ANFRACTUOUS:
an exploration of creative practice

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work that is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the exegesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official research program; and any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.
Summary

How do we engage with the space of creative practice?

This research project has explored ways in which people make meaning of space within the creative process. Originating with questions on the nature of the studio and its relationship to studio practice and teaching, there has been a specific focus within the study on the use of reflection within the creative process.

In this project the labyrinth has been selected as the model and the metaphor for conceptualising the space of creativity, particularly the space of the studio and studio practice. Labyrinths have two main forms: the maze that has multiple entrances and paths; and the labyrinth, which consists of a single winding path that leads to a centre/goal, with the only exit being via that same path. Whereas the maze has been primarily used for fun, games and to symbolise complexity, confusion or punishment, the labyrinth has been used for religious or spiritual ceremonies and was designed for reflection and transformation. This research explores this labyrinth of reflective practice.
This project is a topographic exploration of the anfractuous experience of creative practice as conceived through labyrinthine space. Theoretically, and in practice, this is an exploration of the experience of located creative practice, articulated as the studio (a working space of creativity) and creative practice. As the narrative of this research evolves within this text, I will discuss and present the evolution of my understanding of the ‘space of the studio’ and the idea of the labyrinth and the labyrinthine. Building on my findings from the research process and the work of key thinkers in the discourses of creativity, reflective practice, embodiment, and space and place, I arrived at my conclusion that when attempting to make meaning of located creative practice, it is not labyrinthine space that we seek to understand but rather labyrinthine place.
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Introduction
This exegesis tells the story of my inquiry into the phenomenon of reflection and creativity as related to labyrinthine space. The project incorporates studio practice, landscape installations and phenomenological questioning. This text outlines the evolution of my exploration of the research topic through the various stages of the project; particularly the use of reflection and the experience of space within creative practice. In addition to this text, project artefacts and visual documentation have been collated on DVD, and together with the final installations and this exegesis form my final submission for this doctorate by project.

The labyrinth has been selected as the model and the metaphor for conceptualising the space of creativity, particularly the space of the studio and studio practice. Labyrinths have two main forms: the **maze** that has multiple entrances and paths; and the **labyrinth**, which consists of a single winding path that leads to a centre/goal, with the only exit being via that same path. Whereas the maze has been primarily used for fun, games and to symbolise complexity, confusion or punishment, the labyrinth has been used for religious or spiritual ceremonies and was designed for reflection and transformation. This research explores this labyrinth of reflective practice.
Background

The work presented here evolved from my initial research into the potential relationship between art and design studio-based practice and new technologies. Within my academic work I was exploring and using online technologies for teaching. During the late 1990s significant research was being undertaken on the potential of new communication technologies in the creation of learning environments with an emphasis on text based teaching.
and learning (Coyne 1995, Laurillard 1993, Harasim 1990). The application of new technologies to the delivery of theoretical courses was relatively easy to envisage because of their dominant use of text and static image environments. As a studio-based teacher and practitioner, I became interested in the possibilities for using communication technology with its greater emphasis on images, objects and interaction, within the studio-working environment. In 1998, little research was being undertaken in this area. Many of the art or design courses focused on information delivery in static ‘step by step’ delivery. There were some interesting explorations of interactive or collaborative workspaces by Rick Bennett at the University of New South Wales and Thomas Kavan at the University of Hong Kong, but these were the exceptions rather than the rule. As I started on this course of consideration, I first had to clarify what the studio and studio practice were. Initially, the questions pertaining to these issues included:

What is the nature of studio practice and studio teaching?
What does this mean for creativity, creative solutions and actions?

However, as the study began to take form, I became increasingly unsure about what studio practice actually was. As I reflected on my own practice, spoke to other professionals and referred to the literature, there seemed to be much ambiguity about the studio environment and practitioner’s experience and use of it. On the other hand the terms reflection and collaboration were used repeatedly to describe what took place in the studio
and how people experienced it. At the same time however, there were similarities and differences in various accounts and descriptions and I still wasn’t sure what the term or the experience meant. Subsequently, new questions evolved:

What does the studio look, feel or sound like?
What does it taste like? How does it nourish the individual?

What is the role of reflection in creative practice?
Where does creativity happen?
And, who am I, the creator when I am there?
Where or what is physically and spatially there?
Is there a model for THERE?

As I tried to make sense of the experience and space of the studio as a site for creativity, I discovered the concept of the labyrinth and the labyrinthine. The labyrinth seemed to be a potential means for answering or at least conceptualising the questions that had arisen regarding space, the creative process and practice. As I designed the project, the following elements were identified as being central to this inquiry.
The Elements

The four elements of creative process, reflection, kineasthetic engagement and labyrinthine space have been found to be key conceptual orientations. Individually, and/or in combination, they contribute to, and represent, my understanding of the anfractuous path of creativity, from nothing or faint inspiration to subsequent creative outcome. This understanding evolved from my initial research into the nature of the studio and studio practice. For this research project, the following definitions have framed the focus of the research:


Reflection within this context is used to describe the act of contemplation, of focusing or considering.
Kineasthetic engagement works beyond the mind. It alludes to our ability to encounter and interact with the labyrinthine space, in a state of awareness through either the senses and/or movement.

Labyrinthine space is at once actual and metaphoric. It is not simply a ‘Labyrinth’. It references labyrinth as landscape, structure and pattern. It might be literary (as in the works of Borges (1998, 2000)), or it might be physical such as the church labyrinth at Chartres. Labyrinthine space, for the purpose of this research, is a ‘space’ that is designed to challenge and enable the viewer or participant to move or travel physically, conceptually or intellectually within a reflective context.
The Research Questions

The following research questions have framed this project. They have evolved from my initial thoughts and questioning of the space and experience of the studio and creative practice. Whether I was reflecting on my own practice, my observations of the experiences of the participants or the broader literature; I have used them to contextualise and critique my reflections on what I was coming to know.

They were also the basis for the questions used within the conversations with the research participants at the two key installations.

How do creative practitioners make meaning of engaging with labyrinthine space?

How does this vary according to different contexts, media and the individuals’ needs and practices?

How do creative practitioners experience the process/act of reflection, and how does this relate to space and context?

How might kineasthetic engagement with labyrinthine space influence the act of reflection?

How might creative practitioners make connections between labyrinthine space, reflection and the creative process within creative practice?
Why?

There are two important ‘why’ questions related to the design of this project. These are:

Why the labyrinth?

Why do this research?

Many have turned to the labyrinth in their efforts to make meaning of the abstraction of experience. Reference to the labyrinth and the labyrinthine can be found in science, humanities and the arts; for example in the works of Engburg (2003), Lonegran (2001), Borges (2000 & 1998), Kern (2000), Attali (1999), Irvine & Ver Steef (1999), Reed Doob (1990), Tafuri (1987) and Robertson (1963). Often the focus within these labyrinthine discussions is on the maze, with reference to the structure that imprisoned Theseus’s Minotaur (Lonegran 2001, Kern 2000, Attali 1999, Reed Doob 1990). This research focuses on what some suggest is the pattern of Ariadne’s golden thread (Lonegran 2001). This is the labyrinth as represented by a single circuitous path that leads towards a central space. The walker must retrace this path in order to leave. This form of the labyrinth does not distract with tricks and dead ends like the maze. It assumes that all directions and actions are a part of a process.
This form of the labyrinth has been found across cultures and dates back to
pre-historic times (Lonegran 2001, Kern 2000). Its most noted forms arise
from ancient Crete 7-cycle labyrinth and the medieval church labyrinth
particularly Chartres Cathedral; within the literature there is also reference to
the landscape Turf Labyrinths of England and northern Europe dating back to
the 15th century and on. My rationale for this choice of labyrinth is that its
linear, circuitous form and its use as a space for reflection and contemplation
could be understood or used as a model for creativity and the creative
process. Of particular interest is the potential similarity between the two (the
creative process and the labyrinth), as represented through there being a
central goal that is reached via a seemingly random path, and like achieving
creative resolution, there is a process of clarifying and refining once the main
idea has been found. (In the labyrinth this is represented through the return
walk along the same path). In this respect the potential relationship between
the labyrinth and creativity can be interpreted as both a process (a model for
how something occurs) and a location (a site for creative exploration).
The Studio

The term ‘the studio’ is used to describe both a process and a location; this is what creative practitioners often refer to as studio practice. The studio as a space can be both actual and virtual. It is designed to enhance, challenge and facilitate creative exploration and outcome. In response to this lack of clarity about what the studio is, and its relationship to the creative process, I sought to find another structure that could facilitate creativity in action. I wanted to identify a space that could model what the studio is seen to do or be, thereby deepening understandings of what takes place in it.

Jacques Attali (1999) presents the labyrinth as a frequently used model or metaphor to describe winding or layered processes, as evidenced in the language of literature, town planning and new technologies. In this context, the labyrinth can be seen as a means for conceiving and articulating complexity. Penelope Reed Doob refers to this as the ‘idea of the labyrinth’ (1990, p. 2). Her ‘idea’ is the interpretation of the labyrinth as something more or other than a tangible object or an explanatory device. It is to understand the labyrinth as a concept that ‘encompasses both formal principles… and (has) habitual, culturally shared and transmitted significance’ (ibid). These formal principles, according to Reed Doob, are the ‘dualities of artistry vs. chaos, order vs. confusion, admirable complexity vs. moral duplicity,’ and they are present in
all forms of the labyrinth (Reed Doob 1990, p. 5). Within this inquiry I explore how these dualities of the labyrinth relate to the complexities of studio practice and creative process.

**Labyrinths: meditation and reflection**

The labyrinth’s use as a tool for reflection and transformation was particularly useful for this research (an exploration of reflection and creativity). It provides a structure around which discussion and exploration of ‘the idea of the studio’ can take place. Similarities were identified in relation to the language and expectations of engagement with the space of the labyrinth or creative practice and the studio. Early searches of the literature on labyrinths and my initial conversations with colleagues about the experience of creativity and studio practice, revealed similarities between creativity as a process of transformation, and reflection as tool for realisation and change. Finally these were ambiguous terms and connections and they sparked my desire to know more about the space and experience of creative practice and the labyrinth.

The historical use of the labyrinth as a physical space of contemplation leading to action was also influential in its selection. This aspect of the labyrinth and the many ways that contemplation occurs (e.g. walking,
tracing, crawling or praying) aligned with my interest in the role and potential of physical engagement in relation to creativity. The creative process does not occur in the mind alone. As a process of sense making and communication it draws on our many ways of perceiving and being in the world. As explored by Merleau-Ponty (1964), our perception of and interaction with the world is an individual, holistic and kinaesthetic act. It is through our senses that we perceive and we create knowledge. According to him, ‘A being capable of sense-experience… could have no other way of knowing’ (Merleau-Ponty 1964, p. 15). This research considers whether the same may be said of the way in which people experience the act of creation.

The fundamental reason for undertaking this research is my desire to understand the experience of creative practice and its relationship to the studio. Through this project, I wish to contribute to the contemporary discourse surrounding creative practice as it relates to space, the body, creativity and the creative process. I have done this through an exploration of my own creative practice and the practice of others.

This research evolved from my uncertainty as to what is meant by the term the ‘studio’, particularly as it relates to creative practice. The studio is a term that is used broadly within the art and design disciplines. It is used to describe a place of work, creation or teaching. It can also be used to describe an approach to working or creating i.e. to have a studio-practice. Often the
studio as a location is a shared space and, at times, it is a collaborative space. Schön refers to the studio as a place of action and problem solving, where the implicit is made explicit, and in educational terms it is ‘an exemplar for learning-by-doing’ (1985, p. 6). My intention in this research is to investigate these terms and make them tangible as they relate to the experience of creating by doing, particularly by creative practitioners.

Much of the research undertaken on the creative process is done from the outside or, in retrospect, through evaluation and analysis of the ‘great creators.’ According to Csikszentmihalyi (1996), these are the easy ones to research and reference as their work is situated in the public domain. As a study informed by studio practice and phenomenology, this project seeks to understand and make meaning of the experience of the ‘personally creative’ (ibid, p. 25), through those who engage professionally in a creative practice. Through this process I aim to draw conclusions in relation to my questions and thereby contribute to the broader discourse of creativity and creative experience (van Manen 1997). As Merleau-Ponty (1993) argues, it is the voices and reflections of artists and designers, and their descriptions of how they make meaning of their processes, that provides the real basis for new developments. The intention of this research is to provide real information that may inform future practice and developments.

This research project has been designed around three key areas of action and focus: the exploration of creative practice, the construction of
labyrinthine installations and the participation of others within these environments. They are inter-connected and have facilitated the research process, the findings and the final project outcome.

Firstly there was the exploration of creative practice, what it means and how it is experienced. A significant component of this discovery has been the critical reflection on my own practice and my experience of the creative process and this project. Only then was I able to consider the broader implications of the research questions. As I have considered the research elements and subsequent questions in relation to the participants and the broader literature, I have also considered them in relation to myself, and the manner in which I make meaning of the creative process. I describe my practice as multi-disciplinary; incorporating art, design, fashion, education and workplace research in both practice and theory. I am an academic and a maker of objects and ideas. This practice was explored through reflection and action, through observation and making. This has been done in collaboration with others. This doctoral research project evidences the complexity of my practice through the hybrid nature of its context and methods, and the diverse voices and perspectives that inform it.

Secondly there was the construction of physical labyrinthine spaces. Through their design and construction these installations were used to explore the research elements. They were a manifestation of my practice and
the core of this research. My intention through their creation was to engage and challenge the participants in the research elements. I did this through the facilitation of experience and subsequent reflection. The two major installations of the research were modeled on the fundamental features of curvilinear labyrinths and were designed to accentuate features (actual and metaphorical) of the particular environments and locations of their construction. The two locations explored within the project were the forest and the desert. The relationship between these two installations is one of deepening or thickening of knowledge. These were not just data collecting exercises that were collated and evaluated at the end (though this was a part of the process). Knowledge and realisations were built upon or dug into and then applied to the next phase of the project. This was a methodology of entering into the labyrinth and then finding my way out.

Thirdly the research was participatory. A select group of participants (15), the majority of whom were actively involved in either the creative arts or design, were invited to interact with the installation space(s). My intention in working with others in the research process was to broaden my understanding of the creative experience and creative practice. Going back to the original impetus for the work - to understand the nature of the personal and shared experience of the studio - it seemed necessary to work with others, to explore and record how they made sense of the modeling of the labyrinth within the creative process in practice.
The participants were advised of the nature of my research and what I was seeking to understand. They were asked to consider and approach the labyrinth installations with this in mind. I invited them to make use of the spaces as often and in any way that suited them, and I encouraged them to document their experiences and any thoughts or concepts that arose as a result. We then engaged in a process of phenomenological questioning and discussion where the participants were encouraged to explain how they made meaning of the spaces and how this related to their own creative process.

The Project Artefacts

This research has in many ways been experiential, and it has involved a diverse range of methods. These include: two-large scale landscape installations, numerous journeys, conversations and reflections, which have been combined with the literature and thoughts of a diverse range of voices and disciplines.
The outcome of the research reflects the complexity of the project and the diversity of my practice.

The artefacts of this process presented for examination are:

The exegesis: a textual and visual exploration and documentation of the research process, the literature, the methodology, the discoveries and subsequent conclusions.

Image DVD: a digital compilation of the visual documentation of the installations.

Exhibition: an installation that explores the essence of what has come to be known through the research process. It is the final in the series of labyrinthine installations within the project. It is my comment and summation of what I have come to know via the project. However, unlike the other installations, the experience of the viewers remains personal and undocumented by the researcher.

The title of this research, Anfractuous, was a gift to me from a colleague. It is a real word (much to the disbelief of many) that we have forgotten or lost within modern language. Its definition is full of twists and turns, and expands to include ‘winding’ and ‘tortuous’. It seems an appropriate term by which to combine these apparently distant concepts – creative practice or process, the studio and the labyrinth. The twists and turns also refer to the evolving nature of knowledge within the project, the anfractuous path of discovery and
reflection. At times this path seemed logical and straight, but it would quickly turn or wind, seeming to fold back upon itself and a new discovery or insight was revealed.

This research is a topographic exploration of the anfractuous experience of creative practice as conceived through labyrinthine space. Theoretically, and in practice, this is an exploration of the experience of located creative practice, articulated as the studio (a working space of creativity) and creative practice. As the narrative of this research evolves within this text, I will discuss and present the evolution of my understanding of the ‘space of the studio’ and the idea of the labyrinth and the labyrinthine. Building on my findings from the research process and the work of key thinkers in the discourses of creativity, reflective practice, embodiment, and space and place, I arrived at my conclusion that when attempting to make meaning of located creative practice, it is not labyrinthine space that we seek to understand but rather labyrinthine place.
The Exegesis

This document has been designed to reflect the evolving nature of learning and discovery as elucidated by the project. It has been divided into five sections reflecting the various stages of the research project. It focuses on the exploration, the design and methods used and the implications of the findings in relation to the research questions.

The Design

This section outlines the research design through a discussion of the methodology that has informed my approach to the project and its relevance to the research outcomes and application. It includes an introduction to the methods that have been used in the project are expanded upon as they relate to two the installations later in the text.

The Labyrinth

The Labyrinth outlines the first phase of the research as explored through the landscape installation, Forest. At this stage of the research I focused on the literal labyrinth as understood as a pattern and form. I was interested in exploring the literal labyrinth as a space for reflection as well as its potential
relationship to the creative process. Within the installation design, I was also exploring the nature of the forest as a location, and the use of structural devices (the labyrinth) to control and contrive experience. Included in this section are transcripts from my conversations with the participants and images of their responses.

**Embodiment: the body in space**

The middle stage of the research focused on embodiment, the physical experience of transitioning through the labyrinth and the construction of the labyrinthine. In this section I outline my exploration of the body and its construction in space through the design response *Site for Transformation.* Returning to the labyrinth, I then discuss the experience of the body transitioning through space, particularly the practice of walking in relation to creativity and creative practice and then as the transformational act of pilgrimage. This is considered as it relates to space, the labyrinth and a metaphoric term for change and evolution in practice. Finally I present my transition to the labyrinthine according to my encounter with the labyrinth of Chartres Cathedral.
The Labyrinthine

The second landscape installation of the research was Desert. Through its design and interaction with the project participants, this installation was an exploration of the labyrinthine. Through the use of navigational devices and the act of noticing, this installation endeavoured to engage people and connect them with space, thereby constructing a sense of place. This section outlines the design and findings of this installation and event.

Anfractuous Place

Anfractuous Place is a summation of the research findings. It returns to the research question and the elements of the research and outlines what has become known as result of undertaking this research by project. Included in this discussion are outlines of the final two installations of the research, Trajectory and Anfractuous Place.
The Design
Situated within the traditions of studio-practice, this research project has drawn on diverse methods and methodologies in order to seek answers to the research questions about creative practice. Through critical engagement with the process and objects of my practice, I have sought to make meaning of the experience and creative process of others, particularly the 15 participants in the research. As Jarvis (1999) states, research undertaken with the intention of improving or deepening practice is a complex, subjective and highly individualistic scenario. In this research, I have endeavoured to integrate the subjective exploration of the personal with the collaborative exploration of others (the participants) in order to obtain some greater understanding that may relate to the general.

In, *The practice of practice; research in the medium of design*, Leon Van Schaik (2003) argues that when using the medium of practice as a methodology to gain mastery in some aspect of practice, respect for the medium, the process and the expertise of the practitioner is required. When combined with critical reflection on practice this increased awareness of practice deepens practice in application. Within this approach there is an integral relationship between experience and the advancement of practice. Van Schaik summarises this process as, ‘experience drives practice, and practice drives theory, which in turn affects experience’ (2003, p. 13). This action model proposes an evolving cycle and, perhaps, a spiral of continuous exploration.
This is a process that can be described as building upon and going within, that which is known and experienced in order to inform future action. Theory informs the process or inquiry, and the process in turn creates theory, which in turn informs practice. The outcome of the research is evident in its application to practice, which also furthers the research.
Van Shaik’s approach to design and practice as research is reminiscent of Schön’s (1983) evolution of reflective practice from ‘reflection-on-action’ (thinking back) to ‘reflection-in-action’ (being aware of reflection and documenting the process) and ‘reflection-through-action’ (becoming aware through action) (Mason 2002, p.13). In all three manifestations there is an acknowledgment of the tacit knowledge and expertise of the practitioner. There is an expectation that critical reflection facilitates greater awareness of practice that will be evidenced through actions, knowledge and outcomes. Subsequently, there will be a deepening or transformation of practice, which will in turn influence future actions. Ideally, this is not a ‘one off’ method of exploration. Instead, it becomes the practice of practice, a multi-cycled methodology of practice informed by reflection that is embedded in action. Argyris and Schön (1974) classify this as ‘double loop learning,’ and what we may interpret for this project as the multiple loops of practice.
In ‘The Practice of Everyday Life’, Michel de Certeau (1984) explores the concept of practice as a means of engaging with the activities of life. To practice is to act; it is a mode of engagement. De Certeau argues that to understand practice, is to engage with the distinctly individualistic ways of knowing, based on the premise that knowledge comes from and draws upon the personal in order to have meaning. He gives the example that to gain knowledge and interact with external texts, it is necessary for us (as individuals) to personalise, customise or mutate that knowledge into a form that has meaning for us, as we inhabit the space of the text.

‘The mutation makes text habitable, like a rented apartment. It transforms another person’s property into a space borrowed for a moment by a transient. Renters make comparable changes in an apartment they furnish with their acts and memories. In the same way the users of social codes turn them into metaphors and ellipses of their own quests.’ (de Certeau 1984, pp. xxi – xxii)

The researcher, in their search for meaning through the research process, is like the renter. They inhabit the space of the practice with all their tacit knowledge and expertise, and at the same time they engage with the object of the research from this informed perspective. Research based in practice is a rich, thick and often murky space of inquiry. This is Schön’s (1983) swamp of located reflective practice.
Mapping

This research is an exploration into located creative process (studio practice) as symbolised by the labyrinth. This was enabled through critical engagement with my own creative practice as experienced through making, mapping and reflection. These three are not a sequence of actions, rather they are the acts of my practice. They are more than the methods of information collection, they are the integrated means by which and through which I make sense of practice and explore experience.

To draw on Van Shaik’s inter-relationship between practice, experience and theory, this work has endeavored to map the relationships between the elements of the research as they are used and experienced within creative process. This has been considered in relation to theory and, in turn, has helped inform
practice and experience. There have been many layers, connections, signposts and souvenirs used for the journey and the subsequent map making. This is what this research has sought to do, to map out the elements of the research as they exist in space, in order to be able to read and relate to what is there.

As a methodology for working, mapping can be messy. There are times of great confusion, and as such it calls for an awareness of subtleties and possibilities. In constructing a map, we endeavour to make sense of the components or elements; we look for features of meaning and significance and we relate them to each other in space. We use the map and the mapping process to both conceive and capture the world around us bringing it into a tangible or ‘manageable’ form (King 1996). Maps reflect what we know and what we don’t (Lippard 1997). By tracking the evolution of maps, we are able
to see the evolution of our knowledge and our journey as a society. Some of
the earliest maps leave blanks or spaces of nothingness to reflect unknown
lands and locations, factors that aren’t yet known. Noble Wilford discusses the
ancient maps of the Babylonians and explains that, ‘What the Babylonians knew,
their property lines and city walls, they mapped with some attention to
accuracy; what they did not know, the lands beyond their own, they chose
either to ignore or to fabricate’ (Noble Wilford 2002, p. 11). The same can be
said of mapping as a method and methodology of practice and research.

In research, mapping can take the form of collecting and
recording, exploring and trialing or questioning and seeking new knowledge or
understanding. The features of these maps help us to locate ourselves, and the
research as we identify and construct possible relationships between the many
research components. For this project, I have endeavoured to map the
potential relationship between the four elements of reflection, creative process,
kinaesthetic engagement and labyrinthine space, particularly as they relate to
creative practice and the studio.

Initially the four elements sat separately, the research questions
occupied the central position seeking to link them as they sat within the
context of creative practice and the studio (Figure 4). Through the research
process, the relationships between the elements were identified. This exegesis is
one record of this mapping process including the discussion of the evolution of
my understanding of the relationships and the subsequent research findings. Figure 5 represents the movement and overlap of the elements as the research evolved and the relationships became apparent. The central dark area represents what might be thought of as the ultimate aim and answers of the research.

Fig 4 above left The four elements of the research surround the research question Fig 5 above centre As the research evolves and the elements overlap, the dark centre representing the research questions Fig 6 above right The central circle focuses on the many relationships within the research beyond the central point of equal overlap
As the research progressed and more became known, a circle was placed over the top of the intersecting areas, representing the many relationships within the research, those that are connected and those that stand-alone (Figure 6). As the research story unfolded, the size of the circles also changed.

Informed by Phenomenology

In its design and approach this project has been informed by phenomenology. This research draws particularly on phenomenology’s focus on the lived experience of knowledge and the making of meaning (Schwandt 2003, Bentz & Shapiro 1998, van Manen 1990). As explained by van Manen, ‘Lived meaning refers to the way that a person experiences and understands his or her world as real and meaningful’ (van Manen 1990, p. 183).

This research has explored the lived experience of creating and reflection as experienced in creative practice by creative practitioners; both the
action (creative practice) and the location of the action (the studio or work environment) are the lived experience of myself and the other participants in the study. The research design and interactions function to establish ‘clarity and authenticity through maintaining connectedness with the lived experience of the participant,’ (Barnacle 2001, p. vii), while at the same time acknowledging the artificiality of the events that have catalysed conversations and responses. In calling the installation events artificial, I acknowledge that they have been the constructs of my research and not the everyday lived activities of the participants. Yet their enactment transforms them into the lived experience of the participants. In the context of the research, the installations have been metaphors and methods for experiential engagement with the focus of the research. Through them I aimed to draw attention to the experiences of the everyday (what is present, what is missing, what we do and how we relate to the various aspects of the research) in order to evoke responses through conversation, text and artefacts.
Language of Inquiry

In phenomenological research emphasis is often placed on the experience of writing as a means for documenting and exploring lived experience. Writing is used as a means for gaining depths of awareness, seeking nuances and identifying themes in order to get to the essence of the phenomenon being researched (van Manen 1990). Van Manen explains that through writing we are able to gain ‘distance from the practical immediacy of lived life by being forgetful of its context’ (ibid, p. 128). We are able to separate ourselves from the experience that is the focus of our research and, as such, aim to gain some level of objectivity about our subjective experience. We may also refer to this process as gaining critical distance from the subject of our exploration. In this sense, writing can be the method by which we critically reflect on experience in order to work through the reflective cycles of research in action.

In research, the writing and the construction of text is complex and it can take many forms. Wolcott (2001) explains that in research there are two classifications of writing: the writing of the research process and the writing up. Wolcott’s is a conventional view of research and writing. For him the writing of the research in this context is the capturing of what takes place (data collection), and the writing up is the preparation of the thesis or the final report. Writing is a separate and objective act of recording. It does not embrace writing in its richness as a space for, or a source of, reflection as
presented by van Manen, nor does it allow for what Richardson (1997) identifies as the inter-subjectivity of the experience of language or the writing of it (p. 89), which is the creation of the research text.

The conventional perception of writing within research is often limited to the language of written text. The aim of the written text is to communicate and/or explain the research process and findings and it is written in the language of the discipline of the research. Beyond the languages of written text, there are also the languages of image, structure, movement and sound, or the temporal languages of performance and conversation; some of which may be captured in a medium such as a photo, sound or image recording. The textual accounts and records of this research project have included all of the forms listed above – written and oral text, images, structures, artefacts, dance and sound. These have been used within the exploration of the research topic, the questions and responses, and in the final presentation of the research outcome.

As researchers, there are many ways that we can engage with our discoveries. Van Manen argues that in phenomenological research and writing, the aim to is to write and to rewrite, with the intention of identifying themes within the text (van Manen 1990, p. 131). Our aim is to be ‘attentive to what is said in and through the words’ (ibid). It is to listen to the silences between the words, and to be aware of the nuances of the language, listening for how it is
said as much as what is said. The process may require the sequence of ‘rewriting (re-thinking, re-flecting, re-cognizing)’ in order to delve deeper (ibid). The same is true to differing degrees for all the languages of communication. Differences will depend on the intention, skill and context of the work: for example, the text may be a spontaneous response or it may be the outcome of reflection, and it may be a worked and reworked text of precise communication. In all cases, whether we are the author or the reader, our experience will be informed by what we bring to it, including our tacit knowledge, bias, expectations and skills.
Writing and Reading

Mikel Dufrenne (1973) argues that there are two languages of communication in relation to the meaning of objects of creation. There is the meaning/intention of the creator and the meaning/experience of the viewer(s) or reader(s). These are separate views and they are inter-connected. The artist/creator creates the work out of a desire to explore or manifest an idea or concept, and they do so knowing that others will interact with it and understand it from their own unique or specific perspective. Within this pluralistic dialogue the creator cannot completely control what the other sees in the work, for it will always be biased by the performance of the viewing, the context of the viewing and the openness and lived experience of the viewer who is engaging with the work. It is a dialogue bound by the possibilities and limitations of interaction between two or more components (Dufrenne 1973, p.244).

In this research, I have engaged in this conversation between object and viewer through multiple forms of text and with multiple authors. There has been my text, the text of others and then our shared text. I have engaged with, considered and revisited these texts which relate to the broader investigation of the research.
As part of the research, I have constructed installations and invited others to experience and then respond to them through conversation, text and/or artefact. Once all the data was collected, I then went through a process of working with the feedback and responses, delving into the layers of experience and meaning and comparing the texts (transcripts and journal entries) with observations and the artefacts. My aim was to gain some greater understanding of the research questions and to discover how I, and others, made meaning of the research experience. This was an evolving process. As themes or issues arose at one stage of the project, they then formed the basis for the next act or exploration. Throughout the process, there was an awareness and acknowledgment on my part, of the complexity of meanings and of the importance of the silences in the texts. I sought out the similarities and the differences between what was said, written in journals and made.
The research design for this project was both planned and emergent. It is what Maxwell describes as an ‘interactive model, it does have a definite structure... it is an interconnected and flexible structure’ (1996, p.3). I initially set out with a clear proposal of what I wanted to do and know. I had my research questions, the initial literature and a clearly defined timeline. Within six-months this had changed. New information, realizations and opportunities had emerged. The design and the methods for undertaking the research changed, thereby signifying the organic and responsive nature of studio practice.

In particular, this research has been strongly informed by the locations of the installations, study tours, presentations and travel. The ordered appearance of my original linear maps and timelines that were defined by dates
evolved into an anfractuous path of discovery dominated by locations. The early mind maps used to help define what the research could be, more closely resembled the way that the project evolved. Within this account of the research, key events have been located in time and marked by place names. They appear sequentially and thematically, yet the application of reflection in practice means that influence and understanding may relate to both the future and the past.

This non-linear approach to research is what Terrence Rosenberg (2003, p.3) describes as research that is ‘centrifugally’ driven. This is research and practice that ‘explores possibilities’, where the ‘aims are to expand and develop opportunities,’ and the ‘impulse is not towards certainty but to escape it’ (ibid). This research project has in part embraced this perspective. It has been guided by a clear set of research questions and at the same time has been responsive to opportunities, insights and connections within the findings, as the project has unfolded.
Methods

In undertaking this research, a diverse range of methods has been used to explore the research questions. These methods have been the acts of the research and they reflect the methodologies of studio-practice and phenomenology. ‘Studio-practice,’ like mapping, is a term that can be used as both a method and methodology, it can be an action and an approach to action. In this project, I have embraced it as both. The following are descriptions of the key methods used in the project.
Making

‘Making’ can be understood as a method of practice and research. Making is a component of creation and creating. In this research, I have explored ‘making’ as an aspect of creative process and practice. Within the context of this research project and my practice, ‘making’ refers to the means by and through which we construct, whether it is the construction of knowledge, ideas or objects. This has included the making of spaces and particularly the installations. I have explored ‘making’ as a means for conceptualizing ideas and relationships in the research through the creation of images and objects.

In working with the other participants, I have also encouraged or facilitated them in using making as a means of exploring the spaces, themes and their own practice, which is particularly evidenced in the installation, Desert. This process has manifested itself in images, objects, song, journals and dance, which are presented as part of the discussion of this research.

Sculpture is at the origin of my practice; the making of objects and spaces, and exploring their relationships, is how I make sense of lived experience and how I endeavour to communicate this. This aspect of my practice and sense making has informed and influenced the focus and design of the research, particularly my interest in space and my desire to map and make sense of our relationship to it.
The Installations

Within this research project the installations have been the main manifestations of the acts of making, mapping and reflection. They have been the prime sources of data and experience, and they have provided the context for working with the participants. Their design and construction has been the vehicle for exploring the acts of making and experiencing. As an exploration through practice of the phenomenon of reflection in labyrinthine space, it seemed appropriate to construct environments rather than to just talk, read and imagine what the potential relationship might be; building the installations and inviting others to engage with them enabled this to be a sensorial and experiential investigation.

The selection of the two locations for the installations, the forest and the desert will be outlined in the following sections, *The Labyrinth* and *The Labyrinthine*. The decision to construct landscape installations as models for exploring the space of the studio was based on my desire to work with environments that were free from constraints of similarities (for example an internal working space), so that I could draw attention to features and conceptions of space that abstractedly refer to aspects of the studio and creative practice (containment, expansive space, randomness, physical challenge and the senses). As argued by 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’. For this research, this has been the role of the landscape installations; they have been tools for facilitating language and reflection and the context for the discussion and consideration of the themes and questions by the participants and I.

Full details of each of the events, including details of the participants, the design and what took place, will be expanded upon as they are referred to within this exegesis.

The Participants

A significant component of this research has been my engagement with the creative practices of others; the ‘others’ being the 15 participants in the project. The participants are a selection of creative professionals, with the majority
having a professional art or design practice. Lists of those who have participated and their background are outlined in the installation descriptions. Some participants attended both installations. This was optional and subject to their ability to travel to the respective locations.

Traditionally within research, the identity of participants or contributors is withheld. Pseudonyms are used to identify the voices of the contributors. With this project I have chosen not to do so and all participants agreed to be named and identified. My rationale stems from the authenticity, connection and recognition of the work that the others bring to project. Failing to identify them seems to be a denial of their contributions.

The visual nature of the work has also called for extensive documentation to be done. This has taken the form of:

Visual diaries and journals
Photographs, slides and videos
Large-scale maps and diagrams
Mementos and souvenirs
Artefacts and objects created in response to the research

These are referenced and represented within this text and in the final presentation of the work.
Reading

The term ‘reading’ has many interpretations, from the reading of a space or a situation to the reading of literature or artefacts. In this research, I have engaged in extensive reading: the reading of the locations of installations and encounters and the reading of literature. The four elements of the research draw on diverse bodies of knowledge and I have read broadly as a result. I have engaged with the literature as a means by which to gain further knowledge, clarity and context for my work.

The literature that has informed the research has been diverse. In addition to texts on labyrinths (including historical, cultural, religious and new age applications), references have been drawn from the disciplines of reflective practice, geography, philosophy, cultural theory, fashion theory, creative practice, creativity, design theory, aesthetics, phenomenology, education and adult learning and landscape design. Within this text the literature and other references are referred to as they relate to the evolution of thinking and observing and the subsequent outcomes of the project.
Time and Distance

As I write this text, I draw on the many artefacts and records of the research. I now construct the text, with the benefit of distance and hindsight. Each of these events occurred in their particular place and time and others have occurred since. I have had many conversations, I have read and reflected. As such I cannot say that what is apparent to me now is what I knew then. I was not always able to see the links and the evolution of ideas and concepts as they occurred. At times I had to trust that things felt right and to pursue them with a sense of the unknown. Through reflection and distance, I have been able to map out the vista and find the hidden details.
The Labyrinth
The early focus of this research was on the literal labyrinth, which can be defined or described as a path, pattern or structure. I was exploring the history and the design of the labyrinth pattern and its cultural and historical meanings. I delved into diverse texts and interpretations of the labyrinth, exploring different traditions and perspectives, including the scholarly and the popularist. Of particular interest to me was the physical nature of the labyrinth as a space, and its use in ceremony and meditation.

What did, and what could, the labyrinth look like, and how is it used?

The traditional western or medieval labyrinth consists of two components: the wall and the path. The wall is the line that draws or marks the pattern, and the path is the space between, the space that we traverse as we move through the labyrinth (Attali 1999).

![The labyrinth path and wall](image_url)
Many speak of, or refer to, the labyrinth as a path or pathway. This is the labyrinth as a means of navigation, of mapping our way through a space or a context (Reed Doob 1990, p. 204). This labyrinthine path is usually both linear and circuitous with the path ‘circling back and forth’ (ibid). It has only one entrance and one centre (or goal as it is called), and to exit you walk back the way that you came. This winding nature of the space creates a sense of confusion for the walker. The person who is engaged with the labyrinth has a sense that they began where they ended and ended where they began. The seemingly random winding nature of the path creates an illusion of many options, leaving the walker with a sense of many paths and possible centres or ends. This indirect path can leave us feeling that we are not ‘in control’ of where we are within the labyrinth. In reality, this is the illusion of the labyrinth. Our sense of confusion is but our interpretation of our experience, for we are in fact walking a single path that follows a set or devised pattern. There is only one way in and out.

Fig 9 Unraveling the labyrinth
During the early stages of the research, I walked as many labyrinths as possible. My intention was to gain a sense of what it was like to be inside one; to explore my responses and interpretation of the space and its use and to observe others as they did the same. I was fascinated by our ability to be confused in the labyrinth even when we know what it is and how the path meanders.

Commonly, the labyrinth used for meditation or reflection is a floor pattern, a representation of a traditional three, five, seven or twelve-cycle pattern (Kern 2000). It may be a permanent or temporary structure. Recently there has been an increase in the use of temporary labyrinths within church, community and other events focused specifically on reflection and mindfulness (Curry & Houston 2000, Westbury 2001). In these situations the design is painted on cloth or made from some other temporary material that is appropriate to the location and focus of its use. Depending on the size and location of the installation, walkers are usually able to stand away from the labyrinth and observe its twisting path that leads in and out of the centre. As I undertook my own walks and heard and read the accounts of other people’s experiences, I observed that there was much confusion about its structure. Even though we know what a labyrinth looks like, when we are in one we can still be confronted by the convolutions of its path. I came to realize that engaging with the labyrinth is a process of negotiation between trust and control. You can either trust the path you walk or try to maintain control.
For example, by placing yourself in relation to a point of reference in the labyrinth such as its centre, the entrance or a point outside of it, you can endeavour to navigate your way through the pattern to the centre and out again. Focusing on your location along the labyrinth path is one way of trying to retain control over your experience of the space and the walk.
In designing the first installation, I decided to pursue this aspect of confusion, disorientation and control as related to the labyrinth. It seemed to mirror how I understood and experienced the creative process and its application. Although in a project we may have a clear goal to work towards,
there are times within the process that we have no idea of where we are or where the project is headed. In the design of the installation, I wanted to heighten this sense of uncertainty and to limit 'the view ahead' for the participants. There are a number of reasons for doing so. Firstly, like the creative process we don’t always know what lies ahead. Secondly, I was conscious that I was going to be working with a group of participants and that the presence of others in confined spaces and experiences can be distracting. It is easy to fall into the trap of watching others and subsequently forget about our own experience or actions. Finally, I wanted to push people outside of their comfort zones and encourage them to consider alternate ways and possibilities of viewing things. This could be achieved by increasing their physical sense of being in the labyrinth.

Consequently, drawing on all that I had experienced, read and observed, I decided to elevate the labyrinth from being just a flat pattern on a floor and give it real walls to guide the walker along the path and, at the same time, block or distort the view. This design feature was the key focus of the first installation.
The forest as location

... travellers who, finding themselves lost in a forest, ought not to wander this way and that, or, what is worse remain in one place, but ought always to walk as straight a line as they can in one direction and not change course for feeble reason, even if at the outset it was perhaps only chance that made them choose it; for by this means, if they are not going where they wish, they will finally arrive at least somewhere where they will be better off than in the middle of the forest.

(Descartes, in Harrison 1992, p. 110)

In locating the first labyrinth within a forest with its tall trees and random sense of order, mirrored the aspects of the labyrinth that I wanted to explore. I wanted to draw on the symbolic nature of the forest as a mystical space and the home of many childhood stories. The forest is often presented as a place of the unknown and uncertain; the wild environment that
is not controlled by civilised human development (Harrison 1992). In the forest we can rarely see the horizon, and when we do it is usually when we look out from the forest to clearings and other places. It is difficult to heed Descartes’ advice and to walk in a straight line – the line of reason and certainty across the forest. The apparent sameness confuses us. It is easy to meander and find oneself rambling on circuitous paths through and around the trees, always glimpsing potential paths ahead. To locate ourselves within the forest we must concentrate in the same way that we do within the labyrinth.

Harrison (1992) explores the nature of the forest in depth and speculates on its cultural significance. ‘From the family tree to the tree of knowledge, from the tree of life to the tree of memory, forests have provided an indispensable resource of symbolization in the cultural evolution of humankind’ (p.8). This perspective of the forest as a space of historical cultural and social change added to my decision to explore the relationship between the labyrinth and the forest. In this context the forest is a site of creative potential, growth and change. Before the order of the modern Western world there were forests; these were self-supporting environments. As civilized and reasoned society evolved, the forests were cleared, society was ‘enlightened’ (Carter 1996) and lived in the cities of its own creation and the forests were the refuge and eventually the home of the outcasts, the mad and the unknown (Harrison 1992). According to Descartes anywhere was better than being in the ‘middle of the forest,’ so great is its darkness and potential for cultural
demise. Just as the forest is a collection of trees and as a resource, represented the potential for change, it also represented the darker and emotional aspects of our beings. These characteristics of the forest resemble the language used to describe creativity and the creative process (illogical, emotional, the unexpected, juxtaposition of ideas and elements etc.). I was interested by their comparisons and wondered how it might be possible to explore them.

When discussing *Forest*, the first installation of the research, there are two interconnected aspects of the work to be considered. There is the design and construction of the physical space within the forest and the design and facilitation of the event of working with the participants as they experienced it. *Forest* is an exploration of the labyrinth and its relationship to reflection and creativity. This is the labyrinth as a structure and a space as experienced through the forest and the cloth structure I built within it.
The Installation

Forest is a landscape installation within a plantation pine forest at Bonnie Doon, located in Northeast Victoria, Australia. It is a large three-dimensional structure that is tactile and inviting. The structure is a literal representation of the labyrinth with its design based on the pattern of a five-cycle labyrinth (Kern 2000, p. 34).

The upright trees provided the support needed to construct the walled labyrinth. The ordered nature of the plantation pine forest formed a grid that I used to trace the pattern of the labyrinth. Although the order was useful, I was conscious that it might also limit the potential confusion of the forest (as presented by Harrison (1992) or Descartes (1980)) that I had sought to explore. Acknowledging this I decided to work with the linear nature of the space, juxtaposing it with the horizontal walls of the labyrinth and using these features to distort views and to enhance the sense of confusion. I did this by emphasizing the view up into the trees above the walls and the view through or along the winding paths. Plantation forests are relatively open spaces to work with; there is no undergrowth just a consistent cover of pine needles, root mounds and fallen trees. The lack of undergrowth within the forest gave me a relatively clear base to work with, helping to make it easier to build the labyrinth within the forest and to delineate clear paths for people to walk.
Pine forests are perceived as foreign landscapes within the Australian landscape and its qualities are significantly different from those of the ‘bush’. These spaces differ in colour, density, light and life yet both symbolize the unknown and, in their beauty, harbour the potential for fear and form a part of Australian cultural identity. Within our cultural interpretations of the landscape even the native Cypresses are seen to be something other than the ‘real’ bush or forest landscapes where eucalypts dominate. For me it is a strange contradiction that even though the pine forest (even when cultivated) is the place of fairy tales in the northern hemisphere and not the forest or countryside of my experience, I easily translate the literature of the forest into the space of the bush in order to make sense of what I am reading and through association I make the unknown familiar. On the site of the installation both types of Forests were present (native bush and planted pine). This offered the participants the opportunity to compare their experiences and relationships to these different environments, one known and the other less familiar.

Locating the labyrinth within the forest involved finding a balance between the spacing of the trees and the gradient of the land. Once I identified the specific site that was the best compromise between slant and tree placement, I drew the walls of the labyrinth with coloured string. It wasn’t possible to see the shape of the labyrinth, rather it appeared as green and orange flashes of light between the trees. The next day with the assistance of two others, we traced the string lines with the yellow cloth that created the labyrinth walls.
Forest has one entrance and one exit; they are one and the same. It is approximately 25 meters in diameter and is constructed of burnt yellow (golden) cloth, which weaves the pattern of the labyrinth through the trees. The walls are 145cm high and they blind the viewer/walker to the long or short view of the path ahead and alongside. Guided by the topography of the land, the structure rises and falls along the trees; beyond the cloth walls the view is up, down or around:

Down according to the rise and fall of the land, the scattered remains of the forest and the forest construction

Above it is the sway of the trees; linear guides to the sky above that dance to the movement of the wind creating their own sound of ‘whoosh’ and ‘crack’

Around the widening and narrowing path as it twists and turns

Bonnie Doon
The fabric is attached to the trees using either hook nails or else it is wrapped firmly from tree to tree for support. The visual height of the labyrinth walls varies according to the topography of the land. The location of the forest is on a steep hill, the gradient makes it challenging to walk, as do the pine needles and other debris that lie on the ground. Upon entering the labyrinth there is a sense of walking down hill, even when walking against the slope. On leaving there is a sense of walking up. The severity of the gradient and the approximately 1.5m spaces between the pine trees has moulded the final shape of the structure. Sometimes the trees are absent and the internal space is open, at other points saplings have grown and it is necessary to navigate around in order to progress forward.

The final structure floats within the forest. The yellow colour complements the pine green and the rust coloured needles on the ground. The cloth walls shimmer in the wind and their colour responds to the changing
nature of the light. At times there are clear shadows on bright yellow fabric, at other times it is mellow and dense, and when it rains the fabric become plump with moisture and its texture becomes apparent. When standing below in the clearing and looking up into the forest the labyrinth looks like a yellow thread winding between the trees. From above it looks like a series of crisscrossing sails.

**The Event**

_The Labyrinth_ was constructed on September 26 and 27, 2002. On September 28 there was a gathering of people (10) wanting and willing to explore its physicality and how their engagement with it (individually and as a group) would be for them. (A total of 13 people contributed to the discussion over three visits.) I was interested in what it meant for their experience of space, the act of reflection and their creativity or creative process. Two of these ten were my supervisors.
It was a labyrinthine adventure from the city to the country involving maps and markers. On arrival at the property, Forest was there veiled within the pine forest; a golden thread laced within the trees. Everyone was aware of its creation and my intention, and no one quite knew what to expect. There was a strong sense of anticipation of what it would be like, what we would do and, as friends and colleagues, what it would mean for me.

As creator of this experience and this labyrinth space, I had intentionally set out to engage my participants in my work and the activity of the day. I had made it an adventure. I had invited them to work with me and to make some time for themselves to contemplate their own creativity. I made sure that I indulged their physical needs: plenty of food, drinks, wine for after, and a fire. Some stayed the night, in the house or in tents, others returned home.
Aim:

As I designed the event, I kept coming back to the questions informing the research process and the critique.

In response to the questions, the aim was to:

Create a labyrinthine space that focused on containment in structure and location using a traditional labyrinth pattern as form

Engage people in my labyrinthine space and my research – discover how they experience the space, how they understand their creative process and the use of reflection

Document how this occurred via artefacts (image and objects), conversations (individual and group) and text (reflective journals)

In *Forest*, the labyrinthine space was literal, a golden labyrinth constructed within a pine forest. The participants were guided along a road journey to find or encounter the labyrinth within the forest. They were asked to engage with the space, and were invited to consider or reflect upon what they experienced there. In particular they were asked to consider whether it in any way related to his or her own creative process. All those who participated in the experience did so in virtual reverent silence. On leaving the labyrinth they were interviewed about their experience. This elicited an almost immediate reflection upon their reflection. A few hours later, there was a group discussion and reflection, and then one week later a more distant reflection on the experience was conducted with the participants except for my supervisors.
The Event Design

In order to answer the questions and achieve the aims, data have been collected in a number of ways:

**Participant involvement over three sessions, captured in conversations, semi-structured interviews, group discussion and artefacts (text, image and objects made by the participants)**

**My reflections and documentation of the process, of the creation of the labyrinth and the subsequent interviews**

**Engaging with literature relating to key emergent themes**

Three groups of people were brought to the site over a four-week time span. The first consisted of 10 participants, the second consisted of one and the third had two. I was present at all visits. The nature of each visit to the labyrinth site was different, as was the engagement of those who were there (including me). Since the initial session, I have made a number of trips back to the site to be near the structure and documenting its changes over time.

The participants

In asking people to participate in this, the first installation and event, I attempted to draw from a broad selection of people who were professionally engaged in art or design. Information has been collected from individual and group conversations, text documentation in journals, a song, visual imagery, objects and performance.
The following participants for *Forest* at Bonnie Doon (over the three visits) are listed in alphabetical order:

**Visit one** -
- Laura Brearley: Singer; songwriter; academic
- Janice Burgess: Dancer; choreographer
- Liz Grist: Instructional designer; photographer
- Shane Hearn: Graphic designer
- Eddie Ho: Product developer
- Gini Lee: Interior and landscape designer; academic
- Feride Peel: Fashion designer
- Mick Peel: Fashion designer/academic
- Louise Tomlinson: Painter

**Visit two** -
- Thea O'Connor: Drummer; dietician

**Visit three** -
- Filomena Cappola: Visual artist
- Cheryl Cookson: Psychiatric Therapist
Cheryl has performed the role of ’critical friend’ within the project and has been fundamental to the research. She has walked with me through the research process and, particularly, in the direction change from phase one to two. As a psychiatric therapist her professional practice has always involved reflective practice. Thus our discussion and her questioning has created a space for me to reflect and consider reflective practice and creativity from an alternative perspective.

Liz had a changing role. She is a friend who kindly offered to document the event on video for me, and on the day, also became a participant. She would not describe herself as coming from a creative background or having any particular creative skill, yet her creative work and the depth of her involvement and reflection do not support this view.

The questions that guided the conversation

Individual interviews were held with each of the participants. They were asked the same series of questions immediately on the day, and then again one week later. Everyone was given an individual journal to document their experience and follow-up thoughts. These have also been referenced as I worked through the feedback.
The questions they were asked:

How was the experience at Bonnie Doon for you?

What meaning (if any) do you make of the labyrinth and the forest space?

How did you engage with the space (the labyrinth, the forest, the property, the day, the other participants)?

Were you moved to record/mark this experience in some way – journal, photos etc.?

How do you experience your creative process?

Do you find any connections between your creative process/work and the space of the labyrinth?

What does the term or act of reflection mean to you?
What emerged

The following is an analysis of the conversations with the participants. On transcribing the tapes, I then went back and explored the text, looking for themes, responses and interpretations of what people experienced and how they made sense of the labyrinth and my questions. I endeavoured to apply van Manen’s (1990) process; I looked for what was said and what wasn’t – the silence between the thoughts and statements. As I sought to discover or identify meaning, I took care not to impose meaning.
In addition to the conversations I also had access to people’s journals and the artefacts of their experience. These included their drawings/jottings and photographs, a sculpture, song lyrics and video documentation of a dance/performance piece. The richness of these texts provided an alternative to the language of the questions. These were not responses to my specific questions but rather spontaneous responses to the labyrinth, the forest and the event. I have considered these diverse items and made my own meaning or interpretation of them, accepting the multiple languages of aesthetics and the potential miscommunications between viewer and creator (Dufrenne 1973).

**Group discussion**

Initial responses and comments in a group discussion on the day of the main collection focused on the nature of the labyrinth and how it made participants feel. What was stated within this session was consistent with follow up conversations and interviews. In documenting this discussion, I didn’t note names of who said what, rather I sought to capture the connections and observations. There was a strong sense of ‘the group’, of being there with others, as one participant commented, “I felt observed, aware that I wasn’t alone”.

There was a general fascination and interest in the nature of the form/pattern of the labyrinth. It was thought to be deceptive as “you thought that you were out to find that you were in,” and “it appears random but is ordered.”
There was a sense of the unexpected surrounding the form both in its structure and in its location. This was expressed through terms such as “eerie or scary” or remarks about it being strange to encounter this man-made object within the forest. They knew to expect it but wondered, “what would it be like if you just encountered it? You would wonder why is it here and who made it?”

The aesthetics of the space was alluring and people stated that they felt as though they were being drawn in. At the same time, the nature of the forest was also emphasised, horizontals and verticals, sound and space, time and timelessness. All the senses were engaged in the interaction – smell, touch (“I wondered what it would be like to be blind” and “I wanted to bounce off the walls”) and sound (the trees creaking, breath and footsteps).

Individual conversations

On evaluating and reflecting on the responses, it is apparent that although the participants including myself, present similar themes and foci, there is no ‘one’ response to the space or the event. Each participant makes their own meaning of the experience and this is influenced by what they bring to it, through their history, their practice, their fears and expectations. For me this illustrates the richness of this research and the installations, the diversity of knowledge and knowing and, in this case, the willingness to share, learn and acknowledge it.
Participant responses varied from observations of the space(s) and their reactions to being with others and to being there. Responses have been emotional, physical and spiritual, and they have been described in relation to the physicality and aesthetics of the structure (actual and implied) and the context of the event.

I have clustered the responses under the following headings:

Space – the labyrinth structure and form, aesthetics, interaction and the forest greater

Engagement – the labyrinth and the group connection, expectations

Reflection and reflexivity

Creativity and the creative process

Although they appear here in a sequence of clustered text with headings, the relationship between the themes is not so clear or divided. The threads of meaning merge between the themes making it difficult to decide what to place where within the text, thereby raising questions of classifications and boundaries.
Throughout the preparation of *Forest*, I focused on the exploration of one particular space, the labyrinth. However, as the time for the Bonnie Doon installation and the involvement of others came closer, it became apparent that there were many more spaces within the installation (e.g. the forest, the installation), the event and the location than just that of the actual labyrinth. From this point on, a dialogue began in my head, in my journal and in my reading.
In particular the term ‘place’ emerged as we spoke of the location (Bonnie Doon) and the locations within the site (the pine forest, the damn, the house, the fire etc). From the feedback of those who were there, it seems that I was not the only one considering these questions.

In everyday discourse the term ‘space’ can be used to mean many things. This is apparent from conversations with the participants. Their talk flows on from the space of the labyrinth, to the forest and to the space of the experience of being there. Responses to the labyrinth were rich and varied, with comment on the form and fabric of the structure, the aesthetics and the physical challenges of the topography and the environment.

What is the nature of space and what are the differences between notions of space and place?
The Labyrinth

"On encountering the labyrinth I began to understand what people mean by space...in my awareness there was the power of space." Thea

The physical structure of the labyrinth within the forest drew strong responses from those who encountered it.

The most noticeably different responses from people were in relation to their sense of containment within the space. For Shane, it was comforting. He didn’t find the space claustrophobic and, in fact, would have liked a greater sense of containment, "I’d love it if the fabric went all the way to the ground and was above me head!". The key words he used to describe the experience were: ‘comforting’, ‘seclusion’, ‘peaceful’, ‘respect’. He enjoyed not knowing what was coming and the sense of intrigue, which placed him in the present, made him focus on what he was doing then and there. He found the greater forest to be alienating, the sway and sound of the trees, "the labyrinth made it feel safe."

Thea expressed a similar sense of safety, "I enjoyed being in the centre. I had a sense of being hemmed in, ... there not being an overview, a perspective." Within this there seemed to be some sense of irony. She had an expectation of the space as she went through a process of active reflection. She was seeking a ‘bigger picture’ understanding from what could be described as a blind space: "I was asking a question of this place that had no overview, no perspective... to try and receive an answer from a place that has no vision."
Looking up wasn’t the same... it didn’t provide a bigger picture. I was exploring in a sense from a blind space.”

By contrast Liz found the space to be too containing, it was claustrophobic and therefore fearful. “I had a strong sense of confinement... I couldn’t see the end and I had to get out. Once I got out I could go back in because I knew how to get out. It was about the journey of getting from A to B – once I knew what this was, I knew what was there.” For Liz there seemed to be a strong sense of order or processes that she had to follow even if it was uncomfortable: “Even though I wanted to leave by going under, I couldn’t. I had to follow the correct procedures.”

Her strong sensorial response to the fabric was comforting and helped to overcome her sense of claustrophobia: “The view was really nice... the trees were an extension of the labyrinth walls. This also added to the sense of confinement.” She also felt that viewing the space mainly through the controlled vision of the video viewfinder added to her sense of containment, “with it (the camera) you have no sense of peripheral vision”.

**Labyrinth as model or metaphor**

When we discussed the idea of the labyrinth or the labyrinthine, people spoke in relation to the installation and their broader understanding. Some found the space to be like life and engagement and how they live. Feride summed it up, “It was like a model for life... you keep looking for something that is already there...
What happens in life is that you go round and round hoping to find a meaning or achieve something. You might go around things that aren’t really necessary but you find you have to get where you want to go... getting to the centre made me realize this.” This was also her experience of the forest greater:

Liz felt that the experience of how she related to the space and to the weekend modelled how she approaches her life in a broader sense. She had a strong desire to just be in the space without the camera or the other people. Janice really enjoyed giving over to the structure and to the experience: “The structure was there and I didn’t have to look at it or workout how it worked... unlike the rest of my life...I just moved with it.” She felt that the experience of my labyrinth was “more than a labyrinth, a piece of art.”

Disorientation

“Walking through the first spiral and then what appears to be a back tracking, we are ushered around the peripheral ‘layer’ and then onward – into the winding paths, towards the ‘central space’.” Shane

The nature of the space including the cloth walls, the trees and the topography, combined with the unknown pattern (plan) of the labyrinth, resulted in many people expressing a sense of disorientation within the space. Before people entered the space I briefed them on what to expect and how they might choose to engage with it but still there was a sense of uncertainty and of being lost. For example, Thea feared that she had missed the centre and...
was on her way out. This was because of the variations in the width of the path as a result of the irregular placement of the trees. However, she wasn’t ready to leave when she thought that she had passed the centre “so I just kept on walking.”

Janice found that this sense of uncertainty seemed to add to her enjoyment of the labyrinth. She claimed, “It was very satisfying.” She had a sense of being contained by the form and wanting to try and understand it. Like many, she had an expectation of a known pattern in the form of a spiral that would lead slowly to the centre, and then that wasn’t the case. “I expected a spiral and it didn’t do that at all. You think that you are sure and then you find out that you are somewhere else.”

Mick’s relationship to the space was complex. He expressed a sense of confusion as well as an acknowledgement that you could subvert the rules of a single path and one entry. He expressed this as, “You don’t have to take the entrance, you can climb under.” Mick wasn’t the only one to recognise this as a way of dealing with the space. His confusion was evident in his journal description of getting lost within the form: “I just sat down in a nice corner, I’m on my way out, but I cannot recall which way I came from.” He had to ask someone else to direct him out.

Louise added to this sense of uncertainty and confusion about the space. She found the space to be full of surprises and became disorientated. She wanted to get up high so that she could see the plan and understand it.
On the first day it was exhilarating for her to be in the labyrinth. On the second day, “I was nervous. I avoided going back inside it. I sat in the Forest making time to sit and draw... I was stalling, avoiding going back in.” Louise had a sense that there was something there, that she would discover something and she wasn’t quite sure what. In fact, on the second day, she did re-enter the space, this time by crawling in and not going to the centre: “I went back in but I slipped in underneath... not to the centre... I couldn’t go back to the centre.”

Eddie was quite overwhelmed by the space and the event: “I was anxious as there was so much to take in... then I realized that I could go again!”

Going into the space, she stopped regularly, trying to capture the details, rubbing surfaces, collecting mementos and taking notes. On arriving at the centre, she had a real sense of achievement for getting there and, then promptly ran out.

**Aesthetics**

The physical nature or the aesthetics of the space drew many of the strongest responses and reflections from the participants. With many of the comments focusing on sensorial responses including sight, touch, smell and sound. Responses were emotional and physical, often drawing on associations and memories for contextualisation and understanding.
“(In the beginning) I hung outside focusing on the outer space because I thought that it would be very different to the inside and I wanted to make sure that the contrast was shown in the camera.” Liz

Louise had a very strong reaction to the physicality of the labyrinth: “It (the labyrinth) had an unavoidable presence when no-one else was around...”. When she was inside the labyrinth she tried to “focus on my own internal thoughts, but it was a struggle... then I allowed myself to focus on the external... the people, the cloth, the floor, the corridors... You were forced to look at things... there was a false horizon, the stretched fabric, the texture... there was a lot of visual stimulus.” Focusing on the details seemed to help her be able to relate to the space, to understand it and be with it. This uncertainty about the space was also communicated by Mick who simply stated that, “It looks kind of eerie.”

In contrast, Feride thought that, “It was like being a kid again, looking up and down.” This change of focus reminded her of her childhood, noticing details and looking at the ground. At the same time, it was a foreign landscape for her and being there “inspired me to think.” Filomena was amused by the feet: “feet, paces, steps in which way are they going? One pair careful, slow, controlled, the other bounding sure, familiar with the terrain – unconcerned by that which is directly there or ahead.”

The softness of the fabric and the warmth of the yellow brought out many references to safety and being wrapped and held. Liz stated,
“The best thing was the sense of touch of it. The feeling of it... I wanted to roll myself up into it.” As she documented her hand tracing the walls she found herself wondering what it would be like to be blind and to feel the labyrinth rather than see it.

For Shane, the structure was visually exciting, “the fabric was very important, creating a contrast between the horizontal to the vertical nature of the trees... the linear.” This added to his desire for it to be taller, lower, all embracing; much like the “cubby houses of his childhood”. It was not until my fourth visit to the site that I had similar kinds of sensorial experiences. “Today when I was walking around it for the first time I was intensely engaged by its fabric, the sensuality of it. I wanted to touch it and rub against it. I haven’t felt that way (as others have said that they did) until now. Perhaps it is because of distance and time. I still feel infinitely connected, but it is changing.”

Janice had a strong experience of the space and a connection through sound. She had a sense of getting lost and was guided by the form and getting down low and looking under. She connected to the space through her own identity, both in terms of feeling liberated and free to just be, and also wanting to be something other than herself through the adoption of another character, the purple fox. In approaching and relating to the space, she was conscious of wanting to please me and then decided to just let go, do what came and trust the form.
For Louise, the sound of the space was really strong. She found herself remembering a Kurosawa film and started creating a sound scape in her head. “I was enjoying a three-dimensional aural experience by being in that space.” This association to a known form and of creating an unknown form – a sound scape – helped her to relate to the space, to work with it.

**Topography**

The pine forest at Bonnie Doon is situated on the side of a hill and the labyrinth structure was within in. This meant that the ground under foot was challenging. Not only were walkers required to negotiate the angle of the hillside but also the mounds and crevices created by the tree roots. Added to this was the slipperiness of the pine needles, which had fallen and held no traction for human feet. Thea described how engaging with the terrain and feeling its unevenness kept her focused on where she was going and what she wanted to do.
The topography had an interesting effect on the participants. It was an unintentional design challenge. The specific site within the forest was selected for the spacing of the trees that would guide the walls. Where there were spots within the forest that were flatter the trees were too far apart, making it very difficult to construct the form. The location that was used was selected as a compromise between the challenges of the slope and the placement of the trees. Had the location been flat, a very different structure would have been created and many of the subtle nuances of angles and viewpoints would have been lost, as would have the way in which people walked and engaged with the space.

Shane responded strongly to the physicality of the labyrinth. On viewpoints and perspective he states, “I’m probably more aware of the immediate metre or two in front of me – important as the ground is uneven and slippery.” His own physicality was a part of this as well. “I’m taller than the other participants and so am noticing the ‘heads’ circling around the space. Sometimes I glimpse a pair of feet – seemingly detached from the ‘person’ with a mind of their own.” He seemed to move between the structure and the greater location. “Firstly I observe the set of legs working their way towards me and then on looking up, the yellow fabric followed by the tall, tall verticals of the pines, swaying and whooshing in the wind.”
The decision to place the work within the forest was in part aesthetic but also symbolic. The forest location had a significant effect on people. It frequently created a sense of unease and uncertainty, though some found it exhilarating. It also added to the sense of confusion and uncertainty within the labyrinth. Liz stated that she was a bit “spooked” by the environment. “The pine forest is confronting but you could always see a way out but when you are in the labyrinth the perimeters are there but you can’t see a way out.” Mick expressed a similar sentiment, explaining that he was conscious of the greater landscape and forest too. “At first the forest was spooky and then it became safe,” and “the landscape was all part of the experience, the noise of the trees.”

Like the experience within the labyrinth what was fearful for some, was comforting for others. Shane described his experience as, “I keep going back to how I loved its
enclosed structure...loved the sound... the eeriness of a different experience to the Australian bush... a pine forest has a different sound... a little deader... the contrast of the natural...texture...horizontals and verticals. I loved walking in the space, it exaggerated the vertical feel of the forest." Filomena commented on the sturdiness of the trees that surround the walker on the path, the path itself and the shock of encountering the occasional sapling standing in the middle of the path. Once she got to the centre she became aware of the "dancing, swaying tops and the sturdy bases below."

Louise was extremely aware of the space; both the structure and the greater forest. She found it to be an extremely activating space it made her want to do things: "It bought out a childlike aspect in me...all of a sudden playing hide and seek and climbing trees. I wanted to chase the others in the labyrinth space!" Her response to the experience fell within the greater forest context; it became a place of inspiration: "I was enjoying just being in that area, in the forest... you can just walk through that area and it has rhythmical effect on your eyes. There was a sameness of form that is meditative, like being in the labyrinth."

In working through the documentation of the responses to the nature of the space, both labyrinth intervention and the forest location dominated the conversation. This was expressed in the diverse terms and contexts of experience and association.
Engagement

Engagement is a theme that I had not expected to emerge from the installation and the associated data. However as I went through the planning and preparation process of the installation it became increasingly evident that there was something about the notion of an invitation to participate that was important. As I entered into the conversations with the participants, the word or theme ‘engagement’ began to emerge in relation to the structure, the experience, the group and the process.
Janice embraced the invitation to experiment and to explore the ways in which the physical and the visual are used to navigate space. Particularly how we use both to position ourselves and to interact or interpret: "Labyrinthine, a flutter of ever changing positional illusions and vision was necessary to show the true position," she stated. Similarly, Shane couldn't wait to get in and prided himself on being first to the centre. Louise by contrast was hesitant to go in: "I was happy to look at it...but couldn't go back to the centre on my own...it was daunting...my expectations. I wanted to maintain some purity around the first experience...conforming to the rules that I had made for myself."

For Liz interaction and engagement with the space and the whole experience became increasingly strong. She was conscious of not being what she terms creative and of how her role changed. Also, she wanted to support and please me by taking the best video footage possible: "I am compelled. It's only because I am not an artist that I am hesitant...I too can enjoy this space and interact for all to see."

Throughout the day there was a strong sense of community and shared experience and the people were aware of their role within this. "The participants were part of the space too," said Janice. Shane enjoyed being a part of the group. Spending time with other creative people, talking about things and watching their processes: "everyone arrived separately...everyone had
their own journey... and entered the labyrinth alone. There was a community with like-minded individuals even if there were different disciplines."

Mick was aware of the group presence, which he described as leaving him feeling like a tourist. It was like the experience of travelling, all the people looking, walking and photographing, and also the process of going to places for new experiences in order to find inspiration.
Filomena Cappola – Mapping the Labyrinth
Within the feedback there was significant disparity surrounding the use of reflection and reflective practice as some of them regularly use reflection as part of their lives, while others do not. A number of the participants stated that the event itself was a great opportunity for reflection on creativity and practice.

Thea for example stated that reflection is something that she does everyday and, as such, holds little meaning as a term or process because...
of its familiarity. Whereas for Liz reflection is quite alien. She describes herself as being forward focused, moving on, usually looking ahead and not behind. Shane doesn’t normally use reflection as part of his creative process. He has an abundance of ideas and tries to capture and control them. Reflection was something he did outside of his professional creative practice. On being at Bonnie Doon he said that, “It was a nice time for reflection and for just being.” Although this was a creative time for him, it was separate from his professional practice.

For some of the participants reflection is a conscious part of their creative practice. Mick noted that for him, “reflection is the only way to find creative inspiration in an experience.” Louise had a similar approach. When she is reflecting in her practice, it is something that she does when she doesn’t have to think. Ideally this is when she is sitting. It can also occur when she is walking around a lake or track. She also enjoys meandering, either by walking or in the car: “I get a lot of ideas and enjoyment. I really enjoy not having to think in a logical, rational progression at times... I like allowing my mind to play with ideas... play with thoughts and associations... just dream basically.” On her way home from Bonnie Doon, she spent time meandering along the roads and paths of King Lake.
There were marked differences in how people saw their creativity, the creative process and even the lack of it. For some it was unconscious and just an act of work, something that they did. For others, it was distant and fearful. Feride described creativity as being linked to inspiration and for her, creative inspiration is something that she is always seeking and she draws upon experience and memory. Janice has to manage her creativity and she uses structures to keep her creativity in line.
When asked about the event’s influence on peoples’ creative processes, the participant responses were quite different. The group aspect was particularly important with most stating that they usually create alone. Mick felt that, in relation to his experience of his creative process and the visit to Bonnie Doon that, “I felt a bit weird, for me my creative process is a private thing.” He also felt that the linear nature of the labyrinth’s path with its ups and downs, is like the creative process. Shane found the whole experience to be very enlivening and very different to his normal practice. He had expected to spend time drawing, instead he wrote, sketched and photographed: “I like to be on my own. I actually create in private better than when I have other people around me.”

Louise stated, “I usually work in isolation so being with others was challenging, being given the license to be creative all weekend was also unusual.” Being with the group was both exciting and distracting. Reflection is an important part of her creative process and, to explore how she felt on that day she left the group to meander on her own to create a large sculpture in the trees of the forest.

The feedback from the participants evidenced the diversity of experience and the responses of a group of people to an event. What was black for some was white for others and for many there was a consistent shade of experience in between. As I went through the process of clustering the responses around the themes of space, reflection, creativity and engagement, it became apparent that space, aesthetics and experience were
the dominant areas of consideration and comment by the participants; space as location, aesthetics as environment and a method of response; and experience as the means by or through which this occurs. This realisation was to have a significant influence on the next stage of the research.
The building of the space was a personal creative achievement. Since my early days of art practice, I had always wanted to create a large landscape installation and this was the first time that I had had the opportunity. As an exploration into creativity, I was fuelled by my enthusiasm over my own creative achievement.
Within my concern of how to actually build the space and locate it within the forest, I was also conscious that I was trying to create multiple spaces. I noted in my journal,

I am endeavouring to create a space within a space that encourages connection to the present and at the same time may draw on the past. It will become the past a memory, a conversation, a story, an artefact of this event.

In many ways my experiences within the process were heightened versions of what I was hearing from the others. On completing the building of the labyrinth and preparing everything for the next day, I was compelled to go and create another installation on the property. This is a string drawing laced within the trees in a riverbed. It was a direct application of the drawing process used in constructing the labyrinth. The difference was that it was spontaneous and site responsive.
There was no advanced planning or patterns to honour or follow. It was just me interacting with the space and using my own aesthetic sense. The freedom of this was liberating; in a way I was free from the confines of the labyrinth and I was responding to the labyrinth. It was through engaging with the labyrinth form and constructing the installation that I was inspired to further interpret and play with elements of the structure in another and more spontaneous form.

Over my many visits during the following months, I continued to have a strong sense of connection to the labyrinth. I was overwhelmed by my perception of its beauty, by the fact that I had made it and that there was ‘something’ there for me to come to terms with in relation to its application. I watched the space change as time and the environment exerted their impact; subtle changes of light, a slow draping of the walls, small collections of leaves, a spider web etc. My first inclination was to clean and repair it, to keep the form pure as it was on that first day in September but I didn’t. Instead I watched as the labyrinth transformed in response to the forest and I contemplated it as it became a marker and a memory.

Once I had come to terms with the multiple spaces, the aesthetics of the environment and the powerful influence they had had upon the research findings, I was able to start clarifying what else was becoming evident. A number of issues emerged and informed the next phases of the research.
Labyrinth as site and process

As noted I had not expected how important the acts of invitation and engagement would be within the research. Both these acts bring people into a situation or experience. They can be used literally within the context of experience or doing where we are lured, drawn in or occupied by something. I became conscious of how important the invitation to ‘experience’ can be. Unintentionally, I had created a sense of intrigue and expectation around the event through my invitation and through the subsequent use of text, maps and information. I had been careful not to tell people too much in advance, as I wanted them to bring some level of purity rather than mystery to the event. I tried to limit any pre-planning so that they would be open to a spontaneous experience on the day.

I began to make connections between the installation and event of Forest, and the broader understanding and applications of the labyrinth as a tool for meditation. I could see possible correlations between the experience at Forest and the methods people used to walk labyrinths for meditation. Of particular interest was the relationship between the acts of focus, intent, movement and stillness as presented in the literature (Lonegran 2001, Curry 2000, West 2000, Artress 1999).
Based on the simple sequence of engaging with the labyrinth as a space, I presented the participants with the following 5-step process as a possible guide for engaging with Forest.

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<td>Walking in</td>
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<td>Stopping at the centre</td>
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<td>Walking out</td>
<td>Walk with application</td>
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The 5-step process is a synthesis of the various ways that people engage with labyrinths and the nature of the space and its paths. To walk with intention is to hold the idea or focus for the duration of the walk without consciously trying to solve the issue. To walk with application is to consider ways of applying what has become apparent whilst in the centre of the labyrinth. Many of the contemporary guides for engaging with labyrinths for meditation or reflection utilise spiritual traditions as methods for engaging with the space. It is assumed that the labyrinth walk is undertaken with purpose; that there is a question or an issue that is the focus of the experience. For example, Reverend Dr Lauren Artress draws on the Western Christian
tradition of the mystical path known as the Threefold Path, involving Purgation, Illumination and Union (Artress 1995, p. 28) when leading labyrinth walks at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. Similarly Sig Lonegran crosses spiritual traditions to explore the relationship between the charkas and the 7-paths of the Cretan Labyrinth (Lonegran 2001, p.131).

This approach to engaging with the labyrinth as it related to my research was literal. Beyond using the pattern of the labyrinth as the design for the installation, I was endeavouring to adapt one way of engaging with a labyrinth as a potential model for utilising reflection in the creative process. Reflection in this context refers to conscious awareness and a specific or separate process that could be used within creative practice. In this way reflection is closely linked to engagement; to work or consider reflectively is to be engaged with the act of creative practice.

Albert Borgmann in his essay ‘The Depth of Design,’ explores design as practice, process and outcome. He is particularly concerned about what he sees as the loss of engagement within contemporary design and the subsequent demise of the practice and the outcomes, particularly in relation to aesthetics. He states that,

‘Engagement is a term to specify the symmetry that links humanity and reality… Engagement is to designate the profound realization of the humanity-reality commensuration’ (Borgmann 1995, p. 15).
For him engagement with the practice of design is what brings humanity and beauty to design outcomes, and it is essential for the future of the profession. Just as Borgmann speaks of engagement as the expression of the relationship between humanity and reality, in this research I seek to understand the role of reflection within creative practice and its relationship to the labyrinth within the context of ‘meaning.’ In this I am interpreting ‘meaning’ as being related to humanity and the human experience of reality, in particular the experience of creative practitioners within the space of practice. I have sought to engage myself and others in considering the potentials of the relationship between the labyrinth and creative practice, and in the use of reflection within the creative process. Reflection has been both the subject and the act of the research and, as the experience of Forest has shown, engagement and aesthetics have been the means. The aesthetics of the space (both the forest and the installation) proved to be the means for engaging people with the space and with the focus of the research.
Considering reflection in practice

The feedback from the participants suggests that for most, reflection is not a normal act, nor is it something that they can be articulated easily. The feedback supported Mason’s (2002) view on the actual application of reflection in practice. Mason questions the sustainability of ‘reflective practice’ in practice, including models such as Schön’s conceptions of reflection in, on or through action (Schön 1991). Mason states, ‘Reflection is the vogue term for intentionally learning from experience, but it is more talked about than carried out effectively’ (Mason 2002, p. 29).

The comments from the participants in the research suggest that reflection is some sort of ‘other’ within their practice. It is desired and enjoyed yet rarely applied to the day-to-day lived experience of their creative practice. Suggested reasons for them not using reflection include: lack of time, not a ‘natural way of engaging’ and that it isn’t required in their work as the creative process and outcome are made obvious or laid out in advance. Of those who did use reflection, most see it as something separate that they do, something that feed their creative practice and something that they do alone. Reflection is used to help find clarity or depth in issues or, it is a space to play with ideas and concepts for future work. This resembles Dewey’s view that reflection is an
action undertaken in order to know more about a subject or object so that ‘nothing will be overlooked’ (Dewey cited in Darso 2001, p. 143).

One dictionary definition states that with regard to light or sound, to reflect is to send back, and as a mental process, reflection is a form of ‘continued consideration; meditation; contemplation’ (Webster 1998). The differences between the two forms of reflection (physical and intellectual) fascinated me. For light or sound there is an assumption of return or of sending out, whereas for the mental process the focus is on the inward or the internal. This same word could however be used to describe two very different flows of energy – into the self and out to others. In considering Webster’s definition of reflection in conjunction with Mason’s (2002) questioning of the real use of reflection in the experience of practice, I became conscious of the differences between the theory of the literature, the accounts of the participants and my experience of reflection. Consequently I formed the following questions:

What is the relationship between reflection and creative practice?
How does this relate to the labyrinth?
Considering creativity

The literature on creativity and creative processes is largely drawn from the worlds of psychology and education where the emphasis has been on ‘demystifying’ the creative process by exploring what it is, what facilitates it and who is likely to be creative (Cook-Greuter & Miller 2000). References to the use of reflection or contemplation within creative processes are often couched in the language of experience and/or approaches to thinking or problem solving. Within much of the literature and research, creativity is presented as a process, and this process may be innate or facilitated. Within the facilitated approach to creativity, de Bono’s ‘Six Thinking Hats’ or ‘Lateral Thinking’ (de Bono 1968, 1995) model has been amongst the most influential. In his approach, the emphasis is on novel and alternate ways of thinking. De Bono’s thinking tools are used to facilitate a creative process that can be applied to any situation or problem. It does not assume creativity it directs or facilitates it.

Analysis, invention and imagination are often related to creativity and creative processes. Robert Grudin suggests that one way that we use these tools or characteristics within creative resolutions is through the hypothetical method. As he comments, ‘The hypothetical method is of a markedly creative character. In hypothesis, as in invention, a structure of ideas
is modelled, sometimes from scratch, and given visible identity’ (Grudin 1990, p. 40). Once the hypothesis has been proposed, it is then rigorously explored through trial and error until a result is found. The analysis that is the basis of this process is more than intellectual it is a holistic activity of mind, body and spirit. In this way, creativity is more than ‘ideas’ it is an approach, view or perspective that leads to something. Thus creativity may be understood as a process or series of actions (Darso 2001). Yet, for all the research and exploration undertaken in this area, there are still no clear facts or simple processes that explain creativity or the creative process. Richard Florida states, ‘Even though much about the creative process seems strange and elusive, there does appear to be a consistent method underlying it. Many researchers see creative thinking as a four-step process: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification or revision’ (Florida 2002, p.35). Darso (2001) supports this approach classifying creativity as a holistic or systems approach to thinking. Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 1990) moves beyond this focus on process as a definition of creativity, to explore the conditions or characteristics that enable creativity. This is what he refers to as the optimal state of ‘flow’ where the self (body, mind and spirit) and the object of our attention merge through an acute state of connection, action and possibility. Across the different approaches in the language of creativity and creative process, reflection, in its diverse forms is usually present and it seems to be considered an important part of the creative experience.
Acknowledging the differences between the ‘theory’ and the feedback from the participants on the language and use of reflection in practice, I concluded that these disjunctions might, in part, be about language and expectation with regard to the term ‘reflection’ and its associations with quiet introspection. This interpretation of reflection is incongruent with the realities of possible application within creative practice and the pressures of the workplace. However Webster’s (1998) definition of reflection as related to light and sound, where reflection is directly linked to taking something in and then sending it out, seems to have possibilities for understanding the use of reflection in relation to creative activity. Put simply this could be articulated as:

**something is brought in (problem or idea)**

**it is considered (worked on)**

**it is then sent out (resolved and created)**

This process resembles the 5-step process I had devised for walking the labyrinth at *Forest*. It also related to Dewey’s ‘5 steps of reflection’ (Dewey 1910, p. 72 in Darso 2001, p. 143):

i. a felt difficulty

ii. its location and definition

iii. suggestion of possible solution

iv. development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestions

v. further observation and experimentation leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief
With regard to the labyrinth as a space for reflection, my interpretation of its possibility was evolving into two different applications. Building on the traditional use of the labyrinth as a tool for reflection, I could see that it had often been figured as a literal space for reflection and used as a reflective meditative space that people walked. It could also function as a metaphor or model for a reflective creative process. This approach embraced the labyrinth as a spatial structure as well as a method and location for walking meditation that could be transformed into a sequence of activities or steps in a process. At the same time I also drew on the four elements of the creative process as presented by Florida (2003).

This interpretation of the labyrinthine was about a process or system. It placed the various stages of a creative process within the walls and paths of the labyrinth. The labyrinthine space was the location for mapping a method for creative process; it was literally connected to the spaces of the labyrinth and how people move through them. As I went through the research process, this interpretation evolved as I began to evaluate the ‘idea of labyrinthine space’.
Anfractuous

Walking a labyrinth

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Walking in</th>
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<th>Before/outside</th>
<th>Stopping at the centre</th>
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<td>Four stages of the creative process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
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<td>A felt difficulty</td>
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<td>Walk whilst holding an intention</td>
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<td>Walk with application</td>
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<td>Acknowledge</td>
<td>Further observation and experimentation leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief</td>
<td>Completion at this time</td>
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As I reflected on the experience of *Forest*, the terms ‘awareness’ and ‘noticing’ also emerged; from my experience and observations, particularly in relation to the sensorial or aesthetic responses. As I delved deeper into the research and the multiple texts, ‘awareness’ and ‘noticing’ were often used to explain how people engaged with the experience and created meaning. They appeared to be methods *for* engagement: engagement with the labyrinth, the environment, the other participants and the experience of being there. The importance placed on the sensorial experiences and the aesthetics of the installation implied some link between noticing, engaging and the physical, emotional and intellectual self. In this research ‘awareness’ refers to raising or creating awareness around something or somewhere. ‘Noticing’ is the means by which this is done. The two actions can be separate and interconnected; I notice something and I become aware, I am aware of something and I notice more. They can be seen as potential facilitators of interaction and reflection.

Mason (2002) argues for the ‘practice of noticing.’ This is noticing as ‘a collection of practices both for living, and hence learning from experience and for transforming practice’ (p.27). From this perspective, ‘noticing’ goes beyond surfaces and connects to experiential learning, what could arguably be kinaesthetically directed consciousness. ‘Noticing’ as a practice can be based in the present and retrospective, it can be understood as a form of reflection.
'Noticing is an act of attention, and as such is not something you can decide to do all of a sudden. It has to happen to you, through the exercise of some internal or external impulse or trigger. The more you notice, the more you can accumulate to support noticing in the future. Marking is also an act of attention. It involves attaching connections so that what is marked can come to mind later without the need for outside triggers’ (ibid, p. 61).

Marking of experiences or observations is a common practice for art or design professionals. It can be captured in journals or sketchbooks, images and cards stuck to walls or fridges, objects collected randomly decorating every surface and objects and images of inspiration that are collected for use at some later stage or just to spark interest or enthusiasm.

It is possible to cluster the terms ‘awareness’, ‘noticing’, ‘reflection’ and ‘engagement’ as being possibly ‘the same only different’, where some are acts that encourage the other. At this stage of the research, I chose to keep them separate as I explored what they meant and could mean in the broader context of creative practice.

The exploration of the relationships between creativity, space, reflection, engagement and awareness and noticing, was the basis for the design of the next installation, Desert, particularly the use of ‘noticing’ as a way of engaging in space and in practice. At this stage, new questions in relation to the notion of space arose, particularly with regard to how we negotiate and connect with space, this will be explored in the next chapter Embodiment: being in space.
Embodiment: being in space
In response to Reed Doob’s (1990) ‘idea of the labyrinth’, the next phase of the research focused on the ‘idea of space’, particularly as understood through embodied experience. I was building on my observations and considerations from Forest, where I had begun to explore what space is and might be, particularly how we relate to, move through or mark it as a location and an entity. This next stage in the research was a journey of exploration from the experience of the ‘body in space’, as manifested through the design response Site for Transformation, to an encounter with the medieval labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral. In this chapter I will discuss the development in my thinking from the idea of space, to the construction of place, the experience of kinaesthetic engagement and transition, and my subsequent opening up of the ‘labyrinth’ to the ‘labyrinthine’.

The exploration of labyrinthine space is fundamental to this research. Labyrinthine space has been proposed as a potential model and metaphor for articulating the space of the studio and the experience of the creative process. Through the installation, Forest, I had undertaken my first exploration of this conception of space. I did this through the literal construction of a specific kind of space (a labyrinth) within an identifiable context or location (the forest). Both environments represent different interpretations of the labyrinth, from the literal historical pattern to the metaphoric conception of space.
Within this research, references to labyrinthine space allude to a space that has elements of the ‘idea of the labyrinth’ as presented by Reed Doob (1990). Reed Doob presents this ‘idea of the labyrinth’ as being a space of complexity, confusion and intrigue, where contrast or contradiction are prominent and represented through dualities such as chaos versus order. Only through these is an experience of discovery and potential possible.

The participants at Forest spoke of the labyrinth space with these terms citing confusion, disorientation, empowerment and allure. The physical nature of the space, its colour, texture, form and pattern, engaged and challenged them as they moved through it. Some felt in control or empowered and others were fearful; there was no single way of knowing or experiencing the space. Each participant brought to the event their own methods of experiencing and interacting, their own delights and fears.

As I reflected on the diversity of the responses and the methods used by the participants to interact and read the space and the structure, I became aware of the significance of the individual and all that they bring to an experience. What we know and what we have done effects who, what and where we are within the experience of life; whether we are going to work, meeting new people, sitting on a train or walking a labyrinth within a forest. The act of engagement and the space or location that this occurs in, varies from person to person. A labyrinthine space can be designed to enhance or
highlight the experience of dualities (light or dark, open or closed) or draw attention to specific environmental characteristics; but how that duality is experienced will be diverse and subject to many variables. These variables may be physical, intellectual or emotional, and they represent the richness of experience and the creative process and outcomes. This was clearly evident from Forest and the accounts of being there.

Building on this revelation of the experience of space, I began to question the physical experience of ‘being in space.’ How do we physically engage, and how do we emotionally and intellectually respond to this experience of being in space? What are the connections between the various aspects of people and the spaces that we inhabit? At this stage of the research, I understood labyrinthine space as a pattern or structured space that was placed within a broader conception of space. At Bonnie Doon, there were two kinds of spaces placed one within the other; one large the other small, one controlled the other ‘natural’ (natural to the extent that it was a plantation forest). These characteristics were the subtle variations on the notion of space, where space is interpreted as a location with specific features. This conception of space was one of otherness. Space was something entered into and left like the labyrinth installation with its defined path, it was a constructed space. Even though I had created the installation, I had a sense of being separate from it. My relationship to the labyrinth at Bonnie Doon had two facets.
One was as an object, it was something that I had created, and the other was of a space that others interacted with. In both forms the space of the labyrinth was relational, it was a co-product of actions and perceptions (Thrift 2003). My language for relating to the structure was of space; space as location, site, object or void.
SUPERMODERNGORGEUS! (SMG) was the next event in the research, and it had a significant influence on how the project evolved. It was an opportunity that emerged within my professional practice, and it was to open up and clarify two areas of thinking within this inquiry: the nature of physical engagement and the construction of place. Within my art practice, I make objects and images as a means or method for exploring ideas, hence my decision to undertake a
PhD by project. The design and construction of landscape installations reflects this aspect of my practice. At this particular phase of the research, I returned to my more conventional practice of exploration through the creation of an art/design object of a more intimate scale. Through this process, I explored some of the key themes within the overall project. The outcome of this process was to set the direction for the design of the second landscape installation, Desert. As I move through the following topics within this chapter, I will refer to the SMG project and the experiences and findings of Forest as they relate to the themes and discoveries.

SMG is a body of work curated by Anthea Van Koppen. Van Koppen invited a number of artists and designers to respond to a design brief that questioned the relationship between sustainability and fashion. The outcome of this exercise was first exhibited as part of the ‘Sustainable Living Exhibition’ at Federation Square,
Melbourne in February 2003. Selected works then toured to Queensland where they were exhibited at Craft Queensland in conjunction with the Making an Appearance conference at the University of Queensland in July 2003.

Of particular interest was the intimate nature of the SMG project with its focus on fashion and clothing. This focus required me to consider the experience of the body in social and cultural contexts and thereby enabled me to further the concept of aesthetics and body placement that had been evidenced in the responses to Forest. I was able to employ my existing knowledge and practice in the field of fashion and fashion theory as it relates to design and the body in order to explore kinaesthetic engagement as related to space and location. Through this exploration of the role of the garment or fashion, I was able to consider the role and experience of the body within a topographical context.

My response to the design brief was a hand felted body wrap embellished with text, image and thread entitled Site for Transformation. This is a distinctly personal object. The content of its imagery and its meaning stem from one of the formative experiences of my life, the years I spent living in Japan from 1986 – 1989, aged 22 – 26 years. It is an exploration of how connectedness can transform our relationship to clothing from the transient, soulless adoption of ‘fashionable styles’, to an authentic construction of self-identity through garments and items of meaning that can contribute to the complex dialogue that exists between viewer and wearer.
The significance of this piece in relation to my PhD inquiry is demonstrated in three areas.

The exploration of the body as a site for being and communicating (kinaesthetic awareness)

The placement and movement of the body in space and the creation of a sense of place for the self

The creation of a sense of self through connectedness to location

Within this discussion, I will use the terms ‘fashion’, ‘clothing’, ‘garment’ and ‘dress’. The term ‘fashion’ refers to the industry and the changing styles of time. Dress relates to the act of adornment and the total appearance of the body. It is the process of creating and preparing the body/self within a private or social context. The terms ‘clothing’ and ‘garment’ refer to the actual items of cloth or other material and are interchangeably used with a reference to the singular and plural.
The body as a site for being and communicating

Our current conventional perception of the body within society is the clothed body. Whether it is a body that has been dressed for adornment or for protection, the way in which it is presented to the world is covered. Usually this ‘covering’ is more than practical as the process of dressing is complex and layered with personal, social and cultural meanings (Entwistle & Wilson 2001). Clothing, dress or fashion reflects who we are in the world and how others see us, and it is essential to what Susan Kaiser refers to as ‘the situated practice of being’ (Kaiser 2001). The situated practice of being, as expressed and understood through the clothed body, is an interactive and subjective act of communication. The garment or decorative object forms and is formed through its relationship to the body, the person and the situations that they find themselves in. Thus, the garment, and by extension the wardrobe, becomes a topological record of the act of living through memory, marks and association.

Max van Manen states, ‘Lived experience is the breathing of meaning’ (van Manen, 1990, p. 36). Van Manen’s statement suggests that there is an integral connection between the two aspects – experience and meaning brought together through breath. It is not possible to have life (that is to live)
without meaning, even if this meaning is not what we desire. As Merleau-Ponty (1964, p. xxi - xxii) explains, every action, whether undertaken consciously or not, has significance for the person, the subject/object of their attention and the context or place of the action. ‘Because we are in the world, we are condemned to meaning’, and this meaning places us within an historical (time) context so ‘we cannot do or say anything without its acquiring a name in history’ (ibid). This condemnation to meaning will be informed by the location, culture and political context that we inhabit. The meaning of lived experience flows from a construction of the many elements that have made our past; they are our experiences, known within our context and together they have formed who we are (Weiss 1999). These elements are the components of the narrative of our lives and they constitute what Bergson (1998) refers to as duration, the ongoing evolving creation of self. Bergson argues that our past is always present in all that we do. Whilst acknowledging that not every element or feature will be visible at one time, the person we are in the present is an accumulation of all that has been in our past. For, as Grosz (1999) explains, being selective about what is visible and known to others in the present is essential, as it is not possible for everything to be visible simultaneously.

According to Bergson, we are in a constant state of evolution, building on our accumulated self to become all that we can be. He states ‘what we do depends on what we are; but it is necessary to add also that we are, to a certain extent, what we do, and that we are creating ourselves continually’ (Bergson 1998, p. 7).
As I considered the role of the garment or fashion within this construction of duration, this accumulation of the lived experience, I was prompted to ask,

how do we know or experience these life acts, how do we record them and where do they take place?

Perception

Merleau-Ponty (1964) in the ‘Phenomenology of Perception’ presents an analysis and discussion of the importance of perception as the means by and through which we know the world around us. The experience of living takes place as a dialogue between mind and body that is both physical and emotional. Through our bodies we sense things and with our mind we process sense data. Site for Transformation explores how the garment is a part of this
dialogue; particularly what Susan Stewart sees as the relationship between, ‘sense experience and the expression of sense experience’ (Stewart 2002, p. 18). This relationship between the sense experience and expression of the sense experience takes the form of an ongoing dialogue that combines the sensorial and the intellectual; and through this dialogue objects, their meaning, and our lived experience are formed. According to Tuan (1977), this sense experience evolves over time and varies according to location. From this perspective, the garment can be understood as more than an additional surface that merely surrounds or decorates the body, the garment can also be seen as a site or a location that participates in this sensorial and experiential dialogue. This participation is structural - where the garment as a physical object that interacts with the body and mind within a context - and textual - where as a tool of communication, it conveys and records meaning through style, form and modifications.

There are many ways that we relate to and interact with garments, and through them we are able to express ourselves within the broader social context. For example, a significant body of literature and research has been produced by historians, social and cultural theorists and psychologists exploring the role of clothing, fashion and style in the construction of identity (for example; Hollander 1978, Wilson 1985, Davis 1992, Sproles & Burns 1994, Craik 1994, Roach-Higgins, Eicher & Johnson 1995,
Public, Private, Secret

Within a semiotic analysis of fashion the garment functions as a mode of communication (Hollander 1978). It is one means by which we communicate with the world, and the world with us. This is a conversation where clothing is one of the languages used to present ourselves to the world and, like the dance of the seven veils we do this through the revelation of different layers of
exposure. Susan Kaiser (1997) presents these layers through the classifications of the *public* (that which we show the world) and the *private* (what we may keep to ourselves or wear at home or secretly layer within) and she also presents Joanne Eicher’s addition of the *secret* (that which we don’t share with others, known only by ourselves and perhaps our most intimate relations).

These categories are usually referred to in relation to the ways and means by which we construct our identity. Terms such as ‘self-realization’, ‘promotion’ and ‘construction’ are used (Kaiser 1997). The public is what we might wear to work and the private is what is within our homes and the secret is even more private, evidenced in garments such as fetish or fantasy-wear. The emphasis on the private meanings and connections is, and has been, manifest in many forms across cultures and genders; from locks of hair to hidden tattoos (from the small to the Irezumi body covering), lingerie, linings, hidden pockets, or even such things as the recycling of fabric to make new garments, or the popularity of vintage wear.

*Site for Transformation*, my contribution to SMG, adds to the contemporary discourse about the layers of knowing and understanding in relation to clothing and the body. However rather than referring to the many items within one’s wardrobe and what each item may symbolize (Kaiser 1997, Entwistle & Wilson 2001), *Site for Transformation* refers to the personal connection that exists between the wearer and the clothes that they wear;
their wardrobe. Rather than being placed within public and private readings, it is about public and private ‘knowings’ – what I (the wearer) know and what others (the viewer) see.

*Site for Transformation* has two faces: an outer with a bleeding of red and faint stitch lines and subtle areas of embroidery and an inner that is rich with images, text (quotes and statements), embroidery and embedded thread. One end rolls over and the inside becomes partially visible as it wraps around the body and parts can be glimpsed behind and within. On initial viewing one sees a grand wrap, warm and embracing, striking in colour and enticing in texture. On closer viewing the inside and then more particularly the stitch lines become evident, a hint that there is something hidden inside. The internal embellishments (linear threads, postcard style images, snippets of text) form a kind of map, marking a time and recording experience. These are subtle references to the rich history of secret spaces within garments or the private layers of underwear; there for the luxury, amusement or privacy of the wearer.

Clothing tells us much about its wearer and there are many nuances in its language. The context, experience and identity of the co-communicator within the conversation will influence and inform what is said or understood. Like all communication, there are layers of richness, expertise and symbolism; that which in oral or written communication might be perceived as slang, jargon or regional dialect. Some forms of the language are complex,
refined or sophisticated, others are raw, spontaneous or outdated. In the process of the interaction, we may become fascinated by the skill or eloquence of the language through such features as shape, colour, style and combination. Alternatively we may seek the deeper meaning of what the clothing tells us about the other, their connections or preferences as seen through what has endured and is presented to us now. There are infinite potential connections between the person, their body, their garments and the life lived and communicated with others.
To explore the role of clothing as a structure is to engage with the physicality of our being. This is a physicality that exists in space and time and comprises of our bodies and our minds. The body is the means by which we exist, move and engage with the world while the mind guides, interacts and records those experiences. Through the interconnection of mind, body, experience, thought and the senses, we are able to locate ourselves in time, space and place.
(Merleau-Ponty 1964). As Elizabeth Grosz states, ‘The body is my being – to – the – world and as such is the instrument by which all information and knowledge is received and meaning is generated’ (1994, p.87). It is the body that grounds us in this life, through it we engage with life as we pass from one act or location to another.

**The body located**

Space is a complex term; it has many potential meanings and interpretations. When conceiving or speaking of space as location, we find ourselves also speaking of place; within the everyday vernacular the two words are often used interchangeably. Yet, as Crang and Thrift note, it is space that dominates much of contemporary discourse across the disciplines, stating that ‘Space is the everywhere of modern thought’ (2000, p.1). Space is an abstract term used to convey an idea or concept, or it is an actuality referring to a location and/or time. In contrast, Casey (1997) argues that it is place that is everywhere and that our current preoccupation with space has caused us to distort or ignore the importance of place. Place, he states, is ‘as requisite as the air we breathe, the ground on which we stand, the bodies we have’ (Casey 1997, p. ix). Casey like Tuan believes that it is not possible for us to exist outside of place,
and space is the broader entity in which we, and everything exists; whether we
know or recognize it, space exists (Tuan 1977, p. 7). Tuan argues that place
exists within space, it is what we create through connection to specific
locations within space; ‘places and objects define space,’ (ibid, p. 17). In this
context it is the interaction between these elements that creates place; as
Berger claims place is an outcome of action, ‘A place is the extension of a
presence or the consequence of an action. A place is the opposite of empty
space. A place is where an event has taken or is taking place’ (2002, p. 28). It is
unclear from Berger’s text as to whether his notion of emptiness (empty
space) is based on the idea of space as a vacuum or space as the unkown,
what Casey calls the ‘most encompassing reality that allows for things to be
located within it’ (Casey 2003, p. 404).

De Certeau (1984) argues that space is not this fixed or empty
location as presented by Berger; rather it is place that is a fixed position and
space is a construct of our practices. Furthermore it is the practices of
everyday life (humanity) that facilitate the dialogue between these two entities.
Thrift speaks of place as being ‘place space,’ a ‘human’ space, which becomes
place only through its relationship to the particular rhythms of life (2003, p. 7,
8). Massey and Thrift refer to these as ‘moment[s] in a wider relational space’
(2003, p. 280). Place is defined or defines location (the map), while space is the
construction of the intersections as experienced through the practices of life.
‘Space is a practiced place’ (de Certeau 1984, p. 117).
In this project I am drawing on the work of these writers and I do so from the perspective that place is the location of the acts or practices of life; we create place and/or we seek place. Through place we locate our actions, and ourselves; and there are as many places as there are actions for each new action creates a new sense or context of place. If we draw these together it seems that nothing we do is unplaced; that everything we do creates place. Socially, we mark places by allocating names and signposts, we create maps and boundaries, structure etc. Individually, we connect to space through collections, markers and photographs, we remember and make associations; and through awareness we make and we live in place.

Site for Transformation explores the possibility of the garment being an embodied place of location and connection. Commonly we refer to the garment as a space, a membrane that cushions, protects and modifies the body and the internal physical, emotional and intellectual aspects of the wearer. It is, however, more accurate to refer to it as a place, that which has connections, signposts and other aspects of strangeness and familiarity. According to Tuan, ‘Our own past then consists of bits and pieces… but what objects best image our being? Objects anchor time’ (1977, p. 76) These objects that he speaks of may be anything from photos, mementos and memories, household goods, clothing, songs and locations. Site for Transformation presents the garment as an object and a marker of the place-world, which through its connection to the many places of our lives becomes ‘habitus linking places and selves’ (Casey 2003, p. 411) as they evolve and accrue over time.
Souvenirs and memories

Self-actualisation and the creation of our own identity or personal style is a complex process embedded in the world that we live, the objects that we interact with and the ones that we collect or desire. Our clothing is a part of our collecting; it anchors us in time, connecting us to particular periods or phases of our lives. Over time, we build a wardrobe and in this process many items are discarded and some are retained. Through clothing, and other items such as records (CD’s), books etc. we remember people, places, loves and events. There is a nostalgia for these ‘bits and pieces’ either in actuality or in image through a photo or video. Often it is our own past that we collect, and for some people it manifests in a nostalgia for the memory and past actions or objects of others. The collector of memoirs, antiques, retro music or vintage clothing creates their own present by placing themselves in a bygone era, drawing on and reinterpreting the bits and pieces of other lives to create their own lived reality.

Susan Stewart, in her text On Longing, discusses the role of the souvenir as the marker of our travels and the means by which we create the narrative of our journey. Even though the souvenir is a derivative of a certain place (purchased at a certain time and perhaps associated with a tale of adventure, humour or intrigue about the place of purchase) it is not only the narrative of the place of purchase that we are engaging with but the narrative of the souvenir owner or collector.
Such a narrative cannot be generalized to encompass the experience of anyone; it pertains only to the possessor of the object. It is a narrative which seeks to reconcile the disparity between interiority and exteriority, subject and object, signifier and signified (Stewart 1993, p.136).

If we view the garment as a souvenir of life and experience, then it too can be viewed as narrative both singularly (the garment) and collectively (the wardrobe). Like the souvenir narrative, each item from the wardrobe tells us something about its owner and the relationship between their internal and external worlds, the evident and visual, and the deeper meaning. The language of the narrative is highly personal; it relates to each person’s experience and sits closely to the body, forming it and/or wrapping it. It is easy to imagine (perhaps) that the nature of a narrative (the telling of a story) is a monologue and that a conversation becomes a dialogue through an exchange of ideas, information or views. The narrative of the garment and the wardrobe and its wearing and presentation to the world is one of exchange, not only is the wearer telling, the viewer is listening and commenting and the wearer subsequently responds. This conversation may be actual, verbal, visual or sensed – a silent conversation of observation and being observed that takes place within the public space of communication (Stewart 1993, p.107).

Our relationship with clothing is intimate. It is based on touch; we touch it and it touches us. It is a private conversation where each forms the other. Over time the body shapes the garment, molds it, wears it out and,
through this exchange, forms us within our broader or private context.

Susan Stewart states that, ‘Of all the senses, touch is most linked to emotion and feeling. To be ‘touched’ or ‘moved’ by words or things implies the process of identification and separation by which we apprehend the world aesthetically’ (Stewart 1999, p. 31). Furthermore, it is through touch that we ‘traverse the boundary between interiority and externality’ (ibid, p. 35). Such a relationship infers a rich, dynamic and intimate relationship between object and body there is a sense of mutuality and connectivity.

*Site for Transformation* uses text, image and thread as metaphor to explore this notion of connection to place and experience; it is a garment that is both a space which forms a barrier between the body and the external (the self and other), and it is also a place that has connection and meaning. The transformation is both my understanding and my growth through experience, and change in myself from the private/secret to the public. How the viewer understands this sense of place depends on their knowledge of the experience. On the inside, the meaning is present in clear image, text and fine threads representing tales, journeys and memories. On the outside is the silhouette of lines that hints at what lies beneath. The overall aesthetic is the public perception (the connection). However, it is in the subtleties of the garment ‘text’ that we move closer to the private. Through the images and the bold marks and eventually through the subtle veins of stitch lines we see the secret; the things that those outside of us may never understand.
Reflecting on individual accounts of engaging with *Forest* and the lure of the physicality of the space, particularly the texture of the cloth, the topography of the location and the sense of enclosure, I began to comprehend the importance of this sensual connection to our conception and experience of space. *Site for Transformation* facilitated an exploration into the experience of the body in space through an analysis of the role of the garment; particularly how this clothed body is a conduit for knowledge and the means for the lived account of life. This is an account that accrues and evolves over time, and one that aesthetically engages with the world. It creates the lived reality through perception.
Transitioning through space

The body exists in space, and it is through awareness and connection to the features of that space that it is able to create a sense of place. This connection to or knowing of space is not static; it moves and changes over time, in location and through actions (de Certeau 1984). The body is mobile, and as it lives life it moves through space to new locations, or as Casey (1997) would argue, life is a transition through a series of places each with its own meaning and identity.
Kineasthetic engagement and the experience of the body as it transits through space is one of the issues guiding this inquiry. The intention of this particular aspect of the research was to explore an integrated approach to creativity and creative process, which included the physical. For most disciplines, the creative process is considered to be a static cerebral activity. However the language of the process is one of transition or movement with terms such as ‘journey’, ‘exploration’, ‘trains of thought’, or ‘the walking of ideas or concepts’ being used to describe evolutionary processes. Consciousness and cognitive activity is more than an act of the mind (Greenfield 1995), because engagement with the world and with knowledge can take many forms. In this case, I am drawing on ‘consciousness’ (rather than mind) as defined by Susan Greenfield.

Mind has a more inclusive, permanent and enduring connotation that survives the fleeting moment and is somehow tied up with our integrated and continuing personalities. Consciousness on the other hand, is suggestive of more transient state in the here and now’ (Greenfield 1995, p. 5).

Gardner (1993) presents an argument for multiple forms of intelligence. These intelligences refer to the different ways that people engage with knowledge and information, particularly evidenced through methods for problem solving (p. 60). He has categorized these intelligences under the seven categories of linguistic, logical – mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kineasthetic, intra-personal and interpersonal intelligences. There is debate as to the validity
of Gardner’s work and his categorization of intelligence and what some might call skills. However I am interested here in his recognition of the importance of movement and bodily awareness as a means for interacting and problem solving. As one of the participants in the research was a dancer, I consciously noted and observed the way that she worked with the space. Gardner’s concept of bodily intelligence is supported by Rudolf Laban’s work on dance, choreography and conceptions of a language of the body that is articulated through dance (Hodgson &, Preston-Dunlop 1990, Laban 1988). For Janice (dancer), unlike the visual artists and designers involved in this research, her body was both the means for exploration, the tool and the manifestation for creation; she traversed space in order to create in space.

Again we are brought back to the language of the body, and the body as a site of and for communication. The body engages with the world through perception and then articulates this back, either as a primary source through movement and/or as a secondary where it informs other acts and outcomes. As Merleau-Ponty states, ‘Perception becomes an ‘interpretation’ of the signs that our senses provide in accordance with the bodily stimuli, a ‘hypothesis’ that the mind evolves to explain its impressions to itself’ (Merleau-Ponty 1967, p. 39). A sentiment endorsed by Edie (1964) ‘For we call what we perceive, ‘the world’ (p. 26) and it is this world that we then articulate and relate to as we move through it and as we place ourselves within it.
'Motion allows a certain mental freedom that translates a place to a person kinesthetically’ (Lippard 1997, p. 17). Which Rebecca Solnit, referring to Edmund Husserl, puts as,

*The body is our experience of what is always here, and the body in motion experiences the unity of all its parts as the continuous “here” that moves toward and through the various “theres”* (Solnit 2000, p. 27).

**Walking**

Walking is one of the fundamental ways in which we move through space. The upright human is itself as representation of advancement and intelligence, the evolution of our species and our anatomy (Solnit 2000, p.3). In contemporary life, walking has taken on many meanings, a political act of protest, a sign of health and fitness or the luxury of time through wanderings and meanderings along streets, gardens or mountains. Walking is no longer a necessity nor is it
our primary means of transportation; we can fly, drive or ride at varying speeds. But to drive across a landscape is significantly different from walking it. To walk is to be in the landscape or the location, to touch it with our feet and all our senses. (Adams 2003). As Rebecca Solnit states, 'Walking shares with making and working that crucial element of engagement of the body and the mind with the world, of knowing the world through the body and the body through the world' (ibid, p. 29).

As Forest was an exploration of a labyrinth structure within a forest space, it was also an encounter with the body, sparking sensorial experiences and physical movement through walking. As I designed the space I was conscious of the topographical challenge; the ups and downs and potential slipperiness. I endeavoured to find the balance between safety and ease, designing the space with awareness, knowing it would be essential for the participants to focus as they walked. Feedback from the participants showed that this was the case, people were very aware of the undulations and challenges of the landscape, of having to choose their steps and watch their feet. They expressed amusement and interest in observing the feet of others, visible underneath the cloth wall, some walking fast and sure and others apprehensive. Walking within the installation represented two features of interest; walking as kineasthetic engagement and walking as metaphor for movement and transition within a creative process. The first aspect was obvious, the second emerged with reflection.
Walking and the labyrinth

Walking is of course the primary means by which people engage with labyrinths. Although there are accounts of people crawling, dancing, slithering on their stomachs through a labyrinth or tracing the design with a hand on a small model or pattern (Westbury 2001, Curry & Houston 2000, Kern 2000, Artress 1999), it is to walking that the language and terminology of engagement returns. Walking is an act and metaphor for physical interaction with the space of the labyrinth, and in this context the body in motion is the vehicle for the experience of the spirit and the mind in a process of reflection and transformation. To explore the labyrinth and its possibilities is to explore the act of walking.

Walking as a practice

Walking as a practice spans cultures and traditions, walking meditations, prayers, pilgrimages, walks for meetings, for thinking and for creating. Thus walking is a space for exploration, 'a bodily labour that produces nothing but thoughts, experiences, arrival' (Solnit 2000, p. 5). It is also a practice for transitioning; moving or transitioning from here to there or from this to that.
Tuan argues that in navigating space we are able to create awareness and locate ourselves within the bigger picture in order to create place. 'When space feels thoroughly familiar to us, it has become place. Kinaesthetic and perceptual experience as well as the ability to form concepts, are required for the change if the space is large' (Tuan 1977, p. 73). The transition then from space to place is based on, actual and virtual movement. At times walking as a practice is used as a manifestation of a desire to connect to specific places (de Certeau 1984, Tuan 1977, Thoreau 1974). For others it is used to explore randomness and the sensation of being lost (to lose the sense of place) (Caren 2002, Solnit 2000).

Solnit (2000), in her exploration of the traditions of walking, presents walking as being something more, or something other, than a means of transport. For her walking is an engagement with consciousness that is connected to rhythm. 'The rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts' (p. 5-6). This is a principle also presented by de Certeau, in his explorations of *Walking the City* where he discusses walking as being the art of mapping the city landscape, a means of navigating meaning.

*Walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc; the trajectories it “speaks.”* All the modalities sing a part in the chorus, changing from step to step, stepping in through proportions, sequences, and intensities which vary according to the time, the path taken and the walker (de Certeau 1984, p. 99).
Walking as a creative practice

When considering the practice of walking we must also consider the tradition of walking as aesthetic and creative practice.

The act of crossing space stems from the natural necessity to move to find the food and information required for survival. But once these basic needs have been satisfied, walking takes on a symbolic form that has enabled man to dwell in the world. By modifying the sense of space crossed, walking becomes man’s first aesthetic act, penetrating the territories of chaos, constructing an order on which to develop the architecture of situated objects (Careri 2002, p. 20).

Careri’s opening statement within his text *Walkscapes: Walking as an aesthetic practice* presents the changes that have facilitated the change in art and creative practice where walking has transcended from the practical to eventually becoming inspirational, and an aesthetic act unto itself. The evolution of walking as both an aesthetic and political practice has developed across cultures and contexts (Careri 2002). For example, there are Buddhist garden mediations (Cooper 2003), 18th and 19th century romantic artworks inspired by the landscape, the Dada and Surrealist deambulations in the 1920s (which explored randomness and walking events in open country towns), or the Situationist International Lettrist ‘derives’ of the 1950s (their events included texts and travel guides that were focused on random foot explorations of the urban environment).
More recently Rebecca Solnit as a contemporary academic and author states that she too walks to think, solve and create. She believes, ‘walking, ideally is a state in which the mind, the body, and the world are aligned’ (Solnit 2000, p. 5). She says of beginning work on her book *Wanderlust*, ’I sat down one spring day to write about walking and stood up again, because a desk is no place to think on the large scale’ (ibid, p. 4). In both of these cases we see walking as part of the act of creation, the preliminary or ongoing thinking space within another act of creation, writing. It is similar to the idea of the artist’s garden, such as Monet’s, where although the garden space is a creation unto itself its primary purpose is to inspire and provide subject matter for another creation. To meander in the external space is to take respite from the other activities in life and to have space and time to focus on the work of creation and creating.

Beyond the perception of walking as an aid to inspiring creative outcomes, there are also those (such as the Surrealists and Situationist International) who perceive the actual engagement with space by walking in the landscape (city or country), that is in itself an act of creating and an artistic outcome. The walking and interacting with the location is the making of meaning; this act of creation (like dance or other performances) is temporal and contextual and exists whilst being enacted. Documentation or recording of the creative act is secondary to the act of walking itself. This is the opposite of the artist’s or writer’s walk, which is used as a source of inspiration or problem solving, and as such is a lead up to the real act of creation.
In the latter part of the 20th century, a body of artists evolved who have built upon the work of the Surrealists and Situationists. The curator Julianna Engburg classifies these artists as ‘walkers’. These are artists (e.g. Richard Long) whose creative practice is embodied in walking (Engburg 2003). Walking is their creative act that may or may not be recorded, any marks or constructions or associated documentation directly relating to the walk is just that, documentation of an ephemeral act of experience. The documentation is a secondary construct and an interpretation, it is another aspect of the work, and it is not lesser nor is it the focus. The walk it is not a source of inspiration for the documentation, and the documentation is not secondary or an afterthought; they are different aspects of the one and creations unto themselves.

As I reflected on *Forest* and worked with the diverse data and information I had collated in text and image, I was drawn to the work of these transitional artists, these walkers who worked with the landscape rather than imposing foreign objects on to it. I was particularly interested in the works of Andy Goldsworthy with his modifications of space and displacement of objects, James Turrel’s light works, Nils-Udo’s place and displacements and Richard Long’s walks, markers and maps of his walks. (Long’s works were particularly influential to my thinking as I worked towards the next installation, *Desert*. This will be explained in greater depth in *The Labyrinthine*). In relation to the work of Richard Long, Francesco Careri comments, ‘Here walking is not only an action, it is also a sign, a form that can be superimposed on existing
forms, both in reality and on paper’ (Careri 2002, p.150). Long’s work embraces walking as an aesthetic practice within a space, and through connection to that space, unknown landscapes become places for the viewer. Miller (1995) argues that we are able to make meaning or sense of distant places, to feel that we know them through maps and place names. This is the effect that Long’s work has on us. We have not traveled with him to Dartmoor or taken a six-day walk across the English landscape (Careri 2002, Long & Lelie 1997) but through his artefacts and records we have a sense of where he has been and what it was like.

It is possible to draw similarities between the embodied acts of dancers, performance artists or musicians and those artists whom we may refer to as walkers. In certain ways ‘walkers’ are no different from any other artist, writer or designer. All creativity is an embodied act; it is a process of the senses and of perception. In this section of the research, I have chosen to draw on those who explore and work with the experience of transiting and marking space as the methods of their practice. These artists provided a bridge for me as I worked through the installations of this research, from the initial exploration of the labyrinth in the forest to the second labyrinthine intervention in the desert. Their methodology for moving in and through space engaged and informed me in my designing. They also manifest in many ways, within my explorations regarding the experience of the body in space through Site for Transformation, particularly the findings from Forest regarding acts of
noticing and awareness as guides for transition. These artists use these methods and they create objects that draw others into the space as well. It has similarities to the work of architects and landscape designers. However unlike the creations of these professions with their dominant focus on permanency and use, these artists are aware of the place that they are in and they notice what is there. They highlight it and work with it in order to create something new that may be as ephemeral or permanent as any other object of that place.

Pilgrimage

Any discussion of the labyrinth and labyrinthine space as spaces of transition where the body moves with intention and expectation, must address their link to pilgrimage.
Labyrinths are not merely Christian devices, though they always represent some kind of journey, sometimes one of initiation, death and rebirth, or salvation, sometimes of courtship. Some seem merely to signify the complexity of any journey, the difficult of finding or knowing one’s way... Like the stations of the cross, the labyrinth and maze offer up stories we can walk into to inhabit bodily, stories we trace with our feet as well as our eyes (Solnit 2000, p. 71).

Within my practice I have often referred to the process of creative resolution as being a journey of transition and transformation; one starts with an idea or problem and moves through a process of exploration and experimentation until reaching a point of resolution that is then refined into the final outcome. The language to describe this process is one of movement, walking and journey. Both of these issues started me researching and thinking about the terms and different acts of journey and pilgrimage and the historical context.
Labyrinth as Pilgrimage

There are differing views within the literature on the role of the labyrinth during the medieval period. It is claimed by some historians and labyrinth writers that one function of medieval church labyrinths was to serve as a substitute pilgrimage, for those could not undertake the real thing (Miller 1996). Yet there is no actual evidence to support this (Reed Doob 1999, p.119). ‘Most accounts for example, of labyrinths having served as paths of repentance and as symbolic pilgrimages are only hearsay’ (Kern 2000, p. 146). It is generally conceded that these connections are usually made with reference to the fact that a few church labyrinths, such as Chartes, were also known as the ‘chemins de Jérusalem’. This ‘Journey to Jerusalem’… could mean a penitential pilgrimage, in symbolic form, to the Holy City, which on medieval maps was placed at the centre of the world’ (Miller 1996, p. 18). Kern supports this as being one way of understanding this interpretation of the role and evolution of the labyrinth within medieval Christianity. In his research, he adds to this perspective by analysing the symbolic placement of the labyrinth at the western entrance to cathedrals and its use within ceremonies such as the Easter Dance at Chartres (Kern 2000, p. 146-147). He presents the view that in some way the labyrinth was a part of medieval religious life. Reed Doob, however, sees the connection as being one of association; ‘As classical and early Christian writing show, life can be compared to a labyrinthine journey; since life may also be a compared to a pilgrimage, the argument would go, a pilgrimage must be a labyrinth, and vice versa’ (Reed Doob 1990, 120-121).
Forest as Pilgrimage

Forest seemed to model what I thought a pilgrimage would be like. There were the changing dimensions of the path – wide, narrow, obstacles. There was the terrain – sometimes easy, sometimes difficult and it was slippery, expansive and encapsulating. I began to explore the idea in my journal.

I wonder when you are on a pilgrimage... What do you need to take with you? What is necessary? What is the minimum, the maximum?

Can you dance on a pilgrimage? You can definitely crawl or walk... but what about running, skipping or swimming? Can you fly?

What is a pilgrimage and how does it differ from a journey?

Building on my initial thoughts around pilgrimage in Forest, and in response to my travels (during the course of the research I travelled to Europe, the USA and the Flinders Ranges in South Australia), I began to explore the idea and the act of pilgrimage, particularly in reference to my travel to Chartres. I questioned what my intention was in relation to this travel. Was it a pilgrimage or a journey? Dictionary definitions, suggest that a pilgrimage is usually defined within the context of moving forward or towards. It is a journey to something, and there is an element of sacredness within the
location that is being journeyed toward (this sacredness may be religious or spiritual). In contrast, a journey is seen as travel, movement from one place to another either with or without purpose; it may be there and back and it may be a ‘life’s journey’. A journey need not be sacred, while a pilgrimage is sacred at its heart of intent. In light of this, it is possible to conclude that a journey may be something taken unto itself and it may also be a part of a pilgrimage. This interpretation opens up the possibility of the two actions being connected. If this is the case, how do we differentiate them? What makes something a pilgrimage? How do we define notions of sacredness, and what happens when we get to our destination?

The differences between the two seemed to be based upon expectation, especially expectations relating to sacredness, change or transformation and their ongoing application to lived experience (for example, the granting of a prayer by a holly saint). Location or destination is central to these ideas. The term pilgrimage implies a journey to a place or destination with an expectation of transformation or new knowledge upon arrival. There is also an assumption that you will return to your place of origin (Sumpton 1975). In contrast, a journey is less specific. You may journey to anywhere and the destination may be less important and dependent upon what you intend to do once there. Furthermore it may change as other options evolve along the way. Solnit (2000) states that,
Pilgrimage is one of the fundamental structures a journey can take – the quest in search of something, if only one’s transformation, the journey toward a goal – and for pilgrims, walking is work. Secular walking is often imagined as play...

Pilgrims, on the other hand often try to make their journey harder (pp. 46-47).

A pilgrimage is not easy, unlike holiday travel it is not meant to be enjoyable, it is the reward of achievement, of arriving at the destination with all its expectations, that drives the pilgrim on. Ann Armbrecht Forbes quotes the declaration of a fellow pilgrim, an elderly Yamphu man who is making his sixth pilgrimage to Khembalung in northeastern Nepal with her: ‘It wouldn’t be a pilgrimage if it wasn’t difficult’ (Armbrecht Forbes in O’Reilly & O’Reilly, 2000, p. 194).

Return & expectation

‘Pilgrimage is premised on the idea that the sacred is not entirely immaterial, but that there is a geography of spiritual power’ (Solnit 2000, p. 50). There is an expectation and a belief about the location or the site of the pilgrimage. Usually these are places of magic, belief and history that have the power to transform lives. Yet beyond the destination of the pilgrimage, there is also the process of the travel, the itinerary that is to be followed, and the stops to be made along the way. The nature of the itinerary with all its markers, place names and routes
exists for both a pilgrimage and a journey, as they are features of the travel experience. According to Augé, stops made during a course of travel may distract us from where we are and where we need to go (Augé 2000). For a traveller, these can be unexpected turning points of interest or opportunity, however, for a pilgrim walking an established path, this would not be the case. The stops made along a pilgrim’s path are not places of interest, rather they mark their progress and the path they have taken. This is an important aspect of their travel. To validate this there are often mementos that can be collected to verify or signify to others where they have been, and to aid them in remembering what they have achieved, and the path that they have taken (Longman 2003, Sumpton 1975). The same is also true for the traveller and the holidaymaker as evidenced through the collection of souvenirs, trinkets and photographs (Stewart 1993). For pilgrims and travellers, the marking of travel through collecting, becomes a form of validation of experience and a device for sharing, telling and reliving the experiences.
Pilgrimage or Journey?

The key characteristics that emerged from definitions of, and comparisons between, pilgrimages and journeys were: intention, expectation, destination, sacredness, variation, time and method. Conscious of the excess use of 'journey' within contemporary management and personal development jargon - where the term is used to conceptualise and justify processes of change and development - I contemplated my original question as to whether my travel to Chartres was a journey or a pilgrimage? I could see that it was potentially both. There was travel, markers, souvenirs, maps and other paraphernalia of journeys. However, the intensity of my expectations surrounding the destination, the sacredness of it for me, and my anticipation of acquired knowledge that could be applied upon my return mark it as a pilgrimage. Unlike the great religious pilgrimages, it was not arduous, but invested with much emotion and expectation.

Two people can travel to the same site and perceive the experience quite differently; for one it maybe a pilgrimage, for the other a journey. It is the emotional investment, expectation or level of engagement separates the two.
In May 2003, I had the opportunity to travel to Chartres Cathedral to see the 12-cycle medieval labyrinth and rose window. This labyrinth is one of the few surviving medieval church labyrinths still in use in Europe. Its pattern is one of the most complex, and it was a destination and a metaphor for pilgrimage. It has been influential on many of the recent labyrinth developments (Kern 2000).
Expectations

This journey to Chartres held great expectation for me. Although I had partaken in modern labyrinth walks, this was my first time to see the ‘real’ or ancient form within its traditional context. In my journal I noted:

On arriving at the town, I was timid about entering. I wanted to look at it from many perspectives, to try and take it in. I also wanted to savour the experience, to hold off. So I stopped and had a coffee, looked at a map and thought about what might be there. And then in a round about way I made my way to the cathedral. Breathtakingly it stood above me, the spire reaching high into the sky.

Three things were of particular note around this event:

My expectations and the experience of the labyrinth in context

The inaccessibility of the labyrinth due to the placement of chairs across its form

Inspired by the travel I considered further the relationship between pilgrimage and journey

My journal notes at this time express my great expectation in relation to travelling to the cathedral and seeing the labyrinth. I was particularly
keen to consider it historically and in relation to
the greater structure of the cathedral. In my
undergraduate degree I had studied the cathedral
and its rose window as an example of medieval
architecture. Within the literature on labyrinths, the
Chartres labyrinth or ‘Chartres style’ labyrinth is
often referred to for its complexity of design and
use within medieval Christianity. Seeing the
labyrinth was like experiencing theory; something
abstract from books was to become real.
The sensation was similar to the excitement we
experience at seeing the real ‘thing’ within the
museum, the gallery or while travelling. It is a
process of translation of knowledge, from idea
to experience, as related through Merleau-Ponty’s
(1964, 1993) discourse on perception and
meaning making.

On entering the cathedral, I was
struck by the fact that apart from a walkway
through the centre, there were chairs lined up
in neat rows obscuring the pattern and making
walking it impossible. I knew that this could happen
as friends and colleagues who had travelled there before me had no recollection of the labyrinth as the chairs had been in place. It seemed outrageous that such an important historic feature could be covered up and ignored within the contemporary use of the cathedral. From what I could glean from those who worked there, it seems that this is common practice. There is little formal seating in the cathedral and it was Easter. Thus I can only presume that it was an act of necessity involving space and resources.

Ironically, it was at Easter that the medieval church made use of the labyrinth. As Batscelet-Massini argues, a considerable amount of labyrinth manuscripts contain tables and calculations used to date Easter each year (Batscelet-Massini in Hern 2000, p. 146). The labyrinth was a part of medieval Church life; they were used to map time, to meditate and to celebrate the resurrection of Christ in the Easter Dance. The Easter Dance of Chartres was a ring dance performed by the canons of the cathedral around the labyrinth. The most recently ordained canon would (like the others) cover his head with his hood and pass a golden ball to the dean who would perform a three-step dance back and forth inside the labyrinth. It is assumed that he danced along the path and out again. The labyrinth since ancient times has been the symbol of the underworld and the golden ball has been a symbol of life. To dance into the centre was to dance towards the depths of hell, and to dance out was to be resurrected and on the way to heaven (Hern 2000, p. 147). Unfortunately, with the rise of the Renaissance these rich traditions of connection between
the labyrinth and the church were lost, the pagan (and some would say feminine) past was no longer desired. In Chartres, the original brass marker featuring Theseus and the Minotaur was removed and the use of the labyrinth for prayer, meditation or celebration came to an end. It is only in relatively recent years that we have seen a return of the labyrinth to mainstream Christianity (Artess, 1999).

I spent considerable time that day at Chartres, sitting and drawing glimpses of the labyrinth that were visible between the chairs. I watched as visitors walked across it unaware, and others who noticed and then tried to trace out the pattern by climbing across the chairs. Initially this breaking of the pattern through the placement of the chairs caused me much distress. I was stuck in a desire for the literal. I wanted to see where the priests had danced with their golden ball. However as the day wore on my perception changed. By being hidden, the labyrinth became exposed to me. I became aware of the act of ‘noticing’ within the space; what draws people in, and what gains people’s attention. Through this my concept of the labyrinth expanded. Informed by the writing of Penelope Reed Doob (1990), I returned to the ‘idea of the labyrinth’; those social and culturally shared principles that make a labyrinth, such as ‘dualities of artistry vs. chaos, order vs. confusion, admirable complexity vs. moral duplicity,’ (Reed Doob 1990, p. 5). These principles then translate to our perception and interpretation of the labyrinthine.
The labyrinth of Chartres is much more than a complex pattern within the floor. It has a rich history of religious and cultural change, as represented through accounts of grand ceremonies and religious and spiritual expectations (Kern 2000, Miller 1996). As an historic site and point of reference for modern day mythology, the Chartres labyrinth has great significance. However these features and associations do not make the lived space of the labyrinth that I sought to understand. As I sat with the labyrinth and focused on its details,
I tried, like the woman I watched clambering over chairs, to map the elements to create the whole. I believed that the only way to know the labyrinth was to encounter its complete structure, and preferably, to walk it. Neither of these acts were possible on this day. I only had access to Tuan’s ‘tiny bits and pieces’ of the whole, the fragments of the places I could connect to and I had to imagine the grander meanderings of the labyrinth. Like the structuring of place within the grander context of space through the visible fragments, I imagined, mapped and connected to each, and as I moved through or around the chairs, I was able take in the grander landscape of the pattern on the floor.

In Forest I had created a labyrinth; a structure placed in space. I used the traditional 5-cycle pattern to mark the space, and from there I played with elements of the forest and the form to create an aesthetic experience around the labyrinthine space. At this time, I did not fully realize what the term ‘labyrinthine’ meant, as in my travel to Chartres I was firmly placed within the literal. I thought of the labyrinth as an actual structure, a literal pattern. Through engaging with the visible fragments of the Chartres labyrinth I opened up to Reed Doob’s (1990) ‘idea of the labyrinth’. This idea embraces the labyrinthine – that which contains the features of the labyrinth but is not bound by its actual form. This is a space of complexity and discovery, of engagement and noticing, confusion and meanderings towards something. Free from the constraints of a structured walkway with an entrance, a centre and a clearly marked and consistent periphery, the person who engages with
the labyrinthine is not bound by the expectation of return or of following a set path. At Chartres, I and the other travellers on that day, could not engage with the literal labyrinth, we could only notice features and fragments and, from that vantage point we could map our own.

Moving to the labyrinthine

As I moved through this exploration of the embodied experience of reflection and creative practice in relation to labyrinthine space, I came to the point of knowing that the labyrinthine space that I sought to understand was something other than I had anticipated. Through *Site for Transformation*, I had engaged with the experience of the body in space and the ways it moves and relates to the locations that it is in. Of particular significance was the construction of place and the realization that when we connect to a location we create place, and it is in place, that we find and create meaning.
My encounter with the labyrinth of Chartres cathedral and my investigation and contemplation on the experience of pilgrimage were vital to the development of this project. On a pilgrimage, we move or transition from one place to another and we do so with expectation of change or transformation. There may be expansion or deepening, a bringing in or a letting go, but no matter which, it is with expectation and commitment that we engage with a process that is challenging or even difficult. My travel to Chartres had many of the features of a pilgrimage; it was sacred and I had great beliefs or expectations of enlightenment as a result. This occurred but wasn’t what I had expected. I would not have thought that the simple fact of chairs being placed across a floor; a practical action to increase seating at a time of increased visitors, would cause such a major shift in my work and in my understanding. A circular form fractured by linear rows was broken apart and thus the labyrinth expands to the labyrinthine.

These key themes helped form and are further explored in the second landscape installation of the research, Desert.
The Labyrinthine
Desert was the second installation of the project. Like Forest, it was both a landscape installation and an event where in research was undertaken in conjunction with others. Oratunga Homestead was the site selected for Desert; it is approximately six-hours drive north of Adelaide, South Australia. Its remote location and contrasting aesthetic opened
up many new challenges within the research. The design was a response to what had been ascertained from the project thus far, particularly the idea of the labyrinthine, and the use of mapping and ‘noticing’ as tools for navigating and connecting to space. Desert was an exploration of these themes within an experiential context of working with the participants and the practice of making. The interview questions and conversations expanded on what had been realised in the first phase of the research.

The event involved a series of three experiences within the location and took place over three days, June 15-17, 2003. These were: a river and ridge walk on the eastern boundary of the property to take in the vastness of the location, a labyrinthine installation in the creek running beside the shearer’s quarters for approximately 2km, and finally a 5km walk through the installation to Glasses Ruins.

I travelled to the location in March 2003 to investigate the site and explore the possibilities for the design of the installation. Desert was built and the event took place in June 2003. I arrived at the property two days before the participants to build the installation. All the participants travelled from Melbourne. Consistent with Forest, a significant part of the preparatory work for the installation was logistics - including the planning and building of the installation, getting people to the site and housing and feeding them. During the event we cooked together and ate together and, as with Forest, there was a strong sense of collective endeavour.
Aim:

In preparing for the installation I again returned to the initial research questions and expanded on these to include what had emerged from *Forest* and *Site for Transformation*. In this installation my aim was:

To explore the perception of labyrinthine space within the expansive and arid environment of the South Australian desert

To engage with specific locations on the property

To explore the nature of the labyrinthine and the labyrinth through a landscape installation

To explore ‘noticing’ as a design principle within space and to draw on tools for navigating space as a means for facilitating this

To further investigate how people experience the relationship between creativity, reflection and labyrinthine space

To invite the participants to interact with the space (all locations) and to respond creatively if desired

To observe, discuss and reflect on experiences of the location

To explore the phenomenon of place as a construction of space
The site, Oratunga Homestead within the Flinders Ranges, is located within a region that has had historic significance within the evolution of ‘Australian’ art and culture. This region has been the subject of many creative works, exhibitions and publications, from the rock markings of the indigenous inhabitants, and the paintings and drawings of the 19th and early 20th Century (for example, the works of EC Frome and Hans Heysen) to the work of contemporary artists...
such as Jeffery Smart and Anthony Hamilton (Bunbury 2002). When I first encountered the location, this history and the very nature of the landscape overwhelmed me; like others before me I was seduced by its beauty, vastness and richness of colour and texture. I was fortunate that again I was given access to this location, that the owners supported my research work and that they were happy to have an installation remain as long as nature allowed.

*Desert* was a significantly different installation from *Forest*. Whereas *Forest* was a literal interpretation and creation of a labyrinth in a landscape, *Desert* was an exploration of the *labyrinthine* and endeavoured to work with, rather than on, the landscape. The desert was selected as the location for the second installation as I wanted to explore a location that was vastly different from the forest; a location that was the antithesis of the confinement and ‘mystery’ of the enclosed forest space. The desert with its connotations of openness, vastness and infinite horizon, seemed to have potential as such a space. I anticipated that the more open and exposed nature of the desert environment would suggest and reflect a more ‘open’ understanding of the labyrinth and an exploration of the labyrinthine.
There are two dominant discourses in relation to ‘Australian’ cultural perceptions of the desert. One is the desert as a site of beauty, life and change. The other is of the desert as a static or monotonous place of nothing, a landscape void of ‘life’ (Haynes 1998). This project has explored both of these perspectives; the conception of the desert as void or ‘other’ to forest, and the experience of the desert as a place of beauty and transient life. These perceptions of the desert are cultural and historical, informed by western, and particularly European, interpretations and experiences of the landscape and civilization, with little or no reference to indigenous traditions or culture. Engagement with these discourses has been in relation to how they may model or inform creative practice and the conception of labyrinthine space.
The popular western image of the desert is of an arid place dominated by, distance, extremes, isolation, vulnerability, death (or at least few life forms) and illusion (mirages or the blurriness of sun haze). Socially and culturally, the desert is often presented as a place of nothingness or emptiness, a monotonous ‘blank’ behind the coastal sites of ‘civilised’ dwelling (Haynes 1998). This is the desert as a desolate place of punishment, transition and exploration, what Ross Gibson describes as the ‘awesome opponent’ (1992, p.69). There are stories of exile and retreat, historic accounts of explorers endeavouring great journeys across unknown arid plains of Australia, indigenous culture and traditions, and modern narratives of survival, enlightenment or coming of age (for example recent Australian Films such as, ‘Japanese Story’ (2003), ‘Rabbit Proof Fence’ (2002) and ‘Holy Smoke’ (1999)). In the visual arts there are two dominant representations of the desert. There are those who perceive the desert as a place of great beauty, possibility and respite from the modern life (in Australia this often references indigenous culture) (Haynes 1998). Then there is the presentation of the desert as an empty canvas, where artists, such as James Turrell and Robert Smithson move earth like paint across linen to create their artworks, which are more accurately referred to as earthworks. In different traditions, the desert is known as a space and a void (Haynes 1998, Spirn 1998); it is a place and a metaphor, and it is the void that most notably sets it apart from the density and thickness of the forest. However, even in its ‘otherness’ it bears similarities to the forest. As noted by
Haynes (1998), Gibson (1998), Drew (1994) and Harrison (1992) the desert shares with the forest the common perception of being a place of the unknown, of time and timelessness and of possibility; both the desert and the forest are locations outside of modern civilization comprising ecological and at times mythological systems unto themselves.

The Flinders Ranges

The desert of this research is that of the Flinders Ranges. The desert of the Ranges does not conform to the popular image of the desert in the way that the surrounding flat open expanses of sand and salt lakes do. This desert is a ragged mountainous formation, billions of years old with craggy rock faces, saltbush, cypress trees, waterholes and occasional flowing creeks (Bunbury 2002). Like the desert of the plains it is a harsh and isolated landscape with searing heat, an inhospitable nature, breathtaking beauty and a foreboding sense of isolation. Unlike the open expanses of desert sand, there is a sense of life; there are animals, birds, plants, wild flowers and markers of human engagement including roads, signs, campsites and homesteads (used and ruins). Consistent for both of these desert landscapes, humans are transients, even the oldest homesteads are new and our ability to survive or exist seems subject to the whims of nature.
Water is essential to all life and in the desert it is ever present, mostly through its absence. It is the absence of water that most defines the desert space and separates it from the forest. In the Flinders Ranges, trees, plant and animal life mark the presence of water and, for brief periods, it actually flows down creek beds and rivers until finally sinking into the artesian waterbeds. Thus this desert landscape has the markings of ‘life’, however fleeting. The climate is extreme and water is an infrequent visitor yet always leaves traces of its presence and thoroughfares.

Expectations, scale and memory

My decision to make the leap from forest to desert was at first a theoretical one. It had been many years since I had traveled to such a location. I was designing and thinking about the space through association; through the images, texts and the accounts of others who had been there. On the initial site visit I was daunted by the beauty, size and scale of the landscape. There were 75 square kilometers to choose from:

*Where with so many possibilities would I place my labyrinthine structure and how could I relate to the scale of the landscape?*
My conclusion was that I needed to embrace the enormity and to focus on the details. On scouting the site with the owners, I observed that this was indeed what we did. We moved from commenting with awe on the greater landscape (the mountains and their beauty) to marveling at the subtleties of detail and colour of small stones. Both of these aspects of the location (the grand and the intimate) were important for understanding the labyrinthine qualities of this place.

The installation was expanded into a series of activities. I decided to use the dry creek beds as paths within the landscape. These are natural thoroughfares that guide movement, and change and structure the landscape. There form also varies from being open and expansive to enclosed and intimate. Most of the time they are dry; only with significant rain do they flow for a short time and then dry up again. The rains of the Flinders Ranges can be intense and when the rivers flow the force of the water is immense. For instance, in the riverbeds huge trees are wedged between others, lifted and caught at hip height, sheets of iron are bent like paper or molded around rocks. Piles of leaves, twigs and other matter form horseshoe patterns along the ground. These structures have been pushed and pulled into shape over time by the force of the water when the creeks flow.

The ability of water to define and construct landscape is significant. Anne Whiston Spirn (1998) speaks of the language of the landscape,
the structures and the stories. This is a language that evolves over time and water (like wind) is essential in its formation. She writes, ‘Water flowing, like sun shining, shapes and structures landscape’ (ibid. p. 88). In surveying this landscape, the creek beds, with their role in creating the grander landscape narrative, seemed to be the most appropriate site for the installation and my exploration into creative practice and location.

Designing the labyrinthine

For this installation, I drew on the artists who worked with the landscape, traversed and marked it. I was particularly inspired by the landscape installations of Richard Long, Andy Goldsworthy and Nils-Udo. Each of these artists interacts with the landscape in very different ways, and I chose to draw upon their marking and mapping practices for this work. In addition, the cairns and other stone markers placed across the property by various visitors fascinated me.
These simple yet complex objects were there to aid in locating and identifying location and for signifying that someone had been there. From this I began to explore other ways that we mark space and locations using lines, colour, and scale, as well as the placement or displacement of objects and the exposure and/or concealment of features or issues. These were to be my references as I mapped and marked the labyrinthine path and the event as a whole.

A design challenge within the construction of the space was to translate the experience of the labyrinth centre into a turning point within a linear walk. I had decided to unravel the labyrinth, to create a labyrinthine path that possessed the features of the labyrinth but was opened up. Thus I returned to my earlier considerations of the path within the labyrinth.

This ‘central’ space of contemplation would be the turning point for walking back up the creek bed. As I walked the creek bed, I looked for a space that had a sense of containment and felt like a good place to stop. There was no set distance, nor any pattern to follow. The point selected was a wide turn in the creek bed, one side had an open embankment and a cliff wall stood on the other. It had a sense of safety and turn around which was appropriate for my intentions.
Awareness and noticing

Exploring the themes of noticing and awareness and the acts of mapping and marking of space, I went about creating the labyrinthine path that the others would follow. One aim was to explore the markers within the space to facilitate the act of noticing and engagement in the manner suggested by Mason (2002). To do this, I drew on the various tools we use in the landscape to mark spaces with rock trails, stone markers or cairns, lines drawn in sand, and the clearing and moving of rocks or debris. I worked with the environment and used what was there. The only ‘foreign’ substance introduced into the space was blue builder’s chalk that I used to indicate my markers. Using the chalk was a difficult decision for me. While wanting to retain the integrity of the location, I also didn’t want the experience to be difficult for the participants. I was also conscious that engaging with the installation could become like a treasure hunt and I endeavoured to find a balance between the obvious and the subtle in the placement and construction of the markers.

The decision to make the walk 2km long was a combination of chance and planning. After the initial site visit I had intended to make the installation considerably longer. On arriving at the site and starting to mark and build the space, I walked the creek bed and found what I thought would be a good location had been found for the symbolic centre of the labyrinth. As discussed in Forest and Chartres the return journey or way out is an
important part of the research. It enacts closure of the experience of the labyrinth. Although aware of the influence of the undulations of topography when designing a landscape installation, I was not prepared for the extreme physical challenge of making one’s way up a creek bed for approx 3.5kms. I no longer focused on the space but only on my physicality and pain. This was pushing kinaesthetic engagement too far. My aim was not to exhaust my participants. Consequently, the next day the distance was shortened to a more manageable length.

**Three walks**

The final experience at *Desert* comprised of:

**Day one** – A walk up a creek bed to a ridge on the eastern boundary. From this point you can see all of the property, Wilpena Pound and Lake Torrens. It provides an aerial perspective of the lunges of the landscape, its enormity and the grandeur of mountains and flat plains. The intention was for us to experience the greater labyrinthine context of the location and the experience of walking up a creek bed.

**Day two** – This comprised of the walk along my installation and the invitation to respond. The walk approximately entailed a 2km section of the...
creek bed that runs from the shearers’ quarters, past the homestead and then down towards Oratunaga Creek. People were invited to interact with the space as they wished and to return as often as they like. The day included follow up group discussion and individual general questions regarding the experience and their impressions.

Day three – Participants were guided on a 5km walk from the shearers’ quarters, along the installation, past the original location for the turn around and finally to Glass’s Ruins. The aim was for people to experience the depth of the landscape, the meanderings of the creek bed and its sense of flow towards the greater river. It was followed by individual conversations with the participants.

In addition to the main installation, I also drew a large 7-cycle labyrinth in a flat area underneath the windmill. This was presented as a reference point for people who wanted to explore the two different interpretations of the labyrinth.
**The Event Design:**

The model for data collection in this installation was similar to that used in *Forest*. The methods used were:

- Design and construction of a labyrinthine landscape installation
- Observations of participants as they engaged with the various spaces
- Participant involvement in the three activities, group discussion and series of three interviews
- Participant creation of artefacts through dance, image and object
- My reflections and thoughts through journal entries from the first visit through to my return home in June

**Engagement with the literature**

For this installation, I repeated the process of engaging in three conversations with each of the participants as in *Forest*. This involved questioning over the three days and then follow up question a week later.

Participants lived together in the shearers’ quarters for the duration of the event. Consequently, there were more opportunities for casual discussion about the experience than there was for *Forest*. These conversations have been drawn upon and documented within the discussion and analysis.
The Participants:

There were seven participants in this event including one of my supervisors and myself. Due to time and distance constraints, it was not possible to have more participants. Five of the participants were involved in *Forest*. All had visited the Bonnie Doon site and been exposed to that installation.

- **Janice Burgess**  Dancer, choreographer
- **Grant Cheyne**   Architect
- **Cheryl Cookson** Psychiatric Therapist
- **Liz Grist**      Instructional designer (new media and video)
- **Shane Hearn**    Graphic designer
- **Gini Lee**       Interior and landscape designer; Academic

The smaller group of participants allowed for greater depth of sharing and comment; there was a sense of intensity, intimacy and trust.
The questions that guided the conversation:

For the second interview the following questions were used as a starting point for the conversation. They differed from those used in Forest and were directed at the emerging themes of the research.

How do you understand or what does the term labyrinthine space mean for you?
How does this relate to my installation? To the greater location?
Could you describe how these labyrinthine spaces have influenced your experience of reflection and creativity?
How would you describe your creative practice?

For the third interview I added the following question. In contrast to Forest, at Desert all the participants created something and I was interested to know what they made and why.

Could you please tell me about what you made or created in relation to my installation?
What emerged

Group discussion

On completion of the walk on day two, a group discussion was held between the participants and myself. A strong theme emerging from this conversation was the participants awareness of my expectations and needs in terms of this research. Negotiating the space and identifying the markers was also of concern.
On the installation walk, people were conscious of it not being a treasure hunt but at the same time couldn’t help thinking “there’s one!” (Grant)

There were differing responses to the space, my design and placement of the markers. They found them to vary throughout the space and commented that they drew their attention to other aspects of the space. Grant assumed that each marker was endeavouring to draw one’s attention to something that they were there to try and make you look at something, to make you stop. “So I stopped and did a turn of 360 degrees. I found it very interesting that as I went further into it, I was conscious that I was walking downstream and tributaries joined in. And I became interested in not just what went down the river but also what went across ‘the slate’, the tributaries, trees or an old piece of fencing wire and the debris – these are the things that went across... The markers and the design drew you away from the grand vista to the details, breaking the view like when we climbed up the hill yesterday.”

Shane felt that it had a transient feel of contemplation. “The transient materials are like the transient nature of thoughts and the detritus of thoughts.” Janice felt that there was subtleness about the turning point. That it was naturally serene and “you could trust that you were there”.

People had a strong reaction to the direction of moving with the water or walking against it. “it’s easy when you were going downstream... yesterday we were going upstream and I felt like a salmon, whereas, I really
enjoyed today being able to go with the flow down the river” Janice. As well as the experience of walking in the two directions there were the two views. Shane observed, “On going down you saw all the debris that has collected but when you walk back up it looks clear you don’t see it. The two views – what you see going is quite different to what you see on the return.” 

As everyone, the participants in Desert had experienced Forest, there were comparisons drawn between the two locations, the design of the space and the experience of walking. Like Forest, much of the conversation focused on the aesthetics of the location and the installation, people spoke of the beauty and their associations. People often made reference to Forest and their experiences there. Reiterations of what emerged in previous conversation (and discussed in my earlier chapter) have not been included in here.
Individual conversations

Consistent with the feedback from Forest, the aesthetics of the experience had the greatest influence on the participants and their reflections; many comments related to both my installation and the greater landscape. The design of this experience actively engaged them in a contemplation of the broader landscape as being a labyrinth unto itself, and the relationship of my installation to this. Other influences on people’s experiences included the dynamics of the group, the distance and remoteness of the site and the length of time that we were there. This was particularly evident in relation to thoughts around creativity, reflection and practice. As I worked through the feedback, I clustered the responses around the themes of space, creativity and reflection, and their creative practice. I have also included images and descriptions of the artefacts they created.
The notion of space dominated participants’ comments, particularly the aesthetics of the environment and their experience of navigating it intellectually and physically. The rocky terrain of the creek bed challenged people in their walking, making it necessary to pay careful attention to each step, particularly as they moved further along the path. Some felt that this modelled their life while others felt that it made them aware of where they were and what they
were doing. Cheryl described: “It would have been different for me if it had been smooth, the rocks made me very aware of my age and my fears, my fear of falling. These fears have been with me all my life: fear of being physical, of being creative. So that really confronted me... I was tunnel visioned. Occasionally I looked at the bigger picture but mostly I focused on my feet and what was underneath me. This stopped me from looking at the bigger picture much like my life – surviving to the next day.”

Shane was immediately aware of the sense of movement within the space and interpreted it as ‘flow’, flowing in space and ideas flowing. “The thing that most immediately happened to me was a feeling of flow and the way we moved down the river. It got me thinking about how I might work with the space... the ideas were really flowing... collecting, making collections, collecting one’s thoughts and then I thought of the bower birds, collecting. I sketched certain elements as I walked down.”

Aesthetics and Associations

Participants had a variety of responses to the nature or aesthetics of the space, its beauty and transience, and this was often referenced to time and water. The water that wasn’t there and the marks and structures left by the water.
For Liz the water was always present, it almost haunted her and made it uncomfortable for her to stay in the creek bed. "The space has so much in it, so much to visualize – rocks, trees etc. It is very evident to me that lots of water had been there. I had a sense of prohibition because we shouldn’t be there because it is meant to be a place of water... a waterway. There was this absence of water. On the way back I stopped and wrote, then I was keen to get out."

Janice summarized the experience as being one of transience, "The sense of time is endless and the marks of time are all around and the marks that you made that were you and they had only just happened and they are transient." Through this she made connections between the details of my installation and the greater landscape. This response was evident for many of the participants and reflected Shane’s comments from the initial group discussion mentioned above. Observations were often framed in the language of the personal and consequently people referenced other aspects of their lives in their responses. For Liz, it was in relation to her childhood as, "Your space is a part of the greater space and this place has a lot of connections for me going back to my childhood. The labyrinth makes you stop and actually look at one part of this whole place – one section of all the space." Cheryl expressed this in relation to physical vulnerability. "I feel like yesterday’s space was like a microcosm of the whole space. Every walk we have done has been challenging, beautiful, harsh, interesting, scary... Everything we have been/done
has been like that. On the first day when we were walking down the mountain I was really scared. But this whole thing I see it everywhere... I see this old female form everywhere here – old and interesting... never ending.”

As I considered these responses I could see a common thread within the discussion. There were constant links between the personal and the broader context. It was reminiscent of my observation of interacting with the space, the way in which we move from the grand vista and comment on the details.

**Navigation**

Navigating the space and the greater location was a strong theme in the conversations. People had an ongoing sense of wanting to try and make sense of their location within the greater landscape rather than just in relation to the installation, which seemed to be far more tangible and manageable for them.

The design of the space and the use of the markers within the creek bed created a very different sense of space, which was often compared to the formal structure of *Forest*. "There wasn't a sense of being lost in this labyrinthine space and I was much more me (compared to Forest). Therefore, I was a lot more objective and, looking at the design... I didn't feel like I got lost in it... in a sense of space. But I got lost in it in a sense of time. What could have
happened to have created these structures along the way?” Janice. Shane commented that, “This one didn’t look like a labyrinth, it was more a path... which I guess is interesting, since I guess that is what labyrinths are all about, walking a path.”

As a dancer, Janice’s main method of perceiving space is through the experiences of her body and she consciously places herself in relation to things. For Desert, her spatial orientation was from above she had an aerial sense of the location. The walk to the ridge the first day helped with this and she would climb hills when she could to get a better sense of where she was. On placing herself within the space she said, “that this time it came from being above. For me it was very much about this because there wasn’t that intricate backwards and forwards... that illusion of space. There was a sense of time and that pathway... in time... history.”

The markers were the design device used to guide people in the space. Subsequently they were the main tool used by people to understand and to interact with it. Grant particularly made use of them as literal points of reference; they raised his awareness of the space both where they were and beyond. “The markers prompted me to look at things differently and prompted me to do the same so that I can draw attention to details... So I guess I see the markers as guiding me through and as hinting that something was going on. Otherwise I would have stumbled around. It makes you observant, it makes you
look around and you discover what is there...and there was a lot of stuff, but I could only really see it if I stood still. So, on a number of occasions, I just stopped. When your moving part of your concentration is pre-occupied with balance. When you’re actually standing your eyes can actually take things in... when you’re not actually looking ahead, you can look around... a little bit more perceptive... when moving along if something prompts you to step you are able to see more.”

There was a significant amount of commentary by people on the difference in the experience of the walk in and out. Shane was conscious of the different perspective of the space in relation to the flow of the water and the debris. The way in was dominated by the piles of matter pushed up against or around trees, whereas, on the way out these weren’t visible. The space appeared cleaner or clearer. Generally it was felt that on the way in, there was also a sense of newness and discovery. The turning point (the centre) was restful, but the walk out was for most a necessity. Cheryl was very emotionally affected by the experience and cried all the way out. Liz was in a hurry to get away from the water. Shane and Grant both expressed that the interest had gone at this point and it was time to do something. “The way back wasn’t as interesting as the way down. It was like leaving the theatre after you have seen the performance and not so much a discovery. And the landscape becomes more austere as you come back.” Grant
Labyrinthine Space

The first interview question focused on labyrinthine space, what it was, how it would be defined and how the participants related this to Desert? People’s answers referenced the broader space of the property as well as the installation. They also talked about how their thinking had changed and evolved since Forest. Comparisons were made between the different forms of the labyrinth, from the literal yet confusing nature of Forest, to the sense of flow and pathway that they experienced at Desert. It was felt that a labyrinthine space could be literal in the sense that it could be a structure, however more often the labyrinth related to experience, perception and thinking.

Janice felt that a labyrinthine space emphasized the experiences of disorientation and orientation, which she summarized as mapping.

“It (labyrinthine space) is the space that you can’t necessarily locate yourself in. So it might be that you are suddenly searching through marks or spots that you can refer to... it’s a space that you are contemplative in and I try to stay in the moment in. The domestic part of my life never goes there... The Flinders Rangers was completely different to the other one. ‘Desert’ was much easier to locate yourself in geographically because the pathway itself was very apparent. There were different layers and different things happened as you scratched the surface the deeper it got. There was a depth to it, if you were reaching with the space
but the actual pathway was quite clear. This probably gave me more time to interact with the space.” For her this time, the labyrinth was “in my head,”

Liz thought that her understanding “has changed a lot since last time. A labyrinthine space is a space to take a journey... to reflect, to discover and to create, or to do whatever you want. And once you get to the central space there, you go into your inner self and the journey out is the discovery of what you have learnt within. I still think it has a lot to do with reflection and with discovery about yourself – your restrictions, about being in a space, interpreting, intuitively going through the emotions of allowing things to come up and then working through them.”

There were differing perceptions of the shape or form of a labyrinth. For Grant, “A labyrinthine space is something that creates order in chaos. It is an existing space that has something done to it that changed it and usually that change creates some order.” The labyrinthine was considered to be more than a form or pattern, it was also a way of thinking. Cheryl combined these elements and felt that a labyrinth is, “somewhat circular and that creates an environment for one to contemplate in.” Liz had moved to a very self-determined perspective of its form and use. “It is a space that you want to follow; and there is a start and end but how you get there can be your own interpretation. I see it now as a space that is marked by whatever markers that tell you where you want to go, it can be any shape, straight or round.”
Within the conversations there was a general consensus that the installation, and the entire experience of Desert, was labyrinthine and that the installation did evoke feelings of being in a labyrinth even though it wasn’t the literal pattern. Even though the path was straighter and they could see, to a certain extent, where they were going there was a sense of needing to locate themselves within the space. This was consistent with Forest, where people expressed feeling disorientated and had tried to locate themselves within the structure.

In addition to the conversation about my work, there was ongoing discussion throughout our stay on the nature of the place that we were in. This included the changing features of the landscape, the distance and sense of isolation, the antiquity of the land and the richness of its harsh beauty. In Forest, the physicality of the installation and the forest itself had dominated the feedback. In Desert, there was less mention of the environment within the direct questioning, yet it was a part of almost every other conversation. There was a subtle tension around what should be spoken of and when. As the greater location was acknowledged as being appropriate for the inquiry, it was also left aside as something different or separate from the installation, which for most consisted only of the markers.
Creativity and Reflection

The second question I asked the participants was about how their experience of *Desert* might inform their perception of the relationship between reflection and creativity? Again responses moved between personal associations, professional practice and the installation.

As is evident in all of the responses, the experience at *Desert* was intense. For Cheryl, *“It was confronting and beautiful.”* She has a commitment
to a reflective practice and therefore sees "an enormously strong relationship between creativity and reflection. Any creativity that I have is through reflection and I suppose I see that my creative process is creating myself. At this point in my life if I don’t reflect there is no hope of me being creative."

In contrast Shane had a very different perspective. He didn’t feel that there were strong ongoing connections. "I separate these experiences from my daily work. I don’t see that there would be a connection. When I am in the labyrinth, it is a different creativity to what I do day-to-day. What I do day-to-day is creative but mechanical... It influences me at the time more than in the long term. But I certainly have memories and I look back at Bonnie Doon but I’m not sure how I apply it to my day-to-day work but I don’t contemplate enough with that work. It comes quickly to me. I don’t sit and think so I find it hard to translate what we do with the labyrinthine spaces to that."

Janice and Grant’s definitions of creative practice were again diverse, as distant perhaps as could be expected from a dancer and architect. Janice’s creative practice is about her body as experienced in space and time and her dance pieces within the creek bed were an exploration of this. "In relation to reflection I would say yes. In the sense of bringing myself together, and the way that the body and geography work together. My body has a map and as I mapped that labyrinth there was some sort of connection objectively between my body and the landscape. I could see the bones in the rocks and the
sand as the soft fleshy parts of my body. So it was creative space for someone who creates through the body and this was part of the lycra sacks – membrane."

Grant felt that it was about the external and the intellectual. "Creativity is about observation... about making a comment (these are influenced by what we did yesterday). It inspired me to notice and discover – it is about the application. I don’t think that creativity is about doing much. It is about the obvious and making it interesting. Some activities do it better than others. Giving things meaning or new meaning, making people look at things in different ways, inspiring them. Doing that is creative through the skills of observation. If you don’t observe then it is very difficult to be creative.”

Both Janice’s and Grant’s explanations open up significant possibilities for considering the act of creating, as they made links to the various ways in which we engage with the world around us. Again, as became evident through Forest, reflection was not something that people actively or self-consciously practiced.
Building on the discussion surrounding the experience of reflection in relation to the labyrinth, I then asked the participants to describe their creative practice. Responses were noticeably different between those who considered themselves as having a creative profession and those who didn't.

Janice continued to describe her experience as they related to and through her body and she is aware that how she sees and does things is...
different from other people, particularly non-dancers. “I definitely work in my body and my creativity is, even when I write or interact, it is with my body. And I try to take that with me. I guess if you’re not a body person it would be different. I get lost in my thoughts in my head and sometimes I can do that to disastrous levels... When I work I see things and the way I interact with things, when I walk along a beach, the way that I live. Everyone assumes that everyone works the same. I used to assume that everyone was the same in the way that people relate to an experience but a lot of people don’t... they don’t do that at all.”

Grant and Shane both spoke about the contextual nature of their practice, especially in relation to use or application. As designers their work, which is their creative practice is based on problem solving and providing solutions. Grant explained that this is what gives him the impetus to work, “Personally I can only be creative if someone puts a problem in front of me. Then I have something to work with. I’m not creative by my own devices. I need a problem to solve. I usually don’t set them for myself. I can’t imagine myself being creative without a practical problem.” For Shane creativity is about the exploration and “generation of ideas”. He states that in his work as a graphic designer, this is very limited. “I am confident that I can pull my answers out of my head. It (my paid work) is formulaic. With my other artwork I don’t allow myself to do to much of that at the moment...This is very different to what I normally do – here I am more prepared to make an effort. There isn’t a lot of
space in my life to be creative outside of my working life.” In his answer, there was a sense that for him there was a difference between free or non-paid creative activity and that which is executed for clients as part of work.

Liz found answering the question very difficult. She didn’t believe that she was creative. After some discussion she began to think that she did manifest creative acts and artefacts in her work and private life. “I really have a problem with separating being creative with being arty. I always thought that creative people were artists, sculptors, painters etc. But I do creative things, my work, cooking, my home.”

Cheryl was able to bridge the gap quite clearly between her personal and professional creativity. However, for her it seemed that the real creativity was in the realm of the personal. “For a long time I have put it into my work and into my home, particularly when I was doing the therapy work. Everyday I had to create things that others people would engage in/with. At the moment I am being creative in my house and in my garden... My creativity isn’t about something that I want people to look at, it’s about me peeling my onion. It’s not something attractive for people to see, it is about my centre.”

How people within the group experience their daily creativity was markedly different. Furthermore it appeared that those who work in creative careers seem to be less inclined to embrace their professional practice as creative acts. At the same time, those who hadn’t received formal training
within the creative industries were less confident in their creativity; it was something to do or to apply rather than being an unquestioned method of engagement. There is no single method for classifying or categorising creative practice or process, each person, each context and each discipline approaches things differently.
At the third interview when we had returned to Melbourne, I asked the participants to tell me about the pieces that they made whilst at Oratunga. I had images and my own interpretations, and there had been brief mention of these within conversations with me and with each other. However, I wanted to know what their intentions for the piece were and how the labyrinth may have inspired them. My intention here was to gain some greater clarity about the
artefacts from their perspective. In many ways, the things that they made mirror how they describe their creative practice.

In *Forest*, responses by making had been minimal. At *Desert*, this was prominent. Responses varied from the formal responses within the creek bed to the instinctive, such as small collections of rocks, bones and other objects from the property, which then appeared outside dormitory doors or on tables within the shared accommodation. There was also the ongoing photographing of the various sites and the landscape details. We were all aesthetically engaged and enticed by the location and were attempting to capture, interpret and come to terms with it. Then there was the telling of tales, people told stories of other travels and other experiences such as childhood memories - all inspired by the landscape and the homestead.

The following are the participant descriptions of their work. Like the answers within the conversations these too were responses to the installation and greater location. However, unlike the conversations they were self-directed or initiated response –observations, comments or reflections on the space.
Liz

I didn’t want to do anything there. I didn’t want to make something. I did do the bird’s nest and it felt ok because it was off the ground, it would be saved. Anything on the ground would be washed away because of the water. In making it, I was inspired by the debris along the creek bed how they were kinds of nests against trees formed by the water. I also made a collection of things that I found here outside my room, I kept adding to it, animal bones and rocks etc.
Janice

Well my work was immediate and gone... the other little structures may last or pass in the next rain but what is there when we walked today will be there forever... there is some sense of time. With that, the whole idea of mapping came to mind, of mapping where the leaves were piled up high, or the rocks held back by obstructions and that was a real marker for me amongst our markers. Emphasis on marks in time and that these markers mark time, that is what gave me the sense of looking down over it. The illusion was to be with the layers of time.

I observed the space for how I would want to interact with it on a physical level. There were five dance pieces, I planned them on the way down and then did them on the way back. These were:

- flat warm rocks and pool of water – time had gone, the space was flat and the energy was still there – blue lycra being still
- tree with sunlight – wrapping around the trunk the marks of the water between the rocks, repetition, floods and stops, floods and stops.... as a patterning is left sounds of rocks, the arms of a tree wrapping the rock, a sense of quietness and a feeling of bones protruding from the skeleton of the earth
- the flat surface – attempting to be like a membrane emulating what was there, the view from within the sack- a sense of linear
When I was doing these I was exploring different sensations and things like:
wrapping the rock, I had a sense of the rock pushing me away – arching and touching
wedging between the rocks was about a sense of design and of being secure
the pool was about being water and collecting things

My pieces like everyone’s are transient, just more so. They were only whilst we were there.
Shane

I had an immediate response to the labyrinth this time unlike the last one, which I really liked but it didn’t inspire me to do anything/create anything, but I loved being in the space, looking at it. It was so beautiful to be in. I was really inspired by the landscape and you had put the markers in but they weren’t as graphically strong as the last one. So I felt a little bit more open to do something but it was very much inspired by what you did; the colour of the blue chalk and also the forms. The river catching debris as it goes down and the flow of the water were also significant.

I was thinking of ideas being collected... it was palpable you could feel people thinking, their minds, there was a lot of thought happening. And the blue reminded me of a bowerbird collecting blue things, ‘a catchment of ideas and a collection of objects’. So I created this kind of double crescent that reflected the flow and the collecting of things as well. I wanted other people to add to it too, even Cheryl who added her thoughts!
Grant

There were two kinds of works that I created – those that were done spontaneously as I walked through the space and those that I went back and did.

The things I did spontaneously were very different for me, whereas the things that I went back and did were more like my normal way of working. These were things I would normally do. The things that I did on the spur of the moment were different for me and if I had thought about them, I would have negated them. With the later ones I had already thought them through – the logic process started to kick in and I was being more like an architect. The things that I went back and did were more contrived than the things that I did spontaneously.

Some of the things I was more pleased with than others and this was partially influenced by what other people did. I created things in places where I thought that there was something interesting and I wanted others to notice too.
Cheryl

I did a very small piece. I found a bone on the really hard walk that we did on the first day. And I put it in my bag and I had it with me. And when I got to that point in the centre, I had this strong urge to get it out of my bag and leave it there. I built a mound of stones or a tomb over the top and called it, ‘burying the bone of contention’. For me that is about me knowing that, ultimately, that is what I need to do. I need a huge skeleton, really one bone isn’t big enough to represent all my bones of contention. While I am carrying these bones of contention, they weigh me down.

It wasn’t really covered, this is my inability to let go. I believe that that is about wanting to be right about some things. I put it in the womb area… connected to the ancient femininity of the space – not taking up lost opportunities and being overwhelmed by the beauty.
My experience, observations and conclusions

My experience of Desert was very different from that of Forest. The structure and location and the overall design were more challenging and at the same time there were similarities, particularly the exploration of mapping and locating in very different ways.
In *Desert* I was endeavouring to work with the landscape and the ephemeral nature of the markers reflected this. I had a very strong sense of the sacred in relation to the landscape; its age and grandeur were very imposing. As I moved the rocks and dug into the ground, I was conscious of this. This site had a sense of sacredness about it, a feeling of fragility. Its age seemed to impose (like an elderly person) a need for care and respect. Age implied permanence in what is essentially a transient location; a dry creek bed that would surge with water and change. This was an ongoing tension for me throughout the event, permanence and transition standing aligned.

The brief that I had set myself for the design of the installation was to create a space that used ‘noticing’ as a means of exploring the labyrinthine. I aimed thereby to transform the location and its broader sense of space to something connected to and having the qualities of place. To do this, I explored placement as a means
for navigating the labyrinth. The feedback from the participants suggests that this was achieved. My markers were able to construct one interpretation of the space, which the participants then interpreted for themselves in order to construct their own sense of meaning and location.

Being the second installation, I was less hampered by fears surrounding working with the others, the questioning etc. I was prepared for the group dynamics and for how their support would affect me. At Forest this had been almost overwhelming. Consequently, I had a greater sense of time, space and clarity when working with and observing what was taking place.

The pace of the Desert was also significantly slower than Forest, having three days together rather than one, created different dynamics and also allowed for a diverse range of topics to be explored. The smaller number of people also made this easier: Group conversations were more inclusive and people were able to speak longer and covered diverse topics. There were also mixtures of references; people spoke of the greater location and the journey there. The fact that they were building on previous conversations and observations from Forest, also added to the depth of the experience. It seemed that, like me, they were less overwhelmed by the experience and better able to explore their thoughts, considerations and observations.
As I drove the two-day return journey home across the changing landscape from the interior of Australia through the river lands to the rural and finally to the city, I was struck by how similar this experience of travel was to the labyrinthine process I was exploring. There had been the drive there, the designing and building of the installation, the interaction and conversations with the participants and then the contemplative trip home. Along the way, I had noticed and engaged with the changing landscapes that I passed through. On the way there, I was focused on the installation and the event. I observed the desert and from that designed my installation and markers. The return journey was different. The way there had been full of anticipation, while the way back was thick with thought and reflection as I endeavoured to make sense of what had occurred and what it meant for the broader questions of the research. As I contemplated what had occurred, I noticed the evolving features of the landscape, the bare rolling hills, the changing vegetation and these beautiful spherical forms of tumbleweeds, pushed by the wind into clusters against fence lines. They were randomly scattered by the whim of the wind and barred by solid structures (trees, fences and other vegetation). I stopped and collected one, a souvenir of my journey.
The language of the landscape

The aim of much research is to focus on the heart of an issue and to excavate the layers of meaning within it. This research project has many layers and within its complexity there have been consistent themes or issues that have been manifested in different ways. Most notable, that which applies to the broader or general context, also often relates to the personal experience. In the same way that we engaged with the greater landscape of Oratunga by focusing on the details of rocks at our feet, the labyrinth of the grander landscape is also the labyrinth of the mind and of practice. We return to Spirn’s statement, ‘The language of landscape is our native language… The language of the landscape can be spoken, written, read and imagined’ (1998, p. 15). Spirn argues that it is in the landscape that we find our true language and our true place. She contests Heidegger’s statement that, ‘language (is) the house of being’, believing it to be something more specific than that. For her ‘the language of the landscape truly is the house of being; we dwell within. To dwell – to make and care for a place - is self expression’ (ibid). It is within the landscape that we inhabit, which may be urban or country, internal or external, that we discover meaning.
Similarly, Pannikar (1991) supports this perspective on the interrelationship 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).

In constructing Desert, I was faced with this language of the landscape. I (like the others) was overwhelmed by the wisdom and age of the discourse that surrounded me. By modifying the space through the construction of the markers, I created my space. I was changing or playing with the narrative that was there and that was the challenge, to have my say within a much greater discourse and to hope that it would still have meaning and be heard by others. This was the discourse of the installation, the research and, according to Pannikar, of me.
Desert was more than just another installation exploring different aspects of labyrinthine space as listed in my proposal. Earlier in my research, I had thought that it was just another kind of environment that was being considered. Desert became much more than another location, the installation, its design and what was explored, it was a synthesis of what had become apparent through Forest, Site for Transformation and Chartres. Desert was a labyrinthine exploration of the construction of place.
Anfractuous Place
This research project has endeavoured to gain insight into the experience of reflection within creative practice, particularly as it relates to the space or location of creativity through the metaphor or model of the labyrinth (through the construction of labyrinthine installations). It has been a labyrinthine pilgrimage of discovery involving revelations, confusion and the generous input of others. In many ways the methodology of the project has reflected the research findings and process. Over the duration of the project and across the various sites of the installations, I have ventured into the heart of the labyrinth. I have watched, reflected, noticed, and sought out answers to my questions along a twisting and winding path, and slowly I have made my way out but not back to where I started. The opening of the labyrinth has moved, the design has spun or slipped and I have come out in a new place, with new knowledge that can be applied to future practice.

When I ventured into the project, I held a premise; I believed that it might be possible to conceive of the space of the studio, a specific site for creative practice, as a labyrinthine space, and that reflection was a significant component and a source of creative insight within studio practice. At the end of this project, I have come to realise that my premise had substance but with modifications. As a studio practitioner, I assumed that the manner in which I experienced and manifested my practice would be the norm for others. My work with others during this project, both the participants and my more
distant colleagues from the literature, has shown that this is not necessarily the case. This finding coupled with critical reflection on my own practice and experience of space, pilgrimage, identity and transformation, has led me to re-conceptualise creative practice and the labyrinthine nature of the studio.

Although there have been many findings within the project, the following are of most significance. Firstly, contrary to my experience and the theories in the literature, the role or use of reflection within creative process and practice is not a given. Secondly, when speaking of the location of creative practice and our relationship to the space that we work in or find inspiration from, it is more accurate to conceive of this location as place rather than space. As such, the labyrinthine space that I initially sought to understand can be more productively understood as labyrinthine place.
Chance and transience

This research is framed by the two landscape installations that were the prime sources of information and exploration within the project. These were Forest and Desert, and they articulate the transition from the labyrinth to the labyrinthine and from space to place. In between these two, there was the reflective exploration of kineasthetic engagement through Site for Transformation, which through its consideration of the body, perception, location and transition,
facilitated my realization of the importance of place, movement and connection. My travel to Chartres aided in consolidating this idea particularly the dissection of the labyrinth to create the labyrinthine. In this final chapter I will present the consolidation of these realisations as they relate to the research objectives.

The Return Visits – Forest and Desert

During October and November 2003, I made return visits to Desert and to Forest. Since the event in September 2002, I had travelled to Forest a number of times, being only three-hours drive from Melbourne. Due to the greater distance to Desert it was October before I made my first return. My intention in returning to the sites of the installations was to see what had happened over time, to see what became of the structure as they dwindled into memories of the events and moulded into their surroundings. On each trip, I documented the forms of what had happened.
Returning to Desert I observed that in my absence there had been rain and some of the markers had been lost. I walked the creek bed to see what remained. There was an apparent randomness to the changes. For example two forms that stood side by side, the larger sturdier one was gone, whereas the other more fragile one remained unchanged. Where there had been hollows, there were now mounds of silt and although small pebble trails had survived, the blue chalk was all gone. Cheryl’s piece was now completely buried. Shane’s had washed away and only small amounts of the bracken could be found. There were some faint tracings of Grant’s structures and placements; and Liz’s stood safe elevated from the water as she hoped it would.

On the second day of my return visit, there was a torrent of rain and the creek filled with water. It was strange and exciting. My perception of the waterways was one of aridity, however, the rain and the presence of water changed my perception of the space and my pieces within it. Even though impermanence had always been a major feature of the design, its physical presence had implied a sense of stability. As the rain washed it away, I was faced with the reality of my design, the structures were disappearing and their only permanence was in the form of memory and documentation.

Nothing significant had happened to Forest over the first 12-months. There was some draping of the fabric and collecting of leaves etc. Approximately six-months after the event, a small sapling had fallen and was being held up by the wall. When I encountered this, I was tempted to move the tree, but decided not to. It was part of the passage of time and it should
be left to be. On my return in November I found that a major change had occurred to the structure. This time a full sized tree (approx. 30-meters high) had fallen through one side of the structure. The fabric, although still connected, was twisted and stretched around the tree that lay on the ground. It was no longer possible to walk the pattern in its purity. You had to climb over the tree or diverge from the path. The structure was divided as one half was untouched and the centre remained the same. There was still the sense of serenity and the focus on alternate horizons. However, the other half was open and exposed so that one no longer needed to use the original entrance.

These changes to the installations made real for me Bergson’s, Tuan’s and Stewart’s discourses on the transience and accumulative nature of being. Paul Carter (1996, p. 53) speaks of rain as being an ‘in between phenomenon’, something that sits between earth and sky. In this research, the flowing water and the falling tree were the ‘in between phenomena’ that facilitate change and transition from one form to another. The installations had a number of identities or roles; they were explorations of the labyrinth and the labyrinthine, they were manifestations of my practice, environments for individual and shared creative exploration, and markers of my inquiry within these landscapes, and signifiers of the passing and transience of thought, action and time. Their passing and modification due to time and elements beyond my control represented the transient nature of all of the installations’ roles and interpretations. The installations, like experience and outcomes of creative practice, are in a constant state of flux. As Shane observed they are impermanent, like the detritus of thoughts.
From its initial conception and design, the four elements of creative process, reflection, kineasthetic engagement and labyrinthine space have been central to this research. Through the research questions and the various phases or acts of the research, I have explored their significance as they relate to creative practice and the research objectives.
It is appropriate to return here to the fourth research question, the one that brings all the elements of the research together and seeks to understand their interconnected meaning.

How might people make connections between labyrinthine space, reflection and the creative process within creative practice?

This research has shown that there are many ways that people make meaning of reflection and the creative process within their creative practice; labyrinthine space is one way of conceptualizing the location and the methodology for this relationship. Through the research process it has become apparent that when a kineasthetic connection is made to this inhabited space of creative practice, it is more accurate to conceive of that location as labyrinthine place.
Creative Process

‘Creativity’, ‘creative process’ and ‘creative practice’; terms used freely within our language, yet, there is no simple way to elucidate what they are, or what they mean for individuals within their practice. In an attempt to try and contain this project, I chose to focus on what creativity and the creative process meant for professionals working within the creative industries, particularly art and design. These are the studio-orientated disciplines that utilise the studio as the site for education and work, and are the basis of my professional practice.

As I have worked through the project, I have been interested to discover how people experience their creative process. I also wanted to know whether connections could be made between the way that we walk a labyrinth and the stages of the creative process.

There is a consensus within the literature that creativity in practice involves a process that can be understood as a sequence of acts. As argued by Florida (2002) and Darso (2001), these phrases include the four stages of preparation, incubation, illumination and verification or revision. Added to this is the context or location of the creative act, for example, what Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 1990) refers to as ‘flow’, and finally there is the contribution or influence of the specific experience and prior knowledge that the practitioner brings to their work (Bergson 1998).
Feedback from the participants in the project has supported each of these perspectives. For some, their creative practice was fluid, easy, a given, something that directed their every engagement with life. For others it was more directed and outcome focused, involving problem solving and results, and for a few it was desired, vague and separate from their daily practice. In clustering the themes and responses, it became apparent that there were two markedly different ways of engaging in creative practice. For some creativity was always present, it was their normal way of living and it was not possible not to be creative, while for others it was something that you applied, a mode of action or thinking that could be used at specific times. The significance of this for my research is in relation to engagement, the theme that emerged at Forest. How people engage with the space of creative practice, particularly the studio, is influenced by their perception of their creative process. Although there is no conclusive evidence, I am left wondering whether those who are reticent about their creativity, may be less forthcoming or bold, step more fearfully along the path towards their goal than those who are confident in their abilities. This has potential for further research.

Engaging in creative practice is challenging and individualistic, each person brings to the practice their unique methods, expectations and methodology. For some the relationship between themselves and the practice reflects John Berger’s (2002, pp. 17-18) conversation between the artist and the subject of their work; where it is an intense, personal and an essential
aspect of self. For others it is far more complex, marked by trepidations and rules and driven by external requirements or expectations.

How did you become what you visibly are? asks the painter.

I am as I am. I’m waiting, replies the mountain or the mouse or the child.

What for?
For you, if you abandon everything else.
For how long?
For as long as it takes.
There are other things in life.
Find them and be more normal.
And if I don’t?
I’ll give you what I’ve given nobody else, but it’s worthless, it’s simply the answer to your useless question.
Useless?
I am as I am.
No promise more than that?
None. I can wait for ever.
I’d like a normal life.
Live it and don’t count on me.
And if I do count on you?
Forget everything and in me you’ll find – me!
(Berger 2002, p. 17-18)
Reflection

I had expected reflection to feature far more prominently in people’s conversation and descriptions of their creative practice. I had assumed that they would stand somewhere within Schön’s interpretations of reflection and practice. In my own practice, reflection is a dominant methodology for engaging in projects and for devising new ones; and my interpretation of reflection is conventional, involving silence, journals, sifting and thinking. As I spoke with the participants, this form of reflective practice seemed to be rare. For a few this modeled their methods and they used it as a regular feature of their practice, with the most notable difference being those who were professionally employed as designers. Generally, those that were employed in industry didn’t create through reflection; theirs were action orientated practices, responsive to demands and delivering outcomes quickly. The space of the studio was for them, fast paced and separate from their own identity, unlike the visual artists and the dancer who worked from a slower and more personal perspective.

On considering the conversations, the statements and the artefacts, I could see thoughtfulness and consideration in people’s approaches to their work. There were signs of reflective activity - it was the labelling that seemed to be wrong. The participants engaged with their practice and with
the spaces that I created in a manner that was suggestive of Masons’s (2002) ‘practice of noticing’. Noticing being a methodology for engaging in the ‘practice of practice’ and in the ‘space of practice’. I have concluded that it wasn’t that people didn’t reflect, rather it was the form and the language of the reflection that was different. There was a perception, for me too, that reflection was something quiet that was done away from the hustle and bustle of everyday practice. I now believe this to be a misconception. In contemporary practice, with the demands of the workplace, the client and the technology, reflection has morphed to become what may better be understood as **thoughtful** rather than **reflective** practice. This thoughtful approach to practice resembles Schön’s early work on ‘reflection-on-action’ as used in ‘The Design Studio’ (1985), where he speaks of practitioners undertaking reflective conversations with the materials of their practice (p. 52), or Masons’s (2002) practice of noticing. This approach seems to be more applicable to those involved in this project, than the perception of reflection as something silent, somber or removed from everyday acts.
Kineasthetic Engagement

Initially, my interest in kineasthetic engagement within the research was related to movement, and walking in particular. Inspired by the labyrinth as a site for walking meditation, I was interested to know what, or if, movement was significant in influencing the creative process. I had thought that this would be the case for those involved in the performing arts, but what of the rest of us whose work seems more static and/or cerebral? As the research evolved, this interpretation of kineasthetic engagement expanded to include physical perceptions and responses and the body’s presence in the landscape. Throughout each phase of the research, movement and the body’s interaction or connection to the installation, the location or the object was pertinent to the design and the outcomes. For the two installations, I deliberately focused on emphasizing a whole body response.

The installations were topographically challenging from the undulating landscape of the forest floor to the gravel and river stones of the desert creek beds. Responses to the installations focused heavily on the physical, with people recounting how they felt, the challenges of walking the paths, what they noticed in the environment and what the experience meant
for them; these responses included accounts based on sight, smell, touch and sound. These accounts supported Grosz (1999), Crowther (1993), Stewart (1993) and Merleau-Ponty’s (1964) perspectives on the role of the body in constructing experience, knowledge and identity. That it is through our senses that we make meaning and we live. It also aligned with Casey (2001) and Spirn (1998) who argue that landscape is a language and a habitat, that we make our homes in the world through our interaction with the locations of practice as we move from ‘place to place.’

To engage with space is to engage with the sensorial, it is to be physically and mentally present in the place that we are in. Knowing and understanding are methods for locating in space, and in creative practice this location may be related to time/history, tradition, context or simply a project’s outcome or application. As we move through a process or a project, we map and locate with differing levels of knowledge and awareness. In *Forest*, the space of creativity was relatively blind; there were glimpses of the greater context up, down or around and the walker was required to trust the path they were on. In *Desert*, the vista was wide open, and the markers or ’place makers’ along the way delineated the right track. These were two very different ways of conceiving and marking space; both required the participant to connect and act within the realm of the physical with the aim of engaging the intellectual.
Labyrinthine Space

Labyrinthine space has been the prime focus of this research. Initially, the exploration of the labyrinthine as model for the experience of the studio was drawn from the literal patterning of the labyrinth. Over the course of this project, this interpretation of the labyrinth has evolved, with two significant transitions in relation to labyrinthine space, which in essence articulate the findings of the research. These are the transitions from labyrinth to labyrinthine, and from space to place.

Although the labyrinthine has always been present in the language of the research since the earliest conceptions of the project, it was not until my encounter with Chartres and the work of Penelope Reed Doob, that I really understood what the term meant and how it might be used. Forest was a literal labyrinth while Desert was an exploration of the labyrinthine. To open up to the possibility of the labyrinthine and to step away from the formal structures of the labyrinth, it was necessary to open up to the possibility of abstraction, and specifically the abstraction and uniqueness of experience. Although Reed Doob’s conception of the labyrinthine is a space of duality, contrast, contradiction and confusion, in Desert the labyrinthine was a space of possibility and uncertainty.
This research has explored the labyrinthine via the landscape. Relph states, ‘Landscape is both the context for places and an attribute of places’ (Relph 1976, in Casey 2001, p. 417). Casey argues that the relationship between body and landscape is reflective of self and place. He claims, ‘both body and landscape are so deeply ingredient in the experience of the human subject as to pass unnoticed for the most part,’ and it is through ‘reflective awareness’ that we are able to make conscious connections (ibid). Through the landscape we are able to identify and relate to place, for the landscape is of place, bound by borders and the horizon (ibid). As the body moves across the landscape, the ‘self’ (via the body) transitions from place-to-place.

As the research evolved there was a realisation and a transition from the conception of the studio as a ‘space’ to an understanding of it as a ‘place’. To speak of the space of creativity is to speak of something distant or other, to speak of the place of creativity is to give meaning and connection to the location and embodied experience of this. Place is where events happen, place is active and it is the series of locations in which we live our lives. Relph argues that place ‘centres human existence’ (Relph 1976 in Adams, Hoelscher, & Till, 2001) within creative practice.

At the beginning of this project, the research inhabited the literal yet unknown space of the labyrinth. As it concludes, labyrinthine space has transformed to labyrinthine place; an abstract location of connection, action and potential meaning.
To Conclude

Two installations comprise the final presentation for this research project, one an external urban landscape installation, *Trajectory*, the other, a digital presentation within a gallery environment, *Anfractuous Place.*
The final landscape installation of this project is the articulation of the research findings. *Trajectory* is located within the labyrinthine laneways or void space of transition between buildings 2, 4, 6, 8, 16, 22, 24 and 28 of RMIT City Campus. For ten years these lanes have been my space of transition from one part of the university to the next, through schools and faculties, disciplines and practices, these transitions are sometimes hurried and at other times are slow and contemplative.

Tumbleweeds collected from the side of the highway south east of Mildura, were placed within the installation site, amongst them is a handmade interpretation, an aesthetic response to the tumbleweed form.

Spherical organic objects are a passion of mine, my environment is littered with collections of them; poetic forms that I am drawn to and explore as objects located in space. My noticing and collecting of the tumbleweed as I returned from the Flinders Ranges was a typical feature of my practice, such objects catch my attention, fascinate me and are the impetus for my own practice of making. Each of the tumbleweeds is an object unto itself, selected on an aesthetic basis of shape and colour, their intricate and dense branches creating environments of their own. Individually they have been considered and modified with features of interest noticed and marked.
The tumbleweed is an environment unto itself, a ‘habitus’ of the place-world where the outer edge of the object is the boundary of the location. The tumbleweed is a transient object free wielding. Once uprooted from the ground it blows with the wind until caught by objects within the greater context. When conditions change, it may move on again to a new location with new connections. In this installation the tumbleweeds were placed within the urban landscape (hunted down and collected from their rural origin) to become a part of the greater discourse of the location.

The placement of the weeds within the space is a subjective response by me, the maker of the installation, to this specific location. The tumbleweeds mark points of notice and interest for me within the space. When noticed by others, they connect the maker and the viewer. As the viewer walks past, they may notice or engage with these transient objects as they exist in this space (collecting the detritus of thoughts and marking action) and, in so doing, the viewer creates their own interpretation and with that their own sense of place.

Reminiscent of Desert, the markers placed in space create connections to the location and thereby with that a sense of place. Unlike the other installations in the project, there is no designated path but multiple entrance and exit points and no expectation of return. In this installation, the labyrinthine has been transformed into a conception of space, which through engagement and awareness with markers within the space enters the ‘place world’ of practice.
'Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together' (de Certeau 1984, p. 97). Thy mirror the path we traverse through the many aspects and spaces of our practice – through multiple places, known and conceived from one creative project to the next.
Anfractuous Place

Anfractuous Place: a digital compilation and interpretation of this research project constructed as three narratives. These are: Forest, Desert, and Trajectory. Projected simultaneously on the walls of the gallery, the viewer negotiates the diverse and evolving narratives of the project.
In Summation

This research project began with a series of questions regarding the experience of the studio, particularly its relationship to creative process and practice with an emphasis on the role of reflection. There was an assumption that the labyrinth, as a space of reflection and transformation, might model what this experience is like, spatially and as process.

I have argued here that in relation to the labyrinth and labyrinthine space, the studio and creative practice can be more accurately conceived as labyrinthine place. This is the studio as ‘shaped space’. To engage with practice, whether it be in the studio or not, is to be present within the environment or the context of the work. Creative practice is a personal act it varies from person to person. Although there may be similarities in phases or steps, it is impossible to define creativity as this or that, or to suggest that any particular process will be true for all. The 5-steps for walking a labyrinth in meditation offers one way of considering the process; it mirrors what many see as the ‘four steps of creativity’ with the additional act of acknowledgement. This is where we acknowledge the work and achievements that we have made and subsequently deepen our connection to our professional creative practice. It is in this way, through embodied connection, that we move from the space...
of creativity to the place of creativity. It is in place that we live, and each day and with each new project or action, we create new places and new meanings. Each place is an entity unto itself, bounded by features and located in time and space, each one is connected through action or context to the next. However, unlike the boundaries between towns, states or countries, the borders of these creative places within studio practice are not so clear. Some boundaries overlap as we draw knowledge and experience from one situation or location to the next. We conceive of many projects and places that we never enact. Their presence in our practice maybe likened to knowing the name of a place on a map but never going there; that knowledge transports that location into our conscious life or place world.

As we move through the various stages of creative practice, we create a labyrinthine path, an anfractuous path of interconnected places. The studio is an organic space that varies in form and context. Through individual practice it transforms into 'shaped space', that which we refer to as place, to become a labyrinthine place of contrast and possibility.
Postscript
This research began with an inquiry into the nature of the studio, particularly its role as a site for teaching and learning. As the research problem was refined, the nature of the studio as a site for creative practice became the focus of this project. In formulating the initial proposal and research design, it became apparent that understanding the experience of practice within the studio was necessary before addressing other issues related to it as a site for teaching and learning, such as the application of new technologies. As part of this project, I worked with a variety of creative professionals whose practices incorporated many of the diverse traditions of the studio, and most of whom include teaching within their professional practice. Having completed the project and reflected on its multiple findings, I return here to my initial questions regarding the studio as a location for teaching and learning with some recommendations in terms of its future.

In 1985 Donald Schön wrote his influential ‘Design Studio’, an in-depth exploration of the studio as a location for teaching and practice. Although the text is situated within the discipline of architecture, the pedagogical themes and practices discussed by him are highly relevant for other studio-based disciplines. Schön argued that the studio is an exemplar-teaching model; it operates within the tradition of being a place of ‘reflection-in-action’, of ‘making’ in action, and the undefined possibilities of its design briefs based in the material reality of creation. For him, the studio is a practical
methodology of knowledge creation for application (pp. 94-95). On this basis, Schön advocates the studio as an essential educational model not only for architecture but also other disciplines, particularly the humanities. As he comments:

*It would be unfortunate, in view of this emerging readiness to see and appreciate the unique features of architectural education, if university or government officials were to respond to budgetary pressures by treating schools of architecture as vulnerable targets of opportunity. It would be even worse if they were to use budgetary constraints as an excuse from trimming off what seemed to them to be marginal accretion on the body of the university. For, perhaps more than any other existing branch, architecture offers clues to the reform and realization of higher education* (Schön 1985, p. 96).

Put another way, the studio (in architecture) is for Schön an important vehicle through which epistemological and pedagogical discourse should be rethought. Almost twenty years on from this publication the ‘vulnerability’ of studio-based teaching identified by its author has arguably become even more pronounced across the disciplines that currently employ it. Such programs are expensive to run and outcomes are not as easily quantifiable as they are in other disciplinary fields. Studios require space, materials and time. The ‘reflective practicum’ (p. 89) with its open briefs and exploratory nature does not conform to the contemporary emphasis on
‘outcome focused’ education within the tertiary education sector. There is an expectation that more will be achieved with less resources resulting in a pre-defined and measurable outcome.

One of the key findings of this research has been that such a cookie cutter approach to art and design education would undermine the rich and explorative process as revealed in the labyrinthine nature of creative discovery. Data has shown that the process of creative exploration is one of engagement with surroundings, of exploring and proposing possibilities that lead to new discoveries and future explorations. Within the project, even those participants working within defined industry protocols (where design problems are responses to client needs) expressed and identified an anfractuous methodology at work in their creative practice. My argument here is that this also holds true, and will continue to do so, within the parameters of art and design educational frameworks. If the practitioners (students) are going to apply this methodology on graduation, then the educational institution should logically provide analogous training and experience in that creative practice (based in the studio).
In this research I have argued that for creative practice to have meaning for the individual it is essential that the studio be something more than a 'space of practice'; rather, it must be transformed into a 'place of practice'. In this context the studio is a location of exploration. It must be a creative space that facilitates learning, that challenges conventions, and provides infrastructure to enable the creative process. This infrastructure is partly an obviously material form in terms of rooms, facilities, technology etc., and, of course, teaching staff who are familiar with the practices of the discipline and able to forge new ones in conjunction with students. But the education studio is also a more abstract place of learning, of intellectual engagement and freedom to experiment, contradict, discover and feel connected. Educational programs within the studio must enable this 'place of practice' through a curriculum that is itself exploratory, not focused simply on the most convenient definition of an 'outcome' but orientated toward the educational value of the process. When a student graduates and then enters their profession the greatest skill that they can take with them is the ability to think creatively; as technologies and contexts change and evolve it is the ability of the practitioner to navigate their way through problems that will be of the greatest ongoing contribution to their area of professional practice.
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