

SITE/PLACE/SPACE

Quotations.

Compiled by Jude Anderson – #1 I to You Program - *In Habit*

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SITE

"Site is not simply a geographical location or architectural setting. It can be seen as a network of social relations, a community. With the shift from site to community, or the conversion of community to site, questions concerning the role of the artist, the public function of art, and the definition of community are given new urgency."

- Miwon Kwong

(To this end) "Community is NOT a coherent and unified social formation. Rather than "a common being" it is a way of "being in common".

- Henri Lefebvre

According to Miwon Kwong: "One Place after Another" – MIT Press 2004

"Site Specific" work emerged in the 1960's from the Minimalism movement and as an arts exploration can be considered in 3 distinct periods:

1. Phenomenological - An actual location – an agglomeration of physical attributes –

Size, scale, texture, dimension, walls, ceilings, rooms, existing lighting conditions, topographical features, traffic and circulation patterns, seasonal characteristics of climate etc. It's where architecture has served as a foil for the art work in many cases.

2. Social and institutional – studios, galleries, museums, arts markets, arts criticism.

Not just a physical arena but made up of social, economic and political processes.

3. Discursive – The public realm: dispersed across much broader cultural, social, and discursive fields and organised through the nomadic movement of artists. Operates more like an itinerary than a map. Site becomes a billboard, an artistic genre, a disenfranchised community, a magazine page, a blog, a social cause, and a political debate – as literal as a street corner or as virtual as a theoretical concept.

In contemporary exploration of site there is constant tension between site as sedentary and site as nomadic; permanence and immobility vs. impermanence and transience.

"Site, wherever situated, is most often open ended and the scene of political/cultural struggle..."

"With accelerated speed, access, and exchange of information, images, commodities and even bodies, there is a breakdown of traditional time-space experience with an accompanying homogenisation of places and cultural differences: (The Disneyfication of site and place - JA). This indifferentiation and de-particularization, all that is non specific about a site is seen to exacerbate a sense of alienation and fragmentation in contemporary life. Consequently, that which links subject/object to location, and the interplay between place and space has over the past 20 years received much attention".

MK

PLACE

The Hebrew name for God is *Makom* – which means, “place”.

“When space feels thoroughly familiar to us, it has become place”

Yi-Fu Tuan

Place as terroir:

“Without the liberating notion of ‘terroir’ – that place to which we profoundly belong - individuality, dignity, tolerance, and shared civilisation would not exist.

Terroir is an act of generosity. It's the sharing of what's particular for the good of the ensemble. It's the exact contrary of sectarian and reactionary values. Expressing what is particular to changes in a place – in terroir – is a unique way to offer a sharing of all that's of beauty within the identity of culture. It's a way of using that which arises from a local domain to introduce each of us to the specific beauty and mystery of “the other””.

Jonathen Nossiter – “Mondovino”

Place as memory:

“James Joyce wrote in the preparatory note for *Ulysses* “places remember events”. Joyce is clear about how time is deeply embedded within place. Like a simple mathematical formula Joyce suggests that place is memory of events over time. Space, despite being felt as immense and limitless, is often measured and defined by time. Within the immensity of time and space, the scars of the past are firmly etched in place.”

JA

“Place is space in which the process of remembrance continues to activate the past as something which is lived and acted rather than represented”.

Tacita Dean – “Place” – Thames and Hudson Artworks series - 2005

Place as particularity:

“Place is formed by an intimate and particularised culture that is bound to a geographical region”.

Jeff Kelley

Place as meaning:

“A space to which meaning has been ascribed and which has been assigned distinctiveness and value. Any location has a potential to be “a place”. Its “thereness” is indispensable to the vision of place whether virtually or immediately perceived.

“Thereness” is elastic since places evolve, degrade and ameliorate.”

“Where subject and object are linked to a location”.

MK

Place as boundary:

“Place is perceived as in some sense ‘bounded’, particularly in relation to the seemingly endless extension of space”.

Tacita Dean.

The most famous slave narrative “*The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*” from 1845 begins with “I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, about 12 miles from Easton in Talbot County, Maryland”.

Douglass's text is a foundation text for Afro American studies. Such precision of place reminds us that the slave experience was one defined by geography – the boundary between freedom and bondage; relative danger and relative safety, which could be mapped according to the Mason Dixon Line and the Ohio River.

If Douglass moved from Tuckahoe (agricultural south) to New York he went from being “a slave” to “a man”.

Attitudes to space in Afro American experience (seen generally in terms of “dislocation”) make “sense of place” very important and can often be specified in 2 extremes of responses to the environment

1. hostile
2. celebratory

“We can't ignore the labour of slaves in creating gardens. We should ask: Who plants the flower? What works was involved? What existed there before? What exists around it now? Put place into politics and politics into place”
Jamaica Kincaid

Similarly the maestro aboriginal epic of operatic proportions “Carpentaria” by writer Alexis Wright tells interwoven stories of the inhabitants of a fictional place – a town called “Desperance” – drawing a taught emotional and spiritual boundary between despair and hopefulness (esperance) and from it describing a physical and metaphysical gulf.

“ONE EVENING IN THE DRIEST grasses in the world, a child who was no stranger to her people, asked if anyone could find hope. The people of parable and prophecy pondered what was hopeless and finally declared they no longer knew what hope was. The clocks, tick-a-ty tock, looked as though they might run out of time. Luckily, the ghosts in the memories of the old folk were listening, and said anyone can find hope in the stories: the big stories and the little ones in between.” Alexis Wright - Carpentaria

PLACE AND DETERRITORIALISATION

There's a theory of “wrong place” to be written which accompanies the Disneyfication of place.

It's a way of imagining a new model of belonging and the consequences of being in transience and is based on absence, distance and ruptures of space and time.

Proposition MK

“Valpairiso” a play about deterritorialisation by DeLillo

“Under Ice” by Falk Richter is another that considers “non-place” or “wrong-place”

“If you don't know where you are, you probably don't know who you are”
- Ralph Ellison

“What's interesting is that we always talk about globalism in terms of loss, and it seems that this loss is to do with place...but actually globalisation itself is caused by or impelled by a sense of place: I'm sure that it comes about because of the staggering boredom of countryside. The experience of the city is partly an experience of change, and romantic ideas of the countryside come from a condition of being allergic to change”.

Joseph Koerner - interview

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/place>

place *Noun*

1. a particular part of a space or of a surface
2. a geographical point, such as a town or city
3. a position or rank in a sequence or order
4. an open square lined with houses in a city or town
5. space or room
6. a house or living quarters
7. any building or area set aside for a specific purpose
8. the point reached in reading or speaking: *her finger was pressed to the page as if marking her place*
9. right or duty: *it's not my place to do their job for them*
10. appointment, position, or job: she won a place at university
11. position, condition, or state: you know what your place in the world is
12. a space or seat, as at a dining table, on a train, boat, car etc
13. *Maths* the relative position of a digit in a number
14. **all over the place** in disorder or disarray
15. **go places** *Informal* to become successful
16. **in or out of place** in or out of the proper or customary position
17. **in place of**
 - a. instead of: leeks can be used in place of the broccoli
 - b. in exchange for: he gave her it in place of her ring
18. **know one's place** to be aware of one's inferior position
19. **put someone in his or her place** to humble someone who is arrogant, conceited, etc.
20. **take place** to happen or occur
21. **take the place of** to be a substitute for

Verb

[placing, placed]

1. to put in a particular or appropriate place
2. to find or indicate the place of: *I bet you the media couldn't have placed Bulangarook on the map before the by-election*
3. to identify or classify by linking with an appropriate context: *I felt I should know him, but could not quite place him*
4. to make (an order or bet)
5. to find a home or job for (someone)
6. (often foll. by *with*) to put under the care (of)
7. (of a racehorse, greyhound, athlete, etc.) to arrive in first, second, third, or sometimes fourth place [Latin *platea* courtyard]

LANDSCAPE

"A landscape is the land transformed whether through the physical act of inhabitation or enclosure, clearance or cultivation, or through human perception."

Tacita Dean

"A landscape reflects each of its perspectives in the interior perspectives of those who contemplate it. A garden is a demonstration of a thought or thinking.

Landscape, a cultural symptom, creation of mind/spirit is nothing without its own visual presence or self image attained via its body – "the garden". People, subject to their own dreaming, carry within themselves a garden, which translates into a landscape, and above and beyond that a universe. In a place of culture (or cultivation) which is controlled and defined, the visible and invisible cohabit and oblige consideration of the garden as a territory that is specific to the soul whatever the results or capacities and which is at the service of faraway visions. Hence the impossibility of reducing such a place to its physical limits.

The correlation between landscape and garden is born as soon as a person is conscious of their own environment and finds words to define it."

SPACE

In the 14th and 15th century space was seen as the most useful concept with which to explore the infinite. It became a period that celebrated the mathematicization of nature.

Nature and place could be converted into calculable distances.

“When we say that a thing is in a given place, all we mean is that it occupies such a position relative to other things”.

Liebniz (reducing place and space to position or site).

The fact that over the centuries we retain a strong sense of place or displacement, or being out-of-place in itself reflects a refusal to accept a purely mathematical model of place-as-location.

“Space is much scarier (than place) because it's harder to graph”.

Simon Schama

“You can trap space brilliantly, or extend it, but it also means that the world is reduced to a set of controllable spaces. For example Mexico City has been a place with its own geographical logic. And then it comes under the Spanish grid, which is a control device”.

Simon Schama

“Each strategy for (urban) space focuses on several objectives, just as abstract urban space – is manipulating and manipulated and has “properties”.

Strategic space for example allows for pushing unskilled worker communities towards city boundaries and to rarefy space around the city centre as a space of wealth, power and information – to create a hegemony of alliances between middle classes and “the elite”, - to plan and control production and flux spatially.”

Henri Lefebvre

“Is it possible to experience space, or can we experience place but only *imagine* space? Maybe we experience place but only *recognize* space? You can recognize space without experiencing it can't you? It's a different kind of action or activity.”

Tacita Dean

“Space is a continuous quantity; for the parts of a solid occupy a certain space, and these have a common boundary; it follows that the parts of space also, which are occupied by the parts of the solid, have the same common boundary as the parts of the solid.” Author ?

The Categories by Aristotle

THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TIME AND ANY OF THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF SPACE EXCEPT THAT OUR CONSCIOUSNESS MOVES ALONG IT.

The Time Machine by Wells, H.G.

No one gave a thought to the older worlds of space as sources of human danger, or thought of them only to dismiss the idea of life upon them as impossible or improbable.

space

noun **1.** ROOM, volume, capacity, extent, margin, extension, scope, play, expanse, leeway, amplitude, spaciousness, elbowroom

noun **2.** GAP, opening, interval, gulf, cavity, aperture

noun **3.** PERIOD, interval, time, while, span, duration, time frame, timeline

noun **4.** OUTER SPACE, the universe, the galaxy, the solar system, the cosmos

noun **5.** BLANK, gap, interval >> ADJECTIVE spatial

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