COPYRIGHT AND CITATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR THIS THESIS/ DISSERTATION

o Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

o NonCommercial — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

o ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

How to cite this thesis
EXPRESSIONS OF LIMINALITY IN SELECTED EXAMPLES OF UNSANCTIONED PUBLIC ART IN JOHANNESBURG

By
Julie Lovelace
200582691

A dissertation submitted in the Department of Visual Art, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Magister Technology (Fine Art).

February 2014

Supervisor: Professor Karen von Veh
Co-supervisor: Gordon Froud

University of Johannesburg
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the generous assistance of the: The University of Johannesburg. (Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not to be attributed to The University of Johannesburg).

I wish to thank my supervisor Professor Karen von Veh and co-supervisor Gordon Froud along with the practical assistance of John Shirley.
DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is, unless otherwise indicated, my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment for the Degree of Magister Technologiae (Fine Art) in the Department of Visual Art, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any university.

Julie Lovelace
Twenty eighth day of February, 2014.
ABSTRACT

The focus of this research is an exploration of aspects of liminality and how it manifests in selected unsanctioned public art interventions in ‘urban places’, specifically, the Johannesburg Central Business District. Liminality informs my own art work and to contextualise my practice I investigate Steven Cohen’s performance/intervention entitled Chandelier (2001-2002), and Alison Kearney’s The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003). I argue that unsanctioned public art maintains a liminal identity, a fluidity of ‘repurposing a space’ that is in constant shift between different dimensions of liminality. Such works create a zone between physical and conceptual space, challenging the relationships between people and places, the artist and the audience. Liminal spaces (such as the underside of bridges for example) provide the platform for new mediation to happen outside of the normal social structures. Homi Bhabha (1994:54) refers to this as a “third space” where transformation may occur, and it is this transformation of space and experience that I aim to explore in my work.

In my practical component I present a body of unsanctioned public art interventions consisting of ceramic sculptures placed in urban liminal spaces in Johannesburg. I populate the chosen spaces with imaginative objects that playfully reflect my own cultural hybridity, and resultant liminal existence, in a post-colonial urban society. My practical work thus draws on analyses of the liminal aspects of Cohen and Kearney’s works as well as on aspects of my hybrid existence arising from my status as an immigrant in Johannesburg. Through my art works I attempt to engage with the local inhabitants without the restrictions of institutionalised arenas, allowing for a new experience of both the space and the artwork. Finally I record my own interventions in detail and compile an annotated photographic catalogue to document the sculptures in situ and the ephemeral life span of these unsanctioned public art interventions.

KEY WORDS

Liminality, Unsanctioned Public Art, Ceramic Sculpture.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS...........................................................................................................i
DECLARATION....................................................................................................................ii
ABSTRACT..........................................................................................................................iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS..........................................................................................................iv
LIST OF FIGURES ...............................................................................................................vi
LIST OF APPENDIX.............................................................................................................v

INTRODUCTION................................................................................................................1
Theoretical positioning........................................................................................................4
Bhabha cultural hybridity and the ‘third space’...............................................................5
Overview of chapters.......................................................................................................6

CHAPTER ONE: DEFINING LIMINALITY..........................................................................8
Introduction.......................................................................................................................8
Liminality..........................................................................................................................9
Liminal space and Thresholds.........................................................................................13
Conclusion......................................................................................................................16

CHAPTER TWO: UNSANCTIONED PUBLIC ART IN THE JOHANNESBURG C.B.D.........................18
Introduction.....................................................................................................................18
Public Art..........................................................................................................................18
Steven Cohen....................................................................................................................23
Alison Kearney.................................................................................................................29
Conclusion......................................................................................................................35

CHAPTER THREE: MY INTERVENTIONS........................................................................37
Introduction.......................................................................................................................37
Intervention 1: If You Go Down To The Woods Today (December 2011)......................42
Intervention 2: We Are All Migrants (December 2012)...............................................47
Intervention 3: The Shack, Shopping For Democracy (June 2012).................................49
Interventions 4, 5 and 6: Introduction .................................................................51
Intervention 4: "I Did It Mao Wei Wei" (August 2013) ........................................53
Intervention 5: "Let Freedom Reign. The Sun Shall Never Set On So Glorious A Human Achievement" (August 2013) ..............................................................57
Intervention 6: "I Did It Mao Wei Wei" (August 2013) .......................................59
Intervention 7: "If You Go Down to the Woods Today" (August 2013) ............60
Intervention 8: "When It Rains, It Pours" (August 2013) ...............................63
Conclusion ...........................................................................................................64

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION ........................................................................66

SOURCES CONSULTED .......................................................................................82

APPENDIX
Migrant Manifesto ...............................................................................................91
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Steven Cohen, Chandelier, 2001-2002 Chandelier Project [o]... ............ 68

Figure 2 Steven Cohen, Chandelier, 2001-2002 Chandelier Project [o]... ............ 68

Figure 3 Steven Cohen, Chandelier, 2001-2002 Chandelier Project [o]... ............ 69

Figure 4 Steven Cohen, Chandelier, 2001-2002 Chandelier Project [o]... ............ 69

Figure 5 Alison Kearney, The Portable Hawkers Museum: Rosebank, 2003 (Kearney 2004:84)......................................................................................................................................... 70

Figure 6 Alison Kearney, The Portable Hawkers Museum: Rosebank, 2003 (Kearney 2004:85)......................................................................................................................................... 70

Figure 7 Alison Kearney, The Portable Hawkers Museum: Excerpt from The Portable Hawkers Museum Visitors book, Rosebank, 2003 (Kearney 2004:85)..... 71

Figure 8 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 1: If You Go Down To The Woods Today, December 2011.......................................................................................................................................... 72

Figure 9 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 1: If You Go Down To The Woods Today, December 2011.......................................................................................................................................... 72

Figure 10 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 1: If You Go Down To The Woods Today, February 2012.......................................................................................................................................... 73

Figure 11 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 1: If You Go Down To The Woods Today, December 2012.......................................................................................................................................... 73

Figure 12 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 2: We Are All Migrants, December 2012 ....... .......................................................................................................................................... 74
Figure 13 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 2: We Are All Migrants, December 2012 .......................................................... 74

Figure 14 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 3: The Shack: Shopping For Democracy Porcelain Vase, June 2012 .......................................................... 75

Figure 15 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 3: The Shack: Shopping For Democracy Porcelain Vase, June 2012 .......................................................... 75

Figure 16 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 4: I Did It Mao Wei Wei, August 2013 ...... 76

Figure 17 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 5: Let Freedom Reign. The Sun Shall Never Set On So Glorious A Human Achievement, August 2013 ........................................... 77

Figure 18 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 5: Let Freedom Reign. The Sun Shall Never Set On So Glorious A Human Achievement, December 2013 ........................................... 77

Figure 19 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 6: I Did It Mao Wei Wei, August 2013 ...... 78

Figure 20 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 6: I Did It Mao Wei Wei, August 2013 ...... 78

Figure 21 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 7: If You Go Down To The Woods Today: Blocks, August 2013 .................................................................................. 79

Figure 22 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 7: If You Go Down To The Woods Today: Blocks, August 2013 .................................................................................. 79

Figure 23 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 7: If You Go Down To The Woods Today: Blocks, August 2013 .................................................................................. 80

Figure 24 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 8: When It Rains, It Pours: Blocks and Ducks, August 2013 .................................................................................. 80
Figure 25 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 8: *When It Rains, It Pours:*
Blocks and Ducks, August 2013...................................................... 81

Figure 26 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 8: *When It Rains, It Pours:*
Blocks and Ducks, August 2013...................................................... 81
INTRODUCTION

This study is motivated by my position as an immigrant to this country and my resultant need to belong. William Glasser (William Glasser Quotes [sa]) explains that “we are driven by five genetic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun”. David Lowenthal (1985:41) adds a further layer that identifies my situation, writing that: “the past is integral to our sense of identity… [The] ability to recall and identify with our own past gives existence meaning, purpose, and value.” My lack of shared histories in South Africa, both politically and socially, leads me to struggle with a sense of displacement, marginality, not fully integrating into South African society. This also leads me to personally identify with the concept of occupying a liminal\(^1\) or ‘in-between space’.

Homi Bhabha (1990:221) has defined a liminal ‘third space’ as a place of hybridity, which “enables other positions to emerge [which] displace the histories that constitute it and (creates) sets up new structures of authority, new initiatives.” This statement resonates with my own position as an immigrant from the United Kingdom and my engagement with the public spaces of Johannesburg, spaces already defined by transformation. The melting pot of Johannesburg’s public spaces offers a fertile tableau for unsolicited artistic expression that could give rise to new hybrid forms, born out of a productive creative syncretism\(^2\) with the city. I see this as a place in which my identity is liminal, and where another (third) position emerges through my artworks, which consist of unsanctioned public interventions.\(^3\)

My research is about understanding the way in which liminality informs my work: from the liminal aspects of unsanctioned public art which influence my approach to intervening as an artist with the physical environment of Johannesburg, to my own

---

\(^1\) I use the concept of liminality (from the Latin word limen meaning ‘a threshold’) to describe a psychological, neurological or metaphysical subjective state, conscious or unconscious, of being on the ‘threshold’ of or between two different existential planes, as defined in the Oxford Dictionary.

\(^2\) Syncretism is defined as the amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought (syncretism [sa]).

\(^3\) Dr Anna Notaro (2010:19) explains that “unsanctioned artwork has an aura of potential subversiveness in contrast to the ‘responsibly’ sanctioned work carefully selected for public consumption” I apply this definition of subversiveness to this dissertation because all my artworks are inserted into the urban fabric of the city without asking for permission and with no consideration for by-laws or other urban rules and regulations.
‘liminal’ immigrant state. I ‘repurpose’ specific places in the urban city of Johannesburg, using objects that incorporate images which commemorate my cultural background.

To contextualise my own exploration of liminality, I consider the way it manifests in other selected unsanctioned public art interventions in ‘urban places’, specifically the Johannesburg Central Business District. The first intervention I analyse is Steven Cohen’s *Chandelier* (2001-2002), and the second is Alison Kearney’s *The Portable Hawkers Museum* (2003). Cohen performs his ‘interjections’ uninvited in public spaces: these deliberate acts challenge and disrupt the issues of identity, sexuality, race, ethnicity and class in the ‘new’ South Africa. He performs his ‘identity of difference’ in moments of antagonism and presents a powerful critique of all fixed identities. Cohen thus inhabits an in-between space where identities are performed and contested, in a liminal site, as an expression of the artist’s hybrid and fragmented subjectivity.

Kearney, in her outdoor performance of *The Portable Hawkers Museum* (2003), reveals the interdependence between private with public, and by rejecting the cult of the object and the idea of art as consumption she discloses an anti-art attitude. She questions this by challenging the relationship between museums and the objects housed within them to the communities that they supposedly serve. She investigates the role which the audience plays in creating meaning, and contributing to the creative process, while engaging with conceptual artworks in the field of exhibition display.

Importantly, these two performances in public spaces are attached to the idea of including the spectator, who often becomes a cooperating participant and shares the

---

4 I use the words ‘repurpose space’ as applied by Justin Armstrong (2005:1): “street art is not about taking space; it is about repurposing space... rather it is about making space for an understanding of the way that street art and similar forms of cultural resistance influence our interactions with the visual environment”.

5 I use the term ‘urban places’ as applied by Charles Goodsell (2003: [sp]) to describe appropriated sites where social interactions, sense of belonging, collective memories, and shared identities occur.

6 In the intervention *Chandelier* (2001-2002) Cohen’s performance took place in Newtown, Johannesburg in a squatter camp under the M1 highway.

7 In the intervention *The Portable Hawkers Museum* (2003) Kearney’s performance took place in Rosebank.
responsibility of the work’s realisation. The audience of these interventions is composed of accidental urban dwellers who become participants in these brief ephemeral encounters. “What exists in the space between the words public and art is an unknown relationship between artist and audience, a relationship that may itself be the artwork” Susan Lacy (cited by Kwon 2004:105). This adds a conceptual layer that creates an alternative experience of the everyday urban environment.

These art works invigorate the visual culture of the city and their consumption becomes a social act; as such these street interventions encourage explorations into the dynamics of the public space they inhabit. They explore the world, question our manner of living together, reflect on conditions, define new practices and ultimately produce new awareness. Using these examples I argue that unsanctioned public art interventions maintain a liminal identity, a fluidity of ‘repurposing a space’ that is in constant shift between different dimensions of liminality: the zone between the physical and conceptual space, challenging the relationships between people and spaces, the artist and the audience. Liminal spaces allow transformation and new mediation to happen outside of the normal social structures, to flourish beyond institutionalised political arenas. The urban landscape provides an opportunity for the artist to engage with the urban dweller creating a new understanding and experience of the space.

My practical work draws on the analyses of Cohen’s *Chandelier* (2001-2002) and Kearney’s *The Hawkers Museum* (2003) and I apply my findings on liminality in these works to my own interventions. In my practical component I present a body of unsanctioned public art interventions consisting of ceramic sculptures placed in urban liminal spaces. My aim is to engage with the urban dweller in a playful way; to inspire a sense of curiosity and explore the multi-faceted nature of liminality. My sense of entitlement and freedom in the unsanctioned nature of these interventions contributes to the notion of public art as an act of ‘repurposing’ rather than occupation. By using imagery from my own cultural legacy in the selected urban spaces of Johannesburg, this approach constitutes an expression of my individuality. Finally my own interventions are recorded in a catalogue of annotated photographic

---

8 Museums would be examples of institutionalised political arenas.
documentation, recording the sculptures in situ and the ephemeral life span of these unsanctioned public art interventions.

**Theoretical positioning**

The theoretical positioning of my enquiry lies within a post-colonial discourse, and specifically includes an exploration of post-colonial ‘liminality’, ‘cultural hybridity’ and the ‘third space’. I refer to the studies on liminality by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner to contextualise the liminal nature of ritual and performance, which has a direct influence on my approach to art making in the city. According to Turner’s notion of symbolic representation, emotion and feeling become a critical component in making sense of social interaction, meaning and individual experience. These experiences can be applied to understanding an event, cultural performance or the perception of a cultural artefact. I apply these findings to the analysis of Cohen and Kearney’s art works. Post-colonial liminality describes a psychological, neurological or metaphysical subjective state, conscious or unconscious, of being on the ‘threshold’ of or between two different existential planes. Neurological psychology defines this as a liminal state. Turner (1967:299) further develops the concept of ‘liminal space,’ a space of transition between ritual phases of separation and reincorporation in society.

With reference to liminal space, I consider Sharon Zukin’s (1991:36) approach to identifying contemporary urban spaces as ‘liminal’. Zukin examines the identifying factors in ‘neighbourhoods’ and surmises that the look and feel of cities reflects decisions about what and who should be visible or not visible. This is important to this study with regard to public and private space. Mark Augé’s (1995:96) classification of the ‘non-place’ refers to the liminal spaces one encounters while travelling such as airports, bus terminals and hotels, which one often only remembers in very generic terms. These ambivalent spaces hold none of the familiar attributes of place; for example, they incite no sense of belonging. Augé’s

---

9 In my work I adapt Bhabha’s use of the term ‘cultural hybridity’ as a term to describe societies that emerge from cultural contacts of ‘explorers’ and those ‘explored’.

10 The theories of these two authors are further discussed in chapter one.

11 Turner (1982:111) argued that the better analogy for making sense of culture is to perceive social interaction as a kind of theater; his analogy is applicable to both Cohen’s and Kearney’s unsanctioned street interventions.
development of a theoretical concept that is able to meet the demands of the
growing conviction that the local can no longer be understood except as a part of the
complicated global whole. This concept emphasises the anthropologist’s own
experience and illustrates the apparent inseparability of the gap between language
and experience. Augé’s concept is able to contextualise and close these gaps, which
makes it relevant to this study on contemporary culture.

Quinton Stevens (Franck and Stevens 2007:75) believes that through engaging with
spaces within the urban city, an exploration and discovery of new frontiers is
possible, and this manifests in the contested nature of urban spaces. He defines the
city as a “vibrant place where dynamic actions offer moments of emancipation” (Del
Real 2010:149). The city becomes ‘loose’ through the actions of those that
participate within it locally on the thresholds of sidewalks and streets: it is these
public spaces that define cities. This idea is important, to help contextualise the
loose spaces of Johannesburg’s urban environments.

Art historian Carole Duncan, places importance on the museum practise and further
expounds the anthropological theory of liminality in her analysis of the art museum
as a ritual site, stating (Duncan 1995:12) that the museum is a stage setting that
prompts visitors to enact a performance of some kind. Defining the museum shrine
as a ritual site is essential to the context of art display in this study.

**Bhabha cultural hybridity and the ‘third space’**

Bhabha’s concept of hybridity and the ‘third space’ is important to this study. Rufel
Ramos (2000:1-4) explains that Bhabha’s theory extends an inclusionary approach
to creating culture. “A new hybrid identity or subject-position can emerge from the
interweaving of elements of the coloniser and colonised challenging the validity and
authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity”. This leads to a multi-faceted pattern
of cultural exchange and maturation. This inclusionary and multi-faceted approach is
central to the foundation of the liminal third space that I create with the urban dweller
in this study. Bhabha (1994:52) states these shared collectives (cultures) are specific
temporal constellations, which consist of elements that they share with others. He
further states the location of culture is not to be found in physical space, or within
social collectives, but rather in the inter-subjective realms (third spaces) between individuals and groups “constructed on the boundary between frame of reference/frame of mind” (Bhabha 1994:163). These encounters result in something new and substantially different, more than just conglomerates/ juxtapositions of new and old elements (Bhabha 1994:10-11), and furthermore may result in new practices and ways of thinking about things that cannot be traced back to a specific origin. Bhabha argues, social encounters result in contradictory and ambivalent spaces in which social identities and ideologies are questioned and negotiated, in other words a "third space of enunciation" (Bhabha 1994:54).

This theory is applicable to my study as it focuses on border situations and thresholds as the spaces where identities are performed and contested: Bhabha calls this the ‘liminal site of modern society’ (1994:209). Bhabha (1994:5) further writes that liminality is important as a category strongly related to the concept of cultural hybridity. I therefore draw on his theories to contextualise the liminality of cultural hybridity and the third space, which I adapt to an application of unsanctioned work in the urban public spaces of Johannesburg.

**Overview of chapters**

The first chapter contextualises my art practice by considering the various aspects of liminality and its importance to me as defined by selected theorists. I firstly consider the writings of the anthropologist, van Gennep, who defines liminality as an ‘in-between space’ and who considers the importance of rites of passage involving ceremonies and rituals. Turner, a more recent anthropologist, expands on van Gennep’s notion of liminality, focusing on the transitional or liminal phase in which ‘communitas’, the notion of ‘outsider- hood’, ‘marginal’ and inferior’ are introduced as features. Liminal space and thresholds are further expounded, as these are the selected spaces that I choose to intervene with. The concept of ‘non-place’ as defined by Augé, is applied to thresholds and how these mediate between public and private spaces. An exploration of public liminal spaces follows and Bhabha is introduced to contextualise the ‘third space’ of liminal hybridity that I wish to realise.
In Chapter two I introduce characteristics of the visual environment of Johannesburg, with examples and an explanation of sanctioned public art. I then consider examples of unsanctioned public art in Johannesburg, an explanation of the characteristics of this genre and why artists choose to express themselves in the urban environment. I further explain how these works create an alternative visual layer to the city and how they become part of our visual culture. The contested nature of public spaces is raised which leads to an explanation of contemporary street art practises and how the experience of sharing these spaces with the urban dweller determine the character of these works.

Expressions of post-colonial liminality and cultural hybridity in the selected public art interventions of Cohen’s *Chandelier* (2001-2002) and Kearney’s *The Portable Hawkers Museum* (2003) are then explored to contextualise my own art production. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how Cohen’s and Kearney’s interventions challenge and negotiate identity within the city, and how this experience differs from an encounter within the gallery of sanctioned public art. The link between these works and my own work is then touched on.

The third chapter consists of an in depth analysis of my own unsanctioned public interventions and expressions of liminality. I consider how space can be transformed and made available for the negotiation of new cultural meaning by the urban dweller. How liminal spaces can be opened up to become ‘repurposed’ ‘non spaces’ thereby adding a further visual layer to the city and creating a sense of place. I assess the extent to which my work demonstrates Bhabha’s development of the hybrid ‘third space’, which allows for alternative perspectives to evolve. I also discuss my relationship with the city, and how it forms the foundation of my interventions; I explain what the objects that I produce consist of and how they are decorated in ways that reflect my cultural immigrant background; and I give an over-view of the type of sites in which I place them. My interventions are then individually discussed; the choice of space described and the reaction of the urban dwellers who encounter them is noted.
CHAPTER ONE: DEFINING LIMINALITY

Introduction

In this chapter I define liminality (liminal space and liminal physical thresholds) as something that is fundamental to my work, as it provides a semiotic understanding of performance genres and public art, both of which inform my attempt to create and communicate an alternate visual meaning in the urban environment. I utilise liminal spaces by placing my interventions in them so that they can interact with the urban dweller in a "liminal zone of time and space in which visitors (urban dwellers), removed from the concerns of their daily practical lives, open themselves to a different quality of experience" (Duncan 1995:20). Liminal spaces allow me to work on the margins of what is acceptable. In terms of performance genres I have identified liminality as a significant aspect in the work of Cohen and Kearney (to be discussed in chapter two). In their work, a place, a time, a situation or a way of being may be defined as a transformational space (a middle-ground) filled with ambiguities and contradictions. Liminal space is therefore the means by which both these artists and I work: outside acceptable boundaries and expectations.

Another aspect of liminality, which pertains directly to me, is the notion of a liminal or in-between personal existence. As an immigrant in South Africa living in Johannesburg, which is a melting pot for local inhabitants, immigrants, illegal aliens and refugees, I feel as if I exist in an in-between state, hovering between belonging and alien. In other words I feel as if I inhabit a liminal position in a city that almost by default exudes liminality in its ever changing identity. The concept of 'outsider-hood' and 'marginality' (as informed by Bhabha's theory of the 'third space') is connected to my own persona – the “betwixt and between” (Turner 1967:93) liminal state that pertains to my own migrant back ground and is relevant to this discussion as my 'third space' is created through the insertion of objects that reflect my own personal, liminal, migrant position in the urban spaces of Johannesburg.

This chapter begins by defining liminality and considers the various aspects of liminal expression as explained by van Gennep in his book *Rites de Passage* (1909) and
further developed by Turner in his book *The Forest of Symbols* (1967). This is followed by an explanation of liminal space and the notion of ‘thresholds’, both of which pertain to the choice of exhibition sites for my work. I then briefly discuss Bhabha’s (1990:211) notion of the ‘third space’, considering how an understanding of the creative possibilities engendered by an intersection of cultures might function in my work.

**Liminality**

Liminality is derived from the Latin word ‘limen’, meaning threshold (Liminality [sa]). It is used to describe the characteristics of any in-between state,¹ regardless of the situation that it is part of: it can be a situation, time, or even a way of being. A threshold is a liminal space in itself; and the crossing of this threshold is also a liminal act. Liminality can be defined as a middle-ground, a space and time where transformations can take place, a transitional situation fuelled with ambiguities and contradictions (Turner 1969:94). The worth of liminality as an ‘in-between’ space or condition, is very useful in describing and understanding complex social and cultural phenomena such as the trans-cultural, trans-gender and the trans-geographical space.²

The word liminality is also closely associated with the Latin word *limes*, meaning limit. Unlike a limit, however, a threshold is not an end-point but a mid-point, which allows for fluid crossing of, or wavering between, two worlds. The term was first introduced as a concept in 1909 by the ethnologist van Gennep in his fundamental work, *Les Rites de Passage* originally written in 1909.³ This was then expounded upon by anthropologist Turner, and the terms ‘liminal’ and ‘liminality’ have more recently broadened to describe political and cultural change (Thomassen 2009:51).

---

¹ As Turner (2009:95) defines it: “Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony”.

² This state of liminality can be utilised in the exploration and analysis of the works of Cohen and Kearney.

³ This book was first published in French in 1909 translated by Monika Vizedom and Gabriella Coffee and printed in English in 1960.
In his book, van Gennep (1960: 69,175,177) defines rites of passage as “rites” that accompany every change of place, state, social position or certain points in age. Rites of passage mark specific moments in a person’s life where a transition takes place, either as an individual, social group or nation that one is a part of. The transition allows for the movement from one world to another; whether this is from one status to another, one place to another, one situation to another or from one period of time to another. Universally the most recognised, celebrated and highly ritualised rites of passage are those marking birth, puberty, marriage and death. van Gennep (1960:1-15) explains that rites of passage are not only present at these moments but may accompany any change from one state to another. He also stresses that these moments of transition are enveloped in ceremonies and rituals whose structure clearly marks them as rites of passage.

Rites of passage and ritual are extremely varied in South Africa. Examples include Xhosa initiation rites of male circumcision and Christian matrimonial ceremonies. In some societies it is believed that every transition that one goes through defines one’s very existence. For each transition there are ceremonies and rituals whose main purpose is to enable and assist the individual to pass from one defined position to another. In every rite of passage ceremony that he analysed, van Gennep (1960:15-21) observed similarities in the order in which these different transitions or rites of passage progressed. Within them he defined three different phases that form an underlying pattern. The first phase is separation, during which an individual or group is removed from their normal social structure and becomes detached from their social position and previous identity. The second phase is transition, and is characterised by an ambiguous state of being, where the individual or group has no identity and therefore stands outside the normal space and time-frame of their society. The third phase is incorporation, during which the individual or group re-enters their normal social structure. van Gennep (1960:1-15) also compares a rite of passage to a journey from one place to another, in the form of departure, travelling and arriving. This physical passage in space is, in addition, often accompanied by a passage of internal change, thus physical and territorial passage is a real transition

---

4 Van Gennep (1960:1-15) defines a rite as a set of actions that may be prescribed by a religious passage or ceremony, signifying an event in a person’s life that is indicative of a transition from one stage to another.
in time and space, not just a symbolic one. It is van Gennep’s view that the rites of passage in the basic everyday behaviour of people could be applied to any distinct time, place or surroundings.

A historical example of this is in the Middle Ages in Europe, the frontiers of different countries did not touch each other - they were surrounded by a strip of neutral ground. This moment spent between the two worlds is a transitory experience: the crossing of such a neutral zone in its entirety is a complete transition, “a rite of the threshold” (van Gennep 1960:21), as a threshold of some kind needs to be crossed to enter or leave the neutral zone. This neutral zone is symbolic of a period of time where new knowledge is discovered in a space where the participant is liberated from the normal demands of everyday existence. Such a liminal space would enable one to exist in between ordered worlds, where everything is unknown and anything can happen; where knowledge and doubt, activity and reflection, weakness and strength, exist side by side.

When Turner (1967:81) borrowed and expanded upon van Gennep’s concept of liminality, he placed greater significance upon the transitional or liminal phase, introducing it, as described above, as a space of transformation where the human being is between past and future identities and anything can happen. Turner (2009:166-178) lays down the idea of liminality in terms of ritual behaviour where two things are accomplished: firstly, those undergoing the ritual temporarily become nothing, and are placed into a state of extreme vulnerability where they are open to change; and secondly, during the liminal phase, persons are inscribed with their new identities and initiated into their new powers. Within each of the three phases of separation, transition and re-incorporation there is the creation of experiences of space and time that are different from normative everyday reality. Therefore Turner sees a rite of passage as a situation where there is a different structure from the one we know, and he characterises the liminal phase by this ‘anti-structure’ (Turner 2009: 95).

5 Zones of this kind were considered of great significance in classical antiquity. In Greece they were used for market places or battlefields. Much closer to home, neutral zones can be found within the city - an example being a religious building, or in a house, in the form of a gate, a door or a threshold (van Gennep1960:18).
He further develops the concept of liminality by exploring the transition phase within a rite of passage, observing that this phase is filled with questions and doubts, ambiguity and contradictions; and that this situation does not straightforwardly reveal answers. From this liminal phase, Turner (2009:96) observes a form of human interrelatedness emerging that is opposed to the given hierarchical social structure and order. He terms this ‘communitas’, and he defines it as a form of social behaviour that surfaces during the liminal phase of a rite of passage; pertaining to a group of people, as well as being a social need that is necessary for society at large to function cohesively and in certain situations to survive. According to Turner (2009:96) ‘communitas’ often arises spontaneously within a moment, situation or phase in life that presents a need for people to be or work together. When this happens the boundaries between different segmented social positions evaporate and this leads to a heightened sense of solidarity, equality, wellbeing and belonging. The hypocrisy of the hierarchical social structure that is the normative everyday reality is therefore highlighted. Turner (2009:97) concludes that society needs models of human interrelatedness - needs ‘communitas’: it is a “matter of giving recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there would be no society”.

The realisation that ‘communitas’ has a necessary place in society led Turner (2009:111) to explore how other social characteristics such as ‘outsider-hood’ ‘marginal’ and ‘inferior’, which are typical of the liminal phase, also emerge and form their own category within society. A liminal space is often foreign and strange to the liminal person. It is a space in which one feels invisible, having no social position, and consequently this leads to feelings of isolation. In a liminal space negative forces alternate with positive processes of growth, demanding constant reconceptualisation of one’s identity. In a liminal space these forces are in constant flux and flow, altering one’s views and opinions about the constructs of society and one’s place within it.

In his book *The Ritual Process*, Turner (2009:111-112) uses the term ‘outsider’ to describe the condition of a person or a group of people that either permanently or temporarily, but often voluntarily, opt to live outside the structural arrangements of the hierarchical social structure. Some examples of outsiders across various cultures are shamans, priests, those in monastic seclusion, hippies, hoboes and gypsies. Turner (2009:125) uses the term ‘marginal’ to designate those outside of the hierarchical social structure; who are often pushed to the edges, the margins, of society. Typical marginals are immigrants, persons of mixed ethnic origin and migrants from country to city. ‘Inferiority’ is a category that is measured in economic terms and can be like outsider-hood, either permanently or temporarily, but unlike outsider-hood, it is never voluntary.
Experiencing a liminal space raises questions instead of providing answers, and leads one to inquiry and critical thought about one’s situation (Turner 2009:95-96).

**Liminal Space and Thresholds**

Psychologists (liminal art [sa]) call ‘liminal space’ a place where boundaries dissolve a little and we stand on the threshold, getting ready to move across the limits of what we were, into what we are to be. Turner (2009:128-129) suggests that an in-between space allows an active exchange of ideologies, concepts and methods of working. Therefore liminal space might be defined as a metaphorical realm where ideas and concepts - artistic, political, cultural and social - are in constant states of contestation and negotiation, flux and change. My preferred choice of a liminal space for my unsanctioned interventions is a physical threshold. Actions on thresholds are often publicly tolerated as they are not perceived by others as lasting and dangerous.

A hypothesis advanced by Augé (O’Beirne 2006: 38-50) is that “If a space can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity, will be a non-place.” Examples of non-places include airports, supermarkets, hotel rooms, and highways. As Emer O’Beirne (2006:38-50) explains, Augé coined the term non-lieux [non-places] to describe specific kinds of spaces, chiefly architectural and technological, designed to be passed through or consumed rather than appropriated, retaining little or no trace of our engagement with them. Many built architectural elements distinguish inside from outside and mediate people’s passage between them: bridges, doorways, stairways, pavements and stoops. Each has its own distinctive perceptual, behavioural, social and symbolic affordances. I would identify these ‘non spaces’ as thresholds.

A threshold (or as Augé would term it a ‘non-place’) is where a boundary - between, inside and outside - can be crossed, creating a liminal space where an ‘opening’ to perceptions, movements and social encounters becomes possible. “[The] opening is the element that makes the place come alive, because the basis of any life is interaction” (Norberg-Schulz 1971:25). Because of these in-between inside-outside
qualities, thresholds are always open for playful possibilities; therefore these are the spaces in which I intervene.

According to Hanson and Hillier (1984: [sp]) “…threshold is also a restricted space; its design always constrains people’s behaviour and their perceptions”. The Johannesburg CBD reveals multiple ways in which thresholds are designed as control mechanisms (an example of this is a pavement). Despite these constraints, thresholds are sites where conventions become loosened through people’s diverse behaviour, and despite the regulated spaces of the Johannesburg CBD, its thresholds are still surprisingly liminal. Thresholds, although designed for practical function, are also sites where a great variety of playful and liminal social behaviours occur.

Exploring the concept of liminality can inform us about how threshold spaces are liminal, and about how they shape aspects of urban life. As Mihai Spariosu (cited by Franck and Stevens 2007:74) explains, people, symbols and objects are encountered outside cultural frames of reference and normal instrumental relations. While buildings often provide a sense of order a physical threshold frames an escape from social convention and adds to the exploration of new possibilities and “rites of passage” (van Gennep 1960: 74). In this constrained threshold-space where people gather, the space channels their movement, focusing their attention and forcing them into close contact with each other. A threshold is a passage which also frames people’s emergence from private spaces into the public realm; it is a site of new stimulations, a loose mix of two different environments. The threshold as stated by Jane Jacobs (cited in Franck and Stevens 2007: 75) is a complex setting in its own right with distinctive physical properties. It is a space set apart from the wider public realm where people can control their level of exposure to others. When the thresholds of many buildings with different uses are pressed close together in the street, new experiences and unplanned juxtapositions to social groups and behaviours are more likely.

My use of a threshold reflects and contributes to this symbolic potential and highlights the power people have to create new social discourse through their actions within the built environment. Thresholds of buildings are generally only
designed for momentary fleeting occupation, and because they must provide access directly from a public space, they will always remain open to appropriation by various members of the public for new uses, for example: smoking (Franck and Stevens 2007: 90).

A threshold mediates between public and private realms, indoor and outdoor spaces, and is often a place where people experience release from the limitations and order of spaces where they have defined roles and commit their attention to specific tasks. At thresholds, people may experience sudden exposure to new stimuli and new possibilities, to freedom, anonymity and risk. People play at thresholds because it is their first and last chance to act upon the freedom and inspiration which the urban public space provides; where they have the opportunity to ‘be themselves,’ before they cross the threshold back into private space. The threshold's transitional function and its physical separateness, highlights people’s ability to compress or stretch spatial experience and action; to choose and to control how and when to step outside the everyday and the expected. Threshold spaces can, at least temporarily, be manipulated as distinct settings and enjoyed for their unique behavioural opportunities. When one steps out onto a threshold, one is ‘on the loose’ allowing for a third space to be realised, as Stevens (Franck and Stevens 2007:90) explains: “encounters with difference and the unexpected in public space are in themselves adventures or escapes from the everyday which can transform a sense of self”.

Bhabha’s concept of the liminal third space as contextualised by Ramos (2000:6), offers a dialectic model of ambivalence, which explains the process of creating culture when two cultures collide. By stressing the importance of the third space in cultural and artistic discourse, Bhabha disputes that nations consist of homogeneous identities thereby developing the theory of an interstitial perspective. While discouraging relativistic notions of cultural and poetic interpretation, further stated by Ramos (2000:2-3) Bhabha has depoliticised postmodern theory and states that by applying this concept, contrasting sides of the argument such as ambivalence, mimicry, interstice and hybridity, can meet on neutral ground.

In an interview with Jonathon Rutherford (1990:209-211), Bhabha defined a ‘third space’ as a space of hybridity that is liminal. It is not a position of identity in itself, but
identification, a process of identifying with and through another object, and this is an object of otherness. Bhabha (Rutherford 1990:211) sees this hybrid space as a site of potential: “The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of meaning and representation.” He goes further, stating that this hybridity is a liminal state because it is an “interrogatory, interstitial space” (Bhabha 1994:5) which is for the “holism of culture and community” (Bhabha 1994:204) and he contends that it can “enable other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives” (Rutherford 1990:211).

Bhabha’s theory is pertinent to my art production, as I intervene with liminal thresholds of Johannesburg, I disseminate objects from my own immigrant cultural state of ‘otherness’ to create a liminal hybrid third space: a space of collected memory with the urban dweller. As James Young (2010:81) suggests:

> we recognise that we never really shared each other’s actual memory of past or recent events, but that in sharing common spaces in which we collect our disparate and competing memories, we find common understandings of widely disparate experiences and our very reasons for recalling them.

On this threshold I create a liminal hybrid third space where meaning can be created, enabling other positions to emerge that are multi-faceted and inclusionary.

**Conclusion**

Liminality defined by van Gennep and further developed by Turner, is discussed in this thesis within the framework of several key concepts. These encompass 'social drama', 'ritual,' 'symbol' (cultural artefacts) rather than looking at the structure of society. Turner uses liminality to observe the symbolic and emotive impact of these structures and, more importantly, what happens in these in between spaces. It provides a means through which to construct meaning, bringing together socioeconomic and political structures with their individual actants. Turner explores the role of social dramas and human interaction: the emotion of the human experience within the community, and thus his analysis is not so much what happens
within the confines of social structures, but rather what happens outside of them that is important. What links these concepts are their focus on indeterminacy, instability and process as opposed to certitude and finitude. Turner’s emphasis on ritual and ‘rites of passage’ is able to add layers of meaning and symbolism to the unsanctioned public art installations analysed in the following chapters.

Bhabha’s theory of cultural difference provides this discussion with the conceptual framework of liminal hybridity and the third space. This is important to my interventions as it allows me to challenge essentialist models of identity by taking on and then subverting their own vocabulary. Bhabha’s concept occupies a central place in my discussion on creating a liminal hybrid third space in the thresholds of Johannesburg. “[O]wing to the advantage of in-betweeness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference” (Hoogvelt 1997: 158), his concept develops and encourages an inclusionary model of liminal cultural hybridity along with a multi-faceted rather than a dualistic pattern of cultural exchange. This encourages me to create a hybrid third space with the urban dwellers of Johannesburg, where new meaning can be created.

As noted above by Turner (1982:55) liminal spaces are in constant flux and flow, altering one’s views and opinions about the constructs of society and one’s place within it. The liminal space raises questions instead of providing answers, and leads one to inquiry and critical thought about one’s situation. These are essential aspects which are particularly pertinent to Cohen, Kearney and my own art production: the unauthorised nature of our works is integral to their liminality and to their reception. In the next chapter I analyse the liminal aspects of Cohen’s Chandelier (2001-2002) and Kearney’s The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003) and in addition, I draw parallels with my own work which is discussed in chapter three.
CHAPTER TWO:
UNSANCTIONED PUBLIC ART IN JOHANNESBURG CBD

Introduction

In this chapter I explore expressions of liminality in unsanctioned public art interventions in the Johannesburg CBD. I begin by explaining the nature of sanctioned and unsanctioned public art and then I discuss examples, focusing firstly on Cohen’s *Chandelier* (2001-2002) and then on Kearney’s *The Portable Hawkers Museum* (2003). I apply liminality to a discussion of Cohen’s and Kearney’s works to illustrate how it can be identified, and what effect it has on such diverse expressions of public art.

Public art

The visual environment of Johannesburg is characterised by sanctioned public art which consists mainly of government sponsored sculpture, monuments\(^1\) or decoration, advertising campaigns, street signage, and more generally, the built environment.\(^2\) Monuments, memorials and civic statuary are perhaps the oldest and most obvious forms of officially sanctioned public art. Architectural sculpture and architecture itself are even more widespread and also fulfil the definition of public art.

---

\(^1\) A monument is a type of structure either explicitly created to commemorate a person or important event, or which has become important to a social group as a part of their remembrance of historic times or cultural heritage, or simply as an example of historic architecture. In English the word ‘monumental’ is often used in reference to something of extraordinary size and power, as in a monumental sculpture, but also to mean simply anything made to commemorate the dead, as a funerary monument or other examples of funerary art. The word comes from the Latin ‘monere,’ which means ‘to remind’ or ‘to warn.’ Prehistoric tumuli, dolmens, and similar structures have been created in a large number of prehistoric cultures across the world, and the many forms of monumental tombs for the more wealthy and powerful members of a society. South African examples include The 1820 Settlers National Monument is mainly used for activities which encourage the ideals of freedom of speech and social interaction. The statue of Paul Kruger located at Church Square; in Pretoria (Now called Tshwane) is probably one of the most famous landmarks in South Africa along with The Huguenot monument in Franschhoek which celebrates religious freedom. In recent times, monumental structures such as the Statue of Liberty and Eiffel Tower have become iconic emblems of modern nation-states (Monument [sa]).

---

\(^2\) The built environment refers to the human-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity, ranging in scale from buildings and parks or green space to neighborhoods and cities that often include their supporting infrastructure, such as water supply, or energy networks. The built environment is a material, spatial and cultural product of human labour that combines physical elements and energy in forms for living, working and playing (Oleru 2008:24-27).
Increasingly, most aspects of the built environment can be legitimate candidates for such categorisation, however public art is not confined to physical objects but includes performative expression such as dance, procession, street theatre and poetry. Public art is characteristically installed with the authorisation and collaboration of the council / government or company that owns or administers the space. Johannesburg has been deemed a city for public art by the Arts, Culture and Heritage Services as the words of their policy document indicates:

Public Art provides a means of celebrating Johannesburg’s unique culture, diverse communities and rich history. It offers shared symbols, which build social cohesion, contribute to civic pride and help forge a positive identity for the city. Through this art, the City projects its collective identity and vision, while individuals and community groups in neighbourhoods are also empowered to express their unique identities. Public art acts as a catalyst for development and economic growth through raising confidence, attracting visitors and stimulating investment (Department of Community Development, 2010:1).

The Arts, Culture and Heritage Services of the city of Johannesburg are responsible for administering the public spaces of Johannesburg. In their document, surprisingly, no reference is made to unsanctioned public art or the city’s position with regard to it.

Public art produced in the public space of Johannesburg responds to, interacts with, and intervenes in particular spaces. These spaces, which are transformed by these art interventions, are an important element in the production of visual public culture and are all aspects of contemporary city life. Studying our visual culture is a way of analysing which images are used within our urban environment, what they inform us about ourselves, and whom they represent. The graffiti artist, Roadsworth (Waclawek 2012:1), reasons that: “if you can see it, it becomes a part of the visual

---

3 In performance poetry in South Africa, artists often collaborate with, or are musicians themselves. The American hip-hop culture and rap music came to popularity across the country in the 1980’s and have since then had a substantial influence. Poets such as Lesego Rampolokeng, Lebogang Moshile, Kgafela oa Magogodi, Blaq Pearl, Jessica Mbangen, and Mak Manaka are household names in this genre (South African Poetry [sa]).

4 Mission statement: “to celebrate Johannesburg’s unique character and identity and enhance the urban environment through a vibrant, diverse city-wide programme of public art” (Department of Community Development, 2010:2).

5 Though born Peter Gibson, he chose the name Roadsworth because, as he states, “Where Wordsworth is a poet of words, Roadsworth is a poet of roads” (Alice 2013: [sp]).
culture. That's the thing about cities. There's so much going on visually speaking and a lot of it is manipulative in some way”.

The images distributed in our cities are bound to our visual reality. We are consumers of advertisements, we have laws indicated by road signs, and also we resist authority by using imagery such as unsanctioned graffiti to subvert order. These images and symbols define the look and feel of the urban city and shape the visual landscape. The city’s visual narrative is an important component of public culture. The concept of public culture has been defined by Harold Proshansky (1978:147) as a set of relationships between the economic, social, cultural, and environmental elements of a city and its urban dwellers.

Unsanctioned public art consists of ‘spontaneous’ visual interventions that appear or are developed in public spaces ‘in the streets’ (therefore often referred to as ‘street art’). In many democratic societies, artists like Cohen and Kearney find unsanctioned public art useful in promoting their ideas and establishing a censorship-free means of contact with viewers. Unsanctioned public art may be intentionally ephemeral, as in the case of transient installations and performance pieces. Such art has a spontaneous quality that is characteristically displayed in urban environments without the consent of authorities. The urban landscape of unsanctioned public art provides the opportunity for authentic participation to flourish beyond institutionalised political arenas. Positioning these practices in public spaces

---

6 In Chandelier (2001-2002) Cohen provocatively confronts issues of identity. His live performances are choreographed uninvited, in public spaces. Using these public interventions as liminal zones, he explores places of special or social power in which things can happen outside of the normal realm. His work deals with outsider identity, using his own body to create ‘living art’. These events are designed to force his viewers into recognising him and ultimately accepting him for what he is: a ‘Jewish faggot’ (Cohen 1998: [sp]) in doing so, he draws attention to his own sexuality.
7 In The Hawkers Museum (2003), Kearney confronts the museum establishment by parodying museum practices and the values ascribed to objects of material culture within the museum context. Kearney’s street intervention is a conceptual liminal zone of blurring between people (street hawkers) and place, which reflects a concern for the art object and its correlation with canons of artistic worthiness as defined by the museum practice.
8 I use the definition of ephemeral art by Mary O’ Neill (2007:1), “which is often confused with temporary works. This definition identifies four characteristics of ephemeral art: time, communicative act, inherent vice and directive intent. Ephemeral art often involves works that do not exist in a steady state, but change or decay … The different physical state of ephemeral works represents a shift from the art object to communicative act...The use of non-traditional, non-durable materials and the incorporation of chance and ephemerality mean that the resulting works possess an ‘inherent vice’ which results in the demise or disappearance of the work. This is a key feature of ephemeral art, which distinguishes it from temporary works. The latter are designed to function for a fixed period, after which they are discarded or destroyed”. 

---
implicitly and explicitly questions their cultural commentary within a spatial context, challenging the relationships between people and spaces.

Sanctioned and unsanctioned public art is often used for political ends and is frequently ‘undemocratic’⁹ in its implementation. The most extreme manifestation of this is the use of public art as propaganda within totalitarian regimes, often coupled with the simultaneous suppression of dissent. In more open societies artists often find public art useful to promote their ideas or establish a censorship-free¹⁰ means of contact with viewers.

Public spaces are neither politically nor socially neutral – they are contested places.¹¹ The term public implies ‘openness,’ ‘accessibility,’ ‘participation,’ ‘inclusion’ and ‘accountability’ to ‘the people’. Street art, as an unsanctioned form of display, penetrates the urban cityscape and occupies this contested space, displacing the boundary between public and private use. Street art in a public space is about location, it creates a process of social engagement, criticism, and relationships. "Public space is made and not born" (Acconci 1997:2) and “the public has to squeeze in and fit under and fall over what already exists in the city” (Acconci 1997:3).

As a ‘criminalised’¹² art form, unsanctioned street art questions who the streets belong to, and points to the fact that the answer is not only political and economic, but also aesthetic. The battle for the street is a battle for property, space, appearance, and perception. One might speculate which is the greater imposition -

---

⁹ An example of this in South Africa is The Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria. This huge granite structure prominently located on a hilltop was raised to commemorate and celebrate the Voortrekkers history. I use this example of an undemocratic monument as democracy is characterised by the principle of political or social equality for all.

¹⁰ Fith47 is an unauthorised street artist living in Cape Town. Her early work was inspired by the social reality in South Africa. She juxtaposed the vast difference between official policy, the promises of a better life brought in with the ‘New South Africa’ post-apartheid and the harsh reality of the lives of most South Africans living on the streets. Her Freedom Charter project, featured phrases from the statement of core principles taken from the South African Congress Alliance on inner city streets of South Africa.

¹¹ As stated before “Cities, by definition, are about conflict and contested space” (Bollens 2000:269). The urban landscape by attracting an influx of people to its geographical domain consists of a fluctuating population, it raises questions of control, regulation and projection of its future development and breeds conflict, be it physical, socio-political, aesthetic, or cultural.

¹² The origins of modern street art dates from New York City’s illegal graffiti boom that started in the 1960s, developing through the 1970s, and peaking with the spray painted full-car subway train murals of the 1980s centered in the Bronx (Street Art [sa]).
the carefully planned and monitored aesthetic environments, the controlled uniformity of shopping malls and gated communities of Johannesburg, or the unsanctioned public art that interrupts them.

Both unsanctioned and sanctioned public art negotiate the meaning of public space; however, the nature of each negotiation is different. In a formal museum or exhibition space visitors expect to experience ‘real art’. However in the context of the urban environment, the artwork may be encountered unwillingly by people who do not expressly set out to view and experience art. Art in public spaces is often not perceived as such, especially unsanctioned graffiti and street art, which is often met with a hostile response and seen as an invasion or vandalism. Without validation in galleries or museums, unsanctioned public art is often dismissed, and this leads to the urban space being perceived as a "product of conflict" (Deutsche 1996:278). The site in public art discourse directly influences how the ‘public nature’ of an artwork is determined.

Contemporary street art practices can also be read as performances in the urban realm, which capture dimensions of everyday experiences and potentially challenge the status of high art. In many ways this fosters a relationship between the artist, the viewer, and the physical and cultural spaces of Johannesburg and responds to the possible lived experience of the city dweller. As explained by Claudia Walde (Waclawek 2008:215-217) street art is an element of everyday life that engages with the contemporary city and reshapes places through human activity. It is because of this unsanctioned state that these art works can be identified and understood as liminal. Liminality is fundamental to the way unsanctioned public art challenges the

---

13 There is sometimes a thin line that exists between commissioned and ‘illegal’ art interventions. An example of this is an intervention commissioned by Arts on Main: a community arts and culture development. They commissioned American graffiti artist Above to spray-paint a giant mural on the wall of Jewel City, the heart of South Africa’s diamond trade. But while they gave him permission to paint giant black-and-white letters that paraphrased Marilyn Monroe: "Diamonds are a woman’s best friend", he added a sting in the tail: "And a man’s worst enemy". This swipe at the global trade in conflict or "blood" diamonds caused local anger, embarrassment and demands that the mural be scrubbed immediately. Above, from California, boasts that he hoodwinked the property owner into allowing him to smuggle in a political message. The mural was painted over with black paint within days.

14 Every year in Cape Town the Africa Centre presents Infecting the City Public Art Festival. Its curatorial mandate is to create a week-long platform for public art whether it is visual or performative artworks or artistic interventions that shake up the city spaces and allow the city’s users to view the cityscapes in new and memorable ways. Brett Bailey, former curator of Infecting the City Festival, believes that public art should to be freely accessible to everybody in a public space.
viewer to engage with works in a different way to an encounter with the art in a
gallery, or with sculpture in an official public place.

I have chosen Cohen’s *Chandelier* (2001-2002) and Kearney’s *The Hawkers
Museum* (2003) to analyse because they reveal states of marginalization and cultural
hybridity in relation to conventional social cultural frameworks in contemporary South
Africa. These works create a space for debate and the negotiation of meanings; they
do not give answers but rather raise questions as they expose aspects of cultural
hybridity and liminality. These works intervene in public spaces outside conventional
systems of art production and dissemination, in order to explore and question the
mechanisms and discourses normally implemented in our social and cultural reality.
Primarily the works reflect the dichotomy between liminality and social reality.

In the next section I investigate the liminal aspects of Steven Cohen’s *Chandelier
performance* (2001-2002) and the significance of this intervention. I begin by
explaining Steven Cohen’s background, as this is very pertinent to his art practise.

**Steven Cohen**

Steven Cohen was born in South Africa in 1962 and is a white Jewish homosexual
artist. As a child he suffered both homophobic and anti-Semitic experiences. His
childhood traumas, along with his experience as a conscript in the South African
army,\(^{15}\) illness \(^{16}\) and his coming out as a homosexual; influenced Cohen to use
performance as his medium. He has staged uninvited interventions in public spaces
on mainstream platforms unassociated with art, such as sports events,\(^{17}\) taxi ranks
and national election voting queues. His work challenges the “patriarchal, militaristic

\(^{15}\) Steven Cohen studied from 1981-84 and received a Bachelor of Arts degree (Psychology, Eng. Lit.)
from the University of the Witwatersrand. In 1985 Cohen studied at the Ruth Prowse School of Art in
Woodstock, Cape Town. From 1985-87 he was forcibly conscripted, which was compulsory during
apartheid, to the South African Defence Force (Finn 2009:86-87).

\(^{16}\) During the time that he was conscripted, Cohen was sent to an asylum associated with the army,
for long periods of time, in part due to his refusal to hold a gun. Cohen explains how a later illness
sparked “… the birth of the performance artist in me which also took place in Rietfontein Fever
Hospital … the effect of the disease and even the colours of my body - yellow eyes and the black piss
how that made me aware of the palette of possibilities that my body offered” (Perryer 2010:17).

\(^{17}\) In *Ugly Girl at the Rugby* (1998) Cohen performed a ‘simple’ action of going to buy a ticket, in drag,
for a rugby match at Loftus Versfeld stadium in Pretoria (Carmen 2003:46). Cohen is looking for a
confrontation with spectators through his use of drag; he draws on this which deliberately troubles his
external signs of gender identification.
[and] heterosexual” (Carmen 2003:6) values that formed part of the apartheid regime. Under this regime, as a young, Jewish homosexual he was “automatically marked as marginal and even subversive” (Carmen 2003:6). The hierarchical structure of South African apartheid society formed the basis of his personal development, his artwork and public performances, and has also lead to his sense of otherness. He had to determine his position in a society where everything was categorised, differences minutely separated, and every aspect controlled.

One might argue that the apartheid system effectively imprisoned each South African in a prescribed role: to be living in misery, a victim of violence; to be maintaining and perpetuating this state of affairs; to be observing; or to be ignoring the fact of apartheid (Rosenthal 2009:37).

As Cohen states, at school he was “frigid”, at university felt “vacuous” but “out of the destruction of the army I made myself what I wanted to be” Jane Raphaely (sited by Sassen 2008:9). The army was a turning point where he found the courage to emerge as an artist and also as a homosexual.

This combination of creation amid destruction weaves itself in and out of his work. As a reaction to this sense of outsider-hood/otherness his work provocatively confronts issues of outsider identity by drawing attention to his own sexuality and identity as a gay ‘Jewish faggot’. By using his body to create ‘living art’ (Cohen) places himself in a state of ‘outsider-hood’, the liminal category that Turner defines as people in marginal positions, people who live on an edge “edgemen” (Turner 2009:128). In Cohen’s case this marginal state of being is due to his religion, race, and sexuality, along with being raised in a strict hierarchical South African society. Cohen (figure 1) uses his art practice as a means to set himself apart. This enables him to question, criticise and reflect upon this social structure, enabling many contradicting feelings and facts to arise while being immersed in such a liminal transitional state. Cohen’s work goes beyond his own individual dialogue, and calls for the recognition of all those outside the confines of straight society. The voluntary choice of outsider-hood

---

18 In his thoughts on performance Cohen states: “I believe I have found a new form of expression in art beyond performance art. I call this ‘Living Art’. People don’t come to an appointed place like a gallery or at appointed times (and places) like a theatre – these are not scheduled performances but non-contractual public interventions, and in non-art defined areas, which are in fact, art unlikely” (Steven Cohen [artist] [sa]).
also ensures that his art practice can rise above the hierarchical structures of the apartheid system and not be limited by it.

In the unauthorised public intervention, *Chandelier* (2001-2002), Cohen places his body firmly at the centre of this practise by crafting a beautiful heavy crystal chandelier that is fashioned into a tutu. His costume consists of a corset and stockings with suspenders and high heels; wearing the star of David on his shaven head he whitens his face and exposes his buttocks “which invokes both beauty and discomfort, as the positioning of such a fragile and luxurious object in the midst of extreme poverty gives the viewer the feeling that something is on the verge of shattering” (Shire 2006:1). The crystals of the chandelier tutu clink together, “this is eerily beautiful yet almost cruel in the presence of people whose makeshift homes are being crushed and disassembled” (Shire 2006:1). It highlights the roles and identities of those who are simultaneously persecuting and persecuted.

In 2001 the performance took place in Newtown, Johannesburg, in a squatter camp under the M1 highway. Before the performance Cohen made a point of walking through the informal settlement regularly, and when the chandelier was ready, he chose this location for its inaugural showcasing (Steven Cohen [artist] [sa]). When he arrived wearing his chandelier, ready to ‘shed light’, and teetering on fetish black heels with a bare behind and his face painted, he discovered (figure 2) ‘red ants’ - men yielding crowbars, termed as a ‘ballet of violence’ by Cohen (Steven Cohen [artist] [sa]) who were employed by the government to evict the squatters and destroy their shacks (makeshift homes).

Cohen’s performance highlighted the contradictions of the ‘new’ South Africa, which he wished to expose. (Steven Cohen [artist] [sa]). The residents were powerless against the authorities because they were inferior, marginalised and had no voice in society. Yet this act of destruction united them in the ‘communitas’ defined by Turner (2009:96) and they temporarily formed a mass with a small voice. As Cohen (Steven Cohen [artist] [sa]) explains, it appeared that he was directing the destruction when he raised his arms in a commanding way, but in contrast, when he raised his eyes and palms (figure 3) to God in the heavens, it appeared that he was also suffering and perhaps praying for peace on earth. As he describes his performance as a ‘anti-
ballet’, ‘creating amid destruction’ (Steven Cohen [artist] [sa]) using non verbal communication with the residents of the squatter camp.\(^{19}\)

Using the symbol of a chandelier\(^{20}\) Cohen has come to shed light: he is both over-dressed in a chandelier-tutu and high heels but at the same time under-dressed, with a bare behind, almost naked, he is displaced, ‘betwixt and between’ in this particular space - illuminating an otherwise marginal place. Cohen explains:

"Artists have always painted the social concerns of their time, and by moving in a chandelier-tutu through a squatter camp being demolished ... and filming it ... that's what I'm doing too, a digital painting of a social reality, half beautifully imagined, half horribly real - where Hollywood glamour meets concentration camp horror. I am trying to shed light on what is seldom seen, by creating amid destruction (Steven Cohen [artist] [sa])."

He creates a liminal zone by putting himself into a “limbo of statelessness”\(^ {21}\) (Turner 2009:97) deliberately displacing his own sexuality. His body is not contained, but open to change, defenceless and exposed to uncertainty. By doing this he creates an extremely vulnerable and marginalised character within an already marginalised site and community, and thus he opens himself and, his audience up to change, mediation and transformation. As Turner (1982:20-23) states, this enables one to explore a liminal space of special social power, in which things can happen outside of the normal realm. The performance, as a marginalised event, presents that which cultural and hierarchical political structures deem transgressive.

Presenting himself as the ‘othered’ individual in the most visually extreme sense, Cohen evokes a persona, temporarily assumed, through the embodiment of ‘the monster’. He achieves this by employing “monster drag”, to create a particular “confusing and threatening” monstrous embodiment as a “sort of bogeyman or

\(^{19}\) Cohen’s long term partner Elu films the event he is “digitally painting a social record” (Steven Cohen [artist] [sa]).

\(^{20}\) Chandeliers have been around since before the 16th Century and are mainly decorative rather than functional - they are not practical as they require so many light bulbs. Chandeliers served the purpose of showing wealth for the upper class and were used to decorate many European palaces.

\(^{21}\) Van Gennep (1960:76,11,53) states that the first phase of separation comprises symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual / group from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a "state"), or from both. During the intervening "liminal" period, the characteristics of the ritual subject are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state.
golem” (Carmen 2003:13). A golem in Jewish folklore is a mythic creature made of earth and blasphemously given life via magic spells or misuse of holy writ” (Carmen 2003:13). In Cohen’s Chandelier (2001-2002) performance, he creates an entity that is a mysterious monster which therefore does not lead to straightforward classification. It inhabits a liminal space in terms of its fundamental nature; being created out of contradictions in its gender, species and behaviour, it provokes anxiety because of “a fixation that is born of the twin desire to name that which is difficult to apprehend and to domesticate (and therefore disempower) that which threatens” (Cohen1996:viii). The golem inhabits a liminal space beyond the grasp of language and this leads to its rejection. The heavily-costumed character of Cohen dramatises difference and the contested nature of the spectacle of otherness. Cohen describes it as:

…messing with a society that is more shocked by the violence of my self-presentation as monster, queer, unrepresentable or whatever than by the actual violence they live with every day. It’s almost as if, because I’m alive and present, I’m more real and more threatening than reality (Steven Cohen [artist] [sa]).

The transformative potential of this practice and how it functions in terms of creation and destruction, demonstrates Cohen’s drive to “encounter new realities” through the dismantlement of established norms (Heathfield 2004:7). This ‘anti structured space’ empowers the potentially transformative nature for the individual, but also for society. There is creative capacity in this space during Cohen’s Chandelier (2001-2002) performance; Turner (1982:45) explains this liminal phase as being in a "kind of institutional capsule or pocket, which contains the germ of future social developments of societal change”.

Cohen’s unsanctioned public intervention tests the reality and legitimacy/validity of, social ethics, retribution, politics, legislation, commerce, rituals of mourning and death, taboos, corporal punishment and degradation, sovereignty and absolute power, domination, and sacrifice. Cohen is pushing the boundaries and as David

---

Mircea Eliade (Myth and Ritual [sa]) states that one of the foremost functions of myth is to establish models for behaviour and that myth may also provide a religious experience. By telling or re-enacting myths, members of traditional societies detach themselves from the present and return to the mythical age, thereby bringing themselves closer to the divine.
Bunn (2008:165) notes, he accomplishes this by “testing the new limits of the new citizenship at its most sensitive points”; he also “elaborate[s] the performance of vagrant masculinity and take[s] it to the edge” (Condee, Smith and Enwezor 2008:270). By pushing these boundaries a little further he allows himself “to fall and in the moment of falling accepting the enormous realisations that come” (Carmen 2003:14). Cohen recounts the responses to his performance in Chandelier (2001-2002):

Reactions ranged, from ‘go away’ and ‘what’s wrong with you?’ to biblical comparisons ‘Jesus’, ‘Mary’, and ‘angel’ (I think that’s ‘cause of the lights), to a bloodshot man who presented his Hustler centrefold in one hand and me in the other, saying ‘I got it, I got it’. Blown away on drink and dreams of cunt, he kept showing me vulva after vulva, and making pumping fuck-motions against me. He didn’t even see the chandelier, he just saw a shaved Hustler pussy come to life - the slut of his dreams - and he wasn’t going to let that pass without embracing it. His Hustler was soon snatched away and ripped up by an offended fellow-squatter. There was a man who shook his knobkerrie at me, a woman who kissed my hand (and me hers), some women sang Nkosi Sikilele iAfrika, one woman said The Lord’s Prayer, some people clapped, some people scorned destruction (Steven Cohen [artist] [sa]).

These volatile (figure 4) and diverse responses, along with the intimacy of these interactions from the urban dwellers, essentially construct the work and give it meaning. The urban dwellers create the meaning of the work as they experience it, and these may be different for each person as this intervention is designed to provoke questions rather than answer them, a typical feature of the transitional liminal phase. As Turner (1982:20-23) explains, through rituals of transition these in-between liminal spaces are places where order can be challenged - people have the chance to recreate themselves and their environment under new terms and where new mediation can take place. Cohen achieves this in his Chandelier (2001-2002) performance, by bringing public awareness to that which is seldom seen or wilfully ignored.

For Cohen’s Chandelier (2001-2002), the study of liminality is useful because it does not create meaning in itself: it refuses meaning. Liminality is crucial as a passageway between places rather than a place in itself, but it is crucial in relation to a process that begins and ends. It is not at the mid-point of transition, but in a state of being
that offers, as Turner (1974: 233) said: “... no cultural assurance of a final stable resolution of their ambiguity”. From his liminal position, Cohen in Chandelier (2001-2002) produces an intervention of ambiguity, contradiction, and uncertain endings. His 'living art' serves his ability to capture the transitory and reveal the hidden which provides a fertile practice for questioning, exploring and trying to express the South African social realities.

In the next section I consider a completely different type of liminality in Kearney's unsanctioned performance The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003). Rather than personal liminality, this work grapples with the liminal space between commissioned and non-commissioned public art and attempts to deconstruct the rigid delimitations of institutionalised art consumption.

Alison Kearney

In the unauthorised public intervention The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003) Kearney's (figure 5) objective is to interrogate aspects of existing museum practice and how value is attached to objects within contemporary culture. She achieves this by parodying ethnographic and art museum conventions of collecting, archiving and display. The Portable Hawkers Museum consists of a box on wheels that resembles a packaging crate or a small coffin, and is reminiscent of a hawkers stand. The museum contains small non-perishable objects; these objects are placed in a specific position and are cushioned in velvet which also lines the interior of the crate: the crate further acts as a plinth to display these objects as Kearney (2004:66) explains:

The museum collection consists of non-perishable items that cost R10 or less, which are bought from the hawkers in Johannesburg. The items that I buy can be categorised into insecticides and rat poisons, toiletries, and personal accessories, including cheap jewellery, and cellular phone accessories amongst others.

---

23 It is similar in size to a shopping trolley bag on wheels and stands in contrast to the monumentality of other public museums.

24 Kearney states (2004:66) that “the process of collecting within The Portable Hawkers Museum is not unlike the process of collecting within the traditional museum, since it is a process that involves the removal of objects from their original context to hold them up for a particular kind of looking”.

---
The opening of the museum is identified by a hanging sign that reads, The Portable Hawkers Museum. Kearney’s first unsanctioned intervention took place in June 2003 near Rosebank Mall. As Robyn Sassen (2005:1) observes from the photographs (figure 6) of Kearney’s performance, she ties her hair back, wears a knee length skirt, sensible shoes and opens her suitcase to display her wares to passers-by:

“She is not aiming to sell things, but to show them...she's a museum on legs” (Sassen 2005:1).

Kearney’s interest in hawkers began with an attempt to represent something of her own experience of the Johannesburg inner city: by trying to find an ‘icon’ through which she could explore her personal response to her environment:

For me the hawkers on the sidewalks are an icon of the city because they form a large part of the pulse of the city. Their stands enliven the pavements, and force you to walk in a rhythm with those around you, thereby causing you to interact with others in the city in a particular way (Kearney 2004:64).

The unauthorised street intervention is a conceptual liminal zone of blurring between people (street hawkers) and place (gallery), which reflects a concern for the art object and its correlation with canons of artistic worthiness as defined by museum practice. In naming her unauthorised public art intervention a ‘museum’ she is appropriating the power of the museum to ascribe a certain value to the objects of material culture and the ways that the collections are displayed within it. Duncan (1995:7) proposed that museums contain levels of performance and ritual, and views “the art museum as a ritual site”. Duncan (1995:20) further claimed that the museum creates a space in which individuals can step back from the practical concerns and social relations of everyday life, and look at themselves and their world, or some particular aspect of it, with different thoughts and feelings.

25 Kearney states “At the time that I became interested in the hawkers of the city, the Johannesburg city council implemented their EGOLI 2002 project, which was aimed at rejuvenation of the inner city, and included a forced removal of the hawkers from the pavements in downtown Johannesburg and Braamfontein. As a result many hawkers lost their form of income. The hawkers now have designated areas in which to sell their goods, where they have to pay a rental fee that some cannot afford. Many hawkers continue to sell their goods illegally on the sidewalks” (Kearney 2004:64).

26 As Duncan states (1995:11) “liminality as a term associated with ritual, can also be applied to the kind of attention we bring to art museums” and mode of consciousness outside of our every day cultural and social states.
When the visitor to the museum enters the space of The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003) this is symbolic of the separation of the ‘pre-liminal phase’ that Turner recognises as the beginning of a rite of passage. This museum space is not a museum in the normal sense, but it allows people, by questioning the value of everyday objects, to interact with and negotiate some aspect of their world in a different way. The space of The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003) represents a marked off zone, and Duncan (1995:11) expands on this concept by explaining that: “a ritual provides a frame. The marked off time or place alerts a special kind of expectancy. Liminality, a term associated with ritual, can also be applied to the kind of attention we bring to art museums.” Similarly, for the individual museum viewer of The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003), it is through this interaction with the museum and the objects displayed that a personal construction of cultural meaning and identity can arise. The engagement between Kearney, in her role as museum curator, and the visitor to the museum, is a mutually (liminal) transitional journey: as new connections, insights and meaning are created between these two parties.

The shape of The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003) resembles both a packaging crate and a small coffin: a deliberate allusion to the association of the museum and death. It could be argued that this death also situates the displayed object in a liminal space - in a collection - hidden until it is activated by curatorship. Benedict Anderson (as cited by Armstrong 2005:5) sees “museums as locations for state preservation of tradition, in which the state is responsible for what is considered important in terms of art and what is historically acceptable to the public”. The portability and impermanence of The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003), is juxtaposed with the monumentality of the traditional museum; it mirrors the process that the hawkers undergo every day as they unpack and pack up their stalls. Kearney by assuming the roles of director, curator and artist is thereby calling into question the ideological separation of these activities.

27 Some theorists refer to the museum effect as a kind of ‘death’ of the object. In transforming objects within museums into objects of aesthetic value by removing them from their original contexts and functions, they are separated from everyday praxis and their original cultural meaning and value is lost: they are objects “to which the observer no longer has a vital relationship and which are in the process of dying” (Adorno 1967:175).
Kearney as curator communicates her ideas to the audience and influences how the audience interprets the objects on display through conventions of arrangement and exhibition. As well as information provided on the labels. Michael Baxandall (1991:37) argues that it is in the space between the object and the label that the relationships between the active participants in an exhibition are made evident. The label indicates the exhibitor’s interpretation of the object, and also provides the viewer with limited information, or at least a starting point, as to how to interpret the objects on display. James Clifford (1992:117-136) states, “the space between label\textsuperscript{28} and objects [is] widened dramatically, thus openly soliciting the viewer’s constructive role”. The viewer becomes part of an active transitional phase in reconstructing cultural ideals that inhabit the liminal space created between the text and object. This reconstructed culture is evident in Kearney’s (2004:66). \textit{The Portable Hawkers Museum} (2003), as she explains:

...what is important to me about the objects that I select for \textit{The Portable Hawkers Museum} collection is their indexical relationship to the place and people from whom I buy the objects.\textsuperscript{29}

In Kearney’s use of these found objects from contemporary urban culture within her installations, the objects are chosen because of their relationship to places and people, and are not valuable according to traditional museum criteria of value. These comment on the value systems within ‘high art’. The objects are mass-produced, are not old, or rare, nor are they produced by those who sell or use them: in choosing these objects she is demonstrating their cultural value in as much as they signify aspects of contemporary urban life in Johannesburg. In placing these objects within \textit{The Portable Hawkers Museum} (2003), which is both an artwork, and a museum, a new cultural value is assigned to them. They are thus demonstrating their cultural value as signifiers of contemporary urban life in Johannesburg. The new cultural value that these objects acquire crosses over different realms and thresholds to form the said experience of thought, thereby creating a liminal space: an ephemeral,

\textsuperscript{28} In order to interpret any writing, the viewer/reader has to move outside the text and understand it through his or her own personal emotions, biases, or experiences. Essentially, the text has no meaning until someone actually reads and interprets it (Kearney 2004:15-16).

\textsuperscript{29} Kearney states: “This focus on aspects of contemporary urban culture that are traditionally excluded from the discourses of ‘high culture’ enables me to explore notions of value with the discourse of ‘high culture’” (Kearney 2004:66).
transitioning space that is suspended “betwixt and between” (Turner 1967:95) the preconceived ideas of the museum hierarchies.

The actions that are performed in opening the museum during the performances, parody those of the museum curator, and also a hawker. Kearney, during these performances, presents herself as a volunteer museum worker: she carries the museum and goes out into the public space to talk to people about some existing museum practices, and the ways in which she is trying to challenge these practices. The performances are characterised by a methodical packing and unpacking of The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003). Inside the museum, each object has a specific place, cut out of velvet cushioning which lines the interior of the portable museum. Further, as they are unpacked, each object is carefully placed on the museum case, (which doubles up as a plinth), to signify their preciousness. A central aspect of the performance is that Kearney is in attendance to speak to members of the public who are interested. Kearney (2004:69) notes:

> Within this, I, like Sisyphus, have a burden to carry; my burden is to take responsibility for what I think and say. Through the performances a dialogue is set up between the viewers and myself, the artist and representative of the museum.

In responding to viewers’ questions regarding The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003) she ensures that the hawker’s museum is not a “silent pedagogic edifice; rather it is an interactive space” (Kearney 2004:69). The interactions with the visitors are recorded in a visitor’s book, in which she asks people to write down any comments (figure 7) or thoughts that they might have regarding the proposed alternative to existing museum practices. These performances are not advertised, so it is by chance that people experience the site-specific artwork.

In Rosebank, The Portable Hawkers Museum (2003) was performed in-between other hawkers and this also had an impact on how the objects within the museum

---

30 Kearney states that “most visitors to The Portable Hawkers Museum were opposed to this suggestion, even though many of them had never been to either The Apartheid Museum or Museum Africa” (Kearney 2004:69).

31 As Sassen (2005:1) notes, 'the museum pays homage to the hawkers of Johannesburg whose lives have, in many instances, been negatively affected by the city of Johannesburg’s restructuring programme'.
collection were received by viewers. These objects move out of the commodity circulation of the market, and acquire cultural value. The function of the collection is to create a new context, which stands in a liminal metaphorical relationship rather than a contiguous relation to the world. As Zukin (Liminal art [sa]) has observed, certain neighbourhoods of post-modern cities have become liminal spaces that are ambivalent and ambiguous, located between the local and global markets, between private value and public use, between home and work, culture and commerce. These are sites where contradictory identities sit side by side and to which new ones are being articulated: Rosebank Mall is an illustration of this. Kearney notes that she received more attention in Rosebank than in the inner city because the objects were less familiar in an upmarket area: “It was this incongruity, that caused me to choose that space in which to perform, and also which proved to be an entry point into the discussions on value” (Kearney 2004:71).

Within this performance the relationship between artwork, viewer and context is highlighted in each presentation, since viewers of different kinds, with different expectations, and understandings of what art is and can be, emerge from each context in which the artwork is presented. Throughout exchanges the visitors transition from simple observations to speculations about the meaning of the object. This exchange reveals the viewer’s realisation in the construct of (figuring out) the artwork in relation to the artist and society. This dialogic exchange of opinions, thoughts and experiences creates a sense of personal ‘mean-making’ and new connections are created with the intervention between these two parties. This represents the liminal ‘in communitas’ stage and makes visible how society and the individual come together towards the end of this ritual process, as well as the construction of new meaning by the assimilation of experiences and insights gained (this is the point at which new status is given - it is ‘post-liminal’). This is not a fixed experience, but contingent upon the existential circumstances of the encounter. The

---

32 Zukin (1995:257) explains that: “Shopping spaces are a valuable prism for viewing public culture. The types of goods that are sold, at what prices, and in what forms - these are the everyday experiences in which physical spaces are conceived in the light of social structure.” In shopping spaces vision is power, and furthermore according to Zukin (1995:260) public spaces are “important because they continually negotiate the boundaries and markers of human society”.

33 I refer to ‘mean-making’ for the purpose of this study as a personal construction of meaning of an object gathered from personal experiences, thoughts, memories and associations.
emphasis on viewing these works rests with the experience of them: their language is metaphorical rather than literal.

As Kearney challenges the hegemony of the institutions in which we operate, she has opened the discursive spaces of art production and display and has created an awareness of the ideological nature of art institutions. By using parody as a means to challenge the authority of the art museum she has uncovered the museum for its particular way of looking at culture, and in so doing, has “challenged artists and museum goers complicity with the ideological agendas of art production and display” (Kearney 2004:82). In the unauthorised Portable Hawkers Museum (2003) she has engaged the museum visitors in transformation, a mentally accessible process of enlightenment, as the realm of her alternative impermanent museum urges individuals to question their identities and past experiences in relation to objects and space. She has created a liminal experience in the margins of the city. These movements and actions form part of the ritual, in which the visitor is the actor and the unauthorised Portable Hawkers Museum’s (2003) sequenced space and arrangements of objects, provides the stage, set and the script for a mutually transformative performance.

Conclusion

In this chapter, liminality has been discussed as an aspect that is fundamental to the unsanctioned public art of Cohen and Kearney. Their interventions negotiate identity in relation to the culture of a city, with the goal of challenging conceptions of identity via the processes of cultural and political assimilation. Their unsanctioned artworks and performances exist in space and time as something that is ‘betwixt and between’. Their liminal existence is fundamental to the way unsanctioned public art challenges the viewer to engage with works in a way that is different from the encounter with art in a gallery, or with an official public sculpture.

There is a link between liminality in the unsanctioned public artworks of Cohen and Kearney and the art interventions that I produce. My works exist in liminal spaces and thresholds within the urban city and are presented as sculptural objects that express my own state of liminality as an immigrant in Johannesburg, South Africa.
These objects are unsanctioned and are placed so that the public both encounter and interact with them in various ways.
CHAPTER THREE: MY INTERVENTIONS

Introduction

In the following chapter I show how my works attempt to create a public intervention which contributes to the experience of the urban environment. Like Cohen and Kearney, I explore liminal spaces and create interventions that reflect the social reality of a marginal site. Spaces can thus become transformed, gaining social visual currency in people’s lives, and by taking on this symbolic significance these spaces are converted and are available for the negotiation and performance of identity. As James Gibson notes (cited by Franck and Stevens 2007: 91) “Betwixt and between environments are always there as potential, the scope of these possibilities depends on these affordances”. Particular sites offer a variety of human perception and action as a result the space is always shifting, fluid and unpredictable.

As discussed in the previous chapter, spaces that open up to allow the construct of new cultural meaning by the assimilation of experiences, liminal spaces are re-articulated by street artists into spaces of activity which then become spaces for performance, identity, and transformation. Liminality has been discussed previously in relation to the work of Cohen and Kearney. My approach is similar; through performing our work in urban spaces, we emphasise a number of obscured urban realities: that a lot of what may seem to be public space, is in fact private space; and that our unauthorised public art contributes as much to the production of space in a city’s visual culture, as sanctioned projects. While adding an additional visual layer and experience to the city, my work ‘repurposes’ ‘non-places’.

Through the ritual of producing unsanctioned public interventions, I am able to transgress society’s hierarchal norms, thus enabling a process of identity renewal and ‘meaning making’. The liminal, marginal site provides a symbolic resource for the maintenance of alternative identities, and is therefore a site of new meanings and transgressions. Unconscious or hidden liminal sites are everyday spaces that afford me playful interaction and resistance within the city. On the outskirts of social convention, marginal places present opportunities for ‘subversion’. The fact that
unsanctioned street art is illegal is also a driving force for my production, as it allows me to work in an unmediated manner. My work is a reflection of, and a response to, an experience with the Johannesburg urban space.

My contribution to the urban landscape employs a personal brand of manipulation that is informed by imagery and symbols from my culture. By creating art in public places, I am drawing attention to the city’s liminal thresholds or ‘non-places’ and re-examining areas which might not have had links to art or display previously. I ‘repurpose’ these spaces, by personalising, customising, subverting, and creating (in Bhabha’s terms) a culturally hybrid ‘third space’: intermingling space, my intervention and the urban dweller using my own visual language.

Bhabha’s explanation of cultural hybridity resonates with my production of art, as I am an immigrant from the United Kingdom, who engages with the public spaces of Johannesburg, which are already spaces defined by transformation.¹ The interventions are not only an expression of my cultural hybridity, but a way to create a space of communication, that expresses my participation in the city’s visual culture. I populate the space with ceramic objects that reflect my own liminal migrant culture in a post-colonial urban society and setting. I create a ‘third space’ by intermingling the liminal space, my intervention and the urban dweller, enabling other positions to emerge; positions that are both ‘inclusive and multifaceted’. I disseminate my unauthorised public interventions in marginal liminal spaces of the city in an attempt to forge a relationship between the intervention, the urban dweller and the space. I hope to create an opportunity for dialogue, to make meaning, to redefine places² and to forge new connections with the urban residents, while also adding a further visual layer to the city.

My sense of entitlement and freedom in the unsanctioned nature of these interventions contributes to the notion of public art as an act of ‘repurposing’ rather than occupation. My aim is to repurpose the space of the urban environment, in a

¹ As Mbembe (Mbembe and Nuttall 2008:54) observes, Johannesburg is undergoing a massive spatial reconstruction.
² As Ajith Kuruvilla (2009: [sp]) notes that “one of the key roles of public art is to redefine public space and provide a sense of place”. Hence through the process of inclusion public art debates the idea of who constitutes the public and how they are represented.
playful way that reflects the multi-faceted nature of my liminal migrant identity. In particular this approach, using imagery from my own cultural history in the selected urban spaces of Johannesburg, constitutes an expression of my individuality.

The city itself, as an urban community, inspires my public interventions. I have chosen the centre of Johannesburg because of its high population density. Roadsworth (Waclawek 2012:3) makes a statement, which I feel also pertains to me:

people seem to create psychological barriers, walls, bubbles for themselves that perhaps perform the practical function of “screening” incoming stimuli, noise, people that one is confronted with on a daily basis but which can be collectively alienating, especially to more marginal elements of a society.

It is my response to my relationship with Johannesburg that inspires me to intervene with my unsanctioned street interventions in these marginal thresholds where the urban dweller is ‘betwixt and between’. I engage with a space that is apart from the private and enclosed spaces of office towers, shops and apartments. These liminal spaces of the city offer the urban dweller unplanned encounters: “opportunities for exploration and discovery, for the unexpected, the unregulated, the spontaneous and the risky” (Franck and Stevens 2007:3).

The city is conceptualised, not only as a pivotal constituent of the work itself, but also as a framework for my art practice which is not directed at any one group of people. As Armstrong (2005:5) explains: “Rather than speaking to a dying culture, street art, attempts to celebrate the living urban city by presenting a forum for free expression and an ever-changing cast of characters”. My unsanctioned public art interventions circulating throughout the urban cityscape function as a visual resistance to sanctioned imagery.

In my interventions I produce art which embodies some of the same principles used by Cohen and Kearney, who create temporary ephemeral moments of beauty or otherness which are a part of the city; as opposed to a singular standing object like a monument. I create human encounters, and moments of surprise with my playful public art interventions. The everyday life of the city fosters movement and fleeting
moments as well as varied spaces for potential participation. The creation of new spaces of meaning allows alternative perspectives to develop, which plays an invaluable role in a city’s (visual) culture. Therefore, dissipating my work in the city is an expression of my personal artistic freedom. It could be seen as a type of performance, which facilitates a personal engagement with my liminal migrant culture as well as the personalisation, re-purposing and re-articulation of the visual cityscape.

Art historian Martha Buskirk (2005:22) states that an art object is not only constructed through its site of dissemination, but also through the viewer who experiences the work, "as a series of unfolding encounters". In the absence of rigid guidelines, these liminal spaces afford me the opportunity to create and recreate myself without the fear of reprimand or rejection, which is appealing. I am able to stand apart from my social position, as well as existing social stereotypes, and formulate a potentially unlimited series of social alternatives.

Having discussed the unauthorised nature of my art production I now describe my interventions. My practical works consist of unsanctioned, anonymous public art interventions comprised of intimate,3 domestic, found4 and slip-cast objects that at first sight seem cute, playful or even banal, but which are imbued with metaphor and narrative and which reference wider social realities. Examples are small figurines and items of crockery which might be decorated with multiple layers of patterns and glazes. These are placed onto columns, cubes and spheres and are placed into an existing liminal environment. These objects further serve as a canvas for decoration with layers of glaze, airbrushed colour, decals and lustres. Both found objects and created elements celebrate the dichotomy of make-believe and reality, enhanced by decals showing nostalgic childhood images to symbolise the idealization of a

3 I use the definition of intimate here from anthropological research: intimacy is considered the product of a successful seduction, a process of rapport building that enables parties to confidently disclose previously hidden thoughts and feelings. Intimate conversations become the basis for "confidences" (secret knowledge) that bind people together. Developing an intimate relationship typically takes a considerable amount of time: months and years, rather than days or weeks (Moore 1985:237-247).

4 A found object indicates the use of an object which has not been designed for an artistic purpose, but that exists for another purpose already. Found objects may exist either as utilitarian, manufactured items, or items that occur in nature. The objects as discovered by the artist are capable of being employed in an artistic way, and are designated as "found" to distinguish them from purposely created items used in the art forms.
recollected past. My work has strong ties with the innocence of childhood juxtaposed with current world situations, and in this way it reflects the cultural nature of my background and my liminal immigrant relationship with the space.

My objects are placed in specific overlooked urban sites such as the underside of highways or bridges, because of their liminal zones as described earlier in this document. These urban sites are identified by walking through Johannesburg in the manner of a detached observer. Placement of the sculptures and found objects follows a path of observation and then action, rather than a pre-planned outcome; I thus follow the spontaneous approach employed by Kearney in her work *The Portable Hawkers Museum* (2003). Placing objects in these sites ‘repurposes’ both space and object.\(^5\) My practical work also draws on aspects of cultural hybridity and liminality as identified in the unsanctioned public interventions by Cohen and Kearney, whose works primarily reflect the dichotomy between liminality and social reality.

I discuss these interventions, beginning each one with the choice of space, then a brief description of the work, followed by the work’s reception in the streets. A detailed description of both the work and its reception can be found in the catalogue, titled *Unsanctioned*, which accompanies this dissertation.

---

\(^5\) An example of an artist working in this way is Issac Cordeal who has been placing his cement miniatures all around Europe. Isaac explores the urban landscape by placing his little sculptures in unassuming locations. His sculptures take the form of little people sculpted from concrete in ‘real’ situations. He is sympathetic toward his little people and I empathise with their situations, their leisure time, their waiting for buses and their more tragic moments such as accidental death, suicide or family funerals. His sculptures can be found in gutters, on top of buildings, on top of bus shelters: in many unusual and unlikely places. “The street is the perfect scenery for my sculptures. I could not imagine having to make big holes, carry water to fill pools; the city comes with all of this by default and it’s still free. Sometimes it’s difficult to find suitable sites and other days the city seems to be calling me” (Street Art, London 2011: [sp]).
Intervention 1:

*If You Go Down To The Woods Today* (December 2011), Ceramic plates and found objects placed on the corner of Berea Street and Fox Street opposite the old Jewel City, on the underside of the Joe Slovo off-ramp.

Immigrant Movement International 2011

My intervention (figures 8, 9 and 10) near Arts on Main was inspired by the Immigrant Movement International’s (I M International) call for submissions. This is an on-going project initiated by artist Tania Bruguera (2011: [sp]) and co-presented by Creative time and the Queens Museum of Art, New York. They instituted an open call for submissions for actions which were to take place on December 18, 2011 - a day that was designated as ‘International Migrants Day’ by the United Nations. The organisers called on artists, immigrants, activists, and interested members of the public to stage an action on this date at 2pm local time, in recognition of the concept of transnational migrants as a ‘global class’; united across continents and cultures by common political and social conditions, as well as by the human experience of being a migrant. By engaging participants across the globe in a UN-endorsed project, the organisers hoped to promote understanding of the specificity of local migration issues and the political interconnectedness across nations and regions that migration engenders. Bruguera (Creative time 2011: [sp]) whose project was initiated in Corona Queens in January 2011 explains:

As migration becomes a more central element of contemporary existence, the status and identity of those who live outside their place of origin starts to become defined not by sharing a common language, class, culture, or race, but instead by their condition as immigrants.

Individuals and groups from around the world were invited to participate by visiting the immigrant-movement.us website and submitting an idea for an action. The website enabled users to track these actions as they happened in real time across the globe by presenting an interactive map of the world with a description of each action. Nato Thompson, Chief Curator of Creative time (Creative time 2011: [sp]) posed the question:
What does it mean to represent the contemporary immigrant? And furthermore, what are the forms of governance for a global citizenry? These questions are at the heart of Tania Bruguera’s Immigrant Movement International.⁶

My Unauthorised Public Intervention, *If You Go Down To The Woods Today* (2011), was produced in response to this call. It was placed under the bridge, on the bridge bent,⁷ situated on the corner of Berea Street and Fox Street in Johannesburg, opposite the old Jewel City. I chose this position because the threshold of a bridge forms an interface between two different spatial, perceptual and social realms. Bridges, as some of the busiest thresholds in the city, can be sites of relatively uncontrolled encounters with strangers. Bridges are natural gathering points, bottlenecks where many people’s paths must converge. In such settings, chance and risk are always present (Goffman 1982:117). A great number and variety of people use the underside of this particular bridge as a walkway which connects them to the city. The top side of this bridge is designed and scaled to serve the flow of cars, while the underside serves the flow of pedestrians. Its generous scale makes it a suitable setting for informal use and for public intervention.

What is distinctive about social encounters on these major thresholds, such as the underside of the above-mentioned bridge, is their frequency and intensity. When strangers have to negotiate the road on both sides of the bridge they are at times unexpectedly forced into close proximity, increasing bodily intimacy, exposure and thus, tension. Activity around the threshold of this particular bridge is diverse because the physical and social conditions prevailing around it are varied. These are conditions that foster liminality and transience. They are therefore an ideal setting for my intervention and my attempt to allow a hybrid ‘third space’ to emerge.

The bridge is situated opposite an area known as ‘Arts on Main’ which is part of a regenerated area called the Maboneng Precinct. Surveillance cameras and security staff, supervised by the precinct management, monitor this area constantly to ensure

---

⁶ In addition to mobilising members of the global public to perform an action on December 18, IM International also provided a ‘Migrant Manifesto’, (see appendix A) which was made available on the IM website for participants to incorporate into their actions on December 18.  
⁷ A bent is the term for a transverse structural member or framework used for strengthening a bridge or trestle.
the safety of the citizens and visitors to Arts on Main. It is a space that generates diverse powers and energies, a space that has been lost and/or re-appropriated. Currently the space is regulated by the Maboneng Precinct to serve its ‘regenerated’ community. The negotiation between this new enclave zone and the pre-existing communities, street-level economies and the flow of urban dwellers, who earn their living and pass through it on a daily basis, converge with these new forces of urban planning.

I chose this space, particularly, because so many urban dwellers regularly pass through this area while going about their everyday lives. The bridge “is part of the infrastructure that creates a city but does not define it” (Waclawek 2011:114) ... “it creates one layer of meaning: one definition of space, one visual marker” (Waclawek 2011: 158). It responds to my need as an anonymous author, using my form of art display as resistance by subverting and repurposing the space. The unsanctioned presence of my intervention in the cityscape challenges the consumption of this space and promotes my expression of unmediated ideas that confronts the museum establishment. My approach is evocative of Kearney’s street intervention: a conceptual liminal zone of blurring between people (street hawkers) and place.

Having explained the choice of site, I now explain the objects and their display which form my intervention.

I incorporate found and slip-cast ceramic objects which consist mainly of a mixture of small and large ceramic plates. I embellish these using visual images and words with which I explore issues of my culture and transience within the duality of make-believe and reality. I use the imagery of childhood role-play juxtaposed with world situations as my subject matter. I am interested in how inanimate ceramic objects can take on personalities of their own, have ‘life’, and can trigger memory and emotional responses leading to a further liminal transformation taking place for the viewer; a claiming of meaning. I use these ceramic objects because of the historical contexts of the medium, and the domestic and utilitarian associations that emphasise

---

8 As the Gauteng Tourism website states “regeneration in Johannesburg has seen the transformation of areas that, for years, were declared no-go zones as a result of urban decay and crime. The Maboneng precinct east of the city is one of them (Maboneng Precinct [sa]).

9 In this instance the use of guns in young people’s hands.
their own narratives in relation to the work. In this intervention I choose to use mass-produced consumer objects that I cover with images specifically connoting nostalgia, kitsch and stereotypical notions of idealised childhood. These associations are then subverted through the inclusion of words from the Hip Hop/Rap song Little Weapon (2007), written and performed by Lupe Fiasco, which reflects the social effects, worldwide, of gun-use by young people.

As well as putting this intervention on the IM International’s website, I also documented it by photographing a 360° panoramic view of it with a Lomography Spinner film camera. This camera is particularly effective because it shows the surrounding urban space which is a fundamental component and context of my unsanctioned street intervention. I chose film because of its ability to capture the ephemeral moment and therefore a documentary medium that is faithful to the character of the intervention.

As part of this initiative, my unsanctioned public intervention is intended to produce an encounter between moving people and immobile artefacts, words, or images made solid for an ephemeral moment. I create a conversation where the addressee is anonymous and absent and the viewer or addressee continues this conversation despite the absence. Through my desire to interact with the city I construct a vision of my culture by layering and juxtaposing my work in this particular space. My aim is to create an engagement between the intervention, the street and the viewer; to illuminate a marginal space and introduce an element of surprise to those who notice it. It is in this moment that this action reveals a repurposing of the space and thus transforms it into a ‘place’ rather than ‘non space’, as defined earlier by Augé. I aim to turn spaces into places by adding to and challenging the visual narrative layers of the urban city by creating non-profit, non-commissioned artworks. It is because of the work’s illegality that “it holds a particular position in the context of the city to emphasize the functionally private reality of public spaces” (Waclawek 2011:123).

This particular installation has received some public recognition due to a photographic project in the Maboneng precinct. A company called the I was shot Foundation (NGO) provides photographic training for homeless street children who are then encouraged to apply their “newly developed skills and generate an income
(I Was Shot In Joberg [sa]). They produce a range of photographic images taken in and around the Maboneng precinct that are transferred to canvas, entitled *jo’burg on monday afternoons 2012*. One of these is an image of *If You Go Down To The Woods Today (December 2011)*, which can be purchased from a studio/store in Arts on Main or from their internet site (iwasshot.com).
**Intervention 2:**

*We Are All Migrants* (December 2012), Ceramic clouds and angels placed at the corner of Berea Street and Fox Street opposite the old Jewel City, on the underside of the Joe Slovo off-ramp.

Immigrant Movement International 2012

For the second call for action on December the 18th 2012 I revisited the bridge (figure 11) opposite Arts on Main, where I had initiated the previous intervention, *If You Go Down To The Woods Today* (2011). To my surprise it was still there - some of the pieces were missing,¹⁰ but it was still moderately unharmed. I decided to add to the remains of the intervention and further construct a monument to celebrate the immigrants of Johannesburg. This, like the previous intervention, is reminiscent of Kearney’s construction of her museums that function as monuments to the hawkers of Johannesburg “that challenge the conventions of public artworks and monuments through their subject matter, scale and the materials used” (Kearney 2004:64). Kearney’s museum, like my street intervention, speaks of ordinary people who live and work in the city rather than memorialising the heroes of the grand narratives of history. I want to pay homage to the migrants and immigrants of Johannesburg in this space that many pass through on a daily basis.

My intervention, *We Are All Migrants* (2012), (figures 12 and 13) consists of white clouds, one with the text “we are all migrants” and another with “we are immigrants” in black decal transfer letters positioned on top of the plain white clouds. I placed black angels sitting in various positions - praying, blowing kisses, hiding their eyes, ears and mouths (hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil) on top, some with small silver-lustred guns at their side. The angels in my mind are metaphors for migrants and immigrants: where do they belong? Where have they flown or floated from? Where are they going? How many borders have they crossed? Where are these borders, and how many miles have they travelled?

¹⁰ Some of the plates had been removed.
The day before the planned intervention, I primed the wall on the underside of the bridge. This and most of the flyover had been repainted, and each bridge bent had been painted with the letters of the Maboneng Precinct. Interestingly, they had carefully painted around my previous intervention (thereby accepting its existence).

The next day I arrived to initiate my street intervention, *We Are All Migrants* (2012), and, unexpectedly, as with Steven Cohen’s *Chandelier* performance, the ‘Red Ants’ arrived: the city council employees, dressed in red overalls and armed with crowbars, who demolish informal settlements at the order of the Sheriff of the Court. The ‘Red Ants’ evicted the squatters who had moved into the abandoned building fifty meters away from the bridge where the intervention is placed.

When I returned later to finish my installation the former inhabitants of the building had moved all their goods under the bridge (near my installation) and many families spent more than one night there until they could find alternative accommodation. It was dry and safe due to the precinct’s surveillance cameras and security patrols. This space was momentarily reactivated for a purpose other than the control of property. When I returned two days later to finish the installation, there were still families inhabiting the underside of the bridge.

While I was there I also visually documented the intervention with my Lomography Spinner film.
Intervention 3:

*The Shack* (2012)

*Shopping For Democracy* (June 2012), Porcelain Vase placed under the off ramp on Civet Street.

Artist, St. John Fuller, mentioned to me that he had created a shack and that he wanted to place it, unsolicited, in a public space. The shack (figures 14 and 15) incorporated old posters collected after President Zuma’s last election campaign and also contained a bed and chair. I asked him if I could include a ceramic vase that I had created: I had been looking for the right space to place it for some time and this seemed an ideal opportunity.

The shack, including the vase, was then placed under a bridge in Civet Street, Johannesburg. The bridge forms part of an overpass and the underside is very large with big leafy trees which make it feel calmer and safer than some of the other occupied bridges in the CBD. We were very careful not to infringe on the space of the homeless people who occupied the site.

The morning that we erected *The Shack* (2012) was in the middle of winter and the sleeping occupants were burning fires with anything they could get their hands on in an attempt to stay warm. The shack was erected by St. John Fuller with the help of his wife Faith and me. The installation only lasted for three days before the shack, table and chair, along with my vase, vanished. Possibly it was taken to use as firewood or perhaps someone repurposed it to sleep in. This repurposing ends the life of my intervention, because the intervention moves from the aesthetic to the functional.

---

11 These flyovers and underpasses form part of the arterial network of roads that carry people daily in and out of the city. They form a strong physical visual presence, which is one of the reasons that I am drawn to them.
I placed the vase at the entrance on the outside of the shack, so it was in full view. It was a found ceramic Chinese porcelain vase and was chosen because of the historical value placed upon Chinese porcelain in the 17th century, thus it was symbolic of opulence and aspirational wealth. I also selected the vase as the shape is linked to the human body in the way that it is described, using the human anatomy i.e. foot, body, shoulder, neck, and lastly the lip – this became symbolic for me of the humans in this environment. I placed the vase onto a slip-cast ceramic box base symbolic of a trophy: an ancient Greek and later Roman monument set up to commemorate a victory over one’s foes. The base was covered with gold lustre on top of the gold lustre, black ceramic decals spelled out ‘shopping for democracy’, which refers to the sale of weapons from China on the African continent. I further layered the vase with decal images of sweets, as they symbolise temptation and refer to children and innocence. Finally I added a decal of a shopping trolley filled with weapons, along with more gold lustre.

This is my expression of, and response to, an already marginalised everyday liminal space in Johannesburg. I visually documented this by photographing it with the Lomography Spinner film camera and placed the resulting image on the world wide net. It has subsequently been posted on many street art websites,12 has been re-blogged numerous times and continues to have a virtual life on the internet.

12 StreetArt Germany is one of the web sites on which I have viewed it.
Interventions 4, 5 and 6:

4: *I Did It Mao Wei Wei* (November 2012) Ceramic platter (1): Street intervention carried out in August 2013 and placed at the intersection of End Street and Albertina Sisulu Street.


Introduction

Each of these interventions consists of a plate that carries a portrait image of selected iconic political leaders. Throughout history and across cultures, people have been fascinated with faces, and in turn, with portrait representation. The depiction of an individual likeness is about identification, but more than that it is a record of an interaction between artist and subject. Far from being mirror reflections, portraits are a complex construction of identity that serve a range of functions, from expressing power and declaring status, to making statements about society at any given point in history. Portraits represent stories of their identity, which museums and galleries display and protect as guardians of this history. The next three interventions are evocative of the portrait gallery/museum and the kind of attention or contemplation that is brought to it.

Duncan (1991:91) points out that “like traditional ritual sites, museum [gallery] space is carefully marked off and culturally designated as special, reserved for a particular kind of contemplation” demanding a special quality of awareness which Turner (1982:41-43) calls ‘liminality’. If museums are accessible to everyone they function as a clear display of political commitment to the principle of equality; an example of this can be seen in the Louvre. Before the French Revolution the Louvre in Paris was only accessible to kings but after the revolution the government declared the Louvre was to be a museum for the people, “to be opened to everyone free of charge. It thus
became a powerful symbol of the fall of the ancient regime and the creation of a new order” (Duncan 1991:93). My installations are evocative of this democratisation of art, as they are easily accessible to the urban dweller and everyday passer-by.
Intervention 4:

*I Did It Mao Wei Wei* (November 2012) Ceramic platter (1): Street intervention carried out in August 2013 and placed at the intersection of End Street and Albertina Sisulu Street.

This intervention (figure 16) was carried out in response to the “debacle over the temporary ‘censorship’” (Gers 2012) of this platter when it formed part of the Dinner for 101 installations at the Iziko Museum in Cape Town’s Castle of Good Hope. Controversy erupted around the piece when a group of Chinese tourists objected to its depiction of the erstwhile Chinese leader, Chairman Mao Zedong, the first Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China from 1945 to 1976. The work is made up of a found political ideological propaganda plate commemorating the Chinese leader onto which I painted bloodied tears streaming from Mao’s eyes also making reference to Mao and the dissident contemporary visual artist Ai Weiwei in the title. The title refers to the song *I did it my way* (Paul Anka 1967) which was sung and popularised by Frank Sinatra. I chose this song because the lyrics of the song tell the story of a man who, having grown old reflects back on his life as death approaches. He has come to terms with his mortality and takes responsibility for how he has dealt with all the challenges of life while maintaining a respectable degree of integrity.

Weiwei is a dissident contemporary Chinese artist and political activist who is highly critical of the Chinese government’s poor human rights record and its limiting of democratic freedom. He was arrested in 2011 and held by Chinese officials for over two months (without any official charges being brought against him): the international community rallied behind him, issuing numerous calls for his release (Attan

13 In 1981, on the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, an official statement summed up this chaotic decade as the worse setback for the party, state, and people since the founding of the PRC, and laid the blame squarely on Mao Zedong. The repercussions of this decade of turmoil can be seen in the propaganda posters of the Four Modernizations period of the late 1970s and ‘80s, and the lingering effects that continue to inform the works of contemporary Chinese artists who lived through it (Avril 2009).

14 Ai Weiwei’s father was the Chinese poet Ai Qing Ai Weiwei who was denounced during the Anti-Rightist Movement and in 1958 sent to a labour camp in Xinjiang along with his wife, Gao Ying and Ai Weiwei aged one year old at the time: in 1975 the family returned to Beijing (The Circle of Courage Brave 2012:2).
2013:07). I created this work to shed light on Weiwei’s disappearance. Like many other people around the world, I was concerned that he could be taken by the Chinese authorities and held without any further explanation.

The political propaganda plate commemorating Mao aims to highlight the restrictive nature of art in China which is exemplified in Mao’s ironic championing of cultural production. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, Mao Zedong declared that art should serve the people: “A bigger and better art museum is a sign of political virtue and national identity... - recognisably a member of the civilised community of modern, liberal nations” (Duncan 1991:89), but in this case the works of art were highly censored by the State and were only allowed to ‘serve’ the masses as long as they did not criticise or question the communist party and their ideology.

Shortly after the opening of the Dinner for 101 installation exhibition, the work was strongly criticised by a group of young visiting tourists from China, who insisted on the removal of the piece as they found it disrespectful to Mao. Esther Esmayol, the show’s curator, described the incident, “They objected to the manner in which Mao was depicted and very forcefully demanded to buy the piece in order to destroy it” (Attan 2013:07). Out of concern for its safety, the plate was temporarily removed from the main table and placed instead on a side table in the banqueting hall, while Iziko made a decision about the work. It was promptly decided to return the plate to the main table setting, with the clear understanding that Iziko welcomed “lively debate and discussions on important social issues and commentary affecting our shared humanity” (Atta 2013:7).

After the Iziko exhibition I placed this intervention under a bridge near traffic lights and opposite the old Chinese cultural centre. This was chosen as it seemed a fitting place in reaction to the attempted ‘censorship’ of the platter by the Chinese tourists. I painted a strip of the wall on the bridge bent red and cemented the ceramic platter on top of this. The intersection of End Street and Albertina Sisulu Street are where two very chaotic roads cross and as a result the threshold is very busy and constrained due to its size, scale and the amount of pedestrian use. Pedestrians have to dodge cars and taxis to cross the road, and it serves as an informal parking
area for taxis when they are not in use. The area contains a concentration of many individual thresholds of buildings, consisting of apartments, offices, arts studios; towers blocks, shops and many informal businesses which are being conducted in the street. As explained by Jacobs it is, therefore, a place where “new experiences and unplanned juxtapositions of social groups and behaviours are more likely” (cited by Franck and Stevens 2007:2).

A dimension to the liminality of this urban threshold is its potential to generate fluid or ‘loose space’. The informal businesses that exist in this location demonstrate that “a fixed use no longer exists...and in such cases, through people’s activities, spaces become loose” (Franck and Stevens 2007:2). The physical elements in this area, such as the underside of the bridge, have been appropriated by the urban dweller. This all contributes to the emergence of a space, which allows various behavioural possibilities; but as Franck and Stevens (2007:2) goes on to state “people themselves must recognise the possibilities inherent in it and make use of those possibilities for their own ends”. This is visible as informal businesses, including taxi ranks, car cleaning, food preparation, street vendors and other informal trading that takes place around this intersection. It also serves as a refuge from the weather and a sleeping spot for some of the local street children.¹⁵

This urban space consists of a concentration of the city’s variety of visual symbols. In the background to this intervention is a piece of street art by well-known artist Faith 47¹⁶ which reads, The People Shall Govern along with the old Chinese cultural centre. It is the informal nature and freedom of this repurposed space, as opposed to the suppression exemplified in Mao’s rule of China, which inspired me to place this intervention here. It demonstrates my expression of concern over the Chinese tourists’ attempt to censor my platter along with the Chinese authorities’ attempt to repress Weiwei.

¹⁵ As defined by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) of South Africa. “A street child is any girl or boy who is under the age of eighteen and who has left his/her home environment part time or permanently (because of problems at home and/or in school, or to try to alleviate those problems) and who spends most of his/her time unsupervised on the street as part of a subculture of children who live an unprotected communal life and who depend on themselves and each other, and not on an adult, for the provision of physical and emotional needs, such as food, clothing, nurturance, direction and socialization” (Cited by Le Roux and Smith 1998:915).

¹⁶ This work by Faith47 forms part of her Freedom Charter project.
As Franck and Stevens (2007:17) states “freedom is a pre-requisite of loose space”, and I use this unregulated space to place my unauthorised intervention to disseminate my message with a wide and diverse urban dweller: to function as visual resistance to the attempt of sanctioning by the Chinese visitors. This gives me an opportunity to express my cultural migrant identity in a “loose space, allowing for identity of place and culture to flourish” (Franck and Stevens 2007: 21) a liminal hybrid third space filled with possibilities.
Intervention 5:

The latter two interventions: *Let Freedom Reign The Sun Shall Never Set On So Glorious A Human Achievement* (30 June 2013) Ceramic platter and three bud vases and *I Did It Mao Wei Wei* (November 2012) Ceramic platter (2) are placed in close proximity to each other to create a dialogue with each other. Through this juxtaposition they create a new experience of the space for the urban dweller.


The title of this plate (figures 17 and 18) is part of a quote taken from Mandela’s speech at his presidential inauguration (Pretoria May 10, 1994):

> Today, all of us do, by our presence here, and by our celebrations in other parts of our country and the world, confer glory and hope to new-born liberty. Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must produce an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity’s belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for a glorious life for all. Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world. Let freedom reign. The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement! God bless Africa!

This intervention took place near Arts on Main in Johannesburg under a bridge that forms the underside of the Joe Slovo off-ramp. The ceramic platter was hung to celebrate and honour Nelson Mandela. It consists of a ceramic platter with a printed iron oxide \(^{17}\) ceramic decal image of Mandela’s smiling face. The iron oxide gives a sepia\(^{18}\) quality to the portrait and I chose this effect to represent Mandela as someone beautiful that once existed, but was now fading away. This seemed fitting because at the time I made the plate he was critically ill in hospital, his existence hanging in the balance between life and death. The ceramic decal was fired into the

---

\(^{17}\) I used a printer toner to transfer an image onto ceramic transfer paper The toner printer has enough iron oxide in it to allow a ceramic artist to transfer the images onto an unfired or glazed clay surface When re-fired again the image will then be visible on the surface. When is fired the image is transferred onto the piece.

\(^{18}\) Sepia prints traditionally make the subject appear lighter, softer and in this case more transparent
glazed surface of the platter and I then surrounded the image with fired on gold lustre. Finally it was framed with a black transfer picture frame to reference frames which the ‘grand masters’ used that hang in museums today. I also applied gold lustre to three found ornamental bric-a-brac bud vases. These simple objects, chosen to reflect Mandela’s simplicity and humility, were then cemented on top of the platter.

A strip of the wall behind the intervention on the bridge bent is painted bright red as a way of drawing attention to the space and to set it apart from the rest of its environment. By positioning the bud vases on top of the platter and placing flowers into them, I was attempting to create a potential of interaction with the urban dweller in the manner of some people’s interaction with memorials.

During the course of this interaction, a third space could be created; a space of contemplation and reflection. As Tim Edensor (2007:243) notes “there is always the possibility of interaction with the material elements around us and with the other inhabitants of the city”.

UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG
**Intervention 6:**


This is similar to the first *I Did It Mao Wei Wei* platter (figures 19 and 20), and is positioned to create a dialogue with *Let Freedom Reign. The Sun Shall Never Set On So Glorious A Human Achievement* (Street intervention carried out on 30 August 2013). Again I treated the wall in the same manner, but placed the Weiwei image on another bridge bent behind the Mandela portrait (intervention five). I wished to create the impression of walking through a portrait gallery/museum space, hoping that it would attract the urban dwellers’ attention towards this space and the interventions placed within it.

One of the reasons that I was drawn to this site is the grandeur and size of this bridge, which for me holds the dramatic presence of a monument. I chose it to disseminate my works, in order to engage with the urban passers-by in this space. As Duncan (1995:10) states, the general ritual features of art museums are achieved by marking off a “liminal” zone of time and space in which visitors are more open to experiencing something different. In this intervention I aim to achieve something similar, by creating a marked off liminal zone for a different visual experience of the urban cityscape.

My approach is reminiscent of Kearney’s examination of the liminal space between commissioned and non-commissioned public art, as I also attempt to explore the rigid delimitations of accessibility to institutionalised art consumption, particularly accessibility to the urban dweller.
**Intervention 7:**


This intervention (figures 21, 22 and 23) was positioned on a bridge which crosses an extremely polluted storm water drain,\(^{19}\) in Anderson Street near the crossing of Berea Street. In the immediate area are the Mai Mai market and a small public park that exists between two Joe Slovo on and off ramps. This has been repurposed into an open air church space where services are regularly held. To the side of the market is a very busy vibrant taxi rank with all the informal trading that goes on around these sites. On the opposite side of the road to this bridge is a recycling centre, and near this, a shebeen. As a result of all this activity there is a diverse mix of urban dwellers in the street that pass by.

The intervention consists of large and small ceramic blocks covered in coloured floral sheets of ceramic decal transfers; some are sprayed through with on-glaze\(^{20}\) using patterns of lace, and were further layered with silhouette images. Again I use images that explore issues of my culture and transience within the duality of make-believe, childhood role playing and reality. I once again incorporate found and slip-cast ceramic objects, which I decorate and further embellish with acrylic paint; I then seal them to withstand the elements.

I was drawn to this space because it is over the bridge, which for me is suggestive of an English dyke that I used to play near when I was a young child. Joined to the bridge is a building, fashioned with concrete statues to imitate a castle; it was originally constructed as an outlet for selling these concrete creations. The bridge is very broken and run down at one corner so I decided to reconstruct it, filling in the

---

\(^{19}\) Examples of some of the pollutants in that contaminate storm water runoffs in the city, include: motor oil, pesticides, pet waste, paint, household chemicals, rubbish and construction debris. Rainwater comes into contact with these contaminates and washes them into the storm drain system. In this particular area of the storm drain, I viewed the disposal of substances such as food waste, office waste and human faeces.

\(^{20}\) On-glaze is a method of decorating ceramic objects. I spray the on-glaze on to the glazed surface of the object which is re-fired to enable the colours to fuse into the glaze so that the decoration becomes durable.
gaps with my own imaginative brickwork similar to the interventions of Charles Simonds in the crumbling brickwork of New York in the 1970s and ’80s.21

The intervention took me an entire Sunday to erect, which afforded me a great opportunity to converse with the diverse mix of urban dwellers who passed by in the street. Some kindly invited me to church, some staggered into me on the way back from the shebeen, and a couple of street children, who earn a living by recycling, stopped to sell me objects that they thought I could incorporate into my installation. Nearly all the passers-by stopped to ask me what I was doing and used the word beautiful to describe the intervention. They expressed surprise that I was repairing the bridge without any recompense; some of the mothers communicated their fear that the broken bridge was a danger to the local young children and they were happy to see it repaired.

I went back the next day and some of the more vulnerable pieces had been stolen, and a week later someone had attacked it with a rock or brick and caused considerable damage,22 but it was still standing. While I was visually recording the damage, a young girl who worked in the shebeen came past and told me how sad she was to see that it had been vandalised, and she noted that this had been carried out by boys who live on the street. This seemed very sad for the community, as they had expressed joy at seeing the bridge beautified and revived during the construction. I explained that I would restore it and make it strong enough23 to withstand this type of destruction. I felt a strong sense of attachment towards the local community, who had taken the time to stop and talk to me about what I was doing, and had given such positive reactions.

Urban dwellers experience and interpret these interventions within their own cultural background, and it is in this liminal moment, when the blocks and objects are given meaning, that this forms “part of the process by which art comes to be authorised in

21 Charles Simonds created tiny brick dwellings for his own mythology of ‘little people’. They would appear “unannounced and largely undocumented” (Princenthal 2012) in broken buildings, nooks and crannies, where his structures were subject to the vagaries of time, weather and public intervention. His purposes were different to mine but the manner of intervention was similar.
22 The aggressive response to the blocks may “be a response to the alienation from society they experience every day” (McKay 2000:1).
23 I plan to do this by filling the blocks with cement and stones and placing the embedding objects well into the cement between the blocks, so that if and when it is attacked it will be more resilient to attack.
[this] act of spectatorship and interpretation” (Ramos 2000:5). This street holds many thresholds of relatively unregulated juxtapositions of uses. Some of these thresholds are very open and flow over onto the street. For example the park has been repurposed as a church where religious rituals are carried out in the open air.

This intervention penetrated the cityscape and occupied this particular contested liminal threshold, which tested these open boundaries even more. It created an opportunity for me to engage socially with the community in this space. Positioning this fragile ceramic intervention in the midst of such poverty, in this case the recycling centre, brought to mind the contradictions of the ‘new’ South Africa. This was also an aspect highlighted by Cohen in *Chandelier* (2001-2002). It emphasised the difference between the privileged and the under privileged in society, and how these street children are marginalised and even excluded from society because of the situation that they find themselves in.

This is reflected in the marginality of the spaces they occupy in the streets. Malcolm Miles (1997:76) suggests, “Sub cultural space as such does not guarantee freedom from constraint, but for some does provide a site of reflection and negotiation”. My intervention sheds light on these young street boys and how they are integrated into the new South Africa’s capitalist economy.
Intervention 8:

**When It Rains, It Pours** (August 2013) Blocks and Ducks: Street intervention placed on Fox Street near to Phillips Street

This intervention (figures 24, 25 and 26) took place over the same storm water drain but further along its route, and on a different bridge. I chose this site because of the unexpected surprise of coming upon it, in this urban environment. It provides one with a view between industrial buildings, where the water runs off these buildings into the storm water drain. One can stand on this small bridge, and opposite is a view of another small bridge where the storm water disappears under the road. In this way the water makes its presence known as it appears and then disappears. I found the decay of this uninhabited and abandoned space profoundly poignant; the decay of the crumbling brick and concrete walls transforming it into a strange and beautiful landscape.

I also chose this site because there is a skateboarding facility, which is a meeting place for all the local children: in order to practice, skateboarders frequent this physical threshold for long periods of time. As Jordi Balló (2009: [sp]) states “In the city, uninhabited spaces don’t belong to anyone, and this is part of their appeal”. Skateboarding and the numerous urban practices in these liminal ‘non spaces’ of the city, inform us in Borden’s words (2001:2):

> that we need to celebrate three things: different peoples, different spaces and different ways of knowing the city. All of whom have different ideas of public space, and who subsequently use and make their own places to foster their own identities as individuals and citizens.

My intervention consists of small blocks reminiscent of children’s building blocks, ranging from five centimetres to eight centimetres in size, stacked on top of each other. Three dimensional objects slip cast from moulds, were cut up and attached to the blocks. They are under glazed, glazed, lustred, on-glazed and finally, some parts were painted with acrylic paint and sealed. The attached objects consist

---

24 The study of “skateboarding shows how cities also involve various machines and tools, everyday spaces, imaginative experiences, city mapping, social identities and urban terrains” (Borden 2001:1).
of guns, roses, hand grenades and heads: signifying social reality. I cemented these to the wall of one of the old industrial buildings which adjoins the bridge.

The second part of this intervention consisted of bright yellow ducks, which were slip moulded from a child’s rubber duck, usually one of the first gifts a baby receives to play with at bath time. They were under glazed and glazed and on top of this on-glaze was applied. They were then cemented onto ceramic plates that had sheets of ceramic decal flowers which had been applied and fired onto them. The plates with ducks on them were then attached, using cement, to the storm water drain. I placed the plates just above the water line to give the impression of the ducks floating on plates down the effluence.

The intervention placed here illuminates an otherwise marginal space. In addition it creates a space of public awareness and a sense of surprise to what was a ‘non place’.

Upon my return a few weeks later, the water flow had increased considerably, it was very dark in colour and the bright yellow ducks had turned black, probably due to the polluted effluence, which looked like contaminated industrial toxic run off entering the storm water drain. The blocks at this time were still in their original condition.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I examine how my unsanctioned street interventions contribute to the experience of the urban environment by intervening with the physical elements of the cityscape. Like Cohen and Kearney, my interventions re-purpose liminal spaces reflecting the social reality of these sites. I place ceramic objects that are imbued with imagery and symbolism that engage with my own narratives, and express my own multi-faceted state of liminality as an immigrant in Johannesburg. These interventions contribute to the production of space by adding an additional visual layer, allowing an alternative perspective to unfold. The construction of ‘meaning’ by the urban dweller who comes upon these easily accessible works, creates a hybrid ‘third-space’.
My interventions shed light on the contested nature of these public spaces that encompass the existing communities, street-level economies and the daily flow of urban dwellers going about their everyday lives. They illuminate the contradictions of the ‘new’ South Africa especially the exploitation of street children and their place in its economy. My relationship and engagement with the communities that populate these liminal spaces are a fundamental component of these interventions.
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

Through the creation of unsanctioned interventions in the city’s liminal spaces, Cohen, Kearney and I confront and renegotiate liminal identity which is performed in relation to the culture of Johannesburg, thereby adding an additional visual layer to the city.

Unsanctioned art presents an alternative view of the city which inspired and empowered me to express my liminal identity with an ‘ever-changing’ cast of characters with whom I have shared ephemeral moments. I have ‘repurposed’ spaces beyond the shopping malls and gated communities of Johannesburg, to produce a series of unfolding encounters with the urban dweller. I found these spaces very open and available for me to express my cultural hybridity. They also afford me an opportunity to engage playfully and inventively with the urban dweller, and in so doing, to create a liminal hybrid ‘third space’ which provides the potential for transformation and for constructing a new experiential engagement with the city.

Placing my interventions in these spaces has exposed the role of ‘communitas’, the emotion of the human experience within the community. This has contributed powerfully to my personal sense of belonging and I have also formed a strong relationship with these liminal city spaces. As Mbembe states: South Africa

...needs to distance itself from an understanding of culture as pastness, a simple matter of customs and traditions, monuments and museums. We have to realise that culture is not yet another form of “service delivery”. It is the way human beings imagine and engage their futures (Department of Arts and Culture 2010:1).

---

1 As discussed earlier Turner (1982:45-51) states that in liminal situations communitas emerges in the form of spontaneous sociability, love for each other, a sense of solidarity and equality and heightened emotional or spiritual experience creating a sense of belonging which challenges the orthodox social and cultural order. It is a space where utopian ideals and hopes for a better future can be voiced and alternative paradigms of socio-cultural structure devised.

2 This sense of ‘communitas’ (human interrelatedness) became particularly evident to me while placing the intervention *If You Go Down To The Woods Today* (August 2013) on Anderson Street; the diverse community that I came into contact with and their positive reaction to the repair of the bridge. In my future interventions I envisage intervening with the built environment in places that are broken or rundown, using my creations as a way to repair, restore and patch up for the local community.
Unsanctioned public art in Johannesburg provides a means of celebrating people from different backgrounds, diverse communities, class, race, and gender. This use of public space empowers people to express their own identities as individuals and citizens, to “imagine and engage [with] their [own] futures” Mbembe (Department of Arts and Culture 2010:1).
ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1 Steven Cohen, *Chandelier*, 2001-2002
(Chandelier Project [o]).

Figure 2 Steven Cohen, *Chandelier*, 2001-2002
(Chandelier Project [o]).
Figure 3 Steven Cohen, *Chandelier*, 2001-2002

(Chandelier Project [o]).

Figure 4 Steven Cohen, *Chandelier*, 2001-2002

(Chandelier Project [o]).
Figure 5 Alison Kearney, *The Portable Hawkers Museum*: Rosebank, June 2003
(Kearney 2004: 84).

Figure 6 Alison Kearney, *The Portable Hawkers Museum*: Rosebank, 2003
(Kearney 2004: 85).
“I happen to pass the museum on the side of a parking bay- in fact, on a vacant parking bay out of way of traffic flow. The museum was interesting to visit. It seems to be well organised, all the objects of the museum is carefully laid out and well documented taken care of. It was under a tree and there were music and sounds in the air as the sun sets at the museum. We need more museums like this”.

(Kearney 2004: 85).
Figure 8 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 1: *If You Go Down To The Woods Today*, December 2011
(photograph by author).

Figure 9 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 1: *If You Go Down To The Woods Today*, December 2011
(photograph by author).
Figure 10 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 1: *If You Go Down To The Woods Today*, February 2012
(photograph by author).

Figure 11 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 1: *If You Go Down To The Woods Today*, December 2012
(photograph by author).
Figure 12  Julie Lovelace, Intervention 2: *We Are All Migrants*, December 2012
(photograph by author).

Figure 13 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 2: *We Are All Migrants*, December 2012
(photograph by author).
Figure 14 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 3: *The Shack: Shopping For Democracy*: Porcelain Vase, June 2012 (photograph by author).

Figure 15 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 3: *The Shack: Shopping For Democracy*: Porcelain Vase, June 2012 (photograph by author).
Figure 16 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 4: I Did It Mao Wei Wei, August 2012
(photograph by author).
Figure 17 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 5: *Let Freedom Reign. The Sun Shall Never Set On So Glorious A Human Achievement*, August 2013 (photograph by author).

Figure 18 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 5: *Let Freedom Reign. The Sun Shall Never Set On So Glorious A Human Achievement*, December 2013 (photograph by author).
Figure 19 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 6: *I Did It Mao Wei Wei*, August 2012 (photograph by author).

Figure 20 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 6: *I Did It Mao Wei Wei*, August 2012 (photograph by author).
Figure 21 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 7: If You Go Down To The Woods Today: Blocks, August 2013 (photograph by author).

Figure 22 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 7: If You Go Down To The Woods Today: Blocks, August 2013 (photograph by author).
Figure 23 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 7: If You Go Down To The Woods Today: Blocks, August 2013 (photograph by author).

Figure 24 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 8: When It Rains, It Pours: Blocks and Ducks, August 2013 (photograph by author).
Figure 25 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 8: *When It Rains, It Pours*: Blocks and Ducks, August 2013 (photograph by author).

Figure 26 Julie Lovelace, Intervention 8: *When It Rains, It Pours*: Blocks and Ducks, August 2013 (photograph by author).
SOURCES CONSULTED


Accessed 13 June 2011.


Chandelier Project. [Sa]. [O]. Available: http://vweb.isisp.net/~elu@artslink.co.za/stevencohen/chandelier.htm


Accessed 18 December 2011.


Accessed 13 December 2011.


Accessed 10 January 2011.
Department of Community Development. 2011. [O]. Available:
Accessed 17 January 2011.

Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display, edited by I Karp and


Routledge.

Industrial Ruin. In K. Franck and Q. Stevens. Loose Space Possibility and

Eliade, M. Myth and Ritual. [Sa]. [O]. Available:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myth_and_ritual


Franck, K & Stevens, Q (eds). 2007. Loose Space Possibility and Diversity in Urban


https://www.facebook.com/groups/257503277608330/
Accessed 20 March 2013.


Democratic Manifestations” American Review of Public Administration,

Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations.

University Press.

Press.


Accessed 13 January 2012.


Accessed 22 September 2013.


Accessed 13 January 2012.


Accessed 13 November 2010.


APPENDIX

Migrant Manifesto by IM International


Our voices converge on these principles:

1. We know that international connectivity is the reality that migrants have helped create, it is the place where we all reside. We understand that the quality of life of a person in a country is contingent on migrants' work. We identify as part of the engine of change.

2. We are all tied to more than one country. The multilaterally shaped phenomenon of migration cannot be solved unilaterally, or else it generates a vulnerable reality for migrants. Implementing universal rights is essential. The right to be included belongs to everyone.

3. We have the right to move and the right not to be forced to move. We demand the same privileges as corporations and the international elite, as they have the freedom to travel and to establish themselves wherever they choose. We are all worthy of opportunity and the chance to progress. We all have the right to a better life.

4. We believe that the only law deserving of our respect is an unprejudiced law, one that protects everyone, everywhere. No exclusions. No exceptions. We condemn the criminalization of migrant lives.

5. We affirm that being a migrant does not mean belonging to a specific social class nor carrying a particular legal status. To be a migrant means to be an explorer; it means movement, this is our shared condition. Solidarity is our wealth.

6. We acknowledge that individual people with inalienable rights are the true barometer of civilization. We identify with the victories of the abolition of slavery, the
civil rights movement, the advancement of women’s rights, and the rising achievements of the LGBTQ community. It is our urgent responsibility and our historical duty to make the rights of migrants the next triumph in the quest for human dignity. It is inevitable that the poor treatment of migrants today will be our dishonor tomorrow.

7. We assert the value of the human experience and the intellectual capacity that migrants bring with them as greatly as any labor they provide. We call for the respect of the cultural, social, technical, and political knowledge that migrants command.

8. We are convinced that the functionality of international borders should be re-imagined in the service of humanity.

9. We understand the need to revive the concept of the commons, of the earth as a space that everyone has the right to access and enjoy.

10. We witness how fear creates boundaries, how boundaries create hate and how hate only serves the oppressors. We understand that migrants and non-migrants are interconnected. When the rights of migrants are denied the rights of citizens are at risk.

Dignity has no nationality.