rivers' currents, the stream of memory flows together via the objects, sounds and video projections that make up this exhibition.

- Norie Neumark

Professor of Media Arts and Director of the Centre for Media Arts Innovation, University of Technology, Sydney

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into the springs that feed the gaps - and are sacred places.

As Dick talked, or more often sat or walked in companionable silence, a process

began that subsequently drove my life in a new direction, and resulted in my living

an image emerged of a people who aspired to a functional integrity of individual,

community, land and spirit. I have since sought to translate that integration and

connection into the more clumsy world of science and applied research.

in Australia for four magical years. As Dick told the dreaming stories in the gaps,

The hope is that we can connect with our rivers, immerse ourselves in their memories and messages, and move responsively into that richer future. 7

prawing on experience of research into environmental flows for rivers and the connection between remaining flows and water quality, a team of us began to research the effects of multiple pesticide-use in the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment. A second project focused on environmental flows and institutional governance in the catchment, it is a rich landscape, with ochre sandstone curves, stretches of ofive-mistry-grey bush and a sad, green, puddly river. Sydney is a city that likes on borrowed water — borrowed from the Hawkesbury-Nepean. Sydney-siders seldom encounter the reality of the struggling river. In the same spirit, my first swim in the Murray was during the 2007 drought, in opaque brown water drawn down far below the banks, with a blue irrigation pipe in the water, and a pump determinedly systeking out water.

These river memories frame the challenge rivers offer us today.

First, a small lesson in reading riverine memories: after rainfall, water flaws, seeps, trickles and thunders. Depending on the volume of water and the speed at which it moves, it either carries or deposits sand, mud, pebbles, cobbles or boulders. When you get to a river bank, look at the shape of the place – the mixture and spread of rock-sizes, the sand-bars, mudflats, billathongs, riffles, pools, cut banks, riverside terraces. They all tell of past flows. Even if the present flow is a miserable trickle, or if a series of weirs has drowned the natural riffle-pool sequence, the shape, height and width of the banks allow you to calculate the magnitude of past flows.

Riverine blotà, plants and animals, also tell the stories of past and present - and warn of the future. As the river channel is sculpted by water, living things respond to the creation of potential homes -habitat. Each plant and animal has specific conditions under which it thrives, and also a capacity to "hang in there" if conditions change

and become tolerable rather than ideal. Most river ecologists can pick up a river rock and describe the general water quality, depending of the number, kind and variety of bugs found wrigging on the underside of the rock. Water quality, the chemistry of the water, varies naturally, but all over the world the common pollution sources of mining, industry and sewage disposal changes how inhabitable the river is to life forms from microscopic diatoms and mayilies (my favourites), to fish and crocodiles. A challenge of pollution is that it is silent and usually unseen. Our research shows that there are combinations of pesticides in the Hawkesbury-Nepean at concentrations that are threatening groups of bugs in the river. That may not bother many people – people are generally tougher than many river bugs – but it does add a page to the story of our gradual poisoning of the earth.

At another scale there are trees. In Australia the konic riverine trees are the river red gums. All over the continent from deserts to bushland the rivers are lined by these majostic trees. Eucalptus camaldulensis. The form of the trees mirror the river in two dimensions - the spreading bifurcating branches and roots are both reminiscent of the tiny streams and tributaries that join the mainstream flow to the ocean. Sometimes a rivers loses itself in the network of a delta, and finally freshwater vanishes into inland sands or the ocean.

Plants are one of the main pathways of water from earth to air – and to understand the water balance in catchments we now understand we need to know about transpiration. The giant red gum forests dying at the mouth of the Murray-Daring, and along other waterways, scream silently of bumans over-using the ground- and surface-water for irrigation, industry and cities. As the groundwater level drops, the roots are stranded in dryness and the

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Original creative work

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Original creative work

The recognition that human society is inextricably linked to the biophysical earth, and the recognition of these as complex adaptive

tree begins to die. The river red gums are named after a garden in Italy near the monastery of the contemplative Camaldolese monks. Perhaps each Australian could sit under a river red-gum and contemplate their part in the water future. Dreaming of life-styles that are rich-enough, and include at least some healthy rivers.

systems, is central to resilience thinking.

As a researcher, the ultimate frustration is that the functioning of the earth, of ecosystems, seems to hold the elusive keys to humans being able to resolve the escalating challenge of sustainability, and yet we seem unable to pick up the keys and use them. The keys: at every scale – from cells to catchments – living systems are complex. They comprise multiple components and processes with feedback loops that can amplify or counteract other effects. There are multiple possible pathways and outcomes for each process. Human society is the same – and so are our economic systems. Globally there are new ways of thinking and approaching research that take account of complexity – that look to find meaning in stories as well as data – places where arists, designers, engineers, poets, priests, politicians and scientists can weave new insights that can free humanity to live in new ways on the earth.

It is heartening to see Elinor Ostrom win the 2010 Nobel Prize in economics for her analysis of economic governance, especially the commons - and water is one of the key "commons" resources. Prof Ostrom is a founder member of the Resilience Alliance. The Alliance seeks to bring together thinkers, academics and practitioners who seek to understand the structure and function of social-ecological systems so as to influence social-ecological well-being. The recognition that human society is inextricably linked to the bio-physical earth, and the recognition of these as

complex adaptive systems, is central to resilience thinking.

Several groups have demonstrated that a wide variety of people can interact in the peaceful co-management of their resources by working together to build joint mental models of their systems. Actor-network analysis can facilitate the recognition of the pathways of human communication, power and decision-making. All these new intellectual knowledge-flow pathways follow the rivers model – as rivers reflect the activities in the catchment – knowledge flow reflects societal processes at work. Herein lies hope.

Although many rivers are "hanging in there" – people still have the capacity to make decisions to live differently, to envision a future where the memory of past natural riches speaks into the desert of material wealth. Humans could decide to live more modest financial futures in order to live in a richer environment. The hope is that we can connect with our rivers, immerse ourselves in their memories and messages, and move responsively into that richer

- Tally Palme

Executive Director Applied Research and Innovation, National Research Foundation, South Africa.

Former Director, Institute for Water and Environmental Resource Management, University of Technology Sydney (2005-2008)



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River to the Olympic Park Wharf and walking through the wetland reserve to the

Newington Armory. What a different experience I have here, at this river. Here, my

experiences with nature are brief, snatched en route from one place to the next,

with many an administrative task awaiting me at my destination. I catch ducks

The main tenants of the debate between the properties, and merit, of sound and noise have similar dichotomies to fine art and experimental art, or solid and abstract expressionism.

paddling in and around the water catchments; I hear the mynah birds before I see them, picking at the undergrowth and flying in and out of the fenced off areas bearing signs that warn of 24 Hour Security Patrol. Patrol of what? I wonder, as a mynah bird pecks at an empty chip bag left by an errant picnicker. Surely the patrol will collect that? Cyclats peddle by and a local couple walking at a brisk pace smile and bird me hallo as I bumble along carrying large rolls of viryl signage under my arm and whatever else in my cloth recyclable bags. What a variant site I must be amongst all this lush, vibrant, nature; a nature that has been manicured out of necessity after years of uncategorized abuse.

Memory Flows is an exhibition showcasing the participating artists' responses to the way we interact with our river systems in Australia. It's about the way that those river systems have been (mis)managed and how the rivers themselves and the eco-systems they exist within, remember and respond to these actions. Memory Flows as a project also stands as a record of the current bio-evolutionary state of the Great Artesian Basin, while simultaneously utilizing current and outdated technology to record and disseminate those memories, past and present. As an historian of living artists, much of my observation, categorization, care, and authorship of media art takes place in the now. There isn't much past to care for, more of a present to delve into. I found out as much when researching this essay; I found a lot of sources querying exactly what Sound Art is. By the end of my research, I understood why people are still asking...the short answer is that it's a stream of modern experimental enquiry encompassing the communication of alternate forms of artistic expression. My initial question evolved a little to encompass: alternate to what? This brief essay will discuss this alternative, situating the Memory Flows exhibition in the rhetoric of sound vs. noise, with a glimpse at how, theorhetically, these different media communicate the artwork to the audience.

Historically speaking, Sound Art emerged as a serious artistic enquiry in 1885. Born from the Italian Futurist painters, the main player in this line of enquiry was Luigi Russolo. Russolo wrote a manifesto titled The Art. of Noises (1913) and spent most of the rest of his life giving noise concerts to his experimental contemporaries because most of the general public, who were listening to opera and favoured classical string instruments, didn't understand the nuances of either his manifesto, or his sounds and noises. Many left his early concerts out of both consternation and confusion. Out of his line of enquiry came the contrest, and contrast, between the artistic properties of noise and sound!

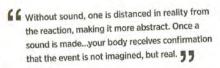
This contest becomes particularly relevant to the Memory-Flows exhibition when you close your eyes and experience the audio portion of the work of Jenkins and Mills beside that of Helyer, or Gothe and Gwillt all displayed in close proximity to each other. Jenkins and Mills' work emits an electric, crackling noise, Helyer's a dual spoken dialogue, one voice maile, one female, both mingling against tricking water; and Gothe and Gwill's an almost guttural chanting bordering on an understated melody. Art historically speaking, artworks in this exhibition are continuing a diebate sparked over 100 years ago by Luigi (sussale.

The main tenants of the debate between the properties, and merit, of sound and noise have similar dichotomies to fine art and experimental art, or solid and abstract expressionism^{3,3}. In the end it inevitably reverts to the politics, taste, and qualitative investment rationale of the voyeur. My favourite explanation of this debate comes from artist John Maeda (b. 1966), a specialist in arts and technology who often utilizes the computer as a graphic instrument to create his work. When reflecting on any artistic practice, he counters with dialogue from his personal philosophy, that of post-visual arts education. According to Maeda, if we consider what post-visual might mean in the simplest of

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terms, it might mean what occurs after sight has registered and the eye has communicated with the braint. On the other hand, if ones' eyesight is taken away from them, what senses have they remaining? Those of smell, touch, taste and hearing each of these senses, whether abstract or present, trigger spatial awareness, a sense of self in relation to ones' surroundings, and memory. These senses, when combined, lend the possibility of immersion to an artwork that sight alone cannot accorrigible. Sound, therefore, becomes a tool of augmentation in Memory Flows.

Where art theorist Michael Baxendall (1933-2008) utilized the famous sign -> signifier -> signified scenario of semiotics to explain the way we understand pictorial space and spatial engineering; there is a line of enquiry more specific to the interactive participant that pre-dates Baxendall, namely the Shannon-Weaver model (1949). Where this mathematical communication model also uses semiotics to understand what is being represented, it replaces an object or element (painting or bridge, as with Baxendall) with represented participants in the viewing/ knowledge/understanding of what is being registered. The S-W model looks at the act of communication and how we understand it based on the transmission of sound or action. In their model, a noise source disrupts the transmission of information along its pathway from an information source to its destinations *. This model can be applied to the way that many contemporary artists have attempted to use noise or sound to disrupt an understood art form such as installation, sculpture, or film to create a new art form; a hybrid.

Where Madda defines noise as messy and chaotic, the sure way to destroy order in a systemic program; sound, on the other hand, he treats more carefully. He says that, "Without sound, one is distanced in reality from the reaction, making it more abstract. Once a sound is made_your.

body receives confirmation that the event is not imagined, but real."4

Sound and noise, it seems, are still two very different aesthetics within contemporary artistic expression, of which the ultimate outcome of the work is relient on. Factor in the ecologic enquiry also apparent in this exhibition and we're dealing with a very niche area indeed. As previously mentioned, the hybridity apparent in the works that comprise Memory Flows combine a specific environmental and philosophical concern about nature via the mediums of sculpture, film, installation work and the built environment in which they are displayed, the Armory Gallery, with sound. In Memory Flows, each of these hybrid elements hold a whisper of the experimental about them, but it is the elements of sound and the environment that, historically, escalate them from artistic experiment, to art. The conversion point occurs in the theory and the end result of eften years of study and preliminary exhibition.

Popular sound theory merged with ecology in roughly the mid-20thcentury, and started gaining ground in the 1960s with R. Murray Schaler of Simon Fraser University (Vencouver, Canada), Referred to as acoustic or soundscape ecology, this art form is defined by the relationship, mediated through sound, between living beings and their environment. Schafer's group was called the World Soundscape Project, and from this group came the study titled The Vancouver Soundscape? By 1993, the response to this project from acoustic and ecologic researchers and artists was so great that they formed a Ward Forum of Acoustic Ecology, and bodd international symposia on this line of enquiry every 3 years⁶.

Herein lies the historical connection of the experimental art/artist to a forward thinking university research group, future focused if you will, remains a clear and integral link to this elevation from experimentation to art form. The Centre for Media Arts Innovation (CMAI) has, since its inception, been involved in the enquiry surrounding the hybridity of sound art. From conference participation and leadership, to festival participation, hosted performances, and exhibition leadership, CMAI also boasts an enquiry into emergent technologies, including locative and interactive media, situating It not only in contemporary practice, but as emergent ploneers of this process.

In the next essay, CMAI guest curator, Sophia Kouyourndjian, interviews the Memory-Flows artists both in person and via email. She posits both practice and process-based queries, linking the act of remembering to the action of constructing a recollection. This, in turn, acts as a *Instory* of Australian rivers, creeks and the Great Artesian Basin in the form of hybrid art creation and exhibition through artistic reflection.

Deborah Turnbull
 Director, New Media Curation

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Then I came back and we went through both Jacquie's drawings and my journals

JG: We found that the presence of self or person in that place was about the

and we found some common points.

...we think of rivers as landscapes of contemplation, but really there's so much tension in that river because of its contamination, abuse and mismanagement...your work is a personal reflection, about how the river has possibly affected the daily life of a family living by the river...

deep connection between ourselves and our contemplation and the place. The journals and drawings gave a sense of the connection that was trappening between us across that distance.

How does the use of sound result from these contemplations?

SD: Interestingly sound doesn't seem to be a huge part of it, it's more that the experience is taking shape in the form of the [exhibition] space that we've chosen, the way that we will invite the participant into the installation to relate to the materials. The sound has a functionality as well as a representational aspect.

How do you emulate a deep personal connection with a landscape that isn't necessarily familiar?

SD: That was one of the interesting challenges of the piece. I decided not to do a lot of research. I just wanted the direct experience of what could perceive with my senses. What does it mean these places that are suffering, when you don't have a daily relationship and a use or need for them?

JG: I've been building a practice that is around tracing and drawing countries. So it is using scientific representations through cartography, which then moves into another space that is chorography, the art of representing place, not the science. I'm very interested in that move between cartographic and chorographic representation and how it felt

Norie and Maria, for In Search of the Inland Sea you retrace an existing journey and represent this through what you refer to as 'media memories'. How are these connected with the futile search for the inland sea?

MARIA MIRANDA: The impetus behind the work is the idea of the

inland sea. In our practice in general an idea or figure like this often sets us off, and in more recent work we have literally set out to 'search' or follow it and it is this that creates the work and our relation to place. The inland sea was an important and evocative figure for us on a number of levels and it's what drove the project. For instance Europeans expected rivers to run to the sea so it was logical for them to think that there must be an inland sea... and this is what lured explorers like Sturt. In following Sturt on his misguided adventure we were searching not for the actual or imaginary inland sea - but for different relations to place and country.

Just outside Wagga was so evocative of the scenes from Mad Max. So the journey was following the original one, but then all these other memories became part of it. Filled with media memories, and for me it was my own memories of growing up there too. The outcome is an odd mixture of soundtracks that people listen to in the installation. Ultimately they are all linked through a journey down a river as mediated memories.

NORIE NEUMARK: The soundtracks we made played with performances of the media memories. We wanted the script to create the experience of watching the film or reading the journal. So each scene of the triptych is an intense moment taken from our actual journey and the 'media memory' that the journey sparked.

MM: Another important aspect of the project for us was that we used a mobile phone to film. This gave it an intimacy in the making that we also wanted to convey in the installation with the tiny PSP screens and smallish central monitor.

NN: We also made paper boats along the way. We would get found objects, like tourist brochures or maps, and turn them into paper



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boats, wherever, if we were sitting at a picnic table or in our caravant night and often [whilst] watching videos in the van. The paper boats became an important part of the project for us.

With your work Megan there's a strong personal connection, having grown up on the river, which comes through via re-enacted memorles. How did that personal reflection of memory develop in the work?

MEGAN HEYWARD: Yes, My work really starts with contemplating the Paramatta River and in particular the changes in its perception, because now I live in Concord and I grew up on the other side of the river in Gladosville. The area is now very expensive, lined with brand new apartments, but it didn't used to be like that. In Concord it used to be very industrial and same to an extent in Gladesville. So it's contemplating what the river remembers of its past and what I remember of the river's past and what I remember or not it's fine.

Cleanse includes montages which are set in the present with me contemplating the river and scenes that attempt to evoke memories. For example my parent's house was built in the 1920s in Gladesville by my great grandfather and underneath the house there's all this junk including lishing traps that my grandfather built from scrap metal during the depression and used to fish with the river. So there is a montage about using the traps to fish in the river. If you go around different parts of the river today, there are signs that say, "Don't fish here", because of chemical pollution.

There's a sequence in your video of you walking into the river. Is this a baptism or purification of sorts?

MH: I've for a long time had an obsession with immersion in rivers.

Exploring how much of the past we carry with us and the point where we let it wash away. That ties in with the idea that the Parramatta River, in the cultural imagination, has regenerated from being an industrial swamp to a different kind of capitalist dream.

Greg, I watched a video of you on the Memory Flows blog dredging large objects from the Cooks River – a garbage bin, a witch's hat – what does that act signify for you?

GREG SHAPLEY: When living near the Cooks River we would walk along the river virtually every day, and you see all this crap in the river and it would stay there for years. These objects became monuments in the river themselves. So it was quite significant, for me, the removal of these things that had been there forever and signified the neglected state of the river.

The process ended up being a lot harder than I thought and that's why the video works. The mud was so thick and after you scraped away the first few centimetres, it was just black. It was so greasy and to me that was profound and disgusting all at the same time.

Do you see a connection between Norie and Maria's paper boats as remnants of a journey and your dredging of objects of detritus?

GS: Yes. For my work, everything seems to come back to the idea of trace. You can trace the objects back to the river and back to a previous existence and all these traces overlap. The river has a literal trace of the landscape but there are also the historic, social and environmental traces.

That concept of mediated trace brings me to your work Chris. Disturbance and interconnectivity are central to your work. How do

you utilise water's reflectivity and sense of flow to convey these ideas?

CHRIS BOWMAN: It is a contemplation. When I went to these places, I wanted to connect with water and river, part of my process was to sit with that sense of water and to be that water, to be in that landscape.

So I developed a set of video recordings, photography and drawings. Recently I felt that it was also important to have water as an integral part of that process because the work is a mediation, but reframes the source in a technological context. It's using technology to purposefully disturb that original representation by distorting it, by abstracting it.

Flow is an interesting context in relationship to disturbance because there are different rhythms that exist. There are different forms of disturbance that interrupt, whether it's the reality of sitting in the space, sitting with the water and hearing the disturbance of the body, hearing the disturbance of the world.

GS: Disturbance is an interesting word in relation to most Australian waterways that are deeply disturbed waterways, especially the Cooks River. They have been harnessed and used and abused to the extent where some cannot be considered as natural rivers. So our interaction with waterways in Australia is just adding to that. It's one more layer of disturbance.

Roger Mills, Nell Jenkins, Shannon O'Neill, Chris Caines, Jes Tyrrell, Jen Teo with Sophia Kouyoumdjian (Interviewed in April 2010).

Roger and Neil for Diffusion you have extracted underwater audio recordings from the site.

ROGER MILLS: We followed Parramatta River up to Duck River, which is one of the estuaries at the Ryde Bridge. We hired two hydrophones and spaced them apart to get stereo recordings of what, we weren't sure, but we do now. This has brought up a lot of really interesting elements to it including the metaphor of the memory of water and how the pollution is very much still contained within the creeks and the rivers.

So what do you think you were expecting to hear and then what did you hear with the hydrophone recordings?

RM: Professional hydrophones are extremely sensitive and you can pick up signals from quite a long way away. We thought we were making some sort of mistake with the recording because when we put them into the river there was this loud clacking sound.

NJ: It was like crackling, like sitting around a fire. Was it just turbulence in the water? Particles hitting the microphone? It was actually the sound of snapping shrimps, nipping their forearms together.

I guess the things we thought we'd hear would be the movement and flow of the water, particularly where the river cats go past. You can hear the river cats probably from about 400 metres away underwater and of course with water - because it's heavier than air - the frequencies of sound that travel through it are slightly different.

That act of going to different locations along the river to record, is there a sense of narrative in that or is it about capturing different aspects of the river?

NJ: There's an element of a narrative in a mapping of the area. We started looking at the formation of the river where Duck River starts,



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to try to get as close to the source of the river as we could to record to gauge all the different sounds that are going on inside the water. We used those as a mapped out sound piece.

The Field have also been doing audio and video recordings or interpretations of the site, how do they differ?

50: What I'm doing is creating sound synthetically and through electro-acoustic manipulation, creating imaginary sounds of the place. I think the direction The Field project is going is a dreamlike one. I am not interested in representing the place in a realistic way, am more interested in going on a journey.

CHRIS CAINES: That relates to the visuals as well. The basis of The Field material is field recordings that are very extrapolated and abstracted. We also have been up, as far as you can up by boat on the Parramatta River, and shot video. The recordings then a reprocessing and the interaction between all three of us creates this dreamy space.

JESTYRRELL: Yes. The boat bip up the Parramatta River, as you get closer and closer, the river starts to narrow and it gets a lot shallower and you've got the beautiful mangroves, a lot of industry and convict remnants. I started thinking of this as a Western Sydney Heart of Darkness because it was really hot and the river cat goes quite slowly as it gets to that part of the river.

50: So we had this structural idea of a descent, starting off with lighter sounds and images and then heading into murkier territory.

Some Memory Flows artists are examining the contamination of river systems. In your work, Roger and Neil, it's represented in a...

NJ: Quasi-scientific way. I've being doing research about the different pollutants and where they've come from. I was looking at the different torms of chemicals and heavy metals that pollute the river and looking at their chemical structures. So for the speaker boxes that we created for the various recordings, I'm designing panels with fligree patterns that are made out of the atomic structures of the various pollutants in the water. So effectively I was trying to turn something that's quite dark and disturbing into something that's almost quite pretty.

Yes, we think of rivers as landscapes of contemplation, but really there's so much tension in that river because of its contamination, abuse and mismanagement. Jen and Shannon, your work is a personal reflection, about how the river has possibly affected the daily life of a family living by the river.

JEN TEO: The site that we're particularly interested in is next to the Armory site. We're looking at the Rhodes Peninsular which spans from the Ryde Bridge to Thomas Walker hospital.

Our work is tooking at my family history in the area on my mother's side. The Christensen's moved to the area in 1951, right about the time when Union Carbide was there, producing all the chemicals. Part of the work is interviewing family members about what it was like growing up in the area during that period; the different smells, the different sounds, the recreational use of the river as well as what they've noticed in terms of the wildlife and the quality of the water back then compared to now.

It's been quite interesting, getting that information of how polluted it really was and how these companies took no responsibility for

those actions. The nice side of it is to hear about the improvements of people's quality of life that are living in the area now.

SO: I think our work will directly be political in terms of dealing with some of these issues, but without being didactic per se, as these are strong feelings that people have who have lived around there. So it will be a mix of childhood anecdotes and playing in the river as well as what it actually means in terms of health.

So there were anecdotes of a recreational connection to the river?

JT; Yes. Well there were some. My uncle Danny remembered how he used to build boats out of corrugated iron with a friend. They'd cet a sheet of corrugated iron, fold it in half and then nail the ends together, build a little boat and go surfing on the Parramatta River.

So the interviews that you've been doing, what form will they take in the final work?

50: We've got two horrible old arm chairs, gaudy big arm chairs. We've embedded speakers, they're high-backed chairs, so the speakers are at head level and we'll split the interviews across the two. The conversations go between the chairs and then we also have a big rug that we've cut into the shape of the river. People walk over that as they sit down.

That sense of mapping the area with memory, is that something that's coming through in The Field's work or is it more about a contemplation of the site?

JES T: Yes, and creating an imaginary dreamscape rendering of the site. It's maybe not so explicitly about memory, but different imaginings of

what that place could be. I do a treatment to the video that makes it look like it's shot on Super 8 film, like it's quite degraded and blurred... it definitely has a flashback childhood memory feeling to it.

Why is performance the chosen collaborative medium for The Field? Especially considering all the different aspects of your individual practices.

JEST: Well, for me it's about working through imagery or footage or ideas in a live and an improvised manner with other artists and bouncing that off each other.

CC: There are all those things that you work through that always happen in a performance, the excitement of the live moderation that you wouldn't get if it was pre-rendered and pre-made.

It's definitely a really important part of that process and there are things in the synthesis of our three works that wouldn't happen if it wasn't happening in real time and that is how it exists.

So with your work Neil and Roger, you both have a strong background in network collaborations or internet performances and audience interaction, but this piece that you're doing for Memory Flows is quite composed and is more intimate and is perhaps a shift away from that.

NJ: Yes. A lot of the things that I've created in terms of my practice are multi-user environments where people can work together in some way and be engaged in audio visual mixing. But the other side of my practice is that I do a lot of work based around sets of data. I'm quite intrigued by how you find information and correcy that information in a different way.

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With Diffusion, as the sounds increase within the water the lights. get brighter in the boxes revealing more of the elements. So it's that responsive idea of working with other people, but in this work it's the actual data that's talking to us.

lan Andrews, Clement Girault, Ian Gwilt, Nigel Helyer, Damian Castaldi, Solange Kershaw with Sophia Kouyoumdjian (interviewed via email in June 2010).

SOPHIA KOUYOUMDIJAN: How did you reference or utilise memory in your work for Memory Flows?

IAN ANDREWS: My work is about the Manning River. Memories of the river were assembled from various historical texts, personal memoirs of local 'old timers,' and a poem entitled 'The Beautiful Manning' by Henry Kendall. One of the most important archival sources was an account of a journey taken by the Reverend John Dunmore Lang along the river. From this historical material I chose fragments that were related to the river trade (generally in the steamer period, closest to living memory), the original river vegetation, and the timber trade.

The extlinct Birpai (aboriginal) language still visible in the many place names in the Manning region forms another kind of memory trace. The Birpai place names are called up at random beside various trees (listed by their common English or 'trade' name) harvested in the region. This is superimposed over photographs of the timber grain along with English and Latin names. In many cases the all three languages refer to trees but the connection between the Birpai words and the other languages is lost.

CLEMENT GIRAULT: The photographs are quite literally reflections along the river bank but the photos have been framed in such a way that it's not apparent at first which half is the reflection and which half is reality. This is very much a contemplation on the ambiguous, distorting side of memory.

IAN GWILT: The work lolderflow uses a physical representation of a computer desictor icon (a repository of digital content) as a metaphor for memory and a place to store ideas and information.

The folders are placed in the pattern of a generic river system, with a main artery and feeder tributaries, suggesting a system of flow: the flow of water; the flow of information; and the flow of memories.

Live on the Georges River and am interested in the flow of waterand how the river looks and feels very different at high and low tides. The work attempts to parallel the idea of 'digital flows' through the referencing of the computer desktop.

DAMIAN CASTALDI AND SOLANGE KERSHAW: In the Memory Pendulums, memory is referenced in two ways. Through the use of

three liquid filled pendulums, which, like controlling the mechanism of a clock, control the listening of a poem over time. If the pendulums swing uninterrupted for approximately 90 seconds the listener will hear the whole poem. The listener's memory must be engaged in an absolute experience or appreciation of the poem. Memory is also referenced throughout in the poem written by Jill Jones.

River as memory, by Jill Jones

where waters come from clean as that mysterious rain you never see a source in the rack from sea rioud cycling planetary urges the shiver of ancient degrees death moves in circles drinks at the ground

great birds in the flow's shadow making channels and ridges

in our mud memory

NIGEL HELYER: Deep in the pre-historic root of our brains we share a memory of environmental catestrophe, it survives as the narrative of Gilgamesh (or the later biblical story of Noah's Ark) as a reprise of the cataclysmic flooding of the Black Sea region which occurred some eight thousand years ago. Rising sea levels fed by the melt-waters at the thaw of the last Ice Age broke through the land formations... admitting a massive flood inundating the ancient agricultural societies. searing the disaster permanently into human collective memory.

Family memories are vague, unreliable and embroidered but it seems that the paternal side migrated from Northern Germany as fisherfolk and operated a small fleet on the North East coast of Britain - but there on the lead grey, mist wracked North Sea, Vivid impression - my father's back a Palimpsest of shipyard labour, his skin punctuated with small, Junar-white scars - a Tyneside riveter's coat-of-arms. His voice a soft Gordie crooning a fullaby about Shrimp Boats coming home, guaranteed to put me to sleep in the cot. My fate is co-mingled with salt water...

Pasted to a bulkhead of a North Sea trawler: -

This is the old Hessel Road The home of Bear Island Cod where the Hudson's speak only to the Helyer's And the Helyer's speak only to God!

The memory of salt is in the blood.

What river system do you reference in your work. What drew you to that river/creek system or body of water?

CG: The river that features in both the video piece and photos is the Laura River, in Cape York, it's roughly three to four hours north of Cairns. Victor's Traditional Knowledge Revival Pathways project was started by two Kuku Thaypan elders from the small town of Laura and the area has a lot of meaning for the indigenous people of the Cape - not just for the Thaypan clan, Laura is considered neutral ground in many respects and that is why different clans meet there every two years for a dance competition and celebration of indigenous culture.

Rivers are often thought of as landscapes of contemplation. How is this relevant to your work?

IA: 19th Century representations of the landscape formed the basis of the visual representation of the river in this work. Painters such as Corrad Martens were more interested in depicting rainforest vegetation rather than the iconic eucalypts favoured by later landscape painters. Often their paintings would feature dramatic skies and torrential flows of water. Many of the video representations of the river are thus fictional composite images, combining superimposed wrecked ships, storm clouds and mountain ranges, in reference to these paintings. These faked images are exhibited along with the original recorded images in a semi-random sequence. However, the original and its fake (or in some cases a number of different fakes) are never seen in immediate succession, in this way it is only by memory that the two different images can be compared.

16: The audience is invited to contribute to the work by adding their own thoughts, comments, musings and so on. A pen and note pad allows people to write down a message and place this in one of the folders. The notes are often contemplative and form a snapshot of the thoughts and feeling of the viewer. No instructions are given but the evidence of other peoples engagement (earlier notes placed in the folders) is often enough to trigger a contribution

What role does media - digital, electronic or other - play in conveying significant concepts in your work?

IG: I have always been interested in the parallels between digital systems and real-world systems, and the focus on water, flow and experience for me has interesting resonance with notions of digital

fluidity, movement, memory and constant flux of digital data, I think the juxtaposition of material and digital artefacts that connote fliese Ideas in both spaces is a rich space for further creative commentary,

And in your work Nigel, can you describe the significance of the Ark and kayak and the integration of sound?

NH: Drift is what the Ark did, aimlessly and noiselessly...What Noah lurgot was fish - I don't think there were fish on the Ark. So in a Johah (esque) trope Adrift has netted the fish free cosmos of an Ark. but one which constantly intones all those species of fish that never swam in the waters of the original flood - all the warm vernacular fish names from my new Antipodean homeland. Moored alongside; the slender form of Slika my sea kayak coopted as a resonating vessel low frequency submarine sounds captured with hydrophones in the Equatoria) waters off Singapore.

Damian and Solange, how did the knowledge of the river's contamination affect your approach to addressing the river in your work?

DC & SK: We are inner city dwellers and engaged with the immediate polluted Parramatta River. On installation a fault in the work made it complete. This is interesting because we're working with the knowledge of the affects of contamination, which implies a defect or imperfection and on completion the work made its own statement, as if we had somehow put everything in place for this to happen.

The pendulums contain a bluish liquid, symbolising pollutants. Placed directly under the pendulums is a container filled with the smelly, muddy water from the Parramatta River. Our intention was for the pollutants to be swung, threatening the river. The fault in the work was tiny, microscopic holes in each of the pendulums making each one slowly leak and drop its pollutant into the river water. Over the life of the installation the memory pendulums will pollute the Parramatta River inside the Newington Armory and we clidn't intend for this to happen.

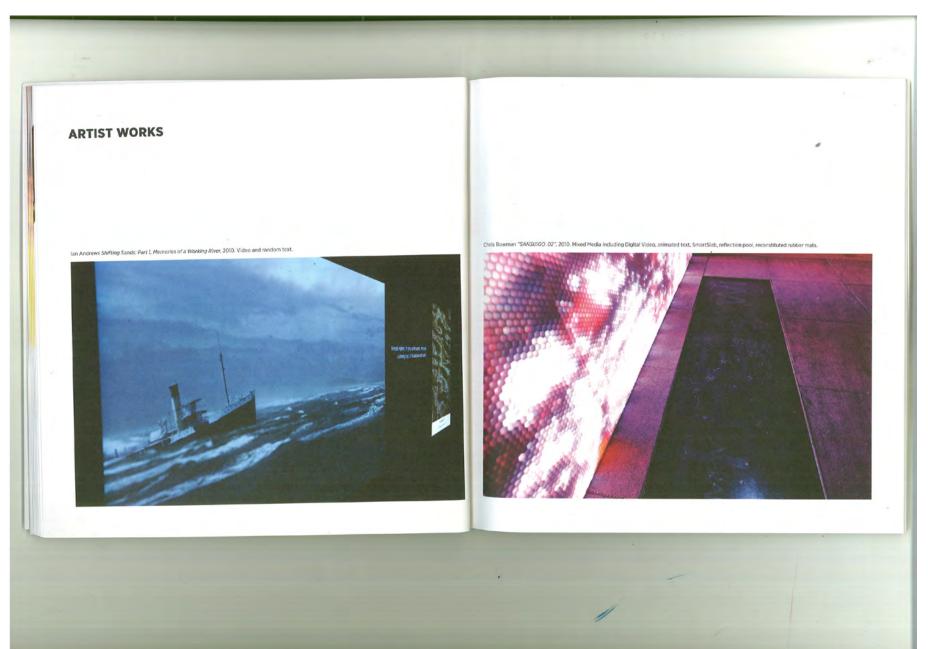
1. Ian Andrews, 2. Chris Bowman, 3. The Field, 4. Damian Castaldi & Solarige Kershaw, 5. Shorre DeLys & Jacqueline Gothe, 6. Clement Girault & Victor Staffensen, 7. Jacqueline Gothe & Ian Gwilt, 8. Ian Gwilt, 9. Nigel Heler, 10. Megan Heyward, 11. Neil Jenkins & Roger Mills, 12. Maria Miranda & Norie Neumark, 13. Shannon C'Neill & Jenniller Teo, 14. Grey Shapely

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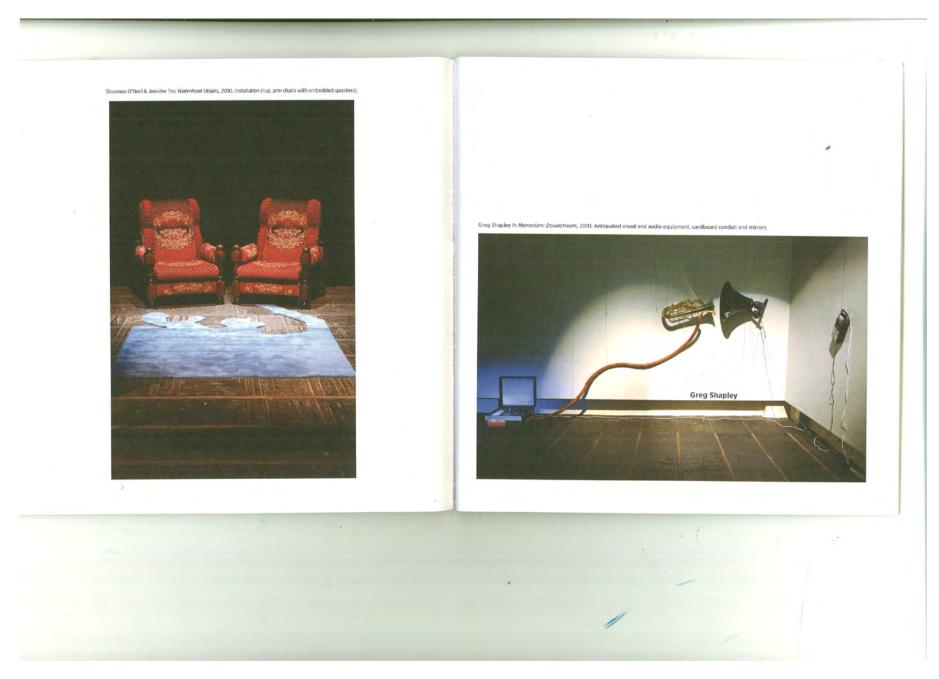


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Web links:

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JACQUELINE GOTHE Drawing Water II

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Original creative work

Supporting evidence