Walking Borders: Explorations of Aesthetics in Ephemeral Arts Activism for Asylum Seeker Rights

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Abstract

Australia's Operation Sovereign Borders vehemently enforces closed borders to asylum seekers arriving by boat to Australia. Policed urban borders were enforced in Brisbane, Australia, during the G20 Summit in 2014, to protect visiting dignitaries from potential violent protest. The ephemeral arts intervention *Walking Borders: Arts activism for refugee and asylum seeker rights* symbolically confronted border politics by peacefully protesting against Australian immigration policy. Rather than focusing on the direct effects of the ephemeral arts intervention, this article attends to the affective workings of the aesthetic elements of the project through sensory ethnography and storying. Informed by Ranciere's aesthetics of politics, this article explores the affective experience and potential educative gains of the ethical turn attended to in participatory arts such as ephemeral arts interventions.

Policing is enacted through the division of the world into countries, states, territories, the division of people by age, race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, faith, roles, and so on, and how laws stipulate distribution of resources, what Ranciere (2010) refers to as "distribution of the sensible" (p. 36). These divisions separate and exclude but also define participation. Such policing determines the relations of shared common parts and exclusive parts to select divisions, determining what is visible and what is audible. Those who are denied parts in society are relegated to spaces sepa- rated from public life (e.g., domestic spaces for women and children and detention centers on remote islands for asylum seekers). What can be said and done by whom, and when and where it can be said is tightly defined by the police principle to the point that no place, or "void" remains for those situated outside of these divisions (Ranciere, 2010, p. 36).

Australia's Operation Sovereign Borders (Australian Government: Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2016) reflects Ranciere's (2010) definition of policing through the enforcement of borders that render asylum seekers without part and invisible. Since January 1, 2014, the Australian government has implemented a strict, militarily enforced "No Way" policy through Operation Sovereign Borders, whereby without exception, " . . . if people try to come to Australia illegally by boat, there is no way they will ever make Australia home. The way to Australia is closed" (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2016). This divisive policing language is operationalized through off-shore processing in Papua New Guinea and Nauru,[1] and is an example of politicians playing "to the darkest fears in the Australian psyche" (McMaster, 2002, p. 288) relating to invasion (Clyne, 2005; Glendenning, 2015) and "the floodgate" (McMaster, 2002, p. 288). Policing the Australian border in such a way acts to deter asylum seekers with the prospect of disadvantage, regardless of the authenticity of the individual's claim to refugee status (Veracini, 2013). This has trans- formed the Australian coastline into a closed border for all outsiders, a fact that is unashamedly boasted loudly and clearly through "NO WAY YOU WILL NOT MAKE AUSTRALIA HOME" campaign posters dispersed in key nations of origin for asylum seekers (e.g., see http://paki- stan.embassy.gov.au/islm/visas_and_migration.html).

Politics makes visible the invisible and speakable the silent (Ranciere, 2010), and acknowl- edges the brutal reality that when asylum seekers flee their category of country, they exist in statelessness; and without state there is not much they can take part in. Despite this, the Australian Government has attempted to silence evidence of the humanitarian abuse of those classified as "unauthorised maritime arrivals" by publicly condemning reports such as the Human Rights Commission Report titled "The Forgotten Children" that questioned mandatory detention for asylum-seeker children (Griffiths & Woodley, 2015). Another ongoing feature of political discourse, rhetoric, and strategy in recent years has been a belligerent focus on "peo- ple smugglers" (Grewcock, 2014a, 2014b; Pickering & Weber, 2014). This focus has been argued to add a "pseudo-humanitarian gloss" to existing "punitive and discredited deterrent measures" (Grewcock, 2014b, p. 107) without any concern for the human cost, leading many Australians to recognize that Operation Sovereign Borders is abusive and must stop. Growing numbers of Australian activists and human rights organisations, religious leaders, union lead- ers, medical professionals, teachers, celebrities, and politicians have thus responded with out- rage via numerous submissions for inquiry to the Parliament of Australia (2016a, 2016b). One collaborative act of arts activism that strategically took place during the G20 Summit in Brisbane 2014 was *Walking Borders: Arts activism for refugee and asylum seeker rights* (http:// walkingborders.net/).

This article explores sensory ethnographic research of this arts activism by attending to how the affective workings of the aesthetic elements of borders, boats, and bodies provoked embodied learnings of policing and politics of space. First, we explain the project, and ephem- eral arts interventions, then we describe the sensory ethnographic principles that informed our research methodology. With the context laid out, we then share our storied encounters of borders, boats, and bodies, and conclude with identified lasting bodily learnings from our lived experience of *Walking Borders*, what Biesta (2014) refers to as pedagogy in the interest of the public.

Walking Borders: Arts Activism for Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Rights

In recognition of the fatigue of the length of the campaign against the Australian government's exclusionary immigration policy, artist Scotia Monkivitch sought divergent means to bring international attention and ignite further local public dialogue and action for the asylum-seeker cause. Through aesthetics, Monkivitch devised walked performances and installations, titled *Walking Borders: Arts activism for refugee and asylum seeker rights*, to invite poetic focus on border poli- tics during the G20 summit in Brisbane in November 2014.

In preparation for the G20 Summit, the G20 (Safety and Security) Act replaced and sus- pended the existing Peaceful Assembly Act, to escalate the enforcement of security during the Summit, and to prevent and control any possible risk of rioting, as experienced in previous world summits. Driven by fear and control, policing commonly demands that pedestrians "move along," so that the only permissible activity is movement through public spaces (Ranciere, 2010). In line with this, the new Act provided a comprehensive list of definitions and disclaimers including the nature of lawful assembly, the right to search individuals, includ- ing children and persons with impaired capacity, stop and search powers, requiring personal details, use of detection dogs, prohibited and excluded persons, and arrest and custody powers (Queensland Government, 2013). The enforcement of the "move along" principle through detailed specification of lawful assembly restrictions in the Act and the declared and restricted zones provided Brisbanites a momentary taste of reduced liberties to the right to freedom of movement. Brisbane's declared zone (see http://briscan.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ CBD-Security-Areas.jpg) mirrored Australia's waters, where you could be searched for pro- hibited items (G20 [Safety and Security] Act Part 6), deemed a prohibited person (Part 5), and arrested (Part 9). The *Walking Borders* project resisted the enforcement of an environment of fear and saw the increased media spotlight as an opportunity to make visible dissensus of national and urban border enforcements. To disagree with demarcations, divisions, partitions, borders (i.e., dissensus) is to Ranciere (2010) the "essence of politics" (p. 38). *Walking Borders* sought, as Jeffers (2014) has described of other social movements (e.g., Arab Spring, and Occupy Wall Street), to reappropriate cultures and climates of fear, central to global capitalist politics, through collective action.

For six weeks prior to the G20 supporters of refugee rights and arts activism gathered at parks located near the declared zone borders of Brisbane to fold thousands of paper boats for the *Walking Borders* project. These boats were stockpiled for placing a trail of paper boats along the declared zone border of Brisbane continuously from November 13 to November 16 (marking the duration of the G20 summit) as an ongoing vigil for asylum-seeker rights.

Public boat-folding gatherings in local parks were deliberately planned to welcome participa- tion of those for whom walking activism was not possible, be it for mobility reasons, personal choice or fear of police intervention. The boat-folding gatherings brought together people of all age groups, interests, and professions wanting to do something to stop the inhumane treatment of asylum seekers. They provided space for a rich exchange of human rights dialogue.

From November 1 to 12, Monkivitch vigilantly lined the restricted areas (hotels and sites for the G20 Summit where international delegates resided and met) with paper boats. Each boat was labelled "*Walking Borders*" and weighted with a handful of gravel. The gravel grounded the boats at the borders— a farcical play on then Prime Minister Tony Abbott's declaration that he had "stopped the boats." For the duration of the summit, from November 13 to 16, activists walked the declared area border (approximately 30 kms in circumference), lining it with gravel-weighted paper boats along footpaths. Monkivitch walked 96 hours continuously with many companions joining her at various intervals throughout the walking vigil. The walking of this arbitrary border responded to the removal of democratic access to public space, while mirroring the refugee expe- rience of walking long distances across national borders to flee conflict. The persistent visibility of *Walking Borders'* paper boats presented a palpable declaration of objection to Australia's inhumane treatment of asylum seekers, sparking widespread media attention (Olding, 2014) and public discussion.

Ephemeral Aesthesis

> Sometimes doing something political can become poetic . . . and sometimes doing something poetic can become political. (Francis Alÿs on his work *The Green Line*, cited by Fisher, 2012, p. 4)

The *Walking Borders* website's front page foregrounded this quote, honoring the value of poetics in politics. Francis Alÿs uttered these words in reference to his work (*The Green Line*) of walking the Palestinian/Israel border with a dripping can of green paint. Alÿs' provocative axioms can be read in multiple ways, as has been analysed by Fisher (2012). What drew Monkivitch to the quote–and what Fisher (2012) describes as "something more scrupulous and precise"–is the understanding that the axiom names "the condition of possibility that allows art to intervene in the sphere of the political" (p. 6). That is, that the poetic act can become political while retaining its autonomy from politics. Alÿs created *The Green Line* not to incite activism but rather to make a political statement. Fisher (2012) defines *The Green Line* as critical poeisis, that is, "when art moves by means of the aesthetic toward the disclo- sure of the aesthetic dimension of the political" (p. 16). It is "critical" because it locates within the aesthetic act the limited condition of the political. The act of creating a line of folded paper boats in *Walking Borders* was an aesthetic act, and a critical act in that it made visible the political dimension of the G20 declared zone border, while metaphorically mirror- ing Australia's Operation Sovereign Borders of inclusion and exclusion, of awarding and denying rights. The G20 declared zone border was in most parts only visible on the landscape of Brisbane's CBD through *Walking Borders*' paper boats.

Aesthetics create sensuous perception. And aesthetic politics, according to Ranciere (2004), creates "recasting of the distribution of the sensible, a reconfiguration of the given perceptual forms . . . an art that would transmit meanings in the form of a rupture with the very logic of meaningful situations" (p. 63). Aesthetic acts can enable ruptures of how we understand and make sense of policing and politics. If politics is about disrupting the "divi- sions of the sensible," then Ranciere (2004) sees that there are three ways to disrupt the sen- sible through aesthetics: "the surface of 'depicted' signs, the split of reality of theatre, the rhythm of dancing chorus" (p. 14). Monkivitch (personal communication, November 9, 2014) explicitly sought to design activism with "more creative and aesthetic ways of engaging and building local conversation . . . as a different entry point." She saw the opportunity of increased media attention to seize attention through visual intrigue. The "depicted sign" of the paper boat is readily symbolic of the common media reference to asylum seekers arriving in Australian waters as "boat people." The performance of the walk operated in two zones of reality: the performance of placing boats along the border zone and the spectator–participant relational zone. The ongoing routine of filling and placing boats along the border habituated rhythm. In essence, *Walking Borders* drew from all three ways of aesthetically disrupting the sensible, to make visible, heard, and felt the delicate vulnerable plight of the asylum seeker on Australian territories.

As a transient, multidisciplinary artwork with a political agenda, *Walking Borders* contributes to the domain of ephemeral art, in that it was an event that involved visual elements, sound, movement, and interaction between actors and spectators for political purposes in a public space (Murphy & O'Driscoll, 2015). The implication of an ephemeral art intervention is not just to cre- ate a spectacle for others but also "to transform participants politically through the complex workings of affect" (Murphy & O'Driscoll, 2015, p. 333). *Walking Borders* was a transient work that worked with the visual of the delicate paper boat trail realised through walking and interac- tions between participants and pedestrians to make visible the plight of asylum seekers. Collectively, all emplaced components worked together to cultivate engagement. Murphy and O'Driscoll (2015) argue that ephemeral interventions are a vital element of public life in current times yet are underresearched. Discussions of participatory art and ephemeral art interventions both tend not to focus on the aesthetics (Bishop, 2012; Murphy & O'Driscoll, 2015), with focus on "direct effects and moral exemplarity" (Bishop, 2012, p. 39) overriding. The aesthetics of ephemeral art is explicitly decommodified with an insistence on participation (Murphy & O'Driscoll, 2015). Some, such as Burk's (2015) article on ACTUP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), have started to alert to the impact of aesthetics in ephemera art on enhancing the reach of cultural activism. In this article, we explore the impact of the integral aesthetic elements of *Walking Borders*: borders, boats, and bodies,

through sensory ethnographic readings of our emplaced experiences of the project.

Sensory Methodology

To open up our (the authors) sensorial awareness of the affective experience of participating in *Walking Borders*, we drew from animism as an ontology of being "alive and open to a world in continuous birth" (Ingold, 2011, p. 64). The mobility of walking further switched on kinesthesia and connection to place, feeding in data from all directions weaving an entangled fuller, deeper, and richer story of experiencing ephemeral art intervention.

We attended to the sensorial through application of principles of *perception, place, know- ing, memory*, and *imagination* in sensory ethnography (Pink, 2009). We read the socially, cul- turally, and biographically specified meanings of interconnected sensory data gathered through walking. Through interconnected perceptions of "tactile apprehension and kinesthetic appro- priation" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 97), we came to know much more about aesthetic political acts. We walked through spaces that became places of meaning (Creswell, 2004), that détourned (Lefebvre, 1991) policed spaces. We read our sensory memories as embodied and continually reconstituted through ethnographic work of body and place. These sensory memories were not merely reported but rather reactivated, imagined, mused over, and linguistically played with. Through the creation and sharing of stories of our emplaced sensory memories of *Walking Borders* affective embodied learnings of policing and politics of space emerged. Through walking, we imagined other people's experiences of walking along and across borders. These principles guided our embodied attendance to the sensoriality and materiality of walking bor- ders, with paper boats.

By foregrounding, sensorial embodied, emplaced "lifeworld entanglements," we like Aoki and Yoshimizu (2015) claim that such elements are not "secondary or superfluous to the research process" (p. 273), but rather integral and noteworthy. We both participated in the boat-folding gatherings and the durational walking of the imposed borders. Sensory data recording included, burst photos taken with wearable GoPros, conversations with coparticipants, and journaling after participation. We sat with the data and our memories to distil prominent aesthetic elements that recurred as resounding metaphors of the policing and politics of space in the asylum-seeker cause and experience. The following relays costoried encounters of borders, boats, and bodies; how- ever, we are acutely aware and frustrated by the limitations of reflecting our four-dimensional experiences into two-dimensional form, we hope that a sketch, an essence, a whisper of under- standing is received.

Borders

> The border is the primary analogy we are working with . . . the removal of democratic access to public space. (S. Monkivitch, personal communication, November 9, 2014)

In the eighth thesis of Ranciere's (2010) "Ten Theses of Politics" he states "the essential work of politics is the configuration of its own space" (p. 37), that is, disrupting the borders of what is publicly permissible as visible and sayable. Politics transforms the policing space of "move along," to refigure what can be done, seen, and named in public spaces: a space for the visibility of "a subject: the people, the workers, the citizens" (Ranciere, 2010, p. 37). *Walking Borders* made visible the imposed (yet in most places invisible) G20 border with a trail of paper boats, and reimagined public activity as paper-boat trail-making.

Figure 1. Bullet proof fencing for protected zone, 2014.
Source. Author.

Figure 2. Pedestrians corralled by G20 fencing, 2014.
Source. Author.

The G20 summit gave birth to a line, where once there was none, a border that we traced with our feet and with the fragile line of white paper boats that we laid. Inorganic and unyielding plastic barricades shouted *No Entry (Figures 1 and 2)*, their solid forms contrasting the tenuous sounds of sirens and helicopters that penetrated the haze surging from the bitumen roads of Brisbane. The sirens and the helicopters alerted us to the violating imposition of border control. Hundreds of heavily armed riot squad police[2] patrolled the streets, yet all we held were paper boats and a bucket of gravel. They searched for bombs. We gave them delicate paper boats. Stepping one foot in front of the other, the experience brought awareness of three important ingredients to creating the borders. First, is the hand that draws the line and then comes the line itself. By walking and marking the borders, we became the third essential component, the space on either side. Step-by-step in the heat, we felt the significance of authority, loss of control, and who gets to stand on one side of the line or the other. A microcosmic reflection of what is hap- pening at the outer edges of the Australian border.

Policing, through police surveillance and regulation and as "the division of the sensible" (Ranciere, 2010) was escalated to the point of complete and utter irrationality—division by the senseless. Most residents of Brisbane had vacated in response to media hype of potential civil unrest and the restrictions of movement imposed through the G20 (Safety and Security) Act 2013 (Doorley & Passmore, 2014). The *Walking Borders* protest endeavored to refigure and reappro- priate what could be done, seen and named within the gaps of the divisions, by working with the aesthetic of the political dimensions: the borders and the restricted items. Paper boats stabilised with a spoonful of gravel, provided as offerings to the temporary, invisible, scarcely known bor- der between the ruling and the ruled.

Boats

I was feeding this constant row of boats. How do I then personalise the boats, or the images, or the way they fit and engaged in with the landscape because they moved around, they were interacted with, became something individual once they were placed on the ground? I began to number the boats (like what happens to Detention Center detainees) to use the physicality of what was happen- ing to them as a way of storytelling (S. Monkivitch, personal communication, December 6, 2014).

Figure 3. Scotia Monkivitch, mother, 2014.
Source. Image courtesy of Scotia Monkivitch.

Figure 4. Scotia Monkivitch, boat on barb wire, 2014.
Source. Image courtesy of Scotia Monkivitch.

The paper boats were the central aesthetic element of the *Walking Borders* project. Monkivitch saw that the activism needed to have visual appeal to seize the curiosity of media representatives when multiple national and international issues would be competing for media attention. The arts provided a different point of entry than the usual (e.g., rallies, petitions). The list of restricted items in the G20 Act narrowed down potential materials to create with. Paper was one item that was acceptable and could be easily carried on person and left minimal environmental footprint, and the boat, a recognizable symbol for asylum seekers.

> they're small they're made out of paper . . . they're not offensive aggressive symbols. They're symbols from the water that sit beautifully on the land and they make a visual line. (J. Cruickshanks [paper boat artist], personal communication, November 2, 2014)

We worked together in pairs and small groups opening and filling the boats with a scoop of gravel for weighting, then placing each boat with reverence and care to its positioning along the border. The boats rested on carefully chosen sites of stability, sites that provided a setting for their story (Figures 3 and 4). The boats were not just paper they were personalised.

They were not abandoned (Figures 5 and 6). Each boat was collected after each circumnavi- gated installation of the restricted areas and declared zone. Their paper form metaphorically reflected the vulnerability of asylum seekers. By placing them on the ground further escalated their vulnerability to the weather, to pedestrians, to be treated as refuse, collected, and thrown away. Security guards and council cleaners repeatedly orchestrated the removal of the paper boats. The ephemeral art condoned as refuse—not to be publicly permissible as visible. Each boat had a story to tell.

As we walked the borders, we heard some of the stories the boats evoked. A homeless man earnestly shared,

> "I've seen your boats and let me tell you what I did to them. Let me show you" and he walked up to a boat, and he picked it up and placed it closer to the curb and he said, "I've done that to all of your boats for you, so I've just moved them so there's one on the gutter, one on the walk, one on the gutter, one on the walk." (E. Kennedy, personal communication, November 16, 2014)

Figure 5. Scotia Monkivitch, hunt for daring detail and fragile highlights, 2014.
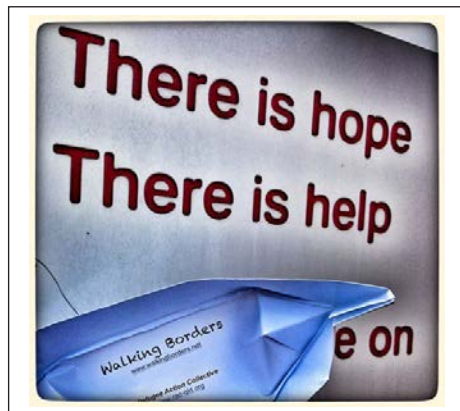*Source.* Image courtesy of Scotia Monkivitch.

Figure 6. Scotia Monkivitch, there is hope there is help, 2014.
Source. Image courtesy of Scotia Monkivitch.

He seemed to be telling us, that not every boat follows the line. Not every boat is on stable territory. Every second one has fallen.

A woman waiting for a bus glanced down and, on noticing the delicate boat at her feet, wept. The delicate little boats provided a stark contrast to the policing harshness of authoritarian blue, impenetrable fencing, and the constant alarming hum of helicopters; they softened the edges. Though *Walking Borders* spoke out against the violation of asylum seekers, it seemed that approaching this from a point of quietness and beauty offered an alternative provocation for attention to the dissensus. Through aesthetics of the political dimension, the paper boat commu- nicated fragility, the line—unrelenting repetition . . . a trace of political poetics. The ephemeral nature of the work added to the aesthetics: the transience of the provocation—to be felt—not to be grasped or recorded.

Bodies

> it's about putting yourself in the action . . . that physicality of putting your body in the picture   and committing to presence. See me—I'm a name, I'm a face, and I'm committing my presence   to this physically, soul-ly, ethically making a stand. (S. Monkivitch, personal communication, November, 9, 2014)

The internet has significantly altered activism practices, most notably evident in the rise of online petitions. Ellison (2013) describes such active citizenship as operating within thin time (networked) and disembedded space. *Walking Borders* operated in thick time (clock) and embedded space. Monkivitch committed her bodily presence to the action by walking the declared zone continuously for 96 hours. Groups of up to 15 others joined her at various points of time. By being there on the borders, by our feet touching the ground and walking along the borders, as Ingold (2011) describes in his essay titled "Culture on the Ground"—a grounded approach was elicited, rather than being suspended from, we emplaced and embodied ourselves with others and the surroundings. Our embodied emplacedness communicated our commitment to the action to fully place ourselves in the public to use our bodies to refigure space for political purposes. We were bodies in our plurality laying claim to the public, "Seizing and reconfiguring the matter of material environments" (Butler, 2012, para. 1) with the material environment being part of the action at the same time. We were borders, boats, and bodies inviting the public, the media, and politicians to rethink borders, to rethink boats, and provide refuge for abandoned bodies.

Figure 7. Unfolding boats, 2014.
Source. Author.

Figure 8. Filling boats, 2014.
Source. Author.

Figure 9. Boat offering, 2014.
Source. Author.

Figure 10. Placing boat along border, 2014.
Source. Author.

Butler (2012) argues that for "politics to take place the body must appear" (para. 5). We placed our bodies in the politics of seeking to have asylum seekers counted. Our bodies occupied space for others. We mobilised space through the performativity of bodies (Figure 7). Our political action was not solo (Figure 8). We walked, folded and unfolded, filled and laid boats together (Figure 9). When Monkivitch walked on her own, she was with boats and gravel carrying trolley, she was appearing for others. The political action emerged in what happened between bodies, both human and nonhuman (borders and boats; Figure 10). Political claims for refugee rights were made through the entangled appearance of bodies, borders, and boats.

Together our hands unfolded boats, scooped gravel, and placed boats along footpaths, fences, and walls. Collectively, our bodies worked together to perform a visible trace—each body per- forming a different part of the boat-laying machine. The heat rose to 40 °C (ABC Premium News, 2014)—igniting bodily discomfort to our pilgrimage. Black bitumen scorched underfoot. Heat penetrated skin through to bones. Sweat saturated clothing—performing salt lines (Figure 11).

The discomfort accelerated making each step more intolerable and the desire for water, shade, and rest more and more salient. Yet below this discomfort was the privileged comfort in the know- ing that we had a choice to partake in this political act of walking, of unfolding boats, of filling them with gravel, of laying them along borders. The striking affect of the heat made us acutely aware that those who we walked for do not have the same choice in where they walk, live, and act. And that our discomfort paled into insignificance compared with the indefinite discomfort of physical and mental harm for weeks, months, even years that the thousands of asylum seekers experience in the sweltering overcrowded Australian off-shore detention centers that psychiatrist Patrick McGorry declared as "factories for producing mental illness" (Cresswell, 2010). Placing our bodies along the borders with boats heightened the affect of the aesthetics of the political dimension.

Walking

> We use walking as a main tool of not only meeting people but to get away from people, and if you're a refugee often you'll have to walk out of your country. (S. Monkivitch, personal communication, November, 9, 2014)

Our bodies were not just in place they were in motion. We walked. Our footsteps were guided by the fact that walking as a political act has a long and distinguished history that powerfully exemplifies how the peaceful enactment of citizenship through walking can result in profound social shifts. The key protagonists in these stories of activism have been led by individuals (e.g., Mohandas Gandhi and the salt march as Indian resistance to British Raj, and Vincent Lingiari and Wave Hill Walk-off for Aboriginal Australian wage equality and land rights) who placed themselves forward as the representatives of their people. Through the act of walking long distances, these individuals have shone the spotlight on critical social justice issues, and in doing so, garnered support, publicity, and finally victory in the face of institutional power structures. The durational visible resistance of the legacy of these political walks, along with the critical poesis of Alys's *The Green Line*, inspired *Walking Borders*.

Figure 11. Salt lines on dress, 2014.
Source. Author.

The G20 borders foregrounded the inherently political nature of the street, visibly transform- ing it into an "arena" where democracy might play out, facilitating a space where walkers could shift away from passively consuming meaning and toward actively producing meaning (Solnit, 2000). Walking was the chosen performed action—a corporeal political expression (Solnit) that brought lived emplaced embodied political aesthetics. As Monkivitch recalls:

> The constant repetition was a body memory for me. This sense that it just keeps going. . . . A slowing down of rhythms. . . . My mind would go into a meditative state, things would come and go of what I was thinking about, what I was seeing and engaging with. I think the timespan of the entire action enriched that meditative spirit because I had the week and a half of short walks and then the four to five days of constant walking. It was a constant, not numbness but, when you go into meditation that sense of yourself in a bubble. Things happening around you but you aren't fully connected. The heat was intense on the last few days. . . . And even now I still feel my feet coming out of the numbness. Slight discomfort but nothing compared to the discomfort of detention. . . . This is what people have to do on the run. The idea is that their body is alive to the constant threat—the idea that they have to be constantly aware and alert to potential harm. Even in detention centres now, they are not safe. Real stories of brutality, rape. That means you have to have a constant alert system in your body—awake— to be constantly aware. (S. Monkivitch, personal communication, December 6, 2014)

The physical endurance of walking along borders demanded and reflected commitment to fellow human beings who are suffering, who cannot step off a boat, who cannot walk out of the deten- tion center. The journey for refuge is an unrelenting and often insurmountable endurance test. Walking produced physical ongoing presence of the project across a 30-km span of urban Brisbane with affect imprinted on bodily memory. Political walking is about tenacious commit- ment for justice. In disrupting the "divisions of the sensible," the durational performance of walking, operated in "the split of reality of theatre" (Ranciere, 2004, p. 14)—the epic endurance performance of placing boats along the border zone—zoning in— zoning out with momentum's rhythm sustaining the ongoing flow.

Together

Walking Borders was deliberately designed as a collective and peaceful protest, so that activists could "get some encouragement from each other, because it's hard out there maintaining a con- sistent outrage" (S. Monkivitch, personal communication, November 9, 2014). This assertion underlines Murphy and O'Driscoll's (2015) observation that ephemeral interventions, like *Walking Borders*, "serve to solidify the participants as a community" through the shared perfor- mative elements of the protest (p. 347). Folding and walking together thus created a peaceful space for people to push against an abusive national policy that effectively panders to Australia's fear of invasion. The following quote highlights the importance of the concept of "we" to *Walking Borders* participants:

> the feeling you get being with a group of people working . . . walking . . . and then coming back in and sitting with a bunch of people . . . I didn't know them a few hours ago and why are we here? We're here because it's something that we want to do something about, we want to be heard, so I think this bringing together of people is great for your own personal confidence in what you think you know, and also learning more on an issue that you're concerned about in a group. (J. Cruickshanks, personal communication, November 2, 2014)

To Jo (and many other interviewed participants who iterated similar sentiments), the togetherness created relationality, learning, and personal confidence. As Butler (2012) noted,

> No one body establishes the space of appearance . . . this performative exercise happens only "between" bodies, in a space that constitutes the gap between my own body and another's. In this way, my body does not act alone, when it acts politically. (para. 5)

Strategies of nonviolence have historically tended to lead to a higher success rate in terms of social change (Stephen & Chenoweth, 2008), in part due to the fact that through these sorts of collective actions, participants gain an augmented sense of both the "illegitimacy of the issue and the efficacy of the group" (Thomas & Louis, 2014, p. 263). Collective and peaceful protesting thus cultivates the nurturing of relational identities where individuals can extend through a rela- tionship with the Other in such a

way that "the tale of errantry" can transform into "the tale of Relation" (Glissant, 1990, p. 19), and where the individual "gives-on-and-with rather than grasps" (p. 144).

Folding boats with and walking alongside refugees who were resettling in Australia, the act of walking an imposed border, and the at times challenging sensory impact of doing so, connected activists with some of the hardships experienced by asylum seekers. In this way, identification with the targeted issue contributed to the spark of collective action (Klandermans, 2002; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). Participants were also brought together peacefully through the sharing of aesthetic moments that emerged while laying the boats. Bishop (2012) frames this sort of participatory art as aiming to "restore and realise a communal, collective space of shared social engagement" (p. 275). The *Walking Borders* project achieved this by "refuting the injustice of the world" and "proposing an alternative" (p. 275), that is, peaceful civic engagement through art and community.

A sense of community was a resounding affect of the moments spent sitting in parks, folding boats together. The cultivation of community extended into the care that was taken to support Monkivitch during her durational walking vigil, and the care that emerged between activists as they walked, laying the never-ending white line of boats. The significance of this was expressed by one of the participants, Christine, who said that " . . . the symbolism of walking, it's like being on a pilgrimage, the unknown journey and where strangers become friends" (personal communi- cation, November 2, 2014).

Organically, we formed production lines, one person unfolding the boats, another scooping the gravel from the cart that was being pushed by someone else, and yet others taking piles of "filled" boats and laying them carefully. Together we looked back to what we were creating, to the solid line behind us, and ahead, to lines deconstructed by hot summer breezes. We surveyed our work, behind and ahead, from moment to moment, with both satisfaction and reverence. Born from the heat, this efficiency strategy enhanced the feeling of working together to create something beautiful, ephemeral. Through our footsteps and our conversations, punctuated by silence, we were held together by solidarity.

Lasting Affects and Bodily Memories

The above pastiche of sensory readings of the aesthetic affect of the ephemeral arts intervention *Walking Borders* provides glimpses of how embodied arts activism can cultivate pedagogy in the interest of the public (Biesta, 2014) that provokes civic engagement. Artists, educators, commu- nity workers, retirees, children, and young people collaborated together as political agents to visibly claim asylum-seeker rights to not be harmed and to be treated with dignity. In Ranciere's (2010) words, together we counted "a part of those without part" (p. 36). Though today there are a myriad of electronic communications that are utilised in activism, we agree with Murphy and O'Driscoll (2015) that virtual communities are no substitute for bodies mobilised on the ground. By connecting with place and others through movement, our whole bodies were activated as moving, sensing, thinking beings, enhancing capacity for affect, and lasting bodily memories. Bodily memories of border tracing, border crossing, and refiguring; of heat searing through our bones, of the rhythm and repetition of folding and placing paper boats and the ongoing perambu- lation of security borders; and the care and relations for each other. Lasting affects that we con- tinue to talk about, feel, and ruminate. As Murphy and O'Driscoll (2015) noted participants in ephemeral art interventions often find the bodily and emotive processes to be transformative, because of the affect of the "stimulus elements of the intervention" working directly on the body, and translated into emotions, that are communicable into "pre-existing categories of significa- tion" (p. 332).

We are particularly interested in the educative gains of ephemeral arts interventions like *Walking Borders*. In the ethical turn that participatory art brings to the arts (Bishop, 2012), we see great educative potential. Ethical criteria guide and inform participatory art works with an "ethics of interpersonal interaction" prevailing with "compassionate identification with the other" as "typical of the discourse around participatory art" (p. 25). Ranciere (2010) explains that the ety- mological root *ethos* signifies "the dwelling and the way of being, or lifestyle that corresponds to this dwelling" (p. 184). From recognition of such etymology, he then defines ethics, as "the kind of thinking in which an identity is established between an environment, a way of being and a principle of action" (p. 184). Essentially, we see ethics as how we contextually coexist with oth- ers, to be a political human—a citizen. Not citizen, as in nation statehood, as such a definition excludes rights from many as is the case for asylum seekers, but rather a

recognition of political agency than mere passive existence. Through participation in *Walking Borders*, we were person- ally provoked to reflect on ways of being when policed by borders and suffering heat and physi- cal endurance, along with our actions with others to enable the objectives of the ephemeral arts intervention. In addition, we witnessed participating others (and pedestrians on the periphery) too engage with ethicality, in that *Walking Borders* evoked thinking, commentary, and action with consideration for intersection between environment, ontology, and actions.

Ethicality is not only reflected in the interactions of the participatory component of ephemeral art but also in respect for the unrepresentable, which Ranciere (2010) alerts to as a central cate- gory of the ethical turn in aesthetic reflection, "occupying the same place in aesthetic reflection that terror does on the political plane" (p. 195). In the case of *Walking Borders*, the suffering of detainees in Australian detention camps was ethically considered unrepresentable for aesthetic pleasure. As Ranciere (2010) explains "extreme suffering belongs to a reality that is in principle excluded from the art of the visible" (p. 195). Respect for the unrepresentable urges an antirepre- sentative demand that eliminates boundaries and choice restrictions. Utilising the symbolic, the poetic, in this case, borders, boats, bodies, walking and together, invites multiplicities of entry points and meaning. Ranciere (2010) may consider the placing of paper boats along borders "a 'soft version' of the ethical turn of aesthetics"—a promise of emancipation (p. 200). Though pedestrian responses such as the woman who wept at the small delicate boat at her feet and the homeless man who shifted each second boat to be on the edge of the gutter suggest the capacity of the work to remind us of the "immemorial and never ending catastrophe" (p. 200) of Australia's violent claim and protection of territory. It is through affect that we learn empathetic coexistence with others.

Notes

1. On the April 27, 2016, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Peter O'Neill, announced that Manus Detention will close as Papua New Guinea's Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional (Davidson & Doherty, 2016).
2. Approximately 4,500 Queensland Police Service officers, 1,500 interstate and New Zealand police officers, and 650 Australian Federal Police were involved in the security operation of the G20 declared area (approximately 12-km long and 5-km wide; Brennan, 2014; Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland, 2015).

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