

Viewing Platforms

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Viewing Platforms:

A Photographic Investigation of Australian Tourist Landscapes

Name: Kristian Paul Häggblom

BFA (Hons)

(Student ID: 20596529)

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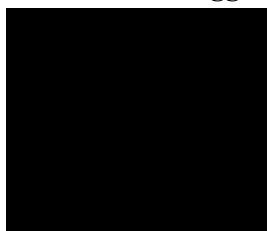
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Abstract

Viewing Platforms is a photographic investigation of the relationships that are played out in the Australian landscape between tourists and remote destinations and the subsequent interaction of society, space and nature. Photographs are made at both remote urban and rural landscape attractions and the liminal spaces that separate these tourist travel destinations. For this project, the uniquely Australian long distances to journey to these locations are considered part of the tourist experience. Visually and conceptually, within these places of transience and awe, the tourist infrastructure that is physically imposed over particular landscapes is considered a stage, not only for visitors, but, also guides, other tourist industry workers and local inhabitants. *Viewing Platforms* imagery depicts how the landscape is contained for consumption and is captured from within the performance of tourism.

The project includes both photographs for exhibition and a photobook publication that are considered an experimental travelogue which is punctuated by an anecdotal semi-fictional voice. The exegesis outlines the initial construction of viewing platforms in Australia and how photography is manifested as a performance within these spaces. The project is informed by theories that pertain to tourism, simulation and contemporary landscape and photography theory. As a point of departure, the research makes use of Dean MacCannell's extension of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical analysis of front and back social 'regions'. Research is also undertaken of more recent tourism theory that elaborates on the 'performance turn' which looks beyond the tourist gaze to a more informed multi-sensorial experience.

Viewing Platforms acts to highlight the many complex modes of travelling within the Australian landscape from within the narrative of my own experiences. By photographically documenting 'drifting' forms of tourism and 'performative' engagements with the landscape the project illustrates both positive and negative physical and psychological possibilities of travel within Australia.

The research outcomes include an exhibition of photographs and a photobook publication of which are accompanied by a narrative voice that is both academic and anecdotal. These entwined methodologies expand on documentary photographic practices and question what tourists gain from (semi) mediated experiences in the vastness of Australia.

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This paper has more than likely become somewhat complicated. Therefore, my acknowledgments will be straightforward. First, thanks to my parents for encouraging me to take whatever path I desired while in my turbulent teens. Thanks to Dad for the introduction to photography and accompanying me on many road trips to make the photographs for this project. Thanks always to Mum in having faith in my often obscure pursuits. And of course, uncle Michael Kelly for constant and ongoing inspiration and support. Also, my brother Shane who always trusts my vision but asks good questions.

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Artilla

I wake in the back of the car just after sunrise curled up amongst camping equipment, camera cases, folded tarpaulins and a tripod that had been poking into my back overnight. Although I am sure there was a Winnebago parked at this rest stop last night, this morning the dusty car park is empty, silent and it feels like time has stopped. Before getting back on the road I first stretch my cramped muscles and begin repacking the car. This has become a matter of habit and I have a routine that I loosely follow. I begin, as usual, by putting the cameras and tripod in a position where they are protected from movement and sunlight, but are also easy enough to access throughout the day. Suddenly I hear “good morning” from somewhere behind me and I jump startled and knock a box of camping pots and pans from the edge of the back of the vehicle to the ground. The sound exacerbates my surprise. The words “sorry didn’t mean to startle you” cut through the crashing sounds.

This, I discover, is Bill. We make our acquaintance and I question where he is from, to which he replies: “over yonder, spent the night in the dry riverbed.” Not exactly the answer I was looking for, and I haven’t seen a riverbank. Bill explains that as I was just packing the car he thought it a good time to request a ride and if I approved I could pack accordingly to fit in his luggage (worn bag, rolled swag and sleeping bag that were all held together with one octopus strap) and keep the front seat clear. I agree to his request, to which he responds: “I would assist with your packing but I don’t want to mess up your routine, let me know if I can do anything.”

Bill is a bushman and probably about my age. He is travelling north “on foot” through the interior to look for work at cattle stations and his car is “cactus”. Intrigued that I am travelling alone he asks what I am doing, to which I reply simply – “photography” and his answer is as short: “another one”. I’m not entirely sure what this means but don’t press on with that conversation. Bill is happy to end up where ever it is that I do. To me he is starting to resemble one of these characters that are on the run and roam the expanses of the Australian desert where police are most likely not to find you. This must be showing, as he explains further: “I’m out of work so can drift up and down the Stuart highway till I find something. It seems like there is nothing

out here, but actually there is plenty of work either on a station or one those tourist places – they always need people with knowhow.”

I take a left off the Stuart highway and head towards Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. At about 100 kilometres from the park I stop to make my third photograph of the day. This time Bill stays in the car – he has inspected my equipment to a satisfying degree. There are three other vehicles in the bitumen car park and they go about making sandwiches and photographs. Soon a tour minibus arrives and several more people offload and go about their tourist business. The driver, like Bill, stays in the bus. I situate myself amongst the tourists and listen to their conversations. Many are amazed at how big Uluru is and the fact that we can see it from more than 100 kilometres away. Others doubt that it is actually Uluru.

I pack my gear away once again and get in the drivers seat. It seems Bill was having a nap and he lifts his hat and turns to me: “You know that’s not Uluru?” To which I respond, “yes I know, its Mount Connor.” Bill’s response is once again short: “No its not, its Artilla, you know, like how Ayres Rock is not Ayres Rock?”

Introduction

There is more to sightseeing than seeing a site. – Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt et al.¹

Viewing Platforms is a photographic investigation of the tourist experience from two very different perspectives within the Australian landscape.

First, from the viewpoint of a ‘wide eyed tourist’ making pilgrimage to such places. Secondly as an artist-researcher seeking a deeper understanding of the overwhelming attraction of iconic landscape tourist destinations. Both perspectives are required in order to understand the tourists’ desire to interact with these sites. This approach was adopted to deal with the fact that each journey is framed by a personal desire for discovery and wonder, and thus the intent is not dissimilar to that of the majority of tourists encountered, that is, the desire to experience, photograph and assemble a collection of stories to be retold. The research aim of understanding more profoundly what drives this desire, to write oneself into the epic story of the landscape, cannot be pursued without maintaining an openness to this complex experience.

A literary device has been developed to separate the two perspectives by using two different voices in the text. The first, a semi-fictive ‘tourist’ voice, recounts real and imagined encounters about the experiences as they occur. The aim of the semi-fictive voice is to enable the generation of a much wider range of experiences and ideas by imaginatively ‘trying on’ different responses to each site, in the same way as the photographer tries different viewpoints to understand and engage with the subject. It is also intended to prompt a range of different and sometimes challenging responses to the analytical second voice in which the main body of this research has been conducted and retold. The semi-fictive voice punctuates the following five chapters four times (and once above) and is further expanded on in the accompanying photobook publication created for *Viewing Platforms*.

The title *Viewing Platforms* refers literally to the infrastructure within designated grand urban and rural landscapes that is constructed to optimise the finest view that the particular site has to offer. The terminology is reflective of the verb ‘view’ and other verbs that may be used to indicate actions that take place on and within the vicinity of such platforms. These could include: stroll, rest, pose, choreograph, photograph and transcend, amongst many other leisure activities. Hence, in this

practice-based research project the physical viewing platform is considered a stage. The many actions, experienced and imagined, that take place on viewing platforms and while touring, are considered a mode of performance that is sometimes mediated, at other times spontaneous, and constantly discursive. *Viewing Platforms* questions what tourists gain from these (semi)-mediated experiences and evaluates how these experiences are approached by the tourist both physically and mentally.

¹ J. Ole Bærenholdt, M. Haldrup, J. Larsen and J. Urry *Performing Tourist Places* (New Directions in Tourist Analysis series), London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004, p. 101.

The discursive nature of tourist performances is influenced by the mode of tourism investigated which is more a form of ‘drifting’² through landscape rather than a short-term tour. Locations investigated for *Viewing Platforms* include Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, The Great Otway Ranges and Mungo National Park, and as with other locations that have been analysed and photographed, these sites are largely only accessible through long distance travel by automobile³ and therefore been labelled remote. The national and international tourists who travel to such landscapes use their vehicles (be that a tour bus, campervan or 4WD) as a familiar and fluid base for activities. Such tourists often spend weeks, if not months, seeking out mythologised and iconic natural features within a specific landscape (the monolithic rock or the cascading waterfall) of each tourist place and enjoy the travel experience and discoveries made while in transit.

For such tourists the pilgrim-like long distance travel experience is intrinsic to the tourist ‘performance’ and to the narrative construction and collecting process. Purpose-built and improvised comforts found at rest stops, petrol stations and information centres take on a heightened importance beyond their functionality and the infrastructure that extends from tourist ‘points of interest’ blurs the line between the ‘bush’ and the holiday-park.

For the purposes of this exegesis, these morphing natural and cultural spaces, have been termed touristscapes. These include the natural landscape and central feature of that space which has been viewed prior to travelling repeatedly by tourists who subsequently desire to experience the landscape and feature firsthand. Such natural features include the limestone stacks that run along the shoreline at the Twelve Apostles and the monolithic Uluru rock that rises from the central Australian desert. For *Viewing Platforms* these spectacular landscape characteristics have been labelled the landscape apogee. Touristscapes also include other sites of less importance that are found ‘on the road’ that are often fabricated for tourist activity. To further understand such spaces I have researched both the history of tourism and the construction of the first viewing platforms in Australia. Further research is conducted of travelogues, photographs, promotional material and writings about tourism that promoted and influenced landscape tourism and the physical and psychological construction of touristscapes.

Throughout this exegesis an emphasis is placed on an embedded approach by producing this project from within the ‘performance’ of my own tourism. Like many of the other tourists I encountered, this has involved travelling in a strategically packed 4WD, navigating maps and guidebooks, monitoring fuel, food, and funds. And on a social level, engaging with the often mediated tourist industry, sites (both analytically and spontaneously), people and experiences of interest. Importantly, much of this travel methodology is reflective of my photographic practice which incorporates framing, consuming, collecting, persisting and so on – all elements reflective of the tourist experience. Here then, in other words, the embedded photographer and researcher is living inside the ‘performance’ of tourism.

² A mode of tourism described by Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt, Michael Haldrup, Jonas Larsen and John Urry in their book *Performing Tourist Places* (2004) that defines a mode of tourism that is largely self-directed and involves visiting tourist attractions and other unplanned discoveries along the journey.

³ Sites such as Lake Mungo and Uluru do have landing strips though these are largely reserved for goods transport and emergencies. They can be used for tourism but at very high prices.

To illustrate this embedded viewpoint I have occasionally inserted myself into the photographs, not in a self-portrait mode, but actively partaking in tourist activities amongst the immense landscapes or the ‘tourist bubble’⁴. In relation to this project the ‘bubble’ refers to the places frequented by groups of tourists travelling to similar locations over approximately the same timeframe. This involves shared experiences and often the tourists encounter each other several times. Certainly, for this form of touring, photography plays a major role in tourist activity and the ‘gaze’ is all important, although, in my exegesis I argue that contemporary tourism and this particular form of remote Australian travel relies on a multi-sensorial experience where a chance meeting or ‘off-the-beaten-track’ discovery is as important to the travel experience and memory narrative as images.

This hybridised sensory experience is established and enacted through tourist activities and imagination and is photographically documented for this project using two methods. First, with a large-format camera and often from a distance with compositions that include tourist interaction, infrastructure and the featured landscape (though mostly not actually picturing the landscapes desired natural feature (apogee) wholly). These more analytical photographs ‘set the scene’ and are accompanied by mid-range or even close-up details that act to elaborate on the possibilities these places present to the tourist.

The second approach is more representative of the embedded working methodology as a smaller medium-format camera is used which requires less technicalities and a more candid approach. This enables photographs of a more fleeting nature and emphasises human interaction with the particular location and amongst fellow tourists, locals and industry workers.

Weaving a discursive line through these two approaches is the possibility of a choreography that adds another layer to reflect on the tourist experience that is so heavily reliant on both mediation and chance. The photographs that make up this project have been produced for both exhibition and a photobook publication and aim to experiment with the traditions of the travelogue and documentary photography.

The inclusion of the semi-fictive narrative that chronicles encounters with other travellers creates a further level of insight that may not be evident within the actual photographs. This anecdotal travelogue-like voice recounts mini-narratives that might be factual, an extension of the truth or total fiction. The non-linear voice outlines failed and fulfilled expectations and ambitions within the Australian ‘outback’ and aims to give further understanding to the mode of tourism investigated. Much like the photographic work, this voice poses questions about choreography, authenticity and multi-sensorial experiences, and encourages the reader to question and expand on the narratives that unfold throughout the images and text. This methodology establishes the project as a form of experimental documentary and is contextualised with other documentary projects that blur fiction and fact through discursive narratives, and present them in experimental ways (photobook, installations, multimedia, Internet, etc).

Through the inclusion of a performative-self and accompanying semi-fictive narrative, the exegesis argues that *Viewing Platforms* extends the long history of travel diaries, maps and guidebooks and

⁴ This term was discovered in the writings of social psychologist Dr. Alex Gillespie in relation to tourism that is ‘packaged’ and prevalent in most modes of modern tourism. This can make up some of the travel experience I am investigating but more often relates to much shorter periods of travel and may include guided tours or theme park experiences.

that the project contributes to the contemporary tourist experience and its representation in visual culture. Early influential photographic publications that documented travel and have influenced my project include William Bradford's *The Arctic Regions* (1873)⁵, Robert Frank's *The Americans* (1958) and in Australia, Nicholas Caire's *Victorian Views* (1905), amongst many others.

This exegesis is structured in five chapters, Chapter One, *The Tourist*, begins by defining this term 'tourist' in relation to *Viewing Platforms*. It introduces concepts relating to tourist encounters and questions the tourist's quest for authenticity within the Australian landscape. It also elaborates on key terms used throughout this exegesis which include: remote, landscape, touristscape and desire. The chapter historically uncovers how tourism was established, particularly with the influence of The Grand Tour both as an activity and a concept that developed as technology advanced. The American West is highlighted for the entwined relationships that formed in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries between frontier mentality, technology, tourism and photography. It elaborates on theoretical linkages between photography and tourism in relation to technology and how these two modern commodities are interlinked and share similar histories that fuel tourist desire.

The second section of Chapter One then looks at the introduction of tourism in Australia by focusing on the Blue Mountains through an engagement with the writings of Australian historians Julia Horne and Martin Thomas. Investigations are made of the first viewing platforms constructed in the Blue Mountains and further analysis is then made of how these were influenced by travel literature and visual culture. Viewing platforms are often constructed with cameras in mind, introducing photography as a central element in the experience of tourism and establishing tourist spaces as performative, enacted and interactive. To demonstrate this, a visual analysis is undertaken of early photographs (found in the National Library of Australia Digital Collections and The Sate Library of Victoria) and advertising posters. These include photographs by Kerry & Co Photo Studio, Harold Cazneaux and Harry Phillips that reveal an ongoing interest and engagement with two traditional visual tropes – the picturesque and the sublime.

The chapter then moves from the photographic print to book publishing that represented early versions of the Australian photobook which document colonisation and tourism in a celebratory manner. Nicholas Caire's *Victorian Views* (1905) is examined for modes that document the Australian rural and urban landscape and attention is paid to editing and narrative. This is important to *Viewing Platforms* as a new form of travelogue that reflects past attempts to photograph new frontiers of Australia and experiments with new methodologies.

The chapter concludes with an analysis of one of the photographs from *Viewing Platforms* to demonstrate how these ideas visually and conceptually intersect and mutate. This evaluation introduces the accompanying visual work to this thesis and establishes the arguments that run through this exegesis.

Chapter Two, 'Photography, Tourism and Landscape', is a contextual overview of practitioners who have worked with themes and methodologies that relate to and have influenced this research. It examines specific projects relevant to *Viewing Platforms* and delineates how my imagery contributes to the ceaselessly expanding medium of photography and photobook publishing.

⁵ Featured in the expansive and informative: Parr, M. and Badger, G. *The Photobook: A History Volume 1*, London and New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 2004 p. 31.

The chapter begins with photographic perspectives on confined tourist locations by evaluating the seminal work of mid-twentieth century British photographer John Hinde who created stunning postcards for both promotion and tourist keepsakes. This is followed by a discussion on the work of Japanese contemporary photographer Tomoki Imai. And an analysis is undertaken of his project *TDL* (2003) that disguises fabricated Disneyland landscapes as real environments.

The section concludes by looking at prolific English photographer Martin Parr and his book *Small World* (1995) that was produced while he criss-crossed the globe in the early 1990s to document international 'package tours'.

Chapter Two then investigates Australian perspectives for depicting both tourism, rural and urban landscapes in two differing modes: the vernacular and the spectacular. It begins with an analysis of work made by contemporary Sydney-based photographer Anne Zahalka and her series titled *Leisureland* (1998 – 2001). The project is an edition of large-scale exhibition prints documenting Australian leisure pursuits that are largely undertaken in simulated environments. I then look at Martin Mischkulnig's 2009 publication *Smalltown* that documents the in-between towns that are scattered throughout the Australian 'outback'. These influential projects are synthesized as differing ways of picturing the Australian landscape and methodological components, including scale, narrative and accompanying text.

Chapter Two concludes with a comparative analysis of projects by two German photographers that use the urban and rural landscape as a stage by employing a combination of methods usually reserved for cinema. First I look at seminal film director Wim Wenders' photobook *Written in the West* (1987) and this is followed by contemporary photographer Mirko Martin's project *L.A. Crash* (2006 – 2011). Particular attention is paid to how they use space theatrically with semi-choreographed subjects as performers in much the same vein as tourism. I also elaborate on the new and experimental modes of documentary photography and how these are presented in varying forms.⁶ Many of the discussed projects intentionally blur the line between fact and fiction and extend the readings of photographs beyond traditional means. Chapter Two finishes with a contextualisation of how *Viewing Platforms* is situated amongst these projects and the production techniques that establish *Viewing Platforms* as an experimental form of documentary photography.

Chapter Three, 'Journeying', investigates theoretical concepts that are pertinent to this project. It begins by identifying tourist desire that includes: memory collection, the open road, visual confirmation of specific landscapes and new and exciting encounters that are multi-sensory experiences. The chapter outlines the importance of photography to these performative activities and elaborates on concepts that relate to what American sociologist John Urry termed the 'hermeneutic circle'.⁷

⁶ In other documents I have termed this 'New Documentary' which relates to the concept of 'slow journalism' and is featured in the Spring 2014 issue of Aperture Magazine titled 'Documentary, Expanded'. The term and methodology 'New Documentary' has also been influenced by the recent exhibition, *Backstory*, and catalogue essay from the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Photography written and curated by Karen Irvine: <http://www.mocp.org/exhibitions/2013/05/Backstory%20Essay.pdf> (Accessed 17/12/2013).

⁷ Hermeneutic has several complex meaning, here I referenced from: J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, London and California: SAGE Publications, 1990, p. 140 (Note: I use this term in relation to philosophy and the visual study of photographs both looked upon and being made).

This involves the cyclical motion of inspiration gained from imagery, photographs then being made that emulate those original images and the eventual presentation of these photographs.

Chapter Three then draws on American cultural critic Dean MacCannell's influential theoretical extension of sociologist Erving Goffman's dramaturgical analysis of front and back social 'regions'.⁸ It establishes viewing platforms as central to tourist sites and also imaginative undertakings where MacCannell's varied social regions meet and mutate. This section also introduces more recent tourism theory that elaborates on the concept of 'performance turn' which looks beyond the idea of the 'tourist gaze' originally introduced by Urry.

The chapter concludes by outlining the unique ways in which tourists travel to and experience remote Australian touristscapes. Different forms of travelling are highlighted based on the influential publication series *New Directions in Tourism Analysis*.⁹ Australian travel is framed and analysed in association with 'Inhabiting, Navigating and Drifting',¹⁰ the forms of tourism that take place within touristscapes and amongst the liminal spaces traversed whilst 'on the road'.

Chapter Four, *Imaging Touristscapes*, analyses the performative tourist actions I encountered while producing *Viewing Platforms*. It outlines the photographic methodologies employed to document this form of embedded research and examines this process in association with the 'dérive'¹¹ which is a mental and physical mode to experimentally experience urban space. Photographic methodology is then discussed in relation to particular images and expanded on, some techniques include: camera formats in relation to analytical and candid modes of image capture, shooting sets of the same composition, including a performative-self in the images and choreographing subjects within the frame. The chapter also expands on the semi-fictional voice and highlights other methods and influences such as books by British art critic and author John Berger and Australian author Stephen Muecke.

Chapter Four concludes with an outline of how my photographs are presented in gallery and publication contexts contrasting the dialogue created between these two modes of presentation and the supporting writing that is approached in academic and fictional modes. This draws on previous contextual discussions to emphasise the importance of scale, narrative, text and camera craft to both expand on concepts investigated and also elicit emotive responses to experiences encountered while travelling in Australia (awe, excitement, fear and other such emotions). It finishes by highlighting the connections and narratives created between readings of the photographs in relation to the text and how these expand on experimental documentary.

⁸ D. MacCannell, *The Tourist A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York: Schocken Books, 1976.

⁹ *New Directions in Tourism Analysis* is an extensive series of publications on tourism from many perspectives. It is published by Ashgate, London, and edited by Dimitri Ioannides: <https://www.ashgate.com/default.aspx?page=2572> (Accessed 20/01/2014).

¹⁰ J. Ole Bærenholdt, M. Haldrup, J. Larsen and J. Urry *Performing Tourist Places* (*New Directions in Tourist Analysis* series), London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004, pp. 104-137.

¹¹ The Letterist International first established the 'dérive' in the 1940s in Paris. It was a research tool that was used to make psychogeographic experiments on emotions and behaviour experienced in urban environments while 'drifting' without designated plans. Individuals were entirely directed – without maps or itineraries – by feelings and emotions. The concept was taken up and continued by the Situationist International a radical group of avant-garde artists and thinkers that succeeded the Letterist International in the 1950s.

Chapter One: The Tourist

The terms tourist and tourism have a contested nomenclature that requires a general explanation and a definition pertinent to *Viewing Platforms*. Etymologically, William F. Theobald's publication *Global Tourism*¹ positions 'tour' as deriving from the Latin 'tornare' and the Greek 'tornos' which translates as "a lathe or circle – the movement around a central point of axis."²

This early definition is associated with all modern renderings of the term and succinctly defines the mode of travel within Australia that I am exploring. It references a single point of departure (which could be home or the first point of entry for the international visitor) and the subsequent long distances the tourist requires to traverse the desired tourist attractions within such a vast country as Australia. The term tourist in contemporary society is used "to describe a traveller who tours sites of interest, with the journey itself as part of the purpose, the travel as well as the arriving being equally important."³ This lathe or circle is also representative of the often-travelled round-Australia trip⁴ that is intrinsic to this project and requires extended motor vehicle travel and some form of technology that contains a lens that acts to "offer indisputable evidence that the trip was made, that the program was carried out, that fun was had."⁵

The concept of a central axis later shifted in the English language as touring became more affordable, possible and popular towards the end of the eighteenth century. The term became something more akin to 'one's turn', where the suffix –ism is defined as an action or process and the suffix –ist denotes one that performs this given action. When the word tour and the suffixes –ism and –ist are used in combination it again references a circle travelled.⁶ Importantly, this later nomenclature in relation to *Viewing Platforms* delineates the need for a performed action beyond simply sightseeing (and photographing) which includes other sensory experiences and the journey itself that is referenced above as a circle.

For this project, the circular journey refers to the longer travel times in remote Australia that enables chance discoveries and more time for contemplation. Hence the undertakings and encounters that take place during this act of tourism are as important as seeing and experiencing the desired features of a particular landscape. These activities are a deliberate and conscious acting out of leisure events from a starting and returning point and include unmediated tourist experiences.

¹ W. F. Theobald, *Global Tourism*, Oxford, England: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2005, pp. 9.

² Ibid. 9-11.

³ J. Horne, *The Pursuit of Wonder; How Australia's Landscape was Explored, Nature Discovered and Tourism Unleashed*, Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2005, p. 30.

⁴ Colloquially this is also known as 'the big lap'. Although this term may indicate a literal round the whole of Australia trip it is often used for smaller circular journeys through the continent. When I was a teenager I made a 'half-round-trip' which took in central Australia and the east coast in a Volkswagen camper with six passengers.

⁵ S. Sontag, *On Photography* New York: Picador USA (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), 1973, p. 177.

⁶ W. F. Theobald, *Global Tourism*, Oxford, England: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2005, pp. 9-11.

The Grand Tour

Travelling for the purposes of cultural (and landscape) exploration and consumption is by no means a new leisure activity, but its function is closely related to technological (and photographic) advancement. The main purpose of early travel was related to survival and the everyday tasks of gathering and hunting food. In the medieval ages travel was also introduced as part of spiritual pilgrimage, where, importantly, the journey travelled added weight to the importance of the spiritual experience. In Europe during the Renaissance technological advancement and travel diaries ignited interest in exploration, trade and adventure. Travel became a tool for expedition and exchange.⁷

Meanwhile, for centuries in Australia Aboriginal societies used land travel for a combination of all of these purposes that included discovery, spirituality, trade, education and food gathering. Young men were sent out alone on initiation rituals and gathering expeditions were split between tasks for woman and men that involved ritual practices. Although slowly slipping away from present knowledge, this form of fundamental remote Australian travel created new languages, cultures, customs and survival techniques.⁸

Modern tourism is undoubtedly linked, connected and influenced by the rapid industrialisation that has encouraged technological advancement and the establishment of market economies and eventual digital globalisation, where we can now travel in virtual worlds at street level through Google Street View. Starting in the nineteenth century and consolidating in the twentieth, widespread and far-reaching travel was made possible by tourism becoming organised, managed and promoted on a massive commercial scale. The idea of visiting distant and foreign places to which people had never before thought of travelling to was and continues to be an enticing prospect for many. Beyond its attractiveness as a leisure pursuit, initially confined exclusively to the wealthy, at the turn of the twentieth century travel became a pastime that, was, and continues to be, considered a valuable, educational and pleasurable experience for the middle classes.

Initially influenced by The Grand Tour which has a rich history that is largely European, and beginning in the late sixteenth century it became fashionable and desirable for young male aristocrats to visit Paris, Venice, Florence, and Rome, in the final years of their classical education. This introduced Englishmen, Germans, Scandinavians, and also Americans to the art and culture of France and Italy. In the beginning, travel was difficult and expensive throughout Europe though the tradition was extended to include more of the middle class after rail and steamship travel made the journey less of a burden in the late nineteenth century. The 'Grand Tourist' was typically a young man with some understanding of Latin and Greek literature in addition to leisure time and considerable funds.⁹ The Grand Tour is a striking example to illustrate how tourism became structured, organised and, importantly, valued and desired.

⁷ J. Sorabella, 'The Grand Tour', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/grtr/hd_grtr.htm (Accessed 07/02/2014).

⁸ For example see: P. Jones, *Ochre and Rust: Artefacts and Encounters on Australian Frontiers*, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2007, pp. 356-362.

⁹ J. Sorabella, 'The Grand Tour', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/grtr/hd_grtr.htm (Accessed 07/02/2014).

In Europe the proximity of borders between small but diverse countries helped to make travel and tourism economically and logistically feasible. As a result, much of the theory and present ideas about tourism are constructed through theories that are Euro-centric. Prior to the revolutionary introduction of steam power, the Grand Tour was a cultural expedition undertaken by mainly upper-middle-class European males (and Americans on a smaller scale). The gentlemen on tour were usually accompanied by a 'cicerone' (cultural guide) and firmly believed that cognitive knowledge is acquired through the external senses. The more one could experience the more one could know, therefore, while on tour everything from seeing, smelling, dancing, eating, sporting, shopping, and even fornicating was both undertaken and encouraged. Everything was to be consumed.

The Grand Tour eventually became a leisure undertaking beyond an arduous and expensive pastime and was a proposition of travel firmly established throughout Europe. To travel within Europe to events such as World Fairs incorporated many detours and pauses along the journey to take in sites of interest and this brought about the establishment of the tourist itinerary.

Grand Tour-like journeys also included a spectacle of another kind – the everyday. This included informative, educational and leisurely tours of locations that American author and sociologist Dean MacCannell has extensively deconstructed in his influential publication *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*¹⁰ (1976). For example, in Paris the tour was punctuated with excursions within government buildings and below the depths of the bustling street life to locations that included the morgue, a slaughterhouse, a tobacco factory, the government printing office, the mint, the stock exchange, and the Supreme Court in session. Locations and activities that MacCannell has poignantly pointed out illustrate the balance of man, nature, life and death.¹¹ As I will argue in the following chapters, tourism undertaken by a motor vehicle to remote Australian destinations also encompasses experiences of awe, fear, risk and the everyday that relate to this balance of encounters that are expected of a particular type of tourism that is largely self-directed and can be considered a form of 'drifting'.¹²

The Grand Tour that swept across Europe was also transplanted to America through visual culture that included guidebooks and travel diaries in addition to early versions of photobooks. At the turn of the twentieth century the entrepreneurial Kolb brothers set up their studio on the rim of one of America's greatest landscape attractions – the Grand Canyon. From this base they made tourist photographs and postcards and travelled extensively to 'un-tamed' regions documenting their explorations.¹³ In America tourism began on the east coast where most recent European (and especially English) arrivals established their new lives. The landscape was considered a space of wonder and popular locations included Niagara Falls and the White Mountains in New Hampshire.

¹⁰ D. MacCannell, *The Tourist A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York: Schocken Books, 1976 pp. 62-76.

¹¹ MacCannell takes his work-related location examples for analysis from two key guidebooks from that period: W. Heinemann *Anglo-American Practical Guide to Exhibition Paris: 1900*, London, 1900 and K. Baedekar *Paris and Environs With Routes from London to Paris: Handbook for Travelers*, Leipzig, 1900 (see MacCannell chapter 3).

¹² The publication *Performing Tourist Places* (2004) by Ole Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen and Urry defines three forms of tourist methods, 'inhabiting', 'navigating' and 'drifting'. The last method includes techniques from the previous methods and is largely self-guided across longer periods of time. Large tourist attractions are to be visited but it is also important to move through and explore other unplanned sites over extended periods of time.

¹³ R. Bosma, 'Tourism, landscape and photography pioneers: the Kolb brothers' photo studio in Grand Canyon National Park', in Gremmen, H. (ed.), *Objects in Mirror: The Imagination of the American Landscape*, The Netherlands: Fw:Books & FOTODOK, 2012, pp. 4-15.

Following this, other regions of America were established as tourist locations with the opening up of the American West for exploration and exploitation. Importantly, photography was invented in the same period as ‘frontier’ economic development in the American West and it was practiced by settlers to record progress. Many of the expansive number of photographs made in the American West were produced by surveyors and scientists and are still influential to landscape photography today. Prominent practitioners included Timothy H. O’Sullivan and Carleton E. Watkins whose compositions often feature small figures amongst grand landscapes and industrial constructions (such as railways) that emphasise both the natural and industrial¹⁴ sublime. This is a method of scale also adopted for *Viewing Platforms* in order to emphasise the vastness of the Australian landscape and also the possibilities that it offers the tourist. Figure 4.11 in chapter four is a photograph from *Viewing Platforms* made in the South Australian desert and expands on this trope of photography, where the figure (who is actually me) is extremely small-scale within the composition and submerged in the desert terrain.

The imagery and stories from the American West created a cultural idea that derived from geography and transformed into mythology that implied freedom, individualism and heroism – it was the West of the imagination.¹⁵ The introduction of steam trains and importantly the automobile enhanced this imagination and the ‘road trip’ was established. Photography is intensely bound up with this process of mythologisation which is also enacted at tourist locations. Later in this chapter this process will be outlined to uncover how development and myth established the Blue Mountains in Australia as a tourist attraction that led the way for many other such sites.

In her publication, *Landscape Matters; Landscape Photography, Culture and Identity*, British photography theorist Liz Wells outlines the importance and influence of seeing, views and photography in these adventures. Importantly, she looks back to poetry, guidebooks, stereoscopic photography, and paintings to establish how specific locations became signposted and known as ‘viewpoints’, ‘scenic views’ and ‘Kodak moments.’¹⁶ Eventually viewing platforms were constructed amongst such grand landscapes and photography was influential as to where these were installed. This enabled paramount ‘views’ (although meditated) of the designated natural features for photography and assisted the conservation of the environments where high visitor numbers were expected. It also established a focal point within the landscape that guided tourists within the designated space. In terms of imagery, it created the ‘view’ that was used to promote the location through images of the epic landscape viewed from the platform and eventually this imagery came to include the platform itself.

One important travel publication Wells makes reference to is influential nineteenth century American preacher Thomas Starr King’s *The White Hills; their legends, landscape and poetry* printed in America in 1869. Although today’s travellers typically have a continuous live feed of Google maps, historical information, instantaneous ticketing and advice through social media, King’s publication could loosely be compared to a printed *Lonely Planet* guidebook, though with subtle religious undertones. In a more visual and culturally sophisticated manner, King’s publication was like an interactive information

¹⁴ D. E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994.

¹⁵ S. P. Phillips, ‘To Subdue the Continent: Photographs of the Developing West’, *Crossing the Frontier: Photographs of the Developing West, 1849 to the Present*, San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1996, p. 14.

¹⁶ L. Wells, *Landscape Matters; Landscape Photography, Culture and Identity*, London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2011 p. 90.

centre one might find when entering rural cities or at the border entrance to national parks. Wells notes (as quoted from King): “for tourists, bringing together pictures, selected poems, and history of the region in a single volume, the purpose being that travellers need carry only one book.”¹⁷

Although it may have read rather whimsically, it was intended that the tourists themselves would fill in the gaps between historical facts and religiously influenced poetry.¹⁸ When it came to describing how, where and when to view the landscape it was extremely precise and the following two examples show how the writing reflects the act of image-making: “A perfectly finished picture is shown from a small hill about four miles from the Hotel” and “a frame is gracefully carved out of the two nearer hills, to seclude it from any neighboring [sic] roughness around the Peabody valley.”¹⁹

Common to travel writing from the same period is the poetic manner in which the visitor is encouraged (or directed) to where and how to best to admire (or ‘soak in’) the landscape and this, no doubt, lead to the geographic location for the construction of viewing platforms.

The tourist landscape locations elaborated on throughout this exegesis, were first designated by explorers, surveyors and tourist operators (entrepreneurial or government initiated) and then expanded on aesthetically through visual culture and literature which also influenced where infrastructure and viewing platforms were built. In regards to my own research this is considered a form of ‘site curation’. Later, industry, leisure and health resorts in association with the laying of train tracks were essential to the establishment of tourism and the geographical location of infrastructure.

In the middle of the nineteenth century in Great Britain terms such as ‘tourist industry’ and ‘package tour’ were touted amongst the new dialogues on travel and Thomas Cook is attributed with creating this new industry in 1841 (whose name is still synonymous with tourism). However, the advent of modern tourism did not start with the entrepreneurial Cook. Well before his time, successful pilgrims had required considerable skill and foresight in anticipating both the needs and interests of travellers with religious interests. By the end of the eighteenth century, several other entrepreneurs had begun to offer all-inclusive excursions throughout Europe. These more secular experiences, rooted in the traditions of the Grand Tour, served to reduce the amount of effort individual travellers had to spend in planning their own holidays.²⁰

With improvements in transport and the growth of industry, aligned with growing industrialisation, tourism had firmly established itself in Europe in the late nineteenth century. This led to an interest in foreign countries and there was soon a need in Europe for more and even new tourist landscapes – including Australia. By the late 1880s Thomas Cook & Son had established an agency in Australia and their mission was two-fold: expand on travel back to Europe and to establish economic, safe

¹⁷ T.S. King, *The White Hills; their legends, landscape and poetry*, Boston: Woolworth, Ainsworth and Company; Riverside, Cambridge: HO. Houghton and Company, 1869, p. 9.

¹⁸ In Judith Adler’s American Journal of Sociology article *Travel as Performed Art* (1989) she states: “By the 18th century, some travel guides included standard lists of questions and columns of blank tables wherein a traveler might enter statistical information.” (p. 1384).

¹⁹ T.S. King, *The White Hills; their legends, landscape and poetry*, Boston: Woolworth, Ainsworth and Company; Riverside, Cambridge: HO. Houghton and Company, 1869, pp. 9-10.

²⁰ E. Chambers, *Native Tours; The Anthropology of Travel and Tourism*, Illinois, USA: Waveland Press, Inc, 2012 pp. 16-17.

and well-planned holidays, packages and excursions in Australia. Approximately twenty years later the government also became involved, not only through policy and funds, but by establishing tourist bureaus that facilitated travel and promoted locations.²¹

Although it may not have been using the same nomenclature, Australian tourism started earlier than this period of globalised travel possibilities. Julia Horne is an Australian historian with a particular interest in the development of tourism in Australia. In her publication, *The Pursuit of Wonder; How Australia's Landscape was Explored, Nature Discovered and Tourism Unleashed*,²² she chronicles early colonial exploration in Australia and how this shaped what became the tourist industry. Through her deconstruction of early Australian tourism Horne often uses the term 'sight-identifying' rather than 'sightseeing', a term in common use as well as tour, tourist and tourism in those times.

Like the European Grand Tour and travel in the American West as discussed above, the journey and what could be found 'en route' was of utmost importance.

As a recently colonised country Australian travel journals, botany records and, importantly, surveyor reports paid particular significance to tabling possibilities for future inhabitation. As she notes: "Their *worth* was often identified by reference to notions of the sublime, the beautiful and the picturesque and the important literary and artistic modes of expression in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries used to depict enlightening and interesting landscapes."²³ Importantly these landscapes were evaluated in terms of how manageable and prosperous they would function as lands to inhabit. Although more about discovery and the future conquering of new lands, these colonial expeditions paved the way (and psyche) for future Australian tourism and manifestations that still exist today. Indeed, the pilgrim-like nature of much remote Australian travel to landscape attractions today contains some elements of this adventurous spirit.

Horne also cites several examples from early colonial expedition journals that were filled with notes, poetry, drawings and survey documentation. Many of these explorers were aghast at the beauty found for example in Tasmania and the language they used is reminiscent of that from Europe and America that is descriptive, composed and often poetic.

This form of travelogue language is also reflected in early photographic compositions, particularly in relation to the picturesque. A good example is quoted by Horne from George Frankland's expedition report to observe and survey Lake St. Clair while attempting to find the head of the Derwent River in 1835:

...we suddenly found ourselves on the edge of a most beautiful lake, in the heart of the scenery of the most picturesque character... We again obtained a magnificent view of the greater portion of this beautiful sheet of water... I will not dilate on the extreme beauty of the scenery as it might be considered out of place in an official Report [sic], but I must confess that while narrating the circumstances of

²¹ J. Horne, *The Pursuit of Wonder; How Australia's Landscape was Explored, Nature Discovered and Tourism Unleashed*, Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2005, p. 64.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid, p. 30.

this journey, I feel inspired by the first discovery of such romantic Country [sic], impressions which revive even in cold narrative. I believe that every man in the party felt more (or) less the calm influence of this scenery, and to all, this day's journey was a matter of recreation.²⁴

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century tourism was becoming increasingly more interesting to Australians as an activity to aspire to. This was also inspired by the colonial excitement of the 'new land' where there were many unexplored territories. As Horne notes, "Celebration was also notable in traveller prototypes, the intrepid tourist, the lady traveller, the gentlemen explorer, all manifesting certain virtues as a consequence of travel."²⁵ The expansive landscapes varied greatly from the inner deserts, to picturesque coastal towns and the grand Blue Mountains – the most popular of tourist attractions during this period. As Australian academic and historian Martin Thomas (who has also written extensively on the Blue Mountains) points out, within these spaces of "marvel and bewilderment... image-making brought a ritualistic quality to the landscape encounter."²⁶

Linguistically and conceptually, tourism was still of course bound to travel, history, culture and sociology, but it had a more fluid definition in Australia as opposed to where its roots lay in Europe and it saturated the Australian psyche. Discovery then became a prime motivator in Australia rather than sites continuously visited such as those in Europe.

The Blue Mountains

The Blue Mountains are part of the Great Diving Range located in southern New South Wales and are famed for their sublime limestone gorges and picturesque waterfalls. Australian tourism was first established throughout this region with early sightseers seeking grand views and adventures within landscapes that were astonishingly different from Europe. It is known that adventurous travellers visited the area as early as 1860. In the late 1880s newly developed resort towns between Wentworth Falls and Mount Victoria were constructed to take visual and leisurely advantage of waterfalls such as that at Weatherboard. The first rail infrastructure to the area was established in 1867 and improvements, including going through mountains rather than around them, continued into the next century and included lodgings enabling tourists to stay for longer and dwell with comforts that were reminiscent of home. Apart from clear and posted walking tracks most upper-class visitors did not have much interest in establishing further tourist infrastructure, and "indeed many may have not wanted such changes."²⁷

Promoted by entrepreneurial foresight and the introduction of a steam train, the region quickly developed entrepreneurial infrastructure that included retail, accommodation and the subdivision

²⁴ Narrative of an Expedition to the Head of the Derwent, and in the countries bordering the Huon, performed in February and March, 1835, by George Frankland *Tasmanian Education*, August 1954, pp. 213-14 (Quoted in J. Horne 2005, p. 43).

²⁵ J. Horne, *The Pursuit of Wonder; How Australia's Landscape was Explored, Nature Discovered and Tourism Unleashed*, Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2005, p. 62.

²⁶ M. Thomas, *The Artificial Horizon; Imaging the Blue Mountains*, Melbourne University Press, 2003, pp. 30-31.

²⁷ J. Horne, *The Pursuit of Wonder; How Australia's Landscape was Explored, Nature Discovered and Tourism Unleashed*, Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2005, p. 118.

of land. The Blue Mountains were fully equipped for visitors and increased interest was driven by promotional tourist material, including the use of terms such as ‘beauty spots’, ‘therapeutic vacationing’ and ‘resort holidays.’²⁸ As Martin Thomas has outlined, the Australian psyche shifted dramatically from duress to delight in regards to ‘bush’ tourism:

During the nineteenth century the perception of the Blue Mountains in European consciousness underwent a profound shift. From being a barrier, then a conduit to the anticipated riches of the interior (land, gold, bountiful harvests), finally, in the wake of the railway that led to the upper reaches in 1867, the Blue Mountains became an object of beauty and contemplation to a greater populace.²⁹

As the Blue Mountains became increasingly popular for visitors further tourist infrastructure was installed. The tourist routes that followed were aided by industry that was dominated by logging and mining. The huge swathes of land that were being opened up for railways to support this new industrial growth ultimately made the tourist industry of the Blue Mountains possible. As visitor numbers rose it was necessary to ensure safety throughout the rugged landscape and hence more infrastructure was required. This led to more extensive construction of paths that trailed along valleys and scoured up mountains. Viewing platforms were also constructed to take advantage of particular locations with views of waterfalls and valleys. In addition to this, cave entrances and trails were also extended and these new trails and decks that led deeper into the landscape increased and created new dangers for the uninformed and/or adventurous visitor.

The extension of walking paths and opening up of more inaccessible areas created newer and more exhilarating trails to experience the ‘grand vistas’. The initial paths, steps, rails and lookouts were constructed mainly from left over industrial materials and trees felled on location and roped together (this is evident in Nicolas Caire’s publication *Victorian Views* which acted to educate ‘city-dwellers’ on the progress made ‘out bush’). These did little to protect visitors from danger and were there more to direct people and warn them of possible dangers. Due to popularity, Govett’s Leap was one of the first of these sites to install iron railings and the viewing platform continued to be the point of entry into the wilderness that lay beyond and below.³⁰ These were sites of excitement, wonder and exhilaration and many of the newly formed walking tracks (albeit mostly unknown to visitors) connected with ancient and sacred Aboriginal tracks and paths worn by early explorers.

With the introduction of newly formed and safe access to the landscape this excitement was also expressed through photography which was visually taming and colonising the Blue Mountains. In his comprehensive study, *The Artificial Horizon; Imaging the Blue Mountains*, (2003), Martin Thomas outlines how photographs were made theatrically to entice landscape consumption and wonder and how people came to want possession of such places. Thomas refers to the part-time photographer and full-time judge, Ernest Brougham Docker’s, stereographic photograph from 1898 tilted *Three Sisters, Katoomba*³¹ in the following passage:

²⁸ J. Horne, *The Pursuit of Wonder; How Australia’s Landscape was Explored, Nature Discovered and Tourism Unleashed*, Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2005, pg. 118 (terms used throughout *The Pursuit of Wonder*).

²⁹ M. Thomas, *The Artificial Horizon; Imaging the Blue Mountains*, Melbourne University Press, 2003, p. 41.

³⁰ J. Horne, *The Pursuit of Wonder; How Australia’s Landscape was Explored, Nature Discovered and Tourism Unleashed*, Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2005, pg. 62.

³¹ The image can be viewed at The University of Sydney Museums website: <http://sydney.edu.au/museums/collections/photography/views-and-scenes.shtml> (Accessed 13/7/2014).



FIGURE 1.1: E.B. Docker, *The Three Sisters*, (Mrs Vivian, Muriel Vivian and Rosamund), Katoomba, N.S.W. Stereographic photograph, (1898)

At a purely polemical level, this is explicit in the Docker stereograph where the conjunction of trinities becomes a means of assimilating the landscape into a European schema, rendering it feminine and thereby more easily subordinate to possession.³²

But as Thomas also makes extensive reference to, not all these locations are purely joyous, “accidents and intentional jumps are an inevitable reality.”³³ These stories certainly add to the mythology of the Blue Mountains as with many other Australian landscapes that are haunted by legends of lost children and other human tragedy.³⁴ Thomas recounts several of these stories throughout his text and points out that many place names make reference to these legends and these titles also create imaginings for the visitor: Ruined Castle, Mount Solitary, Devil’s Hole, Sublime Point, Dog Face, Point Repulse and Orphan Rock.³⁵

³² M. Thomas, *The Artificial Horizon; Imaging the Blue Mountains*, Melbourne University Press, 2003, p. 160.

³³ Ibid, p. 161.

³⁴ In his book *The Artificial Horizon: Imaging the Blue Mountains* Thomas retells a horrific story from 1907: “All these tragedies have their own peculiarities, their own odd details that stick in the mind. But the strangest to my knowledge occurred in July 1907 – a bizarre double fatality. ‘A MOUNTIAN SENSATION’, the headline read, and the story explained how T.J. Lannon, a thirteen-year-old resident of Sydney, had stood with his sister trying to get icicles,’ the newspaper explained, ‘which were hanging in the great length, and slipped on to the rocks at the top of the second fall.’ He fell some 200 feet, and when he was found, his head was ‘jammed between two rocks and scarcely a bone left sound’. Later that afternoon, two sisters, visiting from Bathurst, inspected the scene of the accident. One of them, Henriette M’Aviney, aged twenty-three, stepped on the same place as the boy and also fell. She was ‘literally smashed to pieces’. Her sister was ‘out of her mind with the shock’. The newspaper solemnly reported that, ‘The trustees have now fenced the dangerous spot’. (pp. 162-163 quotes from ‘A Mountain Sensation’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 July 1907).

³⁵ M. Thomas, *The Artificial Horizon; Imaging the Blue Mountains*, Melbourne University Press, 2003, p. 164-165.

Already established with agencies across Australian capital cities, in 1895 Thomas Cook & Son published their first guidebook to New South Wales and in a prominent and enticing manner the Blue Mountains were described as containing “great attractions as a tourist resort and sanatorium.”³⁶ During this period the New South Wales Railroads used the Blue Mountains to mount a campaign titled ‘Change of Air’ and rather than extended poetic text like Star’s (as discussed earlier in this chapter) photography and illustration was used on travel posters. These posters were popular and highly influential marketing tools throughout the next fifty years.³⁷ Visual analysis of this early advertising delineates the viewing platform as a central motif. Several of these illustrations (see FIG: 1.2 and 1.3) use compositional tropes that reference the picturesque and sublime that were borrowed from European painting and early Australian photography and are still in use throughout visual culture today – particularly landscape imagery.

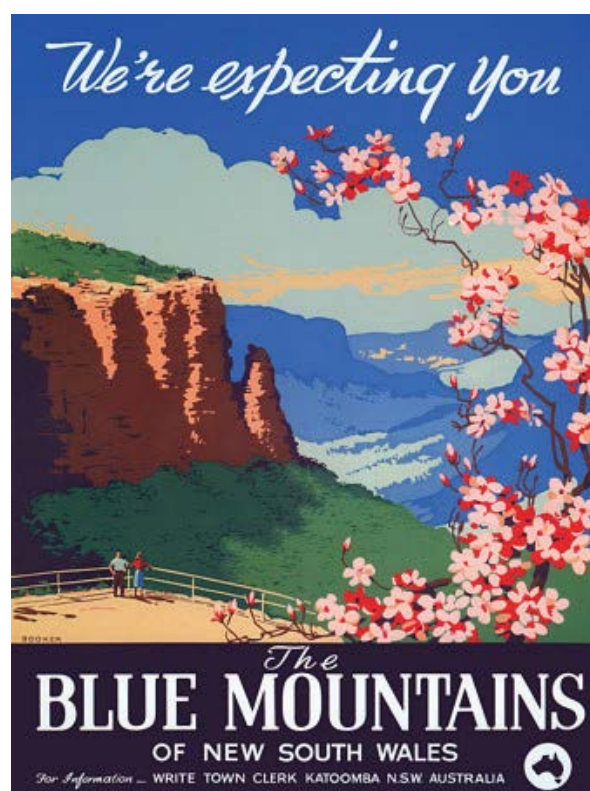


FIGURE 1.2: *Blue Mountains Tourist Advertising Poster*, (c. 1949)

Like early photography (both picturesque and pictorialist) these posters use a compositional mode where the mountains in the distance create a sectioned off landscape that emphasises fore, middle and background. At one-third or halfway through the composition the mountains are often accentuated. Flora details fill the edges of the frame and platforms and paths lead the viewer into the composition. Of the many posters illustrated to attract tourists to the Blue Mountains in the early

³⁶ J. Horne, *The Pursuit of Wonder; How Australia's Landscape was Explored, Nature Discovered and Tourism Unleashed*, Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press, 2005, p. 62.

³⁷ Many posters that were usually found in railway stations and travel agents are now collectors' items. See Josef Leovic Gallery for samples: http://www.joseflebovicgallery.com/catalogue/CL_143_2010/Pages/pg01.html (Accessed 01/12/2013).

twentieth century a majority feature a romanticised image of a couple or several people perched on a viewing platform admiring the landscape or poised to enter the mountain range. In these highly drafted posters slogans, commonly across the expansive blue skies, enticingly invite the viewer to the region: ‘We’re expecting you’ and ‘See for yourself’.

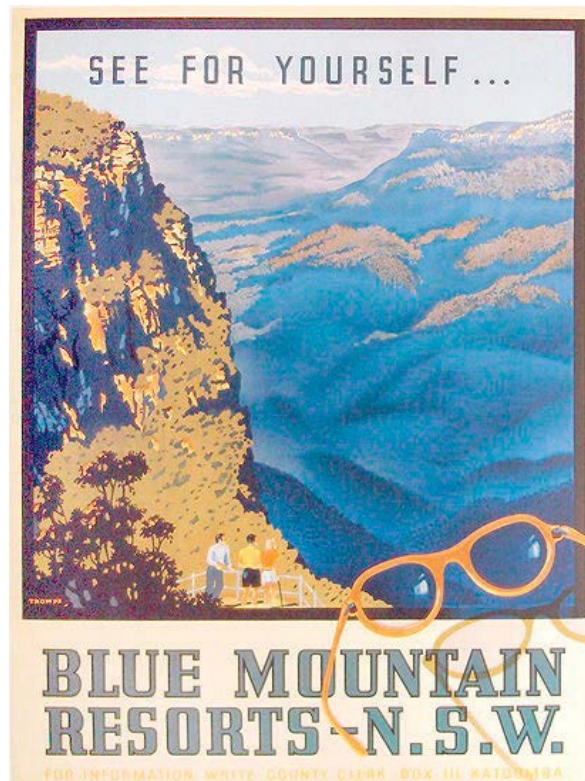


FIGURE 1.3: *Blue Mountain Resorts*, (1946)

Undoubtedly these advertising posters were drafted to emulate photography. The picturesque aesthetics they adopted reference, encourage and inspire the act of image-making.

To further understand how tourist infrastructure and imagery influenced photography and tourist activity within the Australian landscape this section will examine several examples of early photography and book publication that were made approximately fifty years before the above posters as Australian tourism was still being formed.³⁸

The first image to be examined was made by Charles Kerry & Co from Sydney between 1893 and 1897³⁹ and is a 20 x 15cm albumen print inscribed with: *The Lookout, Katoomba Fall, 411*. Kerry and Co were a Sydney-based company that compiled a collection of over 2,900 glass-plates between 1892 and 1917 and prints from these plates appeared in publications (often titled ‘Albums of Views’) and later as postcards. Subsequently, their extensive collection of photographs is regarded

³⁸ Australia has a vast history of view and tourist photography and plays an important role in the history of publishing and the photobook. Many photographers exploring the Blue Mountains between 1907 – 1925 were featured in the varied *Wilson’s Guides to the Blue Mountains* that are still collected today. For further details see Phillip Kay *The Far-Famed Blue Mountains of Harry Phillips* published in 1985.

³⁹ This photograph is part of the National Library of Australia’s Digital Collections accessible online: <http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.pic-vn4469751-s46&fullrecord=yes&referercode=catt> (Accessed 7/4/2013).

as some of the most important early colonial imagery of New South Wales. Kerry and Co employed a number of photographers⁴⁰ and during the 1890s they compiled an immense stock of scenic views as well as staged squatters quarters imagery where photographers on horseback or train travelled to remote new towns throughout New South Wales to document rural and urban landscapes. With the assistance of one of their employees, Willem van der Velden, they designed a photographic elevation vehicle that vertically lifted the photographer to a higher vantage point above the vehicle while the camera was kept level.⁴¹

These factors contributed to their work and its relevance to *Viewing Platforms* as early photographers who were seeking ultimate views of the landscape and its inhabitants, even if that required choreography and some ‘site curation’ or the construction of artificial vantage point technology.



FIGURE 1.4: Kerry & Co Photo Sydney, *Lookout, Katoomba Fall*, 411, (c.1895)

⁴⁰ Kerry & Co staff included prominent photographers in their own right, including: George Bell, J. C. Cruden, Harold Bradley and W. Van der Velden.

⁴¹ Further information and images from the Kerry and Co studio are available through the Powerhouse Museum website: http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/database/theme,1420,Charles_Kerry_Photography_Studio_1885-1917 (Accessed 12/12/2013).

The Lookout, Katoomba Fall, 411, depicts a primitively structured walking track that cuts through dense bush below Katoomba Falls that tower above in the photograph. Where the path meets the waterfall in the composition it makes a sharp left shift in direction and scales the mountain towards the falls. At this point, the path slightly, though precariously, hangs over the edge of the cliff and the rails are attached to a tree for support. Standing upon this early version of a viewing platform is a well-dressed man sporting a top hat and heroically resting one foot on the wooden railing. Proudly he peers over the edge of the cliff and down the sheer mountain face. This is a stoic image staged amongst the rugged Australian landscape. The rather small part of the composition that is dedicated to the sky emphasises the denseness of the engulfing 'bush'. This is not a pastorally tamed European landscape, it is a rugged wilderness that has been tamed, or is at least in the process of being tamed. This landscape may have been seen as untamed and/or untameable back in Europe but the makeshift fortifications and proud stance of the gentlemen indicate progress and the waterfall a spiritual aura of prosperity. The high vantage point, picturesque and daunting landscape heighten and elicit a performative response that is evident through the gentleman's pose. This image updated and was educational back in the home land of Great Britain and enticed tourist activities in Australia.

The next photograph to be analysed extends on these performative elements that are played out in the landscape and amongst early tourist infrastructure. Harold Cazneaux was a pioneer pictorialist photographer whose style had an influence on the development of photography in Australia and abroad. In 1916 he was a founder of the pictorialist Sydney Camera Circle and he regularly exhibited and organised exhibitions nationally and internationally.⁴²

Australian photography curator and historian Helen Ennis has written extensively about early pictorialist photography. In her writings Ennis has emphasised two distinct styles that were established in Australia: "The picturesque as an aesthetic mode (that) has its parallels in Australian pictorialist landscape photography from the 1860s to 1930 with two distinct phases: an earlier soft-focus, impressionist style of depiction; and a later style emphasising bright light and spaciousness."⁴³ Photographs made during this period that conform to the second category from above were often landscapes made at tourist destinations.

The glass negative by Cazneaux titled *Mary Piesley on seat and Winifred Cazneaux standing at stairs, Blue Mountains, New South Wales* was made in 1906. It is unusually composed and clearly belongs to the second phase of pictorialism (harsh light and spacious composition). The foreground of the photograph features carry bags resting on a bench and a table for day-trippers that function as visual props within the composition and suggest other pleasurable pastime activities such as picnicking or ball games (or of course photography). Mary takes up a substantial part of the bottom of the frame and sits uncomfortably on a wooden bench that has been constructed (like the table) from available materials either collected on location or left from the construction of other paths and platforms. Between these wooden structures her feet dangle from the bench without touching the ground as she stares intently at the landscape before her. From the lower right-hand-side of the frame a rickety ladder runs up the steep cliff and cuts through the image. Standing on a step at a height slightly above Mary is Winifred, who looks purposely towards the lens. The women are

⁴² To recognise his contribution to the medium in 2008 The Art Gallery of New South Wales held a substantial retrospective titled *Harold Cazneaux: Artist in Photography*.

⁴³ H. Ennis, 'Postwar Australian Landscape Photography', *History of Photography* vol.23, no. 2, 1999, pp. 136-141.



FIGURE 1.5: Harold Cazneaux, titled *Piesley on seat and Winifred Cazneaux standing at stairs, Blue Mountains, New South Wales*, (1906)

obviously posed and hold stern expressions, perhaps to enable a sharp exposure (no doubt Winifred was used to this ritual). This adds a theatrical aesthetic to the photograph as one woman sits in waiting as the other elegantly descends the stairs to enter the ‘stage’. Amongst the dense valley the photograph activates the tourist location and the ‘actresses’ play out the roles visually: they take direction from the photographer, listening to Cazneaux’s instructions while Winifred looks at him (us) and Mary at the landscape that lies beyond. Their stillness evokes anticipation.

The above photographs are staged to enact the landscape. Although discussing photographs made in the 1860s and 1870s, the work by Kerry & Co and Cazneaux is well defined the following quote that acts as a pictorial blueprint by Australian historian Anne-Marie Willis from *Picturing Australia: A History of Photography* (1988):

Many landscape photographers working in Australia in the 1860s and 1870s organised their landscapes images according to the conventions of the picturesque, seeking out elements such as framing trees, foreground logs, winding paths and rivers. These were the means by which nature, conceived of as original wilderness, could be tamed and rendered visibly manageable.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ A. Willis, *Picturing Australia: A History of Photography*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1988, p. 60.

During this period Australian national identity was rapidly and steadfastly being formed and landscape imagery played a key role in the establishment of nationhood. Managing the largely unexplored and unknown landscapes was undertaken through image-making and photography's role was to enact these vast spaces as not only sublime but also inhabitable and enticing for visitors.

Visually these photographic examples set the tone for much image-making that follows in Australia and are responsible for establishing tourist expectations and imaginings. These methods, that include notions of the picturesque and sublime, have been drawn on in the production of *Viewing Platforms* to describe how contemporary tourist activities are played out in the Australian landscape. Throughout the photographic series, several larger-scale images use methods aligned with Kerry & Co and Cazneaux that make use of scale, framing devices and choreography within the compositional structure to depict the landscape as a vast and dramatic space – open with possibilities.

While introducing another important Australian photographer who worked in the Blue Mountains, historian and author Phillip Kay succinctly outlines the lure of the mountainous landscape and a list of other photographers (known and unknown) who have made the ranges their subject matter (many discussed above):

This is the background against which we may view Harry Phillips. Like Atget and Merlin he recorded a single area in great detail. Like Cazneaux, the great Australian pictorial photographer, and Muybridge, he was a lover of dawns, dusk, shadows and mist, prepared to wait for days for the right weather. An apostle of Nature like Caire, he had the business pretensions, if not the success of Kerry. He was fascinated by clouds like Hurley, who was infamous for his photo-composites, and a mystic, like the influential American photographers Alfred Stieglitz and Minor White, whose work is imbued with their philosophy of life. Phillips' work, like that of all these masters, also bears the stamp of his personality and its own unique characteristics.⁴⁵

Harry Phillips was known as the “man with his head in the clouds.”⁴⁶ He was a photographer, printer and publisher who worked from the beginning of the 1900s until his death in 1944 and is best known for documenting views of the Blue Mountains and book publishing.

Phillips' first printed book, *Commonwealth Views*, was published soon after he finished his apprenticeship as a printing machinist and featured scenic images of Australian cities by an array of photographers. Although Phillips did not initially set out to become a photographer, and was most likely influenced by his time operating printing presses, in 1908, whilst recovering from hand injuries, he travelled to Katoomba and began to experiment with making images. Phillips was so inspired by the Blue Mountains that he shortly after relocated his wife and daughter from Sydney to the steadily expanding tourist town of Katoomba. Phillips established his photography and printing business within a Katoomba shopfront featuring large windows to display his work and the hoardings that hung over the footpath prominently proclaimed “H. Phillips Photographer”, and

⁴⁵ P. Kay, *The Far-Famed Blue Mountains of Harry Phillips*, N.S.W: Megalong Books, Second Back Row Press, 1985, p. 11.

⁴⁶ From a historical/promotional website for the region: <http://katoombawaltz.com.au/general-history/harry-phillips> (Accessed 10/07/2014).



FIGURE 1.6: Harry Phillips, *Blue Mountains Wonderland 81 views* (cover), published book, (c. 1910)

in smaller lettering, “Post Cards and Stationary.” Within the heart of the mountains he began to photograph, print and publish books and by 1919 100,000 copies of his best-selling *Blue Mountains Wonderland 81 Views* had been printed – a substantial undertaking in terms of printing in Australia. Phillips was often found on his beloved cliff tops photographing grand vistas, but much of his income was made in the studio photographing tourists in front of painted vistas.⁴⁷

Although not many of Phillips’ negatives have survived and most of his publications are now housed in rare book collections of national libraries, his work can still be found in family photography collections through the iconic (and often kitsch) postcards he produced. Phillips’ photography and publication styles varied and illustrated his technical skill, in particular, he made great use of the popular panoramic photographic format that he used to emphasise the daunting cliff heights of the Blue Mountains. The approximate 80 books that he produced were printed on high quality paper with ornately lettered covers which were designed by Phil Blake & Co.⁴⁸ Phillips’ attention to detail saw him oversee all aspects of his printing projects from film processing to printing press and, like other landscape photography enthusiasts, he worked tirelessly on commercial schemes to expand and encourage tourism which would in turn support the economy of the region.

In fact, Harry Phillips’ enthusiasm for photography and obsession with the Blue Mountains is chronicled in Australian academic and author Delia Falconer’s novel *The Service of Clouds* (1997).⁴⁹ The male character featured in the romantic tale is based on Phillips and his mountainous

⁴⁷ Powerhouse Museum website: <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/library/2012/04/clouds-and-surrounds/#sthash.EZPjt4Em.dpuf> (Accessed 10/07/2014).

⁴⁸ Design & Art Australia online resource: <http://www.daao.org.au/bio/harry-phillips/biography/> (Accessed 9/07/2014).

⁴⁹ The books blurb reads: “It is 1907 and the Blue Mountains are filled with the grand dreams of elsewhere. Eureka Jones, a young pharmacist’s assistant with historical eyes, falls in love with Harry Kitchings, a man who takes pictures of clouds and succumbs to the ‘madness of photography’. Their love turns the mountains sapphire blue. Set in a vast landscape haunted by sadness and the stories of romance which drift across it, *The Service of Clouds* combines the lushness of Marquez and the tenderness of Ondaatje to explore passion, illness, and the secret desires men and women bring to mountains.”

exploits and sections of the novel are (apparently) not totally exaggerated from historical facts. The character based on Phillips' (Harry Kitchings) becomes so engrossed with the mountain ranges that he believes that God speaks to him through the evaporating mists that shroud the spectacular though daunting landscape.



FIGURE 1.7: Harry Phillips, *Blue Mountains Wonderland 81 views*, published book, (c. 1910)

Early twentieth century landscape photography and book publishing, as investigated in this section of Chapter One, will centre on Harry Phillips' publication *Blue Mountains Wonderland N.S.W. 81 Views* that was published from his Katoomba studio in approximately 1910.

Like several of his other books, this collection is presented in an oblong format to emphasise the panoramic format of his images (240 x 580cm) and features a dark green and silver elaborate cover with title and illustrations. The photographs themselves are mostly photogravure process plates and depict the views from the towering heights of the Blue Mountains and from within the depths of Jamieson Valley. It is understandable as to why 100,000 copies of this particular book sold throughout Australia. The landscape depicted in this elongated format encourages the viewer

to scan along the length of the landscapes and in several (as they are vertically framed) up the vast steep slopes of the mountain ranges as the waterfalls act as a narrative that punctuates the set of images – sometimes as a minute detail within the composition and in others filling the frame, the camera low at water level.



FIGURE 1.8: Harry Phillips, *Blue Mountains Wonderland 81 views* (Britannia Falls, Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls), published book, (c. 1910)

Like the photographs made by Kerry & Co and Cazneaux discussed earlier, the images in *Blue Mountains Wonderland* make no attempt to conceal the manmade tourist infrastructure that was embedded within the landscape. In fact, in many cases the architectural intrusions that create access to vantage points are enhanced through compositional elements. These are particularly emphasised in Phillips' photographs as his elongated compositions often feature, either at the bottom or edge of the frame, such human interventions. Therefore, when the images are read vertically or horizontally the eye either begins with or concludes on the imposed infrastructure. Thus, like a journey (or indeed the actual journey to the location) the viewer either begins on or ends at the mediated vantage point.

Again, like Kerry & Co and Cazneaux, many photographs made by Phillips' feature figures (often alone and seemingly in contemplation)⁵⁰ that are dwarfed by the daunting though spectacular surroundings. Reminiscent of Cazneaux who used his extended family in his work, Phillips' also engaged friends and family in his photographic excursions. In two waterfall images from *Blue Mountains Wonderland* the same person – sporting a black dress hat – features within the far right (glancing over the waterfall) and bottom (peering up at the descending waterfall) of the compositions.

This compositional trope that was employed by photographers of both the picturesque and sublime around the turn of the twentieth century functioned to enact the landscape, to make it a site of human endeavour where culturally enhanced desires were to be played out. Much like a natural amphitheatre where environmental features are conducive to amplifying and echoing sound,

⁵⁰ Like much of the photography of this time, this may be enhanced by lengthy exposure times required of the equipment.

these Australian landscapes acted as natural ocular amphitheatres where vision was prioritised but – like an amphitheatre – performance was paramount. This is evidenced by the compositional structural elements discussed in this chapter that the three photographers make use of: ascending and descending steps, projected viewing platforms that function as stages and the inclusion of performative protagonists that inject the spaces with possibility.

This chapter will now look at the collection of images in albums and publications made in Australia during the same period as photographs discussed above. An important and influential early photographic album is Nicholas Caire's *Victorian Views*.⁵¹ The images are well crafted and edited to combine the colonial adventurous spirit with politics, marketing and tourism. The album of 106

photographs was presented by the officers of the Department of Agriculture in 1905 to its then director S. Williamson Wallace to celebrate his success in governing and establishing new colonial frontier towns throughout Victoria. In the late nineteenth century Nicholas Caire established and ran a portrait studio from the Royal Arcade in Melbourne. With the revolutionary introduction of dry plate technology in 1885 he gave up his portrait business to solely photograph the Victorian 'bush' that he had a passion for. As Helen Ennis has noted: "Caire was one of the photographers captivated by giant trees and pursued them with a fervour unmatched by any other colonial artist, naming them and writing about them evocatively as individuals."⁵²

Like Phillips and many other photographers of this period working in the Blue Mountains, Caire lugged his cumbersome view camera down valleys and to the top of steep plateaus that would later become the Victorian snowfields. The album does not actually feature a viewing platform, although the perspective of many images could have been made from such platforms and Caire features many natural environments that act like platforms (including rock ledges and raised tracks). Beyond photographing, he encouraged visitors to the Victorian bush through newspaper and magazine articles and his own guide publications. His enthusiasm was also evidenced through tourist lantern lectures and his photographs delighted and entertained passengers in railway carriages.⁵³

The photographs in *Victorian Views* shift between pictorial modes that were in vogue at the time, including the picturesque and the sublime, but also a more analytical, documentary-like mode reminiscent of earlier photography of the American West. The two visual methodologies are woven together throughout the album and establish a visual narrative through composition, scale, editing and juxtaposition. During this period Australian national identity was rapidly and steadfastly being formed and the photographed landscape played a key role in the establishment of nationhood. The colonial photographers of Caire's time (including John W. Lindt and John Watt Beattie) were influenced by a "desire to define what was unique and distinctive about Australia and Australian life."⁵⁴

⁵¹ Available online: <http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.pic-an3105280-s1-v> (Accessed: 2/12/2013).

⁵² H. Ennis, (S. Hall, (ed.)) *Intersection: Photography, History and the National Library of Australia*, Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2004, p. 89.

⁵³ J. Cato, 'Caire, Nicholas John (1837-1918', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/caire-nicholas-john-3139/text3683> (Accessed 14/12/2013) (originally from J. Cato, *The Story of the Camera in Australia*, Melbourne 1955).

⁵⁴ H. Ennis, (S. Hall, (ed.)) *Intersection: Photography, History and the National Library of Australia*, Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2004, p. 87.



FIGURE 1.9: Nicholas Caire, *A family surrounded with ferns near Marysville Waterfall, Victoria*, (c. 1900)



FIGURE 1.10: Nicholas Caire, *A man sitting outside a bush hut, Gippsland, Victoria*, (c. 1900)

One photograph from the publication depicts a family amongst a dense forest at Marysville Waterfall in Victoria (FIG 1.10). They stand erect like the many differing tree species that surround them. The four figures look towards the camera as if they were passing through and Caire asked them to pause and smile – they are both dwarfed and enveloped by the trees, ferns and bush. The forest may be daunting and sublime but this family is also adventuring and making new discoveries. Other images feature giant gum trees that fascinated new European arrivals to Australia. These are being hacked down, dwelled in or even used in the construction of homes as the tree is still erect. Another compositionally well-structured image depicts a man sitting outside his bush hut in Gippsland (FIG 1.9). The composition is chaotic but also visually ordered. Practically everything in the image is made from wood and conveys the story and hardships of this man's life as he stares off into the forest over Caire's shoulder.

This chapter will conclude with the introduction and analysis of a key image from *Viewing Platforms* that makes use of many of photographic techniques discussed above.

The photograph, *Lake Mungo Viewing Platform*, was made in 2010 at the Mungo National Park and features the historically and geologically important lunar landscape of Willandra Lakes, the platform and six figures. Like Kerry & Co's *Lookout, Katoomba Fall, 411* and *Cazneaux Mary Piesley on seat and Winifred Cazneaux standing at stairs, Blue Mountains, New South Wales*, the Lake Mungo image features a male figure peering over the viewing platform and two seated females. In all three photographs figures appear in the lower section of the left-hand-side of the composition – a photographic trope that was (and still is) used by both picturesque and sublime modes of photography.⁵⁵

Within the composition the four tourists in the foreground, like the information signage to the left of the platform, face away from the camera towards the so-called Walls of China – the thirty-meter

⁵⁵ This technique is often referred to as the 'Rule of Thirds' or 'Golden Ratio' and divides the composition into nine equal sections where objects of interest are placed where they intersect for visual impact.



FIGURE 1.11: *Lake Mungo Viewing Platform*, (2010)

high lunette that has been formed over thousands of years and is pictured in most photography made at the site. In a mode similar to Kerry & Co, Cazneaux and Phillips, the image illustrates ways to both view and experience this landscape and elaborates on modes in which the site is actively performed. Unlike many of their photographs, I have captured the horizon line slightly above the centre of the frame to exaggerate the flatter and more open planes of the semi-desert location.

Many Australians know that the discovery of extremely important Aboriginal remains were made at Lake Mungo and rewrote Aboriginal and Australian history.⁵⁶ Between 1969 and 1974 Australian geologist Professor Jim Bowler uncovered the remains of ancient Aborigines that had inhabited the area, first a female and then a male respectively know as Mungo Lady and Mungo Man. This is not evident in the actual photograph, nor is it visually apparent at the site (except in tourist texts).

⁵⁶ Dr Jim Bowler made the discovery of a cremated female body at Lake Mungo in 1969 and the remains were initially estimated to be 25,000 years old. Further investigation in 2003 determined that Mungo Lady was probably closer to 40,000 years old and she is thus the earliest known human to have been cremated. Dr Bowler also discovered Mungo Man in 1974 and the remains were covered with red ochre in what is the earliest known burial practice of this type. There is still some contention as to how old Mungo Man actually is and some studies have estimated his age at more than 60,000 years but the current consensus is that he is about 40,000 years old. There have also been much archaeological findings that indicate active inhabitation throughout the seventeen lakes that make up the World Heritage listed Willandra Lakes Region, of which Mungo is central. The rich and important archaeological heritage of these sites is very significant to the Australian Aboriginal people. (For further information see): H. Lawrence, *Mungo over Millennia: The Willandra Landscape and its People*, Tasmania: Maygog Publishing, 2006).

In respect of the Aboriginal custodians' wishes and traditions the bodies have been returned to their burial grounds and the actual site is known to very few. Nowadays the presence of Mungo Lady and Mungo Man is simply an atmosphere that pervades the landscape.

The drifting sands and lunette formations of this landscape are well protected and guarded, though not entirely by park rangers or tour guides but by infrastructure that includes: an information centre at the entry to the lake, raised walking decks (known as boardwalks) and signage. There are also a small number of informative tours, although most tourists make the trip to Lake Mungo in a self-guided manner and spend a few hours drifting through the space.

Lake Mungo Viewing Platform was made with a large-format camera and documents two forms of tourist interaction with the site where the dramatic landscape acts as a 'backdrop'. Populating the foreground platform that dominates a large section of the photograph are four elderly tourists who are dressed comfortably for touring and carry cameras, water bottles, and so on. They station themselves on the viewing platform in a relaxed manner and chat, photograph and 'take in' the landscape. In approximately the centre of the composition a red parasol punctuates the frame and seems somewhat out-of-place. The parasol shades the two seated ladies while the men stand at the threshold of the wooden construction and ponder the iconic scenery. The red parasol acts to indicate a tourist mode that is about comfort and strolling. As if patiently waiting for sunset, this mode of tourism could be referred to as 'slow tourism' (which is further investigated in chapter three). This methodical approach often includes picnicking on site, chatting with other visitors and locals and visiting most tourist outlets (farm machinery museums, gemstone galleries, truck-stop restaurants, etc) that aid tourist narrative collection.

Lake Mungo Viewing Platform is printed as a large photograph (127cm at its longest length) that is intended to be examined in detail. This is not only to emphasise the vastness of the landscape and to highlight the attire and 'props' the tourists carry, but to also make evident the other couple of tiny tourists that are found in the far-left of the composition below the line of the sky. This couple is evidently examining the terrain in minute detail as they both peer at the ground on which they walk – off the designated boardwalk. This indicates a more adventurous tourist intent on making discoveries and traversing the tourist infrastructure. For this form of tourism it is important to get off 'the beaten track'. Remote Australian tourism undertaken in a drifting mode with a motor vehicle as base allows much opportunity for both of these types of tourism – the open roads and vast landscapes encourage exploration. This is reflected in the words of American sociologist, Judith Adler, who has a particular interest in travel and tourism: "the baseline elements of any travel performance are space, time, and the design and pace of the traveller's movement through both."⁵⁷

As depicted in the photograph, on the viewing platform between the two seated ladies and standing men is a gate that is swung half open. Leading to this gate (most) tourists respectfully use the boardwalks provided and avoid stepping on the actual surface of the landscape. Once they get to the platform they are confronted with the gate which is not a fortified obstacle that would restrict adventurous tourists (and photographers) to get beyond. Here, at the pinnacle (apogee) of the tourist infrastructure this gate creates a demarcated zone between structured and unstructured, contained and adventurous modes of tourist drifting.

⁵⁷ J. Adler, 'Travel as Performed Art', *American Journal of Sociology*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989, p. 136.

These modes are of course not delineated but mutate amongst visitors depending on many diverse factors varying from simple (weather) to more complex (tourist group mentality).

In order to contribute to both an understanding of contemporary tourism and visual culture, this opening chapter has uncovered tourism's origins particularly in relation to Australian landscape and photography through illustrating links between historical images, advertising posters and an image from *Viewing Platforms*.

This chapter has defined this form of tourist as a person that travels to remote locations via automobile and is largely self-guided. The chapter also established remote Australian landscape tourism as performative. The journey has been outlined as an important factor for encounters to unfold and build memory narratives to be retold (like my experiences recounted in the semi-fictional voice included in this project). Terms such as 'remote', 'drifting' and 'slow tourism' have been identified as important, and short excerpts from historical travel narratives cited language that reflects photography and the direction of tourist vision. Importantly, viewing platforms and spaces that expand out from tourist attractions, which encompass infrastructure to facilitate (amongst many other things) accommodation, travel infrastructure, dining, leisure and education, are considered touristscapes and are the core spaces from where this project is constructed.

To conclude the chapter, I will quote a fairly lengthy passage from Delia Falconer's novel, *The Service of Clouds*, that poetically sums up the mystical power of Australian landscapes (as captured in Caire's depictions of trees and Phillips' obsession with clouds), the camera as myth-making device (as evidenced through advertising campaigns) and the theatricality these places elicit (illustrated by the stage-like inclusion of viewing infrastructure depicted in many of the images discussed above):

In the months that followed, Harry Kitchings' photographs began to appear on mantelpieces and walls around the town. He took portraits with his panoramic camera while his subjects stood on small damp ledges in the middle of great filmy waterfalls which passed like the phantoms of water over rocks. Or he posed them in the shadows at the base of tree ferns whose upper fronds flared into fluffy parasols of light. In other photographs his subjects stood staring at the clouds, dwarfed by pitted cliffs. This made them marvel at themselves. They felt heroic and defiant...

As the evenings lengthened, people began to gather at the window of the studio to see if they could find themselves in Harry Kitchings' pictures... The crowds also marvelled at a photograph Harry Kitchings had taken of himself, posing with his heavy camera, his hair neat, his blond moustache immaculately waxed, in the high fork of a tree.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ D. Falconer, *The Service of Clouds*, Sydney: Picador, 1997, pp. 137-138.

Slap

For a majority of the night it rained and now most of the camping gear is soaked through. This morning the first task is to get all the camping gear dry. We drape and hang sleeping bags, tarpaulins and swags from the car and other structures. On this trip I am travelling with Dad who has been on several journeys with me to photograph remote and often obscure locations. Moon Plains are located just out of Coober Pedy and famed for their unearthly flat landscapes. This is my third day exploring this area, and I decide to join the 'tourist bubble' and take a mini bus tour of the unusual surrounding landscapes while Dad oversees our gear that is sprawled throughout the camp site. Boarding the minibus most of the other sixteen national and international tourists mingle and are full of anticipation. I sit next to an Australian couple from Victoria who are newlyweds and want to hear about and see the locations where science fiction films were made in the desert. This is their honeymoon. The loud excited voices of many different languages reverberate throughout the bus and the driver stares ahead – focussed or maybe just bored. I have been here before and found it majestic and sublime in a minimal way. The name certainly is apt. Although I have not found a way of photographing the expansive desert, I am hoping that the inclusion of this group will assist. We pass several former movie sets and stop briefly to acknowledge a sign that marks filming locations: Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome, Pitch Black, The Red Planet and others. The Victorian couple seems somewhat disappointed as though expecting some relics, more information – anything but more rocks leading to a shifting horizon.

By the fifth stop the driver/guide is watching my movements – especially my unusual camera – so I decide to keep a low profile and further observe without pointing the lens.

A group of five European tourists become overly jubilant through either boredom or excitement – possibly both. They begin photographing each other in varying exaggerated poses when one female member of the group becomes irritated, runs towards another camera-pointing tourist and slaps the camera from his hands. I watch the camera (as do most others in the group), it descends – as if in slow motion – to the desert floor and smashes into the rocks. Dust rises.

There are some screams although nobody except their group understands them. The camera is dusted off and they are quickly ushered back onto the minibus by the slightly amused driver/guide.

Chapter Two: Photography, Tourism and Landscape

This chapter outlines some approaches to documenting tourist spaces from within the tourist experience and illustrates the ‘performances’ these places elucidate. It discusses photographic projects made by Japanese, British, German and Australian image-makers that document urban and rural landscapes that act as ‘stages’ for leisure and entertainment activities. These methodologies are important to my project and offer an international context for the photography I have produced for *Viewing Platforms*.

A majority of the photographs examined are made from within gated touristscape experiences (such as theme parks), what they have in common with this project is a sense of choreography, simulation, the tourist gaze and a blurring of fact and fiction. The chapter begins with an analysis of themed holiday resorts in Great Britain and continues with contrived spaces at Tokyo Disneyland before moving on to the American West, tourism, cinematic contexts, and finally returns to the Australian landscape and viewing platforms.

Theme Parks and Holiday Camps

British figures John Winfred Hinde and Sir Billy Butlin had several interests in common that are intertwined and pertain relevantly to this research project: tourism, entertainment, performance and photography.

Hinde was the great-grandson of shoe giant James Clark and grew up in a Quaker family, from an early age he had a keen interest in photography (especially colour photography) and by the 1930s, aged in his early twenties, he was already well adept at the then new technicalities of colour processes. In 1947 he was commissioned by Lady Eleanor Smith to document Ricoh’s Circus for her forthcoming book *British Circus Life* (1948). He was soon the circus manager for Ricoh’s and later for other established circuses, Bertram Mills and Chipperfields. Eventually Hinde started his own circus in Ireland, though The John Hinde Show was very short-lived but did initiate Hinde’s eventual return to his passion for photography.

As a young man Sir Billy Butlin enthusiastically ran a ‘hoop-la’ stand in one of the many travelling fairs of England where his admiration grew for the working class families that he entertained. The entrepreneurial Butlin went on to establish nine holiday resorts in England and Ireland that were enjoyed for short periods of respite. Butlin proclaimed that one week’s wages would pay for a one-week sojourn, and it proved so popular that the seaside Bognor Regis Camp often accommodated 5,000 campers and another 5,000 day-visitors. On arrival at one of Butlin’s otherworldly entertainment establishments each ‘happy-camper’ was issued with an enamel badge to wear for the duration of their holiday.¹

¹ The badge ensured the visitor readmission to the site should they take a trip out to the surrounding countryside (weather permitting) during their stay. Badges were worn with pride and campers were known to keep their badges from previous holidays and wear them together on a length of ribbon (a quick eBay search uncovers a keen – though cheap – trade in these trinkets).

Attendants, who became known as the 'Redcoats' for their red blazer uniform, oversaw the needs and entertainment of their visitors.² Picture postcards were a large part of this holiday experience and also doubled as promotion for Butlin's. Sir John Hinde was responsible for creating these visual souvenirs that were unique colour photographs and are still much appreciated and collected today.

Since the 1990s, Hinde's photographic work has enjoyed a flourishing of interest and this re-ignition was largely influenced by a 1993 exhibition at the Irish Museum of Modern Art. The British photographer Martin Parr – a Butlin's photographic employee over two summers in the early 1970s (and obsessive collector of the Hinde postcards) – brought Hinde's work to the attention of the broader photography world with his 2002 publication *Our True Intent is all for Your Delight*. The book of 56 plates introduced the mostly unknowing world to what Parr refers to in the introduction as "the unique British Institution of Butlin's Holiday Camps."³ Complex narrative tableaux are enacted in quirky lounges, smoky cabarets, sterile restaurants, swimming pools and bustling ballrooms, environments which are as self-consciously constructed and decorated as the images themselves. Most are interiors, although there are a number of images depicting the outdoors where the holidaying visitors spent their lazy afternoons. One photograph prominently features a signpost directing the clientele to the twist ballroom, a bar with music, boxing and wrestling.

The John Hinde Ltd postcard company was founded in 1956, with the intention of making idealistic compositions of the Irish coastline and countryside. Increasing interest in tourism enabled Hinde to become the owner of one of the most successful and biggest postcard companies in the world. As his images crisscrossed the globe, his enthusiasm soon led to his work being sold in the UK and America.

Sometime in the late 1960s Butlin and Hinde met and a contract was promptly drafted to ensure that the only photographs that Hinde would produce were for the sole purpose of documenting, invigorating and hence promoting Butlin's Holiday Camps.

This new and extensive assignment involved a certain amount of choreography, such as scouting the perfect view, setting up the elaborate equipment and convincing the attractive holidaymakers to the 'hot-spots' within the composition. Hinde soon enlisted (amongst others) German photographers Elmar Ludwig and Edmund Nägele and then British photographer David Noble. The process was akin to a film production, with the photographer working for hours to establish one frame that would be photographed with three or four sheets of film. As Noble recalls in a series of interviews in *Our True Intent is all for Your Delight*: "You knew you had to do some gardening, as it were... We'd never stoop so low as to use plastic flowers."⁴ Hinde trained his stable of practitioners to create slices of reality that had no glimpses of façade. He would go to great lengths to make his pictures look realistic and even ensured that when they were required to fill the foreground of the frame with a flower to make sure it was a local native and not something that grew in other pastures.

² The 'Redcoats' were trained at Butlin's own 'Academies of Excellence' and even featured in 'Redcoats TV': a 41 episode docu-soap that followed the lives from selection process to life 'behind the scenes' of these paramount travel guides at the Minehead and Bognor resorts. Interestingly, the red colour through the photobook, *Our True Intent is all for Your Delight: The John Hinde Butlin's Photographs*, is reflective of the 'Redcoats'.

³ M. Parr, *Our True Intent is all for Your Delight: the John Hinde Butlin's Photographs*, London: Chris Boot, 2002, p. 6.

⁴ D. Noble in *Our True Intent is all for Your Delight: The John Hinde Butlin's Photographs* (John Hinde, Elmar Ludwig, Edmund Nägele and David Noble with an introduction by Martin Parr), 2002, p. 126.

Reminiscing on his time working at Butlin's, Nägele recounts, "what I learned during that time is that you do not allow compromise. You always go for the ultimate result."⁵

For all its choreography, *Our True Intent is all for Your Delight* nevertheless points to the tourist leisure desire in Great Britain during this period. The hyper-colour photographs feature moments between the directed imagery where tourist exuberance is occasionally captured in a deflated state (a boy waits bored for his younger sister and a young girl feeds ducks as her dress is blown by the wind). These micro-narratives register the images as closer to real experiences of holidays and lend them further validity. Another technique employed by Hinde and his photographers was to request that the holidaymakers look at the camera as the image was exposed and hence engage the eventual viewer. Photographic subjects are usually encouraged to not look at the camera – to act as if the camera was not there. But Hinde reverses this role, his holidaymakers don't just 'wish you were here', they entice you to come along and enjoy the fun.

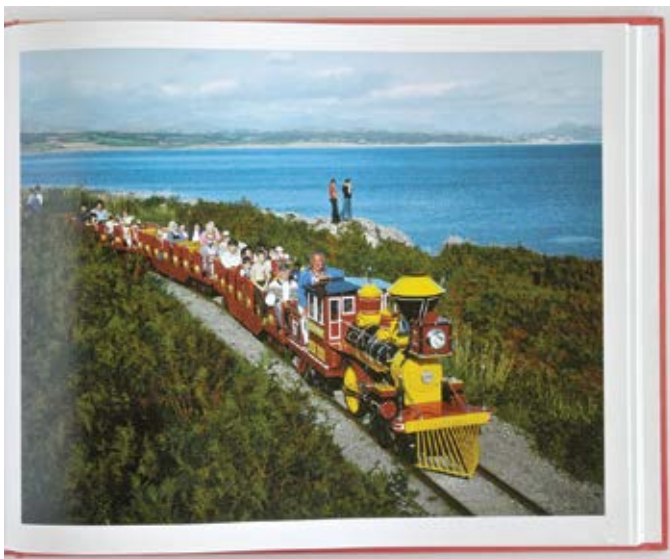


FIGURE 2.1: David Noble, *Train and Panorama*



FIGURE 2.2: David Noble, *The Boating Pond*

John Hinde's imagery is about looking, and a participatory gaze – a tourist gaze, one that is innocent, pleasurable and devouring. In two exterior photographs both taken by David Noble at Butlin's Pwllheli (FIG: 2.1 & 2.2), holidaymakers appear in either the fore or middle-ground of the frame, their back to the camera as they 'soak in the view'. Other figures within the compositions stare at the camera politely.

In a classical use of the rule-of-thirds, the whole of the image's composition is in use and the view, more often than not, is punctuated by a recreational activity. In other photographs from around the grounds of Butlin's, tourist-mobiles (ferris wheels, monorails, rowboats and miniature steam trains) are being engaged to explore the terrain and obtain alternative 'views' unreachable by the grounded visitor. In the evenings when the photographers moved indoors to the ballrooms, lounges and bars (with fantastical names such as the Blinking Owl, Beachcomber, Gaiety and Interior Continental)

⁵ E. Nägele in *Our True Intent is all for Your Delight: The John Hinde Butlin's Photographs* (John Hinde, Elmar Ludwig, Edmund Nägele and David Noble with an introduction by Martin Parr), 2002, p. 124.

their flash units were waiting and had been elaborately setup earlier to document dances and live music. *Butlin's Minehead, The Old Tyrne Ballroom* (FIG 2.3) is a good example. The symmetry of this photograph frames three different stages, in the foreground are the seated onlookers, only their heads visible, as they peer out of the lined row of seats (much like the actual viewer of the photograph). Beyond the semi-balding heads is the dance floor – the 'event' – where the clutched couples glide across the polished floor. In the third frame-within-the frame the musicians look on from a slightly raised stage – they overlook the dancers and face-off with the audience. The careful construction of these choreographed photographs places the participants on the nine equally dividing lines that make up the rule-of-thirds. This sets up several lines of visions that look out, into and across the composition. This is reflective of tourism which is largely about looking and performative participation.



FIGURE 2.3: David Noble, *Butlin's Minehead, The Old Tyrne Ballroom*

Hinde's imagery is all encompassing and the sharpness of the images doubled with the vibrant colour palette throughout the compositions ensures that everything within the frame is important, interesting and to be visually devoured. Looking through the back of the ground-glass on a large-format camera renders precision and this looking is reflected in the tourists' 'gaze' throughout these photographs.

In contrast to the celebratory nature of Hinde's body of work, *TDL*⁶ is a series by Tomoki Imai. The Japanese photographer chose to defy the restrictive Disney rules of entrance and document the park for conceptual not memorabilia purposes. Overseen by gangs of smiling guards and surveyed from every possible angle by security cameras, Disney stipulates that tripods are not allowed and 'snaps' are only to be taken for personal use. To a professional photographer this poses many dilemmas. Undeterred, Imai set himself a technical task to elicit his photographs: to go undetected of his intentions with a mock girlfriend and plastic camera. Imai planned to make landscape photographs within the theme park grounds of plastic rocks, man-made ponds and fire-breathing volcanoes with no visual signs that would indicate his actual location – Disneyland.



FIGURE 2.4: Tomoki Imai, *TDL* #1 (2003) FIG 2.5: Tomoki Imai, *TDL* #2 (2003)

The photograph *TDL* #1 (2003) (FIG 2.4) resembles a river scene that depicts an idyllic waterfall and rock formations. In the shadows a moose is grazing on the vegetation at the waters edge and in photograph *TDL* #2 (2002) (FIG 2.5) two pockets of water bubble menacingly as if something may erupt. On the MousePlanet.com website that promotes the Disney Kingdom, amateur American photographer Frank Anzalone (who has taken tens of thousands of images of Disneyland) suggests in his photo tips: "As you walk through the parks, take a moment to notice just some of the little areas that are 'inbetweens' of the main attractions... Strolling from land to land at Disney's Animal Kingdom, the landscaping is very lush... and you never know when you will pass by some extremely unique vegetation."⁷ The soft focus and underexposed tones of Imai's plastic camera images make his work more convincing as details are lost through the low quality of the lens. Although when buildings and structures are featured it starts to resemble, maybe not Disneyland, but other Japanese parks.

⁶ The title of this project refers to where the images were made: Tokyo Disneyland. Although the body of work is not published on his website there are many other projects that relate to landscape: <http://www.imaitomoki.com/> (Accessed 02/06/2013).

⁷ http://www.mouseplanet.com/7264/Photo_Tips_4 (Accessed 18/01/2014).

This work demonstrates how the tourist illusion is reinforced through packaged tourist experiences. Again, the landscape is a strong attraction for the leisure seeker. Imai's *TDL* is purposely made from within the touristic experience, his methodology is theatrical and he invites us to this performance. Disneyland has been the subject of much negative tourism theory but here Imai poses more subtle questions that relate to photography, perception, landscape and tourism: are these real landscapes? Does it matter?

Both the work of Hinde and Imai are concentrated studies of particular tourist locales, where the simulation of many places are confined within the one singular gated place. Both make use of selective photographic techniques to generate their pre-visualisations: one elaborate and orchestrated and the other simple – a plastic camera.

Travel for leisure is common amongst most present contemporary societies, the forms of travel may differ depending on desire and funds. An amusing (and extremely crass) example is Donald Trump's extraordinary public 'stunts' that Paul Virilio discusses in his book *A Landscape of Events* (2000): on August 3rd 1996 Trump teed off with 60 other participants in his 'Supersonic golf tournament'. Aided by a rented Concorde, the performance was staged on three different continents throughout one day in Marrakech (Africa), Shannon (Europe) and Atlanta City (America), reducing the world to a golf ball-like size.⁸

British photographer Martin Parr addresses this time-space compression in his publication *Small World* (1996) that looks at globalised tourism and continues Parr's interest in the European middle-class. He also uses a technical framework to create his amusing photographs that includes a sophisticated use of juxtaposition and editing (particularly in his photobooks) to create witty observations of what seem everyday situations. From Athens to Kyoto, Switzerland to Egypt, the imagery in *Small World* combs the world's tourist attractions. His images encompass the global transients that stop momentarily to admire, take a 'snap' or buy a trinket. In Stockholm, distant smoke seems to plume from a tourist's purse while at the Leaning Tower of Pisa the crowd poses as if holding the icon up – a clichéd tourist performance.

Parr's work has a journalistic edge, but unlike most photojournalism, he manages to use the whole frame while shooting. He does this by positioning himself a few steps away from tourist groups as they shuffle through locations of interest. As such, their view is our view, or he often takes the same photographs they take, but he includes them in the frame. This is consistent with Parr's other projects that combine strong visuals with distinctly 'dry' British humour that is often expressed through the humorous titles of his publications: *Bad Weather*, *Bored Couples*, and others.⁹ The publication produced for my project, as with Parr's photobooks, is experimental in format and challenges the traditional format.¹⁰

In the image *Golden Temple, Kyoto*, (1993) from the photobook *Small World* (1995), a pack of identically dressed Japanese students stand in reverie of the famed temple, their silent anticipation illustrates their studious respect for the religious relic. Again, vision and looking are

⁸ P. Virilio, *A Landscape of Events*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 2000 p. 10.

⁹ See Parr's comprehensive website for more publications: www.martinparr.com (Accessed 3/11/2013).

¹⁰ Martin Parr in collaboration with Gerry Badger have published the inspiring and informative set of books titled *The Photobook: A History* of which the third volume was recently released.

important to this photograph and tourism per se. From the group, two boys look elsewhere and another has his hand over his friend's shoulder and both actions hinting at an underlying restlessness, or even just boredom with the touristic experience. This emotively captured moment is indicative of much of Parr's work that comments on human interaction with grand tourist attractions.



FIGURE 2.6: Martin Parr, *Golden Temple, Kyoto*, (1993)

Another example from the same publication is *Acropolis, Athens, Greece* (1991) (FIG: 2.7). Once again there is a subject in the very foreground and we – the viewer – peer as if over his shoulder. This man photographs a large group of Asian tourists who are all wearing tightly ironed trousers and face towards the camera. On the left-hand-side of the frame is a group of European or American tourists all wearing casual shorts and polo shirts. This second group face in the opposite direction, their backs to camera as they ‘take in’ the spectacular monument. Parr has a tendency to make the figures within his compositions look out-of-place and uninterested. But *Acropolis, Athens, Greece* is different: people are represented as typecast groups absorbed in the performance of tourism, whether it be taking the mandatory group ‘snap’ or studiously cocking their heads in amazement at the guides. Once again the visions of the tourist intersect, both, inwards and outwards, backwards and forwards, and could be plotted – graph-like – with the verticals of the architectural columns and the stripes of the tourist photographer’s shirt.



FIGURE 2.7: Martin Parr, *Acropolis, Athens, Greece* (1991)

Like Hinde and Imai, this amusing series of photographs are captured from within the performance of tourism. It is part critical, part humorous and wholeheartedly social in its observation. One cannot help feeling that Parr is making critical judgments that reflect the prevailing negativity towards mass tourism one finds in critical theory and more generally.

In his book *Travelling Light: Photography Travel and Visual Culture* (2000), Peter Osborne critically reviews Parr's *Small World* publication and discusses the same photograph from Greece. He points out that ten of the sixty-nine photographs in Parr's book actually depict the photographic act as it unfolds and he acknowledges tourist places as stages, asserting that the tourists "link themselves to a world of public culture, of global identity. At the same time the photographic framing extracts the building from the tourists' personal histories. The moment is absolutely public and entirely intimate."¹¹ His reference is made in relation to a packaged form of tourism and global identity. Arguably, tourists that travel in the remote Australian landscape also seek a form of identity confirmation, although this is largely shaped by concepts that represent Australia and, as we shall see, this style of tourism uses a self-guided 'drifting' approach as opposed to the packaged model. Parr's images may conjure negative thoughts about tourism, but as with most of his projects

¹¹ P. D. Osborne, *Travelling Light: Photography Travel and Visual Culture*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000, p. 71.

they also seem to express a kind of ironic affection towards the middle-class and their achievements.

Like *Viewing Platforms* the work may pose questions but ultimately concludes that tourism can be educational and pleasurable and that such experiences can enrich understandings of place and culture.

The American West

I will now turn to analyse two German photographers who do not document tourism per se, but use urban and rural landscapes as a 'stage'.

In 1983 the influential German film director, Wim Wenders, travelled throughout the American West for a reconnaissance mission with a Plaubel-Makina¹² camera to seek locations for his film *Paris, Texas* (1984). The narrative of the film revolves around the amnesiac and delusional character, Travis Henderson (played by Harry Dean Stanton), who wanders the American deserts of the West in search of a vacant plot of land he owns in Paris – a small town in Texas. The location is never actually found but only seen through an old photograph he carries on him at all times. The photographs produced by Wenders on his initial road trip were published in a book, *Written in the West* (1987), and later also exhibited. The creased and folded photograph that Travis carries with him is reflective of Wenders' own images and his search is also reflective of Wenders' photographic road trip in preparation for the making of *Paris, Texas*.

Wenders' initial reconnaissance mission, the photographs he made, the cinematic production and the film plot all take place and are embedded in the iconic American West (from Los Angeles to Texas and back). The opening sequence of the film is an aerial shot of the desert as Travis walks aimlessly as a small red-hatted figure within the landscape. The 62 photographs and published conversation at the beginning of *Written in the West*, document the process of Wenders seeking out cinematic locations. Within the introduction conversation which is presented as an essay, the French film critic, writer and director Alain Bergala comments: "One senses from your photos that you like confronting subjects full face. The manmade foreground often feels like a stage set",¹³ to which Wenders replies:

The impression is basic to the American West. Everything people have built there has a highly theatrical air. Once you're in country as open as that, a frontal view becomes more or less the only option, because any other way of looking at things – say, from a particular angle, from the side or above or below – ends up isolating the subject from its surroundings. Viewed frontally, things retain their identities, whereas if they're seen at special angles they tend to lose them. And any angle other than a full face one is a reminder of the photographer's subjective presence... In the

¹² The Plaubel-Makina was a series of medium-format press style cameras. The original Makina was manufactured and made in Germany from 1912 through 1953. Plaubel was later sold to Makina in Japan and they produced the cameras in a slightly new design in the late 1970's through to 1980s. All Plaubel-Makina models had leaf shutters and a rangefinder focusing system with collapsible bellows. Presently they have somewhat of a cult following and are also collectable.

¹³ W. Wenders, *Written in the West*, Germany: Schirmer Art Books, 1987, p. 16.

American West, the horizon is invariably present. It dominates every picture. Do what you like, the horizon is there, cutting the picture in two, and the special qualities of the everything in the picture are related to the horizon because that is where the perspective leads. If the point of view isn't frontal but angled, the subject is divorced from the horizon, and that hurts the eyes. And the things themselves...¹⁴

The colour palette used to photograph the landscape and architectural details is consistent and emotive. The photographs are made from a front-on or forty-five degree sideways angle and many feature fading and chipped advertising texts where attention is paid to surfaces. Although Wenders is in awe of the grand American West his images are somewhat nostalgic but also dystopian and imbued with a postmodern irony that are poignant themes throughout the eventual film. Wenders used a handheld medium-format camera to make the photographs and this enabled him to be quick while creating high quality image quality. Hence, unless he has requested people to pose for the camera they are unconscious to the photographic act and are often seen from behind or the side. This methodology enables Wenders to juxtapose the two styles: the formalist, front-on or side views, with a more candid style of photography that is usually the domain of street and tourist photographers.

Plates 47 and 48 from *Written in the West* are interestingly titled the same, *Painted background and foreground action Downtown Los Angeles, California* (1983) (FIG 2.8 & 2.9) and illustrate this double methodology with precision. The first of the two images is a frontal detail of a painted backdrop-like wall with (real) canvas footpath coverings and two cars parked on the street – half of each is visible. The structured horizontal and vertical lines are aligned with the edges of the composition. The word 'action' in the titles hints at both the cinematic notions that the painted wall implies and what is taking place in the second frame. Plate 48 is recognisable as being in the same location or close vicinity due to the canvas footpath coverings and wall behind the parked



FIGURE 2.8: Wim Wenders, *Painted background and foreground action Downtown Los Angeles, California*



FIGURE 2.9: Wim Wenders, *Painted background and foreground action Downtown Los Angeles, California*

¹⁴ W. Wenders, *Written in the West*, Germany: Schirmer Art Books, 1987, P. 16.

police car. Here Wenders' has switched to a more mobile mode of photography to capture a man in handcuffs being arrested and escorted to the police vehicle – his back to us.

This switching between formalist views and more candid embedded photography is also an important methodology used for *Viewing Platforms*.

The analytical structured approach was important to 'set the scene' and encompasses much of the tourist infrastructure installed at particular landscape locations (or more liminal places such as rest areas). In these images figures are usually presented on a small-scale within the frame and this emphasises the vastness of the remote urban and rural landscapes. The second methodology, which is produced with a handheld medium-format camera, afforded participation within the tourist performance (this is also represented by photographs in which I am also included). By juxtaposing these two styles, as evidenced by Wenders' set of photographs, the photographer can be both analytical and descriptive while also immersed and encountering the subject matter – the photographic act itself becomes performative.

In the foreword conversation to *Written in the West*, Bergala and Wenders make extensive reference to theatre, locations as 'stages' and figures as 'actors'. This is reflective of the conceptual and visual approach I have taken to touristscapes in *Viewing Platforms* and the extended conversation is worth including here:¹⁵

A.B. In regard to theatricality, I was particularly impressed by two photos of Los Angeles (plates 47, 48). First you construct a theatre, with the trompe-l'oeil windows and the little curtains. Then against that backdrop something real happens - a man who has just been arrested is taken to an open police car - but under your gaze that real scene itself becomes theatre. It's like a reward: you photograph the city as if it were a theatre, and promptly something very dramatic happens. But wonderful little chance events like that have to be earned. How exactly did it happen?

W.W. I was walking around downtown Los Angeles, and all of a sudden down this dead end I saw the painted wall with its make-believe windows and dainty awning. I went down and tried to find somewhere that I could get everything in, the theatre set and the cars in front. It was a bit like back projection in a film, as if real cars had been put in front of a photo of a street. It took me a long time to find the kind of position I had in mind because there wasn't much room. I backed into an entry to get everything in. That was the first photo. Then I noticed that there was a police car ten metres along and they were just taking someone along who had been caught shoplifting. The cops had the guy between them in handcuffs. So there I still was looking at the back projection screen, and now I had my actors. So I rushed out behind them in that short quiet moment when one of the cops had opened the car door for the thief to get in, it all went very quickly, I hardly had time to look through the viewfinder and left the aperture as it was, estimated the distance, and then just took the shot.

¹⁵ W. Wenders, *Written in the West*, Germany: Schirmer Art Books, 1987, P. 16.

A.B. You were in the position of a reporter, but basically the photograph radiates the selfsame calm and composure as all the others.

W.W. That's because the previous photo was still in my mind. It was really as if the actors were simply rehearsing. And then there was that remarkable moment when all three of them were standing waiting by the car like actors waiting for the director to shout "Action". They didn't notice me, and I went off grinning, with that sly feeling of having bagged one of those moments - a snapshot.

This insightful conversation outlines the methodology that I used to photograph locations theatrically in remote Australia. In addition to that, it also gives 'back story' to the actual situation in which the photograph was made and this is also reflective of the fictive voice that is placed throughout this exegesis and the *Viewing Platforms* photobook publication.

The final photograph I wish to examine from Wenders' publication takes the viewer backstage to where the sprawling billboards of Los Angeles are conceived. The first three plates of *Written in the West* are details of a Billboard painter's studio: a corner shelf littered with long-dried-up paint tins and brushes, the paint splattered back of the painter's pickup truck and the painter himself, cigarette in mouth, raising his scaffolding. Plate four, *Billboard painters studio Glendale, California*, (1983) merges the aforementioned styles of photography – structural and analytical but also candid from

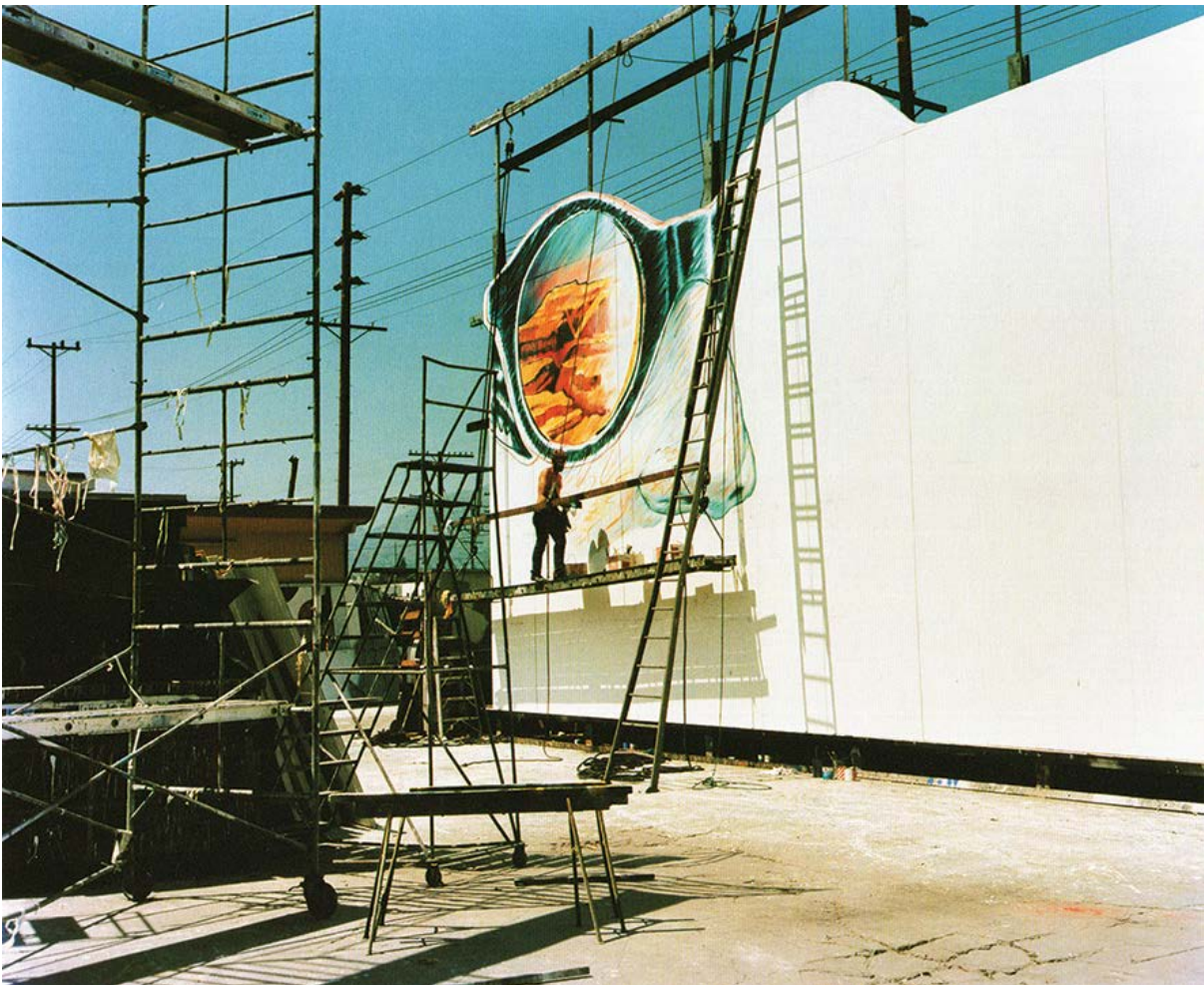


FIGURE 2.10: Wim Wenders, *Billboard painters studio Glendale, California*

within the 'action' unfolding. The composition can be halved into two aesthetically oppositional modes, the right is a minimalistic palette that presents an 'empty canvas' like the sparse landscapes of the desert. The left-hand-half of the composition is symmetrical and structured but also chaotic and confusing. The urban and rural landscape 'stage' is set here by the introduction of the half-blank billboard and the dialogue is represented by the text that features throughout the publication (on signs, shop fronts and billboards).

Again, these textual elements have influenced *Viewing Platform's* semi-fictive voice and obviously the construction of the imagery for the exhibition and subsequent photobook.

Whilst Wenders was shooting for possible future film locations, the German photographer Mirko Martin shoots actual film sets in Los Angeles and often while filming is taking place. Martin then presents these photographs in photobook and exhibition formats juxtaposed with other images that are made throughout Los Angeles in everyday un-cinematic circumstances. This coupling of choreographed and un-choreographed locations and scripted and unscripted activities blurs the lines between reality and simulation. Like *Viewing Platforms*, both Wenders' and Martin's projects use particular locations as a 'stage' for photographic investigation. On a more subtle level Wenders makes documentary images that look like they emerge from his fictional films, whereas Martin documents the filmic atmosphere that pervades Los Angeles.

It is my intention that the touristscapes documented in *Viewing Platforms* also draw on the staging and choreography that is evident in the two projects made in America. Platforms and infrastructure within particular landscapes establish this stage where the tourists' (semi) mediated performances are played out in the landscapes.



FIGURE 2.11: Mirko Martin, *L.A. Crash* from *Tales from the West Side*, (pp. 48 & 49), (2008)

L.A. Crash is a larger series of photographs by Martin that are that are incorporated in the photobooks: *In Broad Day* (2011), *Marginal Stories* (2009), *Tales from the Westside* (2008) and *Scenic* (2008)¹⁶. Car accidents in the city of Los Angeles reoccur as subject matter throughout this series. On page 48 of the publication *Tales from the West Side* a billboard advertises a cinema release, *Street Kings*, and below this are two silver cars that have had a head-on collision. Power lines criss-cross the late afternoon sky and in the foreground oil and water spew from the two engines. What makes the scene somewhat unsettling is the lack of people. On the opposite page is a more candid image of a police officer who seems to be screaming instructions. Again, this is a juxtaposition of formal and more candid image making techniques which is evidenced through depth of focus and composition. Whether these two scenes are related (or even real) is unknown. Statements and interviews from Martin's website give some insight to his intentions:

For my photo and video works, I search the streets of urban areas for situations in which the borderlines between a staged and real-life scene are blurred. I am drawn to dramatic aspects of rituals of everyday life when people publicly act out their roles in theatrical ways and thus transform the venues into stages of the everyday... By creating ambiguous images, I want to let viewers make up their own narratives and reflect on behavior [sic] and cultural backgrounds, as well as on the perception of images.¹⁷

To create *L.A. Crash* Martin often sneaks onto film sets to document the choreographed action. The imagery created using this methodology is then juxtaposed with vernacular photographs taken in the streets throughout central and sprawling Los Angeles that are not part of constructed film narratives. Ultimately this asks the viewer to consider what is real and what it not? Certainly, it is all choreographed for the camera, but where does the line between 'first' (everyday goings on) and 'second' (the filmset) realities divide? The simulacra, that is Martin's project, is further confused through its reading by postproduction and he makes no efforts to hide the fact that many of the *L.A. Crash* photographs have been altered, reconstructed and stitched in the digital realm. In an email interview between Martin and I he further elaborated on the making of his images:

I am not necessarily hiding, just as the situation allows it. Often people don't mind, because cameras are omnipresent in L.A. But white cops don't like being photographed arresting a black guy, etc, or movie security will try to prevent you from taking shots when big stars are around. Then it becomes about hiding and sneaking and playing games, and it can be very stressful, but it is worth it if I get a good picture. Often I don't, but then I at least know I did everything I could. Getting permission is difficult, especially after 9/11, and it would take very long. (Before, they even had a shoot sheet in the central film office downtown, which any tourist could pick up in the morning, and which would tell you all the locations of the day. Now, terrorism seems to cast its shadow on everything, and you have to drive around in the city all day and look out for shoots). Maybe it could make sense in certain cases for me in the future, but I have not yet been seeking permission.¹⁸

¹⁶ Most of these publications are accessible as PDF files on Martin's website: www.mirkomartin.com (Accessed 03/03/2013).

¹⁷ M. Martin, <http://www.mirkomartin.com/> (Accessed 10/2012).

¹⁸ M. Martin Email interview 7th and 10th January 2010.

Pages 32 and 33 of *Tales from the West Side* include an image that bleeds to all four edges of the page and features a photograph of the sky with black smoke pluming from the centre of the page. Within the haze are nine helicopters hovering at similar distances from each other. The next page reveals that this is just a small edited detail from a much larger photograph that overlooks Los Angeles from a high vantage point. A fire in the centre of the right-hand-side of the frame is causing the smoke and there are many more helicopters (real or fabricated) in the sky. This is a common technique used to create narrative in experimental contemporary photobooks.¹⁹

The repetition of imagery is also used in *Viewing Platforms* to create more extended readings of images and establish an analytical viewing that is both critical and propositional. The use of varying sizes and formats (panoramic, vertical, horizontal and close-up details) in Martin's work is reflective of the film-making – and especially editing – process. These larger-scale images 'set the scene' of where the narrative will unravel. They are then punctuated by more candid undertakings that take place throughout Los Angeles: an elderly person crawls along the ground and onlookers pay no attention (mid-shot); a man is arrested (close-shot); a woman tells her kids to look at the camera (long-shot); a fire on the side of a highway (long-shot); a woman stands on the roof of a taxi screaming (mid-shot); helicopters hover between buildings (mid-shot), a homeless man pissing while walking across the street (long-shot) and so on.



FIGURE 2.12 & 2.13: Mirko Martin *Tales from the West Side* (2008), pages 32 & 33, 34 & 35

Australian Perspectives on Tourism and Landscape

I want to conclude this chapter with an analysis of two Australian photographers who have worked with both tourism and urban and rural landscapes. These practitioners have particular styles to approaching unique Australian environments that vary from spectacular leisure spaces to small rural townships.

¹⁹ Some other notable publications that make use of this technique have been produced by Massim Ovitale (*Landscapes with Figures and Natural Habitats*), Michael Wolf (*Night and Architecture of Density*) and Walter Niedermayr (*Momentary Resorts*).

Anne Zahalka has been working with photography since the 1980s and has exhibited widely in Australia and internationally establishing her as one of the country's leading contemporary image-makers. She has an ongoing interest in iconic Australian leisure activities and culture and how they are played out in large-scale public places. This work has also been informed by earlier staged studio photography that reference art history and well-known Australian images²⁰ and makes use of elaborate backdrops of iconic Australian landscape locations where the beach often plays a central role.

Leisureland is a series of large-scale colour photographs made between 1998 and 2001 that document spectacular recreation activities that include sport and leisure within mostly simulated environments. Like viewing platforms that create landscape vantage points, many of these places have been constructed with both tourism and photography in mind. These places include stadiums, aquatic centres, zoos and motor shows where photography is encouraged.²¹ A large number of the photographs in the series are made, like Hinde's highly choreographed holiday resort images, from behind the audience as they admire and absorb the atmosphere of the event.

The photographs I have made for *Viewing Platforms* also use this visual trope where the viewer of the image aligns their vision with the depicted figures. Although, for my project what exactly the pictured tourists are looking at is often unclear or obscured: it could be the landscape attraction that is out of view or minute details of the terrain.

One of the photographs Zahalka made for *Leisureland* is an image that documents the Cole Classic swimming race at the iconic Bondi Beach (which is the location for earlier staged photographs that appeared on painted backdrops for a series of portraits titled *Bondi: Playground of the Pacific*²² (1989). *Cole Classic* (1998) can be separated into three image planes. The first features a large number of swimmers standing on the golden sand as they wait in anticipation to enter the water and contest. The colour scheme created by matching swimming costumes contrasts with the above blues of the sea and sky which are halved by the horizon line. Like many *Viewing Platforms* images, performance is at play and here the anticipation is palatable: to enter the water (the unfolding landscape) and to compete (perform).

An additional repetitious visual element in Zahalka's project is screens (televisions in a gym, screens for projection, slot machines, etc.) that allude to the act of image production and the saturation of photography throughout contemporary society. Blair French in his essay 'The Photogenic Image: Anne Zahalka's *Leisureland*'²³ asserts that this technique of repetitious image reproduction (images within images) reflects "the colonisation of social space by the image" and this "requires that we question whether or not the images we are concerned with exist

²⁰ Arguably Zahalka's most recognised image is *The Sunbather #2* from 1989 which is a direct appropriation of Max Dupain's original black & white photograph *Sunbaker* made in 1937.

²¹ Until more recently as concerns about images of children in Australia have escalated due to photographic controversies involving Bill Henson and Polixeni Papapetrou amongst others.

²² These images can be viewed on the Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery website: http://www.roslynoxley9.com.au/artists/3/Anne_Zahalka/245/ (Accessed 28/09/2013).

²³ B. French, 'The Photogenic Image: Anne Zahalka's *Leisureland*', *Photogenic: Essays, Photography, CCP 2000 – 2004*, (ed) Daniel Palmer, Melbourne: Centre for Contemporary Photography & Ellikon Press, pp. 49 – 57.



FIGURE 2.14: Anne Zahalka, *Cole Classic* (1998)

simultaneously within, and at a reflective distance from, the culture they epitomise.”²⁴ In the essay, French reviews many of the photographs in this series and labels both the works and the places photographed of ‘photogenic’ nature that is representative of contemporary society and heightened through leisure experiences. He concludes: “...their photogenic quality is actually a constitutive element of their very being, and it is this condition that is in fact both revealed and reiterated.”²⁵

Like the work of John Hinde discussed earlier, whom Zahalka openly admires, these images are made from within the mostly gated venues where spectacle unfolds. The compositions are formally structured to encompass the venue, décor, participants and leisure activities (be they dancing, exercising, gambling, swimming or climbing Sydney Harbour Bridge). Zahalka’s *Leisureland* photography makes a point of depicting embedded technology particularly photographic and screen-based where action is often also unfolding in real time as this adds to the photogenic nature outlined by French.²⁶

²⁴ B. French, ‘The Photogenic Image: Anne Zahalka’s *Leisureland*’, *Photogenic: Essays, Photography, CCP 2000 – 2004*, (ed) Daniel Palmer, Melbourne: Centre for Contemporary Photography & Ellikon Press, p.49.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Anne Zahalka also has a smaller series titled *Wonderland* that addresses similar leisure themes but in more landscape oriented environments such as this project. Viewable here: http://www.roslynnoxley9.com.au/artists/3/Anne_Zahalka/329/ (Accessed 05/01/2014).



FIGURE 2.15: *Hopetoun Falls Viewing Platform (Mobile Phones) (2011)*

Viewing Platforms also uses this formalist compositional style to frame more minimal structures within touristscapes (platforms, signs and boardwalks) (eg. FIG: 3.1 & 3.2 and 3.3 & 3.4). Like the photographic act of framing, these facilities also enhance the techniques of the tourist industry, tourists themselves and this project to contain and consume the landscape. Reminiscent of Zahalka's *Leisureland* images, my photograph *Hopetoun Falls Viewing Platform (Mobile Devices)* (FIG: 2.15) features two Muslim ladies dressed in a traditional manner. Their burqas are the same green colour and tones of the landscapes they are absorbing from the height of the wooden platform. On closer inspection the landscape is also repeated on the screens of their mobile phones and digital cameras as they compose photographs. The 'live view system' is caught statically in this photograph like the images they are producing as part of their memory narrative that is conscious of photogenic possibilities as outlined above. This photograph connects two points that are met on the conceptual hermeneutic tourist circle (that is discussed in the next chapter), where the actual desired landscape unfolds in real time while the personalised image of that site is being made for later consumption.

Martin Mischkulnig's project and subsequent publication *Smalltown*²⁷ focuses on 'far-flung' Australian locations and features several places that I have also investigated and photographed for *Viewing Platforms*. The *Smalltown* photobook is presented in a tradition monograph format and contains an insightful essay by respected Australian novelist Tim Winton and has been described as "a beautiful book about ugliness."²⁸ Mischkulnig works as a commercial photographer but also has varied projects that focus on notions of 'Australiana' that include portraits of backyard wrestling and shrines made by surfers. As with most of the work analysed in this chapter, the photographs are made with a large-format camera and shift between vast open urban and rural landscapes that include (often smaller scale) human intervention, interiors of public spaces and several portraits.



FIGURE 2.16: Martin Mischkulnig, *Lochiel, South Australia*

The cover image, *Lochiel, South Australia*,²⁹ depicts a vast salt lake in South Australia where the horizon line cuts through the centre of the frame emphasising the expanse of the salt and sky. In the distance some low-lying hills indicate the edge of the salt lake and add depth to the remote location which sets up the landscape as a 'stage' for interaction. Punctuating the centre of the frame is a sculptural dinosaur that is made from used tyres like much road-side constructions

²⁷ M. Mischkulnig, *Smalltown*, Penguin Australia (Hamish Hamilton), 2008.

²⁸ Penguin book review: <http://www.penguin.com.au/products/9781926428123/smalltown> (Accessed 20/01/2014).

²⁹ The year the image was produced is not specified as with all images in the book.

that are largely installed to amuse visitors and tourists passing through. It is a striking and humorous image that, much like many of the other photographs in the book, chronicle laid-back, half-hearted attempts to ‘decorate’ remote Australian towns and other small-scale transitory places where visitors often stop. Winton wittily defines these endeavours and attempts as ‘fugly’, an invented Australian colloquial term that combines the words fucking and ugly.

Other examples of the ‘handy work’ that is considered in this light includes painted murals, front yard instalments, oversized tourist attractions and random interventions along highways. This style of kitsch ‘bush art’³⁰ is also featured in my own work for *Viewing Platforms*. A good example is *Cooper Pedy, (Camel)* (2011) which is composed from behind a sign that is shaped like a camel and advertises a caravan and tourist park. Without text the roadside sign’s meaning is lost (it obviously refers to the many millions of stray camels that wander inland Australia). The landscape is framed by a monolithic-like sign on the left-hand-side of the composition and by other light poles and signs in the distance.



FIGURE 2.17: *Cooper Pedy (Camel)*, 2011

³⁰ Not to be confused with Aboriginal art.

To close this chapter I will elaborate on one of my images that encapsulates many of the ideas outlined through the analysis of the photographs in this contextual chapter. The photograph, *Coober Pedy, (Spaceship)* (2011), documents two international tourists in remote northern South Australia as they interact with an abandoned filmset spaceship. This has obviously been ‘acquired’ by the owner of the lodgings which the pictured car park facilitates. The centre of the image is empty and as is representative of the wide-open desert spaces that surround this area which have also been documented by Mischkulnig. This is not a gated tourist place like that depicted in Imai and Hinde’s work but visitors mainly inhabit the town and it’s attractions (underground museums and bars) and only venture somewhat further out for daytrips to engage with unusual desert landscapes such as Moon Plains or The Breakaways. In the foreground of the image the rudimentary sculpture of a

‘bushman’ holding an Australian flag and the parking sign that is kept erect with the assistance of a dilapidated car tyre could be labelled ‘fugly’. As with much of the other decorative elements in this unique town, they are installed to amuse tourists. Like much of Zahalka’s photography, the tones in this image are representative of the Australian desert and like many of the photographs discussed in this chapter, the open central area of the image acts as a ‘stage’ for the visitors (who prepare on the edges) to enter and act out tourist desires.



FIGURE 2.18: *Coober Pedy (Spaceship)*, (2011)

The Bunker

There are small benches that are perhaps better described as standing decks that perforate “the strip” that is setup to view Uluru. These are really two one-way lanes with parking bays and minimal wooden structures to aid viewing, and most importantly, photographing at sunset. The buses and larger vehicles have a separate designated parking zone, which, as I enter the “strip” in the early afternoon, are empty meeting grounds. At sunset, and to a lesser extent sunrise, the “strip” comes alive with tourists who vary with age, nationality and travel arrangements. All tourists who come here have one thing in common – they carry a camera of some varying format. Tourists with tripods are assumed serious or professional and hence must obtain a permit to shoot. This involves outlining the use of the resultant pictures and getting them cleared through the media centre by Aboriginal elders. Nowadays one is strongly advised not to photograph people climbing the monolith, as this would encourage future climbers.

A group of four tourists who look comfortable picnicking on a bench initiate a conversation after noticing my tripod. They are students from Sydney – two couples from Korea – and are here for the experience of the Australian desert. I have come early to establish positions to photograph and as I walk around I find more people than I expected, picnicking, arranging chairs, setting up cameras and drinking from iced Eskys. On noticing my tripod the group of Koreans make a polite request: “You have equipment, you must be a professional? Please take a picture of us with the rock in the background.” I use two of their phones and a digital camera to replicate the same image. As a reward they offer me some traditional Korean food. The portable and well-worn polystyrene Esky lid is lifted and the strong smells of garlic and cabbage wafts through the dry air. Over kimchi and tins of beer our discussions sporadically flow in random directions. It doesn’t take me long to learn that they bought a cheap car in Sydney where they are studying various university degrees and are now travelling and looking to get some fruit picking work to support their adventure. “There are no concrete plans,” they explain. The four Seoul residents then enthusiastically described how about 100 kilometres from Uluru they had

hit a kangaroo and their treasured car was now only just drivable. “We are leaving tomorrow because the National Park pass only lasts for three nights, I hope we make it...”

Over more kimchi and tins of beer I explain that I am at Uluru to photograph. The Korean four proceed to outline places where the best views are for photography and other possible techniques they have witnessed over the last few days. These included bus tour sunset fine dining in a secluded car park and fence jumpers who wear army camouflage gear to get closer to “the rock”.

I ask them what they think of Uluru? “First, the campgrounds and facilities are great for travellers like us who can’t afford to stay in hotels. It reminds us guys of the mandatory military service we do in Korea and the rural bases where we were stationed.” I prompt them to continue: “you have a permit to go in and out and almost all your moves are controlled, there are many signs telling you what not to do.” In addition, they are also bemused by the beauty of the rock and subtle changes it makes as time advances. They thought that it had many secrets to convey but was not speaking to them, or at least they didn’t understand the ancient language: “It’s like going on DMZ tours and looking into the North, there is something going on there too – but we don’t know what, it keeps secrets and doesn’t speak our language.”

That evening back at the ‘bunker’ we continued our conversations over kangaroo burgers and they tell me about a man named Bill who they squashed into their car for about 200 kilometres. Apparently this Bill had minimal bags and pronounced himself a ‘drifter’. He told them stories about the ‘outback’ for three straight hours.

Chapter Three: Journeying

Chapter Three will examine ‘drifting’ modes of travel to remote Australian locations and position the viewing platform as a site that empowers and is central to tourist desire.

My methods of analysis have been influenced by the publication *Performing Tourist Places*¹ from the *New Directions in Tourist Analysis* series.² It outlines two methods of analysis for tourist activity in relation to ‘mobile methods’³ that are labelled ‘corporeal’ and ‘imaginative’. These methods call for a new type of tourism analysis that does not use the tourist as sole barometer but “focuses rather upon the contingent networked performance and production of places that are to be toured and get remade as they are so toured.”⁴

I use the term ‘corporeal’ here in reference to the above mentioned publication and to describe physical activities that are both premeditated and spontaneous. These are akin to much other tourism (viewing, purchasing, consuming and so on), but also include undertakings that are valid to the Australian landscape including the storage of petrol for long journeys and practising caution around dangerous wildlife.

The ‘imaginative’ implications are intangible and fuelled by literature, film, conversations, the Internet which largely revolve around semi-mythical notions of the ‘outback’ and ‘bush’. These physical and mental implications constitute the tourist desire – driven by adventure, discovery, landscape pilgrimage, and a longing for grand landscapes and the atmosphere they create. Of utmost importance is the technology which allows one to record the experience. The camera, as Australian historian Anne Marsh notes, “is a prosthesis for the operator, one which extends and enhances both physical capabilities and psychological structures.”⁵

I will argue that the camera and photographic image-making are central to this desire. I propose that tourists that travel to remote Australian locations aspire to make visual confirmation of landscapes which they visit and engage with – to experience first-hand the images that have prompted travel. As suggested by photography theorists and historians like Susan Sontag and Marsh, the camera becomes a form of tourist ‘prosthesis’ that also plays a role in tourist performance.

Used in both interaction with fellow tourists to make portraits and to picture the actual landscape from a personalised aesthetic perspective, the camera is the instigator of much tourist performance.

¹ J. Ole Bærenholdt, M. Haldrup, J. Larsen and J. Urry *Performing Tourist Places* (New Directions in Tourist Analysis series), London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004.

² The *New Directions in Tourist Analysis* series also includes: *Tourists, Signs and the City; The Semiotics of Culture in Urban Landscapes, The Framed World; Tourism, Tourists and Photography and Landscape, Tourism and Meaning*.

³ “Mobile methods produce insight by moving physically, virtually, or analytically with research subjects. They involve qualitative, quantitative, visual and experimental forms of inquiry, and follow material and social phenomena.” From: <http://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/mobile-methods-697> (Accessed 20/12/2013).

⁴ J. Ole Bærenholdt, M. Haldrup, J. Larsen and J. Urry *Performing Tourist Places* (New Directions in Tourist Analysis series), London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004, p. 151.

⁵ A. Marsh, *The Darkroom: Photography and the Theatre of Desire*, Australia: MacMillan, 2003, p. 13.

It is also important to note that this desire has, with the development of technology, also been influenced by the instantaneous nature of current photographic technologies which enable images to be immediately consumed on site. Within this digital realm a second confirmation takes place that connects the tourists' social media 'friends' with visual evidence of the journey and accomplishments undertaken. In the introduction to her book, *The Darkroom: Photography and the Theatre of Desire* (2003), Marsh continues from the quote above and suggests that "the distinction between fantasy and reality, between 'truth' and its interpretations, is blurred: that every photographic 'truth' is an interpretation and that this interpretation is driven by desire, the desire of the operator, the subject being photographed and the viewer looking on."⁶

Therefore, I maintain that the photograph is all-important in confirming visitation to the tourist site and that the camera is an extension of the body (and eye). But of more importance, is the performance of tourism, the act of making the photograph, framing, directing subjects and the eventual story telling that establishes and expands on one's own travel narrative or 'truth'.

In 1990 American sociologist John Urry published what is considered to be one of the key theoretical texts on tourism – *The Tourist Gaze*. In it Urry draws attention to what he labels "a kind of hermeneutic⁷ circle"⁸ that takes place between three forms of representative imagery that the tourist engages with. The first fuels tourist desire and refers to guidebooks, brochures and the Internet that are used as marketing tools and inspiration to travel. The second is the actual tourist imagery made while journeying and when at key sites of interest, and the final set of images is the tourist collections which are sorted and displayed in albums (and now on computers and the Internet). This collection of photographs is used both privately and publically to re-enact tourist memory narratives and 're-animate' the experiences that were first generated visually through commercial forms of photography. Later while reflecting on these images, comparisons are drawn from the different sets of photographs (commercial, private, social media generated) collected physically and through memory.

Therefore, as the camera is an extension of the body, so to are these collections an extension of our imagination that both expands on and replaces memory. Nowadays, the democratisation of photography through technology and the Internet further complicates yet reinforces this cycle of image production and reproduction. The roles and outcomes of these three points of image production that connect the hermeneutic circle Urry outlined have now mutated and are less defined. These dissolving boundaries have enabled the contemporary tourist experience to become more participatory, creating new tourist desires and in turn fostering new forms of tourism.

⁶ A. Marsh, *The Darkroom: Photography and the Theatre of Desire*, Australia: MacMillan, 2003 p. 13.

⁷ "The term *hermeneutics* covers both the first order art and the second order theory of understanding and interpretation of linguistic and non-linguistic expressions. As a theory of interpretation, the hermeneutic tradition stretches all the way back to ancient Greek philosophy. In the course of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, hermeneutics emerges as a crucial branch of Biblical studies. Later on, it comes to include the study of ancient and classic cultures... With the emergence of German romanticism and idealism the status of hermeneutics changes. Hermeneutics turns philosophical." B. Ramberg, & K. Gjesdal, (2005), *Hermeneutics*: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/> (Accessed: 18/01/2014).

⁸ J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, London and California: SAGE Publications, 1990, p. 140.

Beginning in the late 1880s images that inspired tourists to travel were seen through printed matter which was produced for commercial purposes (advertising and marketing) or the personal collections of other peoples' pictures that were presented with verbal stories from travel. Many of the first photobooks published were also travel related and pictured far away exotic locations. In the early twentieth century the introduction of personal cameras by Kodak (and followed by other companies) expanded the dissemination of imagery, largely of family, important events and travel.

Nowadays, the rapid expansion of photography through digitisation has saturated contemporary society through means such as image hosting platforms (Twitter, Flickr and Instagram) and personal digital devices (iPads and smartphones). Amateur, particularly landscape, photography is used by travel agencies and the tourist industry to promote their product through devices that include photography competitions. This is not an entirely a new marketing concept but has accelerated with the digital ease of transporting pictures via pixels. The use of amateur (and less expensive or even free) images for promotion of designated landscapes inspires and encourages tourists to produce a collection of their own images beyond the personal and public collections which are celebrated through printed collections, email and social media.

Tourist can now hope their image might be the finalist in a competition or feature behind the weather forecaster on the nightly news. Such image production is also inspired by the ease and cost effective methods available to produce a brochure or coffee-table book through publish-on-demand services. This closer aligns the domestic tourist and their 'point-and-shoot' methodologies with professional photography from tourist locations and is representative of two points on Urruy's 'hermeneutic circle'.

In the essay *Moments, Magic and Memories: Photographing Tourists, Tourist Photographs and Making Worlds* co-edited by cultural theorists Mike Robinson and David Picard they outline the synergies that connect the amateur and professional modes of image-making:

"Each set of visual representations exist, and are connected; the images of a Caribbean holiday beach strewn massively across an advertising hoarding and demonstrative of the super-structures of the international tourism industry, are reflected in, and animated by, the photographs of the family on holiday on a similar beach."⁹

Inspired by a collection of memory images, a tourist begins their journey with a 'slideshow' stored in their visual mind which they desire to experience and to perform firsthand. What they have seen prior to their journey inevitably influences what they would like to record on site with a device containing a lens. This is an important factor in understanding the hermeneutic circle – the act of re-photographing and re-enacting. Technology heavily influences the ways in which this is presently undertaken, for instance, contemporary innovations include live feed video telephone calls from location or capturing the site in new and advanced ways through still and moving imagery with devices such as a miniature attachable GoPro camera.¹⁰

⁹ M. Robinson and D. Picard (eds), 'Moments, Magic and Memories: Photographing Tourists, Tourist Photographs and Making Worlds', *The Framed World: Tourism, Tourists and Photography*, London: Ashgate, 2009, p. 7.

¹⁰ For more details on this brand of high quality attachable and wearable cameras see: <http://gopro.com/> (Accessed 20/01/2014).

The iconic landscape apogee still plays a key role but there are new and evolving methods to record oneself, accompanying travellers and the landscape amongst such tourist places.

Where once albums were treasured and 'slide nights' entertained guests with tourist adventures, these image collections are now largely presented through differing modes: emailed, slide shows presented on televisions, through social media and so on. One factor that has impacted on the influence of travel imagery (and photography in general) is instantaneous image transference which creates immediacy and a sense of 'being there' regardless of distance. Through the aspiration to, the collection of and final display of the tourist albums Urry's hermeneutic concept comes full circle.

The presentation of ones tourist album through social media becomes a form of personal narrative and travel promotion and creates tourist desire. The quality of digital technologies now makes the amateur far more capable of creating interesting and personalised photographic travel documents. The immediacy of uploads that run concurrently with digital technologies as well as instant post-production services create quality amateur imagery that is influenced by professional tourist photography and vice versa.

This cyclical activity is performed by collecting travel aspiration, the photographic act and eventual recounting of travel stories. This revolves around the camera and construction of narrative 'truth' that binds the multi-sensorial experiences that were explored and documented by the tourist. Again, the extended forms of experiencing touristscapes are reflected in the multiple modes that *Viewing Platforms* approaches remote Australian tourism through differing voices (academic and anecdotal), photographic technique (analytical and candid) and two differing photographic outcomes (exhibition and photobook).

The importance of all this photographic activity is the 'performance turn', a concept which Urry has discussed in his recent writing that emphasises the actual 'performance' of the photographic act, rather than the 'tourist gaze' itself. In many of the photographs made for *Viewing Platforms* the natural elements of the desired landscape are not entirely depicted, rather, my project concentrates on the activities that take place within the vicinity, the extended sites that are touristscapes and how this constant image collection is central to the tourist experience.¹¹ The framing of the landscape by tourist infrastructure and through tourist lenses is heightened through compositions which often include stabilising devices running parallel to the edges of the photographs – re-representing and simulating the several levels of framing that are taking place within my images. Examples include photographs depicting the photographic act that function to both emphasise the importance of image capture to tourism and question its values.

The viewing platform is the centre point of touristscapes and this is explicitly illustrated through

¹¹ *Lost Holiday* is an intriguing 'Documentary Detective Story' directed by Lucie Králová that attempts to uncover the owners of a lost collection of tourist photographs made by a group of Chinese tourists in Sweden and is described by the makers as: "Czech tourist Lada found a suitcase containing 22 rolls of undeveloped film in a Swedish dumpster. When developed, the negatives produced 756 fascinating snapshots of six unknown Chinese tourists. The film crew search for those people according their lost photos in a world where every fourth person is Chinese. At the end of the journey tracing the unknown Asians footsteps, the story becomes a part of the Chinese TV industry viewed by more than 300, 000, 000 Chinese. This documentary detective story is about travel, photos, and identity in an interconnected world, about memory and the importance of treasuring images, about Czech, Europeans, and Chinese." <http://www.taskovskifilms.com/film/lost-holiday/> (Accessed 5/08/2013).

compositions from the *Viewing Platforms* series of photographs. This is particularly evident in works made at Hopetoun Falls where the platform features centrally in the image and is shrouded in lush forest vegetation (eg. FIG 4.12). It is the point where the landscape is best viewed and consumed.

As I discussed in Chapter One, photography, the tourism industry, surveyors and other traditions that are adopted from painting and literature have dictated the location of viewing platforms. Importantly, positioning and use of the platform represents a form of ‘visual curation’ where a particular view of a landscape is colonised and dictated. Logistically, platforms are designed with safety in mind and more recently to minimise the impact of tourists on the environment. This is especially the case at Lake Mungo where a conscientious visitor may not step foot on the ground of the actual landscape and is asked to keep to the boardwalk and platform infrastructure. At other locations, like Hopetoun Falls in the Otway Ranges of Victoria, tracks and platforms are led away from steep dense forest heights for safety purposes and at the Twelve Apostles on the south-west coast of Victoria, the touristscape infrastructure needs to be kept at a distance from the eroding beach cliffs.

Although viewing platforms and other infrastructure are central to creating tourist desire they can also be restricting due to political or commercial means. Examples of this include forms of ‘visual colonisation’ where governments or landowners don’t want visitors to see particular places and this involves both ‘corporeal’ and ‘imaginative’ elements (logging areas, military testing grounds and so on). Some important Aboriginal sites that are designated culturally significant also have restrictions and are only accessible to people from specific tribes (examples include sections of the Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Parks). This is mostly respected by visitors in remote Australia where these sites are in proximity to other attractions. Restrictions imposed by commerce are usually corporal, such as physical infrastructure built into the landscape and routes followed by commercial tours that lead visitors to sites of consumerism. Importantly, these physical and mental restrictions also manifest tourist desire to understand and/or enter the unknown.

As discussed in chapter one, the burial location of both Mungo Lady and Mungo Man are only known to very few but their whereabouts weigh in the visitor’s mind and add to the mythologising



FIGURE 3.1 & 3.2: Lake Mungo Boardwalk and Lake Mungo Boardwalk (with Tourist), 2011

process – they haunt the landscape. The whole site has an atmosphere of adventure and discovery that is heightened by stories from past and ongoing archaeological activities. The photographic diptych titled *Lake Mungo Boardwalk* and *Lake Mungo Boardwalk (with Tourist)* (2010) (FIG 3.1 & 3.2) illustrates this performative interplay between zones of inclusion and restriction.

The first photograph documents the boardwalk that hovers above the ground in the bed of what was once Lake Mungo. It physically acts like a stage and conveys a sense of reverence although it is there to mediate the tourist experience. It is not explicitly outlined that tourists must stay to this controlled path though most do while they admire the landscape, listen to guides, converse amongst each other and photograph. Some tourists do step off the boardwalk to undertake these activities and in an unusual role-reversal it is as if they are on a stage and gaining the attention of other tourists – both companions and unknown other visitors (a slipping of front and back social ‘regions’ that is expanded on in the next section).

The second photograph is a semi-choreographed (like the touristscape itself) image of a tourist resting on a bench. The placement of this iron and wood structure is important, it marks the end of the boardwalk and the point visitors should not go beyond. The physical and mental boundaries and possibilities permeate the atmosphere of this space but are only semi-accessible – important gaps are left in the visitors mind which are to be filled by their imagination.

Front and Back Tourist Regions

To further understand this form of tourist performance that takes place amongst the historical, mythological and imaginative atmosphere that ‘haunt’ touristscapes, I now want to turn to an investigation of Dean MacCannell’s extension of Erving Goffman’s dramaturgical analysis of front and back social ‘regions’. These theories act as preamble to recent tourism theory that elaborates on the concept of ‘performance turn’ which looks beyond the ‘tourist gaze’.

One of the major key theoretical investigations in MacCannell’s publication *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976) is a tourist-driven analysis and expansion of Goffman’s theory that structurally divides social space into front and back ‘regions’. In the context of public and private spaces, ‘front regions’ are for hosting or servicing people one may or may not know. ‘Back regions’ are where people are more relaxed, these spaces are generally not to be seen by the public and where performers (tourist workers, local inhabitants, and so on) take a break, preparing or conclude activities. MacCannell uses reception offices and parlours as examples of ‘front regions’, while kitchens, boiler rooms and executive washrooms are examples of ‘back regions’.¹² It is important to note that MacCannell’s analysis of tourist spaces focuses on modes of tourism that unfold in mostly urban environments and often reference the theoretical canon around tourism that extends from The Grand Tour. His examples include large architectural constructions and the back stage workings of significant urban sites such as a parliament, but in his original analysis there is no mention of landscape tourism.

¹² D. MacCannell, *The Tourist A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York: Schocken Books, 1976, pp. 100-102.

My photographic work, *Viewing Platforms*, expands on MacCannell's theories and overlays these 'front' and 'back' stage concepts across urban and rural landscape tourist attractions and the larger spaces that these sites extend from. The degree to which these spaces are demarcated shifts between corporeal and imaginative levels, "although architectural arrangements are mobilized [sic] to support this division, it is primarily a social one, based on the type of social performance that is staged in a place, and on the social roles found there."¹³

Within such spaces tourists understand their role and can read the visual signs and cues but it is also important to note that industry workers also play many roles from guides, story-tellers and service people. In most circumstances, remote tourist-drifting in Australia leaves the physical and social demarcations between these spaces vague.¹⁴ In addition to this, tourist and tourist worker roles are often purposely blurred and this enhances atmosphere and creates layers of 'mystification'. MacCannell goes on to say that 'back regions' that are "closed to audiences and outsiders, allow concealment of props and activities that might discredit the performance out front. In other words, sustaining a firm sense of social reality requires some *mystification*."¹⁵ (Other interesting examples that he uses are novels about novelists and a television shows about fictional television stars).¹⁶ The tourist 'mystification' often also extends to the remote Australian guides and local inhabitants who can recall the story (with gusto) but don't have the answers to poignant questions posed. Well-known historical and mythological examples include the death of baby Azaria Chamberlain at Uluru and the disappearance of several schoolgirls at Hanging Rock (both of which have been the subject of feature-length films).

Between these 'front' and 'back regions' MacCannell goes on to identify and expand on a further four 'regions' within tourism:

Returning to Goffman's original front-back dichotomy, tourist settings can be arranged in a continuum starting from the front and ending at the back, reproducing the natural trajectory of an individual's initial entry into a social situation. While distinct empirical indicators of each stage may be somewhat difficult to discover, it is theoretically possible to distinguish six stages of this continuum. Here, the exercise of a little theoretical licence might prove worthwhile.¹⁷

For this photographic and travelogue-like project, *Viewing Platforms*, the six 'regions' MacCannell makes reference to morph and mutate through tourist performance and the touristscapes where this takes place. The 'regions' are defined as: stage one is Goffman's original front region that tourists attempt to get beyond (a booking agency with a wealth of tourist imagery);¹⁸ stage two is also a front region that is slightly set up to look like a back region (information centres found on the edge of towns); stage three is more elaborately organised to look like a back stage experience (historical museums); stage four is a back region that is open to visitors with some restrictions

¹³ D. MacCannell, *The Tourist A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York: Schocken Books, 1976, p. 92.

¹⁴ The only strongly enforced regions that tourists cannot enter are Aboriginal communities where permission is required, mining operations (that often run guided tours) and military training/testing grounds such as the Woomera Rocket Range.

¹⁵ D. MacCannell, *The Tourist A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York: Schocken Books, 1976, p. 93.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 101.

¹⁸ In contemporary society this agency is more likely than not online though still contains a plethora of imagery.

(guided tours of landscapes that have restricted access); stage five is a decorated back region where tourists are allowed to glimpse (tours of operational industry such as mines) and stage six is the back region that motivates tourist desire (the landscape and its natural features – the apogee).¹⁹

Some locations that can be used as examples to illustrate ‘front’ and ‘back regions’ and where these social interfaces intermix and morph between MacCannell’s six ‘regions’ include The Perry Sand Hills and Broken Hill. In an Australian context and pertinent to this project, these spaces combine some forms of industry (mining and entertainment) with tourism and remoteness. Often these industrial pasts (although some still continue to operate) act as both educational and leisure undertakings.

Although only a few kilometres from the substantial township of Wentworth in New South Wales, The Perry Sand Hills seem isolated due to the desert-like makeup of the landscape. Most tourists (be they in buses or travelling with their own ‘camper’ vehicle) only stop at the ‘entrance’ to the dunes and take in the information plaques and use the toilet facilities while admiring the unusual sand formations.

This is the typical ‘front region’ that is presented by the tour guide, bus driver or gathered from discussions at the information centre. For those who traverse this ‘frontal region’ with some imaginative aspirations, usually in the form of research through discussions with locals and Google on their smart phone, will soon uncover more notable and interesting facts about the location. This could include the fact that the dunes are continuously drifting and that what seems like mallee scrub bushes that dot the perfect sand surface are actually the tops of trees that are rooted below the sand and have survived like this for millennia. Further research of the site may uncover the fact that the sand hills were used as a bombing range during World War II. Much of this tourist information, that is both educational and pleasurable to the form of ‘drifting’ tourist this project investigates, can also be obtained prior to or after visiting the dunes from the Wentworth Pioneer Museum.²⁰ Like most rural town museums, the Wentworth Pioneer is also a ‘frontal region’ in true MacCannell style though can be a tremendous source of information for those willing or interested enough to actively seek it out.

When I visited the Perry Sand Hills in late 2013 I discovered and followed the Majestic Bus Tour as it was the first time I had seen an actual full-scale bus follow the sandy track around the foot of the dunes (see FIG:). Unlike Uluru and other such locations, the tracks around Perry Sand Hills are not gated or signposted with entrance warnings. Through this experience the tourist group was quite literally transported – in the comfort of the bus – through MacCannell’s various ‘regions’ where they frolicked amongst the ‘back stage’ of this touristscape. Once the bus was securely parked the group of Greek tourists were free to traverse the dunes looking for shrapnel, estimate the height of the sand covered trees and of course take a group portrait (which I did for them). In one afternoon many of the desired tourist activities that were imagined, outlined and discussed during the long journey to this location were fulfilled.

¹⁹ D. MacCannell, *The Tourist A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, New York: Schocken Books, 1976, pp. 101 -102.

²⁰ The Wentworth Pioneers Museum features megafauna replicas that include a Diprotodon, a Procoptodon, a Genyornis and a Thylacete. The scale of these models has been determined by actual skeletons found in the region: <http://www.visitnsw.com/destinations/outback-nsw/wentworth-area/wentworth/attractions/pioneer-museum-wentworth> (Accessed 09/02/2013).



FIGURE 3.3: *Perry Sand Hills (Majestic)*, 2013

Broken Hill is located in southwest New South Wales and is an isolated mining city and one of the world's greatest repositories of silver, lead and zinc. Many of these metals were (and are still) found in a long arching ore deposit locally known as the 'Line of Lode'. On the edge of a giant mullock slagheap that bisects the city is perched the Line of Lode Miners Memorial and Visitors Centre that commands views of the city and surrounding arid landscape. Like most contemporary touristscapes, the site features a café, restaurant and souvenir shop. Importantly, the striking architectural edifice and view over the city add emotional weight to the list of more than 800 miners who lost their lives on the job kilometres below the slagheap surface.²¹ As with many other locations visited to make this project, most visitors photograph themselves at the memorial which is perched overlooking the town and go about other such 'frontal' tourist engagement. Adrenalin seeking tourists or those with an interest in mining will actually take a tour deep underground and engage with sections of the mines that are actually still in use.

Like the Perry Sand Hills, intrepid tourists visiting Broken Hill have a wealth of experiences on offer. Again, these combine education and leisure and include film sets, outback artist studios, gem collections, mining relics and historically important art deco buildings. As the Broken Hill

²¹ Tourist website, *Discover a Lost World – Broken Hill*: <http://www.brokenhillaustralia.com.au/explore-and-discover/mining-attractions/miners-memorial/> (Accessed 29/07/2014).

tourist website proclaims: “Much more than a stunning backdrop, the Silver City is a place for complete immersion. A destination where daily discoveries are recounted every night amid an atmosphere of historic grandeur and hospitality.”²² While visiting the memorial site I made a photograph that includes myself as a performer within the touristscape actually taking a photograph of a couple at their request.

Many of the locations that were visited to make photographs and research for *Viewing Platforms* are considered ‘Gateways to the Outback’. These rural towns and cities (like those mentioned above) act as departure points for more extended and remote travel within Australia.²³ ‘Drifting’ forms of tourism that use the motor vehicle as a central point for their activity require such locations where visitors are guided by online and published literature, local advice and collective stories. These inhabited environments often give way to large expanses of uninhabited land that leads to more remote tourist infrastructure that is centred around and on viewing platforms. The physical design and constructed mythologies of such sites that extend to the liminal (in-between) spaces and that are encountered while ‘on the road’ provide much opportunity for morphing and/or ‘back’ stage exploration.

As a ‘stage’, the viewing platform encompasses many of these ‘regions’ simultaneously as it is the vantage point located on the threshold or within the landscape. Importantly, this is where people congregate, social interaction takes place, photographs are made and desires fulfilled – it is the point of arrival and departure. Recent innovations in viewing platform design have attempted to motivate tourists to literally go beyond both front and back regions with glass-bottomed platforms such as the Grand Canyon Skywalk in Arizona, and more recently, the Aiguille du Midi (Needle of the Middle) that is nestled within the French Alps which “allows visitors to walk off the highest mountain peak.”²⁴

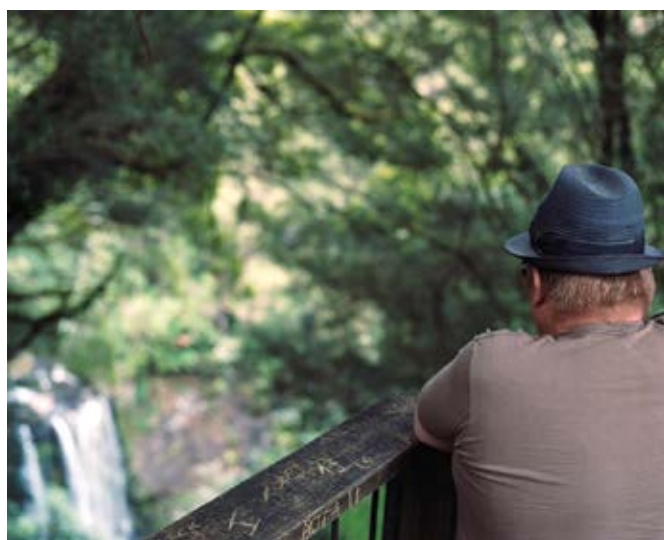


FIGURE 3.4 & 3.5: *Uluru (Compound)* (2011) and *Beech Forest (Triplet Falls Viewing Platform)* (2011)

²² Tourist website, *Discover a Lost World – Broken Hill*: <http://www.brokenhillaustralia.com.au/explore-and-discover/mining-attractions/miners-memorial/> (Accessed 29/07/2014).

²³ Others include Mildura, Coober Peddy and Uluru.

²⁴ Quoted from press coverage, *The Daily Beast*: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/12/21/a-new-installation-in-the-french-alps-allows-visitors-to-walk-off-the-highest-mountain-peak.html> (Accessed 05/11/2013).

These ‘regions’ and the theatricality of tourist performances are visually represented in several ways throughout the photographs made for *Viewing Platforms*. Many images made for this project contain sections or edges of touristscape infrastructure (signs, railings, fences, boardwalks and so on) that visually assist to frame the landscape (like tourist visions). In addition to this, it also presents the landscape as if it is being viewed from a stage or alternatively vision is directed at the stage that is submerged in the landscape.

The Performance Turn

Most tourist places are ‘dead’ until actors take the stage and enact them. – Jonas Larsen²⁵

This chapter will now look at the methods that tourists use to traverse the expansive Australian urban and rural landscapes and how this has influenced and affected my photography. Attention will be paid to how these experiences are enacted through multi-sensory approaches that relate to the ‘performance turn’ that encapsulates the gaze but emphasises more bodily engagements while touring.

Central to ideas presented here is the essay ‘Goffman and the Tourist Gaze: A Performative Perspective on Tourism Mobilities’²⁶ by Danish cultural theorist Jonas Larsen. Throughout Larsen’s writings he argues that tourist studies are shifting to more important ethnographic research methodologies as opposed to research based on vision or statistical data that tracks tourist flows and activities at specific places.²⁷ For example (and I would also include the Internet and social media as examples that expand on this quote):

While tourism performances are surely influenced by guidebooks, concrete guidance, promotion information and existing place-myths, the performance turn argues that tourists are not just written upon, they also enact and inscribe places with their own stories and follow their own paths.”²⁸

There are no particular categories or labels that act as summation for the ‘types’ of tourists that travel vast distances in Australia with a vehicle as their mobile base. While ‘on the road’ the degree in which their experiences are mediated by the tourist or tourist workers is left largely up to the discretion of the discursive tourist-adventurer and the roads they navigate.

This is the kind of tourism *Viewing Platforms* relates to and documents, and which the differing literary and photographic approaches attempt to encapsulate.

²⁵ J. Larsen, ‘Goffman and the Tourist Gaze: A Performative Perspective on Tourism Mobilities’, *The Contemporary Goffman*, (ed.) M. Hviid Jacobsen, New York & London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009, p. 323.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid p. 322.

The embedded approach to mobility-inspired research²⁹ has enabled an ‘on the ground’ understanding of remote Australian tourist methodologies – what many tourists encounter I have also encountered. Similarly, chapter seven of the publication *Performing Tourist Places*,³⁰ by sociologists and authors Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt, Michael Haldrup, Jonas Larsen and John Urry is titled *Inhabiting, Navigating, Drifting* and reiterates tourism as a performed leisure activity. The authors emphasise that not all tourist experience is constructed at the landscape apogees (the mountain peak or picturesque lake) and the act of touring itself is as important. They draw on examples mainly through Scandinavian family-oriented tourism and in particular second-home (known as ‘holiday house’ in Australia) forms of tourist activities where repeat visits and longer vacation times expand on the mythologies of place and local knowledge. This also relates to the discursive drifting methods outlined in this exegesis and the extended periods people devote to remote tourism and the semi-guided nature of the journey.

In the publication, *Performing Tourists Places*, the authors delineate three forms of touring that are largely recognisable through their titles and valid to the many forms of travel that tourists undertake in remote Australia. These touring methods are also reflected in the photographic work of *Viewing Platforms* and have shaped how it was made. ‘Inhabiting’ refers to return visits by tourists to a particular region to absorb the surrounding landscape and cultural activities associated with the location. Nostalgia plays a key role in this form of tourist methodology and a rapport with locals and an understanding of the area is a main driver of this kind of tourist desire. In Australia this ‘inhabiting’ form of tourism is encountered with tourists who have purchased purpose-built campervans or caravans and associated equipment or made renovations to a used bus for road travel and dwelling. Often this form of touring includes attached compact 4WD vehicles or boats. These expansive ‘vehicle-quarters’ are usually stationed at caravan parks or free camping areas that supply water and toilets. The space that is methodically setup as an extended undercover area from the vehicle functions as both a semi-private and semi-public stage for dining, relaxing and entertaining in public view. This method of travel is associated with the term and concept ‘grey nomad’³¹ and extended periods of time are spent at locations of interest where associations are made with locals and other tourists. The photograph, *Rest Area, (Antenna Dish)* (2011) (FIG 3.6), is representative of such circumstances and was made at a picturesque rest area where a couple had setup their vehicle to camp. When I encountered them they had been in the same location for several days and befriended a majority of the passing tourists who had stopped to recuperate.

²⁹ Mobilities is a contemporary social sciences research methodology that investigates the movement of people, ideas and other physical objects related to this transitioning. Like the ‘performance turn’, the ‘mobility turn’ began in the 1990s in response to increasing numbers of physical (migration, new suburbs, tourism, etc) and non-physical (information, the Internet, pixels, etc) movement. A key instigator of this research was British sociologist John Urry who is discussed throughout this exegesis particularly in relation to the ‘tourist gaze’.

³⁰ J. Ole Bærenholdt, M. Haldrup, J. Larsen and J. Urry *Performing Tourist Places* (New Directions in Tourist Analysis series), London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004.

³¹ Generally speaking in Australia a grey nomad considered someone who is 55 or older and is taking a long-term camping trip around Australia. Although they may travel in lots of different kinds of rigs such as motor homes, caravans, camper trailers and tents, grey nomads can be characterised by their sense of adventure, humour and their camaraderie.” And: “We cannot stress enough how wonderful it is to determine a destination, hook up your choice of BYO accommodation and just go for it. There is nothing more satisfying than becoming your own personal tour guide and seeing Australia at your own pace.” Both from: <http://www.greynomadsaustralia.com.au/> (Accessed 18/01/2014).



FIGURE 3.6: *Rest Area (Antenna Dish)* (2011)

The second travel methodology that is relevant to remote Australian tourism and outlined by Ole Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen and Urry in terms of ‘time geographies’ is ‘navigating’.³² This form of touring requires a set of goals and these are related to tourist attractions and what can be gained largely through educational and atmospheric experiences of place. Under these circumstances, time is of the essence and itineraries are predetermined. But it is also important that places ‘en route’ are experienced as unplanned revelations. Along this journey discovery (unplanned encounters), collection (souvenirs and stories) and documentation (photography) fulfil and manifest tourist desire. Again, here the motor vehicle is once again important as outlined in the *Performing Tourist Places* publication: “the car is not merely a means of transport, but a mobile machine extending the capability of the family to track their way into the unknown territory and encounter strange places.”³³ This form of navigational travel is associated with remote Australian tourism and the large expanses of the country that are traversed on a time limit. These tourists are often international travellers, honeymooners or students (or a combination) and have a fluid itinerary.³⁴ ‘Back region’ experiences are valued by tourists travelling this way but only so much time can be expended

³² J. Ole Bærenholdt, M. Haldrup, J. Larsen and J. Urry *Performing Tourist Places* (New Directions in Tourist Analysis series), London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004, p. 132.

³³ Ibid 134.

³⁴ This is how I first encountered remote Australian travel as a teenager (as referenced in the introduction). We had a six-week window to get halfway around Australia and see that attractions we had nominated that included Uluru, Cairns, some distant relatives in Brisbane, Water World theme park, Byron Bay, etc.

seeking these experiences and dwelling in them. Public infrastructure (BBQs, public toilets and camping grounds) is of utmost importance as this form of tourist mainly travels by car and public places act as stages. This methodology closely represents my own travel to create this project although my itinerary was largely dictated by photographic opportunities – many of which required following other tourist's itineraries.

The third mode of tourism that Ole Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen and Urry define is 'drifting'³⁵ a term I have already appropriated and have been using throughout this exegesis. They make reference to slower more engaged forms of tourism such as walking, hiking and cycling where the tourist is in physical contact with the landscapes they are exploring – the performance is tactile. "Hence, drifting produces pleasures that escape both the logic of inhabiting and navigating and follows its own logic and prescription."³⁶ This is what self-guided tourists seek in the expanses of the Australian landscape. Nodal points are to be met (experienced, seen and photographed) but much of what makes up the experience and memory-narrative is undertaken along the way. Using this mobile travel methodology can render the most vernacular of spaces, places and experiences interesting: a chance meeting at a rest stop, the discovery of a small town off the highway. the purchase of a unique souvenir or capturing an aesthetically-pleasing photographic 'snap'. The chapter *Inhabiting, Navigating, Drifting* concludes with the concept of 'laid-back tourism' where "tourists navigate to find their way to the heritage sight, the petrol station or hamburger restaurant. They inhabit the beach, the car and the cottage lawn and fill these places with social life and meaning. They drift absent-mindedly, though open to the multi-sensorial impressions derived from the passing landscape or townscape."³⁷ 'Laid-back' tourism was once (and although the word is no longer fashionable) referred to as 'wanderlust' a term that originates from the German words *wandern* (to hike) and *Lust* (desire). Both these terms adequately describe the mode of Australian tourism that this exegesis defines and photographically documents. The vastness of the landscape in Australia and open spaces encourage this form of performance inquiry.

This chapter has outlined concepts that relate directly to photography and how it generates tourist desire. The 'hermeneutic circle' has been expanded on to understand how images move in a cyclical motion to inspire, document and retell tourist narratives through photographs. Discussion has also revolved around the viewing platform as a metaphoric and physical central point of touristscapes. It is on this stage that tourist aspirations are at their height and tourist performance is played out on a grand scale. Using MacCannell's sociological theories, six discrete regions (that often overlap and mutate) have been identified within urban and rural landscape attractions to make analysis of these spaces and the activities that unfold within them. Amongst these places and the grand spaces of the Australian urban and landscape three modes of travelling have been identified (inhabiting, navigating and drifting) and discussion has revolved around how these are interconnected and relate to remote travel in Australia. These concepts have expanded to ideas relating to 'slow tourism' and 'wanderlust' to define the multi-sensorial tourist-driven mediations that unfold through journeying. The next chapter focuses on how these concepts have been transposed to Australian landscape tourism and are captured photographically for this project.

³⁵ J. Ole Bærenholdt, M. Haldrup, J. Larsen and J. Urry *Performing Tourist Places* (New Directions in Tourist Analysis series), London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004. p. 134.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 137.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 139.



Eclipse

In the Australian outback the desert landscapes make the smallest of intrusions interesting, chip wrappers glimmer mysteriously in the sun and abandoned structures take on archaeological significance. Likewise, sounds can be heard from a very long distance away like your pulse in an anechoic chamber. These are my thoughts as Dad points the screen-saver-like windscreen in the direction of a rest stop to switch drivers. I immediately notice the amount of rubbish scattered around the site and graffiti scrawled across the ubiquitous shading structure. This indicates that we are closer to a largish town than we think. I am momentarily startled as Dad breaks out in laughter and points ahead. There, under the shade of the concrete picnic setting, stands a lamb, not at all startled and staring directly at us – as lambs do. Dad picks up rubbish and I fiddle with cameras. The lamb goes nowhere.

As if inspired by the lamb, Dad says: “Let’s bush camp tonight? Get away from the pampering and sleep under the stars.” I figure we could do with a break and agree.

Later in the day the sun is casting long shadows and dad and I are seeking a secluded track or riverbed to setup camp. We come across flat and shaded ground by what was once a creek and obviously a camping spot detectible through long burnt out fire sites and rusted beer tops. Minimal camping gear is hastily set up, a small indiscriminate fire is started and the contents of Dad’s infamous red esky are reshuffled.

In the distance we hear a car approaching from a few kilometres away and, although we don’t stop our conversation, we both quietly track its movements via sound. To our amazement it slows to nearly a stop and pulls into the same area as us. I immediately recognise the science fiction newlyweds and we greet each other as they get out of the car and stretch their legs. “Do you mind if we also setup camp here?” To which we reply in unison: “Sure. It seems like a good spot.” They inform us that another travelling couple might join them if they spot them from our makeshift camp from the highway. They explain that they met another couple recently and they don’t have contact numbers but have become recent Facebook friends. I

sense that Dad is not particularly happy with this new arrangement but he doesn't complain. Soon two more campervans (these with matching orange stripes) are ensconced by the would-be creek. We quickly make our acquaintances with these travellers, one couple also on a honeymoon and the other retired (which are the expected friends we don't know). As sun sets we promptly ask them to join our fire. Dad and I are immediately amused by the configuration of their seats – not towards and around the fire but in a line pointed away towards the west, I can't help myself and ask: "why are your seats pointed in that direction? As if at a drive-in cinema?" to an excited response: "the eclipse!" Through all our drifting Dad and I had not discovered that there was a significant eclipse this particular evening. Throughout the night there is much convivial sharing of stories, food and beverages with these Scandinavian travellers and the science-fiction couple. At 10: 55 the clouds miraculously part and the moon begins to vanish. This excites the rambunctious group of temporary outback drifters even further.

Most travellers rise early and make a hasty start to the day but this morning things were moving slowly. The contingent of happy campers exchanged tourist information, emails and social media details and promises were made of exchanging photographs. Just before we pointed the car back to bitumen once again, the retired Scandinavian lady hands me a lucky charm to complete my "unusual" project – a special edition Australian dollar coin that reads: "ONE DOLLAR 2002 Year of the Outback."



Chapter Four: Imaging Touristscapes

It must all be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel. – Roland Barthes¹

Viewing Platforms as a body of work may seem disparate but the photographs and semi-fictional voice act together as propositions about contemporary Australian tourism and how it is experienced. As a project of both framed photographs and a photobook that extends the possibilities of the travelogue, the project encompasses and expands on traditional adventurers' diaries to the slide-night and instantaneous travel photography posts on the Internet.

The propositions that emerge from the visual outcomes are importantly supported and expanded on by the semi-fictional anecdotal voice that runs through this exegesis and the photobook. This narrative unfolds in a diary-like manner and is made up of a combination of lived experiences, recounted stories and observations that purposely obscure fact and fiction. Each short text is constructed to give the viewer and reader further insight to remote Australian tourism and each instalment is composed without contention. The 'rambling' discursive manner in which the semi-fictional text is composed is representative of the form of drifting tourism this exegesis defines and the project follows. The embedded 'mobility-influenced' research that takes place from within the remote journeyings of tourism provides unique insight to both the quest for visual confirmation of landscape sites and performances that unfold while on this exploration.

Photographically, *Viewing Platforms* intentionally excludes portraiture² although figures are frequently found in compositions while they interact with tourist space and place. Portrayal of singular people or small groups is only engaged through the semi-fictional voice (a Japanese man testing a new camera or a Korean couple travelling with fellow students). Importantly, these anecdotes are reflective of the memory narrative that tourists compile and compose and later convey after the trip is made (myself included) and introduces other sensory encounters that are fundamental to tourist experience (eg. a kangaroo burger or 'tall' tale).

The previous chapter defined and elaborated on several methods people use to travel in remote Australian landscapes for tourist activity. Throughout this exegesis photography has been established as a performative activity and the viewing platform has been located as a central point for desire and enactment.

This chapter outlines how both premeditated and spontaneous modes of travelling within urban and rural landscape are captured photographically. As discussed in Chapter Three the term 'laid-back' tourism³ resonates with both tourist interests and the mode of travel used to make the photographs

¹ R. Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, London and Basingstoke: The MacMillan Press LTD, 1977 (translated by Richard Howard), p. 90.

² By 'portraiture' I refer to the traditional meaning where the main subject of the photograph is a person that fills a majority of the frame and engages with the camera.

³ J. Ole Bærenholdt, M. Haldrup, J. Larsen and J. Urry *Performing Tourist Places* (New Directions in Tourist Analysis series), London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004, p. 151.

for this project. A slower paced and less mediated form of travel, 'laid-back' tourism makes use of a mode of drifting where desired locations are 'plotted' on maps, digital devices and mentally. The designated attractions act as the nodal points and between these destinations time is allocated to finding other unplanned discoveries. This touring methodology aligns with the act of actually seeking out and making the photographs for this project. While tourists travelling in the expanses of Australia seek out their planned and unplanned leisure activities, I also travel the same routes and visit the same rest stops, caravan parks, attractions and so on. Together, the tourists and I have a desire to interact with the urban and rural landscape and are driven by the automobile and the lens.

Viewing Platforms uses a similar travel methodology to other tourists encountered throughout the journey, though the purposes are more complex than leisure alone. In terms of travel for research, alignments can be made with 'psychogeographical' techniques and especially the practice of the 'dérive' (which literally translates as 'drifting').

These concepts were originally used for artistic and theoretical purposes by the Situationist International who were a collective of European social revolutionaries active from 1957 to approximately 1972. Based in Paris, members included intellectuals, avant-garde artists and political theorists that included influential Marxist theorist Guy Debord who established the 'dérive'. Intellectually the Situationist International was an extension of anti-authoritarian Marxism and associated with the early twentieth century arts movements Dada and Surrealism. As the grouping of the two terms 'psycho' and 'geography' suggest, the French word 'dérive' refers to both physical and mental spaces that are drifted through. Participants of this practice were encouraged to forget about usual modes of transport that are related to everyday life and simply let themselves be drawn by physical attractions of the land or architecture and encounters that may unfold in the places they find themselves.⁴ Author (and translator of many Debord publications) Ken Knabb describes the activity as:

In a 'dérive' one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there... The 'dérive' includes both this letting go and its necessary contradiction: the domination of psychogeographical variations by the knowledge and calculation of their possibilities.⁵

Arguably, this approach is relevant to the specific mode of remote travel in Australia which I have identified throughout this exegesis. Although the tourist is seeking experiences related to leisure in predominantly rural rather than urban landscapes they are also spending extensive amounts of time drifting amongst the open expanses of the land. This could be at unmarked places that capture the tourists' interests, camping in one of many rest stops that allow this or being abandoned by the side of the road due to vehicle malfunctions. As mentioned in Chapter Three, such landscape spaces encourage and enhance the type of activity that leads to unplanned encounters. Even at more mediated attractions, tourists continue to have the ability to 'drift' within the location, the

⁴ K. Knabb, "Theory of the Dérive", *Situationist International Online*: <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/theory.html> (Accessed 02/02/2014).

⁵ K. Knabb, (ed.) *Situationist International Anthology*, Berkley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1995, p 50.

infrastructure that is supplied and within the atmosphere that pervades such touristscapes. In these spaces the viewing platform is the physical and symbolical central point from which these leisure activities revolve around – it is the desired destination (and view) to get to and then get beyond.

Photographically, the ‘dérive’ and ‘psychogeography’ play important roles in how the photographs for *Viewing Platforms* are produced within remote touristscapes. As with most other tourists travelling by automobile, plans when journeying to shoot for this project were not concrete and resembled a form of ‘laid-back’ tourism where drifting and navigating are enacted. The duration of the shooting period was dictated by a time limit and an expectation of eventually arriving at an established attraction. Much of the remaining journey was made ‘on the road’ in liminal spaces of the Australian landscape. These open spaces can make the smallest discoveries photographically interesting (detritus, advertising and makeshift structures installed to entertain passersby) and these add to the discursive narrative this project has constructed in both exhibition and publication formats and which is reflected through this exegesis.



FIG 4.1 & 4.2: *Rest Area, South Australia (Super Cap Gun)*, (2011) and *Italian Club, Coober Pedy, (Poker Card)*, (2011)

The photographs *Rest Area, South Australia (Super Cap Gun)* (2011) and *Italian Club, Coober Pedy, (Poker Card)* (2011) are details of packaging and a playing card that have either been dispensed of or non-intentionally blown away and now drift through the terrain on the peripheries of demarcated places. Compositionally, they are both cropped tightly with minimal focus and they are juxtaposed in palettes of red and green. The placement of the two pieces of card within the compositions and the angle of the subject to the lens creates a visual triangle that crosses the compositions from top-right to bottom-left edges. These are small details found on my travels and are representative of tourist drifting which enhances awareness of one’s surrounds. Within the narrative of *Viewing Platforms* these images are included to suggest other encounters that may unfold while travelling in remote Australia that involve risk and chance.

A third photograph that makes use of the same compositional elements was used for an earlier related *Viewing Platforms* exhibition that experimented with and influenced much of the imagery



FIGURE 4.3: Stuart Highway Rest Area, Northern Territory (Lost dog note on the back of a Carlton Draught box), (2011)

used for the final exhibition and publication of this project.⁶ *Stuart Highway Rest Area, Northern Territory (Lost dog note on the back of a Carlton Draught box)* (FIG 4.3) is a photograph of a note that was scrawled on the inside of a beer box and attached to infrastructure at a rest area and subsequently blew away.

Like the cap gun packaging and poker card, the photographed note was found discarded in a location that featured no particular attraction but was frequented by tourists to mainly recuperate from driving fatigue or to dine. At the depicted location on a Northern Territory highway it would seem unlikely that tourists would meet here unplanned but due to the limited number of designated places to stop, and some unwillingness to stop at other unmarked areas, tourist interaction often unfolds at such locations. Another factor that influences tourist performances amongst such sites is the continued coincidental meetings that occur as tourists traverse the same routes on approximately the same timeline. These often begin with nods of acknowledgment and progress with chance interaction to more lengthy and in-depth discussion that includes information gathering,

⁶ This 2012 exhibition took place at Edmund Pearce Gallery in Melbourne and featured 16 photographs and an online catalogue (downloadable here: <http://edmundpearce.com.au/kristian-haggbloom-viewing-platforms-november-28-december-15/>) (Accessed 20/04/2013).

advice and storytelling. These are the modes of interaction that extend the remote landscape experience beyond the visual and inspire the discursive nature of the tourist journeys.

While I was making the photograph *Stuart Highway Rest Area, Northern Territory (Lost dog note on the back of a Carlton Draught box at rest stop)* an elderly tourist couple arrived in a large 4WD towing a caravan. A conversation soon began around the fact that they had seen me photographing at a tourist attraction the day before and then around the caravan park where they were staying (coincidentally, they had stopped to let their two dogs “stretch their legs”). A long conversation ensued over a picnic lunch and much hypothetical conversation took place around Oscar the dog and its owner Ray and then turned to factual and mythical tales about getting lost in the Australian landscape.⁷ For this couple of ‘laid-back’ tourists their dogs played an important role as this dictated where they could stay, places they could visit (many national parks do not allow dogs) and, to a certain extent, the people they encountered.



FIGURE 4.4: (scan) *Stuart Highway Rest Area, Northern Territory (Lost dog note on the back of a Carlton Draught box)*, (2011)

⁷ The couple and I had recently read journalist Robert Wainwright's *The Lost Boy*: "In the stifling Australian heat of October 1993, a campsite the size of a small town was spontaneously created at a lonely desert roadhouse by the side of the Stuart Highway. The 1200 men and women who swagged on the unforgiving ground beside their horses, cars, trucks and even helicopters had come to this isolated place called Dunmarra to help solve a mystery and save a life. A local son had disappeared without a trace. No one was certain if he had been abducted or lost in the hostile bush around the roadhouse, but all knew it was a search where hours could mean the difference between life and death. But there was much more at stake. They came from all corners of the far-flung Northern Territory townspeople, stockmen, tourists, police, soldiers and emergency services to help their friends, to forge a community bond and to test themselves, emotionally and physically, in a land untamed by more than a century of European settlement. It would be a desperate search for a life and a triumphant assertion of the human spirit. Robert Wainwright followed this unfolding drama as a working journalist in 1993 and now, a decade later, he explores the raw, gripping story of an outback family embroiled in one of Australia's biggest manhunts to find that the core of our national identity mateship in troubled times is, indeed, real and alive." <http://www.allenandunwin.com/minisites/crime-city/books/9781741143423/> (Accessed 05/10/2013).

Other tourist aspirations are also prescribed by similar factors acting as another layer of mediation that mutates with semi-controlled tourist experiences, although these remote travel itineraries also include aspects of navigating and drifting. For instance, some factors that may mediate tourist desires include small budgets, time limits, a mix of local and international travellers, touring by bus or motorcycle and physical capabilities. A group of four tourists I encountered at the Woomera Rocket Range Museum was made up of an Australian couple and two men from America. It was obvious that the gentlemen had some extended knowledge of rockets – possibly from their employment. These men also had great interest in my large-format camera and why one would use such “elaborate and outdated” technology. In this particular case it was not the revered natural landscape attraction that guided tourist desire but personal interests that could be discovered in the desert where rockets are still tested today.⁸ Landscape attraction was certainly important to these tourists but their journey was also inspired by multiple diverging factors. Other preoccupations that can be played out in the vastness of Australia include automobile, wildlife, military and mining (‘corporeal’) interests or spiritual, religious, mythical and notions of the sublime associated with landscape (‘imaginative’) interests.

My photograph *Rest Area, Northern Territory (Kink in a Fence)* (2010) was taken from a distance, preventing the tourists depicted from knowing they were being photographed. Of the various images that make up *Viewing Platforms* this work belongs to the more formal and encompasses large areas of touristscapes including sections of the landscape and minimal infrastructure. The photograph is made from outside the rest area’s perimeter and the flat horizon halves the composition into equal parts of land and sky. The expanses are punctuated with minimal architectonic structures that are installed for the needs of road travellers and are ubiquitous along desert highways of inland Australia. Amongst the shelter structures are two groups of tourists packing camping equipment into their vehicles. These two groups of tourists aspire to visit the same places but travel in very different modes which this image elaborates on: the couple on the left have a 4WD and sophisticatedly pack their trailer with emergency gas, water and petrol (which the man is pouring into the vehicle) the second group of three younger tourists have a small compact vehicle that they pack with their more minimal luggage. Between the two groups is a water tank and signpost, the text juxtaposed – as the different tourists are – reads: “Warning” and “We got weed here”, alluding to other darker remote travel possibilities.

The ‘mobile’ embedded research methods undertaken for *Viewing Platforms* have facilitated this form of in-depth visual and conceptual understanding of remote Australian tourism. The anecdotal information gained through tourist encounters and ‘on the road’ understandings of travel methods

⁸ Woomera is an Aboriginal word which means ‘spear-launcher’. The Australian and the British governments established Woomera in 1946 and it became a major settlement. It generates jobs for the Air force, Navy and the Army in Australia and from other foreign nations. Woomera is a town situated in the southeast part of the Woomera Prohibited Area or WPA and is just 488 Kilometres from Adelaide and used to be a restricted Australian Defence Force facility for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). It is presently is used for evaluation of civilian and military missile and aerospace system testing. Woomera is still the biggest domestic ADF base support facility in Australia. Many tourists are drawn to this place to see the National Missile Park. These tourists are interested in the range’s operations, missiles, bombs, rockets and aircrafts. Tourists will also be able to experience the audiovisual presentation and the gallery that tells the story of the historic Woomera at the Woomera Heritage Centre and the Community Museum. Today facilities include the missile park, two museums, a school, theatre, hospital, swimming pool, gym and a hotel. Other facilities found in the area include a bowling alley, bank, post office, radio station, and an IGA supermarket: <http://www.woomera.com.au/> (Accessed 02/02/2014).



FIGURE 4.5: Rest Area, Northern Territory (*Kink in a Fence*), (2011)

and desires may not be clearly interpreted by viewers who have not also travelled the Australian landscape but are iterated through the accompanying semi-fictional voice. For instance, running as an undercurrent through the imagery and anecdotal voice is a typically Australian ‘dry’ humour which perhaps relate to Martin Parr’s ‘witty’ photographs of the British middle-class. This underlying humour draws upon fears that are associated with tourism and the mythologised Australian landscape.

My narrative has been inspired and influenced by fictocriticism, a postmodern and experimental form of writing that combines fiction, theory and criticism. Three books have been especially pivotal in my research undertaken for the narrative voice, and all include photographs within the publications and are presented in novel format. The first is by the seminal French philosopher, literary critic and cultural commentator, Roland Barthes. His book *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (1977), is a reflective discursive form of biography that draws on philosophy and reflections on his own life. In many ways it is an abstract text that includes a number of scrawled notes and photographs of Barthes (mostly at work) and his family. Barthes describes fiction and writing through the term ‘double figure’ which he describes as:

This work, in its discontinuity, proceeds by means of two movements: the *straight line* (advance, increase, insistence of an idea, a position, a preference, an image) and the *zigzag* (reversal, contradiction reactive energy, denial, contrariety, the

movement of a Z, the letter of deviance).⁹

This is a definitive explanation that functions on several levels to outline the mode of drifting discursive travel that this exegesis seeks to define and also the manner in which the photographs are produced. It also succinctly encapsulates the manner in which the semi-fictive voice is composed in a nonlinear style that creates a kind of ‘substratosphere’ around the photography.

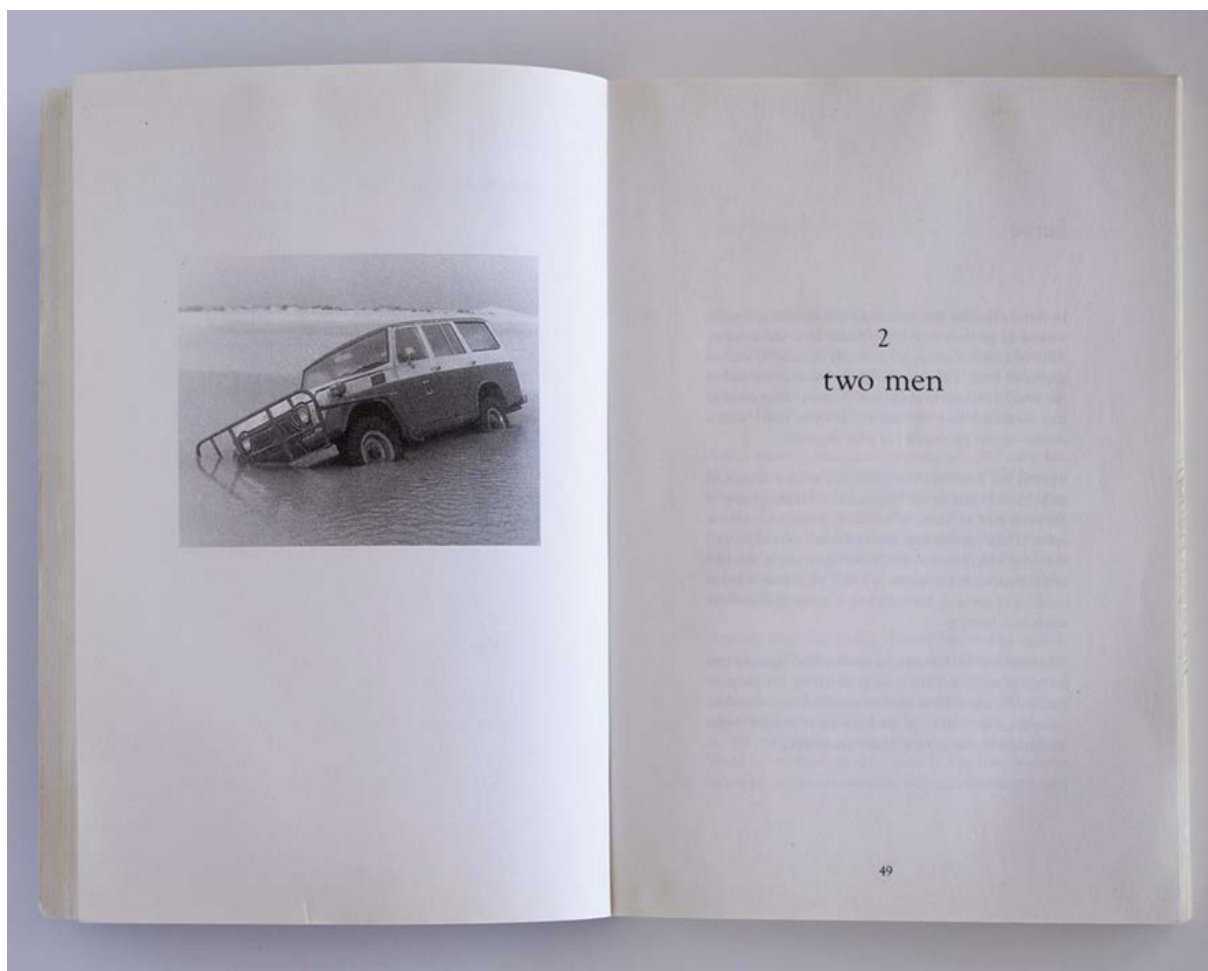


FIGURE 4.6: Steven Muecke, *No Road: Bitumen All the Way*, (p. 48), (1997)

A second fictocritical influence was Steven Muecke’s *No Road: Bitumen All the Way* (1997), a nomadic travelogue that traverses through the interior of Australia and draws on influences from other world travel and encounters. The book is a provocative combination of storytelling and ideas that mixes ‘witty’ anecdotes and concepts pertinent to contemporary Australia. Interestingly, throughout his rambling travels and theoretical musings Muecke (factually or fictionally) has a brief encounter with Dean MacCannell and elaborates on Jean Baudrillard’s book *America*.¹⁰ He

⁹ R. Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, London and Basingstoke: The MacMillan Press LTD, 1977 (translated by Richard Howard), p. 90.

¹⁰ *America* is a critical book first published in 1986 that chronicles French philosopher and cultural critic Jean Baudrillard’s road travels in America. It analyses American culture and in particular stereotypes. Much of the text is dedicated to the open spaces of the desert.

also frames his own journey with regards to author William Hatfield's 1932 publication *Australia through the Windscreen* and its reportage from car journeys throughout Australia. Originally from England, Hatfield arrived in Australia in the early 1900s and developed an affinity for Australia landscape and people who worked the land. His travels were also the subject matter of other books including *Sheepmates* (1931) and *Desert Saga* (1933). Muecke also blends theory and travel stories with humour reflective of the Australian psyche and is often encountered while 'on the road' researching.¹¹ The book only has a few images but these are well edited to create further depth through Muecke's story telling. The images reproduced below are good examples that link two chapters through a visual image that relates to the story as a whole and encounters to come.

The third textual influence reads more like a photobook than its format as a novel. English art critic and novelist John Berger and Swiss documentary photographer Jean Mohr first published *A Seventh Man* in 1975 and it has been republished a number of times since. It is a book of images and text about the experience of migrant workers in Europe and is broken into three chapters (*Departure*, *Work* and *Return*) and punctuated with candid and humane images by Mohr. Juxtaposition plays a key role and the photographs are edited with clarity and consideration and they read seamlessly with the written word. The text outlines facts and the migrant situation of the 1970s in Europe (that may be somewhat outdated but still relates to other regions of the globe) and entwines these stories with an unidentified individual who is only referred to as "he":

He was not the victim of these delusions. He spoke of them to nobody. They did not interfere with his work. He did not believe in them. They were simply the form which, from time to time, his unease took upon itself. This unease became more pressing.¹²

A Seventh Man was originally envisaged as a film-documentary-cum-family-album¹³ and is powerful mix of figures, poetry, theory and photographs that chronicle the dehumanising experience of migration and extends the possibilities of the photobook. The book has a cinematic aesthetic and is reminiscent of French writer and film director Chris Marker's *La Jette* (1962), a 28-minute experimental film about a post-nuclear war, an underground society and travel (both physically and mentally). Like the photographs from *A Seventh Man*, the film is almost entirely made up of black-and-white still images. On page 178 and 179 of *A Seventh Man* are two images that feature women, on the left are the walls of a migrants living quarters that are lined with posters of nude women and three men sit on the bed in conversation. On the right page is a portrait of a handsome peasant girl working in the fields. This juxtaposition is influenced by the expanded though unseen distance between these people, a space that is elaborated on through the text and images here becomes palpable. Subtle links that are established through editing are also important to represent journey, inspired narrative and theoretical concepts throughout these seminal works and have influenced editing decisions made for this project.

The three literary examples above elaborate on an intermixture of text and image and are presented in book format. While *No Road: Bitumen All the Way* uses more humour, all three examples

¹¹ Stephen Muecke studied linguistics and semiotics and his PhD was based on storytelling techniques among the Aboriginal people of Broome in Western Australia.

¹² J. Berger and J. Mohr, *A Seventh Man*, London and New York: Verso, 1975 p. 140.

¹³ <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/dec/18/seventh-man-john-berger-review> (Accessed 10/02/2014).

draw on theory conveyed through personal experiences and travel as research. Like *Viewing Platforms*, they are forms of the diary and approach this mode of documentation both critically and experimentally. Certainly, they are all information and *A Seventh Man* contains a number of related statistics. But what is fiction and fact throughout the texts becomes blurred, adding to the poetic and discursive nature of the narratives.

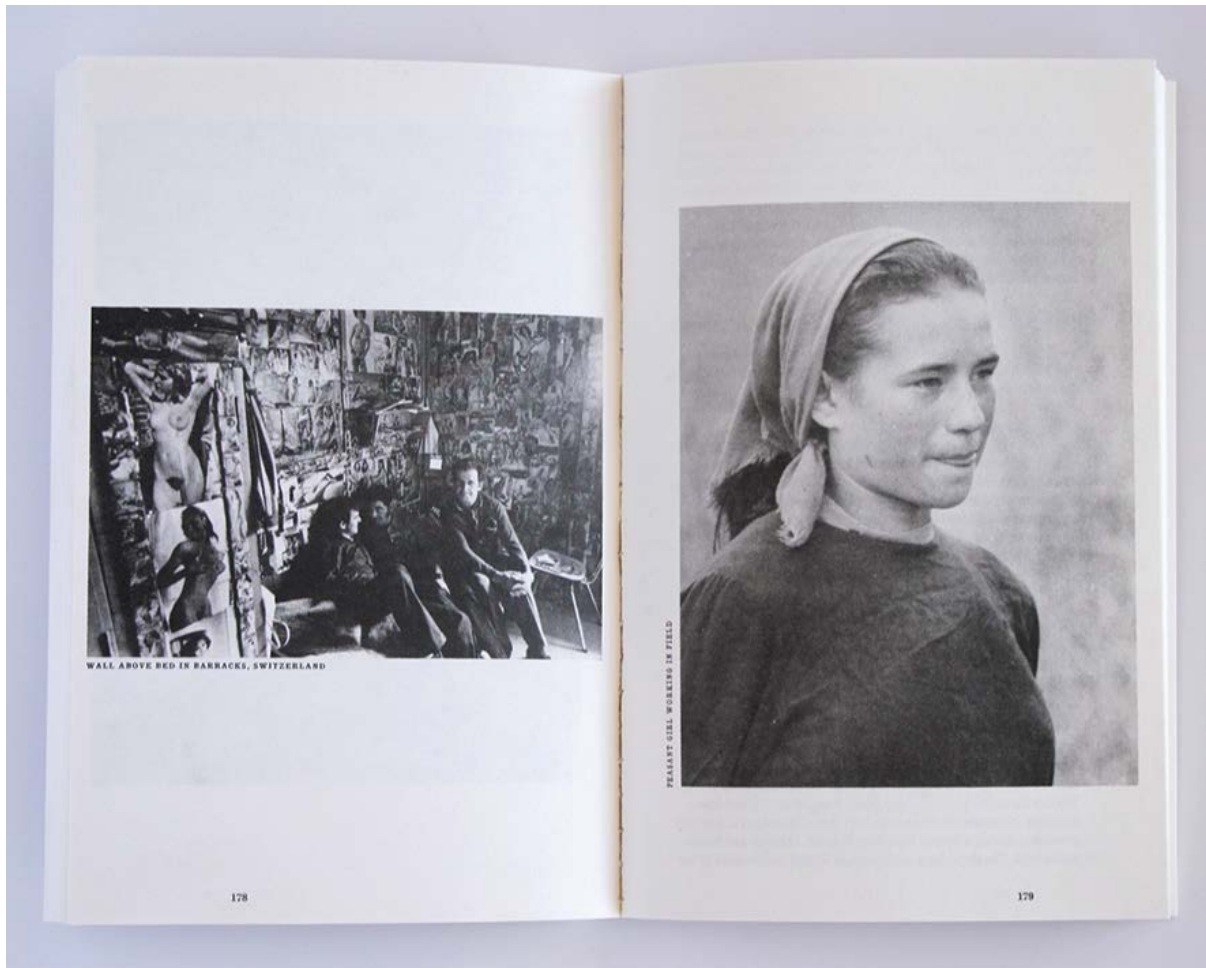


FIGURE 4.7: Jean Mohr, *A Seventh Man*, (Wall above bed in barracks, Switzerland and Peasant girl working in field) (p. 178 & 179) (1975)

Image and Text

I will now look at specific images from *Viewing Platforms* that function as photographic groupings (usually in the traditional diptych and triptych formats) and sections of the semi-fictive writings that overlap and correlate with imagery and descriptions from specific locations and engagements that were experienced while making the work. Like the literary examples cited above, the text and images that make up *Viewing Platforms* are intended to be read together. This was encouraged by the prominent inclusion of the photobook in the exhibition¹⁴ and by outlining anecdotal stories made from within the tourist performance.

¹⁴ The photobook was displayed on a large plinth that was painted gray (to match the tones on the cover) and centrally positioned within the gallery space.



FIGURE 4.8: *Rest Area, South Australia (Sheep Dick)*, (2011)

The photograph, *Rest Area, South Australia (Sheep Dick)*, depicts the shelter and picnic tables that are found at all rest areas throughout central South Australia. The amount of graffiti sprayed over the structure and large amounts of rubbish strewn throughout the landscape indicate that this site is located closer to major towns. The image is a side view of the corrugated iron structure that has a rudimentary penis scrawled across a side panel and below a sheep is shading itself. Although crude, the scrawled penis and other elaborate messages that are penned and scratched into the rest area facilities are examples of what tourists encounter on road-trips throughout remote Australia. These humorous, concerning and incidental encounters add important details to the travel narrative and while they are probably not photographed by most tourists, they last as memories that construct all-important tourist stories. This liminal landscape is also featured in a semi-fictional text that outlines the location in textual format. The close observer will note that I was travelling with my father on this particular trip and later that evening observed an eclipse.

Other image groupings include intentional overlap – not by the inclusion of literary explanations but through repetitive shooting of the same location and are subsequently exhibited together. These conscious decisions in exhibition presentation are intended to represent the stories and myths that shroud the touristscapes pictured and the tourist related theory in this exegesis that elaborates on such sites. One such triptych uses the cinematic devices of long, middle and close-up shots to depict a dilapidated caravan. *Stuart Highway, Northern Territory (Viscount Camper Crash) #1, #2 and #3* (2011) documents a caravan that had come detached from a vehicle and shattered on the side of the



FIGURE 4.9: Stuart Highway, Northern Territory (Viscount Camper Crash #1, #2 and #3), (2011)

highway.¹⁵ A colour scheme of red, yellow and blue runs through the set of photographs and the camera perspective shifts from face on, slightly titled in towards the destruction and finally down on a fire blanket and a bag of nuts. The triptych is printed in small-scale and is designed to be read on a wall or in published form from left to right or on progressing pages where splintered wood cuts at angles and creates dark pockets of hidden detail. Like other photographs discussed above that portray a lost dog, gambling and guns, these photographs suggest a darker side to tourism.

Platform, Twelve Apostles (Reverse Gaze) (FIG 4.10) is a more obvious set of tourist images that visually investigates what has been referred to throughout this exegesis as the urban or rural landscape apogee. The landscape apogee is representative of what the tourist has seen many times before through photography and has come to witness ‘on location’. Captured via still or moving photography this is the rock, the waterfall or the desert. The touristscape apogee is, more often than not, negotiated by the viewing platform that directs vision to the landscape’s celebrated natural feature and is the site where it is best viewed or ‘visually curated’ – and photographed. These act as points on the hermeneutic circle and the sites align as the core of tourist desire that generates inspiration and anticipation and eventual empowerment through enacting the site. The touristscape apogee is where performance is heightened and this set of images documents that experience, not from behind the tourists as they gaze upon the landscape (like the camera), but looking back at the tourists as they go about their own documentation. Here, tourists have navigated to the furthest point they can reach on the Twelve Apostles boardwalk and negotiate the three-metre-wide wooden octagon that is installed to enable tourists to make a photograph over the fence that delineates the edge of the viewing cliff. This series was captured from the same position in front of the raised viewing structure over several minutes. It is shot from within the performance of tourism, and although candid, the consistency of composition and extended number of images lends this set of photographs an analytical reading that merges the two methodologies used to make the photographs: first from a distance encompassing the space as a stage and secondly from within the performance as a participant.

¹⁵ On February 1st 2014 open speed limits were introduced on sections of the Stuart Highway. It is believed this will attract car enthusiast tourists though the exact reasons behind the decision have not been outlined: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-01/speed-limits-shelved-for-nt-highway-sports-cars/5232388> (Accessed 03/02/2014).

Every person depicted in this series clasps a photographic ‘prosthesis’ that acts to both extend and replace their vision, and later, their memory. The series is presented in small-scale as a strip that is representative of cinema and demands analysis where small details become apparent (a pink umbrella and lens tissue). These details equip the viewer, when approaching the series as a whole, with possible details of the smaller figures in other photographs and the semi-fictional narrative alludes to their tourist memory narratives as they are being constructed (the mental slideshow).

The photographs made at the Twelve Apostles on the Great Ocean Road in Victoria depict the mediated routes tourists embark on to experience such rural and urban landscapes. These more popular and closer to major city locations are traversed in many varying ways from the ‘laid-back’ tourist journey to a guided bus tour that leaves early morning and arrives back in central Melbourne that same evening. Due to the physicality of the location and environmental protection required to preserve the landscape the tourist experience at The Otways is largely mediated though this is not reflected in the imagery (largely due to close cropping) and the photographs are made purposely candid to enhance the performative aspects that are enacted at the site.

Importantly, information from this site can be connected through other images and also through the semi-fictional texts that punctuate this exegesis and the photobook. By combining these methods the project outlines tourist ‘enactment’ and ‘performativity’ through modes of photography and text, factual research and fictional tourist imaginings. For example, the photograph *Twelve Apostles (Octagon)* features the platform being used in the aforementioned series of images and also discussed in the semi-fictional narrative. In the text, *Apostles*, I have a discussion with a Japanese tourist who seems uninspired by the number of other tourists at the location and is not interested in mediated tourist activity that he refers to as “McDisney” experiences. This is a method also used by Muecke to critically engage with the landscapes he both traverses and analyses in *No Road (Bitumen all the Way)* and also Berger’s use of statistics in *A Seventh Man*. This use of ficto-criticality and statistical information is reflective of how tourists engage and enact the spaces they visit via information they have collected both prior to travel and once journeying. This is, of course, hugely advanced and omnipresent within contemporary remote Australian tourism due to technology which enables online connections and real time engagement with data on a personal (Facebook and other social media) and corporate (tourist agencies and other entrepreneurial websites) level.



FIGURE 4.10: *Platform, Twelve Apostles (Reverse Gaze) #5 & #6*, (2012)

During the process of making the images at the Twelve Apostles a form of observation that British social psychologist Alex Gillespie conceptualised as the ‘reverse gaze’¹⁶ emerged. In this context, the ‘reverse gaze’ is enacted when photographs are produced close enough for the tourists depicted to register that they are being photographed (or at least included in image capture). This is no doubt heightened by the sheer number of images tourists both create and consume – particularly (as mentioned above) through the Internet. This is also greatly influential to how people ‘perform’ at tourist locations as they have a wealth of preconceived imagery, poses and camera angles to draw on while interacting with tourist locations which can also make them overtly conscious of other cameras.

For Gillespie’s sociological undertaking, research was conducted in Ladakh (a popular international tourist region in India) and the ‘reverse gaze’ was enacted between photographing tourists and traditional local inhabitants when the Indian inhabitants turned the camera on the tourists themselves. Gillespie’s project uncovers interesting and awkward moments when tourists are confronted with their own desires through the lens.

When I was making the work for *Viewing Platforms* and tourists did realise they were being photographed this would lead not to discomfort but discussion. As opposed to Mirko Martin’s Los Angeles project discussed in Chapter Two, the people in this project are conscious of being photographed, as they themselves are often doing, and in a similar mode to John Hinde (also discussed in Chapter Two), some of my subjects are choreographed. In some cases tourists assume I have found the best position to photograph the particular site and they attempt to make photographs from the same viewpoint. Again, this is also hinted at in situations that arise in the semi-fictional texts that include the aforementioned Japanese tourist (Hajime), the use of the Twelve Apostles ‘viewing octagon’ and while a tourist becomes annoyed with fellow travelling partner’s camera habits and a camera is slapped from the hands of another.

The photograph *Broken Hill, (Slag Circle)* (2011) (FIG 4.11) extends on this social occurrence. The image was made at the foot of the Line of Lode Miners Memorial and Visitors Centre on the edge of the mullock slagheap that sits at the perimeter of the city of Broken Hill (discussed in the previous chapter). In all likelihood, some locals had driven on to the muddy flat and skidded a vehicle around that had left a symmetrical circle at the foot of the heap. As I made a photograph of this, an international couple in a hire car also stopped to observe and photograph the same circle. A chartered tourist bus then slowly passed and the occupants photographed us photographing the circle.¹⁷

This is of course one of the unplanned encounters that unfold while drifting within touristscapes and ignites and inspires tourist memory narratives and creates an atmosphere of place.

¹⁶ Described as: “The interaction between tourist photographer and local photographee is a dynamic site of identity construction. To date, this interaction has been theorized mainly in terms of the power of the tourist photographer, which has been shown to mediate and commodify local cultures and create new identities amongst those photographed. The present article contributes a change of emphasis by examining the sociopsychological dynamics of the reverse gaze and its role in constructing the emerging identity of the photographer. The reverse gaze refers to the gaze of the photographee on the photographer as perceived by the photographer.” http://www.academia.edu/176404/Tourist_photography_and_the_reverse_gaze (Accessed 06/04/2013).

¹⁷ Reminiscent of French director Jacques Tati’s film *Playtime* (1967) and the tourist bus scene.



FIGURE 4.11: *Broken Hill (Slag Circle)*, (2009)

Other images largely made at touristscape apogees introduce another photographic trope that reflects tourist mediation – choreography. Within several images produced for *Viewing Platforms* there are degrees of choreography that have been staged for the camera. Although subtle, this adds another layer to concepts pertinent to this project: mediation, performance, theatricality and photography. For instance, the diptych *Hopetoun Falls, Viewing Platform #1 & #2* (FIG 4.10) is a repeated chaotic composition that is shot from the walking deck that is submerged in the Otway forest. Rather than on the way to or from the viewing structure the landscape is captured from an enabled composition made from above the platform. As with many of the other images, the actual landscape ‘attraction’ (a waterfall) is not pictured. When first encountering this location I found a couple seated on the supplied bench and the striking red clothing created a visual juxtaposition that emphasised the human presence amongst the lush forest. I also knew that a large group of tourists would soon arrive with children of all ages as I had previously passed them. Hence, I hastily explained and asked this couple to stay within the frame as the group moved through the composition. Again the two photographs are analytical through repetition and composition but also candid as the children move through the scene. The predominant factor in this and many other compositions is juxtaposition between the very slight differences in camera angle (my tripod was knocked by one of the children) and the differing modes of interaction with the space – one exuberant the other more meditative. This is reminiscent of much of the imagery that Jean Mohr produced for *A Seventh Man* that has been influential for *Viewing Platforms*. The predominantly male workers look at leisure in their cramped living quarters though this is starkly juxtaposed with



FIGURE 4.12 : Hopetoun Falls, Otway Ranges #1 & #2, (2011)

the images that harshly illustrate dangerous working conditions, injured men and the poignant text that speaks of their plight.

The diptych consisting of the photographs *Coober Pedy, (Semi-Oasis)* (discussed previously) and *Coober Pedy, (Breakaways)* (2011), introduce another methodology that was established later in the project. The Breakaways are located in the harsh arid desert lands that surround Coober Pedy and have acted as the set for several Australian and international films. The photograph made there is in fact a reproduction of an image I shot in the same location in 2000 when I travelled to Uluru and the journey inspired this project. The newer photograph is composed in much the same way and features the desert terrain and no horizon and/or sky. The 2011 image features a very small figure walking along the crevasses created through water flow. This is the introduction of what I label the ‘performative self’ and is reflective of the embedded approach to research undertaken for *Viewing Platforms*. At the Breakaways this became necessary as the site where the photograph was made is beyond the fenced tourist zone and there were no other tourists for me to direct into



FIGURE 4.13: Coober Pedy #1, (*Breakaways*), (2011) & Coober Pedy #2, (*Semi-Oasis*), (2011)

the landscape (my Father shot this image while I walked through the arid landscape). Although it was physically required for the production of this photograph it later became further focussed to encourage interaction with other visitors and position my activities in relation to other tourist activities. Enacting the ‘performative self’ also enabled me to gain greater insight to fellow tourist aspirations and situations that would not have been made possible while ‘shooting from a distance’. This included creating a Facebook page for some senior travellers to share images and collecting international perspectives on perceptions and thoughts on the Australian landscape experienced through remote tourism (one example is outlined in the semi-fictional text *The Bunker* which traces a discussion with visiting Korean students).

Other images feature me taking photographs of tourists with their camera that reflect actual situations where I was asked to make portraits or I instigated the activity. A smaller series was also established as a topographic ‘micro-narrative’ that recorded repetitious images of the car that I used as a base for the drifting research journeys that assisted to chronicle duration through repeated



FIGURE 4.14: Broken Hill, (Miners Memorial), 2013

journeys and other conditions that could be detected such as travelling companions or weather conditions. This emphasises the act of tourist performance and enacts touristscapes as stages where tourist desire is played out and morphs according to each location, other visitors and inhabitants and my interaction as an artist-researcher.



FIGURE 4.15: *Beech Forest, (Entrance)*, (2011)

The photographs that are made for exhibition and publication from the *Viewing Platforms* series are presented in several different formats in order to create ‘micro-narratives’ from within the overarching story. As discussed, works are also presented in sets and groupings although they are all framed in the same manner which establishes a cohesion amongst the selection of photographs. These images and locations are also discussed in the anecdotal stories told in the semi-fictive narrative texts. For an earlier exhibition held at Edmund Pearce Gallery in Melbourne it became apparent that the series required a strong beginning and concluding image with punctuations throughout the edited selection to create narrative reflective of the semi-fictive voice. In order to do this, the opening photograph was an image made at the experimental plantation of California Redwoods near Beech Forest in The Otway Ranges. The image is of a walking track that leads into the dense forest which is semi-pictured although it also depicts a black dark space beyond the entry that is left unknown. This visually and conceptually guides the viewer into the project and due to the small size (25cm at the longest end of the print) it required some attention to detail in order to discern the darkness of the forest. Of the photographs presented at Edmund Pearce there were seven different sizes that were dictated according to subject matter and larger images were considered key punctuations throughout the exhibition space.

In the photobook I also utilise different sizes and pay attention to the opening, closing and punctuating images that are supported by the semi-fictive writings and the title of the works that importantly include the locations where the photographs were made. However, it is not the role of the book to simply outline the photographs in sequence from what is physically exhibited in the gallery or to inform where they were made. These two forms of representation are established as separate projects that work as a whole and create a dialogue between the two methodologies. The two forms of presentation are meant to complement and make *Viewing Platforms* more complex

with propositions and questions being raised through the travelogue format. They both function as a journey and are reflective and supported by the semi-fictive voice that speaks from within this journey both physically and psychologically. Like the punctuating larger-scale images, the semi-fictive voices were composed and included to break up the overarching story and create ‘micro-narratives’ both visually and textually that viewers could expand on in their own ‘drifting’ manner from both imaginary and remembered fragments of travel.



FIGURE 4.16: Installation view Edmund Pearce Gallery , (2011)



FIGURE 4.17: Installation view Edmund Pearce Gallery, (2011)

Apostles

Following the narrow road that traces the winding coast of the Twelve Apostles I spot the buses gleaming in the car park ahead and realise the long drive is coming to an end. I was enjoying the temperature control and audio entertainment of the car capsule – the front window like a screensaver of ever-changing landscapes. On the windswept cliffs where scenic tourist helicopter flights hover overhead, I strike up a conversation with Hajime by acknowledgment of each others camera bags. The information centre sells trinkets and cups of watery coffee while staff keep an eye out for energetic fence-jumping visitors. It's unnecessary to enter through this commercial/surveillance venture so my newfound friend and I skirt the edges as the seascape ahead is reflected in the peeling vinyl stock photographic images that cover the shop windows. We join the focused pilgrimage-like procession onto the extended viewing deck. Hajime and I chat about the weather, cameras and he comments that it is very orderly – much more so than he expected. With buses, crowds and orderliness I feel the need to reassure Hajime that it is worth the inconveniences and that revelations on personal and national levels have been made atop these cliffs. He reassures me that it is no problem and he is enjoying his visit and, besides, he is in Australia as a company employee and has work to undertake. It's strange how free-flowing and open conversations develop among tourists. I explain that I am travelling to other popular locations to photograph and am happy to give any advice or tips he may require. Hajime's answer is rendered in a straightforward manner, albeit with a Japanese accent that is rather weird for the terminology used: "I don't want no McDisney experiences. Just beautiful landscape!" He further stipulates that there will be no bus tours with ladies carrying directional flags or climbs over the Sydney Harbor Bridge. And no museums where people pretend to work, if I wanted to see this I can see it in Japan, you know we have a guidebook to all the museums in Tokyo, there are thousands, things like button, ramen and doll museums". In many ways he is the quintessential image of the 1980s Japanese tourist flâneur cashed up from the economic bubble and transcended across seas to the tourist bubble. Only now he wreaks the benefits of further rampant technological advancement that are reflected in everything from his weatherproofed clothing, GPS in his phone, and

camera and wristwatch.

Hajime and I both designate a similar location to make our photographs. Amongst the lenses in cameras, smart-phones and tablets, I set up my 'kit' to Hajime's amazement. I cannot tell if it is awe or disgust (I learn later it's both) that he registers at the sight of my plate camera. On peeling open his own camera bag I have the same double response to what seems to be a camera from the future, surprisingly with no maker logo or markings.

We stroll back to the car park together and Hajime finds a path that runs off the viewing deck and bypasses much of the crowd. He uses this time to tell me that he is amazed that I am shooting film (and with a Japanese camera!) and that he works for a camera manufacturer. In fact, Hajime is in Australia to test a new camera, one that will revolutionise digital imaging and that I should seriously consider shifting to a "digital workflow". The details of the camera or the maker can't be discussed and he jokes that if they were he would have his little finger amputated on return. He can tell me one detail as it may be very useful to my project: "If there are many people, too many people in your frame, just shoot three of the same photo and this camera will erase the tourists for you – simple. They vanish!"

Conclusion

In this exegesis I have sought to define and position a specific mode of Australian tourism where the journey and multi-sensory performance are intrinsic. This form of tourist experience is affected by a myriad of physical and mental situations, planned and unplanned encounters, and new and contesting desires. The type of tourist experience this project documents aims to witness and confirm largely preconceived ideas of the Australian landscape through capturing an anticipated image from a viewing platform and associated touristscapes. Along this journey the tourist formulates a hybrid-sensory collection of personal narratives that are accumulated to be re-told and re-shown.

Throughout this exegesis I have argued that the photograph is quintessential to this experience – but also that the tourist performance has now surpassed the mono-sensual gaze. Conceptually, this project concludes that new forms of tourism are being undertaken that are embodied, self-guided and unfold with copious amounts of pre and ‘on-the-road’ knowledge that enable a form of ‘laid-back’ drifting that is navigated by the automobile within Australia.

These tourist experiences incorporate a desire to physically engage with landscape attractions that are fuelled by imagery and mythology where liminal places and the vast physical open spaces of the Australian landscape are left to be filled with their personal memory narratives. The ‘hermeneutic circle’ plays an important role for this tourist undertaking, and connects the imagery across aspiration-inspired image collection, the actual making of images at desired sites and the eventual presentation of this imagery which is of such importance to tourism. Here, photography acts as a tool for the tourist to experience ‘front-stage’ mediations and go ‘back-stage’ to create their own personalised experiences that can, in many instances, be instantaneously posted and viewed through social media.

This conversation on this uniquely Australian mode of tourism has been mapped through evaluation of historical factors that extend from the act of and concept revolving around The Grand Tour. The exegesis also then looked at the American West and alignments that unfolded historically and connected tourism, technology and photography. An extension of these ideas was investigated to uncover how the Blue Mountains in Australia were critical in establishing landscape tourism and the construction of the first viewing platforms.

Throughout the five chapters a concentration has been placed on images of tourism, staging and choreography in relation to photography. This was explored through photographs of gated and themed tourist places (Tokyo Disneyland and Butlin's Holiday Camps) and then extended to include international package tours (Parr's *Small World*). Photographs made for cinematic purposes were then analysed to outline theatrical methodologies of photography that were also employed at remote Australian locations for this project. Imagery of the Australian landscape and tourist spectacle were also engaged to find and examine different modes of picturing Australian urban and rural landscape and tourist activities.

In essence, *Viewing Platforms* is a documentary photography project that experiments with the conventions of traditional exhibition and publication formats. This includes and incorporates a textual element to encapsulate this mode of contemporary tourism which is expressed through the semi-fictive narrative. The project is not a dictatorial summation, rather, an open-ended embedded travelogue that draws on the audience's tourist memories and subtly proposes questions about past and future directions in tourism. It has identified this mode of travel unique to Australia due to the vastness of the landscape and culture that has been established by settlers a present day inhabitants. It is important to note that tourists who 'pass through' or spend longer periods exploring the locations researched also contribute to the places they visit – physically and psychologically.

In terms of research outcomes, *Viewing Platforms* has interrogated remote Australian tourism from four varied methodologies that are both structured and discursive and inherently linked. The core research activity is of course the photography which is presented through the final exhibition and the publication of an experimental travelogue photobook. These photographic outcomes have been supported by and expanded upon by the writings within this exegesis that are approached in an academic manner and the semi-fictive narrative voice that is more fluid and personalised. These entwined modes of image collection and story compilation are reflective of tourist ambition and desires. On a larger scale, approaching my subject matter from four angles is reflective of contemporary society where work, leisure and everyday tasks are undertaken through multiple virtual and lived methods like the tourist that are both physically interacting with a touristscape through a number of sensual means and broadcasting the experience live online.

The research uncovered that this type of Australian travel is undertaken through a mode where tourists themselves can delineate to what extent they want to engage with prescribed experiences. This required establishing several photographic techniques that could both facilitate research on and document this process. These included choreography of other tourists, shooting both analytically and from a more engaged candid perspective and the introduction of a performative-self. These methods have been employed to formulate a set of discursive though connected photographs that are presented in traditional forms (the gallery and book) though executed in an experimental travelogue-like approach where several narratives (and micro-narratives) are unfolding at once and can be entered and engaged visually and textually on several levels.

This methodology will be further instigated to create future projects that combine factual and fictive elements across presentation formats (photobooks, exhibitions, installations, and so on) and embedded research. This extension of documentary photography will include a photographic project that retraces the route of a seventeen year-old Japanese high school student that sadly killed his friend and mother due to minor altercations and travelled halfway across Japan ‘on the run’ from authorities.

In a sense, the question I perhaps naïvely asked myself in this research can be summarised quite simply: what do tourists gain from mediated experiences? Of course, the answer to this can only be speculative, and I hope my images suggest some possible answers. Perhaps most importantly, I think that; what tourists (and I) gain is a form of tourist freedom that is largely self-directed and is interchangeable with other more mediated experiences associated with the ‘tourist bubble’. This fosters unique and in-depth understanding of how Australia has been physically formed and culturally constructed. The importance that tourism and photography have played in this continuous process is naturally of particular interest to me as a researcher and artist. What the tourists on this journey collect is valuable and educational, and in the best of cases serves to enhance perspective of place and culture, particularly through mental and physical comparative undertakings while ‘on the road’ and on return to home.



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Viewing Platforms





Viewing Platforms

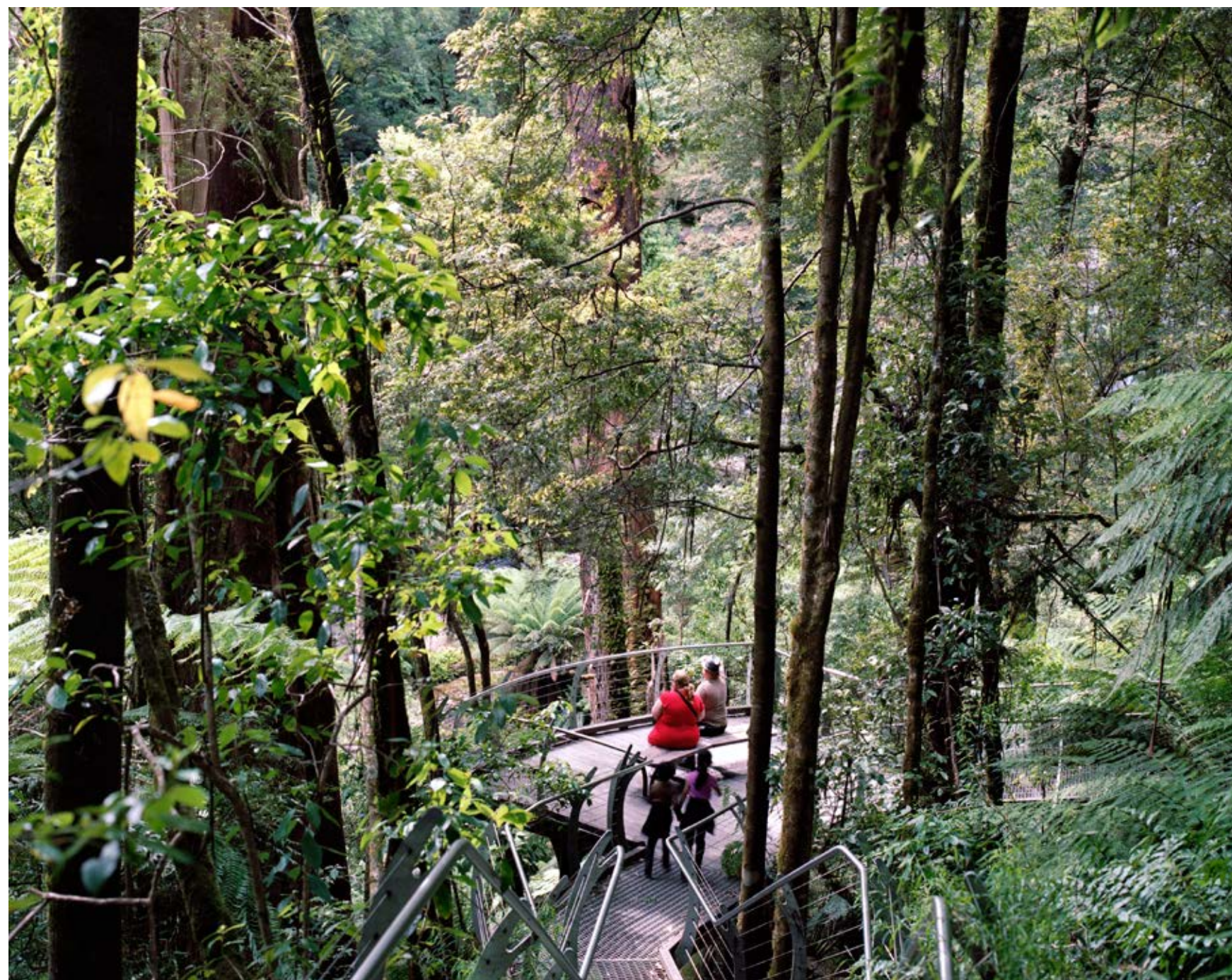
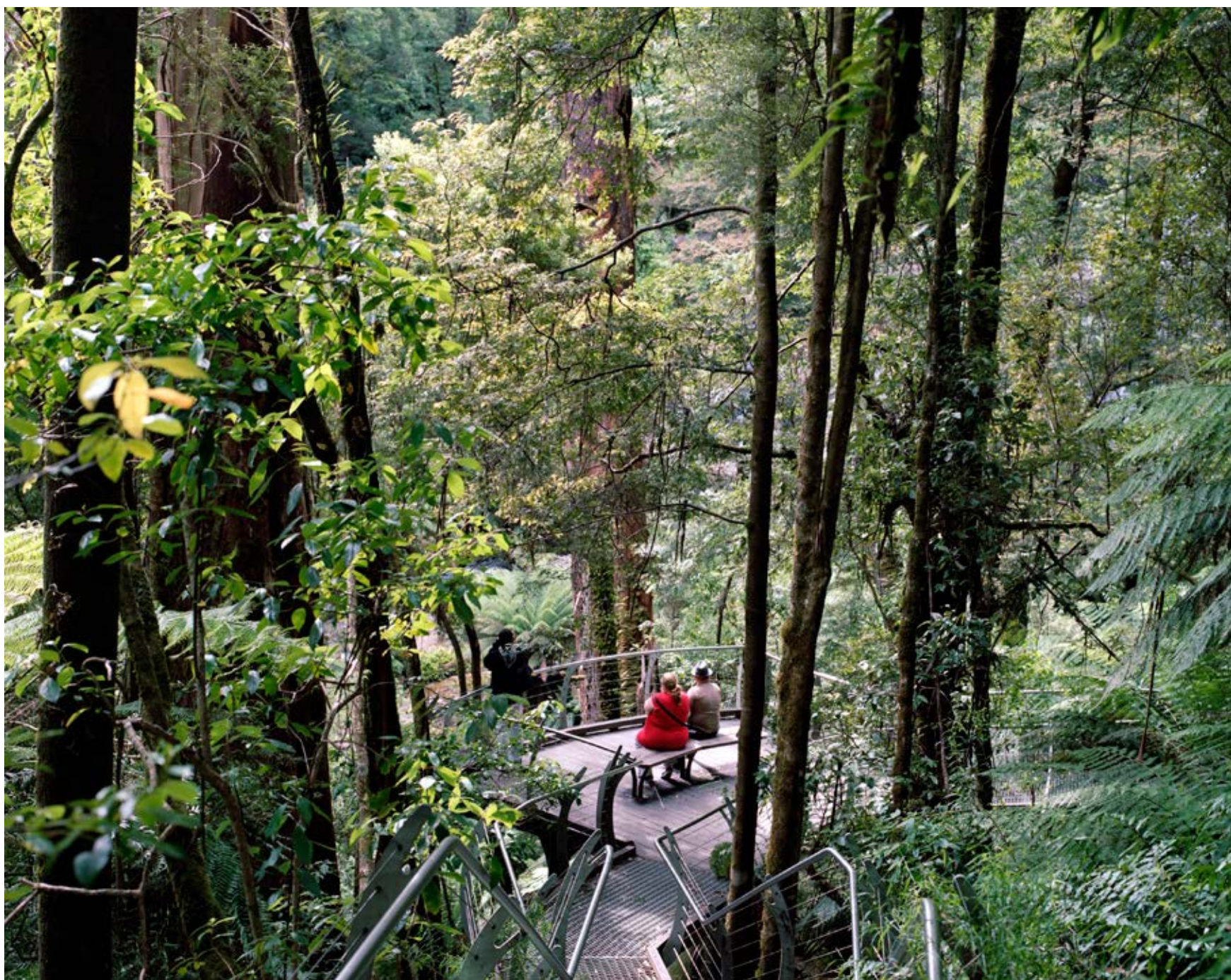
Kristian Häggblom













Artilla

I wake in the back of the car just after sunrise curled up amongst camping equipment, camera cases, folded tarpaulins and a tripod that had been poking into my back overnight. Although I am sure there was a Winnebago parked at this rest stop last night, this morning the dusty car park is empty, silent and it feels like time has stopped. Before getting back on the road I first stretch my cramped muscles and begin repacking the car. This has become a matter of habit and I have a routine that I loosely follow. I begin, as usual, by putting the cameras and tripod in a position where they are protected from movement and sunlight, but are also easy enough to access throughout the day. Suddenly I hear “good morning” from somewhere behind me and I jump startled and knock a box of camping pots and pans from the edge of the back of the vehicle to the ground. The sound exacerbates my surprise. The words “sorry didn’t mean to startle you” cut through the crashing sounds.

This, I discover, is Bill. We make our acquaintance and I question where he is from, to which he replies: “over yonder, spent the night in the dry riverbed.” Not exactly the answer I was looking for, and I haven’t seen a riverbank. Bill explains that as I was just packing the car he thought it a good time to request a ride and if I approved I could pack accordingly to fit in his luggage (worn bag, rolled swag and sleeping bag that were all held together with one octopus strap) and keep the front seat clear. I agree to his request, to which he responds: “I would assist with your packing but I don’t want to mess up your routine, let me know if I can do anything.”

Bill is a bushman and probably about my age. He is travelling north “on foot” through the interior to look for work at cattle stations and his car is “cactus”. Intrigued that I am travelling alone he asks what I am doing, to which I reply simply – “photography” and his answer is as short: “another one”. I’m not entirely sure what this means but don’t press on with that conversation. Bill is happy

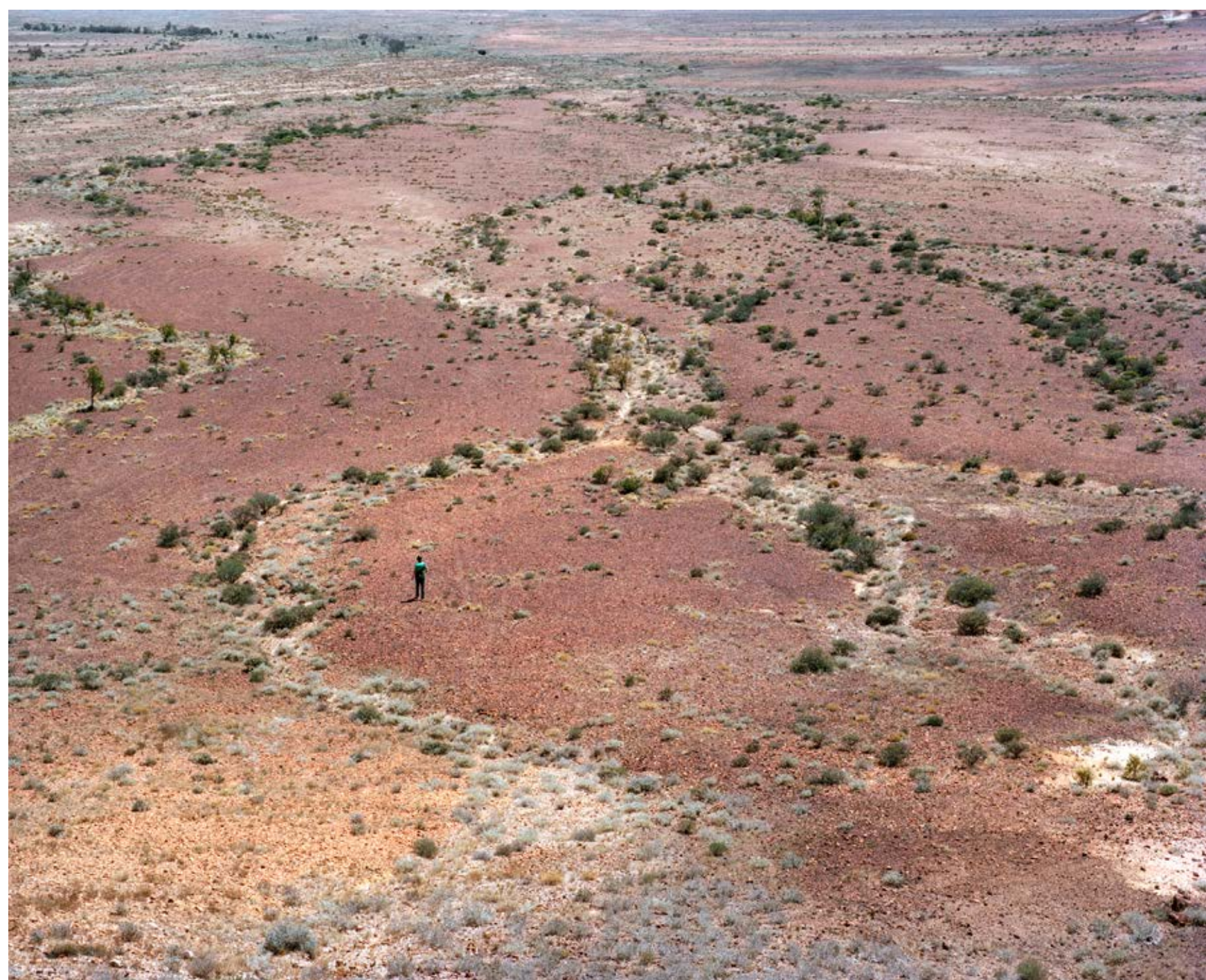
to end up where ever it is that I do. To me he is starting to resemble one of these characters that are on the run and roam the expanses of the Australian desert where police are most likely not to find you. This must be showing, as he explains further: "I'm out of work so can drift up and down the Stuart highway till I find something. It seems like there is nothing out here, but actually there is plenty of work either on a station or one those tourist places – they always need people with knowhow."

I take a left off the Stuart highway and head towards Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park. At about 100 kilometres from the park I stop to make my third photograph of the day. This time Bill stays in the car – he has inspected my equipment to a satisfying degree. There are three other vehicles in the bitumen car park and they go about making sandwiches and photographs. Soon a tour minibus arrives and several more people offload and go about their tourist business. The driver, like Bill, stays in the bus. I situate myself amongst the tourists and listen to their conversations. Many are amazed at how big Uluru is and the fact that we can see it from more than 100 kilometres away. Others doubt that it is actually Uluru.

I pack my gear away once again and get in the drivers seat. It seems Bill was having a nap and he lifts his hat and turns to me: "You know that's not Uluru?" To which I respond, "yes I know, its Mount Connor." Bill's response is once again short: "No its not, its Artilla, you know, like how Ayres Rock is not Ayres Rock?"











Slap

For a majority of the night it rained and now most of the camping gear is soaked through. This morning the first task is to get all the camping gear dry. We drape and hang sleeping bags, tarpaulins and swags from the car and other structures. On this trip I am travelling with Dad who has been on several journeys with me to photograph remote and often obscure locations. Moon Plains are located just out of Coober Pedy and famed for their unearthly flat landscapes. This is my third day exploring this area, and I decide to join the 'tourist bubble' and take a mini bus tour of the unusual surrounding landscapes while Dad oversees our gear that is sprawled throughout the camp site. Boarding the minibus most of the other sixteen national and international tourists mingle and are full of anticipation. I sit next to an Australian couple from Victoria who are newlyweds and want to hear about and see the locations where science fiction films were made in the desert. This is their honeymoon. The loud excited voices of many different languages reverberate throughout the bus and the driver stares ahead – focussed or maybe just bored. I have been here before and found it majestic and sublime in a minimal way. The name certainly is apt. Although I have not found a way of photographing the expansive desert, I am hoping that the inclusion of this group will assist. We pass several former movie sets and stop briefly to acknowledge a sign that marks filming locations: Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome, Pitch Black, The Red Planet and others. The Victorian couple seems somewhat disappointed as though expecting some relics, more information – anything but more rocks leading to a shifting horizon.

By the fifth stop the driver/guide is watching my movements – especially my unusual camera – so I decide to keep a low profile and further observe without pointing the lens.

A group of five European tourists become overly jubilant through either boredom or excitement – possibly both. They begin photographing each other in varying exaggerated poses when one female

member of the group becomes irritated, runs towards another camera-pointing tourist and slaps the camera from his hands. I watch the camera (as do most others in the group), it descends – as if in slow motion – to the desert floor and smashes into the rocks. Dust rises.

There are some screams although nobody except their group understands them. The camera is dusted off and they are quickly ushered back onto the minibus by the slightly amused driver/guide.











Eclipse



In the Australian outback the desert landscapes make the smallest of intrusions interesting, chip wrappers glimmer mysteriously in the sun and abandoned structures take on archaeological significance. Likewise, sounds can be heard from a very long distance away like your pulse in an anechoic chamber. These are my thoughts as Dad points the screen-saver-like windscreen in the direction of a rest stop to switch drivers. I immediately notice the amount of rubbish scattered around the site and graffiti scrawled across the ubiquitous shading structure. This indicates that we are closer to a largish town than we think. I am momentarily startled as Dad breaks out in laughter and points ahead. There, under the shade of the concrete picnic setting, stands a lamb, not at all startled and staring directly at us – as lambs do. Dad picks up rubbish and I fiddle with cameras. The lamb goes nowhere.

As if inspired by the lamb, Dad says: “Let’s bush camp tonight? Get away from the pampering and sleep under the stars.” I figure we could do with a break and agree.

Later in the day the sun is casting long shadows and dad and I are seeking a secluded track or riverbed to setup camp. We come across flat and shaded ground by what was once a creek and obviously a camping spot detectible through long burnt out fire sites and rusted beer tops. Minimal camping gear is hastily set up, a small indiscriminate fire is started and the contents of Dad’s infamous red esky are reshuffled.

In the distance we hear a car approaching from a few kilometres away and, although we don’t stop our conversation, we both quietly track its movements via sound. To our amazement it slows to nearly a stop and pulls into the same area as us. I immediately recognise the science fiction newlyweds and we greet each other as they get out of the car and stretch their legs. “Do you mind

if we also setup camp here?" To which we reply in unison: "Sure. It seems like a good spot." They inform us that another travelling couple might join them if they spot them from our makeshift camp from the highway. They explain that they met another couple recently and they don't have contact numbers but have become recent Facebook friends. I sense that Dad is not particularly happy with this new arrangement but he doesn't complain. Soon two more campervans (these with matching orange stripes) are ensconced by the would-be creek. We quickly make our acquaintances with these travellers, one couple also on a honeymoon and the other retired (which are the expected friends we don't know). As sun sets we promptly ask them to join our fire. Dad and I are immediately amused by the configuration of their seats – not towards and around the fire but in a line pointed away towards the west, I can't help myself and ask: "why are your seats pointed in that direction? As if at a drive-in cinema?" to an excited response: "the eclipse!" Through all our drifting Dad and I had not discovered that there was a significant eclipse this particular evening. Throughout the night there is much convivial sharing of stories, food and beverages with these Scandinavian travellers and the science-fiction couple. At 10: 55 the clouds miraculously part and the moon begins to vanish. This excites the rambunctious group of temporary outback drifters even further.

Most travellers rise early and make a hasty start to the day but this morning things were moving slowly. The contingent of happy campers exchanged tourist information, emails and social media details and promises were made of exchanging photographs. Just before we pointed the car back to bitumen once again, the retired Scandinavian lady hands me a lucky charm to complete my "unusual" project – a special edition Australian dollar coin that reads: "ONE DOLLAR 2002 Year of the Outback."



















The Bunker

There are small benches that are perhaps better described as standing decks that perforate “the strip” that is setup to view Uluru. These are really two one-way lanes with parking bays and minimal wooden structures to aid viewing, and most importantly, photographing at sunset. The buses and larger vehicles have a separate designated parking zone, which, as I enter the “strip” in the early afternoon, are empty meeting grounds. At sunset, and to a lesser extent sunrise, the “strip” comes alive with tourists who vary with age, nationality and travel arrangements. All tourists who come here have one thing in common – they carry a camera of some varying format. Tourists with tripods are assumed serious or professional and hence must obtain a permit to shoot. This involves outlining the use of the resultant pictures and getting them cleared through the media centre by Aboriginal elders. Nowadays one is strongly advised not to photograph people climbing the monolith, as this would encourage future climbers.

A group of four tourists who look comfortable picnicking on a bench initiate a conversation after noticing my tripod. They are students from Sydney – two couples from Korea – and are here for the experience of the Australian desert. I have come early to establish positions to photograph and as I walk around I find more people than I expected, picnicking, arranging chairs, setting up cameras and drinking from iced Eskys. On noticing my tripod the group of Koreans make a polite request: “You have equipment, you must be a professional? Please take a picture of us with the rock in the background.” I use two of their phones and a digital camera to replicate the same image. As a reward they offer me some traditional Korean food. The portable and well-worn polystyrene Esky lid is lifted and the strong smells of garlic and cabbage wafts through the dry air. Over kimchi and tins of beer our discussions sporadically flow in random directions. It doesn’t take me long to learn that they bought a cheap car in Sydney where they are studying various university degrees and are now travelling and looking to get some fruit picking work to support their adventure. “There

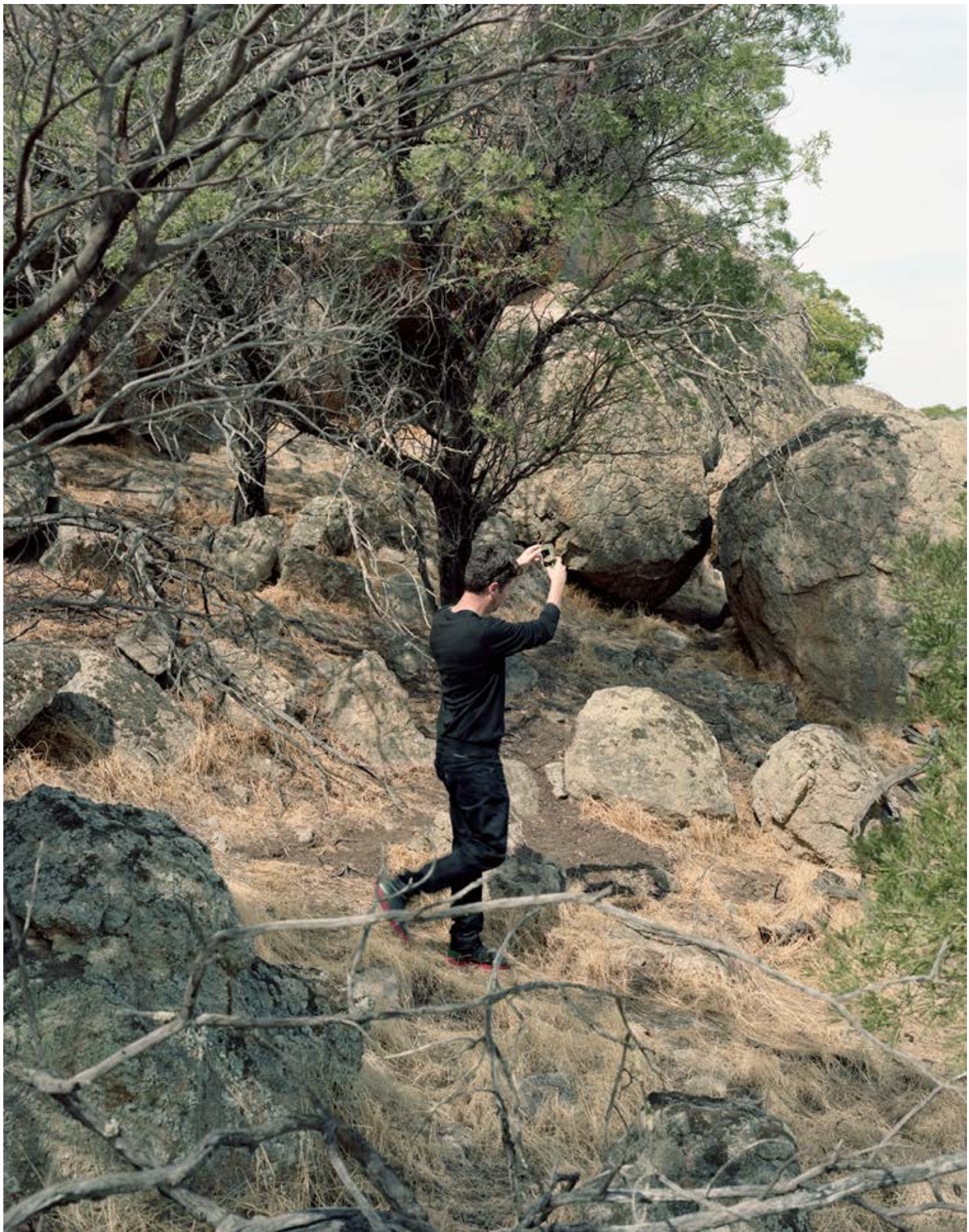
are no concrete plans,” they explain. The four Seoul residents then enthusiastically described how about 100 kilometres from Uluru they had hit a kangaroo and their treasured car was now only just drivable. “We are leaving tomorrow because the National Park pass only lasts for three nights, I hope we make it...”

Over more kimchi and tins of beer I explain that I am at Uluru to photograph. The Korean four proceed to outline places where the best views are for photography and other possible techniques they have witnessed over the last few days. These included bus tour sunset fine dining in a secluded car park and fence jumpers who wear army camouflage gear to get closer to “the rock”.

I ask them what they think of Uluru? “First, the campgrounds and facilities are great for travellers like us who can’t afford to stay in hotels. It reminds us guys of the mandatory military service we do in Korea and the rural bases where we were stationed.” I prompt them to continue: “you have a permit to go in and out and almost all your moves are controlled, there are many signs telling you what not to do.” In addition, they are also bemused by the beauty of the rock and subtle changes it makes as time advances. They thought that it had many secrets to convey but was not speaking to them, or at least they didn’t understand the ancient language: “It’s like going on DMZ tours and looking into the North, there is something going on there too – but we don’t know what, it keeps secrets and doesn’t speak our language.”

That evening back at the ‘bunker’ we continued our conversations over kangaroo burgers and they tell me about a man named Bill who they squashed into their car for about 200 kilometres. Apparently this Bill had minimal bags and pronounced himself a ‘drifter’. He told them stories about the ‘outback’ for three straight hours.













Apostles

Following the narrow road that traces the winding coast of the Twelve Apostles I spot the buses gleaming in the car park ahead and realise the long drive is coming to an end. I was enjoying the temperature control and audio entertainment of the car capsule – the front window like a screensaver of ever-changing landscapes. On the windswept cliffs where scenic tourist helicopter flights hover overhead, I strike up a conversation with Hajime by acknowledgment of each others camera bags. The information centre sells trinkets and cups of watery coffee while staff keep an eye out for energetic fence-jumping visitors. It's unnecessary to enter through this commercial/surveillance venture so my newfound friend and I skirt the edges as the seascape ahead is reflected in the peeling vinyl stock photographic images that cover the shop windows. We join the focused pilgrimage-like procession onto the extended viewing deck. Hajime and I chat about the weather, cameras and he comments that it is very orderly – much more so than he expected. With buses, crowds and orderliness I feel the need to reassure Hajime that it is worth the inconveniences and that revelations on personal and national levels have been made atop these cliffs. He reassures me that it is no problem and he is enjoying his visit and, besides, he is in Australia as a company employee and has work to undertake.

It's strange how free-flowing and open conversations develop among tourists. I explain that I am travelling to other popular locations to photograph and am happy to give any advice or tips he may require. Hajime's answer is rendered in a straightforward manner, albeit with a Japanese accent that is rather weird for the terminology used: "I don't want no McDisney experiences. Just beautiful landscape!" He further stipulates that there will be no bus tours with ladies carrying directional flags or climbs over the Sydney Harbor Bridge. And no museums where people pretend to work, if I wanted to see this I can see it in Japan, you know we have a guidebook to all the museums in Tokyo, there are thousands, things like button, ramen and doll museums". In many ways he is the

quintessential image of the 1980s Japanese tourist flâneur cashed up from the economic bubble and transcended across seas to the tourist bubble. Only now he wreaks the benefits of further rampant technological advancement that are reflected in everything from his weatherproofed clothing, GPS in his phone, and camera and wristwatch.

Hajime and I both designate a similar location to make our photographs. Amongst the lenses in cameras, smart-phones and tablets, I set up my 'kit' to Hajime's amazement. I cannot tell if it is awe or disgust (I learn later it's both) that he registers at the sight of my plate camera. On peeling open his own camera bag I have the same double response to what seems to be a camera from the future, surprisingly with no maker logo or markings.

We stroll back to the car park together and Hajime finds a path that runs off the viewing deck and bypasses much of the crowd. He uses this time to tell me that he is amazed that I am shooting film (and with a Japanese camera!) and that he works for a camera manufacturer. In fact, Hajime is in Australia to test a new camera, one that will revolutionise digital imaging and that I should seriously consider shifting to a "digital workflow". The details of the camera or the maker can't be discussed and he jokes that if they were he would have his little finger amputated on return. He can tell me one detail as it may be very useful to my project: "If there are many people, too many people in your frame, just shoot three of the same photo and this camera will erase the tourists for you – simple. They vanish!"









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