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## **Material Thinking as Place Making**

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*Material thinking; the materialisation of thinking, the material of thinking or thinking that takes place through material which may or may not result in a materialised, realised or made thought.*

In response to Carter's discussion of Vico's writing on the relationship between memory, imagination and invention, my proposition is that the localised acts of making and creating are the realising acts of invention, the materialising of thought, which may or may not result in the creation of a thing. In particular, I am interested in how this act or series of acts of materialising towards the made, is an act of habitation and place making. Informed by the fields of phenomenology, fashion, human geography and landscape theory, I propose that the practice of material thinking is an experience of the *local* and the articulation of *place*.

Carter (2004, p. 7) argues that material thinking, is an act of invention, of making, which results in myth making. Within this discussion I consider this notion of myth and meaning, through the lense of the language of creation, and the transient nature of knowledge. In response to the work of Morris, Carter states, 'Invention, after all, depends on equivocation – the possibility that something *might mean something else*' (p. 10). This 'else' I argue is temporal, it is personal and situated; it is placed. Place is more than where we are, place is how we are, how we know, how we connect to the location that we are in. In this way I wish to explore the notion of the 'local invention' and how landscape interventions can enable this.

As argued by Whiston Spirn (1998, p. 15), 'the language of landscape is our native language... The language of landscape can be spoken, written, read and imagined... Landscape, as language makes thought tangible and imagination possible... the meanings of landscape elements (e.g. water) are only potential until context shapes them'. Similarly, Pannikar (1991) supports this perspective on the inter-relationship between language and landscape. His perspective is that through our connections we are a part of the landscape. It is through space and location that we know ourselves and through language that we express ourselves. This occurs 'When language is the very house of our being. When we live in the very words we utter, when we create each phrase out of a

concrete experience in time and spaces' (1991, p. 20). Pannikar's perspective of language and landscape is one of authenticity and connection; it links to Bergson, Merleau-Ponty, Tuan and Stewart's perspectives on the construction of meaning. In this case Pannikar speaks of the meaning formed in location, where the space that we are in contributes to the discourse. 'Landscape is essential to the experience of being – we exist in, through and as space' (ibid, p.21).

To imagine the possibility of the materialising of thoughts and ideas is to inhabit a space of creation, of making. It is to place ourselves within the local in order to navigate the creative act. 'All places exist somewhere between the inside and the outside views of them, the ways in which they compare to, and contrast with, other places. A sense of place is a virtual immersion that depends on lived experience and a topographical intimacy that is rare today...' (Lippard, 1998, p. 33). The materialising of invention is a localised act of design that takes place within, and creates the place(s) of, practice.

## References

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