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A Line Made by Walking and Assembling Bits and Pieces of the Bodywork of Illegally Dumped Cars Found at the Edge of Roads and Tracks in the Illawarra Escarpment

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Abstract

Make seven walks up from my home to places where there are illegally dumped cars in the escarpment bush. On each occasion, cut out a square section of a car with an angle grinder and carry the piece home.

This scheme provides the basis for a work that responds to the impure complexity of the local illawarra environment. The aim is not only to intervene, in a small way, within sites of vandalism, but also to descend down into the space where car and forest meet. The work takes shape partly as a set of sculptural samples and absences, and partly as field of action - walking, cutting, image-making and writing.

Keywords

era2015, roads, edge, found, cars, dumped, illegally, pieces, bodywork, bits, tracks, illawarra, made, escarpment, line, walking, assembling

Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Law

Publication Details

B. S. Bunt A Line Made by Walking and Assembling Bits and Pieces of the Bodywork of Illegally Dumped Cars Found at the Edge of Roads and Tracks in the Illawarra Escarpment 2013 Articulate Gallery Sydney Articulate Gallery 26/4/2013-12/5/2013

**A Line Made By Walking and Assembling Bits and
Pieces of the Bodywork of Illegally Dumped Cars
Found at the Edge of Roads and Tracks in the
Illawarra Escarpment**

Brogan Bunt April 2013

(broganbunt.net)

INTRODUCTION

These are set of blog posts enmeshed in an overall project that responds to aspects of my local environment. I live in Wollongong at the base of Mt Keira and at the edge of the Illawarra escarpment bush. At the top of my driveway, looking southeast, I can see the Port Kembla steelworks just a few kilometres away, spewing smoke and flames. But turn the other way, towards the west, and I'm facing thick green temperate rainforest. This hardly, however, constitutes a pure contrast between nature and human industry. The escarpment bush is no pristine wilderness. It was extensively logged a century ago and is now full of feral deer, rampant weeds and all manner of gently and brutally inscribed human traces. Despite this, the escarpment retains a strange resilience. It always strikes me as wonderful that I can head out my door and be immersed in this steep, green and leechy space for hours at a time without encountering anything that remotely resembles a suburban street. I often wander up to the high ridges, following slight trails and risking becoming benighted or lost. This project is an excuse to make something more of this experience, to explore its potential relation to dimensions of artistic practice.

My specific focus is in pursuing a minor sculptural intervention, or at least in performing a specific sculptural act – cutting pieces out of illegally dumped cars.

There are many illegal dumping sites up in the escarpment bush. I have never known quite how to react to them. When I first encountered them I could scarcely believe that people could have such a careless disregard for their local environment. I can understand litter and general trash, but whole cars rolled over the edge of steep slopes, often alight, to raze long slides of bush and form distant rusty heaps seems to indicate something more – not just disregard, but a kind of hatred for this green space, for everything that it represents. It is as though the children of people who used to work in the steel works, who have no hope of working in the steel works themselves, are perversely determined to fashion the surrounding bush in terms of their own unobtainable future.

In doing this, however, they unwittingly manifest something else, something contrary to any initial violence. Once the wrecked vehicles come to rest in the bush, once the flames have abated and darkness returns, the cars begin to drift away from whatever they initially represented. They discover a relation to the forest. They become – however disturbingly - a new part of it.

So, as the title suggests, this project involves walking up into the escarpment bush and cutting out pieces of these illegally dumped cars. At one level this represents a small act of imperceptible resistance. At another level it is about pursuing a passionate relation to the impurity of the local environment to the point at which my actions themselves, like the dumped cars, become estranged and uncertain.

A Line Made By Walking and Assembling Bits and Pieces of the Bodywork of Illegally Dumped Cars Found at the Edge of Roads and Tracks in the Illawarra Escarpment

Posted on March 5, 2013 by brogan

Make a number of walks from my home up into the escarpment to various places where there are illegally dumped cars. On each trip cut out a section of a particular car's bodywork with a battery powered angle grinder. Carry the piece back home and write an account of the walk. Once many pieces are collected, assemble them together into a line. The order of the line should obey the sequence in which the pieces were collected. The pieces should be connected together with loose joints so that the line is flexible. Roll up the line into a scroll. Transport it to a gallery space and roll it back out on the floor until only a third of the scroll remains. Make booklets of the written accounts of each walk freely available. Place the title of the work on a small visible card.

[I acknowledge that this plan describes a rather neatly conceived artwork, which for me is problematic, but it still may be worth following the plan and producing the work. The proposed work represents a fairly legible (perhaps too legible) means of reflecting upon the tradition of Land Art – addressing, for instance, issues related to intervention in the natural landscape and the privileging of natural materials and modes of experiential engagement. The work of Gordon Matta-Clark is also relevant, if only to remind me that the work is not only about the line of pieces, but also about the holes cut in the wrecked vehicles. The photographs of the holes could possibly be arrayed as a corresponding line on a nearby wall. At the very least, they should be included in the written accounts. I should explicitly acknowledge the reference to Richard Long's iconic work "A Line Made By Walking" (1967) in the title.]

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_00


Posted on March 6, 2013 by brogan

I will henceforth refer to the project, *A Line Made By Walking and Assembling Bits and Pieces of the Bodywork of Illegally Dumped Cars Found at the Edge of Roads and Tracks in the Illawarra Escarpment*, by the convenient acronym, *ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE*. Since I expect to make no more than 100 posts in the process of undertaking this project, each post will be referred to in numbered sequence from 0 through to an upper limit of 99. It seems unlikely that I will require this number of posts, but always nice to know that additional posts are available if needed. I could, of course, reduce any slight uncertainty by including an additional digit, which would enable me up to 1000 posts, but then there is the considerable risk that the final digit will prove superfluous. Better I think to enforce a stricter maximum. I should note that the initial proposal falls outside the total set.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_01

Posted on March 6, 2013 by brogan

For the past day or so I have been absorbed with the problem of how to cut out sections of illegally dumped car bodies. A friend of mine, Kim Williams, who has considerable experience as a sculptor, has assured me that an angle grinder will cut through the skin of a car "like butter". Now I already own an angle grinder, which I have typically used for paving tasks and the like, but it plugs directly into the electrical mains; hardly suitable for working up in the escarpment bush. So I have rashly gone online and purchased a cordless angle grinder, a Bosch GWS 18v-Li Skin:



Bosch 18V Cordless Angle Grinder GWS 18V-Li Skin

Bosch Australian Authorised Distributer 12mth Warranty

Item condition: **Brand New**

Time left: 28 days 16 hours (05 Apr, 2013 01:12:59 AEDST)

Quantity: More than 10 available / 67

Price: **AU \$154.00** [Buy It Now](#)

[Watch this item](#)

I wasn't quite sure what "skin" meant. Did it perhaps mean that you couldn't cut through solid objects, only through their outer skins? Did it refer to some outer plastic sleeve that ran around the outside of an actual grinder, indicating that I hadn't bought an actual grinder at all? I realised that these were fairly unlikely interpretations. A quick bit of additional research revealed that what "skin" actually means is that the device comes without a battery or charger. Damn it! Off to Bunnings to get the missing parts. Of course, it turns out the battery and charger cost more than the grinder itself, but on the plus side, the guy at Bunnings was very helpful so I learnt a fair bit about how the amperage rating of a cordless device relates to its power output. Just waiting now for the actual grinder 'skin' to arrive.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_02

Posted on March 6, 2013 by brogan

As you will have discovered if you have been attentively reading through my blog entries over the past couple of weeks, I have rather a poor record of persevering with particular ideas, particularly in relation to proposed creative projects. It has proven no different in the case of my most recent project, *ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE*. I quickly began to have all kinds of doubts, less specifically in relation to the artistic merit of the project than in terms of its practical possibility. I should note that I had deliberately inoculated myself against disabling creative doubt by anticipating these doubts at the outset – they are mentioned in my initial description. In this manner, doubt becomes an aesthetic element within the project rather than figuring as an alien impediment. So my focus has been on practical issues. Can I find enough illegally dumped cars? Can I make sufficient walks in the next 5 weeks or so to assemble a decent line of bits and pieces? More intricately, wouldn't the pieces need to be rather small to actually roll up into a scroll, and wouldn't this require more trips than I can possibly manage? And then, more importantly, how can I actually cut out sections of cars without drawing attention to my actions (angle grinders are loud) and without risking damaging myself or the local environment? The latter is a particular concern. I have no wish, for instance, to start a bushfire. I am still mulling over these problems, determined to find workable solutions.

Considering slight modifications to original plan. It may be that the long scroll of pieces is unrealistic. The line may be better expressed less literally. May also be better to employ fewer pieces and to do most of the cutting closer to home. I am now thinking of small mounds of cut up car pieces.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_03

Posted on March 13, 2013 by brogan

Just waiting to get started. Have everything at hand – angle grinder, blades, goggles, ear-muffs and gloves.

I am hoping that I can find enough cars. I know of at least four places where there are dumped cars, but some may be a bit too close to the road. Keen to avoid being heard or observed.

I guess that I will cut simple geometric shapes, probably squares. I don't want to take too long.

Rather fancifully, it occurs to me that it would be nice to cut words into the cars, but this would require something other than an angle grinder. And what would I write? Perhaps, "NO MORE WRITING" or "HERE IS THE SUN". But this risks over-complicating matters. It is the cut that counts more than any dimension of super-added linguistic meaning. Removing a regularly shaped section of the cars is sufficient

There was a need to make this project practical and now it is becoming consumed by practical concerns. Perhaps a good thing.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_04

Posted on March 15, 2013 by brogan

Around mid-afternoon I headed up the Mt Nebo track towards the dumped cars on the south side of the saddle leading up towards Mt Kembla. As I started up the initial steep slope towards the water tower, I became more aware of the specific character of the project. Not so much its conceptual identity as the kind of effort that would be required to complete it. Clearly, I was not simply going to magically appear amongst the cars, I had to walk there. The walking there and back would be harder than my normal walks and differently configured. I was carrying a heavy pack of stuff and the process of walking no longer appeared so neatly as an end in itself. My focus was on reaching a particular place rather than upon walking *per se*.

The pleasure of walking and running, for me, relates to the sense of constant motion. The two activities project an intimate and yet also ghostly and evanescent relation to space. Stopping for any length of time is always awkward and difficult, as though I am afraid that I may not be able to start back up again, that I may become fixed in the one spot (like all the relatively permanent things that I move past).

This partly explains my sense of trepidation when after 40 minutes or so I reached the dumping spot. I had looked down the steep slope at the tangle of wrecked cars many times before, but had always swiftly continued on. This time I knew that I had to stop and find some way down to these abject and abandoned things. Their tumbling slide had formed an open scar on the hill. Initially I tried to descend this way but quickly discovered that it was too strewn with rusted junk and too overgrown with lantana to provide a viable path. So I found a way down through the forest on one side. It was dark, densely canopied and very slippery underfoot, but surprisingly open at ground level. Balancing from one thin root, trunk and branch to another, I was able to slip and slide 100 metres down to where the bulk of the cars lay.

After taking some photographs of the overall scene, I selected a specific piece of car body to cut. I had expected to have to cut from a whole car, but instead found a loose bit of panel. It was covered in weeds, but I pulled them away to expose an expanse of white skin. It seemed like a good place to start. I unloaded my pack of tools, inserted the battery in the angle grinder and donned my various bits of safety gear. As soon as I put on the ear muffs I felt at ease. I was in a cocoon of deliberate action that nothing could interfere with. Far from the road, suburbs and other people, and with all the necessary equipment at hand, I had only to begin. I pressed the start button and cut a nice straight line in the panel. I cut out an overall square. The process of cutting all went smoothly.

I took a photo of the cut panel and the removed piece. Then I carefully packed up all my gear, picked up the square piece of illegally dumped car and made the difficult climb back up the hill. Upon reaching the track I discovered that I had a few small leeches on me. I flicked them off and began walking home. Light rain started to fall. A young boy appeared at the top of the hill on a bike, quickly followed by his sister and their mother. I said hello as we crossed paths, but they didn't respond. I could hear dirt bikes close by. I turned off on to the smaller track that winds around the side of Mt Nebo. I could see the ocean, grey and still, in the distance.



Steep slope, dumped car



Loose bit of panel



Cut out



Square piece

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_05

Posted on March 19, 2013 by brogan

Mid-afternoon start again. Contemplating walking over in the direction of Broker's Nose. It's a long trip that involves heading most of the way up Mt Keira, then north to the freeway and across into a marshy expanse of bush that holds, as far as I can recall, a bogged and abandoned 4wd vehicle. But after walking for a little while and noticing that there are only a couple of hours left in the day, decide to work with the first dumped car that I encounter.

I'm expecting that'll be up at the "Jumpers" – a top section of the Mt Keira circuit that seems to have been named precisely in terms of the suicidal trajectory of the various wrecked cars. Before I even get there, however, I see a set of green car panels down in the bush beside the path.

I decide upon an appropriate panel, this time a bit more scratched and rusted than the first one, and take a set of photographs of its original state. Then I cut out a square section with the grinder. I notice the burning smell of the cutting and the hot sparks against my legs. Even though I am close to the path and road this time, I have no sense of being observed. Once again it is something about the ear muffs and the neatly defined procedure that lends the process a curious sense of inexorability.

The process reminds me of tattooing. Both activities involve piercing skin and are similarly methodical. It is reassuring and addictive to cut out the shape of the square and neatly lift it free of the framing panel.

I take some more photographs, gather up my gear and the square, and head back in the direction of home. For some reason the edge of the square is more ragged this time, with occasional shards of steel sticking out. I need to hold it carefully, shifting it from hand to hand.

Halfway back, I realise that I am enjoying the walking portion of the event more today. It feels more just like normal walking. I am less concerned to hurry things up.



Just off the track



Green skin



Cut out



Square piece

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_06

Posted on March 19, 2013 by brogan

I have decided to collect seven squares altogether and link them together with hinges. They will be arranged concertina fashion so that both the outer and the inner skins are visible.

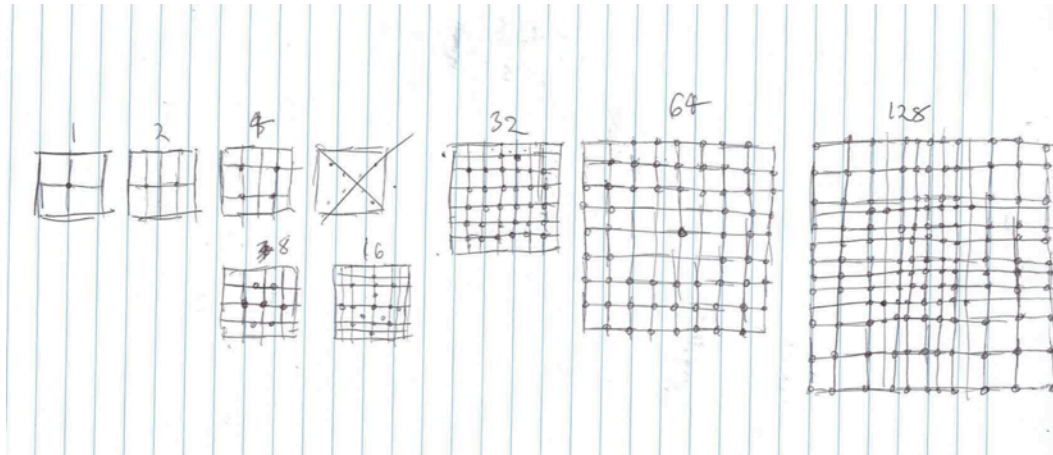
Seven squares demands seven walks.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_07

Posted on March 19, 2013 by brogan

I had thought of using the cut out metal squares as pages in a book. They would be drilled out with small holes in a grid-based fashion to represent a vision of multiple suns. The first square would contain one sun right at the centre of the square. The second square would

contain two suns, one in the centre of the left side and the other in the centre of the right side. The third would have four at the centre of each quarter and so on, until the final square contained 128 suns/holes.



Study for suns

This would have transposed two additional interests – the representation of the sun (and the multiplicity of the sun) and the nature of digital counting. In some ways I like this idea, but then what would have happened to the simple idea of cutting out and assembling square sections of illegally dumped car bodies? It seems preferable to avoid additional layers of meaning. At least for now.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_08

Posted on March 19, 2013 by brogan

I realise that I said nothing substantive about the walk up Mt Keira in ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_05. I said nothing about the initial walk up my driveway, which later I would discover was misrecognised by our next door neighbour as the gait of an escaping burglar. Particularly suspicious was my swift exit into the nearby bush. When I returned, he was quite convinced that it hadn't been me, that I was wearing different clothes, that I was possibly bigger and more malevolent. Of course, I know quite well that it was me, while at the same time I very much regret that I failed to make a clean escape.

Leaving all of this out is perhaps understandable, but why no mention of the green and overgrown path, the fallen tree across the start and the bits of scattered pine where the insane mountain bike jump had been – the jump that had ascended in the air from the flat, continued along at head height and then just as abruptly ended where it was poorly supported by a broken branch? And why especially no mention of the steepness of the track and the dappled light in the forest? Why nothing of the stinging nettle that grazed against my leg, the tall greenery all around and the place where the rocks slid down away precariously from the road? Not to mention the closure of Mt Keira road; it is only possible now to drive up as far as the archery centre, though I tend to more commonly walk. I could have also mentioned the track work just after the girl guide camp entrance, with each step now nicely filled with fresh dirt and the surrounding few feet of plants whipper-snipped into submission. But this only suggests further omissions.

I could make an effort to describe everything. Perhaps I should. But I won't. I should make an effort to be concise, to say very little, but I won't.

Instead I will continue to represent what is essentially an iterative procedure in terms of a set of narrative events. That is, each walk will be described in rather prosaic subjective experiential terms, with the odd predicable poetic observation thrown in (I wonder, for instance, whether I actually even really noticed the sea in ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_04 or just cynically employed it as a convenient conceit for inconclusively ending the piece?). Now it is not altogether wrong that I adopt this approach, because I am interested in the problem of running embodied procedures, of setting myself a task and then dutifully following my own instructions. And this is really a straightforward process. There is nothing especially inspired or ecstatically phenomenological about it. It just has to be plainly and simply done and then just as plainly and simply described. No point also in writing too much because people get bored. I am thinking of people generally, but also myself particularly. What do any of us care about the actual process of my walking? Nonetheless, I will continue to describe it. There are another five walks to go. Who knows how similar or different they can be?



Mountain bike jump (prior to falling down)

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_09

Posted on March 21, 2013 by brogan

Made an early start today. Decided to do the long walk, the walk over in the direction of Broker's Nose. Hoping to find that 4wd vehicle abandoned, bogged, whatever in the marshy creek. So up Mt Keira, then out north along Clive Bissel drive, with a small sidetrip to a nearby lookout, and plenty of stops at the various blocked water board exits, with their piles of dumped rubbish – bricks, asbestos, etc. – and on towards Mt Ousley Road, which can be heard from a long way off – a constant roar of trucks and cars. Getting close I came across the remnants of a crummy couch spread out on the side of the road, all conspicuously labelled with “Illegally Dumped” stickers. Nobody picks any of this stuff up. It just becomes a series of fake crime scenes, with not even a remote chance of catching the culprits.



Illegally dumped

The guy waiting for his coffee at the caravan truck stop on the corner of Clive Bissel Drive and Mt Ousley Road observed me curiously as I headed left to follow the traffic along the freeway. There is no way across the freeway itself. It is entirely pedestrian unfriendly, despite the existence of walking tracks on either side. Nothing connects them. The only way to get to the northern escarpment is to walk down the freeway to the Picton turn, go along there for a way and then turn back to Wollongong, which leads finally to an overpass to the other side. What could be thirty metres or so is turned into two kilometres or so of frightening walking at the edge of a major freeway. Don't imagine that many people ever attempt this. Kept expecting to be crushed by a wayward truck or pulled over by the police. I could imagine the latter treating me as some dangerous vagrant, especially when they discovered the angle grinder in my pack. But nothing like this happened. In fact one person even pulled over to offer me a lift. Very nice of them.

Of course, having walked all that way, having finally found my way to the small creek crossing where the vehicle had been some months ago, I discovered that the 4wd was long gone. Not a trace of it in the muddy creek overflow. So I guess it may not have been genuinely abandoned. I took photographs of the empty scene. Then I noticed that the rear flap of the tray was sitting in the creek, repurposed now as a small bridge. I contemplated cutting out a portion of the tray, but thought better of it. Unlike the various other bits and pieces of illegally dumped cars, this thing lacked any sense of abject desolation. Instead it was serving a useful and ingenious purpose. If I'd cut one end off then it would no longer have reached properly across the creek and may have damaged the tires of some mountain bike (I suspected mountain bikers had made the bridge). So I left it there and began the walk back, regretting that I'd walked so far without managing to collect anything. I was also dreading the thought of having to retrace my path back along the freeway, but there was no other option so I just walked as quickly as possible.



The car was gone



Tray flap bridge

It was a relief to get back to the quiet of Clive Bissel Drive. I stopped to take a photograph of a pretty crop of roadside flowers.



Roadside flowers

Having missed out on my intended target I kept a vigilant eye open for traces of wrecked cars beside the road. Very luckily, I came across a car door in a small clearing that was clearly convenient for illegal dumping activities. It looked in fairly good order and there was no sign of the larger vehicle it was once attached to. I'm not sure what it was doing there, but it meant that my day was not entirely wasted. I took some initial photographs, dragged the door further away from the road, took some more photographs and then carried the door down to a more hidden spot and cut out my usual square. The skin was in good condition so it took a bit longer than usual. The grinding blade wore down considerably. Then I had trouble lifting the cut piece from the car body frame. Some strange gummy stuff that holds the body work to the internal car frame was causing problems. A bit of twisting freed the square. I dragged the door back up the hill and took more photographs.

I had what I was after so just a matter of walking for a final hour or so home. But by now I was getting a bit leg weary, so I dropped my pace and dawdled. Finally got home around midday.



Car door panel



Moved further from the road



Cut out



Square

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_10

Posted on March 21, 2013 by brogan

The conceptual scheme: To illicitly cut out portions of illicitly dumped vehicles. To render bushwalking in illicit terms. To render illicit activities in terms of bushwalking and art, thus to make them, in some sense, licit. To confuse the licit and illicit, in the same manner that the dumped cars confuse the disturbingly alien and the intimacy of the native. They are alien and native at once – especially in their desolation.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_11

Posted on March 25, 2013 by brogan

Didn't really feel like cutting up cars Saturday afternoon. Very hot day and I was already bedraggled from mowing two lawns and pruning some trees, but put a new blade on the grinder, charged the battery and headed off. Inspiration would have to wait.

Walked up again in the direction of Mt Nebo – steep for the first twenty minutes or so, then a prickly traverse to a dirt section of O'Brien's road and an easier stroll along the top of a ridge. Kept looking down on either side of the ridge for dumped vehicles. Came across washing machines and sinks, but no cars. I could sense that I was being drawn back inexorably to the long slide of dumped cars described in ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_04, but still hoped to stumble on something more accessible. The hornet hum of Mt Kembla trail bikes in the distance reassured me that nothing that I could do could possibly attract audible attention. Took a detour down to a saddle clearing that I'd visited some years before. I recalled a small decrepit shed and various piles of rubbish. Perhaps there would be a car? The shed and rubbish were still there, but the weeds had been cut back and some stray boulders pushed into piles. In any case, no sign of a wrecked vehicle so headed back up to O'Brien's road and the slippery-dip automotive graveyard.

Turned left at the slight trail and made my way down once again through the steep forest that runs alongside the slide of dumped cars. Part of the way down I followed a deer trail across to the other side. A white Ford Falcoln ute hung suspended in the bush above me. But since I already had two bits of white car, I left it alone, retraced my steps and continued downwards.

I reached my previous low point and wondered what to do next. Then I spotted a single red car panel poised on the final slope above the creek. I took some initial photographs and considered how I could remove a square section as cleanly as possible. The cutting proved difficult. It was awkward to stand on the steep slope. I wore through an entire grinding disk before eventually freeing the square.

I spent some time at the bottom photographing the cut out shell and the view back up through the forest. In the darkness of this hidden and inauspicious space, I felt as though I were a diver tarrying a little too long at an unaccustomed and dangerous depth – yet still not wanting to leave.



Looking back up

The wander back home was uneventful. Late afternoon, early evening. Light clouds in the sky.



Red shell



Skin



Cut out

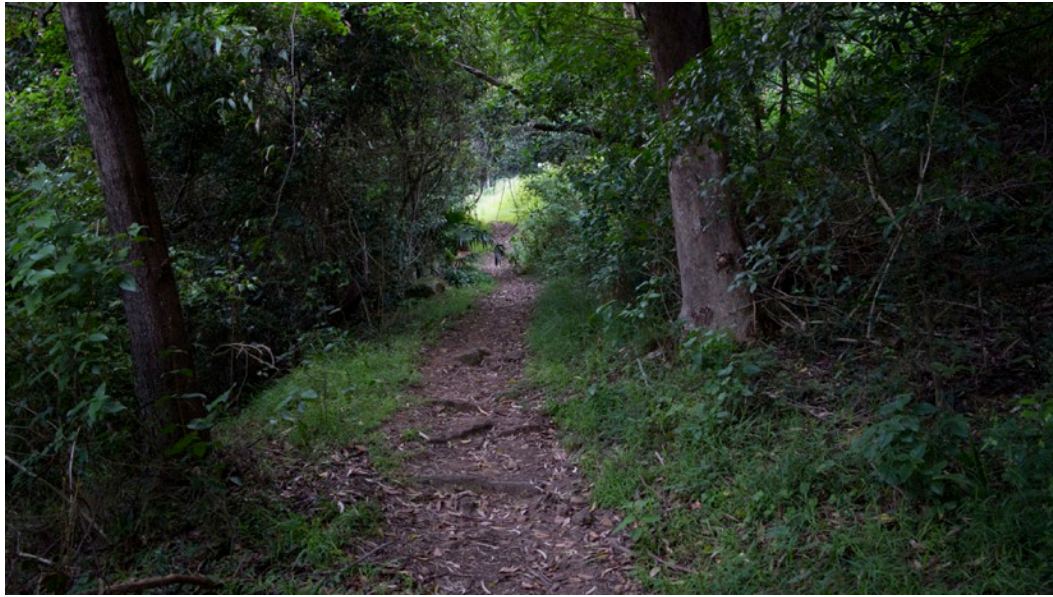


Square

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_12

Posted on March 26, 2013 by brogan

Left late in the afternoon. Low cloud settling over Mt Keira. Up in the direction of the Jumpers. The tree that had once been attached to the broken branch that had held up the daft mountain bike jump had itself fallen down, so jumped across its fractured branches. I was walking quickly, even running at times, because I was worried about the light. Also needed to get breathing and to summon the late afternoon heat. Up to the Jumpers where I knew there were the remnants of blue car. It lay right beside the track. I'd walked past it on the way to the non-existent Broker's Nose 4wd. So this was a calculated target. I had no doubt that it was there. I figured that at this time in the afternoon – really early evening – that there would be no one else around. The descending clouds made all the greens of the forest more intense. I walked up the steps beyond the archery centre with a sense of rapidly disappearing from view. Didn't take long to reach the Jumpers and the wrecked blue car. Took more photographs than I needed and then prepared for the cut. For some reason this time, I forgot to put on my gloves. A bad oversight, but luckily with no bad consequences. If anything, my lack of long trousers was more of a problem as hot slivers of metal shot off against my legs, becoming ingrained like burrs in my socks and shorts. But I was consumed in the cutting, which can't be halted once started, which can only be stopped once the square is removed. Once again, for some strange reason, I was having trouble maintaining a neat straight line. It occurs to me now that perhaps I was pushing the angle grinder too deep. Rather than lightly making an incision, I was roughly carving the skin from the larger shell. I could see the grinding blade rapidly wearing down. Although I carried a spare, I was determined to complete the job before the single disk was altogether spent. Eventually, with some final grinding and manual twisting, I pulled the piece out. More photographs. I also took some photographs of the overall scene. I continued to take photographs most of the way down. Each time I stopped and balanced the metal square against my leg and each time it cut into my skin. Mt Nebo was grey and yellow in the distance. The softness of the clouds. The softness of the forest. The most intense yellow flowers that I rapidly walked by without any effort to hold on to them, to somehow preserve them here.



Trail to the Jumpers



Blue panel



Cut out



Square

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_13

Posted on March 26, 2013 by brogan

And now I am feeling sad that I have only two more walks left. Before I was focused on getting the seven walks completed as quickly as possible, but now would like to slow things down.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_14

Posted on March 26, 2013 by brogan

Note to self: read up again on Land Art.

Hunch: the Land Art tradition intervenes in the natural landscape to produce monumental statements. I intervene within an impure environment to produce small, inconsequential statements, phrased as simple, inexplicable absences.

Observation: so these cars have spilled down the escarpment hills on dark and drunken evenings (or so I imagine, perhaps the truth is less colourful and violent, perhaps the violence only takes proper shape when the cars slip over the edge – when gravity kicks in – perhaps prior to that there is only the dull thought of getting rid of an unwanted thing), but as soon as they halt their slide, as soon as they come to rest, they gradually become something else. They are absorbed within the forest. They become habitat for lizards and possums. Their skin grows mottled and less reflective. That is what I notice the most – the shininess disappearing, passing into something else – something that I cannot quite describe. Abject and desolate perhaps, but also calm and oddly transcendent. Transcendent not of the forest, but of whatever originally shaped their existence. The wrecked cars remain at once very obviously cars, but at the same time, as dumped things, as things slowly decaying in the forest, manage to transcend their identity as cars, manage to transcend even the sense of ruin and simple decay. They gain another indeterminable skin.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_15

Posted on March 28, 2013 by brogan

A work, what work?

It seems to me that the work is constituted precisely in terms of a complex of ambivalent elements. Walking that is not simply walking. Cutting that is not simply cutting. Writing that does not simply represent events. Images that gesture towards the unseen.

And the set of cut out squares are just a residue. They are not a sculpture. They are a set of samples arranged in a line.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_16

Posted on March 28, 2013 by brogan

Ok, all nostalgia gone. Must get this project done while the weather holds. Indian summer can't last. So though I hadn't slept the night before, and the night before that as well – bloody moon – knew that I had to get walking or I had no chance of getting the two last squares before I'd be away for a week.

Spent the morning at work. Headed off up into the escarpment just after 1pm. Very hot. The pack felt heavy and no amount of pushing the pace seemed to get me into the necessary zone. Everything felt hard. I had a meeting in town at 4:30pm, so needed to hurry.

My plan was to make the big circuit – up Mt Nebo, then south in the direction Mt Kembla, up and west to Harry Graham Drive, north along the road to Robertson Lookout and back down finally via Mt Keira and the Jumpers. I was hoping there would be cars somewhere along the Harry Graham Drive section, but wasn't sure. I had a back up plan in mind – if all else failed I would remove a piece from another wreck in the Jumpers – but was keen to discover a new site rather than just continue to move back and forth between the Jumpers and the Mt Nebo slide. Discovered a small green car panel at the edge of the track as I walked through the gate on the water board land up beyond Mt Nebo. Thought of just stopping there and cutting that, but knew that I needed to do the full circuit up to the very top of the escarpment, linking together all the various sites into a single walk.

The rough track up to Harry Graham Drive was overgrown with weeds, so much so that in places the track was scarcely visible. I did my best to walk confidently to scare off any snakes.

I was still struggling to move swiftly up the hills. My tee-shirt was utterly soaked in sweat and I regretted carrying so little water. But eventually I reached the dark top section of rainforest and came out at the derelict mining depot on Harry Graham Drive. No sign of dumped cars.



Derelict mining depot



Dumped tv

Just a short way north along the road, however, I came across a large slide full of fresh household waste and wrecked cars. An associated fire had burnt out a portion of the bush opening up a fantastic view of the Port Kembla steelworks, Five Islands and the sea. I tried to take a photograph of both the hillside strewn in trash and the distant view, but it wasn't possible. The contrast was too great. The distant view was too bright and the sordid forest scene too dark. So I photographed them separately, though they properly belong together.



Coast view



Slope

I had to make my way down to the twisted mess of burned out vehicles, but could not safely descend the trashy slope. Managed to squeeze down through some tangled vines and then traverse across to an exposed rusted door panel beside a sordid double mattress. I took the photographs that I always take, put the battery into the angle grinder, donned my safety equipment, switched on the grinder and, taking care not to stand too close or to cut too deep, removed a square from the panel. Once again, even though I made a lot of noise and was working right beside a paved road, I attracted no attention whatsoever. More photographs of this incomprehensible place and then an awkward scramble back up to the road.

Only a hundred metres or so further I came upon another longer and even more desolate slide. I realised at once that this would have to be my destination for the final trip.

A little further again, at the entrance to Robertson Lookout, there were a number of heaps of household garbage. This area has become more remote and less frequented since Mt Keira Road closed, making it easier to dump with impunity. Clearly all sorts of people prefer to

sneak up during the night and trash the local state conservation park rather than pay the new higher tip fees. Standing there, having seen this place deteriorate so much over the past few months, there was no way that I could regard this in terms of some blurring of the natural and the cultural. It just seemed like the most abject vandalism.



Robertson Lookout car park

Continuing on it occurred to be that the only saving grace of people who do this kind of thing is that they are not hypocrites. They don't care about the escarpment. They don't care about the consequences of their illegal dumping. They are happy to consume and discard wherever suits them. But what about me? I oppose their dumping and yet continue to consume stuff. Do I really imagine that there is some proper place to dispose of all my junk, some effective remedial process that makes it somehow safely and inconsequentially disappear? I guess I am confident that there are better ways than tucking it away illicitly in the bush, but how genuine are these alternatives? Is it conceivable that all of my junk can be discretely recycled without having any wider deleterious impact on the environment? And not only the environment that I may wish to walk through, but also the environment that escapes my immediate attention, that is way high up in the air or ten feet underground, that may be difficult to see or muddy, slushy, inaccessible and un-beautiful?

With these gloomy thoughts in mind, the square of rusted metal in my hand and an eye on the time I hurried down the final track home.



Rusted panel



Close up



Cut out



Square

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_17

Posted on March 29, 2013 by brogan

To be a parasite upon an unhealthy host. To vandalise vandalism. To intervene by making an inconsequential mark. No point in cutting a whole car in half. I am not, like Gordon Matta-Clark, responding to systems generally. I am not trying to create something large. The squares are small, deliberately small. They are a size that I can easily carry home in one hand.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_18

Posted on March 29, 2013 by brogan

So I had a whole day in front of me – all of Good Friday – to collect the final piece. That would have concluded things nicely. I am going away for a week tomorrow. But I woke up feeling unwell. Some kind of virus thing has finally caught up with me. The weather too has

changed. It is much colder. I could hear the wind blowing all during the night and waves of little Eucalypt seeds falling on the roof and deck. So I decided not to go, to leave it another week before I make the final walk. Not certain about this, but it gives me time to think. It makes things less rushed. I was shocked by all the garbage on the last walk. Need to think more carefully about my relation to this trash before I climb up again to Harry Graham Drive and remove one last square.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_19

Posted on March 29, 2013 by brogan

No intention any longer to connect the pieces together with hinges. Instead I will simply hang them up from the ceiling in a line at roughly upper body or shoulder height. I am envisaging that they will be suspended by vertical wires at the top left and right corner of each piece. It will be possible to walk around the squares, but not between them. The side facing out from the relevant near wall will be the exterior painted side. The interior side, which is often in better condition, will face towards the wall. The wall itself will display a line of seven overall images, each composed of a column of four photographs. The line of photographs will correspond to the line of suspended pieces and will display the four states that are recorded for each cutting event: a wide general view prior to cutting; a mid shot of the uncut panel; a corresponding mid shot or closer shot of the cut panel; and a final shot of the removed square. I am also considering including a hand drawn map of the various walks and places where I found illegally dumped cars, but I doubt that I will have sufficient room. This may have to go in accompanying pamphlet that contains these blog posts. I am also contemplating arranging an actual walk that takes in all the sites, not so much as an opportunity to view the cut out panels in situ, but as a means of conveying something of the experience of walking through the escarpment bush – the strange mixture of beauty and desolation this entails.

I am also coming to the nagging realisation that I should be exhibiting this work in Wollongong. I will look into local exhibition possibilities once this Sydney show is finished.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_20

Posted on March 29, 2013 by brogan

I can imagine other, possibly smarter and wittier, works.

I could, for instance, fashion replica national park wildlife information signs that contain information about the nature of illegal dumping activities. These could be placed prominently next to various dumping sites. They may drolly refer to the nocturnal activities of the genus *scumbagus wollongongus*, etc. Additionally there could be wildlife tours of the relevant sites, with little brochures and maps depicting particular routes, features and views. But all of this, however potentially useful as an intervention, strays away from my genuine, unfunny, confused response to the wrecked vehicles and associated rubbish. That is why I prefer a less sophisticated response.

Remaining with my current strategy of cutting, it is clearly possible to imagine carving something more elaborate and precise, even whimsical, but this risks detracting from the naivete of the square shape. Crucially, for me, the roughness of the latter indicates a kind of failure of response. If it is eloquent at all, it is precisely in terms of its directness, simplicity and manifest inadequacy. It is as abject as the cars themselves.

Whakatane notes

Posted on April 2, 2013 by brogan

[Written swiftly on a sleepless night in the small NZ coastal town of Whakatane, prior to leaving at 3:30am to drive back to Auckland. It belongs in ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE only in as much as it provides a general context for my current actions. I will not, however, place it specifically within the numbered set of ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE entries.]

Before I learnt programming or thought about walking
I used to build fences and simple farm sheds
- really just animal shelters.
Both of these involved a concern with lines.
Lines of wire from one spot to another.
Posts lined up straight via a crow bar.
Lines of uprights.
Lines of corrugated iron.
All material – I can particularly remember the heat and flies and
At other times the coldness, the numbness.
But also abstract – notional geometries, notional divisions, notional structures,
Entirely temporary, endlessly in need of maintenance.
So two things – the lived line and the abstract line.
The play back and forth.

I spent close to twenty years as a programmer.
In the end I could write a workable 3d engine from scratch.
But I have abandoned all that. Too old to spend time programming.
Too old to want stare at screens.
Too old to believe the elusive promise of “hello world!”.
But it was through programming that I found a way back to walking.
Although I have no idea what walking represents.
How so?
Leaving aside the meaning of walking, the multiple investments in this practice,
Programming led me to the problem of the iterative subdivision of simple shapes.
This led me in turn to recognise the aesthetic potential of mechanical iteration.
Art does not have to be exclusively conceptual or critical.
Art does not have to defamiliarise or deconstruct.
Art can simply perform.
Art can simply repeat.
Or, more precisely, art cannot escape these operations.
They are not the other of art.
Indeed art exists in this tension between knowledge and skill and
Performance – repetitive enactment,
Which always confirms and undermines repetition,
Which is strangely, despite all the manifest constraints,
And with no effort at deliberate resistance,
Also a space of freedom.
Of a freedom that happens within the interstices of
Determination.

So I no longer wished to have a neatly conceptual relation
To these processes,
So I wished myself to become iterative,
Which is to say open to the possibility of the event (Badiou).
So I returned to walking.

I followed the pattern of walking.
My aim once again is not to defamiliarise,
Not to estrange walking and the experience of space,
But to acknowledge within walking its own staging of freedom.
I know we need artists.
I know we wish to be stirred,
But I also want to acknowledge a field of experience
That requires no lofty justification,
That need not employ the term “art”
That is constitutionally aesthetic,
If not putatively.

And it may be that walking absolutely cannot be positioned as art,
Not absolutely.
This may just be an interim stage – a stage of reflection.
Because walking undermines not just the notion of a material work,
But much more radically,
The notion of an audience for the work.
Of a division between artist and consumer.
Just as walking is an ephemeral act,
Just as it signs an essential contract with disappearance
(The walker should never leave any trace),
It also does not require an observer.
Something happens but it disappears and does not need to be seen.
In this way, walking suggests a new amateurism.
Or an art without art.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_21

Posted on April 8, 2013 by brogan

Back from my trip away and there was the sense of the changing of seasons – Summer passing into Autumn. I had one last walk to make.

Arrived home on the train late on Friday evening with a lingering flu. Showers from Sydney down to Wollongong and the air much cooler than a week ago. By Sunday, however, it was fine. No chance, however, to get away until 3:30. Day light saving time had finished that morning, so it felt later in the day. Long shadows and ominous clouds on the Western horizon. I hurried up the hill as quickly as possible. Despite the flu, I felt much better climbing today than I had a week ago. I was heading up to the long slide on Harry Graham Drive – the one that I’d seen on my last trip, but not explored.

I walked swiftly up to the Jumpers and then across to Robertson Lookout. I thought of my trip away – the all night drives, the hotel rooms, the volcanoes, the people that I met, the films that I watched on the plane. All of this made the walk go more quickly.

The piles of rubbish had disappeared from Robertson Lookout. Instead there was a nice, shiny Mercedes. No sign of the owner. They must have been enjoying the view. I half expected to see the earlier trash tucked into the bush somewhere nearby, but it had been scrupulously cleared away.

The Sun passed behind clouds and late afternoon grew dark and gloomy.

I approached the slide with a sense of trepidation. Once again I'd have to find some awkward way down through the adjacent jungle to the pile of wrecked cars. This time the bush was wet, so I was expecting leeches. I descended through a section of thick vines into the forest below and traversed across towards the cars. There were many more than I expected. It was a cathedral of dumped vehicles. I recognised the late model wrecked Land Cruiser that had been visible from the road, but was particularly struck by a rusted vehicle covered in bright graffiti. Initially I assumed that the car had been painted before it had rolled down the slide, but now wonder if it hadn't been painted afterwards, suggesting that there had been other vandalising parasites before me.



Cathedral of wrecked cars

Settled on a portion of the door panel painted with a large pink 'B'. My initial. So it seemed suitable as a found signature for the overall work. I took the usual preliminary photographs and then prepared myself for one final effort of cutting. The grinder cut smoothly through the metal skin. There was no backing glue or awkward bit of hidden structural metal. Once I made the final cut, the square piece simply fell out of the larger panel. A few more photographs and I was done.

As I traversed back through the bush to my original point of descent, I noticed a faint track continuing low in the forest towards Robertson lookout. I realised that this was an old walking track that had fallen into disrepair. So instead of ascending back to Harry Graham Drive, I followed the neglected trail back to the lookout. Then it was simply a matter of retracing my path back down to Mt Keira, the Girl Guide camp and home. I half ran down the hill to ward off the gathering darkness, making it back just before 6pm.

And not a leech to be seen.



Graffiti car



'B' panel



Cut out



Square

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_22

Posted on April 10, 2013 by brogan

I realise that the name should change. It should no longer be “A Line Made By Walking and **Assembling** Bits and Pieces of the Bodywork of Illegally Dumped Cars Found at the Edge of Roads and Tracks in the Illawarra Escarpment”. Instead it should be “A Line Made By Walking and **Cutting Out** Bits and Pieces of the Bodywork of Illegally Dumped Cars Found at the Edge of Roads and Tracks in the Illawarra Escarpment”. The emphasis is not upon assemblage (sculptural, symbolic, re-constitutive) but upon a problematic gesture of intervention. The focus is upon action and reflection, rather than upon shaping a transformative aesthetic thing. In a sense the gallery assemblage of metal pieces, photographs and text represents simply another, subsequent axis of action, not dissimilar, in a way, to the action of cutting in that it also signals a removal, an absence, an uncertainty.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_23

Posted on April 20, 2013 by brogan

I could write about the plans for the installation and its practical development, but I have no wish for this to become a journal. These assembled posts do not simply provide a background to the project. They are intimately tied to it. I walk and I write. I have walked and I have written.

I have been advised to leave this writing out – to just display a limited set of documentary materials. Some have suggested that I am leaving no room for imaginative viewer response, others that I am making unreasonable demands on the viewer's time. This writing risks then two forms of exhaustion – an exhaustion of viewer imagination and an exhaustion of viewer engagement. But I am prepared to take this risk. It is more important for me to avoid obscuring the total complex of practices that constitute this work.

Actually this process suggests new possibilities for me for writing. Writing becomes tied to action. It becomes an aspect of action. It shapes and informs other dimensions of action and discovers a renewed sense of openness and freedom by not being entirely book based, by discovering associations with walking, cutting and image-making, with all kinds of currents of ordinarily silent action.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_24

Posted on April 21, 2013 by brogan

All of my walks have been made alone.

A week or so ago, however, on the afternoon of the 11th of April, I organised a group walk around the large Mount Nebo, Mount Keira circuit. Visiting artists, Simon Pope and Julian Priest, together with Kim Williams, Ilka Nelson and Ailsa Grieve, joined me for a convivial walk up to the wrecked car sites. It was a lovely warm afternoon. We started out around 2pm and returned just before nightfall.

I had just completed the 7th walk two days before and at that stage regarded the project as essentially finished.

It felt odd to do the walk in different way and to discover different responses to the wrecked cars.

This walk somehow made me aware that I was not finished. Something more was needed. I wondered whether this was a long piece of reflective writing – a kind of project summary – but realised that I had nothing specific to say that I had not already said. I also realised that I could not write from outside the event structure that I had established. Writing was only possible within the context of walking. But there was no need to collect further car parts. On what basis then could I write anymore?

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_25

Posted on April 21, 2013 by brogan

I must show this one image, if only to express a doubt. The image is a composite of all seven of the cutting actions. The seven sets of four images are each two feet wide and four feet high. They will occupy a whole wall in the installation.

I worry that they transform the event into something too neatly visible (and composed), but it is too late now. A kind of blindness pushes me to this visibility. Events become visible once they disappear.



Composite

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_26

Posted on April 21, 2013 by brogan

As much as I do my best to adhere to the various rules that I have established for myself in this project, there are always elements of failure. Sometimes it is because the specific rule only occurs to me in the midst of things. For instance, I decided after the second walk to keep all of my used grinding blades. I had already, however, discarded the first blade, so in the end I was left with just six. I could, of course, have just ground another blade until it looked suitably worn, providing me with an apparently scrupulous full set, but this would infringe an even more important rule, that I cannot cheat any of my procedures. It is not just that I am averse to cheating, but that the work depends precisely on attending closely to whatever it is that actually occurs (or seems to occur). Abandon this principle and the whole work collapses.



6 Blades

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_27

Posted on April 21, 2013 by brogan

For the past week I had not been thinking much. Too many other things to do. If the work was not satisfactorily finished then let it fade away. There was now simply the practical necessity of installation, which really didn't absorb me greatly. Installation seemed to be the point in which the work became opaque for me, in which it fell apart.

But yesterday I woke up with a greater sense of clarity. It was windy and raining. Autumn leaves were spread all across our back lawn. As I have suggested, *ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE* is partly marked by the transition of seasons. The first six walks happened in the final few warm weeks of summer. The seventh after a short period of rain and cold weather. Now there was a more decisive shift towards autumn. Now it made sense to do the walk one last time, to visit all the sites within a single trip. To do this in the grimmest weather, with heavy rain pouring down.

Apart from returning to each individual scene of cutting and taking a photograph, I also had another idea. I would stop every fifteen minutes and draw a small map of the path I had followed in the previous quarter of an hour. Upon my return, I would assemble these fragmentary images into an overall map of the journey.

I dressed in appropriate lightweight wet weather gear and placed my camera and paper and pens in separate dry sacks. Then I put both sacks inside my day pack.

I left home at 9:15am, walking first up towards the Jumpers. I had the feeling I always have of starting up the steep hill too quickly – puffing after just a few hundred metres. I was especially aware of my breathing because I had my jacket hood pulled over my head to keep out the rain. The track was soaked. Rivers of water ran down the mountain bike track and pooled beneath the collapsed ramp jump near the fallen tree. I hopped up the muddy steps beside the boulder ramp, moving swiftly to stay warm and keep the leeches at bay.

I wondered how I could possibly get to all the sites in this weather. I was especially concerned about having to descend the steep forest beside the Mt Nebo slide. Bracketed my doubts and kept going.

The rain got heavier as I approached Mt Keira Road. The orange lights at the road block blinked on and off. I could see that I had some chance of reaching Byarong Park within 15 minutes so I switched from a walk to a jog.

There was a small National Parks cover at Byarong Park, but even then I could tell I was going to have trouble keeping my map drawing materials dry. I quickly sketched my rough path since I'd left home, jotted the time in the upper right corner of the page and got the next page ready. I had decided on an 'Exquisite Corpse' style approach, in which the last point at the top of any one page would provide the corresponding bottom point on the next page.

Placed everything back in my pack and headed off again, this time up the Ring Track towards the Jumpers. The steps were pools, but I was already so wet that it didn't matter. Further up, waterfalls splashed down the steep bush beside the track. Everything was dark like dusk. I was half running, half walking.

Another fifteen minutes up just a few hundred metres short of the Jumpers. No chance to get out of the rain. Everything drenched as I drew a quick map sketch and risked a single photograph of the track, which had become a small creek. No matter that the image is blurred.



Track become creek

Followed the track up to the Jumpers and took a photograph of the cut that I had made in a blue panel (walk 5).



Jumpers - blue panel

I also took another image of the flooded track.



After the Jumpers

Hurried on again for a few minutes, but then realised that I had completely forgotten to photograph the other Jumpers vehicle that I had cut (walk 2). I had stupidly walked straight by it, mesmerised by the flowing path. I briefly considered not worrying about this omission, but then thought better and doubled-back. I also did some quick math, deciding to discount this detour from the current map drawing interval calculation. Within a few minutes I had retraced my steps and found my way down the gentle incline to the glistening green panel.



Green panel

This mistake reminded me to be more attentive. In order to make up for lost time, I ran the next 10 minutes or so to the lone white car panel on Clive Bissel Drive (walk 3). A cold fog blew in from the coast, obscuring any possible view. I drew another small map and took a photograph.



Clive Bissel Drive panel

An uphill slog back to Mt Keira Road. Feeling ok. Turned right towards Picton and Harry Graham Drive. The fog was so thick that I could scarcely make out the road ahead. Turned left at Harry Graham Drive and then immediately left again towards the Robertson Lookout walking track. Followed a power lines access road through deep pools of water to the track. Then pushed the pace again to get to Robertson Lookout within the fifteen minutes. I knew there was another small National Parks cover at the lookout, but at this stage it did not make a great deal of difference. The sheets of map paper were a gluggy, glutinous mess and I had to take great care to separate off any new sheet.

A sip of water and then descended the old forgotten trail that runs beneath the Harry Graham slides. Very quickly reached the rusted vehicle covered in purple graffiti (week 7).



Graffiti car

I decided to see if this low trail would connect to the next slide. Feeling a bit uncertain, I jogged along looking for any signs of burnt out forest and a high gap. Needn't have worried. The trail led straight beneath the slide. Old tyres lay on either side of the path and variety of

rolling detritus – soccer balls, hubcaps, bits and pieces of engines – led up to the wrecked cars themselves. The slope was very slippery, especially the barren section of ash just beneath the cars.

The rusted panel that I had photographed and cut (walk 6) was now largely obscured by a dumped boat and trailer.



Obscured panel

I was standing only 10 metres below the road, but decided to descend back down to the track and see if it connected up with the track that leads down to the Water Board trail and Mt Nebo. The track grew increasingly faint as I headed South. I grew increasingly concerned that it would disappear altogether, but it eventually came out just where I expected. I hurried as quickly as possibly down through the rainforest and the slippery mountain bike track, stopping just once to draw another map.

I could feel myself tiring once I reached the relative ease of the Water Board track. Fifteen minutes elapsed and found myself at the top of the steep paved section. I tried to find some shelter from the rain, but it was useless. Still, I managed to find one last useable sheet of paper and sketched yet another hurried map.

A few more minutes and I was standing at the top of the Mt Nebo slide. I committed myself to heading down. It was as slippery as I had expected and I had to cling to trees to have any chance of staying upright. Even then I often lost my footing and went sliding down the muddy slope. I hoped that it would be easier to get back out. Finally, I recognised the red panel at the bottom of the slide (walk 4), approaching it as carefully as possible to avoid sliding down further into the creek, which I could hear, but not see, roaring down in the undergrowth below.



Nebo - red panel

Just one panel to go – the very hardest of them all. By this stage I had become grimly determined and didn't worry about constantly slipping over in the mud amidst car parts, lantana, stinging nettles and glass. And then there it was, right there, the final panel – the original white panel (walk 1) with its light lichen fur suspended in weeds in the middle of the slide. I took a photograph, but no image can do this place justice.



Nebo - white panel

The struggle up the slope was much more difficult than I expected, perhaps because I was becoming increasingly tired. I strung together a line of trees, roots and junk to haul myself back up to the road.

From there it was just an easy stroll along O'Brien's Road back to Mt Nebo and the descent down to Valley Drive. I stopped along O'Brien's Road to draw one more map. The rain had stopped and drawing suddenly became easy. I should have drawn another map on the final descent, but I knew I had no hope of recovering another blank sheet. The map had become an undifferentiated wad of pages with ink seeping everywhere.

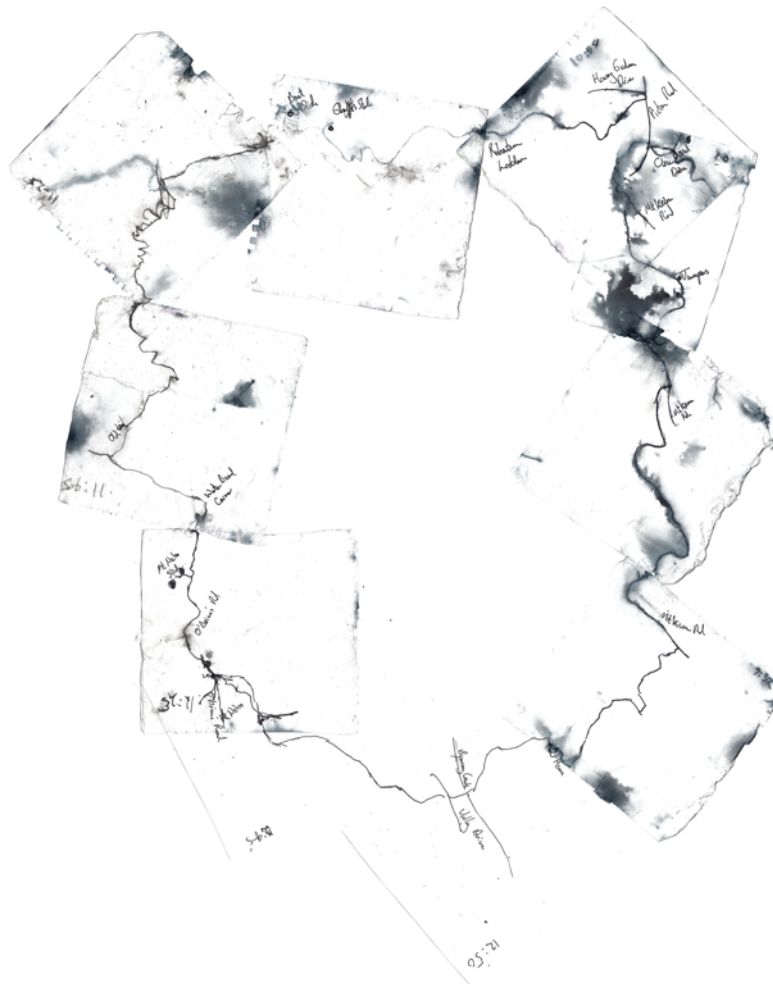
Byarong Creek was running high but I walked straight through it, unwilling to make the long detour across the Koloona Avenue bridge.

Walked the final few hundred metres home. It was 12.50pm when I dropped my stuff beside the rear door.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_28

Posted on April 21, 2013 by brogan

And finally here is the completed map composed of sketches produced at 15 minute intervals. It took some work to separate the pages and decipher the scribbled times in the upper right hand corners. I should note that this map, although produced in the interests of this project, also suggests further procedural trajectories. It seems the only way to draw a close to one set of procedures is to discover the inklings of another.



ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE map

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_29

Posted on April 22, 2013 by brogan

I have decided not to suspend the cut out pieces from the ceiling. Instead they will be simply balanced against one another to form an overall line on a small, unpainted pine table. I like the idea that the overall table and arrangement of pieces may easily topple over.

I practiced balancing the pieces in a line on my balcony.



Balanced pieces

I am also planning to include a large version of my hand drawn map, which will be printed on basic white drafting paper and pinned to the wall. I am hoping that there will be sufficient wall space.

I will also include the sequence of photographs that I discussed earlier. I could possibly leave them out, but feel inclined to show them.

And finally copies of this document will be placed in a cardboard box or in a neat pile, probably close to the wall.

ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE_30

Posted on April 23, 2012 by brogan

It occurs to me that this project has an ambivalent attitude to communication. At one level, it has a highly private aspect and engages with dimensions of silence. At another level, it makes all kinds of efforts to communicate – via sculptural samples, photographs, drawing and writing. Yet these apparent efforts at communication draw their energy from never literally constituting or enabling a communicative circuit. For instance, while these blog entries run publicly on the web and are distributed in print form in the gallery, I refuse to be bound by the hope that they will actually be read. I refuse to make it a condition of my writing. In this sense the work resembles my programming based projects that preserve a necessarily oblique relation to any form of communication. They pass through layer after layer of obfuscation and

distance, to the point that any sense of communication seems tenuous or fatally deferred at best.

Ultimately, I have the sense that my communication is intransitive. It lacks an object. It cannot adequately produce or imagine one. It is motivated not so much by the thought of reaching another person as by an intimate engagement with the escarpment field. The latter demands efforts of mediation because the field is endlessly elusive. It is never simply itself.

Unlike the 60s land artists, I do not feel that mediation is extraneous, that it is only possible to experience environmental works by traveling to see them, because even to visit the works *in situ* is not to discover them as such. Any actual site can only be properly approached by rendering it in other terms. For my purposes, mediation is not only oriented by the need to communicate. It takes shape within the texture of things, events and experiences.

In the case of *ALMBWABPBIDCFERTIE* there is actually no work as such to visit. There is only a set of procedures, their ephemeral performance, an obscure set of cut out door panels, a small collection of removed pieces, some photographs, a drawing or two and this text. Each element is insufficient on its own. It is only in their integral refraction and displacement that the work takes shape.

Within this context, my final summative walk is less the perfect, most authentic point of access to the overall work than itself a point of departure. Although I suggest, while standing in the mud before the first car panel, that no image can do justice to this place, it is only by walking down there, only by cutting out a square piece, only by taking photographs, only by writing about it later that I can attentively engage with that inexplicable scene.

