
THE ARTIST CURATES

EDITED BY RUTH JOHNSTONE

CONTRIBUTORS:

JAZMINA CININAS, RICHARD HARDING,
RUTH JOHNSTONE, JOHN NIXON,
NIKOS PANTAZOPOULOS, ROSSLYND PIGGOTT,
ANDREW TETZLAFF, DEBORAH WILLIAMS

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The Artery co-operative: curating an artist community

Jazmina Cininas

In 2004, the informal Victorian Initiatives of Artists Network was established to represent and promote the interests of artist run initiatives (ARIs), commencing with the launch of a map and website in 2005. VIAN also played a key role in developing the 2007 Making Space event, a series of exhibitions and a major publication showcasing twenty-one Victorian ARIs. Seven years on, the network, and its website, appear to have vaporized, as have a number of the ARIs featured in the Making Space publication.

As curator Zara Stanhope observes, ARIs provide 'structures and potentially a typology that requires its own archive if practice is not to become a mythology known only to a limited collective.'⁶¹ All too often, however, the archives of individual ARIs are either full of holes, or disappear from the public realm once the ARI itself closes its doors, making any broader history of ARIs and their curatorial practices fraught. Stanhope goes on to ask:

How can generally short-term, unofficial, committee-driven associations retain the type of empirical information on which to base an understanding of the particularities of each operation, let alone offer an overview of the whole? The archives, if they were kept, of defunct ARIs are in individual hands, and exist from the days before digital documentation and websites.⁶²

Contemporary ARIs, West Space being a particularly proactive example, understand the importance and value of maintaining a web archive of their exhibitions and activities. However, one of Melbourne's longest running

ARIs, TCB (Taking Care of Business), reflects the erratic nature of ARI online archiving practices more broadly.⁶³ TCB provides rudimentary descriptions and images of their early shows in the late 1990s, with more comprehensive entries including substantial statements in recent years, but there are significant gaps between 2002—2008, with five of those years missing entries altogether at the time of writing.⁶⁴ Even ARIs which once had substantial websites such as the now defunct CLUBSproject Inc., for example, no longer have an online presence except through secondary sources⁶⁵, making the writing of individual ARI histories, let alone an overview of broader ARI curating history, challenging to say the least.

In order to ensure workable parameters, the histories I explore in this chapter are filtered through one ARI in particular, the Artery co-operative, which currently manages a large complex of artist studios, and occasionally hosts elaborate birthday parties, pop up exhibitions and open studios. Not being part of a regular public programme, these events are particularly vulnerable to poor documentation, and their 'mythologies' in danger of remaining restricted to a select number of individuals. While Artery may not conform to conventional understandings of ARIs in that it does not operate as a gallery with a public programme of exhibitions, the studios nevertheless conform to a broader understanding of an ARI that sees artists empowering artists to, as Stanhope describes, 'take creative practice and the presentation of culture into their own hands.'⁶⁶

I trace the links between community and curating within Artery through discussion of the co-operative's major social events as a manifestation of a social and curatorial ethos of inclusivity and democracy. A history of Artery's formative years at the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital (PANCH) introduces key personnel, while also providing background context for the co-operative's primary values and aims. Key to my chapter is a series of interviews with Bianca Hester, Hilary Jackman, Justine Khamara, Viv Miller, Jeph Neale, Kristen Phillips and Jonas Ropponen. These artists are themselves curated in a sense, chosen by me not just for their key involvement in Artery social events, but also for their part in the broader landscape of artist-led curation through their collective involvement with CLUBSproject Inc., Downtown Art Space, Montsalvat, Seventh Gallery, Upstairs at the Napier, West Space and particularly PANCH, amongst other ARIs. I will also touch on other collaborative projects in which Artery artists have demonstrated an inclusive curatorial approach, such as the Open Spatial Workshop (Hester and Scott Mitchell), *Cashmere If You Can* (Phillips and Ropponen) and *1000 Tears* (Helen Kocis Edwards and Jessi Wong).

Locating the Artery co-operative

Artery's primary mission is to provide secure, well-resourced artist studios while also fostering 'the exploration and exchange of ideas, knowledge and skill'⁶⁷ amongst its resident artists and members. The co-operative was formally registered with 15 shares in 2001. Since 2007, the co-op has been operating artist studios in Northcote. At the time of writing, the Artery studio complex consists of 38 individual spaces, including my own printmaking studio, spread across three purpose-converted warehouses at 101, 105 and 107 Helen Street, accommodating a community of around 60 artists. Artery's cultural enterprises are entirely self-determined and self-funded by its artist community, receiving no financial support—or directives—from government, councils or philanthropy.

In 2012, Artery took out a business mortgage on 101 Helen Street through Foresters Community Finance, a leap of faith requiring a stable psychological framework in which co-op members could imagine a long-term future for their community. As well as the individual studios, Artery houses a well-equipped communal sculpture workshop with professional woodworking and metal working machinery, a small office area with (intermittent) computer access and a common kitchen. The latter hosts formal co-op meetings but primarily functions as a vital, if informal, social hub for the sharing of lunch, coffee, news and the generation and exchange of ideas. It is fitting that much of the material for this chapter was collected over the course of lunch-time conversations around the communal kitchen table, supplemented by email questionnaires, follow up phone calls, comprehensive minutes and the patchy archives held in the Artery office filing cabinets. On occasion, Artery has opened its studio doors to curators' tours, professional practice visits for RMIT, VCA and Monash University BA students, film nights and social occasions encompassing multi-layered cultural happenings, memorable for their exhibitions, performances, DJs, dancing, interactive lighting, pyrotechnics, giant disco ball and coffee-based cocktails. Artery does have a website, however this has remained largely dormant since 2012 and many of the co-op's key studio events are either missing from, or only cursorily represented on, its online archives.

For resident artists and non-studio visitors alike, the social events serve to build a sense of community, offering insights into art practices or creative outlets that usually take place behind closed studio doors or are reserved for external venues. The organic and egalitarian genesis of events such as Scott's 42nd in 2010 (for Mitchell's 40th birthday), the Co-opting Practice68 exhibition and artist party in 2011, the Combined 100th birthday celebration

for Hilary Jackman and Jo Buckley in 2013 and the 101 Housewarming (celebrating Artery's purchase of 101 Helen Street, also 2013), serves to galvanise the artist community within and beyond Artery. Yet their very spontaneity and informality leave these parties and events vulnerable to poor documentation and historical obscurity. By memorialising the Artery studio events, I hope to also memorialise a curating ethos that is very much grounded in community.

PANCH: Artery's first beat

The seed for Artery was planted in 2000 during a weekly forum held in the RMIT School of Art Sculpture studios. Then-student Jeph Neale raised the possibility of forming a sculptors' co-operative as a strategy for overcoming the uncertainties of Melbourne's ever-increasing rental market and its challenges of securing long-term studios in the inner suburbs. Neale and his partner, painter/printmaker Jackman, had previously been members of the Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative Ltd., formed in 1971 with the aim of securing and preserving 132 hectares of remnant bushland in Victoria's Bend of Islands. The co-operative consisted of 32 shares, with each member being allocated land on which to build a family home while conforming to an ethos of responsible stewardship for the environment.⁶⁹ Neale had been impressed with the co-operative as a company model, particularly the egalitarian distribution of power that, in turn, garnered a strong sense of ownership among its membership.

Around the same time, Jackman set up her first studio at the Montsalvat artist colony in Eltham, the brainchild of trained architect Justus Jørgensen. Jørgensen had originally intended his artist studios to take the form of a large boat floating on the Yarra, a flight of fancy that is still reflected in Montsalvat's romantic, Europhilic architecture. The artist colony was very much Jørgensen's dominion, however its early days were also marked by communal dinners during which guests hotly debated philosophy and art. The Montsalvat dinners took place against the broader landscape of Eltham's large artist community (known especially for its potters) in the early 1970s; Jackman recalls regular weekend gatherings at which guests bought ceramic goblets from which to drink the evening's wine, as a way of supporting their host and fellow artist. Music and performance were also features of these dinners. It was during her time at Montsalvat that Jackman first encountered flamenco dancing, a passion she pursues to this day⁷⁰, and which she demonstrated with aplomb at Artery birthday parties: *Scott's 42nd* and the *Combined 100th*.

Jackman and Neale were confident that, by pooling their resources, artists

could ultimately take control of their future security by collectively purchasing property outright. The couple had also been deeply impressed by the vibrant conversation and collegiate support of the Eltham artist community, and were keen to perpetuate a social and communal environment of art making, sowing the seeds for Artery. In the interim, Jackman and Neale were approached by sculptor Brenton Angel to become live-in caretakers of the then-derelict Preston and Northcote Community Hospital, more commonly known by its acronym, PANCH.

Developer William Deague was keen to have his five storey, three wing building inhabited as a deterrent to would-be vandals and arsonists, offering free rent in exchange to residents. Fledgling artists Tony Mercuri, Luke Adams and Chris Mether had already taken up residence and persuaded Jackman and Neale to join them in the unpowered, unplumbed, vandalised, pigeon-shit encrusted wards and consulting rooms. While living conditions were initially appalling, being a former hospital the rooms proved receptive to a little elbow grease and Jackman and Neale were able to carve themselves respectable living quarters and studios. Adams' electrician background enabled the residents to power inhabited areas of the hospital (even if power detectors remained de rigueur safety equipment when moving through the building) and once plumbing was connected, Jackman and Neale were able to install the requisite bathroom fixtures for hygienic habitation.

Jackman and Neale were in turn joined by fellow RMIT graduates (primarily sculptors) Abby Harman, Pete Skerys, Lorna Fitzpatrick, Kristen Phillips, Daniella Tigani and later Robert Owen and printmaker Andrew Sinclair. It was around this time that Artery was formally registered as a non-trading co-operative, 'formalising the communal, not-for-profit structure that defines its actions.'⁷¹ The first directors were Harman, Adams, Skerys, Jackman and Damien Cravino, joined by members Neale, Tigani, Chris Mether, Kate Gorman, Edward Horne, Lorna Fitzpatrick and Cathi Colla. Each member committed to contributing \$50 a week to the co-op kitty, and through this modest but regular investment came to be in a position to purchase the first major pieces of sculpture equipment, and eventually raise the \$60,000 required (including the sizeable bond) to relocate to the Helen Street studios.

PANCH provided a valuable testing ground for the co-op, enabling its members to realistically map out spatial needs for a communal sculpture studio as well as individual studios. Many of the fixtures in the Helen Street studios, including lights, power points and shelving, were salvaged from PANCH prior to its development as the mass accommodation complex, Bell City, saving the co-operative considerable sums of money and enhancing the viability of their relocation process.

In the course of its four-year career as artist hub, PANCH also gave its residents the chance to test the viability of their futures as artists. Sinclair set up a printmaking studio which opened the door to his career as a master printer, while Neale worked on his first major public art commission, a collaboration between indigenous artists Vicki Cousins, Lee Darroch and Treahna Hamm for the City of Melbourne. The 110 metre *Birrarung Wilam* eel path was entirely cast at PANCH, the virtually limitless accommodation and shared resources enabling Neale to host up to fifteen indigenous artists at any one time, all of them simultaneously drawing on steel with caulking guns. PANCH enabled Neale to realise a \$1.2 million commission that had been in danger of stalling indefinitely, setting in motion his future as facilitator of major public art projects for others. While Sinclair and Neale continue to have personal art practices, it is significant that they have chosen to locate their careers primarily in assisting and collaborating with broader communities of artists.

Other key features of the PANCH studios were the weekly feedback sessions on each other's art, perpetuating the critical, reflective dialogue that had formed such a valuable part of the artists' studies at RMIT, as well as the social, collegiate aspects of Montsalvat community that Jackman and Neale had so admired. Adams also assisted Neale in leading more prosaic but equally valuable lessons in how to set up and operate spread sheets. Neale firmly believes that the spread sheets were vital to the successful formation of the co-op, enabling its future members to visualise how finances might be shared and managed over time to purchase key pieces of seemingly prohibitively expensive equipment and achieve seemingly prohibitively expensive goals. The lessons also had unexpected side benefits in empowering artists to apply for grants and undertake ambitious projects, confident in the knowledge they could calculate and manage their budget within set timelines. Spread sheets would also reappear in a creative context, playing a key role in Artery's elaborate artist parties (discussed in more detail below).

Whilst the former hospital wards were largely dedicated to living quarters and studios, PANCH also hosted regular social gatherings that morphed into cultural happenings. On one such occasion, the artists were able to patch together the intercom so that music could be played through the entire building, while the chance discovery of a stash of abandoned hospital gowns created an instant hospital-themed dress code for attendees. Neale would lead torch-lit expeditions through the night-time corridors, basements, service shafts and across roof tops. Legends of the PANCH gatherings spread through circles of friends and artists via word of mouth, generating large turn outs; to this day Neale is recognised by former visitors as their PANCH tour guide.

The redundant hospital not only housed the gatherings, but also drove the context and content of the ensuing happenings, creating a unifying theme and 'playing host' as much as its resident artists.

This direct engagement with the building's architecture and former purpose drove the *ICU* exhibition for the 2003 Fringe Festival. Initiated by Kristen Phillips with key support from Tony Mercuri, *ICU* featured the PANCH residents and other invited artists, all of whom responded directly to the site.⁷² Phillips, for example, created a video of herself endlessly bursting through the hospital's doors, an oblique reference to her having been born in PANCH's maternity ward. Skerys utilised a mass collection of existing pipes, cutting and shaping them into a giant heart to represent the engine-room of the building. Jackman put aside her paintbrushes to work with hospital fixtures, relocating them in unexpected places, while Neale created a steam governor⁷³ for the matron's office, paying homage to the matron's key role in managing the nurses.⁷⁴ Around 200 guests attended the opening of *ICU*, which was awarded the Best Visual Art Show of the 2003 Fringe. The award validated the PANCH/Artery community's egalitarian curating ethos (i.e. if you're a resident artist, you're in the show) which has carried over to the Northcote studio exhibitions and events.

The co-op had already begun looking for alternative premises when they received short notice to vacate PANCH in 2005. Artery briefly rented a storage container at the former Tip Top factory in Brunswick, where they also met on a regular basis for updates and to maintain vital social cohesion, while searching out more permanent premises with the assistance of a professional consultant. Around ten factories were viewed before Artery secured a commercial lease on former factories at 105 and 107 Helen Street, Northcote in 2006.

In a concurrent offshoot project, Jackman and Neale were approached by an acquaintance, Bill Silvester, who envisioned establishing an artist residence and studios in the former Foundry/Mass art gallery site on Queens Parade, Fitzroy. A core group of Artery artists, including Neale, Jackman, Adams, Skerys and Fitzpatrick were joined by Ruth Johnstone in an artist community housing venture that got as far as the initial development phase, but ultimately failed to eventuate. It nevertheless proved a valuable lesson for the co-op, providing the members with more realistic understanding of the logistics required when converting a former industrial space for artist purposes, as well as the critical mass required—both in terms of membership and density of occupancy—to weather the fluctuating fortunes and enthusiasms of individual members and studio artists.

A new Northcote beat, new blood and the broader ARI network

With the move to Northcote came an influx of new members and studio artists, myself included amongst the latter, and a reconfiguring of key personnel. The new generation of artists brought with them experience of a broad range of ARIs, injecting new expertise and perspectives into the studio and its operations. For example, painter Viv Miller, who has been chairperson of Artery twice since joining the co-op in 2012, was instrumental in setting up the Downtown Art Space in Adelaide between 2002–2004, and was also involved with Bus in Little Lonsdale Street (now Bus Projects in Collingwood) between 2005–2007. Miller describes the initial set up of Downtown Art Space as follows:

The space we were given access to was an abandoned 1980s dodgem car rink in Hindley Street, in the middle of town, albeit the 'dodgy' part of that middle. Having closed a long time ago, it seemed that no one knew what to do with this dingy, cavernous space. But we were very, very excited to take it on as an art space because it was so unusual; it was so huge and a lot of us held memories of visiting it as kids. This was never going to be an orthodox kind of art space—it was grimy and still had brightly striped walls—but it presented an exciting, very *real* opportunity to play with our own, native cultural fabric, and a completely new context in which to present art. We really felt that this could shake things up in the Adelaide art world.⁷⁵

Like PANCH, the unconventional character and dominating architecture of Downtown Art Space offered up new possibilities for presenting and contextualising artwork, and for redefining a space for artists beyond the museum model. Such spaces also undeniably pose unique challenges. Sculpture, installation and video work tended to dominate Downtown Art Space's exhibition programme but, according to Miller, it was the space more so than the proposal committee that dictated the types of artists who applied, and the mediums that were featured. The ARI eventually moved to a more conventional white gallery space attracting an expanded range of practitioners, but the early experience taught Miller to see opportunities in unconventional spaces where others might see obstacles.

Past Artery secretary Justine Khamara, former director and workshop co-ordinator Scott Mitchell, current director and workshop co-ordinator Charlie Sofo and member Bianca Hester have all been involved with West Space. One of Melbourne's longest running and highest profile ARIs, West Space attracts regular funding from the Australia Council, Arts Victoria, the City of Melbourne's Arts and Culture programme, as well as the Ian Potter and Sidney Myer Foundations. Its website is one of the most comprehensive

and best-maintained online archives of any Melbourne ARI. First established in Footscray in 1993 by Brett Jones and Sarah Stubbs, West Space's critically engaged exhibition programme has branched out to include 25 gallery publications as well as a journal, and international projects in Singapore, Milan, Canada, Japan, Seoul, Glasgow, Hong Kong and Paris.⁷⁶ West Space was also instrumental in facilitating the *Making Spaces* publication and programme of exhibitions, and its own programme regularly features interrogations of the role of the artist and ARIs in contemporary society. Hester was a board member between 2001–2002, Khamara served briefly on the programme committee between 2006–2007 when West Space was located in Anthony Street near the Victoria Market, while the move to City Village in Bourke Street saw Sofo become a board member and Mitchell join the program committee. All three artists have contributed work to West Space's fundraising exhibitions, while Mitchell participated in the 2010 *Structural engagement* project, which explored independent art cultures through the lens of six Australian and five Asian ARIs.⁷⁷

Hester, Khamara, Mitchell and Sofo bring West Space's critical rigour and social consciousness to the Artery community, as well as an understanding of the logistical realities of managing an artist collaborative. These same qualities are also at the core of the Open Spatial Workshop (OSW), a collective founded in 2003 by Hester, Mitchell and fellow sculptor Terri Bird. One of OSW's key initiatives was the 2009 West Brunswick Sculpture Triennial (wBST), featuring 27 local and interstate artists working across five venues.⁷⁸ These consisted of four domestic sites—a backyard, Hester's living room, a garage-cum-gymnasium and a former wood yard—all located in the neighbourhood streets west of Sydney Road, Brunswick. The self-consciously localised event stood in contrast to cultural megaliths such as the Australian Sculpture Triennial, however the wBST also strove to locate the public exhibition of artworks within the domestic site of production and the private context of everyday life, including the 'ride on dinner' hosted by Mick Douglas as part of its exhibition programme. Significantly, Ocular Lab, an ARI made famous for its artist dinners⁷⁹, was the only dedicated gallery space utilised in the event. As with the Monsalvat dinners and PANCH social events that fuelled Jackman's and Neale's vision for Artery, art was explored as an inherently social endeavour driven by community if not, indeed, manifesting as community. The wBST's invitation to 'artists and audiences alike to approach the process of production and reception from within a lived context' resonates strongly with the Artery exhibitions and artist parties that were to follow, emanating from informal 'domestic' conversations around the communal kitchen table to which Mitchell and Hester were, and continue to be, pro-active contributors.

OSW itself grew out of the ARI CLUBSproject Inc., founded by Hester along with Terri Bird, Nadine Christensen, Starlie Geikie, Kate McMahon, Spiros Panagirakis, Michelle Ussher and Helen Walter, with Stephen Bram, Cate Consandine, Christopher Hill, Marcus Keating, Laresa Kosloff and Lizzie Newman joining later. The ARI was initially located above the Builders Arms Hotel in Fitzroy, before a new landlord with plans for re-development forced the collective to reassess its mode of operation and shift to roving events in a diverse range of one-off locations. One of Melbourne's most diverse and multifaceted ARIs during its run between 2002–2007, CLUBSproject facilitated feedback sessions, workshops, large-scale collaborations, events, interventions, forums, artist-driven publications, a website, off site projects and activism, lending the initiative a rare weight and critical regard that flowed on to its members.

CLUBSproject's aim to 'reconfigur[e] organisational relations & the impact they have on the practices they make public'⁸⁰ was directly inherited by OSW and the wBST, evident in the shared interrogations of gallery hierarchies and strategies for empowering artists. Hester also gained an understanding of the

importance of forging and nurturing long-term social bonds: bonds which form a workable community that in turn generates what Bonnie Honig terms a 'holding-environment' for sustaining practice and for producing critical forms of cultural production⁸¹

Hester goes on to describe her time with CLUBSproject as

a direct encounter with being a part of what [Danish Situationist] Asger Jorn calls 'living culture', where 'individual production is inseparable from the collective experiences of a community that lives through an engagement with its ideas and processes'. This was art production at its most unruly. But I maintain that this activity had a certain *soul* to it, due to the intensification that results when engaging without concern for recuperation or instrumentalization structuring one's activity.⁸²

Opening up the Artery: the parties

The 'long-term workable community' or 'holding environment' that Hester aspired to with CLUBSproject, and which also form key attributes of Hester's individual art practice,⁸³ equally apply to the Artery studios; professional and personal friendships are forged over informal kitchen conversations, and elaborate parties engender and reinforce social and artistic bonds. It is no co-

incidence that the Artery website homepage features the kitchen pin up board while a single image of the coffee machine was chosen for the 'About' page. The co-operative introduces its core values as an 'emphasis on the interaction and support [Artery] generates amongst its artists, and views this as an essential means to nurture strong artistic cultures.'⁸⁴ Artery recognizes the value of the communal kitchen as 'a forum for the sharing of knowledge and skills' enabling the co-operative to realise its goal of 'actively promot[ing] discussion amongst its members and tenants.' In such environments, community is able to take precedence over artistic hierarchies, reputations or self-consciousness, facilitating 'unruly' cultural activities which, in Hester's case, have included baking, making piñatas and DJ-ing for the Artery social events. These, in turn, are recognised as legitimate artistic pursuits, expanding the spectrums of art and the gallery.

Mitchell's contributions to the Artery parties included programming an iPhone app that enabled interactive dance floor lighting, and homemade cannons firing a range of projectiles, from confetti to meat (to the horror of Artery's vegetarian population). Both projects form a natural extension of Mitchell's collaborative and interactive art practice, which has included a gemstone cannon produced for the OSW exhibition, *Lumpen Falls*, at Conical gallery in 2012, and the *iPod Social Outreach Program (iSOP)*, a free iPhone repair service for the *Barbertown* exhibition at Uplands Gallery in 2006.⁸⁵

The tech and IT savvy Mitchell has built upon Neale's and Adam's earlier work with spread sheets, generating twenty year predictions that were instrumental in persuading the co-op that purchasing one of the Helen Street factories was a viable proposition. Of course, such a long-term commitment has to be not only fiscally possible, but also *psychologically* possible; co-op members need to trust that their members will remain a cohesive community for decades to come. This requires a leap of faith that cannot be tabulated on a spread sheet, however the latter did take an unexpectedly creative turn in the genesis of the artist parties, playing a part in strengthening social bonds and engendering a supportive, stable community.

Following increasingly jocular discussions around the kitchen table, Mitchell and current Artery treasurer, Sinclair, developed the first of Artery's elaborate party timelines for *Scott's '42nd'*, as a tongue-in-cheek spoof of the Artery spread sheets. The timeline escalated into a major piece in its own right, with the title *Predicting the future*. Measuring eight metres across with activities broken down into fifteen-minute intervals accompanied by hand-written annotations and appendices by various contributors, the final piece was installed in the laneway behind Artery, where *Scott's '42nd'* largely took

place.

The Artery parties not only offered an opportunity to see what went on behind the studio doors, but also to showcase alternative creative outlets not normally presented in a gallery environment. My own performative contribution typified the genesis of events. Sinclair transformed my offer to bring along a salad into a scheduled 'Presentation of the Salad' which ultimately morphed into a ritualised handing-over of home-grown greens while singing Happy Birthday in Lithuanian⁸⁶ to Mitchell and his twin after they had burst through a celebratory banner. Other events of the night included self-consciously clichéd party staples including a balloon drop from the studio roof (Hansen), sparkler fest (Megan McPherson) and piñata (Hester), interspersed with DJ (Sofa), interactive dance floor lighting (Mitchell) under an enormous mirror ball (Sinclair), a human tunnel, and carpet bowls in the studio corridors. The event's title, *Scott's '42nd'*, itself evolved from an in-joke, beginning with a misheard admission by Mitchell that he was turning forty, too.⁸⁷

Through providing a supported context in which artists may share normally private aspects of themselves without fear of judgement or ridicule, Artery parties engender social cohesion, contributing to the psychological framework in which co-op members can imagine a long-term future for their community. Miller observes:

I think that Artery really values having a broad, inclusive community and I think this is something we have tried to foster with the parties.... I guess these parties have taken on a bit of a creative tone, thanks to a bunch of people who have been willing and able to set up rather extravagant dance floors, disco balls and lights.... We all had the sense that we could contribute something.⁸⁸

Absurdity plays a key role key in forging social bonds, and is actively encouraged and celebrated in the genesis of Artery events.⁸⁹ Ropponen enthuses:

I love working with artists so much! Experienced artists, contrary to the stereotype of the lonely tortured genius, often have the capacity to think really radically and then to organise that ridiculousness into being.

Miller expresses a similar sentiment:

My favourite party was Scott Mitchell's 40th [*Scott's 42nd*] at the end of 2011, because we set up all those ludicrous activities to provide a sense of ceremony.

One of the performances came about following Miller's revelation that she was a member of the Body Electric amateur dance school, open to all comers and run by choreographer Jade Duffy. Body Electric dancers learn a routine to a pop song, which is then performed at an end of term extravaganza, complete with homemade costumes. Phillips attended one of the performances and was inspired to replicate the experience for *Scott's 42nd*. (Phillips subsequently joined the school herself). Following a lunchtime discussion around the kitchen table, Phillips and Miller recruited long-time flamenco enthusiast Jackman and a regular Artery visitor, Jacqui Edge, to come up with a show. Miller explains:

We made up a routine to Dolly Parton's classic, '9 to 5' and put together some costumes. It felt absurd, but within the context of the 'program of events' Andrew Sinclair and Scott Mitchell had been organising, it was going to make perfect sense.

Scott's 42nd set the benchmark for Artery parties, with many of the individual events becoming instant 'greatest hits', resurrected in increasingly elaborate manifestations at future parties. The second rendition of the 'Presentation of the Salad',⁹⁰ for example, featured nine members of my Lithuanian folk-singing ensemble, The Lost Clog, performing three songs in full national dress with accordion and lagerphone accompaniment. Piñatas became bigger, extra DJs were recruited and Mitchell's cannon fodder escalated from confetti to meat, blasted onto a hotplate for barbecuing. A wall boasting 'ARTIST FUNDED' formed a prominent backdrop to Scott's 42nd and subsequent Artery events, underlining the empowerment that comes with artists taking control of their own futures and opportunities. At the core of these 'unruly' cultural activities is the curation, and celebration, of Artery as a community.

Two of the Artery social events, *Co-opting Practice* and the *101 Housewarming* party, included exhibitions loosely curated by studio artist, Jonas Ropponen, in a process characterised by ongoing conversations and negotiations with the artists. Printmaker Sinclair proposed the *Co-opting Practice* exhibition as a satellite event for the IMPACT7 international printmaking conference being hosted at Monash University, initially imagining that non-printmakers might team up with printmakers to engage in collaborative projects. Once Ropponen took on the mantle of curator, however, the emphasis shifted to enable as many of the studio artists to participate as possible. Ropponen explains:

...the main focus was for everyone to contribute, which meant presenting work in whichever medium they felt best represented

what they do. This was curation-lite as I was calling it at the time.... [I] kept the dialogue alive with all participants so that they were generally aware of what other art works would be around them and what the space and lighting limitations and possibilities would be.⁹¹

The final *Co-opting Practice* exhibition included prints, paintings and sculpture, as well as site specific and interactive installations and videos, located throughout the studio's common areas. Video artist Briele Hanson, for example, created a collaborative piece, *Practice Portrait*, especially for the event. The work features a significant proportion of Artery studio artists filmed in close-up, giving a one-word response to the deceptively simple question, 'What does it mean to you to be an artist?'⁹² The artists were not identified except in the final credits, nor were any clues provided as to their practice, thereby ensuring a level playing field. As such, Hanson's video provides a valuable time capsule marking the Artery community at the time and offers a surprisingly poignant insight into what drives artists to persist with such a fraught vocation.

Through regular discussions and negotiations, Ropponen and the artists were able to reach consensuses and make the most of the unconventional spaces or, indeed, make a feature of them in the work; hanging and installation decisions were determined by the artwork's fit to the site, rather than the artist's profile. For example, Carolyn Eskdale's untitled installation (still in situ) features plasticine pressed into a timber moulding articulating a rear corridor corner. Two-dimensional and low relief works were allocated the narrow corridors, while the loading bay—the only area large enough to accommodate seating—and adjacent stairwell were transformed into a video gallery. Visitors to the exhibition were provided with a map in order to negotiate the artworks, supplemented by individual wall labels for ease of identification, a solution that, once again, was born of group negotiation.

While financial constraints often result in ARIs beginning their life in difficult spaces that no-one else wants, these very challenges engender resourcefulness, fostering the ability to see new opportunities and contexts for presenting and thinking about artwork. To an extent, the ability to negotiate a final floor plan of artwork to everyone's satisfaction is the legacy of previous ARI experience with unconventional gallery spaces, whether it be the derelict hospital wards of PANCH, the 'grimy and still...brightly striped walls' of Downtown Art Space, or the nondescript backyards and lounge rooms of the wBST.

An accurate forecast for gale force winds and torrential rain on the *Co-opting Practice* artist party night put this resourcefulness to the test in a very immediate way. Scheduled laneway activities, including confetti canon

(Mitchell), dance floor (Neale, Sinclair, Mitchell), DJs (Hester, Sofo, Nick tsch), giant heart piñata (Yuho Imura) had to be moved under cover into the workshop, seeing the industrial panel-saw be converted into an impromptu bar. The indoor venue proved such a success that future studio parties followed suit. Ropponen elaborates:

After a successful use of the central workshop in our three-warehouse complex at a previous party we were considering replicating that [for the *101 Housewarming* party]. Then, I made the absurd suggestion that we have the dance floor in one of the corridors. This was taken up as a great suggestion and was set up by Scott [Mitchell] and Andrew [Sinclair] with a ridiculous amount of stage lighting, a smoke machine and DJ station. It was the most stupid dance floor I've ever danced on.

The ARI legacy and Artery

Miller sees her involvement in the Artery parties as emanating from the same need 'to become part of something bigger than the size of your studio'⁹³ that also attracted her to become a member of the co-operative as well as other ARIs. Her comment recognises that Artery's true value extends beyond its collection of individual studios and that art, and artists, require a broader social context in order to flourish. Indeed, 'community' was the overwhelmingly dominant response I received from interviewed artists as to why they had taken up roles in ARIs. The isolation of her two-person studio prompted Khamara to seek out West Space while, for newly arrived from Adelaide Miller, Bus provided a foothold in the Melbourne art world. Seventh offered Ropponen a chance to reconnect with Melbourne's contemporary art scene following two-years abroad in his native Sweden and Upstairs at the Napier served a similar function for Phillips following the birth of her son. Ropponen's light-handed, collaborative approach reflects his experience of Seventh gallery in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy, where he served on the board between 2009 and 2011. Seventh has developed a reputation for showcasing emerging artists' first solo exhibitions; the selection committee seeks critically engaged installations for its main gallery, while a second, smaller space is reserved for video works.

Ropponen was also a participant in *Cashmere If You Can* (C.I.U.C.), a collaborative project conceived of by Jamie Boys in 2007, spanning seven years, seven artists and seven venues, all of them artist run spaces, and one of which was almost Artery. The C.I.U.C. project is well documented on a

dedicated blog that includes the following introduction:

With each passing year the C.I.U.C. group acquires a new artist, so, that by the 7th year, 7 artists have joined and continued with the project until the final show. Each year the newest artist of the group is performatively initiated on the opening night of the exhibition via the Cashmerie Sacred Initiation (C.S.I.). The central theme of this project critically and sometimes humorously deals with the acquisition of raised status through competition and consumerism.⁹⁴

The self-consciously absurd initiation ritual required a measure of trust not only of the fellow members of C.I.U.C., but also of the audience, largely made up of the artists' friends. The project also required a long-term commitment from each of its participating artists, particularly those entering at the early stage, if it were to fulfil Boy's vision. In the same way that Artery selects its members based on their capacity to be a good co-op 'citizen',⁹⁵ selection for C.I.U.C. necessitated long-term commitment to the C.I.U.C. community, entailing the ongoing production of new work and repeated subjection to ridiculous initiation performances requiring new exhibition proposals and venues over several years. Boys, and each subsequent artist who joined the project, also had to be open to their vision for C.I.U.C. being altered with each new arrival, in an ongoing process of consultation and negotiation, much as each new member of Artery brings their own voice, perspective or emphasis to the co-operative.

Ropponen, who studied his Visual Arts Diploma with Boys at RMIT, was the second artist to join the project and describes the curatorial process as follows:

It became a tradition for the previous year's new participant to put forward names [for the next artist]. Everything was discussed in a loose-goosey generally wishy-washy manner that brought to the surface some tensions but it was great to feel like each artist could contribute reasonably freely and was endowed with...power to choose new artists to the project and become instrumental in the initiatory performance ... Jamie had a certain vision for the project that, in retrospect, I can see I tried to alter from the word go. I was working under an alter ego, Federico Joni⁹⁶,...and was more interested in things like alien channelling and making work out of budgie shit than exploring themes of inherited extreme wealth and consumerism that interested Jamie so much. Each artist found a way to explore the themes in their own way.

Given the nature of the *C.I.U.C.* project, it is perhaps unsurprising that Ropponen invited fellow Artery studio artist and former co-op chair, Kristen Phillips, to join *C.I.U.C.* as the third member in 2009. Phillips, whose earlier video works *Art Drive* and *Picasso*⁹⁷ (with Nat Starr-Thomas) included performative elements, was keen to explore this aspect of her practice further, and was grateful for the opportunity to kick start a career which had been put on hold following the birth of her son.

Phillips' community spirit was also evident in her energetic promotion of Upstairs at the Napier soon after the ARI was established in vacant spaces above a popular Fitzroy pub. Recognising the ARI's potential to attract a new, steady audience to its spaces, Phillips was proactive in developing Upstairs at the Napier's website and signage, securing a grant from the City of Yarra, soliciting donations for their annual Christmas Card show and curating and installing exhibitions.

The latter included the collaborative *Artery Co-operative Fundraiser* in 2010, created in response to an unexpected demand from Darebin Council that Artery conduct an environmental site assessment, likely to cost the co-op around \$20,000 and threatening its existence in Northcote.⁹⁸ (The euphoria of *Scott's 42nd* was undeniably heightened by Artery's VCAT win over Darebin Council, with the confetti for Mitchell's canon coming from the shredded Darebin council documents.) Co-operative members and studio artists alike donated work while Jackman, Miller and Kathy Temin curated the hang, Neale and Mitchell oversaw the installation and Phillips generated the promotional material. The exhibition also provided an extra, unscheduled, opportunity to demonstrate the co-operative's ability to rally together in the face of adversity, when extreme rains caused the roof to leak and threatened damage to the works. (All works were saved.) The *Artery Co-operative Fundraiser* also served as a unifying showcase of the diverse talents in the studios, planting the seed for the subsequent Helen Street exhibitions.

Hester's enthusiasm for ARIs and collaborative working strategies stems from her early encounters with the artists making up the Grey Area Art Space, operating out of Melbourne's Port Phillip Arcade in the late 1990s. Hester explains, 'I really enjoyed the community and the discourse that emerged from their regular film nights and relaxed artist talks. There was something relaxed but serious about this group of people.'⁹⁹ An unconventional exhibition in 1995 on the rooftop of RMIT Building 2, when the future Grey Area artists were still Honours painting students, made a particular impression on fledgling artist Hester:

[Leslie Eastman, Michael Graeve, Georgina Konstandakopoulos, Laresa Kosloff and Emma Woolley] were making really engaging, site-responsive and immersive installations, architectural interventions and abstract films. ... What was inspiring about this exhibition to me was the DIY organization, the open and gritty feel of the work, the site-responsiveness, the project-orientation of it ([privileged] above pristine objects), the embodiment and the social engagement... which I really responded to and which, in reflection has contributed to my own aesthetic and way of working.¹⁰⁰

As the Grey Area example demonstrates, ARIs also provide a 'safe house' for new graduates facing the 'wilderness after art school'¹⁰¹, assisting in validating a vocation that remains precarious at the best of times through providing a supportive environment and generating opportunities. When talking about Downtown Art Space, Miller openly confesses:

Of course there were other benefits. I think the art space elevated our own profiles within the community and allowed us to be taken more seriously. And friendships and artistic identities would grow. I think this is why people are continually attracted to volunteering at ARIs.¹⁰²

Miller continues:

The inaugural show for Downtown Art Space featured us, the directors! ... This might sound bad, but I suspect that many art spaces begin this way—first and foremost as places that provide a space for those who've developed them to show in. Bear in mind too that, probably like many ARI organisers, we hadn't had too many opportunities to show our work prior to this venture.¹⁰³

Millers observations recognise that the cliché of the lone artist in the garret veers closer to myth than reality, and that talent alone is rarely enough to ensure an artist's survival. Early ventures into curating may simply be a case of showing with friends, however networks develop from friends and communities; practices develop through continual risk taking and public exposure, prospects that are less daunting in a stable network of peers.

Ropponen makes a similar observation:

I've really come to appreciate how supportive the art scene can be at the same time as being a place where critique is fostered, I've become less concerned with what can look like elitism in the Australian contemporary art scene and more happy to get involved

with others.¹⁰⁴

A number of Artery artists have found themselves curated into shows as a direct result of their membership of an ARI: Mitchell has participated in West Space exhibitions and events on multiple occasions, while the participating artists in the wBST are described as having been 'drawn from an intergenerational group of peers and associates interested in self-generating possibilities for making their practice public.'¹⁰⁵ Phillips held solo shows at Upstairs at the Napier during her time with the gallery, while Ropponen identifies two interstate exhibitions showcasing work by board members, one at Feltspace in Adelaide (2009) and the other at Boxcopy in Brisbane (2010), as the highlights of his time at Seventh. Ropponen also lists 'influential arts administration, curation roles and community arts development work'¹⁰⁶ among the careers of former Seventh board members, and describes the following benefits to his own art career:

I can see how...high engagement with so many people boosted my interpersonal skills and sharpened my critical art eye. I can see how it has helped me in my subsequent teaching work at RMIT University and Monash University's art schools through fostering more straightforward yet, supportive communication, and by a deeper appreciation of deadlines. By reviewing so many proposals I have greater clarity on what is attractive and annoying when it comes to proposal reading, this has helped me secure grants and shows.¹⁰⁷

During time at Seventh, Ropponen also co-curated the *These are your instructions* exhibition that included Artery and West Space members Mitchell and Charlie Sofo. Artists were invited to create a set of instructions for gallery visitors, suggesting ways in which artworks might be created, performed, extended or completed, while nevertheless leaving much of the outcome up to chance, a natural fit for Mitchell and Sofo.¹⁰⁸ Through creating a showcase for Mitchell and Sofo, Ropponen was able to develop his own curatorial skills, and raise his profile as a critically engaged curator.

It is worth making an aside to Sofo's *B.E.D.* project, in which the artist put out a call for volunteers prepared to let him sleep in their bed for a night, with them in it. Sofo carefully stipulated that his project was not about sexual encounters, but rather about breaking down boundaries and enabling new levels of intimacy, a theme that permeates the artist's quietly introspective practice.¹⁰⁹ Sofo notes on his blog: 'There are certain friendships, very solid and intimate friendships that can only come about through seeing a person everyday of the week,'¹¹⁰ reflecting the level of social bonding that occurs

at Artery. The daily kitchen table discussions, the regular contact and engagement with fellow artists and the knowledge that one is in a secure, long-term environment allows the breaking down of boundaries and the public sharing of private creative pursuits as evidenced by the Artery parties. It is perhaps unsurprising that Sofo is a proactive member of the Artery co-operative, as well as a highly engaged member of its studio community.

In a fraught financial climate with fewer opportunities than there are artists, starting or joining an ARI gives artists the chance to gain agency over their own futures, through shaping the broader, albeit local, art world to fit their own practice. In collectively taking responsibility for their own opportunities, these ARIs, including Artery, also engender a sense of duty or obligation to contribute proactively to the promotion and preservation of other emerging artists and art practices. Miller is open about Downtown Art Space serving her own interests, but is also careful to point out:

Of course, ARIs do have to be careful not to become too cliquey and to stretch outside their own network of friends and acquaintances, and we were anxious to extend our hand to the Adelaide art world more broadly.¹¹¹

This sense of responsibility resurfaces in Miller's reason for joining the Artery co-operative:

I wanted to become a member because I was spending so much time there and wanted to have a say in how things were run. I also felt like I should be making myself more useful.¹¹²

Khamara echoes Miller's reasons for joining the co-operative:

I was aware that others were working hard to keep the studios running and I wanted to contribute, pull my weight, but also to be able to have a say in shaping Artery's direction. The idea that we were also setting something up that would be a long-term stable studio space was also a significant factor in choosing to join. I liked the fact that it was us running the ship, that we are in control of what and how things get done here.¹¹³

Miller's strong involvement with ARIs and her experience of the autonomy they afforded also influenced her decision to show with Neon Parc, set up in 2006 by Tristian Koenig and Geoff Newton, both of whom had extensive previous experience running ARIs. Miller explains:

Even though they were going into Neon Parc without much financial backing, [Koenig and Newton's] vision for the gallery

seemed to be more aligned with the cultural attitudes of the ARI scene rather than the more conservative stuff you'd usually associate with many commercial spaces. I liked that about them and I liked their DIY attitude. I guess I'd grown accustomed to the idea that creative independence comes when you do things yourself on your own terms.¹¹⁴

A similar ethos is reflected in Hester's decision to show with Sarah Scout, an unconventional commercial gallery that shares the spirit of engagement, equity and support that Hester actively seeks in her practice. Hester explains:

'I feel that my practice as a whole is supported, and that I am supported as a human being, above and beyond my ability to produce marketable goods. I feel that the approach of Sarah Scout aligns with the general ethos of support and discourse that emerges from more artist-run initiatives.'¹¹⁵

Returning to the heart of Artery

While Artery's extended parties and cultural events have become imbedded in the co-op's mythology and reinforce its inclusive, egalitarian ethos, Khamara reminds us that Artery's key legacy should be the provision of a secure, supportive, long-term space in which artists can get on with the business of making art:

I guess if anything experience with these two organisations [West Space and CARNI] have taught me to be very clear about what our 'core business' is. Exhibitions and events are a lot of work to put together, taking away valuable time from actually being in the studio making work.¹¹⁶

While the Artery parties may have offered opportunities for artists to showcase alternative creative outlets, ongoing access to quality equipment, critical dialogue, generously shared expertise and a stable, supportive community have had a far greater impact on studio artists and their practices. Khamara acknowledges that she has become more ambitious in terms of scale and complexity as a result of access to facilities and expertise, while Ropponen has been able to tap into a new community of artists for his curatorial and collaborative projects. Although not a dedicated exhibition space, the Artery studios have nevertheless served as a creative incubator, enabling artists to engage with new mediums, new communities and new, collaborative approaches to creating and displaying their work.

Hester's description of her experience with CLUBSproject could apply equally to Artery:

I see retrospectively that we were motivated by what [Berlin-based art critic] Jan Verwoert discusses as an 'ethics of care' in which participating in something is determined according to how much you care about the ideas, forms, people and relations, over and above the need to perform. My memory of working with CLUBS is of working through a process of love. Not love in a blinded and deluded sense, but love that engages with the totality or complexity of a situation that is replete with agony, frustration, unresolvable antagonism, joy, new experience, growing friendship and heightened consciousness. Bell Hooks discusses this version of love as a 'combination of care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect and trust.'

The strong friendship that has developed between new Artery member Jessi Wong and Helen Kocis Edwards, with whom she shares her studio, spawned two collaborative projects in 2013, exhibited at Fracture Gallery and No Vacancy Project Space in the Atrium, Federation Square. Both projects drew on the Artery community and beyond for contributions. For the *1000 Tears* project, Kocis Edwards and Wong distributed postcards (designed collaboratively by Wong and Kocis Edwards and printed by AvantCard Freecard Media Postcards) on which one was asked to write a regret and post it back to the Artery studios, or contribute a regret via Facebook or SMS. Kocis Edwards and Wong distributed the postcards as widely as possible, in the hope that the public collective unburdening of regrets might engender a cathartic recognition of shared humanity amongst its contributors and visitors alike.¹¹⁷ The postcards were then cut into teardrops following Kocis Edwards' and Wong's design, and installed in conjunction with a commissioned animation by Rebecca Young. The crowdsourcing was supplemented by crowd funding in the form of a Pozible campaign, necessary to cover installation costs.¹¹⁸

A second project, *Dust*, was initiated by Kocis Edwards and Ingrid Wilson, and consisted of a printmaking exchange portfolio that included Artery artists Alexis Beckett, Jackman, Andrej Kocis, Kocis Edwards, Sinclair, Anna Topalidou and Wong, accompanied by video documentation by Wilson of the artists in their studios. Once again, the project both depended upon and engendered community through the exchange of prints and the sharing of emotional, conceptual and technical responses to the project via the video interviews.¹¹⁹

The curation of Artery events remains very much a communal endeavour,

initiated through informal discussions around the kitchen table and continually negotiated through subsequent consultations, communications and escalations of fancy. The latter, in particular, is encouraged by stable, long-term membership of a community in which partnerships and friendships develop organically, whereby individuals gain the confidence to reveal and share aspects of themselves that are usually hidden from the public art arena. It also enables lateral approaches to utilising spaces, from corridors being converted into dance-floors and bowling lanes, panel-saws converted into bars, laneways re-imagined as discos and barbeques, rooftops as launching pads for balloons, or loading bays as video galleries. New members to the co-operative are chosen not just for their ability to cover their rent but, even more importantly, for their engagement with, and contribution to, the Artery community.

Ultimately, Artery and the Helen Street studios have always been about more than just a building and its equipment. With each new generation of studio artists and co-operative members comes knowledge and experience from a new range of ARIs, stretching from Montsalvat to Downtown Art Space CLUBSproject Inc. to Seventh to West Space, invigorating the kitchen table discussions and contributing a critical context to subsequent Artery events that belies their informality and spontaneity. The renegotiation of the Artery community is itself a form of curation, ensuring that each new generation of studio artists fits in with, and contributes to, the co-operative's overarching ethos of artists empowering artists, giving it the greatest chance of surviving into the future.

Jazmina Cininas would like to thank all the Artery artists who have contributed to such a vibrant studio and artist community, and especially Bianca Hester, Hilary Jackman, Justine Khamara, Viv Miller, Scott Mitchell, Jeph Neale, Kristen Phillips, Jonas Ropponen and Andrew Sinclair for answering many questions, generously contributing their time, experience, insights and good will to this chapter.

63 This may be a legacy of TCB's late entry to cyberspace. When Stanhope wrote her chapter for *Making Space* in 2007, she remarked that TCB did not have a website at all. Their current site was created in 2012.

64 tcbart.org.au, accessed 26 November 2014.

65 This is due to the CLUBSproject site being hacked, although plans remain to re-archive and publish material. Extant secondary sources include Spiros Panigirakis' blog, 'Correspondence, 'CLUBSproject feedback session', 2 January 2006, <http://without-correspondence.blogspot.com.au/2006/01/clubsproject-feedback-session.html>. See also Louise Menzies, 'Work by Christopher L.G. Hill, James Deutsher & guests', *Enjoy Public Art Gallery, 2006 catalogue*, <http://www.enjoy.org.nz/files/CLUBS.pdf>

66 *Op. cit.*, Stanhope, footnote 3. p. 10.

67 'About: Mission', Artery Co-operative, http://www.acoop.com.au/?page_id=2, accessed 6 January 2014.

68 A satellite event for the Print Council of Australia's Month of Print, aligned with the IMPACT7 international printmaking conference at Monash University.

69 This included participation in regular, clothing-optional (so long as safety boots were worn) working bees. The co-operative still exists. See Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative website, <http://www.roundthebend.org.au/>

70 I occasionally hear Jackman practicing in her studio, opposite mine.

71 *Op. cit.*, 'About', Artery Co-Operative.

72 One of the few online references to the exhibition can be found here: <http://pah2.golding.id.au/2003/10/10/fringe-festival-icu-at-panch/>.

The Teratology Project, a theatrical work by the Institute of Complex Entertainment (ICE) also took place at PANCH, albeit without the involvement of the Artery artists. Throughout the performance, a doctor with nurse entourage guided the audience through various dystopian medical futures in genetic engineering, Anni Davey, *A Monstrous Science*, *RealTime*, issue #53, Feb-Mar 2003, p. 36, accessed online at <http://www.realttimearts.net/article/53/6994>

73 An archaic centrifugal device, once a common fixture in steam trains and used to regulate fuel flows.

74 Also, Tigani created a series of graphic illustrations from Photoshopped photographs of new mothers in the ICU maternity ward, from whence

61 Zara Stanhope, 'Unfiled notes on Victorian artist-run initiatives' in *Making Space: Artist run initiatives in Victoria*, edited by Din Heagney, Melbourne: VIA-N, 2007, footnote 3., p. 10.

62 *Ibid.* p. 2.

only 50% of the babies ever made it home. Tagani's images from ICU are viewable here: <http://www.figdesign.com.au/album/icupanch-fringe-festival-exhibition/>

75 Viv Miller, email correspondence with the author, 26 November 2014.

76 'History', West Space website, <http://westspace.org.au/about/history/>, accessed 6 December 2014.

77 'Program: Structural Integrity', West Space website, <http://westspace.org.au/event/structural-integrity/>, accessed 6 December 2014.

78 2009 West Brunswick Sculpture Triennial, <http://www.osw.com.au/wbst/>, accessed 7 December 2014.

79 See 'Hostings: Ocular Lab, 2003–2010', Surplus, <http://www.surplus.com/>

80 Terri Bird, *Making Space*, 2007 p. 43.

81 Hester, 'embodying convergences: caring to commit', unpublished paper for the Curating Public Space panel, Curating Feminism Conference, SCA, University of Sydney, Saturday 25 October 2014.

82 Ibid.

83 Hester, for example, lists 'Projects' rather than 'exhibitions' on her curriculum vitae, with no distinction between solo or collaborative projects, nor gallery-based projects and publications or speaking engagements. Her 2013 project Hoops: sound tests, performances, documents, for example, was dependent upon voluntary participants—largely made up of friends—rolling steel hoops through public spaces such as car parks, community halls. See Bianca Hester: CV, <http://www.biancahester.net/?q=node/360284> and NGV, 'Explore Art & Projects: Bianca Hester', Melbourne Now, <http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/melbournenow/projects/016>, both accessed 21 January 2015.

84 This, and the following two quotes, are taken from 'About: Artery's core values' on op. cit. Artery website. The same text appears in a promotional booklet produced by Artery in 2013.

85 iSOP included detailed repair logs and instructions for DIY iPhone repairs, which are still accessible at Scott Mitchell, iPod Social Outreach Program, <http://www.openobject.org/isop/?p=5>, accessed 20 December 2014.

86 Sung as a duet with my husband, Jonas Lipšys.

87 An informal breakdown of the event and its evolution, with photos by Briele Hansen and timeline, is archived on Sinclair's Website. See 'Scotts 42th [sic] (predicting the future, which is now passed), and 'Artist Funded Event. At Artery Studios' Sinclair Press, http://www.sinclairpress.com.au/?page_id=163 and http://www.sinclairpress.com.au/?page_id=138, accessed 4 December 2014. See also 'Old Man Mitchell's Birthday Gig', Artery Co-operative, <http://www.acoop.com.au/?p=225>, posted 10 January 2011.

88 Op. cit., Miller.

89 Recent studies highlight the importance of laughter in forging and maintaining social bonds. See, for example, Pedro C. Marijuán and Jorge Navarro, 'The Bonds of Laughter: A Multidisciplinary Inquiry into the Information Processes of Human Laughter' (research paper), Bioinformation and Systems Biology Group, Instituto Aragonés de Ciencias de la Salud, Spain, 2010. Accessible online at <http://arxiv.org/pdf/1010.5602.pdf>

90 At the Co-opting Practice artists' party.

91 Jonas Ropponen, email correspondence with the author, 2 December 2014.

92 The most common response, including my own, was 'freedom' although it was evident that a number of the artists struggled to encapsulate their experience in a single word.

93 Op. cit. Miller.

94 'Concept', Cashmere if You Can (blog), <http://cashmereifyoucanseries1-7.blogspot.com.au/>

95 This is explicitly spelt out in the minutes of the co-operative's first formative meeting, before Artery was formally registered, and indeed before it had a name. The first criteria under 'membership restrictions' is 'must have a cooperative nature', followed up by 'no discrimination other than their capacity to work in a cooperative.' Sculptors [sic] Cooperative Meeting (minutes), Carron Tavern, 30 November 2000.

96 While Federico Joni has a nineteenth-century Italian forger as his namesake, Ropponen describes his alter ego as: 'Finding himself somewhat out of sorts and unknown when immigrating to Australia in the early 1990s, Federico Joni, an apparently once quite successful, European conceptual artist of the late 1970's, spends most of his artistic energy ... in a type of alien

channelling technique he calls 'The Joni method'. ...He is now definitely living 'off the grid' somewhere in South Australia.' Jonas Ropponen, 'Alter Ego Projects', http://jonasroponen.com/?page_id=73, accessed 8 December 2014. See also 'Federico Joni: Interview with Gustav Trolldahl, Sydney, April 1, 1999', *Art&Text*, no. 68, 1999, pp. 86–87.

97 Nat Starr Thomas and Kristen Phillips, *Picassol Chorus Line* is viewable here <http://youtu.be/C5jzp1ok4fg>

98 As it was, taking the ruling to VCAT cost the co-operative close to \$15,000. Artery's fight to stay in Northcote was followed by local press. See, for example, Gabrielle Procter, 'Artery blocked by zoning laws', *Melbourne Times Weekly*, 29 September 2010, p. 3; Suzanne Robson, 'Artery may close', *Northcote Leader newspaper*, 29 September 2010 and 'Artery pumped over win', *Northcote Leader newspaper*, 1 December 2010, p. 7. The latter also includes reference to Mitchell's confetti canon.

99 Bianca Hester, email correspondence with the author, 20 December 2014.

100 Ibid.

101 Op. cit., Miller.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 Ropponen offers reflections on a number of his curating projects and decisions on his blog <http://jonasroponen.wordpress.com/>

105 'About', 2009 West Brunswick Sculpture Triennial, <http://www.osw.com.au/wbst/> accessed 27 December 2014.

106 Op. cit., Ropponen, email.

107 Ibid.

108 See 'These are your instructions' (blog post), Jonas Ropponen, <http://jonasroponen.wordpress.com/2010/11/09/these-are-your-instructions-2/>. Sofó's practice often includes creating instructions for himself, which may, or may not, involve collaborations. A 2013 video piece, for example, documents 33 objects that can fit through the hole in my pocket, while the Toilet roll plinth project from 2012 documents seventeen household items formally presented atop toilet-paper rolls, the diameter of the object's base matched perfectly to that of the toilet paper roll. See Charlie Sofó (blog), <http://charliesofoblogspot.com.au/>, accessed 21 January 2015.

109 See Amy Spiers, 'Intimate encounters with the public – Charlie Sofó's B.E.D. and Jason Mailing's *The Vorticist*', *Unmagazine*, Issue 4.2, 2010, pp. 27–31. Viewable online at <http://www.jasonmailing.com/vorticist/pdf/Vorticist-Unmag-Article.pdf>

110 Op.cit., Sofó, blog post 18 January 2012.

111 Op. cit., Miller.

112 Ibid.

113 Justine Khamara, email correspondence with the author, 28 November 2014.

114 Op. cit. Miller.

115 Op.cit. Hester email correspondence

116 Op. cit., Khamara.

117 For an in-depth discussion of 1000 Tears, including a rigorous analysis of the curatorial rationale and comprehensive documentation, see Rebecca Young and Helen Kocis Edwards, *1000 Tears: Crowdsourcing Regrets for an Art Installation*, <http://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/64855/64856>. Young also reflects on broader social ramifications of the project, including issues of privacy and censorship around that were raised through the incorporation of Facebook and a public, all ages exhibition venue.

118 See '1000 Tears – relaunch', *Pozible*, <http://www.pozible.com/project/28703>

119 Wong provides a description of the project on her website/blog. See 'Coming up: Dust', Jessi Wong, posted 29 October 2013, <http://jessiwong.com/coming-up/>