

**'LINES WE MIGHT HAVE WALKED'  
CRITICAL RESPONSE BY MEGAN SPENCER**



*“‘Lines We Might Have Walked’ draws on the act of mapping; how we record where we have been, how our memories shape meaning in spaces we’ve inhabited, and how our movements within these spaces make up a part of who we are.*

*The work asks whether, by tracing memories of movement in the form of lines, we can create alternative portraits of ourselves in the spaces we inhabit.’ – Georgia Mill*

Georgia Mill’s Seedpod project is one that asks us to consider the idea of ‘the personal map’ as a way to represent *the self* – ie physical, cartographical manifestations of what happens inside an individual’s mind, via memory and subjective impressions.

Initially, she spent five days at the Castlemaine library gathering data and materials for such ‘map portraits; of local residents, whereby she “had a table set up with a collection of pop-up maps of Castlemaine. [She] asked people to sit down with [her] and draw a line on the map in response to a question.”

The questions were strange, personal and funny, such as, “Draw a line on the map which takes you to two places you would feel warm, and one where you would feel small.” Or, “Draw a line on the map which takes you to two places where you could sleep soundly and one where you would be scared.”

These materials were then cartographically arranged and displayed within the ICU space, (in overheads, as mobiles, light sculptures, a model etc), for members of the public to view and ponder.

We were also invited to further participate in Georgia’s research; we were asked to record our *own* answers to such questions, here, in the ICU, as the others had done several days beforehand, there, in the more formal environment of the Library.

In essence, our reactions to her questions – drawing our own maps on the butcher’s paper she had wrapped around the ICU pillars – became a living part of the installation on display. The floor itself was a map, with taped lines leading us from one question to the other, and one installation to the other, in our own time.

In situ, at the ICU space, Georgia Mill’s Seedpod project was extremely enjoyable to experience, operating on a number of intertwining, considered levels.

The ICU space had been carefully sculpted to deliver and present to the public,

- . a) The specific conceptual concerns of her Seedpod 'experiment': to investigate, research and reflect upon the act of personally mapping one's own identity/environment, through the presentation of data and text,
- . b) An aesthetic manifestation of the project whereby the collected data was arranged into various appealing/ethereal installations, inside the space of ICU, and,
- . c) A unique interactive and personal experience for people to walk through, and contribute to.

Beyond the enjoyment of discovering the various/varying personal 'portraits' of others – those that had been collected at the Library – one of the great gifts of the installation was being given the opportunity to generate one's own, within such a gentle meditative space.

Time seemed to disappear and it was hard to keep track of. The preoccupation was to work out one's own personal map, based upon the questions Georgia had posed, and asked us each to respond to.

As more people entered and interacted with the space, more lines/maps appeared on the butcher paper-covered pillars, over the course of the evening. In no uncertain terms, at the entrance to this show, we were heartily encouraged to 'grab a texta' and go for it! Do the rounds, carve out our own responses by drawing our own maps. People seemed to spend ages standing in front of the pillars, drawing. We're not often asked to do that any more! So it was fun, and simultaneously an enjoyable meditation.

People who came along were prompted to talk about their own 'mapping experiences'; in a way that perhaps a performance – based on the data collected – might not have evoked. A stand and deliver 'lecture' or report would not have been exclusive; the point of Georgia's ICU installation was to be inclusive.

There was no accompanying soundtrack to the installation, other than the naturally occurring sounds within the space. Either a 'happy accident' by virtue of omission, or a disciplined conscious decision... Either way, the result was the same: we were in an environment without distraction. Each of us was invited to be alone with our thoughts, an invitation that doesn't happen everyday. Usually it's the opposite – 'monkey mind' is encouraged, constant, unfocused, internal chatter... To have augmented the space with music or some kind of atmospheric soundtrack would have posed as a significant distraction from the task at hand; to go 'within'. It would have been counterproductive to Georgia's 'work in progress' i.e. her continued data collection, another reason the ICU installation was set up.

Recognition of the bodies within the space was also integral; while we worked in stillness and silence, we were also encouraged to move and walk around. Elements of the installation reminded us that we were physical; as we walked closer to the mobiles (made from the 48 maps drawn by locals at the Library, folded into

origami-like shapes, and suspended from the ceiling), air currents were generated. They would spin and swing on approach. There was no way for them to be still as we got closer, for 'a look'.

The internal landscape of the ICU constantly changed as people moved around it; each of us became part of this spatial sculpture, in shadow, in light, in half-light, in half-shadow. You could open and shut your eyes and each time it would look different, depending on the flow and activity of the people moving through it, what they were doing, at any given moment.

And lest we forget (!), we were at an art exhibition after all – the 'Light Sculptures' on the wall were a timely reminder. Georgia arranged and framed series of lines from selected maps, illuminating each squiggle, then to set them up on a wall like pictures in a gallery. Only in this series, they reminded me of the animated graphics Saul & Elaine Bass would design for the opening credits of Alfred Hitchcock movies of the 50s and 60s. Made from the local, personal map portraits/stories that had most attracted her, Georgia confessed she would "like to make a whole wall of them" if she could!

In addition to asking the artist questions about the project, participants also felt equally moved to reveal their own map memories and experiences to her, encouraged no doubt by the quietness of the space, unmistakably meditative and contemplative, in mood.

Like the signs said, "You are here." Yes we were, in no uncertain terms.