



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

University of Wollongong
Research Online

Faculty of Creative Arts - Papers (Archive)

Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts

2010

Editorial: Curiosity

Su Ballard

University of Wollongong, sballard@uow.edu.au

Publication Details

Ballard, S. (2010). Editorial: Curiosity. *Junctures: the journal for thematic dialogue*, (13), 7-9.

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library:
research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Functures

The Journal for Thematic Dialogue

13: unseen

December 2010





unctures
The Journal for Thematic Dialogue

13: unseen

December 2010

Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue is a multidisciplinary academic journal founded by Otago Polytechnic Te Kura Matatini ki Otago in 2003 as a forum for trans-disciplinary discussion, analysis, and critique.

Junctures aims to engage discussion across boundaries, whether these are disciplinary, geographic, cultural, social or economic. Each issue of *Junctures* is organised as a site of encounter around a one-word theme. This allows us to highlight the resonances and disturbances of dialogue. With New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region as a backdrop, but not its only stage, *Junctures* seeks to address the matters which concern us all as we negotiate the contemporary environment.

Junctures is fully blind peer reviewed and catalogued on the Ulrichs Periodicals directory, Thomson Gale databases, and in the EBSCO databases: Academic OneFile, Literature Resource Center and Expanded Academic.

Annual subscription:

NZ\$100 institutional domestic; NZ\$140 institutional overseas; NZ\$40 individual domestic; NZ\$65 individual overseas. Requests for subscriptions should include complete mailing address and payment by international money order or credit card and should be sent to: Subscriptions, *Junctures*, Otago Polytechnic Te Kura Matatini ki Otago, Private Bag 1910, Dunedin, New Zealand. junctures@op.ac.nz

ISSN: 1176-5119 (print)

ISSN: 1179-8912 (online)

Junctures is published under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives Works 3.0 New Zealand licence (cc-by-nc-nd), unless otherwise indicated. Copyright in all images remains with the artists, unless otherwise indicated.

Send items for review to:

Reviews Editor, *Junctures*, Otago Polytechnic Te Kura Matatini ki Otago, Private Bag 1910, Dunedin, New Zealand. junctures@op.ac.nz

Editorial Assistant: Pam McKinlay.

Design and Typesetting: Suzanne Thornton, Design Hub.

Printing: Uniprint, University of Otago, Dunedin.

Cover image:

Detail from: Lilly Daff, *Chrysophanus salustius*, *Vanessa gonerilla* (Butterfly studies, n.d), watercolour. Hocken Collections Uare Taoka O Hākena, University of Otago. Reproduced with permission.

EDITOR

Dr Susan Ballard

Dunedin School of Art,
Otago Polytechnic Te Kura Matatini ki Otago
Dunedin, New Zealand

REVIEWS EDITOR

Bridie Lonie

Dunedin School of Art,
Otago Polytechnic Te Kura Matatini ki Otago
Dunedin, New Zealand

EDITORIAL BOARD

Dr Christina Barton, Director, Adam Art Gallery, Victoria University, New Zealand

Dr Cameron Bishop, Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia

James Charlton, Interdisciplinary Unit, AUT University, New Zealand

Prof Sean Cubitt, Culture and Communication, University of Melbourne, Australia

Assoc Prof Frances Dyson, Technoculture, University of California at Davis, CA, USA

Prof Matthew Fuller, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

Rachel Gillies, Photography, Dunedin School of Art, Otago Polytechnic Te Kura Matatini ki Otago, New Zealand

Univ Prof Dr habil Oliver Grau, Image Science, Danube University Krems, Austria

Prof Johannes Heidema, Mathematical Sciences, University of South Africa

Dr Brendan Hokowhitu, Te Tumu, School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, University of Otago, New Zealand

Dr Zita Joyce, Media and Communications, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

Dr Gail Kenning, Art History and Art Education, College of Fine Arts, UNSW, Sydney, Australia

Dr Drew Leder, Philosophy, Loyola University of Maryland, Baltimore, MD, USA

Prof Erin Manning, SenseLab, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

Prof Estelle Maré, Art History, University of the Free State, South Africa

Dr Manulani Aluli Meyer, Education, University of Hawai'i, Hilo

Dr Brett Nicholls, Media, Film and Communication, University of Otago, New Zealand

Prof Sally Jane Norman, Performance Technologies, Director, Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, University of Sussex, UK

Assoc Prof Mike Paulin, Zoology, University of Otago, New Zealand

Assoc Prof Andrew Murphie, English, Media and Performing Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Michelle Schaaf, Te Tumu, School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, University of Otago, New Zealand

Dr Tony Schirato, Media Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Prof Leoni Schmidt, Dunedin School of Art, Otago Polytechnic Te Kura Matatini ki Otago, New Zealand

Dr Jo Smith, Media Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Peter Stupples, Art History and Theory, Dunedin School of Art, Otago Polytechnic Te Kura Matatini ki Otago, New Zealand

Prof Dirk van den Berg, Art History and Visual Culture Studies, University of the Free State, South Africa

Susan Ballard	Editorial: Curiosity	7
Allan Smith	Shining and Vanishing: Seen and Unseen in the Art of Leigh Martin	11
Bridie Lonie	Representation, Use and Participation; Three Ways of Looking at Art/Science	23
David Haines & Joyce Hinterding	<i>EarthStar</i>	33
Yuk Hui	The Computational Turn or a New <i>Weltbild</i>	41
Julian Priest	<i>The Future Network</i>	53
Peter Gorman	<i>Mains Hum</i>	61
Margaret Pack	Making the Unseen Seen through the use of Multimedia Approaches in Counselling and Social Work Education	69
Claire Beynon	Nature's Little Masons: Seven Meditations on Two Antarctic Seasons	76
REVIEW ESSAYS		
David Green	<i>Illustrating the Unseeable: Reconnecting Art and Science</i> Symposium, 28 October 2009, hosted by Electronic Arts, Dunedin School of Art, Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, New Zealand	89
Cushla McKinney	David Edwards, <i>Artscience: Creativity in the Post-Google Generation</i> (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2008)	93
Bridie Lonie	<i>HotHouse</i> Symposium, the Launch of the National Institute for Experimental Arts (NIEA), Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House, Sydney, Australia, July 20-21 2010	95
Author Biographies		98
Call for Papers	<i>Junctures 14: peace</i>	99

Curiosity

Some things are best seen at a distance. In Eric Carle's book *Papa Please Get the Moon for Me* (1986), a father silently obliges his daughter by building an enormous ladder on top of a mountain. Once captured, the moon slowly fades as its beauty is found to be contingent and relative. Carle introduces young children to different forms of knowledge; experiences constructed between the discoveries of Galileo and Kepler and tuned by the wonders of phenomena behaving badly.

In both art and science rendering things visible allows certainty and clarification. Plato implied that this relation between existence, truth and visibility was natural, and in the early twenty-first century we do not often dispute it. Photography was born of this need to capture, reduce and retain images. Recollection, if separated from an image, could lead to ambiguity or, even worse, forgetfulness and error. So when the photograph became confused with the truth, and seeing with verification, it seemed that the dominance of visuality would always remain. Making matter visible brings it into existence, and looking at it takes time. But this process has limits. The duration of vision means that often things move, change and transform before our eyes – as and when we are watching. As Descartes proved, our eyes are unreliable; a straight stick in water seems most definitely bent. In art and science other sensations come into play as the tools of mathematics and music (amongst others) suggest different approaches to the study of matter. Today, visualisation is not modelled solely on photographic capture; instead, scenes of continual invention, transformation and movement have become the media of the unseen.

The problems of visualisation were the catalyst for a symposium entitled *Illustrating the Unseeable*, which David Green and I hosted at the Dunedin School of Art in late 2009. At the time, we were concerned that our digital media students were limiting their activities to the service of representation, whether as 3D 'avatar' modellers or in visualisations for scientific projects (as one person said to me, 'the art makes science look pretty'). David and I felt that there were other relationships to be explored between art and science, and that the time-based tools of electronic media could themselves offer some alternative methods for understanding the unseen. We wanted to uncover the various ways that the unseen might manifest without being visualised: as network, as private space or knowledge, as imagination, as sound. A selection of papers from this symposium are included in this issue of *Junctures*.

Extreme environments already exist on earth. The sufficiency of earth's resources remains measurable yet unseen, and the need to pay attention is rendered more urgent each day. The death of eleven workers on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig in April 2010, the extraordinary rescue

of thirty-three miners trapped deep in Chile's Copiapó mine in October, and only today the death of twenty-nine workers in New Zealand's worst mining disaster for a century, all mark a peculiar interdisciplinary combination of technology, nature, work, and humanity. These events involve the unseen forces of labour and capital, and also point toward our responsibility to leave a living planet. They are key moments where the intangible is made tangible, and where people's lives are changed forever by forces unseen.

There is another question though: are there some things that should remain unseen? After the visible excess of the industrial revolution, science turned to the unseen. Marie Curie measured electrical charges to trace sources of radiation; Ernest Rutherford fired particles at a sheet of gold to discover the structure of the atom; and Albert Einstein discovered the wave-particle duality of light. These processes used control, light and force to illuminate materiality. At around the same time Franz Kafka penned *The Metamorphosis* (1915), and the unseen became associated with fear and concealment. Hiding under his sofa to protect his mother from his image, the creature that had once held down a reputable job as a travelling salesman finds his life taking on a disorientating and menacing complexity. Despite his best efforts at adaptation, Gregor dies alone, a shrivelled damaged shell of himself. The hidden mental processes of the unconscious may also explain Gregor's behaviour. Unearthing such experiences, Freud deemed the unseen meaningful. To see through the darkness was good, and offered a promise of hope and control.

Kafka and Freud wrote before the age of terror. Their works uncannily anticipate the mutation of warfare from direct physical and visual engagement to the hidden threat of unseen enemies; whether in the form of stealth bombers dropping warheads equipped with their own cameras, or distributed camps of disenfranchised young men hidden in mountain caves. The development of the searchlight marked the beginning of unseen warfare, and today eighty-eight searchlights are used in the place of New York's World Trade Towers, as a memorial to the victims of 9/11. Illumination is one tactic to address these technologised relations between vision and light, absence and invisibility, representation and materiality. To approach the unseen in the early twenty-first century, we must deal with such extremity.

The first three essays in this issue connect visibility and representation via three very different approaches. Allan Smith introduces us to Leigh Martin's speechless paintings rendered in noise. In the mobilised perceptual event of painting, movement is captured and, at once shining and vanishing, the image is made visible through the enactment of time. Tracing a detailed path, Smith marks the progression of fine lines of difference and similarity. Bridie Lonie triangulates the art/science relationship through three modes of perception: representation, use and participation. These differing degrees of virtuality show the difficulty of cross-disciplinary practice that is truly participatory. Lonie's engagement with the historical ideals and complexities of the art/science divide reminds us of the necessity for revisiting the model of paradigm shift as mooted by Thomas Kuhn fifty years ago.

The sun holds 98% of all matter in this solar system. David Haines and Joyce Hinterding's *EarthStar* uses a range of devices to bring that matter closer. The photoessay included here documents their research into frequency and sensibility conducted through a Hydrogen-Alpha telescope. Synesthetic approaches tend to conflate one sense with another; Haines and Hinterding do the opposite, drawing scent, image and sound out of frequency and vibration. Simultaneously moving toward the sun and turning us away from it, the perceptual energy of their research gives us tactility of vision.

While Smith, Lonie and Haines and Hinterding all perform a focusing of the lens of the unseen, the next three essays introduce friction. Yuk Hui unpacks the implications of imaging control by

placing two contemporary worldviews alongside each other: the so-called computational turn, driven by networked ecologies, and French curator Nicolas Bourriaud's 'altermodern,' which has come to dominate the languages of exhibition. In Hui's essay a map of a network that includes everything is read alongside an exhibition model that could encompass everything, via a worldview that did encompass everything.

Network technologies are given a different expression by Julian Priest. *The Future Network* is a prose poem that was first performed at Downstage Theatre in Wellington, New Zealand. Priest discusses the balance between planetary energy, information and entropy, and contrasts a future energy network based on renewables with the current fossil-fuel based energy infrastructure. In Priest's poem, the Internet serves as a model for infrastructural change and provides a critique of existing energy provision.

Pete Gorman also voices the network. Tracing his own teenage investigations into earth batteries and what some call 'rock music,' Gorman develops a methodology for sonification of the electrical and telluric currents that circulate beneath the surface of the earth. The development of electricity, and its attendant need for safety and control, means that huge currents are fed back into the immediate surface beneath us. Without resort to ventriloquism Gorman performs his sonifications, introducing listeners to the affective resonance of mains hum.

The last two essays address both collaborative process and interdisciplinary communication dependent on shared tools. Rethinking supervisory experiences lead Margaret Pack to a theatrical model of multimedia presentation. Through the development of a set of scenarios, Pack encouraged colleagues to participate in the production of short video clips that give students a hitherto unseen direct experience of the intimacy of the counselling relationship. Technologies of reproduction serve to enable the necessary and safe distance between event and experience, but also contribute methods that allow students agency within the teaching environment.

Instruction in the details of a new topic often entails an encyclopaedic approach. Claire Beynon, though, uses the intensity of nano-scale microscopy to investigate unicellular foraminifera; creatures that seem to approach the world aesthetically. Beynon's seven meditations are the result of personal and intimate communities formed in the particular environment of the Antarctic, an extreme environment where art and science must work together.

This issue concludes with three reviews of events and experiences read in situ. David Green reviews the *Illustrating the Unseeable* art/science symposium by introducing a backstory of increasing technical sophistication in the development of the cinematic illusion and filmic suspension of disbelief. Cushla McKinney reviews one of a number of books published recently that address the arts/science relationship and highlights the need to balance scientific and creative energies. Bridie Lonie reviews the NIEA *HotHouse* symposium where design, ecology, utopia and the material impacts of climate change contributed a complex agenda for cultural and aesthetic resilience and development.

The NIEA *HotHouse* symposium, like Haines and Hinterding's *EarthStar* and Priest's *Future Network*, remind us of scale and the importance of thinking very carefully about our next move. Where we look next will determine future behaviours, relationships and economics; inevitably it will teach us what kinds of matter survive into the next centuries. We are immersed in a culture of the visual. Leaving some things unseen is as crucial now as it was in the eighteenth century to bring them to light.