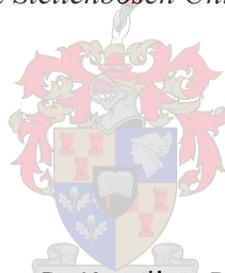


**Making otherwise: negotiating the spatial context of Stellenbosch
University through situated making**

By Jess Middleton

*A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Visual
Arts at Stellenbosch University*



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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract: English

Student political activism on South African University campuses during the 2015/16 fallist period highlights not only issues pertaining to Western university curricula, institutional culture, and access to South African higher education, but also foregrounds the material public space/place of the university institution. It is within this space/place that students, material objects, and other environmental components meet in encounters of varying intensities. The affective turn, post-humanism, and new materialism lend insight into this complex terrain in which non-human, organic and inorganic matter hold the potential to affect us. Space/place, from this perspective, is complex and negotiations therein take place between the animate and inanimate and within relational processes. This research aims to make sense of the place of Stellenbosch University (SU) campus in a situated manner by engaging in open, generative arts-based modes of exploring public campus in order to ascertain what insights this may glean into the spatial context of SU. The word 'otherwise' in 'making otherwise' signals a mode of change, going up against, doing in another manner, and break in the status quo. This thesis concerns speculation, negotiation, and open, ongoing exploration in which participation in making processes shift to interaction with the material. It is this thinking differently, negotiating, learning, doing, making that makes up this practical research experiment.

Opsomming: Afrikaans

Student-gedrewe politieke aktivisme op Suid-Afrikaanse kampusse gedurende die 2015/2016 fallistiese tydperk beklemtoon nie net die kwessies wat verband hou met Westerse universiteit kurrikulums, institusionele kultuur en toegang tot Suid-Afrikaanse hoër onderwys nie, maar stel ook die materiële openbare ruimte van die universiteitsinstelling op die voorgrond. Dit is binne hierdie ruimte wat studente, materiële voorwerpe en ander omgewingsfaktore in wisselende vlakke van intensiteit ontmoet. Die affektiewe wending, post-humanisme en nuwe materialisme bied insig in hierdie ingewikkelde terrein waarin nie-menslike, organiese en anorganiese materiaal die potensiaal het om ons te beïnvloed. Ruimte/plek, vanuit hierdie oogpunt, is kompleks en onderhandelinge daarin vind tussen die lewende en nie-lewende, en binne relasionele prosesse plaas. Hierdie navorsing poog om sin te maak van die plek van Stellenbosch Universiteit (US) kampus op 'n gesitueerde wyse deur deel te neem aan oop, generatiewe kunsgebaseerde maniere om publieke kampus te verken ten einde vas te stel watter insigte dit in die ruimtelike konteks van die US kan verkry. Die woord '*otherwise*' in '*making otherwise*' dui op 'n manier van verandering, om op te tree teen, om op 'n ander manier te doen en om die status quo te verbreek. Hierdie tesis handel oor spekulاسie, onderhandeling en oop, deurlopende verkenning waarin deelname aan die prosesse van maak verskuif na interaksie met die materiaal. Dit is hierdie anderste dink, onderhandel, leer, doen, maak wat hierdie praktiese navorsingsprojek uitmaak.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

| | | |
|-------|---|---|
| 1.1 | Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.2 | Background. | |
| 1.2.1 | Disclaimer..... | 2 |
| 1.3 | Aims & Objectives..... | 3 |
| 1.4 | Research Methodology..... | 4 |
| 1.5 | Theoretical Framework..... | 5 |
| 1.5.1 | Post-humanism and Feminist New Materialism..... | 5 |
| 1.6 | Overview of Chapters..... | 7 |

Chapter 2

2.1 A Thickening of Stellenbosch University Institutional and Public Space/Place

| | | |
|---------|--|----|
| 2.1.1 | Crossing Trajectories..... | 10 |
| 2.1.1.1 | Exposed Tape Residue..... | 13 |
| 2.1.1.2 | Graffiti Women..... | 15 |
| 2.1.2 | Looping Back to Settler Colonialism..... | 16 |
| 2.1.3 | Apartheid and a Normative Sensibility..... | 18 |

2.2 Shifting Material Typologies and Transformation at

Stellenbosch University.....

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 2.2.1 | Formal Transformation & the Visual Redress Project..... | 24 |
| 2.2.2 | Unruly Transformation & Disorder..... | 28 |

Chapter 3

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 3.1 | Extending Participation ‘Other-wise’ | 33 |
| 3.1.1 | From Embodiment to Entanglement..... | 36 |
| 3.1.2 | Post-human Space/Place..... | 39 |
| 3.2 | Making Otherwise: Propositions for Practice | 41 |
| 3.2.1 | Ethics of Care, Deep Listening & a Gift | 41 |
| 3.2.2 | Becoming ‘Apprentice to Materials’ | 48 |
| 3.2.3 | The Diagrammatic..... | 56 |

Chapter 4

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|----|
| 4.1 | Walking-with | 60 |
| 4.2 | Productive Failures | 66 |
| 4.2.1 | Tracing Productively..... | 66 |
| 4.2.1.1 | Frottage, Photographs & Collage..... | 68 |
| 4.2.1.2 | Sound Fragments & Drawing..... | 73 |
| 4.3 | Through the diagram | 74 |
| 4.3.1 | Knotting..... | 75 |
| 4.3.2 | Splicing..... | 80 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Thesis Conclusion | 87 |
|--------------------------------|----|

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Reference List | 91 |
|-----------------------------|----|

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Appendices | 102 |
|-------------------------|-----|

APPENDIX 1: Interview consent form for Leslie van Rooi

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Addendums | 105 |
|------------------------|-----|

ADDENDUM 1: Exhibition catalogue

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SU - Stellenbosch University

HEI - Higher Education Institution

POC - People of Colour

SOC - Students of Colour

VRP - Visual Redress Project

HE - Higher Education

SITC - Student Institutional Transformation Committee

ITC - Institutional Transformation Committee

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1** Volks Verraaiers, Stellenbosch. 2015.
Available:<https://www.citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/1035262/self-declared-traitors-of-the-volk-trash-afriforum/>
- Figure 2** Women in headscarf graffiti on the JH Marais statue, Stellenbosch. 2021. Photography by author.
- Figure 3** The knot (work in progress), Stellenbosch. 2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 4** GPS tracked walking routes, Stellenbosch. 2021. Digital composition by author.
- Figure 5** Line translation, Stellenbosch. 2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 6** Collected debris, Stellenbosch. 2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 7** Traces, Stellenbosch.2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 8** Frottage of road. Stellenbosch. 2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 9** Frottage of wall, Stellenbosch.2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 10** Photograph in motion, Stellenbosch. 2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 11** Frottage of tar, Stellenbosch. 2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 12** Trace of frottage, Stellenbosch. 2021. Photography by author.
- Figure 13** Campus security hut, Stellenbosch. 2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 14** Campus security hut at a distance, Stellenbosch. 2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 15** Mapped traces (work in progress, Stellenbosch. 2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 16** Charted sound, Stellenbosch. 2021.
Photography by author.
- Figure 17** Frottage fringe (work in progress), Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

Figure 18 Paper heap (work in progress), Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

Figure 19 The knot (work in progress), Stellenbosch. Photograph by
Ledelle Moe.

Figure 20 Palimpsestic page, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

Figure 21 Assembling book fragments, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

Figure 22 Assembling book fragments, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

As a critical term, ‘space’ has long since left behind notions of fixity and cartographical location; instead we are taken into the realms of poetic space, spaces of memory, political and geopolitical space, imaginative space, contested space, ideological space, and spaces of performance (Pready & Neate 2008:2).

Student political activism on South African University campuses during the 2015-16 fallist period highlights issues pertaining to Western university curricula, institutional culture, and access in South African Higher Education *and* foregrounds the university institution’s material public space/place. Within *this* space/place, students, material objects, and other environmental components meet in encounters of varying intensities.

The Fees Must Fall Movement highlighted the affective and emotional force of the university setting, experienced as isolating by many students of colour. This is particularly relevant to Stellenbosch University, despite ongoing institutional efforts to transform the University’s places, people, and programs. Taken in step with the COVID-19 pandemic, these forces have emphasised inequalities and, moreover, evidence the non-human’s capacity to alter human trajectories. In this sense, the question of causation becomes more complex precisely because human agency is not the only agency at play. The affective turn, post-humanism, and new materialism lend insight into this complex terrain in which non-human, organic and inorganic matter hold the potential to affect us.

This theoretical perspective is being taken up by Stellenbosch University in their policy and attempts to alter the University landscape by visually redressing past injustice in order to create a more heterogeneous and socially just place. Arguably, Stellenbosch University presents a precarious space/place for transformation to occur

as it is a space/place of sticky racialised thickenings, a contested space, in which there can be no clean slate nor a return to what once was. Space/place, from this perspective, is complex and negotiations therein take place between the animate and inanimate and within relational processes.

The word ‘otherwise’ in the title of this thesis signals a mode of change, going up against, doing in another manner, and break in the status quo. The context mentioned above has inspired my work in negotiation and open, ongoing exploration in which participation in making processes shift to interaction with the material and matter¹. This thinking differently, negotiating, learning, doing, making makes up this practical research experiment.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Disclaimer

Given the complexities inherent in spatial experience/s, I initially planned to employ a participatory action research approach involving a diverse range of students in arts-based modes of exploring and making sense of public campus space/place. I hoped that this could potentially provide insight into the notions of social justice and transformation, or the lack thereof, on campus. The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, affected the trajectory of the research process. Action research is an iterative and cyclical process. It requires multiple engagements with participants to build trust and deepen meaningful engagement. This was difficult to achieve in the context of the restrictions imposed by the government and the research ethics committee on participant mobility and assembly. At the outset, co-opting participants was challenging. I sent a call to participate to numerous University departments and

¹ My reference to ‘open’ research refers to the territory of process-driven art-making and art-based research. This includes remaining open to divergences in the research process and other manners of knowing compared to traditional qualitative research. I reference Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze’s term ‘deterritorialisation’ here. “To deterritorialise is to free-up existing fixed relations, exposing oneself to new forms, to transformation. It is not a real escape, but more a departure— sometimes violent—from a given territory” (Deleuze & Guattari cited by Crispin 2019:47).

student societies for dissemination. I recruited one participant in this way. I then converted to snowball sampling. Unfortunately, the recruitment process witnessed a revolving door of students committing to and retracting from participation. The main challenges were a perceived disinterest in participating in a research project, the lack of student presence on campus due to the nearing end of the academic year, and the restrictions on student numbers returning to campus at the start of the fourth quarter. As a result, the group numbers dwindled to three participants who had less time to conduct the participatory activities due to the prolonged recruitment process.

Although the above-mentioned research direction has been valuable to the advancement of my engagement with theory, it has required that I re-orientate the main focus of the research to *my* making practice. Therefore, an arts-based method has been adopted. As a researcher-practitioner, I realised that to make do with what was at hand necessitated this shift. In doing so, I endeavoured to acknowledge the difficulties that I have encountered and I allow those insights to generate alternative directions for my research as I believe flexibility and negotiation are an important part of the research process.

1.3 Research Aims & Objectives

This research aims to make sense of the place of Stellenbosch University (SU) campus in a situated manner by engaging in open, generative arts-based modes of exploring public campus space/place² in order to ascertain what insights this may glean into the spatial context of SU. The main research question has two sub-questions:

- How can a situated practice of making negotiate the spatial context of SU?
- What insights, if any, can this lend to understanding the spatial context of SU?

The objectives of the research correlate with the thesis chapters and are as follows:

² Space and place are used as supplementary terms, hence space/place.

1. To contextualise Stellenbosch University theoretically and historically
2. To explore what a practice of situated making ‘otherwise’ could entail
3. To explore ways in which these insights could inform the spatial context of SU

1.4 Research Methodology

This research approach and methodology is arts-based in which the researcher is the artist-maker. This is an integrated approach. Making/practice assumes a central position in the research process. The research uses arts-based inquiry, analysis, and presentation of data (Given 2008:29). In terms of the data presentation,

[a]rts-based researchers will configure their ‘data’ into an aesthetic form that is designed to promote the kind of re-visioning that was described previously... that enables the reader/viewer to re-experience the world from a previously unavailable vantage point (Given 2008:31).

This manner of research willfully plunges into uncertain terrain, multiple meanings and refuses status quo comprehensions about the social world (Given 2008:29). The purpose of this research and research goal is to explore how situated making can negotiate a particular spatial context. Guarantees toward certainty and conclusive findings through a pre-determined and rigid research design obscure attunement to ‘new’ possibilities and meaning (without being pre-decidedly transgressive).

Therefore, the research design is tentatively structured so that the researcher is a bricoleur— a person who uses a diverse range of available methods. Furthermore, spatial concerns are interdisciplinary and the ‘how’ of spatial study tends to include more open, performative, and experimental methods and methodologies (Roberts 2018:2). In light of this, a ‘toolbox’ of methods is adopted (Clark, Laing, Tiplady & Woolner 2013:13). A ‘toolbox’ is a conceptual framework of methods available to the researcher i.e., a set of methods for the researcher to choose from. However, “[t]hese

design elements will, of course, vary to some degree according to art form” (Given 2008:30). This flexible format allows the methods to respond to emerging data as the inquiry develops (Levinsen & Ørngreen 2017:73). Roberts (2018:13) has said that “[m]aking do’ becomes an entirely appropriate statement of intent in that it is premised on, and values, the idea of a performative doingness that unfolds in a time and space of creative becoming.” French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss coined the term ‘bricolage’ meaning “[the making] do with ‘whatever is at hand’” in meaning-making (Levi-Strauss 199:17;19 cited in Roberts 2018:1). I opt for methods-in-motion combined with an art-based approach to productively entangle space/place and ‘making’. Data generated in situ includes photographic images, collage, collecting mixed-media fragments, and walking. The researcher-as-bricoleur and researcher-as-artist are situated *in* the research, affecting the study and outcomes (Roberts 2018:2).

I use a methodology of thinking through making as a way of knowing from the inside (Ingold 2013). Art in this research context is relevant as it re-engages the senses. Ingold (2013) explains this notion as engaging the meshwork and weave of life in which one takes a thread to take it further.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

1.5.1 Post-humanism & Feminist New Materialism

The ‘post’ in post-humanism signals a departure from human centrality and hierarchical classifications apparent in humanism (Ferrando 2013:29). Ferrando (2013:29) states that post-humanism is post-exclusivisms; it is a relational ontology and a move away from dualisms. Ferrando (2013:30) states:

[Post-humanism] is a philosophy which provides a suitable way of departure to think in relational and multi-layered ways, expanding the focus to the non-human realm in post-dualistic, post-hierarchical modes, thus allowing

one to envision post-human futures which will radically stretch the boundaries of human imagination.

New materialism signals a broad field of inquiry characterised by a shift to matter. This shift is away from human centrality and transcendentalism and radically revises the world in its relational co-constitution (Dolphijn & van der Tuin 2012:94). New materialism is closely linked to post-humanism in that it is “a specific feminist development within the post-humanist frame” (Ferrando 2013:26). Humanistic tendencies include the idea that representation, for example, linguistic representation, realistically resembles an outside world. This assumes a measure of mastery by the human over the non-human world and matter and an ability to view it from the outside. However, there are qualities in the world that evade capture and articulation (Bennett 2010:4). Language is therefore understood as an apparatus in defining what matter comes to matter. Therefore, there is no purely discursive arena, but one that is material-discursive (Bozalek et al. 2016:194); “[c]onceptual content is not a representation of an object, but a material articulation of a phenomenon, which encompasses both meaning and what is meant” (Freitas 2017:9 citing Rouse 2016:5).

I draw on critical post-humanist and feminist new materialist scholars, Karen Barad and Jane Bennett. Bennett (2010) proposes that matter is vibrant and has agency and the capacity to act. Bennett terms this thing-power. This provides an understanding of complexity, of a situation or a problem, as arising from the distributed causality between humans and non-humans (Bennett 2010). Affect is vital to this ability to act and be acted upon. We affect others— human and non-human, inorganic and organic— who affect us in return. This acknowledgement is fundamental to our relationality.

Post-humanism pursues a notion of things not as transcendental and possessing essences but as something in flux, motion, and coming into being through intra-action. This term is drawn from Karen Barad, who draws on the quantum physics of Niels Bohr (2007). To say that things are imminent is to move against the solid and definitive boundaries and essences that have delineated one thing from

another. Karen Barad (2007), in reference to the level of particles, says that particles do not delineate clear boundaries. Intra-action refers to the co-constitution of things in relation. This differs from inter-action as the word ‘inter-’ presupposes separate preexisting entities. This presents implications for research in that it posits that the researcher is never separate from the research context. The researcher is always situated. Donna Haraway has termed this ‘situated knowledges’ (Bozalek et al. 2016:194). Therefore, ontology (the nature of being), epistemology (the production of knowledge), and ethics, are necessarily co-imbricated— we come to know in the world, we make the world through our knowledge and the world makes us in return. Barad (2007) also introduces the term ‘assemblage’ as comprised of components entangled in relations. This altered conception of agency lends insight into complex contexts in that it stipulates that causality is diversely distributed among human and non-human agents. This does not mean that people cannot and should not be held accountable, rather, a focus on responsibility is shifted to response-ability— our ability to act within specific assemblages. Therefore, response-ability is not a moral judgement that we make as detached, autonomous, and disembedded beings in the world (Bozalek et al. 2016:193).

1.6 Overview of Chapters

My chapter breakdown is as follows:

Chapter Two aims to contextualise Stellenbosch University theoretically and historically, with a particular focus on outdoor public campus space. This serves to frame the spatial context with/in/through which I engage. I aim to illustrate the complexity of Stellenbosch University as a contested space and as composed of human and non-human constituencies. Regarding the former aim, I do so by attending to the past in the present as much as possible, specifically by referencing settler-colonialism, apartheid, and #FeesMustFall. I then discuss how the spatial context of Stellenbosch University is negotiated through shifting material typologies on SU campus in terms of transformation and visual redress. The Visual Redress Project serves as an entry

point to discuss how public space affects us because of human and non-human forces taking part and how institutional public space is currently under negotiation.

Chapter Two's discussion of the non-human and ontological complexity of space/place sets the groundwork for Chapter Three, in which I approach 'otherwise' as 'other-wise' in terms of framing the non-human and inanimate as vital actants in public space. I situate this approach and speculative thinking as vital to this research's attempt to think and do 'otherwise.' I argue for a focus on relationality within Stellenbosch University public space by extending conceptions of justice to include relational justice. I then shift this discussion from a moral issue to an ontological issue through the writing of Maria De La Bellacasa. This opens the space to a discussion of an ethics of care, deep listening, and attuning to space/place and materials in the making process as a means of making/doing otherwise.

Chapter Three zooms into my making practice, drawing on insights discussed in Chapter Two and Three. The chapter centres on practices of listening, attunement, and connecting in a more-than register. I explore embodied and repetitive methods, including weaving my body presence in/through space, wayfaring and sensorily tuning-in. I describe my process of transferring the materials to my studio in which thought is extended through my practice of making and transforming materials. In the conclusion of the thesis, I reflect on possible insights that this process has put forward in terms of the spatial context of SU.

Chapter 2

This chapter aims to provide a theoretical and historical contextualization of Stellenbosch University's public space. This aim is two-fold, 1. to outline the complexity of Stellenbosch University and 2, to acknowledge the human and non-human forces taking part in sustaining and negotiating public space on Stellenbosch University campus as public space affects us because of human and non-human forces taking part. I substantiate my reasoning for space/place as negotiated/heterogeneous/complex via arguing for contested public space on campus. This chapter is sectioned into two parts; the first attends to how the past and present are inextricably intertwined. I zoom in on the site of the JH Marais statue, weaving threads of personal experience (via vignettes) through events of the 2015-16 fallist period.

Furthermore, I reference the Fees Must Fall movement as an entry point to engage the material-discursive and sociopolitical nature of Stellenbosch University campus space. I then loop back to Stellenbosch as a settler-colonial town in order to illustrate threads linking the colonial to a neo-colonial context and, arguably, a distinct heritage setting. In addition, I outline the links between the university institution and apartheid to frame the shifting material typologies contemporaneously under negotiation. I attend to one instance in which the public space of the institution is negotiated, that being the Visual Redress Project. I engage with the VRP to extend this thought of an affective space and the role of the spatial and material in influencing how bodies behave in certain ways. Finally, I consider unruly transformation as a means to discuss institutional space and how the status quo of space may be disrupted to form new affordances for action. This chapter sets up the context of the space/place with/in/through which I engage.

2.1 A Thickening of Stellenbosch University Institutional and Public Space/Place

2.1.1 Crossing Trajectories

While walking the university space in the research practice of this thesis, the absence of student bodies, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, foregrounded the material fabric of public campus space. The lack of student and staff activity rendered academic and bureaucratic buildings hollow and without academic function, highlighting its efficacy and lingering 'present(ce)' - a personal feeling that the space implied something of a covert obscenity.

I passed by the figure of the Johannes Henoeh Marais statue on numerous occasions.³

The statue on the Stellenbosch University Rooiplein is exposed, central, and commands the public gaze as a political symbol. I observed that the back side of the statue is 'defaced' with iterations of a stencilled graffiti image of a woman in a cloth hair covering or head-wrap.

Charged by the visual traces of graffiti, paint splatter, and exposed tape residue, the energies of the 2015/2016 political student activism linger in myth and memory.

The social, political, material, cultural, and spatial are imbricated in the public spaces of the university institution. The above vignette hints at the intertwining of physical traces and structures in space/place, and the politics of memory and transformation (Roux 2021). It is appropriate to note that being a white, English-speaking woman, my embodied experience of the space differs radically from that of a student of colour. Elina Kamanga (2018)'s *Lived experiences of hidden racism of students of colour at a historically white university* exemplifies a facet of this differing embodied experience. My sensitivity to the lingering racial presence

³ JH Marais is a benefactor of Stellenbosch University and advocate for Afrikaans education (Breyne 2018:41).

emerged not so much from a precognitive affective jolt or embodied feeling of not belonging, but from a learned awareness of the forces at play. I elaborate on this in more detail later in this section. Admittedly, in the initial phase of walking the university space, I found it mundane and lacking the kind of affect conducive to creativity and artistic production. I initially pegged my response as the result of overfamiliarity and spatial habituation from six years of residency in Stellenbosch in a student's capacity. In *A phenomenology of whiteness*, Ahmed (2007:149) states that "[whiteness] orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they 'take up' space, and what they 'can do'". Via a process of reflection on my positionality as a white, middle class, and English woman, I have come to acknowledge the influence of my racial and cultural privileged positionality on how I come to know and experience the world.

The statue marks a contested public space and is frequently the target of vandalism and protest action (Statues and symbols: creating a welcoming culture 2016), as it seems to perpetuate segregation, "being read as a symbol of white supremacy" (Breyne 2018:40). On Stellenbosch University campus, it functions similarly to the monument of the British imperialist Cecil John Rhodes on the University of Cape Town campus (Frank & Ristic 2020:553). This monument was formally removed in 2015 and sparked extended protest action, known as fallism, in South African Higher Education contexts during 2015-16 (Frank et al. 2020:553). The main prerogatives of Fallism include equal access to Higher Education and the decolonisation of the curricula and institutional culture (Verwoerd 2018:8). On Stellenbosch University campus, this included the Fees Must Fall (FMF) and Open Stellenbosch movements. The successful removal of the Rhodes statue intensified debate on the architectural and the academic/pedagogic space of the Western institution. Fallist events are relevant to unpacking the complexity of place and space as they offer a perspective on the politics of public space, monuments, and architecture in South African Higher Education. It demonstrates how public space can

become a subject of contestation through a spatial practice of protest and occupation;⁴ a method of commingling bodies, politics, and space (Mpatlanyane 2018:56).

The negotiation of public space/place is revealed in the disruption of oppressive structures and the re-appropriation of public space by disenfranchised groups (De Backer, Dijkema & Hörschelmann 2019:[sp]). The phenomenon of ‘urban fallism’ is defined as “the contestation, transformation and pulling-down of public monuments by minority, marginalised and/or oppressed civic groups in today’s socially, politically and ethnically diverse cities as a means of political struggle for social recognition and inclusion”, and for the formation of a heterogeneous and socially just place (Frank et al 2020:556). Doreen Massey’s ontology of place resonates in this context when she posits that space is a “sphere of a dynamic simultaneity” (Massey 2005:63;107).

The visual, vandalistic marks on the JH Marais statue indicate stories of protest, clashing trajectories, and contestation.⁵ These trajectories are human, non-human, local, and global, and hold affective agency in that they influence people’s lived experience within entanglements of relations and processes in space. In this sense, “place demands negotiation” (Massey 2005:141). Negotiation does not mean reaching a resolve, but rather it implies an ongoing and open process.

In the context of contested spaces of Higher Education Institutions in South Africa, strategies for transformation and decolonisation are highly debated. According to Hendricks (2018), decolonisation demands a drastic structural overhaul. Hendricks, citing Mazali, states that “Universities are ‘rigged spaces’ because of their foundational alignment to the norms, values, cultures, and epistemologies of the West” (Hendricks 2018:18). For example, “buildings [act] as ‘the visible embodiment of the invisible,’ manifest and represent certain values and identities” (Kinossian & Wråkberg 2017:90). In order to grapple with issues relating the ‘post-apartheid’, ‘post-colonial’ Western university within a multicultural context, the analogy of a

⁴ For example, in March 2016, protesters occupied Stellenbosch University’s Old Main Building (Protest and occupation on Stellenbosch campus 2016).

⁵ According to Massey (cited by Baldwin 2012:208), “trajectories are changing phenomena that ‘may be a living thing, a scientific attitude, a collectivity, a social convention, a geological formation’; while stories are the ‘history, change, movement of things [such as trajectories] themselves’”.

palimpsest is applied to the visual and material landscape (Kinossian et al. 2017; Powell 2008),⁶ in terms of the inscription of a colonial past in the present and attempts to apply a new ‘layer’ reflective of democratic values, cultural diversity, and African centrality. “The concept of palimpsest implies that images, layers from the past remain and become re-engaged within a modern context” (Kinossian et al. 2017:97).

2.1.1.1 Exposed Tape Residue

In March of 2016, the plinth of the Jan Marais statue underlined political posters veering from campaigning emancipatory rights for people of colour (POC), set up by a student member of the EFF, to posters dissociating the Volks Verraiers (Afrikaans-speaking whites opposed to Afrikaner nationalism) from Afriforum (an Afrikaans lobby group). This was done in a show of support for the EFF, Open Stellenbosch, and #FeesMustFall. The posters read that Stellenbosch “‘is not your [Afriforum supporters] apartheid museum’ and that ‘Afrikaans does not own SU’” (‘Traitors of the volk’ trash AfriForum 2016) (see figure 1).



Figure 1: Volks Verraiers, Stellenbosch. 2015.

⁶ I write ‘post-apartheid’ and ‘post-colonial’ in single inverted marks to align myself with discourse critical of the claim of a ‘post’ era. See, for example, Mabasa (2017) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013).

On 3 March 2016, conflict broke out on site of the JH Marais statue between Afriforum youth who congregated in commemorative action and the EFF (Afriforum loses bid to have ‘defamatory’ rape posters taken off Facebook 2016). Afriforum student members forcefully attempted to remove the chalked messages and rally posters of the EFF (ibid 2016). The heterogeneity and simultaneity of space are communicated in, for example, the comparative accounts of the statue as ‘*Maraisist*’ and ‘*traumascape*’ (Kamanga 2019:38; Breyne 2018), versus a “*heritage treasure*,” as commented by Marcus Pawson, spokesperson of Afriforum youth (Pawson 2016). The latter point is understood according to Breyne’s (2018:43) account that “a place consists of different layers of history, connecting differently with the bodies that enter that place.” In *Toward a phenomenology of the material* (2020), McGregor argues that “seen through this [a feminist new materialist] lens, lived experience is created by the performativity of everything that is entangled in a phenomenon, not just the human” (ibid 2020:511). Applied to the context of Stellenbosch University, Breyne (2018:55) states:

From this perspective, the non-human statue of Jan Marais, for example, has agency and— corresponding to the concept of ‘vital materialism’ developed by political theorist Jane Bennett (2010:89)— possesses the ability to make things happen and produce effect (Bennett 2010:5). Applied to the site in question this means that the statue does influence the behaviour and the emotional state of passers-by.

2.1.1.2 Graffiti Women



Figure 2: Women in headscarf graffiti on the JH Marais statue, Stellenbosch. 2021. Photography by author.

On the reverse side of the statue is a gestalt of orange graffiti iterations of a woman in a cloth hair covering (figure 2). Dressing the head is traditionally linked to the self-identity of African women (Hopkins 2006). Projecting this sign onto the statue forms a palimpsest of contesting ideologies of the 2015-16 fallist movement—charting visibility/invisibility, destabilising exclusive place identities, contesting the racial and patriarchal foundation of white supremacy, and investing new meaning into the space. In *Urban Fallism*, Frank et al. (2020:554) argue that “[the] destruction of monuments is not an irrational act of vandalism but a deliberate and purposeful attack to abolish both the ‘icon’ and a set of values associated with it (Gamboni 1997; Speitkamp 1997)”. Furthermore, Frank et al. (2020:556) state:

Symbols of racial and socio-political supremacy and dominance in public space are ‘targeted’ and contested in order to set the stage for the creation of a heterogeneous memorial landscape, which acknowledges the legacies of diverse communities. In this context, we argue that fallism is not much about the ‘killing of memory’ (Bevan 2006; Riedlmayer 1995), erasing and

forgetting the past, but about unpacking, deconstructing, and subverting troublesome heritage (Macdonald 2009; Logan and Reeves 2009) and opening it up to new meanings.

This account bolsters a palimpsest metaphor of the space/place of Stellenbosch University. The act of “unpacking, deconstructing and subverting” (ibid 2020:556) references the overlaying of meaning and the inscription of new meaning. In other words, it involves taking what is there and entering into a dialogue with it.

2.1.2 Looping back to Settler Colonialism

I walked from Stellenbosch University botanical garden, across Van Riebeeck street, past the provincial heritage site, Grosvenor House, on 12 Drostdy road. I crossed the ambiguous boundary between Stellenbosch University and Central Stellenbosch business district; it happened in-between a few metres, but the moment of its exact morphology, I could not pinpoint.

Framed by the open top half of the Grosvenor House dutch doors stood a woman in colonial garb; perplexed, baffled, and sceptically curious, I lingered.

The territorialisation, slowness, and endurance of amalgamating symbols, signs, architectural styles, and statues in spatial ensembles, arguably, foreground an affective assemblage and Stellenbosch (University) heritage landscape. “Every actual assemblage is an individual singularity” (De Landa 2011:185 cited by Witt 2018:175 PhD), and this accentuates the particularity of the congealing parts of the assemblage. “Assemblages emerge through territorialization processes when connections between entities produce an arrangement that functions in a specific way” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012 cited by Foroughmand Araabi 2018:6). Territorialisation is a mechanism of stiff, controlled, and defined becoming (Foroughmand Araabi 2018:6); in other words, territorialisation gives form to (coded) assemblages. Arguably, the distinct process of settlement (settler colonisation of Stellenbosch) is significant to the project of identifying the sources/mechanisms of a territorial space/place; its distinct

spatial production and identity (form and character). Stellenbosch is the oldest Dutch-founded rural settlement in the Cape, witnessing less change over the decades compared to either military, administrative, commercial or shipping “posts” (Smuts [ed] 1978:81). In the official commemorative volume, *Stellenbosch Three Centuries* (Smuts [ed] 1979:81-83), it states, “development was particularly slow during most of the nineteenth century with the result that Stellenbosch has retained the salient features of every stage of its history... Stellenbosch was essentially different; it was a farmer’s village, a settlement of people who regarded it as their permanent home.” Settler colonialism is iterative territorialisation; a process of emplacement in ‘nobody’s land’. It entails the construction and perpetuation of false narratives of settler legitimacy, ownership, right of claim and belonging, and elimination practices.

⁷ Arguably, the structure of settler-colonial occupation of Stellenbosch produces an arrangement that functions to monumentalise white authority in *both* physical and psychological space, hence the prerogatives of fallist movements at Stellenbosch.

Veracini and Verbuyst (2020:1) argue for a South African settler-colonial present advocating that “settler colonialism and apartheid should be understood as distinct yet overlapping modes of domination.” Veracini et al.’s prerogative to consider contemporary settler colonialism *and* apartheid legacy hinges on abetting current decolonial endeavors (ibid 2020:14). The aforementioned settler-colonial context of Stellenbosch University and apartheid complexify perspectives and debates on the transformation and decolonization of the Higher Education landscape. The refusal to relegate settler-colonialism to the past interrupts the linearity of time (past, present, future) via addressing “continuities linking the past and present”; negating the “phenomenological reality of ‘the becoming present of future events and then their becoming past’” (Veracini 2020:4; Ross 2012:6). Compressed space-time entanglement spills from the crack of the latter epistemic shift. My reference to historical events is not to outline a linear causality and progressive, fixed, and fully given ‘development of Stellenbosch’. Stellenbosch University is irreducibly complex. Rather, in the words of Ross, (2012:6 original emphasis), “the impulse is to activate the past in the present *as much as possible*.” I

⁷ For example, see Fanon, F. 2008. *Black skin, white masks*. Grove Press.

delineate sections in this exploratory review to the somewhat split articulation of the colonial and apartheid and present; however, I do so to loop back around to point to entanglements as they are materialised in the here and now (Ross 2012:286).⁸

2.1.3 Apartheid and a Normative Sensibility

Architecture, human densities, and locational relations are a force in structuring what can be done in space itself. Walls and roads obviously privilege certain kinds of activities and inhibit others, support the projects of one type of actor and deter the goals of others. Beyond such material impediments are the symbols and styles that also influence behaviour (Molotch 1993:888).

The material-discursive arena of Stellenbosch University public space is marred in “the social and political histories that informed the planning, construction and cordoning off of [the institution]” (Clarke & Constandius 2019:5). In other words, socio-political forces are important to the processes of materialisation of human and non-human bodies. According to Lefebvre, space is “partitioned and built in relation to socio-political needs, space shapes those who inhabit and move through it, naturalising behaviour and privileging certain modes of being over others” (Clarke et al 2019:5).

Historically, Stellenbosch University is a white Afrikaans medium university and kingpin adjacent to the formation of Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid. The National Party formed close to Stellenbosch University's inauguration. It was headed by Victoria College alum, JBM Hertzog (Froneman 2000:400). Historically advantaged Afrikaans Higher Education institutions (HEIs) strongly supported the apartheid state and knowledge production, in large part, served the state agenda (Hendricks 2018:24; Bunting 2006:40).⁹ Six South African Prime Ministers in office

⁸ Ross (2012:286) states that “[t]he temporality of the loop (its repetitiveness and interminability)...establishes a movement forward via a return.”

⁹ For example, eugenics and racial science tainted the syllabus, promoting “biological ideas of racial difference and their application to different racial groups in South Africa” (Dubow 2015:243; Mpatlanyane 2018:8).

between 1919 and 1978 attended Stellenbosch University in the capacity of a lecturer, chancellor, or student.¹⁰ The list includes Daniel François (DF) Malan, Johannes Gerhardus (JG) Strijdom, Hendrik Frensch (HF) Verwoerd (titled apartheid's master builder), and Balthazar Johannes (BJ) Vorster (Stellenbosch University 2019); arguably, a marker of the symbiotic relationship between the institution and apartheid state, and the founding ideological basis of the norms, values, and epistemologies of the institution. Although white supremacy and segregationist policy were already in existence, this period witnessed the election of the Afrikaner ethnic nationalist party in 1948 and the institution of apartheid as a political system (The history of separate development in South Africa [sa]). In closing *HF Verwoerd's student years - cradle of his political career and thought*, Froneman (2000:410) states that "on the one hand, his [Verwoerd's] views as a young man were informed by the Afrikaner nationalist Stellenbosch of his student years; on the other hand, he actively participated and helped form that very context."

In 1994, South Africa transitioned to the new dispensation. However, freedom is not reductive to politics; racial inequality is reproduced in political, social, and economic realms (Mabasa 2017:96). The rhetoric of rainbowism and the born-free liberal narrative are explicitly negated on a nation-wide level following fallist student activism at Higher Education institutions (Mabasa 2017:95).¹¹ 'Born-free' students mobilised against persisted inequality and eurocentrism in Higher Education, commenting that formal transformation had not adequately been felt in the lived experience of students of colour (SOC) (Arbuckle & Nqelenga 2019:25). For example, the controversial and discredited article titled, *Age and education related effects on cognitive functioning in coloured South African women* (2019), linked to Stellenbosch University, evidences the thread of essentialist and racial logic in research today (Gasnolar 2019). Furthermore, prejudice and discrimination are contemporaneously enacted, evidenced by multiple campus controversies and studies

¹⁰ The prime minister, termed state president in 1961, functioned as South Africa's head political leader.

¹¹ The term born-free refers to black South Africans born after the dispensation. The terminology born-free (born post-apartheid) is amiable to the rainbow nation narrative and one that states that the institution of equal rights and liberal democracy will radically transform South African society.

on lived experience at Stellenbosch University. Therefore, “[t]he prefix ‘post’ [in post apartheid], signals not a negation or surpassing, but a zone of activity” (Frenkel & MacKenzie 2010:4).

In 2015, a documentary titled ‘Luister’ circulated on social media. This video comprises a series of interviews reporting on student accounts of racism at the University of Stellenbosch and Elsenburg. A black interviewee accounted the following racial prejudice:

The colour of my skin in Stellenbosch is like a social burden. You walk around and you... I mean just walking into spaces, you know, there is that stop, pause, and stare where people cannot believe that you would dare enter into the space (Contraband Cape Town 2015).

The student’s embodied account reverberates in Elijah Anderson’s statement on ‘white space’. He states that “when judging a setting as too white...[people of colour (POC)] feel uneasy and consider it informally ‘off-limits.’ For whites, however, the same settings are generally regarded as unremarkable, or as normal, taken-for-granted reflections of civil society” (2015:10). Arguably, historical, iterative events of spatial segregation, racial violence, and exclusion, produced and normalised Stellenbosch University as ‘white space’— an affective categorization of a historically racially segregated and subsequently homogeneous space previously occupied by whites, “a situation that reinforces a normative sensibility in settings which black people are typically absent, not expected, or marginalised when present” (Anderson 2015:10). In this context, “the concept of place, the feeling of being linked, of being connected is felt very differently among various social groups.” This, according to Massey (Pop 2014:283), is contingent on mobility, as evidenced in the political prerogatives of Open Stellenbosch fighting for physical access to the space of Higher Education. Clark et al. (2019:5), referencing Casey, state that “space emerges as a territorialised entity through the movement of bodies therein.” According to Stellenbosch University’s statistical profile (2018), “58.1% of enrolled students were white, 20.1% African black, 18.1% coloured, 3.1% Indian and 0.2% Asian”. Whereas, the white

population fit only 15.7% of the population in the Western Cape (Census 2011:21). Pertaining to #FeesmustFall, Maldonado-Torres (2016:4), frames the fee increases as covert segregation mechanisms by the neoliberal state. Apartheid adopted socio-economic measures that barred POC entry and access with success to HE today and benefit a white minority group (Hendricks 2018:26).¹² The manifestations above subsequently ascribe validity to white (Afrikaans, heterosexual male) identity and norms, marginalising divergent identities (Clark et al. 2019:4). Hence, the privilege of belonging and, ergo, the frequently referenced association between social connection and institutional culture (Toma, Dubrow & Hartley 2005); the capacity to feel at home is political. Culture exerts agency and environments of institutional culture impact embodied experiences (Clark et al. 2019:9). Racial experiences negatively affect student throughput and success, mirroring the pungency of physical exclusions (Kamanga 2019:11). Subsequently, belonging is a question of access (Mbembe 2016:30).

In *Silence at the end of the rainbow: an analysis of the effects of rainbowism on post-apartheid South African cinema* (2015), Luke Slade illustrates how the notion of ‘the rainbow nation’ functions as a mechanism for silencing voices of dissent. According to Maldonado-Torres (2016:9) this mechanism, the “aiming to silence the forms of questionings that emerge from the lived experience, creative work, and knowledges of the colonised”, is a self-sustaining feature of a neo-liberal, neo-colonised state. Dominant thought foundations act in defence of coloniality/modernity and lend counter “bad faith” responses toward voices of dissent. Arguably, a bad faith response is evidenced in the claim that Stellenbosch University is an “Afrikaans university” during the debate on the language of institutional instruction shifting from Afrikaans to English. Chris Brink (2006:ii), in *No lesser place: the taaldebate at Stellenbosch*, illustrates that the ‘language struggle’ is fundamentally an identity struggle: “the issue is about a reaffirmation of identity - the group identity, namely, of the Afrikaners.” Furthermore, Giliomee and Schlemmer (quoted in Brink 2006:62) state that, “if Afrikaans as university language should

¹² Superior and inferior racialised educational structures manufactured historically advantaged and historically disadvantaged institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, separate development and the racialised labour system systematically instituted the socio-economic disadvantage of POC with unrelenting effect.

diminish or disappear, it would mean the downfall of Afrikaans as language of science, as disciplinary language, as the language of intellectual discourse and eventually also as literary language”; a signifier of pure excellence translated to white power and control in the academe. Therefore, the Western legacy of South African HE institutions is problematic, not only in its modes of exclusion but also in its force to render invisible. As Karen Barad (cited in Juelskjaer & Schwennesen 2012:21) states, “each meeting matters, not just for what comes to matter but what is constitutively excluded from mattering in order for particular materializations to occur.”

Therefore, the taken-for-grantedness of Stellenbosch University as a white Afrikaans space is the outcome of iterative processes and is not a neutral, pre-given phenomenon. Crang & Tolia-Kelly (2010:2316) reference this shift from concepts of fixity to iteration via the work of Saldanha (2006), who “opens out some of this with his metaphor of viscosity for how racial types gradually become ‘sticky’ and cluster into racialised aggregates where localised ‘thickenings’ emerge from fluxes.” Furthermore, Frosini (2018:211 citing Laclau) states that:

Power is merely the trace of contingency, the point at which objectivity reveals the radical alienation which defines it. In this sense, objectivity, the essence of objects - is nothing more than a sedimented form of power, in other words, a power whose traces have been erased.

2.2 Shifting Material Typologies & Transformation at Stellenbosch University

“The desire to preserve the old while creating the new, or to reconstitute the past while transforming it” is itself a mode of negotiation (Roux 2021:[sp]). Stellenbosch University, in its formal policy and practice, has been actively

attempting to alter the public space of the university in order to redress past injustice. I frame the visual redress project at Stellenbosch University as a means of negotiating the material-discursive landscape of campus space. Furthermore, I reference the policy and theory guiding such intervention to outline the regimes by which affects are understood and managed. In so doing, I approach the negotiation of space/place in relation to the imperatives of university policy and student activism. Furthermore, I introduce a notion of the institution as a tree-like structure and one that affords routines of action in service of the institution. Protest and bottom-up intervention is rhizomatic action; however, it risks being subsumed by the force of the institutional tree as the space privileges certain kinds of activities and inhibits others. Here, I suggest the need for spaces of unpredictable behaviour to counter the over-determination of functions. Lastly, I frame the visual redress project as a marker of the institution's recognition of the agency of the human and non-human in public space. In so doing, I frame negotiation as dialogical, relational processes between space, the animate and inanimate. This new materialist proposition “compels us to think of causation in far more complex terms; to recognise that phenomena are caught in a multitude of interlocking systems and forces and to consider anew the location and nature of capacities for agency” (Coole & Frost 2010:9). Arguably, a non-normative conception of agency could provide an alternative partial account of the complexity of transformation. Bennett (2010:32) writes:

To figure the generative source of effects as a swarm is to see human intentions as always in competition and confederation with many other strivings, for an intention is like a pebble thrown into a pond, or an electrical current sent through a wire or neural network: it vibrates and merges with other currents, to affect and be affected. This understanding of agency does not deny the existence of that thrust called intentionality, but it does see it as less definitive of outcomes.

2.2.1 Formal Transformation and The Visual Redress Project

The #RhodesMustFall movement “highlighted the material and immaterial legacies of apartheid” (Veracini & Verbuyst 2020:6), intensifying critical examination of visual culture and the corollary, visual redress, in Higher Education and the broader post-apartheid South Africa.¹³ The amplification of student critique of exclusionary academic pedagogy and practice via the #MustFall campaign and call for decolonisation, accelerated the implementation of formal HE transformation initiatives and policy (Transformation Indaba 2020). The Visual Redress Project (VRP) at Stellenbosch University is an action-orientated and institutionally-led initiative. The VRP aims to intervene in the university’s landscape in order to pursue an inclusive learning environment and institutional culture, and remedy past injustice (Visual Redress [sa]). Chair of the Visual Redress Committee and Senior Director: Social Impact and Transformation, Leslie van Rooi states, “Changes to a campus environment can influence an institutional culture and must be seen as an important aspect for transformation to occur” (Mulder 2020). Kuh & Whitt (1988:12) define institutional culture as “the collective, mutual shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behaviour of individuals and groups in Higher Education and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions.” The practices and policies of visual redress are guided by a set of five institutional values: excellence, compassion, accountability, respect, and equity (Visual Redress [sa]; Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019-2024 [sa]). Devised by the University-affiliated Division for Social Impact and Transformation, the expanded Stellenbosch University Visual Redress Policy took effect on 1 January 2020. The policy’s implementation is the second leg after the first phase successfully met completion (2018-2019) (Mulder 2020).

The profuse and uncritical use of the term decolonisation in educational discourse transforms decolonization into a metaphor (Tuck & Yang 2012).

¹³ See Schuhmann (2013) in *Picturing change: curating visual culture at post-apartheid universities* (Vorster 2013).

Decolonisation is not implied in social justice and democracy (ibid 2012).¹⁴ According to Tuck & Yang (2012:1), “[d]ecolonisation brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools.”¹⁵ The HE context demands re-orientated modes of intervention, however, this re-orientation is not necessarily decolonial. Hölscher, Zembylas, and Bozalek (2020:146) state that “decolonial language and concepts need not necessarily imply a commitment towards a participatory, inclusionary and emancipatory approach to Higher Education.”¹⁶

Nancy Fraser’s theory of social justice contributes substantially to the theoretical/philosophical base of the Visual Redress Project (Transformation Indaba 2017; Clark et al. 2019).¹⁷ According to Fraser, ‘participatory parity’ is the primary objective of social justice; the rouleaux triangle of three dimensions: “the distribution of resources, the politics of recognition and the politics of distribution and belonging” (Bozalek & Leibowitz 2012:63). Participatory parity “‘permit[s] all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers’” (Armstrong & Thompson 2007 quoting Fraser 2003:36). It is important for me to acknowledge both decolonial and social justice theories to understand social justice prerogatives at HEIs coinciding with decolonising prerogatives harked in HEI student activism, to situate the research in a manner that displays a practical and sensible consideration of the material-discursive research context. I reference the policy and theory guiding Visual

¹⁴ Contending approaches to decolonisation range in focus according to differing conceptualisations of the term (Hölscher, Zembylas & Bozalek 2020:148). Oyedemi (2018:6-8) highlights three broad approaches to decolonization: decolonisation as de-westernisation (the decentering of eurocentrism), decolonisation as indigenisation (the re-centering of Africa in the context of Africa) and decolonisation as polycentrism (shifting from UNlversality to PLURlversality).

¹⁵ Commonly, support for social cohesion, multiculturalism and reconciliation wavers because of a perceived link to superficial liberal peace and the transformation lag and shifts in favour of radical reparation (reconstitution) and decolonization. The tension hints at the dialogue between transitional justice and transformative justice. Gready and Robins (2014:340) argue, “[w]hile transformative justice does not seek to completely dismiss or replace transitional justice, it does seek to radically reform its politics, locus, and priorities. Transformative justice entails a shift in focus from the legal to the social and political, from the state and institutions to communities and everyday concerns. Transformative justice is not the result of a top-down imposition of external legal frameworks or institutional templates, but of a more bottom-up understanding and analysis of the lives and needs of populations.”

¹⁶ For example, see *“Decolonise, don’t diversify”*: *discounting diversity in the South African academe as a tool for ideological pacification* (Makhubela 2018).

¹⁷ Nancy Fraser is a feminist and critical theorist based in the United States. Fraser is oft-cited in social justice literature responding to exclusionary forces in South African HE (Hölscher et al. 2020:3).

Redress to outline the regimes by which the institution understands and manages material typologies of (racialised) affect. Next, I discuss how this principle is applied in practice.

The Student Institutional Transformation Committee (SITC), (2020), emphasised lived experience of a diverse and intersectional student body.¹⁸ The impetus of this approach to transformation, I contend, is linked to Strauss' (2014) discussion of the intimate and the everyday in relation to politics. Strauss (2014:474), quoting Cvetkovich, declares, “‘what counts as national or public trauma is that which is more visible and catastrophic, that which is newsworthy and sensational,’ which she distinguishes from the ‘small dramas that...[on the other hand,] draw attention to how structural forms of violence are so frequently lived, how their visibility or normalisation is another part of their oppression.’”

In *Visual redress at higher education institutions in South Africa (manuscript draft)*, Clark & Costandius (2019:3) highlight the complex entanglement of humans, non-humans, time and space in lived experience in a relational, non-dualist approach; “[a]s material reminders of oppression, buildings, statues, and signage need to be thought of as ultimately affective in the manner in which they impact those who encounter them. In relation to the spaces of HE, staff, students, and visitors can be understood as ultimately entangled in the institution and in one another, as one’s sense of self is in constant state of co-creation” (ibid 2019:11).

It has been argued that the physical landscape of the institution holds affective agency, and transformation is both structural *and* individual. Subsequently, Clark et al. (2019) highlight three imbricated hotspots for the transformation: the physical landscape (visual), language (audible and discursive), and the embodied (felt and affective) (Clark et al. 2019); emphasis is placed on lived experience. Specifically, visual redress targets three residual effects of a troubling institutional history,

¹⁸ Acting as the agent of the student body, the SITC submits relevant advisory contributions and communicates student interests to the ITC for consideration (Student Transformation Indaba 2020).

connected to apartheid and colonisation: sensitive symbols and iconography, misrecognition, and social injustice (Stellenbosch University visual redress policy (draft) [sa]:3). For example, colonial-era statues, apartheid architecture, and harmful building names perpetuate symbolic violence, ‘mentally harass’ SOC and denigrate blackness since their erection is rooted in ideology (Mpatlanyane 2018:9; Mbembe 2016:30; Clark et al 2019:7). To date and non-exhaustively, the initiative has revised several university building titles and has inserted African-centric installation art on campus (Visual Redress [sa]). Examples of interventions by the Visual Redress Initiative include the placement of a circular bronze sculpture of prominent female South African leaders alongside the Rooiplein, aerial maps of communities in the Stellenbosch surrounds on the walls of the amphitheatre and the JS Gericke Library, welcoming expressions in South African dialects inlaid in cement benches (Mulder 2020).

The artistic interventions initiated by the university function as a visual manifesto of Stellenbosch University's revised aspirations and values; a commitment toward 1. being an “African university, rather than a university in Africa” and 2. a commitment to community-orientated heritage (Putting Africa back in our universities [sa]). Belonging proceeds “as much from visceral, affective and pre-discursive processes as it does from the materialising force of discursively embedded representations” (Crang et al. 2010:2316).¹⁹ Arguably, the intervention of the VRP aims to negotiate affectual and emotional encounters in public space in response to the aforementioned alienating atmosphere. Affect is, according to non-representational theory, ““a form of landscape engineering that is gradually pulling itself into existence, producing new forms of power as it goes’ (Thrift 2008:187)” (cited by Bennett 2019:112).

Harking back to Hendrick’s assertion that Universities are rigged spaces for transformation, and redress on Stellenbosch University Campus, Barad’s comment stands out here:

¹⁹ This is largely the perspective of non-representational geographers.

a remediative response may be important, but it must be remembered that remediation does not constitute an undoing of loss and the recovery of some prior state of existence, as if the clock could be turned back to an earlier time...the ‘re’s’, like ‘restoration’, ‘reintroduction’, ‘rehabilitation’, ‘remediation’ must be taken as questions, not answers, and in doing so policy makers need to confront the questions of agency and responsibility, the violence of all cuts (including ‘restorative’ ones), and their constitutive entanglements, with all the associated ethical, epistemological, and ontological implications of the reconfigurings of spacetime mattering... What is entailed in matters of justice is paying careful attention to the ghosts in all their materiality (Juelskjaer & Schwennesen 2012:21-22).

2.2.2 Unruly Transformation & Disorder

“You cannot only make use of institutional structures or platforms or committees to bring about change, you must find other avenues and you must be disruptive...and I think that that is the general mandate of students.”
(Van Rooi 2020).

Formal transformation is long-winded owing to bureaucracy, stakeholder involvement politics, and participatory practices (non exhaustively) (Transformation Indaba 2020; Verwoerd 2018:9). I conducted an interview with Leslie Van Rooi, Senior Director of Social Impact & Transformation at Stellenbosch University, in which Van Rooi (2020) stated that the university might be understood to be alienating on two fronts— the “white European and colonial” and “pristine and clean.” Looping back to settler colonialism and apartheid, social stratification is evidenced in that “members of a society are sorted according to different mechanisms that hierarchise the social spheres; these relations are cemented by a codification of the network” (Massumi 2002:63-64). I approach Van Rooi’s descriptions as an indicator of a particular institutional space/place. In theory, the institution may be thought of as a tree-model. The tree-model (stratum) is a Deleuzeguattarian organisational model

describing how structures emerge through stratification.²⁰ The institution has a central structure (trunk), roots emerge from a central source, and the branches articulate a hierarchic structure. Similarly, Stellenbosch University has various prescriptive, centred, and hierarchical processes, policies, and normative codes of conduct. For example, in the context of Transformation at Stellenbosch University, the student body, student representatives, SITC, ITC, and the Rector's Management Team (RMT) delineate one such governance structure in ascending order. Van Rooi's statement above suggests that certain forms of unpredictable interaction and productive disorder need to be included in campus life to bring about change.

The protest action of the 2015/16 fallist movement disrupted the space and status quo of campus action; to use Gough's (2006) expression, "shaking the tree, making a rhizome." In other words, shaking proximities, making new nodes. Arguably, protest action can be thought of as rhizomatic in that it is unpredictable and can actualise variegated potentialities and possibilities. Clarke et al. (2019:5), in conversation with Lefebvre, state, "the institutional spaces of HE...all direct behaviour to the needs of the institution, while deterring inappropriate and counter-productive conduct." Given that institutional space constrains behaviour and protest is rhizomatic, one can gather that institutional space actively resists the budding rhizome or rather, attempts to contain it. In other words, some constraints function in an institutional way, and the institution obstructs many things in ways. Edensor (2012: [sp] quoting Adam 1995:66) states that "'when, how often, how long, in what order and at what speed' are governed by 'norms, habits, and conventions' about temporarily." Arguably, this form of unpredictable, rhizomatic development in which complexity yields unexpected results in the advocacy of change is termed unruly transformation. Unruly transformation featured positively at the SU 2020 Transformation Indaba in reaction to the point that solitary, top-down approaches to transformation are ill-efficient alone (Gready et al. 2014:340). In other words, activism and bottom-up transformation play a pivotal role in materialising change.

²⁰ DeLanda enumerates two organisational models: sedimentary (strata) and meshwork (Massumi 2002:61).

Public space on campus affords certain routines for action and constrains others (affordances).²¹ For example, the Rooiplein is a large red bricked area allocated to student movement from point A to B. Therefore, to linger, sit, gather, discover, or way-fair on the Rooiplein is constrained by the space (via the lack of conducive object-bodies and force of normative conduct) and to block the transitional space it to thwart the normative (academic) functioning of the space. However, Clarke et al. (2019:5) state that institutional spaces “see a coming together of architecture, social hierarchies, behavioural codes as well as human— and object-bodies in a manner that can be unpredictable and indeed, transgressive.” For example, as seen during the #OpenStellenbosch movement and occupation events- the institution’s force for order is evident in student suspension, expulsion, criminalisation, and heightened security presence (Mtembu 2015; Mpatlanyane 2018:129).

Conclusion

In Chapter Two, I reference the Visual Redress Project (VRP) as an example of how social justice and transformation are negotiated in/through the politically charged material environment of Stellenbosch University campus. I do not aim to meaningfully contribute to this initiative as an outcome of my research, but rather to illustrate the imbrication of the social, political, cultural, and spatial in the public spaces of the university institution within this chapter. This is sustained through the palimpsest metaphor and the idea of acting in dialogue with what is already here/there. I have illustrated how Stellenbosch University space/place is negotiated in terms of socio-political prerogatives and how negotiation is also something that takes place between the human and non-human. I have done so by illustrating how object-bodies play a role in affecting and effecting action in public space. Furthermore, through illustrating the complexity of the Stellenbosch University context, a distributive agency is suggested in terms of human and non-human forces acting in negotiation. This chapter sets the tone for the next chapter, which attempts to explore an extension of participation other-wise. It suggests something of the shortfall

²¹ Affordances refer to the possibilities for action presented by an environment, thereby implying that meaning is not cognitively constructed but can be discovered (Withagen & van der Kamp 2018:2).

of a humanist conception of agency and the potential benefits of attending to materiality.

As discussed in this chapter, the contestation in the post-apartheid public spaces of Higher Education in South Africa points to the complexity of space/place and hence provides a vital frame for exploring, understanding, and intervening in the context of Stellenbosch University campus. Hulst and Yanow (2016:97) provide a point of inspiration for my research in their discussion of “framing as sense-making work.” Sense-making, they argue, is one of three acts of framing (the others’ being naming and storytelling). It involves open activities in action with both human and non-human actors and entails bodily ways of knowing (ibid 2013:98). In the context of Stellenbosch University, this translates to the negotiation of the spatial-context and hinges on the idea that the problems of place/space are not linearly defined but are multifaceted and complex.

Chapter 3

The word ‘otherwise’ in the title of this thesis signals a mode of change, going up against, doing in another manner, and break in the status quo. In this chapter, I outline several concepts that I argue belie my practice. In Chapter Two, I discuss the thickening, slowness, and entanglement of space/place on Stellenbosch University campus— an ethical attempt to acknowledge the complexity of the context. This sets the groundwork for this chapter to come. I consider otherwise as other-wise (Witt 2018); a re-orientation toward the *who* in ‘*who* takes part’ in public space. I argue that this is relevant to strengthening the threads of this research in terms of an awareness of the ontological complexity of space/place and a desire to come to know about place/space, albeit via a partial account.

In this section, I discuss concepts and dispositions that lean toward a prospect of making and navigating *otherwise*. I explore an ethics of care as a means to subvert human centrality and individualism, and I attend to how this may be practicable in and through arts-based research. I do so by exploring deep listening as the enactment of care, drawing on two examples of artists and research practitioners who combine care, art, and a notion of relationality as extending beyond the human. I propose that deep listening and weaving oneself into the fabric of material life may enable particular kinds of negotiations within intra-actions between the human and non-human. This focus on care flows from a desire to come to know about space/place in dialogue with the inanimate, non-human, and the kinds of space for understanding this opens up. In the context of such dialogue within art-based research, I engage with the idea of becoming ‘apprentice to materials’— meaning to enter into experimentation with them— as my engagement with materials is itself a negotiation. The materials afford possibilities for action; they bend one way, break in another, maintain material memory in both ways or not, and make me think. This notion of centering materials in practice fits squarely under the umbrella of ‘thinking (with/) through materials.’ It is this thinking, negotiating, learning, doing, making that makes up this practical research experiment. Furthermore, I touch on diagrammatic thinking

to illustrate a mode of thinking and doing that honours the generative and thick nature of matter, attempting to close the ontological gap between thinking and making.

3.1 Extending Participation Other-wise

Stellenbosch University public space, the bureaucracy of ethical clearance applications, COVID-19, state regulation, and an array of other actants funnelled the research into rhizomatic offshoots under negotiation, pushing new potentialities and looping back around. In the initial stages of my research and before the COVID-19 pandemic, I experienced a strong methodological prerogative to conduct participatory research with students. However, the pandemic posed a radically unfamiliar terrain for participatory research and due to the obstacles that I faced with ethical clearance procedures and in-person research, I shifted course to *my* making practice. The COVID-19 pandemic also changed how I experienced the Stellenbosch University campus. I used to experience it as a hub of chatter and student interaction. However, the lack of student presence on public space on campus during the pandemic rendered it bare and isolating, and it highlighted, for me, the thing power of the space/place.²² COVID-19 is a prime example of the capacity of the (viral) non-human to alter human trajectories radically and, “[i]t also teaches us that non-humans can, in fact, make injustice acutely manifest” (Khatchadourian 2020:1649).²³ Understood from a post-humanist and new materialist perspective, Stellenbosch University’s public space is a complex spatio-temporal congealing of ontologically diverse bodies that are radically re-mattered during a global COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdown.

After shifting my research orientation, I reassessed my taken-for-granted view of participatory research as a ‘best fit method’ for negotiating the spatial context of Stellenbosch University campus— a decisively humanist and discursive approach. In

²² Jane Bennett proposes “that thing-power is the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle” (2010:6).

²³ For example, Jon (2020), in *A manifesto for planning after the coronavirus: Towards planning of care*, states that “Minority communities are bearing the brunt of the virus due to pre-existing health conditions caused by chronic societal inequities.”

this section, I touch on the problematics of participation from within a humanist frame and then attempt to expand the notion in more-than-human terms, shifting from human-human relations to a disposition that is ‘other-wise’ and one that points to the more-than-human other. I do not present this as a ‘better’ approach, nor as a means to answer directly to social injustice prerogatives, but rather as a promising rhizomatic offshoot in a practice of negotiating space/place in its material-discursive complexity.

24

In *Forward back together, and the materialities of taking part* (2019:154), Simon Pope asks, “how is our concept of participation transformed when we consider the materialities of taking part? Also, in what ways would a hybrid, ‘more-than-human’ formulation transform our understanding of what constitutes a ‘public’ for public art?” Arguably, Pope’s questions fall within a field of literature relating new materialist thought to social justice practice. Pope attempts to depart from a human-centred (anthropocentric) model of participation and agency (Pope 2019:157).

²⁵ Aligning new materialism in cultural geography and the post-humanism agenda, Pope (2019:160) proposes the more-than-human (that which exceeds human) in ‘*who takes part*’ in order to “re-animate the missing ‘matter’ of landscape, focusing attention on bodily involvements on the world in which landscapes are co-fabricated between more-than-human bodies and a lively earth” (Pope 2019:161 quoting Whitmore 2006:603). Pope’s (2019:162) reference to ‘missing’ matter is understood

²⁴ Bennett introduces her notion of vibrant matter related to hoarders and what their relationship with things can reveal about things themselves. Significantly, Bennett clarifies that if her prerogative was to attend to the treatment of hoarding as a mental impairment, she would not set aside theories of mental illness to account for the hoarding condition. Rather, she is interested in the vital capacity of things and in what one may learn from hoarding and hoards when normative explanation is set aside. Similarly, my work does not attend to the treatment of social injustice. Instead, it is a practical experiment. COVID-19 has highlighted the active role of the non-human and *this* more-than-human preoccupation is increasingly accentuating the way for a post-covid-new-normal.

²⁵ Pope unpacks his argument concerning the modes of participation involved in the public sculpture *forward* from its genesis to destruction, stating that the ‘intensity of engagement’ includes multiple materially transformative events and is not concentrated to the sculpture’s conception, therefore, expanding the “range of *people taking part*” (ibid 2019:156). However, to stop there, Pope states would be to overlook “the various other things— whose agency also provided the ‘creative impetus’ for the work... [excluding] the most vibrant agencies who took part in the artwork’s material transformation” (2019:157).

via Barad's (2007) reference (in dialogue with quantum physics) to how the apparatuses in experiments foreground some things and omit others.

Pope states that this ontology is radically different from that which underscores participation in contemporary art, positioning participation as a human-human relation. This implies that an ontology of participation preoccupied with human relationships misses life's vitality and sticky thickness. From a post-human/new materialist standpoint, we are always already *with* the world, in relation, and entangled in its sticky web of relationships. Pope references Barad in this regard, stating that the inevitable entanglement,

compels us to think of participation in a more-than-human world in ways that disrupt both the democratic claims of participatory arts' practices and discourse, and also its critic's insistence on withdrawal or opting-out as an expression of agency (2019:162).

To this point, Pope references the prominent critique of participatory art in Claire Bishop's *Artificial Hells* (2012 cited by Pope). Bishop, drawing on Rancière, states that participatory art assumes that emancipation is achieved through creating a collective in a moment of encounter in which social bonds are strengthened. In this instance, the distance between the spectator and artist is destabilised. Rancière, cited by Bishop, critiques this, stating that this distance is always there and cannot be reduced (Pope 2019:164 citing Rancière 2011:5). The point Pope makes here is that this ontology remains one of separateness and is therefore inadequate when thinking about the more-than-human. He (2019:166) concludes the article questioning if this kind of distance "can ever prove adequate to the more-than-human 'universe'." Pope's opening questions are thick provocations, albeit not resolved in his writing.

Therefore, the prerogative to include human-human participation in 'social' justice contexts, understood through a vital materialist frame and one that draws on Jane Bennett, suggests that although we are always situated in more-than-human contexts, "humans and pebbles would share less of any given 'problem' [in terms of

what their bodies have in common], and would also have less of a collective capacity to do anything about it” (McGregor & Knox 2016:[sp]). As previously mentioned, this research does not attempt to contribute to social justice/ transformation directly; rather it is exploratory in its mode of negotiation in which the shift in focus from the social to the ecological is seen to open the space of negotiation to new possibilities.

3.1.1 From Embodiment to Entanglement

I explore more of what this shift from the social to the ecological may mean in the practice of making. Prominent French philosopher, Merleau-Ponty largely challenged the mind and matter divide and produced ground-laying work for speculative realism, post-humanism, and new materialism (Ravisankar 2019:31). From a philosophical, phenomenological perspective, Merleau-Ponty spearheaded theoretical work on perception and embodiment, influencing a broad domain of successive scholars, including French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (Toadvine 2016). Merleau-Ponty’s work on embodiment underlines my understanding of where new materialism and post-humanism take flight and how my body is entangled in the making process. I begin this section with a brief look into dualistic thought, against which Merleau-Ponty and other scholars in the aforementioned fields set their focus.

Dualism is the division of things or principles into independent, irreducible categories, such as nature/culture, mind/body, subject/object, sensation/intellect etc.²⁶ This dualistic thinking proliferates traditional Western philosophy (Howard 2020). Accordingly, the mind is a non-physical mental faculty and accordingly, the body and sensation are peripheral to cognition. Furthermore, the primacy of visual and scientific reason dominates Western knowledge, shedding light on the common phrase ‘seeing is believing’. If the mind is taken as inseparable from the body and how the body experiences the world, this has radical implications for how we come to know. The dual subject/object and mind/matter categories enable the claim of objective knowledge about an object studied (Howard 2020). In *Sensory ethnography: perception, place, knowing, memory and imagination*, Sarah Pink (2009:3) states that

²⁶ The use of the forward slash in this paragraph on dualism is used to indicate a division.

“the idea that one might define a corporeal experience by reflecting on it and giving it meaning proffers a separation between body and mind and between doing (or practice) and knowing. This implies the objectification of the corporeal experience by the rationalising mind.” Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of the body deconstructs the subject-object and mind-body divide (Pink 2011a:345). He states, “[t]he world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject which is nothing but a project of the world, and the subject is inseparable from the world, but from a world which the subject itself projects” (cited by Reid & Mgombelo 2014:178). He rejects “the exclusive assumption of the natural sciences and modern psychology, which treats the physical body (‘korper’) as a thing, object, instrument, or machine under the command and control of an all-knowing mind, thereby challenging the Cartesian Cogito”, originating in Desecretes (Zarrilli 2006:48).

Furthermore, the senses are unified in Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of the body that concerns the body’s lived experience. Sensation, to do with the body and experience, is always in relation to external materialities and is fundamental to perception. The primacy of vision is shifted to a view of the senses as non-hierarchical (Pink 2009:7). A similar theoretical grounding is shared by anthropologist Tim Ingold (2011:315), who defines the senses as follows:

For the senses are not keyboards or filters that mediate the traffic between mind and world. They are rather— as Gibson (1966) always insisted — aspects of the functioning of the living being in its environment. And their synergy lies in the fact of their being powers of the same organism, engaged in the same action, and attending to the same world (see also Merleau-Ponty 1962: 317–18).

The work of Merleau-Ponty, in conjunction with the ecological perspective of James Gibson, heavily influences the re-centering of the body and senses in human experience within the field of ethnography and notably in the work of sensory ethnographer Sarah Pink (Pink 2009:5). Specifically, research concerning a sense of place is predominantly approached via phenomenology, the study of the ways we

experience things. Hunter states “[p]erception [our being-in-the-world originating from Heidegger] is the primary locus of local knowledge, intrinsically experienced as ‘lived experience’” (Hunter 2009:91-92).

The term embodiment denotes this inseparability of the mind and body and capitulates a non-dualist understanding of human reality or lifeworld; “meaning and form are inseparable” hence, the notion of the material-discursive (Reid 2008:296). Walter and Suina (2018:234 citing Husserl) state that “the lifeworld is the taken for grantedness of our embodied realities...Our lived experience is inseparable from the social, cultural and physical world in which we exist and our experiences of this world are shaped by our relational positioning within it”. Hence, we come to know with and through the body.

Although we are embodied, we are also emplaced, that is, situated in place. Emplacement originated in anthropology and is a new mobility paradigm that emphasises the imbrication of body-mind-environment. Sarah Pink (2011) advocates a shift from embodiment to emplacement with reference to the new possibilities that are brought about when analysing skilled performance (in her context, bullfighting). This is contingent on the idea that the event is an ecology of human and non-human actors and that there is never one event that’s the same as the configurations are constantly changing (Pink 2011:344). The example of “an intensity of things in process” within the bullfight as place-event are “the bullfighters, the audience, the bulls, the horses, sand, the materiality of the arena, the sun” (Pink 2011a:349). The bullfighter’s multiple experiences of the event may differ; however, this is not owed only to the happenings between the bull and bullfighter in a static and embodied context. Therefore, understanding the event through place as a flux of intensities in movement accounts for an ecology of things– “emotions, sensations, persons and narratives” and non-human entities including environmental components (Pink 2011:350). This attunement to the mind-body-environment has implications for how we do research. The premise of Hunter’s (2009) argument in *Researching as if place mattered: toward a methodology of emplacement* is that the researcher needs to become sensuously aware (emplaced) to understand the entanglement of people and

place. He states that “[t]his relationship [the ‘knitting together of self and place’] is among the most fundamental to human experience” (Hunter 2009:87). Furthermore, applying this understanding to a fieldwork context, therefore, requires “flexible purposing [that] can open rich, deep and genuine encounters between humans and the world and [that] allows for an approach that values spontaneity, playfulness, and intuition” (Witt 2019 62-63 citing Dewey 1916).

Embodiment and emplacement, however, stop short of the radical relationality proposed by Barad’s concept of entanglement and intra-action, as perception in phenomenology is human-centred (Springgay & Zaliwska 2015:144). However, the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty is taken as an important foundation to understanding further developments in the philosophical inquiry of new materialism and post-humanism and in terms of the art-making process including the embodied maker (Ravisankar 2019:86), and space/place.

3.1.2 Post-human Space/Place

Considering that the ‘field’ of my exploratory research includes space/place, I now take a closer look at how space/place is understood, considering that the integration of mind-body-place merits a reconceptualisation of place that rejects old formations of place as empirical reality and as a static container and bounded locality (Pink 2011:348). For Doreen Massey, space and place are tied-up. Place is relational; “a constellation of processes rather than a thing” (Massey 2005:141) and “an ongoing product of interconnections” (Massey 2005:107). Hence, place is open, unfinished, and boundless.²⁷ This offers further theoretical insight into the critique of Stellenbosch University as an Afrikaans university.

²⁷ Massey’s view emerges from the perspective that if space is reconciled with time as space-time (thus change), place is in constant flux.

Both Massey and Ingold emphasise movement in the configuration and perception of place (Pink 2011:349)²⁸. Ingold influenced human geography in thinking about place rhythmically and ecologically (Hubbard & Kitchin 2010:249). He (cited by Pink 2011:349) states that “for inhabitants...the environment does not consist of the surroundings of a bounded place but of a zone in which their several pathways are thoroughly entangled.” This is reflected in the following question posed by Ingold (2008:1796), “[a] drawn circle, is the line the trajectory of a movement or the perimeter of a figure?” The question stresses how “the logic of inversion has turned the generative movements of life into boundaries of exclusion.” He posits that movement is vital to life, no less place.

A meshwork of entangled lines replaces ‘a constellation of processes’ in Ingold’s relational analogy of ‘things’ in movement (Ingold 2008:1796). ‘Lines of becoming’ loop and knot and extend out into a matted jumble of threads, meeting again in knots (Ingold 2013:132). Ingold distinguishes a knot from a node and, thereby, a meshwork from a network. The distinction is contingent on movement. Knots entangle the lines of flow of their connection, whereas nodes are points of connection in which their threads figure statically (Ingold 2013:132). Ingold contends that network topology presupposes separate entities that are mutually constitutive only after they link (Ingold 2008:1796); “it is not, then, that organisms are entangled in relations. Rather, every organism— indeed, everything— is itself an entanglement, a tissue of knots whose constituent strands, as they become tied up with other strands, in other bundles, make up the meshwork.” Therefore, according to Ingold, cited by Lorimer (Hubbard et al. 2010:250-251), “a person is something, or someone, who is imminent; a trajectory that exists as it goes along.” Therefore, ontologically and epistemologically, we come to know in movement (Hubbard et al. 2010:251).

Furthermore, this entanglement also has political implications. In *Becoming otherwise: artful urban inquiry* (2020:163), Rika Sitas cites Amin (2008:8), stating:

²⁸ It is important to mention that Ingold and Massey do not read space and place as interchangeable terms. This is capitulated in Massey’s book titled *For space* (2005) and Tim Ingold’s book titled *Against space* (2009).

the potential of public space [is] ‘in the entanglement between people and the material and visual culture of public space, rather than solely in the quality of social interaction between strangers... It is the ‘traces’ and ‘resonances’ of the event that hold the possibility of political becoming.

Massey (cited by Baldwin 2012) “insists that negotiations ‘take place within and between both human and nonhuman.” Roberts (2018:4;7) states that “the lived, everyday, and performative, therefore, is the ‘space’ within and from which the world– *our* world, *this* world, any given world we are speaking towards– erupts into being...our understanding and experience of space is itself action and praxis based.” This resonates with Ingold’s view of making: “making is a practice of weaving, in which practitioners bind their own pathways or lines of becoming into the texture of material flows comprising the lifeworld” (Ingold 2010:91). Massey and Ingold’s account of space/place inspires the idea of ‘threading’ and tuning-in sensorily and emotively in practice.²⁹ Although we are always already entangled in the world, what this means, in the words of Brian Manning, is that “it’s more like being right where you are – more intensely” (2002:212). In the context of this research, it also involves the dimension of doing and making ‘otherwise’.

3.2 Making Otherwise: Propositions for Practice

3.2.1 Ethics of Care, Deep Listening & a Gift

An ethics of care is valuable to this research as it links social justice thinking to a perspective on relationality; it highlights how people exist relationally with other human beings *and* the environment in a state of constant vulnerability and interdependence. In Chapter One, I touch on the neo-liberal, neo-colonial forces at play that impede transformation. Furthermore, I spoke about Nancy Fraser’s

²⁹ Wayfaring, tuning-in, and weaving become metaphorical guides in this research practice and will be discussed further in the third chapter.

participatory parity and how her theory informs the Visual Redress Initiative. In this section, I aim to integrate care into the theoretical terrain of participatory parity and social justice, illustrating its relevance, however, from a humanist perspective. I then attempt to extend an ontological and political ethics of care through the vital frame of feminist new materialism, in order to navigate care as an ethics that extends beyond human-human relationality; transitioning from ‘matters of fact’ to ‘matters of care’ (De La Bellacasa 2012). I tend to Puig De La Bellacasa’s speculative ethics; an attempt to read feminist ethics of care diffractively through a relational ontology. Thinking *about* care presents an avenue for thinking and doing *with* care. This will help me to navigate an ethics of care as an ethical non-normative obligation and form of labour. Important to note here is that there is no one way and the best way of practising care. It is context-specific. Furthermore, it informs a relational ecology of practice based on how and with what I relate.

In *Care and affective relations: Social justice and sociology*, Lynch, Kalaitzake, and Crean (2020) attempt to shift care from the periphery into political purview through a discussion of affective and relational in/justice.³⁰ This sits within and as an extension of literature on the social and political salience of emotion and affect, shedding light on the everyday in relation to institutions and systems (ibid 2020:10).³¹ The authors suggest a fourth dimension to Fraser’s dialectic— relational justice. This expansion of Fraser’s political topology responds to the hegemonic global value system under neoliberal capitalism, and unrelenting individual self-interest and care indifference. The authors explain that “thinking through and with care is also a different epistemological perspective and other-centered way of knowing the world with the intention of addressing its injustices” (Lynch et al. 2020:2). The authors relegate the scarce handling of affective relationality in Fraser’s participatory parity to “the *who* of social justice”, stating that Fraser’s reference to the independent adult is “premised on an individualist rather than relational concept of the person.”

³⁰ “Affective relations of love, care, and solidarity” are traditionally pushed to the periphery in the Western canon (Lynch et al. 2020).

³¹ Lynch et al. (2020) frame care as enacted between people and within social relations. Participation in participatory parity is “social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life” (Fraser 2007: 20).

Care is constituted through its practice. It is a process, “care is fluid, it has no clear boundaries, and no career structure; it is governed by its own ethical-relational logic and cannot be completed in the measurable time that both bureaucratization and commodification require” (ibid 2020:2).³² Relational ethics and inter/dependencies govern care relations. Care is a practicable ethical disposition, a mode of thinking and learning, generating grounded insights. Lynch et al (2020:11) say the following of the relevance of affective relations of care:

For it is within the fields of affective care that people learn how to nurture and feel for others, intimately, locally, and distally. Ethical dispositions are learned experientially by doing and being loving, caring, and solidaristic, and/or by seeing the harm the abuses of these dispositions has on humanity, other species, and the environment. The ‘ethical practice of care’ enables people to learn and hear injustices from the ground up. It ‘emerges as a generative way’ of making private ‘sufferings’ and injustices politically actionable.

Maria Puig De La Bellacasa, in *‘Nothing comes without its world’: thinking with care* (2012), re-reads the work of Donna Haraway through the notion of thinking with care and the kind of politics this produces. She discusses care in/through the practice of knowing and writing. This presents an important point of interest for me as arts-based research and knowing in/through practice (the methodology of this research) suggest that this ethics of care may be extended to and practicable within the relations between maker, material, tool, and the environment under exploration.

Although the ethics of care is a moral issue— arguably, Lynch et al.’s (2020) discussion follows this grounding— it is also an ontological issue. To enter into care is to enter into relation, and *this* impetus on relationality holds ontological grounding (De La Bellacasa 2012:198). Importantly, care does not attempt to set forward a world absolved of conflict; rather, through a feminist framing of care, care practice is

³² Lynch et al. (2020:5) acknowledge the negative spectrum of care as gendered work and social burden. An ethics of care and relational justice traditionally attend to the disenfranchisement of women as care work is in this sense highly gendered and has historically been devalued in political and economic domains.

grounded “in vital ethico-affective everyday practical *doings* that engage with the inescapable troubles of interdependent existences” (ibid 2012:199). “Nothing comes without its world” (De La Bellacasa 2012) is an extract from Haraway’s writing on situated knowledges. The notion of situated knowledge suggests that knowledge is never objective and from the outside. It is a process that exists relationally that also plays a hand in the making of worlds and it is in this sense, thinking-for and thinking-with is in constant negotiation (ibid 2012:211). This sets the tone for her argument that care is required in processes of thinking and knowing (De La Bellacasa 2012:198). De La Bellacasa’s first port of call is the notion of thinking-with. The author explains, via the writing of Haraway, that we are inextricably embedded in a world of multiplicity and relationality. Our knowledge and writing are owed to such webs. Here, thinking with care reflects, “the embeddedness of thought in the worlds one cares for” (ibid 2012:202). De La Ballacasa (2012:212 citing Deleuze 1989:193), states:

knowing is not about prediction and control, but about remaining ‘attentive [emphasis in the original] to the unknown knocking at our door’. But though we do not know in advance what world is knocking, inquiring into *how* we can care will be required in how we will relate to the new.

De La Ballacasa’s passage regarding attentiveness propels me to speculate about a notion of care, kinship, and solidarity across species and more-than-human assemblages, what De La Bellacasa calls speculative ethics. She states that “transforming things into matters of care is a way of relating to them, of inevitably becoming affected by them, and of modifying their potential to affect others.”³³

Arguably, the concept of ‘productive failure’ in the research process attenuates this uncertain navigation with empathy and care (Witt 2018:152 citing

³³ In her book, *Speculative ethics in more than human worlds* (2017), Maria Puig De La Bellacasa shifts matters of fact to matters of concern via a discussion of the work of Bruno Latour and then, via a re-reading of Haraway, shifts matters of concern to matters of care.

Koro-Ljungberg 2016).³⁴ This attentiveness of care, as mentioned in the above quote, speaks to curiosity. De La Ballacasa states that the tight etymological knit of ‘care’ and ‘curiosity’ lends to the formulation of curiosity as “the care one takes of what exists and what might exist” (De La Ballacasa 2007:92 quoting Foucault cited in Latimer 2000). Attentiveness is therefore political and important to an ethics of care. Attentiveness, meaning “heedful, observant” and “expectant, hopeful” (Etymonline 2021), implies an (ethical) disposition hopeful of a gift - a gift presented by “the unknown knocking at the door” (De La Ballacasa 2012:212 citing Deleuze 1989:193). I am drawn to attention at the use of the word hope here. It resonates with me through a non-academic article regarding a precarious and ecologically damned world in which the author exclaims that “[h]ope is not a happy accident. Hope is a right that we must protect” (Florsheim 2021). This resonates with Nikos Papastergiadis’ statement, in *Hope: new philosophies for change*, that “faith has to be constantly replenished – and that hope which is crushed by history and experience” (2002:84). Florsheim’s conviction is borrowed from Mariame Kabas’s (2021) statement that “hope is a discipline” and should be practised daily, from within her writings on activism and transformative justice practice. It reminds me of the sense of despair I felt at reading Hendrick’s statement that “universities are ‘rigged spaces’ because of their foundational alignment to the norms, values, cultures, and epistemologies of the West” (2018:18), and presents me with a prospective hopeful and caring way forward and contentment with its unfinished business.

Furthermore, De La Bellacasa discusses ‘touch’ as a mode of caring thinking.³⁵ Touch, whether taken literally as physical contact or as an affective and emotional experience of ‘being touched’, highlights thinking and affect as embodied (ibid 2017:100). She states:

[t]o think with touch has a potential to inspire a sense of connectedness that can further problematise abstractions and disengagements of (epistemological)

³⁴ Productive failure acknowledges that complex contexts require that researchers resist the linear and stringent qualitative research processes and enter into a space of uncertainty and methodological complexity in which failure is potentially productive (Witt 2018:152 citing Koro-Ljungberg 2016).

³⁵ However, the author speaks of this in relation to haptic technologies.

distances, the bifurcations between subjects and objects, knowledge and the world, affects and facts, politics and science. Touch counteracts the sensorial metaphor of vision, dominant in modern knowledge-making and epistemologies (2017:97).

The author continues (ibid 2017:100 citing Dumm 2008:158) that “losing touch is a flight into the ‘futility of total thought’ while touching is a turn to the ‘partial nature of action,’ a move ‘from transcendence to immanence, from the untouchable to the embrace of corporeal life.’”

Although touch, like care, is already omnipresent, this bodily dispositioning toward relationality is similar to deep listening, which refers to a multisensory attentiveness to the world. The concept of deep listening has been argued to be an enactment of care. In *Craft, relational aesthetics, and ethics of care*, Belinda MacGill (2019) meditates on/through her craft practice of re-crafting found sea ball assemblages of mottled seagrass, sand, nylon line, etc.³⁶ She outlines “a conceptual framework for looking and listening” in/through re-crafting; a conceptual framework for a dialogic craft model including relational aesthetics and ethics of care. Economic purpose and value determinants are impaired in/through the craft (ibid 2019:415). The framework is ‘a framework of community’ and sensitive relationality in/through craft, which differs from Western hegemonic philosophy (MacGill 2019:408). MacGill describes her practice as follows, “[t]he hands mediate the craft practice as Sea Balls have their own temperament: fibrous material float to my working surface as I weave, thread and pin” (2019:414). Based on this account, I get a sense of the vitality of the materials with which MacGill works. Furthermore, she states that embodied thought lines are too interknit in this re-crafting practice. Subsequently, MacGill’s (2019:412) conceptual framework implies epistemological consequences; embodied

³⁶ MacGill’s re-crafting of Sea Balls is craft-without-function and economic value. Craft practice is historically gendered (MacGill 2019:411) and pervades feminist critical literature. However, craft is re-appropriated in political realms as activism, such as craftivism. MacGill indicates that craft’s potential for political disruption, albeit ‘soft,’ emerges from the emotional economies in which it circulates (2019:413).

understanding informs knowledge via deep listening and dialogue. It entails a relational sense of being-in-the-world. Attunement and co-responding— a relational and generative orientation— requires multi-sensory engagement (sensory attunements). MacGill (2019:408) posits that the “listening, attunement and connecting” in her beachcombing is deep listening. She states:

deep listening is an enactment of care. It is an embodied listening that allows space and time for the sea to offer a gift and includes gratitude *to* the gift as an enactment of reciprocity... this is the enactment of reciprocity that works both ways between the gifting of the sea material and the purchasing of the material that I take with gratitude to turn into a craft object.

MacGill’s gesture is a gesture toward answering ‘the unknown knocking at the door’. The concept of the gift and reciprocity as it is interpreted here, pushes back against the colonial forces of domination of ‘nature’ and their contemporary manifestations of neglect and indifference.³⁷ In re-assembling the Sea Balls, MacGill (2019:409-410) meditates on the interdependency of human and non-human referencing land ethics of care in Indigenous knowledge, belonging and political practice; “the sea craft balls act as a way to sew myself [dis/comfortably] back into a place of relationality where the assemblages work metaphorically.” According to Ingold, the gift is “about forging concordance” (2017:58 cited by Naimi 2021:58), however, attunement and care practice can also hold the potential to be confronting and uncomfortable.

³⁷ The category of nature is one in which colonised people were relegated to by colonial settlers. In this sense, sketching a case for the non-human may precisely and radically challenge the very structures of Eurocentric thought that deemed indigenous people as other or half-human via the codification of differences into hierarchical and scientific (biological) discriminations and subsequent racial categories within a superior-inferior dialectic (i.e., conquerors-conquered). These categories presuppose a dehumanised subject or “non-subject” in relation to whiteness and partly justified colonial domination and exploitation (Maldonado-Torres 2007:244; Quijan 2007:168).

3.2.2 Becoming ‘Apprentice to Materials’

Looping back to De La Bellacase, in her discussion of the ethics of care, she briefly acknowledges that touch does not guarantee a ‘better’ way of knowing as knowing-through-touch and that the notion of touch is ambivalent— there are also negative and non-caring forms of touch (2017:99). In this next section on becoming an apprentice to materials, I allude to touch through a particular mode and view of making that seeks not to appropriate materials, but rather, to enter into an experimental relationship with them.³⁸ In other words, to want to understand what they do and not what they are, not to impose form on them, but to coax it out.

Arguably, MacGill’s craft is a mode of material thinking— a post-human reformulation of the instrumentality of matter in the art process in which agency is distributed to inanimate actors (Bolt 2007:2).³⁹ The dialogical ‘conversation’ takes place in the assemblage in which “the human is no longer outside of the assemblage directing the proceedings. The human being becomes just one material-semiotic actor engaged in complex conversation with other players” (Bolt 2007:2). This differs from making through thinking, for example, in the case of scientific experimentation.

Intersecting the agency of matter and artistic practice, theoretically, is radical:

creativity, like intelligence, is [viewed as] the property of the acting ensemble, not the individual... the acting ensemble is characterised by its emergent property... [, subsequently] the outcome cannot be known in advance... This relation is not a relation of mastery but one of co-emergence (Bolt 2007:2-3).⁴⁰

My art-based practice is embodied engagement and process-oriented investigation, “a practice of intra-acting with the world as part of the world in its

³⁸ I adopt this concept from Manuel De Landa, who, drawing on the thought of Deleuze, writes of entering into experimentation with materials as becoming an apprentice to materials (Bobbette 2008).

³⁹ Donna Haraway and Bruno Latour are two contemporary philosophers propelling this thinking.

⁴⁰ This speaks to the applicability of the concept of productive failure.

dynamic material configuring” (Barad 2007:379). Intra-acting explicates an ontology of imminence— entities do not hold an apriori autonomous existence (transcendent essences). Therefore, knowledge cannot be produced from the properties of individual entities, but “rather from ‘how things are ‘in-phenomena’ that is ‘being produced through a series of entangled relational possibilities’ [with other objects and things]” (Witt 2018:81 citing Malone 2015:8-9).

In *Making, knowing and being made: Hand-stitching beyond representation*, Emma Shercliff, unfolds her practice of tacit knowing in the form of non-decorative stitching craft, stating that “beyond producing an artefact, my stitching is also, therefore, a field of investigation” (2019:69). Schercliff’s art-based practice is informed by non-representational theory and anthropologies of making. Accordingly, knowledge in practice attenuates how material-into-artefact reciprocally transforms the maker and the material (Schercliff 2019:70). Schercliff (2019:71) cites Barad (2003:71) in this account, stating:

[t]he world *is* intra-activity in its differential mattering. It is through specific intra-actions that a differential sense of being is enacted in the ongoing ebb and flow of agency. That is, it is through specific intra-actions that phenomena come to matter— in both senses of the word (emphasis in the original).

Schercliff highlights a sense of “coming-up-against” tools and materials in her making process (2019:72). This sense of conflict between the maker’s intention and the materials and tools’ affordances resonates in my practice and highlights how intention is one such force among other forces intra-acting that have required me to engage differently. For example, making the knotted object involved a process involving my body, GPS tracking, physical campus space, paper, charcoal, fixative spray, scanner, printer, ducting tube, aluminium lined plastic pipe, toy stuffing, towelling paper, cold glue, scissors, box cutter, craft glue (figure 3).⁴¹

⁴¹ I will provide greater insight into my process resulting in this object in Chapter Three. The point to be made here is that particular types of agencies emerge from the combinations here and within these kinds of combinations, the materials and tools afford certain things.



Figure 3: The knot (work in progress), Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

The process witnessed several unforeseen redirections and resistances in “coming-up-against” the materials: the grams per square metre and composition of the paper correlate to the paper’s resistance to movement, shape and fold memory, and varying complex fractional geometries of crumpled paper. The aluminium flexible ducting pipe is fickle and capricious, extruding and bending continuously in frustratingly unpredictable irregular forms. The aluminium-lined plastic piping affords bendability and semi-fixity; however, the pipe composition governs the curve in a circular loop (i.e. its geometries of transformation). If the pipe is wound too tightly (with a small coil diameter), its curves will relax or become irregular and if

wound too loosely, it will pop out into a non-coil shape. Bonding paper to the aluminium foil via an economically viable crafters glue fails. Therefore, a cold glue adhesive is required. However, a cold glue adhesive versus crafters glue holds a higher average drying time, and therefore, gravitational forces pose greater resistance to making things stick. Furthermore, the tonal paper applications and directional ‘grain’ of the paper on the pipe flip direction and tone transitions clamour in sections— the result of missteps, miscalculations, and hindrances that prompted me to engage differently. It is a process of iteratively experimenting and developing tacit knowledge. I felt a strong sense that to remake the artefact would produce a different process and result in which I would be less mentally and sensibly attentive and would risk the artefact functioning as an end in itself. Schercliff’s (2019:72) reference to the ‘leakage’ of matter reverberates here:

When making, it is in moments of frustration at mistakes or of unforeseen difficulties that a practitioner is most consciously impressed by the “leakage” of matter, more so than a skilfully executed, familiar manipulation of material, which can sometimes go unnoticed, so seamless in collaboration between hand, eye, mind, tool, and material. Encountering leakage like this disrupts the process, slows it down, inviting reflection, imagination, and adjustment.

The leakage disrupts the process *and*, arguably, provides lines of flight. In *An ecological approach to creativity in making* (2018:4), Withagen and van der Kamp state, “ideas are not the starting point of working with materials, and by no means instruct the body. Instead, we believe that ideas are better thought of as constraints that originate in the correspondence of maker and material.” Withagen et al. (2018) extend Gibson’s theory on affordance(s) to reformulate creativity in making— ideas and creativity emerge through action and in correspondence (Ingold 2013:6 cited by Withagen et al. 2018:3).⁴² I view the making process *and* starting point not as powered by individual intention that masterfully translates mental concept to physical

⁴² “Correspondence... is the process by which beings or things literally answer to one another over time, for example in the exchange of letters or words in conversation, or of gifts, or indeed in holding hands... This is not about the exchange of information, as communication is often understood today; it is rather about forging a concordance” (Naimi 2021:58 citing Ingold 2017:14).

artefact.⁴³ The ‘knot’ is not this. My practice extends beyond the making of an artefact to the process and tensions arising therein as being a valuable space for investigation and negotiation, specifically within the type of material engagement I practise in. I view “how [I] begin, how [I] proceed from ‘here’” as a matter of orientation (Ahmed 2012:236). In *Orientations matter*, Sara Ahmed (2010:236;254 citing Schultz & Luchmann) states:

The place in which I find myself, my actual ‘here,’ is the starting point for my orientation in space. The starting point for orientation is the point from which the world unfolds: the ‘here’ of the body and the ‘where’ of its dwelling.

Furthermore, Ahmed (ibid 2010:234) states that “[w]hat matters is itself an effect of proximities: we are touched by what comes near, just as what comes near is affected by directions we have already taken”— shifting focus from intention to affect in the making process.

During the initial stages of my practice-based research, I walked campus as a method of weaving, tuning-in, and entangling myself in space/place. This relates to the “knitting together of self and place” that Hunter suggests (2009:87). Via a smartphone app, the global positioning system (GPS) tracked my movement, (re)presentationally (figure 4).⁴⁴

⁴³ This perspective maintains the duality of mind and matter.

⁴⁴ I prefer the word (re)presentation to representation in that I critically approach representation as the mirror to an ‘objective’ reality, hence (re)presentation.

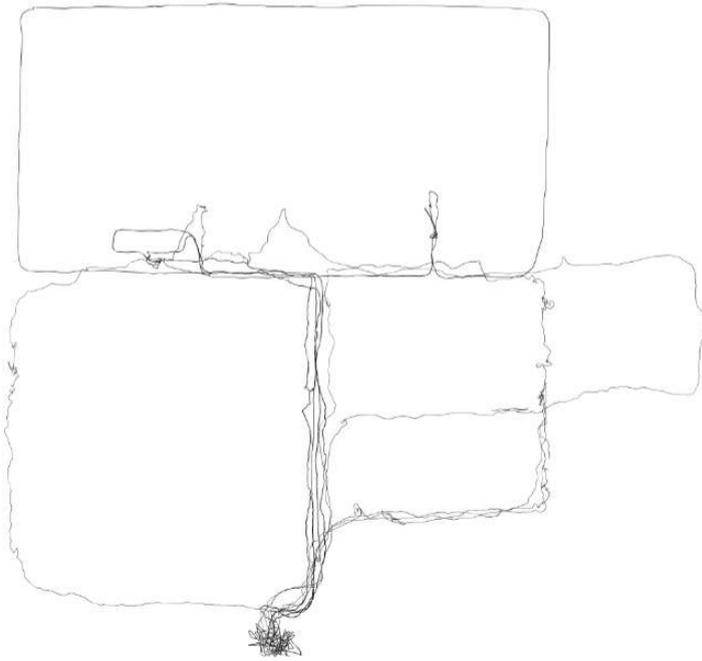


Figure 4: GPS tracked walking routes, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Digital composition by author.

The app's convention of (re)presentation— staggered, jittered lines, Tim Ingold's *The life of lines* (2010) reading provocation, my body's relation to the ground, the privilege of paper in my 'landscape of knowledge' (Shercliff 2019:70 citing Ahmed 2010),⁴⁵ congregate in intensity and a direction and line of flight emerges;⁴⁶ a forward gesture— making the line physical.⁴⁷ The line moves off the screen via a cut into dimensional space— itself becoming a body in motion (figure 5). Oliviera (2016:45) has said that “[f]rom the initial conditions of an encounter to the emergence of novelty, creativity reconfigures the implications and explications of possibility and potentiality... Hence, the emergence of novelty corresponds to a determinate

⁴⁵ I am a Visual Communication Designer by profession and so, I have extensively worked with paper as a medium in illustration, print, and packaging, and I have developed a preferential affinity towards it as an artistic medium.

⁴⁶ Intensity refers to an affectual relation.

⁴⁷ These components are not isolated but form part of a greater research assemblage. Furthermore, productive reading provocation/s here function as a mode of thinking through theory in an open way (Witt 2018:160).

transformation of its own enabling conditions.” In other words, potentials shift in proximity in an encounter, affording new potentials and in/determinancies.



Figure 5: Line translation, 2021.

Photography by author.

Materials afford possibilities for action and in altering the affordances, new affordances can be made. These affordances are practically experienced. Withagen et al. (2018) state that creativity is the unconventional *and* meaningful use of affordances. Arguably, this relates creativity to constraint. In *Creating when you have less: The impact of resource scarcity on product use creativity* (Mehta & Zhu 2015:767-768) find that,

scarcity salience [versus abundance] activates a constraint mindset that persists and manifests itself through reduced functional fixedness in subsequent product usage contexts (i.e., makes consumers think beyond the

traditional functionality of a given product), consequently enhancing product use creativity.

Arguably, scarcity alters how bodies are oriented toward things— heightening attentiveness and experimentation to alter affordances and proximities, producing new affordances in a meaningful way. A more dialogic relationship between a person and ‘discreet matter/object’ develops.⁴⁸

Creativity is radically revisioned through a relational understanding of it as the emergent property of intra-action. In *Creativity as intra-action: Relational entanglement and creative becoming within a space of schooling*, Naimi (2021:57 citing Tanggaard 2013), states, “it is contact with or resistance from the materials with which we work that causes new ideas to arise.”

Lines of flight, as they emerge, are an invitation with “the potential ‘to set things in motion, incite questions, produce ideas’” (Witt 2018:253 citing Ketchabaw et al. 2017:7). In this way, the making process is unpredictable and may unfold in different ways. This is one such example of the value of arts-based research in that “[s]uch movement cannot be gained through contemplative knowledge alone, but takes the form of concrete understandings which arise in our dealings with ideas, tools, and materials of practice” (Barrette & Bolt 2007:33). Here, I quote MacKay, Solder & Wyatt’s (2020) epigraph in *Aesthetic intervention: Lines of flight*, “[i]t starts with a line. A line on the page. A line of thought. A line which pulls together and dissents. Then multiplies and disperses.”

⁴⁸ I attempt to read Mehta & Zhu’s findings through an alternative lens as their approach maintains a human-centered status quo that “nonhuman things are there to be shaped by humans, through human labour, and for human Benefit” (Pope 2019:160).

3.2.3 The Diagrammatic

In Deleuzian terminology, ‘the diagram’ comes to substitute the notion of ‘the idea’. It has been discussed how creativity and ideas emerge in encounters and are, therefore, “never only a matter of determination but also a matter of indetermination” (Oliveira 2015:112). Moreover, “[t]he diagram must be considered from the perspective of this encounter between formal constraints and spontaneous processes of emergence” (Oliveira 2015:135). The diagram is central to the notion of an assemblage as it is the “[agency] of assemblage, organisation, and deployment” (Zdebik 2012:62). This use of the concept of the diagram, originating from Deleuze, refers to the conceptual rather than representational. The issue with representation is that it is a mode of capture. It infers that a word or image directly relates to something external to it and it maintains a distance with the world. However, a situation can never fully be captured through the language of representation. It leaves something of life’s thickness and complexity behind. The diagram in the conventional sense, is a (re)presentational drawing of associations and offshoots between things that already exist. However, in the interpretation of Deleuze, the diagram is an abstract machine. Rather than the diagram representing that which is external to it, it becomes a “productive mechanism of thought” that abstracts and refers to the ‘what-could-be’ (Zdebik 2012:16). “The diagram thus does not represent, but rather maps out possibilities prior to their appearance, their (re)presentation” (ibid 2012:1). Mapping in this way functions differently from tracing in that tracing reproduces what is already there, whereas mapping maps new territories and possibilities (ibid 2012:11). The map is more akin to the rhizome, and the tree-model is more akin to the function of tracing. However, the authors are careful not to pin the two functions squarely against each other, thereby thinking in dualistic terms.

In *Diagrams and Cuts: A Materialist Approach to Research-Creation*, Springgay and Zaliwska outline a mode of analysis that is diagrammatic praxis in which the authors engage pure edging and cutting together-apart to resist “‘diagramming as capture’ technique and qualitative semi-structured coding practices” (Springgay et al. 2015:138). According to Manning (2014:3 cited by Springgay et al. 2015:136,

“[w]hat emerges [from diagrammatic capture] is an account of experience that separated out the human subject from the ecologies of encounter.”

The concept of diagrammatic practice emerges against the idea that:

There is a given, a real world (data) that can be gathered together (collected) and described (analysed and known) as in logical positivism/empiricism...[which] tell us that the world is really like so we can know it and adjust our living accordingly (Springgay et al. 2015 citing St. Pierre 2013:255).

This concept of diagrammatic practice and thinking presents a rich avenue for practising what has been preached here. The third chapter will develop these concepts further in theory and practice.

Conclusion

Shifting a view of the social to a perspective of the ecological through a new materialist lens opens the possibility of becoming other-wise. It facilitates a shift in orientation to the non-human with which we are irreducibly and thickly entangled. The practice of “finding one’s way” in the research process becomes less linear, fixed, and procedural than traditional qualitative research. The shift in focus from intention to affect and from the human to the non-human, opens the space of negotiation to new possibilities. It presents the opportunity to think through materials in the art-making process. The work on embodiment of Merleau-Ponty, lays the grounding for this understanding and what the new materialist and post-humanist concepts that I engage with come to mean in relation to the making process. Creativity emerges from the assemblage in which matter ‘leaks,’ disrupting the process and forming lines of flight. “In other words, making is a matter of being a part of the entanglements (the relationalities) between materials, humans, non-humans, felt dimensions, expressions of frictions and ‘push back’, including the socio-material realities in which these take

place” (Lemieux & Rowsell 2020:[sp]). Furthermore, I have suggested that entering into an experimental relationship with materials offers a disposition in which both maker and material are mutually moulded and touch may display a caring manoeuvrability.

Contemporary care-indifference incites problematic relationalities and highlights the enactment of care as a potential avenue for moving forward in this context. I have argued for the relevance of relationalities of care at Stellenbosch University via extending Fraser’s participatory parity to include relational justice. From there, I have attempted to situate care as an ethics that extends beyond human-human relationality. A speculative ethics of care presents a means of being attentive and hopeful toward things. Although the notion of care is ambiguous, I have attempted to highlight deep listening as an enactment of care between human and non-human through “listening, attunement, and connecting” (MacGill 2019:408).

A nuanced thread through the writing thus far, is a challenge to modes of reduction and the incorporation of the more-than in the research context. The mode of exploring space/place as an assemblage is not procedural. It is exploratory and in this sense, the notion of productive failure attenuates this uncertain navigation with empathy and care. I have spoken here about creativity and ideas emerging from material thinking. Importantly for the next chapter, the diagram is not prescriptive, but rather is an emergent process and is therefore apt to this research process that attempts to come to know about space/place through a situated and open manner.

Chapter 4

Introduction

WTJ Mitchel, during the *Negotiating space* conference in 2008, defined ‘negotiation’ as “finding one’s way” (Pready & Neate 2008:7-8). I add to this definition to include “the care one takes of what exists and what might exist” (De La Ballacasa 2007:92 quoting Foucault cited in Latimer 2000). I interpret the practice of ‘finding one’s way’ as relating to how the research practitioner variously improvises and negotiates a passage in and through space and what form(s) this could take. This includes the processes of drawing close materials, ideas, and associations that give shape to objects and images in the course of arts-based practice.

My practice extends beyond making an artefact to the process and tensions arising therein as a valuable space for investigation and negotiation, specifically within the type of material engagement I practise in. It is embodied engagement and process-orientated investigation and entails being attentive, curious, and hopeful. The research process is open to surprise in the sense of the unexpected ‘knocking at the door,’ and therefore, becomes less linear, fixed, and procedural than traditional qualitative research. However, there are no guarantees of the outcomes of such a disposition and exploratory mode of research. The ‘new’ cannot be known in advance; rather, it emerges from the uncertainties in the research process. Barrett & Bolt (2007:31) have said that “[t]he ‘shock of the new’ is thus a particular understanding that is realised through our dealings with the tools and materials of production and in our handling of ideas, rather than a self-conscious attempt at transgression.”

The following section discusses my various orientations to exploring campus space in a more-than register. In navigating the uncertainty of such a practice, I have argued that one needs to become vulnerable to the prospect of failure as the research

outcomes cannot be known in advance precisely because human agency is not the only agency at play.

The spatial theory of Massey & Ingold frame space in terms of informing a political and dynamic approach to negotiating the spatial context of SU, in terms of ‘listening, attunement, and connecting’ and three subsequent metaphorical guides—⁴⁹ weaving, wayfaring, and tuning-in. The guides coax an exploratory and ethico-onto-epistemological arts-based practice and “‘a precise yet opening inquir[y] that can expose something qualitatively new about the situation’ while maintaining to avoid ‘the pitfalls of prematurely seeking final answers’” (Dyrssen 2011:229).⁵⁰

4.1 Walking-with

Walking the site composed the initial phase of the arts-based research/fieldwork;⁵¹ Annie Lovejoy (2019:144) says the following about fieldwork as artistic research,⁵²

“it is an active engagement with a particular place towards purposefully contributing an emergent work in situ. This speaks volumes about attention to a place, about getting lost in a place, loitering in a place, getting to know a place through the feet, the ground, following paths, hunches, clues, encountering others, conversations and stories. Here, connective relations shape a work, alert the antennae, fuel encounters and enthusiasm.”

⁴⁹ Oliviera 2016:132 defines a metaphor as follows, “a metaphor is not the linguistic expression of one thing in terms of another, but rather the abstract projection of determinate structures across domains.”

⁵⁰ Ethico-onto-epistemology indicates the indivisibility of ethics, ontology, and epistemology, introduced by feminist theorist, Karen Barad (2007:90). Otherwise put, knowledge production is inseparable from the intra-acting human and non-human agencies co-constitutive of the world. Therefore, I frame my practice as ethico-onto-epistemological in that it facilitates a relational sense of being ‘with’ the world.

⁵¹ Feminist and indigenous research-practitioners perform walking as a method of research-creation and political counter practice. If a map is an apparatus for spatial and place-based understanding and Western-type cartography attempts to dominate place via complete categorisation, the practice of coming to know about space in a processual and embodied way, offers tools for understanding place and space in new ways - making new meaning, otherwise. Acknowledging the partiality of spatial knowledge and researcher-practitioner positionality is honouring the complexity of space and place and enacting a practice ‘otherwise’.

⁵² However, it is acknowledged that artistic and arts-based research are not exactly the same.

This harks back to Chapter Two's discussion of the overdetermination of functions within institutional space/place, in which "norms, habits, and conventions" govern "when, how often, how long, in what order and at what speed" (Edensor 2012: [sp]). Loitering and becoming-lost resist the status quo in pace and rhythm. It is a form of unpredictable and rhizomatic arts-based research/fieldwork in which complexity yields generative potentials (Lovejoy 2019:144). Weaving my body-presence in/through space/place to create research implies awareness and a measure of attunement with others (human and non-human). Tim Ingold (2013:132) has said that "[e]very animate being, as it threads its way through and among the ways of every other, must perforce improvise a passage, and in doing it lays another line. We can do the same." I improvise a passage - a walked cartography. How the cartography is walked and performed is vital, I wayfare. Wayfaring suggests a walking route that is improvised rather than preconceived from point A to B. Wayfaring practice is, therefore, more adept to engage in heterogeneous situations (Lanng & Jensen 2016). Here, a walk is mobilised intuitively,⁵³ the in/determinacy of the route could be influenced by the direction of wind and wind gusts, the temperature (I tend to cover a further distance on foot in lower temperature conditions), centres of social activity, personal disposition, comfort and safety (in the context of COVID-19, I approach concentrated human activity with caution), traffic, environmental phenomena (rustling trees), et cetera. Perceived safety conditions frequently determined the route and duration of my walk owing to whether or not I held a high-value item (for example, a digital camera or smartphone) on my person and the physically isolating force of the space. This account communicates non-representational dynamisms and attentiveness to human and non-human companions.

The key to 'finding [my] way' in this arts-based research is navigating "how...wayfaring can generate spaces for [situated] art-making" (Berry 2020:243). My process of wayfaring connects to my making practice through the multimodal

⁵³ Lemieux and Rowsell (2020:[sp]), have said that "human intuition serves as an entry point into the relational dimension of materiality, in that it speaks to non-representational dynamisms (for instance, sense-making and intuitive mobilisations serve as valid ways to understand the world)."



Figure 7: Traces, Stellenbosch.2021.

Photography by author.

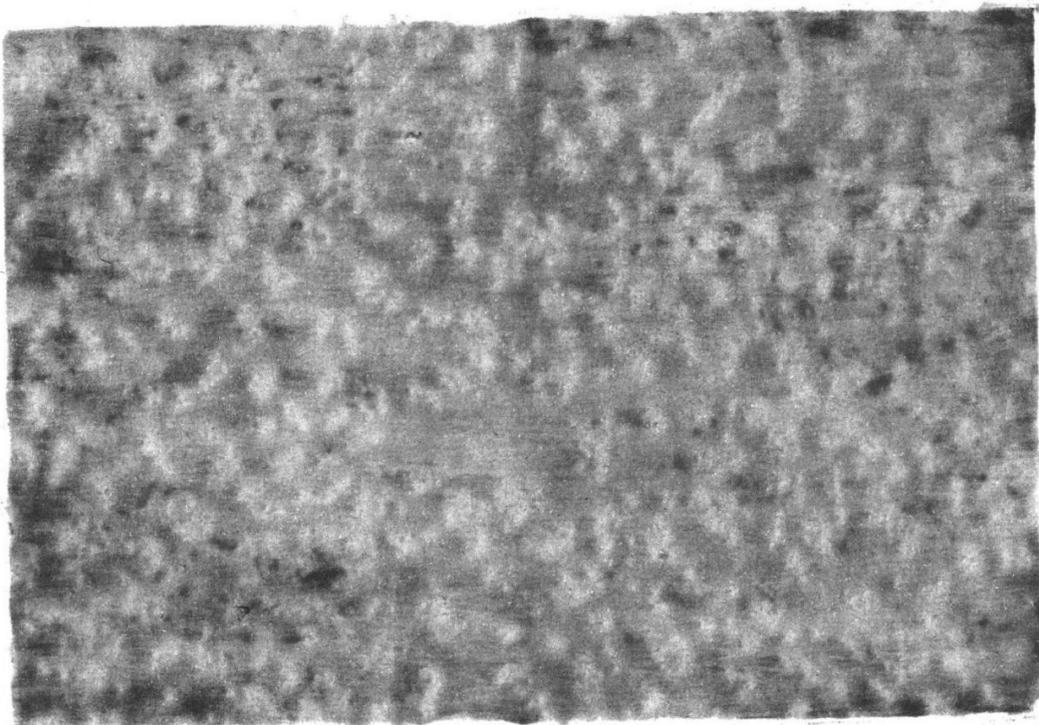


Figure 8: Frottage of road. Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

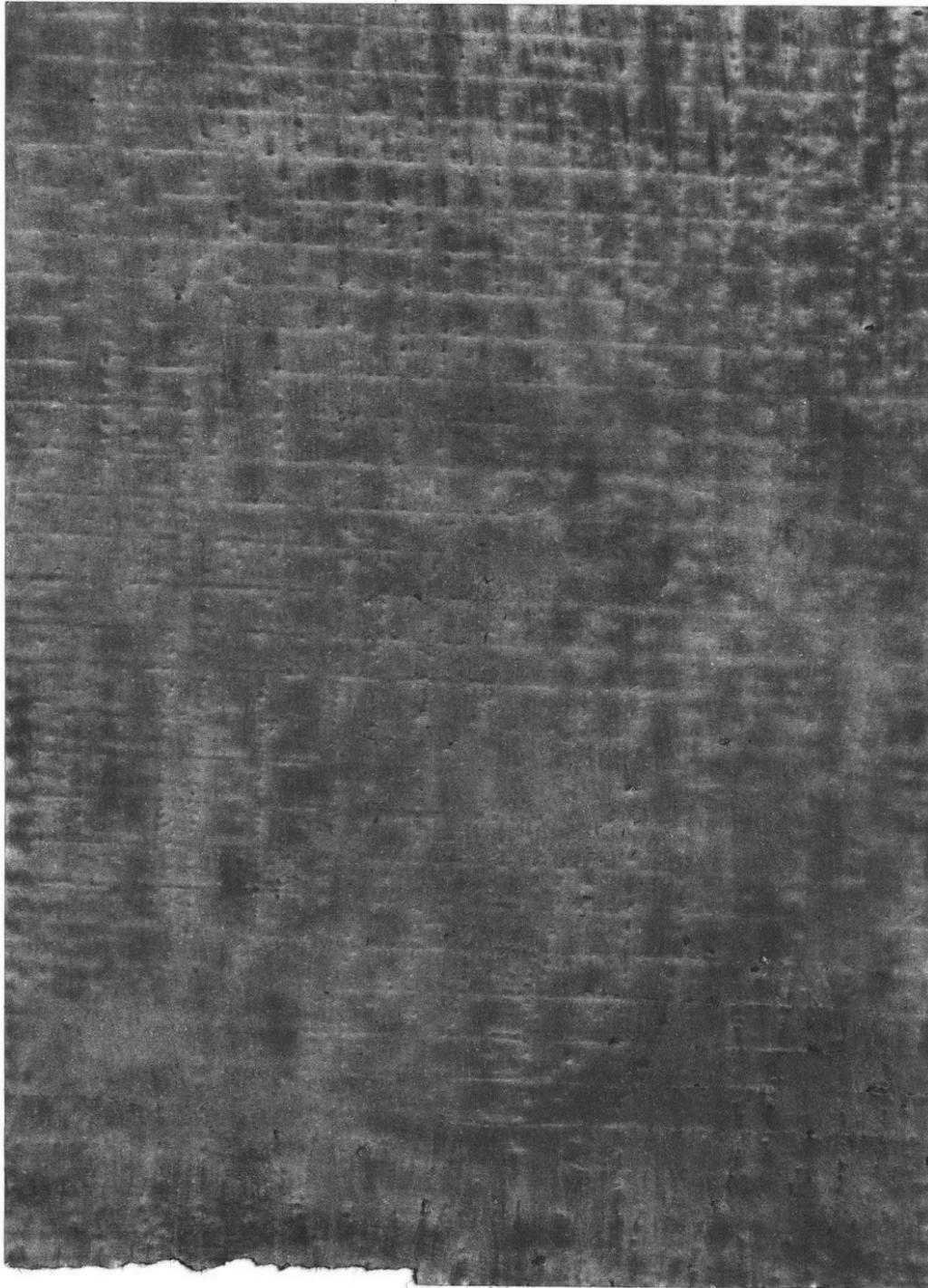


Figure 9: Frottage of wall, Stellenbosch.2021.

Photography by author.

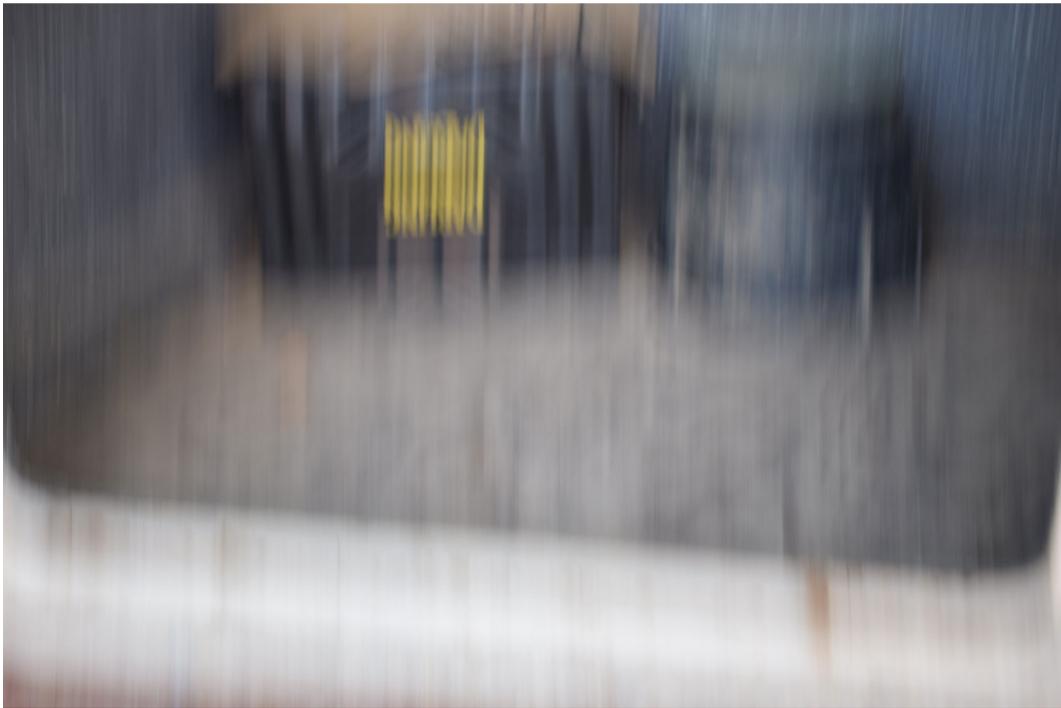


Figure 10: Photograph in motion, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

4.2 Productive Failures

Without a risk, qualitative researchers cannot take a leap of faith, and they are unlikely to face the unknown responsibly (Koro-Ljungberg 2019:3).

Arguably, the principle of hope, of being hopeful of a gift presented by “the unknown knocking at the door” is similar, here, to faith leaping (Puig de la Ballacasa 2012:212 citing Deleuze 1989:193). This arts-based research’s open and unfinished business resists conclusive findings and solid answers. Instead, its ‘resolve’ is subsumed by a rhizomatic “productive new beginning”, new questions, problems, concerns, and extensions to be continued (Koro-Ljungberg 2019:2). Koro-Ljungberg writes, “[b]y failure, I do not refer to a position or skill that does not meet specific criteria, external evaluation, or social expectation... Instead, I use ‘productive failure’ to work against finality, completion, and extreme methodological purification and predictability.” This opens the research space to experimentation with the unknown and the researcher to a hopeful disposition (Witt 2018:152 citing Koro-Ljungberg 2016). I will unpack relevant examples in the following section.

4.2.1 Tracing Productively

My movement in/through space, motivated by a hopefulness of coming to know about space in/through its complexity, involves intra-actions between my body and the materialities of other bodies and things in which I enter into relation. This relation is always more-than-representational— it exceeds linguistic articulation and visual (re)presentation. Any attempt at (re)presentation is self-admittedly partial and unfinished. Arguably, this relates to the negotiation between the (re)presentational and non-representational in that some modes of (re)presentation and linguistic expression attempt to do more to acknowledge this more-than register, for example, poetic language and collage (Powell 2010:550). (Re)presentation here does not attempt to convey a direct, realistic signifier-signified relation, rather the relation is understood

as deterritorialisation-reterritorialisation (Oliveira 2015:132).⁵⁶ This means that when a sign is produced, the sign alters/mutes certain components of the signified, producing a sign that (re)presents the signified, which evades total capture. Therefore, any attempt to capture data of the relationality in space misses aspects of its more-than register.⁵⁷ In the initial stages of the research process, I felt unsure about how to proceed from the here of my body in public campus space to the situated making of my research practice. Experimental play with (re)presentation directed this uncertainty toward exploring traces, fragments, and indexical marks, dually enabling me to be ‘here’ more intensely (figure 11,12).

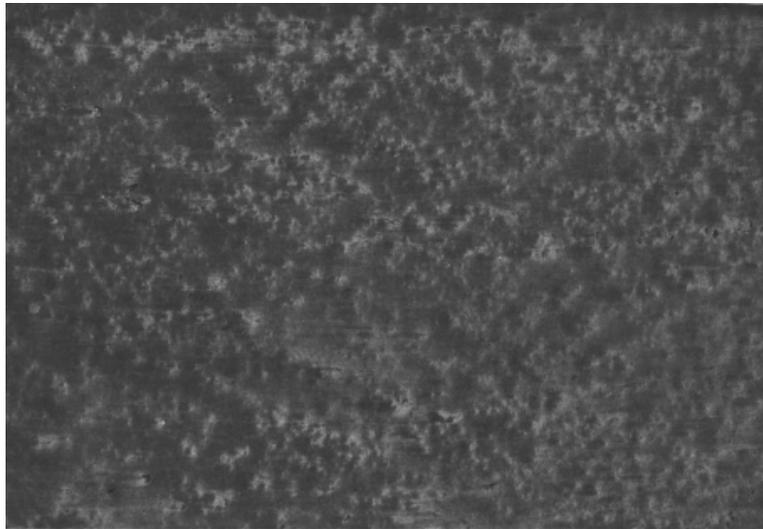


Figure 11: Frottage of tar, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

⁵⁶ Deterritorialisation is the altering of the components of an assemblage and rearranging them differently to form new relations and articulations. The latter process is called reterritorialisation.

⁵⁷ For example, affect is inarticulable and movement does not have representation.



Figure 12: Trace of frottage, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

Marks, imprints, and residue are ‘a trace of a gesture’ (Ingold 2007:1), and “[l]ike threads, traces abound in the non-human world” (Ingold 2007:43).⁵⁸ Barad states that “[t]he universe does not have memory, it *is* the memory of iterative materializations. This suggests that there is a sense in which even molecules and particles remember what has happened to them” (Barad cited in Juelskjaer & Schwennesen 2012:21). More so, “[v]isual traces of experiences in the visual environment are necessary to keep culturally necessary moments present in consciousness” (Descartes [sa]:4). The discussion in Chapter One of the graffiti marks and tape residue on the JH Marais statue attest to this point.⁵⁹ In the context of COVID-19 and the lack of student presence on campus, I became increasingly aware of and attentive to the visual traces of the movement of others- human and non-human companions alike.

4.2.1.1 Frottage, Photographs & Collage

During my walks, I photographed campus space, particularly marks, traces, and residue on surfaces in outdoor public space. I found that a practice of walking-with-camera and walking-with-sketchbook set my disposition toward

⁵⁸ A trace is defined as “any enduring mark left in or on a solid surface by a continuous movement.”

⁵⁹ Karen Murriss (2016:282) makes a similar point with reference to the contested Rhodes statue in her article titled, *#Rhodes Must Fall: A posthumanist orientation to decolonising Higher Education Institutions*.

tuning-in, being attentive and hopeful. Traces have to do with movement, but they also have to do with touch. I have discussed the relevance of touch in both the physical and figurative sense in Chapter Two. I extend this understanding of figurative touch to photography, in that to look, pause and make a photograph is to be touched by something, even momentarily (figure 13,14). Regarding the bottom photographs, it felt as if I had stumbled upon a communion of ‘strangely vital things’ (Bennett 2010:3).



Figure 13: Campus security hut, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.



Figure 14: Campus security hut at a distance, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

I understand the act of making a photograph as the trace of the knotting together of trajectories in the meshwork of space/place and within a particular space-time. Therefore, the process supersedes concerns over (re)presentational accuracy. In *Indexicality as “symptom”*: *Photography and affect* (2009), Yuriko Furuhashi cites Roland Barthes, stating:

The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here” (1981: 80). What the indexical sign of the photograph appears to guarantee, for him at least, is the presence of (and not the resemblance to) the pre-photographic referent.

The photographs appeared static and lacked a connection to my sensory, embodied, and embedded relation to space/place. Considering that touch and the trace

figure strongly in my processual navigation of space, I shifted to a more tactile way of 'seeing'. I made multiple frottages of surfaces. The process involved rubbing away charcoal on a blackened A5 page. Pindyck (2018:17 citing Massumi 2015:51) states that "there is no such thing as starting from scratch. Everything re-begins, in a very crowded, overpopulated world' (2015: 51). Frottage offers a humble acknowledgment of that statement and a beckoning to act in response." Elsewhere he states that, "frottage relies on a desire to work with what is already there, an explicit participation in unmaking what has been made, a leaving of material traces and an attempt to decolonise ground by working absence" (Pindyck 2018:16). The rubbings that I produced left a black charcoal frame around the page edges, a trace of my emplacement. I iteratively 'mapped' surfaces in public space using frottage—sidewalks, roads, maintenance hole covers, walls, and the stone facade of the statue center campus. The frottage is a trace of the intra-action of my hand and a surface. It is in this sense that the work begins to develop an embodied quality. Furthermore, it also functioned as a way for me to engage with the emergent quality of making and to be surprised by the result. As Pindyck states, "[w]hat 'emerges' as a 'finding' [of frottage practice] is a result of chance, choice, and invention" (2018:23).

In situ, the data I generated includes frottage, photographic images, immersive self-reporting, collecting mixed-media fragments, and walking. I did so to explore the complex ecology of trajectories and stories in space/place. French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss coined the term bricolage, meaning "[the making] do with 'whatever is at hand'" in meaning-making (Levi-Strauss 199:17;19 cited in Roberts 2018:1). Arguably, bricolage practice is compatible with the conceptualisation of space/place as heterogeneous, open, and palimpsestuous. Massey defines 'sense of place' as arising "from the absolute particularity of the mixture of influences found there," in other words, from 'what is at hand' (Sergot & Saives 2016:339). In line with the proposition of open research to experimentally play with the data material, I assembled the collected traces and fragments in collage form (figure 15). The traces felt as though they (re)presented what was already there as an appropriation, rather than making/ leading to something new, and so, I overlaid, altered, shifted, and cut the indexical marks digitally, to arrive at a different 'place.'



Figure 15: Mapped traces (work in progress), Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

The collages became a means to re-enter into intra-action with the data.⁶⁰ During my walking practice, I started tuning in through collecting a hoard of found debris, rendering the notion of the gift rather literal. These collections became assemblages of place fragments. The series of collages consisted of different materials from different collection contexts: frottage, photographs, and scanned in debris. The process of assembling the fragments posed difficulties because they constantly suggested multiple directions of actualization. The collages do not attempt to represent the

⁶⁰ Collage making involves clustering images or materials onto a surface to visually represent a topic of focus (Butler-Kisber & Poldma 2010:2).

research-event, but rather to place me in the thick of data— to rework and reconfigure the data and to think in/through making.

4.2.1.2 Sound Fragments & Drawing

In the name of deep listening and attempts to weave myself sensorily into place and tune-in, I extended my practice to include seeing, touching, *and* listening. I entered into relational space through movement and sound, “a practice of intra-acting with the world as part of the world in its dynamic material configuring” (Barad 2007:379). I listened deeply to the sounds in campus space/place: crickets, car engines, talking, leaves rustling, et cetera. While simultaneously recording the sounds with my smartphone, I captured my acoustic contributions. While listening, I drew. I expressively charted the sounds in situ through mark-making (figure 16).



Figure 16: Charted sound, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

4.3 Through the Diagram

The law of the diagram, according to Bacon, is this: one starts with a figurative form, a diagram intervenes and scrambles it, and a form of a completely different nature emerges from the diagram, which is called the Figure (Rotas & Springgay 2013:286).

Movements of thought are diagrammatically structured...[the diagram] never functions in order to represent a persisting world but produces a new kind of reality, a new model of truth. (Oliviera 2015:133).

The sidewalks, pathways, trees, benches, buildings, red-bricked paving through which I traverse with a creative disposition toward making, become a studio of collaborators. My arts-based research practice is situated there, in the public, outdoor space/place of Stellenbosch University *and* indoor home/studio. In *Micro-geographies of the studio*, Christian Edwardes (2019:53 citing Hennion 1989) states that “the studio is ‘a performative separation’”. In other words, the space of artistic practice emerges in/through the interaction of matter and human bodies in affectual relation. The point to be made here is that the inside studio does not stand in juxtaposition to the outside in the negotiation of Stellenbosch University space/place through my arts-based practice. Edwardes (2014:59 quoting Manning & Massumi 2014:64), states that “it’s coming in turns the inside out.”

I collect the debris, fragments, and drawings and bring them back into the ‘indoor’ studio. These things are intercessors or ‘mediators’— “forces from the outside that penetrate and populate the realm of the studio” (Edwardes 2019:59). Manning and Massumi formulate a definition of ‘mediators’ from Deleuze, stating that mediators are human, non-human, inorganic, and organic matter vital to expression. Manning and Massumi’s (2014:64 cited by Edwardes 2019:660) reference to the mediator or intercessor as an “uneasy disturbance in the field” arguably hints to the leakage of matter discussed in Chapter Two. The vitality of matter within the

creative process becomes apparent here, and even more so in Manning & Massumi's (2014:125 cited in Edwardes 2019:59) eloquent expression that "you're always working in a group, even when you seem to be on your own. And still more when it's apparent."

Wayfaring influenced my engagement with the space/place of Stellenbosch University campus and how this engagement translated to various arts-based practices. The intersection of these two things is a condition of possibility for how space/place may be negotiated in/through my practice and the rhizomatic developments thereof. These practices (photography, frottage, collage, drawing, recording) were activated by affective encounters. This data material holds the potential to be experimented with, re/constructed, re/engaged with, affected, and interfered in to produce something new-in-the-making.

4.3.1 Knotting

In the previous chapter, I introduced the knotted sculpture and the conditions of the emergence of the translated walking route. I stated that the tracking app that digitally drew my walks as lines, a theoretical provocation proposed by Tim Ingold as threads weaving in/through the mesh-work of life, my body's materiality and its co-constitution with other bodies and matter in movement, and my preferential disposition toward paper as a medium, in a relational field and affecting one another, produced an intensity and line of flight in which the line became physical and a 'body' in itself. The process of translation from two to three dimensions involved cutting paper and in the spirit of working with what was at hand, I used paper on which the frottage was photocopied. I cut the paper into thin strips, crumpling them in my hand and uncrumpling them, a careful action attentive to the limits of the paper's integrity and fractional geometries. The cut lines accumulated into heaps of paper mesh, spilling over, hooking into each other in mingling chains. Some lines clung to the wooliness of my clothes, others caught a gust of wind, and all seemed to convey a sense of vitality. The paper strips 'glowed' together. The knot became an important metaphor, visual image, and theoretical concept in terms of Ingold's conception of

knots constituting life's meshwork. I walked lines in the landscape. The lines knotted in intra-action with other lines— threads became knots. I assembled an internal looped frame onto which the paper could be fastened. The loop/knot is made from a 4m bent aluminium-lined piping tube, threaded through a ducting pipe, stuffed with toy stuffing, and secured together with wire on the ends. Matter leaked in this process.

The process included a deep sense of attentiveness, care, repetition, and pattern:

Clamp copies in tone homogeneous groups of fourteen in a landscape orientation; match up the ruler parallel to the right side of the page, 1 mm from the vertical edge and 7mm from the horizontal top edge; slowly draw down the side of the ruler with the blade, once, twice, and a third, even fourth time, piercing through the stack and penetrating the rubber cutting mat; stay attentive to the pressure applied to the ruler by the hand holding it in place; shift the ruler a millimetre to the left; cut; stay attentive to the pressure of the hand on the ruler and blade tearing through the paper, four times; on the sixth cut of a new line, cut straight through separating the tassel from the page; shift the ruler and cut again, stay attentive to fatigue, adjust pressure, move slower and more intensely pierce, and again and again in differential iterations until the entire page surface is cut into paper tassels of lines; pause; break the fatigued tip of the blade away; clear away paper waste; repeat again, repeat again 29 times (figure 17).

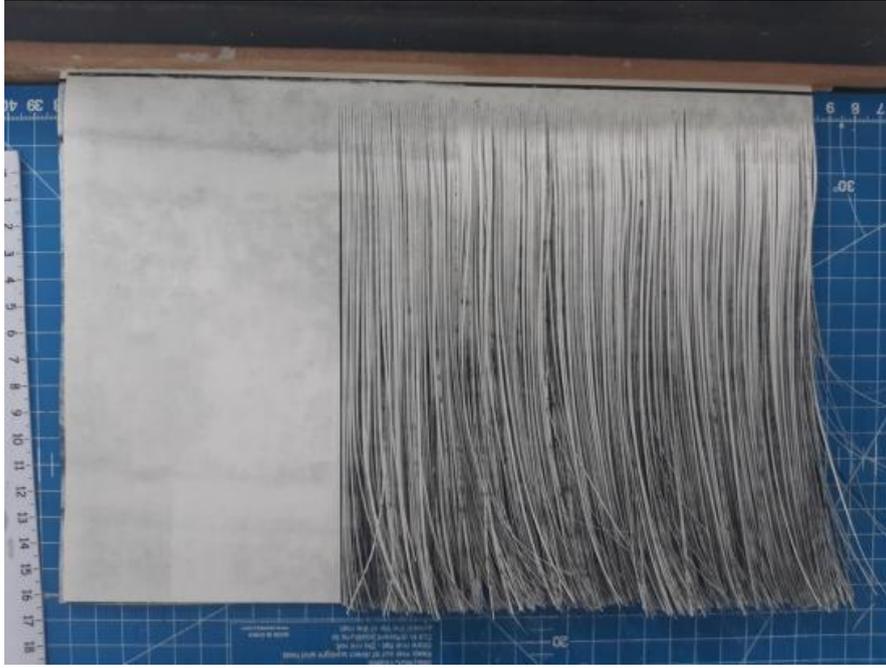


Figure 17: Frottage fringe (work in progress), Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

Stack the tassels in groups of 5-6; pinch the paper heads with the right hand, run it through the left palm; pinch the ends with the left fingers; accordion fold into four, pinch paper between 10 fingertips and lightly crumple; uncrumple, separate the tassels; take care in untangling the tangles; lay them in a heap; repeat; repeat 2175 times (figure 18).



Figure 18: Paper heap (work in progress), Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

Lather a small section of ducting pipe tube with craft glue; pinch a crumpled tassel head; apply a bead of glue to the head; paste tassel; hold in place; stay attentive to the glue drying on the tube; modify the rate of application; repeat; repeat 13 050 times (figure 19).



Figure 19: The knot (work in progress), Stellenbosch. Photograph by Ledelle Moe.

This project was mentally and physically laborious. It demanded my complete sensory immersion in the process, my mental attention, and body in a rather ritualised way. The process worked with the affordances of the paper to make new affordances in the process of transforming it. While making the object, I gained an embodied sense of the blurring of the tools' boundaries and my body. The blade became an extension of my hand. The sound of the blade cutting the paper vibrated; I felt the vibrations through touch and I heard them. My sense of touch seemed to start at the blade's tip rather than at my fingertip. The tool and my hand vibrated together to navigate the material and the action. Perhaps this initial conception of an extended body is actually a reminder that the "body is already 'more-than' itself" (Oliveira 2015:46).

The repetitive nature of the gestures allowed my mind to drift off. This is not to say that the repetitive actions became automatic; they differed slightly in iteration and required attuning to their shifts in differentiation. Just as this process involved repetition, so too did my walking in public campus space/place. Both were processional; I learned to pick up (in a multi-sensory way) the nuances of differences

in each repetition of slicing, crumpling, and sticking the paper in the development of the skill, so too did I learn to pick up on the nuances of space/place during my walks.

The art process produced an artefact through repetitive gestures and for a particular duration of time. I was unsure about the relation between the process and the artefact's function within this context. In Chapter Two, I conveyed a feeling that to remake the object would produce a different process and result, suggesting that my attentive navigation and exploration of the materials resulted in material 'leakages' and lines of flight that resulted in the emergence of singularities under peculiar conditions and an affective 'aura'. The object is abstract— what it *does* instead of what it *is* is important. It holds affective potential for viewers and calls to be placed back within campus space/place. For it to be placed anywhere else would transform it into something else. However, I also resonate with Manning and Massumi when they say:

I wonder to what extent it is less the object that matters than the ritualised gestures that compose it, hour after hour...? Does this ritualizing activity facilitate the shift from the multiple to multiplicity, from the countable to the more-than? (2016:67).

The frottage traces become threads in the sculpture, in which the surface disappears. Ingold has said that “threads have a way of turning into traces, and vice versa. Moreover, whenever threads turn into traces, surfaces are formed, and whenever traces turn into threads, they are dissolved” (Ingold 2007:2). The repetition in the process is likened to the increasingly repetitive nature that my practice took in the field and the repetitive nature of life itself.

4.3.2 Splicing

During the initial stages of my research, I acquired a book titled *Stellenbosch Three Centuries*, an official commemorative volume published by the Stellenbosch Town Council and the Oude Meester Group in 1979. The 464-page book

commemorates the three hundredth anniversary of Stellenbosch and provides an authoritative recorded history— matter is presented as a matter of fact. The book is composed of colonial archive material and a progressive historical account of the development of Stellenbosch from a settler farming community to a University town. The book is dualistically categoric in presenting its subject matter as fixed ‘wholes’ in dividing chapters (fauna and flora, military, culture, social life, education, et cetera). This orientates the reader’s navigation and presents a comprehensively accounted for terrain of historical Stellenbosch. Seen in this way, the gridded book is like a gridded map that claims to account, factually, for all of its territories. What is in the map comes to matter, and so too, in the book.

Considering the year of publication and publishers, the event commemorated (three hundred years of settler colonialism), and my review of the book’s contents, it is markedly ‘white’. Reading the book from page to page would reproduce this kind of discourse and linear narrative unproductive in the context of this research. However, to view the book as non-human and vibrant matter energises a hope of a gift of ‘the unknown knocking at the door.’ It is in this sense that I approach the book as lively data.

I performed two cuts on the book. Firstly, I continued to collect images and words, as I had done during my wayfaring practice in public space. However, I shifted to digital wayfaring in which I utilised the pages of the books as prompts to draw the periphery in and to make the invisible visible— akin to the graffiti women encountered on the JH Marais statue. I drew on images and text from both present and past. The process was informative and led to surprise, discovery, and questioning moments. For example, I discovered, from a heritage prompt in the book, that the numerous historical Dutch buildings in Stellenbosch (and other heritage sights) are managed and maintained under strict heritage conservation regulations. This opened up the following questions for me that resonate with Hendrick’s assertion of ‘rigged’ University spaces: is decolonization possible in the context of settler-colonial occupation? Does contemporary heritage conservation in Stellenbosch impede transformation? How is memory in public space negotiated?

I curated the collected images and text and printed them over the book's original pages, creating a palimpsest of sorts (figure 20). I chose to do this to open the history up and to explore more of the past with the present— re-configuring stories. While combing through the book, I scoped the pages using a viewfinder block of 4cm by 5cm. This enabled me to zone in on certain words, phrases, and image fragments that energised rhizomatic meandering, thinking, and associations that led to the accumulation of content to be printed over the pages.

Secondly, I spliced the book into blocks of three columns and seven rows in line with ideas on defying the grid, cropping, disordering (complexity maker), enabling constraints, chance, and the viewfinder. This was experimental and attempted to shift from a space of order to disorder to open the data up. The result was a chaotic mass of paper tabs (figure 21)— micro-moments in cut image and text (figure 22). Springgay and Zaliwska (2015:140) reference Deleuze in their enactment of cutting research material, stating that, “‘micro’ does not simply mean ‘miniaturisation of visible and articulable forms; instead it signifies another domain, a new type of relation, a dimension of thought that is irreducible to knowledge. ‘Micro’ therefore means mobile and nonlocalisable connections.” The tabs become rhizomatic as the possible associations and meanings that they conjure up from person to person are diverse and open-ended.

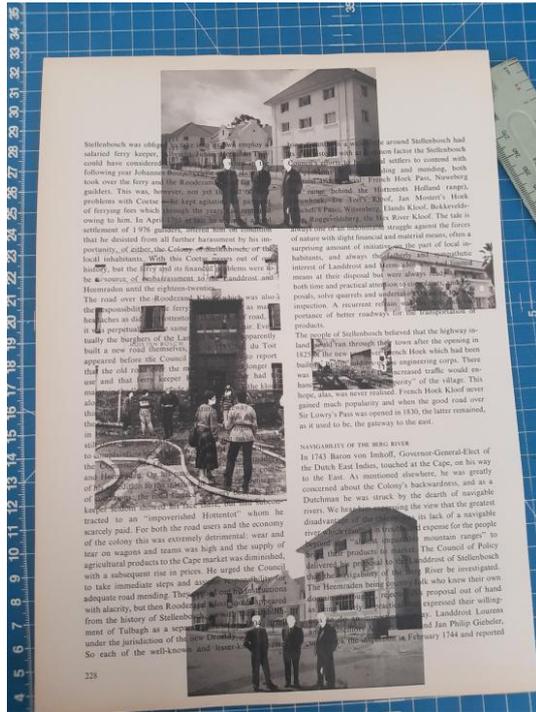


Figure 20: Palimpsestic page, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.



Figure 21: Assembling book fragments, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

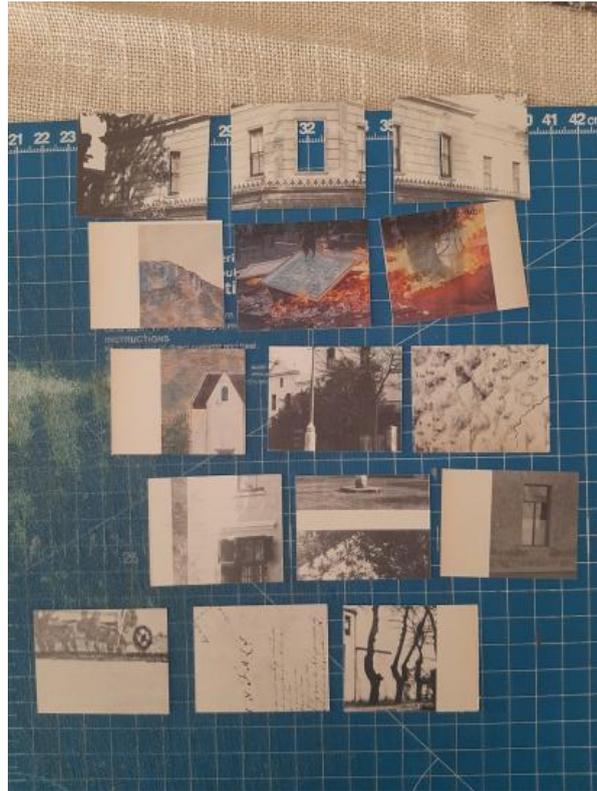


Figure 22: Assembling book fragments, Stellenbosch. 2021.

Photography by author.

It is easier for me to make connections and disconnections between the visual fragments of the book and the present context through the micro text and image. The fragments invite my memory and imagination into the making process, or rather, it invites a diagrammatic mode of thinking. “In an era of standardisation and representation, the diagram becomes ‘a rhythm emerging from chaos, the manipulation of change to suggest the emergence of another world’” (O’Sullivan 2009:255), “a politics that resides between the known and the yet-to-come” (Rotas & Springgay 2013:288). It forced me to consider the blocks in themselves rather than trying to figure out a linear narrative. In this way, the negotiation process and thinking process became much more rhizomatic. I reassemble the book and repiled the pages, not in one column, but three. These columns enabled me to comb through the tabs and make associations between three tabs at a time. It demanded attentiveness to

possibility and required negotiation. Some connections shot out, with nowhere to go, and others have a multiplying line of offshoots. A sense of in/determinacy became palpable. I enacted two cuts in order to create something new from the data. I viewed the data differently- with the *hope* that the few disjunctive words, or image fragments, on one paper tab had something to offer me. They triggered imaginative meanderings and associations with more spatial/social/historical potential. Fragments of image and text resonated with me and my personal history, forging connections that I would not have been able to make otherwise.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the various processes of negotiation within my arts-based research. In line with this research's focus on the otherwise and other-wise, the process is open and generative, and therefore, the research outcomes do not attempt to report and provide final answers drawn from 'brute' data. Rather, this research is used to encourage further rhizomatic developments in terms of new problems, questions, and concerns. The research's "potential for furthering its own inquiry purpose" is the crux of this arts-based research methodology (Given 2008:31).

Becoming 'apprentice to materials' and entering into experimental relation, "teasing out a form out of an active matter" (Oliveira 2015:135), speaks of matter's diagrammatic nature/constituency/ies. Methodological openness to risk and the attentiveness and care one takes toward the unknown presents an avenue for discovery and co-production in more-than-human contexts.

I have set knotting and splicing as two modes of re-engaging data produced in situ, shifting terrains of what matter comes to matter, and how imagination can reinvigorate theoretical and historical understandings of space/place. Repetitive action reflects the fluxes of attunement and enables a mode of thinking in/making.

Furthermore, I have highlighted key concepts that have been vital to the processes of drawing close materials, ideas, and associations that give shape to objects and images in the course of this arts-based practice that facilitate the negotiation of the spatial context. I have entangled multiple threads of other-wise, making, care, deep listening, wayfaring, weaving, attunement, and hope to figure out a practice of making 'otherwise'.

Thesis Conclusion

The question is not: Is it true? But... What new thoughts does it make possible to think? What new emotions does it make possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body? (Massumi 1987:xv cited by Ulmer 2017:838).

I have suggested that negotiations in this context are always partial and unfinished, as well as speculative. I have done a great deal of speculation—speculation in terms of the more-than-human and an ethics of care, and I will continue on this trajectory. This latter section aims to open out the possibilities of this research.

The question that I was faced with at the advent of the pandemic was what alternative ‘partnerships’ are viable in addressing the spatial context of Stellenbosch University? It became clear during the pandemic that empty public campus space was not bare at all. It was “teething with life” (Ulmer 2017:839 citing Vannini:2015). The ‘who’ and ‘what’ of my research ‘partnership’ as human and non-human relationships, helped along the question of doing in terms of ‘how’ and ‘in what way’. In this sense, ‘kinship’ is more adept at speaking about the affective relatedness between the human and non-human. The arts-based methods of walking-with, experimenting with (re)presentation, situated making, in the context of COVID-19, helped along a different kind of attunement to material aspects of space and the historical agencies active in present campus space, for example, traces, residues, and marks. Riding the coattails of the pandemic’s rupturing of time and disruption of continuity, repetition, and care in this arts-based research stretches the tempo and pace for attuning oneself to the site and processes of one's embeddedness. Barad has said that “matter comes to matter through the iterative intra-activity of the world in its becoming” (2003:207). I affect the world and the world affects me in return. In the same way, I affect the materials in the situated-making process, altering their affordances and their capacity to affect others, and in return, I too am affected.

Arguably, the research process invites response-ability and alters my capacity to act through matters of proximity, care, attunement, and openness. “To foster response-ability, there must first be a meeting and within that meeting, a willingness to be transformed” (Taylor 2013:152). According to Barad:

responsibility is not about right response, but rather a matter of inviting, welcoming, and enabling the response of the Other. That is, what is at issue is response-ability — the ability to respond. The range of possible responses that are invited, the kinds of responses that are disinvited or ruled out as fitting responses, are constrained and conditioned by the questions asked, where questions are not simply innocent queries, but particular practices of engagement (2012:81).

We become accountable to what we come to see and know and how our practices matter in terms of “our active engagement of sedimenting out the world in certain kinds of ways and not others” (Dolphijn & van der Tuin 2012:68). The repetition of splicing and mangling of threads provided an embodied account of a sense of this thickening and affective relationalities implicit in it. In other words, suggesting that “this ritualising activity [may] facilitate the shift...from the countable to the more-than” (Manning et al. 2016:67). Attentiveness, repetition, and recurrence (pattern) constituted Stellenbosch University space differently for me in that it highlighted the entangled affective relationalities therein.

A dynamic relation surfaces between hope, responsibility, and accountability. The repetitive and embodied experiences of being in place foster a willingness to open oneself up to experiencing place as not just pre-given, but in constant becoming. Allowing oneself to be responsive and to engage in bodily repetitive and material actions enables passing a threshold into the thick of things. The experimental and embodied process of being attentive, walking-with, experimenting with (re)presentation, in a sense, composed the curricula of my Master’s study. It functioned to facilitate embodied learning opportunities through “the care one takes of

what exists and what might exist” (De La Ballacasa 2007:92 quoting Foucault cited in Latimer 2000), and perhaps, in this way, it may hold pedagogic potential.

My arts-based process of altering the Stellenbosch Three Centuries book is similar to the concept of altered book-making— repurposing a printed book in a new way. Chilton states that “[i]n the altering process, the artist confronts the book as a symbol of authority, reality, or convention, and changes it to make their own story” (2013:458). During the process of combing through the image fragments, I was struck at moments when fragments resonated with my personal experience and family history precisely because the ‘micro’ elicits “mobile and nonlocalisable connections” (Springgay et al. 2015:140). The possible associations and meanings that conjure up from person to person are diverse and open-ended because of the differing biographies, objects, and other actants in conversation. The project enabled me to loosen historical narrative fixity, open historical accounts through imagination, and reconfigure stories to be past, present, and future-orientated. The result was a fragmentary, partial, and ambiguous clump of ‘stories’ in a bound three-column book format in which my own familial and embodied connections were interwoven. It condensed the micro and macro narratives through fragmentation, allowing for more intense threading of associations. The implications and possible value of this kind of process in the context of Stellenbosch University and formal processes looking to intervene in the university landscape, like, for example, the Visual Redress Project, is the prospect of further exploration in terms of what this kind of situated making activity can offer in a context that draws on a diverse group of student actors. Exploring what this could offer in terms of the differences that they produce and how they can thus attend to the hope of “shaping questions not prescribing answers” could be valuable in inspiring public events, interventions et cetera (Clark & Costandius 2020:41). This translates to the negotiation of the spatial-context and hinges on the idea that the problems of space/place are not linearly defined, but are multifaceted and complex. A further suggestion for a future research offshoot could be looking at the value of repetitive material acts in embodied learning scenarios.

The “lingering ‘present(ce)’” in the opening vignette of Chapter Two is the ghostly presence of the past in the present. According to Barad, there is no past condition to return to. Transformation necessitates an “ongoing conversation with the ghosts of the past, aiming at inventing a different future rather than fixing the past” (Bozalek, Zembylas, Motala & Holscher 2021). This reverberates in one of the Visual Redress Project's tactics of historically contextualising artefacts with signage rather than opting for their removal completely. It is about engaging with what is there and entering into dialogue with it.

What presents itself is the prospect of the trace as memorialisation in terms of keeping these moments in consciousness. From this perspective, the residue, traces, and marks on the JH Marais statue are vital to the formation and negotiation of a heterogeneous place as an expression of diversity and, arguably, to processes of transformation and redress. The traces on the JH Marais statue reference a counter-project of student activism that raises questions and unsettles space (Clark et al. 2020:31). What is to be made of the traces of its unruly eventfulness? Arguably, the trace connects more strongly with the imagination, encouraging a more contemplative space. This presents another offshoot in terms of how traces of this sort are intentionally managed by the institution— their foregrounding rather than erasure.

Institutional processes of shifting material typologies in redress and transformation are official, structured, strategic, and resolved. This touches back on the need for unruly transformation or what Clark et al. (2020) term counter-projects as they intervene more in the lived experience of space. I end with a thought by Amin (2015:255) in *Animated space*:

[P]ossibility might be found in the atmospheric feel of public space, with its ambiguities cajoled towards the civic ends..., sounds and smells that can encourage communal feelings, architectural designs that yell out incompleteness, ambiguity, and experimentation. Perhaps this is the stuff of public space revved up for democracy.

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APPENDIX 1: Interview consent form for Dr Leslie van Rooi



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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH (STAFF RESPONDENT FORM)

Exploring the Role of Participatory 'Making' among SU Students in a Reparative Practice Context

You are invited to take part in a study conducted by Jessica Middleton, from the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University. You were approached as a possible participant because you are currently a SU staff member and involved in transformation/ visual redress at the university.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research study sets out to explore how creative 'making' with/by students can extend inclusivity within the context of visual redress and transformation at Stellenbosch University (SU). The results of this research study will contribute to a Master's thesis.

The objectives of the broader research are to:

1. Contextualise transformation in South African Higher Education and the Visual Redress Project on Stellenbosch University campus.
2. Investigate how student bodies experience place (SU) and the visual landscape, through a participatory photography project.
3. Explore the role of creative 'making' by/with students within a reparative practice context.

Individual, open-ended interviews with key role-players in the visual redress initiative at SU aim to meet the first research objective and gather insight into formal transformation at the university. The research aims to gain a better understanding of how the visual redress initiative has evolved and how the study may be better situated within the SU context.

2. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF ME?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to:

- 1) Participate in an unstructured, one-on-one online interview with the primary researcher. The interview (of +/-30 minutes) will be conducted remotely/online via Microsoft Teams. An interview guide, comprising open-ended questions and themes (relating to visual redress/transformation/ inclusivity), will guide the conversation.
- 2) Consent to the researcher taking notes and recording the interview for transcription.
- 3) Consent to the information you have provided in this interview being used for assessment purposes.
- 4) Consent to the publication and distribution of non-identifying material.

3. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORT

There are no foreseeable risks.

4. POSSIBLE BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS AND/OR SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits for the participants.

The research aims to communicate the importance of actively engaging university students as stakeholders in initiatives oriented toward visual redress/transformation and the valuable and mediating role which collaborative, creative practice can play in extending inclusivity. The small scale project is contextually relevant to Stellenbosch University and may potentially offer insight into visual redress/transformation/inclusivity.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will not be monetarily compensated for your participation in the study and no costs will be incurred by you taking part.

6. PROTECTION OF YOUR INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND IDENTITY

Any information you share with the researcher during this study that could possibly identify you as a participant will be protected. Your privacy and anonymity will be maintained. Identifying markers will be omitted unless consent has been provided to the contrary. Data will be stored in a password-secured, online file hosting account (Microsoft OneDrive).

Only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to the interview recording, notes, and transcript. The data will be erased after at least five years from the date of the final publication. The results of the study will be published in a thesis and report, to be submitted for consideration by the Visual Redress Initiative.

At any stage of this study, you have the option to view or opt-out of your information being shared. The information collected for this study will not be used for future publications and/or used for other purposes in the future.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence. If you choose to withdraw from the study, your data/information will be omitted and permanently deleted. You may also refuse to answer any of the questions and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this study should a valid condition arise.

8. RESEARCHER'S CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Jess Middleton via her email address at 19436653@sun.ac.za and/or the supervisor, Karolien Perold-Bull, at karolien@sun.ac.za or Marthie Kaden at mjkaden@sun.ac.za

Written consent template. REC: Humanities (Stellenbosch University) 2017

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms. Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

As the participant I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and that it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.
 - I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.
- All issues related to the privacy, confidentiality, and use of the information which I provide, have been explained.

By signing below, I ___Dr Leslie van Rooi___ agree to take part in this research study, as conducted by Jessica Middleton.



___1 December 2020___

Signature of Participant & Date

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

As the **principal investigator**, I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. In addition, I would like to select the following option:

| | |
|---|--|
| y | The conversation with the participant was conducted in a language in which the participant is fluent. |
| y | The conversation with the participant was conducted with the assistance of a translator (who has signed a non-disclosure agreement). This "Consent Form" is available to the participant in a language in which the participant is fluent. |


_____ 1 December 2020_____

Signature of Principal Investigator Date

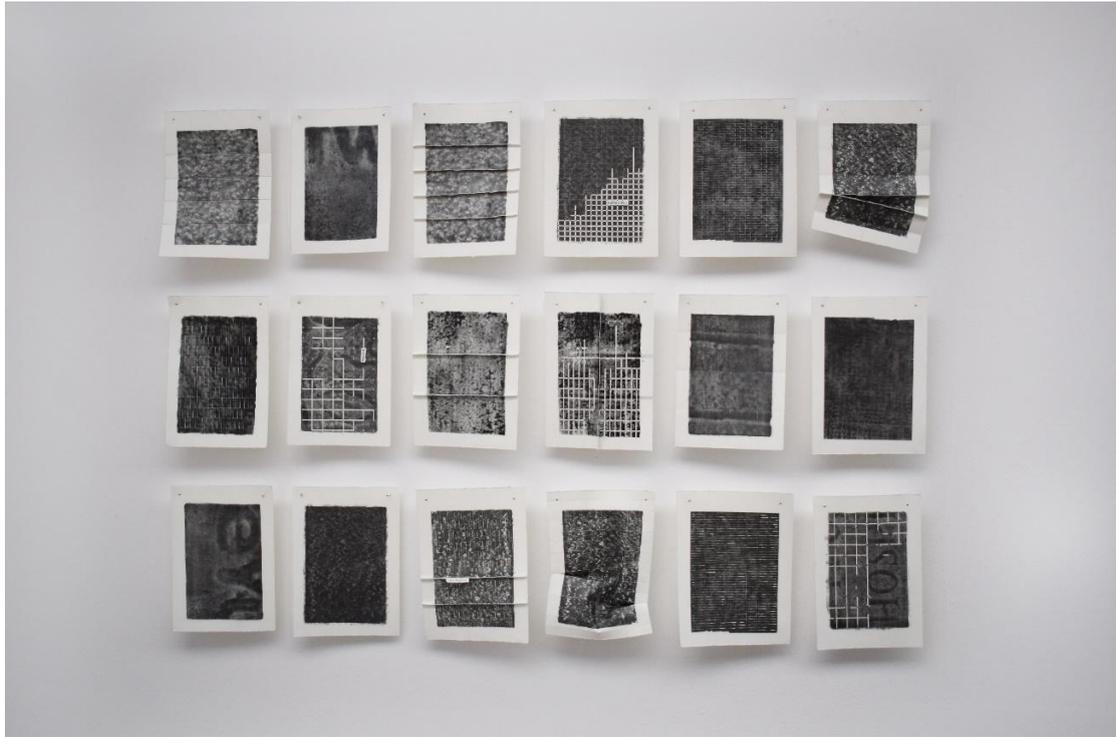
ADDENDUM 1: Exhibition Catalogue



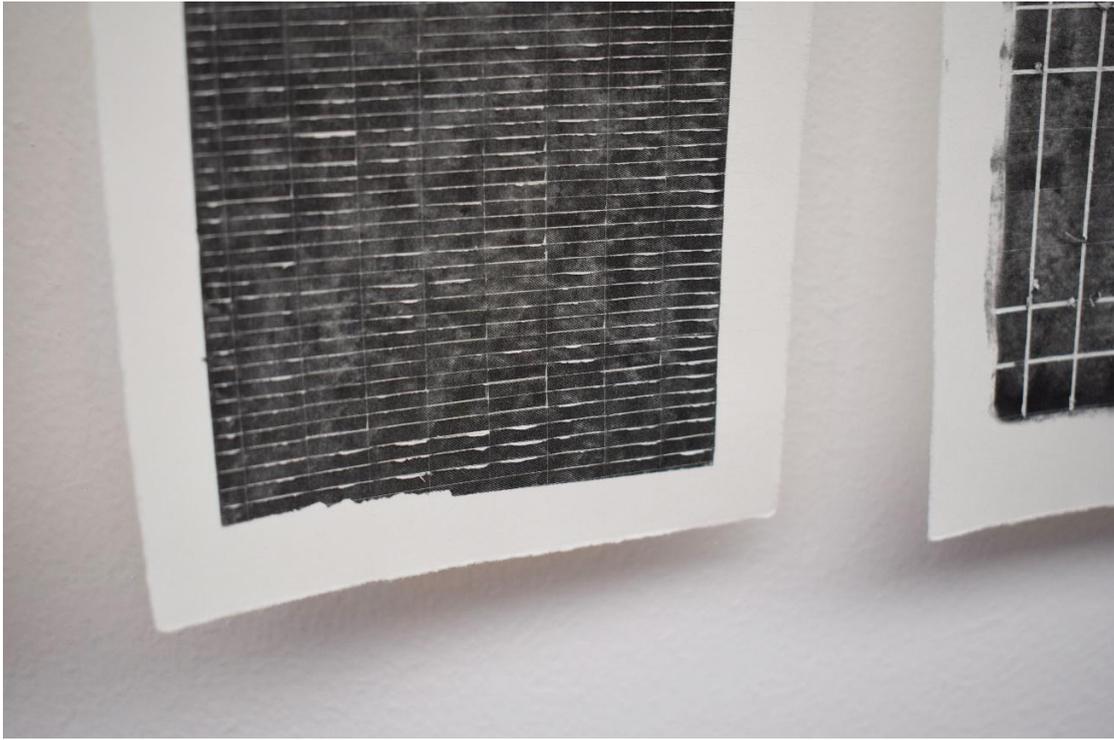
'Making Otherwise'. Site of Exhibition, Container on Rooiplein. Stellenbosch University. 2021. J Middleton.



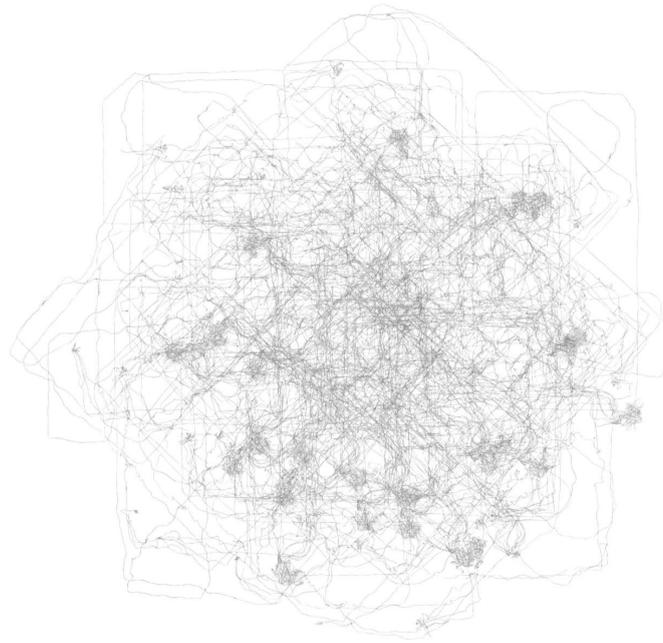
'Making Otherwise'. Layout at Entrance of Exhibition. Stellenbosch University, 2021. J Middleton.



Touch map in 'Making Otherwise' Stellenbosch University. 2020-2021. J Middleton.



Touch map in 'Making Otherwise'. Close view. Stellenbosch University. 2020-2021. J Middleton.



Making in motion video in 'Making Otherwise' Stellenbosch University. 2021. J Middleton.



Enmeshed in 'Making Otherwise' Stellenbosch University. 2021. J Middleton.



Enmeshed in 'Making Otherwise'. Close view. Stellenbosch University, 2021. J Middleton.



Enmeshed in 'Making Otherwise'. Close view. Stellenbosch University, 2021. J Middleton.



Shifting grids and shifting histories in 'Making Otherwise'. Stellenbosch University. 2021. J Middleton.



Shifting grids and shifting histories in 'Making Otherwise'. Alternative view. Stellenbosch University. 2021. J Middleton.



Shifting grids and shifting histories in 'Making Otherwise'. Close view. Stellenbosch University. 2021. J Middleton.



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Collage postcards of space-time fragments in 'Making Otherwise'. Stellenbosch University, 2021. J Middleton.



Collage postcards of space-time fragments in 'Making Otherwise'. Close view. Stellenbosch University, 2021. J Middleton.