

Book Chapter

## **Idiosyncratic Spaces and Uncertain Practices: Drawing, Drifting and Sweeping Lines Through the Sand**

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### **Recommended citation:**

Shepley, A (2018) 'Idiosyncratic Spaces and Uncertain Practices: Drawing, Drifting and Sweeping Lines Through the Sand', in Journeaux, J. & Gorrill, H: *Drawing Conversations: Collective and Collaborative Drawing in Contemporary Practice*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2018, pp 164-191. Available at: <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/collective-and-collaborative-drawing-in-contemporary-practice>

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# IDIOSYNCRATIC SPACES AND UNCERTAIN PRACTICES: DRAWING, DRIFTING AND SWEEPING LINES THROUGH THE SAND

ALEC SHEPLEY

### Introduction

*Dedicated to my mother, Jess*

I am sitting on the doorstep of the hotel side door, thinking of thresholds - marginal spaces that provide the kind of ambiguity I need to practice, to disperse, to encounter, to act – not standing for anything certain but renegotiating a relationship with audience; testing out work that is perhaps not “of art” (Duchamp 1913, 105). I pick up on a kind of creative energy found in such settings as abandoned buildings, building sites, cracks, gutters, vacant lots, wind and dust, clefts and fissures, and the crumbling pavement beneath my feet - they offer a useful metaphor for my (our?) uncertain? state of being.

Marcel Broodthaers wrote: "The definition of artistic activity occurs, first of all, in the field of distribution" (Crow, 1996 177). According to Daniel Kunitz (2011 47-52) the lesson of such earlier efforts in the 1960's where art challenged context, is that if you want to disrupt the understanding of what art is, you need to alter how it gets to its audience (see Fig. 7-1) and somehow rupture its first (physical) and second (conceptual) frames (Kosuth, 1977 169-173).

This paper explores the nature and characteristics of a kind of ad hoc drawing practice that emerged during a short residency in Delhi in the autumn of 2014, together with an unofficial offshoot of the main residency programme – a sort of escape. I am reflecting on the possibilities of a practice at the interstices between the individual and the collective, between purpose and play – a kind of non-place. This space is not yet a place, or at least if it once was a place, it has somehow lost its place within the master-plan and is slowly falling away from its institutional configuration (see Fig. 7-2).

The broader project contextualizes the continued value of drawing as an ad hoc, semi-structured method, alongside the tendencies amongst a number of contemporary artists re-examining the status of the art object and questioning its position as highly valued, unique commodity-component as we enter the Age of the Anthropocene.

In order to offer context, the chapter very briefly touches upon artists incorporating their own labour and that of others as the artwork, in relation to traditional forms of object creation for market exchange. The chapter considers the value of ad-hocism and purposeful purposelessness as strategies for developing new approaches to drawing, opening new directions for practice research as an aid to reimagining cultural sites in neglected urban settings such in Delhi (see Fig. 7-3).

The chapter reflects upon the nature and value of specifically improvisational drawing and contouring practices which involved street encounters, sweeping and drifting through the city following the cracks, contours and tears within the urban fabric. Reference is made to precedents in art concerning the function of labour within artistic outputs; problematizing the relationship between art and capital; provisionality; the lasting document; and drawing as a social practice.

### A Place of Impossibility

In the autumn of 2013 I responded to an open call for speculations from artists, curators, writers, architects, cultural practitioners and activists for the re-imagination of spaces and cultural infrastructure in Delhi. Raqs Media Collective, the Delhi-based artistic and curatorial collective, invited proposals for the imaginative rethinking of

unused public spaces and cultural infrastructure in Delhi. The call was a provocation for artists and cultural practitioners to rediscover the city's cultural and artistic potential through imaginative transformations, and the result was a series of conversations initiated by artists from all over the world congregating in Delhi.

My proposal entitled *A Place of Impossibility* was among the 25 submissions invited to exhibit full proposals in the exhibition in *New Models for Common Ground* at Mati Ghar (Mud House), at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) February 2014 as part of *INSERT2014* curated by Raqs Media Collective (see Fig. 7-4). Artists included Anagram Architects, Atom Collective, Yao Jui-Chung and Ivane Franke to name but a few.<sup>1</sup>

*INSERT2014* was an international contemporary art exhibition presented by the INLAKS Shivdasani Foundation, and supported by the Goethe Institute, New Delhi, and also by the India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore. The trigger for the series was an invitation that Raqs received from the INLAKS Shivdasani Foundation. At that time, they had just inaugurated the *Sarai Reader '09*, a nine-month-long exhibition organised in collaboration with the Devi Art Foundation that explored what the future art scene in Delhi could be.

The Raqs Media Collective, selected Delhi as the site for *INSERT* for both conceptual and logistical reasons. Delhi is where the collective was founded in 1992 and has been based ever since. For Azad Shivdasani, chairman of INLAKS Shivdasani Foundation and the sponsor for this event, the idea was to see how an international show of contemporary art would fare in Delhi, after he encountered one in Los Angeles. The main concern for Shivdasani, however, was that the event should be socially relevant. This is reflected in the artists who were invited to be a part of it, such as the Taiwanese artist Yao Jui-Chung, from Taipei who presented *Energies of Derelict Buildings* as part of *INSERT*, and for the last two decades has been fascinated by abandoned buildings, and those that have been built but never used (Ali 2014). Referring to one such recent work at Meliwan Resort on Shanyuan Bay, Taitung County where construction work started on the project in 2004, then ceased in 2007, and finally resumed in 2011, Yao said:

“Derelict buildings can naturally make for a good metaphor, a symbol for a certain state of mind, as our circumstances and our background can be seen in a similar way – as derelict buildings pending redevelopment or reconstruction. Derelict buildings provide a kind of creative energy that can be harnessed by artists” (Yao 2010).

My own project in *New Models for Common Ground* speculated on a conceptual reimagining of two sites selected from the list put forward by Raqs Media Collective, namely Palika Bazaar Park on Connaught Place, and the abandoned office building known locally as Skipper Tower in Delhi (see Figs. 7-13-19). Speculative street encounters, activities involving drawing, talking and writing, walks or happenings, were all proposed as a way to add the artist directly into the spatio-temporal mix, and experience the selected sites, encounter those people who lived and worked there, detailing the process using methods such as drawing, writing, photography and video etc. as appropriate.

Skipper Tower, located outside the metro station of Barakhamba Road, is a disputed property and has come to symbolize for many, the image of modernity in the form of a ‘ruin from the future’. This empty tower block currently stands alone and silent amongst many busy office spaces. The possession of this fourteen floor abandoned building currently rests under the Claims Commissioner, by the order of the Supreme Court of India. Although there was no further information found about this building at the time of writing this paper, the site in its present state of ruins and abandonment was seen by the project curators Raqs, as definitely one that could fuel micro engagements, as major events might be problematic due to the restrictions over ownership (see Fig. 7-16).

The second site chosen for the project was Palika Bazaar and Palika Park on Connaught Place, Delhi. This park (and if you include the Bazaar) is one of the most popular public places of Delhi. This park attracts people from all walks of life: from homeless vagabonds to office workers, from college students to compulsive loners and many others besides. Connaught Place, popularly known as CP is known not only for its nostalgic historicity and impressive built heritage, but also for the sheer vitality of changing urban life with all its fullness and diversity (see Fig. 7-15).

Apart from the sheer terror and exhilaration I felt as an initial response to the scale of the place, I was struck by the heat, the constant noise and movement, and the breezes that stirred the trees and brightly coloured fabrics and flags, as I made my first drifts through the surrounding districts. I was drawn along on dizzying walks embedding myself within the contours of the Connaught Place and its surrounding streets.

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<sup>1</sup> Alec Shepley, Anagram Architects, Aryakrishnan Ramakrishnan + Karthik KG, Atom Collective, Chandni Arun Narendra, CRIT Studio, Heidi Fichtner, Hemavathy Guha, Himali Singh Soin, Indrani Baruah, Janine Ramlochan, kOSH, Layout Collective, Manuela Ciotti, Naresh Kumar, Naveen Mahantesh, Paribartana Mohanty, Parul Gupta + Gagandeep Singh, Samarjeet Behera, Solomon Benjamin, Sikan Kumar Panda, Surajit Sarkar, Vinay Seth

Benjamin suggested the bazaar is the last hangout of the flâneur and I was set on inserting myself here with my sweeping brush, meandering through the spaces and contouring the intersecting lines which divide and subdivide the city's lots (Benjamin 2002, 12).

I walked slowly – like a tortoise – interested. I breathed consciously. Experiencing at such a slow, tortoise like pace contrasted with the effects of a large, fast moving city, the popular park busy with people from all walks of life. This process of walking slowly and sweeping my path, served to foreground the large edifice of the modern office block void of people. It produced many ad hoc micro-engagements with local people, visitors and groups of tourists who were milling around. This performative practice opens up to me the spaces and objects of the everyday. Siegfried Kracauer wrote about those seemingly purposeless and empty moments which infiltrate everyday life such as that of the pedestrian, the commuter or the person waiting in the queue (1960, 30-33). In his final and unfinished book, he referred to the *terra incognita* where objectives and modes of being which still lack a name and hence are overlooked or misjudged, can be rehabilitated (1995b, 192).

Although a very lively place, with large numbers of people present at any given time of the day the area seems to be in decline and the infrastructure is in a state of decay. One of the curatorial aims of *INSERT2014* was to “inaugurate a rethinking of ‘place’ in contemporary art as an active presence, and the foregrounding of the poetics of usage as a vital axis of art’s inhabitation with life and its potential” (Bagchi, Narula and Sengupta 2014, 10).

The project that I proposed for these sites was situated therefore within this broader context and included myself as an actor of a nomadic and fragmented practice, with an aim to occupy spaces seemingly void of artistic activity.

### **Enactments #1, #2 and #3**

Using a research grant from my faculty awarded for the project, I travelled to Delhi in September 2014 and enacted three street cleaning *Dérives* at three co-located sites in New Delhi: Palika Park; Skipper Tower; and Connaught Place. By inserting myself in this way I set out to subvert and affect rhetorical frameworks and structures, to reimagine these spaces – or at least their potential to be re-imagined through artistic engagement and seemingly the flimsiest of plans. This is important, as the idea behind *INSERT2014* was that of acting as a “provocation for artists and cultural practitioners to discover and propose ideas that can be leveraged, adapted and transformed to lay the foundations for a distinct and dynamic art and culture scene” (ibid 2014, 10). The point of departure for this event, therefore, is not an artwork but a provocation. However, given the history and context of the location, its current condition and the potential for my status as an artist to be perceived as an unwanted intrusion i.e. being ‘parachuted’ in to an area to engage in some kind of development activity, I decided to adopt ‘a point of departure’ as my main focus of activity and also to enact in a public setting for the first time the private, post-working day studio procedure – of sweeping the floor. I have, over the years developed certain working methods and habits that are attendant to practice but have hitherto been *outside* of that practice, rather than co-opt them within practice, I am speculating on their co-opting *me* so to maintain a form of escape. As Einstein wrote:

“To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old questions from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advances in science” (Einstein 1938, 92).

Drifting through the areas around Connaught Place allowed me an opportunity to experience daily life and current conditions and to embed myself within the contours of the urban spaces I found myself in. My intention was to invert the notion of ruin and reveal some form of positive direction through cleaning, for renewal and change (Shepley 2014, 90-91). I encountered physical manifestations of the incomplete, unfinished maintenance and failings in the urban fabric. My itinerant street cleaning precipitated temporary drawings in the dirt. Through these acts of marking and erasing, doing and undoing, this interplay becomes the maxim of the process. Surface is caressed – the material (dust) is the medium and pavement the substrate.

In *Enactments #1, #2 and #3* I am engaged in the act of sweeping the selected sites Connaught Place, Palika Park and Skipper Tower. At first glance these may seem like pointless acts, however I am exploring escape opportunities; what Gordon Matta-Clarke has referred to as metaphoric voids, gaps, left-over or undeveloped spaces where you stop to tie your shoelaces. In other words, these are the places that are just interruptions in your own daily movements (Matta-Clarke 1974, 34).

*Enactments #1, #2 and #3* were acts of contouring where I swept the paths (both designated routes and ad hoc ‘user experienced’ short cuts worn across the grass), cracks, back alleys, open doors and gateways. This work followed on from previous projects for example at Kilmahew in Scotland and other locations; following the psycho-

geographic lines and shapes in my path, I sensually swept the brush along the grooves, gutters and pavements of the selected sites (see Figs. 7-10, 7-11, 7-12).

During this same period of time in Delhi, I made some drawings which comprised 30cm x 30cm fabric squares taped down onto the marble pavements of Connaught Place. These pavements, worn into smooth, often slightly concave surfaces show the mark of countless people: office workers, travellers, tourists, beggars, pilgrims, and I wondered how I could make a drawing about this. Or rather how *they* could make the drawing? So, following a kind of process based on observed phenomena and random selection, I ‘posted’ horizontally, special fabric which was designed specifically for the artwork onto the various locations I had chosen. Over time passersby made their mark as they passed over the small square on the floor. At first, when new and white, these squares formed a kind of obstacle, a hazard to go around, but with the unstoppable flow this caution was overtaken by the sheer pressure of numbers and the squares were soon obliterated – or in my eyes – made! Some remained in situ as I left for the UK, but obviously in a poor state of repair, some were removed by officials and I myself removed one and brought it home to the UK (see Figs. 7-25, 7-26, 7-28).

Connaught Place is a space that was once part of a Utopian master plan, institutionally cared for but perhaps now more a place of feral human occupation, contrasting with the municipal order implied by the (now worn) classicist colonial architecture (see Figs. 7-13, 7-14, 7-15, 7-16). As an artist, I wanted to place myself in an awkward situation. As a white western person, cleaning the streets around Connaught Place, the reaction of the people I encountered certainly emphasised the sense of my own absurdity. The project’s focus on the urban contours and surfaces was a metaphor for my own psychological condition as a human. Immersing myself in the crowd added to the sense of fragmentation and an incomplete project.

In this–work an attempt was made to put into reverse my own assumptions around negative stereotypes of neglect: to invert it and create the potential for a more positive metaphor by *cleaning*, where art has become more like a system or process. I was immersed in a set of visual relationships, within the crowd, that consciously or unconsciously may have aware of me. I wanted to *enact* allegories, rather than only depict them, and to bring new meaning to my own situation by foregrounding the creative potential of the fragment in a process of renewal and redefinition. I was thinking of ‘doing words’ – verbs – and thinking about my own version of Richard Serra’s verb list (see Fig. 7-3).

## Invisible Cities

“Nobody wonders where, each day, they carry their load of refuse. Outside the city, surely; but each year the city expands, and the street cleaners have to fall farther back. The bulk of the outflow increases and the piles rise higher, become stratified, extend over a wider perimeter. Besides, the more Leonia’s talent for making new materials excels, the more the rubbish improves in quality, resists time, the elements, fermentations, combustions. A fortress of indestructible leftovers surrounds Leonia, dominating it on every side, like a chain of mountains” (Calvino 1979, 91).

The writings of Italo Calvino, in particular his book *Invisible Cities*, and principally the sections about the cities of Leonia and Sophronia, have also influenced this new work. The accidental viewer on the street of Delhi or visitor to Kilmahew would witness a figure steadily and progressively sweeping his way around the streets, attempting to fulfil a seemingly impossible blueprint which was referred to by the inhabitants of *Invisible Cities*. The visual narrative conjures the street cleaners who are welcomed like angels to the city, and who “engage in their task of removing the residue of yesterday’s existence in a respectfully silent ritual that inspires devotion” (Calvino 1979, 91). Perhaps because once things have been discarded nobody really wants to have to think about them anymore.

In the book, as in the project, the reader/viewer is compelled to reflect on the ultimate outcomes of such accumulations of debris that are a result of our daily progress and thus question a wider logic around production and unbridled modernity.

The question about what to do with our worldly possessions, once we no longer have a use for them, is as poignant today as it ever was. My enactments are intended to pause, visualize and reflect on the status of the fragment within a potentially restored embodied relationship with the world (Temple 2013, 3-4). My practice of contouring cracks and fault-lines within the urban, speaks to an act of healing, the kind of healing that Joseph Beuys alluded to throughout his artistic career. This kind of work not only speaks to a personal kind of healing but that of communal healing, signalling a wider distribution of ideas across a broader cross-section of society than that focused upon a gallery experience (O’Leary 1996, 91-105)

For me as an artist I felt I had initiated precisely the kind of dispersal I wanted - around the place of possibility - one referred to by Michael Phillipson when he wrote:

“Under the intensity of creative experimentation (the situation and challenge of artists’ practice) each work asks itself (and therefore us, too) whether there might be a ‘place’ where culture has not yet reached; it hopes to be that ‘place’ – an elsewhere that is not yet a ‘place’ on culture’s terms” (Phillipson 1995, 202-203).

Through dispersals within the contours and cracks in the urban space and within the crowd, and by prolonging the idea of an unfinished work, I was creating a possibility for myself. Through the unfinished there is also a disclosure of ambivalence – what is missing or not being seen – a disappearance if you like, somehow occupying the body of the wandering performer but unseen by any public. Through ambivalence indifference may be deployed as a condition of possibility. In other words, possibility is revealed by disclosure of ambivalence - that which is missing or not ‘being seen’. In a world where an apathetic public seems disinterested in truths and only spectacle, I am trying to disclose the creative potential of the fragment to reconnect the forgotten place with the world (Ross 2006, 1-49).

My work alludes to the artist as a traveller: walking and moulding thought - drawing you in and inviting you on an existential journey – a journey through imagined sites of the fragment such as those witnessed by readers of *Invisible Cities*. Similar to the Medieval itinerant artists who sought commissions, often following religious pilgrimage routes (Ross, 2003 95), the elements pertinent to my own situation are discursive spaces, linked and alert to architecture and site as metaphors for our psychological states; they all refer to a place of (our) making and unmaking, both real and imagined.

By positioning myself within a fragmented and incomplete space I am able to heighten tensions between the meaningful and the meaningless, between creativity, fiction and reality. In my work an attempt is made to disclose the disproportion between the repetitious labour and the magnitude of the task on the one hand, and the absurdity of the implements to hand and the meaninglessness other than its own taking place, on the other.

My immersion within a set of visual relationships affects and shapes my consciousness as I tentatively move towards a process of renewal and redefinition. Through foregrounding the idea of the unfinished, the impossibility of art (the gap between the real and represented) and yet the possibility of art, is made apparent. I am trying to disclose that gap through the disclosure of the ambivalence of representation - the gap between art and life.

I believe the artist reveals this gap, this space of potential, and doesn’t fill them in. The value of art today, its condition of possibility, lies in this disclosure (Ross 2006, 49).

Drifting in an uncertain and ambivalent manner, mixing attentiveness and apathy, purposefulness and ennui, create a provisional site of (my) making and *un*making and attempts to open up speculation on the possibility of a place for art and narratives of hope. Precedents include Beuys, Alÿs, Perray, Hanson, Orozco and others (see Figs. 7-5, 7-6, 7-7, 7-8).

The elements of the enactments combine to reference unstable and subjective concepts of space and understanding, and offer temptation around seemingly unstructured activities and makeshift actions that ultimately draw attention to the unresolved poetics of the everyday and the indefinable beauty in the ordinary. People stop, make comment, engage, interrupt, redefine. They witness the progressive and yet futile sweeping of the pavement, a never-ending task of cleaning this once utopian super-structure – a structure which was a strangely alien form, now void of its intended inhabitants. These repetitive acts of sweeping and cleaning would indeed appear to have no end in sight. Delayed closure. It seems a form of self-abandonment to the wilderness – a penance. Or an escape plan?

## Escapes

As an artist, Francis Alÿs, Régis Perray and in particular Mierle Laderman Ukeles, are probably my nearest reference points. In the words of Ukeles, I am thinking about the ‘flushing up to consciousness’ of everyday practice - the routine the everyday - flagging the void spaces to approach, address, attend (Laderman Ukeles 1969 41).

According to Bartholomew Ryan (2009) Laderman Ukeles promoted maintenance as an important value in relation to the excitement of avant-garde and unbridled industrial ‘development’. She asked, after the revolution who was going to be pick up the garbage on Monday morning?

Laderman Ukeles, along with many other female conceptual artists promoted the idea of artists as activists challenging the privileged and gendered notion of art practice to form early and important works of institutional critique. She joined the New York Department of Sanitation in 1977, as an Artist in Residence and she has been there ever since. But why is there a merging of what is commonly seen as something with a high cultural status i.e. art, with something with such a lowly status as routine maintenance and for example, cleaning? I believe this kind of immersive practice creates an entry point into the field of distribution enables a means of ‘listening more closely to the hum of life’ (ibid). According to Helena Reckett, Laderman Ukeles’ actions “underscored the institution’s contradictory role as champion of artistic expression, cultural gatekeeper and preserver of the past” (Reckett 2013, 133).

My focus on the supplement of cleaning, enables me to contour culture's inscription within architectural surfaces. The elements combine to reference unstable and subjective concepts of space and understanding, and offer temptation around seemingly unstructured activities and makeshift actions that ultimately draw attention to the unresolved poetics of the everyday and the indefinable beauty in the ordinary. People stop and comment. They encounter my unsteady but progressive sweeping of a pavement, a gutter, something that was once a concrete space of modernity but which is now an abandoned and ruined husk.

These repetitive acts would appear to have no end in sight. Through enacting this 'self-abasing gesture' of street-cleaning I formed a visual language remarking on a *condition of being* (Moran 2005, 25). Like Price, Broodthaers, and many more before him, my intention is to escape institutions. However, futility is an artistic tactic I deploy, together with ambivalence and deferral. To quote Stephen Wright once more:

"This is escapology's *a priori*, and though it seeks to better appreciate the escapological drive in contemporary culture, it does not see escape as a self-conscious attempt to escape *from* something. It envisages escape in terms of offensive retreat; as such, it shares none of the projective logic of an event-driven vision of history. Whereas (left-leaning) art historians and social theorists have conditioned us to think of emancipation, and indeed of art itself, in terms of events – whether past or yet to come – escapology rejects this masculinist perspective as one premised on the luxury of being able to wait for the coming event or to look back on the one which took place. Escapology is the science of the kind of everyday elusiveness, leakage and doing-otherwise that can really only be described as 'escape' once power structures shift to capture its movement. Ultimately, escapology's examples, those that instantiate its concrete truth, all lie beyond, or behind, the event horizon itself.

In lieu of an example, then, consider this speculative etymology suggestively put forth by a contemporary escapist. The verb 'escape' is usually thought to derive from the Vulgar Latin *excappare*, from *ex-* ('out') + *capio* ('capture'). It may well be, however, that it comes from the Late Latin *ex cappa*, in reference not to capture at all but to a 'cape' or cloak which remains behind even as the living body which it had clad has slipped away." (Wright 2014, 23-24).

However certain the "paradoxical undertaking" of such projects may be, these works I enact are an attempt to delay being co-opted by the institutions that define art and that have traditionally distributed it (Wright 2014, 23). This period of time I refer to, called 'delayed closure', is led by emergent problem finding as part of the creative process (Getzels 1976, 174-178). The development of an appreciative system involves a reflective conversation which transcends situation and those within it (Schön 1995, 272-275).

From formlessness, a visual language and actions emerge over time. I needed to work with that in order for a system to grow - I needed to escape for this to be what it needed to be rather than what I wanted it to become. To be close to it, to occupy its space, I needed to 'camp' out with it in the shelter of that row of derelict houses or to trespass on that site, doing/undoing and accepting the potential of failure, primordial mess, sweat and dirt as procedural components of the practice of discovery and of the reflexive conversation between artist, place and material. Significantly, failings were in some way closely synonymous with that elusive space of potential not of art as they revealed to me the gap or break I was searching for in the production line of art's commodification. Alec can you rewrite this sentence to clarify it please

By exploring the psycho-geography of the area: the desired seamlessness of a city's self-image, I was able to observe actual seams opening up or failings in the infrastructure, use/non-use/misuse, and to engage in a practice of simply being there. I was able to unmake and blur – acts I found liberating and engendered ad hoc encounters with passers-by. In the words of Michel De Certeau I was able to link "acts and footsteps, opening meanings and directions" emptying them out of their primary role and historical order of movement, as a means of articulating a second, poetic geography on top of the literal, forbidden or permitted meaning (1984, 105).

Both the Kilmahew and Delhi projects are on-going, and in 2017 I proposed a further iteration of practice at IGNSA in the form of an occupation of the selected cultural sites, enacting dispersed practices and hovering in a state of unresolved poetics, ambivalence, mutability and itinerancy.

My INSERT project aimed to rethink expectations about the artwork, opening up the space to uncertain practices and to problematise assumptions of what may constitute a work of art investigating the "unsitely aesthetic" (Miranda 2013, 22-48). Paradoxically, and as perhaps a cautionary endnote, in resisting or circumventing the problem of the art object's commodification Miwon Kwon argues that it is now the performative aspect of the artist's mode of operation that is circulated as an art commodity, and that artists have adopted managerial functions of art institutions (Kwon 2000, 38-63) in an "aesthetics of administration" (Buchloh 1997, 140). Nevertheless, Kwon argues, despite a proliferation of 'artist / nomad / aesthetic administrator' and the loosening of relations around exhibition and reception, the phantom of a site as an actual place remains – perhaps as a "compensatory fantasy in response to the

intensification and alienation wrought by a mobilized market economy following the dictates of capital” (Kwon 2000, 57).

Through an insinuation into the everyday syntax of these places, not to depict you understand, for that would be to capture and kill it, but to breathe it, to live it and to act as a conduit for its energies, I was able to explore a place where a fictional self (Kwon, 2000) could be in the space of unmaking and retrieve for myself some form of ownership and control for the idea of an art that is not of art - a form of occupation as a performative or transcendent process (Shepley 2014, 90-91) beyond normal categories (see Fig. 7-29).

Both Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre saw the everyday as an elusive category, stretching out invisibly across urban space, incorporating wordless activities and caught up in the nameless, the indefinable. This territory can seem almost unreadable, forever escaping analysis or interpretation and defined by what is left over, after all distinct, superior, specialized, structured activities have been singled out by analysis but then, as Meno the pre-Socratic philosopher said “how will you go about finding that thing the nature of which is totally unknown to you?” (in Solnit, R. 2006, 4).

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