

Julieanna Preston

“MOVING,,,,”

07

Online versions of this article can be found at:
<https://drawingon.org/Issue-01-07-Moving>
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ABSTRACT

"Moving stuff" was a performance in which mud and shipping pallets shifted repeatedly across a historic, geographic, cultural and political zone demarcated by the Whau River Estuary and Rosebank Road's industrial sector, Auckland, New Zealand. It explored the complexities of notions of ecology and economy hinged to dynamic processes of material exchange and distribution. "Moving stuff" was also an extension of themes recurring throughout my creative work: labour as a time intensive, often excessively repetitive and seemingly monotonous act, and the female body, my body, an organ that is mine to use as only I can choose, as it is employed as a performative feminist tool. "Moving stuff" tested, therefore, both labour as an untaxed investment tied to capitalism, and labour as part of a feminist, embodied materialist critique. "Moving stuff" saw me toil for eight hours a day for two days, walk more than twenty kilometres, converse with more than 600 people, shift more than 160 litres of mud and 150 pallets and finally return the site to the state in which I found it. The only limit to this labour was my personal exhaustion.

*This piece represents one a series of interconnected creative works oscillating around this original performance. Three of those works are presented in this journal: a video entitled *Stratified Matter: Moving things again* (2013), a recording of a presentation given in October 2013 at the *Plenitude & Emptiness* symposium, and finally this piece, a photo essay chronicling moments from the original performance. None of these subsequent works are adequate representations of the original, nor can they ever be, rather they are works in their own right. Here I ask the watcher/reader to interpret the scenes presented, or better to interpolate from the scenes presented. These pieces therefore represent an exercise focused on keeping the work moving, or as social scientist Bruno Latour advocates, keeping it in circulation.*

*For the two accompanying pieces see Issue 01, *Drawing On: Plenitude & Emptiness* at www.drawingon.org*

BIOGRAPHY

*Dr Julieanna Preston is a Professor at the College of Creative Arts, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand. She is a spatial artist currently probing the performative agency of materials through the mediums of creative work and a spatial writing practice. Her recent projects include *meeting, you in detail* (Writingplace, Delft, 2013), *BALE* (Snowwhite Gallery, 2011), *No Fixed Seating* (Whirlwinds, London, 2010), and *Interior Weather Watch* (Wellington LUX, NZ, 2011). Recent publications include *Interior Atmospheres* (Architectural Design, 2008), *Intimus: Interior Design Theory Reader* (co-edited with Mark Taylor, Wiley, 2006), *"Blazing Inter-Alia: Tropes of a Feminist Interior Practice"* (Feminist Practices: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Women in Architecture, Lori Brown ed., 2011), *"Fossicking for Interior Design Pedagogies"* (After Taste: Expanded Practices in Interior Design, Kent Kleinman, Joanna Merwood-Salisbury and Lois Weinthal eds, 2011), and as guest editor of *Interior Economies* (IDEA Journal, 2012). A recent book, *Performing Matter: interior surface and feminist actions* (AADR, <http://www.spurbuch.de/en/aadr.html>) was published in late 2014.*

CREDITS

*"Moving stuff," 2012 [still images]
Spatial Artist: Julieanna Preston*

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Julieanna Preston

"MOVING,,,"

Enclosed is a gift,
an object from an exhibition called
Rosebank: artifacts of place
Snowwhite Gallery, Unitec, Auckland, 16-24 March

and

a trace of a public performance entitled
moving stuff,
Croxley, 460 Rosebank Road, Avondale
10am to 5 pm, 23 and 24 March.

Both events are a part of the Rosebank Artwalk
in the Auckland Arts Festival.
<http://rosebankartwalk.wordpress.com>

This sliver of timber was extracted
from a standard pallet, a literal tool for industrial
transport and an icon of trade and exchange.

Its coating accumulated at the edge of the Whau River
estuary as the result of tidal currents laundering
organic particles in geological time.

It reproduces an idea that sites of economy
and sites of ecology are not so different from one another;
that the systems of industry are not entirely at odds
with environmental processes.

This artefact is sent to you
to encourage keeping the ideas and materials of
moving stuff in circulation;

Please join us in this effort.

Julieanna Preston

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Thank you to my sponsors
Croxley and Massey University College of Creative Arts



Inside Croxley Stationary, Rosebank Road, Auckland, New Zealand.

09:00. Open gate, load trolley, drop pallets at street, buckets and shovels at the river bank. Already warm, the road is already busy. I find myself acting as hostess, ushering people through the site, greeting them without the shyness of my normally introverted self. Stacked high, the pallets already feel heavy. A symbol of industrial manufacturing and transportation, a universal unit of a neo-classical capitalist economic system, they enable trade and exchange. And yet, in the first thirty minutes I earn four splinters and bust the popular myth that all pallets are equal...

above: *Inside Croxley*. Photograph by Julieanna Preston
right: *The Pallets*. Photograph by Julieanna Preston

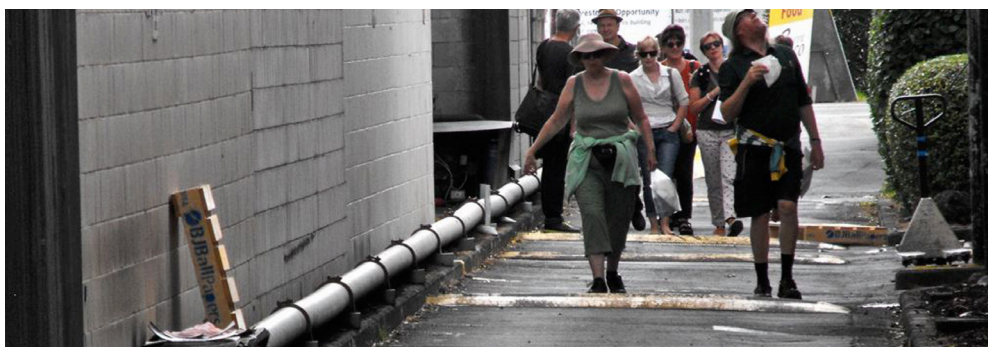




The architectural environment of the path from Rosebank Road to the Whau River.
Photograph by Julieanna Preston

11:30. Mid morning on the first day of the performance, knee-deep in clay mud, a substance described as "soft tissue... mineralisations...the substratum for the emergence of biological creatures asserting itself..."⁰¹ This soft stuff made my footsteps heavy and clumsy. In much the same manner, my tongue, another soft tissue, found it difficult to pronounce the name of the river correctly, for I had collected at least five different ways of saying 'whau' based on the cultural proclivities of local New Zealanders: 'foe', 'phow', 'fa-oo', 'faux', and according to some locals, 'wow'.

01. De Landa, Manuel. 1997. *A Thousand Years of Non-linear History*. New York: Zone Books, p.26.



The public.



The middle-ground.



A mangrove horizon.



The Whau River, a semi-natural water body.

Photographs by Hubertus Mick (MICA)



The mud. Photograph by Hubertus Mick (MICA)



"moving stuff" represented at Artifacts of Place, a group exhibition at Snowwhite Gallery, Auckland, 2012.
 Photograph by Julieanna Preston

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