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Paper Presentation: Abstract

Generating and transforming: philosopher, geometer, and technology – mediators

I am undertaking practice-based PhD research, at the School of Art, RMIT University, Melbourne, titled *Generating and transforming: multiplicity, non-Euclidean geometry, technology, spatiality and object in contemporary jewellery artist practice*. In this research project I am utilising non-Euclidean geometry (a theory of surfaces – about characteristics of objects in space that enable continuous transformation) to investigate the philosophy of multiplicity, through the making of small art objects and jewellery. The works range from small scale object installations to larger composite object installations. I am 'reconfiguring or manipulating materials in space and time' in the process of making surfaces and forms, in these artworks, that then pose questions for the viewer (or wearer), about relations between person, object and space.

The springboard for this PhD research is Henri Bergson's philosophy of duration (the contemporaneity of past and present) – his 'qualitative multiplicity of time'. The spatial is implicated in the temporal, and I am extending the focus of my research to the spatial dimension of Bergson's philosophy, the 'quantitative multiplicity of space'; as well as to the non-Euclidean geometry of Bernhard Riemann (the foundations for topology) that influenced Bergson's philosophy of multiplicity.

The idea that I am a unity that is multiple and a multiplicity that is one, (Bergson,1910/2007) encapsulates a sense that there are many sensory and other inputs that comprise me – the one body, and my experience/activity in this multi-layered and networked world. This unity/multiplicity idea, which Deleuze and others have built on since Bergson, underpins and provides multiple facets for my research. I am working with the idea of immersing surfaces and forms from Riemann's non-Euclidean geometry of n-dimensions, within the 3-dimensional world of our senses, activity and experience. My research draws on the *event* philosophy of Brian Massumi,

to this end – including his thinking on topology and the virtual; the virtual and actual; and the possible, potential and virtual of actual.

In this paper I am proposing that the philosopher and the geometer, as well as tools and technologies I engage with, are my mediators. The philosophy of multiplicity gives me language and rationale for my research, and the geometry is the tool for my imagination and intuition, in the forming of material – could we say, of the real and virtual? Deleuze says he needs his mediators in order to be expressive; that mediators can be people eg. artist or scientist for a philosopher, or can be real or imaginary; and that we need to be part of a series in order to express oneself.

This paper will describe works from my current project, and the tools and technologies of making and experiencing. I give two brief examples of the work here. ***Multiplicity… vessel… 5 ellipses*** is a manifestation of the unity/multiplicity idea; the one art object is comprised of multiple different, discrete coloured wooden layers. It exists as an 'actual' wooden object, and a 'virtual' but 'real' (according to Bergson) object in our memory. ***Multiplicity… discrete and continuous*** takes up the idea of the virtual, and asks the viewer to contemplate another sort of object/person/space relation. It is an exploration of a continuous, self-intersecting surface, bounded by an edge; and it exists as a 100-frame animation, for screen or wall projection, where the viewer experiences a shiny object rotating in space. This presentation will make explicit my thinking, work and hence, research methodology.

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