

## Mapping the Space Between

Rich Keville

Within the discipline of art therapy, the 'space between' often intense, time compressed therapist-client sessions is considered important and highly useful. Reflections and realisations are consciously integrated through engagement with the therapeutic process using expressive modalities and methods with the ultimate aim of mapping therapy experiences into daily life to affect an awareness of progression and change.

TEXT the word that represents and signifies all written words, is defined by one of the more curious semantic qualities as being autological, meaning it expresses a property that it denotes. Since I first began experimenting with TEXT as a word and moniker in 2015, it has evolved to function as an aesthetic and conceptual semantic device I often use in public space art projects and interventions.

Sensing the analogous nature of how time operates in conference settings where massive amounts of information are received and processed by participants, Mapping The Space Between was phase one of this experimentation, investigating how break times - the spaces between - SAUC conference presentations could be utilised to reflect upon, express and map my own and participant ideas and realisations generated through the experience of engaging with conference themes using non-verbal multi-modal methods.

TEXT, the word, and fragments of it, presented an aesthetic anchor to these experimentations and manifest as outcomes in both the conference context and public context.

The works produced spanned two distinct phases focused on the art therapy approach of ‘aesthetic-expressive’ (Lett, 2011) representation, which premises non-verbal creative expression of content, held both consciously and unconsciously, through visual modes. In phase one, this approach was adapted to encourage not only writing and illustration, but visual methods associated with graffiti and street art practices as we “mapped the space between” the conference proceedings over three days.

The textual layering of intersubjective dialogue over this period saw cardboard cubes simulate an urban wall inscribed with observations, questions and provocations that responded to conference presentations and broader socio-political themes, mixed with artistic expression in the form of statements, symbols, stickers and tags.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

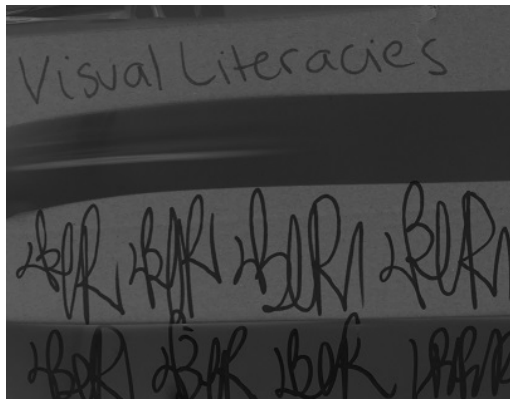


Figure 4.

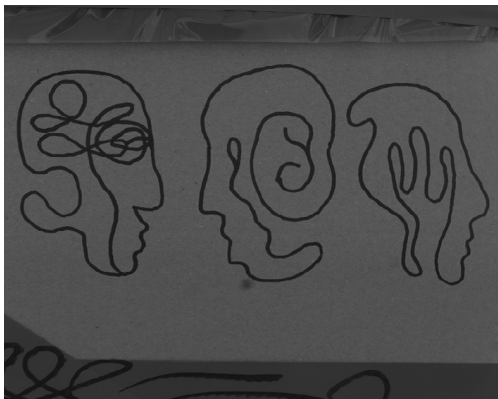


Figure 5.



Figure 6.

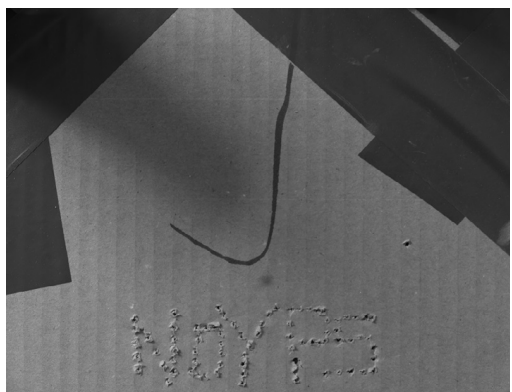


Figure 7.



Figure 8.

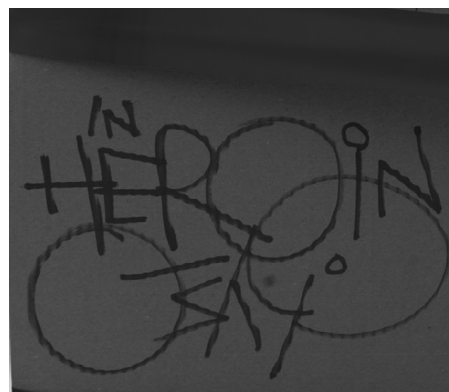


Figure 9.

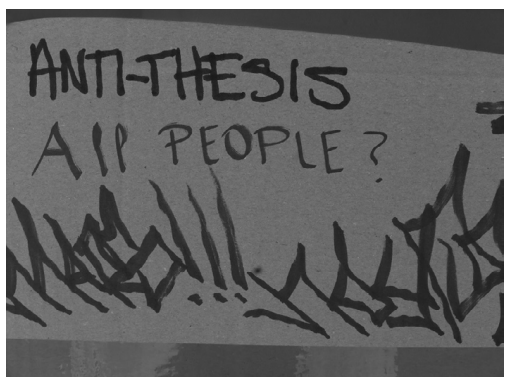


Figure 10.

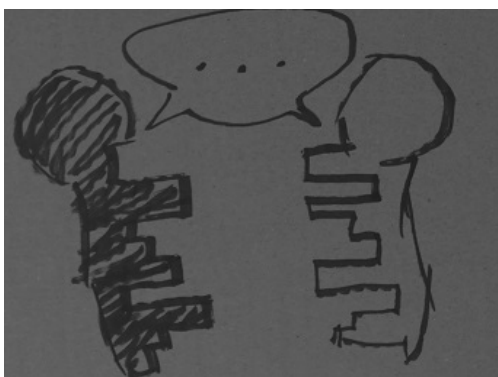


Figure 11.

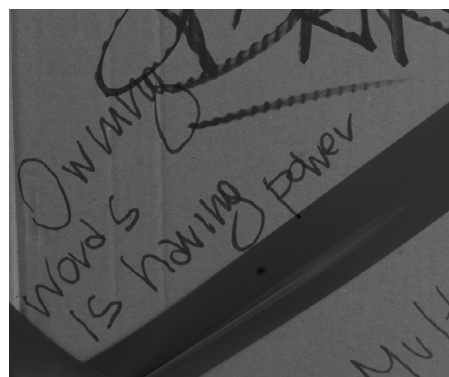


Figure 12.

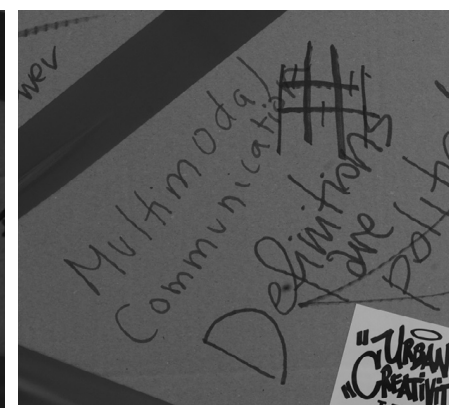
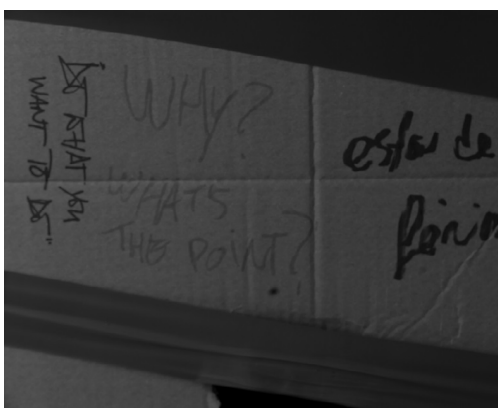
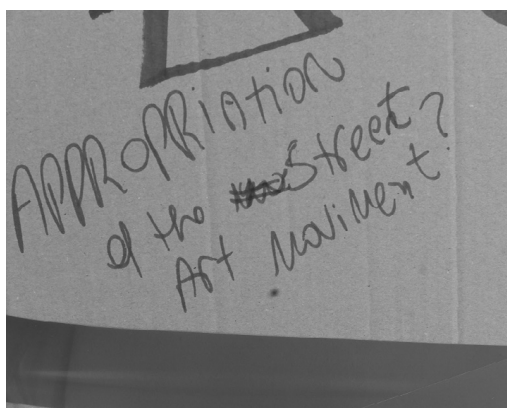




Figure 17.



Figure 16.



Figure 18.



Figure 19.



Figure 20.

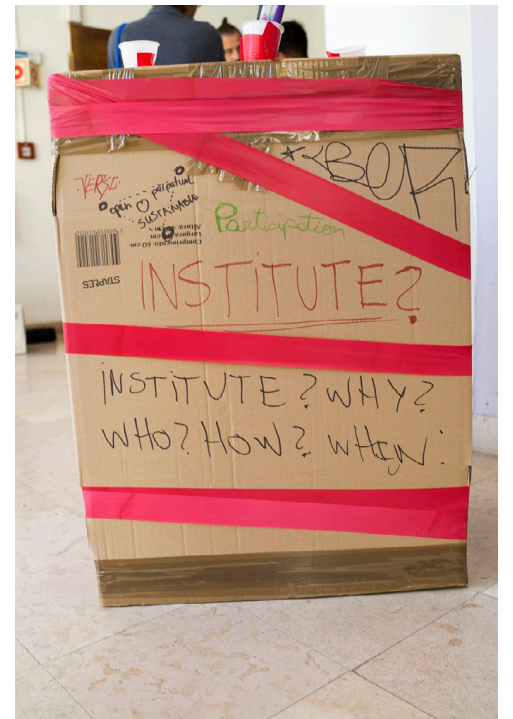


Figure 21.

Phase two included unsanctioned urban interventions executed in Lisbon, Porto and Praia de Valadares over a two-week period. These works elaborated upon the use of visual modes of expression whilst connecting to a more long-term experimentation with the word TEXT.

A TEXT mural created in Lisbon mapped participant responses collected from the SAUC conference in phase one, with an emphasis on experimenting with the reconfiguration, displacement and reduction of language, represented as textual forms. For this work, TEXT framed and juxtaposed the personalised, calligraphic nature of the writing painted inside its boundary.



Figure 22.



Figure 23.



Figure 24.

In Lisbon, Porto and Praia de Valadares, recycled found materials and glow in the dark vinyl tape were used to experiment with the form and function of TEXT; how, like a graffiti tag, it can disrupt the order of signs and objects located in close proximity and respond to and accentuate spatial and architectural elements in ways that encourage curiosity and interaction with the location of encounter.



Figure 25.



Figure 26.



Figure 27.



Figure 28.



Figure 29.



Figure 30.



Figure 31.



Figure 32.

The development and dominance of verbal language as the principal means of communicating is at times limiting. Visual expression more easily allows for the externalization of ideas so that they may then be considered and integrated into thinking. Albeit driven by radically different socio-political motivations and histories, and generally facilitated in contexts that are diametrically opposed, there exists an intriguing and under-explored relational confluence between expression, visibility and perception in the discipline of art therapy and in urban art practices, such as graffiti, street art and muralism.

Mapping The Space Between and related TEXT experiments represent an ongoing inquiry into liminality and non-verbal creative expression that seeks to depart from the notion of the art product or final outcome serving as the primary locus of value. Instead, arts' usefulness and function are articulated in the creative methods used to encode inner and outer experience, enabling a more nuanced sense and critical awareness of the world, as it is encountered in everyday life.

## Images

Figure 1 – 21: MAPPING THE SPACE BETWEEN project images from SAUC conference.

Materials: cardboard; various types of electrical and packing tape; markers and plastic cups.

Lisbon, Portugal, 2019.

Photographs by Rich Keville, except figure 19, 20 and 21 by Malcolm Jacobson.

Figure 22 - 24: TEXT mural.

Materials: ink; spray bottle; markers; tape; 750ml silver chrome spray can and a 750ml pressurized can of 'Hauser' gap filling expanding foam.

Lisbon, Portugal, 2019.

Photograph by Rich Keville. Figure 23 and 24 by Malcolm Jacobson.

Figure 25: TEXT intervention.

Materials: found statue of Jesus; wooden cabinets and fragments; netting; string; electrical insulators and cable; marble; garden flowers and straw.

Praia de Valadares, Portugal, 2019.

Photograph by Rich Keville.

Figure 26: X MARKS THE SPOT intervention.

Materials: found electrical cable and electrical cable insulation.

Lisbon, Portugal, 2019.

Photograph by Rich Keville.

Figure 27 – 28: protoTEXT #1.

Materials: glow in the dark vinyl tape and glue.

Lisbon, Portugal, 2019.

Photographs by Rich Keville.

Figure 29 – 30: protoTEXT #2.

Materials: glow in the dark vinyl tape and glue.

Porto, Portugal, 2019.

Photographs by Rich Keville.

Figure 31 – 32: protoTEXT #3.

Materials: glow in the dark vinyl tape and glue.

Porto, Portugal, 2019.

Photographs by Rich Keville.

## Reference

Lett, W. (2011) *An inquiry into making sense of our lives*. Melbourne: Rebus Press.

Rich Keville specialises in working creatively with text. Paint, ink, brush and roller are his primary creative vehicles: Phenomenology and Narrative the theoretical vantage points. Preferring the urban environment to that of the gallery, he has marked and painted his way across the streets, train lines, abandoned buildings and in community settings throughout Australia, Asia and Europe. His research interests and art projects in public space often engage themes focussed on environmental conservation, visual literacy and the aesthetics of written language using participatory and action research techniques. He has trained in art therapy methods at the Melbourne Institute of Experiential and Creative Art Therapy (MIECAT), graduating with a Diploma in 2012 and in 2018 he received his MA degree in Community Practice from Melbourne University. Rich lives and works in Melbourne, Australia. Details about his practice can be found at [www.textura-arts.com.au](http://www.textura-arts.com.au).

