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Souvenirs of the senses: Collaborative and cross-artform makings

Abstract:

Souvenir hunters are often limited in their selection of souvenirs to objects that evoke an iconic and/or generic relationship to place. For example, a small-scale replica of the Eiffel Tower might substitute for a whole range of other more personal responses to the sensory experience of being in Paris. This paper reports on a collaborative and cross-artform five-day workshop, 'Souvenirs of the Senses', conducted in Qatar in early 2013 as part of *Tasmeem Doha: Hybrid Making*, a biennial international art and design conference. Two of the three workshop leaders, Patrick West and Jondi Keane, were Australian-based visitors whereas workshop leader Valerie Jeremijenko is permanently based in Qatar. There were five workshop participants from a diverse range of international and Qatari backgrounds. One of the conference themes, 'Made in Qatar', heightened our attention to what it means to be spending time in, and making things in, one place as opposed to any other place. What did it mean to be making something in a country where so many things have to be imported? Building on this line of thought, the second conference theme, 'Hybrid Making', suggested possibilities for undoing traditional modes of souvenir making as part of the creation of more complex objects that might be sutured to the singular experiences of place that happen when a) established regimes of tourism are disrupted, and b) experiences of place are curated via a focused awareness of the operations of the senses as sustained within our collaborative, cross-artform workshop environment. What attracts our attention is how objects ripe for 'souveniring', when they are considered as perceptual systems, suggest new ways of experimenting with the fabrication of objects and of artistic and individual relationships to place, and further, how hybrid souvenirs affect the way in which a place is re-membered (put together) and re-made in memory.

Biographical notes:

Dr. Patrick West is a Senior Lecturer in Professional and Creative Writing in the School of Communication and Creative Arts at Deakin University. He is author of *The World Swimmers* (2011), and wrote the script for *Sisters of the Sun* (2012), a fictional-documentary film arising from Deakin's 'Flows & Catchments' project. He has published widely, including 'Zones of Practice: embodiment and creative arts research' (with Drummond and Keane, in *M/C Journal*, 2012) and 'The Bird Watcher' (in *Landscapes*, 2010). His Ph.D is from The University of Melbourne.

Dr Jondi Keane is an arts practitioner, critical thinker and senior lecturer at Deakin University. Over the last three decades he has exhibited, performed and published in the USA, UK, Europe and Australia. (<http://jondikeane.com/>). His research interests include contemporary arts practice (installation-performance), contemporary theory (art history, philosophy, cultural theory, cognitive science), embodiment, (embodied cognition and the philosophy of perception), experimental architecture, built environment, cultural space and the theory-practice nexus, research design and practice-led research.

In 2008, **Dr. Byrad Yyelland** and his family moved from the prairies of Canada to the deserts of Qatar where he joined Virginia Commonwealth University Qatar as Director of the Liberal Arts & Sciences program, which includes the Writing Center and VCUQatar Honors Program. Byrad has been teaching undergraduate Sociology and Psychology for 25 years. He has BA (Honors) in Psychology, MA in Sociology and EdD in Educational Leadership. For his doctoral research, Byrad conducted an ethnographic study of emotion management during organizational culture change in a Canadian college. Byrad has focused predominantly on teaching and private contract research for most of his career, but in recent years has been actively engaged in academic research in the areas of emotion management, identity, organizational culture change, visual sociology, and educational leadership. Byrad is an enthusiastic collaborator in interdisciplinary research and is an accredited facilitator for Instructional Skills Workshops and Appreciative Inquiry.

Valerie Jeremijenko is the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth in Qatar, the Director of Yama Yoga studios, a center for yoga, dance and well-being in Doha, Qatar and a writer. Her current academic research explores embodied approaches to writing, the link between creative arts practices and research, affect and the cultural anthology of the senses. As a writer she is the editor of *How We live our Yoga* (Beacon 2002,) a collection of literary essays on yoga, has had numerous short stories published, been recognized by a Fellowship from the Virginia Commission on the Arts and is at work on a novel. Her work in Student Affairs focuses on the enrichment of learning environments and the development of students in an intercultural environment. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing and is currently completing her Ph.D in the School of Communication and Creative Arts of Deakin University, Australia.

Keywords:

Souvenirs—Senses—Collaboration—Making—Place

Introduction

When language cannot record memories we look to images. When images fail to revive memory, we may look to the well-kept secrets of objects. Unpacking the secrets encoded in images and objects we find the memory of the senses. (Marks 2000: 195)

Souvenir hunters are often limited in their selection of souvenirs to objects that evoke an iconic and/or generic relationship to place. A small-scale replica of the Eiffel Tower, for example, might substitute for a whole range of other more personal responses to the sensory experience of being in Paris. In a similar way, postcards of different towns and sub-regions display iconic images of local attractions like churches or monuments around the highlighted name of the place, or they give the name and show a scene such as a beach or mountain that could be from almost anywhere. In all cases, the elicited response is largely normative or generic, and resists local re-makings.

But souvenirs can also embody the intercultural flows of people, ideas, and interactions and have the potential to be the hybrid form par excellence. When considered carefully, a souvenir is more than a product or commodity. It is also a recollection-object, an heirloom, fetish, gift or artwork. As an inherently trans-national object, it can also serve as relic, artifact, or as a 'radioactive fossil' (Marks 2000: 80), laden with memory and emblematic of the process of meaning making and placing. Tied as it is to its definition of evoking memory, of 'bringing to mind', a souvenir can reference the ineffable remnants of sensual experience and fray the divisions between product design, art making, place-making, meaning making and engineering. To some extent, the souvenir operates as an attractor or a nodal space for many affects and effects to become attached. In short, the souvenir can be considered as the perfect laboratory for place-making and hybrid cross art-form makings.

In the light of these potentials, the following paper reports on a collaborative and cross-artform five-day workshop, 'Souvenirs of the Senses', conducted in Qatar in early 2013 as part of *Tasmeem Doha: Hybrid Making*, a biennial international art and design conference. One of the conference themes, 'Made in Qatar', heightened our attention to what it means to be spending time in, and making things in, one place as opposed to any other place. Our initial questions therefore considered what it meant to be making something in a country where so many things have to be imported and that is in the midst of reinventing and reforming itself? What is the potential of a souvenir as a cultural artifact to contribute to the image of and memory of a place and how is the choice of the experience to be 'souvenir-ed' affected by this sense of its potential? Building on this line of thought, the second conference theme, 'Hybrid Making', suggested possibilities for undoing traditional modes of souvenir-making as part of the creation of more complex objects that might be sutured to the singular experiences of place that happen when a) established regimes of tourism are disrupted, and b) experiences of place are curated via a focused awareness of the operations of the senses as sustained within our collaborative, cross-artform workshop environment.

In the following we will address these concerns and unpack our process, first by looking at the context of the workshop, second by examining all the potential embedded in the notion of the 'souvenir' and finally by linking this to the experience of sensual orientation to a place and the role of art-making in place-making. The

collaborative experimentations of the workshop will then be examined as a critical part of producing hybrid, porous and re-engineered souvenirs which affect the way in which a place is re-remembered (put together) and re-made in memory, and conversely, the way one might imagine engaging with places not yet visited.

We will conclude by suggesting that the senses hunt for meaning and our attachment to places fix upon particular metaphoric and metonymic triggers or prompts that re-collect the affects of our experience. Objects (found or manufactured) can be considered ripe for ‘souveniring’ when they are considered as the result of perceptual systems. The value of our approach is to suggest new ways of experimenting with the fabrication of objects and of artistic, individual and singular relationships to place.

Hybrid making workshop for Doha, Tasmeeem

The ‘Souvenirs of the Senses’ workshop was part of *Tasmeeem*, a biennial design conference offered on the Doha, Qatar campus of Virginia Commonwealth University (VCUQatar). The conference is renowned as an exciting and well-attended event featuring presentations by world-class designers from around the globe. Organizers of the *Tasmeeem 2013* sought to build on this legacy by expanding the role of art in the conference and adding a hands-on component in which participants would not only hear about innovative design but could be actively involved in actually creating it. Immersing the creative process in deliberate interdisciplinarity culminated in *Tasmeeem 2013: Hybrid Making*.

Tasmeeem 2013: Hybrid Making included the traditional two-day ‘talking heads’ conference, but preceded these two days with five days of laboratories for VCUQatar students and a small group of students from the home campus in Richmond, Virginia. These labs were led by a small group of designers working in the field and design faculty from the two campuses. During this time the majority of VCUQatar faculty, along with a select group of faculty from Richmond and external professionals, participated in twelve Tasmeeem Hybrid Making Workshops that had been elicited from designers and artists through an open call for proposals. The various workshop topics included, amongst many others, a multicultural food preparation and eating experience, hands-on felt making with local materials, and a music and movement workshop influenced by the culture of Qatar.

The ‘Souvenirs of the Senses’ workshop proposal stated:

Our collaborative team proposes to use the idea of suturing—of materials, spaces, words, objects and environments to memories, dreams, associations, sensations and impulses—in order to arrive at the synapse or juncture of new formations. These new formations will be inspired by the souvenirs or found objects sourced in diverse international places. (West, Keane & Jeremijenko 2013)

It conjectured that places were woven into the fabric of other places through the inward and outward flows of the senses in travelers and in the dispositions and practices of their ‘foreign-travelling’ bodies.

This workshop, with its three workshop leaders and five participants, was able to start suturing place experience immediately. Two of the three workshop leaders were Australian-based visitors. The third was an Australian expatriate who had lived in Qatar for over ten years. Of the five other participants, one was a graduate graphic

design student from the States, another a fabricator also from the States but living and working in the UAE. Another American participant had an anthropology background and had lived in Qatar for five years while the other two were Arab designers, one Syrian born and raised in Qatar; another a long-time resident of Qatar from Lebanon. This diversity enriched the discussions of souvenirs, as embedded in the concept of souvenir is the recognition that they are, like fetishes, ‘not the product of one culture but of the encounter between at least two’ (Marks 2000: 80).

The other major participant in the place-making collaborative workshop was Qatar; itself a hybrid of its high-rise glittery capital, expansive rocky deserts, conservative Saudi-influenced Wahhabism¹ and its population of privileged Qatari and disenfranchised guest workers. The very idea of Qatar as a place in which to collaborate to do place-making raised questions. Solidified as a state by a 1915 treaty between the ruling Al Thani family and the British, Qatar’s current boundaries only marginally reflect the porous approach to place of its previous nomadic tribes and pearl divers. The conference exploration, ‘Made in Qatar’, also highlights a past and present largely devoid of locally-produced material culture and reflects Qatar’s need and development vision to diversify its over-exposed petroleum economy.

Our approach, then, was not just to create souvenirs of this or that element of a complex place through the senses. Rather, it involved working into our process a recognition of how the *place itself*, picking and choosing by accident or design from its multiple historical layerings, was always already ‘souveniring’ itself, remembering itself for its self. What a nation chooses or is able to remember constitutes its own souvenir collection with which it travels into the future. This is a nuance of ‘Made in Qatar’. A related nuance of ‘Hybrid Making’ is that the souvenir, as already noticed above, itself takes from, or ‘souvenirs’, aspects of other transitional objects like heirlooms, relics and fetishes. Places to be souvenired also always already ‘souvenir’ themselves, and souvenirs, at a definitional, conceptual and ultimately creative level, are the ‘coming to mind’ of other objects. Hybridity is indiscernibly hybrid in the parts (places, objects) out of which new things may be formed through sustained creative activity.

We began the workshop, then, with an invitation to explore the concept of place, in this case the place of Qatar, and with the suggestion that we approach it not as a given set of boundaries but as an interaction, a geography created by its relationship to the senses. As Paul Rodaway points out in *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place*, ‘the senses are not merely passive receptors of particular kinds of environmental stimuli but are actively involved in the structuring of that information and are significant in the overall sense of a world achieved by the sentient’ (1994: 3). ‘Geographical understanding’, he further suggests, ‘arises out of the stimulation of, or apprehension by, the senses’ (1994: 5) and the role of the senses in geographical understanding is as ‘a kind of structuring of space and defining of place’ (1994: 4). The senses generate sensation, meaning, experience, and arguably access to or even participation in the construction of, reality. The senses operate through the body and by so doing situate the body in the sensuous dimension in relationship with place – both *of* a place by participating in the construction of space-place and *in* place by adjusting to the surrounding feedback loops already in operation.

Nigel Thrift suggests a similar relational-based appreciation of geography when he argues that it is the process of the participants circulating within and between particular spaces that contributes to place-making. 'Every place (should be) regarded as a knot tied from the strands of the movement of its many inhabitants' (2006: 142). The possibility of place-making with cross-art forms then starts with Qatar not as a static backdrop but as a porous networked space and active collaborator apprehended by the senses and the goal of the workshop included an apprehension of place as affect or as a mapping designed and created by sensorial engagement with a series of sensual regions as opposed to a politically defined place or an iconic sense of 'country'.

Given this a 'placing experience' was part of the first day of the workshop. Participants were asked to explore the environment of Qatar, not as a landscape or predetermined place but as a threshold of a place ripe for regional meaning making. They were asked to record their sensual reactions as bodies, spaces in themselves, interacting and collaborating in the formation of relationships. The critical questions were 'Where?' and 'How did you land there?' While place-making was obviously at the heart of the exercise, what concerned us was less how the senses helped to place the body and more how singular attachments to the place were formed and the role of the senses in that.

Of the out-of-town visitors involved in the workshop, the reactions to the environment seemed to be foregrounded. The American graphic design student focused on the vast horizons of the flat land; West responded to the lunar quality of the environment; and Keane to the verticality of the high rises and the movement and textures of the sand dunes. Of the Qatar-based participants, one reported on the scents of the Souqs (traditional Arabic marketplaces) and another on the mud of the Industrial Area, an underdeveloped area of town where many of the migrant workers live in sub-standard conditions. Jeremijenko reported on wind and the sound of wind in construction sites while another participant brought back photos of abandoned car wrecks caked in dust and disintegrating back into the desert.

Themes that emerged from the discussion of these observations and affects were the importance of sound and the soundscape of the place; relative permeability, particularly the way the dust and mud seemed to hold objects and spaces together and unify landscape and objects; and the scale of the open spaces in Doha/Qatar and the way the imagination floods into them. Color, especially as a function of the old/new contrast where the old objects and spaces had a gradient of color (blue metal door with rust-red handles) while the new was uniformly monochrome was also noted, as was the constant contrast between the old and the new and the proximity of each to the other. There was also a tangible awareness of time and of our ability to sense it both in the pre-history memory of the desert and the disjunction between the rapid pace of development and the slow rate of decay in the older neighborhoods. In a way though, we also felt time 'souveniring' itself—ages intruding into and disturbing other ages in some form of historical metalepsis.

Notably, at the end of the day there was a distinct sense of satisfaction, admiration and even connection to the experience of Qatar.

These initial reactions to the space occupied by Qatar were in stark contrast to participants' reactions to the typical souvenirs of Qatar: Arabic knives, miniature hookahs, and pearls, usually cultured elsewhere. A range of more historical objects such as old coffee pots and framed traditional jewelry form another category of iconic souvenirs for sale at every other store, but like the knives and hookahs, are generically Arabic as opposed to specifically Qatari. Like the Persian carpets and Kashmiri scarves collected by resident expatriates, these 'Arab' items are interesting in the way they evoke the porous nature of silk road trading routes (or in how they souvenir one experience under cover of another experience), but as souvenirs they are quite disassociated from the current affective registers of Doha as a city, and Qatar as a land.

This disconnect between experience and most iconic souvenirs is perhaps due to the fact that they are trying to 'bring to mind' or evoke a time, place and experience that has no connection to the embodied sensual experience of that place. If we interpret the souvenir as an object of reference 'for when the memory of the senses fails us' (Marks 2000:196) we come to recognize that at the heart of any souvenir or relic—iconic or otherwise—is this very sense of loss: a mirage of another time or of a sensual experience that can only now be remembered but never experienced again. The difference is that as items of remembrance, or 'recollection-objects', these iconic tokens are not only referencing a time and place that is lost but one that never existed as part of any embodied sensual experience. If the potential of the souvenir to evoke a sensual memory and attain an aura of place is to be effective it should in some way connect to one such sensual memory. And if the souvenir is to be most helpful in creating place it should reference the experience of a real one not a romanticized one. Therefore, to assist in this, our team aimed the tasks of the workshop to address the conditions of attachment, of re-collection and of the co-construction of place. The souvenir was a linchpin concept-object that aided us to realize and organize particular types of sensory-based connection and to link them to specific modes or qualities of spatiality and temporality.

Workshop tactics

With these thoughts in mind and with the goal to capitalize on the inherently hybrid nature of souvenirs, we came to the task of examining the modes of attachment between souvenir and sense. As we were also interested in their place-making and trans-national possibilities we suggested that instead of merely attaching sense to object we explore ways in which the object could continue to evoke that point of connection in other milieus (as if bringing to attention the acquisition by Qatar, no doubt through sensory activities, of this or that mode of nationhood and/or historical presence as mentioned above). In one way, Jeremijenko's now-lost box of amber from India illustrates the potential of a transported object to layer place. Whenever this box was opened its resinous scent immediately evoked the smell of India and with it all the color, tastes and textures of that time. But as it was transported first to the United States and then to Qatar it layered the experience, weaving the memories of India into the clothes it scented during an East Coast winter and later into the strangeness of Qatar when she first arrived. As a sensual experience it evoked all

places simultaneously, reminding us of the way the body brings its sensual memories to all other sensual experiences—‘souveniring’ on the fly.

Food provides another type of model of the way sensual memories and international places can be made, un-made or re-made through the complex activities of bodily senses. Spices, for example, can retain the memory of the original taste yet still take on different flavors in different places, especially through their being mixed with new airs or waters. Fusion cuisines reference cultural dishes within the context of new gastronomical experiences. Even a cherished family recipe cooked by various hands in various places, but tweaked as it goes in the mode of new ‘souvenirings’, can layer trans-generational memories and the experience of an ever-expanding diaspora into a simple meal. The choice of food and a redolent root as examples provides us with another aspect of the re-engineered souvenir; its connection to everyday life. It is through this connection and with it to the body that we can move away from the realm of commodification and fetishization and develop art practices that fold into cultural, historical and community concerns, and collaboratively change the social interactions around the creation and labeling of an object as a souvenir.

From the standpoint of symbolic interactionism, a souvenir is a physical object that holds a specific meaning for a specific individual. The object does not inherently contain this meaning. Meaning is attributed to the object on the basis of the individual’s definition of the object. According to Herbert Blumer, founding father of symbolic interactionism, ‘this meaning sets the way in which he sees the object, the way in which he is prepared to act toward it, and the way in which he is ready to talk about it’ (1969: 11). Not all physical objects become souvenirs because individuals do not define them as such. Similarly, what one person defines as a souvenir may be significantly different from what another defines as a souvenir. Blumer goes on to say that ‘[O]bjects (in the sense of their meaning) must be seen as social creations – as being formed in and arising out of the process of definition and interpretation as this process takes place in the interaction of people’ (1969: 11-12). When traveling, an individual sees specific items on display as souvenirs within specific stores and through this visual interaction with the social environment of the store, and perhaps communication with the storeowner or other customers within the store, the traveler comes to learn (define) some items as souvenirs and some as non-souvenirs. There is perhaps a resonance here with what a place and the different groups and individuals within a place, like Qatar, might choose to select—‘souvenir’—from what history and culture offers.

With these factors in mind the workshop team began to list the types of objects that form different and differing relationships or attachment points. The aim was that by delineating an array of types of objects currently in circulation we might learn how each one sits within a context that it helps to produce and thereby examine the conditions of attachment upon which they operate successfully; that is, form attachments that are strong and lasting.

We then discussed the different points of attachment provided by the object and the directions of the attachment from object to sensation or site, by which memories attach.

The types of attachments we discovered within the objects on the list included:

- belonging,

- longing for origin,
- nostalgia, (idealized sense of the past),
- feeling of ‘home’
- sense of (lost) self (restored (partially)),
- self-fulfillment,
- embodied memory,
- links to space/place,
- intensification of desire or affection,
- production of leisure (stealing time)
- pleasure
- entertainment/fun in relation to or in contrast to pleasure.
-

As the list grew we quickly realized that the object-ness began to dissipate into the action or interaction that the object helped to perform. This relational emphasis soon gave way to a place in a circuit of configuration of events/interactions which all drew into that event-space a range of other systems of connections: physical, emotional, sensual, associative, social-cultural-historical, temporal, imaginary and future-oriented. The complexity of the tip of the object-place iceberg once excavated, began to construct huge ice edifices permeating every step of our process and lives and revealing the kaleidoscope of affects available to each person in successive or concurrent moments.

Workshop outcomes

As Helio Oiticica and Lygia Clarke suggest, ‘Art finds its affirmation – not as autonomous objects but as part of the network by which knowledge and objects circulate’ (Papastergiadis n.d.). Networks invite collaborations that invite new networks. The work produced in the ‘Souvenirs of the Senses’ workshop was done using a collaborative method and on a platform and through materials that draw from the experiences of each. Fundamental to our method was shifting the participant’s role from artist as producer to artist as collaborator.

Our collaborative approach was also informed by Nikos Papastergiadis who provides an interesting and relevant definition of collaboration in his essay ‘The Global Need for Collaboration’. He states that collaboration is ‘that which seeks to create an understanding of new social possibilities by allowing each partner to go beyond certitudes and participate in collaborative knowledge making that is not just the sum of their previous experiences’ (n.d.). Papastergiadis further suggests that the shift from artist as producer to artist as collaborator in the construction of social knowledge not only leads to consensual representations of other people’s realities, but also redistributes agency in the production of social meaning (n.d.). In the context of our workshop, we similarly argued that embodied collaborative practices offer the possibility of changing the social interactions around the creation, labeling and use of an object as a souvenir. With these concepts embedded in our methods we approached collaboration, not as instruction, nor as an attempt to produce a unified response, but *as a mutual process in problem solving*.

Our collaboration was further enhanced by the very nature of the workshop and the conference as we were a self-identified affinity group, drawn together by the approach

to the ‘hybrid souvenir’. The group very consciously conducted group tasks, both reconnaissance journeys aimed at gathering materials, sensations and interactions and writing group tasks where the experiences were run through reflective and productive aspects of writing short descriptions through which we connected the dots across multiple systems of reference. From our collaborative exercises and engagements each individual focused on a particular sensation-experience-material-location nexus on which to base their workshop souvenir to be exhibited with all the other workshops from the conference.

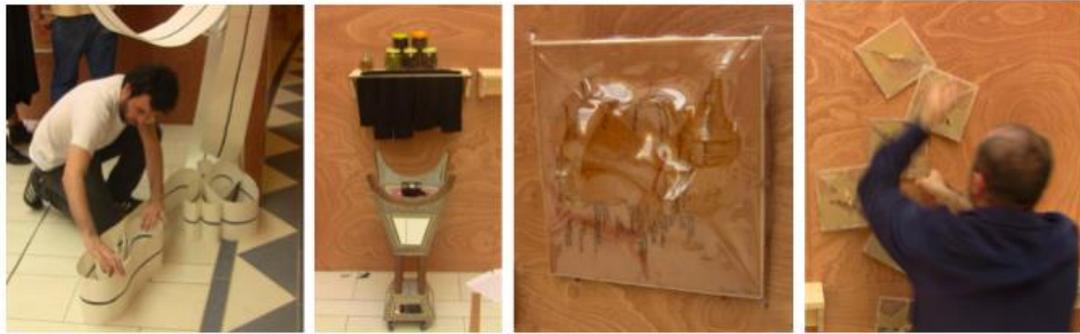


Figure 1. Installing the *Souvenirs of the senses* exhibition in the Saffron Gallery

Given the premise and the approach, the works that resulted from the workshop all displayed a multisensory dynamic. Although the brief was to reverse engineer a souvenir, not all of the works were predominantly visual and several foregrounded the notion of time and experience of time (temporality of both materials and perception). The temporal element became more and more important as the objects took on relationships to each other and to the works in the exhibition if for no other reason than as a result of the complex configuration of experiences invested or ‘written into’ the materials and the fabrication techniques deployed by each artist/designer—personal, differential time-scales came into play.

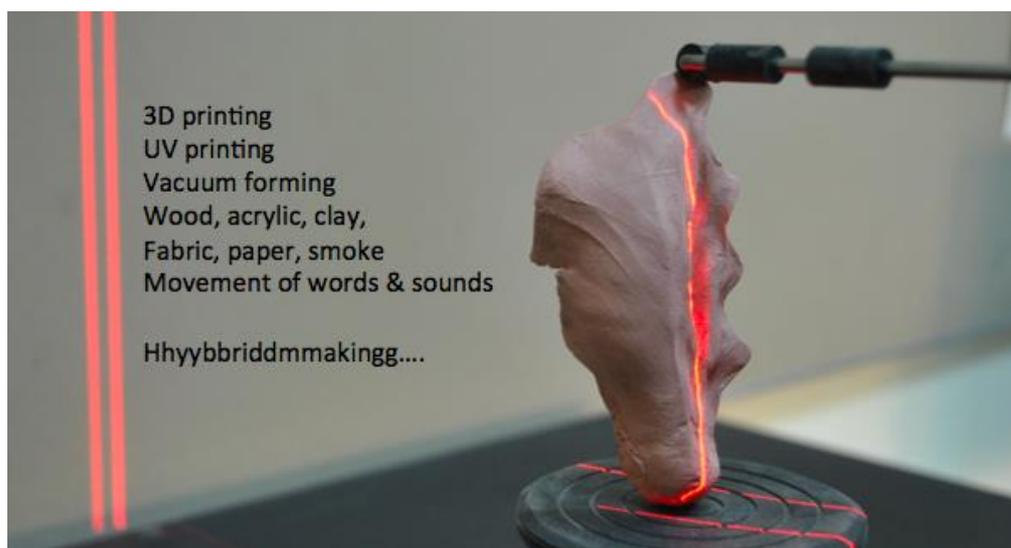


Figure 2. The 3D scanning machine produces a model for 3D printing.

The shelf displaying our work divided into sensory clusters: proximity senses (scent and touch), sound, and space and movement. Other thematic elements ran through them all, including the folding of the horizon into and through the objects and the materialization of writing. One piece, a long straight line spanning many sheets of paper, spoke to the horizontalism of Qatar, but hung vertically in the final exhibition, evoking not only the contrasting experience of the capital but the layering of the desert's pre-history. A series of photos of this line, caught by the wind and rolling through the expanse of an archeological dig accompanied it; the artist/visitor chasing his horizon also encapsulated the differences in our sense of movement and proprioception in strange spaces. Another piece, a series of wall-mounted rotating puzzle pieces with varying compartments that caught the falling sand, invited us to experience the instability of the environment and the changing horizons of the sand dunes. A set of coasters based on the mud of the industrial area evoked touch and texture as well as the economic regionalism of the city and the defined horizon of experience for its inhabitants.

Another related response to the environment evoked the way that landscape is inscribed onto us and at the same time, exists as the unexplored wilderness we are yet to become. In Keane's *Hand Dunes*, clay was squeezed, scanned then 3D printed. This experience of clay memories transformed into digital information that could be transmitted simultaneously and produced in other places introduced concepts of globalization and mass production into our exploration of the layering of place. The tactic of 3D printing explored by Keane was combined with concepts of material writing in several other pieces. Jeremijenko's piece, *The Acoustascope*, was designed as a 'user experience prototype', evoking affect and the crystalized sand of desert roses (filigree-like pre-crystalized formations). Like all the other pieces, it had multi-modal, multi-sensory points of attachment that were re-engineered to produce a shell-like echoic 3D print (the object made a sound) that materialized not only the sound of the wind but the act of silencing to listen to and feel the touch of it. A poem, *Wind words/Sound shapes*, was layered around the surface running words together, into and through the experience of listening. As stated in the description this piece evoked a child's toy and just as 'the kaleidoscope manipulates visual geometric patterns the acoustascope captures and manipulates the experience of wind and the ambient noise of the immediate environment', layering many sound experiences and environments together.

In our experimentations on how to embody and materialize spatial experiences in multi-module hybrid ways, 'material writing' became a means of addressing some of these issues. Within the context of the workshop we imagined material writing as both *object/word hybrid* and the *materialization of process, affect and attachment*. We also saw material writing as a possible method for the very different types of artists, designers, and fabricators involved in the workshop to develop a *mutual process for problem solving*. This was apparent in two of the other pieces of the exhibition. As a writer, West saw writing materialized throughout the vistas of Qatar, in the sand swept in sand storms over the tarmac and in the fluttering of plastic unraveling from newly installed light poles. His split-screen video used the medium of video to suggest this materiality of writing: the plastic undulating against a dusk desert sky

evoking a loose, disintegrating, run-on syntax. The video was complemented by his piece titled *QASMONAUTS*, a poetic consideration, and a 3D printed rocket replete with falcon headgear combining the lunar aspects of the environment, the notion of comings and goings, and the affect of a traveler's displacement.

A final piece collapsed materialized writing with the sense of smell. The US-born resident of Qatar evoked the scent of the Souqs and of women walking by in abayas drenched with perfume with scented silk pieces etched with the words 'breathe before it is gone'. This connection of smell to the fundamental fact of breathing and the life of the body reminds us of the fragmentary, networked, performative and ephemeral qualities of space and the self in relation to it.

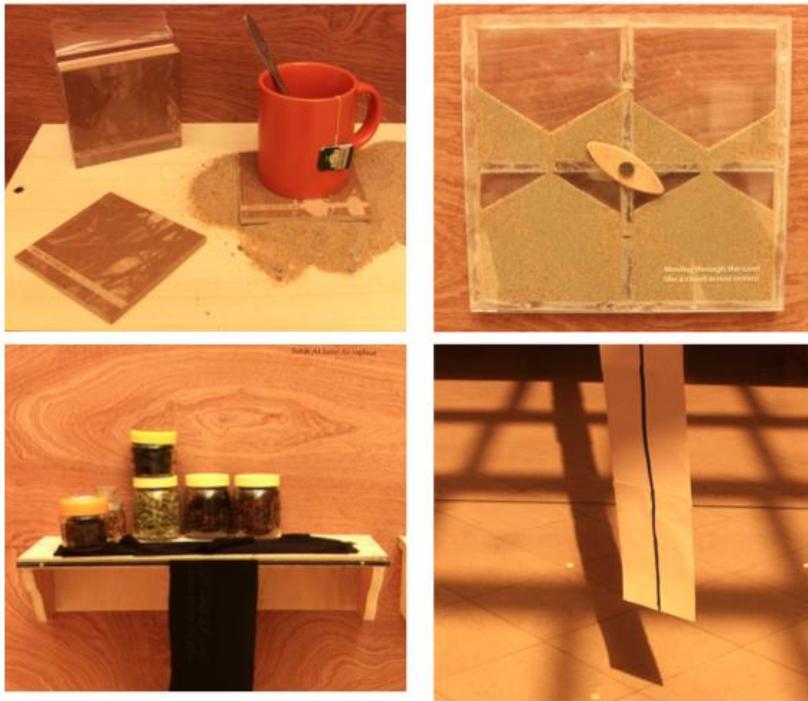




Figure 3: Installed works. Artists from top in rows from left to right: Ahmad Outswani and Imad Fadel; Lesley Gray and Jorge de Silva; Valerie Jeremijenko and Patrick West; Lincoln Adams and Jondi Keane.

Conclusion—Making | Saying | Being

The plasticity of writing informed all our creative manoeuvres of making, saying and being.

The role of writing developed in the course of the workshop in terms of the ways in which sensory experience and the experience of recollection come together, through how writing can materialize into a range of forms and also formalize sensory attachments. The process and practice of writing and the interdisciplinary nature of workshops and design fabrication techniques produced a situation ripe with possibilities and connections across the more isolated nature of making images, producing objects and composing written work as sole authors. In addition to this, ‘Souvenirs of the Senses’ opened up questions of what making in (a) place means and its possible affects and effects.

Neither promoting universals nor unquestioningly celebrating differences, these artistic practices simultaneously posed the need to identify local civic needs alongside cross-cultural, regional and global conceptions of human experience. This gave a dual perspective on the interface between the need to have an attachment to a specific place, but to also participate in the broader debates on what it means to be human in trans-national social spaces.

‘Made in Qatar’ is also made in the world, but the suturing of the world to Qatar is always going to be a matter of new makings, sayings and beings.

Endnotes

¹A member of a Muslim sect founded by Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792), known for its strict observance of the Koran. (Free dictionary online)

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