



**narrating  
 poeticising  
 orientating  
 imagining**

*narrating  
 poeticising  
 orientating  
 imagining*

TOUR  
 ROUTE

**imaging  
 following  
 manoeuvring  
 remembering**

*imaging  
 following  
 manoeuvring  
 remembering*

## TOWARD DEPARTURES

manoeuvring

Welcome, driver. This project, *A TRACKING VEHICLE*, is now ready and awaiting departure. The project inquires into the design of art in public space. It is concerned with an artistry of design practice and with the design of a network of art; with the tramways of Melbourne and with concepts and experiences of public space.

*manoeuvring*

The project *makes tracks*. It is a project that is in itself comprised of a networked collection of text, image and sound *tracks*. It is a project which makes moves of departure from enclosing modes of thought and action toward a non-essentialist mode of thought and action sustained by a regenerative poetic momentum. *A TRACKING VEHICLE* attempts to open up a renewed repertoire of movements for the *conductor* of the project, whilst evoking reverberative memories and resonant imaginings for those who might encounter it.

Like any new beginning, the project “contains” what Martin Heidegger has described as “the undisclosed abundance of the unfamiliar and extraordinary, which means that it also contains strife with the familiar and ordinary.”<sup>1</sup> In order to facilitate new departures for art and design practice, the project mobilises a dialogue between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the ordinary and the extraordinary. Specifically, this is a dialogue between the tramways of Melbourne and reflections upon art and design practices in public space. But such a dialogue soon drifts to also be one that echoes between specification and general abstraction; between a focus on the experientially particular and ‘real’, and the conceptually vague and imaginary. The project gathers a curvilinear momentum from this dialogical turn, openly extending outward in movements that re-turn upon themselves to mobilise an undisclosed abundance of departures.

The project proposes an allegorical approach toward the design of art in public space that is concerned with modulations of movement and the connected-ness of a network of relations between art and urban structures. The net effect of *A TRACKING VEHICLE* is the intertwining of the *dialogical momentum of its tracking*, the way it moves back and forth, and the *network of tracks* that mobilise its approach.

**TOWARD PRACTICES OF DESIGNING ART IN PUBLIC SPACE**

In the context of contemporary Australian multicultural society, the ways in which individuals identify themselves within collective social groupings and as a 'public' is radically changing. Prior to the industrial revolution the horizons of a public culture were largely grounded by the geographic space it inhabited, with autonomous works of art located in public space generally claiming to reflect the values and beliefs which united people together as a collective social group. As manifestations of the dominant historical and social values, traditional public artworks implicitly expressed the culture's dominant relationship to a sense of time and space - toward a sense of the past, present and future; and toward senses of space in relation to the personal realm of the body and mind and the social realm of the city and cultural forms.

In an era of mass media and telecommunications, people no longer have to share the same geographic space to communicate. The 20th century has brought about a proliferation of alternative communication spaces which challenge the role of the physical city in providing a primary platform for accessible collective social exchange. Mechanical information technologies (print press, film), electronic information technologies (television, radio, telephone and the internet), and privatised configurations of urban spaces (shopping complexes and private housing estates) have all introduced ways in which social exchange is mediated under constraints greater than those experienced in the public spaces of the pre-20th century city streets. Under the prevailing motivations of privatisation and competition, urban culture is being challenged to find ways to nurture the qualities which make collective social presence actually worthwhile, or be witness to the gloomy prospects of an expansion of inequitable differences in social life between those privileged with the right to privacy and those deprived of it.

narrating

## TOWARD RENEWED WAYS OF MAKING ART PUBLIC

*narrating*

One response to this condition in advanced industrialised countries of the West is to look toward art and design practices to enhance the experience of public space and propose ways of making some sense of our shared social existence through developing work which may bring about appropriate shared meanings and understandings. At a simplistic level, this type of response has produced artworks facilitated by regional and national government programs which can be criticised for amounting to little more than contributing to a program of aesthetic beautification of the public spaces determined by existent power relations, with little actual impact upon stimulating the re-creation and expanded understanding of our contemporary social relations and their context. At a more ambitiously critical level, we might look to art and design practices to play a role in facilitating the development of shared values and understanding of the collective spaces of habitation available to us, by prompting both impassioned questioning and deliberation upon existing processes of change which effect the social collective, and the remembrance of a re-invented past in the imaginative possibilities of the present.

Meanwhile a public art industry is burgeoning as governments attempt to reconcile the relation between global cultural economy and the particularities of local existence. Melbourne's City Council has joined a trend to economically unite the development of public art with capital works, seeking to construct an image of Melbourne as "a city for the arts" with "a commitment to public art" endorsed by the policy to allocate one percent of the City's capital works budget "to the inclusion of art in major projects, or to the commissioning and acquisition of artworks for designated redevelopment areas"<sup>2</sup>. The call upon artwork to occupy 'designated' public spaces of the city as part of urban redevelopment programs prompts the need to challenge the conservatism underpinning this tendency to conceive of artworks as simply an aesthetic panacea to rectify the unsightliness of urban social ills. As Rosalyn Deutsche has argued<sup>3</sup>, urban development is 'uneven' in its effects, for whilst we may focus on streetscape beautification, increasing tourism, and a new increased density of inner city apartment-style living, such development risks neglecting its responsibility to address what its potential displaces:

affordable housing and services, established living practices of inner urban working-class and migrant cultures, and the richness of existing everyday practices, patterns of movement and exchange. Rather than affirm the discreet objectification of artwork for the convenience of *designating* it for a public space due for development or for the purposes of economic, bureaucratic and audience efficiency, we might for a moment move differently toward re-thinking and re-enacting the possibilities for encountering art within the social and political urban arena.

Four broadly conceivable issues of public relevance stand out in shaping the context that might inform contemporary art in public space, issues which are integrally interdependent but which we might provisionally articulate as issues of ecological, cultural, social and technological character. The threat, or regional actuality, of ecological crisis is paramount amongst these issues, daunting in its scale and complexity yet unavoidably demanding of efforts to improve sustainable living practices.

Secondly is the concern over the loss of historical memory and knowledge of the cultural systems from which 20th century reality has emerged - and which we are propelled to forget as we become increasingly saturated in the seemingly endless barrage of images and commodities of our own consumption. In Australia this issue is double-edged, for it is both the issue of the indigenous people's of Australia suffering loss of historical memories and knowledges at the expense of colonisation, and of all contemporary Australians exposed to the feared or actual threat of their localised memories and knowledges being lost amongst the flows of global information pouring from centres of media production elsewhere.

Thirdly, yet perhaps most importantly, is the necessity of fostering the social imagination to enrich our resources to redress the ever-changing situations faced ahead. If social groupings are to be empowered to form visions in order to conceive and agree upon collective approaches to address concerns in which we are all implicated, we must nurture the capacity to share our images of possibilities. In order to form images and concepts of alternative possibilities we are reminded of the imagination's inter-dependence with an 'undying' memory.<sup>4</sup>

Lastly, and perhaps most prominently for those of us who could be considered in the social

category of the 'information rich', is the issue of how new technological forms are impacting upon our social relationships, our practices of work and leisure, and our relationship to the geographic places of our residence. These four sets of issues underlying our contemporary conditions urge us to consider how collective life might be re-invented and re-understood or risk being further eroded into dysfunctional divisions.

Yet to call upon art in public space to produce a critical effect in relation to these issues that are by no means exclusive to Melbourne or Australia, is a tall order. It is problematic to claim to justify the effectiveness of the work of art in terms of such overwhelming large scale and complexity. The value of 'public' art can only at best hope to be measured in terms particular to specific practical situations. Art in public space might be developed to explore this tension between, on the one hand, reaching out toward global issues and the implications associated with such an all-inclusive concept as 'public', and on the other hand, negotiating specific localised issues and taking actions which contribute to the actual formation of social groupings in particular relationships and situations. The way in which social groupings are *brought into being* by art, the way in which a social actor is brought into the network of social relations through encountering art, can be considered, in a pluralistic society, to be a primary concern of art in public space. Just how art in public space may operate to engage, encounter or exclude particular public constituencies becomes a focus of the work to be done.

#### **TOWARD ART ENCOUNTERS WITH THE COLLECTIVE**

Whilst people in contemporary society may not have to meet in geographic space to communicate and form a social group, they may choose to do so in order to experience the inimitably full presence of bodily social contact. As urban experience becomes increasingly characterised by fragmented sensations mediated via different communications technologies, art in public space might consider its contribution toward facilitating the development of ways to understand where we 'live', where we co-habitat with a sense of nearness, where we communicate and attribute value in our urban experience.

**manoeuvring**

*manoeuvring*

Increasing cultural plurality and technological mediation of urban life have made contemporary social organisation increasingly complex, preventing the spaces of our habitation from being adequately represented and understood by traditional mechanisms. Previously the formal city of the Western world dominated understandings of our space of inhabitation and was given an imagable form by the cartographic master plan or the Cartesian perspectival view, whilst the totalising narratives of modernism and imperialism provided dominant explanatory rationales. The increased complexity of multi-cultural societies with communicative powers which transcend geographic boundaries makes the concept of a public realm or public space ever more complex, abstracted and removed from any singularly unified conception that traditional left-wing oriented politics interested in social collectivity might wish to pursue. Given the contemporary lack of legitimacy credited to totalising forms of representation as we reflect upon their previously unseen imperialist implications, the question arises as to how collective culture might alternately be understood in order to come to terms with and shape the character, quality and direction of life which it offers. Is the idea of conceptualising collective habitation still viable, or even desirable, or is it too problematically underpinned by an imperialist frame of mind? This tension between inclusivity and exclusivity, unity and difference, has long been, as Hannah Arendt has described, characteristic of the contradictory nature of the public realm. For the public realm is what simultaneously unites us in common whilst maintaining us apart, enabling commonality to be seen in diversity, and difference to be established in context. “The end of the common world has come when it is seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective.”<sup>5</sup>

## DERAILMENT

### 1

*A tracking vehicle departs from the tramways of Melbourne as we know them, renewing possibilities for the design of art in public space. This is not a vehicle of discreet objects of art. **A tracking vehicle resonates amongst minds and streets of Melbourne, manifesting itself in a diverse range of temporary forms and ephemeral effects.** Let us entertain the possibility of such a vehicle tracing the tracks of Melbourne, re-iterating local memory through the re-inventions of local imagination.*

*A tracking vehicle does not set out upon a relentless pursuit of new horizons, new territories, new markets for design or new audiences for art but seeks means to make renewable moves. A tracking vehicle articulates movements toward a dynamic network of ways of moving and being moved.*

*A tracking vehicle draws out the renewed, making new from the old, drawing out the unfamiliar from the familiar in ways which challenge and play with the valuing and re-valuing of historical images and narratives. The vehicle moves in the context of existing tracks with an aspiration to traverse them anew: to make new tracks from those which exist, are known, and are yet to be realised. A tracking vehicle mobilises reiterations of what we might actually know of the unknown but cannot tell; it mobilises the uncanny and unknown from within what we thought we knew. It proposes to open up new stories and old stories, making taller stories from worn stories, articulating the unhomely found within the privacy of home and the homely from within the collectivity of public space. The diverse images and narratives of a tracking vehicle are traced by imagination and memory as we traverse derailments of its potential travel. Tracks reiterate memories reiterate tracks.*



### A SPECULATIVE INQUIRY

A *TRACKING VEHICLE* is a speculative design project which proceeds through proposing questions and reaching out toward possibilities, aiming to facilitate departures toward the beginnings of a renewed design approach toward generating art forms and effects, and toward regenerative opportunities for different modes of thought and action. This work pursues an inquiry into the practice of designing art in public space by proceeding via an encircling momentum between articulating provisional propositions of knowledge and speculating imaginable possibilities; alternating between making an image or narrative of propositional understanding and departing from these propositions to speculate upon and *affect* the possible effects which may follow, exploring the open-endedness of the question “*what if?*” rather than attempting to provide fixed answers. A speculative form of inquiry pursues new knowledge through making possibilities perceptible that otherwise remain unknown - for it is through imagining possibilities that we can gain a sense of how we might wish to negotiate changing the actuality of experience. Speculative inquiry opens up possibilities for consideration rather than closing down the range of conceivable options: it prompts departures toward further speculation and elaboration of ideas rather than specifying certainties. Rather than being based upon an endeavor that might seek seemingly definitive propositions in the form of a claimed objective scientific knowledge, this project's speculative inquiry resists attempting to circumscribe fixed notions of public space, design practice or works of art in favor of mobilising the imagination and memory to grasp multiple provisional senses of what they *might be*.

following

*following*

imagining

### A *TRACKING VEHICLE*

This project forms a sense of coherence, not through enclosing terrain within limits to claim it as a whole, but through its parts generating a momentum that propels us outward and evokes more than the sum of its parts. Through engaging in a dialogue with the tramways of Melbourne the project attempts to generate an approach toward the design of art in public space which bears physical, cultural and

*imagining*

technological relevance to Melbournian urban experience whilst simultaneously negotiating with the contemporary reality of social experience which has us encountering multiple experiences of space and senses of time, and multiple ways of gathering ourselves together as a social collective.

This project does not offer the visual representations of designs for artworks in public space that we might be accustomed to. The project is less concerned with the actual *appearance* of art - or the actual appearance of means of designing or of the actual appearance of Melbourne - than it is conceptually concerned with the ways artwork, design practices and Melbourne are known and imagined to *move* and might be enabled to *move*. The current Victorian government's motif that claims Victoria is "*On The Move*" may well raise the profile of a notion of movement in Melbourne's contemporary public consciousness, but exactly how movements might be made and in which directions they might move should remain open for debate and change: open to the variations of movement itself.

Are there ways of moving and being moved that hold some resonance with this contemporary moment in Melbournian experience, ways which reverberate with physical, emotional and conceptual depth? To imagine an approach toward designing art in public space this project mobilises images of movement which might best, by their nature, provoke us to move and be moved, to enable us to sustain the capacity to form images not of reality but of what is simultaneously not *there* and yet also enriches us in being *here*: sharing identifications with Melbourne. Rather than seeking to claim or construct a single, essential identity or authenticity for Melbourne, for artworks or for a mode of design practice, we might traverse across provisional positionings between here and there to mobilise a more fluid and enabling sense of 'home'. We might gather a momentum for the work of art and design practice that feels 'at home' in Melbourne not because it is exclusive to Melbourne but because it *departs from* Melbourne: it is traced via Melbourne, inscribing Melbourne into its very making and reiterating something of "Melbourne".

## THE PROJECT'S ALLEGORICAL STRUCTURE OF MOVEMENT

imaging

A *TRACKING VEHICLE* departs from the tramways of Melbourne as we know them by reiterating the structure and movement of the tramways. The organisational structure of the project is integral in affirming the reflective method via which movement through the project has been enabled in its formation and may now be experienced - or better, *conducted* - by others who encounter it. The project constructs and ceremonialises itself in the form of *Tracks, Routes, Design Tickets and Derailments*. The motivating momentum for the work's organisational structure has emerged through its dialogue with the tramways of Melbourne, a dialogue which has gathered momentum as it has traced an approach toward art and public space in relation to experiences of living in Melbourne.

*imaging*

The tramways have enabled the construction of an appropriate thematic tool of inquiry, a tool that moves between, on the one hand, a material source of rhetorical *figures* through which to extend possible understandings of the work of design and art and experiences of public spaces; and on the other hand, a sensible domain of experience through which to examine and speculate upon possibilities for design and art practices in public space. This work affirms the tramways of Melbourne: reiterating the images it evokes and the language we know of to refer to it by; reiterating its structure and momentum as a network of relationships and forces that are themselves constitutive of a reiterative economy. Such a rhetorical manner of working dissolves the convenient oppositions of the sensible to the intelligible, form to content, medium to message, subject to object, or practice to theory, by creating an echoic depth between these terms and concepts through which we are able to move.

As we might expect of a work of design, this project communicates through the actions that have made it, as much as through the text, images and sounds that present themselves here as the product of this work. As a work of design, this project speaks through the relations of inter-dependent movement between its structural form and its content, between what is demonstrated and what is described. Yet the manner in which this design project leaves traces of its process, the manner in which the project reiterates its tracks, involves some trickery with the interpretative possibilities of tracks. Through its rhetorical methodology the project elliptically weaves its way forward, building

something of an allegorical presentation that blurs distinction between what is real and what is imaginary.

Remember: this is a work which turns in and out of itself, a work of design exploring an art of design. To be more precise: *A TRACKING VEHICLE* is a 'net-work'. It is a work of many directions of travel with many lines of connection. In a sense the public space of Melbourne is so simply captured by this image, by the networked lines of tram-track scribed into Melbourne's streets and the networked lines of overhead electrical cabling suspended in mid-street air. The space in which we may freely encounter each other, the space of the Melbournian street, is at its most memorable strewn with these seemingly unending lines that are so pervasive that our familiarity with them has us temporarily forget them, erasing them from the attention of our minds until once again the eminence of their presence strikes us anew.

This is the effect of a *net* of work. Rather than form a totalising image or a teleological narrative to draw an understanding of a coherent whole, the *net-effect* has us occupy a shifting movement that plays upon the interdependence between presence and absence. The image of a 'net' has our attention flicker with inversions of presence and absence: we undergo ceaseless movement back and forth between the presence of matrix-like lines of connection and the accumulative absences of a collection of holes. This project argues for an approach toward the design of art in public space that does not produce the autonomous objects of presence characteristic of logocentric intentions, but one which weaves itself into the urban fabric of public space, shot through with connections that resist being conveniently reduced to artifacts, forever tracking tricks between presence and absence.

orientating

#### TOWARD A NETWORK OF TRACKS

The manner in which the project mimes the tramways has one who encounters *A TRACKING VEHICLE* traverse tracks as the driver of a most imaginary tram might, as though one's focus follows the momentum of a tram's passage as we make tracks through the mind and across the bodily senses.

**orientating** We move from a focus upon the presence of form to *movements that perform*. The project always provides one marked line of track ahead to be readily followed from amongst all the tracks in the network, yet drivers might invariably find themselves drifting toward other tracks, remembering tracks previously articulated and imagining tracks of undisclosed possibilities. The project situates drivers within a context to perform *A TRACKING VEHICLE*, moving up and back, back and forth, from the here and now to the out there, then and somewhere else. As we traverse the project's Routes we may well keep our minds and sights on the track ahead as it is most evidently presents itself. But keep aware of the signs that rolls past at the sides of the track and the signals that mark each section of track *en track*.

The momentum of *A TRACKING VEHICLE* unfolds through *tracking a network of tracks*: through traversing a dialogical relation between, on the one hand, the articulation and demonstration of *tracking*, and on the other hand, the articulation and reiteration of *a network of tracks*. This is a movement back and forth between, on the one track, an art of undertaking an approach toward design practice in public space, and on the other track, designing renewed art forms and effects *of public space in public space*.

The method of this project, the *net-effect* of its dialogical movement back and forth, is in large part the object of the project's focus. Remember at the outset, this project undertakes a dialogue with the tramways of Melbourne in order to generate an approach toward the design of art in public space. Through tracking the unceasing inversions of creating design operations and interpreting design effects the user of this network is subject to the reiterative construction process of a 'net-work' and not simply subject to an autonomous 'work' as a static product. A network unfolds dynamic transpositions of subject and object, reverberating inside-out and outside-in again, actively demanding the attention of its user to engage: to actively re-construct the network through acts of negotiation. The project makes a demand upon its users to traverse its tracks and reiterate *tracking*, not to take its users for a ride at their expense, but in order to argue for a designerly way of knowing through demonstrative means.

Such moving back and forth is part of the everyday practice of the drivers and conductors of

Melbourne's tramways who become accustomed to provisionally locating themselves always somewhere in-between. Conductors will tell you that after a while you find your feet on a moving tram: you work out ways to balance the placement and displacement of your weight, poising yourself in flexible, negotiable ways. The trick is to follow the movement of the present moment, ensuring that you remain agile enough to re-orientate and manoeuvre in relation to an immanent counter-movement, riding the rhythm of ebb and flow across tracks, climbing and curving, coasting and shunting throughout the network.

## DERAILMENT

### 2

*A tracking vehicle departs from the tramways of Melbourne as we know them, renewing possibilities for the design of art in public space. This is not a vehicle of fixed purposes, presences or certainties. **A tracking vehicle has no purpose other than to track and to mobilise tracking.** A tracking vehicle is without presence in itself, but is apprehensible through the traces of its tracking, renewing possibilities from existent opportunities.*

*A tracking vehicle reiterates its travel within the network of its construction, traversing tracks back and forth, up and back. An encounter with a tracking vehicle is an unpredictable moment, never grasped in totality, only remembered in its absence. A tracking vehicle articulates an architecture of memory and imagination: not an architecture of fixed spatial territories but an architecture of ephemeral moments. A tracking vehicle choreographs a changing collection of moments: erased moments from repressed memories; impossible moments from the deepest edges of imagination; dark moments from fearful nights; moments of lightness from the clarity of the days promise; moments which surprise and change us with the unpredictability of Melbourne's seasons compressed within the oscillations of day and night. Tracks are remembered in their absence. Ephemeral.*

In an attempt to articulate a renewed design knowledge, this project asks: how might we apprehend and convey something of design practice which is best understood through its performance? In order to generate and communicate useful design knowledge we might think of and act out a practice of design which produces work that is self-evidently a demonstrative embodiment of the design knowledge which has produced it, enabling others to access that knowledge through the design work itself. Constructing design work which is constitutive of the design know-how which it seeks to articulate to others demands that the work be reflexive. If design knowledge is to be of practical use to others, it might best be presented in a manner which enables it to experientially learnt, through situating one who encounters a body of design knowledge in a context of *performing* the ways that it is known.

The question here has an evasive circularity: what might be a means of articulating knowledge of design which remains true to the very integrity of design as it is empirically encountered and understood by designers and users of design? How might understanding of design knowledge be communicated, harnessing the very dynamism from which design activity derives its greatest potential to change, create and be re-created? How might design knowledge be applied toward mobilising designerly ways of knowing?

Tracking the tracks of this network is proposed as an allegorical way of both articulating and knowing design practice, and a way of *articulating* and *knowing* possibilities for the design of art forms and effects in public space. This proposal is to be encountered between the intelligible and sensible experience of the work: it is both explicitly described in some of the text tracks of the network and implicitly affirmed through the allegorical structure of the work's presentation. The Tracks, Routes, Design Tickets, Points of Departure, Zones of Travel and Derailments which modulate the network reiterate the way of knowing which this project proposes. The *net effect* of the project is a non-essentialist way of knowing. Users of the network are situated to negotiate a sense of *A TRACKING VEHICLE'S* movement through the figures it employs and the allegorical structure it deploys, demanding

that its effects be apprehended by mind and body: to be thought and felt. Through what it demonstrates and describes *A TRACKING VEHICLE* makes a network of poetic tracks toward articulating a designerly way of knowing.

### **EN TRACKS: THE NET-WORK OF AN ART AND DESIGN PRACTICE**

*A TRACKING VEHICLE* is characterised by the tracks it makes: the project is a network of tracks in text, image and sound. Akin to footprints in the sand, tracks are the most fundamental type of sign that C.S. Peirce called an *index*, a type of sign which points elsewhere. The interpretation of tracks is entirely provisional and dependant upon the moment of their encounter, for tracks are “doubly marked: by the definiteness of physical contact and by the uncertainty of interpretation”<sup>6</sup>. Tracks are brought to bear relevance through acts of interpretation, operation and performance. Tracks are presented for *tracking*, for traversing to remake and renew tracks.

Each track of text is marked by two signs. Hanging above each track, overhead as it were, is a signal that offers a indication of what to expect en the track ahead as a provisional object of interest, just as the signal “*en tracks: a net-work of art and design*” is evidently hanging above this track indicating what we might keep an eye out for. Flashing past the eye’s view to the left or right of the track as we travel are signs indicating the *operative vector* of design agency being performed en track. You might have just noticed “*maneuvering*” pass us by on the right. Rather than designating proper places, suburbs or streets through which we might travel, these signs display a single verb via which we may gather a sense of our on-going movement en track. These signs signal a motivation, a moment of design agency which affects the movement of our approach.

The collection of tracks encountered, including this passage of text being read, form a network of relations that converge and diverge in a play of combinatory potential. The act of reading and interpreting is a re-traversing of these tracks, a re-performing and re-iteration of the structural movement that lends this work the criss-crossed coherence of a net. Tracks present themselves in the

**manoeuvring**

*manoeuvring*



sequential arrangement of Routes. Tracks may be read in line with the direction of travel en Route or alternately tracks from different Routes may be traversed in accordance with a personally preferred line of travel.

Through its net-working of tracks, *A TRACKING VEHICLE* articulates and demonstrates ideas toward designing art in public space. Text, sound and image tracks interconnect across diverse lines, prompting a degree of free-play that enables further ideas to be mobilised, evoking new tracks which are yet to present themselves. The different tracks of the project do not enclose a unified and ordered whole but rather lay side by side in their diversity, forming a montage of imagery and narratives which unite as a heterogeneous network. As Michel de Certeau has described, free-play within a discourse (read: network) enables people to inhabit and deem that discourse (network) useful and credible precisely because the free-play “takes away what it urges them to believe in”, enabling “ways of going out and coming back in”, constructing a form of order that is “everywhere punched and torn by ellipses, drifts and leaks of meaning: it is a sieve-order”<sup>7</sup>.

In reiteration of Wittgenstein’s proposition that *meaning is use*<sup>8</sup>, Routes of travel have been designated Design Tickets. These tickets provisionally validate the use of a way of maneuvering across tracks, with the appropriate Ticket for each Route indicated at its Point Of Departure. Each Route traverses a different Zone of Travel relative to an open-ended rhetorical question that simultaneously asks and proposes: *what if ... ?* The Route has us shunt back and forth around its questioned Zone of Travel, speculatively exploring how the design of artwork in public space might: (1) *mobilise different ways of experiencing and understanding urban life;* (2) *mobilise those who encounter it to renew the art of their own life;* (3) *mobilise poetic ways of making sense of contemporary experiences of space-time;* and (4) *mobilise a network of different trajectories in the urban imagination.*

Travelling en Route has us constantly negotiate the momentum of converging and diverging, folding back and forth as we converge focus upon the track or diverge attention off track. Track travel has one reiterate and renew tracks, contributing toward the reiterative inscription of a network of tracks.

Through what it demonstrates and reiterates, *A TRACKING VEHICLE* seeks to mobilise those who encounter it. But in order to traverse the tracks of the network, one must first make the move to depart.

### TRACKING: A FIGURE OF INTER-WOVEN DESIGN VECTORS

Remember: each track is constituted by operative movements. The most prominent movement is indicated *en text tracks* by the signs at either side of the track bearing reference to a single verb that describes that formative and per-formative movement of human agency. A momentum of latitudinal and longitudinal axes is gathered on each Route by the collection of these movements en track: this is the momentum of *tracking*.

These operative movements echo across the line of the Route's track from one side to the other, providing a dialogical sensation of curving and rolling, a little to the left and then the right, the attention of our eyes and the balance of our senses reverberating from one side and the other. Along the length of the Route these operative movements conjoin to form an amplitude of variations: resonating with the rising and falling of contours in the tracks. Those verbs sign-posted on either side of the track bunch together as waves of movement, those on the left and those on the right each forming a respective vector of design momentum that entwine to articulate the rhetorical figure of tracking.

Rather than depart from the corner of Swanston and Bourke streets, the Routes of *A TRACKING VEHICLE* depart from points of convergent intersection between the design vectors of tracking, from such non-places as: (1) *narrating and imaging*; (2) *poeticising and following*; (3) *orientating and manoeuvring*; or (4) *imagining and remembering*. As we traverse each route we return to the vectors of tracking to reiterate, qualify and extend them as they stitch through the fabric of each track.

The figurative concept and practice of *tracking* is presented via this collection of eight design vectors: they are the eight wheels of motion which mobilise *A TRACKING VEHICLE* - eight vectors that are not mutually exclusive of each other but weave together to mobilise the motion of tracking. The

remembering

*remembering*

momentum of tracking is to be understood intelligibly through the memorable means of figurative elocution and understood sensibly through the manner in which it mobilises the means for us to feel the modulations of movement as we traverse en track, enabling us to follow, to perform, and to *track*.

The net-work of *A Tracking Vehicle* is formed and performed by these design vectors of tracking. The collected vectors of tracking orchestrate our ability to reiterate the departures of a tracking approach toward the design of art in public space. We never fully depart from these vectors of movement, for this speculative inquiry never enables us to arrive at a stationary point, but rather enables us to remain ever expectant of immanent movement whilst provisionally *narrating, imaging, poeticising, following, orientating, manoeuvring, imagining* and *remembering*. The practice of tracking *hovers*, undergoing ceaseless reverberations and resonant movements between mind and body.

poeticising

#### THE EXEMPLARY DEPARTURE OF DERAILMENTS

*poeticising*

The defining character of a reiterative economy is the manner in which re-iterations vary in quality of sameness and difference as they layer one upon another. On each Route a most marked variation is announced by a Derailment: a passage of writing which significantly departs from the customary momentum of the Routes, venturing 'off the track', propelled by the momentum generated by the travel en Route. A derailment implies that a force of energy acquires a dangerous lack of control whilst departing from its precedents, yet it is always understood in relation to the track, to the paths of travel and understanding which have come before it. Unlike the derailed tram or train whose movement off track is always short-lived because of its weighing heavily into the earth, the Derailments in this network defy the certainties of gravity to speculatively articulate the trajectory of movements which depart with the lightness of a fiction toward an imaginary *TRACKING VEHICLE*.

*A TRACKING VEHICLE* is characterised by the danger and uncertainty of a derailment, but the risk of this speculation is only that it is unable to prove its effectiveness in any terms of actuality. Through initiating flightful departure from the path of the certain and the readily conceivable, the Derailments seek to hover at the limits of the possible and tangible. Such speculation invites the imagination and

memory of others to render its images conceivable, believable and for some, perhaps even desirable. By manifesting the previously intangible in an imaginable form, the speculative proposition expands the breadth of known possibilities and conceivable choices for the ways we approach the design of art in public space.

### A PROPOSITION FOR AN ART OF MELBOURNE TRACKS

So what if a dialogue with the tramways of Melbourne were to mobilise an approach toward the design of art in public space? Why mobilise an approach toward design or toward the production of art in proximity to the tracks of Melbourne? If we asked this question of a Melbourne tram conductor as though inquiring into our tram's dual direction of travel, we might hear of the unparalleled opportunities that tramways provide to mobilise a fluid artistry of everyday trackery and trickery, of maintaining regenerative movements and a network of connections.

If we were to back-track and recollect what this approach toward the design of art in public space might be, we could, to begin again, draw attention to a theory of signs that categorises the word/image "track" as a trace; as an *index*, the fundamental type of sign which points back toward a moment of physical imprint, yet yield no definitive interpretation. We might acknowledge that a cultural and institutional desire in Australia to affirm to ourselves and to others *who* and *where* we are has popularly motivated a longing for metaphysical depth, for authenticity, history, identity and belonging - all that a young colonised fringe culture is understood to lack if we look back at ourselves from the imperial headquarters. By association with this interpretation of "tracks" as traces that provide clues to an unknown and lost absence, an art of tracking accepts and implicitly undertakes to negotiate with this characteristic longing of our culture, yet only to reveal that such aspirations are illusory, just as the tram tracks per se will not tell of the greater cultural life that has transpired across them but will contain it within themselves "like the lines of a hand ... every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls."<sup>9</sup>

remembering

*remembering*

Tram tracks affirm that we travel upon an artificial, constructed line of ground; that the quest to claim an authentic ground, an origin, a place, an identity or event of significance is always a socially constructed projection that might best be considered in a contested context with counter claims and with different vectors of interpretation.

The tram tracks of Melbourne by definition mobilise Melbournians, they are carriers and fundamental signs of movement. The capacity *to move* is a fundamental democratic function of public space that artwork committed to democratic principles should best foster. But the potential transportation of tram tracks is many-fold, for they also mobilise associations with other tracks and with tricks of tracks. From the sphere of reference to other sequentially structured forms, the technologically sequenced formats of visual and audio recording and transmitting devices, to the figurative tracks of popular language that have us structuring our ways of thinking, describing, acting and knowing, tracks allude to physical, psychological and technological dimensions of our experience. The ground upon which we re-construct ourselves is marked with tracks.

It is the multiple dimensions of an art of tracking that has it mobilise potential use in negotiating issues of sameness and difference, unity and diversity, history and future. The distinctive difference which a track can mark makes tracks a marker of difference. Art and design practices which negotiate with public space are needed to make differences that matter, differences that mobilise what Iris Marion Young calls an “openness to unassimilated difference”<sup>10</sup>, differences that *(1) mobilise different ways of experiencing and understanding urban life; that (2) mobilise those who encounter them to renew the art of their own life; that (3) mobilise poetic ways of making sense of contemporary experiences of space-time; and (4) mobilise a network of different trajectories in the urban imagination.*

**THE REMEMBRANCE OF A TRACKING VEHICLE**

A *TRACKING VEHICLE* is a fictional design: it is a figure which alludes to more than it could ever be itself, calling upon our fancy and fortitude to invest in bringing the potential of its net-effects toward a relation with our lives. In *A Lover's Discourse*, Roland Barthes describes how:

“figures take shape insofar as we can recognise, in passing discourse, something that has been read, heard, felt. The figure is outlined (like a sign) and memorable (like an image or a tale). A figure is established if at least someone can say: “that’s so true! I recognise that scene of language”<sup>11</sup>

The usefulness of A *TRACKING VEHICLE* will be known if we identify with its figures and experience the momentum they mobilise.

When our passage traversing the tracks of this network draw to a provisional rest, we might find Design Tickets re-emerging from between the folded papers of this project or at the side of the video and television, from the pockets of last season’s coat or collecting dust on a shelf or amongst notes on the drawing board. The tickets provisionally declared our entitlements, conveying something of what we were to expect and where we might have even traveled to. After the journey has begun and we follow the beginnings of an approach to the design of art in public space, the Design Tickets memorialise our travel in an ephemeral form which we might inadvertently carry with us for some time. If the experience is moving enough, we might bring them ‘home’ to keep in some scrap book or a drawer of memorabilia and souvenirs. We might show the tickets to others, validate the journey or even find oneself shunting toward what they might licence. But what might a *Design Ticket* license?

It would be a conceit to suggest that a Design Ticket be valid outside the dialogical setting from which it emerged. They are not proposed to authorise design practices or the generation and production of art in public space, nor are they to be zealously considered to be anything other than a displacement of the object of design discourse that has previously been known as ‘*the design process*’. A *TRACKING VEHICLE* is entirely contingent upon the moments which it connects together through the net of its work to produce a personal practical knowledge for its conductor. The design inquiry that the

Design Tickets signal remains speculatively open and without known destination.

As a collection, the Design Tickets help us keep a track of our potential approach. They provide a pocket-size means for memorialising points from which we might depart; the design vectors that modulate the amplitude of our tracking; the Zone's of Travel whose Route we might continue to question as we set about undertaking further departures. With Design Tickets in hand and mind, our practices of tracking might mobilise a network of tracks toward an art in public space.

#### THE CONDUCT OF A TRACKING VEHICLE

Once we have traversed the tracks of *A TRACKING VEHICLE* we might find ourselves reiterating and extending them, finding that in their repetition and variable modification we travel toward new derailments and departures, renewing the tracks of our former passages. We might ponder whether we have been *driving* at all. Herein lies an approach toward the design of artwork in public space that is not a matter of being in the seat of dominant power and control but of being poised with an ever extending repertoire of movements that open and extend powerful connections between the physical, emotional and conceptual dimensions of peoples lives and the life of public spaces. *A TRACKING VEHICLE* conducts itself in dialogue with *others*.

With the planned introduction of automated ticketing machines into the tramways system of Melbourne, local conductors have been encouraged to depart from their artistry of their craft and learn the skills and knowledge of driving. This project returns to the line of the track to reiterate another variation to its network and propose: Drivers! Consider yourselves conductors of *A TRACKING VEHICLE*. Imagine yourselves *A TRACKING VEHICLE*.

imagining

*imagining*

## DERAILMENT

### 3

*A tracking vehicle departs from the tramways of Melbourne as we know them, renewing possibilities for the design of art in public space. This is not a vehicle of rationalist teleological intent. **A tracking vehicle moves dialogically back and forth between the actual and the imaginary.***

*An index of a tracking vehicle might become evident at a siding of Melbourne's tramways network, where trams may temporarily rest from their inter-dependant movement on the main tracks of the system. Where this section of side-track is normally understood to cease, the two steel rails of track might defy their usual line of horizontality to curl upward until vertically projecting themselves the length of a tram or so up into the Melbourne air. A rectangular, light-emitting screen might be connected to these tracks at both ends of its slim box-like shape, presenting itself as an electronic-type sign with single words: something akin to an oversized version of the destination sign that we would expect to view affront of a tram.*

*But this index of a tracking vehicle does not name the destinations you might expect to travel toward. The rectangular screen rhythmically rises and falls along the vertical track, a physical corollary to those virtual black boxes that appear on our personal computer screens in corresponding movement to the mouse, focussing upon one word at a time from a pull-down menu that is only made visible through the inverted illumination that the movement of the black box avails. The words which repeatedly appear, as if suspended mid-air between the tracks until the screen box rises and falls into vertical alignment, are not the names of proper places or fixed locations. These words are verbs signaling vectors of human agency, they signal names for a collection of axes that might characterise a way of operating, a way of renewing possibilities for the design of art in public space. This interconnected collection of verbs articulate renewable amplitudes of movements, they are the eight imaginary wheels of motion mobilising a tracking vehicle.*



orientating

maneuvering

imaging

narrating

imagining

remembering

**poeticising**

following

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- <sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row, New York 197, p.76.
- <sup>2</sup> City of Melbourne, *Melbourne: A City for the Arts*, (supplement to Art and Australia, Art AsiaPacific and World Art Quarterly journals), Fine Arts Press, North Ryde 1997.
- <sup>3</sup> Rosalyn Deutsche, "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City", *October*, no 47 Winter 1988, p.3-52.
- <sup>4</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter*, Pegasus Foundation, Dallas 1983 (originally published 1942), p.45.
- <sup>5</sup> Hannah Arendt, "The Public Realm: The Common" in Nathan Glazer & Mark Lilla (eds), *The Public Face of Architecture: Civic Culture and Public Spaces* Free Press / Macmillan, New York 1987: p12.
- <sup>6</sup> Stan Allen, "Tracks, Trace, Tricks", *Any: Writing in Architecture*, (Anyone Corporation, New York), May/June 1993, Number, p.8.
- <sup>7</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (trans. Steven Rendall) University of California Press, Berkeley 1984, p.106-107.
- <sup>8</sup> see Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, (trans. G. Anscombe), Baisl Blackwell, Oxford 1968.
- <sup>9</sup> Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, Harcourt Brace & Co, Orlando, 1972, p.11.
- <sup>10</sup> Iris Marion Young, "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference", in Nicholson, L. (ed), *Feminism / Postmodernism*, Routledge, New York 1990, p.300-323.
- <sup>11</sup> Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, Hill and Wang, New York 1978, p.4.