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Some combinations: Praxis, multimodal art research and complex environments

Williams, Quinten Edward

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Some Combinations:

Praxis, Multimodal Art Research and Complex Environments

By: Quinten Edward Williams
Student Number: 0606782J
Supervisor: Professor David Andrew

Dissertation presented towards the requirements for the fulfilment of the degree of Masters of Fine Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Faculty of Humanities
Division of Visual Arts
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Declaration

By submitting this dissertation, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.



17 January 2014

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Introduction: Some thoughts about this project's engagement with the world

1 Aircon-man-bird-tree-building-car



Video still from Aircon-man-bird-tree-building-car (2011).

One day, I was walking in Braamfontein looking for a new place to eat. Halfway through the alleyway running behind the FNB, I saw something which made me stop in my tracks. I saw a fan, the outer part of an aircon unit, spinning. This unit was mounted on the outside of an office building, which was on the other side of the street. That was the street in which the alley ended and into which I was looking. It was only a small part of Reserve Street, but very busy.

I remember some people who were standing around a small corner shop, an electronics shop. There was a restaurant selling pap and vleis, and some people sitting outside at a table on the sidewalk, eating and chatting. There was also the bank, some people leaning on an old-school public sculpture, many people walking around; people talking, joking around. There were some parked cars and some moving cars, and a man washing and cleaning a car. I looked through the alleyway, across the street, and saw some birds flying past. A light breeze was visible in the moving leaves of a tree. I can remember no sounds or smells. I do remember though, that it was a bright day. What really grabbed my attention, what made me aware of this small part of the street as being part of a larger Johannesburg, however, was seeing that spinning fan of the aircon unit. It was just going around and around. The moment had passed. I went into the cafe to buy some pap and vleis.

2 Problematising modernist research approaches

An approach in some of the literature on artistic research is that artistic research activities produce a type of knowledge that is not accessible through other domains or modes of enquiry (Pakes 2004). As Anna Pakes (2004) points out, however, there is not much agreement on the parameters of this type of knowledge: namely, whether knowledge generated through artistic research is located in the process of making, or whether it is located in the artistic outcomes of that process.

Pakes (2004) describes an approach in the literature around artistic research regarding the production of knowledge:

> …[This approach] frames the activity of the practitioner researcher … as an engagement with particular questions, arising within the context of past and contemporary art practice, to which the artist's practice offers a solution, thereby contributing to knowledge within the domain. (Pakes 2004: 5)

In this regard, artistic process and product are understood as intentional action by a so-called artistic researcher, as opposed to an “ordinary artist” (Pakes 2004: 5). Rather than engaging in

a “purely” artistic endeavour, the artist-based researcher is understood to be able to reflect and find creative responses to “initial questions” (Pakes 2004: 6) through “intentional actions” (Pakes 2004: 5). Art, therefore, is understood to become research when it is framed as such: a limitation to the “proliferation of its meaning” (Pakes 2004: 6) through an emphasis on particular research intentions and outcomes. As Pakes (2004) points out, in such an approach, artwork becomes one aspect of a larger research activity:

> …[artistic research becomes a] combination of clearly articulated intentions, documentation of process, presentation of the artefact and reflection back on this object's relation to the initial questions and the broader artworld context. (Pakes 2004: 5)

Such an approach may be understood to be embedded within a modernist paradigm, where qualitative research has to be framed in terms of scientific research logics of coherence and progression (Cilliers 2005). When the research is abstracted from the work and the environment in which it emerged, “dialogically or relationally orientated thinkers” are forced to engage in “conclusive” monologues (Noy 2003: n.p.). These approaches create the danger of guiding research into following predetermined directions, and of placing the work of art and process at the periphery of human understanding (Pakes 2004). As Pakes (2004: 7) argues, the artistic research object is an “autonomous structure[s]”, of which the value is not tied to any specific artistic intention: It can be decontextualised and recontextualised within “different horizons of meaning” (Pakes 2004: 8). For Pakes (2004), therefore, artistic research creates embedded knowledge that is experienced in the relationship made with a work of art.

In this dissertation I approach artistic production, through a reading of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Gauttari (1994), as a relationship of forces creating particular sensations in the world, embedded in particular assemblages. I have found that working between other bodies requires agility. This engagement with other bodies does not produce objective, value-free, universal, and linear results (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). This artistic process cannot be contained in an aim. It does not follow the reductionist “contract” (Noy 2003: n.p) produced in the proposal. The art object and performance are “a crucial element in generating new insight” (Pakes 2004: 8).

This is not to say, however, that my research, *Some Combinations*, has had no interests, no intentions, and no actions.

This art project started with a certain interest area, namely, to investigate complex environments through different modalities. Although the project had this interest area, there was no clear sense of what the investigations might be. Such uncertainties led to spontaneities. Not knowing resulted in a type of research activity which could improvise. The philosophical approach to the research undertaken is one where personal intuition and influence from other bodies guide the interaction, and where research terms and interests are gradually refined, redefined, complicated and multiplied. That is to say, this dissertation has a focus (but one which can be here, and then there) and it has a direction (which can shift).

Some forms of artistic research are embedded in environments, and continuously respond to other bodies in environments. It is through these engagements that interests change and intentions shift. Ideas around nonlinearity are useful for such forms of artistic research.

Taking a nonlinear approach, but within a sociological study, is Chaim Noy (2003), who argues, with reference to Umberto Eco (1989), that narrative inquiry should be open-ended, should stress the multiplicity and ambiguity of meanings inherent in writing, and should stress the contextual embeddedness of the creation of meaning in writing. An open-ended approach to the presentation of ideas and concepts can create “dialogue”, “combinations” and “contaminations” (Noy 2003: n.p.) that “continuously evolve, and inspire new meanings, between writer and reader, teller and interlocutor” (Noy 2003: n.p). This is because, as Noy (2003) explains, literary texts are fields of meaning. Such an approach to the opening of meaning, rather than closing it, seems pertinent to artistic inquiry too.

Initial support for such a position in the literature around artistic research, may be found in the writing of Graeme Sullivan (2006a), when he stresses the importance of approaching artistic research in terms of the non-linearity of the creative act:

> Rather than seeing inquiry as a linear procedure or an enclosing process, research acts can also be interactive and reflexive whereby imaginative insight is constructed from a creative and critical practice. Oftentimes what is known can limit the possibility of what is not and this requires a creative act to see things from a new view. An inquiry process involving interpretive and critical acts is then possible as new insights confirm, challenge or change our understanding. If an agreed goal of research is the creation of new knowledge, then it should be agreed that this can be achieved by following different, yet complementary pathways. What is common is the attention given to systematic and rigorous inquiry, yet in a way that emphasizes what is possible, for to create and critique is a research act that is very well suited to arts practitioners, be they artists, teachers or students. (Sullivan 2006a: 19-20)

In order to “advance our knowledge of constructs such as imagination or visual cognition”, as Sullivan (2006a: 22) phrases it, it is important to approach these subjects in ways that are sensitive to the particularities of the field.

The approach to artistic research taken by David Andrew (2011) holds that linear approaches create openings of definite research problems where research is initiated, and they create closings which are definitive, universal and finite. These particular types of initialising and finalising procedures are implicit in reductive research approaches, and not suitable for artistic research approaches (Andrew 2011). For Andrew (2011), with reference to Sullivan (2006a), it is essential for artist researchers to engage in the nonlinear approaches that are implicit in artistic production and process. In this way, artistic research is a process of questioning the world, and creating new arrangements in the world, rather than simplifying them.

Alongside Andrew (2011), Sullivan (2006a) and Noy (2003), could stand Arjun Appadurai (1996) and particularly his notion of intersecting scapes. These are multidirectional and heterogeneously formed, and there are always multiple viewpoints of this heterogeneity. Scapes are always experienced in different ways, as different combinations of elements, by different bodies.

With reference to these positions, it could be argued that a linear approach in artistic research would limit the emergent engagement necessary in artistic production: Linear approaches may not really create the openings which Noy (2003) and Eco (1989) write of; linear approaches may not allow for understanding to shift in relation to the interpretive and critical acts made during artistic production (Sullivan 2006a).

These voices of resistance all display sensitivity to research as embedded in situations, to the nonlinearity of working process, and to the heterogeneity which is inherent in artistic research. They can be seen as resisting a modernist paradigm, where qualitative research has to be framed in terms of a scientific research logic based in the ideas of coherence and progression (Cilliers 2005). These approaches show a suspicion of the "false" (Cilliers 2005: 261) certainties of Modernism, and implicitly, they take "seriously" (Cilliers 2005: 259) a complex experience of the world (Cilliers 2005).

The complexity of a system is in our experience of it (Preiser 2012). As Paul Cilliers (1998) argues, complexity appears as a property of the relationships of the system, and meaning is created out of local interactions. This has two consequences for this project. First, individual parts of the system cannot have access to the system as a whole. For instance, the artist has a partial access to the city, and the reader has a particular access to this project, and some of the activities undertaken. Similarly this dissertation has a partial access to the works of art created during the project. Second, because we engage in local relationships, we cannot know all aspects of a complex system. Our activities and engagements are inadvertently normative and uncertain, as opposed to factual and predictable (Cilliers 2005).[i]

As Cilliers (2005) argues, we need to find ways to deal with the uncertainties of the world. Rather than creating equally normative certainties through processes of systematisation, we must find ways to engage with these complexities: we need to acknowledge the uncertainties which arise in complex situations, and work with them. In this project, *Some Combinations*, I take the position that artistic production is a complex type of inquiry which can deal with complex research subjects.

3 A rhizomatic approach to artistic research

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) conception of a rhizome was particularly useful to me, to understand this dissertation and its relationship with other aspects of this project. A rhizome is a decentralised, non-hierarchical collection of interlinked forces and points, which create meaning through particular relations. Mark Bonta and John Protevi (2004) summarise the following principles of the rhizome from Deleuze and Guattari (1987):

> …connection (all points are immediately connectable); heterogeneity (rhizomes mingle signs and bodies); multiplicity (the rhizome is 'flat' or immanent); 'asignifying rupture' (the line of flight is a primary component, which enables heterogeneity-preserving emergence or 'consistency'); cartography (maps of emergence are necessary to follow a rhizome); and decalcomania (the rhizome is not a model like the tree, but an 'immanent process'). (Bonta and Protevi 2004: 136)

As Protrevi and Bonta explain (2004), a rhizome is an intensive network, which is produced through the self-ordering processes of heterogeneous human and nonhuman bodies. It is a temporary collection, a grouping that will change. The rhizome is intended to conjure up an image of a "hidden network" (Protrevi & Bonta 2004: 136). This hidden network resists "the striating forces of the surface and air … particularly the heirachized State", by creating a decentralised and emergent activity of connection between bodies (Protrevi & Bonta 2004: 136). The world, this dissertation and my work may be seen as part of a rhizomatic relationship between human and nonhuman bodies.

Thinking can be rhizomatic. It is a nomadic movement between points, making connections (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). Rhizomatic thinking and making are not based on truth and degrees of accuracy of representation. Truth based on a conception of stability remains uncertain and inaccurate. The truth of logic is not a necessary truth. As Deleuze (2004b) argues, "The ideas formed by pure intelligence only have a logical truth, a possible truth, their choice is arbitrary" (Deleuze 2004b: 96). For Deleuze (2004b) necessary truths are those of value and sense. It is a truth based on inconsistency and variability. It is based in the relationships between bodies (Deleuze 2004b). For Deleuze (2004b), the production of sensation creates a communication with the body that creates a necessary truth, not based on logic, but based on the relationships of bodies and forces. Although this project employs some combinations of concepts and experiences placed into specific relationships, the research has created something else too, namely, an engagement in the world with other bodies.[ii]

Such an engagement requires agility. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use the metaphor of a root-tree to argue that traditional thought follows a linear pattern. The model of thought following the root-tree structure is a continuation of the hierarchical orderings of classical reflection. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the model functions in terms of the binary logic created by dichotomy, and cannot register multiplicity. In a world where the relationships between bodies are characterised by contingent and hazardous processes, the tree analogy as a model of thought creates fixed structures of hierarchy and false certainties. This model of thought does not have the agility of the rhizome. The model of the root-tree, however, can move into the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). The model of thought presented by the rhizome is a way of dealing with the unknown as it arises in the relationships between bodies (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). In this approach, thinking is an experimental, material, and embedded engagement. It is linking and disrupting. Thinking imbricates other bodies.

The concept of the rhizome is sensitive to the open and shifting relationships between heterogeneous human and nonhuman bodies which comprise an assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari 1987).[iii] The world is created out of multiple intersecting assemblages, shifting groupings of bodies (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). Artistic production can be understood as

thinking through an engagement with the production of assemblages (Oliveira & Rebolledo 2011). This writing too, is a production of assemblages, each section of the dissertation creating a particular combination of thoughts, concepts, passages, and experiences in this project (Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

This dissertation does something more than create a functionalist account of my research processes. This is necessary, because artistic research does not stay at any point for long. It continuously moves between points, it is a middle, a mutation that does not end (Deleuze 2004a). I have often gone back to a painting, after I thought it was done... the boundaries of an interaction in an environment are even less clear. Where do the repercussions of an interaction end? Perhaps they are forgotten, but they don't just stop. They transform into something else, a new relationship of forces (Deleuze & Guattari 1987).

Aims become multidirectional: they are becomings that change as they engage in environments. Aims can be thought of as the interests of the artist: they are a process of invention (Carter 2007). In this employment of the term, interest is comparable to a rhizomatic form: it is neither a predetermined direction or outcome, nor an abstract theoretical proposition, which needs proving or disproving. Interests are material engagements, the attitude to these engagements, and the creation of relationships between bodies. This type of thinking cannot be separated from its process. For this reason, rationale becomes complicit in direction, and is discussed alongside arguments as part of arguments. Reasons cannot be separated from particular cases.

The methodologies employed in this project, therefore, are more than a system of rule-bound methods that establish definite relationships between the methods and their outcomes (Cartwright, Childers & Findlay Hendry 2012). My artistic undertakings required engagements with the world that do not attempt to simplify complexity, and are able to “navigate”, in action, and in action again, through the uncertainties of complex environments (Morin 1999: 3).

Artistic methodologies are emergent; they arise and adapt through the activity of working (Sullivan 2005). In this project, I understood my methodology as arising through engagements

with other bodies in relationships of affect: the capacity to invoke or undertake a change in a body, and always implicating another body (Cole & Masny 2009). The methodology employed in this project has been of mutational becomings, which occur in engagements with other bodies (Deleuze 1987, 2004b). This dissertation looks into such an unfolding approach to artistic research, as embedded in the production of urban assemblages.

In this rhizomatic approach to research, theoretical frameworks are too rigid. One cannot simply use a prefabricated theoretical framework and then clad it with your own arguments, to suit your particular project. As Deleuze (2004a) wrote, theory needs to be used, but theory needs to be recreated in each new situation. Concepts, however, are not rigid; they exist as independent creations, they are produced within specific situations, and they always exist in relationship to other concepts (Deleuze & Guattari 1994).[iv]

Deleuze (2004a) compares the use of concepts to a toolbox. Like tools concepts have a potential use which opens up in a situation, and can be shifted in a situation. As Claire Colebrook (2010: 3) writes, Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy, which creates a grouping of concepts that order the world as a collection of assemblages, is an assemblage itself. Working with their assemblage, Colebrook continues, makes it possible to understand the complex orderings of the world in a particular way, but also spawns new orderings.

An example of how concepts are re-engaged and not simply employed can be seen in Andrew's (2011) approach to the groups of theorists and concepts he works with, works into, and away from. He describes the group of theorists and concepts he engages with as a team, and as a grouping that may form a theoretical listing and also a theoretical constellation. In his work, the list is a striating force, it is the creation of a particular order.

Concepts can always be arranged in other combinations, and they are always embedded in particular assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari 1994). As Andrew (2011) writes, when the striation of the list is released back into a smooth relationship, it becomes a constellation. The list becomes relational and topographical. These constellations "are markers of becoming" (Andrew 2011: 51), and theory becomes a constantly changing set of relationships, an activity

in the world of working. In this regard, a relationship of different concepts from different thinkers becomes implicated in a working process embedded in the world, as in my case, an artistic research project in Johannesburg.

This agility of concepts means that theories, just like other types of activities in the world, are based in normative relationships within particular assemblages (Deleuze 2004a). Once theory is approached as an activity in the world, alongside other activities, it becomes possible to write about art; about experiences in Johannesburg alongside theory. Rather than creating definite boundaries between theoretical sections and the more “interpretive” sections of the artistic practice, these forms can contact each other, and so create new assemblages.

Deleuze and Guattari (1994) argue that philosophy and art are intertwined. According to them, philosophy and art do not explain each other, but operate as ways of thinking in the world. Philosophy produces concepts in the world, and art produces sensations in the world. Concepts and sensations, however, start working through each other, and become transformed in the contact between each other.

The general approach to the literature review cuts out embedded influences in the project if they are not academic, or frames everyday sources within groupings of concepts and discourses as problems to solve. The question is: How can such an approach deal with contingent engagement in the world without reducing its complexity through a representation (Morin 2007)?

An approach to the literature review which attempts to identify shortcomings in the discourse, and then addresses these inadequacies directly in a conclusive, gap-filling way, creates a closing of meaning. Meaning, however, is multiple. As Noy (2003) argues, however, the literature review can be a dialogue, an entering of a space to write in.

This dissertation temporarily suspends readings between complexity theory (Cilliers 1998, 2005, 2007), material-semiotic theory (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 1994), urban theory (Appadurai 2006; Pieterse 2009a, 2009b; DeLanda 2006; Protevi 2009; Simone 2008),

approaches to artistic research (Bolt 2007; Goddard 2007; Carter 2007; Sullivan 2005), multimodality (Cole & Masny 2009) and praxis (Deleuze 2004a), amongst others.

Rather than produce a literature review as a section in itself, however, another approach would be to run the content of the literature review through the dissertation, the temporary suspension of readings creating different assemblages throughout this dissertation (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). This approach does not mean that the content gets lost in this dissertation. On the contrary, this "conversational" (Noy 2003: n.p.) approach can reposition content that would have been incorporated into The [definitive] Literature Review, into the arguments of this dissertation, thereby engaging with them in another way that is more open to ambiguity and an openness to meanings (Noy 2003).

Each section of this dissertation may be seen as a repositioning of my argument in terms of a different focus in connected literatures. In this approach, other combinations can arise, and various positionings in the assemblage of this project can be undertaken. What must be remembered, however, is that the research process in this project has not only been in the writing of this dissertation, and that this dissertation needs to work with the reality that it cannot simply contain or explicate what I researched (Andrew 2011).

4 What writing about art can do

A more theoretical type of writing cannot explain artistic production and cannot contain the interaction in the world. This dissertation, writing as becoming, as a flux in the world (Deleuze 1998), is only a mutation of some of the things which have been on my mind and things which I have encountered in some way. This writing, therefore, is not so different from my artistic work. The dissertation is only another mode of thinking through the uncertainties of environments (Morin 1999).

Artists are creators of realities: Their works exist independently in the world as blocs of sensation, combinations of forces, which are extracted from chaos (Deleuze & Guattari 1994; Grosz 2008). When the work exists already, is already partaking in the world, why attempt to

put it into theoretical writing? As Allan Kaprow (2004: 4) asks: “who really wants to write on what he does?”. Whereas an institution may require the writing about work, this requirement seems unaware of the fact that artistic work already does something, did something in the world. As Deleuze and Guattari (1994) write, sensation exists independently in the world; it is doing something in an assemblage.

As Andrew (2011) argues, displacing the approach to writing about art from being an analysis is not a lack of criticality. Rather, it is a critical engagement with ways of thinking about art, as well as art's relationship in the world. Andrew (2011: 51) writes, though approached through another theoretical “constellation”:

> Attempts to describe it [sense], to harness it, as it were, in the conventional terms of logic will always fall short. This is not an expedient or even strategic avoidance of the challenge this poses for the thesis. Rather it is an attempt to begin to understand this sensibility in terms of a micro-specificity. (Andrew 2011: 21)

Andrew is arguing that works of art, as beings of sensations, resist the codifications of analysis. He argues that artistic research needs to engage with works of art in ways that are sensitive to artist’s particular “sensibilities” in the world (Andrew 2011: 19).

Attempting to explain the work of art in an environment, attempting to represent the sensation as a way to capture it, would only reduce the complexity of such an engagement (Cilliers 2007). It would make works of art and the processes undertaken only illustrations of ideas (Lesage 2009; Pakes 2004).

This does not mean, however, that artists cannot, or should not write about their work. It means that the writing about one's art cannot simply take the form of a direct translation of what was done, or have theories be applied to it, or have its impact value ascertained (Lesage 2009: 6), or follow any other reductive approach. Art is already active in an engagement with an environment. This engagement is a tension between bodies; it is a force in the world, it influences relationships in the world (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). Writing about your work needs

to do something very different than attempt to explain it. Rather, following Kaprow (2004), an artist should write for themselves:

> He should amuse himself, question, cajole, invent roles for himself, saddle his image with great tasks, address with studied relish his towering ambitions, and above all, take himself as unseriously as possible. It is just at that moment when the words become most perfectly soliloquized that they take on something of the air of authenticity. This is not easy - one always thinks of amusing others as well as oneself - but if it happens that a high level of privacy of ideas is reached, then the more likely what is said will approach the status of pure “lies,” resembling nothing more than another plane of invention or art. (Kaprow 2004: 4)

A piece of writing about art could stop being about the art, and become another type of production. As another work of art in the world, it releases another sensation, creates another territory. All these are research productions: a dissertation, alongside a painting, a photograph, a video, a sketch, a conversation, a performance, a walk, a drive, carrying a found object into my studio, carrying a painting (or twenty) through a street (over a day), engaging in a lecture or talk, an installation, a hired bakkie full of art, an anecdote about this trip. These engagements in the world have been created through an artistic praxis (Deleuze 2004a) complicit in the production of assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari 1987).

5 An uncertain praxis

The challenges faced in the format of this dissertation may be seen as arising from a problematic distinction in the degree of the “practical component” (art production) and the “theoretical component” (academic research).

The term praxis, often understood as a relationship between theory and practice (Williams 1983), could be understood as a mutation point between bodies in environments (Deleuze 2004a). Theory is praxis, a mutation of concepts embedded in environments (Deleuze 2004a). Artistic production is praxis. It is a type of mutation in the world between ideas, bodies and

activities. It is an action, a becoming, an undertaking which is responsive to an environment, involved with a concept, and productive of a sensation (Deleuze 1995, 2004; Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 1994).

Through this approach, it is possible to understand artistic research as both the “theoretical” and “practical” components, or rather, mutations between sensations in environments (Deleuze 2004a; Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 1994). Through praxis we can consider process as research. This allows us to think about research results as being intertwined with research process (Carter 2007). Artistic research is not abstracted and universal, it is situational and particular (Carter 2007). Because this research does not separate the research process from the research result (Sullivan 2001), and because it does not create representations of complexity, it could produce complex engagements.

This research may be understood as a process of influencing other bodies around it through affect, “the increase or decrease of the body's power to act” (Bonta & Protrevi 2006: 49), an activity that creates blocs of sensation in the world (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 1994). My research has been an uncertain (Cilliers 2005, 2007; Morin 2007) engagement which materialised, and shifted to be different things in the course of the research. Here, now, I am writing a dissertation. A few months ago I was walking along the Jukskei River. In chapters 1 and 3 I look at how this research may be understood as an uncertain engagement embedded in material relationships.

6 Artistic research as an exploration and local material engagement

One form of this research was in the process of planning an exhibition and producing its installation. This was an important engagement, because the exhibition provided a broader public and academic audience the opportunity to engage with some of the ideas I have been thinking through. In this exhibition, a viewer could engage with an environment in a gallery space. This environment was continuously in production, transformed as working space. It was a construction site. This exhibition did not have a wall text; it was a space where I was working, which could be entered, be explored, and in which conversation could happen. The activities of

research, however did not only take form in an exhibition, but also in the countless smaller interactions in places outside the gallery or studio.

In the research activity, I would start one thing, and it would change into other things, as one process was displaced by another. For instance, I would collect objects from streets, fields, buildings, mechanics, or any other places through which I moved. I would take photos, and record digital videos. I would make a painting, a sculpture, a mural, a poster, an installation. I would talk to people, artists, peers and lecturers. I would look at other artists' work, or read philosophies that question the construction of the knowledge of environments (epistemological questions), and what environments are (ontological questions). I would go to places, and do some things in them: move through, or stand still, follow something, make something, or take something. Sometimes I would go back, repeat actions, look again, or do something else.

It was by being active in the world, it was through undertaking various engagements in Johannesburg, that the work emerged. This approach needed to find ways to deal with the following challenge: How does a person, researcher, artist, engage with the complexities of environments without being overwhelmed by them?

7 An object with potential

My studio has been at 9 Wolmarans Street, a WITS-owned building. I did a lot of walking to and from my studio to WITS, but also to Pick 'n Pay. A lot of building activity takes place around Braamfontein, and my eyes are always open for a useful find. The problem is, many people keep their eyes open for useful things. For instance, one day, I was walking to my studio. Next to a building, I saw a good couple of meters of carpet that were torn out of a building being refurbished and thrown into a skip. I hurried to my studio, put my bags down, and went back for my new carpet. I arrived back at the skip, but someone else had already taken and rolled it up. I looked at the person walking away with this find.

8 Some things a dissertation can do in a Fine Arts Masters process

We need to find approaches to dissertation writing in the qualitative fields which are not based on the reductive approaches of the sciences (Noy 2003). What this dissertation can do then, what it is already doing, is engage in a discussion about the philosophical approach I took to the artistic research (including the dissertation writing), and engage in a value-based, or normative undertaking; not based on solid facts, but in relations and experiences (Wierzbicka 2011). The type of research the humanities excel in, as Anna Wierzbicka (2011) argues, embraces the activities and events in which people are embedded, and creates opportunities to think about, or think through these actions, attitudes, or mental states which are normative.

This approach is full of tensions, and will always have tensions: it is a relationship between concepts and material encounters: things which have a presence in the world (Deleuze & Guattari 1994). These tensions, however, are productive; they transform forces into new relationships (Deleuze & Guattari 1987).

This dissertation temporarily suspends some different concepts that have informed my project, and have formed through this project. In this process, this dissertation becomes a different way to engage with the world than through working in a woodwork workshop, or walking, or in conversation, or taking a photograph (Cole & Masny 2009). Embodied knowledges in this dissertation are transformed, a crystallisation of concepts and experiences into a particular pattern. In this transformation, a lot of what I did elsewhere is lost. Rather than focussing on loss, however, in a complex world there are usually other possibilities also. Where the dissertation cannot do one thing, it can do another.

In this dissertation, chapters should be understood as views into this project. Each view, which is a relationship of ideas, concepts and experiences, responds to an aspect of this project, and places its view in relation to the other chapters.

This first view, the introduction, presents an overview of the area. Other views, however, look at other things.

The first chapter looks at a relationship between notions of complexity (Cilliers 2005; Morin 2007), artistic research (Bolt 2007; Lesage 2009; Sullivan 2005), praxis (Carr & Kemmis 1986; Freire 2005; Bolt 2004, 2007) and multimodalitiy (Masny & Cole 2009). The second chapter looks at urban theories (DeLanda 2006; Pieterse 2009a; Protevi 2009; Simone 2008) and finds a place in it for artistic production (Anon 2012; Deadheat 2012; Edjabe & Pieterse 2010, 2011; Engelbrecht 2009a). The third chapter looks closely at Deleuze and Guattari's (1987, 1994) conception of art as being complicit in the production of the world, and how this may relate to praxis (Deleuze 2004) and multimodal artistic research (Cole & Masny 2009). Then the fourth chapter looks again at art as the production of assemblages (Haedicke 2012; Oliveira and Rebolledo 2011; Zepke 2009), but this time in terms of Kaprow (2004). The conclusion is not so much a finalisation (Andrew 2011), as a pointing again to some questions that arose throughout this dissertation.

In no way, however, can this dissertation explain past or future relationships definitively. I am more interested in finding points that resonate between my artistic work and various concepts and approaches.

When I discuss my artistic work, it is through anecdotes, accounts, and photos. Through the inclusion of shorter narrative sections throughout the dissertation, this dissertation can enter into a type of correspondence with the works of art and with interactions in the world as another way to think about engagements in environments and of movements through environments (Goddard 2007). This correspondence is not an attempt at similarity, but of communication. Rather than considering the art as contrasting with the theory, they could be read together. Theoretical sections are equally based on normative relationships (Cilliers 2005), and the writing itself is embedded within assemblages (Deleuze 1998). Isolating the writing about the artistic processes from the more philosophical discussions of process creates the illusion that theory in some way can come before or after, and can be used to explain the world definitively. As Deleuze (1998) states, writing is a flux, it is a mutation of positions, it engages in assemblages and is created by assemblages, starting with the writer’s assemblage. For this reason, I have included these anecdotes throughout the dissertation, rather than located in a single chapter. These shorter sections are tools to create such

mutations between writer, reader, text and a project, which is embedded in many different engagements and activities around Johannesburg spanning the last three years.

The dissertation in itself, therefore, presents a movement between views. These are views of the project, and movements through the project: each a mutation of concepts and bodies, infecting my understanding and my experiences.

Chapter 1: Artistic research in a complex world

1 Some production plants around a riverbed



This is an image of the riverbed round about noon. In the distance there is the old paint manufacturing building. I walked down the embankment seen in the centre of the image. To the right, between the reeds, was the stripped plastic.

One day I walked from the McDonalds in Ormonde towards Crown Mines, which is situated on both sides of a river. I was on a busy road with many car shops, storage warehouses, and a De Beers diamond refinery. I kept to this road for about forty metres. At the refinery, I turned left and walked for about ten minutes. To my right, I saw a large field with bush and high grass.

The highway to Soweto was on the other side, raised about five metres above the field. Closer to the road where I was standing, I saw a small, derelict paint manufacturing building from a bygone age. I decided to walk through the field to the building, and from there, onwards towards the highway. The building, it turned out, was not empty: it was used as a shelter. Being day-time, the people who sleep there, were not there. Hundreds of bottle caps were scattered all around the building. I have seen this before outside my studio when plastic bottles were pressed flat, and the lids popped off. I left this building after I saw that people lived there, and I continued on my way. Between the derelict building and the highway, there is a large, sandy riverbed with many reeds. I walked into the riverbed and entered the area between the reeds. Here, I came across an unexpected sight: another production plant, also with no people, other than myself around. This area was used, not to press flat bottle caps, but to strip the plastic off wire. The plastic, in all the primary and secondary colours, was scattered over a large area between the reeds.

2 What did I do in this project?

My artistic process entailed engaging in environments and making things: a type of thinking about encounters through material interactions with various bodies that form complex environments. It was an engagement with people, cars, a studio, lecture rooms, libraries, concepts, the internet, buildings, fields, pipes, bricks, wood, art materials, computers, cameras, gallery spaces, storage spaces, bakkies, rivers, highways, money, and more. It was an uncertain inquiry, made possible through some combinations.

3 Spatial relationships and generalised complexity

The spaces through which we move, and the manners in which we construct, inhabit, manipulate, experience, imagine, and delimit space, define the epistemological and ontological dimensions of our communities (James-Chakraborty & Strümper-Krobb 2011). Starting with the first conceptions of the void in creation myths, it is clear that the conception of the spatial realm continues to be heavily theorised, and remains just as important now as it was then (Casey 1998).[v]

To a large degree (but not entirely), our cultural and conceptual approach to space influences the processes we set up that govern us, and make possible the range of actions in the world available to us (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). My project is part of a topographical or spatial turn in the arts and social sciences. Kathleen James-Chakraborty and Sabine Strümper-Krobb (2011: 4) describe this turn as a reassessment of the materiality of space as equally "fundamental to human experience" and meaning making as through language. In the spatial turn, the world is not understood vertically, but horizontally and relationally.

The notion of complexity may assist us in understanding how the interactions between the "different economic, social, technological and ecological systems that we are part of" (Cilliers, Gershenson & Heylighen 2006: 117) are becoming increasingly mutually dependent. Following Cilliers, Carlos Gershenson & Francis Heylighen's (2006: 117) interpretation, these combinations of bodies, organisations, people, animals, weather systems, technology, infrastructure, ecosystems, and more, result in intersecting systems, "where a change in any component may affect virtually any other component, and that in a mostly unpredictable manner".

An attentiveness to the relations between things is a multidisciplinary affair, an affair that cuts across divides (James-Chakraborty & Strümper-Krobb 2011), but it is also a multimodal affair, implicating many different bodies.

This masters degree has been concerned with researching complex spatial relations (Cilliers 2007; Morin 2007) as material interaction (Deleuze & Guattari 1987) through an art activity. Spatial relationships are material processes; they are particular arrangements of bodies that open the possibility for particular actions (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). Through such an approach, one may bring together conceptions of *engagement*, and of *artistic production in environments* into an understanding of a *research activity which alters the world through artistic production*. Such combinations have not always been possible.

Santa Arias and Barney Warf (2009: 2) point out that, in the modern consciousness of the nineteenth century (concurrent with the time-space compression of the industrial revolution),

space was subordinated to time according to a linear progression from “savagery to civilization, simplicity to complexity, primitiveness to civilization, and darkness to light”. This historicist approach to social systems, Arias and Warf continue, has produced social theories in search for purity and reason. By framing the present as the direct, inevitable and determinable result of the past, these approaches disregard space, human consciousness and the contingency of social life. Their abstract systems reduce all aspects of the world into sameness (Crang & Thrift 2000). Although these theories are part of the complex world, they cannot register its complexity. Interpreting processes as operating without geographical extension is based on the determinism, reductionism and disjunction of the idea of objective knowledge in the paradigm of Newtonian science, which is still prevalent in contemporary approaches to the world (Morin 2007; Cilliers, Gershenson & Heylighen 2006).

In this paradigm, the word complexity relates to appearances that are superficial and illusionary, which could (and should) be discredited (Morin 2007). Cilliers, Gershenson and Heylighen (2006: 120) write that “Newtonian science is one of *simplicity*.” Through analysis, a reductive process, it is assumed that it is possible to extract the perceived complexity of the world into a relationship of its simplest components. The Newtonian scientist’s purpose is to ascertain constant, objective relationships between distinctive elements, and to find accurate representations of these relationships. As Cilliers, Gershenson and Heylighen (2006) point out, these distinct elements are assumed to remain distinct. As the system evolves, distinct initial states are superseded by other distinct states; as distinctive elements interact, “there is no way for particles to merge, divide, appear or disappear” (Cilliers, Gershenson & Heylighen 2006: 119). This renders the evolution of a complex system as “perfectly regular, reversible and predictable” (Cilliers, Gershenson, & Heylighen 2006: 119). In other words, if you know how to look, and have the correct tools to measure, you can measure and plot the relationships of a complex system, and a system stops being complex (Cilliers, Gershenson & Heylighen 2006).

In order to deal with the uncertainties which arise in the measurement of the world, however, theories such as relativity theory, fractals, quantum mechanics, and the theories around a nonlinear dynamics emerged. These are theories which are more sensitive to indeterminacy (Morin 2007). The first scientific complexity theories, however, developed through Information

Theory, Cybernetics, and General Systems Theory (Morin 2007). This dissertation cannot go into this history, but Edgar Morin (2007) and Cilliers (2007), as well as Minka Woermann (2010) create in-depth accounts.

As these philosophers argue, however, the assumptions of these approaches are still based on a modernist sensibility of absolutes where heterogeneous relationships are "retroactively associated" as comprising a complex system (Woermann 2010: 105). Therefore, although these approaches challenge the certainty of the classical scientific paradigm, they are still focussed on underlying patterns and universal principles, and they assume that complex interactions can ultimately be understood to correspond to universal laws (Morin 2007). Cilliers (2007) and Morin (2007) term such approaches restrictive complexity. These restrictive approaches are not particularly useful for my project, which deals with actual engagement in the formation of various spatial relationships in cities.

Although such approaches to complexity have advanced formalisation and the possibilities for modelling nature, and they provide valuable insights into the world that should not be dismissed (Morin 2007), they are not complex systems, but rather complicated ones (Cilliers 1998). These restrictive approaches to complexity, however, are often considered as being incredibly important for complexity in the humanities and arts (Seaman 2005) and social sciences (Byrne 1998). Embedded in the natural sciences, however, this would make the humanities dependent on the models of the sciences. A more useful approach to complexity in the humanities is through Morin (2007) and Cilliers's (2005, 2007) conception of generalised complexity.

Morin (2007) proposes an approach to complexity which integrates and supersedes restricted complexity: When knowledge is understood to be produced through local communication and contextual relationships, through connections and disjunctions, through both analysis and synthesis, one can arrive at what Morin terms the paradigm of generalised complexity. This approach to complexity is an epistemological rethinking of the organisation of knowledge along non-reductive lines.[vi]

Complex systems are complex by their own nature: in complex systems, emergence occurs in the interconnected relationships of parts of the system (Cilliers 2000). An analysis of the parts of a complex system results in the dissipation of the emergent characteristics of that complex system (Cilliers 2000). This is because a complex system is constituted through non-linear interactions that result in emergent properties. A complex system is not equal to the sum of its parts: something arises in the whole that is not present in any of the parts. The relations between the whole and the parts are mutually implicated, and historically dependent (Cilliers 1998).[vii]

For Cilliers (1998, 2005, 2006) poststructuralist approaches are useful ways of understanding the relationships of the world because they are sensitive to the nonlinearity of complexity.

Poststructuralist [viii] philosophies provide approaches which can incorporate multiple views, interpretations, histories, and activities as embedded knowledge rather than meta-narrative. This can be seen in the way that Denis Cosgrove (1999) writes about poststructuralist philosophies:

> A widely acknowledged 'spatial turn' across arts and sciences corresponds to post-structuralist antagonism about both naturalistic and universal explanations and about single voiced historical narratives, and to the concomitant recognition that position and context are centrally and inescapably implicated in all constructions of knowledge. (Cosgrove 1999: 7)

Poststructuralist projects are inherently spatial and inherently sensitive to complexity (Cilliers 1998): Social processes are understood to exist in terms of their geographical extent and historical duration that both human and nonhuman bodies are complicit in the representation of their context, and that meaning is created in terms of local interactions (Pavlov-West 2009). Through such an approach, therefore, an engagement with a city can be seen as an intersection with other activities and bodies in the formation of that city, and the knowledges present in that city. Engagement through a poststructuralist conception is part of the contingent, a series of particular incidents with other bodies (Cassey 1998). In this regard,

relationships of thoughts, actions or conglomerations of bodies develop according to what is possible in the spatial arrangements in which they are complicit. (Cook & Crang 1995)

This engagement in an environment, however, based on a choice, creates an autonomous strategy to knowing which is imbricated alongside other bodies creating the environment (Morin 2007). This can be seen in Morin's (2007) principle of an ecology of action, when he writes:

> ...from the moment an action enters a given environment, it escapes from the will and intention of that which created it, it enters a set of interactions and multiple feedbacks and then it will find itself derived from its finalities, and sometimes to even go in the opposite sense. (Morin 2007: 21)

An ecology of action creates a process of self-organisation where autonomy is dependent on its environment for matter, energy, knowledge and information: a circular system of positive and negative feedback loops (Morin 2007).[ix] In other words, as an action is undertaken, it escapes its original intentions so that it enters an interaction with other actions in an environment.

These interrelated actions and the constant influence between bodies that constitute the complex systems create the situation where working with complexity means to work with unknowability (Morin 1999). Dealing with the limits of our understanding, according to Cilliers (2005), means working in terms of multiple, critical perspectives, and needing to make choices based on normative relationships. This unavoidable normative element in the engagement with complexity, therefore, makes an objective engagement with complexity impossible.

This normative turn, as Rika Preiser (2012) argues, means that our engagement with complexity is at the level of an experience of complexity:

> The reality is that we are facing a condition of unsolvable problems and that the challenge lies in knowing how to navigate through the thicket. (Preiser 2012: 29)

The experiential engagement of moving through complexity has some implications. Firstly, the experience of being active in complex situations constitutes an ethical engagement (Cilliers 2005). In this engagement a modest approach to our understanding of complexity is the responsible ethical position (Cilliers 2005). Although the ethical dimension of working with complexity, however, is outside the scope of this dissertation, a modest approach to the understanding of complexity entails a critical, self-reflective engagement with normative relationships (Preiser 2012: 28). Secondly, engaging with uncertainties requires approaches that are creative and imaginative (Cilliers 2005: 264). Aesthetic activities are important ways to work with complexity: a whole range of cultural activities, which could include "reading books, listening to music, appreciating art and film", playing video games, and wearing fashionable clothes, are ways of engaging with the uncertainties of complexity (Cilliers 2005: 264). This approach to complexity through creativity is also advanced in Morin (1999: 3) who argues that we need to expect the unexpected: when the unexpected arises, we must be able to "confront it" through creative, embedded actions.

Creative engagement can be understood as being embedded in specific relations, and as arising through the intersections of practices, disciplines and modalities (Cole & Masny 2009). In this approach, a creative engagement with the world could be seen as an activity which constructs aspects of the world. Within the general complexity paradigm, the creative, and the imaginative are valuable forms of research.

In this sense, the humanities may offer ways to work with the uncertainties of complexity. As Wierzbicka (2011) argues, the humanities produce creative, imaginative, value-based inquiry.[x] They attempt to work with the possibilities and ways of thinking about life, thought, feeling, and speaking, as well as with the things that may happen to people and those that people can or should do. These inquiries are based on the assumptions that "it is good if people can know things of many kinds about people" (Wierzbicka 2011: 40) and that these "things" constitute a "whole range of human experience, human pursuits, emotions, values, ways of thinking, and ways of living" (Wierzbicka 2011: 40). This way of approaching the humanities challenges paradigms based on principles of rationality and determinism.

In terms of art production, the processes and products in this project have been understood to be a part of an assemblage which is ever-changing (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). I did not attempt to locate and extract definitive aspects of environments, to stand in the place of environments as their representation. In contrast, I engaged with other bodies and influenced them, and was, in turn, influenced by some combinations of bodies. I was not interested in producing a catalogue, or map, or a simulation of the systems of Johannesburg. I was also not interested in creating an analysis of Johannesburg or an aspect of it. What I was interested in, and still am during this writing, is in seeing what intersections may happen when there is an uncertain interaction in an environment. This approach to my art-making was informed by complexity thinking, and was open to an expanded understanding of what research can be.

4.1 Scouting the territory of artistic research

Thinking around the notion of artistic research is a movement through quite a vibrant academic discussion. While some theorists argue the importance of artists developing research methods that are suitable to artistic activities (Barrett & Bolt 2007; Lesage 2009; Sullivan 2005), and even hold that it is possible to produce “systematic and rigorous inquiry” that can transform human understanding (Sullivan 2006a: 20), this is not to say that there is currently any concord around appropriate approaches to artistic research. Keeping in mind that this is a highly contentious and differentiated area of discussion, one could propose (albeit tentatively) that people who argue that art functions as research, attempt to understand how research may inform, or is integral to, or results from artistic activity.

Art courses in universities require artists to correspond to academic standards on bachelor’s degrees, master’s degrees and doctoral degrees, as well as engage in the procedures of funding policies. It is important to see art production as a mode of research, because when art education moved into universities, art schools were initiated with university policies where funding is granted to viable research engagements (Sullivan 2005). This relatively new relationship with universities means that the terms of artistic research are still being defined.

This drive to understand artistic research, however, occurs in an academic climate, which requires a rational definition of artistic research activity in accordance with university policies around research funding allocation (Jewesbury 2009) which in some cases are based on very reductive conceptions of research outputs (Lesage 2009). This approach to research corresponds to what Morin (2005) and Cilliers (2007) identify as the epistemology underlying the rationalism and determinism inherent in the Newtonian paradigm, as discussed in the previous section. As Paul Carter (2004) argues, the reductive approaches of technocratic methodologies reduce emergence through the use of strict rule-based systems and are irreconcilable with artistic processes, but in many ways are only a continuation of what Cilliers (2007) and Morin (1999) argue are the principles of disjunction and determinism that are dominant in our approaches to thinking about the world.

A focus on rationalism and determinism in universities only indicates a politics of authority (Sullivan 2005) and false certainties created in the rationality of progress (Cilliers 2005). The emphasis on clear boundaries, scopes, results, and future predictability models, where results enter a functionalist matrix that dematerialises thought from the poetic matrix of its production, creates an assemblage that impacts the reception of artistic research (Carter 2004). This can be seen in approaches that attempt to include artistic research in art citation indexes, according to “impact value”, or published in credited journals, and also in the opinion that “books, op-eds, articles or critiques in newspapers, [and] essays in journals of a more general character” have little academic value (Lesage 2009: 6).

There are contentions, however, against the notion of artistic research. As Sullivan (2005) argues, next to the supposed certainties of highly structured scientific research fields, for instance, the subjectivity and strange juxtapositions of artistic production influences the idea that art may be too subjective and trivial to function as research. Some artists, too, have been resistant to the notion of artistic research, and argue that a connection to research, which is deemed a scientific activity, would only trivialise their artistic activity (Lesage 2009). These positions are based on the idea that art is created in the realm of genius. As Sullivan (2005) argues, however, artistic research is not mysterious, it is merely a way of working. Artists engage in artistic research activities, not scientific ones (Lesage 2009). The arts, however, can

only be seen as limited undertakings when knowledge is based and built on a reductionist approach, and is posited as something distinct and absolute.

The question is: Why not engage in a conception of knowledge that is open to the non-reductive research processes of artists? In this way artists can develop approaches to funding policies, and also to research, which show more sensitivity to artistic activities (Jewesbury 2009). All artistic practices engage in an initial process of research in terms of technical, logistical, conceptual and methodological aspects (Jewesbury 2009).

These thoughts, both pertaining to the place and the material action of working, perhaps become the best place to start with questions of artistic research.

4.2 Getting entangled with the process and materials

Artistic research is both the activity of art production, and inherent in the experiences which are produced through art (Elkins 2005). The understandings it produces cannot be explained through abstract terminology where knowledge is separated from the processes that produce it (Carter 2004). These approaches to artistic research are adapting the definition of research, engaged in a movement that is creating a plurality of research types.

Artistic research, I believe, is pertinent in Morin's (1999: 6) idea of a future education based on complexity, and not on the specialisation of knowledge and a "false sense of rationality".

A pertinent education would emphasise that meaning arises in contextual and embedded relationships and cannot be abstracted from context. According to Morrin (1996: 6), parts should not be isolated, neither from one another, nor from the whole. In Morrin's (1999: 15) words "knowledge must confront complexity… [as an] interdependent tissue between the subject of knowledge and its context, the parts and the whole, the whole and the parts, the parts amongst themselves". For Morin (1999), learning is an uncertain activity. In his ecology of action, learning has to take into account "random incidents, chance, initiative, decision, the unexpected, the unforeseen, and an awareness of deviations and transformations" (Morin 1999: 45).



A detail of a wall painting I made in my studio with black paint.

Art production, which is open and amendable to contextual variation (Sullivan 2005), can be such a complex learning activity (Cole & Mansy 2009). According to Carter (2007), echoing Sullivan (2005), this constitutional openness signifies the rigour and sophistication of artistic methodologies. As Carter argues (2007), thinking through art production is an adaptive, multi-sensorial method of real-world analysis that is both emergent and contextually adaptable. Research arises through our handling and engagement of tools, materials, production techniques and ideas (Bolt 2007). For Carter (2004), the value of artistic research is in the performance of making itself, an intersection between body, material and context through a process of material thinking. He characterises this activity as the property of invention shared

by all creative undertakings: “the state of being that allows a state of becoming to emerge” (Carter 2007: 15). This way of engaging with the world though a material can deal with uncertainty and the “ambiguity of appearances” (Carter 2007: 15). By exceeding conventional meanings or functions with other possibilities transformations are created.

Through these combinations and formalisations of a material handling and of ideas, analogies, metaphors and models for understanding, objects of enquiry emerge (Barret & Bolt 2007). Artistic results create a multiplicity of possible interpretations, a proliferation of meaning, and an engagement and entanglement with other bodies in a complex system.

4.3 Ball Find

Some months ago now, I was walking up to the beginning of the Jukskei River close to Bruma Lake. The day was sunny. Although the river was already flowing fast in this area, there was little chance of the river rising quickly, as it was in the middle of winter.

Rivers have at least one thing in common: they flow downhill. The Jukskei River is no different. In this area, however, as it flows right past houses and light industries, much of the river runs underground. Passing underneath fields and roads, the river emerges for the first time below a slightly dilapidated park with swings and jungle gyms and all kinds of park toy-machines, right next to Ellis Park. From there onwards, it flows mostly unconcealed. In this area, however, the river has been channelised. It flows in a deep concrete and stonewalled gully. This, undoubtedly, is part of a river management scheme to protect the surrounding area from flooding. After storms and extended periods of rainfall, the river, like other rivers in Johannesburg, becomes incredibly forceful. On this day, however, water slowly trickled into the river out of gutters and pipes.

On this walk to the spring of the Jukskei River, I came across one of the tributaries to this river, also channelised, and I decided to follow it. Although I studied maps of the area, this tributary was not indicated on any of these maps. I had to look where to it led.

Perhaps you saw the video of a person (point of view) manoeuvring up this stream. I included it in my exhibition. You would have seen a careful navigation up an overgrown channel with some debris making its way downstream. If you have seen this, you would know that at some point, I found a relatively clean, well-used tennis ball, slightly hidden, wedged in a gutter opening.

I was very pleased with finding this ball. What a valuable object!

4.4 Praxis: not a movement between the practice and the written component

Different conceptions of artistic production as research may interpret the relationship between artwork and the dissertation in different ways. For Sullivan (2005) artistic processes are strong enough to function as the research and he argues that artists theorise through practice. Carter (2004) also views the written component of artistic research as a supplementary activity. For Carter, the research is conducted through the activity of thinking through materials. Similarly Dieter Lesage (2009) takes a strong position against the necessity of the thesis in doctoral creative research; In this view, the nature of specific projects should determine the type of assessment undertaken. As Lesage (2009) argues, if the university does not allow this, it is a sign of its inability to comprehend the complexity and criticality of meanings of artistic outputs, but also, it fails to recognise the artist, as an artist.

Although I agree that works of art are the sites of research activity, it is also possible to undertake a dissertation which does not reduce the complexity of the artistic work, and which enters into a conversation with the work (Goddard 2007).

In this regard, the concept praxis may be useful to think through some of the challenges between bridging the written (theoretical) component and the practical (artistic) component.

Theory is sometimes considered to be an intellectual process of considered enquiry: open to adjustments, but not speculation (Williams 1983). In other cases, theory is seen as abstract, book knowledge removed from the realities of the world (Williams 1983). In the first approach

to theory, practice may be observed and explained and put into conceptual relationships (Pilario 2005). In the second approach, practice is seen as something that can deal with complexities in the world (Pilario 2005). As Laurence Paul Hemming (2013) writes, in our understanding of action as doing something more useful in the world than thinking and writing, we are all implicitly Marxists.

This may be because the relationship of theory and practice that underlies much modern conceptions of praxis (as action) is initiated by thinkers such as Karl Marx. To quote Raymond Williams (1983):

> …praxis is practice informed by theory and also, though less emphatically, theory informed by practice, as distinct both from practice uninformed by or unconcerned with theory and from theory which remains theory and is not put to the test of practice. (Williams 1983: 318)

Through action, this notion of praxis attempts to unite theory, as reflection/thought put into action, with practice, as action which is influenced by reflection (Hemming 2013). Praxis, then, is the activity of engaging in the world, putting theory into action. In Marxism, understanding arises through praxis, a process of social transformation and reproduction (Hemming 2013). Through their praxis, the oppressed can strive for their emancipation from their suppressive economic, political, and social conditions. Marxist praxis, therefore, is a rationally informed reflection, and a purposive action in the world (Wortmann 2007).

Such a view is also taken by the influential Neo-marxist, Paulo Freire (2005), who argues that human activity, an activity of re-creating and transforming the world as conscious beings, consists of action and reflection, and is praxis, presented as labour activity. The oppressed can learn from their everyday realities and undertake reflective action towards their emancipation.

Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis (1986) also argue that action research[xi] is a social, self-reflective activity, undertaken by individuals and groups so as to “improve the rationality and justice of their own practices” (Carr & Kemmis 1986: 162). In this regard, the modern sense of

praxis, which operates in the field of poiesis (Agamben 1999), is inflected with the older sense of phronesis.[xii]

An advocate for praxis in artistic research is Barbara Bolt (2004: 48, 49) who argues that a type of "praxical knowledge" arises through reflexive knowing that is imbricated with, and follows "from handling". A conception of praxis is fundamental in her approach to artistic research:

> The two-way action or mutual reflection between practice and theory, in what has become termed praxis, becomes central to my rethinking of the relationship of theory and practice in creativity. Following this logic, I would argue that art can be seen to emerge in the involvement with materials, methods, tools and ideas of practice. It is not just the representation of an already formed idea. In this formulation a praxical engagement with tools, materials and ideas becomes primary… (Bolt 2004: 65)

For Bolt (2004), this engagement with tools and materials creates a particular type of sight in the world. Basing her conception of praxis on Martin Heidegger's (1962) philosophy of action in the world, Bolt makes the distinction between praxical understanding, theoretical understanding and practical understanding.

As Hemming (2013) explains, Heidegger enters into a conversation with Marx, but desubjectivises the relationship of action and work. Heidegger does not consider praxis as intended social action. The concept praxis indicates *being*, as seen for what it is, through a human's embeddedness between other bodies. Praxis is not understood as action, but as a "determination of being of man" (Gonzales 2006: 152). As Hemming (2013) points out, human praxis, for Heidegger, is a human self-awareness, the capacity to understand their own being as being in the world, a particular existence (my existence, your existence) and a more general kind of existence (human existence as being human). Being, the human being, is termed *Dasein*. This term speaks about the situated existence of humans, embedded in the day-to-day world: it means being-there, where there is the world (McNeill 2005). In this approach, practical

activity is an engagement that creates particular sight, and a necessary participation with things in the world. Theory means to step back from the world, and to analyse its components based on a dealings with things. Theory is not opposed to praxis. Rather, theory is a praxis. It is a type of concern which is based in Dasein (McNeill 2005). For Heidegger (1962), it is through action, “being-right-there” in the “middle of things” that the world is revealed, and we get to know the relationships in the world (Heidegger cited in Bolt 2004: 64).

For Bolt (2004: 64) therefore, being is praxis, it is the “concernful dealings with or handling of things” that reveals “the nature of the world”. Bolt (2007: 31) argues, however, that artistic “praxical knowledge” is different from practice-only postgraduate research, to the extent that praxical knowledges can enter and extend on existing domains of knowledge, into a theoretical domain, through a reflexivity that transforms the particular experiences of the practice to a broader knowledge economy.

I agree that the dissertation or written component is a good way to extend knowledges to broader academic communities. It is essential, however, that this relationship does not underplay the significance of artistic production on its own (Parkes 2004). Artistic production is an activity that can foster human understanding through the production of sensation, the mutation of forces in the world that impacts on the body (Deleuze & Guattari 1994). Artistic production is praxis (Deleuze 2004a), regardless of the written component. This is something I look at closely in chapter 3.

4.5 Approaches to multiliteracies and the multimodality of learning

As Sullivan (2005) argues, artistic research is created in the intersections of visual, aural, gestural, tactile, written and verbal modes of communication and production, connected to specific contextual conditions and processes. The artist's place of work, be it a studio, a collaboration, a conversation, or a community space, is a place of emergent methodologies. This speaks of the multimodality of artistic activities.

The discourse around multimodalities is linked with the discourse around literacy studies, which has received much attention.[xiii] As David Cole and Diana Masny (2009: 1) write, literacy has gained many definitions encompassing “reading, writing, speaking and listening practices”. The term literacy is also used as a descriptive suffix for literacy in various fields, for instance “media literacy, information literacy, critical literacy, affective literacy, medical literacy, statistical literacy, technological literacy” (Cole & Masny 2009: 1). I will briefly look at three movements around multiple literacies, guided by the analysis of Cole and Masny (2009).

In the first approach, Cole and Masny (2009) frame the multiliteracies framework of the New London Group (1996) as being interested in experience: with regards to experience in contemporary society, becoming is pluralistic, unstable and multicultural. In this regard, literacy is seen as a means to design future societies that are equitable and inclusive. The changing literacies of contemporary society are creating a multimodal communication network. This reality means that social designs need to be approached through an equally multimodal framework. Gestural, spatial, audio, visual, and linguistic modalities create meaning that is based on the experiential interactions between individuals, groups and technology. As Cole and Masny (2009) argue, because this movement is focussed on designing specific futures of social justice, the conception of power in multiliteracies is based on a hierarchical model, where practice is directed alongside a rule-based approach to valuing literate behaviours. These power relationships, Cole and Masny (2009) continue, ultimately take part in larger corporate and governmental organisations, and only perhaps create futures that are equitable. The focus on the design of society also means that creativity in multilliteracies is more regimental, and although it encourages multidisciplinarity and holism, it is less open to emergent and uncertain knowledge (Cole & Masny 2009). Although this approach is sensitive to experience as a mode for learning and creating the world, it attempts to create specific experiences according to planned futures. Experience, however, is not a stable category (Cole & Masny 2009). Such an approach to multiliteracies may be too rigid for my project's approach to open artistic engagement in environments.

A second approach is through the New Literacies movement, in which, as Cole and Masny (2009: 4) write, there is a focus on the “explosion in literacies that has been primarily mediated

through the application of digital technology to communication processes". These new literacies map the relationships of multiple technologically mediated literacies between the social lives of students, the official communication of the school, and "tacit and group codes that are often not recognized in the official curriculum" (Cole & Masny 2009: 4). Research activities, however, can be equally interested in types of communication or meaning making that are not dependent on technological forms of communication (Cole & Masny 2009).

An approach to which this project is sensitive, however, is Multiple Literacies Theory (MLT). In this third approach Cole and Masny (2009) place the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari in conversation with literacy studies. Cole and Masny (2009) propose that literacies are already always in the multiple, that literate communication occurs through multiple practices, from the highly technological to the technophobic. Humans know the world through different, intersecting modalities, not only through reading, writing, speaking and listening practices, but through "actual happenings in the world, where real groups and individuals 'do' literacy" (Cole & Masny 2009: 2). In this approach, learning is a situated and rhizomatic activity. These local interactions create transformations between affecting bodies and are engaged in the production of assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). In MLT, understanding in the world is produced through the becomings of bodies and forces. This approach to research is open to the uncertainties of a complex world, because its conception of learning is an activity that remains open to following anomalies (Cole & Masny 2009). Because the creation of art is an activity which creates affects that are imbricated alongside other bodies and forces (Deleuze & Guattari 1994), an MLT approach to education could be useful for artist researchers to understand their production as intersecting relationships of affect.

Chapter 2: Moving around complexity, a city and artistic research

1 Some preliminary thoughts on approaching Johannesburg

Johannesburg, an African city, is a city of the global South. Johannesburg, as a complex system, cannot be understood as a fixed and stable whole, as it is filled with uncertainties (Morin 2007). Johannesburg, as Martin Murray (2008) describes it, is a contested space of incessant moving of forces; unpredictable and created by shifting rivalries. Being in Johannesburg, “is a [particular] way of being in the world” (Mbembe & Nuttall 2008: 1). There are many theories and concepts which are sensitive to the complexity of the city (Robinson 2006; Murry 2008), some of which will be discussed in the following section. In this chapter I point to some of the approaches to understanding cities that are sensitive to their complexity, but also sensitive to artistic research.

2 Looking down through a window

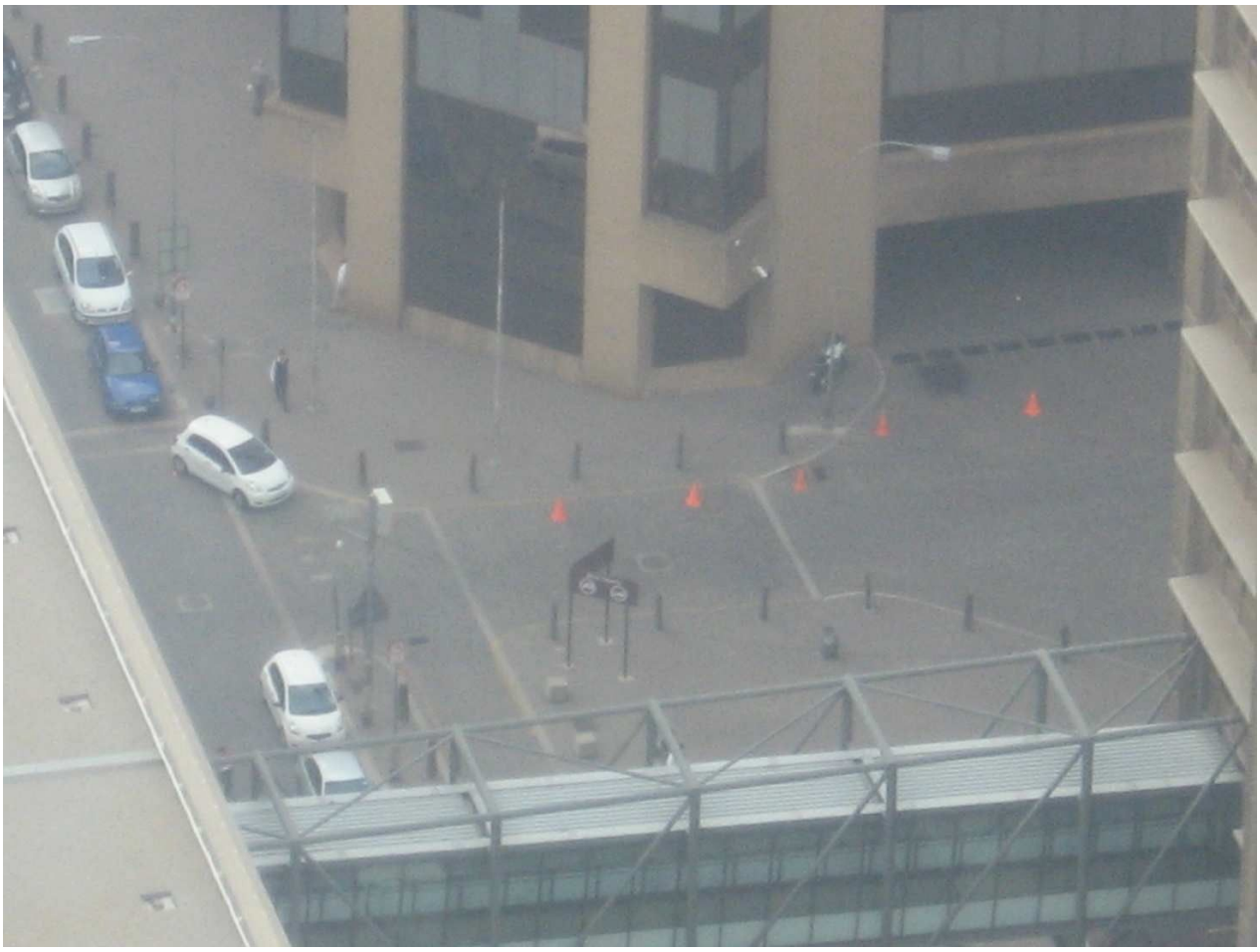
I looked out of a window. I was on the seventh or eighth floor of the building. Further down I could see a little courtyard filled with bottles, broken couches, discarded palettes and puddles of water with not enough dirt to make it muddy.

3 Standing at a corner

At least once a week, when I am at my studio, I stand outside the studio at the intersection for a couple of minutes. There is a security guard who always stands there looking over the meat shop, except for Sundays, and on Saturday afternoons. We don't talk much, but we greet, ask about each other, and then look at what is happening in the street. This intersection is on Biccard Street at Wolmarans Street, and many people are walking to or from the city along this road. The security guard seems to know almost everyone who passes.

I tried a couple of times to formalise this interaction, to write down my observations, to record what I saw, while sitting next to the guard. This never quite worked though, and now I just say “hi”, share a few words, and go on with my day.

4 A reminder of air, and the need to dry washing



You can spend hours looking at aspects of the city, and continuously find interesting arrangements. In this photograph, which I took from the Carlton Centre viewing level, for instance, the line of orange traffic cones mimic the shape of the road and the bollards.

On some days when you stand on the fiftieth floor of the Carlton Centre, you can see a washing line spinning, at the end of a row of washing lines. This washing line is on the roof of one of the buildings below. Even when it is not spinning, people do not seem to hang washing on that washing line. Perhaps a spinning washing line seems too risky. Perhaps it spins too

frequently or unpredictably. Apprehensions, such as these, might cause the spinning washing line to be fixed, ending the possibility of this view.

If you want to, go look for this washing line that spins. If you have scanned the tops of the buildings and can see no spinning washing line, there might not have been enough wind blowing over the top of that building to make the washing line spin. Or, maybe, it has already been fixed.

5 Some approaches to conceptualising the city

A good theoretical overview of approaches to urban research may be found in Edgar Pieterse (2009a). I adopt his classification of three general approaches to urban theory, but emphasise different ideas and theorists. Pieterse (2009a) argues that it is necessary to find ways that can bridge these different types of approaches. This, however, is not my task. In this section, I use Pieterse's (2009a) general classification of types of theoretical engagements with the African city as a guide to organise some theorists and concepts dealing with the African city. This section is not intended to develop Pieterse's scheme, but rather, gives an entry point into the interest area of this dissertation in terms of theoretical approaches to the city.

In Pieterse's (2009a) scheme, the first approach to cities creates economical-political analyses. It emphasises the ability of cities to operate in international flows of capital regardless of nation states as organising nodes in global capital (Friedman 1986; Sassen 1991). The emphasis on hierarchy and (multi)centrally controlled power may be useful to understand aspects of the city, but it does not contain all spatial experiences. I do not focus on this approach, because, the direct types of intersections I am interested in a city such as Johannesburg require a broader approach to interaction than a perspective provided by analysis of macro and meso economical and political relationships.

The second approach to urban theory is the developmental approach (Pieterse 2009a), which often views cities according to levels of economical development, based on Western standards (Davis 2006). Jennifer Robinson (2008), however, offers an interesting view of cities as being

ordinary, and not existing in a global hierarchy. This approach is sensitive to the multiplicity of the city, is contextualised, and interprets development in terms of projects of city re-envisioning that engage multiple voices. Murray (2008) creates an argument for Johannesburg specifically, as a contradictory city. Although artistic production may engage in developmental activities in cities, this project did not deal with this type of organised urban development and I will not focus on this general approach.

Pieterse's (2009a) third approach originates from some theorists in the humanities and is sensitive to the dynamism, contradictions and multiplicity of urban experience. This approach is through ethnographically focused site-specific research, often strongly based on philosophical projects (Appadurai 1996; Mbembe & Nuttall 2008; Simone 2008). By attempting to understand the dynamism, contradictions and multiplicity of urban experience usually overlooked by economic-political analysis and developmental projects, these approaches from the humanities are creating knowledges of cities of the South, including Johannesburg, which are sensitive to their complexity.

Pieterse (2009a: 11) suggests a Situational Analysis (Clarke 2005) approach as a way to bridge the first three approaches, and create “a more robust and multi-dimensional conceptual model that can allow the diverse dimensions of the African city to come to the fore”. This is where I leave Pieterse's (2009a) project, and I move towards a conceptual description of the complexity of the city with the assistance of Manuel DeLanda (2006) and Protevi (2009) and the notions of affect and assemblage. I argue that located affect, rather than simulation, is a suitable way for my artistic production to engage with the city. Such an approach could be seen as a way that is sensitive to the complex relationships that constitute a city (Bryne 1998; DeLanda 2006, 2009, 2011; O'Sullivan 2004; Pieterse 2008; Protevi 2009; Thrift 2005).

In addition, artists who engage with the city (Deadheat 2012; Engelbrecht 2009a) and a research publication (Edjabe & Pieterse 2010, 2011) that undertakes complex artistic research of the city are of interest for my project.

6 The city approached through the idea of multiple modernities: the heterogeneity of creative spatial experience from the humanities

Johannesburg is a southern city, but it is not isolated from the North. As the Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (2011) argue, the South is a way of interpreting flows and connections between people and places. This way of interpreting the South avoids the dualism created by the conceptual separation of the global North and the global South. The South can be in the North, and the North may learn from its adaptability (Comaroff & Comaroff 2011). The innovations linked to specific challenges, which are embedded in particular social sites in the South, makes the South a space of innovation (Ferguson 2012: 15). Comaroff and Comaroff (2011) argue that the asymmetrical internal growth of economies of the South, in some situations, occur in relation to the investment of global capital, and in other situations, result in the economic expansion into the North. Set against the asymmetrical growth of the formal sectors, there is an "extraordinary expansion … of 'informal' commerce, the growth of economies built on more or less illicit practices of counterfeit, and the emergence of new modes of service provision" (Comaroff & Comaroff 2013: 17). Johannesburg can be seen as such a space of innovation, a site of multiple, globalised flows of modernities.

Appadurai's (1996) approach to globalism has been influential in the conceptualisation of the African city (Mbembe & Nuttall 2008). Appadurai (1996) proposes a transnationalism which is created through cultural relations which defy centre-periphery models (even models with multiple centres and peripheries, he adds). His conception also challenges traditional push / pull, surplus / deficit, and producer / consumer models that respectively describe population movements, economic movements and developmental approaches. The global cultural economy is a "complex disjunctive order" (Appadurai 1996: 32) of cultural flows along five scapes that are composed of the relations and possibilities opened through technology, groups of people, global capital, electronic media, and political ideas and imaginaries. These scapes, globalised ideas that together construct the social world, can be perceived in the fluidity of global cultural objects. They are irregularly shaped "perspectival constructs inflected by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation states, multinationals, diasporic communities, [and] subnational groupings" (Appadurai 1996: 33). Culture is informed and influenced by the complex disjunctions of these scapes.

These disjunctions may be understood as rhizomatic (Deleuze & Guattari 1987), a concept I explored in the introduction, and will be looking at again in chapter 3. These disjunctions, however, ensure cultural diversity, and the different types of local situations and global flows of the new global cultural economy. For Appadurai (1996), therefore, there are multiple modernities experienced, imagined and lived through, differently, by different cultures across the world. The world, therefore, is seen as a single complex system that is created by multiple complex subsystems.

This conception of multiple modernities and the intersection of flows and speeds influence, for instance, Archille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall (2008), who write that African cities are global cities. African cities are global in the sense that they form part of a continent, which is, and has been a space of flows, flux and translocations between different bodies. Africa is a continent of "circulation" and "circuits" (Mbembe & Nuttall 2008: 3) and the city is composed of "flows of money, skills, knowledge, security, machinery and technology," but also of flows of "ideas, people, images and imaginaries" (Mbembe & Nuttall 2008: 3). It becomes interesting to think about these imaginaries as material interactions.

As AbdouMaliq Simone (2009) argues, for instance, cities emerge out of material possibilities which are inherent in a range of practices, calculations and economies, and engaged through everyday projects of residents situated in the city and the larger world. People (in this case, Simone was looking at Lagos) are driven by a politics of resilience, speculation and accumulation. Most of Africa's urban dwellers procure basic goods and services through provisional networks, not through planned institutions or organisations (Simone 2004). In these networks, people become infrastructure: a liveable city is produced through their interactions. Simone (2008) develops this idea in an essay about Johannesburg, where he looks at post-apartheid neighbourhoods around the CBD that have seen substantial demographic shifts and now house large communities from elsewhere. These networks indicate that tacit knowledge arises from interactions in cities.

By following interactions in the world, and then tracing these uncertain trajectories through their writing in relationship to other philosophies, Mbembe and Nuttall (2008), but also Simone (2008) and Appadurai (1996), avoid reducing the complexity of the city and its flows.

For instance, when you read Nuttall's (2008: 107) research into the culture of black urban youth, specifically her analysis of “a series of advertisements which have appeared since 2005 both in *YMag* and on billboards around Johannesburg”, she creates an expressive narrative of the city, and starts interrogating urban concerns and futures by looking at local interactions, which are impacted by the system's memory and history. Nuttall (2008) argues that the old spaces of apartheid are being transformed into a new metropole through, amongst other things, the claims to the right of the city embedded in a stylisation of the self by black urban youth. Looking at a range of urban cultural representations, Nuttall (2008) argues that these representations operate not so much through translation as through interfaces, where meanings continuously morph into something else. While she presents analyses of the city, these analyses are not definitive, and they always speak of an excess which could not be captured. Rather than creating a rule, a passage is opened, following a flow through the city.

This approach can be seen as sensitive to Morin's (1999) idea of a generalised complexity learning. Because the city's complexity is a function of its interactions, this complexity cannot be analysed into a simpler version, and it cannot be perceived entirely. Just as conceptualisations of the city cannot keep up with the city (Mbembe & Nuttall 2008), planning cannot control all the movements within the city (Murry 2008; Robinson 2008).

While these theorists in the humanities are sensitive to the dynamism, contradictions and multiplicity of urban experience (Pieterse 2009a), the predominate focus on human cultural relations, however, creates an implicit conceptual division between nature and culture. Although cities are co-produced in the activities of the nonhuman, much theorising on the city does not deeply consider the nonhuman (Heynen, Kaika & Swyngedouw 2006). A complex approach to the relationships that constitute cities, however, would include attention to the non-human. Here a complex approach to cities creates ways to start registering the participation of the nonhuman in the production of cities.

7 An unexpected sight

I always buy my cigarettes loose draw. This means that I have to leave the building every hour-and-a-half or so, and go to the small shop that sells them. This shop is run by a woman. She knows me. Every time I visit the shop, she gives me a Peter Stuyvesant Blue. I go to this shop because all the others sell Reds or Courtleigh or Aspen Menthols.

One day I was not working in my studio, but I was around. I wore jeans that day, and a tucked in collared shirt, with shining shoes. At first the shop keeper did not recognise me, but when she finally did, she burst out laughing!

You see, when I am working in my studio, I always work in old, paint-covered clothes and sandals. This is by far the most comfortable.

It is about moments like these, moments of engagements that make aspects of a city, which I keep on thinking when inside my studio, and now while I am writing.

8 Theorising the African city, and complexity theory

If research is to cope with the particular challenges and relationships of the city it must find ways to engage with the creativity, interactivity and dynamics of cities. The African city is a complex set of relations involving people, their networks and organisations, their multiple experiences, and the interweaving of heterogeneous lived spaces and imaginaries. As Ntone Edjabe and Pieterse (2011: iv) write, we need to be conscious of the activities in “vibrant markets, streets, pavements, taxi ranks, hotel lobbies, drinking halls, clubs, bedrooms, rooftops, gardens, dump sites, beach fronts, river edges, cemeteries, garages, basements”. Conglomerations of these ordinary spaces (Robinson 2006) are what make up a city. The urban is an intersection of “physical, social, economic, political, ecological and cultural systems”, and the activities and materials that form these systems create an infinite amount of unpredictable dynamics (Edjabe and Pieterse 2011: iv).

The following section looks at a couple of different approaches to the city through complexity. I first look at complexity approached through city simulation, and understand its limits in modelling the urban (Byrne 1998; O'Sullivan 2004; Thrift 2005; DeLanda 2011). I then continue to find a way that is more sensitive to [my] artistic research into environments, through a conception of urban assemblages and affect (DeLanda 2006; Protevi 2009).

8.1 Working with the complexity of the city through simulation

In this section, I briefly look at city simulation as an approach to the city through the theories of complexity.

Of these approaches to the complexity of the city, some are based on a restrictive, rule-based approach (Cilliers 2007). In David Byrne's (1998) approach, for instance, he brings together the science of complexity with sociological methodologies in an attempt to create a formalised structure that wards off uncertainty and the metaphorical. Nigel Thrift (2005) and David O'Sullivan (2004), however, are more lenient towards metaphor, and acknowledge the limitations of rule-based modelling: On the one hand, Thrift (2005) argues that metaphorically-influenced conceptions of complexity are useful, because metaphor transfers ideas between different disciplines and may open new avenues in complexity. O'Sullivan (2004), on the other hand, proposes the juxtaposition of multiple different models as a way to complicate rule-based simulations.

DeLanda (2011), however, offers an approach to complexity simulation, which does not reduce the complexity of the world and does not attempt to create predictions of the real world.

DeLanda (2011) understands complexity simulation as an attempt to create emergent conditions in which the properties of complexity may be studied. The particular model he employs to simulate complexity is not rule-based, it is connectionist. Other than rule-based models, where interactions are signified by a programmer, in connectionist models the communication between nodes is guided by the internal thresholds of the nodes themselves: These streams of communication between nodes result in a strengthening or weakening of the

various network paths (DeLanda 2011). This strengthening and weakening of connections produces the network. Because these nodes can represent information, in terms of their internal thresholds, their local interactions result in self-organising behaviour and, as DeLanda (2011) argues, the network produced is complex.

Although such approaches could provide insights into relationships in cities, these simulations are not exact representations of a complex interaction in the world, and they can therefore not be used to predict movements (Cilliers 2007). Different models with different observable data may produce different outcomes, and these outcomes are still largely inaccurate predictions. As Andrew Sayer (cited from O'Sullivan 2004) argues, computerised simulations are experimental, and should be treated as such.

My project, however, has been more interested in engagements in the complex city than in the creation of a complex system through a computerised model. For this project, a set of concepts that deal with the complexity of the city is therefore more useful than complexity simulation.

8.2 Understanding complexity through the concepts affect and assemblage

The social whole should not be seen as a totality created from different parts, but as an assemblage of relationships of affect between distinct parts. So argues DeLanda (2006) alongside Protevi (2009) and Simon O'Sullivan (2001).

DeLanda (2006) argues that conceptions of social wholes as totalities, as coherent bodies, constitute relations of interiority. In these conceptions, the relationships of component parts determine their constitution as an organism. In such an approach, the whole becomes un-unified when a component part is removed, and this part also ceases to be what it is (DeLanda 2006). As DeLanda argues, however, a city should not be understood as an organism with a certain plan, a body, like a human body of which an arm could be removed. This is because the notion of the totality created by relations of interiority cannot explain self-representation

and self-organisation (DeLanda 2006). In DeLanda's (2006) view, when emergence is studied, it is necessary to consider the properties of an entity as separate from its capacities to interact.

For DeLanda (2006), the properties of an entity are constant, and form a closed list. These properties will remain the same even when displaced into another system. This does not mean, explains DeLanda (2006), that properties cannot change over time: Bodies are particular material conglomerations. The capacity of a body to interact (an affect) is a variable which is dependent on its implication in a situation. Affect, is an "in-between-ness" of bodies (Gregg and Seigworth 2010: 2). It is the active capacity of a body to act, and the passive capacity to be acted upon (Bonta and Protevi 2006). A body's affectation is the production of a transition, a passing from one condition to another, in an affected body. As DeLanda (2006) writes, "there is no way to tell in advance in what way a given entity may affect or be affected by innumerable other entities" (DeLanda 2006: 10). These affects are pre-conceptual moments of intensity created in bodies as they react to each other. They are material excesses, the overflowing of meaning and determinations in non-representational relationships (O'Sullivan 2001).

Protevi (2009) argues that bodies in the social environment are co-constituted through relationships of affect, and that humans, as cognitive agents, make sense of relationships by assigning values to these relationships, and undertaking specific courses of action. This cognitive process is open to the affects of the situation. Protevi (2009) argues that it occurs through an interface between the neural (cognitive), somatic (body), and environment (the social), in terms of affect. Through their affective relationships, bodies are influenced by their environments, and may also shift their environment in various ways.

Such an approach takes a study of the city away from the compartmentalised approach that separates the human from nonhuman ecological conditions, and approaches the city as an ecology created through interconnected affective spaces. Such an ecology is what DeLanda (2006) means when he writes about cities being assemblages.

The assemblage, discussed in terms of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari 1987) in the introduction, is a useful concept to understand cities. An assemblage is a collection of affecting bodies in relationships that cross over the nature-culture divide. As DeLanda (2006) argues, these bodies are involved in a process of production, not of a single whole, but of multiple, intersecting assemblages.

Since being part of a whole is defined by the capacity to interact and produce or undergo change rather than focussing on inert properties of entities, the understanding of the formation of cities should shift to relations of exteriority: the connections between entities that create assemblages of varying scales (DeLanda 2006). In DeLanda's conception, some assemblages are component parts of others, which are parts of even larger assemblages. These different scales of assemblages, however, have direct influence on each other laterally, as bodies which interact to produce a flat, topological conception of the contingent influences between bodies.

DeLanda (2006) undertakes a description of several intersecting assemblages at progressively larger scales. As my work is about the city, I start with this scale.

The third pair of scales DeLanda investigates are cities and nations. In DeLanda's (2006: 94) view, cities are relationships of "entire populations of persons, networks and organizations", but also the "physical infrastructure buildings, streets and various conduits for the circulation of matter and energy". The city, however, is composed from both larger and smaller scales. Larger scaled assemblages, which impact on the city assemblage, could be rural areas around cities, the nations of which cities are part, as well as other nations, and cities in other nations. A smaller scale, however, may be that of the individual person. At this scale, individuals create what DeLanda (2006: 52) terms "ephemeral assemblages" with shorter life spans, such as conversations and social encounters, as well as longer life spans, such as interpersonal networks and spatial justice networks. Here, as DeLanda (2006) explains, language, body gestures, proximity, histories and technologies may have an impact in the assemblage. My work exists in this assemblage of the individual person that is connected to bodies around it.

Larger than the individual assemblage, but smaller than the city assemblage, is the scale of organisations and governments. Organisational forms range from decentralised structures, such as bazaars and market places, to centralised structures, such as military and government bureaucracies. Organisations and government bureaucracies are assemblages made of collections of individuals and other bodies in specific environments.

The concepts of assemblage and affects in the understanding of the city have wide use. For instance, for developmental interventions (Robinson 2006), an approach through these concepts could be used to understand the meso level (city-wide) as imbricated in relationships of micro (interpersonal) and macro (national) levels.

My project, however, has been engaged in artistic activities in small environments: an uncertain engagement with various aspects of the city, leading to small shifts and unexpected encounters (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). In this project, I wondered how a passage alongside a river and down a mine, or a conversation in a community, or a street, or an interaction in a gallery as work space, forms part of an assemblage. By making small interventions, the creation of affect, it is possible to think through, and engage with, the complexity of cities through art. As O'Sullivan (2001) writes:

> For this is what art is: a bundle of affects or, as Deleuze and Guattari would say, a bloc of sensations, waiting to be reactivated by a spectator or participant. Indeed, you cannot read affects, you can only experience them (O'Sullivan 2001: 126).

The affects created by art, blocs of sensation, become complicit in the production of aspects of the city. In chapter 3, I will temporarily suspend some of these interlinking concepts by Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 1994, 2004a) in an approach that is more sensitive to the activity of art production in environments than the sociological and urban theories of this chapter.

8.3 Machine



A detail of Machine (2011), going round a corner. In the foreground of this image an upside down taxi rank can be seen connecting to a railway signal. This, in turn, links to a construction site, a fence, electricity cables, and signal towers. The bold line to the right links to a classical building which cannot be seen in this image.

During my last visit to Cape Town, I photographed details of the city along the public transportation routes that I used to get to the gallery where I was painting a mural about a daily passage. The mural showed a network of different spaces passed momentarily. It was an experience of the details of the city in terms of a workday, from 08:00 to 17:00, with an hour-and-a-half commuting on either side. I would travel to work, trace the photographs (from the laptop screen) onto transparencies, project them onto the wall, connecting lines and forms, to make a network, and then paint the mural. In my Johannesburg exhibition, these

transparencies were projected onto a wall alongside other transparencies, which I have made for other paintings.

8.4 Artistic practice as ways of engaging with the complexity of cities

How do you plan ahead in a complex world where the outcomes (affects) of our engagements are uncertain? As Edjabe and Pieterse (2011) argue, modernist urban research approaches cannot keep up with the emergence and heterogeneity of the city. We need to find ways, continue Edjabe and Pieterse (2011), to work with the intersecting flows of physical and imaginary spaces of African urbanism. For Edjabe and Pieterse (2011) it is important to find ways to register the heterogeneity of morals, communities, value systems and creativity in the experiences of the African city. This approach is part of a growing resistance in the humanities and social sciences to the subordination of epistemological and methodological questions to ideas developed solely in the natural sciences.

There is an important space for art production and process in urban research. The humanities can offer creative, imaginative, value-based approaches to research (Wierzbicka 2011). Through such approaches, we can work with uncertainty rather than against it (Morin 1999). Edjabe and Pieterse (2010, 2011) recognise that artistic activity may provide new ways to start dealing with the uncertainty of the city.

In this section, I point to some examples of artist researchers who are working in Johannesburg. I first look at an urban research publication which is open to multidisciplinary and multimodal urban research (Edjabe & Pieterse 2010, 2011). I then look at some artists who have been working with Johannesburg in complex, multimodal ways (Deadheat 2012; Engelbrecht 2009a).

Edjabe and Pieterse (2010, 2011) are editors of a publication, the *African Cities Reader*, that deals with researching the complex African city through a wide range of artistic production. When artistic research engages with environments, why only consider its transfer through abstract essays removed from the work it does? This publication draws together a

variety of artists, journalists, poets, theorists, directors, conservationists, activists and more. For Edjabe and Pieterse, not only essays and models of interaction in cities are seen as acceptable research into the city; multimodal and multidisciplinary approaches to the research of cities are considered to be important. Edjabe and Pieterse (2010, 2011) present essays, but also poems, photographs, lists of cd's, interviews, stories and maps as forms of research. The journal attempts to bring together research approaches that are sensitive to experiences in Africa, and are redefining African cities in an African way (Edjabe and Pieterse 2011).

Echoing Lesage (2009), however, it is important that journals or readers do not become the only acceptable way to understand artistic research into cities. The particular exhibitions, encounters, conversations and projects in African cities, working with the materiality of African cities, become complicit in the production of the city in a way that writing cannot. As was referred to earlier through Morin (1999) and Cilliers (2005), the normative engagement with complexity makes our work with complexity a problem of experience. It is in action (Deleuze & Guattari 1987) where we find, or don't find, ways to "navigate" (Morin 1999: 3) through complexity.

Artistic engagements can create responses to environments in the city that are sensitive to the complexity of those environments.[xiv] Although it cannot be claimed that all artists focus on the theory of complexity, artists often work in complex ways (Sullivan 2005). Their engagement in the world through their handling of material and objects, and their passages and encounters, create an excess (Grosz 2008). I point to two exhibitions about Johannesburg that function as performative installations (Deadheat 2012; Engelbrecht 2009a), but are based in practices that are also engaged with sites in Johannesburg, outside the gallery.

B.J. Engelbrecht (2009a) created a multimodal exhibition, *Slice Me Nice* at the Substation Gallery, University of the Witwatersrand. This installation was a large, built environment inside a gallery space that brought together ideas of building the stable city, and movements through the fluid city. The artist presented a complicated and imposing architectural structure made of large wooden beams which became the built environment. These buildings supported homemade playback devices. These devices played a soundtrack of looped city samples, both

abstracted from the city, and directly recognisable, becoming the movements of humans and nonhumans around cities. As Engelbrecht (2009b: 110) writes, this exhibition was about "finding inventive ways (and sometimes forcing) objects and sounds to fit into predetermined architectural structures". The sound would filter out of the gallery and become part of the world it referenced. As important as the end product, an automated DJ, however, were the processes of collecting sounds and objects in environments (Engelbrecht 2009b).

An engagement with the city, walking on a road, or rifling through a record shop, leads to new discoveries and engagements that result in the production of the city. The building of the installation, and taking it down, becomes an activity of the city.

For Engelbrecht (2009b), actually being there during the duration of the exhibition was an important aspect of the installation: a performance that brought together fragments of experiences of the city into a new environment. After the exhibition opening, a spit braai was held on a nearby flat, concrete roof, on top of the Wits School of Arts building. This was a party where Engelbrecht (2009b) became the DJ again, creating a convivial atmosphere on the roof. Engelbrecht (2009a) continued the production of assemblages in the city. This assemblage disrupted perceived relationships between viewer, artist, research, school and city. This event created a moment of interaction in the city, a grouping of affects that shifted the distributions of an environment in the creation of a new arrangement of bodies (Deleuze & Guattari 1987).

Another example of a complex engagement with the city is Deadheat's (Anon 2012) exhibition of a book which was still in progress at the time of writing. Deadheat, which is created out of the joint practices of Dorothee Kreutzfeldt and Bettina Malcomess, playfully titled the exhibition *Not No Place*. The book "interweaves personal memories with quotations and reflective accounts, as well as science fiction in an attempt to explore the complex making and shifting of a city as both a lived place and an imagined no-place" (Anon 2012 n.p).

This book, a linear device, was made nonlinear through this exhibition. Its contents and research material was placed in relation to multiple discourses, spaces, and images from Johannesburg and its history. By literally extending the book into a spatial dimension, the

exhibition created a complex, non-reductive representation of the city. The form this exhibition took, frames the research activity of book-making as already being spatial, in term of going to places, speaking to people and working with the materiality of objects, engaging with environments, mutating sources, placing archival references, experiences and thoughts in a temporary order.

Although the book investigates Johannesburg, the exhibition generated an affect of aspects of the city, or a street, or a neighbourhood. The exhibition created a group of intersecting affects originating from different materials and modes of working that echoed the construction processes, social areas, accessible spaces and invisible spaces of the city. Although it was possible to read the book (since there was a proof copy), another sense emerged through an engagement with texts, photos, diagrams, paintings, frames, installation, and the designated social areas (through affects of groupings rather than linguistic markings) like reading areas, eating areas, shop fronts, building backs, artist studio, writing bench, and bar. These spaces fulfilled their task at particular moments in the exhibition, for instance with a person reading a newspaper sitting on a sofa having a drink. This exhibition was not only built and forgotten about; it was engaged in by bodies, and it had links into other physical and imagined spaces of the city. The exhibition was not a dead space which is installed, forgotten about and then de-installed, but more participatory, with performances, a lunch, and a book-making workshop with a local school. For instance, chairs, surfaces and open floor areas became transformed in a series of topical conversations about aspects of the city between specialists (from environmental activism to history and migration) and visitors/participants.

Engelbrecht (2009a) and Deadheat (2012) create gallery exhibitions that speak about interactions outside the gallery space, a movement through Johannesburg, and also the processes of making the exhibition as performance. These artists used their exhibitions as ways to communicate ideas, but through the engagements of an interested public in a venue with other bodies, also created assemblages in the city (Oliveira and Rebolledo 2011). These exhibitions, however, also spoke about activities which occur in the world outside the exhibition hall, separate from the framing of the gallery, also creating assemblages through relationships of affect (Haedicke 2012). Artistic products and processes with their intertwined existences are

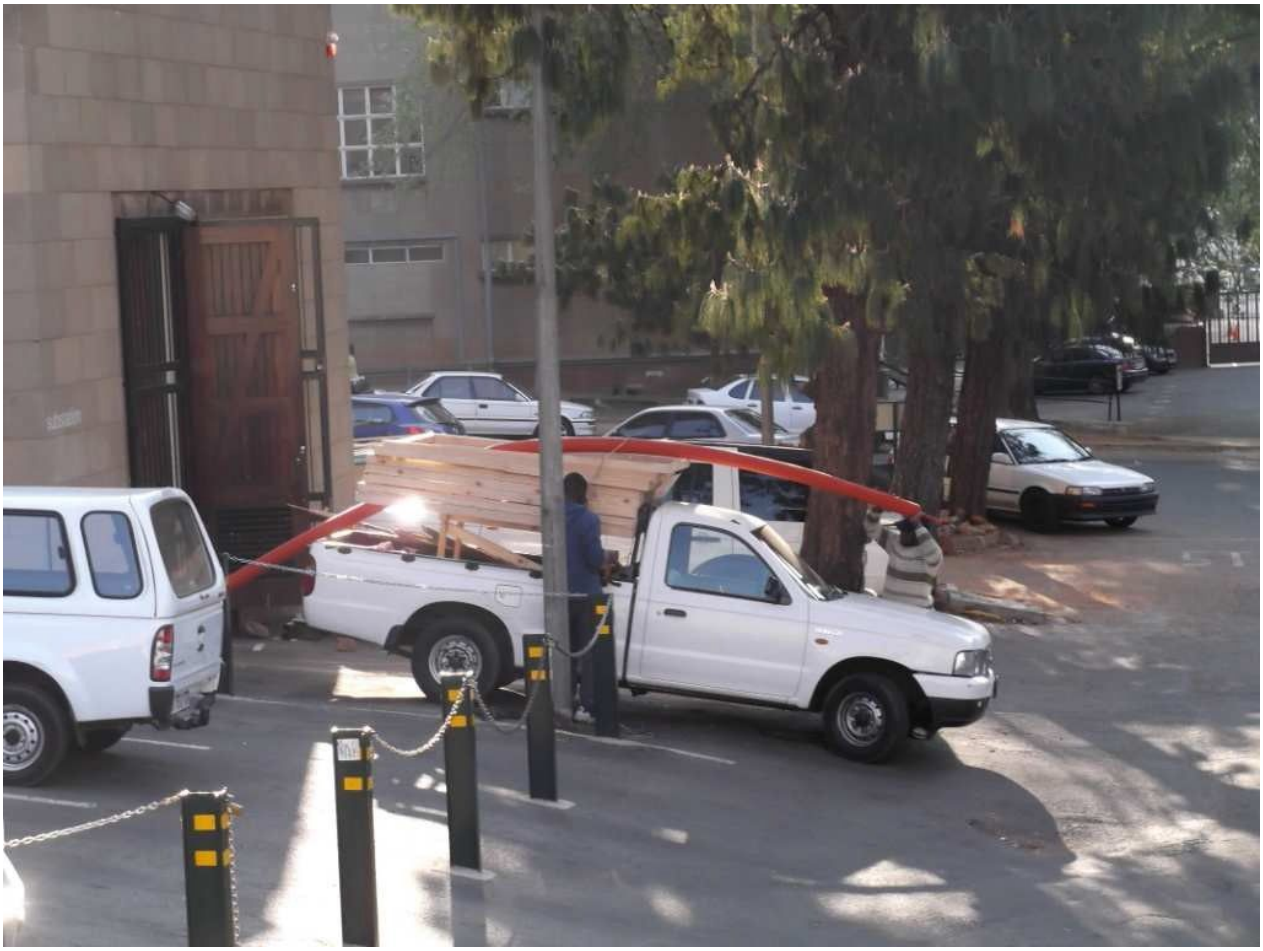
embedded in particular environments, and are particular engagements that create changes in the world. Finding an object in a street and transforming it is as much part of the artistic activity as placing it in a gallery, and viewing it. This artistic work, however, is embedded in environments, and what it does (Deleuze & Guattari 1994) is largely inaccessible in theoretical writing about the work.

What it does through exhibitions and interested publics who engage in the assemblage, however, is different from the assemblage of a street, where another formation makes other engagements possible (DeLanda 2006). Artistic production is a process involved in the material formation of the world, and can interact with the complexities of the city. I have a closer look at these concepts through Deleuze and Guattari in chapter 3 and chapter 4.

8.5 Some combinations in a performative exhibition

In August 2012, I created a performative installation at The Substation Gallery, University of the Witwatersrand. This exhibition transformed the gallery space into a working space, as a way to continue the open process of artistic production and engagement with other bodies. The exhibition was titled, *Some Combinations*, indicating the exhibition as a collection of bodies in ephemeral relationships. Because it was held at WITS, I had a constant stream of visitors: people who are busy with studies engaged the exhibition. Students, lecturers and academic support staff, mostly from around the building, and mostly from one or other department in the Art School, all came in and talked to me while I was building the installation. They gave input, or talked about other things. In the second week, I hosted a dinner in the space for some friends. A couple of days later, a class of first year students visited for a discussion about the work and the working process. Once or twice a student from the architecture department came by, sent by their lecturer, Professor Hilton Judin, to whom I had been speaking in preparation for the exhibition. I had many conversations about the exhibition, and the relationships being set up with my supervisor, Professor David Andrew, as well as other lecturers and students from WSOA.

In this exhibition, I brought together paintings, drawings, un-stretchered frames, photographs, tables, tools, chairs, building materials (bolts, plastic sheeting, scaffolding) and rubble in temporary, planned and unplanned combinations. While installing other artists' exhibitions, I have always found that strange combinations of hanging materials and tools, plastic bubble wrapping, bags and jerseys make very interesting combinations next to the formal works of art. It has always frustrated me to have to take my tools away, clean up any imperfection, and make it pristine. In this exhibition, it was important to me to approach works of art inside a gallery in a way that is closer to my working processes outside a gallery.



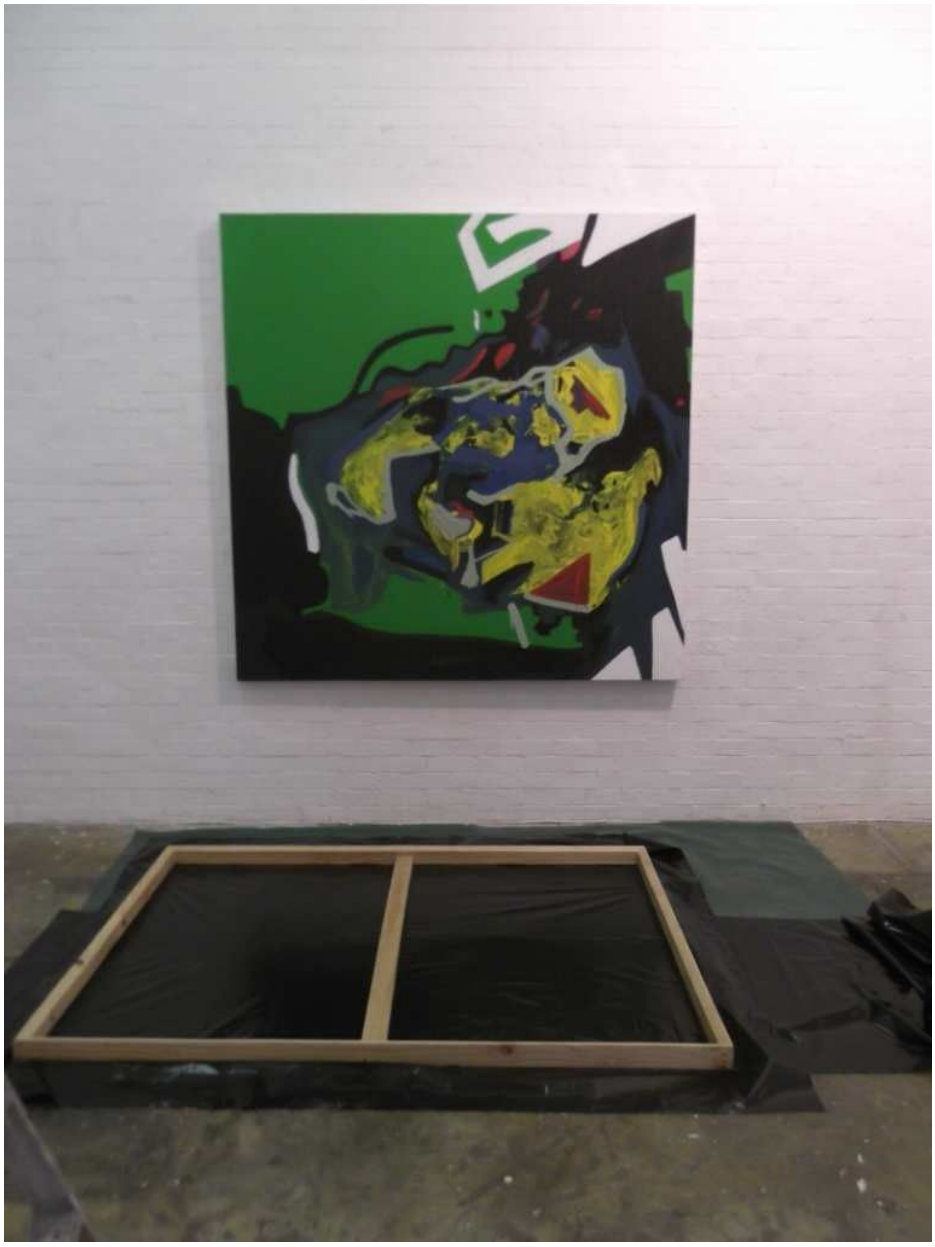
After the exhibition, I had to transport the work back to my studio. This image shows us stacking stretcher frames, a long ribbed pipe and other smaller objects onto a bakkie. The bakkie is owned by Brian, who is the man towards the front end of the vehicle.

Although The Substation is a gallery space, it can be seen as an experimental gallery space. One of the programmes run in this gallery is a residency programme, namely, Dislocating the Studio, organised for the Division of Visual Arts, Wits School of Arts,, by Zen Marie and Naadira Patel (Anon. 2012 n.p.). The mandate set forth by this residency programme is to challenge the space of the studio and the finalised work of art, by allowing process and relational encounters to displace the primacy of artworks conceived as objects transported to the gallery as Art (Anon. 2012 n.p.). The idea is that while works of art remain open in their becomings inside the studio during the production phase, by transporting the completed work to the gallery, and understanding these works as finalised, the works of art become closed. However, a focus on processes and temporary relationships of bodies may open up artistic production as becomings: mutations between bodies that continuously transform relationships in assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari 2004b). Although these relationships may be temporary these relationships are not relative. They cannot make any random combination. They can, however, make relationships that arise as a result of the assemblages they already are an aspect of (Deleuze & Guattari 1987).[xv]

In my exhibition, I did not want to hide the gritty undertaking of working with materials as part of assemblages. The Substation, therefore, becomes a venue for an exhibition in which a process of making can continue as the exhibition, and as a place of interaction between people and materials. It is a good place for me to keep my tools out, and have them contribute to the exhibition during the exhibition open hours. My exhibition was a construction site, with work periods and rest periods, and unpaid overtime. This exhibition looked at the formation of relationships between bodies in Johannesburg making possible relationships of things like paintings, found materials, video projections, drawings, photographs, stretcher frames, my computer, printer, music, and casual conversations between people.

These combinations are important, because, for instance, a hammer, a drill, a ladder, a cup of tea, a cigarette, or a broom next to a painting shifts the meaning of a painting. In such assemblages, paintings rub against other things: Lifting the bottom of the painting up with a wooden beam so that the painting jets diagonally out from the wall, so that it hangs on the standard two bolts in the wall that temporarily became hinges, creates a mutation which I

cannot paint. Suddenly the painting stops being an authoritarian thing, even if the painting is very large. What it does, is make a roof, or a ceiling, or a storage area in the exhibition.



A moment such as this creates a temporary assemblage between a painting, a stretcher, plastic, the wall, the floor and your body.

A video projector, not positioned exactly right yet, casts an image, for instance, of a movement alongside a river onto a corner area. This creates unexpected combinations with the pipes stacked there temporarily. This is a simplified movement of this video: onto a painting, a stack of frames, the wall, the floor then the ceiling, back to the floor and coming to rest on those pipes. Another one of these videos, for instance, showed me (point of view) walking down a big open cast mining pit which is close to Main Reef Road. This displacement from a mine to the gallery onto other objects creates strange juxtapositions as the video changes, and the bodies form new relationships.

These elements of the exhibition all had an origin outside the exhibition, but inside the exhibition they created new relationships that do not necessarily exist outside the exhibition. What was important for me was that formation, and reformation of relationships between objects. A movement through the space, then, kept on showing fragments of works of art, stacked frames, a heap of rubble, a mural, a photograph, a video.



These stairs were constructed some time before the exhibition. I constructed them in the WITS Division of Visual Arts workshop, with the advice of Leonard Russell, the head of the workshop at the time.

Not everything, however, was in constant flux. There were more stable aspects in this exhibition too. One such object was the new staircase. I built this staircase out of palette wood, which had been planed smooth, and I created a very neat and useful object. I sourced the palettes from the WITS rubbish dumps, walking them back to WSOA one by one, because they could not fit into my car boot. Actions such as these, however, could not be accounted for in the exhibition, unless (as I did), I would tell someone in conversation. The choice of palettes was twofold: On the one hand, I did not have any more money to put into this exhibition. On the other hand, this exhibition continuously employed objects in ways that transformed their use into new use values. It was important to make this staircase, because I wanted to be able to place tools in crates under the staircase on a shelf, and The Substation Gallery's stairs were not suited for the task. This new staircase allowed me to store the tools while they were not being used actively. Within the installation, furthermore, the old grey gallery stairs stood out too much as stairs which were just there. The wooden stairs, however, became part of the assemblage as a useful object.

The volume of The Substation created a particular challenge. The space is divided into two sections: a bottom section and a top section. The bottom section is large enough for work to get lost in, but is also quite small, so that you can quickly run out of wall space. This means that work needs to take control, and respond to the requirements of the space itself. The smaller top section has a much lower ceiling than the bottom section, and can easily become disjointed from the bottom space. One of my solutions to this set of challenges was to make walls and rooms inside the exhibition space.



The exhibition went through phases where combinations were very temporary and per-chance. At this point I was still considering what to do on the empty wall leading into the back room. Eventually, I painted a yellow stripe on this section, running from the painting next to the ladder into the back room. The corner also ended up being used to store the scaffolding, which I assembled later on.

I constructed temporary walls from my unstretched stretcher frames, and clad them with paintings, plastic and wooden sheets. In the bottom section, these stretcher frames became the walls of city buildings, and they created streets and alleyways and larger open areas. In the top section, however, which has a lower ceiling and smaller floor space, these partitions created much more isolated areas. They became rooms inside buildings, or small openings between walls on the street, or an opening next to a wall behind some bushes in a park; not hidden, just easily missed.

In the lower section, I built a table into one of these walls. My computer, printer and speakers, as well as books and stationary moved around the exhibition venue as I was working. Eventually, however, the table built into the temporary walls of the exhibition became the more permanent place for my things. In the top section, these walls also became a support for a shelf where I could store excess wood, iron bars, stretcher frames and larger building materials.

These storage areas, however, also became something else. The table top worked into a stretcher frame, that, for instance, became a roof next to an even higher building. Similarly, a green patch painted onto the wall, and onto the ceiling, as if it is flowing out of a painting on canvas, could also be seen as an open area in the city: a park as one person told me, or a dam, as another said.

Moving through the space, I arranged videos, photographs, drawings, and found objects. Alongside these considered arrangements came tools or objects placed only temporarily. These objects were both what they were and something else. I was placing and replacing rivers, parks, traffic intersections, parking lots, shopping malls, mines, sewers and murders. Yet, that is what I was seeing. Someone else might have seen something else or did not know what they were seeing. As soon as I placed these objects, however, an interference would come again: a tool box placed in front of a video projection, a new security village blocking access to a river. A traffic jam. A protest.

It is through combinations of works of art, and things which became works of art in the process of making, and rearranging relationships, that a space was created that started thinking through the complicit relationship that an artist has with the city, and that a viewer has with an exhibition.



This image is taken inside the space, just to the right from the main door. Here can be seen, amongst other things, some stretcher frames, painted canvasses, my staircase, a projector, and my work station.

On the day that the exhibition was assessed it came to a standstill: all work ceased. This was a carefully planned moment, where everything was in equilibrium: a moment where everything was tightened into a particular relationship. However, I could see some of the disturbances: a plastic arrow, cut out of drop sheets and placed on the floor, moved, while walked over, a new scuff mark appeared on the stairs. On my built-in table top, a set of keys, wallets, cell phones and cameras belonging to the examiners were placed next to my computer, printer, stapler and pen. Things do not stay the same.

Chapter 3: Undertaking embedded artistic research. (Or, thinking about artistic research as the production of assemblages through Deleuze and Guattari)

1 Taking a ride in a bakkie, taking a left at the robot



This picture was taken through the window at the back of the bakkie, looking into a collection of objects being transported to my studio. The reflection of myself, the driver, the inside of the bakkie, and the road is also visible in this image.

After my exhibition, I needed to de-install the work, and transport it back to my studio from the gallery. For a moment, my exhibition became part of the street. Seeing a bakkie loaded twice

its height with frames, debris, wooden sheeting, crates, tables, paintings, boxes, poles and projectors makes you forget about the images you made and the combinations made in the exhibition. Here, on the back of a bakkie driving through Braamfontein, are new combinations, and they are about to fall off the bakkie! “You need to turn left at the robot, then right straight again after that”, I said to Brian, the bakkie guy, who drove us to my studio at about six in the morning, so that we could miss the traffic.

2 Deleuze and Guattari as complex thinkers

Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 1994) may offer some ways to start “navigating” (Morin 2007: 3) through the uncertainties which arise out of the experience of complexity (Preiser 2012; Cilliers 2005; Morin 2007). Deleuze and Guattari describe their work together as a geophilosophy: a philosophy of the formation of the earth. Their spatial concepts about the forces of the world, which congeal and dissipate in unpredictable nonlinear ways, may be useful for a complex approach to understanding interactions in cities.

As Cilliers notes, much of Deleuze and Guattari's reference to complexity is through chaos and fractals, which could make their philosophy seem to conceive of a restrictive form of complexity. Cilliers (2011) continues, however, and argues that their concepts are not reductive of complexity. Deleuze and Guattari's geophilosophy is, as DeLanda (1997) describes it, a material ontology of the world that defies a foundationalist and rule-based approach to complexity. At the heart of this philosophy, as with Cilliers’s (1998) conception of the properties of complex systems, is the idea that identity is created through the combinations of differentiations (Cilliers 2011).

The concept of difference is generally understood to be the external relations of things, where variation may be observed, and is based on the idea that there is a basic sameness between the two states (Stagoll 2010b). When difference is considered to be the result of a relation of sameness, the approach to the world is through categorisation within a universal grouping (Stagoll 2010b). Deleuze (2001), however, argues that the perceived world does not function according to sameness, but in terms of the difference-in-itself of singularities. “Such difference

is *internal* to a thing or event, implicit in its being that particular" (italics in original Stagoll 2010b: 75). In Deleuze's philosophy, identity does not lie in a category, but in the material differences, interactions, and influences between bodies (Stagoll 2010b). As Stagoll (2010b) argues, the implication of difference being a particular arrangement, and not a category, is that meaning is not created through representing a pre-existing concept, but through a singular arrangement in the world.

Singularities are implicated in the groups they form, termed multiplicities (Deleuze 1998). A multiplicity is composed of singularities that are in becomings; they are not stable. A multiplicity is a group of relationships of which the elements cannot be separated from, or reduced to one another, without changing the multiplicity (Deleuze 1998). The becomings of these multiplicities are not linear, but grow like a rhizome (Deleuze 1998), as discussed in chapter 1. All aspects of the world are multiplicities, complex relationships between bodies.

By replacing identity with difference, and by replacing the categorisation of being with the variation of becoming, Deleuze (2001) creates a philosophy concerned with heterogeneity, flux and productive process in a world in which forces are not balanced (DeLanda 1997). In Deleuze, chaos is not what lies beyond representation, a system in which patterns dissipate and are temporarily not recognisable. As Alberto Toscano (2010: 48) explains, chaos is the collection of formless, but differentiated, forces through which aspects of the world arise. It is the heterogeneities of the world, all the intensive differences of the world.

3 A popping sound in traffic

I turned the corner and continued driving down the road. There were vehicles ahead and the traffic lights had turned red, so I slowed down and stopped my car. That is when I heard a popping sound. I looked to my right and saw a man running down a field quickly. Then I lost sight of him as the field was sloping down beyond my sight. A man wielding a pistol ran after him. Another man ran towards a car, jumped into it, and sped down the slipway.

4 Deleuze and Guattari: The world as assemblages

Elizabeth Grosz (2008) points out that, for Deleuze and Guattari, matter is not passive, but active. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue that matter is molecularized: it is separate, in parts, atoms, and molecules. Molecular matter, however, is a shifting relationship of molecules that forms into molar compounds. It is a mass of matter, which could exist at various scales. The molecular and the molar are relationships that define matter. They are not opposing, predefined bodies, but relations of forces. As Hyung-Chul Chung (2002) argues, Deleuze and Guattari create a philosophy of the interaction of forces, and the reworking of the relationships between forces.

As such, the world is always becoming, and force is the “capacity” to produce a becoming in the world (Stagoll 2010c: 111). As Lee Spinks (2010: 7) explains: "Within the economy of becoming, every force is related to other forces and is defined in its character by whether it obeys or commands". For Deleuze (1986), the body is constituted by two types of forces: active forces (dominant forces) and reactive forces (dominated forces) (Stagoll 2010c). Active and reactive force are qualities possessed by bodies, and they define “the relationship of force with force" (Spinks 2010: 7). This relationship of forces, each force temporarily exerting itself upon other forces, means that forces are always “in the process of becoming different or passing out of existence, so that no particular force can be repeated” (Spinks 2010: 7). This means that the world is always in flux; it never reaches an equilibrium state of finality or stability, it is always becoming something different than it was, or will be (Stagoll 2010c: 110).

These patterns of forces form a web of forces without any particular origin or goal (Stagoll 2010c: 110). This unpredictable movement between bodies is the world of chaotic forces. Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 338) write that chaos is the “forces of raw and untamed matter”. The world is comprised of conglomerations of events that arise out of this web of forces. Event, in this sense of the word, means a singularity, a particular arrangement of forces. Bodies too, are events: they are conglomerations of forces. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), therefore, the world should be understood as particular, temporary arrangements of the material forces of different bodies. [xvi]

Out of chaos arises rhythm and milieu (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). As Grosz (2008: 47) argues, rhythm and milieu slows down chaos as a "provisional formalization of elements of chaos" (Grosz 2008: 47). Grosz explains that milieus do not exist in isolation or as fixed conglomerations, but are the vibrations of force extracted from chaos. It is through rhythms that milieus create patterns and communicate with the patterns of other milieus. The milieu demarcates limits, or in other words, it patterns chaos through a rhythm arising though these forces. A rhythm, then, is a repetition of a configuration of forces, a pattern of forces that is created through a codification of repetitions that makes sense in terms of the milieu itself. Rhythms create relationships between the bodies and forces of the milieu. These rhythms, as Grosz (2008: 56) explains, may form into colours, sounds, shapes, animals, plants, materials, "geographical features", and any other arrangement.

As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) write, the living organism is created out of multiple interacting milieus:

> …the living thing has an exterior milieu of materials, an interior milieu of composing elements and composed substances, an intermediary milieu of membranes and limits, and an annexed milieu of energy sources and actions-perceptions. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 313)

The organism, then, is composed of a particular arrangement of milieus. As Grosz (2008: 46) writes, "each living thing inhabits only a region of the earth", and this region is "always a locatable zone within a larger surrounding region". The world then, a larger milieu, as Janz (2001) writes, is created by multiple, layered and changing milieus, and our relationships to these milieus are always changing:

> We begin by marking our places, extending ourselves by the use of objects, language, gesture, and so forth. Our bodies do not stop at our skin, they stop somewhere beyond, where our space becomes identified as ours. This can expand or contract based on the clothing we wear, the way we spread out our

> belongings out around us on a table, or the language we use (Janz 2001: 396).

The milieu, then, as a region of the earth, is a limited yet indeterminable functional relationship of significant elements or qualities that structure sets of behaviour (Grosz 2008: 46). When acts of rhythms become expressive and forces of milieus become qualitative, a territory is formed (Deleuze & Guattri 1987). Territory cuts through milieus, according to a force of a rhythm, taking what it needs; It is a conjunction of aspects of milieus and rhythms. It takes possession or borrows from portions of milieus (Grosz 2008: 47). Grosz (2008) defines territory as a combination of bodies, their movements and their milieus:

> It is an external synthesis, a bricolage, of geographical elements, environmental characteristics, material features, shifted and reorganized fragments from a number of milieus (chaos itself is nothing but the milieu of all milieus), that create both an inside, an outside, a passage from the one to the other, and a space that is annexed, outside, contestatory, a resource: a cohesion inside, a domain outside, doorways from one to the other and energy reserves to enable them to reconfigure or reorchestrate themselves. (Grosz 2008: 47)

These possessions and borrowings of heterogeneous elements create an assemblage, a group of functions and forces (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). The expressive qualities of a territory, namely its rhythms, are its sounds ordered through a refrain, and its colours, as well as its movements.

A refrain is a sound that repeats itself, but each repetition is different from before (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). Through this repetition the refrain creates territory (Jasz 2001). As Bruce Jasz (2001) argues, this difference is what makes territory unstable: the borders of the assemblage are temporary; they remain malleable, contested, and moved through. Territory is thus a site of passage. While maintaining an internal organisation, as Kylie Message (2010) argues, it is in a

state of process where it is always becoming something else. A refrain, then, is “the rope that ties together sets of territories and milieus” (Janz 2001: 397).

The process of the formation of territory, in other words, the process of the refrain, is termed territorialisation. The movement away from a territoriality, the crossing of the boundaries and borders of different milieus, is through a becoming, which deterritorialises and reterritorialises, creating a new configuration of organism-environment.

Through these movements between territorialisation, and their deterritorialisation, a territory forms and then shifts again. As Graham Livesey (2010) writes:

> The interrelationship between a territory, however defined, and the forces of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation are necessary for the spatial definition of the earth. Forces, both internal and external, that create deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, do so as a special function of the territory, or as a refunctioning of a territory. Specific actions can find, define, and assemble territories, and the forces of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation themselves develop new territories. (Livesey 2010: 18-19)

Message (2010) argues that territory, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation are not opposed to each other, but accompany each other, and are functions of each others’ movements. This occurs, Message (2010: 257) continues, “in terms of pure relations of speed and slowness ... that evoke powers to affect and be affected”.

These affects and affectations occur, as argued in chapter 2, with the help of DeLanda (2006) and others (Protevi 2009; O'Sullivan 2001), as the production of an assemblage, a conjunction of heterogeneous human and nonhuman bodies. The earth, cities, conversations, each a conjunction of forces extracted from chaos, constitute a joining or diverging of multiple assemblages.

5 Deleuze and Guattari: Artistic production as the creation of assemblages through sensation

For Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 348), art creates territory. Art is a production of an assemblage through a particular becoming. This becoming, however, is "not a transformation into something else that already exists, but a hovering at the moment of potentiality" (Haedicke 2012: 11). Through these becomings, art creates domains that can be seen, "felt, tasted, touched, heard, thought, imagined and desired" (Coleman 2010: 16). The artist, a territorial animal, creates boundaries and limits. Art as territory marks the earth through the inscription of an artistic movement. Art is a form of communication and responds to the world through an engagement with the world (Coleman 2010). Territory is the creation of a maker (Grosz 2008).

This staking out (Beaulieu 2011: 70), however, is not only a marking of boundaries. Alain Beaulieu (2011: 70) describes it as "defining a series of postures, colors and songs: lines, colors, and refrains".

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 348), "sound invades us, impels us, drags us, transpierces us. It takes leave of the earth, as much in order to drop us into a black hole as to open us up to a cosmos". Colours are closer to territory than sounds. When colour deterritorialises, it dissolves, becomes "steered by other components" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 348). Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 348) argue that as sounds become part of other components; however, they "have a piloting role and induce colors that are superposed upon the colors we see, lending them a properly sonorous rhythm and movement". Deleuze (2003) argues that painting, and its colours and forms, creates an apprehension of forces that produces a more stable body. Colour is a visual display, a marking of territory. Movement cuts through territory, and out of territory into a reterritorialisation.

The refrain, movements and markings are activities, as Grosz (2008: 8-9) argues, that en-frame, compose, or extract something consistent from unregulated forces, to make territory. All activities, however, are processes which are engaged in the "ordering" or "deranging" of chaos (Grosz 2008: 9). Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 1994) consider the framing of chaos through three categories, Philosophy, Art and Science, each framing chaos in a particular way.

Philosophy, through the plane of immanence, creates concepts that are independent (Grosz 2008: 8). Art, through the plane of composition, creates sensation that is independent from the artist (Grosz 2008: 8). As Grosz writes (2008: 8), “art … maintains its connections with the infinite”. Art does not produce any particular representation. Science, too, orders the world (Grosz 2008: 8).

Through an activity of framing aspects of chaos, extracting forces, life sustaining rhythms occur (Grosz 2008: 75). In this process the “anomalous interactions among milieus” are suppressed (Loraine 2010: 257). This ordering of the world, however, is not undertaken as a way to control or definitively know chaos, but rather, as Grosz (2008: 28) writes, to “contain some of its fragments”, provisionally registered in a way that it may be used “without being completely overwhelmed” by it. Framing is a mode of organisation of earth, body and of life by extracting qualities from chaos, and it occurs through engaging with other bodies in milieus (Grosz 2008).

Through refrains of songs, as well as movements and markings, each a performance or a framing of chaos, the artist forms a relationship between imperceptible and perceptible forces:

> Forces cohere to enable the productive explosion of the arts from the provocations posed by the forces of the earth (cosmological forces that we can understand as chaos, material and organic indeterminacy) with the forces of living bodies, by no means exclusively human, which exert their energy or force through the production of the new and create, through their efforts, networks, fields, territories that temporarily and provisionally slow down chaos enough to extract from it something not so much useful as intensifying, a performance, a refrain, an organization of color or movement that eventually, transformed, enables and induces art. (Grosz 2008: 2-3)

These qualities as Grosz (2008) argues “become the materials and formal structures of art” (Grosz 2008: 12). Art, then, is an extraction of colour, rhythm and movement from chaos into a “vibratory structure of matter” (Grosz 2008: 12). The process of art, however, is the

deterritorialisation of territory, and its reterritorialisation. Art, therefore, can also destroy territories, and revert to chaos (Grosz 2008). This framing, a formation and reformation of territory out of chaos, may be understood through Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) discussion on the process of composition.

For Deleuze and Guattari (1994), art is composition. What Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 191-192) refer to as composition, however, is not a technical composition, where the work calls on science (mathematics, physics, chemistry, anatomy) or philosophy (concepts), but an aesthetic composition, namely “the work of sensation”, an intensification of forces. Composition, therefore is not the technical handling of material, paint, wood, movements, video, or equipment, but the arrangement of forces generated into sensation through the handling of these materials.

Sensations are the intensification of forces and bodies, and from sensation a particular property (colour, weights, texture, rhythm, or tone) is extracted that functions as intensity for itself (Grosz 2008: 59). Sensations do not represent the world, but are conglomerations of forces that shape the world. Aesthetics, sensation itself, as O’Sullivan argues, (2006), is a sensory field. In this approach to aesthetics, the subject is formed in the encounter with sensation. Sensation is not self-reflective, but imminent; it is a being of sensation which exists for itself, participating in the becoming of the world. Painting, sculpture, musical composition, installations, performances, and so forth, are becomings that extract qualities out of unregulated forces by composing chaos into formations of sensation “neither foreseen nor preconceived” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994: 204).

These sensations, extracted from the forces of chaos, are composites of concepts, percepts and affects. Deleuze (1995) explains the relationship of these aspects of sensation as being interdependent, and implicated in each other:

> Concepts are what stops thought being a mere opinion, a view, an exchange of views, gossip … concepts involve two other dimensions, percepts and affects. Percepts aren't perceptions, they're packets of sensations and

> relations that live on independently of whoever experiences them. Affects aren't feelings, they're becomings that spill over beyond whoever lives through them (thereby becoming someone else). ... Affects, percepts, and concepts are three inseparable forces, running from art into philosophy and from philosophy into art. (Deleuze 1995: 137)

Works of art are compounds of affect and percept. For Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 169), affects are “nonhuman becomings of man”, and percepts are “nonhuman landscapes of nature”. The percepts of the world affect us, and we undertake becomings through the world. These relationships of affect, percept and the human body, are the human body's embeddedness in the materiality of chaos, an extraction of territory out of milieus, its participation alongside other bodies in the creation of assemblages (Grosz 2008). Humans, then, are caught in webs of sensations created out of the relations between various bodies and forces.

Different works of art, and different forms of art, create different sensations. They respond to different parts of the body's perceptual organs, affecting bodies in different ways (Grosz 2008: 82). These sensations, however, are not isolated. They can be accessed by other arts, or by philosophy, each in their own way, since each different type of artistic production, as Grosz (2008: 82) argues, “lays claim to forces of the universe that all the others are drawn to as well”. If sensation, which exists on the plane of composition independently from human experience, creates aspects of the world, art, then, does not create representations. Art creates new harmonies in the world, new sensations that are located in specific relationships of the world, and influence relationships in the world (Deleuze & Guattari 1994). These sensations, the perceptible and imperceptible forces that create the world, affect us, shape us into nonhuman becomings, and make us engage with the world around us (Deleuze & Guattari 1987).

Artistic processes are engaged in the construction of assemblages. They work with bodies in the creation of unexpected combinations of sensations, continuously complicating each other. A working between different types of artistic production can employ these unexpected combinations of sensation in a process of material engagement that adapts to its situation, and

through such processes, artistic production can begin to find ways of navigating through the uncertainty of the world.

6 A cleaning-up operation

One day, during my exhibition in The Substation, I was painting a large, green mural that flooded from a painting onto the wall and onto the ceiling. I stood on a ladder or on scaffolding when I painted, and climbed down to fetch new paint or to take a break. During one break, I misplaced a one litre can of paint, and it fell from the work bench onto the floor, and also onto a little video projection system, which I had rigged up.

This projection was playing a video I recorded of an extractor fan on top of an ABSA building close to the Carlton Centre. The day I took this video, I remember, was a cold day, and this caused the air, extracted out of the building, to condensate. I was standing in the viewing area of the Carlton Centre and the video records a stationary image of the ABSA building, a bit of the highway and the surrounding streets. In this video, the rhythms of the morning traffic could be seen against the rhythms of the air coming out of the extractor fan, mixing with a light breeze. The sounds recorded in this video were of people speaking and workmen laying down metal pipes of scaffolding.

When the paint fell on the amplifier-speaker, the video projector, the digital video player, the extension cords, and the collection of plugs feeding this system, everything stopped working. The gallery went dead quiet. I had to clean this system as quickly as possible, and I was working against the clock. Suddenly, watching paint dry became a very involved process.

7 Approaching praxis through Deleuze and Guattari

In chapter 1, I outlined some approaches to praxis connected to artistic research. Because of its long history, praxis is perhaps a complicated term to use, but as argued earlier, it provides a way to move beyond theory vs. practice discussions and is useful in understanding artistic research. As Deleuze (2004a) argues, in the modern usage of the word, sometimes praxis has been “conceived as an application of theory, as a consequence” (Deleuze 2004a: 206) of

theory, and at other times praxis is “supposed to inspire theory” (Deleuze 2004a: 206), creating new types of theory. Such approaches have been contextualised in chapter 1 in terms of Freire (2005), Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Bolt (2004), based on Marx (Williams 1983) and Heidegger (Hemming 2013). Here I focus on Deleuze’s (2004a) conception of praxis, and its implications for what we do as artist researchers.

As Ian Buchanan and Nicholas Thoburn (2008) argue, Deleuze challenged the standard relationship between theory and praxis. For Deleuze (2004a: 206), praxis is not an “application of theory”. It is not a representation by a theorist after praxis, or an expression of theory. It is also not an inspiration to theory. The relationship between theory and praxis is “fragmentary and partial”, not something that may be applied to cases, or inspire universally (Deleuze 2004a: 206).

This is because Deleuze (2004a) understands theory as local, as embedded in particular contexts. Although theory may be applied to other areas, the “rule of application is never one of resemblance”, but faces new particularities (Deleuze 2004a: 206). Theories, Deleuze (2004a: 206) argues, “encounter obstacles, walls, collisions, and these impediments create a need for the theory to be relayed by another kind of discourse”. For Deleuze (2004a), praxis is the means by which theory moves between applications, and through obstacles. This movement of theory through praxis, according to Deleuze (2004a), is the reason that theories travel between disciplines. Deleuze (2004a: 207) points to praxis as “a system of relays in an assemblage”. This system of relays is a combination of multiple theoretical and practical aspects. Praxis is understood to be the relay between theoretical points, and theory as the relay between praxes. Theory, therefore, is praxis. It is a material activity in itself in terms of local relationships. Theory is not made to enlighten, but to be activated through participation. As Deleuze and Guattari (1983: 181) write, praxis is a method, “a strategy of alliances and filiations”, it is the multifarious relationship between bodies, actively shaping their environment by doing something.

For Deleuze (2004a: 208), theory “is exactly like a tool box. It has nothing to do with the signifier... A theory has to be used, it has to work. And not just for itself”. Theory has to find

ways to engage with its context. If theory is not used, it has *no* use (Deleuze 2004a: 207): theory is therefore not only about practice, it partakes in practice. Theory, however, makes sense only in specific contexts: “You don't go back to a theory, you make new ones, you have others to make” (Deleuze 2004a: 207). Praxis is therefore something which is lived. It is an activity that can only be understood as a whole activity, neither theory nor practice alone. The research process, art production, may be seen as praxis: a type of activity of working with ideas and materials in the world.

Keith Faulkner (2006: 137) argues that Deleuze “redefines praxis as we know it”: Deleuze (2004b) thinks of the activity of praxis as a mutation of assemblages. As Faulkner (2006: 137) identifies, praxis is no longer the activity of a “single subject”, but the mutation between “multiple subjects”.

Praxis is a becoming. It is an engagement with an assemblage. It shifts structures and occurs in the processes that mutate the relations of restrictions and singularities of structures. Each mutation of the assemblage is praxis: praxes are relationships of permanent transfer creating alterations to aspects of assemblages. For Deleuze, to do, is to make, is to mutate assemblages. Praxis, therefore, does not rely on delimitation, correct spaces, or institutionally recognised spaces. As Guattari (2011) points out, mutations of praxis occur in many different assemblages: praxis occurs in the kitchen, in the park, or in a field. It is an engagement with bodies changing relationships. Guattari (2011) describes the mutations of artistic praxis as a connection between bodies, forms, sounds, or social practices, in the production of assemblages.

An example of praxis mutating an environment is given by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), who argue that all writing occurs in an assemblage; it is made possible through the relationships of different bodies and theories. Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 5) point out that writing is not about signifying, or of representation, but that it is about “surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come”. For Deleuze (1998: 50), writing is a “flux which combines with other fluxes” through a becoming.

Inna Semetsky describes becoming as a multiplicity that is in a process where it “changes in nature as it expands its connections” (Deleuze quoted from Semetsky 2006: 3). This changing of nature, however, is not “becoming the other” but rather “becoming-other” (Semetsky 2006: 3). Becoming is a process in itself, real in itself. Becoming is not an end or a predetermined production of “the being that has become” (Malabau 1996: 124). It is not a movement to a predetermined end. Rather, it is a “momentary assemblage that cannot and will not give its reason for being” (Malabau 1996: 125). This process of becoming is a passing *between* points (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 293), a movement of shared deterritorialisation between bodies.

Flux, created through a becoming, is a mutation between points, and can therefore be considered as praxis (Deleuze 1998). It is through deterritorialisation, a particular becoming, that a flux can make conjunctions with other fluxes, this conjunction again deterritorialising. Praxis, then, is a deterritorialision through a system of relays. In this sense, writing is a becoming that creates and destroys, but functions as deterritorialisation, and has no permanent territory.

Deleuze (1998) argues that these becomings of writing, the mutation of assemblages, are not created by a single, intentional subject who creates the writing, but rather by the assemblage which produces those utterances. Although the writer undertakes a process of invention, that invention is a passage from one assemblage to another, and implicates a multiplicity of bodies. For Deleuze (1998) this passage starts with the assemblage that created the writer in the first place. In this way, writing becomes part of life. It is created within particular assemblages and continues to move between assemblages. As Deleuze (1998) argues, although life operates with direction, these directions have no predetermined end. Its becomings, rather, are created in the action itself.

Because praxis is implicated in environments, praxis moves between modes of production, not from “theory” to “practice”, but between modes of activities and products. For instance, praxis may move between writing, painting, talking, lecturing, travelling, fighting, eating, and the assemblages in which these activities take place. Praxis occurs in many assemblages (Guattari 2011); in a bus or in a studio, on a street or in an elevator.

Artistic process, therefore, is praxis; a becoming which deterritorialises. It is a transmutation of fluxes which creates territories, and then continues to deterritorialise and then reterritorialise. Praxis, then, is a way to combine bodies, to shift them, to create new relationships through becoming. In this sense, artistic praxis functions within specific formations and is a becoming that produces aspects of particular assemblages. It is in these interactions between different bodies that sensations are created, and where art creates territory through the framing of chaos, as argued in section 3.3. The activity of praxis creates sensations in the world.

What is important about the interactions of particular bodies, however, is that they are only an aspect of an assemblage (DeLanda 2006). Even at the level of a conversation, there are at least two people creating the assemblage. Although the world is created out of multiple intersecting becomings, multiple relationships of human and nonhuman bodies that form assemblages, an artist is part of only particular becomings. This partial access, which is based on affect, makes of our relationship with other bodies an uncertain, normative relationship. As discussed in chapter 1, uncertainty is a necessary experience of the world, which should not be displaced by a normative sense of certainty (Cilliers 2005). Artistic praxis (Deleuze 2004a), an activity between bodies in an assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 1994), is an uncertain type of activity, an activity that is undertaken and cannot be predicted, in which we could begin to find ways of expecting the unexpected, and through which we could perhaps find ways to navigate in the seas of uncertainty (Morin 1999: 45).

8 Praxis and multimodal artistic research. (Or the interdependence of artistic production, human bodies, and nonhuman bodies).

As discussed in chapter 1, these questions of approaching the world are bound up in the way that we approach our education. As discussed in section 4.2, Morin (1999) argues that learning is an uncertain activity because of the imbrication of body in an unstable environment. I referred to Morin (1999: 45) as proposing that learning approaches need to take into account “random incidents, chance, initiative, decision, the unexpected, the unforeseen, and an awareness of deviations and transformations”.

Also introduced in chapter 1 was the Multiple Literacies Theory [MLT] as conceptualised by Cole and Masny (2009), an approach to learning that engages anomalies and uncertainties, rather than suppresses them. Regarding this, I will consider MLT's implication for artistic research praxis as becomings that produce sensations and are co-constitutive of assemblages through a multimodal activity.

As Cole and Masny (2009: 5) write, creativity in "Multiple Literacies Theory works through local knowledges to produce moments of inspiration, experimentation, critique and art". Through personal affect based in action in an environment, a complex learning activity is undertaken. This activity is not based on preconceived agendas, and it can respond to environmental changes in novel ways. This is because the learning situation does not start with the subject, or with representation, but with affect and affectation, the capacity to undergo or implement a change in another body. Students, lecturers, classrooms and spaces outside the classroom, and other bodies from highly technological to very basic tools, objects and processes are imbricated as shifting relationships of forces and processes in the production of assemblages. Bogue (2009: viii) points out that, in MLT, affects permeate contexts as relations of bodies. In these assemblages, "the individuals within those networks are as much products as producers of those affects".

In Cole and Masny (2009), the research process is a becoming, and it may be considered in terms of the conception of praxis, as a mutation between bodies, which I discussed earlier, in section 7 of this chapter. This becoming is responsive to interactions specific to each situation; it is emergent, improvisational and inferential. The learning process, then, is a process of continuously adjusting to the affects of other bodies in the environment. This would make artistic research an improvisational and dynamic activity undertaken through praxis. Rather than implementing a specific organisational plan which directs every action into a predetermined result, this approach can incorporate the variations, indeterminacies and anomalies which arise in the relationships between bodies. This argument, therefore, becomes equally applicable for a position such as the one taken by Pakes (2004), who argues that rigid

intentional-activity based artistic research approaches sideline the embedded knowledges created by works of art, as discussed in the introduction.

Through an approach that is sensitive to Cole and Masny (2009), different modalities become different activities within the research process, each delimiting specific blocs of sensation. In a multimodal research activity, each of the productions is understood to have their own affective powers. Different ways of working produce distinct sensations in the world, each functioning, influencing, and infecting each other through their contact. These different sensations would be the artistic research undertaken. Artistic research praxis, then, would engage in the production of assemblages through the creation of sensation.

Chapter 4: Always being an extra. Looking closer at the artistic production of assemblages

1 On the implication of the artist in the production of assemblages

Susan Haedicke (2012) takes the position that artists co-produce assemblages when she discusses street art through Deleuze and Guattari. According to her, the artist, as the creator of percepts, is also the presenter of affects, and in the public performance, makes an event. These sensations and their transformations with other sensations define the relationship of the artist and the audience. In support of her argument, Haedicke (2012) points to Deleuze, who argues that affects are important, because the truths of affects are necessary truths. In contrast, truths grasped by the intellect are not necessary truths, and are contained by affect. Deleuze (quoted from Haedicke 2012: 11) points out that the truths of affects are what "life has communicated to us in spite of ourselves in an impression, a material impression because it has reached us through our senses". For Deleuze (2004b), affect impels us to engage with the world in a much more direct and involuntary way than thoughts do. Although it is preconceptual, affect stimulates thought.

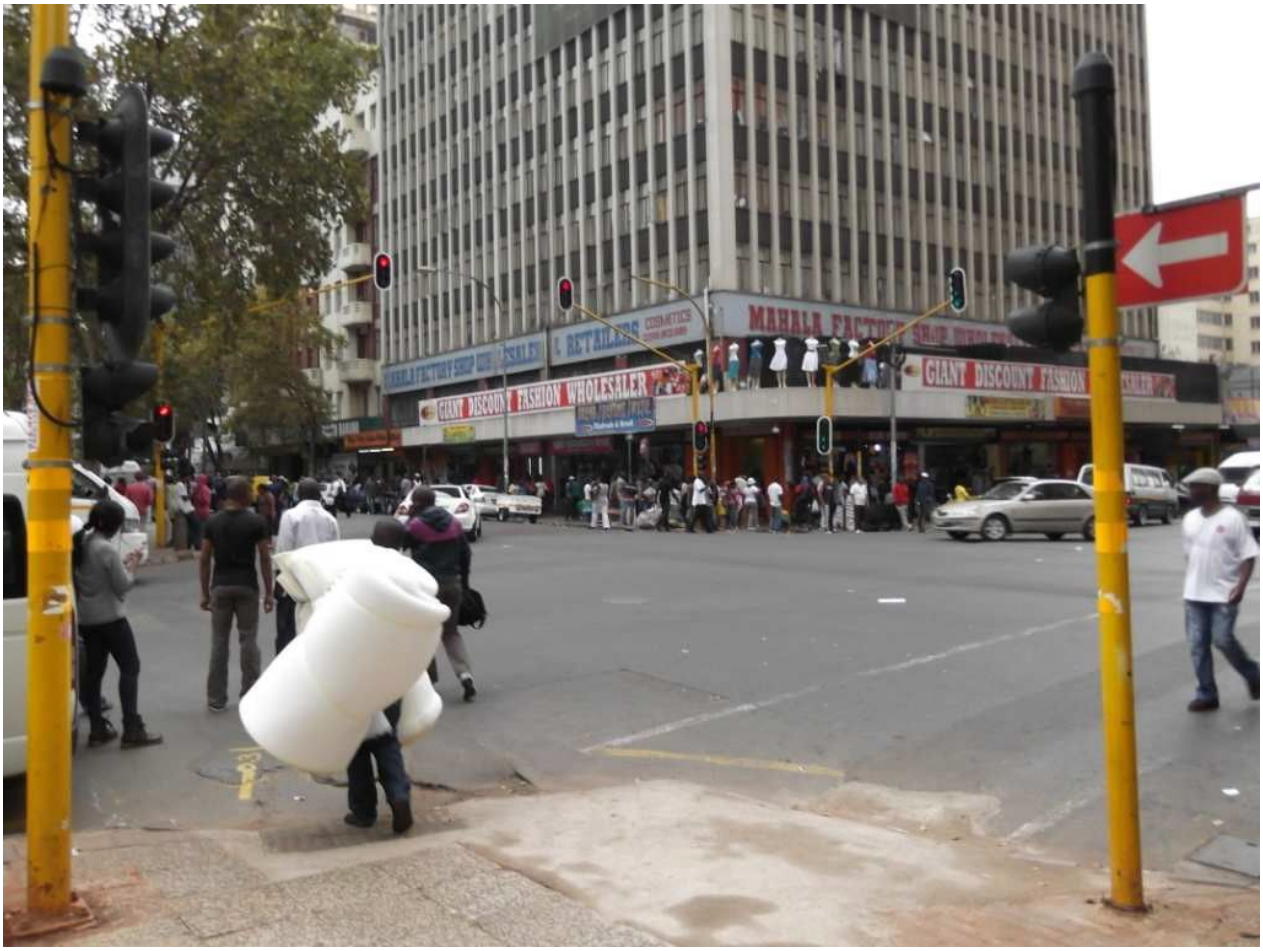
When you consider public space to be intersecting milieus and rhythms from which multiple territories are extracted and mutated, a street performance is a territorialising force, and could be involved in a deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation of the public realm. It seems obvious to say that the interaction between performers and spectators is real, but it is important to acknowledge the participation of spectators in the becomings of the street performance. Although the spectators are affected by the performance, these spectators, as well as the surrounding forces, also affect the performance. This relationship of affect creates a new assemblage. In this assemblage, as Haedicke (2012) argues, the spectators, through their affectations and their becomings, alongside the performance, may recognise these artistic becomings as being artistic, and in this realisation, spectators can undertake a reassessment of previously accepted, established or permanent truths.

Street performance artists, therefore, use public space, a multiplicity of intersecting forces, as an element in aesthetic experience (Haedicke 2012). In these performances, the audience participates in the production of an assemblage, so that “the boundaries between art and non-art become porous” (Haedicke 2012: 13).

Yet such artistic engagements do not only operate on the street, but also inside the gallery. Such an approach is undertaken by Andreia Oliveira and Felix Rebolledo (2011) and is similar to Haedicke’s (2012) approach because it focusses on the relation between the artwork and the viewer in the milieu as the production of an event. In this approach, however, Oliveira and Rebolledo (2012) focus on the gallery as the assemblage created in the event. For Oliveira and Rebolledo (2012), the act of the viewer engaging with the artwork releases the sensations contained by the work into an associative milieu, which includes the gallery, acoustics and size of the room, the hanging materials, tools and projectors, references of the works of art, ambient light and noise conditions, as well as the viewer's desire to engage with the work. The exhibition venue, the viewer and the work of art come into being as an interdependent assemblage, and produce “blocs of pure sensation made up of percepts and affect that continually alter the relations within the constituted event” (Oliveira and Rebolledo 2011: 219).

These two approaches are valuable, because they are sensitive to the creation of assemblages between artist, and viewer/spectator/participator who is either engaged or disengaged, and the recognisable artistic production in a performative activity. The performative activity can be territorializing or deterritorialising. This implication of different bodies and forces in the production of an assemblage can be understood as the blurring of the boundaries of art and life.

2 A mural and a story-telling project



This is the intersection of Jeppe Street with Von Wielligh Street. A clothing shop can be seen across the intersection. There are also some commuters and shoppers.

In 2011, I was part of a story-telling project coordinated by Dorothee Kreutzfeldt (Kreutzfeldt n.d) in Jeppe Street in Johannesburg. This is an interesting area in the city, because it has a very strong sense of community, and has a thriving business sector, built on cheap, imported clothes and accessories. The intention of this project was to make contact with some of the Ethiopian and Eritrean business people of the area, and engage in narrative research that worked with, both linguistic and material narratives. In this regard, narratives could mean the relationship between buildings, people and products as much as conversations, stories and anecdotes. It was a difficult project, because very few people trusted us: We were told that

people thought we were the Illuminati. I am still not sure if this was meant seriously, but these statements contained an element of suspicion. Eventually, Dorothee managed to secure two empty shops for us, in which we then started working. I had a shop, and one of my peers, Amber-Jade Geldenhuys, had a shop. Dorothee gave a lot of input into the running of the shops, and in using them to think through interactions in the area. At times, other people from the art school came and worked around these shops. This was an important development in the project, because, even though we did not really belong in the area, this space created a legitimate presence: we had paid for it, but it was also a sensible or locatable grounding. Saying “I have a shop in Africa City Mall where I am painting” is much less abstract than “We are research students that come from WITS”.

Close to our shops were two internet cafés and a restaurant. I painted the signage of one of the internet cafés and I had a lot of coffee and ngera at the restaurant. Ngera is a traditional Ethiopian and Eritrean sour pancake made with rice flour and served with various types of meat and vegetable stews. The coffee comes in espresso cups, and is equally potent. Steadily, we made friends with the owners of these businesses, and our conversations became less forced. In “my” shop I decided to make a mural of a network of goods and people, which I interpreted as being in this area. Although I eventually resolved some of the formal tensions in the composition, this mural was not the most beautiful thing I have ever painted. In many ways it served another purpose: I could sit and work every day for two months. I went in at eight in the morning and left at five. When I started with this rhythm, I started having more and more conversations with people. It is in these conversations where I heard about people’s dreams and passions, about their limitations, about betrayals and hardships, teamwork and individual perseverance, as well as other things. In these conversations, something not recognisably art, an engagement in life, creating life, could become deeply implicated in an artistic process.



This image shows my shop, mural and sign painting. The closed shop behind my shop was a hairdresser. The next shop along the corridor and the shop directly opposite the hairdresser were both internet cafés. The plants in the foreground were owned by the restaurant. The restaurant was behind me when I took this photograph.

These are stories and faces that I will take with me, but will not be written here. These stories are somewhere else; they are of a different space, both public and in confidence. Through our interactions with the people, something had shifted. Although we were an anomaly in the area, in this part of Jeppe Street we were becoming less threatening to a few people. We started to build relationships and became part of that small community for a short while.

The currency of my shop was not hard cash, but what happens when one is an anomaly in an area. It was a side effect of a mural, painted to make sense of flows of the area through a

visual, material approach. The currency of the shop was engaging in a conversation and a process of getting to know a passerby, or perhaps, another shopkeeper.

3 A precedent by Kaprow

I wonder what could happen when artistic performance is not recognisably artistic work. In another reading of Deleuze and Guattari, art can be seen not as separate or opposed to life, but as the creation of life (Deleuze & Guattari 1987).

In Deleuze and Guattari's (1987, 1994) non-representational philosophy, art is a natural, living process. It is the creation of territory by territorial animals, including humans. Art does not express an idea through the work of art. Rather, art engages in the world, creating aspects of the world. Kaprow's (1976) conception of Activities, as opposed to the earlier Happenings, may be useful to understand this engagement in the world.

Kaprow is an early proponent of performance art, which emerged in the 1960s, and was influenced by the Situationists, Fluxus and Dada. Performance art challenged boundaries and positions between artist, viewer, artwork, art institution, and art market (Parr 2010b).

Kaprow is an artist who understood his performance as an "antithesis of theatre" (Parr 2010: 29). Kaprow (1976) points out that theatre has a stage, an audience, a beginning, a middle, and an end. Unlike theatre productions, Kaprow's Happenings and Activities were undertaken by non- professionals, and were located in the everyday. They were never repeated in the same way, and they did not have a dedicated and informed audience (Zepke 2009). The point of the Happening was to create life, rather than a commoditised work of art (Zepke 2009). By denying an artistic experience to a viewer, the event becomes implicated in life. The engagement is a part of the living world (Parr 2010b).

Kaprow's performances started with Happenings (Zepke 2009). These performances were an expression in a situation. Happenings are created with a score, like a theatrical performance that has a script, but are generally undertaken in a situation outside the theatre (Kaprow 1993).

The score, furthermore, takes fragments of daily life, and compose them into new relationships. The score has two elements: First, there is a description of a setting, and second, a list of events to take place. Unlike theatre pieces which are written, however, the scores of Happenings are created quickly, on the spur of the moment (Kaprow 1993). Whereas plays assume that “words are the almost absolute medium” (Kaprow 1993: 19), Happenings have a looser relationship to the score, the plan directing movement in an environment (Zepke 2009). As Kaprow (1993: 19) writes, a Happening is “generated in action by a handful of ideas or a flimsily jotted-down score of ’root‘ directions” (Kaprow 1993: 19). The score is distinct from the performance, but they exist in reciprocal presupposition. Whereas the score is, and remains abstract, the performance, dependent on the score, is a particular instantiation in the world. Between the score and the instantiation of the action, there is an element of chance. This means that an instability is present in the Happening (Zepke 2009). This element of chance is also in the setting. The Happening does not occur in a planned theatrical space, but in a city location with its own flows. As a part of this urban space, the Happening remains in a personal experience, accessible only to the participants. The activities undertaken in a Happening, a planned social organisation which responds to conditions in an environment, are a strange intersection in the environment.

Later Happenings, however, became less connected to the score (Zepke 2009). These later Happenings, termed Actions, are events in the world. From a social organisation of the Happening, the Action moves into banal and private events. Here Actions do not simply actualise a score, but are engaging with bodies in unpredictable ways. As such, they are creating new ways of living in the world (Zepke 2009). As Stephen Zepke (2009) argues, for Kaprow, the image of the artist is replaced with the image of the anonymous worker. As Kaprow (1976) points out, the word performance, apart from a theatrical presentation, also contains a nontheatrical meaning, namely the meaning of production, of doing a task in the world.

An artistic engagement with the world becomes a way of working in the world that shifts the world in certain ways. Because an Action is a process which produces an aspect of the world through the creation of an unplanned event, a new state of affairs, or a new relationship of

forces, it is close to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becomings (Zepke 2009). Becoming, a “non-linear dynamic process of change”, can help us describe the process of change in performance art as a process that engages with divergent forces (Parr 2010b: 30).

The traditional subject - object relationship in art is transformed through this becoming (Parr 2010b). The art object as finalised “object” and the idea of a viewer as a fully formed “subject” is displaced through the becoming in an environment (Parr 2010b). The viewer, artist, artwork and milieu create an assemblage, a particular arrangement of forces in the world that is ephemeral, and will soon change, again. Although it is proposed that an activity is done in a certain way, the doing of the activity produces unforeseen relationships. As Adrian Parr (2010b: 30) writes, “The art is in the ‘becoming of art’ that is in itself social”.

In this type of becoming, the work of art is sensitive to its own transformation (Parr 2010b): Through its transformation, and re-transformation, the work of art is produced. Art, therefore, can be seen as a transformative experience in the world, a mutation of forces into new combinations. The production of an encounter is not simply that it occurred at a particular moment in time, but that it created a set of sensations, a singularity composed of a particular set of relations of forces, affects and percepts. Value is no longer an abstract value imposed on a work of art. In this case, a work of art is not an object linked to profit margins, or an object that can be coveted (Parr 2010b). Value is created in the encounters that are produced in the engagement. The performance does not represent, and is not universally recognisable, but rather occurs in a particular condition of living in the world and creates passages through the world.

This is not to say to that it is necessary to engage only in this approach. An action within the environment that transforms alongside, and in terms of, other changes in an environment could be combined with works of art that are recognisable as works of art. Regarding this, objects, performances and interactions each have a place, each event implicating and influencing others as they become.

4 A passage through a crowd

One day, I found a long, ribbed, orange pipe in Braamfontein. These pipes are used for electricity cables. (When I write long, I mean long. This pipe is at least 6 metres long.) I took it to my studio because I knew I was going to use it later. I ended up using it in my exhibition. In this space, however, it was a bit dead, placed along a wall: a great, long, orange curve, picking up a yellow dash in a nearby painting, and contrasting with the black swirl of a plastic groundsheet.

This was nothing compared to the street, though. The pipe is so long and curved that I had to carry it on my shoulder, and even then, both ends dragged on the ground, making a dull, scratching sound.

It was a useful object, though, as it made the crowds part in front of me. With this pipe it became easy to walk in the busiest street: People just parted in front of me, giving me right of way.

5 Some thoughts about an artistic engagement with Johannesburg

Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 346) argue that we live in a time of “atomic ’populations‘ of all natures (mass media, monitoring procedures, computers, space weapons)”, a logic that cuts the world up into small and unyielding sites of ownership. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) employ the images of an assassin and of a poet as two competing forces in the contemporary deterritorialisation, or molecularisation, of our earth. This molecularisation can either continue to bombard, train and control existing populations through the assassin, or create “a people yet to come” through the poet (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 346). Whereas the assassin serves the state and attempts to destroy, and conserve, occupy and enslave the entire cosmos, the poet has an uncertain engagement in local relationships, and can create becomings, which opens up the molecular to the cosmos. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the poet, like any artist, does not work in metaphor; the poet's words and sounds, transferred as affects and percepts, create sensations which influence the body, and pass into new singularities away from hegemonic orderings.

In a city like Johannesburg, one of the most violent cities in the world, however, the poet had better watch out: Here, the atomic bomb seems less of a threat than a gang or a faction. Here the highly technological ordering of the world denies many people access to the right to the city, and they exist in the marginal spaces that are created in the wake of the bureaucratic, political and economical orderings of the city (Murray 2008). The heterogeneity of territories, each molecularised and protected, creates a city of contesting affects. This harsh reality, however, does not mean the poet has no place in Johannesburg. On the contrary, the poet has an important role. Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) poet, however, will find particular challenges in local engagements, and will need to do things in terms of those particular assemblages.

When the affects of other bodies make an impact, sticking to one place of working, one way of working, one modality, one sensibility, this creates a false sense of certainty in an uncertain world. To move through the city, the poet needs to be adaptable. The gallery, the studio, and the heterogeneous spaces of the city, all present different conglomerations of bodies, possibilities, necessities and uncertainties. But how is it possible not to see the implication of the city in the gallery? And how quickly does the gallery not disappear in the city? An artist, the poet, can move through both these assemblages, making local relationships, and through these relationships, can pass new sensations into existence.

When you buy a painting, it needs to travel once again.

6 Following the course of the Jukskei River

I got this strange compulsion to follow the Jukskei River from its source to its transformation, where it flows into the Crocodile River. This river carries water to the Indian Ocean, which would have gone to the Atlantic Ocean if it were not for the ingenuity of humans. To serve the water needs of Johannesburg, we move water in from the south, from the mountains, over many kilometres. The Jukskei is visible, for the first time, just below Ellis Park, where it flows out into the open through a pipe, and then into a channel. It then flows through the suburbs

towards Bruma Lake. I ended up going all the way to Hartebeespoort Dam, and then I passed the dam on my way to Brits and Thabazimbi.

Although there are a lot of buildings and privately owned properties along this river, there are many gaps which lead to the river. Usually, there are also a good couple of metres on either side of the river. Video camera in hand, I shot hours of raw footage of this river. The first time I walked through a passage for the Jukskei River underneath a highway, I was quite afraid. The river flows through large tunnels, anything from 10 to 20 metres long and 4 metres high. The inside of the tunnel is quite dark, but you can see light shining in from the entrance; shimmering on the stream. Not knowing what you may find at the other side, or whether you were seen going in, makes for a risky business if you are alone.



Video stills from Jukskei Passage (2012).

Crossing underneath highways and between suburbs, this river forms a very long alternate, and a very isolated passage, winding from the central business district of Johannesburg, all the way out of Johannesburg. This river course is home to some people who have nowhere else to sleep. It is also a thoroughfare for others who do not want to be noticed. These properties of the river meant that I walked some areas, I turned away from some areas, and I drove past some areas.

Along the way, I noticed that the river gets very strong very quickly. This happens all along the course of the river, until its speed is broken again by the dam. Of course, each stream, and sewerage pipe and road runoff contributes to the flow, but the individual additions are not so noticeable.



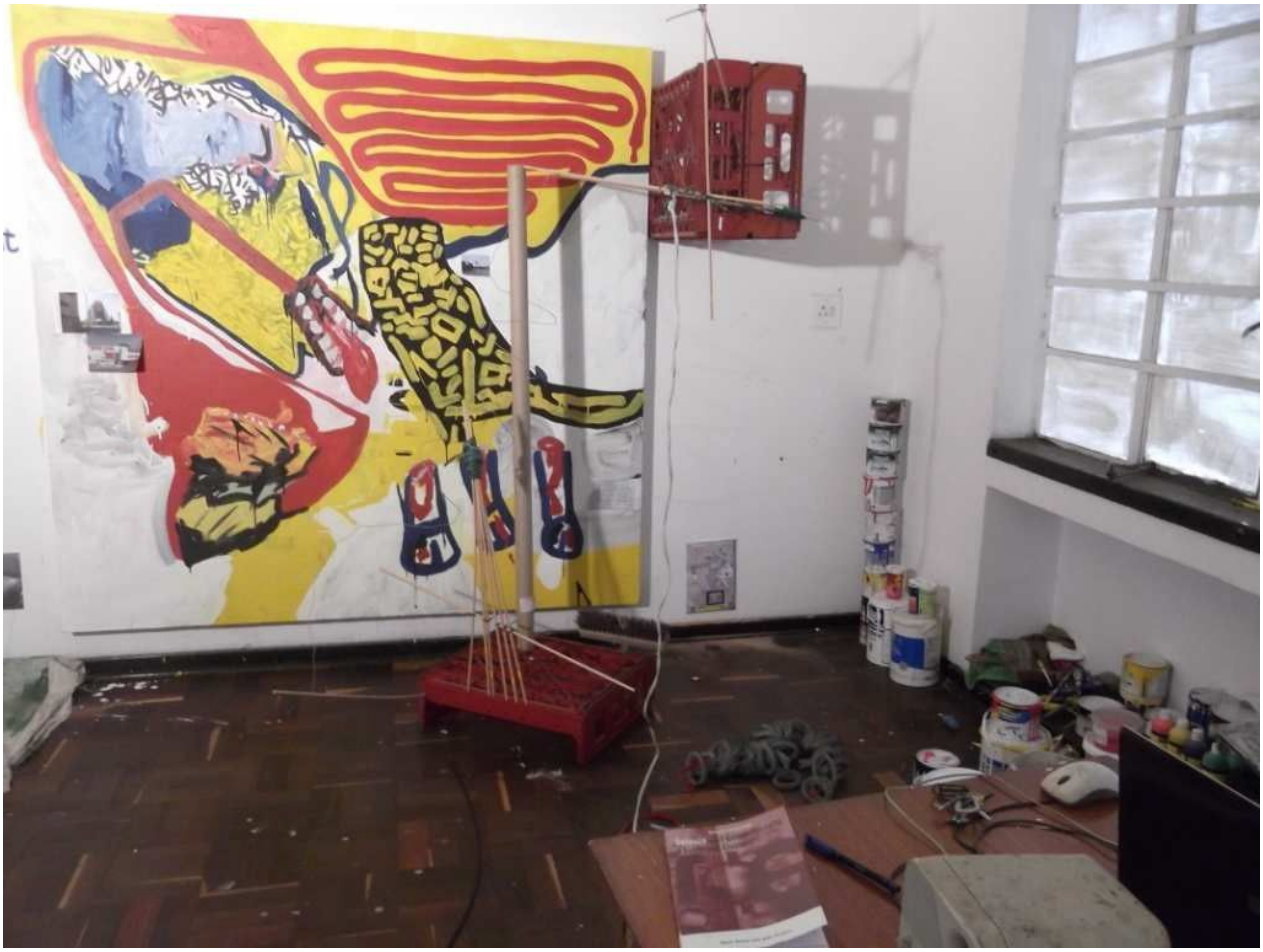
A video still from Jukskei Passage (2012).

The names of the many town house complexes and security villages next to the river give the impression that the Jukskei is a river next to which you would like to spend some time. Generally, however, you would not want to touch the water, and the houses are turned away from the river and its soapy smell. The newest, and probably the most extensive of these complexes, is Waterfall in Midrand, spanning a quite vast area on both sides of the river. This has blocked all access to the river along the river course. The areas of belonging and ownership in Johannesburg prevented me from casually going into areas such as Alexandra, but also into those like Dainfern. Similarly, in the rural, or in the urban peripheral areas, this river often runs through farms, or acts as a boundary itself, and thus has even fewer access points.

This river, which starts out quite small below Johannesburg city centre, passes a lot of different aspects of Johannesburg and its surroundings, such as: residential areas, businesses, smaller and larger dams, a nuclear research facility, vegetable farms, cattle farms, and mines.

Conclusions: Some areas for further consideration

1 Struggling through a sheep's head



A corner in my studio in 2012 just before my exhibition in The Substation.

I was struggling with a painting of a smiley and the word “prophet” traced from a pamphlet. I never knew when it was finished. Each new brush mark changed things, not always for the better, but not necessarily bad, either. I would buy cigarettes to help me think. I would climb up a ladder to smoke and to look. Sometimes, I made a couple of changes to the arrangements of colours and forms. Then I would leave it for months. I did this over and over and over again. Eventually it became part of my exhibition. It was one of the canvasses not displayed face

forward: not because it was not finished, but because a painting can always receive another shift, be moved out of its storage spot, and looked at again. Now, I am thinking about making some new shifts again.

2 Artistic research moving into the city

Although there are many artists who engage with the city, it seems that there can always be more. I think that the interdisciplinary approach of Edjabe and Pieterse (2010, 2011) is important. I would be interested to continue my work in a closer relationship with other research approaches, particularly urban planning and the right to the city (Robinson 2008). I believe it important to have direct engagements with the city, working with spaces, transforming them in relationship to multiple people and bodies. Regarding this I think there is scope for small engagements with people in their assemblages, in terms of workshops, narrative research, and setting up community spaces, performances and exhibitions.

3 Deleuze and Guattari, Cilliers, and Morin

Deleuze and Guattari's concepts seem to be sensitive to what Cilliers (2005) has recently termed critical complexity. This approach to complexity, which encompasses general complexity (Morin 2007), stresses that our engagement with the world is one of uncertainty (Woerman 2010). The heterogeneity of the world, where meaning is made in local relationships, means that we only know aspects of the world, and only know them through a particular framing. This engagement with complexity is therefore a normative activity, and critical self-reflective rationality becomes important (Cilliers 2005). This normative self-reflective engagement with complexity, as Preiser (2012) argues, opens research of complexity to lived experiences in the world. Critical complexity is a new development in complexity, and there is little philosophical research into its relationship with Deleuze and Guattari, and their philosophy of becoming.

4 The ethical activity implicit in art production, an engagement in the world

This dissertation has looked into how artistic production may function as urban research, and how this research may be understood as an uncertain activity in the co-production of assemblages. Artistic production, it has been argued, is an adequate way to engage with this uncertainty that is not reductive of the complexity of the world. As Cilliers (2005) argues, however, because an uncertain engagement is based on normative choices, it is an ethical engagement in the world. This then becomes another conjunction which may be researched in terms of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Cilliers (2005) and Morin (1999), namely, art production as ethical activity in assemblages.

5 A winding down of this dissertation, and the project

My artistic production and processes in this MA have been engaged with heterogeneous other bodies in sites around Johannesburg in terms of field work, studio work, exhibition as construction site and this dissertation. Engagement in the city places the body in relationships with both human and nonhuman bodies, and these engagements between bodies result in environments, or rather, are co-productive of assemblages (Deleuez & Guattari 1987). They are uncertain engagements, embedded in the relationships of bodies. Artistic productions are such mutations in the world.

I have argued that artistic production is praxis (Deleuze 2004a), and engages in the production of assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). Art is implicated in the formation of the world, and this engagement with the world is exactly where artistic research functions: as a becoming, a mutation (Deleuze 2004b) through the uncertainties of the world (Cilliers 2005, Morin 1999). I have argued that multimodality provides further ways for artists to understand their productions, their praxis, as partaking in the production of assemblages (Cole and Masny 2009).

This can be seen in the materials of this project, and how they kept on mutating into something quite different in various situations.

Making a painting, building installations, painting murals, crits, consultations, lectures, conversations, a story-telling project, site visits, the handling of materials, making an ephemeral sculpture, finding an object, the writing of this dissertation, the reading of a book or essay, thinking about art and environments and attempting to learn how to export a video on a Macintosh. One thing leads into another, and sometimes not.

Notes

[i] Although the general understanding of normativity pertains to a correspondence of widely accepted or typical models, the philosophical definition is different: A statement is said to be normative "when it entails that some action, attitude or mental state of some other kind is justified", when it presents an action as one which ought to be undertaken, or when it proposes a particular state as necessary (Darwall 2001: n.p.). Since we only have access to aspects of systems, all our actions should be understood as normative (Cilliers 2005).

[ii] The concept "Body" is approached through Deleuze and Guattari's (1987, 1994) philosophy. As Hughes (2011: 1) notes, "the body has an uncertain place" in the theory of Deleuze, yet it is everywhere in Deleuze's work. Baugh (2010) may provide an initial sketching in of the meaning of this term. Baugh (2010: 35) writes that, for Deleuze, Body, is "any whole composed of parts, where these parts stand in some definite relation to one another, and has a capacity for being affected by other bodies". Deleuze does not have an anthropocentric view of the body, and Deleuze does not define body in terms of its materiality or organic structure. Rather, as Baugh (2010: 35) writes, "[A body] is defined by the relations of its parts (relations of relative motion and rest, speed and slowness), and by its actions and reactions with respect both to its environment or milieu and to its internal milieu". In Deleuze' work with Guattari, a body could be human or non-human bodies, animate or inanimate (Colman 2012). Works of art, therefore, could be seen as bodies that exist in relationship to other bodies.

[iii] Deleuze and Guattaris (1987) use the word assemblage as a specialised term in their geophilosophy. There are, however, four vernacular meanings to the word. A first meaning of the word assemblage is: "A bringing or coming together; a meeting or gathering; the state of being gathered or collected" (Simpson 2009 n.p.). A second meaning of the word assemblage is: "The joining or union of two things; conjunction" (Simpson 2009 n.p.). In this meaning, there are various technical usages: "the joining, putting together of parts (in Carpentry or of a machine); a collection (e.g. of artefacts); a work of art consisting of miscellaneous objects fastened together" (Simpson 2009 n.p.). A third meaning of the word assemblage is: "A number of persons gathered together; a gathering, concourse. (Less formal than assembly.)" (Simpson 2009 n.p.). A fourth meaning of the word is: "A number of things gathered together; a

collection, group, cluster" (Simpson 2009 n.p.). These vernacular meanings do not all resonate with the Deleuze-Guattarian meaning of assemblage in the sense that these different meanings indicate a state, a process of different parts coming together, and the grouping itself. As MacGreggor Wise (2011: 77) argues, however, Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage "is not *the arrangement* or *organization* but the *process* of arranging, organizing, fitting together".

[iv] This is so, at least, for Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 16), who argue that concepts are produced in relation to particular situations, responding to the circumstances of the particular situation. Concepts are multiplicities; they are created from particular combinations of components, expressing particular arrangements. For Deleuze and Guattari (1994), as Stagoll (2010a) explains, concepts gain their meaning in relation to the problems they are connected to, the concepts functioning as a relationship of variables active in their specific situations which influence their mutation. Concepts cannot be thought apart from their circumstances of production, however, they do not represent these situations either. A concept can be thought about as the imbrications of different components which define an "internal consistency" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994: 20). Although the components of a concept can be understood as concepts themselves, regarding the particular concept as a multiplicity, however, components cannot be separated from the concept. Rather, when the components of a concept connect to other concepts (Deleuze & Guattari 1994: 20). Concepts, therefore, exist between other concepts, enabling a movement between different concepts is enabled by the components connecting to other concepts (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 20). These relations do not define a discursive whole, but rather, enter what Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 23) term non-discursive resonance: In Deleuze and Guattari's (1994: 23) words: "either because the components of one become components with other heterogeneous components or because there is no difference of scale between them at any level". Concepts, therefore, exist as "centers of vibrations" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994: 23) in both their internal relationships, and their relationship to other concepts. As Young (2013) explains, Deleuze and Guattari's particular, non-conventional approach to concepts makes concepts subjective. Because of their interrelatedness, however, it is possible to work with concepts, understand their meaning, and judge their relative values.

[v] It should be understood that there are various philosophical notions around place and space. There is an extensive Western-philosophical handling of these terms which stretches back to the times of Plato, and before Plato in terms of creation myths (Casey 1998). This long history, however, necessitates that the conception of space and place should not be conflated into one another unwittingly. In this dissertation, the concept of space is approached through an interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of variable relationships of bodies that form assemblages. An assemblage is an interchanging relationship of smooth and striating forces (Bonta & Protevi 2004: 54). While striated space is a delineating process, a compartmentalization of relationships into a centrally controlled hierarchical ordering (Bonta & Protevi 2004: 154), smooth space functions as a movement of bodies beyond the sedimentation. As Bonta and Protevi (2004: 144) explain, while individual organisms in the world may be seen as stratified, the interactions between organisms are not centrally organized. Interaction between organisms involves the continuous variation of forces in a smooth space. According to Bonta and Protevi (2004: 145) although a smooth space could be encircled by a striating space, and although smooth space occurs throughout striated space, smooth space cannot be ordered by a striating space. In the process where striating forces limit variation, or emergent properties, a smooth space becomes over coded, and disappears (Bonta & Protevi 2004: 144). The process of moving from a striated space into a smooth space is one of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. These two terms deal with the formation of bodies and forces into assemblages and are discussed in chapter 3. This project approaches notions around spatiality through an interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari's conceptions.

[vi] As Cilliers (2005: 256) points out, theoretical positions which posit the "*interpretive* nature of knowledge" sometimes experience "resistance" when charged as instituting a relativity to knowlege. Cilliers (2005: 256) maintains that, although there are theoretical positions which are too "open and vague", and to which such a claim of relativity could apply, this is not always the case. According to Cillers (2005: 260) "accusations" of relativism may have much to do with a fear for the unknown. According to Cilliers (2005: 256), when the claim is made to bolster "scientific facts", it often amounts to political manoevering between contending conceptions of knowledge. Furthermore, as Cilliers (2005: 260) argues, a position in relativity is "self refuting", a position which few philosophers would actually take. As Cilliers (2005: 256)

argues, however, the acknowledgement of the complexity of the world entails the acknowledgement of "the limitations of our understanding of this world". Since we experience the complexity of the world in a limited way, it is necessary to take a "moderate position" as opposed to an "assertive position" (Cilliers 2005: 259), in terms of to the type of knowledge we can possess in the world. Knowledge is contingent (Cilliers 2005). This is because, as Cilliers (2005: 264) holds, an engagement with complexity is a normative engagement; it is based in choice.

[vii] Cilliers (1998: 3-5) identifies some shared properties of complex systems from his interpretation of poststructuralism through connectionist models: For Cilliers (1998), complex systems are open systems that are produced through the dynamic, nonlinear interactions between components and the system, and the system with its environment. An open system is a system without a boundary. The scope of the system is defined through the description of the system, rather than as a property of the system itself. Although Cilliers (1998) argues that longer range communication is often impractical, he explains that influence can still spread over a wide range as a result of the communication between parts at a short range. The effects of the activities throughout the system, Cilliers (1998) continues, can feed back on themselves in stimulating or inhibiting loops within the system, so that component parts undertake recurrent behaviours. These component parts, however, are unaware of the behaviour of the system as a whole. This is because, in Cilliers (1998) conceptualisation, complexity is manifested in the relationship between parts, and not at specific points or levels in the system. The structure of the complex system, therefore, as Cilliers (1998) explains, is produced through the process of self-organisation, a process that results from the interaction between the environment, the present state of the system, and its history. While the behaviour of the system cannot be predetermined, self-organisation does not create a random system. Cilliers argues that it creates a relationship where the interaction between the constituents of the system and the system with its environment manifests a complex system. Since complex systems are created out of contingent aspects, and there can be no overarching theory of complexity, Cilliers (1998) argues that it is necessary to work with specific complex systems.

[viii] Poststructuralism is a term that indicates a collection of similarly concerned philosophers and social theorists. These "poststructuralists" did not create a unified theoretical movement,

and the key representatives often denied being any party to it (Chafee and Lemert 2009). A similarity between these thinkers, however, is that in some way they question or extend models of structuralism (Chafee and Lemert 2009). Although some type of structural approach is present in all fields of empirical research, structuralisms are very common in fields where there is no consensus on the properties of structures, for instance the social system (Chafee and Lemert 2009). The allure of structuralisms is that they provide strong structural assumptions that can help discern sense out of otherwise seemingly inaccessible relations of objects and events (Chafee and Lemert 2009). Although structuralisms thrived in the classical scientific paradigm, Cilliers (1998) argues however, that structural approaches do not have to be reductive. A structural approach that has the properties of self-representation and self-organisation can produce a complex system.

[ix] In order to be able to understand the relationships that result in emergent behaviour, Morin (2007) explains that it is necessary to handle sometimes seemingly paradoxical, contradictory or logically opposing conceptual relationships. The concept autonomy-dependence accounts for a particular property of complex systems. When trying to understand a complex system, it is necessary to look at both internal and external relationships, as well as the relationships of the parts to the wholes. This is because, according to Morin (2007), the internal relationships of a complex system are in a disequilibrium which is only stabilised through the complex system's relation with an external environment. A complex system, therefore, is created through an interface between parts on the inside the system, and between the inside with an external environment. This interface is the exchange of matter and energy. As Morin (2007) argues, an increase in autonomy in a complex system is in a direct relationship to an increase in a dependence on feedback from an external environment. Particular actions become possible in particular environments because they are in particular relationships with other actions.

[x] The term creativity is a somewhat complicated term to use, because it is often used in uncritical ways, but it also often plays into the strategies of accumulation within capitalist society (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005). In this second sense, creativity is facilitated through capitalism as an interconnected and vibrant activity of large populations and cultures, and becomes the driving force of socialised labour relationships. These creative relationships are

then geared towards extracting profit by their transformation into commodities (Hard & Negri 2000). This approach to creativity, however, is not the only possible one. Creativity could be modes of living, ways of distributing products, and types of objects which are not part of the capitalist hegemony. A conversation on the street, as a work of art, for instance could be such an engagement. A way to start challenging these strategies of accumulation may be presented by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), who focus not on ends or beginnings, but on becomings. This movement creates their politics of creativity (Bogue from Chung 2002): an experimental engagement with the world that constitutes "the art of the possibile" (Chung 2002: 166): Although we cannot predict the future, humans are adaptible and intuitive. We are capable of "burning the plans" (Hardt 1993: 107). We can go beyond predefined plans, and overcome our conditions by influencing different becomings. I approach creativity in this dissertation through such an approach to becoming.

[xi] Carr and Kemmis (1986: 162) define action research as "a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which these practices are carried out" (Carr and Kemmis 1986). The action research process has been termed a *self-reflective spiral*: it goes through stages of planning, of acting, of observing and of reflecting, each stage influenced by the preceding stage, and directed at the next stage. Depending on the situation, an action research process can be started at any point, and multiple action research spirals can be completed during the research process. Action researchers' activities are intended as interventions in the world that influence social change. It is through these actions that localised theory is developed. As Carr and Kemmis (1986: 28) write, action researchers "aim at intervention, but expect advances in theory or understanding to be consequences of their realworld interventions".

[xii] The theory and practice division is first articulated in the distinction between theoria, poiesis, and praxis (Flyvberg 2002). Theoria created the knowledge of episteme, was contemplation, and is understood as knowledge today. Poiesis created the knowledge of techne, was skilled and technical production, and is understood as practice today (Pilario 2005). Praxis created the knowledge of phronesis, a virtuous practice, the action itself as the end. Phronesis, as Bent

Flyvberg (2001) argues, has no corresponding term today, and he attempts to inject this term into the conception of knowledge production in social sciences.

[xiii] The term multiliteracies is often employed as a designation of the ability to communicate in a variety of modes. One approach to multiliteracy is in terms of a poststructuralist notion of the heterogeneity of meaning-making processes, and the importance of position in the production of meaning (Cope and Kalantzis 2000). Since meaning in cultural sites is produced through multiple positions, there is no single position which can account for all aspects of that site. Another, related use of the term multiliteracies involves the multimodality of communication: that a cultural site includes not only words, but other modes too (Cope and Kalantzis 2000). Images, writing, layouts, moving images, sound, gesture, and speech constitute independent, but interrelated modes of communication (Gunther 2010).

[xiv] There are many projects which are sensitive to complexity, and are embedded in environments, a few of which I now point to: 1. A project working with migrant populations in Yeoville attempting to create a social map of details of everyday life in an invisible community through a negotiation between artists, residents, consultants and the audience. This project engaged conversations and interactions in this community, accessing ordinary life moments and narratives particular to the people and the place. Multimedia artists, architects, social scientists, academic researchers, community activist, shop owners, urban planners and people from the community came together in a project with a web-based element, site engagement and a site specific participatory exhibition (Kurgan 2012). 2. A list of CDs with information and cover images (Mbaye 2011). 3. Collages made in a workshop with teenagers as a way to start locating obstacles in the experience of Johannesburg (Kostreva 2011). 4. An architectural research project immersed in Yeoville which becomes a form of activism (Gbaffou 2011). A story about research on sexuality embedded in particular interactions. This story is presented as an account of the research, but is [performatively and satirically] removed from any bookish knowledge (Mwaluko 2011). 5. A photography project which documents sapeurs in the street but becomes a moment of exchange, of sharing and conviviality, a party and a dinner, or an exhibition (Lanquetin 2010). 6. The artist-researcher-educator and the multimodal classroom as a site specific installation and public practice (Andrew 2011). 7. A project following a map of their home city drawn by Senegalese immigrants based in Johannesburg, and the project's

subsequent representations. Here the research takes various formats and produces various actions and products: Navigating the city, hand drawn maps, actual maps, photography, publication, conference and social presentations, social encounters, a residence in Dakar, video sequences and installations (Hobbs & Neustetter 2010).

[xv] A question could arise in terms of shifting combinations of bodies and relativism. The charge could be that such a fluxation in the relationships of bodies (Deleuze & Guattari 1987) creates relativity in relationships. It is questionable, however, whether bodies really can take *any random* combination whatsoever: As Wise (2011: 91) argues, an assemblage is not "a random collection of things, since there is a sense that an assemblage is a whole of some sort that expresses some identity and claims a territory". The transformation of these collection of things in temporary arrangements, what Livesey (2010: 18) describes as "complex constellations of objects, bodies, expressions, qualities, and territories", remains contingent to the inherent potentials of the collection. An assemblage is neither relative, nor a collection of bodies according to a specific plan or model, but is always a process in which bodies come together in ways opened by their particular "qualities, speeds and lines" (Wise 2011: 92).

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