Scenographic Landscapes

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Abstract

This article articulates how landscape can be used as a conceptual framework to illuminate processes of audience engagement with scenography in immersive environments. Drawing on the author's own practice-led research project If anyone wonders why rocks breakdown *(2012), the article considers individual and collective engagement with scenography as an active and emergent doing. This emergent phenomenon is conceptualized as a scenographic landscape.*

Scenographic Landscapes

The incorporation of the spectator as an active element of performance design raises new questions as to the nature of scenographic engagement. Scenography, in this article, is positioned within a phenomenological and multisensory framework as developed by Joslin McKinney (2008). This phenomenological approach to scenography is throwing new light onto scenography as a method and operation for performance practice and research. I adopt the rising and common acceptance of scenography as what Pamela Howard calls 'the seamless synthesis of space, text, research, art, actors, directors and spectators that

contributes to an original creation' (Howard 2002:130). The emphasis in this article is placed upon the spectator as an active element of the scenographic composition.

Whilst there has been a dramatic rise in site-specific, promenade performance and immersive practices, theoretical perspectives on the shifting spectator / space and spectator / design relationships have remained largely underdeveloped. At the Prague Quadrennial (2011) - an international exhibition of theatre design – an expanded scenographic field incorporated art practice that engaged spatial design with active mobile spectatorship. PQ2011 demonstrated how the current climate of design-led practice is occupying an intersection between theatre and fine art - in which my own performance practice is positioned. As a scenographer and performance maker, my research is concerned with how audiences engage with the scenography from a position of spatial centrality. My practice seeks an active manipulation and orchestration of the design elements (light, sound and projection) to create reflective, multisensory spaces, without live performing bodies.

Arnold Aronson asserts that 'the language of scenography is changing' (2012: 9). As our understanding of what constitutes scenography develops, so too does the need to consider scenographic research within an expanded theoretical framework. In the editorial to *Performance Research: 'On Scenography'*, Sodja Lotker and Richard Gough inform us '[w]hat is important is that scenographies are environments that not only determine the context of performative actions, but inspire us to act and that directly forms our actions. So how do scenographies make us?' (Lotker and Gough 2013: 3-4). In this article I question the nature of the scenographic experience in my own multisensory, design-led installation *If anyone wonders why rocks breakdown.*

If anyone wonders… was an immersive, multi-channel sound and video installation presented at Leeds Light Night (2011) and Performance Studies International #18 (2012).

This performative installation is situated within an environmental tradition.[i] In environmental scenography, the space surrounds the participants - the scenography envelops the audience - making them an integral part of the environmental image. In the surrounding environment of *If anyone wonders…*, the audience was placed in direct contact with the scenographic elements (light, sound, objects and each other).

Positioning the participant in a direct tactile and spatial relationship with the design elements places *If anyone wonders…* within a wider field of experiential, participatory and immersive art practice. The context for this type of practice includes artworks such as Olafur Eliasson's *Weather Project* (2003), in which a giant sun constructed of mono-frequency lights occupied the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, London. In this piece, the haze-filled room provided a unifying atmosphere in which participants engaged in acts of social play, initiated via their mirrored reflections on the ceiling. Further parallels with my own practice can be drawn from Cildo Meireles, whose installation *Volatile* (2008) exemplifies the complex relationship between tactile and emotional engagement. In *Volatile*, also presented at Tate Modern, participants were invited to walk through a thick layer of white dust in a darkened room, lit by a solitary candle. Feelings of isolation, gentleness and trepidation surface as the participant ventures further inside; the art experience materializes through active participation.

In a theatrical context, links can be drawn between my own practice and the work of Punchdrunk, whose epic performances allow the audience to roam freely through various rooms in labyrinthine found spaces – encouraging the audience to seek out their own narratives. Audio performances which deploy headphone technology to augment audience experience provide a further context for my own installations. Slung Low's theatrical audio walk *Mapping the City* (2011) took its audience on a fragmented narrative journey through

the city of Hull. In this adventure, the audience became voyeurs of the city, as hidden stories were revealed through snippets of conversation channelled through wireless headphones. In all of these examples, and with *If anyone wonders…*, a significant question arises about the nature of audience experience in which active spectatorship is an essential component of the performance ontology: in what ways can we take account of immersion in the experience of scenography and the theatrical environment? In order to find common ground between fine art, theatre and audience engagement with scenography, I turn to landscape, in a non-pictorial sense, as a conceptual frame within which to consider aesthetic experience and scenography as an emergent process.

Landscape, like scenography, has struggled with its own particular ocularcentric tradition. However, landscape can be argued to be a concept unifying the physical environment and the body. Scenographic approaches to landscape have mostly been concerned with actual landscapes, often formed through a site-specific lens. Liina Unt (2008) examines actual landscapes from an environmental perspective, and presents landscape as a 'stage of action' (Unt 2008: 319). This approach begins to deal with landscape as action-orientated - useful for locating performance within a defined and localized area of activity. As sites of action, landscapes in Unt's account are somewhat problematic, as the examples she uses propose a seated perspective for the audience, which is, of course, far removed from the active and mobile spectatorship to which I have been referring. Unt essentially folds the experience of actual landscapes into an environmental tradition, where landscape is presented as 'unified space' consisting of audience and surrounding scenery: hers remains a visual perspective on scenography. Unt employs an environmental lens to broaden her argument by drawing on Aronson's assertion that environmental scenography is the 'practice of integrating the space(s) of the audience and the performers by placing the audience in the

same frame with the performers or using multiple frames' (Aronson 1981, cited in Unt 2008: 328). Whilst the widening of environmental perspective goes some way to acknowledging the potential impact of landscape on scenographic reception - as part of a unified frame - it is less useful when applied to an embodied, action-centred experience in which the audience body has a physical and mobile engagement within the environment. Unt's holistic view of landscape does, however, link with my own approach. She asserts that 'landscape includes different interfaces that involve time, space, mental and material modes as well as several agents' (Unt 2008: 320); this offers a frame within which to recognize that the experience of landscape is comprised of several layers. And scenography, like landscape, can be seen as a manifold experience of mental and material processes. In order to bring about a closer formation between audience, environment and scenography, I conceptualize audience engagement, in my own practice, through what I term a 'scenographic landscape'.

If anyone wonders why rocks breakdown

If anyone wonders… was presented in a black-box studio, designed for a small audience of six and structured as a continuous loop of 12 minutes. The space was enclosed by two projection screens, and the entire floor space was covered by a terrain of tiny 1:50 scale model human figures. In clusters, the figures were illuminated by shafts of torchlight which created areas of focus and shadow. Prior to entering this space, the audience were given a booklet of the textual score and a set of headphones. They were asked to select their own model figure and invited to place this within the landscape of thousands of similar miniature figures. As the audience entered the space they were forced to move through the terrain - treading carefully so as not to harm or disturb the figures.

Figure 1: *If anyone wonders why rocks breakdown*; view of empty space with panoramic projection screen, torch lighting and model figures. [Photo: David Shearing]

Figure 2: *If anyone wonders why rocks breakdown*; close-up image of the model figures. [Photo: David Shearing]

The perimeter of the space was defined by six evenly spaced speakers which diffused a soundtrack composed of found and processed sounds of the city, and layered with a light piano score. The sound experience was augmented by the use of headphones that delivered the spoken text directly into the ears of the participants – the audio was delicately balanced, using semi-porous headphones which enabled them to still hear the external environment. The sound diffusion system sought to encourage exploration, as different sounds could be heard depending on the actual distance between the participant and sound speaker.

Two panoramic screens on opposite sides of the space displayed hazy footage of the horizon lines of a city. Each minute of this video was timed to fit with a different hour of the day, which was presented as two simultaneous times but twelve hours apart; 2:00 was projected onto one screen with 14:00 appearing on the opposite screen. Drawn from personal experience, each hour was expressive of the different moods and routines experienced at those times of day which were both simultaneous and different: an example of this was sending emails at 7:00 or 19:00. A loose, thematic dramaturgy was formed around miscommunication: snippets of phone conversations, a lost message at 2:44, a description of a bedroom at 4:48, a strong cup of coffee at 9:01, a relationship break-up, a journey home, the day begins and ends – it repeats. The average amount of time spent in the installation ranged between 15 and 20 minutes, with some participants remaining immersed in the space for over an hour.

Figure 3: *If anyone wonders why rocks breakdown*; audience wearing headphones, navigating the space and video. [Photo: David Shearing]

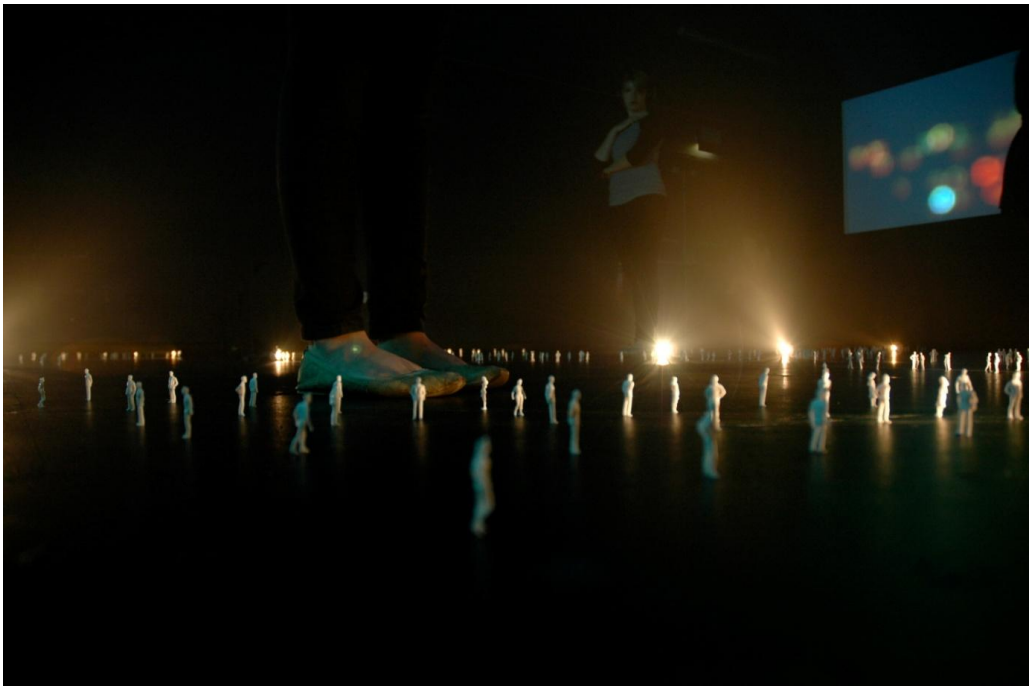
Figure 4: *If anyone wonders why rocks breakdown*; audience members stood in the centre of the environment. [Photo: David Shearing]

The creative starting points of the piece were the phrase ‘between a rock and a hard place’ and Richard Long’s image *A four day walk on Dartmoor* (2009). The piece created and

represented a number of subtle physical dilemmas which the audience needed to navigate. These included, negotiating the tiny model figures underfoot, being 'caught' between two screens and in the sightlines of other participants, deciding whether to follow the booklet or simply to listen to the spoken word and deciding whether to lie down, sit or stand in the space. The intention was to provide an open space for free bodily motility, to encourage shifts in perspective and to allow participants to determine their own durational experience. I hoped to offer agency to the participants, to allow them to discover and shape their own methods of engagement - to make subtle, reflective and personal choices.

In both iterations of *If anyone wonders…* audience reflections were collected, and these are used here to help form a dialogue between practitioner and audience. Directly after participants experienced the performance installation, they were offered a postcard which instructed them to complete the sentence *'If anyone wonders, it felt like…'* The aim here was to develop a sense of creative and poetic reflection, to consider their individual emotional and physical responses to the event. These comments were then placed on display outside the performance space to act as a communal expression of the participants' feelings. In this article, these immediate/instinctive reflections are used to illustrate and offer insights into the nature of the audience experience. Whilst this type of qualitative reflection does not seek to provide a universal account, poetic responses do, as Patricia Leavy asserts, seek to offer a 'porthole onto an experience, one that may be shared by the reader, or one that is new' (Leavy 2009: 68) . Through a triangulation of audience reflection, practitioner reflection and theoretical perspectives, I seek to bring about a dialogue – a phenomenological perspective on the audience engagement with scenography.

Audience members behaved in a multitude of ways. Some were hesitant for fear of disturbing the figures. Some took a long time to place their figure within the space. Others

explored the light, manipulating torches and animating the figures by casting shadows. Some tweeted and took photos. One was spotted kicking the figures when she thought she was alone. The experience was described by one participant as being like 'peaking in on a frozen moment, maybe my own moment'. Another reflected, 'I felt in a kind of peace or meditative state […] I felt like I could be in nature – forest, grass or something similar with light breeze and nobody around'. Another picked up on the dualistic nature of the piece: 'my own scale was brought into distinct focus; a focus that forced a perception of (my)self that remained intimate but distant'. An overriding sense of peace and reflection arose - meditative states and feelings of being submerged in water. Mostly, participants took their time, reading and listening to the text and manoeuvring the figures into new formations – unintentional narratives emerged.

The Scenographer and Audience as Flâneur

I wait until nightfall, it is late, I gather my still camera and a few objects which produce light; torches, a solar powered lamp, some neon glow sticks and a flashing pantomime wand. I set out on foot and head toward a small construction site not far from my home, beside a busy main road. I had spotted the site a few days earlier and was intrigued and captivated by the dirt piles and other construction materials that lay about. As I arrive on site, I am faced with an array of industrial objects; wooden planks, piles of earth, traffic cones, a JCB digger and some large concrete sewage pipes which I crawl through. I begin to physically explore the space. I become fascinated with tracks carved out by the digging equipment - the land is quite literally being 'sculpted'. I begin documenting the terrain, using still images to reveal, through long exposure, light trails across the terrain. Up-close the topography is delicate, small gaps and fissures carve mini-pathways through the soil, I gain a heightened sense of

attention towards my feet as I navigate the crumbling earth beneath me. The pictures act as reminders, revealing a journey – my journey.

Figure 5: Image taken from experiments in light exposure. [Photo: David Shearing]

Throughout the process of creating *If anyone wonders…* I used the city as my source material, recording, capturing and exploring my relationship with the urban surroundings. I followed currents in the crowd, trod carefully over the cracks in the dirt, and I allowed the slow blinking lights on the horizon to captivate my attention. I was alert and attentive, working with the city; I allowed myself to dwell and reflect. I made invisible pathways through my movement - my body shifted as I changed focus from the soil beneath my feet to the flickering lights on the horizon.

The reflection above is an example of how I placed my body at the centre of the creative process. As I continued my explorations, these experiences grew. I slowly formed

and shaped the imaginary space of performance - I was engaged in an imaginative process of sculpting with my surroundings. As I worked through my body, the spatial design of *If anyone wonders…* began to form. The process was an act of gathering and composition, as I sketched, recorded, listened and felt my way through the city.

The significance of this scenographic process, undertaken in the creation of the work, later materialized as an embodied process of spectatorship during the performance event. The explorative action of gathering material and sensing my way around the city can also be seen as a form of gathering and composition for the audience in the performance. Some, at least, of the participants took on the process of creatively composing with the scenographic material before them. Audience reflections and video documentation demonstrated a significant amount of play brought about through physical and imaginative engagement. It appears, then, that some participants take on the position of a poetic flâneur.

By considering the audience as a flâneur, I seek to articulate audience participation as a physical and imaginative strolling of the performance environment. The flâneur and the act of flânerie are rooted in late 19th- and early 20th-century literature - traditionally located within the city of Paris and its arcades. In this traditional articulation, the flâneur is a gendered concept – both because the word is a masculine noun in the original French, and because it is always used to describe male practices of the city. My conception of the audience as flâneur is non-gendered. My focus is on the experiential rather than social-discursive aspects of the city.[ii] I am concerned with the act of flânerie – 'walking' or 'strolling' – and I use it to describe audience engagement, rather than to refer to a gendered subject within a city environment. However, in reference to the historical roots of the term, I will refer to the non-gendered flâneur as 'he' in the following discussion.

The flâneur and the city are intimately entwined; they are conjoined concepts that can be configured as both physical and imaginative processes. Janet Wolff (1994), in her discussion of the flâneur, reasserts James Donald's radical presentation of the city as an imagined environment:

> 'The city' does not just refer to a set of buildings in a particular place. To put it polemically, there is no such *thing* as a city. Rather, *the city* designates the space produced by the interaction of historically and geographically specific institutions, social relations of production and reproduction, practices of government, forms and media of communication and so forth…*The city*, then, is above all a presentation...I would argue that the city constitutes *an imagined environment.* (Quoted in Wolff 1994: 128, with original emphasis)

The act of flânerie, like the city, can be viewed as an imaginative process as much as it is a physical action. Keith Tester informs us that 'the flâneur does not need to travel vast physical spaces to cover vast imaginative spaces' (Tester 1994: 9). It is the imagined, behavioural and poetic characteristic of the flâneur that is of interest to my practice as a scenographer, engaged with the actual city. The conception of the audience as flâneur is concerned with how participants physically and imaginatively engage with scenography within a theatrical context – in my case, a black box studio.

The flâneur as originally envisaged by Charles Baudelaire, is a character willing to immerse himself, not just in, but *with* an environment. Baudelaire suggests of the flâneur that, 'the crowd is his domain, just as the air is the bird's, and water that of the fish. His passion and his profession is to merge with the crowd' (quoted in Tester 1994: 2). This urban character is at ease amongst the people of the city, intimately within, but readily alert. Walter Benjamin later observed of the individual engaged in flânerie:

> [h]is eyes are open, his ears ready, searching for something entirely different from what the crowd gathers to see. A word dropped by chance will reveal to him one of those character traits that cannot be invented and must be drawn directly from life; those physiognomies so naively attentive will furnish the painter with the expression he was dreaming of; a noise, insignificant to every other ear, will strike that of the musician and give him the cue for harmonic combination, even for the thinker, the philosopher lost in his reverie, this external agitation is profitable: it stirs up his ideas as the storm stirs the waves of the sea. (Benjamin 2002: 453)

What the flâneur extracts from the environment are moments of imaginative arousal, a process that could be applied to my own scenographic engagement with the city, part imaginative, part reflective and part spatial construction. The audience in the immersive environment of *If anyone wonders…* could be seen to be positioned into a scenographic act of imaginative construction, exploring the world of the performance and seeking out profitable agitation. This process can be seen in the comment of a participant, who reflected that *it felt like…* 'Walking through a cityscape at night hearing snatches of people's conversations while trying not to tred [*sic*] on very beautiful, luminous insects who clearly have stones of their own and who look much like tiny stars glowing on the ground'.

As participants walk through the space they form and construct their own dramaturgical impressions. Although the physical space was limited, further notions of walking materialized in other audience comments, such as *it felt like…* 'Searching for safety where there is none but finding others to walk with'. Such reflections not only demonstrate a process of gathering and seeking out profitable scenographic agitation, but also allude to the metaphorical and physical motor activity of walking. Anthropologist Tim Ingold examines the nature of walking, reading and writing, arguing that these processes are intimately woven together. Ingold suggests they are as much imaginative practices as they are physical actions:

> [L]etters and words inscribed on the page of a manuscript have just as much of a material presence as do footprints and tracks impressed on the ground, and both prompt the question of the relation between the observation of marks and traces inscribed or impressed in surfaces in the world and the imagining that is carried on, as it were, on the hither side of eyesight, 'in the mind'. Reading and writing surely involve the exercise of both eye and mind, and the same must be true of walking. (Ingold 2010: 16)

Ingold is unpacking the intimate weaving between body and mind through a process of inscription and walking, drawing connections to the activity of the flâneur. The participant reflection above is suggestive of someone walking through a city, hearing 'snatches of conversation', and then responding to the environment in a poetic manner. When walking and moving through space we are active in body and mind. As we walk, the imagination carries us forward.

Human figures in the space can also be seen as part of overall scenography. One participant reflected that it was 'really striking to be able to watch other people move through the figures, some of the beams casting more interesting shadows suggesting loneliness in a city'. Objects are not the only potentially profitable material: the audience body - in this case in relation to the projected light - becomes part of the environmental image. As participants entered the performance space they too formed part of the scenographic and perceptual world. The conceptualization of the audience as flâneur in *If anyone wonders…,* positions the audience as an active body, seeking and building narratives from the poetic material before them. The participant as flâneur enters into a physical yet fictional world where they take on the action of seeking out profitable agitation.

Raymond Lucas, in his chapter 'Taking a Line for a Walk', adds to the profile of the flâneur by suggesting that he 'inscribes upon the city, writing rather than reading it. This is an important distinction: his spectatorship is an active one, which imposes his will upon the city streets creating a narrative as he goes along' (Lucas 2008: 171). This characteristic helps connect the creative potential of the flâneur directly with traditional modes of theatrical spectatorship. Some participants observed how they began to see or hear stories unfolding within the environment: 'I was listening to the stories of the little people around me. I chose which ones were having the stories by which ones caught the light as they caught my eye', and 'It felt involving needing to make a choice for my little woman. Wanted her to be in a small group of 3'. These types of response express an imaginative process of inscription: there is an active *working with* and *connecting of* the scenographic elements. Parallels can be drawn here with Jacques Rancière's notions of the emancipated spectator of whom he notes:

> [t]he spectator also acts, like the pupil or scholar. She observes, selects, compares, interprets. She links what she sees to a host of other things that she has seen on stages, in other kinds of places. She composes her own poem with the elements of the poem before her. (Rancière 2009: 13)

Spectatorship, according to Rancière, is an active process of composition with the presented performance elements. However, unlike the viewing spectator sitting in an auditorium, in the environmental space of *If anyone wonders…* the participant is a mobile body engaged in complex sensorimotor action. The audience as flâneur - like his urban original - moves through space, discovering rather than merely being presented with material - he inscribes rather than reads the performance. The audience as flâneur is an active cyclical process of gathering and composing, brought about through active bodily engagement. This draws Rancière's notion of an emancipated spectator into both an imaginative and active body.

Processes of inscription rely upon imaginative strategies of the audience. However, the act of flânerie can only take us so far. Whilst I believe the audience as flâneur is usefully applied to performances in which the audience are free to stroll - as with works of Punchdrunk in which the audience piece together fragments of performance material – the audience experience of *If anyone wonders…* can be seen to offer a deeper holistic connection with the performance event. This relationship between participant and design extends beyond the reading and inscription of the performance, and materializes as a form of incorporation. Incorporation, I propose, is the synthesis of imaginative inscription and an active physical doing or working with scenography. This can be brought about by considering the design of performance as a form of landscape.

What is Landscape?

A brief outline of the spatiality of landscape is important if we are to liberate it from its dominant associations with visual culture, and in particular with painting. In perceptual terms, and according to landscape architect Simon Bell, landscape is the immediate and localised 'field of our present action', where the landscape can be seen as 'the part of environment that we can engage with at a given time' (Bell 1999: 66). The field of the model figures, torches and the participant body in *If anyone wonders…* can be seen as that part of the environmental design which can be physically engaged with at any given moment.

An etymological examination of 'landscape' reveals an embodied, rather than the common pictorial, definition. Ingold (2011) synthesizes observations made by Alpers (1983), Jay (1988), Carruthers (1998) and Olwig (2008) in order to challenge the common linking of landscape to painting. He argues that this linking arises from a misunderstanding of the suffix 'scape' as a 'scopic regime', and explains this misunderstanding by reference to the superficial resemblance between *scape* and *scope*. In fact, 'scope' derives from the Greek

skopos – 'literally the target of the bowman, the mark towards which he gazes as he aims' (Carruthers 1998, quoted in Ingold 2011: 126) – whereas 'scape' comes from the Old English *sceppan* or *skyppan*, meaning 'to shape' (Olwig, cited in Ingold 2011: 126). It is, I suggest, this notion of a shaping of the land that connects with the scenographic objects of performance. In *If anyone wonders…* the audience were able to physically move the torches and model figures. As the participants individually manipulated the model figures, the scenographic landscape was being shaped over time by contributions from the other participants throughout the day. Like Ingold, I would like to return to landscape, not as a pictorial representation, but through an embodied understanding: 'there is no division between inner and outer world – respectively of mind and matter, meaning and substance […] through living in it, the landscape becomes part of us, just as we are part of it' (Ingold 2000: 191). I would echo Lotker and Gough's suggestion that 'scenographies inspire us to act' (Lotker and Gough 2013: 3-4).

Recognition of landscape as an embodied practice rather than as a visual phenomenon places the body centrally in it. For Ingold, landscape is multisensory and immersive:

> The power of the prototypical concept of landscape lies precisely in the fact that it is not tied to any specific sensory register – whether of vision, hearing, touch, taste or smell. In ordinary perceptual practice these registers cooperate so closely, and with such overlap of function, that their respective contributions are impossible to tease apart. (Ingold 2011:136)

The oneness of the experience of landscape is a multisensory immersion that engages the whole body. Furthermore, a bodily engagement with landscape can be seen as an active process of doing. Kenneth Olwig refers to a dictionary definition of landscape as 'a particular area of activity (Merriam-Webster 1996: landscape), where what counts is not what you see or how you are seen to *perform*, but what you *do'* (Olwig 2008: 85, original emphasis).

Participant engagement in *If anyone wonders…* suggested an active and intentional doing of scenography through the manipulation of objects, opening up an active and multisensory commingling with the performance world. The objects of scenography were shaped by the audience, as much as they shaped the participant. The audience became an active and malleable part of the scenographic composition.

Towards a Scenographic Landscape

As the audience entered the studio space they were encouraged to move through the terrain and find a place in which to leave their own chosen model figure. Video documentation of the installation captured the audience moving slowly around the space, revealing how some participants actively chose to shift their own physical position. Individuals continually shifted their perspective by standing, sitting, lying or kneeling in the central space. Some participants observed from the sides, others decided to play with their height and lowered themselves to the macro perspective of miniature people. The following comments are taken from three different participants and demonstrate this active shifting of bodily position:

I had a strong desire to be small like them, so I lied [sic] *down amongst them.*

I lean down, get my head on the floor, and see the figures loom larger, the light glows through them, ghosts in the city.

Twilight zones of play, imagining, futures + pasts while the present is stretched and expanded. Perspective can always shift and be illuminated.

Here there is a playful response to shifting scale by changing physical position. The 'field' (as one participant described it) of tiny figures sought to encourage locomotion horizontally, through and around, but scale sought to question the vertical axis by movement up and down. The diffusion of the sound aimed to encourage participants to wander through the space. Projectors were positioned so as to capture the audience bodies as they moved through the space. The twinkling projection light sought to create a sense of time passing. Some participants created their own formations with the model figures, where the manipulation of

torchlight and sweeping shadows appeared to captivate their attention. The installation offered up multiple modes of physical play and bodily engagement.

These physical actions appear to bring about a greater sense of personal involvement with the performance, intimately weaving the audience into the fabric of the scenography. In perceptual terms, Bell acknowledges that a greater involvement in landscape affords a higher degree of intelligent perception:

> There is evidence that different people will look at the same scene but perceive different shapes and patterns depending on their knowledge, experience, culture and so on; this further reinforces the theory that active, selective and intelligent perception is normal, as opposed to passive sampling. The greater the involvement by the observer in the landscape the greater the degree of intelligent perception and active visual thinking that occurs. (Bell 1999: 53)

Active perception is a subjective process that can bring about a higher degree of immersive connectedness with the performance world. Subtle shifts in body motility and locomotion can help forge a deeper, more intelligent perception. As the participants shifted their perspectives, the model figures took on a larger significance; active physicality expands imaginative composition.

As more participants placed their model figures into the landscape, the space began to alter: a physical shaping of the performance unfolded. When the installation was finished I was able to observe how these figures had been moved into different formations. One was placed on top of an upright torch, like a statue on a plinth surveying the land. Another was placed away from the main field, alone upon the handle of the door. Some figures were placed in small triangular set-ups, creating intimate relationships between the gendered figures - there was even a ritualistic looking circular gathering. Some participants commented on the impact of these established formations, made by participants who had experienced the installation earlier in the day:

I had an internal debate about whether, after placing my figure down, I was allowed to remove others – clearly some had been already placed before the audience come in, yet I felt slightly conflicted about 'moving' other people's figures.

A *doing* of scenography challenges the audience to reflect upon their relations with others, present and past. Although the individual perception of a scenographic landscape is subjective, action is social, collective and formed through time. This returns us to Olwig's observation of landscape:

> a place of a culture, as defined by common customs and language, rather than the space of a state, defined by maps, rules and statutes […] This is the land 'scaped', 'shaped' or created as place and polity by people through their practice of dwelling – their 'doing' of landscape. (Olwig 2008: 81-2)

The scenographic landscape of *If anyone wonders…* is being formed through the participants' doing of scenography, through an individual and collective process. These engagements begin to demonstrate an intimate relationship between audience and performance in which participants become more deeply entwined with the construction of the performance event. The following two participants demonstrate a further poetic and holistic commingling with the performance:

it felt like…

Morphing in and out of body, self and crowd; between individual and social bodies, hovering at the cusp of practising a placing of my body myself.

It's like a painting where you are the paint and the canvas making a mark with shadows and air!

These participant reflections express a holistic immersion in the performance - a conceptual oneness with scenographic material. This 'morphing' is demonstrative of an embodied process, as the participant's body is intimately entwined with the scenography. The

commingling of the body and landscape is in flux, part of a continual shifting between the personal and the social. This is not merely inscription, but arguably, a process of incorporation. Mike Pearson, who within his own performance practice and writing articulates a clear argument towards (actual) landscape as a form of embodiment. Pearson summarizes Ingold's articulation of movement, tracks and paths as embodied, suggesting that 'this embodiment is not inscription but rather incorporation. Landscape has no pre-existing form that is then inscribed with human activity: both being and environment are mutually emergent; continuously brought into being together; tracks and paths may equally prescribe movement' (Pearson 2006: 12)

The same emergent process can be seen within *If anyone wonders…*. The scenographic landscape of this piece was not merely a product for consumption; it was neither predetermined nor fixed. As the participant shaped the scenography, a collective experience emerged. It is a distinct experience of isolation and individual agency, coupled with a wider sense of shared collective ground where action informs action. *If anyone wonders…* could be seen as improvisatory, within a clearly defined frame. One participant's manipulation of the model figures was another participant's invitation to join the ludic exchange. Scenographic incorporation is a practice of placing and re-placing the body in the landscape.

Conclusions

The audience as flâneur is open to the world of performance, exploring and seeking out 'profitable agitation'. The explorative walking of the environment for the audience is part imaginative and part physical, where the gathering and compositional strategies employed in my own scenographic processes during the creation of the event partly materialized as a

mode of audience engagement within the experience of the event. The audience as flâneur merges with the scenography; they are reflective and contemplative – imaginatively composing and inscribing with the scenographic material.

Conceptualizing audience experience of scenography through landscape seeks to take account of an embodied process of incorporation. A scenographic landscape is a manifold experience of cognitive, corporeal, material and spatial agents that materializes through an active doing of the scenographic world. This doing takes place in a localized 'field of action' (Bell 1999: 66), narrowing the environmental frame to focus on the audience's ability to move physically through and within the performance space. A field of action contains scenographic objects, sound and light materials which invite bodily motility. Bodily action can bring about an imaginative arousal and intelligent perception which can further entwine the participant with the scenographic world.

Physical (sensory) and imaginative (cognitive) engagement can allow for a commingling between participant and scenography. This process can be seen as a 'morphing' of scenographic reception, action and creation, '*where you are the paint and the canvas'*. The individual shapes the scenography with others in a collective and emergent doing. The experience of these actions reinforces the notion that 'there is no division between inner and outer world – respectively of mind and matter, meaning and substance […] through living in it, the landscape becomes part of us, just as we are part of it' (Ingold 2000: 191). Through the audience body engaged in a process of doing, a scenographic landscape emerges – the audience body and scenography are mutually emergent.

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[i] See Aronson (1981) and Schechner (1994) for an outline of environmental performance and architecture.

[ii] For a discursive unpacking of the gendered flâneur and the city, see Wolff (1994), Wilson (1992) and Kuppers (1999).