Inhabiting Space and Place
- From Installation to the Clinical Setting

An MA (Hons) Thesis
The University of Western Sydney

Juliet Fowler Smith
August 2002

Supervisors: Joan Grounds, (primary)
School of Contemporary Art
& Jill Westwood,
School of Applied Social and Human Sciences
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
Figure 1: A gathering of trees 2001 (detail). Vilene, lace and cotton stitched between pine trees. Collaboration with Suzanne Bartos, Royal Tomb Park, Ara Gaya, South Korea
Summary

This paper explores the relationship between place in installation art and its relevance to the practice of placemaking in a hospital setting. The discussion draws on phenomenology, psychodynamic theory and contemporary art, in particular the author’s art practice. The notion of “inhabiting” is considered in relation to the experience of space, place and site. Consideration is given to the ‘felt’ experience of places, their formal qualities and potential meanings, along with, an examination of what creates an embodied sense of being contained/at home (emotionally and physically).

Some of the questions posed for discussion include; what is it about places that becomes inherent to a memory and shapes its form? How do places impact on what we do there and who we are? Is place more significant in memory for a young child or someone in a vulnerable state of being (as in the hospital setting)? Process issues, along with physical outcomes, in installations and in the hospital projects are discussed.

Statement

I state that this work has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other institution.

Juliet Fowler Smith

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the invaluable support and guidance of my primary supervisor, Joan Grounds, and the support of Jill Westwood (Art Therapy) and Eugenia Raskopoulos (who assisted during Joan Grounds absence). I would also like to acknowledge and thank Dr Josephine Anderson, Suzanne Bartos and Graham Cochrane for their editorial comments and support.

I also wish to acknowledge the writers whose work I have studied and quoted here who have influenced and enriched my practice in art and health. Writing this paper has been an opportunity to bring these diverse strands together.
## Contents

1. **Introduction**  
   6

2. **Installation and Place**  
   9
   - Embodiment  
     14
   - The elemental and envelopment  
     16

3. **Experience and Memory of Space and Place**  
   17
   - Memory and landscape  
     18
   - The nature of experience and place memory  
     21
   - Space, place and site  
     22
   - Simultaneous perception and body memory  
     22
   - Inhabiting space  
     23
   - Displacement and clinical links  
     24
   - Luminosity and repose  
     25

4. **Links from installation to placemaking**  
   26
   - Process, irritation and ‘fit’  
     26
   - Boundaries and containment  
     30
   - Psychodynamic perspectives  
     33
     - Experiential and Psychological space  
       33
     - Transitional space and the relation between inner and outer  
       34
   - Placemaking; two examples from Redbank House, Westmead Hospital  
     - The Acute Adolescent Unit Courtyard  
       37
     - The Children’s Playground  
       41
   - Reflections on the relationship between theory and practice  
     42

5. **Concluding Comments**  
   43

**References**  
46

**Appendix**  
49
   - Open air Installation, South Korea (2000 and 2001)
Figures

Figure 1  A gathering of trees 2001 (detail). Vilene, lace and cotton stitched between pine trees. Collaboration with Suzanne Bartos, Royal Tomb Park, Ara Gaya, South Korea  2

Figure 2  Woodtown 2000 (detail). Wax on pine trees. Taejong Lake, South Korea  11

Figure 3  Woodtown 2000 (detail). Wax on pine tree. Taejong Lake, South Korea  12

Figure 4  Flutter 2001 (detail). Vilene, string, wax, in pine forest. Collaboration with Suzanne Bartos Taejong Lake, South Korea  13

Figure 5  Mediation 2000 (detail). Red ink on pine branches. Royal Tomb Park, Ara Gaya, South Korea  19

Figure 6  A gathering of trees 2001 (detail). Vilene, lace and cotton stitched between pine trees. Collaboration with Suzanne Bartos, Royal Tomb Park, Ara Gaya, South Korea  20

Figure 7  Red room 2000 (detail). Red ink, wood, in Australian bush. Mangrove Mountain, NSW  27

Figure 8  Inhabiting (some concentrated moments in time) 1995 (detail). Wax, plastic and pins, on window. The Performance Space, Sydney  29

Figure 9  Osmosis 1996 (detail). Dialysis tubing (semi permeable membrane), iodine, water, starched paper. The Performance Space, Sydney  31

Figure 10  hello, hello 1996 (detail). Pencil and gouache on paper. The Performance Space, Sydney  32

Figure 11  Painting by a young girl of her psychotic experience. Acute Adolescent Unit, Redbank House, Westmead Hospital  38

Figure 12  Bedroom of young girl. Acute Adolescent Unit, Redbank House, Westmead Hospital  38

Figure 13  Acute Adolescent Unit courtyard prior to renovation, Redbank House, Westmead Hospital  40

Figure 14  Acute Adolescent Unit courtyard after renovation, Redbank House, Westmead Hospital  40
Amendment

SECTION 4: Links from installation to placemaking: Process, irritation and ‘fit’ in installation.

PAGE 26 – The last paragraph has 3 lines missing.

The paragraph should read:

The first installation to be discussed was from 1995, when I was artist in residence at The Performance Space (TPS), Sydney. This residency culminated in the installation, “Inhabiting, (some concentrated moments in time)”. The work began from the moment I arrived at the space with the first thing to grab my attention, and irritation. This was the tacky black cloth that someone had left attached over the windows. When I removed the cloth, I didn’t like the view of the grotty brick wall either – it was a harsh view of the outside world.
1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore concepts of space and place, highlighting how an art practice can contribute to a deeper understanding of the significance of physical places in health settings. This study has been developed from many years of inter-disciplinary practice, drawing from fields as diverse as installation art, art therapy, community cultural development, and placemaking. I draw these diverse fields together through an art practice that is "process"(1) based, site specific installation. My research focuses on the intersection between my art practice, my clinical work and phenomenological and psychodynamic theory. This has been applied to a hospital setting.

My background in installation has heightened my sensitivity to the meaning of place(2), which became particularly relevant when I found myself working in a hospital setting for acutely disturbed young people. Installation has taught me to pay attention to the 'felt experience' of places, their formal qualities and potential meanings. Place in this discussion, is not just the neutral location of experience. Rather it is integral to the experience, and a vital consideration in my work in installation. Place, as known, lived in and remembered and how it impacts on experience, is the subject here.

I will be exploring my own professional work as an artist and investigating the ways I have taken insights(3) from my own experience of the significance of place, into my work in community cultural development and therapy in the health field. My clinical work has also fed back into my art practice via theoretical investigations, particularly in the fields of art therapy and psychodynamic thought. The experience and creative expression of the many young people I have worked with in Adolescent Psychiatry has also touched me deeply, and at times prompted an artistic response.

---

1 By process I mean that the art outcome is not defined at the beginning of the work. It unfolds over time and in relationship to place and in interaction with the materials (physical, conceptual etc), at hand. It is not a linear process and is open to both conscious and unconscious material. Process is "unpredictable, complex, perverse, subtle and intimately associated with the idiosyncratic landscapes of the personal imagination" (McNiff, 1998, p2).

2 Place, as defined in the Macquarie Concise Dictionary (2nd ed), is "a particular portion of space, of definite or indefinite extent". Yencken (1995, p11), contrasts 'space' and 'place' to clarify his meaning of 'place' in the context of "placemaking". "A space suggests little that is specific or tangible. We refer to outer space and we infer that it is an unknown and indeterminate area which we do not properly understand. Place by contrast is immediate, known and lived in. We move through space; we stop in and are directly involved with places."

3 Insight, in this paper, is used firstly in the general sense of gaining a deeper understanding of something. It also has more specific meanings in Psychiatry and Psychotherapy. In general Psychiatry put simply, "it is the term applied to the recognition by a patient that he is ill... (In psychotherapy), insight refers to the acceptance and understanding by patients of the part that more dynamic or emotional factors play in the production of symptoms" (Sainsbury & Lambeth, 1988, p90).
Having a professional background in both art and health, it has become clear to me that there is a great need for dialogue and respect for difference but also recognition of common goals and beliefs. At times I have felt like a struggling language translator trying to facilitate communication and sensibilities, between artist and health professionals. As this paper crosses disciplines I will define concepts which may be common place in art (eg. process) or clinical practice (eg. insight) so as to provide clarity for all readers.

Paying attention to my experience and investigation of places led to involvement in placemaking. This is a term, in community cultural development, for public art which creates a sense of place which is meaningful to people. It is also a term used in the fields of urban planning, architecture, and landscape architecture (which may, or may not, involve art). Ryan (1995, p7-8) states:

Placemaking aims to turn public spaces into places; places which engage those who inhabit them, places through which people do not merely pass but have reason to “stop and become involved”; places which offer rich experience and a ‘sense of belonging’; places, in short, which have meaning... No longer can the constructed environment be regarded in a one dimensional way... as little more than a backdrop against which the real interplay of daily life takes place. Placemaking projects challenge this way of thinking and promote the importance of places in shaping the nature and quality of our daily lives.

At Westmead Hospital, my investigation has focused on two places, a secure (ie. locked) outdoor courtyard for severely disturbed and/or suicidal adolescents, and a playground for children experiencing significant behavioural and emotional difficulties. The installations, where place is an integral part of the work, have occurred in the gallery and outdoors.

The preoccupation I have with place has its origins in my childhood experience. In a sense, I am examining my own history as a case study. When I was young we moved a lot. From semi rural small towns, to overseas, to a residential agricultural college, to suburbs, and then another city suburb, and back and forth it went; at least six times by the time I was twelve. Moving a lot intensified the connection with the one place which remained stable during the formative(4) years of my childhood. This central place was a farm near Dungog in the Hunter valley. It had a river running through it and was enclosed by an endless horizon of rolling, steep hills. Even if you were on the top of one hill, you were still enclosed by landscape rolling around you to the horizon. Despite the terror of snakes one could always find a place which felt safe, like being held, contained, at home.

---

4 By formative, I refer to the theory that early childhood experience is crucial to the shaping of the ‘self’. In Object Relation’s theory, put simply, the mother provides the ‘holding’, which makes it possible for the child to develop a secure sense of self. In this paper I will explore how place also ‘contains’.
within and without. There was something about it that always made me feel settled within myself.

There were many places at the farm to choose from which seemed to fit the shape and state of my being and which accommodated the intensity of the weather. The weather was always a preoccupation as it intruded under one’s skin. The place of most enclosure was at the base of the valley, down by the river. Here one could huddle, play and float, be carried along by the flow, build things big or small (which would perhaps be a part of that place temporarily until worn away by myself or time’s elements). It was a place to go where there was an intermingling of the real and the imagined. It was an intensely physical place, which required adaptation and interaction, almost like a conversation. This dialogue linked internal states with the physicality of the landscape.

It is a place I still go to now. It is also the container and the ground of my early memories. This is an embodied memory, by which I mean it is multisensory. Casey (1987) elaborates on body memory as being, located in the body—not just the objective body of sinews and fibers but much more particularly the phenomenal body... The body as memorial container—as itself a “place” of memories—furnishes an unmediated access to the remembered past... Because it re-enacts the past it need not represent it; its own kinesthesias link it from within to the felt movements it is reinstating; as a way of “dilating our being in the world”, body memory includes its own past by an internal osmotic intertwining within it. (p.178)

There are core elements to do with being in a place, and what is done there, that seems to underlie my sense of self. When I get distracted or go off on a tangent, it is the experience of place, which draws me back to myself and forms a bridge from my past, supporting future directions.

My art practice originates from this place in the hills at Dungog. The open-ended play as a young child, was where a “process” approach began. In the early days of my practice, the farm’s physical debris, it’s sounds and

5 Intense weather has the capacity to “get under your skin” in an intrusive way which turns your focus outwards to the irritation/distraction and away from a state of reverie. In a sense, I refer to “skin” here as the boundary between inner and outer worlds. If one is not intruded upon, it is possible to engage in the creative space where inner and outer worlds mingle. This experience can be intensely enriching and formative.
6 I use “ground” here in the Gestalt sense, where “figure” and “ground” are greater than their parts. Merleau-Pontys concept of the “flesh”, which mediates figure/ground, is relevant to this point in that the experience of ground is greater than that which is physically there. “Flesh is what forms and is between the seer and the thing, the subject and the object, the body and the world” (Best, 2000, p.188). This concept will be discussed later in this paper.
7 “Self” here is defined as an inner state. Whose one is for oneself. “A sense of self depends upon the flow of inner life, the form of which might be seen to reflect the emancipation of memory. Images and ideas move from one to the other through effortless connections depending upon association, affect and analogy” (Mearns, 1987, p.547).
smells were the objects from which sculpture and installation came. These art works form a continuum with my more recent work. This experience has spurned my inquiry into what is it about places which affects how one can be there, from extremes of comfort and containment to a sense of alienation and being “out of place”.

From here other questions arise about how place is held in memory and its impact on who we are, and how we are. More specifically; what is it about places that becomes inherent to a memory and shape its form, be it positively formative or deeply traumatic? What is it about place and its relation to what you do there that is important? Is place more significant in memory for a young child or someone in a vulnerable state of being? What makes it possible to relax enough to be able to be fully present in a place, or even better, to be able to generate something from the experience, whether it be a significant memory, recovery from illness, or a piece of art?

2. Installation and Place

There are many and varied views, practices, and places for installation art. This diversity is the subject of a recent anthology of writing, on Australian installation art over the past 30 years. The editors, Geczy and Genocchio (2001, p.3), characterise installation as an,

unstable and extremely fluid notion, ranging from the intangibilities of a critical attitude to large-scale work and architecture, (while maintaining the)... importance of the principle of Installation Art as an activation of space which takes into account the subjective, temporal specificity of the beholder.

In their discussion of some of the origins of installation in conceptual and performance art they write, “it enmeshes the viewer. As distinct from the classical art object which has an essence and implies an existence independent of the viewer, the nature and existence of Installation is fluid with both place and spectator” (p.6). It is these qualities of fluidity, and enmeshment which interest me both when making installation and when considering the hospital ‘placemaking’ projects.

I came to installation early on in my art practice, when I developed an interest more in the relationship an object had with where it was, than the object itself. The object was alive only when it was in place.

My installations have occurred in many places, but predominantly at the Performance Space in Sydney (two of these works I will discuss later). More recently I have begun working in the form of outdoor installations in Australia and South Korea. Outdoor installation, while challenging in its openness and exposure to uncontrollable elements, also offers more choice in choosing what is sensed, as the right place to work.
In the years 2000 and 2001, I was invited to participate in the (5th and 6th) International Environment Art Symposium, “Nine Dragon Heads”, in South Korea. Here I made four outdoor installations. There were two sites for working, Taejong Lake and the Royal Tomb Park, Ara Gaya. I have included a detailed discussion of these works as an appendix, especially for the interest of examiners. Here, however, I will focus only on aspects of the work relevant to the discussion of place and installation.

The first work to explore is from Taejong Lake, South Korea. By way of background, “Taejong Lake” is in a semi rural setting. The lake is really a dam with an abandoned rural village on its floor. I worked in the park at the lakes’ edge, in a hillside pine forest. The pine forest matched my attraction to, and need for, a contained place to work. There was also an underlying memory of time and place to do with steep hills and pine trees at the farm in Dungog.

Through the pine forest, in clusters and scattered, I melted small beeswax houses (approx. 25-30) onto the trees (Figures 2 and 3). I didn’t want them to dominate, but rather meld with the forest; for there not to be a clear sense of where the work began or ended. When you spotted one then others would appear. The houses, were in three shapes, one from a biscuit cutter, and the other two from house drawings I had collected from the parks visitors. The other element to the work was two wooden chairs, cemented low into the ground, on the small level area at the top of the forest. Each was set with their back to a tree far enough apart to be separate. If you sat there for a while you might eventually see all the houses, but never all in one moment.

This work was generated through a response to the location, and of course, what I bought to the work from my history and current concerns. The place I chose to work had qualities of enclosure while still opening out to the environment. The work had no defined boundary, but rather, merged with the forest, enhancing the sense of immersion in the real/unreal form of installation.

The following year I was invited back to Korea, where I returned to working at this site in collaboration with the artist, Suzanne Bartos. It had a sense of homecoming to work there again. One chair had stayed in place, and there was a small number of remaining wax houses to be found, which had dropped to the ground.

8 From Australia I had bought an interest in international symbols of emotional significance, of which the form of a house was used here. This aspect of the work was influenced by work with refugees who had been traumatically displaced from home, family and culture. Bachelard (1964) has written at length on the phenomenology of the house, its qualities and meanings. As he states, “The house is not experienced from day to day only, on the thread of a narrative, or in the telling of our own story. Through dreams, the various dwelling-places in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days” (p.5). It was this quality of houses we inhabit, and which inhabit us which engaged me, along with thinking about cultural similarities and differences.
Figure 2: Woodtown 2000 (detail). Wax on pine trees. Taejong Lake, South Korea
Figure 3: Woodtown 2000 (detail). Wax on pine tree. Taejong Lake, South Korea
Collaboration is a very different process, requiring both a turning inward to get a sense of what is right, and a turning outward to the other artist in a creative interchange. This interchange resulted in us making large vilene fish with the wish to fly them from the trees in a way where they would hold their form while allowing their tails to flick in the wind. They were thrown into the trees attached to a hot pink cord, with a carved wax 'teardrop' attached to the other end. They swam in a cluster, with a few strays, across the side of the hill, tangled in amongst the pine trees. The work was called "flutter" (Figure 4).

These works were formed in an integrated way with their place, with sensitivity to multiple influences, which included bodily perceptions and memory. Installation by its very nature requires multiple sensitivities to its "place", its meaning, form, history and embodied memory(9). How and what draws one in or repels. Whether one finds a place to settle (as I did in Korea), to be there, or if one is repelled, squeezed out. The site of installation requires one to question, and to develop, the relationship between concepts and work in the studio and how to create a "fit" with the work, so that it is, in a sense, seamless with its location.

9 Many of the elements touched upon in this paper, for example, the body, landscape, and place, are "imbued with cultural determinants" (Casey, 1993 p.30). "The cultural dimension of place - along with affiliated historical, social, and political aspects and avatars... contributes to the felt density of a particular place, the sense that it has something lasting in it" (p.33).
Embodiment

There are many examples from children's literature (e.g. C.S. Lewis's "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe", J.K. Rowling’s “Harry Potter”, etc) where characters are transported into an imaginary world. Installation reminds me somewhat of the scene in Mary Poppins where Mary, Bert the chimney sweep and the kids jump into the painting that Bert has been drawing on the pavement. Suddenly they are physically within it. It is jumping into a painting(10) which I am most drawn to. This reminds me a lot of my pleasure of working on drawings larger than myself, which is a very physical experience in both the making and experiencing of the work.

It is the capacity to be within a work of art that draws me to installation practice. The physical body with all its sensory modalities and memories is fundamental to the experience of place; and is inherent, for me, in the making and experiencing of installation. This interest in an embodied experience in installation is one that many installation artist share. The artist Anne Hamilton (1994, p.11) speaks of the desire “to slow you down enough for you to be able to pay attention differently”, and “letting the work work on you up through your body instead of from your eyes down” (1999, p.58). The title of her work “mneme” (from the Greek for “memory”), “refers to the capacity of living organisms or substances to retain the after-effects of experience or sensations” (1994, p.33). She plays with bodily senses and memory in an extremely evocative way. The critic, Judith Nesbitt speaks of her work as:

an invitation to enter an unframed image of the world - a space not of fixity but fluidity, an unbounded, inverted, perceptual field in which sight is no more important than any other sense, a space in which the trapdoors of knowledge and memory are off their hinges, and in and through which we are invited to picture ourselves. When the viewer is acknowledged, and a space prepared for them within the work of art, the effect is one of a welcoming embrace (Hamilton, 1994, p.30).

Anne Hamilton also frequently makes use of bodily movement as one passes through a series of rooms and the work continues to unfold and invite you further in. Best (2002)(11), links bodily movement to the experience of pleasurable affect in the aesthetic engagement of installation. She discusses examples of work by Simryn Gill, Joyce Hinterding, Joan Grounds

10 Smith (1999, p.40) reflects on Merleau-Ponty’s theory of reversibility. “In speaking of the image and of painting, Merleau-Ponty rejects the notion that they are a copy of the external aspect of things. ‘They are the inside of the outside and the outside of the inside.’”
11 This subject is also touched on by Best in an earlier paper (1999) entitled “emplacement and infinity”. In this paper she talks about emplacement, and how it offers “a kind of mooring in the world: there is a point (or points) of attachment to allow orientation, as well as sufficient drift to permit mobility and the feeling of freedom” (p.64). In her discussion, which attempts to reconcile the differences of emplacement and infinity, she draws attention to the work of Joan Brassil and her use of movement through the construction of a path, along with mutli sensory elements which intensify the experience of immersion in the installation.
and Sherre DeLys; which invite you to crouch, to move around things, to search for a sound, explore relationships while being stimulated by the ideas, the materials and their uses (12). Best talks about Silvan Tomkin's notion of the "resetting function of startle" (2002, p.215), which occurs when something catches and shifts your attention. This is what happens in Grounds and DeLys's sound sculpture "Say Aah", which temporarily inhabited a wide overpass between buildings at the new Children's Hospital, Westmead, in 1997. This installation drew you in as you searched for the sounds located in playful objects such as:

... knitted beasties, a globe, a potty-like structure and a measuring machine with rabbit-like ears. These objects were a cross between beings and toys, almost all of the things had a face - the most recognisable of all images - and many emitted... semi-recognisable sounds produced by the human voice - raspberries, animal sounds, gurgles, squeaks, squeals and babbling (Best, 2002, p.216-7).

This was an extraordinary work in its capacity to engage passers-by in a setting which most find emotionally charged and difficult to be in. It invited you to stop and play, be distracted and engaged in a different way. As Best puts it, the excitement or interest evoked by the installation, "is a pleasurable entwinement of intellectual, motor and perceptual activity... (which has the capacity to)... intensify and motivate aesthetic experience" (2002, p.222).

The Japanese artist, Kazunori Kitazawa, at the Korean symposium mentioned above also used the physical process of passage in his work. Kitazawa, a regular participant at this symposium, worked with the experience of a meandering path through long reeds, which precluded ones vision of the final destination. This was an experience of feeling enclosed by the narrowness of the path and the tall reeds stretching over ones head, slowing one down, and leading ones attention to subtle details along the passage. The work had a quality, for me, of drawing one into an internal

---

12 The work of Brazilian artist, Lygia Clark, is also of interest here. An aspect of Clark's work was her concern with multisensorial engagement. Many of these works used props, which could be worn and/or engaged with physically by the observer. Through the 60's and 70's this work led her to be more interested in instigating the creative act in others, rather than the object itself (which became incidental). She developed the Objetos Relacionales (Relational objects) such as "sensorial" gloves and mask, along with relaxation techniques with the purpose of engaging participants bodily, so they "could experience a form of interior knowledge" (Brett, 1998, p.20). Eventually, in the late 70's and early 80's, "the spectator became for Lygia the 'patient, engaged with her in a one to one exchange, mediated by her Objetos relacionais, as a form of experimental psychotherapy" (Brett, 1998, p.20). Clark is one of many artists who have been interested in the relationship between art and therapy.

As discussed in this paper, my art background has informed and influenced the placemaking projects in Hospitals. Interestingly, Clark also took her work to architectural scale in her desire to create "a new, concrete space-time" (Clark, 1983, cited in Fundacio Antoni Tapies, 1998, exhibition catalogue) for herself and others. In my clinical practice with adolescents I am interested in (like Clark) supporting the creative act in others.
imaginary space, which eventually opened out to the vast expansiveness at
the lake's edge and a large steel circle (approx 5 metres in diameter) lying
where the tide flowed. Kitazawa spoke about passage in both a physical
and psychological sense in his discussion of the work.

This discussion of entering an imaginary space(13), leads me to consider
how "real" space may relate to the experience of ones "internal space". 
Real space may match or reflect internal space, provide a sense of
containment, or, on the contrary alienate or threaten the individual. Formal
qualities of openness or exposure, containment or restriction, and the
nature of boundaries, their physical and psychological equivalents, are all
accessible as the material of installation. I have worked with these qualities
in installations where I have found myself either addressing the sense of
enclosure, or as discussed above, seeking out outdoor places that have
qualities of an enclosed internal space, which opens to the world. The
body, my body, is the medium through which all this is possible.

**The Elemental and Envelopment**

The relationship between the subject and the physical world, and its
relevance to installation, is elaborated by Best (2000), in her discussion of
the "elemental"(14). She reflects on this concept in her discussion of the
installations of a number of contemporary Australian artists, namely,
Simone Mangos, Joan Grounds, Anne Graham, Janet Lawrence, Joan
Brassil, Joyce Hinterding, and Robyn Backen. Having personally
experienced many of the installations she discusses, I am also struck by
how many of these artists work invite an embodied interaction which
requires a "slowing down" and an acute sensitivity to the environment. Best
draws on the work of Levinas and Merleau-Ponty, who "are critical of the
notion of a passive world that is simply external to us, and therefore at our
disposal" (2000, p.187). In her discussion of Levinas's work, the focus is on
how we are enveloped in the elements, like in the quality of bathing.

Bathing in the elements means "one is steeped in it; I am always within
the element". It is this quality of bathing that guards against the more
usual modern-day objectification of the world, the world held at arm's
length, from which the beholder is absent... To be "in" the element is like

---

13 Terms like "imaginary space" relate to Winnicott's (1971) "transitional space" and
more contemporary Self Psychology perspectives on experiential and psychological
space. Put simply here, this space draws both from the real and the imaginary. These
concepts will be discussed later (part 4) in this paper.
14 Best (2000 p.186-7) talks about an 'elemental' current in contemporary sculptural
practice. "This current can be, and indeed has been, identified by other writers about
nature, natural processes, the physical world, site, context, environment, matter,
substance and so forth. (Best chose)... the term 'elemental' to describe this current,
rather than these other synonyms, because not only does elemental comprehend all of
these meanings, it also suggests a non-appropriative attitude to nature and substance
and, most importantly, an involution or folding back of elemental substance into the way
we think about the human."
being in the sea, this kind of immersion does not allow observation from outside - the construction of a pure exteriority - and hence it does not allow the objectification and negation of our "supporting" milieu (p.187-8).

In her discussion of Levinas's concept of the elemental, Best elaborates that it (the elemental) is not only our lived environment, but also encompasses a "kind of existential space - the milieu for egoistic enjoyment and a precondition for the separated subject" (p.188). She likens this quality of space, metaphorically, to the inter-uterine. Such a discussion echoes the "containing" qualities of place. It also relates to the psychodynamic concept of "the mother" providing the "holding environment" which makes possible the pleasurable play from which a sense of self evolves.

Best goes on to discuss Merleau-Pontys concept of the "flesh", which is "a kind of latent connective tissue. Flesh is what forms and is between the seer and the thing, the subject and the object, the body and the world" (p.188). It is an important concept when considering the inter-relationship between the subject and the world. It relates to the sense of interconnectedness sought for in installation, achieved when one feels "in place". Such qualities are well put by Best (2000, p.191) in her discussion of installation:

> In the expanded form of the installation, sculpture is no longer conceived as a presence, or a bounded object, rather it has become a milieu offering an immersive experience - in other words, the viewer is plunged into the space of the work rather than being separate from it.

### 3. Experience and Memory of Space and Place

The concept of place is relevant to many fields, including, art and architecture, urban and social planning, philosophy, psychology, and history. On the subject of "place", Hayden (1996, cited in Tumarkin, 2001, p4), states that "Place is one of the trickiest words in the English language...a suitcase so overfilled one can never shut the lid". While, not wanting to "shut the lid", the focus here is on literature which attempts to explore how place impacts on us emotionally and psychologically, and what is particularly relevant to installation and placemaking.

Tumarkin (2001 p 4), in her paper on trauma and place, ponders the

---

15 This leads into complex theoretical territory of obvious interest to feminists, which is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss. Best acknowledges and critiques the danger of collapsing concepts of "women" with the "elements", as do the artists she discusses. Irigaray (1993), cited in Casey (1997, p327) critiques the maternal-feminine as place. "The maternal-feminine remains the place separated from 'its' own place, deprived of 'its' place. She is or ceaselessly becomes the place of the other who cannot separate himself from it. Without her knowing or willing it, she is then threatening because of what she lacks: a 'proper' place."
question, "What do places do to us?"

Scholarship on place attachment and place identity presents places that we inhabit as bedrocks of our identities as well as the storehouses for individual and collective memories... The self is fashioned, reconfigured and maintained through "place", whether it be an actual place of identification and attachment or symbolic locales where identities and memories are stored and performed.

Clearly, places are not neutral sites of experience; the interplay between the meaning of a place and the individual psyche is significant both at the time, and as held in memory. Many of my installations play with the evolution of "self" as it is held in place(16). This is also the concern of the hospital placemaking projects, where the fragility of being for disturbed children and adolescents is in a state of evolution.

**Memory and Landscape**

The role of place in memory is worthy of particular attention. Yates (1966) acknowledges the work of the ancient Greeks who developed an “art of memory” which included the use of a ‘loci’, which acts like an anchor to a memory.

A *locus* is a place easily grasped by the memory, such as a house, an intercolumnar space, a corner, an arch, or the like.. Places are very much like wax tablets or papyrus, the images like the letters, the arrangement and disposition of the images the script, and the delivery is like the reading (p.6-7).

Yates notion of places being like “wax” evokes with its sense of material softness, how places may function in memory. Wax can be inscribed in a way such that the inscription (i.e. the images and experience) become ‘one’ with the substance. By analogy, memory is thus deeply embedded in place. When trying to call on a memory, it is not an uncommon strategy to revisit the place, which can have a sense of permeating what occurred there. This was very much my experience in returning to Korea where places had melded in my memory with experiences from previous visits, and where certain places seemed to have a stronger hold, drawing me back to work there.

---

16 “Inhabiting, (some concentrated moments in time)”, at The Performance Space in 1995, is a relevant example. In this work I played with the relationship between inside/outside, real/not real, self and other through an engagement with the gallery space. The work was partly a reflection on the maternal experience of boundaries, being a container (of the child), and contained (within the Installation). It was an intermingling of internal and external space located in the place of Installation. This work is discussed further in part 4 of this paper.
Figure 5: Mediation 2000 (detail). Red ink on pine branches. Royal Tomb Park, Ara Gaya, South Korea
The Royal Tomb Park, Ara Gaya, in South Korea was a particularly evocative place to work. This park begins on the hills above the town of Haman and stretched for a few kilometres into the landscape. The park, which was not clearly defined, rolled with enormous burial mounds dating back to the 5th century. Farms were terraced on every available bit of land around them. In 2000 (17) I was interested in working with the place where the farmlands met the tombs. The invisible line where one stopped and the other began. This has been a preoccupation of mine in sculpture and installation for some time; ie. the space between things, the room taken up by an object/thing which goes beyond its physical form. It relates to such concepts as “personal space” and psychological “boundaries”.

In 2001 I returned to work in this landscape collaboratively with Suzanne Bartos. Casey (1993 p.25) speaks of landscape as seeming “to exceed the usual parameters of place by continuing without apparent end; nothing contains it, while it contains everything, including discrete places, in its environing embrace”. The discrete place we chose was about a kilometre down the track. It was a distinctive passageway of pine trees between two royal mounds. We came upon it after winding around the first mound and it folded out in front of us. On one side of the passage was a pine forest sloping away, and on the other three small burial mounds, some new, looking out over the valley. It was a sheltered spot with qualities of enclosure and also openness to the distant horizon. The place invited picnickers and walkers with its sense of intimacy and containment, held between two imposing tombs.

17 See Appendix and Figure 5.
Here we stitched, with red and white cotton, towers of vilene between paired trees, creating other senses of inside, outside and tensions between the two. Bright lime green lace trimmed the base where the material didn’t quite touch the ground. The work was called, "a gathering of trees" (Figures 1 and 6).

The Nature of Experience and Place Memory

Phenomenology is relevant to this discussion as it involves intensive examination of the nature of experience. Casey explores the phenomenology of place memory at length. He contrasts Aristotle’s and Descartes notion of "place". According to Aristotle place is:

"the innermost motionless boundary of what it contains." It ensues that there is a tight fit between a given thing and its place; the outer surface of the thing coincides with the inner surface of the place. "Place is thought to be a kind of surface", says Aristotle, "and as it were a vessel, ie, a container of the thing. Place is incident with the thing, for boundaries are coincident with the bounded". (p184)

Casey elaborates further, "places are congealed scenes for remembered contents... Instead of filtering out (as place can do for inappropriate, ill-placed memories), place holds in by giving to memories an authentically local habitation: by being their place-holder" (Casey 1987, p.189).

In contrast, Descartes notion of place is: "nothing but extension in length, breadth, and depth. Here place is conceived as sheer spatial site" (Casey, 1987, p185). Such a definition evokes more a sense of a flattening out mapping process, vacant, empty. It has little influence on the experience of being there and it does not contain or provide a "hook" for memory.

Casey argues rather for a sense of the continuity of place with memory, in his notion of place as "congealed scenes" (like wax congeals around its imprint). How place functions as the "innermost motionless boundary of what it contains" also prompts reflection on how site contains Installation. As Reiss (1999, p.xix) states "Installation art is usually dependant on the configurations of a particular space or situation. Even if the same installation is remade in more than one location, it will not be exactly the same in two places, owing to the differences between spaces." The skin of each place is different, and requires a response, which makes possible the sense that the work is continuous with its innermost boundary.

18 I use the term "skin", here, as for me it relates to qualities of the body, such as boundary, the place of wear and tear, and history, in relation to the environment. It is more than the surface layer as it is continuous with what is underneath. I have worked with these concepts in installation.

21
Space, Place and Site

The Philosophical history of "space", "place", and "site" are considered at length in a later publication (1997) of Casey's, entitled "The Fate of Place". Here Casey defines site as "the levelled-down, emptied-out, planiform residuum of place and space eviscerated of their actual and virtual powers and forced to fit the requirements of institutions that demand certain very particular forms of building" (Casey, 1997 p.183). In this definition, there is a loss of the inherent qualities of place such as being, "encompassing, holding, sustaining, gathering (and), situating... in a nexus of relations" (p.183). He talks about the temptation to imagine that place, space and site correspond to three different kinds of architecture.

"Place" architecture might well emphasize enclosure and, more generally, domestic virtues: 'space' buildings are monumental, on the order of the Imperial city or Nuremberg; and "site" constructions would be typified by the eighteenth century buildings... of empty, panvisional seriality. But it would be more accurate to say that we have to do here with three modes of ordering available to all buildings" (p.418-9).

Thus a building site, may be the location of a place, such as a home, which may have particular spatial qualities.

In this paper I will focus more on the qualities of space as located in place(19) which relate to holding and containing. Aristotle's notion of places containing role in memory is important to this discussion. In installation I have played with the gallery as a "container" and as a subject for work. It was the 'felt' sense of containment in the landscape and memory which has so influenced my practice; and it was the physicality of containment in the secure hospital setting which drew me to placemaking. In all these locations it has been worthwhile to consider what is it, and how is it, that places 'contain'.

Simultaneous Perception and Body Memory

Hiss (1991, p.3), in "Experience of Place" talks about the role of "simultaneous perception", which draws on:

sights, sounds, smells... touch and balance, as well as thoughts and feelings which keeps us in touch with our surroundings... Our habitual style of thinking, it is often said, is a stream of consciousness pouring and pushing its way through the present; but this feeling which I call simultaneous perception, seems calmer, more like a clear, deep, reflective lake.

19 "Space has been, in every instance and from the very start, 'split up into places'. This is made possible through the lived body. This body, my body, is not only the continuing source of my own oriented implaceinent in the life-world: it is the abiding resource of all the places I know" (Casey 1993, p.104-5).
Hiss draws together sources from sociology, biology, public health and psychology to examine how we are affected by the experience of place, and what qualities encourage people to slow down and, through “simultaneous perception” become enriched by their experience of place (20).

The importance of the body with all its sensory and physical capacities also plays a vital part in place memory. As Casey (1987 p.189) states,

The lived body’s basic “inter-leaving” activity makes it ideally suited as a means for mediating between two such seemingly different things as memory and place. As psycho-physical in status, the lived body puts us in touch with the psychical aspects of remembering and the physical features of place. As itself movable and moving, it can relate at once to the movable bodies that are the primary occupants of place and to the self moving soul that recollects itself in place. Above all, through its active intentional arc, the lived body traces out the arena for the remembered scenes that inhere so steadfastly in particular places.

Inhabiting Space

The capacity to be “in” an artwork, where there is a fluidity between the work and those experiencing it, as in installation, is also significant. The interchange which is made possible through the body (21) where somehow the place is internalised (as I found in my childhood), Casey talks about as “in-taking”.

Such activity is responsible for my feeling fully contained in place, with no empty space left over. Here is doubtless the origin of our sensitivity to intimate places, those into which we “just fit”, which seem “just right” because we sense that we are somehow perfectly coincident with what is containing us. These lieux intimes are especially memorable as well, suggesting a profound linkage between memorability and being bodily in a “cozy spot.” The linkage is made possible by the factor of in-taking, which allows us to feel well contained in place (p191).

When I made the installation “Inhabiting, (some concentrated moments in time)” in 1995 during a residency at The Performance Space (documented

20 Hiss (1991, p15) quotes a lot of research, for example, the work of architect, Christopher Alexander, et al, who spent 8 years examining what it is about places which made people feel alive and human. They identified 253 “patterns... of rooms, streets and districts that seem somehow to have definite links with joyful experience”. The impact of hospital design on recovery is also mentioned in citing Ulrich’s 1984 paper (p.183) which found that over a nine-year period, “patients who could see a cluster of trees instead of a brick wall outside their hospital window ‘had shorter post operative stays’ and took fewer... painkillers.”

21 Casey (1997, p.340) talks about a “renewed respect for the body’s presence beneath and through it” (ie place). He highlights that implantation entails embodiment, and visa versa.
below), a major component was finding how to "inhabit" such a space. I was completely unaware of the significance of the word "in-habit": As I was there for about six weeks, the work initially became finding a "fit" with the place. Casey relates this to becoming familiar, or "at home" in a place, creating an, "attuned space", a space with which one feels sympathetic at some very basic level" (1987, p192).

**Displacement and Clinical Links**

For a young person in a fragile mental state, being confined in a locked psychiatric unit,

**22** may be disturbing in itself. Sometimes it is harder for those from rural NSW who are doubly displaced, being in an anonymous large city, a long way from home and family. My own rural childhood experiences remind me that the containment of a distant horizon is very different from the horizon of a brick wall and a built up environment.

Cultural displacement is also an issue for some. Finding a way to be there, and a place to be, can be a struggle. Young people often want to withdraw to bed for long periods of time and not merely for fatigue.

**23**. The bedroom, the only place which is ones own, is often adapted (as in the example I will give later) in an attempt to find an attuned place for recovery. I do not wish to generalise; each young person's response is unique, some struggle with being there, some struggle with leaving; engagement and disengagement can be difficult. It is a highly charged situation in a small environment. Health professionals attempt to relate to patients so they feel accepted and safely "held". However, the quality of containment is related to an intermingling of both the physical as well as the human environment. What message does the physical setting send to the patient? Does it support recovery by providing a fit with their internal state/needs or does it exacerbate their distress?

As John Russell (1981, cited in Casey, 1987, p.195) has observed:

"Where am I?" is after all, one of the most poignant of human formulations. It speaks for an anxiety that is intense, recurrent, and all

---

22 Casey (1997) considers Foucault's analysis of institutional spaces where people, and their time, is fixed and always locatable, as in a psychiatric unit. Foucault, cited in Casey, (1997 p.184) talks about "the rule of functional sites", (having) taken over space, time, and place in a veritable 'laboratory of power' whose aim is to bring about constant 'location of bodies in space'. Thanks to the micropractices of disciplinary power, such bodies become 'docile bodies' in Foucault's telling term - bodies that exist only in sites and as a function of sites. The fate of such bodies is to be incarcerated - positioned - in buildings. Bodies and buildings alike have become site-specific. Everything exists in a well-defined, indeed an overdetermined, position in the 'analytical arrangement of space'.

23 Parr (1999,p.189) offers some examples of peoples experience of mental illness " 'I wanted to stay in bed for hours on end and I didn't want to come out. It's like your head is in a black cloud, really awful. You can't lead a normal life.' (Interview with young woman 12 May 1995). For many people who experience mental health problems the disruptions to both their senses of self and their every day routines, including their feeling of control over time and space, are extremely distressing realities which prompt varied strategies of coping."
but unbearable. Not to know where we are is a torment, and not to have a sense of place is a most sinister deprivation.

Finding a place to be can help with difficult times of separation and fragility of being. This has clearly been recognised by some hospital planners (the new Children’s Hospital at Westmead being a shining example) but neglected as the last priority for other health services (24).

**Luminosity and Repose**

I again return to Casey to reflect on landscape. I have pondered on my experience of landscape, how some landscapes seem to ‘fit like a glove’, contain and sustain. Casey (1987) reflects on qualities like variation (how things catch your attention, at a basic sensory level, slowing or stopping your passage), its sustaining character (relating this to how it contains and provides a place to ‘be’), and its expressiveness (to do with its emotional qualities which, are physically embodied in the landscape). On this last point he speaks of landscapes unique visibility, which is more like “luminosity”:

The kind of light that seems to stem from within an object... places can be said to radiate out from the exact shape they possess in objective space... Places possess us - in perception, as in memory - by their radiant visibility, insinuating themselves into our lives, seizing and surrounding us, even taking us over as we sink into their presence (p.200).

This quality of being able to, in a sense, merge with a place (25) relates to the multi-sensory experience of installation, where one has the capacity to be within a work. Here there can be the experience of jumbling inside and out, the real and not real, a very different experience of place, which goes beyond what is physically there.

These were all qualities I worked with in 2000, when I made an installation as part of a “Synapse Artists Initiative” at the bush site owned by Neil Berecryn Brown at Mangrove Mountain, on the central coast of NSW. Here again I worked with a place with qualities of enclosure, but also an opening out to

---

24 For information on some of the approaches to the use of art in hospitals see Buckland, A (Ed) (1994) “Art injection. Youth arts in hospital.” which documents the program at the Children's Hospital, Camperdown. Also Opperman (1997) in ARTLINK (Vol.17, no2) special edition on “Art and medicine. Art in Hospitals”.

25 “The power of place is most fully manifested at the very moment when place and body fuse and lose their separate identities... The memorability of place amounts to more than what the recollection of place can yield; it is the source as well as the reinforced product of experiences of being-in-place. Perhaps the single most fateful such experience, by means of which place comes to be most deeply memorable, is that in which a given place and the lived body as its correlate dissolve as discrete source- points while uniting in a unique visibility. Then place becomes ours at last; but in remembering it, we remain beholden to its intrinsic power” (Casey, 1987, p.200).
its surroundings in a continuous movement. The work evolved out of the location, the work in Korea, and a desire to create rooms, which blended into the bush. The colours yellow and red were unifying elements for the two rooms, which sat side by side. My aim was to interact with, but not dominate, the natural environment. The work unfolded as one came upon the two rooms (Figure 7), red starkly, yellow less so(26).

Bachelard (1964) writes about the poetics of rooms as a place to withdraw into oneself in a state of “repose”.

Then the great stream of simple humility that is in the silent room flows into ourselves. The intimacy of the room becomes our intimacy. And correlatively, intimate space has become so quiet, so simple, that all the quietude of the room is localized and centralized in it. The room is very deeply our room, it is in us. We no longer see it. It no longer limits us, because we are in the very ultimate depth of its repose, in the repose that it has conferred upon us. And all our former rooms come and fit into this one (p.226).

4. Links from installation to placemaking

The links between installation practice and placemaking, arise out of a sensibility which can be further illustrated by a discussion of the art works, “Inhabiting (some concentrated moments in time)”, and “osmosis”. These two installations are particularly relevant when thinking about the projects developed while employed by the Department of Child, Adolescent and Family Psychiatry, Redbank House, Westmead Hospital, as it was an installation sensibility, which guided the projects conception. It was partly the experience of this placemaking project, which prompted me to undertake this Masters as a way of analysing and reflecting on the outcomes. In this discussion I will only focus on aspects of the Installations which are relevant to the subject of place and space.

Process, Irritation and ‘Fit’ in Installation

The first installation to be discussed was from 1995, when I was artist in residence at The Performance Space (TPS), Sydney. This residency someone had left attached over the windows. When I removed the cloth I didn’t like the view of the grotty brick wall either - it was a harsh view of the outside world.

26 “Yellow room” was triangular and a subtle place in the bush. This room had scattered through it and around it a number of yellow objects including, the one remaining beeswax house melted onto a tree, two small wooden children’s chairs, a barometer, and two yellow miniature buckets which held burning citronella candles. Some yellow ribbon was used to tie back a stray plant. “Red room” was more startling, and the first thing to catch the eye as you approached the work through the dense bush. It consisted of a collection of ply circles, which sat like a red polka dot floor under a giant waratah, a mirror facing the sky, a small hollow picture frame and a long dead tree limb stained red, which stretched across the site.
Figure 7: Red room 2000 (detail). Red ink, wood, in Australian bush. Mangrove Mountain, NSW
One of the things I do in installation is pay attention to what irritates - what breaks or disturbs the feel of a space. Qualities that irritate have the capacity to provoke a sense of unease. A lack of “fit”. It may be to do with formal qualities, and/or the meaning and history of the site, and/or memories it evokes; anything which does not correspond to what I internally need of a space in order to engage with it. In installation such qualities have the capacity to undermine the successful resolution of the work both in process and outcome. Process is disrupted by a need to focus outwards, as if the irritation intrudes on creative work (a bit like the phone ringing when lost in thought). Installation is disrupted in a similar way, when irritations distract the capacity to be fully in a work, as the irritation becomes the focus.27 It is often what I want to ignore which provides the clue to what needs addressing.

When creating a work that incorporates the space, as one does in installation, it is important to address the whole; so in a sense the room acted as a container for my process, and also as a focus to work on. In “Inhabiting...”, I was working with the notion of the walls as ‘skin’ (or boundary), in a play with the relationship between inside/ outside, real/ not real, self and other. The view through the windows, my source of irritation, was also where a harsh external reality disturbed the internal process of finding a beginning for the installation and creating a “fit” with the work generated. The final resolution for the windows was in the form of large beeswax panes, which were fitted to all the windows (Figure 8). The wax was poured onto sheets of plastic causing cracking and irregularity. I wanted light but not transparency and the wax smell infused the space depending on the heat and time of day (engaging on a bodily level).

At the same time I was working with objects developed in my studio, retaining only what fitted or seemed necessary. These included two wax arms the length of my finger, attached to a tall stool. The hands were reaching up, attempting to cup a marble suspended from above. Another identical stool sat opposite. There was a small faceless clock with a pendulum attached to the wall. An orange hued light played with the objects’ shadows. On the wall at the other end to the stools was a large drawing (which was from a pregnancy ultrasound of my sons head), developed concurrently with the other installation components. This work was partly a reflection on the maternal experience of ‘boundaries’, being a ‘container’ (of the child), and contained (within the Installation). It was an intermingling of internal and external space located in the place of Installation.

27 Installation reminds me a lot of the psychodynamic concept of “transitional space”, which is an intermingling of the real/not real space of the young child made possible by the containment provided by the mother (to be discussed in more detail later). In a sense the site of installation is the “container” for transitional space. When something irritates one is drawn back into the “real” and out of artistic reverie.
Figure 8: Inhabiting (some concentrated moments in time)
1995 (detail) Wax, plastic and pins, on window.
The Performance Space, Sydney
Boundaries and Containment.

The next work of relevance to this paper was in a group show curated by Suzanne Bartos at The Performance Space the following year, entitled "unavailable space". This show brought together 6 visual artists and a writer (28) in heated discussion, and work around psychoanalyst, D.W. Winnicott's five "primitive anxieties" (29). These are "fears which arise when one is faced with the loss of one's familiar boundaries. They are: falling forever, cracking up, having no relation to the body, having no orientation and complete isolation because of there being no means of communication" (Bartos, 1996). Boundary disturbance and boundary qualities were subjects of interest in my own work.

The room I was working with was very familiar to me, as I had done several installations there. This meant that it contained a lot of memories and it was a comfortable place to return to. It was a room in which I had been through previous struggles and found resolutions appropriate to the time, the place, and the work. It was also a changing room which initially had had its windows sealed to create the "white cube". Over a number of earlier Installations, I had worked with the remaining window and a doorway with steel, timber and a venetian blind.

In this work I continued my exploration of boundaries. Instead of working with the hole between inside and outside (ie the window), I worked with where two different surfaces met, ie, where the wall met the floor. I had also become interested in both how membranes can be semi permeable and the process of osmosis in nature, which is to do with both finding equilibrium and sustaining structure. The work comprised of a length (approx 5metres) of dialysis tube (a semi permeable membrane), full of an iodine/ water mix, laid on a surface which contains starch. What happens over time is that through osmosis the materials come to equilibrium, with the iodine leaching through the membrane and reacting with the starch in the glued paper surface. The colours inside the tube changed from dark red to yellow/transparent. Purple hues leached patterns across the starched surface on the floor and skirting board, which faded over time (Figure 9).

On the opposite wall, was a series of eighteen drawings which, when hung, related physically to my body height. This aspect of the work was done over time as the osmosis component was still evolving and acted as a point of re-entry to the working process. These drawings began as a process strategy to re-enter the internal space of the work being developed. The drawings were in the form of a black gouache background, with the word "hello", written continuously across the gouache surface (Figure 10).

28 The artists were: Suzanne Bartos, Elizabeth Coates, Margaret Roberts, John Lethbridge, Peter Spilsbury and myself. The writer was Mia Campioni.
29 For further information see Davis & Wallbridge (1990), "Boundary and Space, an introduction to the work of D.W. Winnicott."
Figure 9: Osmosis 1996 (detail). Dialysis tubing (semi permeable membrane), iodine, water, starched paper. The Performance Space, Sydney
There are a number of connections between my thoughts about my installations and the placemaking projects at Redbank House, Westmead Hospital[30]. These include: attention to irritation, considering qualities of containment, and different notions of experiential and psychological space (to be discussed below). The Acute Adolescent Unit (AAU)[31] courtyard project was prompted by an intense irritation with the architecture of an enclosed unit, with a particularly unsympathetic outdoor space (the only outdoor space available to those most acutely ill). Many complained about it, and some simple solutions were suggested - like more pot plants and a basketball ring. For me, it needed a far greater re-shaping. Installation had taught me to attend to the feel of a space, to notice what its qualities communicated and whether it invited relaxation or play - seeing and experiencing multiple qualities of a space/place. I was very conscious of the

30 Redbank House, is the Department of Child, Adolescent, and Family Psychiatry at Westmead Hospital, in Sydney’s west. Two placemaking projects have occurred there: the acute adolescent unit courtyard project, and the redevelopment of the infant, children and families outdoor play area.
31 “The Acute Adolescent Unit (was) an 8 bed (in 2000 it was renovated to 10 beds) locked psychiatric facility for the assessment and treatment of adolescents aged 12 to 18 years who may be acutely psychotic and/or suicidal (with first onset psychosis and/or major mood disturbance). The unit was purpose built and opened in September of 1993, and offers a state wide service. Since opening, the unit has treated between 80-90 adolescents each year with the average length of stay being 28 days” (Fowler Smith &Pool, 1998). The unit has 10 bedrooms, a lounge/TV area, a windowless electronic games room and a dining room/ activities area opening onto a locked courtyard (project site). There is also a classroom, an art room plus nursing offices and a (windowless) interview room.
needs of the hospitalised young people and the impact of acute mental states and their needs for different types of spaces. Hospitals can be alienating environments and little seemed to reflect the culture or needs of adolescents.

**Psychodynamic Perspectives:**

**Experiential and Psychological Space**

My installations have frequently been about enclosing and creating a safe place, but what I had to deal with in the hospital was a place which had an enclosed trapped feel. The task was how to shift the feel of the courtyard from trapped to safe. I was aware of the tension between what the adolescents needed (a secure, safe place to recover), and the reality, for some, that they were there involuntarily, felt trapped and wanted to leave. I pondered how to make such a "loaded" space into a place that provided sanctuary, rather than feeling like it was a prison.

Psychodynamic thinking has contributed to my understanding of how space is experienced. In particular the writing of D.W. Winnicott, of the Object Relations school. Winnicott introduced the terms 'transitional objects' and 'transitional phenomena' to describe the place where inner and outer reality overlap. It is "an intermediate area of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute... It shall exist as a resting-place for the individual engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet interrelated" (Winnicott, 1971, p.2). I will elaborate relevant psychodynamic concepts here as they have informed and influenced my own art practice and the hospital placemaking projects. As I have discussed earlier, in my art practice I frequently find myself creating "resting places" which allow me to access 'inner' states.

When I refer to containment in the clinical setting, and in analogies, I refer to qualities of a supportive boundary similar to Winnicott's maternal "holding environment", or a therapists general "containment" of the patient or client and process of therapy. The concept of "containment", however, does have particular meaning in psychodynamic thought, which is useful to elaborate here. Wilfred Bion(32), especially, uses it in relation to the psychological defence mechanism of "projective identification". Briefly, trauma occurs when a threat to an individual's integrity overwhelms the capacity of the person to deal with it. In order to survive, strategies or defences are brought in to play to limit and manage the threat. An example of a strategy would be to split off or deny the part that is intolerable and project it into someone else or onto something else. The role of a mother or therapist would be to tolerate and transform the projection into less threatening material, which can subsequently be accepted and integrated by the individual. This

---

function is known as "containing". I am suggesting that places can also "contain" in this sense. That there can be qualities of place that repel or transform threats, real or perceived. Qualities that provide support for creative engagement in art and/or problem solving(33).

Casey (1993), elaborates Winnicott's notion of "transitional space" in this regard:

truly transitional space is often a place for creative action, providing enough protection to encourage experimentation... without being overly confining. In Freud's metaphor, such a situation is like a "reservation" set aside so that certain actions not possible elsewhere can be undertaken here (p.122).

**Transitional Space and the relation between inner and outer**

In this discussion of the literature the words, "space" and "place" are at times interchanged and used to support each other. One possibility is that "place" in the "real" world, becomes incorporated into internal "space".(34). Meares and Anderson (1993) also discuss psychodynamic concepts of "space". They begin their discussion with a consideration of experiential space:

Karl Jaspers wrote that "everything in the world that is presented to us comes to us in space and time and we experience it in these terms". An awareness of its space underpins our ordinary lived experience. Despite its fundamental nature, relatively little attention has been paid to the sense of personal spatiality, at least since the era of existential psychiatry. This neglect is due, in part, to the abstract and difficult nature of the subject. (p.595)

An exploration of the transaction between "inner and outer" space, is offered through their discussion of the "play space" and "social space" and finally "intimate space" - which is the important link between the two zones of personal experience.

---

33 Psychosis is characterised by confusion between inner and outer reality. For example, thoughts or feelings are projected out onto reality and are commonly experienced as voices coming from someone else. Practical functioning in the world requires the capacity to make the distinction between what are internal states and what is 'really' happening. When working with acutely psychotic adolescents I strive to create a place safe enough for them to move between these two worlds. To know what is real but also to continue to have access to their creativity. I endeavor to do this by attending to the physical qualities of the place maximising the sense of "containment" it offers. Once this is achieved then play and art therapy can more freely explore the bounds of inner an outer reality.

34 Winnicott uses both terms 'space' and 'place' in his discussion of 'transitional space', eg. transitional space as "resting place" (1971, p2.). Here place is an intermingling of what is internal and external.
A greater appreciation of the concept of transitional space can be gained through an understanding of the stages of child development from the merged state of oneness with the mother, to separateness and recognition of others. Meares and Anderson (1993, p.597) elaborate here about the young child’s experience of inner and outer worlds being merged.

The interior zone of thoughts of things is not distinguished, in a mature way, from the outer world of the things themselves. Rather, the thoughts are mingled with, or even in, the things. Indeed, we may say that physical objects are the vehicles of, and necessary to, a particular kind of mental activity which is comparable with the flux of inner life in an adult. In early infancy these physical objects will consist of such things as clothes, bottles, and body parts. Later, they will include toys.

We are now led to the concept of space. For the adult, inner life is a capricious wandering thing in which a flux of images, ideas and memories is linked by affect, analogy and other associations. In the minds eye, images move against a space we know is not “real” space. It is a virtual space (Meares, 1983). It is as if inner experience is projected upon a metaphoric screen. For the young child, the arena in which thought is displayed, in toys, is real. The playspace becomes the place in which is generated experiences which will constitute the nucleus of “what we mean by personal selves”. It is the forerunner of inner adult life.

There are two other important points about this space. Firstly it is a fragile space which, in object relations theory, is contained through the “holding environment” of the mother. Secondly, the child behaves as if nobody else is there, although “the presence of another permeates the whole scene” (Meares and Anderson, 1993, p.599).

The child’s sense of union with the mother is necessary to play going on. She is a selfobject in Kohut’s terminology, or a “me extension,” to use Winnicott’s language. What is important, however, is that the mother is also “not me”. The child’s experience is now “in the potential space between the subjective object and the object objectively perceived, between me extensions and the not - me”. This is a zone of illusion and “the paradox that is never challenged; the infant and mother are one, the infant and mother are two.” (Meares and Anderson, 1993, p.599).

In stretching the bounds of this theory I have been interested in considering the boundaries of the AAU courtyard, Redbank House (the first project site), metaphorically, in relation to such concepts as “holding”. Further, I have considered the experiential qualities of the space and what they might communicate to disturbed adolescents.

Relevant to this discussion, is that the playspace is the space of symbolic
play. Meares and Coombes (1994) explore the relationship between “play”, culture and psychotherapeutic theory. They make the point that symbolic play manifests itself in a personal setting as “self”, and in society as “culture”. They suggest that, “the artefacts of culture provide an extra-corpooreal memory system which not only provides information to a social group but gives it a sense of endurance which fosters cohesion” (p.61). They go on to state, “Thus, since myth, ritual, dream and social structure all seem to derive from the same process, the psyche and its world are interrelated, and, in favourable circumstances, constantly nourish and recreate each other” (p.62).

Returning to Meares and Anderson (1993), I would like to briefly mention their discussion of social space. Developmentally this space first occurs at about 18 months, and, for the purpose of this discussion, the important point about this space is that it is from here that the evolution of identity begins. By identity the writers mean, “who one is for others” (p.600) which is distinguished from a sense of self, which is an inner state. The final concept of space is that of intimate space. Meares and Anderson discuss the origins of this space, which begins at about the age of four, when the child realises that it is possible to keep a “secret”. From here an inner private world develops which forms the seeds of a “sense of self.”

With the ending of this (younger) period of life comes a change from the mingled co-existence of inner and outer, which is characteristic of the period. A child of six has a private world which we might say, is the place of self, but he or she also lives in another zone, which is public, and in which grows his or her identity (p.602)... Public and private co-exist, but in a quite different way to their mingling in transitional space... The younger child behaves as if there were no boundary between himself or herself and those who are experienced as “me extensions” (p.603).

Transitional space involves a merging of the experiences of the inner and outer in which there is no dialogue between them. It contrasts with the double experience of inner and outer for the older child who has formed the concept of a self boundary and who can now live in a different kind of “potential space” in which public and private zones are co-ordinated, an interchange, or dialogue, taking place between them. (p.604).

Recovery from acute psychosis, for many, requires the reintegration of boundaries35 so that one can more clearly distinguish between inner and

---

35 “A characteristic feature of most schizophrenic conditions is the so-called loss of ego boundaries. This peculiar symptom may give the patient the delusional conviction that he is reading other people’s minds or being controlled by other people’s thoughts. It also renders him extremely vulnerable to any kind of external stimulation. His own identity may fuse with that of any object in the universe around him, and he may suffer personally when he becomes aware that some object in his environment is being attacked. Somebody banging a table 20 feet away may cause him to feel almost physical pain or to become infuriated by such aggressive behaviour” (Kaplan and Freedman, 1980, p1154).
Placemaking; two clinical examples

The Acute Adolescent Unit Courtyard Project

I consider that this placemaking work lies at the interface between art, health and therapy (being art in outcome, and also therapeutic in intent). Just as there can be containment in psychotherapy (a symbolic concept of much importance), consideration can be given to the physicality of containment in a hospital setting. This seems to be particularly important, given that the purpose of the Acute Adolescent Unit (AAU), the location of the first project at Redbank House, is to securely contain (physically and otherwise), and treat, young people in acute states of illness and distress.

When first employed at the AAU one of my concerns was the place of treatment - what it communicated and how this place met (or didn’t meet) the needs of acutely disturbed adolescents. I was particularly conscious of a number of qualities which made the unit functional as an acute psychiatric unit, but which seemed insensitive to the needs of adolescents. Of note, there was a lack of cultural artefacts/reflection of healthy adolescent culture, and a lack of adolescent friendly spaces (the place felt barren). I was also very conscious (as were the adolescents) of it being a locked psychiatric unit. Some adolescents were involuntarily detained under the Mental Health Act and if psychotic and insightless, could find this particularly traumatic. There were many references by adolescents to ‘gaol’ like experience - which were sometimes incorporated into delusional belief systems. This is all compounded by the stigma of mental illness, attitudes such as ‘mad = bad’ and therefore the sense that one should be punished and locked away; all potentially very damaging to self-esteem and identity at a vulnerable age.

One of the reasons why the unit was built was because it was recognised that locking an adolescent in an adult psychiatric unit was traumatising. Research had found that hospitalisation in an acute psychotic states may lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (see McGorry et al., 1991). One of the aims of the unit was to minimise trauma. Balancing the need for safety and security on the unit and for this not to be experienced as punitive or traumatic was difficult. It seemed worthwhile to look again, paying attention to “irritations” in the environment which might reinforce or work against a sense of being in “gaol”. Consideration needed to be given to the very particular perceptual states experienced by people who were acutely psychotic and how they sometimes, incorporated the environments they were in, into their psychotic process or delusional belief system.

An example of this last point is demonstrated through a discussion of a painting done by a young girl recovering from a psychotic depression. An important part of her recovery was being able to paint and talk about the
Figure 11: Painting by a young girl of her psychotic experience. Acute Adolescent Unit, Redbank House, Westmead Hospital

Figure 12: Bedroom of young girl. Acute Adolescent Unit, Redbank House, Westmead Hospital
experience. The painting (Figure 11) had 3 strips of finger-painted colour, red, white, and red/black. She described the red and the white as the colours of the hospital where she was first admitted before coming to Redbank House. The black/red strip was where she existed, she said, “it was like hell”. The red and white colours of the first hospital were experienced as moving. As she was being driven to Redbank accompanied by her mother she saw her reflection and her mother’s reflection in the car window - she believed she was taking her mother to hell with her. It was very frightening for her. She was unusually articulate in her ability to express so graphically the pain and trauma often experienced in a depressive psychosis.

In contrast to this was the observation of another young person who although not psychotic, had a very fragile sense of self. This young girl responded to the place and experience of hospitalisation by covering every surface in her room (walls, ceiling, cupboard, door etc) with pictures of animals (Figure 12). One could postulate that she was trying to create her own personal space, to find Bachelards “repose” (quoted earlier in the discussion of the work, “red room, yellow room”). Was this her version of placemaking, which helped her at a difficult time to find her place? It would have been intrusive to ask, but it was clearly an important thing for her to do.

Within the AAU was a secure courtyard - the only outdoor space available to adolescents when most acutely ill and/or unsafe in an open environment (Figure 13). Unfortunately this space looked rather like a prison yard (some adolescents who had experienced detention in juvenile justice said it was worse). It was barren and uninviting (apart from a basketball ring) and worked against positive engagement. Additional problems with this space, were the harshness of the boundaries, little protection from the heat, the unrelenting brick surfaces and its emptiness. Its harsh vacant qualities also perhaps invited one’s own possibly frightening creation. It could be whatever one projected onto it or imagined it to be.

I developed and produced the project, which aimed to re-shape the courtyard in consultation and collaboration with the young people and staff. I collaborated with the cultural planner, Susan Gibberson, and landscape architect, Tony Walker, from Parramatta Council, to create a design brief and for project supervision. The brief to which the artists, Peter McGregor and Marie Stucci, responded, was to create an outdoor environment more conducive to the emotional and physical well being of the young people, taking into account youth culture and youth needs. The request was for an integrated design, which needed to include gathering places, room for group and individual activity, space for exercise, places to relax and creative expression.

The design idea used by the artists was based on the traditional concept of the courtyard, which promotes a sense of sanctuary within an enclosure. The project was well received and the courtyard has become a much better
Figure 13: Acute Adolescent Unit courtyard prior to renovation, Redbank House, Westmead Hospital

Figure 14: Acute Adolescent Unit courtyard after renovation, Redbank House, Westmead Hospital
utilised place (*Figure 14*) (36). It has heightened administrators awareness and willingness to consider the significance of ‘place’ in future developments.

**The Children’s Playground.**

Earlier I spoke of installation and the need to pay attention to what irritates. This was a big subject when looking at the children’s playground at Redbank House. For me there was a quality of a desert like exposure, little shelter from the heat, no nooks or places which offered a sense of being held. It lacked the variety, which might encourage and contain different states of being; eg. group or solitary play, quiet or active places. There seemed to be little that would invite, or provide, the suggestive materials for imaginative play except, perhaps, the sandpit which, I suspected, was under developed and under utilised. Imaginative play, I am sure, occurred in the playroom as part of the treatment program. But what of this could be taken and generalised to the outdoor environment (this is not an insignificant thought as some of these kids potentially, may go on to act out their disturbance and alienation through vandalism of public places) (37).

The place lacked the imaginative qualities, as observed in a few other public playgrounds, which evoked and encouraged excited interaction and richness of play. There was little (apart from a flag mural) which embraced or reflected the cultural diversity of the children and families. The area was boxed in by surrounding buildings and there was an over use of dark “mission brown” paint along with bare brick walls. For me it felt like an impoverished place, which I wondered, could match too closely, a child/ family's internal and material poverty. It seemed to lack the special attention needed for a place of treatment for some of the most disturbed, and impoverished, children in NSW (38).

36 There were 2 main stages, Project Development and Project Implementation. Project Development incorporated consultation and collaboration with the young people and staff regarding their needs and wishes. This was made more complex by the difficulties associated with attempting consultation with acutely disturbed youth and by the very real needs to ensure safety and security within the courtyard. The final outcome devised by the artists transformed the place through formal and physical devices such as: repaving in the form of a circle, new fragrant and bird attracting garden beds, a fountain, softening the walls through the use of coloured render, ceramic murals, and multiple sitting and resting places.

37 Casey (1993, p.23) talks about the power of places determining “not only where I am in the limited sense of cartographic location but how I am together with others (ie. how I commingle and communicate with them) and even who we shall become together. The ‘how’ and the ‘who’ are intimately tied to the ‘where’, which gives to them a specific content and a coloration not available from any other source... Thisimplacement is as social as it is personal.”

38 These may seem harsh criticisms of a treatment service with very dedicated staff, which I knew was struggling continuously under financial constraint. Any attention to the site would require fund raising, by staff not trained to do so, and persistent hassling of the purse string holders. Looking back now, I was involved for 3 years on a playground committee, which got no where. The shift began when it became clear that the playground did not meet the safety standards for playgrounds set by KidSafe, NSW. This couldn't be ignored. At the same time there was a donation made to Redbank House which became the funding for the Landscape Architect, Ian Jackson. From here we went on to bring in the artist, Jane Cavanough, and her co-workers, to collaborate with the children, family and staff to complete the project.
One parent commented “currently it looks fairly drab and lacks colour to brighten up the children”. Children wrote about the playground as “old” and “boring” and commented on things like the path being “diagonal and straight and we need plants and trees to shade us.” They spoke of the need for a place to “play board games for special time with people and for kids to talk to a teacher if they are having trouble in class.” One child suggested “Aboriginal paintings and clowns painted on the wall because it might improve the look of the playground.” They generally expressed that it needed to “be brightened up badly!” One child put it quite clearly, “We would like to feel excited when we go out to play. Not feel all dumb about not having no colour at all!!!!!” (39).

This project is still continuing, following a similar approach to that of the AAU courtyard project, and has been funded by the Australia Council and Western Sydney Area Heath Service. The artists employed, Jane Cavanough and Tjenka Murray, have consulted and collaborated with many children and staff to produce plans which include: murals and line drawings, animal sculptures integrated with the landscaping, a “cubby” and a lot of colour.

**Reflections on the relationship between theory and practice**

Having explored diverse but related theories and practices, some final links and questions arise. According to Casey (1987 p186), “To be in a place is to be sheltered and sustained by its containing boundary; it is to be held within this boundary rather than to be dispersed by an expanding horizon of time or to be exposed indifferently in space.” The children's playground and the AAU courtyard projects attempt to address to differing degrees, the experience of containment and the place of play through creating an environment more sensitive to the needs of children, families and adolescents. They are attempts at creating, at best, a place for meaningful engagement.

The experience of holding and containment and their qualities are a vital aspect of child development and is the subject of much theoretical investigation of therapeutic relevance. As outlined in the earlier discussion of Meares and Anderson (1993) paper, it is the significant care giver, most often the mother, who most crucially provides ‘holding’, while the child develops their own sense of self and internalises boundaries which are vital to being in the world. Without this early experience the sense of self, and its boundary, is under developed, or damaged, or like a leaking sieve without definition or the security for growth to occur. One wonders about the parallels with Casey's discussion of place. Is place just a metaphor for what mothers offer? Does it relate to the psychodynamic concept of the “selfobject” which “is neither self nor object, but the subjective aspect of a

---

39 These comments are taken from letters of support that children and parent's wrote in support of a grant application to the Australia Council to fund the arts plan for the children's playground.
self-sustaining function performed by a relationship of self to objects who by their presence or activity evoke and maintain the self and the experience of selfhood" (Wolf, 1988, cited in Meares, 1992, p.37)? Certainly there are striking parallels which are relevant to this discussion, but I think that to reduce everything purely to psychodynamic concepts is to underestimate place, and to neglect the richness of how place is entangled in the evolution of being and remembering. Tumarkin (2001, p.5) is critical of this de-materialising of experience. "Space... has been de-materialised to a large degree by metaphoric evocations of inner and symbolic spaces, landscapes of memory and desire gradually moulded into master-tropes." She goes onto speak of "the relentless spatiality of post-traumatic memories and identities" (p.5), which is also worthwhile considering in the context of McGorry's (1991) finding on post traumatic stress in patients hospitalised with psychosis.

7. Concluding comments

Throughout this paper I have attempted firstly to recognise that place is much more than just where we happen to be, and secondly to explore the richness of how place functions in our lives. I have elaborated on installations which reflect on qualities of place relevant to the discussion of placemaking in the clinical setting. Phenomenology and psychodynamic writing has helped me to consider more deeply the nuances of such qualities, which again feeds back into the making of installation.

Casey challenges us to recognise that we do not live in empty space, but rather:

*We live in places.* So it behooves us to understand what such place-bound and place-specific living consists of. However lost we may become by gliding rapidly between place, however oblivious we may be in our thought and theory, and however much we may prefer to think of what happens in a place rather than the place itself, we are tied to place undetachably and without reprieve. (1993,p.xiii)

In installation it is possible to work with the interaction between “real” space/place, and “internal space”. To explore how to inhabit the site, so the work is experienced as seamless with its location. To investigate formal qualities of openness or exposure, containment or being restricted, and the nature of boundaries, their physical and psychological equivalents. I have worked with many of these qualities in installations where I have found myself either addressing the sense of containment, or seeking out outdoor places which have qualities of an enclosed internal space, or playing with the interaction and the boundaries between.

My installation practice began when I became more interested in the relationship between an object and its place, rather than the object itself.
From here I became more critically aware of sensibilities which arise from embodied experience, which are vital, for me, in the making and experiencing of installation. Installation, again, for me, is the art form which most fully draws on the capacities of the body. Installation is not something which can occur without a sensitivity to its place, and it is through the body that installation is made and perceived. Throughout this research into place I have come across many writers who have highlighted the critical importance of the body. It is through the body that we inhabit the world, and it is through the body that place is remembered, the body “is the abiding resource of all the places I (we) know” (Casey 1993, p.104-5).

Phenomenology has contributed a lot to considerations of the complexity of being in the world, the relationship between “inside” and “outside”, and the role of the body. Olkowski (1999, p.10) expresses the view;

The body is the medium of the poetic disclosure of the world, and thus is comparable to a work of art, for both works of art and the body are beings in which the expression is indistinguishable from what is expressed. This is why the world openly acts upon the body as well, for although every use of the human body is a primordial expression that retrieves and remakes it, the world acts upon the body first, and thereby opens it to an infinite number of possibilities.

Earlier in this paper I raised a number of questions about the experience of place. Firstly: what is it about places that becomes inherent to a memory and shapes its form, be it positively formative or deeply traumatic? Having traversed theories and experience of place, my view is that it is to do with a complex interaction of formal and memorial aspects of place and personal states of being, including internal states, as mediated by the body. Places, which Casey (1993, 1997) identifies rather as, “sites”, lack the containing qualities of “place”, (ie, being, “encompassing, holding, sustaining, gathering (and), situating... in a nexus of relations. Casey, 1997, p.183) which may be due to the dominance of functional requirements. For me, this may create a sense of unease, a lack of “fit”, particularly if the site is to be the place of installation, which requires a relationship between external and internal states.

In the clinical setting, which has clear functional demands, the struggle is between the demands of the site of treatment, and the “place” needs of those who inhabit it. This relates to a second question: is place more significant in memory for a young child or someone in a vulnerable state of being? I would say, yes. Internal states live in interaction with all aspects of place. This may be especially critical for those who are at points in their lives where evolving selves, boundaries and bodily states are in a state of flux. I would argue that particular attention needs to be paid to places of treatment for children and adolescents who are struggling with serious emotional and psychological disturbance, where the relationship between what is “inside” and what is “outside” may be mixed-up and uncontained.
For adolescents who are experiencing psychosis the situation is made even more complex by disturbances in perception, which can lead to treatment sites being traumatically incorporated into their psychotic belief system.

The third question posed was: what is it about place and its relation to what you do there that is important? This question arose initially from thinking about the experience of doing creative things (symbolic play) as a child at a farm near Dungog. Psychodynamic perspectives provide one way of thinking about this question. It seems that, if certain needs are met, including those of place, then such places may play a part in the generation and containment of symbolic play. As Meares and Coombes (1994) identify; symbolic play, is vital to the evolution of self and to culture in general. Meares also speaks of the evolution of self, occurring in quite particular situations.

The moments of experience that make up self are those that concern who-one-is in a particular situation, say with another person or a landscape... those moments that compose a personal self are not those everyday events to which we habituate, or through which we move automatically. The significant moments are relatively few, have meaning and are affectively laden (1987, p.547).

These words remind me of how certain landscapes function for me. They also relate to Casey’s, Hiss’s and Hamilton’s attention to a “slowed down” and fully embodied process of perception of the places we inhabit, which are held as significant memories, and underlie our sense of self.

This leads me to the final question posed. What makes it possible to relax enough to be able to be fully present in a place, or even better, to be able to generate something from the experience, whether it be a significant memory, recovery from illness, or a piece of art? Here I am really thinking about the relaxed state of reverie where there is an interchange between what is internal and what is external, between conscious and unconscious. Clearly this requires many things, which may include, safety, containment, a sense of fit, and freedom from irritation (which draws your attention out to the world and breaks the flow of reverie). On this last point, it has been attending to aspects of place that irritate that has been important in both my installation practice and in prompting the placemaking projects at Westmead Hospital.

Inhabiting is something we do throughout our lives, and through our embodiment. Inhabiting can provide the place to rest, both in the physical sense and in the sense of Bachelard’s “repose” and Winnicott’s “resting place”. Places are inscribed in memory, have meaning, and are part of who we are, and what we will become.
References


Buckland, A. (Ed). (1994). *Art injection. Youth arts in hospital.* Sydney. No publisher given. Copyright held by The Children's Hospital (previously at Camperdown, now at Westmead), NSW; and Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney University.


Fowler Smith, J. (1999). *Arts in Health. Connections in theory and practice, from the studio to the clinical setting.* Presented at School of Contemporary
Arts (SOCA) Post Graduate Symposium, "Diversity in Contemporary Arts Theory and Practice", UWS and SCOS "Colloquia". To be published in collected papers, SOCA, UWS.


Appendix


I elaborate on all these works as they reflect on qualities of place that are relevant to the discussion of placemaking in the clinical setting. Phenomenology and psychodynamic writing has helped me to consider more deeply the nuances of such qualities, which again feeds back into the making of installation.

Taejong Lake

In the year 2000 I was invited to join with a collection of artists to participate in an International environment art forum called “Nine Dragon Heads” in South Korea. It was the 5th year of the forum with some artists being regular participants and others, like me, feeling truly a foreigner.

I think of relating the experience of going to Korea as being like peeling an onion. Each layer holding the form of the layer underneath. Getting to the work was informed and shaped by experiences in Australia, which were then reshaped in response to Korea and finding the place of Installation. The process of entry to the works took time, both physically and symbolically. The physical passage required by working in the landscape together with an even greater sense of confusion about where the work begins and ends enhances the sense of immersion of the real/unreal world of Installation. I relate this story as it demonstrates the process of what Casey (1993, p.315) calls “implacement”. “The im- of implantation stresses the action of getting in or into, and it carries connotations of immanence that are appropriate to the inhabitation of places. He talks about how “implacement” occurs between the boundary of the body and the landscape. “Between the two boundaries - and very much as a function of their differential interplay - implantation occurs. Place is what takes place between body and landscape” (p.29).

Arriving in an unfamiliar place with a commitment to make two outdoor installations in two very different sites over a short time created an urgency to find just the right place to work. A place to “inhabit”. The first designated site was the landscape by what was called Taejong Lake. It was really a dam, on the floor of which was a submerged rural village. We stayed in the village of Moonie, on the lake’s edge, which was lucky enough to survive the flooding, and where many of the displaced people had moved. It had one main street and a collection of shops, which had their own logic in opening times and produce. The post office is also the bank. It reminded me of the town near the farm I was so close to in rural Australia. This embodied
memory made me feel strangely comfortable in this place, which was otherwise new to me. Casey (1993) also talks about this strange sense of familiarity with a place one has never been before to do with “place-sensitive mores” and, citing Merleau-Ponty's term (1962), “Drawing on a past which has never been a present” (p.295).

We could choose our site amongst the open spaces where the water moved up and down with the landscape and where farmers raced against the tides to use what fertile land was available. We could choose from roadside and gullies, which lay between. Or we could choose a place on a hill where burial mounds lived with playing fields and picnic spots, where hundreds of people could descend at a time with their bar-b-ques, pulpits, music, and public address systems. Over days it could be a place for a sermon, a classroom, shamanistic rituals, lovers or families. During the symposium it was also a gallery, a site for performance, and for music.

I was drawn to a place on the hillside, more secluded and intimate, which also was a steep climb. The slope was populated with pine trees and slippery with pine needles. Again there was an overlaying of time and place to do with steep hills and pine trees at the farm at Dungog, and pine needles used in the past as art material. There were glimpses of water to one side. It was not a terribly accessible place, and was without an obvious entry point. I eventually dug steps to provide access from the hilltop. There was a level area at the base of these steps - determined picnickers and seekers of solitude would appear here from time to time.

From Australia I had bought an interest in International symbols of emotional significance. This aspect of the work was influenced by work with refugees who had been traumatically displaced from home, family and culture. They had become psychotic and were subsequently hospitalised at the acute adolescent unit where I had worked with them with art. Struggling both with psychosis and little common language, I attempted to find means of communication and engagement through art. Shared symbols became important. I was sensitive to the devastating interplay of trauma and displacement in these young people (40).

One of the shapes I was working with was a house. Bachelard (1964) has written at length on the phenomenology of the house, its qualities and meanings. As he states, “the house is not experienced from day to day only, on the thread of a narrative, or in the telling of our own story. Through dreams, the various dwelling-places in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days” (p.5). It was this quality of houses we inhabit, and

40. Tumarkin (2001.p5) states, “Traumas, more often than not, ‘destroy the sustaining bonds between individual and community’ (citing Herman, 1992). They negate or, at the very least, throw into turmoil our systems of meaning and belief as well as our behavioural matrices. They injure, sometimes fatally, our sense of self, often splitting us at the very core. They wreak havoc in our personal histories, creating air pockets of the unassimilable past that burst when we are least prepared for it.” Trauma combined with displacement can be doubly devastating.
which inhabit us which engaged me, along with thinking about cultural similarities and differences.

I made the first lot of houses in wax using a biscuit cutter. Wax is a material I have used repeatedly for its physical and sensory qualities. In Korea it is a material used by sharmans. It also seemed apt at the time, as wax floats. I was sensitive to the place being by a dam. Coincidentally, the valley of my childhood had been under the insidious threat of a dam for well over fifty years. My spot on the top of the hill at the farm, would be an island if the dam ever went ahead.

I melted some of these small houses made in Australia onto the pine trees. At the same time there were many people who curiously approached me while working. I asked some of them to draw their homes, and collected other drawings from many of the school children who visited the park. From there I combined forms to make new shapes which were in turn melted onto the trees. I lost count of the houses, but there was probably about twenty-five to thirty of them. When you spotted one then others would appear. I didn't want them to dominate, but rather meld with the forest (Figures 2 and 3).

I wanted another element for the work as what was there was so subtle and dispersed it seemed to need something to 'ground' it. I wanted something, which would invite contemplation and taking time. I eventually settled on two wooden chairs, cemented low into the ground, on the level area at the base of the steps, at the top of the forest. Each was set with their back to a tree far enough apart to be separate. If you sat there for a while you might eventually see all the houses, but never all in one moment.

The work could be stumbled across by those wanting to escape the crowds or curious to explore the landscape. People would sit for a while, and sometimes try to ask questions. Once a woman came. She drew her house for me. It was a block of flats. She stayed longer than most, sitting on the chair, while I was lost in the process of melting houses onto the trees. My concentration was broken by the sound of a voice. I looked up and saw her singing. Then she was gone.

Royal Tomb Park

After the grand opening at Taegong Lake we travelled for a day further south to Haman, Ara Gaya. Here we had the very short time of a few days to make a second work. The site was a Royal tomb park stretching for a few kilometres on the hills above Haman. Somehow it seemed ridiculous to me to make work on such a site. The landscape rolled with enormous burial mounds dating back to the 5th century AD. They began above the town council chambers and spread for kilometres into the landscape.
Farms were terraced on every available bit of land around them. There was much discussion about the struggle between the farmers who increasingly encroached on the tombs and those wanting to preserve the surrounding land. Places of very different qualities and significance sharing the same landscape. I was interested in the place where the farmlands met the tombs. The invisible line where one stopped and the other began. This has been a preoccupation of mine in sculpture and installation for some time, ie. the space between things, the room taken up by an object/thing which goes beyond its physical form. It relates to such concepts as "personal space" and "psychological boundaries". Lee (1994) talks about the traditional use of walls in Korea (which are not designed as barriers to intruders) as demarcating inside and outside. "Regardless of how meager his house, the Korean will build his castle wall and rule inside that wall as if there were his own sovereign domain"(p30). The wall is like a boundary between "self" and "other". The boundary between the tombs and the farms was diffused through the landscape.

A feature of the farms was this red and silver shiny ribbon stretched across the fields. It made a distinctive noise in the wind that fluttered across the valley. The red caught my attention. The colour red had special spiritual and cultural values associated with it in Korean culture. I then found some pruned pine branches. I had been stuck for some time by the Koreans relationship with trees. Fully-grown trees would be transplanted to new sites deemed worthy. It was like a medical operation, complete with bandages and drips and an enormous amount of care and attention. Pruning was also striking and extreme. Trees became like living sculptures. I saw a tree once which had a long horizontal limb stretching out so far it needed a crutch. The crutch was disguised as a tree trunk.

So I settled on three elements - a site between the farm and a burial mound, twelve branch prunings and the colour red. The branches were stripped of their bark and dyed with red ink. There was a cluster of symmetrically planted young trees; each was given a red branch standing at its base. If you lay on the ground and looked through the trees it was like red lines curling around the tomb (Figure 5).

*Nine Dragon Heads, 6th International Environment Art Symposium, Korea, 2001.*

In 2001 I was invited back to Korea. For this symposium I decided to collaborate with another Australian artist, Suzanne Bartos. Suzanne and I share similar interests and sensibilities, and have exhibited together before, but never worked collaboratively.

This work began for me with the memory of places, which caught my attention and invited a response. I had also become interested in Korean floristry and their materials. From here we ricocheted ideas and constructions between us. Suzanne introduced the material of Vilene, which
was very similar to Korean florist paper and allowed for large-scale works.

Royal Tomb Park

It was a different experience going back to a place which had become fixed in my memory and which carried the history of my time there. It held the memory of work which other artists had made in response to the site. It was also a different experience working collaboratively. Coming to the choice of a site for working is potentially more complex in a collaboration. Fortunately for the first work the site was clear to us both from the start.

The place we chose was about a kilometre down the track. How the work unfolded as you came upon it was again important to me. The path wound up and down the landscape, around royal burial mounds, skirting forests and farmers plots. I noticed new encroachments of farms into the place of the royal tombs. Some locals also had there own family burial mounds interwoven or just to the side of the tomb place. Burial mounds covered in grass are a feature of the landscape here (41). Some said that the tombs had to be located so as to overlook the family and its livelihood.

It was a distinctive passage-way of pine trees between two royal mounds, which was the place for our work. You came upon it after winding around the first mound and it folded out in front of you. Walkers would have the strange habit of banging their backs against these trees, and small groups of farm workers (always women) would stop here for a break and a lot of chatter. On one side of the passage was a pine forest sloping away, and on the other three small burial mounds, some new, looking out over the valley. It was a sheltered spot with qualities of enclosure and also an openness to the distant horizon. These qualities were obviously inviting for many people, having a sense of intimacy and containment, held between two imposing tombs.

Here we stitched with red and white cotton towers of Vilene between paired trees, creating other senses of inside, outside and tensions between two. Bright lime green lace trimmed the base where the material didn’t quite touch the ground. The work was called “a gathering of trees” (Figures 1 and 6).


"The Chinese character for life is said to have been designed to represent a seed sprouting up out of the ground. And that is what life is, something which rises upwards... Dying is thought of in terms of falling... The Korean grave is a mound, and on it is planted grass, so that it gives a feeling much different from the one you get from the catacombs of the West. The catacomb is subterranean, but the Korean grave rises towards the sky like a hill or small mountain.

The Korean grave... is made of earth, and over the passage of years lets go willingly and returns gradually to level earth... It takes a grave about one hundred years to finally give up its ghost and return back to the earth from which it came. A hundred years to live, a hundred years to die. This is why we say a Korean dies twice."

53
Taejong Lake

Here, after much wandering we returned to the site on the side of the hill where I had worked in 2000. While not wanting to be bound by my history to this place, as it was a collaboration and other sites were also inviting, it did have a sense of homecoming to work again here. One chair had stayed in place, and there was a small number of remaining wax houses to be found, which had dropped to the ground.

Suzanne came across a street stall with a giant fish hanging from its eves. From here we made large Vilene fish with the wish to fly them from the trees in a way where they would hold their form while allowing their tails to flick in the wind. They were thrown into the trees attached to a hot pink cord, with a carved wax tear-drop attached to the other end. They swam in a cluster, with a few strays, across the side of the hill, tangled in amongst the pine trees. We called the work “flutter” (Figure 4).