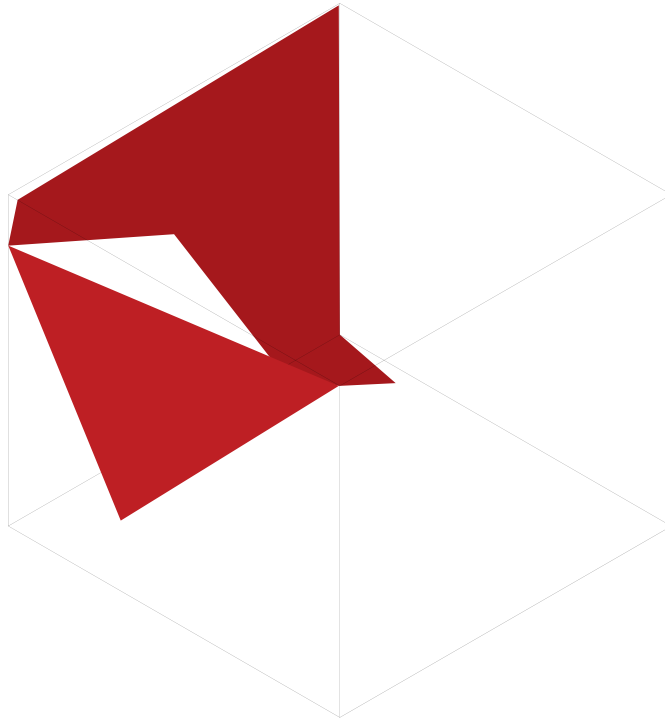


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Running the City

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Abstract: Adopting a collaborative and participatory approach to curating in the university art museum context, this paper focuses on the “out” aspect of the 2013 symposium, “Inside Out”. The intention of the projects discussed here is to query, even upset the traditional gallery/museum context of curatorial projects. Specifically, the paper considers how the curator’s role can move from one focussed on the facilitation of connections between works in an exhibition space, to one that is instead concerned with forging connections with place itself. It is based on the presumption that curatorial practice has moved on from simply assembling artworks in chronological or thematic sequence, to instead create (curate) the conditions for a deeper engagement with place. The architecture of the city, rather than of the gallery/museum, becomes the setting for a series of cultural probes that facilitate participatory methods of collaboration and engagement. Streets, malls and laneways—as opposed to walls, floors and lighting—determine the parameters and outcomes of these curated urban interventions.

Keywords: Participatory method, design, cultural probes, collaboration

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Adopting an alternative approach to curating in the university art museum context, this paper focuses on the “out” aspect of the 2013 symposium, “Inside Out”. The intention of the projects discussed here are to query, even upset the traditional gallery/museum context of curatorial projects. Specifically, the paper considers how the curator’s role can move from one focussed on the facilitation of connections between works in an exhibition space, to one that is instead concerned with forging connections with place itself. It is based on the presumption that curatorial practice has moved on from simply assembling artworks in chronological or thematic sequence, to instead create (curate) the conditions for a deeper engagement with place. The architecture of the city, rather than of the gallery/museum, informs each of the projects here. Streets, malls and laneways—as opposed to walls, floors and lighting—determine the parameters and outcomes of these curated urban interventions.

Since the surrealists embarked on psychogeographic walks in the outlying suburbs of Paris almost 100 years ago, physical movement around city spaces has assumed a meaningful role in the cultural articulation of our relationship to urban spaces. Using a public art project and exhibition as an example, this paper explores how exhibitions premised on experimental inquiry rather than traditional museum priorities based on presentation and display, can forge new modes of engagement with participant collaborators and exhibition audiences. Moving outside the museum, public art projects such as these utilise the architecture not of the museum but of the city itself. Underpinned by research imperatives inherent to a university-led project, *Running the City* tested the capacity for participatory art projects to breach the divides between public and museum spaces, and between art, research and active participation.¹

According to Rebecca Solnit, “Walking... is how the body measures itself against the earth”. (Solnit, 2000, p. 31) But what of running? Can a heightened sensorial perception encountered when running forge a meaningful connection to place, especially in the context of the familiar place of home?

Shifting the connective paradigm of Miwon Kwon’s “art site relationship”, the participatory running projects discussed here propose instead a “site-participant” paradigm. In this model, the art is no longer the outcome or even focus of the project; instead, it becomes a vehicle for forging connection between people and place.² It should be noted that this model proposes neither a de-valuing of art per se nor a promotion of the curator’s role over that of the artist’s. It does, however, reject the idea of “art for art’s sake” in favour of an approach that eschews the architectural space of the art gallery or museum and instead employs the artwork in the service of building psychological and emotional connections between people and place. Imbued with this intentionality, the curatorial role is crucial in achieving engagement between art, site and viewers, though is achieved through a different set of negotiations undertaken by the traditional exhibition curator, who instead facilitates connections between people and artworks in a museum-based group exhibition.

Unlike the presence of walking in art, the nexus of art and running is an under-researched area to date. The most definitive recent research into participatory art intervention and mapping projects is Nato Thompson’s 2008 exhibition, *Experimental Geography* (the title a term coined in 2002 by geographer and author Trevor Paglen) and associated publication. (Thompson, 2009) The project examined a range of performative and interventionist practices undertaken in cities and regions across the world, including many that aimed to strengthen individuals’ roles as agents of change in their home environments. Surprisingly, however, very few of the alternative mapping actions surveyed involved running. One exception was kara-



rinka's running performance of the previous year: the artist ran the entire evacuation route system in Boston, measuring the distance not in miles but in breaths (finding that it takes approximately 154,000 breaths to evacuate Boston). (Langlois, 2010)



Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *Breathing is Free*, 2007. Images courtesy Mizuma Art Gallery.

Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba's *Breathing is free: 12,756.3* (2007 & ongoing), a running project exhibited in the form of multi-channel digital videos and photographs, has been mostly undertaken in the years since Thompson's research. The performative project follows the artist as he runs through regions of the world, which to date number 19. Born in Japan, raised in the United States and currently living in Vietnam, Hatsushiba utilises running as a way of mapping the migratory movements and worldwide displacement and interchange of refugees. In *Breathing is free* he aims to eventually run the distance of the earth's diameter, 12,756.3 km. Documentation of the entire project to date was exhibited in 2013 as part of *Running the City*. (Fenner, 2013)

Worldwide, there are few examples of artists undertaking or initiating running projects either as mapping, spectacle or participatory practice. Berlin-based artist Alicia Frankovich's *Free Time* was exhibited in Sydney in 2013: it presents a range of performative interventions in the gallery spaces, one of which was running.³ Of Australian artists' work, TV Moore's *The Dead Zone* (2003) appropriates from the filmic genre of science fiction a two-channel video showing a man running through the centre of Sydney. On one screen he is running forwards in slow motion, on the other he is running backwards.

Perhaps influenced by global fascination with "the fastest man on earth" Usain Bolt at the Beijing Summer Olympic Games, three notable artworks involving running were created



in 2008.⁴ Daniel Crooks's *Study for "Static no. 11 (man running)"* of 2008, reinterprets with the image of a man on a treadmill the motion analysis work of Etienne-Jules Marey and Eadweard Muybridge (Basil Sellers Art Prize, 2008). Also from Australia, Daniel McKewen's *Running Men* splices film scenes of running men, presenting the footage across five screens, each featuring the solitary figure of Harrison Ford, Tom Cruise, Cary Grant and other famous actors running towards the viewer. The third, most famous of the three was Martin Creed's *Work #850*, performed at Tate Britain. Individuals from all walks of life were selected to perform, their role to run as fast as they possibly could in a straight line from the main Millbank entrance. Operating on rotation, one of the runners sprinted the length of the central court every 30 seconds. Creed's aim was to draw attention to the beauty of human movement and his comments allude to the empowering capacity of running:

Running is the opposite of being still. If you think about death as being completely still and movement as a sign of life, then the fastest movement possible is the biggest sign of life. So running fast is like the exact opposite of death—it's an example of aliveness. (Singh, 2008)



Marnix de Nijs, *RunMotherfuckerRun*, 2001-13. Image courtesy the artist.

The architectural spaces of the works in Sydney and London cited above imposed limitations on the capacity to experiment with fast-paced and participatory art projects. *Running the City* sought to provide alternative, public space contexts for running-based works. It brought together the work of international artists Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Marnix de Nijs and MAP Office. Premised on the proposition that running heightens engagement with place, the exhibition explored the use of the human body to articulate through running new ways of mapping physical space. It played on the relationship of virtual to real space, exploring how participant empowerment encourages the circumvention of physical and social boundaries. Examining human movement through the urban environment, collectively works in the exhibition addressed the psycho-physical dynamics of our inhabitation and utilisation of city spaces. In contrast to Hatsushiba's work, which is fundamentally a performance that's

recorded for viewing in an exhibition context, Marnix de Nijs's *Run Motherfucker Run* requires visitors to interact with the artwork by mounting an oversized treadmill and running (quite fast). The faster participants run, the faster and more dynamic the image becomes. De Nijs, a Dutch installation and new media artist, has been a pioneer in researching the experimental use of media and technologies in art, critically examining their impact on contemporary society and human perception. His interactive installations use imagery, sound and movement to reflect on technology's ability to influence communication and cultural change. Incorporating recorded data and responsive imagery, *Run Motherfucker Run* is an immersive, large-scale video projection in which participants experience running through a city of empty streets, deserted intersections and ominous alleyways, and finding unexpected obstacles to throw them off course. Running on a five metre long treadmill set in front of a four-by-eight-metre screen, visitors inhabited a mix of film and 3D imagery. The distance run on the treadmill's conveyor belt is the same distance covered in the virtual city on screen. By quickening the pace, the acceleration of the belt as well as the speed of the image increases and, depending on running behaviour and the directional choices, the progress of the film is determined. It is an interactive film with an atmosphere somewhere between a thriller chase and urban horror movie.

While *Run Motherfucker Run* required a degree of choice by the viewer—by moving to the left or right side of the treadmill the filmic location altered—ultimately the artist controlled the visual experience. There were more moving scenes incorporated into the work than any one participant could “visit”, but each viewer-runner's experience of place was limited to those already explored, filmed and uploaded by de Nijs. In order to test the thesis that running is an effective device for engagement with place when participants are endowed with a sense of responsibility and ownership of the experience, two participatory artworks were curated in the public sphere as part of *Running the City*, produced in collaboration with Hong Kong artists MAP Office.⁵

Flash Run

The curatorial approach for *Running the City* was not to parachute artists in to respond to Sydney, but to bring together works in which artists explored their native or other known cities. Thus, the conversation within the exhibition spaces did not centre on different perceptions of one place, but on different methodologies that utilise running to investigate the meaning of place in a range of geographically diverse situations.

In contrast to de Nijs's work in which the possibilities for manoeuvrability were limited by the film sequences uploaded and the installation was sited in a gallery-type space, MAP Office's two participatory works, produced as part of the *Running the City* project, bestowed the viewer-participant with a sense of freedom and control.

Flash Run was a curated event for *Running the City*, conceived as an ephemeral performance of running in the city.⁶ Recalling Debord's belief that “Real individual fulfilment, which is also involved in the artistic experience that the situationists are discovering, entails the collective takeover of the world”, the project's “collective takeover” called for participants to start sprinting in the public space, beginning and ending at exactly the same time. (Debord, 1958) The chosen site was Town Hall Square, that being the symbolic centre of the City of the Sydney and a site that's also central to the City's 2030 vision for a pedestrianised city centre:

[Pedestrianisation] would transform George Street as the City's premier street, linking City Squares at Circular Quay, Town Hall and Central Station. The City Squares will be activity, service and civic hubs for the City Centre communities of residents, workers and visitors. The linked City Squares will be active public spaces for large public gatherings and celebrations with improved transport connections and interchange. (City of Sydney, 2008)

Flash Run enacted a psychogeographic temporary takeover that involved running as an alternative to walking. According to Lefebvre, perceived space is produced by its users—it is not an emptiness waiting to be filled. (Lefebvre, 1991) Strengthening their temporary claim



to the public space, participants were issued with 'uniforms' in the form of distinctive black and white "Flash Run" t-shirts. The t-shirts were designed as identifiers for three purposes: to empower the one hundred participants with a sense of proprietary over the space; to identify participants from the general public for filming purposes; and to dispel potential fear in others of there being a criminal or emergency situation unfolding. The latter possibility became apparent during the subsequent filming of *Runscape* (see next section), which revealed that while running is essentially a commonplace and harmless activity, it can be perceived as threatening when undertaken in densely populated urban centres, unless runners display the identifying accoutrements of sport or charity branding. Running through the city for any reason other than fitness jogging (suited in appropriate Lycra attire) or a charity run (with matching t-shirts) has the potential to instil fear, anger and confusion in other users of the public space. The curatorial strategy devised to minimise adverse responses was one of mimicry: the production of branded t-shirts that mimic the running attire of lunchtime joggers.



MAP Office t-shirt design for *Flash Run* participants, *Running the City*, Sydney, 2013.



Flash Run, Sydney, 2013. Image courtesy the artists.

The relationship between artists and curator in devising public art events such as this involves respect for each others' intellectual premise (the curator's exhibition and the artists' work), negotiation around what might, can and needs to be achieved, and, above all, a leap of faith. The role of the "curator-producer" of interactive art in the public sphere involves a delicate balancing act between observing local government regulations while organising an event premised on subverting if not the regulations themselves, the behavioural patterns that those regulations are designed to establish as normal. In producing *Flash Run*, for example, no City regulations could be found specifying that running in the city is prohibited, yet no one could be found running in the city unless they were clad as joggers or were running for a bus: that is, running is only accepted as the norm when it has a clearly advertised or articulated intent. Random running, as required in *Flash Run*, is consequently interpreted as an abnormal, suspicious and even threatening behaviour.



Flash Run, Sydney, 2013. Image courtesy the artists.

Flash Run used the human body, running, to map a defined urban space. Throughout MAP Office's practice, "the action of the body within the territory and the transformation of the body by the territory" is an underlying theme. (MAP Office, 2011, p. 22) The concept emerges from the artists' background as architects and their interest in subverting the expected spaces and routes through the city that are imposed top-down by local government agencies (city councils or shires). *Flash Run* is more specifically grounded in the situationist "constructed situation" idea of the experimental realisation of artistic energy in everyday settings.

While an event such as *Flash Run* appears from the outside as a spontaneous happen-

ing, the curator-producer is in fact involved in complex negotiations towards its realisation for months beforehand. Those transactions are largely bureaucratic in nature and in this instance included seeking advice from Council about potential safety hazards on anticipated running routes, public liability insurance and other forms of risk management, as well as contacting a range of public and cultural organisations to ascertain if other events were planned in the City centre on the same day, and if or how they might impact on the public art event. Weather conditions are less predictable, so contingency plans had to be put in place.

Flash Run revealed how runner participants subvert and appropriate space within given parameters of place and time. The work borrowed from the concept of the “flash mob”, in which people are organised to create an instant crowd at a particular place for a given time. *Flash Run* proposed new perspectives on the urban centre of Sydney, specifically the open spaces and streets around Town Hall and St Andrews Cathedral. No particular route or point of departure and arrival was specified; the only instruction was that participants start at exactly the same time and run as fast as they could in any direction within the defined area, finishing exactly four minutes and 33 seconds later.

4’33” is the title of experimental composer John Cage’s famous work of 1952. The length of time was determined by gauging the average length of a pop song, though is also the average length of time that a human mind will focus on a particular task before wandering. In Cage’s version, the orchestra is instructed to stop playing for exactly four minutes and 33 seconds. The score that’s heard is the sound of the everyday environment: shifting bodily movements, coughing, traffic—it changes each time the work is performed. Cage saw the randomness of sound as viable subject matter:

There is no such thing as silence. What they thought was silence, because they don’t know how to listen, was full of accidental sounds. You could hear the wind stirring outside during the first movement. During the second, raindrops began pattering the roof, and during the third the people themselves made all kinds of interesting sounds as they talked or walked out. (Kostelanetz, 2003, p. 70)

Just as Cage’s “composition” prompts alternative approaches to understanding sound, *Flash Run* prompted alternative approaches to the use of public space. For each runner participant, place was imagined differently: some followed the footpaths in a square around the area, some ran circles around and through the Cathedral, some zig-zagged across Town Hall Place and others ran through the underground railway station. While operating within the same broadly defined space—Town Hall and its immediate surrounds—the experiment proved the proposition that a sense of empowerment, in this case acquired through the activity of running, deepens engagement with place by fostering subversive and exploratory behaviours.

Runscape

Running in Ramallah has bound me to the place and set me against notions of space. Place is worn, freighted, complex. Space is seductive, abstract, dust-free. I’m running an actual place... (Mannes-Abbott, 2012, p. 94)

A project showing how running in the city encourages exploratory behaviour, that in turn leads to a deeper engagement with place, was also devised for a more focused group of runners. The second group was given relatively greater freedom, its runners instructed to choose their own routes and the duration of their participation. Within the area of the City’s defined future vision, runners could run wherever they liked for as long as they liked.⁷ MAP Office’s international series of *Runscape* projects deploy aspects of Parkour as a form of city mapping. In *Runscape*, performers run at high speed through urban centres, cutting through crowded thoroughfares as they determine alternative routes through the city. *Runscape—Hong Kong* (2011) is a fast-paced, high-energy video that explores a highly pedestrianized cityscape from an athlete’s viewpoint; *Runscape—Berlin* (2012) also represents the city from the athlete’s point of view, though in this case the athlete is not running in her home town and the routes taken were based on those in running sequences of films shot in Berlin.





Runscape plan, Sydney, 2013. Image courtesy the artists.

The Sydney *Runscape* was the first in the series to utilise a number of runners. It differed, too, from the earlier iterations in that the runners were not *being* filmed but *were* themselves filming, each one equipped with a Go-Pro (action) camera attached to the chest or forehead.⁸ The runners selected for the event over two days were local people who knew the city well. In consultation with the artists, it was decided to use the City of Sydney's 2030 blueprint as a starting point for planning the event. In terms of "curating" city spaces, the focus was on the George Street "spine" that is earmarked for iterative pedestrianisation (City of Sydney, 2008, p. 43).



Still from MAP Office, *Runscape—Hong Kong*, 2011. Image courtesy the artists.



Running the City installation view, MAP Office, *Runscape—Berlin*, 2012. Photo: F. Fenner



Runscape—Sydney running team, equipped with Go-Pro chest cameras, with MAP Office artists Laurent Guttierrez (left) and Valerie Portefaix (right). Sydney, 16 February 2013. Photo: F. Fenner.

Running is an activity associated with fitness and sport, as well as with cultural subversion (such as Parkour).⁹ Thus, the participant group chosen by the curator comprised a mix of athletes and art students. In the context of running through the city being perceived as a subversive act, and in the context of an orchestrated project such as *Runscape*, more risk-taking behaviour than walking is likely undertaken. The runner can get quickly in and quickly out of a situation, in contrast to the walker whose slower pace means confronting the consequences of their actions (such as running over café tables or accidentally into pedestrians). In other words, as the project demonstrated, because the runner can make a quick getaway, they will be more experimental in their navigation of the city.

In order to maximise potential for the video data to contain multi-faceted engagements with place, runners were selected based on their likely approach to the brief: unsurprisingly, the athletes had a relatively competitive approach, sometimes testing themselves against the clock or a co-runner; the art students adopted more meandering routes at a pace that allowed for exploration of the city's nooks and crannies. The curatorial role in producing the event was to identify participant-runners who would best respond to the artists' expectation that the work articulate new forms of engagement of place.



Runscape—Sydney, 2013. Image courtesy the artists.

Hal Foster warns that importing artists for a temporary project to provide an outsider's perspective on the nature of place can privilege the position of the mapper (the outside artist) over those (home based participants) that have a more intimate knowledge of the site. (Foster, 1996, p. 190) Heeding Foster's warning and cognisant that the artists are from Hong Kong, a curatorially imposed condition on the selection of runner-participants was that they were all from Sydney. It was anticipated that runner-participants would feel 'at home' and therefore have more confidence to fully embrace the artists' request to "do whatever you like".¹⁰ The expectation was that they would feel a proprietorial connection to place, which provided the confidence to make spontaneous deviations through malls and laneways, to challenge normal pedestrian traffic behaviour, and to engage in humorous, sometimes risk-taking antics. In the context of the curatorial research in this thesis, the involvement as curator-producer was an opportunity to explore the prism of home as an agent of deeper engagement with place. Thus, in

selecting the team of runners for *Runscape* it was crucial to the thesis that all were locals: that each knew Sydney 'like the back of their hand'. The rationale behind this requirement was the anticipation that in having prior knowledge and experience of the territory being mapped by the project, with a licence to be experimental participants would seek out alternative places to those they usually inhabit. Participant-runners were given free rein to explore and record their home-town on their terms. The artists' interest here is not place per se, but how people behave in place. As such, the decisions made by the runner-participants became the real content of the artwork.

Running in the city under the imprimatur of the project, the participants assumed a license to explore, to subvert expected behavioural structures in the city and discover new ways of inhabiting their "home ground". Where out-of-towners would have likely filmed iconic sites such as the Opera House or Harbour Bridge, the home team were (as hoped) curious to record what lies beyond and beneath the façade of the city that they already know so well. In contrast to the surrealists' psychogeographic mapping by walking of the outer suburbs of Paris (that is, of places unknown to the participants), the focus here was to provide not an alternative setting to the known and everyday, but an alternative mode of behaviour in the known and the everyday; to impose an alternative mode of behaviour (running instead of walking) onto the geographic context of a place known intimately by the participants. As anticipated, the runners largely avoided the streets and pavements that normally dictate one's route through the city, seeking out instead the liminal, intimate and secret spaces of the city.

The expectation that runners would seek out interstitial spaces of the city echoes

Bhabha's theory that a "third space" of engagement allows for "recognition of the interstitial, disjunctive spaces and signs crucial for the emergence of new historical subjects of the transnational phase of late capitalism." (Bhabha, 1994, p. 311)

The link between interstitial spaces and in-between cultural identity in the context of late capitalism is also made by Bourriaud. In his discussion of relational aesthetics, Bourriaud claims that a work of art, beyond its commercial imperative if it has one, is a "social interstice". He traces the term, substituted elsewhere in the thesis for "in-between" or "in-betweenness", to Marx who, he reminds us, used the word to describe trading communities that elude capitalist structures by bartering instead of exchanging monies: "The interstice is a space in human relations which fits more or less harmoniously and openly into the overall system, but suggests other trading possibilities than those in effect within this system." (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 16)

Bourriaud argues of interstitial spaces, in the context of relational art, that inhabitation of the interstices promotes a kind of *relational* communication between people that is ordinarily inhibited by urban planning and social structures. The interest in interstitial spaces in the planning of *Runscape* and *Flash Run*, in contrast to its interpretation by Bourriaud and Doherty, was not so much about its socialising capacity, but its capacity to deepen engagement between people and place. Further, this engagement was not 'relational' as such—it did not involve responding to or negotiating with others—but made possible a very individualised experience of place. Unlike common conceits of relational and participatory art, neither *Runscape* nor *Flash Run* had outcomes dictated or necessarily anticipated by the artists. The final point of difference between relational and other forms of participatory art is the demanding level of participation: participants had to run (not walk) and, in one of very few directives, they were encouraged to run fast, in whatever direction they chose. Peter Bengtsen has recently compared the experimental dimension of street and public art in the context of Debord:

Much in the vein of Guy Debord's concept of *dérive*, once a process of discovery is initiated, the interested spectator may come to see the street as a space which holds the potential for serendipitous encounters and profound aesthetic experiences. Unlike galleries and museums with their schedules and published programmes, there is no way to know what the street will hold on a given day. (Bengtsen, 2012, p. 77)



Runscape—Sydney, 2013, as exhibited in Running the City. Photo: F. Fenner.

In the case of *Runscape*, engagement with place occurs in two stages: by the participant filmographers who explore the city equipped with video cameras, and later by the exhibition visitors who view the film footage of the nooks and crannies of central Sydney that are commonly overlooked by city workers, shoppers and tourists as they go about their daily business. The footage from each of the Go-Pro cameras was edited, the final work, *Runscape—Sydney*, shown as part of the artists' *Runscape* installation in *Running the City*. The new work was shown on twelve television monitors arranged in a grid. It was accompanied by two earlier versions of the performance documentation, *Runscape—Berlin* and *Runscape—Hong Kong*. The relational aspect of this work is not to be found in the final outcome—its exhibition in the gallery space—but in its production. Here, artists and curators worked collaboratively to produce footage for the eventual film.

The relationship between artist, curator and participant in participatory practice such as these two running projects is interdependent and intertwined. Writing in his role as a participant in Anthony Johnson's durational work (involving a bus ride) created for *Iteration:Again*, curated in Tasmania by David Cross, Seán Kelly describes in layman's terms the ripple effect of the artist-curator collaboration:

On the bus I'd got to thinking about how we construct the world, how all relations, all collaborative conceits, originate in the imagination. The idea could have stayed inside the artist's mind but no, it is out in the world and constructing action in the lives of others. We are all implicated, David had an idea, gave that to Anthony who had an idea which gave to me and now I'm sitting on a bus in the rain and the better part of my brain is playing this game. We all act out of the brains of others. (Kelly, 2013, p. 50)

The concept of acting "out of the brains of others" has a historic precedent in the surrealist game, "The Exquisite Corpse", in which a partial idea is taken up and developed by the next participant, who in turn passes it to the next participant, and so on. The surrealist connection with these athletic mapping projects is not coincidental, given that it was the surrealists who invented the idea of walking as a form of psychogeographic mapping, a concept subsequently developed by Guy Debord and the situationists. Key to the situationists' concept of *dérive* was the lack of pathways: the idea was to get lost. In contemporary art, however, walking is a performative activity undertaken with navigational purpose. All manifestations of participatory projects involving physical engagement share a requirement of collaboration between artist, curator and participant:

In participatory practice, it is perhaps the artist who initiates something in the form of an object, idea, interaction, etc., but unleashes it to the influence of the many for further manipulation, engagement, etc. So the artist is the one who 'proposes' or instigates certain processes but the authorship is ultimately obscured—it occupies this important space of the "co-," where a work is partially made *with* and not *by*. (Reed & Goldenberg, 2008)

British conceptual artist David Goldenberg believes that it is very rare to find situations that provide an opportunity for an audience as participants to cross over from being mere consumers of ideas to engaging with the material setup, as was the basis of participation in *Flash Run* and, to a much greater extent, *Runscape—Sydney*. Goldenberg's theory of Post-Autonomy proposes the decline of Eurocentric autonomous authorship in favour of art projects that require for meaningfulness audience participation:

Critical to Post-Autonomy is participation as a methodology, which operates as a communicative glue within the art system, breaking down orthodox categories and hierarchies of artist, curator, institution, and audience... making transparent the setup, so the possibility exists for participants to actively take over the running of a project. (Reed & Goldenberg, 2008)



The two public sphere events organised as part of *Running the City* were entirely dependent on the participants' sense of empowerment and consequent exploratory engagement with the city. They were not "pretending" or "acting" out instructions from the artists or curator: they were actively engaging in the distinctive physical and psychical qualities of a place they know intimately.

The project encapsulated the academic institution's mission to apply its research in everyday life. By moving out of the university art museum into the places and spaces of the city, the research process was played out on a universally accessible platform of spectacle and participation. As Martin Creed explained in response to criticism that *Work #850* (performed at Tate) was elitist: "It's literally not pretentious because they are not pretending to run. They really are running." (Singh, 2008)



Endnotes

¹ *Running the City* was curated by the author, with the resulting exhibition presented at UNSW Art & Design as part of the 2013 International Symposium of Electronic Arts. The project was an outcome of a major ARC Linkage research project between UNSW's National Institute for Experimental Arts and the City of Sydney, *Curating Cities*. Chief researchers were the author and Professors Jill Bennett and Richard Goodwin. See: <http://curatingcities.org/about-us/>

² "If the search for place-bound identity in an undifferentiated sea of abstract, homogenized, and fragmented space of late capitalism is one characteristic of the postmodern condition, then the expanded efforts to rethink the specificity of the art-site relationship can be viewed as both a compensatory symptom and critical resistance to such conditions". Kwon, M. (2002). *One Place After Another: site-specific art and locational identity*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, p. 8.

³ The work was included in "The space between us: Anne Landa Award for video and new media arts", Art Gallery of NSW, 16 May–23 July, 2013.

⁴ The aptly named Bolt set new world records in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay.

⁵ Laurent Gutierrez and Valerie Portefaix collaborate under the name MAP Office on transdisciplinary projects that focus on physical and imaginary territories. Often incorporating humour, games and fiction, Gutierrez and Portefaix create ideas and interventions that critique the cultural parameters of urban, environmental and political spaces. Their projects are multi-faceted, combining video, photography, performance, drawing, and literary and theoretical texts to devise platforms for dissecting the methods of how we occupy and disrupt space.

⁶ *Flash Run* was filmed with intended use in subsequent exhibition contexts.

⁷ "Danish architect Jan Gehl, in his 2008 study, 'Public Spaces, Public Life Sydney', proposed transforming George Street from a clogged, noisy street to a central north-south spine for pedestrians and public transport linking three major public gathering places. The idea has been developed as part of the 2030 Vision." City of Sydney. (2008). *Sustainable Sydney 2030: The Vision*. Sydney: City of Sydney, p. 142.

⁸ *Runscape—Sydney* was filmed in Sydney's CBD on the weekend of 16 and 17 February, 2013.

⁹ *Parkour* is an activity or sport articulated in the early twenty-first century and defined by moving rapidly through urban spaces, typically by running in a risk-taking, dangerous manner. Running in the city is perceived as a threatening activity because of its association with crime (e.g. running from a crime scene).

¹⁰ Road safety instructions were issued prior to each day's filming.



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