Creativity In-transit: Material Ideals and Spatial Negotiations

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Abstract

“Creativity in-transit” is a series of creative works and exegesis that explore collaborative and processual encounters experienced while in-transit. The creative works—an exhibition and net-artwork—are produced from first-hand fieldwork experiences and interviews with travellers staying in hostelling accommodation. The process of packing a bag is analysed as a situation where travellers negotiate a range of material, spatial, and environmental interactions, attuning travellers to creative and collaborative experiences of movement.

Travel, site-specificity, and diagrammatic processes are used to focus the creative and theoretical investigations into how movements undertaken while transiting draw attention to everyday, processual interactions with an array of human and non-human actors. As travellers re-align and reorient in moments of transition, often attention and actions are shifted beyond individualised subjective intentions, in favour of collaborative and contemplative processes.

Creative processes and theoretical influences merge in a postdisciplinary approach in order to track the mobile and transitory situations. An assortment of perspectives from new materialism, creative arts, tourism, mobilities, Actor-network theory, and geography are used to analyse the creative production and drive further exploration.

The exegesis deploys a materially-oriented methodology to examine the production of creative works and generate insights from the range of theories and recent reconceptualisations of materiality. Beginning with the process of packing a bag, I explore how we move-with materials and show how the packing process exemplifies the distributed and shared agencies of material actors—both human and non-human. Drawing on the stylisation of aircraft safety cards, I investigate how an “aesthetics of transit” can be used to understand movements across a multitude of collective spatial boundaries and representations.
The material and spatial procedures that develop in-transit are then examined within specific sites, Iceland and Nepal. The immersive environments of these two diverse yet similar tourist destinations induce ideals and imaginations of what kinds of experiences travellers expect to have. I argue that the disjunction between mundane, habitual, everyday routines and the immersive environmental situations are conducive to creative and collaborative movements unfolding. I use the term “flexive practices” to describe techniques that travellers use to situate themselves in complex movements and environmental composes.

Moments when travellers become aware of experiences beyond their individual bodies, or when travellers feel themselves re-composing with environmental intensities, or becoming aware of the entanglement of actors in a situation, offer possibilities for creative techniques and flexivities to emerge. The research tracks these moments using a diagrammatic approach in which no one discipline or technique can adequately analyse or describe. These techniques encourage creative and collaborative reflections on both tourism and everyday processes of movement, fostering greater attunement to creative practices that arise through interaction. I propose that this project’s contribution to knowledge is to outline a set of practices that operate within creative art practice and across disciplinary inquiries such as the study and practice of mobilities and tourism as well as provide creative approaches to the everyday spatial practices. In this regard the insights connect practices at different levels of engagement across previously unconnected areas of inquiry and argues for postdisciplinary modes of understanding and production. The works in the final exhibition—hands-on installations and an interactive net-artwork—invite participants to mobilise and experience the creative composures that being in-transit affords.
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Chapter 1: Introduction – The Array of Actors

With the increasing movement of people around the globe, we encounter complex alignments of bodies, materials, spaces, and environments that develop into collective experiences during transit. Over one billion international journeys are undertaken annually (UNWTO 2014). People travel for reasons spanning leisure, work, migration, and refuge. It is the practices required of each traveller and their intersection with a range of social, cultural, and environmental complexities that have captured my attention.

This research project investigates the act of packing a bag as the site through which to examine how we navigate the complex movements in-transit that are comprised of material, spatial, and environmental interactions. By examining these interactions and exploring the creative way in which the boundaries of these interactions can be made to flex, alternative forms of experiences emerge that foster collective movements and actions. Being in-transit heightens and intensifies the material, spatial, and situated aspects of our daily movements and informs the ways practices become creative and our creativity becomes transformative.

Merging practical and theoretical techniques and influences, my research highlights how relations are formed during travel which attune us to creative and collective forms of knowledge and experience. As a result of these attunements, questions arise regarding the boundaries between humans and non-humans and how our experiences reflect the flexibility, dissolution, and reconfiguration of these boundaries, which the process of travelling throws into relief.

Beginning with how travellers pack their bags, my research examines how creative procedures performed in-transit informs site-specific interactions. In turn the creativity found in-transit intersects with theories and practices that bring a new understanding to the elements of creative processes: materiality, spatiality, environmental composure, and flexivity.
There are two aspects to consider when examining the transitions that occur in-transit: the scope of interactions and the global context.

First, the scope of interactions refers to how we navigate and move with an array of non-human and human actors\(^1\) while in-transit. Interactions develop as bodies, materials, spaces, and environments compose through relations. The act of packing a bag in hostelling accommodation is examined as a way to centre this set of interactions, considering them to be emblematic of processual, daily activities during transit. The processes involved in packing a bag highlight the overlapping of everyday and mundane mobilities within larger transitions, such as global tourism.

Second, the global context. The recognition that touristic movements are increasingly globalised sits in contrast to the growing desire for a nomadic (albeit Western) lifestyle of travel. In order to evaluate the potential of experiences in-transit, we need to investigate how we transit-with, move

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\(^1\) I am using the term actor as a broad outline of many different situations, in line with the actor-network theory usage. Latour states that “any thing that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor” (2007: 71, original emphasis). In this manner, a human, a tourist destination, a site, an object, a weather front, etc. can all be termed actors under this broad usage.
within, and attune to—rather than simply consume—the environments in which we are situated. I have focused on two specific destinations: Nepal and Iceland, both of which offer a particular understanding of environmental idealisations and expectations fundamental to touristic encounters.

Combining these two aspects, scope of interactions and global context, increases one’s attunement to the way that we construct relationships as we transit. Experiences in-transit assist in honing our abilities to extract creative and collective modes of knowledge from a variety of situations and interactions.

*The Exegesis structure and content*

This exegesis consists of a series of themes: *materiality, spatiality, environment*, and finally *flexive practices*. The first three themes indicate the main discourses on key issues and ideas addressed in my project and the last signals a way of characterising the shift in my approach to practices that acknowledge the importance of being in-transit and in transition. Each theme corresponds to and is developed within the following chapters:

This introductory chapter outlines the aims of the exegesis and how it compliments the creative works, the reasons or purpose of the project, as well as introducing the process of packing a bag and the areas it brings to focus: travel, site-specificity, and diagrammatic techniques.

Chapter 2 sets up the notion of materiality, where materials hold agency and potential to exceed material forms. Positioning my research within current re-conceptualisations of materiality, I describe the *materially-oriented methodology* that develops through my practice-led research. Drawing on examples from interviews with travellers, I analyse how the packing process often encompasses collective movements as we move-with materials. My net-artwork “bodies+bags” highlights the prospect of movements that are beyond oneself, shifting towards a collective of human and non-human actors.
Chapter 3 begins by theorising spatiality, particularly the way that space (as a concept) and spatial processes (as qualities) merge into complex spatialities. Using mobilities theory, I show how spatialities are practiced and experienced during transit and a globalised aesthetic of transit develops. Transit aesthetics involve visual and communication techniques, which reference the spatialities by which travellers orient themselves and manoeuvre. Discussion of my artworks explore the conflicting perceptions and situations frequently encountered during packing and transit, drawing attention to the conflicts between habitual expectations of space and the actions that are required to carry out the process.

Chapter 4 positions the environment as an actor with which we are in collaboration and moving with in-transit. The expectation placed on environments and perception of environments in tourism scenarios is in contrast with our lived experiences. I propose that certain destinations, such as Nepal and Iceland, increase our attention to the intersection of materiality and spatiality and the relational movements that we undertake as our bodies compose\(^2\) with environmental conditions and produce site-specific experiences. Through an examination of my net-artwork “environment-movement” I discuss how relations are forged with/in immersive landscape environments and also reveal the disconnection of tourist experiences from everyday practices.

Chapter 5 proposes the notion of “flexive practices” to describe a creative approach to practices that are attuned to, acknowledge, and work with the material, spatial, and environmental experiences that emerge during transit. Inflecting the relationality (Manning 2009 & 2013) that occurs during moments of collective movement, and the premise of spatialising processes (Massumi 2011) help to examine how the flexibility of proximities and

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\(^2\) I use the terms “composure”, “composing” or “(re)composures” throughout the exegesis to describe the transitions that merge actors (particularly bodies and environments) into specific configurations of action. If you think of the process of “composing oneself”, it may seem as if you are not affected by the situation, but in fact, you are registering your relationships (and perhaps differences) to the actions occurring. In this vein, “composing” is the processes of assemblage and of consistency (Deleuze & Guattari 2004: 361-366), in which the term “composition … underlines that things have been put together … while retaining their heterogeneity” (Latour 2010: 473-474).
boundaries inform flexive practices during the packing process. I use discussions of site-specific experiences to analyse my series of “Site-specific diagrams” that develop a poetics and attunement to the subtleties of our actions. I demonstrate how practices of travellers breach human and non-human boundaries as relations form through interactions with the site and touristic processes.

Chapter 6, the concluding chapter, summarises and highlights insights drawn from the creative artworks in the final exhibition and the accompanying net-artwork “environment movement”. I discuss how the creative works correlate the practical-theoretical intersections, the key ideas, and approaches of the research project into a series of creative encounters for the viewer-participant. The conclusion demonstrates practices and theories that push past disciplinary confines as a way to overcome human and non-human divisions. The implications and contributions of the research project are outlined as shifts in everyday transitions, creative practices, and tourism. This practice-led research project gives attention to the daily movements, networks of relations and mobilities, as well as the larger, more immersive transit experiences. The creative artworks and this accompanying exegesis suggest further applications of a flexive approach to interactions, whether in the home, the sphere of creativity or tourism scenarios and destinations.

The aims of the exegesis

This exegesis combines practical and theoretical approaches that span many disciplines, which compliment and inform my creative works. The theoretical frameworks for this project bring together a range of contemporary perspectives that address movement, relationality, networks of actors, discourses on collectivity, and ways of understanding creative practices. Propositions of nomadic theory in combination with studies of spatiality, geography, and other areas of inquiry that focus on nomadic, transitional processes, are used to indicate the complexity of our movements and actions during transit. The aim of the exegesis is to provide a context for my research investigations and be an extension of my practice-led research. The writing
chronicles the discourses and creative works that inspired my research and with which I have engaged to develop the project over the last three years. A practice-led approach does not differentiate the value of an art exhibition, interviews with travellers, fieldwork on site, and key theories as sources for the research project. Each of these resources provides a vantage on the complex action and interactions, reflections, creative outcomes, and everyday practices that emerge and inflect the possible modes of engagement and the development of the project.

The processes deployed and discussed in the exegesis

While the theoretical investigations begin with perspectives from new materialism and concepts of relationality and process from philosophy, the knowing-by-doing processes focus on how the packing process interconnects with broader concerns of how we experience materials. This encompasses processes, documentation procedures, and modes of engagement influenced by tourism, mobilities, and geography, which are merged with approaches from Actor-Network Theory, Science and Technologies Studies, the social sciences and, of course, creative arts practice, forming a basis for a materially-oriented methodology (discussed in chapter 2) that ultimately leads to the development of a flexive practice. Underlying the myriad of theories is the practical concerns of tourism that often simultaneously diverge yet are in accordance to the approach and execution of examinations of transit\(^3\) in creative art practices. To ensure a constant relationship between the creative arts, my own artworks, and feedback, throughout the theoretical discussions I draw in a range of creative artists and artworks that are emblematic of aspects of materiality, spatiality, and environment. The artworks that I discuss are oriented to help move the ideas from the theoretical into practical examples of movement and relationality.

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\(^3\) Throughout my inquiry I use the term “transit” as I want to foreground that the project is not only concerned with just travelling for tourist purposes. The term transit also implies that there are a myriad of delicate movements and transitions that are undertaken both within travel, transportation methods, and importantly—the changes and transformations that occur in everyday processes.
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To reiterate, this project works across a number of levels, operating as a postdisciplinary research project. If we are to take this approach seriously, then my research is connected to creative arts practices, the way movement informs mobilities studies, geography, and tourism. Not being confined to the assumption and methodologies of a single discipline allows the research to move from one register to another, and from one discipline to another. Collectively, the range of understandings, engagements and techniques gathered within this project foster insights into the research and practice of mobilities, creativity, tourism and everyday experiences of movement. Each disciplinary inquiry offers valuable ways of acquiring and applying knowledge specific to that research culture. A postdisciplinary approach focuses on common concerns with the understanding that no single discipline can adequately address the issues and brings together a more comprehensive and realistic research endeavour.

The reasons or purpose of the project

Drawing from these complex and rich influences, and combing them into practical and affective modalities of my practice-led research, results in the entanglement of many practices that move beyond disciplinary boundaries and is unregulated by a single perspective of set of research values. Creative arts practices are increasingly valuable to how we understand encounters, engagements, conflicts, and commons concerns pervasive in everyday life. Practice-led research can be deployed in any situation and therefore is able to immediately highlight the complexities at work as well as the necessity of more that one practice, knowledge base and approach. By selecting and utilising a range of approaches, I have teased out modes of engagement to address a multiplicity of transitions in a postdisciplinary and affective field of common activity and shared problems.

In the following section I sketch out a typical scenario of packing a bag in a hostel dormitory room, which serves to set the scene of the complexity of interactions and provides a touchstone for my exploration of relationships and movements. This involves outlining key aspects that have informed my
research processes and that focus my interests: travel, site-specificity, and diagrammatic techniques. I use the discussion on packing to frame the themes that underpin this project—materiality, spatiality, and environment—to show how these develop into flexive practices that emerge through an intersection of practice, theory, and collective experiences during transit.

**Focusing on Packing a Bag: Travel, Site-specificity, and Diagrammatic Techniques**

The original inspiration for this research stemmed from an experience I had while on a trip to Iceland. It was during the height of the Eyjafjallajökull eruption, which halted global aviation in 2010. My friend and I went on a tour to the site of the erupting volcano at dusk. Rumbling sounds below the ground, the landscape covered in ash and streams of glacial meltwater, it was the epitome of an immersive environmental experience. Covered in ash when we returned to the hostel, I dumped my clothes and boots from the tour on top of my bag. The next morning, all around my bag was ash. Weeks later we were still finding unexpected residue and pockets of ash in our clothes, and a fine dust would spill out of our bags while we were packing. It was an experience that infused the everyday, mundane packing process with the surreal, eruptive, earthly, touristic experience.

In this instance, my friend and I, our bags, the volcano, became bound together through interaction. The emphasis on materials, the spatial distribution of the ash, our bodies, bags, the ongoing process of transit, and perhaps most importantly, the resistance of the non-human actors involved—the ash residue, and its relationship to the global travel event— all contributed to the complexity of the packing process and the relational movements involved. This experience highlights a moment in tourism where habitual tendencies and expectations are necessarily overturned in favour of haptic interactions, which prompt creative re-orientations.

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4 See Birtchnell & Büscher’s introduction article to the special edition of *Mobilities* journal focused on the Eyjafjallajökull eruption (2011).
Image 2: A hostel dormitory in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Image 3: A hostel dormitory in Reykjavik, Iceland.
I chose to focus my research through the travel process (being in-transit), dormitory-style hostel spaces (sites within specific sites) as they present a hive of activity that offers a certain kind of atmosphere in which collaborative and social interactions often emerge (Murphie 2001; Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro 2013). Numerous people are in close proximity to each other, sleeping in bunk beds and sharing bathroom facilities. Bunk beds are strewn with towels, hand-washed clothes, and assorted personal items. Almost always you will find someone frantically sorting through their bag, as their belongings, including their underpants, are upturned from the bag and out on display for all the dormitory occupants to see. Fleeting, often heightened moments of intense interactions during packing become the everyday experience for people who are travelling.

Packing a bag reveals an intersection of a number of concerns—movement, relationality, and creativity—through a specific example of material, spatial, and environmental conditions that are engaged during travel. Diagrams and diagrammatic techniques are the most conducive to perceiving, configuring,
analysing, and responding to these varied and complex relationships across different registers of experience.

From this hothouse of intense and heightened activity, an experience emerges that begins to overcome human–non-human boundaries of interaction. Packing reveals interactions that deviate from habitual expectations of material proximities and spatial boundaries. By “packing” I am not referring to filling an empty bag, I am alluding to the small and often over-looked or under-considered moments when we directly engage with materials that we have brought with us and have around us. Packing, as an ongoing daily interaction, reveals how we organise ourselves by sifting through objects, discarding or consuming items. Of course, this process is embedded in a series of larger processes that feed into and are incorporated by the process of packing.

The iconic *Lonely Planet* guides provide a mantra for the process; “Packing is most beautiful when you don’t think about it and most miserable when it enslaves you” (Lonely Planet 2012). Packing is a haphazard process that never seems to go according to plan. One traveller that I interviewed explained:

I just, always put my ... [laughing] sleeping bag in the bottom, and then just, on top, everything [laughs]. I try to, try to have a system, but, it’s not always working. [laughs] ... It’s a problem with the sleeping bag, it’s in the bottom and then you take it out, you can open in the bottom [of the bag], but then everything falls down and then... [laughs] yeah you sort of have to unpack.

Moving one item means moving all contents of the bag, and often, the bag itself too. Movements are beyond the usual expected boundaries of singular objects—materials merge and become fluid as they interact with each other and with the body that is packing. Movements are never straightforward. This complex situation is both a common experience and a unique undertaking that provides the perfect mix of constraint and complexity to track, analyse, and respond to material and spatial practices.

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5 See Appendix: Data, for details of the interview process.
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Image 5: A traveller sitting on the backpack while trying to close the zip.

Image 6: A traveller packing on the roof of the hostel in Kathmandu, Nepal. Often ample room is required to spread out items during packing.

The actions occurring during packing are frequently communal and collaborative, reflecting the kinds of engagements with materials, spaces, and environments that I consider to be “creative”. This is because here engagements involve bodies, materials, spaces, and environments interacting and combining in process, which is inherent to creative arts practice.

I have developed the term “flexive practices” (see chapter 5) to describe the techniques, which I believe to be creative because they develop in the packing process and draw upon the potential of our interactions with an array of materials, spaces, environments, and bodies. The word flexive, although obsolete (“† flexive, adj.” 2014; see chapter 5), signals the capability and
potential for our spatial and material proximities and thresholds to shift, as we are immersed within and composing with the environment we are with/in, thus affecting and altering our processes. Flexive practices are inherently creative because they use materials processes and conceptual processes to reorient ourselves in both familiar, everyday processes and the unfamiliar, or constantly evolving, relations of movements that we find ourselves in during transit.

Packing a bag allows me to “unpack” the aspects of travel, site-specificity, and diagrammatic techniques that inform and are entangled within the project themes: materiality, spatiality, environment, and flexive practices. I will discuss these aspects or foci that have helped me to organise my perceptions and observations throughout the fieldwork and creative production in order to generate ideas and connections that formed the basis of creative approaches to the project.

Travel

The study of travel, particularly in the last decade, has emphasised the knowledges that are generated by tourism and mobilities.⁶ Within these discourses, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of the interrelations that increasing mobilities bring to a global society (Urry 2003 & 2012; Urry & Larsen 2011). Often the interactions that we have in-transit become “a mode of knowing” (Carter 1987: 25), where the processes involved engage in multi-sensual experiences that respond to interactions, processes, and aesthetic resonances of new surroundings (Birkeland 1999; Crang 1999; Crouch 2004; Lean 2012: 166; Sverrisdóttir 2011: 82). Mobilities studies will be discussed in the following two chapters with an in-depth discussion of the way this area of inquiry informs the understanding of spatial relationships and spatiality (the experience of space).

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⁶ The term mobilities is used to indicate the many complexities and interrelations of our movements as we are mobilised in various ways (Urry 2011). See chapter 3 for a discussion on this area of study.
During packing, and travel in general, decisions are not necessarily based on conscious knowledge, or rehearsed procedures. Rather, they are often indicative of how travel initiates a series of situated, experiential, and sensory engagements from which we observe and extract creative tendencies and apply the innovations they foster to daily life and ongoing creative activity.

Throughout the exegesis, I use the term “traveller” rather than “tourist”, because I want to indicate that people are in-transit for a range of reasons, not necessarily just for leisure, which the term “tourist” implies. Travellers are just one of many mobile subjects (Braidotti 2012; Lury 1997; Urry & Larsen 2011) and I have limited my research to focus on people staying in hostelling accommodation. Therefore, it is important to recognise the privilege and ability possessed by travellers. Although many people do not have the luxury or ability to undertake international travel, the processes and experiences that I draw from in this research are applicable and relevant to daily mobilities. We are all always mobile, fluid, and transitory, whether as a tourist or on our daily commute.

I presume most of the travellers I encounter, including myself, have the "right" passport, able bodies, and enough wealth to provide access to safe transit. However, it is important to note that hostelling also provides low-budget accommodation and people stay in hostels for a range of reasons. I have resided in hostels when I had no fixed address or was unable to find suitable rental accommodation as a student. I have stayed in hostels also for leisure as a tourist and now also for research. The point is that many people are travelling and nomadic in their approach to location, for a range of different reasons and motivations. Travellers are positioned to notice the

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7 The concept of a “tourist has become a metaphor for shallowness, contamination, and inauthenticity” (Week 2012: 186), whereas travellers are said to seek a “fuller tourism experience” (Currie, Campbell-Trant & Seaton 2011: 47). However, my choice to use the term traveller does not align with the sub-cultural category that the term often implies. I use it to describe people who are in-transit for a range of reasons.

8 Rosi Braidotti positions tourists as one of the many forms of “nomadic subjects” (2012: 14). Her nomadic theory positions us in a constant state of becoming that is transversal and dissolves human and non-human boundaries, pushing away from anthropocentrism, giving rise to an array of possible interactions.
multiplicities of transitions, the *movements-within-movements*, and collective and relational formations through interaction.

*Site-specificity*

My research is narrowed down to two specific destinations: Nepal and Iceland. When I began the project, I had an idea that there was a disjunction between immersive environmental experiences—for example, gazing at an erupting volcano—and the more subtle, daily negotiations that we had such as packing a bag, washing clothes in the bathroom sink, sleeping in a dormitory, or walking to the convenience store. Certain destinations may intensify or evoke different kinds of experiential, situated attunements to our processes of transit. I wondered if a destination with unique environmental features, such as tumultuous weather patterns, iconic sites of geological forms, would increase our attention to, and perception of, material or spatial processes in daily activities, after experiencing immersive, environmental qualities. The sites within sites would compound this: the bag, the airplane, the hostel, the roadside café, etc. The conditions that are seemingly extraneous, which are encountered when arriving at a destination, require the consideration of an entirely new set of factors. To examine this, I use the notion of “site” to collect and specify the interactions and relations occurring between bodies, materials, and spaces in specific environmental compositions.

There are many contrasting and overlapping uses of the terms “site”, “destination”, “place”, or “environment” especially within tourism research. These terms are frequently clouded by issues of scale, function, and authenticity. My use of the term site is informed through creative arts practice and theory. A site forms through the relationships between bodies, materials, spaces, and environments. For the purposes of this project the notion of site assists me in specifying the interactions that are particular to that configuration of bodies, materials, and spatial effects coming together.

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9 Theirry de Duve’s definition of “site” as “the harmony on place, space and scale” (1993: 25) is discussed in chapter 4.
Site becomes the marker of an intensified set of interactions and draws attention to the many systems of activity and experiences that congeal as a site. By focusing on the fluid and relational formation of experience, innovative techniques in the everyday become sites of creative and theoretical potential.

Destinations such as Nepal and Iceland encompass many sites that excite a socio-cultural and geographical imaginary. They are sites where travellers are thrown into situations with complex material, spatial, and environmental influences. In the imaginations of many travellers, Nepal is the gateway to the Himalaya, often described as verging on the *top of the world*. Similarly, Iceland is often described as being on the *edge of the world*, since it touches the Arctic Circle, and is marketed by its spectacular natural geography. The overlap of these imaginaries is strategically exploited by marketing
campaigns that impose on both destinations ideas of uniqueness and experiential forms of tourism.\textsuperscript{10}

Image 8: The Annapurna Himalayan range, visible from above the city of Pokhara, Nepal.

Image 9: Snæfellsjökull, the iconic “entry point” to the centre of the earth in Jules Verne’s novel, visible from the Icelandic capital city Reykjavík.

Both Nepal and Iceland allow me to discuss a merging of influences: environmental ideals, in-situ experiences, and creative attunements to the aesthetic resonances of particular sites within the two destinations.

\textsuperscript{10} It is important to note that both Nepal and Iceland have a relatively young history of tourism. Nepal has only been accessible for internationals since the 1950s (Ministry for Culture, Tourism & Aviation 2012) and in 2012-13 over 798,000 tourists entered (UNWTO 2014: 9). In Iceland, in the 1950s there was just over 4000 tourists (Icelandic Tourist Board 2012), yet in recent years Iceland now sees more Internationals enter the country than Icelandic nationals – over 800,000 tourists during 2012-13, rising by 20% on the previous year (UNWTO 2014: 8).
Diagrammatic techniques

I have utilised a diagrammatic approach to understand how the many movements and areas of inquiry relate and transform into creative products. The diagram, as understood through Giles Deleuze, “is the presentation of the relations between forces unique to the particular formation” (1988: 72). Understood in this way the diagram is loosened from its tie to drawings, graphs, or charts to find the best way to “present” the affects of particular media and materiality. The diagram highlights the affects of particular relationships that were previously invisible through representational or statistical modes alone.

Image 10: A diagrammatic sketch from my journal, an example of the diagrams I made every time I packed and unpacked my bag.

The foundations for the final creative works arose through diagrammatic techniques. My practice-led research project necessarily involved my own “practicing” of packing. It is also a multi-sited ethnography, as I undertook two periods of fieldwork, doing participatory in-situ research while also collecting data (interviewing and documenting travellers) in the hostels where
I stayed.\textsuperscript{11} While the fieldwork provided context and data that generated creative work, the creative processes drove the fieldwork practices too, particularly when I showed excerpts of my works-in-progress to travellers and participants. The experiences and connections I gleaned while making work, reflecting, interpreting, and drawing insights during fieldwork allowed me to turn the data collection into an atmosphere in which new creative experiments constantly arose. The diagram was an excellent tool to identify, track, and generate ideas, connections, and affects. Adapting the creative product to a range of expressions—whether as online interactive net-artworks, installations, or the exegesis—allowed relations to emerge through the manner in which the information was presented or encountered. Erin Manning explains that Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s concept of the diagram “is a technique or series of techniques for the open conjugation of intensities. The diagram is not content driven – it operates at the interstices of composition where the virtual is felt” (2009: 124). Manning’s comments suggest that the diagram composes forces and intensities into a particular configuration, rather than emphasising the specific content or media that are utilised in the production. My creative production has taken on many techniques to gather, correlate, inflect, interpret and produce new creative artworks.\textsuperscript{12}

Practice-led research foregrounds the relational modes of production that move across the disciplinary trends of accumulating knowledge, in order to emphasise embodied and situated knowledge acquisition. Postdisciplinary perspectives complement diagrammatic techniques, drawing attention to a “complex field that overlaps various paradigms of knowledge and enquiry” (Garcia 2010: 18) through a “short-circuiting of the discursive” (O'Sullivan 2012: 9). The final form of my project (creative artworks or exegetical writing)

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{11} During two fieldwork trips I conducted forty-nine interviews with travellers in hostels in Reykjavik, Iceland; Kathmandu, Nepal; Berlin, Germany (see Appendix: Data, for details on data collection and general results). The interview process comprised an audio recording of questions about their packing process, and/or photographic time-lapse of the participant unpacking/repacking their bag.

\textsuperscript{12} The amount of data collated before, during, and after the fieldwork was immense. The documentation photographs of packing processes alone number almost 23,800. In addition, there are thousands of the tourist-style photographs of my own transit experiences, as well as many documented trials of creative works, and scans of journals. See the documentation website for the project: http://www.creativityintransit.com
\end{footnotesize}
is always composed of movements between and across media that analyse relationships and/or produce relations, rather than being bound to one specific mode of description or representation. In this way, the material conditions through which my experiences are gathered and correlated—the data, my journals, the tourist-style photographs, the fieldwork transitions, and the theoretical influences—are already akin to a relational, diagrammatic approach. The objects, experiences, and ideas that emerge as research are not products or outcomes so much as they are nodes that accentuate the affects of their movements and intersections.

A diagram insists on a move beyond representation, to a presentation of content that indicates relations that are in motion whereby practice and theory are inseparable from the relations by which they produced and in turn, produce.

The Written Diagram: A Reader's Guide

The trajectory of the exegesis has been launched from the processes, contextualising discourses, and products of the project to culminate at a point from which flexive practices emerge. This is a notion that reflects the implications of my approach, the areas of study the inquiry has crossed and included to adequately address the experiences of transition and being in-transit. Ultimately, the insights I can offer stem from the way creative arts practices initiate, open onto, and extend everyday practices and the transitions they raise.

The exegesis embraces a postdisciplinary perspective, which has enabled me to unpack and interpret the significance of actions that begin with packing a bag for travel. The three aspects outlined above—travel, site-specificity, and diagrammatic techniques—encapsulate the multitude of practices and theories that allow me to think through and respond to the complex movements and relationships that the process of packing a bag presents and my research attempts to track. The assemblage of approaches that I have
gathered and deployed are a reminder of the complex multiplicities of actors that are interconnected by increasing globalised movements. As such my project takes a postdisciplinary approach, in which a project “cannot be captured and understood by those residing in single disciplines” (Coles, Hall & Duval 2009: 90-91). I expand not only the modes of knowledge that inform my postdisciplinary approach to research, but also the knowledges that we partake in increasingly as part of our entangled daily interactions. The result is the cohesion of many methods into specific actions that rely upon postdisciplinary approaches to present the many ways we study and practice being in-transit and experiencing transitions.

The concerns that creative practices, mobilities studies, and tourism share are not confined to any of these research enterprises but fold back onto the commons, which are ultimately defined by the practical, critical, abstract and relational sensitivities we employ each day in-situ.

In the last chapter, I discuss the final exhibition “Creativity in-transit” as a way to give material and spatial form to my conclusions. It is important to note that the creative work consist of installed hands-on works, and an online interactive net-artwork “environment-movement” which means that the very notions of materiality and spatiality are pushed into more current configurations.13

My written diagram (the exegesis) does not offer a methodology but instead discusses the processes, artworks and ideas, which together have informed the development of a materially-oriented methodology. Similarly, there is no literature review chapter. However, the information I gathered to situate myself in a community of practice and move across communities of practitioners is offered as part of the engagement with larger common discourses (materiality, spatiality, and environment) in which the interactions and processes of actors take precedence over the particular sources. In the following chapters, under each thematic is a mixture of discussions that

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13 Available at: http://www.creativityintransit.com/enviro-move/ (requires Adobe Flash Player).
include theoretical concepts, contemporary art practices,\textsuperscript{14} and my own creative processes and artworks.

It would be clear even at this early point in the exegesis that I am interested in the movements within and across disciplinary modes of knowledge and the intersections of methods of knowledge acquisition. The creative arts is the key to moving across methods because they offer an unregulated way of connecting ideas and actions, abstract relations, and pragmatic solutions. These constantly reconfiguring methods can be applied to specialised practices such as the design of research in tourism, or the approach to materiality in creative arts, or to the practice of the everyday.

Being in-transit presents opportunities for experiencing and innovating new techniques of engagement. The process of packing a bag emphasises the relationships that form and re-form during transit with an array of actors. It exemplifies movements-within-movements, that is, moments when we begin to flex and move beyond our individual preconceived ideals of transit and towards co-creative experiences. Packing a bag encapsulates practices of materiality, spatiality, and environmental composures that underpin my research project.

\textsuperscript{14} Although I discuss only a few artist’s within each theme of inquiry (materiality, spatiality, environment, flexive practices), the selective assortment of artists and artworks have been carefully chosen to compliment and extend the crossovers of practical examples, theoretical perspectives, and in-situ experiences. Artists that have notably informed my own practices and development of the project are: Roni Horn; Robert Smithson; Sigurður Guðmundsson; Fischli and Weiss; Marina Zulkow; Ross Harley and Gillian Fuller’s book “Aviopolis”; Roman Ondáš; Darren Almond; Ed Ruscha; Jenny Perlin; Eyfjörð and Sparre’s “The ley line project”; Olafur Eliasson; and Eliasson’s recent collaborative installation with Minik Rossing: “Icewatch”. Some of these are discussed in detail throughout the chapters, and the others not discussed directly were artworks that I have been lucky enough to view and participate with during my fieldwork.
Chapter 2: Materiality

Material qualities, processes, and experiences are a crucial part of the process of travelling. The importance of “materiality” has been central to my research project and is a concern shared by a range of disciplines. Examining the materiality of our everyday experiences, especially the transit to destinations, reveals the interconnected and immersive character of our seemingly singular movements. Every action highlights production and composition of creative modes of interaction with an array of actors. Packing a bag provides a specific instance to analyse the material conditions, performative aspects, and interactions that arise during travel.

In this chapter I will theorise materiality with an overview of the current new materialism movement, nomadic theory, and Actor-network theory, discussing key theorists and a wide range of perspectives. These frameworks have informed my methods and practices allowing me to develop a “materially-oriented methodology” to track my insights into creative production. Next, I outline examples of travel practices, that is, ways that materials are encountered during travel scenarios, focusing on the ways in which material interactions provide conditions from which communal and collaborative experiences can arise. Thirdly, I discuss how I have amassed a collection of materials and practices using my net-artwork “bodies+bags (moving-in-between)” to show how I have consolidated the initial fieldwork results and data collected from interviews with travellers. Finally, when considered together, these theories, practices, and examples allow me to rethink how materiality provides a platform for creative and process-oriented interactions.

The following discussions suggest how materiality allows us to move alongside a mass of materials, transgressing the traditional boundaries of human and non-human experience. In doing so, collective movements arise where action is no longer tied to individualised subjective decisions.
Theorising Materiality

The impulse to rethink what constitutes “material” and “matter” across the arts and sciences indicates the importance of providing a more precise and situated set of relationships. As a practitioner-researcher, I use the term material to point to a specific kind of interaction focused on material qualities and processes instead of a more general or universal notion of substance. Materiality points to an even more inclusive understanding of material in which the physical descriptions of matter, the cultural value of materials, and the experience of material relationships (within and beyond the human) are all components.

Alongside the increased attention given to “matter” in the social sciences (Barad 2008; Latour 2007; Law 2004), recent discussions on materialism across various disciplines have emerged within the movement of “new materialism” (Barrett & Bolt 2013; Bennett 2010; Braidotti 2012; DeLanda 2006; Dolphijn & van der Tuin 2012; Grosz 2005, 2008 & 2011). New materialism spans ontological and methodological concerns (Dolphijn & van der Tuin 2012: 115) in re-thinking the ways materials hold agency and how actions can be collectively produced and felt across material and immaterial actors (Bolt 2013: 3). These considerations pave the way for dissolving boundaries of human and non-human relations.

Overcoming the dualisms of human/non-human and the subject/object distinction through a focus on materiality (Dolphijn & van der Tuin 2012: 118-119) has been heavily influenced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s advocacy for affirmative differences. If one considers materiality as a set of relations across a variety of actors, then moments of becoming and transition are where material forms are exceeded. For instance, Deleuze and Guattari state:

you are longitude and latitude, a set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles, a set of nonsubjectified affects. You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, a life (regardless
Urging us to “avoid an oversimplified conciliation” by having “formed subjects, of the thing or the person” or the “spatiotemporal coordinates” of events, Deleuze and Guattari’s affirmative difference positions materiality as a set of relations that operate across actors (2004: 262). Understanding materiality in this way creates potential to consider that regardless of material (or immaterial) composition we are bound to all actors. The points at which we “cease to be subjects to become events” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004: 262) are where individual subjectivities, and conscious decisions and actions are collectively bound. As Jane Bennett explains, “[m]ateriality is a rubric that tends to horizontalize the relations” by drawing our attention “toward a greater appreciation of the complex entanglements of humans and nonhumans” (2010: 112). The boundaries of ourselves are overturned in favour of collaborative and situated experiences by rethinking what constitutes materiality.

Nomadic theory

At the foreground of the reconceptualisation of materiality is Rosi Braidotti’s body of work on nomadic theory (2006, 2008 & 2012). Braidotti positions her analysis as an exploration of material vitality and a philosophy that “contests the arrogance of anthropocentrism” (2012: 139). Her nomadic theory affirms the body as material that is bound through fluid, reflexive movements with the environment (Braidotti 2008: 183). The importance of considering the body through materiality is echoed by many theorists, most notably Bennett’s vital materialism, which prompts us to think of ourselves as ecologies and assemblages of materials (2010).

Shifting the emphasis from concepts to processes, Braidotti suggests that nomadic thinking could be used to “identify possible sites and strategies” (2012: 14) where materiality—released from a classical definition of materiality or individualised anthropocentric experience—is crucial to a subject-in-formation. Nomadic thinking “is framed by perceptions, concepts,
and imaginings that cannot be reduced to human, rational consciousness” (Braidotti 2012: 2). My understanding of nomadism, draws from the writing of Braidotti as well as from Deleuze and Guattari, is that it can be considered as lines of flight, where the potentials of smooth spaces\textsuperscript{15} are created, lived in, and expanded upon in creative ways.

The importance of Deleuze’s definition of the nomad is the potential for movement “even if the journey is a motionless one, even if it occurs on the spot, imperceptible, unexpected, and subterranean” (Deleuze 1977: 149). Deleuze and Guattari conceive of the nomad as one who does not move, but rather “invents nomadism as a response” to challenges (2004: 381). I read nomadism as a creative potential to harness movements within movements, to create trajectories and new modes of movement experiences. It is not a unifying description of a singular entity, but rather the potential, as Braidotti explains, to see “the self as a process of transformation” (2012: 41).

The proposition of becoming nomadic suggests an adaptive process in which the boundaries of individual and collective subjectivities are never fixed. It is not an end point or goal, but rather as Braidotti explains, “[b]ecoming nomadic means that one learns to reinvent oneself, and one desires the self as a process of transformation. It’s about the desire for qualitative transformations, for flows and shifts of multiple desires” (2012: 41). This conception of nomadism “privileges change and motion over stability” (2012: 29) enables nomadic subjectivity to mobilise agency across materials, as a collective process in which the subject is “marked by interdependence with its environment” (Braidotti 2012: 182). What this interdependence means in this instance is that in addition to physical, tactile substances, materiality encompasses organic and inorganic matter, human and non-human compositions and assemblages (Bryant 2011; Grosz 2011).

\textsuperscript{15} I understand the notion of \textit{smooth space} to be “vectorial, projective, or topological” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004: 399), a space that is composing, fluid, and haptic, filled with potential yet “useless as a base of systemization” (Sverrisdóttir 2011: 80). Smooth space is in difference to, but never separated from, \textit{striated space}, which is organised, rigid and has a “clear orientational quality” (2011: 80).
The interdependence of all actors is the precursor to becoming nomadic. Braidotti’s propositions and reflections on nomadism and materiality inform and alter the possibilities for thinking and practicing individual and collective subjectivities (2012). The points at which we “cease to be subjects to become events” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004: 262) is where individual subjectivities, conscious decisions and actions, are bound together. The forming of a collective is similar to the assemblages and networks that Bruno Latour (2007) and others examine in the social sciences. Complementing the philosophical propositions of nomadism and new materialism is the increasing concentration on the role that non-humans (often inorganic actors) play in mobilising us, and collaborating with us, to achieve the nomadic condition of being in-transit.

*Actor-network theory*

In the social sciences the renewed interest in materiality has been discussed through Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and within Science and Technology Studies (STS), to emerge as a major concern in tourism and mobilities studies. The shift from the analysis of individual movements to the consideration of collective assemblages of materials “retunes attention towards the assemblages of matter that move” with us (Adey, Bissell, Hannam, Merriman & Sheller 2014: 267). The propositions of assemblages and associations owes its foundations to Bruno Latour’s work (1990; 2005; 2007a; 2007b & 2013) as well as the explorations by John Law (2002; 2004; Law & Hassard 1999; Lien & Law 2011; Law & Singleton 2013) and Law’s collaborations with Annemarie Mol (Mol & Law 1994 & 2007). Latour noted the urgency for taking materiality as a “concern” (2007: 87-120), in which every actor—every *thing* (Latour 1990 & 2005)—holds potential to influence and inter-act with every other thing.

Latour defines a process of assemblage as actors momentarily coalesce into networks through which relations are “assembling new entities not yet gathered together” (2007: 75). Attentiveness to the process of assemblage allows uncertainties and tentative relations to surface (Law & Singleton 2013:
While the term assemblage refers to an action, it is also a new set of forms that emerge from newly connected networks. Creative arts practice gives prominence to the processes and movements that are foregrounded by the new set of relations between actors. The assemblage is not a formal consideration but a decisive move away from artefacts towards affects.

Law's articulation of collective networks in the social sciences implies the need for a postdisciplinary approach to highlight and examine the movements within and beyond disciplines, allowing investigative practices to develop and flourish. He observes, a discipline “restricts the ways in which things that matter can be made” (2004: 7). A networked approach pushes us out of our human-centered, subjective point of view and questions the way disciplinary perspectives begin to function as impediments to investigations of common concerns.

There is much debate of the role and purpose of actor-network approaches as a theory, guide or methodology. For the concerns of my project, I pay attention to actor-networks as a way to articulate the cohesions of actors—both material and immaterial—into action. Once an assemblage is configured (even momentarily) an investigation of the relations emerging through such actions can occur. Describing the problematics of an actor-network theory, Law and Singleton pinpoint the importance of an actor-network style of analysis:

Perhaps it [ANT] is better thought of as a sensibility to the materiality, relationality and uncertainty of practices, as a way of asking how it is that people and animals and objects get assembled in those practices, and as a way of mapping the relations of practice. Perhaps this is how it works in the world. (Law & Singleton 2013: 491)

The ability to unpack and examine the many interrelations and actors that occur insists on attentiveness to materiality and the complexity of relations that materials produce.
Chapter 2: Materiality

Object-oriented approaches

More recently, the notion of “flat ontology”, following Manuel DeLanda’s interest in relationality (2006), has been taken up by a group of theories under the banners of Speculative Realism and Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO). Although Graham Harman (2008 & 2011) gives significance to material capacities, object-oriented theories tend to draw a hard distinction between objects that are fluid, flexible, and formed through relationality (as informed by Latour’s tracing associations or DeLanda’s assemblage theory, or a new materialist approach), and objects that are closed, always within themselves, and “cut off from their own pasts and from each other” (Harman 2008: 374), which “objectify’ each other” (Shaw 2012: 620). Harman’s version of OOO advocates the latter and explicitly argues against “relationism”, which posits a thing’s existence solely through relationship with other things (2011: 12) and materialism, which as the “hereditary enemy of object oriented ontology” both “undermines and overmines” the object (2011: 13).

Harman dismisses the potential that a relational understanding of materiality permits. His position contrasts to my usage of the notion of materiality, which encompasses inorganic matter and events (Grosz 2011) and the potential of materiality to materialise through processes (Barad 2003: 810) and virtual encounters. The position that OOO advocates does not account for potential collective and collaborative experiences that move through and across materials, nor does it open up moments of relational experiences that exceed individualised boundaries. While I agree that objects hold their own agency, I do take caution when considering whether objects can turn in or close off from the situation that they are within.

However, my more relational experience of objects aligns with some of the statements and observations made by Harman when he posits that “[s]omehow, objects relate without relating” (2008: 382). Such a statement alerts us to the slippery nature of materials that an object-oriented or a flat ontology draws on. At the same time, the slipperiness signals a need for
practitioners to be highly reflexive and have a heightened awareness of how tricky materials can be, and how we need to move-with materials in order to understand the changes and transformations that are taking place.

**Relational materiality**

During transit, encounters with materials are often social, sometimes playful (Sheller & Urry 2004; Thrift 2007), and usually strenuous. They are movements that are enacted through the vast network of actors, both human and non-human. As we explore and negotiate daily tasks, we generate “activity with immense affective significance” (Thrift 2007: 7). This means the process of packing is an ever-evolving performance. Thinking of it in this way helps to understand how experiences that challenge our presumptions arise and have such an affective power. Materiality connects and forges new relationships across actors, generating relations that can be beyond ourselves and beyond our own subjective individual decisions.

In certain circumstances, materials have the ability to shift between objective, solid representational forms and as malleable, fluid, matter (Grosz 2005: 131-144). Considering “matter as activity” (Alaimo & Heckman 2008: 245) presents a way to reconceptualise materiality as not being fixed or static. Elizabeth Grosz urges us to question how we could think matter as something that is “beyond the material”, in terms of “events and processes rather than in terms of things and objects” (2011: 17). This of course can only happen through material processes that connect into other potential sets of relations. Transformations that utilise material potential position the relationships between subjects and objects in affirmative ways, which in turn are ready to be used and reused in creative and innovative ways.

Karen Barad’s contribution of a “materialist, naturalist, and posthumanist elaboration” of encounters through performativity (2003: 803) also calls for increased attention to the transformative potentials of materiality. Barad draws attention to the “open process of mattering” (2003: 817), because what *matters* is indeed still a point of contention and concern. Her suggestion that
“matter is … not a thing but a doing, a congealing of agency” (2003: 822) is consistent with the notion of the transformation of singular entities (objects, bags, and people) towards an emergence of a fluid mass of matter. Theorists inclined towards relationality, process philosophy, and new materialism invite us to “[t]hink the object not ontologically but processually” (Manning 2013: 32).

Agency is no longer isolated to a singular individual or to humans. The intensive act of packing, where materials and bodies move together, allows us to consider a “nonunitary vision of the subject” (Braidotti 2012: 3). In my project, the boundaries between the body and the bag are set into flux. It is in the flexing of materiality that we are made aware of the more-than (Manning 2009) potential of forces larger than ourselves. These newly formed relationships breach individuality and present a collective interaction arising through performativity that, if only momentarily, fuse the experience of the human–non-human.

All of the propositions and theories I have touched upon tackle materiality in different ways: highlighting the role of non-human actors, the forming of assemblages and networks, and shifting of material agency as independent or co-creative actors. In the creative arts materiality is addressed by engaging directly with material processes. In doing so, each situation is filled with complexity and potential for collective and collaborative interactions, and cannot be reduced to a predefined object, enclosed form, as actions are always distributed through processual engagements. Each of the theories that I have used to trace materiality interact with and extend each other in various ways. Taking a nomadic, processual approach to materials allows the potential for human–non-human boundaries to be overturned. Actor-networks extend this dissolution of boundaries by tracing associations and examining the entanglement of materials as actors in the co-production of meaning and experience. Flat ontology, or object-oriented perspectives, extends the emphasis on agency beyond anthropocentrism, giving rise to specific material capabilities that in turn extend and compliment collective movements. From a relational perspective, co-productive material agency
allows us to attend to the entangled movements that are always beyond individual intentions and idealisations. From this array of perspectives and approaches, I have developed a composite approach, a “materially-oriented methodology” that informs my practice-led research.

**Materially-oriented methodology**

In the creative arts practice an emphasis on materiality is “so self-evident and integral to our understanding of art that it may seem unremarkable to frame [artistic practice] in terms of the material turn” (Bolt 2013: 5). Simon O’Sullivan agrees, suggesting that the work of art contributes a “plane of composition in which the material has passed into sensation” (2006: 58). Artworks take hold of materiality to transform specific materials into assemblages of new relationships. Creative arts practices stretch and reposition material agencies and expand (nomadic) subjective experiences of materials. Under these circumstances materials cannot remain only as they have been (a set of properties). They become more-than (Manning 2009) in a constant movement towards other things.

Understood in this way, my creative arts practice has developed into a material-oriented methodology. In line with the affirmative relationality that new materialism proposes, the de-limiting of what constitutes materiality opens the way for a rethinking of material interactions and the role of artwork as everyday production.

The point at which approaches cohere is where all materials have the potential to act and influence the situation as it unfolds.\(^\text{16}\) Combining approaches from new materialism, nomadic theory, actor-network theory, and the many other critiques and examinations of materiality that are inherent to creative arts, my practice is influenced by the incorporations and aspects of them into my materially-oriented approach to the project. Materials

\(^{16}\) Interestingly, the recent creation of the journal *O-zone: A journal of object-oriented studies*, pieces together the many influences I have described above as a postdisciplinary platform.
have informed both theoretical and practical interventions within my project and play a crucial role in how transit (transition and being in-transit) is made possible (Haldrup & Larsen 2010; Urry 2014).

A materially-oriented methodology places material concerns first and foremost, examines how and what matters (Barad 2003 & 2008; Latour 2007; Law 2004) and uses materiality as a key factor to investigate ideas and issues, analyse relationships, and understand the implication of my movements as a practitioner and in the world at large. In short, materially-oriented methodology is about transformation and approaches to transition. It allows an intensified consideration of materiality as fluid, flexible, and always moving beyond or through fixed subjective states assigned to a body, an object, a space or an environment. The new materialist perspectives and practices, consistent with an expanded idea of materials, prove closely aligned to my approach and allow me to focus on the entanglement of materials that are bound together through action. This is a way of recognising how materials produce meaning and value (how they matter), which extends material concerns (Latour 2007). As a result, I am able to balance the highly specific examples of materials within the scope of this project’s inquiry—such as the objects within the bag, bodily movements, and the material elements that constitute the environment, among other things, alongside the theoretical domains in constant flux around the understanding of materiality. This balancing act, though delicate, will ensure that the practice-led research remains in direct relation to the impact and lived experience of theoretical research—through a materially-oriented methodology.

**Travelling Material Practices**

Travellers experience a range of material encounters that, in certain circumstances, can be used to generate experiential and creative knowledges. Creative and collaborative processes are developed and shared between travellers when packing and while participating in a range of everyday tasks. Acknowledging this connection between creative processes
and collaborative situations informs how we understand material practices which arise and take hold. Creativity is fostered by intensive moments of material engagement, which affirms the current drive for a reconstitution of the role of materiality within tourism and everyday movements.

Many artists have made work that situates materials and viewers, breaking the easy designations of identity and position, and accentuating instead the primacy of sensation and evaluation. For example, Michael Fried describes how the “Objecthood” (1968) of minimalist artworks induces situations by the interactions of the participant and the reduced, bare outlay of material forms (which he saw as a negative aspect of minimalism). More recently, Marina Zurkow’s “The petroleum manga” project (Vogrin & Zurkow 2014) draws our attention to how plastics compose and aid our lives.17 Zurkow’s project began as an exhibition of large banners with manga stylised images of plastic objects. Collated into a book, Zurkow’s images are accompanied by writings from invited artists, writers, and theorists (notably Timothy Morton) that detail the legacy and inevitable dominance of plastic substances in our lives. The project foregrounds plastic as an actor “whose presence we take for granted, and whose immortality we can hardly conceive” (Murrell in Vogrin & Zurkow 2014: 1). Creative arts practice highlights relationships that are formed through the overlap of distributed agency of materials that reveal the co-production of contemporary, mobilised life.

The transgressive and mobilising potential that materials have, in certain circumstances, is a useful entry point to establish the parallel between traditional experiences of materiality (viewing an artwork and acknowledging material elements, or paying tribute to the interconnectedness of our bodies and materials), and communal experiences of materiality. My work explores these notions of a collective awareness of materiality by concentrating on the complexity of the packing process.

Conscious decisions about packing push beyond any fixed expectations and reveal an unfolding of movements in which “every event of activity ... is intensely relational” (Manning 2013: 25). Movements are no longer relegated to obvious relocation of objects into and within the bag. Rather, when considered relationally, movements of the body accentuate the interactions with materials and provide instances, although fleeting, of the shifting limits between the human and non-human. These relationships, that pull us out of ourselves, increase our awareness of movement.

Image 11: Arms hovering as the objects are moved in and out of the bag.

Image 12: Kneeling and pressing on the contents of the bag.
Packing a bag is a tricky task to negotiate. Simply locating one item within the bag presents a mammoth task of dismantling carefully placed items, decanting these onto the floor, the bed, or into spare hands. The body flits in and around opening and closing elements—the zipper pulls tightly, catching
the fabric. One item leaks, suddenly the clothes and the floor are covered in a soapy residue. This frenzy of complex movements occurs between the person packing, the items in the bag, the material of the bag itself, the surfaces of the architecture they are within, and the spatio-temporal shifts occurring in that particular destination. These moments challenge our presumptions of our bodily limits and our ability to interact and collaborate with a realm of actors.

Although fleeting, such encounters begin to open up new modes of understanding and thinking through our everyday movements, through multiplicities of both local and global scales. Viewing this process as a creative and performative practice brings forth the “ability to alter the ways in which we perceive things in the world” through materialised forms, transforming our practices to attend to “affective perceptual experiences” (Colman 2007: 72). While increased awareness of the vitality of relations forged by the global mobilities is crucial, it is materiality that has “the ability to make things happen, to produce effects” that must be investigated (Bennett 2010: 5).

In the past decade there has been a strong emphasis on the importance of materiality in travel, and also the role materials play in the formation of tourist experiences (Currie, Campbell-Trant & Seaton 2011; Haldrup & Larsen 2010; Urry & Larsen 2011; Van der Duim 2007; Van der Duim, Ren & Jóhannesson 2013; Walsh & Tucker 2009). Recently there have been several claims that the field of tourism studies has overlooked the potential role that non-human actors play in experiences of travel and tourism situations (Adey & Anderson 2011; Franklin 2014; Lund 2013; Pálsson 2013; Picken 2010; Walsh & Tucker 2009). Arguing that the field of tourism is still bound to theories of signs, representationalism, and an understanding of “performance” that is isolated to humanistic experiences (Haldrup & Larsen 2010), it appears that a study of materiality within travel can overcome the human and non-human divide and become exemplar for other enquiries.
Because I have decided to examine the process of packing, it would be easy to focus entirely on the materiality of the bag and the objects being packed. In line with a practice-led creative arts approach, my concentration on materiality is not isolated to the characteristics of objects and forms (bodies, bags, objects being packed). However, there is one notable tourism study by Neil Walsh and Hazel Tucker (2009) that is quite close to my approach of examining interactions between traveller’s bodies and materials. Walsh and Tucker present the many ways in which a backpack, as a material artefact, co-produces the identity of “backpacker” travellers. Their argument closely resembles the task that my research project is undertaking: to examine how materials—specifically the backpack—contributes and induces intensified experiences of travel.

Yet the backpack in Walsh and Tucker’s investigation is isolated to the production of an identity that is humanistic, inherently individual, and locked within the construction of the social realm of the “backpacker” identity (or perhaps “traveller”, see Week 2012). Although they recognise that “[b]ackpacking is supported by a huge assembly of specific objects and material ‘things’” (2009: 224, original emphasis), their phrasing maintains a sedimented and hierarchical relationship between humans and non-humans; the material non-human supports and enables the human. Despite the differences of attention to non-human agencies, their article presents a range of subtleties that are useful to note within the scope of my research project. For example, they fuse the backpack with the body, recounting how a heavy backpack rubs against the shoulders of the body carrying it. Using examples from their own backpacking experiences, Walsh and Tucker open up the possibility that in some instances material things act with a resonance and vitality, rather than just as passive intermediaries. These acknowledgements of agency distributed across humans and non-humans point tourism studies in a new direction in which considerations of materiality overcome the human–non-human divide.

While the object of the backpack does indeed become an actor, the limits of only taking an actor-network-inspired analysis begin to show. As Nigel Thrift
observes, the linking of processes to the object, “cannot be reduced to it” (2007: 111) and needs to be considered, like all actors, as “an ongoing rearrangement of objects and symbols within a field involving the body” (116). This stands in contrast to Walsh and Tucker’s presentation of this embodied performance as evidence for a subcultural category to be (re)formed.

Even though Walsh and Tucker’s intentions align with my own research, there are many points that can be developed further through creative and post-disciplinary engagements that I draw upon. The need for a postdisciplinary approach is a more robust option, as no one discipline or technique can adequately harness and interpret the many actors, actions, and fields of experience occurring within the complexities of travel scenarios.

**A Mass of Material**

By observing packing and practicing it myself, what became clear was the transformation of objects away from singular forms towards a fluid mass of material that is being negotiated. The strategies I used to collate objects showed a practice that transforms objective qualities into material concerns.

Of the forty-nine travellers I spoke with and photographed,\(^\text{18}\) thirty-six said they had a specific strategy for packing. Most evident was the strategy of collating objects with an intensified consideration of a range of material properties: the size, texture, density, weight, etc. Comments were made such as: “I try to keep it in order ... my socks first, then my pants, and then ... my T-shirts”. Another said they grouped clothing together, explaining that:

underwear [goes] together in one bag ... and then like T-shirts in one, and pants and sweatshirts in another ... so that way it’s all

\(^{18}\) See Appendix: Data for overview of collection and methods of analysis. Throughout the exegesis I refer to the participants via quotes but do not cite their names, due to the data being non-identifiable.
like, if I want to change my underwear or something I know where it is ... I keep them together.

Others grouped according to size and weight, “shoes in the bottom, and big stuff in the bottom”, one traveller explained. A common focus was on manipulating the materials to compress and combine things together. “I like to roll things up and it makes things a lot smaller”, one remarked. Travellers frequently mentioned a range of strategies they had learned and acquired from a range of sources, such as the infamous product design and packaging of IKEA, advice from their parents, or what they had read on blogs and online travel forums. A traveller noted that everything in their bag is laid “flat across the bottom ... like building blocks ... that’s what they do at IKEA—flat packing”. Several travellers commented on the fact that there seemed to be a “right” and a “wrong” way to pack, or some kind of intuitive process that you are meant to have when packing. There is much speculation in discussions with fellow travellers in hostels about how to be a “good” packer or a “fast” packer, as if it is something that can be inherited or learnt that will somehow improve the quality of our travels.

The variations of descriptions and types of measurements used that disclose the many different roles that materials take on in this process, for example: weight, texture, substance, categories, and so on. Depending on the movements required, the materials are regarded in different ways, making the material elements oscillate between singular forms and a fluid material array of sensitive and responsive actors. What began to emerge from these interviews is that in the rigorous daily process of packing, objects transform into fluid, malleable substances: a mass of material that is being negotiated.

The words that travellers frequently used to describe the process are also indicative – terms such as “squish”, “squeezing”, “stuffing”, indicating how each object was being transformed into a malleable form that could be adapted and integrated into a fluid mass of material in the process. This transformation of objects from single to multiple aligns with Law’s acknowledgement that “the singularity of an object is precarious, uncertain and revisable” (2002, p. 36). I am proposing this processual mode of
experiencing materials through encounters releases materials from specific representations and forms. These subtle material negotiations have the potential to create situations in which materials are intensified to the degree that they have the potential to overcome their own material forms and constraints.

The materials are constantly being renegotiated and assessed as to whether they are useful, necessary, fragile, prone to leakage, etc. The roles of each material object and the expectations of the person packing are constantly being negotiated as they move into proximity with each other during the packing process.

“bodies+bags (moving-in-between)” net-artwork

During the first fieldtrip I created an interactive net-artwork “bodies+bags (moving-in-between)” that collates excerpts of the photographic interviews.19 The interactive interface allows the viewer to explore the collation of photographic documentation and annotated sketches of movements. Moving the cursor over certain areas of the screen trigger stop-motion excerpts of the packing photographs that have been extended through layering and annotative sketches of movements between actors. The net-artwork functions as an annotation of the movements between the body and the bag, and where/when they begin to move together. A mass of material emerges, through negotiations of the body packing, the objects within the bag, and the bag itself.

Katherine Hayles (2004) reminds us that net-art practices are often overlooked in the ways that they can provide sensuous interactivity. Simply because an artwork is digitally composed, does not diminish its material qualities, or its ability to draw attention to affective, material processes. In this manner, the online interactive net-art has the capability to cumulate events into a pre-material, or more-than-material set of relations.
The sketched lines annotate the blurring, lingering moments in the photographs that begin to indicate instances where the boundaries of movements are stretched and warped, that ultimately result in a congealing of the material of the body and the bag. These movements of the collaboration between the body and the bag are observable, especially when an object is placed inside the bag and the hand and object move together in action. When the object is placed, the bag often shifts slightly, moving in response, and setting the material boundaries into flux. The often frenzied attempts to unpack, sort, find, re-pack, etc. reveal movements in which the materials—the body, the bag, the objects—are moving in a manner greater than themselves, no longer singular entities but as a collaborative collective action that flows with/in and between the act unfolding.

During the packing process, materiality and movements must be understood as inseparable aspects of each other, they are no longer objects or movements belonging solely to the individual. The aim is not to consider materiality as a literal material form (as in a singular body moving in space), or the qualities of the movements (as in choreography). Instead, the focus, which is at the heart of a new materialist approach and a materially-oriented methodology, is the potential for movement to forge new relationships
through the collective experiences of moving-with-materials. I take up this crucial connection in the following section, “From Materiality to Spatiality”.

The annotative sketches attempt to locate where sensation and experience, arising through material interaction, exceed the practicalities of the task at hand. The aesthetic considerations in the production of the annotated documentation, most obviously the visible result of the photograph’s long exposure, provide a more traditional form of guidance for annotating movement. The two modes of information (photography and sketched annotation) provide insight, but it is their cumulative knowledge that will benefit the understanding and approaches offered by creative arts, tourism, and mobilities studies. These particular research areas draw on ethnographic methods inform the social sciences and the understanding of human movement garnered from performance studies, life sciences, and discourses on embodiment. This difference, between sensory information (for which the image acts as a reminder and prompt) and the tracking of movement as an image, are precisely the difference between creative practice and movement analysis, or poetic meaning and textual analysis.

From Materiality to Spatiality

Examining the packing process through a new materialist perspective reveals how collective experiences develop. This chapter began by reconceptualising materiality and highlighting the need for an increased awareness of material processes and the vibrancy of materials, which has become prominent in mobilities (both in tourism and everyday mobile encounters). I have proposed a materially-oriented methodology which suggests that the study of mobile practices needs to engage a range of approaches and propositions, seeing each investigation as a “holistic endeavour” (Bucher & Cruickshank 2009: 2), which points to the need for an increased sensing and acting for communal and collaborative experiences.
An assortment of perspectives in research facilitates creative explorations that necessarily transgress disciplinary boundaries, encompassing and adapting practical and theoretical influences to promote “freedom of movement as those whose actions [the researcher] wants to follow” (Latour 2013: 31). Discussion of my net-artwork “bodies+bags (moving-in-between)” allowed me to accentuate moments of fluid, relational materiality that operate across physical and digital experiences.

The aim of this chapter was to examine how material boundaries and forms can be overturned in favour of collaborative, relational movements. For my project, it is the ways in which material practices emerge that allow materiality to be understood as “more-than” the property of a singular entity (Manning 2010) to include a vast array of material actors (non-humans). Focusing on the movement, the event, and the experience of the co-constructed space, helps determine how an array of actors contribute to a collective action that moves with material ideals and spatial negotiations.

In the next chapter I develop the transformative potential of materiality and show how this necessitates an examination of our proximities to materials. This requires an examination of the spatial distribution of actors that are mobilised. Through the concept of spatiality, I extend discussions on how movements can be collective rather than isolated to individual entities as we shift and forge relations across spatialities.
Chapter 3: Spatiality

In the last chapter I discussed materiality, and outlined a materially-oriented methodology. This involves de-limiting what constitutes material, as is evident in practice-led research and new materialist theory, which opens up alternative material interactions. As a result I argue that materiality shifts towards movement and relationality, affecting not only the way we think about materiality but extends the scope of my enquiry to include the ways in which material concerns intersect with notions of spatiality.

The “space” of packing is never isolated to the physical object of the bag or the designated geometric area of close proximity to the bag. The packing process encompasses a space that is beyond the perimeter of the bag, extending past the area on the floor of the hostel room where the individual is packing. Interior and exterior boundaries are set in motion through the movements of the packing process. Objects move in and out of the bag, we move in and out of rooms, around beds, and so on. As objects are located, collected, and moved into arrangements they spill out onto the floor, are strewn around the dormitory, and then collated and reassembled as they are moved back within the bag. In an interview one traveller reflected about how much room they take up while packing: “I open it up and take stuff out as I need it. I, err, sometimes I just throw it all out around the room, kinda, and then just work the way through it, but I’m real messy.”
Expanding and collapsing, distorting and producing space, the packing process requires movements within and across spatial boundaries, designations, constraints and comfort zones. The result is a collaborative
engagement with the surrounding actors through which spatialities arise from experiences of shifting spatial qualities and ideas of space.

This chapter explores the spatiality (the experience and co-production of the idea of space) and spatial processes that occur during packing through three discussions: theorising spatiality, transit aesthetics, and coordinating spatialities. I begin theorising spatiality, describing the differences between space, spatial, and spatiality, to highlight the inevitable variations of spatial conceptions that inform our experiences. Mobilities research, as a reference point, shows how emphasis on spatiality brings focus to relationality and processes of movement. Next, an analysis of the presentation of actions carried out during transit and packing leads to the formulation of an aesthetics of transit. Drawing from examples of aircraft safety cards, artworks, interviews, and my “Instructional diagrams” series of artworks, I discuss the set of aesthetic techniques and spatial experiences to which they refer. Finally, I discuss the coordination of movements and spatialities through visual depictions, lived experience, and globalised travel culture.

**Theorising Spatiality**

The notion of “space” is an integral part of many disciplines, yet its meaning and application vary greatly. There are three ways that this chapter explores spatial processes, through three inter-related terms: space, spatial, and spatiality. “Space” usually refers to expectations and identifications of space as an area, foregrounding “cultural concerns on the perspective grid of reference” (de Duve 1993: 25). Designated geometric coordinates form a distinctive representation of space while boundaries within space are forged through habitual measurements. Throughout this chapter, the focus on interior and exterior boundaries is underpinned by this conception of space.

The term “spatial” refers to the qualities and characteristics of habitualised approaches to the measurement of space, whereas “spatiality” usually refers to the lived experience of space, which is often influenced by ideas as well as
collective engagement with space. These experiences and engagements are relational. Once we acknowledge that experience is separate from but linked to concepts of space, it is difficult to extract spatial qualities from interactions in a given situation. The study of mobilities and geography have led to an increased awareness and understanding of how the complexity of spatial interactions and processes are forged through, and informed by, movement.

It is spatiality that concerns me here. Once a context for the terms space and spatial is established, I can expand on the notion of spatiality, which signals an open-ended construction of experience. The term spatiality leads to further discussions (in chapters 4 and 5) of how spatialities congeal to become complex environments and offer a way to understand processes in travel and in our daily transitions.

*From space to spatial*

Space is difficult to talk about without falling into popular and general assumptions involving geometric areas and boundaries or competing scientific theories. It is also difficult to point to a space, especially if it is not confined to specific coordinates or designations. When applied to discussions of packing, for instance, space tend to be understood as the area of the bag to be filled; in other words, a material object that functions as a container, demarcating interior and exterior areas of space. This is a limited understanding which I dispel in the previous chapter.

Until recently the discourse on space in the arts humanities and social sciences has been dominated by space as an abstracted notion, or a closed system that organises sets of containers. There is no lack of discussion on this topic. Nigel Thrift terms this lack of awareness of space as “spatial constraints” (Thrift in Bech, Borch & Larsen 2010: 96), highlighting the need for a greater attentiveness to how space (and spatial processes and experiences of spatialities) is integral to knowledge production and affective experiences (Thrift 2006 & 2007). Henri Lefebvre commented that “space is constituted neither by a collection of things or an aggregate of (sensory)
data, nor by a void packed like a parcel with various contents” (1991: 27). Despite this warning, Edward Soja uses the metaphor of a “container” to critique how the term spatial has been separated from the relational, and exploited to show how it “evokes a physical or geometrical image” (1989: 87), thus throwing the term spatial away from qualities and back to a space as a fixed entity. Even when space is perceived as a container or “dimension”, Doreen Massey explains that spaces are “just as humanly produced as is place” (2006b: 2).

The tendency for our conception of space to oscillate between a fixed and an abstract entity, or static or enveloping entity, “may well supply inventories of what exists in space, or even generate a discourse on space, cannot ever give rise to a knowledge of space” (Lefebvre 1991: 7, original emphasis). Lefebvre’s insights help us to understand how space can be an actor produced through processes as well as an entity bound relationally to all it encompasses through the actions that produce it. Lefebvre continues his analysis by observing “qualities of space, not ... qualities embedded in space” (1991: 230, original emphasis). I interpret this as the potential that these spatial qualities hold supported by the linkages between spatial studies and materialism.

To encompass this understanding of space, spatial qualities, and effects in my project means taking on a process-based knowledge production, which has been ingrained in materialism. Space might not always be tactile, however this does not excuse an overlooking of processual interactions with space. More importantly, how we interact and practice alongside spaces needs consideration.

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20 Massey’s comments may be suggesting the emphasis be put on the human as a dominant actor in the scenario of producing spaces, or advocating for a social construction of space. Instead I read her comment as reinforcing that the idea that space, or the production of spaces, is never isolated to a static lingering dimension, rather, space is something processual and able to facilitate action.

21 For example, Thrift outlines how “processual sensualism” is foregrounded by a “material schematism” (2006: 140).
From spatial to spatiality: mobilities theory and lived experience

Spatial effects are altered with every movement and are susceptible to subjective interpretations, socialised procedures, and everyday practices (Lefebvre 1991). The shift from spatial (as a description) to spatiality indicates the combination of concepts, qualities of space and the experiences they produce. The way that spaces and spatial qualities are produced has been the guiding set of ideas for many theories promoted by the arts and humanities.

Recent attention to “distinct spatial patterns” (Urry 2003: 41) of the global movements of people and materials is characteristic of the “mobilities” turn, which emphasises the transitory and affective experiences of spatiality. In contemporary life there is “an accumulation of movement analogous to the accumulation of capital – repetitive movement or circulation made possible by diverse, interdependent systems of movement” (Urry 2011: 23). This has led to a merging of theoretical and practical examinations of how, where, and with whom and what is mobilised in our daily routines. The study of mobilities traces experiences of space through relational mobile encounters, and aligns with my focus and definition of spatiality as an enactment of affective, lived experiences of space.

Tourism contributes to the growing discourse on mobilities, and as such it is important to link practical and theoretical engagement across a multitude of spatial experiences. This theoretical shift from analysis of stationary or fixed actors or phenomena to the mobilised relations across spaces embraces a “‘wayfaring’ perspective [that] stresses movement both in terms of the many vicissitudes and sensory registers of travel-encounter” (Thrift 2006: 141). Whether fixed, geographical locations, or idealised destinations, spatial

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22 See Jensen (2013) for a discussion on the academic turn of mobilities.
23 Although at the forefront of mobilities research, John Urry cautions that there is the “infinity of promised and assumed consumption possibilities arising from multiple movements that characterises the neo-liberal dream” (2011: 24). While mobilities research takes into account all manner of actors that we move with and that aid our movements, often the “fast” or “current” modes of movement are given priority within academic discourses.
processes underpin many of the discussions in tourism geographies and mobilities research.

Over a decade ago John Urry outlined the oscillatory nature of the networks forged by increasing global movements of people, materials, transportation and data, and coined the term “global fluids” (2003: 59-61). Urry was drawing on Mol and Law’s earlier discussions of fluidity in networks (1994) and their influential actor-network style work, in which they (1994 & 2007) proposed that fluidity creates transgressions of national or geographical boundaries, forging new topological and spatial relations.

The direction of mobilities studies and tourism has been strongly influenced by Urry’s reflections and understanding of movement. Urry outlines “five interdependent mobilities” previously thought to be constrained by standardised topological movements: corporeal travel, physical movement of objects, imaginative, virtual, and communicative (2011: 24-25). Movements are undoubtedly fluid, relational, and subject to inter-action from all manner of actors. Consequently there has been a “greater emphasis on spatial distribution” (Thrift 2007: 113) in research.

Thrift points out that “what counts as ‘we’ is being redefined” and explains that consequently the “number of actors’ spaces that can be recognized and worked with” increases (2007: 17). His observations are consistent with the increasing interest in transhuman movements—the redefined boundary of the human as well as the recognition of non-human agency. Although increasing attention to “heterogeneous networks and events” and “spatiotemporal relations” underpin much mobilities and geographic inquiry (Jones 2009: 491), the implications for all human and non-human actors must be considered carefully, which exploration of in-transit mobilities is well positioned to highlight.

Mobilities research examines spatiality through the experiential, the relational, and the collective enactments of spaces and spatial qualities by a fusion of mobilised experiences. The influence of mobilities theories raises
the critical question, if everything is mobile, then spatial experiences (within creative arts practices as well as everyday creative practices) must be mobile too.

How we navigate the flow of spatialities becomes the next issue. Travel magnifies situations that test spatial concepts and qualities, blurring, extending, and abstracting our attempts to align and orient within the complexity of movements within and across spatialities (spatial qualities, collectively produced spatial effect and experiences of space).

**Transit Aesthetics**

During transit we frequently encounter instructional signage that orients us in space and directs us to carry out complex movements. These signs attempt to refer to and universally represent spatial experiences. Communication during travel throws together symbolic, descriptive, impressionistic, multiscalar, and didactic elements of visual communication. Emergency exit diagrams, procedures for disasters, navigational signage, and aircraft safety cards are examples of communication solutions for travellers in a range of scenarios. I read these examples of instructional signage as an opportunity to examine aesthetic presentations of spatiality that is particular to travel situations: a transit aesthetics.

The aesthetic design of transit signage has received critique in regards to “wayfinding”, in which the “pragmatic imperatives” are “to design systems which enable the traveller to … reach a final destination” (Fuller 2002: 234). The design of wayfinding signage in airports is primarily concerned with how it facilitates moving people through commercial spaces in terms of efficiency and consumption within these spaces. However, as Peter Adey notes, wayfinding signage “require[s] complex cognitive thought processes in order to make sense” of the information depicted (2008: 444). The instructional diagrams that I discuss in the following sections focus on the alternatives and different sensibilities to movements that are influenced by transit aesthetics.
In particular, emphasis is given to the movement within and across the borders and boundaries of self and other, body and environment, private and public spaces. While movement quality inflects the enactment of the crossing, for this inquiry I am concerned more with movement more broadly defined and related to mobility.

Instructional signs are material artefacts that deploy common aesthetic elements and visual communication techniques to maintain a universalised system of communication, which includes arrows, pictographic information, shifts across spatial boundaries and scales, and an absence of a horizon line. This jumble of visual depictions assumes a visual literacy, or perhaps a global literacy, of the objects, spaces, and actions being depicted as well as the styles of depiction. The mixing of codes of representation is meant to associate formal elements with sensory, spatial, and orientation modes of experiences. However, when images are put under pressure to deliver practical information about safety and communicate clearly and quickly across cultures and languages, strange hybrid images emerge.

The mass transit system of air travel epitomises the aesthetics that are emblematic of travel. In the first week of my PhD candidature I read John Law’s “Aircraft stories” (2002) cover-to-cover, thoroughly enjoying his STS exploration of how a military aircraft, the “TSR2”, was assembled through a coordination of promotional visual materials, design and planning. The way he unpacked networks that merged into the aircraft—as both a singular object and multiplicity of objects—captured my imagination through the multiple lines of interconnectedness that one material artefact could have. Through an aesthetics of transit, Law’s analysis of the TSR2 aircraft extends the ways in which, since the 1960s, a multiplicity of cultures intersect in the aesthetics of travel and transportation.
Image 20: Photograph of an instructional card from an emergency helicopter rescue station in Iceland.
The transit aesthetics I discuss below focuses on how travellers negotiate spatiality through experiences of globalised travel culture. Many of the examples I utilise are from air travel, which is arguably the emblem of globalised mass-transit systems. The analysis of instructional signage, particularly aircraft safety cards, informs and extends my interest in commenting on transit aesthetics in my own artworks.

Before I discuss the elements of communication specific to a transit aesthetics, it is important to start with a brief overview of aircraft safety cards in order to set up the context in which common elements of transit aesthetics operate: arrows, pictographic information, shifts across spatial boundaries and scales, and an absence of a horizon line. This will set up a discussion of several elements of transit aesthetics, using transit diagrams, reflections from interviews with travellers, examples in artworks, as well as my own “Instructional packing diagram” series to tease out how spatiality is communicated, experienced, and practiced.
Aircraft safety cards: a collection aesthetic elements and approaches

Aircraft safety cards are instructions that are given to passengers on-board aeroplanes, usually located in the pocket of the seat in front. They show passengers the appropriate actions to undertake in emergency situations, or during flight, depending on where they are positioned within the aircraft. They are artefacts that show the accumulation of a diverse range of processes, representing several series of activities that require spatial coordination in a two or four-page laminated handout\(^{24}\). The existing safety cards I have selected (sketched representations in the images below) are characteristic of the pictographic instructions that depict complex spatialities and from which the aesthetics of transit arises.

Image 22: My sketch based upon an actual safety card depicting the emergency exit path when smoke is in the cabin.

The aircraft safety cards encompass a range of aesthetic techniques that have informed my creative production and will be discussed in the following sections: arrows, pictographic information, shifts across spatial boundaries and scales, and an absence of a horizon line.

*Arrows*

A common visual element in the aesthetic code of safety cards is the use of arrows as placeholders for movements. Fuller describes how in airports, “the arrow is a tool for movement and a tool for stability ... it also determines specific procedures for movement, for transforming our relationships” (2002: 239). On the safety card, arrows flow in and around other sketched elements: weaving around seats, down the aisle, into the overhead lockers, and curving out the emergency doors. Arrows traverse objects, bodies, and spaces, mediating between interior and exterior representations of the aircraft. Arrows are used as guides that are overlaid, directing people through specific
spatial arrangements. The arrows usually denote where spatial boundaries are required to be crossed or moved between. They can refer to a location, an action, a vector, and to themselves.

Arrows also project possible-futures—possible risks and potential emergencies—and even function as a remembrance of past disasters and past experiences of flight. Arrows, together with other transit aesthetic elements such as the axonometric\(^2\) depictions of the aircraft, the absence of horizon lines, and the stylised format of the safety card, congeal to present travellers with highly complex representations of situations in which they may be required to act.

The arrows are intended to help the viewer interpret the movements their body needs to undertake to navigate through the spatial parameters of the situation, twisting and turning bodies and objects during movements. These arrows are place-holders for something that is not quite material or immaterial, not yet actualised, possibly already eventuated in past actions. The arrows provide the conditions for the emergence of a range of events. They highlight the coordination and labelling of what is spatial as an event, coordinating objects, bodies and environments.

\(^2\) The term axonometric describes a visual representation of “a three-dimensional object drawn to scale” ("axonometric, adj." 2014). An axonometric depiction creates a perspective of a situation where the sketching of objects in the image aligns to three-dimensional geometric coordinates, implying distance and spatial proximities between objects.

When considering the arrows in the existing aircraft safety cards, or in my own artworks that utilise them, the arrows produce highly ambiguous set of relations and spatial cues as instructions that need to be followed or procedures to which we must adhere. How are we supposed to align our bodies with the implied actions of flowing arrows, hovering above an unfolding situation? The arrows point towards the oscillation of singular experience to multiple enactments. They fuse qualities of ideals of space with
Pictographic information

Passengers, baggage, staff, aircraft and data are stabilised in the system of air travel by “alphanumeric and pictographic signage” (Fuller & Harley 2004: 31). This emphasis on the pictorial and the visual designation of spatial boundaries makes it difficult to correlate the orientation of one type of depiction with that of another. Despite best intentions, the pictographic presentations of actions that describe or refer to usual spatial designations (such as interior/exterior, human-centric scales) are not easily codified.

In the aircraft safety cards it is often difficult to determine exactly what is required in order to orient your body and carry out these instructions. For instance, a 2006 study by the Australian Transportation Safety Bureau (ATSB) found that only 32% of passengers in the study had read the aircraft safety card, cautioning against assumptions that passengers will “process that information in a meaningful way” (ATSB 2006: 54). The American Office of Aerospace Medicine found lower rates of comprehension of the safety card in terms of what actions were required to perform the procedures presented (Corbett, McLean & Cosper 2008). Often the aircraft safety card is “overly complex”, yet “overly simplistic” (ATSB 2006: 37).26

The reliance on pictographical information is examined by Gillian Fuller and Ross Harley in the book “Aviopolis” (2004). They outline the purpose and functions of airports—operational design, architectural planning and constant redevelopment—that attempt to establish the airport as the epitome of contemporary travel processes. Their analysis of airports takes on numerous visual documentation methods: diagrams, plans, surveys, mappings, photographs, and a mix of image-text montages. They bring together

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26 It is worthwhile looking at the safety card images that were presented to participants in Corbett, McLean & Cosper’s 2008 study, see their appendix C-5 for examples of misinterpretation. Available at: www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA488828
individual, often abstracted and isolated visual materials and coordinate the airport through large “pictographic” diagrams (2004: 31). Fuller and Harley link the techno-visual elements to demonstrate the integral role airports have in the global flow of human and non-human (for example the transport of freight and viruses) passengers.

Another example of the visual literacy that airports and global transit sites require is in Jenny Perlin’s 16mm film “Flight” (2007). In the style of journal notes, and sketches made in-situ, Perlin explores the textual exchanges in airports through animations of the receipts from purchases she made in airports over a two-year period. She (re)presents the receipts in her handwriting, as sketchy, shaky, laid out on the screen in a similar arrangement to the print on the receipt it has been drawn from. Each letter appears in order from left to right, top to bottom across the screen, as if the receipt was being printed out. Not quite perfectly aligned, not quite clear, yet the sketchy animations of text and punctuation are familiar, they are the same type of receipt we encounter in most café transactions. Despite being a sketch of a receipt, the text that is drawn becomes a pictographic representation of the transitory aesthetic that the departure lounges of airports propagate.

The two examples—Fuller and Harley’s book, and Perlin’s film—are creative analysis and interpretations of airports that point to the kinds of pictographics that we use to decode information, orient and direct ourselves. Even when stationary during travel, we are often confronted with pictographic information (think of the emergency exit plans stuck to the back of a hotel door) that inform the way we navigate through spaces, what kind of experiences we should expect to have, and how to respond. These examples of functional pictographics and creative examination and interpretation indicate potential for experiencing spatiality in diverse and creative ways. Pictographical information “create[s] a globalised navigation system, a visual interface through which one moves” (Fuller 2002: 231). It is the discrepancies between the ability to comprehend and adhere to a set of instructions (for instance,

27 Available at: http://www.nilrep.net/flight/
the aircraft safety card) and the potential for examining the complexity of spatialities that pictographic signage presents.

**Shifting boundaries**

In order to focus on the lived experience of space as co-constructed events, we need a greater awareness of the affective experiences of space to allow us to move between and redraw spatial boundaries. An in-depth discussion of interior and exterior boundaries demonstrates how contested and loaded these designations can be.

Roman Ondák’s artwork “Do Not Walk Outside This Area” (2012) unsettles the usual experiences of interior and exterior spaces during flight. An entire wing of an aircraft was installed inside a gallery at the Deutsche Guggenheim. The title of the work plays with the text printed on aircraft wings that is visible from inside the aircraft cabin and extends our usual perception of positioning within either interior or exterior spaces of transit. Visitors were required to walk across the wing in order to traverse the gallery space. The printed text on the wing was the lure to step into the seemingly inaccessible exterior space of the aircraft and invite movement across the wing. Ondák explains that normally “this message is so far away, and you wouldn’t expect to be in a situation where you’d actually step onto this wing” (Ondák in Hohmann 2012: 6). The experience of walking onto the wing would have been unsettling, even in a gallery space.

Ondák’s installation draws on the aesthetic design of the aircraft. His work forces us to cross the threshold of spatial boundaries, as participants in the work alternate from the usual pictographic representation (viewing the text on an instructional diagram or on the wing itself) to the performative potential of the wing that creates a particular movement through space when walked on. It highlights the multiplicity of viewpoints that we have of spatial boundaries: the aircraft wing is always exterior to passengers only accessible visually. However, it is not only visual perception that Ondák’s installation alters. By mobilising the visitor in the gallery, as they walk across the wing, the
installation emphasises a reaction, a feeling, produced as visitor moving within and across spatial boundaries.

Shifts across interior and exterior boundaries are frequently encountered during packing, yet we are not always aware of these experiences. For example, during an interview, a traveller had rigorously packed everything into their suitcase, fitting objects into the bag with ease. As it was zipped closed, they realised that they had left out a large boxed bottle of whisky. “This was going too well,” they exclaimed, laughing. The whisky had been hidden from their view behind them as they kneeled in front of the suitcase. “Oh my god, this is so not going to close!” they said, laughing. The bag was packed tightly. The traveller had expertly arranged the objects with little gaps between them, little space to spare. An overseen object—a whisky bottle—now meant that they had to decant most of their bag. In this instance, the bag was a void to be filled—a spatial container—and also an area that was filled with potential configurations of materials. We both laughed at this “mishap”, a miscalculation due to an object being overlooked. However, you can extrapolate from this example the many ways that objects can be positioned where spatial demarcations—interior or exterior—are crossed and altered. This example in packing seems ready-made for Bachelard’s theories on spatial boundaries (1994), since objects are never fixed into a specific spatial containment due to the boundaries constantly being altered.28

Many of the interviews entailed discussions of bags as interior spaces, where the bags act as materialised spatial boundaries creating interior dimensions to contain objects. Comments such as, “I pretty much know where every item is in the backpack”, or “however I can make things fit, that’s usually how they go into the suitcase”, reinforce the idea of the bag as a container to be filled. Travellers spoke of packing things “in” their bag or fitting things “inside”. Despite the obvious connotation of the task of containing objects within a

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28 Bachelard suggests that “objects that may be opened” have the potential to transform our perception of inside and outside boundaries because “from the moment … [it] is opened, dialectics no longer exist … for the reasons that a new dimension—the dimension of intimacy—has just opened up” (1994: 85, original emphasis).
bag, in general, the activity and movements carried out during the packing process do not always stick within these spatial designations.

Miscalculating the capacity of a bag outlines the way in which one specific material artefact has the potential and ability to instigate a recalibration of boundaries. The examples from the interviews reveal how decision-making while packing a bag is often based on the aesthetics of spatial relationships and the qualities and affects these considerations produce. Shifting across interior and exterior boundaries (such as having to re-pack an entire bag) demonstrates how relations are constantly negotiated due to spatial representations, experiences, and ideals, as stepping over the threshold of the wing in Ondák’s work exemplifies.

Shifts in scale

Being active in organising interior-exterior spatial boundaries can also involve shifts in scale. The following example from an interview demonstrates shifts across scales: as what is exterior space surrounding one object can also be an interior space of a larger object. The scale of the object and its proximity to other objects contributes to the multiplicity of spatial boundaries. A traveller I interviewed used “organising sacks” within a backpack, and explained how the interior of their backpack was organised:

I’ve got these, they’re not compression sacks, just organising sacks, that I throw all my clothes into. They create nice neat little blocks. And then I basically try to pack everything in as a block, and then whatever’s left on top.

The description of these organising sacks utilises them as compartmentalising objects, at once containing smaller objects yet simultaneously functioning as an object to be packed interior to the larger backpack. Switching between singular objects (to be packed) and multiple objects (opening, containing smaller objects), the organising sacks designate spaces (interior and exterior) across a range of scales.
Image 27: The backpack with green organising sacks.

Image 28: The organising sacks being packed.
Chapter 3: Spatiality

My diagram above illustrates some of the issues of scale that interior and exterior spaces take part in defining. Forming a multiplicity of arrangements of exterior space, the “exteriors” cross scales of what is exterior to either singular objects or collective objects (as unified and “packed”). Scales, in this instance, might be measured against the size of the objects, the zips, our hands, our bodies-as-a-whole, the room, etc., which we presume will assist us in organising spatial capacities. However, the organising sacks (that assist in solidifying scales and boundaries) within the backpack can be at once interior (when within the backpack), yet retain their own exteriority (as do the objects within the closed organising sack). Three scales, which might be described as “nested” within each other, are indicated by the above sketch of exterior spaces. It is precisely the extent and affect of each “nested” scale and the threshold between one scale and another that wither relegates movement to habit or generates creative spatial approaches.

Within a single diagram different scales create a multiplicity or disjuncture. The representation may jump—for instance from a stylised bird’s eye view to an extreme close-up—as the actions are distributed across multiple

Image 29: Diagram of exterior space across various scales: exterior to the bag, exterior to the organising sacks, and exterior to the individual objects.
experiences of an event. The diagram is able to entertain “an affinity with certain relations on particular points” (Deleuze 1988: 75). Multiple scales allow movement in the diagrams, as the focus is shifted through the choice of framing and dialogue boxes that zoom in and out of aspects of the situation.


Scales that shift depending on the context and situation present instances where space is stylised, stretched, and warped, depending on the actions required. Attention to these delicate negotiations emphasises how transit aesthetics encompass not only the representation of, but also the practicing of spatial qualities and affects, enriching our understanding that there are many transitions undertaken within transit, that traverse multiple experiences of spatialities.
Absence of a horizon line

The absence of a horizon line is the last item to be included on the list of elements of transit aesthetics. Scanning all the diagrams included in this discussion so far will reveal that the subtraction of the horizon line in the depictions of instruction, movement, and relationships takes away the context. This leaves the set of relationships, indications, and instructions to be worked only through reference to each other. Even the imagery for an emergency landing on the safety card provides the symbolic gesture for “land”, where vast areas of white space are often interrupted by a few tufts of grass (see image 23), hastily sketched out, insinuating that the aircraft is on the ground.

When the horizon line is removed in a physical situation, it is disorienting and makes scale, size, and distance difficult to judge, since the horizon sets the “measure” by which to determine all other relationships. In the instructional diagrams and aircraft safety cards, it is challenging to decipher and approximate where bodies and objects begin and end, or where they are positioned in the situation. However, the absence of the horizon amplifies the affective charge of an image. Instructional diagrams and safety cards have the intention to have the events depicted be transferable to any location, yet often this absence has the opposite effect.

The shifting spatial perspectives form into a disjointed expression of the situation as a result of the hybrid visual-aesthetic languages deployed. The issue here is that the representation does not always equate to spatialisation (Massey 2007: 20), and what is being depicted is not always fully formed. The obscure, haphazard moments that capture our attention are extrapolated into somewhat speculative and parodic instructions based on different modes of spatiality that are encountered in-transit.

When viewing the diagram and attempting to enact the instructions it contains, we are being asked to conceptualise the space depicted across, inside, and outside delineated boundaries. The effect of this re-jigging of our
understanding of the depicted spaces is the coupling of future-possible-events with or alongside mediated events of the past. Hence engaging with diagrams is never solely a conceptual or spatial exercise but reaches into the cultural imaginary and embodied experience that connects space and time, place and events.

*How to deploy transit aesthetics: “Instructional packing diagrams” artwork series*

If the safety cards attempt and desire a universal aesthetic language, then my artwork series “Instructional packing diagrams” begin to play with the assemblage of aesthetic elements, becoming transformational. They no longer attempt to instruct or orient, analyse or interpret the hybrid spaces, but instead, they evoke alternative experiences that can be produced through the transit aesthetics. My “Instructional packing diagrams” series push the aesthetic codes to the limit of their communicative capacity. The aim of the series is to focus on the aesthetic palette of transit diagrams. This focus reveals how poetic connections and creative experiences of travel congeal on the surface of seemingly simple instructional images.

The informational signage that I observed during transit became a formula by which to indicate how we navigate our bodies and align materials in specific spatial relationships during transit. The fact that these instructional diagrams are not able to maintain a universal standard of representation opened the door for inventive and creative re-use. Therefore the aesthetic presentation and formula of the safety card and other transit signage became the conduit for my creative explorations allowing intensified spatial processes and unrepresented experiences that emerge during packing to become perceptible.

During my initial interviews and conversations with travellers there were discussions of whether there was a “correct” or most efficient way to pack a bag. I wondered how to instruct someone to effectively pack and began to realise after my first fieldwork trip, there was no right, wrong, or best way to
pack. New procedures were being undertaken amongst travellers. During packing, space was no longer experienced as a stagnant form, but as activation of space through movements. The shift away from singularly defined objects in space alerts us to a new realm of spatial experiences: spatiality.

Using the same sequential approach of the safety cards, I have produced two distinct series: “Instructional packing diagrams” (which I will discuss in the following section) and “Site-specific diagrams” (see chapter 5), both of which are installed in the final exhibition. Each artwork in the “Instructional packing diagrams” series focuses on the conflicts and slippages of ideals and expectations. The resulting images play with the complex array of actors and spatialities being crossed and encountered. They are indicated through the limited aesthetic elements and compositions of the transit aesthetics.


The content and theme of each of the “Instructional packing diagrams” series arose from comments made in the interviews with travellers. For instance, the proposition of rolling your socks and stuffing them in your shoes to be
packed inside the bag was a common procedure that I noticed. One traveller explained to me that this “saved space”, as if it was a ritualised process that had been learnt. Upon further consideration of these remarks and observations, I realised that these actions were quite complex, often requiring a set of movements across and through spaces and manipulations of materials into specific alignments. Extracting these observations from the interviews, I drew on the visual elements and procedural structure to create the instructional diagrams that assist in explaining these occurrences in packing.

Shifting scales, the ambiguous arrows, and the contrasting “safety” colours of the red, orange, black, and white, congeal to produce a multiplicity of possible actions into a formularised sequence of events. Similar to Law’s analysis of a promotional brochure for an aeroplane, the structure of my “Instructional diagrams” become “a strategy for coordinating disparate objects and relating them to each other to form a unit” (2002: 20). The transit aesthetics that I have developed within my “Instructional diagrams” series provide a solution for how to tackle these unsettling and disorienting moments in travel, and (re)present these to an array of situations—within globalised travel as well as in everyday experiences of movement.

The awkward set of aesthetic techniques and hybridisation appears to try to deal with the huge range of types of spatialities encountered during transit: arrows, pictographical information, shifting scales and boundaries, and so on. These aesthetic techniques become indicators of lived experiences of space, and provide potential for future practices of spatial affects. They are difficult to capture in typical graphic and information design, as it is a confluence of spatial qualities and the situated movements that need to align to specific events.

They characterise postdisciplinary research that merges techniques of the aesthetic, practical and theoretical to provide a better understanding of what is happening to the actors involved. Crossing modes of engagement—whether to new destinations, the borders of interior and exterior notions of
space, or assumptions about the meaning and value of relationships—
dicates how we are always transiting through a saturation of transit
aesthetics, concepts, and ideals. All transitions bring baggage and every
moving-on requires adjustment.

**Coordinating Spatialities**

By rearranging the communication elements and stylistic representation, and
amplifying the ambiguities of the transit aesthetic elements, it became
possible to begin to coordinate and evoke different spatialities. Pushing
beyond the location of arrows, pictographics, shifts in boundaries and scales,
and absences of horizon lines produced an oscillation between spatial
representations. The requirement to read the diagrams in this way activates
the potential to produce alternative spatialities and stretch navigation skills
and conceptual constructs.

The active reading of diagrams requires one to move across the
conceptualisation of architectures and objects (at times as transparent, at
other times as fully formed and tactile), and across the inside and outside
demarcations coupled with the future-possible-events, and mediated-past-
events. Spatiality means that travel becomes movement across time and
space, negotiating through these oscillatory experiences. Alternative
methods are created of perceiving, imagining, projecting, and performing a
multitude of spatial inferences.

Movement and coordination of movements is the key in situations of
transition. Manning suggests this process is always one of “configuring as
the body recomposes” (2009: 15, original emphasis). Movements that go
beyond the limits of each singular form correspondingly stretch and expand
experiences of space.

The significance of understanding spatialities is manyfold. First, spatiality
involves the acknowledgement of material agencies. Second, the accrual of
multiple material processes and movement includes the shifting of spatial boundaries. Third, the types of movements and actions that occur in travel have meant that a set of forms and modes of communication have developed into a transit aesthetics. Lastly, it becomes possible to extract, develop and expand upon transit aesthetics to coordinate hybrid representations, multiple scales of action, movements and human and non-human actors to provide an opportunity to creatively develop new practices.

When considered together as a constantly unfolding event, always in-transit and in transition, these over-turnings, relational movements, and mutually constituted actions come together to form an environment. This environment is an event that is mobile and always forming and re-forming as a coordinated spatiality. It is into this ephemeral and self-organising ecology that is the focus of the next chapter.
Chapter 4: Environment

Throughout this exegesis, relationality and movement have emerged at the end of each chapter as crucial to understanding the shift to larger and more complex sets of actors. In this chapter I use these two key concepts to examine the notion of an environment as the collective and immersive scale of transiting. The experiences travellers have within large, immersive landscapes highlight the numerous subtle negotiations with/in environmental conditions. This may be conceived as practices of mobility, geopolitically as practices of tourism, or creatively as exploratory and experimental arts practices. By looking at the larger dynamic scale of actions that constitutes the environment, it is possible to observe the coordination of spatialities. This approach affords a greater attunement to interactions that occur across all actors: materials, spaces, bodies, and environments. I am suggesting that the actions undertaken when engaging with environments facilitate collaborative and sustainable practices.

Environments are sets of organic and inorganic conditions such as the terrain, topography, climate, season, weather and so on in addition to the human and non-human inhabitants. These conditions produce tangible experiences arising through interactions. Altering our daily procedures through moments of re-orientation, the environment moves us. Once we no longer superimpose idealised notions of place or space onto a new site and cease the endless consumption of the newness which tourism offers, we may begin to transit with the environment. Consuming is replaced or modified by moving with the environment to change and adapt to always being in transition.

In this chapter I examine how certain destinations intensify our awareness to moments of reorientation with/in environments and how this affects everyday, processual interactions (such as packing). First, I sketch out a definition of “environment” from an entanglement of theoretical approaches that can be connected to a creative arts notion of “site”, and site-specificity, and move towards an understanding of the environment-as-actor. This sets up the way
we can understand ourselves as part of the environment and the constant (re)composure\textsuperscript{29} of movements it entails. Second, I outline how we move with and re-orient with environments, drawing on examples from contemporary artists filtered through my own experiences to suggest potential for new relationships between travellers’ expectations and the environments they encounter. Third, I discuss the choice of two specific destinations for my project—Nepal and Iceland—and examine actions that occur where travellers re-orient with the environment. I discuss how ideals and sensations merge by reflecting on my own experiences in transit that depend upon the ways in which collaborative transiting-with environments may happen. Finally, through my net-artwork “environment-movement”, I tackle the intricacies of shifting the composition—(re)composing—during environmental experience and site-specific processes.

I propose that awareness of collaboration and transition with/in environments alters our sense of materiality and spatiality as seen in the packing process, albeit in subtle ways. Here the third thematic of environment is discussed through site-specific experiences. I argue that by collaborating with the environment-as-actor, sustainable or low-impact tourism experiences can be achieved.

\textbf{(Re)composing with the Environment-as-Actor}

Large, immersive landscapes, and extreme climates present navigation and orientation challenges. As travellers find themselves positioned within areas of vastness, the ability to determine distance and scale are skewed. In these moments of skewed orientation, immersive experiences offer stark contrast to touristic expectations. A traveller’s experience is often conditioned by pre-packaged ideals, expectations, and “must-do” behaviours. Their heightened sensory awareness amplifies subtle material and spatial negotiations, working against the consumption of idealised vistas or tourist rituals.

\textsuperscript{29} I am using the term “(re)composure” to describe the transitions that assemble actors into specific configurations of humans and non-humans, spaces, and materials.
Awareness of other modes of engagement transform usual tourist activities—such as exploring the destination on foot, in a tour, or taking photographs—into moments of re-orientation that unfold through sensory engagements with and through the environment. Whether ritualised ideals mesh with the in-situ momentary sensations, or alternative ideals are found, people in-transit are not just mediated by the environment, but are in direct collaboration with it.

This notion of collaboration with the environment has emerged within current discourses of tourism and geography, both of which are grappling with notions from philosophy, creative arts, and the social sciences. Their objective, which aligns with mine, is to extract and extend the discussion on objects, activities, and destinations to more complex and dynamic notions of experience and relationality.

It is important to understand the environment as an actor and as a process of constant (re)composure. The “environment” is no longer isolated to the geographical, cultural, and ecological attributes of the destination, rather it is bound to us through experience, changing and altering with each movement. This understanding involves noticing how travellers adjust to a host of bodily and environmental shifts, including phenomenon such as jetlag (Anderson 2013; Waterhouse et al. 2007) or oppositional climates and seasons, exacerbating the differences between points of departure and arrival. Often the “interval between departure from the familiar to the point in time when one’s own instincts of orientation kick in again” (Sverrisdóttir 2011: 82)
prompts our individual preconceptions of the destination to fuse with our adjustment to unfolding events. The many ways that an environment is imagined, perceived, and then experienced is also shaped by a socio-cultural imaginary and formed through a “history of interactions and influences” such as media, transit, geography, and situation encountered upon arrival (Lim 2008: 389).

We are “always intermeshed with the more-than-human world” and “inseparable from ‘the environment’” (Alaimo 2008: 238). If we accept that the environment is not external, it forms “regions of the body’s very existence” (Ingold 2010: 116) and the environment “modifies”, making “a difference” to events (Latour 2007: 71), then the ability to determine where a body begins and ends is an environmental question.

In short, there is not always a clear boundary around how the environment shapes our bodily experiences, and vice versa. We must change as our surroundings change. The environment can be freed-up—considered no longer as an abstract spatial entity—if we take on a greater awareness of space and spatial practices and transitions. The environment becomes a mode of unfolding the constant (re)composure through a multitude of entities and spaces—a networked, or relational, ecology.

Spatial discourses, as researched phenomena, are turning away from a separation of “site” and “movement” (Thrift, 2006: 141). Thrifts’ observations suggest that even when the body is stationary it is always engaged in some manner in the processes of mobility. Constantly refiguring the conditions of what constitutes an environment means we are always in direct connection with it: both part of and separate from the environment at any moment.

The artists-architects Arakawa and Gins use the term “organism-person-environment” (2002: 1-5) to describe an understanding of a person as a constant composure of sites with and within the environmental surround. For Arakawa and Gins, the “environment' does not consist of unitized entities filling an external space” (Gendlin 2013: 222) rather, an organism-person-
environment is an “integrally intelligent whole, always capable of bringing conscious reflection into the mix, the organism-person feels and thinks its (way through an) environment” (Arakawa & Gins 2002: 3). From a range of disciplines, theories and approaches, a definition begins to form, if only momentarily. An environment is the melding of actions that span (ourselves as) humans and (the terrain, climate, culture, etc. as) non-humans entering into an ecology of relations.

The environment, under this new conception of collaborative relationships becomes an actor that subtly attunes tourists, shifting our practices towards collaborative experiences of transiting. Propositions of different configurations of body-environments—whether of nomadic, subjectivities or organism-person-environments—acknowledge the dynamic and situated material constitution of our bodies, and illustrate that the boundaries between the human (body) and non-human (environment) can never be considered in isolation.

Sites within environments

Reconceptualising the environment as an actor inevitably complicates our ability to be situated within a specific locale. It is imperative that we hone in and define specific moments of actions occurring within this larger set of interactions: the immersive environment. A method for discussing specific sections of the broader environment is needed while avoiding the preconceptions and metaphors of spatial containers or geometric coordinates that the term destination usually conjures.

To counteract the problem of wanting to refer to sections of an environment while not lopping it into separate parts, I have deployed the notion of “site” to help identify particular actions that occur when we are collaborating with environments. The term “site”, as used in creative arts practice and art theory, hones in on the creative and communal actions that are specific to a particular moment of the environmental composure, whereas a site can be designated by the intersection of forces, activities, terrain, or location, where
artefacts, actions, interactions, materials, and relationships can be understood as emerging from site-specific conditions. Uniquely constituted, site-specific actions then feed back into the constant (re)composure of the environment, and aids our understanding of how and why some environments may increase our attunement to, and opportunities for, intensified collective actions.

Art theorist, Thierry de Duve (1993) suggests that historically, site emerged through the harmony of place, space, and scale, but that in contemporary times artworks combine two of these factors, which emphasises the absence of the third. Site is no longer a sign of harmony but of the cultural contention over values. This constant negotiation highlights how sites emerge through shifts in emphasis and with each movement in an environment.

Artist and theorist Simon O’Sullivan suggest that artwork makes “specifically transversal connections” (2006: 17) that emphasise movements and the constant emergence of relations. Art brings to our attention this shifting, fluid and always mobile designation of sites, rather than settling for a concretised “destination”. The notion of site holds the potential for making connections between our individual experiences, the environmental composure within a tourist destination, and the broader cultures and influences that surround our globalised understanding of mobilities.

Some artworks that explore spatiality illuminate ideal and actual experiences of sites encountered in tourism. For instance, the artist Robert Smithson’s pseudo-scientific use of site as both an analytical tool and a creative curatorial concept can be seen in his designs of air terminals in the late 1960s. Smithson explored the ways in which our understanding of sites are always in-motion and intermeshed with a range of visual and geographical experiences which include travellers’ experience of the space of the airport, the materials of air travel and the site in which his artworks are installed.

Similarly, collaborative artists Peter Fischli and David Weiss produced “800 View of Airports” (2012) to document the visual experience of air travel. It
situates the materiality of the plane and the aircraft with the architecture of the airport. When viewed in succession, the eight hundred photographs are overwhelming; yet a familiarity surfaces as you recognise airports that you may have been to, airlines with whom you may have flown.

In Smithson’s architectural plans and Fischli and Weiss’s photographs, the site of the airport transgresses geographical boundaries. Sites form through the oscillatory nature of travel experiences and situate the viewer within the aesthetic and cultural resonance of travel. Sites form through understanding the process of “insertion in to one or more flows” of experience (Thrift 2007: 12), rather than as fixed geographical destinations. Therefore, we can conclude that the experience of our movements extends “before, during and after travel” (Lean 2012: 154) forming a multiplicity of sites through our movements. Site and site-specificity are ways of naming the complex area in which body-environments momentarily converge with material and spatial processes.

Re-orienting Touristic Movements

Travellers often approach the idea of nature with expectations for how they will act and be affected. However, the results are not always clear, considering how much agency can be attributed to the natural environment itself.

In order to re-orient with environments and find prospective new relationships with our surroundings, it is important to examine how we understand environments and how that understanding (pre-orientation) prepares travellers for certain kinds of experiences. Katrín Lund (2013) characterises the relationship between tourists and the perception of a “natural” environment as a lapse into nature/culture or subject/object dichotomies. Viewing perception in a positive light—as a mode of negotiation and orientation—I suggest that travellers compose with environment and constantly re-orientate and attune their perception to the unfamiliar
situations. This prompts a collaborative co-selection process. To reiterate the conclusions from previous chapters, the actions that unfold between the travellers (humans) and the environment (non-humans) are “multi-sensory and smooth spatial experience[s]” (Sverrisdóttir 2011: 82). Re-orienting oneself to and with an immersive environment requires the body to move through conflicting perceptual and experiential moments.

Recent reflections on tourists’ interactions with landscape suggest that travellers recalibrate the relations between bodies and environments. This is done in a number of ways. For instance, the scenic aspects of environments “invite” and “inspire” tourists (Huijbens & Benediktsson 2013) while descriptions of “human-landscape encounters” unique to Iceland have been posited (Benediktsson & Lund 2010: 8) and natural phenomenon are said to attune us toward “a flow of sensation” (Lund 2013: 158). In this way, appreciation of landscape encompasses new “understanding[s] of both place and landscape as events, as happenings, as moments that will again be dispersed” (Massey 2006a: 46). The immersive landscape environment surpasses the geographical or geological formation of the terrain. It is fluid and momentary, bound to and driving forward environmental compositions.

Timothy Morton suggests that the environment is “a way of considering groups and collectives – humans surrounded by nature, or in continuity with other beings” (2007: 17). He concurs with Latour, cautioning that “the actual situation is far more drastically collective than that” (Morton 2007: 17) as we are in continuity with other beings. \(^{30}\) In this manner, nature is a collective assemblage of actors—both human and non-human—forged through a complex entanglement of agency. Latour also warns that the end of nature is through ecology, as nature (in a modern sense) was “a way of organizing the division … between appearances and reality, subjectivity and objectivity, history and immutability” (2010: 476). What Latour is describing, and what

\(^{30}\) It is important to note the similarities between the new materialist approach—where bodies and objects are comprised of active matter—and Morton’s ecological ontology that overlaps and extends on works by Latour (2007 & 2010) and many others in the fields of STS and ANT styles (see discussion in chapter 2). These approaches differ in terminology, but share a favouring toward (re)distribution of material agency through action. What this means for body-environment encounters is that all actions are collaboratively negotiated.
Morton also points out, is that agency should not be divided up between human and non-human actions, but rather through momentary compositions (Latour 2010).

_Artworks that re-compose with the environment_

Fieldwork and creative encounters are two ways that overlap in the encounter of a site within an environment. For example, Inger Birkeland (1999) describes her journey to North Cape in Norway to see the midnight sun. She makes palpable the instance when the relationships with fellow tourists, the earth they stood on, and the geographical ideals of the Arctic North as they stood watching the midnight sun set and rise. An example of creative explorations with/in a site is Nina Katchadourian’s artwork “Translation exercise” (1993), in which she transported rocks across Finnish islands. Selecting a rock from each island, Katchadourian acquired the rock, and brought it with her in the transition to the next island, where she swapped the rock “for a rock that resembled the one I had” (Katchadourian n.d.). This re-positioning, achieved through durational and cartographic practices, shows the new environment composed of a selected island site, movements between her body, the rocks, the transitions to each island, and the mainland the gallery space in which the rocks were presented. Each site, each action on each island is cumulated through the constant movement of singular and multiple experiences of the site that the artwork creates.

Artist Roni Horn has produced work about Iceland (as both thematic and environment-as-actor) that exemplifies the way that a site-specific engagement can simultaneously draw from the environmental conditions and contribute to them. Horn’s project “Vatnasafn / Library of Water” (2007) presents water samples taken from twenty-four glaciers in Iceland, within cylindrical glass columns. Installed in a library-turned-community centre, the

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light is reflected and refracted as it enters the gallery’s large windows. As you walk through and among the columns you are drawn to the vibrancy of the material elements: the water, the ash, sand, and dirt particles within it, the thickness and surface of the glass columns. Although the water in the columns appears still, you can feel a discord between the once stagnant water captured and secured by the glacier, and the seemingly fragile presentation of it behind the thick glass cylindrical containers.

The water in “Vatnasafn” can be understood and experienced in multiple ways: as stagnant, static, preserved in the work or as material in motion indicative of glacial melts, evaporation cycles, or global oceanic currents. The work constitutes an expanded site that encompasses the community centre where the work is installed and the twenty-four glaciers from which the water was extracted. A visitor to the artwork is inside the multiplicity of site-specific and material-specific experiences that amplify the environment of Iceland that merges both macro (environmental, island, and nation) and micro (materials and artwork). Many of Horn’s installations merge “language and material, water and weather, reflection and illumination, the elusive nature of identity” (Lingwood 2007) that are activated through a site-specific environmental attunement.

Documenting creative re-composures

In my own fieldwork experiences, the site that I was within influenced the processes of documentation and the interviews carried out with fellow travellers, altering and changing the experiences and understandings of that specific environment. Documentation in the field often holds the power to extend an event well beyond its spatio-temporal constraints and become a form of composure and re-composure.

Michael Taussig (2011) reflects on his fieldwork drawings to emphasise the power of documents made in-situ. He describes witnessing two homeless people sleeping under an overpass, from the window of his moving taxi, and how he made a sketch (Taussig 2011: 1-2). This becomes the basis for his
analysis of fieldwork sketchbooks, as he examines his abilities to recall this situation with resonance and clarity. He declares that his use of sketchbooks is not simply a matter of drawing, it “is more than the result of seeing” (Taussig 2011: 1-2). From this observation, I infer that a sketch that captures the experience (of seeing and recording) continues beyond the materiality of the journal sketch and then “surpasses the experience that gave rise to it” (Taussig 2011: 2). The experience is not yet complete. It could be said this is an example of the spatialising of an experience through documentation, in which the memory of the site, the fleeting in-situ witnessing, and the physicality of the sketch on paper, becomes accessible again and available for reworking.

It might seem obvious that creative practice-led research produces inevitable overlaps and linkages between fieldwork research that is done in-situ through first-person experiences and the ways in which creative arts practices make these experiences evident. Simply stating that fieldwork research requires a reflexive methodological approach does not take into account the potential that artefacts of fieldwork documentation (journals, photographs, etc.) hold. The connections between experience, ideals, and documentation are formed and re-formed as reflection continues. The key to unlocking these connections that run across site-specific practices is a much deeper understanding of how the environment influences these processes of documentation and the knowledge that is acquired.

Compiling documentation and using several documentation techniques—the time-lapse and panoramic photography, journal sketches and diagrams—my creative works began to operate as creative research. That is, making the work allowed me to tease out experiences of movements with/in specific sites. Rather than presenting my fieldwork as a travel narrative, I feel that the correlation between fieldwork (journal sketches and diagrams), documentation (time-lapse photography of packing), and touristic (picturesque photographs of the landscapes), is perfectly suited to creative research in an expanded field and shows how creative techniques can reveal insights into the intricacies and implication of site-specific experience.
Chapter 4: Environment

Image 35: “Site: Northernmost Iceland”, digital version, 2012. Packing at 00:36 (top); journal entry of the view of the Arctic Circle and map location (middle); photograph of the sunset from the hostel window (bottom). A compilation image of documentation, fieldwork, and touristic influences.
This mix of philosophical propositions, creative examples, and experience highlights how travellers interact with myriad of actors—other persons, objects, or elements that comprise an environment—in ways that are bound through mutual action to prompt a constant (re)composure of experience. Thus, the environment is never separate from our bodies, it moves with us as we transition with it.

Two Environments: Nepal and Iceland

Nepal and Iceland are idealised destinations. They conjure many associations and expectations of what kinds of experiences are on offer to mediate tourist actions.33 Travellers to Nepal experience political instability, earthquakes, long-term power outages, etc. that make it “difficult” to orient oneself. Travel to and around Iceland also presents challenges due to tumultuous weather patterns, seismic and volcanic activity. Despite these perceived “risks”, travellers are more influenced by idealised conceptions of each place as a unique experiential tourist destination (Frohlick 2003; Benediktsson, Lund & Huijbens 2011; Lund 2013; Pálsson 2013; Sverrisdóttir 2011). Although vastly different, both destinations overlap with this vivid imaginary in which tourists participate. What quickly emerges when observing and interviewing in these destinations is the influence that the environment has on travellers’ preconceptions and, once they arrive, how they negotiate the immense physical and psychological geographies.

33 See Karen Oslund’s discussion of idealisation of the Icelandic “North”, 2005; and Lund’s 2013 extension of Oslund.
Chapter 4: Environment

Image 36: Swayambunath Stupa, commonly referred to as the “Monkey Temple”, one of the main tourist attractions in Nepal.

Image 37: A poster promoting Nepal’s wilderness (left).
Image 38: Prayer flags wrapped around electrical wires on the side of a building in Kathmandu (right).
Chapter 4: Environment


Image 40: Photograph taken on the main ring road that circles Iceland. Postcard-like imagery at every bend in the road.

Image 41: Jökulsárlón, the “glacial lagoon”, in Southern Iceland.
A destination is not “bound to specific environments or place images” (Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen & Urry 2004: 2). Instead, they are formed through “the corporeal and social performances of tourists”, where “the human body engages with the natural world and hence produces spaces and places, rather than simply being located within them, or having them inscribed on its surface” (Bærenholdt et al. 2004: 2, original emphasis). Preconceived and imaginary notions of a destination contrast with actual experiences when on-the-ground. This implies that destinations are constantly re-configuring through the action of persons who are being affected in turn by the environment. Collaboration, in this sense, reshapes and re-composes the relations between tourists and environments.

The point at which ideals confront or conflict with experiences and sensations needs to be examined. The negation of spatial and geographical concerns in particular account for a great degree of disconnect or mismatching of expectation and experience. I propose that an emphasis on body-environment awareness would diffuse the “disconnect” and open the possibility of collaborative engagements to be developed through a globalised tourism culture.
To illustrate these experiences I draw from my fieldwork notes and photographic documentation, taken from the perspective of a researcher-tourist. The following insights offer recollections that emphasise experiences that exceed the expected tourist actions as we experience collaborative engagements with environments.

In-transit with/in Nepal

Like many travellers, I approached my trip to Nepal with idealised notions of Himalayan vistas. Upon arrival, it quickly became evident that unless out on a trekking route, pristine views of these giant mountains are relatively scarce from the cities. When I did see my first glimpse of a Himalayan peak, I was overjoyed at the scale of the mountains and the way they dominate the sky above. However, when gazing at the peak from a rooftop cafe, although it was picturesque, I would hardly describe it as an immersive experience of the environment. Instead, such experiences of (re)composure—due to environmental conditions—are often found in unexpected moments. When made aware of obscure and haptic interactions, when our bodies move in unusual ways, when we collaboratively move with other tourists, the reconfigurations of body and environment to body-environment are experienced.

For example, let me share an experience of a domestic flight within Nepal, between the cities of Pokhara and Kathmandu:

The small 20-seater plane climbed, breaching the clouds to reveal peaks glistening. Moving parallel to the Himalaya, the view was fragmented by the 9 small windows on the left side of the plane. People clamber around the cabin, despite the seatbelt sign being on. Climbing over each other, strangers holding each other’s cameras, taking photos for each other. Sitting on each other, sharing the access to the windows. While we flew, little attention was paid to the flashing warning lights and alarms from the cockpit, as the plane bumped around in turbulence. The weight of shifting bodies tilted the plane, as the flight attendant tried in vain to get everyone to remain seated. Our experience was distant, yet we were captivated by the Himalayas. (Journal extract, 30 September 2013).
On the surface, this event could be a purely visual engagement, or a visual consumption of a landscape. However, this experience was not a one-way tourist gaze, nor generic photography of landmarks rather, the actions reveal a communal exchange of bodies and materials, prompted by the environment. The framing of the aircraft cabin windows and the photographic practices impose an expectation of the aesthetic context. The movements within the cabin, and the fact that we were traversing the country in a plane, made the linkages between visual and bodily sensations more evident as the proximity between people shifted. Although we were inside a pressurised aircraft cabin, flying probably a hundred kilometres away from the Himalayan range, this scenario demonstrates how environments have the ability to mediate experiences such as tourist practices.

Similarly, while I was staying at a guesthouse above the city of Pokhara, where the Annapurna range of the Himalaya is visible, myself and other
tourists staying there climbed to the roof each morning to photograph the sunrise over the Himalaya. Although still at a significant distance from the guesthouse, the range was so wide it filled and exceeded our peripheral vision.

More than a usual gaze, a tourist gaze, as John Urry and Jonas Larsen explain, is “an embodied practice that involves senses beyond sight” (2011: 20). This embodied process draws on and extends idealisations and collective experiences of an environment, harnessing the actions occurring in the moment.

*In-transit with/in Iceland*

In Iceland, the environment enveloped and altered fellow travellers and myself in different ways. For instance, in June when daylight hours are long, the experience of sunset united myself and other travellers with the environment:

I sat with two fellow travellers, who were also staying at the hostel, on the rocks in the West of Reykjavík, from about 10:30pm till after midnight. We were mesmerised by the sunset as it silhouetted
Snæfellsness in the distance. Immersed in the multi-coloured hue of the fading sunlight. Everything around us was bathed in a redish-pinkish-orangey glow. The footpath, road, our bodies, all bathed. The sunset enveloped us. (Journal extract, 5 June 2012)

But it was more than just the light at high latitude; it was feeling the Nordic sunset, familiar to many, but ever so exotic and surreal for us as tourists only temporarily in the “North”.

Image 46: Sunset in Reykjavik, June.

Image 47: Sunset in Reykjavik, June.

Image 48: Sunset in Reykjavik, June.
Silence between us as we watched, waited, felt. After sunset we walked back to the hostel. It was after midnight, dark inside the dorm room. The “dark” was red-pink-orange. I searched through my bag, fumbling for my pyjamas. I couldn’t help but giggle about my vision, it felt like being mildly intoxicated and disoriented. On hearing my giggling, one of the guys I had been sitting with remarked about how his vision was pink. Whispering, we all agreed. “Now this is how you pack a bag”, he said, “you have to go stare at the sunset for hours and then try to find your belongings in all the pink”. (Journal extract, 5 June 2012)

In an account that bears an uncanny resemblance to this experience, Manning (2013) writes about the “yellowness” of a kitchen wall illuminated by sunlight. She states, “[t]he luminosity is less object than field of relation. It is less color as such than compositional force” (2013: 25). Dis-orienting, situating, re-orienting. Manning describes this as “an immediate feeling activated by the event of the light” (2013: 25). Sensation and site shift, mingle, and merge to become part of the “experiential complexity” of a “comprehensive aesthetic” of the environment (Benediktsson 2007: 214).34

The similarity in experiencing sunlight, in Manning’s example and my recollection as tourist, is not a mediation of experience through sunlight, it is one of the many ways in which we feel these site-specific events. The light is not a simple overlay or a connection of the landscape and the room we were within rather, it is part of the complex relationships formed between ourselves, the objects, the architecture and the landscape. What this travel event makes evident is how individuality is breached through relations between the site, the season, and the bodies we felt through. The environment is manifested through the process of dis/re-orientation that is felt as movements across body-environments.

34 It is important to note that Karl Benediktsson is talking about landscapes and nature, while I incorporate these as part of what constitutes the environment. However, I take his caution that the geography of such an environment needs to “take visual values seriously” in order to delve into a realm of multi-sensory and aesthetic concerns (Benediktsson 2007: 214).
Transiting with an environment is a collaborative experience that catalyses moments in travel that make us aware of the ways in which we are moving with and interacting with the environment that envelops us. In particular, the felt-sensations of experience, their aesthetic intensities, and the movements that are required to carry out body-environment interactions when in-transit. The form of collaborations that result allow travellers to share and relish experiences that are subtle movements and transitions.

“environment-movement” net-artwork

If documentation is a form of compilation, of processing of information and experience, then creative work becomes a way of exploring the trajectories of insight extracted from the body in-situ. My compilation approach—of positioning photographs that framed the environment in a touristic ideal alongside the documentation of packing—informs the way I process the data and then devise my own creative documentation.
The net-artwork “environment-movement” contemplates movements that go between immersive, enveloping environmental transitions, and the subtle, micro, everyday process of packing. The interactive component involves the viewer controlling the mouse, which is programmed with a corresponding set of movements so that when the viewer scrolls left or right, the time-lapse photography or panoramic imagery moves as well. The potential for movement created by the viewer is specific to the interface but presents an experience analogous to the coordination of small and large scales movements required when negotiating the terrain depicted. Situating practice as a documented lived-experience and then expanding this through creative engagement is a key component of my research. It is incidental that these compilations of images confirm the personal experiences that I am recounting. While the personal experience is important to note, the compilations also reveal aspects of the site that combine to give a heightened awareness of the many collective processes and socio-cultural influences that form our understandings of a specific site.

Image 50: Screenshot of “environment-movement”.

Movements shown in the net-artwork “environment-movement” are not representational but are offered as indication of actions to be felt by the viewer. Actions are both productive and contemplative. One approach to this net-artwork might have been to simulate the experience of personalised engagement with the depicted destination for the viewer. However, I decided instead to focus on the movement between the way tourists ideals mesh with sensations of the moment in order for actions to be felt across body-environments. This occurs through the combination of documentation and touristic experiences, which the net-artwork allows us to examine. In addition the net-artwork draws on ethnographic documentation as a way of tracking site-specific movements and experiences. The work situates itself as a relationship between the activity of packing and experiencing the site, where body-environment compositions momentarily arise.

Because we can be anywhere when accessing this artwork online, we momentarily re-align and re-orient to fit with/in an environmental composure. When we turn our focus from an experience created by an artwork to daily routines and processes, such as packing, the adjusted understandings and re-orientations of situation, scales, and processes persist for a little while. In some instances we take these shifts onboard and adapt these new orientations, which then feed back into the relations we make with the environment.
From Collaborative Re-orientations to Flexive Practices

There are many experiences in travel that mark the interdependence of our bodies with a specific environment. The examples I have detailed here are a selection of moments during transit in which sensations and movements congeal to afford new experiences and understandings of environments. Becoming aware of these processes allows minute and subtle shifts in our practices to emerge in-transit. Moments when we do not resist collective movements open the possibility of enactive relationships in which we are composed by and are composing with environments. It is within such moments that an alert and ecologically concerned tourism practice can begin to develop.

There is an imperative that we take heed of our actions as we transit, becoming aware of the more subtle, less-impactful movements that can be carried out while still maintaining a heightened touristic experience. In doing so, art—as a technique of creating awareness—raises ethical questions. This may occur as a re-evaluation of what it means to consume a landscape or destination, or by exploring ways in which the scales of movements erode both the cultural imaginary and the ability of the land to maintain the very eco-system that draws travellers in.

The reconceptualisation of the term environment makes it possible to reconsider how bodies, objects and landscapes—that is, actors both human and non-human—constitute each other. Through specific examples of how tourists bring preconceived notions of nature and environmental experiences, which perpetuate socio-cultural ideals, it becomes possible to make artwork that targets the foundations between idealised imaginings and actual lived experiences occurring in-situ. The artistic production is a compilation of documentation and lived experience while travelling, reinforces the need for increased awareness of the creative, affective relations that develop through body-environmental composures.
In the next chapter I pinpoint how these moments are indicative of *flexive practices*, foregrounning opportunities where increased awareness and attunements to site-specific actions can occur. Points where our actions are co-creative with the environment that we are with/in harness a relational and flexive mode of production, where new practices and techniques are forged.
Chapter 5: Flexive Practices

Throughout the exegesis I have emphasised the ways in which being in transit attunes our disposition to materials and increases our awareness of spatial effects that culminate in an understanding of being part of the environment. The spatialising of interactions and coalescence of relationships as a function of site-specific engagements enables my practice-led approach to engage with discourses typically considered to reside outside the purview of the creative arts. Various theories, contemporary artworks, and the development of my own techniques leads me to focus on relationality and movement within and between actors (people, objects, ideas, practices, processes, and contexts). These considerations result in a materially-oriented methodology, a postdisciplinary approach, and an arts practice of making while in-transit.

The process that has emerged from the research project I call flexive practices. This notion spans professional, touristic, and everyday practices. While a general observation can be made across different situations in different sites of activity, I bring a unique focus to the analysis and subsequent deployment of relationality and movement: the lens of site-specificity (situatedness), and sensitivity to material-spatial processes (new materialism).

In this chapter I flesh-out the notion of flexive practices and discuss my artwork series “Site-specific diagrams”. In this way I examine the relationships between a general theory of flexive practice alongside specific flexing techniques that develop during packing. These connections inform how we can harness awareness, and guide actions to become a form of creative knowledge production, both in daily life and in-transit scenarios.

First, I work through the notion of relationality and how this extends in space and time, warping space affectively and pulling the future into the present. Then I highlight the ways in which travellers are implicated in the production of fluid and flexive spatial boundaries and material processes, drawing on
Massumi’s notion of “spatializing” (2011, original emphasis) and extending my analysis of transit aesthetics. Third, through a discussion of my “Site-specific diagrams” series I suggest how artworks distil sensitivities and experiences that direct our new awareness, as we respond to each situation in specific and situated ways. These discussions lend themselves to teasing out moments where human and non-human actors are united through processes that harness creative moments—which flex spatial and material boundaries—within the processes of the everyday transitions and experiences of being in-transit. Examples of these types of flexive practices, where we become aware of our relationships and movements with environments, will be developed later in this chapter.

**Defining the flexive**

Procedures that aid our (re)orientations become flexive practices. The ability to be flexive reflects a potential for movement, and an understanding of the relational power of movements that alter material or spatial compositions. Flexivity is an adaptive and eclectic approach to action. The word flexive describes the potential that is prior to interaction. Being flexive is not a re-action, it harnesses the potential of movement that remains unfixed, resisting a probable trajectory, line or permanent boundary.

Flexing requires movement and relationality, particularly an awareness of how relationships form and shift. Practices that emerge as we move with materials, spaces, and environments are flexive. That is, our movements respond to and actively inflect fluid, malleable material and spatial proximities. Situations that combine habitual material-spatial configurations are necessarily overturned. Flexive practices indicate the potential new and creative experiences, which arise through a variety of adaptive techniques that respond to the composure of each situation, for instance, when packing a bag.

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36 Although obsolete, the Oxford English Dictionary defines the adjective “flexive” as “tending to bend” or “flexible” (“† flexive, adj.” 2014).
Flexive practices align with and fold into a practice-led form of knowledge acquisition, production, and transmission. The practices undertaken for this research are indicative of creative and processual encounters (both in fieldwork and in my arts practice) that have informed my research, enabling me to extract techniques that respond to material-spatial and environmental influences.

Flexive practices developed by travellers strengthen their relations with materials and spaces, and allow environments (all actors) to coalesce in direct relation to a given site. These creative enactments, specific to the moment and the site, could be extracted and applied to an analysis and production of innovative artistic and everyday activities.

**Relationality Flexes Time and Space**

Movements that are undertaken during packing are embedded within a complex system of movements-within-movements that constantly transform within processes of transit. Relations emerge and dissolve. Some assist us in orienting and using the complexity of collaborative movements. To track and analyse this complexity, theoretical and practical engagements are needed to pinpoint where an awareness of relationality might have formed through generative and tentative actions: flexivity. It is only when we become aware of the fragility and malleability of relationships that we can interact with the fluidity of spatial boundaries and material processes.

When we pack, filling the gaps in a bag often becomes a puzzle and turns into a task where the movements of bodies and objects are determined by “the combination of ... usefulness and space available”, as one traveller describes. “See it looks like I don’t know what I’m doing, it’s a mess, but it’s all like totally under control”, another traveller explains. Relationships form through proximities and spatial arrangements as the packing process develops through practice. Many travellers comment that their packing process has evolved as they undertook more frequent travel or travelled for
longer durations. Reflecting on the arrangement of objects, another traveller remarks, “I think for the last few months I’ve been more or less content with, ah, with where everything is”. These comments draw attention to the relations of objects that are forged by spatial proximities, rather than the usual focus on conscious decisions and ideals of how travellers want to arrange objects.

**Relational movements**

Spaces are alive and act (Massey 2006b: 2). They are integral to how relations unfold. As actors, spatial experiences are malleable and, like any material/immaterial actor, are susceptible to re-forming relations through inter-action. In order to determine how travellers are implicated in the production of flexive material and spatial configurations, attention must be paid to our movements with all actors—through an increased attunement to spatialities. Oscillations from individual-local to collective-global experiences forge networks and relations through movement (Latour 2007: 172). As Massey notes: “[a]ll is movement. ‘Multiplicity’ requires that we negotiate our interrelatedness, for those intersecting trajectories may clash, contradict each other, nestle together ... or require the long hard effort of establishing mutual comprehension” (2006b: 2).

A relational conception of spatiality extends Massey’s notion of the ongoing construction of human and non-human interrelatedness and the attention she pays to the negotiation of multiplicities (2006b: 2). Spatial relationships, whether in travel scenarios or everyday life, become flexive practices when a habitual practice evolves, requiring careful unravelling of the infusion of movements within movements.

The key researcher-practitioner, who has articulated the importance of developing relational thought, is Erin Manning (2009 & 2013). Manning’s notion of “relationscapes” and examination of “how movement can be felt before it actualizes” (2009: 6) is useful in positioning the way space is created through the intersection of creative and philosophical practices. She
suggests that space can be created through relational movements as the actors react and reconfigure together, altering and expanding the spatial boundaries of that situation (Manning 2009: 15). Sensing movement in the moment creates space and encourages flexive processes that alter and skew with the re-actions to spatial and material intensities.

Movements with objects have the ability to activate “experimentation and play by bringing together the pastness of experience (the object as we know it) and its futurity (the object-ecology in its novel unfolding)” (Manning 2013: 95). Manning uses the term “choreographic objects” (2013: 92-93) to describe situations where objects invite movements. She states: “[c]reative autonomous opportunities are more likely to happen when an event alters how you experience space” (2013: 91). Manning suggests that choreographic objects:

present themselves as part of an evolving ecosystem. They extend beyond their objectness to become ecologies for complex environments that propose dynamic constellations of space, time, and movement. These ‘objects’ are in fact propositions co-constituted by the environments they make possible. (Manning 2013: 92)

When attention to an object dissolves the fixed material form, releasing it from its status as an artefact, the potential for flexive movements and alternative spatialities increases.

I propose that the activity of packing presents a similar choreography of objects, where a space is opened for the interplay between the objects being packed and the person that is packing them in mutually constructed movements. In such instances, the expectations and inter-actions are constantly altering networks of relations. It is when things won’t fit, when objects leak, spill, are squashed, that is, they do not act in the way that we expect them to, that we are suddenly made aware of the ways space and material complexities flex. By emphasising the propositional aspect that Manning identifies in the choreographic objects, it become possible to steer away from creating “idealized space” or as Perec eloquently terms it,
producing “Space as reassurance” (2008: 15). Rather, I am trying to draw attention to the way our interactions compose our experiences and require adaptation of our processes, which never settle.

When spaces and materials flex they are producing, altering, and creating relational movements. A different register of movement (towards the propositional and process-oriented) is presented where movements between singular and collective experiences focus on the relationships and potential of moving-with-materials. This is not to be confused with inquiries that emphasise the qualities of movement that are usually considered to be associated with the performance-oriented goals of choreography, which occurs within and are often isolated to individualised forms. By focusing on movement within between and across the ecosystem of objects and events, materiality and relationality, it become possible to break the isolation of singular objects or forms, opening them up to the more-than material (Grosz 2011; Manning 2013).

Flexive movements show the potential for objects to exceed their material forms. During packing the assortment of objects that have been carefully selected to transit with are all as important as the composures of materials that give rise to the situation, such as the architecture of the room, the furniture, the bag, and the body too. Manning’s point is that objects may hold and compose attention, which initiate choreographed and collective movements where “objects are ... more force than form” (2013: 95). Manning’s explanation focuses the composure of the materiality of the object with the movement, in which a situation is created through unique material processes, rather than enforcing the production of a form with pre-defined boundaries.

Therefore, flexivities—the spatial and relational flexing of material agencies—unfold as collective movements produce relationships. Flexive practices are diagrammatic movements that follow connections across previously indiscernible domains or registers of activity.
In the field of mobilities, movement is discussed in a variety of ways that are particularly concerned with the shifts from the macro to the micro, or from the globalised and the everyday. Urry proposes that an experience of mobility involves “moving assemblages of humans, objects, technologies and scripts” (2011: 26) which are infused in an assortment of corporeal, imaginative, objective, virtual, and communicative movement practices (24-25). Creative practice can expand upon the conception of movement, especially where there is potential to affect more than the material forms that initiate or are implicated in the movement. Therefore by focusing on understanding the relationships formed through movement, inquiries that focus on qualities of movement and movement forms can be joined with concerns regarding materiality, site-specificity, and bodily-environmental experiences. It is this multi-layered and multi-level approach to relationships and relationality that inform an expanded discussion of movement and mobility.

It is the shift from singular to multiple, or specific to generic experiences, which alters spatial boundaries and fixed representations of material forms. Only after undertaking this movement (across scales, boundaries, and modes of representation) that “the collective [will] have enough room to collect itself again” (Latour 2007: 172). Individual subjectivities are overcome through experiences that are more-than habitual perception. In this way, felt and sensed, movements have a:

relation to the imperceptible ... Perception can grasp movement only as the displacement of a moving body or the development of a form. Movements, becomings, in other words, pure relations of speed and slowness, pure affects, are below and above the threshold of perception. (Deleuze & Guattari 2004: 280-281)

The insights gleaned from Manning’s relational movement (2009 & 2013) combined with Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of the perception of movement, to show how movement can become a relational mode of (re)composure. Manning continues, proposing that movements compose and re-compose through networks of actors in transition: “[t]his assemblage is a sensing body in movement, a body-world that is always tending, attending to the world” (2013: 2). When we become aware of relations between body-
environments and the processes of action that are unfolding, we can “move beyond our own experience, when we get disoriented in the sound of the in-between, it is the movement that takes over” (Manning 2013: 83).

There is a caution. The “conditions have to be right for this to occur … When the body is no longer a container for movement but a force for the transduction of movement-moving, we will have gone beyond our own experience” (Manning 2013: 83).37 It is helpful—although difficult—to consider ourselves beyond our own immediacy of experience, beyond our individual subjective decisions and actions, and become aware of the body-environment composing.

I am proposing that if approached in a certain way (a materially-oriented, flexive way), situations such as packing a bag, being in-transit, or moving inside of movement, assist in the body-environment composing (together) and are precisely the situations that intensify attunement and become practices that can be applied elsewhere in art and in daily life. Attention to the potentiality of spaces and materials results in movements and relationality which flexive practices extrapolate. So, how is a person affected by an event not registered as a single, isolated occurrence of an individual body? Mol and Law observe that “[w]hile a body-in-practice may incorporate some of its surroundings it may also … excorporate some of its actions. The very activity of intro-sensing may take place outside one’s body-proper” (2007: 96).

Although a single person might initiate an action, the movements are not isolated to the body or the objects in immediate proximity. Bodies do not necessarily perform or act in space or within an environment as the processes and movements can become “of” an environment. Therefore, we may consider actions as a multiplicity of movements that fold, merge, and flex spatialities and materialities.

37 Here, the term “transduction” is used by Manning, following Simondon, as “a redistribution of processes in the making” (2013: 8). In her discussion of choreographic movements, she states that a transduction can be “a jump in register that incites new process—from a thought of movement to a movement of thought, from time measured to time felt” (2013: 81).
The disruption and re-composure of spatial boundaries can be understood through Mol and Law’s (2007) discussion of the sensing of medical conditions, which are simultaneously manifesting inside the body and externally through the actions the body undertakes in an environment. They recount a case in which a patient with hypoglycaemia describes various aspects of activity in her life, detailing how her daily actions are curtailed by the condition. “She incorporates what surrounds her”, they explain, which shows how the “self-aware body has semi-permeable boundaries. … Some bodily activities may take place beyond the surface of the skin” (Mol & Law 2007: 96). Through this example they are suggesting actions traverse bodily boundaries, overturning the expectations of internal/external distinctions in favour of a body-environment composition.

Feeling and sensing can become dispersed across multiple spatial locales (the body’s position, the surrounding architecture, the proximity of activities undertaken to or with other actors, etc.) enacted as collective experience. It is through collective actions that we shift spatial arrangements when movements skew and stretch the usual material designations and proximities.

The artist Olafur Eliasson describes similar bodily and perceptual experiences in situations that inform his creative art practices:

I sense the surroundings and sense myself searching for sense. This vast [Icelandic] landscape is like test site that nurtures ideas and helps me process them into felt feelings – maybe even into art. Exercising physical and perceptual means of charting out space, of becoming … raises questions that might just as easily be asked at different times in different situations, removed from their art context. Depth, time, psychological and physical engagement, perception – topics abound for which the landscape welcomingly offers experimental conditions and material. In Iceland and elsewhere, I continuously exchange my private being for a shared reality. I – sensorium, feelings, memories, convictions, values, thoughts, uncertainties – only am in relation to the collective. (2013: 125)
Eliasson’s comments pinpoint the flexivity that develops when we become aware of our senses, our interactions, and the way in which we situate ourselves in specific sites. He terms this activity as “sensory re-evaluation” (Eliasson 2013: 130), where the processes of (dis/re)orientation are magnified by our attunement to movements and interactions. They move beyond the individual, becoming a collective within an ecology of relations.

Eliasson’s reflections on the situational influences are important to my understanding of how flexive practices may arise. His examples demonstrate how such practices in specific situations can be utilised to drive further creative production for artists and researchers, as well as in everyday experiences. When body-environments are in constant negotiation and spatial (re)configuration, it benefits the individual through heightened awareness of new possibilities for interaction with the collective. One can see the benefits of these interactions when everything oscillates: material, spatial, and bodily. Flexive practices are creative because, in development and execution, they generate the potential for transversal connections and alternative (postdisciplinary) modes of knowledge production in moments of transition.

**Spatialising and Flexing**

In Chapter 3, I demonstrated the importance of spatiality within my creative research and established that the packing process involves movements across and through spatial boundaries. Combining the discussion of relational movements with a focus on spatial qualities, I will now extend my earlier analysis of informational diagrams in order to examine the spatialising process in relation to my notion of flexive practices.

I am interested in how the fluidity of spatial arrangements can lead to flexive experiences that rely on spatial and material interactions. Relations that emerge during packing emphasise the ability of movements to alter spatial expectations. Massumi’s articulation of “spatializing” (2011) is helpful in this
regard because it emphasises that experiences drawn from spatial qualities are emergent. I understand these qualities, therefore, to be flexive, relational movements.

When an object, in this case a bag, is presented as a complete material entity in which the “[o]utside, inside are offset against each other as different regions defined by the boundary: they are spatialized” (Massumi 2011: 92). Massumi examines the process of “spatializing” (2011: 90, original emphasis) through a diagram in which the process of black lines coming together to form an oval is described and analysed. As separate lines converge they “propagate into an outline” (Massumi 2011: 91), and thus are perceived as the figure of the oval.

Yet, before the lines propagate, each single line stands apart from the others, and apart from the white of the paper on which it is drawn. This difference between black and white and between ink and paper, creates limits in which
the figure of the oval ceases to exist. These limits are not yet spatial, since it is in the accrual of their possible relationship to each other that they are constructing space or “spatializing” (Massumi 2011: 90, original emphasis).

In the same way, the already spatialised packed bag, which designates closed-off interior-exterior boundaries, changes when it becomes part of a spatialising activity. When packing, the bag—in negotiation with the objects placed within it and the body packing—shifts between interior-exterior spatial parameters. Massumi’s oval is a spatialising event and the bag is a spatialising process, which highlights the ecology of relations required to construct space and spatial distinctions. The event inflects object, body, and the environment.

Future-spaces (to be unpacked and re-filled) and past spaces merge through an accumulation of materials and movements. In this instance, spatialising creates the potential for future and past spaces that are activated during movement. The focus is no longer on the moment of objects as singular entities in space per se. Instead, attention shifts to the movements occurring in the spaces being forged through relations.

As lines or materials move and are moved, they open and flex spatialities and find themselves in a processes of collaboration, moving with each other, forming and reforming. Massumi’s spatialising oval (2011), Manning’s relational movements (2009), and packing a bag, are events that become body-environments, blurring boundaries between the designated, expected consequences, the spatial and material arrangements, and the network of relations that guide their emergence.

**Spatialised negotiations**

A traveller endearingly recounted the turbulent process of packing they had witnessed. The following anecdote illustrates the unexpected or unplanned events during packing, and the adaptive capacity of flexive practices.
I met this guy ... and he lost everything because he was so, you know, his personality, it just the way he was ... And he was packing, everything was like, I dunno, maybe five meters from each other, like it had exploded everywhere on the grass [laughs] ... He was just standing and looking in his underwear, and he didn’t know where everything was, and he was just trying to pack it ... he said, ‘I don’t know how this happened, I had so much stuff!’ And he lost everything, [with emphasis] I mean everything! ... he didn’t care, he was a mess. It was really funny to see how he was packing.

... we’d been waiting for him for two hours, and his process about packing was just, took over everything ... I mean, for him, everything mattered, even a sock, or the camera. If he lost his sock he would be as devastated as if he lost his camera. But it happened all the time, he got used to loosing a GoPro camera or that sock ... it’s just interesting to see how every little object had a certain affect on him.

The tumultuous process this traveller witnessed demonstrates an instance where the individual’s subjective decisions are being shifted and overturned as the actions are distributed across all actors in the packing process. The spatial boundaries of packing, in this example, are far from rigid and fixed. Not quite to plan, not quite spatialised, but in the process of spatialising. Agency is no longer isolated to an individual actor but is distributed across collective movements. In this situation the traveller relinquishes control over action as they allow the bag and objects to hover in negotiation.

Another traveller that I interviewed had spread their entire belongings throughout the common area of the locker room. They explained:

the reason I’ve spread it out is because I had honey spill everywhere, so... Yeah, this little jar of honey, and somehow it was protected in this like, put here, kind of thing, so this doesn’t break, it’s pretty tough. Somehow it got like loose, and... it is runny, I didn’t notice that.

Again, a non-human actor holds more agency in this haphazard situation. The entire locker room filled with the aroma of honey as they packed, breaching the usual proximities of packing. The honey would always be infused in the packing process as it covered most of their belongings with a sticky residue, even after several washes. The aroma infused all actors
within this spatialising event. Relations were forged by the honey and set off a different set of spatial experiences of packing for this traveller.

Both examples reveal the spatialising processes arising from unexpected interactions with non-human actors. Our proximities and boundaries are fluid and flexive and the assemblage of actors is far from a rational, spatialised ideal of how the packing should have occurred.

*Spatialising instructions*

Creative works take advantage of events that capsize the boundary identities found in the packing process, especially when the event proposes new relations, breaching intended actions and idealised situations. In these moments alternative spatialities are opened and our perspective and orientation is set askew. We may even attempt to align ourselves within the new tumultuous actions of the event.

Having played with the hybrid mixtures that arise in transit aesthetics in my earlier artwork series “Instructional diagrams” (discussed in chapter 3), I will now detail how these aesthetic techniques (arrows, pictographics, shifting spatial boundaries and scales, and absences of horizon lines) are extended into practices that are indicative of being flexive. To do so, I draw on my “Site-specific diagram” series, highlighting how the notions of spatialising and site-specificity are interwoven in transit experiences. They shift from hybrid aesthetics and spatialities to flexive states, addressing what might be the outcomes of flexive practices—as movements-within-movements, or body-environment composures.

The “Site-specific diagrams” push even further into the connections between a referenced experience and a poetic depiction of a situation. They extract moments of subtle, poetic negotiations of materials, spaces, and environments, presenting techniques for new orientations and composures in travel scenarios. They push, if you will, a poetics of space against transit aesthetics. Poetics is generally understood as making (poiesis) that produces condensed passages of experience and understanding through the rules and
forms of a grammar and syntax. However a poetics of space (Bachelard 1994; Perec 2008) suggests this same concentration may be applied to spaces and spatial intelligence. Following a similar logic of sense-making and sensory correlation, the poetics of the instructional diagrams can be said to reveal just how much these very practical and functional artefacts rely upon a history of creative techniques of spatial representations in art. Problems in communication, and potentials for poetic meaning, arise within the diagrams when the stylised representations are made to conflict, or are not clearly referential, or jump from one mode of spatial representation and relation to another. However, poetics may also be the gateway to the making of new meaning and evoking experiences that have not happened yet.


The artwork “How to move with glacier” is a composition of glacial and packing movements. In card three, the hand anchors a spatial reference point. A reader might infer from the congealing of lines and perspective that the hand is in motion or is perhaps grasping some material and, as a result, begins to spatialise the amorphous topography under the hand.

Approaching this artwork as an instructional series, the question is raised as to how does one attempt to move-with a glacier while packing a bag? While gazing at a glacier requires undertaking a different set of procedures to packing a bag, what this artwork extrapolates and plays with are the overlaps
of attention to materials—moving-with-materials—and the spatialising process of not-quite finalised actions. For instance, in card three the exterior environment is implied by a blank white space and a few black lines and some shaded colours. It requires work to make sense of the ambiguous image that seems to be connected to the images in card one (the close-up image of the glacier) or card two (the materials of the fabrics that the hand is grasping). The lines hover on the white page, merging with the shades of colour—spatialising—not yet formed, still malleable and filled with potentiality. They disregard previous “association[s] of representation with space” (Massey 2007: 20) in favour of actions in formation.

The “Site-specific diagrams” reference materials, forces, and aesthetic resonances within specific sites in Nepal and Iceland. They combine and contrast intensities of experience with mundane, finite movements that are simultaneously being undertaken, such as when packing. The lines in the diagrams propagate into figures, such as the body of a person, environment, or the objects being packed, which are influenced by the associated images and the imaginary qualities the location conjures.
Lines and colours merge to demarcate space, and figures and situations approach the threshold of recognition. The experience of this congealing recognition is suspended in a simultaneous jarring from the lack of context and the lack of completed forms. It is ambiguous as to whether the elements within constructed hybrid images coordinate sufficiently to induce a spatialised understanding because, although they are inspired by a specific site, they confound spatial references. Ironically this makes the site-specific diagrams spatialising events rather than a mixing of spatial representations. The images cannot be discerned as complete forms, yet they point toward an experience of intensity where experience of materials congeal, forming and re-forming body-environment composites.

The unfixed yet inviting relationships of the diagrams are analogous to the situations encountered when packing a bag or encountering a mountain. They unfold through action and through spatialising and materialising proximities – even before materials and spaces have been actualised. The artworks are flexive: not quite formalised, and not yet completed actions. They are propositions for how flexive practices might be enacted. The “Site-specific diagrams” extract sensitivities of the merging of sensations of the moment and the tourist ideals, which influence actions. Simultaneously contemplating obscure and haptic moments during transit, the diagrams also inform future actions of realignment and re-orientation in specific scenarios.

In this manner, a flexive practice is a different approach, and attunement to, completing tasks; once complete the processes of completing the tasks take on different qualities and resonances. For instance, rather than taking a photograph and “gazing” at a glacier, when we arrive upon this unique geological event, what if we were to undertake a series of creative procedures and re-orientations that allow for collaborative (re)composures? The outcomes of taking a tourist-style photograph of a glacier, as opposed to the attempt to move-with a glacier, produce vastly different qualities for experience. Similar to Eliasson’s “sensory re-evaluations” (2013: 130) alongside landscape encounters, the outcomes of approaching a situation with a disposition to flexivity—the potential within events and environments to
think and feel relationally and spatially beyond oneself—could open vastly different avenues of experience.

In my “Site-specific diagrams”, the transit aesthetics are pushed to a state where the artworks are object-events or choreographic-objects (under the guise of artefacts) that reference and encourage flexivities. The diagrams are structures, or ideas, that move toward flexive practices, and in turn, produce another kind of experience when enacted (artistic, touristic, everyday, etc.). They push our attunements to materialities, spatialities, and environments towards movement and relation—spatialising and forging collective movements—through a flexive practice.

**Flexive situations**

Flexive practices emerge from adaptive moments of realignment and reorientation to a specific situation and site. An event emerges through a series of spatialising and materialising compositions that contribute to a flexive situation. The processes that travellers use to adapt to these situational re-compositions become conducive to the formation of an ongoing flexive practice.

The following reflection from my journal while packing in Dalvík, Northern Iceland, demonstrates what a flexive situation in packing might be and how a flexive practice might emerge:

I sit on the wooden floor in the hostel. I wonder about all the other wooden floors I’ve packed on, and how uncomfortable they were. My feet are cold, I’ve tucked them under my legs, kneeling, now they’re going to sleep – pressure from my body and the resistance of the hard wooden floor. I consider getting up and sitting on the bed, but being perched down on the floor amongst all of the objects seems practical. The objects I want are spread out, dispersed across the floor. As I reach over to grab each item, I fumble on my knees and hands on the floor, stumbling across other items as I stretch out to grasp something. I lean on my backpack, hovering, crouching, as I lean further to grasp. Kneeling, squatting, on the floor, my feet going numb from being
bent at unusual angles as I manoeuvre around the pile that has spilt out of my bag. (Journal extract, 25 November 2013)

Often the texture and surface of the floor that I am packing upon resonates strongly. For instance, a hard wooden floor, although nice to look at, sometimes rubs against the skin on my knees and feet. Wooden floors tend to congeal dust and tangles of hair on their surface, ready to be attached to any item that is placed on the floor. The intersection of the material (body, bag, objects, floor) and immaterial actors (the mood I am in, the weather, the schedule for the day) merges into site-specific relations that conjure a flexive situation.

Image 55: Photograph of myself packing in a hostel in Dalvík, Northern Iceland.

The relations that we feel and sense as composes make us aware of how we are situated and the qualities of the situation—as a delicate arrangement in which any movement affects all actors in any given environment, such as the aircraft, the hostel, or the glacial debris that moves me as I watch the slow creep of the ice, folding and unfolding into itself.
It is helpful to consider the suggestion from Ben Anderson (2009) that spaces can produce affects that constitute an atmospheric quality. He states that atmospheres are “spatially discharged affective qualities that are autonomous from the bodies that they emerge from, enable and perish with” (Anderson 2009: 80). Although using the term atmosphere, Anderson is pointing to a notion of affects that helps to tease out flexivities—a pervasive felt potential—which merge diverse actors into a site-specific composure. Similarly, Elizabeth Grosz describes the transformative procedures in which “something incorporeal, rife with the contingency of the momentary and largely unrepeatable alignments of things and processes” produces events (2011: 20). As I become aware of how actors and movements coalesce in a situation—a particular site and configuration of action—what I sense and feel is an event that merges pasts and presents with future potentials. The flexivity of the situation arises through the amplification of site-specific processes.
A moment to pause and collect the implications of my example is needed. The packing process is never isolated to my own decisions or myself. The season, the architecture, the geographical location, are site-specific qualities that affect the packing process more than the movements of my hands.
shifting objects within and without of the bag. These qualities join with and drive the interactions in specific ways. What I am suggesting is that actions take on a selection of qualities, manifesting as an atmospheric flexing of feeling-sensing-doing, which is feeding back into and altering the composition of the situation.

An amplification of the climate and the geographical proximity both contribute to an environmental perception of where we are located and how the surrounds are invested in the actions occurring. What now returns are site-specific affects that (re)inform every movement—this is the flexive situation, open to a host of possibilities and contingencies that belong to and emerge from events specific to that site.

Flexive situations occur in which the singular-multiple collective experiences of past and future packing are compounded by relational movements that propel body-material-spatial-environment (re)compositions. “Climate, wind, season, [and] hour are not of another nature than the things, animals, or people that populate them, follow them, sleep and awaken within them” (Deleuze & Guattari 2004: 263). Flexive practices hone in on these moments in which affects are composing through body-environmental interactions: situating, orienting, and altering the process.

Producing Flexive Practices

Packing and travel present an entanglement of ideals, sensations, creativity, and collaboration. Interactions with a range of actors give us moments of pause within a flurry of events to extract a practice that is flexive and ready to inflect the next situation. Packing and transiting highlight the combining of our individual subjective decisions with collective movements. Ecologies of relations are forged through the intermeshing of forms and fixtures, spaces and situations that resonates through and beyond disciplinary techniques. The “Site-specific instructional diagrams” provide a contemplation of
spatialising processes and how opportunities to investigate moments of flexive actions could occur.

Practices that are flexive harness the potential of a situation, allowing movements to unfold across an array of actors, such as the relationships forged by the coldness of a dusty wooden floor, or the residual aroma of a leaking jar of honey. Movement, in this sense, is no longer bound to rigid or fixed spatial boundaries or material proximities. Instead, actions are collective, pushing, bending, flexively composing and recomposing experience. Practices that are developed and utilised during packing are not necessarily just movements or displacements of bodies and objects; they warp, break, and move past spatial boundaries and push material interactions toward collaboration and collective concerns. Flexive practices overturn expected actions in an ongoing process to which travellers get accustomed.

Sensing ourselves askew can prompt awareness, connection, and a new perspective on an environment. When a moment feels overwhelming, causing hesitation, pause, or contemplation of something that is not quite aligned with habitual expectations, it is at these points in which flexivities are being felt and sensed, as our interactions become the entangled, constantly recomposing body-environment.
Chapter 6: Creativities In-transit

This research project has revealed the many subtle, communal experiences that being in-transit facilitates. Examining situations in travel that open possibilities for collective actions highlights moments where humans and non-humans move together and where creative potential that informs creative practices can emerge. In turn, these creative practices can be used to feed back into future movements and compositions, creating situated, collective experiences, no matter where one is experiencing transition.

In this final concluding chapter I reflect upon the ideas that informed my discussions and tie practical and theoretical engagements together to yield examinations of our movements and alternative “flexive” practices. The exegesis offers a postdisciplinary context in which these new modes of knowledge acquisition and production take place and from which they can move and develop.

This chapter fuses insights drawn from my investigations of material, spatial, environmental, and bodily experiences that occur in-transit and looks at the trajectory of the project through numerous conceptual and practical lenses. It demonstrates how flexive practices can arise and remain open to collective movements.

How We Transited to Here

To hone in on the creative processes experienced during transit, I focused the project by deploying three foci: travel, site-specificity, and diagrammatic techniques, within three overarching themes: materiality, spatiality, and environment. They have acted as the touch points within these larger research discourses, which I used to navigate through practical and theoretical perspectives. This combination of foci within larger thesmatics informed my movements within and across art, mobilities studies, tourism, and practices that develop from everyday movements. The common thread
running through each of these scenarios is movement more broadly understood as both being in-transit and undergoing transition.

*Travel / Site-specificity / Diagrammatic techniques*

I began the exegesis with an examination of travel through the inkling that procedures developed during transit, specifically within the process of packing a bag, presented an entry to the production of creativities that transiting can engage. What I found is that a shift away from traditional human-centric subjectivities is required, through moving towards a processual subjectivity that is “collectively bound” (Braidotti 2006: 136-137). The collective-subjectivity provides a creative potential that can be distilled from our interactions during transit, opening a realm of potential for the creative arts to contribute to postdisciplinary concerns.

The focus on travel highlights the way materiality combines with spatiality because situations that arise in-transit often require the overturning of expected actions and habitual routines. To address this understanding of the ways in which agency is distributed across humans and non-humans, during the first section of fieldwork I developed the net-artwork “bodies+bags (moving-in-between)”. Within communal environments (for example, a hostel, a plane, a landscape) the common spatial relationships between bodies and materials reconfigure, and our interactions tend to be carefully negotiated.

The notion of site and site-specificity gave me a way to articulate how material and spatial relationships merge and rely upon points of contrast between material-spatial ideals (of how we expect to undertake actions) and lived experience. Drawing on the socio-cultural imaginaries that surround destinations like Nepal and Iceland, I discussed the net-artwork “environment-movement” to explore the disjuncture between habitual routines used to orient oneself in an environment and the resonances that immersive environments produce, which require subtle shifts of orientation within these sites.
I deployed diagrammatic techniques to link information across the material and spatial, idealised and immersive, relational and collaborative domains. This approach allowed me to connect the variety of ways that travellers adapt to the array of movements involving materials, spaces, bodies, and environments. The production of the “Instructional packing diagrams” and “Site-specific diagrams”—through a diagrammatic approach to interpreting collected data—enabled me to track the points at which the assemblage of movements coalesced into a relational network of actors. The insights I drew from the complex in-situ investigations revealed that human and non-human agencies are bound together through and in transit (both movement and transition). This is a rich and creative space of perception, adjustment, and acknowledgement of multiple actors that provides openness to movement within and across established boundaries.

As movements within movements, the diagrammatic relations allow for collective actions to become perceptible and take hold, resulting in situations where decisions are beyond the individual. When practices become flexive, a diagrammatic process assists in harnessing the emerging relationships, assisting new alignments and compositions of experience to become possible.

*The trajectory of the project*

The trajectory that this project has taken can be summarised by looking at people in-transit and finding a context that was expansive enough to consider all manner of transitions. I found that my creative arts background became most useful in forming a *materially-oriented methodology* (based upon engagement with the materiality and agency of materials). Placing this method into situations, such as travel, the ways in which the experiences are fed back to the traveller resulted in a *transit aesthetics* (the hybrid of didactic, descriptive, indexical, symbolic and illustrative modes of depiction and reference). The ability to identify the way the stylistic representational techniques, and the experiences which they attempt to refer, enabled me to understand how my work might move across media as the ideas were
operating across a range of different techniques and technologies. The overlaps and differences in each media thus became the focus of the creative production. In this way, travel experiences correlate with creative practice, which always deploy a number of visual, spatial, and technological aspects. My work, when combined with the relational situations of being in-transit and in transition, was much more about the flexing boundaries of collective experience, disciplinary practices, and artistic outcomes.

The implications of this trajectory meant that, in order to address collective concerns rather than disciplinary issues, I had to think across media, distribution, and audiences, to produce relational platforms and experiential situations that allowed the relational, immersive, and performative aspects of materiality and spatiality to be foregrounded. This required a postdisciplinary approach. In this case, the ways in which tourism deals with mobilities, situated experience, and social imagination was an excellent corollary to my concerns with how being in-transit provides opportunities for movement-within-movement. The relational and collaborative (human-non-human) understanding of movement goes hand-in-hand with the move towards collective concerns and approaches that do not adhere to the constraints of specific disciplinary vantage points, but with an intersection of experiences and points of view.

This set of terms, each of which represents an aspect of the processes undergone in my research project, has culminated in what I have called flexive practices. This term captures the qualities of creative practice, tourism and mobilities studies, situated and site conditioned movements, and contemporary ways of articulating these ideas. Through the series “Site-specific diagrams”, I produced a way to compile, track and assess the cumulative affects of previously indiscernible and constantly flexing situations and relationships. By confronting and assessing these situations again and again, I began to understand how flexive practices arise, particularly when spatial and relational flexing of actors unfolds.
When we feel and sense collaborative actions—whether as travellers, as moving bodies, or as creative practitioners—it becomes possible to (re)align and (re)compose with the site we are situated with/in, from which an understanding arises of what kind of flexive potential our movements can have.

**Creative Work: (physical) exhibition + (digital) net-art**

In many ways, the final exhibition is the best form by which to present my conclusions, my understanding of the implications of my research, and the lines of inquiry that my research project has produced. The logic and design of the exhibition is itself an explanation of the diverse modes of both acquiring and producing knowledge.

From the onset, many actions during travel could not be captured and realigned to present a unifying expression of the project in *one particular medium*. Therefore, I produced a range of works during this research project, and each of them has developed from a desire to impart different mixtures of experience (sensing, feeling, thinking, moving). The resulting works have taken the form of digital artworks (net-art or video), physical artefacts, or installation, arising through interactions during travel, ideas extracted from my fieldwork journal, or processes gleaned from the process of documentation.

In this section, I will describe the works to be presented in the final exhibition: “Creativity In-transit”, detailing their structure and relationship as the decision-making process informed this accompanying exegesis. Then I will discuss how the net-artwork “environment movement” forms part of the four final creative works, connecting to but not present within the exhibition space in the gallery, and the reason why alternating between the physical and the digital is integral to the mobile experience of the creative works.
The physical exhibition: “Creativity In-transit”

The exhibition is designed to accumulate the many variations of movements that this research has explored, using the central focus of packing a bag as a way of giving viewers the opportunity to participate in the process. The aim is to make participants aware of the many subtleties of movements and possible interactions with a range of non-human materials, spatialising their processes through the installed works.

The gallery component of the exhibition is comprised of three installed works:

- “Diagramming the packing process”—a hands on experience of packing a bag;
- “Instructional packing diagrams” and “Site-specific diagrams”—two series of images in the form of safety cards, encompassing generic packing procedures and a site-specific series;
- “Packing: movements-in-between” and “How to pack”—installed videos that trace human and non-human movements during packing.

Visitors to the exhibition are invited to become participants, as they are required to interact with the works in a hands-on manner. Each work plays on experiences that we have when travelling, reflecting the ways that we feel and sense ourselves re-orienting after disorienting transit, or the negotiation of materials during the packing process, or, the confined and shared accommodation spaces of hostel dormitories.

Image 57: Sketch of exhibition layout in Red Gallery.

Image 58: Sketch of exhibition layout in Red Gallery.
“Diagramming the packing process” creates the task to pack and unpack a bag. While participants carry out the task of packing one of the bags with assorted objects on the gallery floor, they are encouraged to draw and diagram how they have arranged the objects within the bag. Large sheets of paper, plastic, and marker pens are provided, with directions for them to draw the positioning of objects as they pack, reflecting the spatial relationships and the material proximities of their actions. Once completed, they can pin the sheets of paper and plastic to the wall above the packing area, where the layering of diagrams collates the variations of packing approaches of participants as they visually document their process.
Chapter 6: Creativities In-transit


Image 61: Trial set-up of “Diagramming the packing process”, 2013.

Image 62: Selection of the diagrams produced during the trial of “Diagramming the packing process”, 2013.
The process of literally drawing the arrangement of objects within the bag is what I did in my journal every time I re-packed or re-arranged my bag during transit. These packing diagrams offer reflections on the relationships between objects and the confined space of the bag as a visual depiction. The focus moves beyond the objects as individual entities, by being an assemblage of each participant’s perspective and the decisions made during the packing process. The many diagrams reveal both points of difference and similarity in packing, in that the assemblages of objects within the bag are influenced by practices of spatiality and materiality, such as where objects fit together, layer, and move with each other. The accumulation of overlaid diagrams of each individual’s arrangement emphasises the collective assemblage of objects and spatial relations.

The “Instructional packing diagrams” and the “Site-specific diagrams” series\(^{39}\) pinned to the walls in the gallery emphasise the role that aesthetics and procedural actions play in transit scenarios. As a set of 3-5 laminated posters each, they extract the generic processes of packing as well as the intensified, site-specific actions that can unfold in the format of informational and emergency diagrams frequently encountered during transit. The content and theme of the diagrams is drawn directly from the interview data and my own experiences.

The videos “Packing: movements-in-between” and the series “How to pack” are a compilation of photographic documentation in stop-motion sequences. Key movements have been traced over, where the body meets the bag, or where the objects, body, and bag move together in action. The videos can be viewed in various ways: they are projected on the wall beside the bunk beds and as a screen within the bunk beds. To watch the video, participants need to sit or lie on the bunk beds, absorbing the photographic images and annotated traces of movement. In this way, the situation that I have designed for viewing means that the viewer’s body is positioned on the bunk bed as a functional object, a place to rest or sit.

\(^{39}\) See chapter 2 for in-depth discussion of transit aesthetics and the “Instructional packing diagrams” series, and chapter 5 for analysis of the “Site-specific diagrams” series.
Together the three installed works interweave variations of movements extracted and amplified from situations in-transit. Visitors are invited to be participants. In this sense, they are already undertaking subtle and conditioned modes of movements within the gallery space, for instance walking, wandering or gazing, as well as being explicitly asked to manipulate aspects of the exhibition. The gallery space compliments, and, at times, contrasts with the spectacle of tourism scenarios that are often based upon consumption rather than reflection, or idealised notions of authentic experience rather than relational collective movements.

**Location of the work (gallery as site)**

Since it is not just the materiality of the work alone that is important to my research but the qualities of specific sites and types of sites must also be considered. The issue of the selection of a site to present my project was as complex as the embedded situation encountered when travelling. The fusion of actors, individual ideals and expectations, and sites makes it difficult to find balance for one specific exhibition space.

One approach to the challenge would have been to exhibit the creative works in a hostel: in the situation in which the experiences naturally occur. Because my exhibition draws inspiration from the communal environment that hostelling facilitates (Murphie 2011; Oliveira-Brochado & Gameiro 2013), it may seem that this option offers an intense realism. The dormitory room presents spatial relationships that are in constant formation between bodies and objects. However, I felt that the focus would have too easily shifted from the participation and reflection that the artworks are intended to invite to the spectacle of the hostelling environment.

Another option was to extract the experience to amplify and heighten participation and reflection in another in-between “presentation space”, as the gallery provisionally extracts actual sites from elsewhere and transports them into a specific configuration and presentation. By installing generic bunk beds into a gallery space, as objects that require employing modes of
orientation and interpretation, they alter the movement of visitors through the space, and emphasise the alternating movements associated with public-private sites of rest, activity, and pathways of movement.

Transporting the functions and expectations of the communal hostel environment to the gallery skews experiences of these collective situations towards re-thinking, re-experiencing, and enables new participatory possibilities. In this way, the exhibition draws together and emphasises practices in travel that are creative and foster collaborative interactions.

The digital net-art

My project has traversed many sites. For this reason, it is important to me that the final creative products are not confined solely to the gallery space. Alternating between physical and digital forms of presentation is consistent with my understanding of materiality and the theories that the exegesis has attempted to explore. Presenting net-artworks online, outside, and alongside the work in the gallery, means that the online works will mobilise an audience beyond the gallery in Melbourne, inviting a widespread transitory state. Importantly, the digital creative products can be accessed and interacted with by the many people I’ve encountered in my travels and who have contributed to the research process.

The net-artworks that I have produced during the research offer alternative experiences of material processes. The net-artwork “bodies+bags (moving-in-between)” was transferred into the video “Packing: movements-in-between”, which will be installed in the exhibition. In addition to having the work co-located in a specific site and at a virtual site, I wanted to enhance the tactile materiality of digital interfaces in order to create a potential to “touch a surface, to interrogate it, without being in direct contact with it” (Bassett 2006: 200). The net-artwork for final examination, “environment-

40 “bodies+bags (moving-in-between)” is available at: http://www.kaya.com.au/in-transit/moving.html and has been transferred into video form in the final exhibition. See chapter 2 for discussion.
movement”, is available at: http://www.creativityintransit.com/enviro-move/ (discussed in chapter 5).

Digital interactive artworks offer ways to move beyond the habitual experiences of located materiality. Digital interactivity often prompts collaborative engagement, highlighting relations across experiences. In digital forms, materiality can be “a dynamic quality that emerges from the interplay” (Hayles 2004: 12) of technological processes, texts, conceptual content, and interpretations. The digital acquisition of data and production of creative works has achieved a shift beyond the physical to the digital, in line with the reconceptualisation of materiality that I have worked with. Because, as Hayles explains, “[m]ateriality thus cannot be specified in advance … it occupies a borderland … performs as connective tissue – joining the physical and mental, the artefact and the user” (2004: 72). In the case of the net-artworks I have created, technologically-driven interactivity permits an intensified focus of material engagements. The emphasis on relationships produced by digital interactivity supports the use of the net as an appropriate platform for a practical extension and investigation of relationality, materiality, and the spatialising movements that unfold in-transit.

The final exhibition (located and net-artworks) is the collation of experiences, creative production techniques, theories and approaches to knowledge that are indicative of postdisciplinary practice and necessarily encompass a variety of investigations and outputs. I feel that the alternation between physical and digital spaces allows relationships to emerge across and through mediums, all the more so as no one method or technique was able to adequately translate these experiences. The relationships that the artworks create—as either installed works or net-artworks—never solidify one singular experience, but combine to create an ongoing process of transit.
Contributions to Knowledge

The following section outlines the impacts of my research and how it contributes to the development of new practices and the production of new knowledge. These implications for practice involve the way flexivity (a creative approach to mobilities and relationships) operates in three areas: everyday transitions, creative arts, and tourism.

The experiences during travel examined by my research project indicate a range of procedures that overlap with, and (flexively) extend, everyday transitions and interactions. Our daily processes of transit and being in transition (albeit usually more mundane than international touristic situations) encompass interactions with an array of actors as we creatively negotiate the unfolding of material and spatial complexities. If only momentarily, our movements are open to the potential of collective actions. This research shows how situations where we are moving-within-movements, when we collaborate and attune to subtleties that are beyond our individual actions, we create opportunities for new creative practices and modes of experience that enrich our lives, and clarify our interactions and our impact on the environment.

Situations emerge where our bodily and material constitution are drawn into an ecology of human and non-human actors. By expanding on moments where touristic ideals mesh with sensation, the potential for collaborative experiences that breach human-centric orientation arise. Moments when our daily routines contrast with what we are supposed to feel and achieve reveal opportunities for re-composing oneself in relation to human and non-human encounters. Consequently, these situations infuse everyday and touristic actions in collective processes and contribute to the understanding of experiences of movement and transition.

My research also has implications for creative arts practices, offering ways of becoming more aware of situations where we begin to move beyond our individual actions. This is an entry point for creative arts practices to attune...
and embrace all kinds of mobile encounters. The broad array of mobilities that we are situated within—as tourists, or everyday transitions, or creative researchers and practitioners—offer many ways that creative arts procedures extend on, and can be extended by, the insights and techniques of transit. The creative artworks in the final exhibition exemplify the practical-theoretical intersections I have explored in a series of creative encounters for the viewer-participant.

My project also contributes to and has implications for tourism research and touristic processes. The intersection of practice and theory in my artworks also demonstrate the way a nomadic and relational approach to evaluating transitions becomes a sustainable practice for our relationship with environments, especially tourist destinations. I have highlighted points where our actions are recalibrated towards relational, affective, and flexive practices. Positioning ourselves within a constant state of being in-transit sets up the conditions of transformation that can induce more open and productive relationships in tourism activities. This implies a turning away from consumption and (often detrimental) impact on environments, towards an enhanced sensory engagement with environments. Composures of humans and non-humans help in situating touristic experiences and enriching the ways in which we can understand our interactions and be more aware of the implications of our movements.

My project has worked across a range of disciplinary areas: tourism, mobilities, new materialism, geography, creative arts, and importantly, everyday experience. As a result the research can be positioned as a postdisciplinary inquiry due to its constant engagement with a variety of different approaches to knowledge production. Words such as “materiality”, “spatiality”, and “mobilities” resonate across a number of disciplinary perspectives, however the issues they raise for a community cannot be address by any single discipline or approach. Constant transitions require a plethora of mediums and techniques to adequately address and investigate our diverse movements. In this research I have developed postdisciplinary approaches to hone in on the intensities of movements. This exploration has
led me to understand that practices are constantly shifting in the production, acquisition, and distribution of affects that are drawn from, and then feed back into, flexive (creative) processes. In doing so, my research has traversed practical and theoretical perspectives, and disciplinary constraints, to foreground the importance of a postdisciplinary field of inquiry and flexive approach to practice.

The move from singular disciplines to collective postdisciplinary perspectives has allowed the information acquired from all of the different disciplinary areas to inform each other. It is the movement across the registers of knowledge that have resulted in a postdisciplinary project, not in the contributions to a specific discipline or technique, but across different disciplines that link different techniques. In this way the contribution to knowledge that my project makes is postdisciplinary rather than a disciplinary formation of inquiry. Consequently my research project effectively utilises existing knowledge, particularly through notions of movement and transition, to forge new opportunities for collective practices and knowledges to develop.

Although I have examined long-distance global travel situations, the applications of my research include understanding how new possibilities might arise from movements beyond individualised decisions and ideals in order to address collective concerns across creative arts, tourism, and, just as importantly, everyday experiences of movement.

**Future Transitions**

My research highlights the affirmative and affective subtleties of travel experiences that contribute to creative and collaborative ways of transiting. Embracing the collective experiences of movement encourages attentiveness to how we can transit *with* an array of actors, and in turn, use these interactions as the driving force for new composures and understandings of our movements. As individualised subjectivities give way
to creative and collaborative practices, we can situate our experiences and develop affective and attuned procedures to inform future transitions.

Travelling, being in-transit, and in constant transition, presents a range of scenarios that blur individualised and collective processes between actors and agencies. This blurring occurs on macro and micro scales, where increasingly we are required to possess adaptive and transformative nomadic abilities to situate ourselves in the flow of the global (Urry 2003: 41) that is “ultimately collective” (Braidotti 2012: 43). Breaching individual material forms, collective actions exceed the individual, and every movement forges new relationships and actions.

In a time where international transit is on the rise (UNWTO 2014), the impact and breadth of our movements needs to be carefully considered. The anthropocentric privileging of movement across the world requires a recalibration of agency amongst humans and non-humans. A call for collective action should be encouraged.
Appendix: Data

The following appendix is an overview of the data collected during the PhD project and summary of initial observations. The data influenced my understandings and provided insights into the travelling process and the activity of packing a bag. My practice-led creative works utilised the data to extend on and contextualise the project beyond my own individual experiences of travelling and packing. To help interpret and process the data collected, I have drawn out insights surrounding the categories of bags, the approaches and methods of packing a bag, and the ways that the space of the communal hostel dormitories are used by travellers.

- Ethical clearance was low risk (HEAG(AE)12-21) and the data is non-identifiable.
- Forty-nine participants were recruited.
- Participants were recruited at random from the hostels I was staying within.
- The interviews comprised of a series of questions as an audio interview about how they packed their bags (see below) and/or time-lapse photographic documentation of participants unpacking and repacking their bag in the hostel.
- Throughout the exegesis the participants are cited anonymously with no direct reference to them to ensure the data is not identifiable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Photographic interview</th>
<th>Audio interview</th>
<th>Total participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table of interview methods and locations. 

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Some chose to do an audio interview, others chose to do photographs of their packing, and the majority did both.

The hostels in which the interviews were conducted were in Iceland were the Reykjavík Downtown and the Reykjavík Loft, both situated in the downtown city area. In Nepal the hostel was Alobar1000 in Thamel, the central tourist area of Kathmandu; and in Berlin, Germany, it was the Circus Hostel. The method for recruiting travellers was through casual conversations in public areas within the hostel premises, usually within the dorm rooms, kitchen areas or lounge/common areas. Before introducing my research, I usually had extensive conversation with the person and then asked if they would like to participate in the research.

**Interview questions**

- Do you use a backpack or suitcase when you travel? Why did you choose this type of bag?
- What is the most important object that you have with you?
- Do you have a strategy or method for the way you pack your bag?
- How often do you unpack or organise your bags? And do you have to unpack often to get to a specific object?
- Did you bring any specific objects to this particular location?
- Is there anything you brought to this destination that you may not have brought elsewhere?
- Did you bring any specific objects for staying in a hostel?
- When you stay in a hostel, do you ‘unpack’? i.e. spread your belongings out in the room, put in lockers, on shelves, etc? or do you keep it confined to your bag?
- Did you bring any specific objects for the journey here? (i.e. to carry on a plane, bus, train, etc.)
- Have you acquired any additional objects in your travels? Or have you discarded anything?
- Do you have any stories or recollections about travelling that involve packing, or a particular object?
The participants were selected at random from the hostels where I was also a guest. In addition to the interviews with participants, I also documented my own packing process throughout the fieldwork, taking time-lapse photographs almost every time I packed or unpacked. 23,777 photographs were taken in total of both myself and of the participants packing.41

General observations

Three main areas emerged from the data collected:

• The types of bags preferred and used by travellers;
• the strategy or approach for packing, and;
• the ways in which the space of the dormitory room is utilised by travellers while packing.

These three areas of observation were the starting point for my analysis of the process of packing. During my initial review of the audio interviews and photographic sequences, I used these three areas to show some of the ways that people packed their bags.

Types of bags used

I interviewed people with a range of bags. I asked about the type of bag they used to try to evaluate whether the style, shape, or capacity of the bag influenced their packing techniques. However, I observed that regardless of the type of bag, the process still required negotiating materials and spaces in complex ways, whether using a hiking backpack, a travel backpack, or a suitcase. Although hostelling accommodation is frequently referred to as “backpackers”, not everyone staying at a hostel uses a backpack.

Backpacks are generally anywhere from 40-90 litres in capacity, whereas a “daypack” is a small backpack of only 15-40 litres. There are several types of backpacks. A “hiking” backpack is designed so that the main entry is through the top. Hiking backpacks are generally taller and thinner, aimed at keeping

41 A excerpt of the video compilation of photographs can be seen at: http://www.creativityintransit.com/timelapsepacking.html
the bag adjacent to the back while it is worn. The “travel” style backpack generally has an opening and access to the interior compartment via a zipper, thus allowing it to open similar to a suitcase. Travel backpacks are usually easily lockable, converting into a sort of duffle-bag when fully closed, or some even include wheels at the base that are able to be folded away or covered up.

For the purpose of collating interview data, I chose the hiking and travel backpacks as fitting the category of “backpack”, and daypacks were separated from this into “carry-on”. “Suitcases” ranged in size from cabin-sized bags of only a few dozen litres, to large suitcases with the capacity of far more than a backpack (90 litres +).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Backpack</th>
<th>Suitcase</th>
<th>Carry-on only / other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of bags used by participants.

Thirty out of the forty-nine travellers used backpacks, whereas seventeen used suitcases and three used carry-on sized bags or other means (see table above). In Iceland, two travellers used day packs as their sole bag: one who was on a short trip of only several days, and the other who purposefully chose to swap, discard and acquire clothes and necessities as they travelled. There was one traveller I met in Nepal, who was on a cycling trip through Asia, so their “bag” was comprised of four bike panniers.

**Techniques of packing**

Of the forty-nine travellers interviewed, thirty-six said they had a specific strategy for packing. Of these, six said they specifically “rolled” their items, twenty-one said they layered or folded things in an order, and many said that they grouped things together in accordance to specific material qualities or uses (for example, soft things with fragile, shoes with socks). The overall
impression is that the majority of travellers spend considerable time trying to “fit” the objects together in order to best fill the space available within the bag.

*Space of the hostel dormitory*

During the photographic documentation, many participants kept their bags alongside the bed, on their bed, or in close proximity. Almost everyone I observed in the photographic interviews used the lockers available to them for smaller items and valuables, even if the lockers were not in their dorm room but in another room in the hostel (particularly in Alobar1000 hostel). Two participants in Nepal commented in the interviews that they felt their belongings were more secure in the lockers. Several participants reflected on the way that they used the lockers, the space around their beds, or space under their beds as a functional way of organising and keeping track of their belongings.
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