

Designing in-between: Reflectively mapping an artistic research project

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ABSTRACT

Designing in-between is an artistic research project that sprouted from curiosity regarding how the concept of space, characterised by difference, is perceived in an area of Stellenbosch, South Africa,. Participants included six inhabitants of Jamestown, including the primary researcher. Data was collected through tracking each participant with Global Positioning System (GPS) and photographic material, in-depth discussions, the drawing of mental maps, and the construction of written and visual translations of the research process by researcher/s. The project is informed by critical theory and complexity thinking within the field of visual art and artistic research. An over-arching poststructuralist sensibility that values the power of representational practice in constructing and deconstructing knowledge is implied.

In this article the authors aim to critically reflect and elaborate on the research processes engaged in, on the personal insights the research led to, and on the potential implications of the research for scholars working with artistic research in a South African context. Artistic praxis allowed for multi-dimensional experience and multi-perspectival translation of relations between aspects of complex reality. Such openness provided researchers with imaginative possibilities for continuous negotiation of difference. It facilitated experiences of Homi Bhabha's Third Space, which facilitated transformative learning. Difficulty in translating newfound insights into clear, intelligible arguments was a challenge.

Keywords: artistic research, difference, complexity, Third Space, transformative learning, South Africa

Introduction

In this article, the authors aim to critically reflect and elaborate on a specific artistic research project titled *Designing in-between*. This project was initiated during studies towards completion of a BA Visual Art degree at Stellenbosch University, and ultimately formed part of a subsequent MA Visual Art degree at the same institution. It sprung from vested interest in how people of the multicultural community of Jamestown, Stellenbosch, understand, represent and engage with spatiality. The primary researcher realised that as an outsider entering the community (an *inkommer* in colloquial, Afrikaans Jamestown terms), further knowledge and insight regarding the sociopolitical and cultural situatedness of the space could assist in the continuous negotiation of difference one is involved with on a daily basis when living there. Artistic research seemed like an appropriate medium through which to explore the issue.

Artistic research is a phenomenon that has sparked much debate in recent years. Florian Dombois' (cited by Klein 2010) description of artistic research as 'Research about/for/through Art | Art about/for/through Research' illustrates aspects of the concept's conflicting nature. If artistic research embodies multiple things simultaneously it is bound to lead to confusion. Despite the apparent perplexity there is general consensus regarding the potential of artistic research to enrich existing knowledge because of its very ability to engage with and creatively represent multiple ideas simultaneously (Hannula, Suoranta & Vadén 2005:11). Artistic research incorporates self-reflection, critical thinking, 'artistic experientiality' and 'a diversity of context-specific research methods, presentation methods and communication tools' (Hannula *et al* 2005:20). This ability, however, contributes to difficulty in ascertaining clear methodological guidelines for how artistic research could (or should) be structured, and how it can (if it should) function within established research contexts.

Within the context of exploring spatiality in the multicultural community of Jamestown, Stellenbosch, artistic research was understood as designing in-between; hence the project title. The prefix *de-* implies taking away, breaking down, removing, reversing, deriving from and completing signs (*Collins English Dictionary* 1999. Sv. 'de-'). It represents a process of simultaneously piecing apart and together. A *sign* refers to anything that stands for and represents something else; anything that carries meaning (Longhurst, Smith, Bagnall, Crawford, Ogborn, McCracken & Baldwin 2008:29). The process of design can thus be described as making sense of the world through a continuous process of un-building various external stimuli, relating them to each other as well as to our own thoughts and ideas, and accordingly producing new knowledge that recycles into the equation yet again as new stimuli

to be negotiated. Through such a process meaning is continuously being negotiated in an in-between state. Lorenzo Imbesi (2011:271) describes the process as traversing the world freely and playing on its physical as well as mental borders. He says that he deems such processes as productive as it constructs:

[t]ransversal thinking; mindful (and politically positioned) innovation; driving force (in the processes of transformation and innovation), it goes beyond the (disciplinary and academic) boundaries; it works on the quality of (social and individual) interaction; it creates community and involvement (and furthermore develops new cultural models of reference) ... In few words, it produces knowledge (Imbesi 2011:271).

Designing in-between had as goal to use artistic research to explore, map and negotiate the space of Jamestown. The project was interested in, to use Hannula *et al*'s (2005:21) words, '[p]roducing knowledge about (among other things) the social, social-psychological and psychological as well as political and pedagogical meaning of art in order to develop artistic activity (e.g. education, the living environment, the quality of life)'. Through critical reflection on the research processes engaged in, on the personal insights the research led to, and on the potential implications of the research for scholars working with artistic research, the authors of this article hope to contribute to the continuing discourse on artistic research from a local South African context.

Research context

The research was physically situated within the community of Jamestown, but on a conceptual level it was embedded within the broad milieu of critical theory and complexity thinking within the field of visual art and artistic research. These research contexts will now be discussed separately.

Jamestown was founded by Jacob Weber and James Rattray, a German missionary and a local butcher, around the turn of the twentieth century. They bought a portion of Blaauwklippen, a well-known vineyard in the Stellenbosch district, and divided it into 25 long strips of land (Figure 1) that were then leased to 25 families from surrounding areas for the purpose of small-hold farming. The initial lease contract extended from 1 May 1902 until 30 April 1910, and hereafter the individual families had the option of buying the land on condition that they adhered to the terms stipulated. Strawberries were the main crop cultivated as the land was passed down from father to sons. A strong sense of family and collectivity was present in the community (Williams 2009).

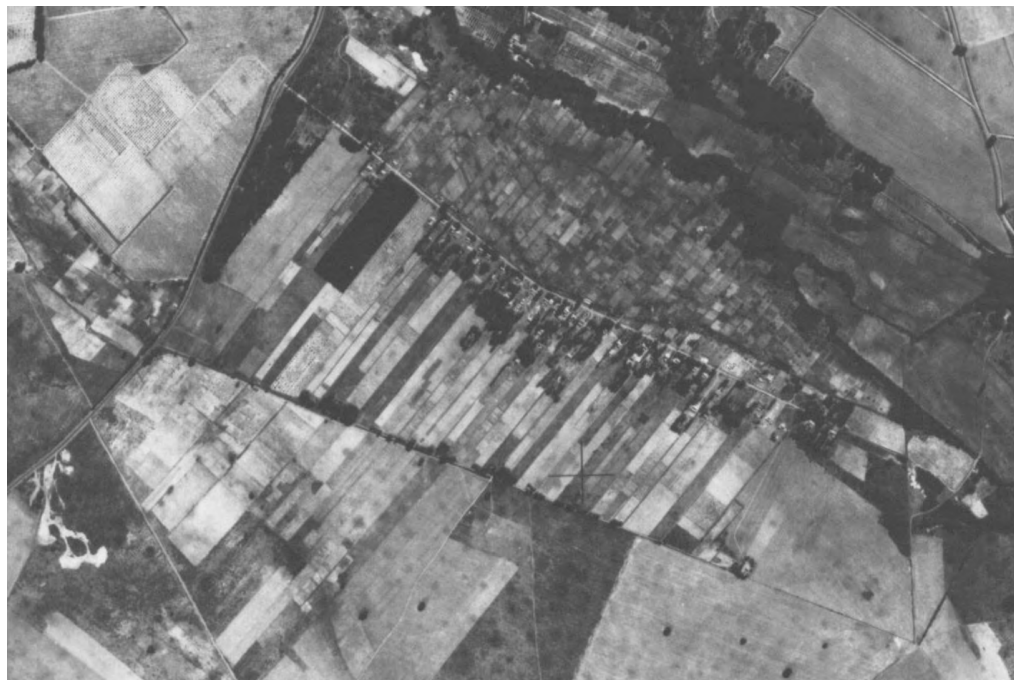


FIGURE **Nº 1**



Jamestown, 2008. Aerial photograph.

(Surveys & Mapping, Western Cape Government).

Subdivision of family property, however, soon became inevitable as families rapidly grew. Around the 1980s, the municipality started to officially cut up land and lay down crossroads. This occurrence, in conjunction with impending financial strain as the growing large-scale farming industry stole Jamestown's business, resulted in families selling sections of their property to outsiders. Elements of this process are revealed in an aerial view of Jamestown from 2008 (Figure 2). As evermore land continued to be sold, significant changes in Jamestown's demographic characteristics occurred. People from a variety of sociocultural and economic backgrounds currently inhabit Jamestown and this inevitably leads to continuous negotiation of difference in the community (Williams 2009).

On a conceptual level the research is informed by critical theory and complexity thinking within the fields of visual art and artistic research. The multi-dimensional nature of the research focus, as well as its sociopolitical and cultural situatedness, warrants an over-arching poststructuralist sensibility that values the inherent power of 'language, images and practices' in constructing and deconstructing discourses and knowledges (Davis & Sumara 2008:161). Complexity thinking is relevant in this



FIGURE **Nº 2**



Jamestown, 1938. Aerial photograph.

(Surveys & Mapping, Western Cape Government).

regard as it acknowledges the social world as a dynamic, complex system of which elements are in constant evolving dialogue with one another.

Paul Cilliers, the author of *Complexity and postmodernism: understanding complex systems* (1998), is of the opinion that it is the existence of intricate and ever-changing relationships between elements that produce complexity. Tamsin Haggis (2008:165) corroborates by saying that relationality is the phenomenon that enables complex systems to exist. Relationality refers to the activity/process of not being in any one position at all, but continuously exploring in-between any two or more points of reference. It is exactly this kind of exploration that embodied the methodological approach to the artistic research undertaken with *Designing in-between* (more detail following in the next section on methodology). Theorists who have described similar ideas include Irit Rogoff (2000), and Stephanie Springgay, Rita Irwin and Sylvia Kind (2005). Rogoff (2000:1) has said that '[i]t is the effort of arriving at a positionality, rather than the clarity of a position, that should be focused on'. Springgay *et al* (2005:904) relate their understanding of relationality in terms of a slash:

It ... refers to what might appear between two points of orientation, hinting at meaning that is not quite there or yet unsaid. This play between meanings does not suggest a limitless positionality, where interpretation is open to any whim or chance. It is the tension provoked by this doubling, between limit/less that maintains meaning's possibility. The slash is not intended to be one or the other term; it can be both simultaneously, or neither. The slash suggests movement or shifts between the terms.

Considering complex systems, it is vital to acknowledge that the components constituting the system are actually often complex systems in their own right. This indicates a digression from representing complexity in the form of a network consisting of solid interconnected nodes. Like Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's theory of the rhizome, everything might rather consist of mere lines continuously traversing and reconfiguring space. Deleuze and Guattari (2004:21) explain as follows:

Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the points and bi-univocal relationships between the positions, the rhizome is made only of lines: lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization.

Traditionally a rhizome refers to a specific kind of plant stem that grows horizontally under the ground and from which new roots and stalks can continuously sprout. Through making connections, a rhizome produces ever-changing and heterogeneous multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari have appropriated the characteristics of a rhizome and use it to represent complex productive systems. The making/breaking/re/making of connections is one of the key characteristics of this metaphor, 'the fabric of the rhizome is conjunction, and ... and ... and ... ' (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:25). These traits render complex systems as continuously opening up, adapting, changing, growing, breaking, linking, mapping and creating texture. It relies on contingency and so feeds on freedom of movement and space for experimentation. A rhizome is in a persistent process of becoming. It moves in-between and is hence appropriated as a process of designing in-between — artistic research — in the case of this research.

Methodological approach

This research is founded on a qualitative research design. This means that human thought and behaviour were investigated from the participants' points of view. The main goal was to describe and provide insight rather than explain participants' ideas and actions (Babbie & Mouton 2001).

Participants included six purposively selected inhabitants of Jamestown. The non-probability sampling method of purposive sampling was appropriate as it allowed researchers to use their judgment to select participants whose characteristics attended to the aim of the research (Babbie & Mouton 2001). The six participants were selected to represent the demography of Jamestown. Given the central part critical self-reflection and 'artistic experientiality' (Hannula *et al* 2005:20) play in artistic research, the primary researcher¹ was included as one of the six participants. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all involved before the start of the study. We refer to participants as numbers 01 to 06 for confidentiality reasons.

As mentioned in the previous section, the methodological approach followed in *Designing in-between* was inspired by relationality and complexity thinking within the field of visual art and artistic research. Patricia Leavy (2009:14) has rightly said that 'arts-based practices [are] predicated upon evoking meanings, not denoting them'. This indicates, in the words of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (cited by Springgay *et al* 2005:898-899), a shift from 'what does it look like, which emphasizes a product driven representation of research, to an active participation of doing and meaning making within research texts ... [to] ... a rupture that opens up new ways of conceiving of research as enactive space of living inquiry'.

Active processes of 'living inquiry' within the field of art can be described as artistic praxis. Through praxis, critical thought and practice can merge into one. Christopher Crouch's (2007:111-112) comment serves as succinct recapitulation hereof:

When the creative practitioner adopts praxis, it encourages the act of reflecting upon, and reconstructing the constructed world. Adopting praxis assumes a process of meaning making, and that meaning and its processes are contingent upon a cultural and social environment. Because praxis is not self-centred but is about acting together with others, because it is about negotiation and is not about acting upon others, it forces the practitioner to consider more than just the practicalities of making.

In *Designing in-between*, artistic praxis was used to gather data. This included a variety of creative methods. Data was collected through tracking each participant with Global Positioning System (GPS) for a day. Every participant also photographically documented their spatial experiences during a day in their lives and produced their own mental map of Jamestown. In-depth discussions regarding the space Jamestown embodies took place between each participant and the primary researcher. Despite participating in all of the above-mentioned activities, the primary researcher also continuously responded to the data collected throughout the

1. Because of the primary researcher's embeddedness in the research process, the first person will be used in relating the next section (*Designing in-between: The story*). In doing this we still acknowledge the supervisory role the second author played in the research process.

process through the production of written and visual translations/reflections. Data analysis did not happen solely after data was collected. Data collection and analysis/reflection functioned in tandem and resulted in what can be regarded as a rhizomatic map or 'metaspace', which Raoul Bunschoten (2001:37) defines as 'spaces of signs in which correlations can be demonstrated, connectivity mapped and planned'.

Designing in-between: The story²

Designing in-between was, as mentioned previously, motivated by curiosity regarding how people perceive, understand, represent and engage with the concept of space in an area many regard as quintessential of post-apartheid South Africa. As an inhabitant of Jamestown I often experience how South Africa's legacy of inequality and oppression continues to create a general sense of apprehension in many individuals. Some of the mental maps constructed by research participants, as well as their comments, show how previously dominant binary logic continues to affect current ideologies.

Grid-like, structure, order, and compartmentalisation (King 2003:390) are some connotations that spring to mind when observing Figure 3. Modernist methodical thought exudes from this spatial representation; borders stand central and space seems definable and contained. The participant affirmed this in conversation.

In the white community we are focused on privacy and to protect it at all costs. This one does not get in Jamestown. People socialise everywhere — doors are always open and people just go in. It could probably be something nice, maybe our people are wrong. It is not necessarily something that bothers me, it is just different, because I tend to want to close the curtains the whole time and fence off everything. I don't want people to see me in my house (05 2009).

Distinctions between right or wrong, between us and them, seems to spring from the above quote, as from the one below:

We've got a lot of white neighbours and so. Not that it's a bad thing, you know, you don't really see them, you just know they live there (02 2009).

2. We want to note that even though this article is set out in separately defined sections, the nature of artistic research blurs the boundaries between them. The doing of the artistic research was simultaneously part of the object of study, the method, as well as the research outcomes.

Doreen Massey (2005:51) concisely articulates that such binary mindsets perpetually fabricate difference. It relates distinction to fracture and disorder, while difference can in fact be interpreted as positive and constructive. This way of thinking was detected throughout the assorted responses collected:

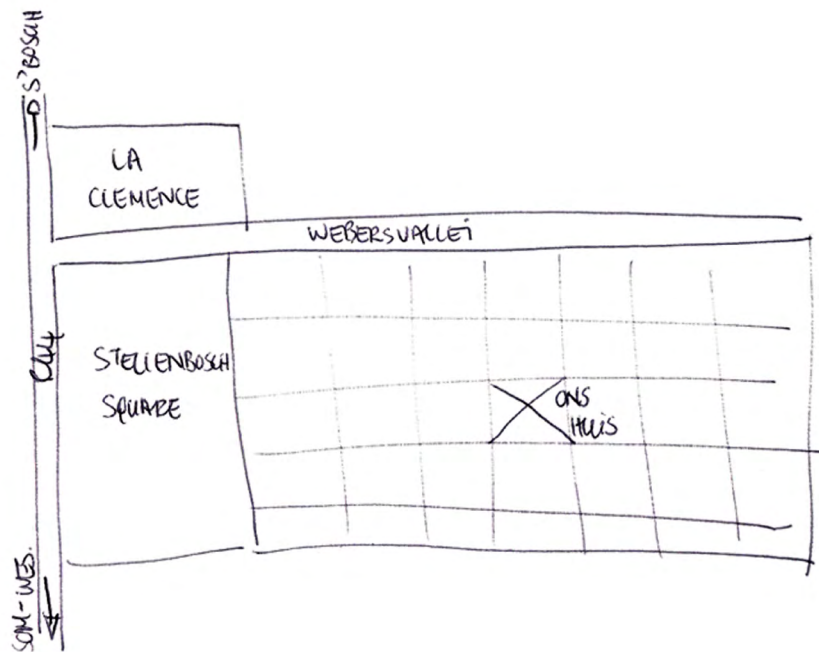


FIGURE **Nº 3**



Mental map of Jamestown (05 2009).

And they always spoke about us that were sort of the elite people, and then there were also people that said that we are from the backside of the world (02 2009).

I don't think it's something that coloured people do that is right or what white people do that is right or wrong, it's not about that, it's just a different culture (04 2009).

Despite a clear pull towards distinction, the above responses also demonstrate a need to simultaneously defuse or justify the distinction. A clear discrepancy between us and them shines through, but something, whether emanating from specific word choice or affective tone, stirs up meaning that seems to be left unsaid. These inconsistencies do not invalidate participants' opinions, but on the contrary show active negotiation of binary opposites. In negotiation, a discursive space where difference is acknowledged is constructed (Bhabha 1994:22; Rutherford 1990:209). This is 'Third Space' in Homi Bhabha's terms — a fragile space open to continuous alternative opinions evolving (cited by Rutherford 1990:211). Magdalena Naum (2010:127) describes it as possibly 'caus[ing] greater mobility, uncertainty and

multiplicity, but ... also empowering, creating possibilities to act in ways impossible or difficult to do in other places, creating hybrid solutions pregnant with potential for new world views and discourses ... where redefinition of self and creation of new identities may take place’.

Engaging with participants through conversation and visual means allowed me to share in others’ negotiation of difference. It brought awareness of how we are collectively involved in the construction of emerging history, and how the key to such ‘re-narrativisation’ (Hall cited by Massey 2005:63-64) rests on consciously relating different humanities to one another (Massey 2005:69). What emerges is a trialectic; a three-part system of self/relation/other where the relation is not merely an independent in-between entity or the sum total of opposing parts, but a process that ‘transforms the categorical and closed logic of either/or to the dialectically open logic of both/and also ...’ (Soja 1997:60,64). It becomes Third Space.

Through the course of the research process, I became aware that the concept of translation as theorised by Walter Benjamin shares close ties with Bhabha’s concept of Third Space. Through continuously relating different ideas to one another, original thoughts are translated into new forms. In this sense translation can ‘liberate the language imprisoned in the work by rewriting it’ (Rendall 1997:163). Each attempt at translation produces another set of elements with different relations in-between. The meaning that emerges within these relations does not seem to be an exact replica of the originally intended meaning, but an evolved version. ‘Essential’ meaning so seem to be elusive while new meanings continuously sprout in ‘afterlife’ (Benjamin 1923; Rendall 1997:153). It is in this sense that translation can be related to a rhizome. It produces seeds, buds and shoots, and continuously multiplies and burgeons new life and meaning (Deleuze & Guattari 2004:4-8).

I made use of the concept of translation as a tool for artistic research. Through dialogue and interaction with the research participants, I set forth to translate our experiences of the research process through using language (written and visual) against itself in ways that obscure the obvious relations between elements and provides room for making links that would perhaps otherwise go unnoticed. I was interested in the potential of artistic praxis for producing ‘bad translations’ (Benjamin 1923), that is the ‘inexact transmission of an inessential content’ (Rendall 1997:152).

In retrospect, it has become evident that becoming aware of the negotiation of Third Space in Jamestown early in the research process has effected all consequent translations. Although I attempt to discuss selected examples of translations in chronological order, it should be noted that the research processes evolved

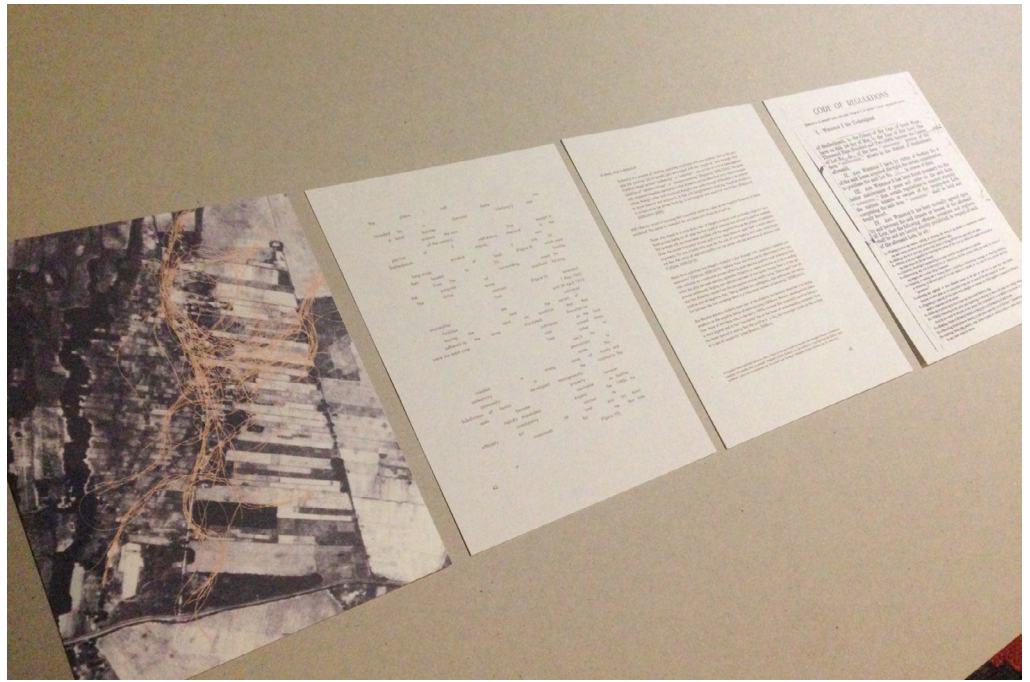


FIGURE N° 4



Extract from dissertation *Designing in-between* (2012) by Karolien Perold.

rhizomatically over the course of three years. Most of the translations were evolving works in progress throughout this period of time.

One of the translations constructed consisted of three individual texts that were juxtaposed with one another in an effort to physically make visible relations between aspects that mostly transpire invisibly (Figure 4). The first text consisted of a formal theoretical discussion with myself of various theorists work concerning dialectics and relationality — two concepts related to Third Space. The second consisted of historical documentation of Jamestown that was reworked by me to add more layers of meaning. Two aerial photographs of the space respectively dating from 1938 and 2008 were reworked (see orange threads added on 1938 photograph in Figure 4) to illustrate the kind of human interaction with the space that was described by other research participants. Jamestown was described as originally characterised by free movement, whereas now movement was more structured and contained:

We just played everywhere when we were kids, doesn't matter on whose property ... But now things are completely different (02 2009).

The third text that formed part of this translation consisted of a critical reflection on my own embeddedness in the research process and the potential effects this can have on me as well as on the research as a whole. As this piece was of a personal nature and words seemed inadequate to convey my ultimate experiences and emotions, an experimental approach to typographic layout was employed in this text's representation. The spacing between all words was dramatically increased. The result was a sea of what appeared to be lone-standing words which, at closer glance, can actually be read in sequence to construct a logical message. The fact that more physical space was provided between words slowed down one's engagement with the text, and hence the interpretation process. I felt that this sharpened my critical awareness of the in-between meanings being negotiated in Third Space.

Critical awareness and insight into the complexity of Third Space in Jamestown was further facilitated through the process of juxtaposing the three texts in relation to one another. I felt that the physical process of designing and editing the final text, of deciding what information and fragments of experience to use, and which to place where and in relation to what, provided felt, embodied experience of Third Space in Jamestown. In this light Anna Borghi and Felice Cimatti (2010:772) hold that 'our sense of body is grounded first in sensation, then in action, and finally in language as a further form of internal and external action ... On one side, internal language can contribute to form a unitary sense of body, alternatively words as tools can contribute to extend it, thus representing a bridge between our body, the external word, ourselves and the environment'.

Main sources of data in this research were the GPS trackings collected through tracking each participant's movement in space for a day and the photographs each participant took as documentation of space. It was interesting to see that when all participants' GPS tracks were superimposed (Figure 5), most convergence of paths could be seen on the R44 (a main road that can be regarded as nothing more than a neutral, impersonal thoroughfare). Furthermore, the participants' paths revealed that, except for one, no one moved around in Jamestown except for travelling to and from their respective homes. This points to a dominant cold understanding of and approach to space in Jamestown. Most of the photographs of participants revealed a similarly cool and distant regard of space. Figure 6 implies an understanding of space as an external entity to be observed and contained by the viewer, and space is so positioned as one-dimensional and lacking in a social dimension.

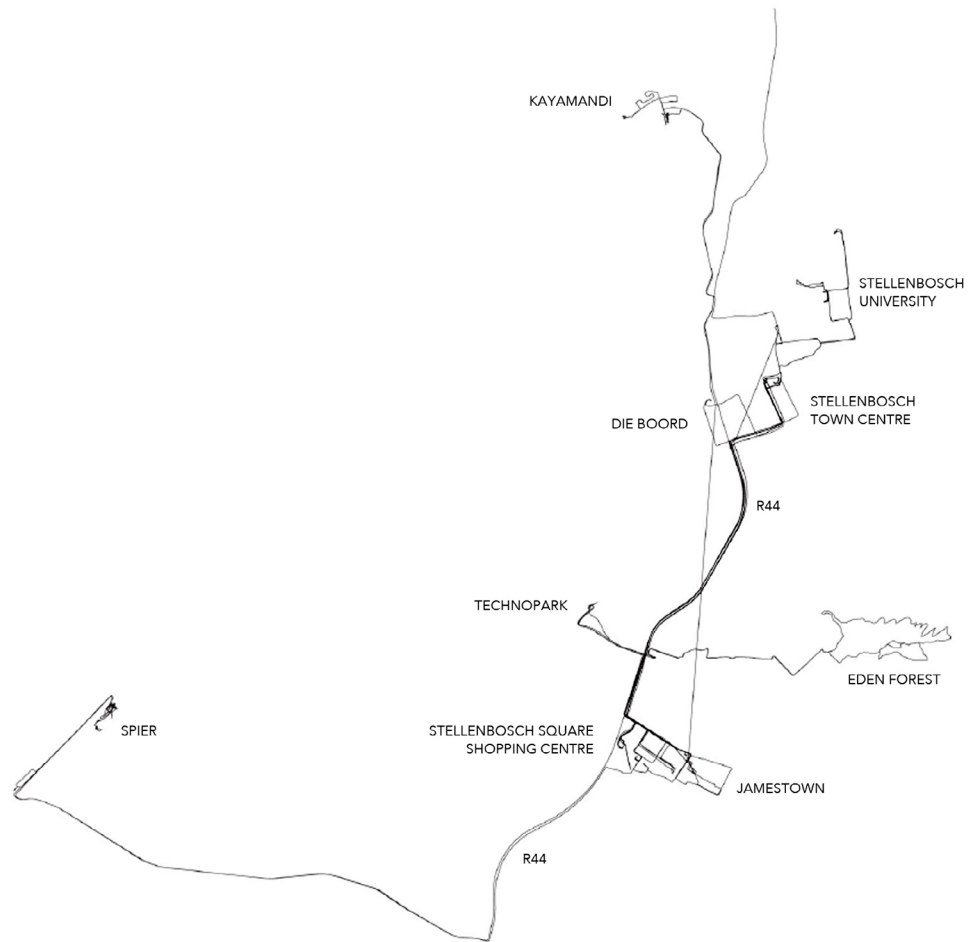


FIGURE **Nº 5**



GPS tracks of participants 01-06 superimposed (2009).

There was, however, a participant whose photographs were taken in motion. These images evoked a more multi-dimensional understanding of space. They were also not only of Jamestown, but included the other spaces that the participant travelled through during the course of the day. The blurriness and illusion of moving elements in Figure 7 induces reservation regarding the dominant physicality of space, as does Figure 8. The images suggest temporariness and highlights that what we see and experience through sensory perception is dynamic and fleeting.



FIGURE **N° 6**



Spatial representation of Jamestown through photography (05 2009).



FIGURE **N° 7**



Representation of space through photography 1 (04 2009).



FIGURE **Nº 8**



Representation of space through photography 2 (04 2009).

Personal narrative concerning participants' sensory spatial experiences of Jamestown emerged in conversation and served to further illustrate the multi-dimensional character of space:

A short hoot when driving by, that is a quick way to greet someone. It's not lying on the hooter, just a quick toot. It's like toot, there's someone, toot, there's another one, toot, toot, toot, everywhere (05 2009).

The silence is very nice in Jamestown. But now and then you get young people spinning their cars' wheels ... And soccer over weekends ... And then the open-air church services. Sometimes early on a Sunday morning, when you're still sleeping deeply, then you hear someone bursting out with beautiful deep choirs, very off-key, bad sound quality ... that for me is definitely Jamestown (06 2009).

Becoming increasingly aware of how participants experienced, negotiated and understood the space of Jamestown as multi-dimensional led to another translation. The goal was to attempt translating how multi-dimensionality can emerge from a single dimension. A series of photographs were taken of the quickly passing main

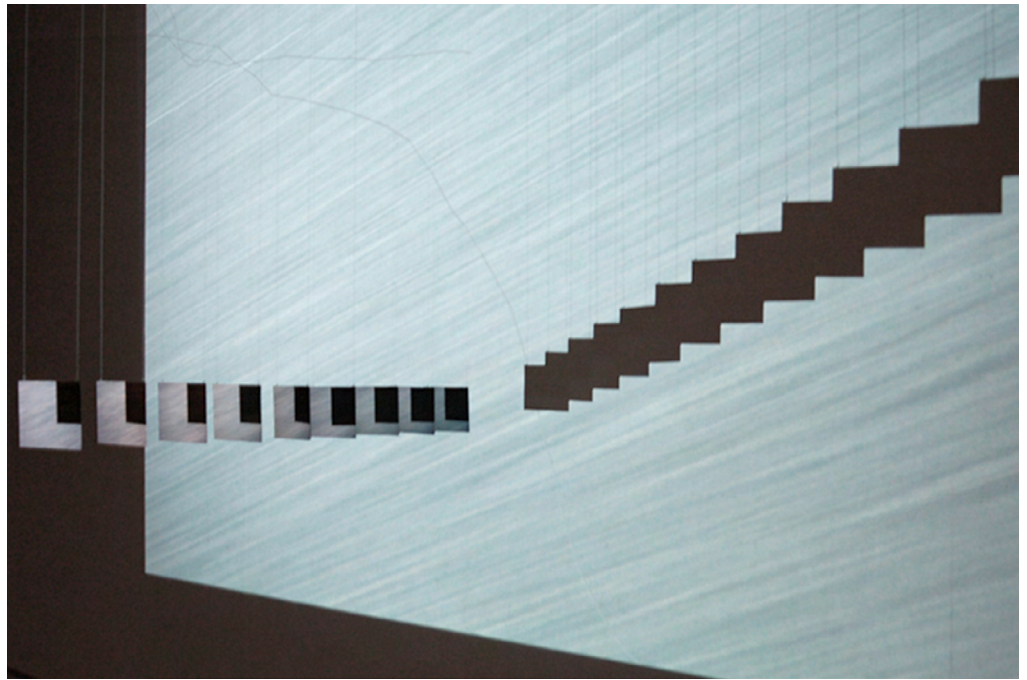


FIGURE **Nº 9**



Facets, 2012. Karolien Perold.

road mentioned above (the R44) while I travelled from my home in Jamestown to work and back. A stop frame animation was made from these images and accompanied by a monotonous droning sound. The animation alone represented my interpretation of the impersonal, one-dimensional regard of space that was related by some of the participants. Stills of the animation were printed and suspended in front of the projection (Figure 9) in an effort to affect some sort of interactive play between visual elements. The light source from the projector cast patterned shadow from the suspended stills onto the projected moving image on the wall. Whereas all elements of this translation originated from the same photographic series, the process of composing the individual photographs in relation to one another served to embody in me a new, multi-dimensional experience of space in Jamestown.

Through the use of creative and artistic processes, conceptualising and constructing this translation provided me with an opportunity to negotiate knowledge in a manner where seeming contradictory ideas could exist simultaneously with equal validity. The research process engaged my imagination, and Evald Ilyenkov (2007) argues that the transformative power of imagination enables us to see what is

really there, and not only what we already know. In engaging the imagination, artistic research therefore seems to be a suitable medium for facilitating transformative learning. Jack Mezirow (cited by McIntosh 2010:45) defines such learning as ‘the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our pre-suppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminative, permeable, and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting on these new understandings’.

Given the central focus on space and GPS tracking as one of the central methods of data collection, the concept of maps surfaced often throughout the research process. Whereas maps have traditionally been regarded as static ‘representation[s] of a part of the earth’s surface’ (Wood & Krygier 2009:421), an alternative approach to cartography has evolved in recent years. This approach is widely referred to as critical cartography and generally strives ‘to understand and suggest alternatives to the categories of knowledge that we use ... [It] does not seek to escape from categories but rather to show how they came to be, and what other possibilities there are’ (Crampton & Krygier 2006:11, 13).

Critical cartography uses mapping to provoke the status quo. According to Christina Ljunberg (2009:309), the map becomes performative as it actively ‘stimulate[s] us to interact by figuring, conceptualising or recording the world’. Through the process of mapping structure can be made and broken down concurrently, and this can inform the mapmakers ‘about their own processes of creating meaning — and their attempts to shape the meaning of others’ (Ljunberg 2009:309).

Throughout the research process I increasingly struggled with how to translate the newfound knowledge and insights I came to into intelligible, clearly structured arguments. I had difficulty in negotiating the impeding power, rigour and structure of scientifically-based research. I wanted to avoid ironically spending my time deliberating more open trains of thought in still restrictive, tightly bound ways (Slattery 2003:194-195) as this can, according to Alex Seago and Anthony Dunne (1999:12), lead to severe restraint of creative drive and thus work against the central characteristics of artistic research.

Critical cartography seemed to be a relevant medium to explore in addressing the above-mentioned issue. In a consequent translation I thus attempted to engage with the space of Jamestown through critical cartographic processes. I aimed to create an active experience of the space I traversed through the course of a day. Each time I moved somewhere, I traced my path on a microscope slide (Figure

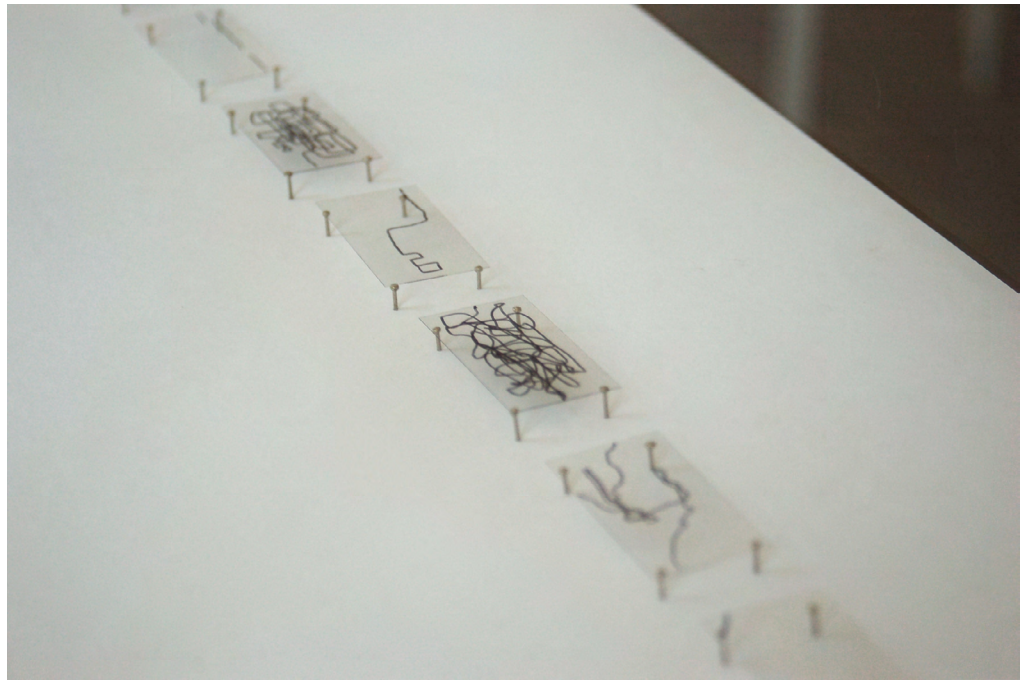


FIGURE **N° 10**



Serial gestalt, 2012. Karolien Perold.



FIGURE **N° 11**



Serial gestalt, 2012. Karolien Perold.

10). The reason for using microscope slides as surface to draw on was because it literally made reference to traditional scientific methodologies. The idea was to use elements of science in ways that challenged the dominant discourses they have come to be associated with. The slides were arranged in chronological order and then divided into groups that were presented (in keeping with a sterile, science-based tradition) in a range of glass display boxes. The boxes were aligned in grid form and filled an entire exhibition space (Figure 11). Part of the motivation behind the mapping process was, as with the previously discussed translation, to explore what would happen when similar individual elements were carefully arranged in ways that facilitated seeing them not as separate entities, but as new wholes. Research on *Gestalt* theory in complex visual systems further provided inspiration for the mapping process. Research by Zeynep Mennan (2009) has concluded that the perceptual processing of the complex images we are daily faced with occurs through a continuous process of sectioning. By means of this, one first makes sense of smaller components of any complex whole one might be faced with, and then one attempts to put individual parts together and interpret the larger whole. This is referred to as 'serial *gestalt*' (Mennan 2009:315). In an attempt at simplifying my own conception of space in Jamestown through visually documenting my individual movements in space, I was granted an opportunity to put my movements back together again to see them in a different light. This process facilitated critical awareness of how pieces of my own spatial experiences can be (and in fact on a daily basis are) combined with others' experiences to contribute to the highly complex and ever-changing social reality of our everyday lives.

The process of translating personal experience of space in Jamestown through critical cartographic processes provided me with an opportunity to experience serial *gestalt*; a paradoxical process that seems to simultaneously undermine *Gestalt* theory as well as complexity theory. I, however, understand such seeming contradiction as embodiment of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome (2004:21) where there are no fixed points of reference — for example finite theories — but only continuously moving lines of flight moving in-between in Third Space. Deleuze and Guattari's (2004:12) description of maps as 'entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real ... [the map] is itself part of the rhizome' is significant in this regard.

My research process evolved rhizomatically, and an intricate map of Jamestown and artistic research came into being. I want to stress that this map only provides a snippet of an ever evolving whole. My map can still be translated in a range of different ways as, according to Deleuze and Guattari (2004:12), it is 'detachable, reversible, [and] susceptible to constant modification'. I acknowledge the research's

multiple natures, and do not intend to propose any definitive conclusions. I do hope that sharing my experiences and insights may excite interest and spur further exploratory work in the broad field of artistic research in the context of South Africa.

Conclusion³

In this article the authors aimed to critically reflect and elaborate on the research processes engaged in during the artistic research project *Designing in-between*, on the personal insights the research led to, and on the potential implications of the research for scholars working with artistic research in a South African context. Artistic praxis was used as a method. Through a combination of theoretical research and creative visual exploration and experimentation, a range of attempts have been made at translating experiences related to a space characterised by difference. The impetus for these translations was to allow differences to move through one another to momentarily exist in entangled dynamic equilibrium. Conceptualising and constructing these translations have allowed for multi-dimensional experience and multi-perspectival representation of relations between aspects of complex reality in the researchers. The artistic research processes engaged in have helped researchers to physically, practically, cognitively and emotionally negotiate the 'assimilation of contraries' (Harris cited by Bhabha 1995:209) — cultural, social, as well as conceptual and theoretical in nature.

Homi Bhabha's concept of Third Space, with its roots in colonial and postcolonial history, is relevant in this regard as it 'can creat[e] that occult instability which presages powerful cultural changes" (Bhabha 1995:209). Within the context of postcolonial, post-apartheid South Africa the kind of change Bhabha refers to is important. Since the official end of apartheid in 1994, social transformation has been a top priority for South African society. It is easy to think of transformation as a binary process involving moving from a *wrong* to a *right* place.⁴ Bhabha (1995:209), however, holds that such an understanding is based on 'the exoticism or multiculturalism of the diversity of cultures' instead of 'on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity'. He continues to say that 'by exploring this hybridity, this "Third Space", we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves' (Bhabha 1995:209).

3. And herewith a return to the third person to conclude in traditional academic research terms.

4. Italics is used here in acknowledgement of the problematic nature of binary thinking within the theoretic and conceptual context of this research paper.

Negotiating Third Space in Jamestown through artistic research processes necessarily facilitated exercise and practice of what Nicholas Burbules and Rupert Berk have termed an 'alternate criticality' (1999) in researchers. Such a criticality regards dialogue and openness as paramount; not only in relation between oneself

and others, but also within one's own mind. bell hooks (2010:10) shares in the thought of Burbules and Berk. She says that, 'critical thinking requires us to use our imagination, seeing things from perspectives other than our own and envisioning the likely consequences of our position' (hooks 2010:10). In this research project, visual translation and critical cartographic processes have certainly encouraged us to see and regard the everyday negotiation of difference in the multicultural space of Jamestown in ways that would not necessarily have occurred otherwise. We believe it has helped us to see, understand and act in more democratic, patient, and 'human' (Burbules & Berk 1999) ways.

Our experience of *Designing in-between* has led us to believe that artistic research is a medium that holds value for scholars who work in contexts of difference, especially in South Africa where the remnants of a previous unequal society still linger. We believe *Designing in-between* has provided an example of how artistic research is suited to facilitate transformative learning.

This article constitutes an attempt at translating the insights attained through artistic research into clear, intelligible arguments. We feel that further exploration of ways in which such insights can be translated in comprehensible, user-friendly ways without losing the open and imaginative qualities that facilitated its production in the first place can hold value. A Third Space for sharing research insights — a space moving in-between traditional structural frameworks and open artistic forms — is and should continue to be negotiated in future.

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