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Experiences of Rupture

by

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Report

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Experiences of Rupture

**Approved by
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By Ledia Pearl Carroll, M.F.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2005

Supervisor: Chris Taylor

I am interested in a mode of inquiry that reveals existing conditions to people through direct experience of an artifact or phenomena. My work ranges from objects, to overt experience, to the documentation of observed situations. These projects tend to be situated in and use materials from both natural and constructed landscapes. They are science or mapping projects that explore fundamental aspects of the world. When they provide multiple perspectives at once they blur boundaries between indoors and outdoors, above and below, the past and the present, or socially permitted and not allowed. Through these projects, I create open conditions of possibility, of rupture, and lines of flight from the everyday experience of time.

This document is divided into four distinct sections. First I will outline some art movements that have made me think about the seamlessness and rupture in daily experience. Then I will examine representation systems that are generative for my work and follow with a section on my design methodology. The final section describes my projects.

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If we define art as part of the realm of experience—not for instance with the limits of painting. We have chosen that experience out of the realm of experience to be defined as ‘art,’ because the ‘art’ had been experienced¹. Irwin-Turrell-Wortz

VALUABLE EXPERIENCES OF RUPTURE FROM DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Hegemonic institutional control is ubiquitous. It functions in the mind—in the disciplinary way we police our thinking— and also appears in the artifacts we make. Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, De Certeau and many others describe this social control of the mind and space. Surrealist and Situationist research was also concerned with the way that a hegemonic structure was being overlaid on the world. They were concerned with what Guy Debord famously called the “Society of the Spectacle”², that through increasing commodification, life for most people was becoming a spectacle like a carnival or a world fair, an all consuming programmed experience of entertainment on the one hand and work on the other. They were concerned that people could not experience life directly because they were surrounded and surrounded themselves with filters. The surrealists proposed some methods to allow for moments of rupture. They were interested in capturing moments of the unconscious mind, Freudian slips in speech can be viewed as an example; glimpses into potential truths beyond what

1 Tuchman, Maurice. 1971. *Art & Technology; A Report on the Art & Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, (1967-1971)*. a project curated by Maurice Tuchman documents the Robert Irwin-James Turrell-Ed Wortz collaboration, compiled by Jane Livingston (pp. Entire document describes the program, this particular collaboration discussed on pp. 127-143), p. 131

2 Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. Zone Books, 1995 (My copy is a reprint. The original publication date 1967)

is generally permitted in daily behavior. I am interested in this model of social control and some of the ideas proposed in the 20th century to break this type of discipline³.

William Morris, John Ruskin and the turn of the century practitioners of Arts and Crafts movement were responding to the dehumanizing effects of industrialization at the turn of the century. Their solution proposed the way of life of the citizen-builder-architect, hands on, experience directly through making. Their Craftsman buildings and furnishings within continue to be a benchmark in design. This movement occurred at the turn of the century. This movement was influential with it's concern with human scaled space. It was in the zeitgeist, cresting as people were beginning to read Freud, considering the "self" in new ways. This led to the Art Nouveau's sense that spaces, particularly interior surroundings, make a difference in an individual's state of mind.⁴

Surrealism, seen as new vision, elaborates on fleeting glimpses, instances, of the everyday⁵. such a close look necessarily abstracts it. An example is a Man Ray photograph that transforms a building into an abstract form or Breton's "conscripted sculptures" from his pockets-photos of gum, crumpled paper, unrecognizable pocket contents, or other ambient ephemera, found object, here a pocket knife "conscripted" into the service of sculpture⁶). The aim of the Bureau of Surrealist Research (so named by way of parody and

3 Deleuze and Foucault make a distinction between contemporary "control societies" and recent "disciplinary societies". While I do see this distinction, the difference between these is the important subject of much work. But for the purposes of this paper, I elide them considering them both as methods of hegemonic societal control.

4 Silverman, Debora. *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siecle France: Politics, Psychology, and Style*. University of California Press, 1989

5 This very momentary glimpse is inspiring to me.

6 Breton, Andre. *Andre Breton: La Beaute Convulsive*. Musee National D'Art Moderne Centre Georges Pompidou, 1991, p. 294

embrace of scientific research but ultimately an art collaborative) was to "gather all the information possible related to forms that might express the unconscious activity of the mind."^{7 8} It was a project of Andre Breton and collaborators, who also had a magazine called *La Révolution Surrealiste* showing photos by Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy and others. Both the Bureau and the magazine were forums for surrealist photographs and other art, dream exploration, and art based on such things as dream, "automatic" drawings, and exquisite corpse group drawings. The emphasis on the role of chance, to get at the parallel of Freudian slips, provides a glimpse into other realities within the mind.⁹

Similarly, dealing with rupture but not overtly with the subconscious/conscious divide, conceptual artists of the 60s and 70s who framed their concerns around "chance" were trying to get away from arrangements according to taste. Setting up systems to follow until a piece was done allowed them to work without relying on their personal composition aesthetic. They were trying to an essential by through moving away from conscious arrangements. Robert Morris¹⁰ talks about art as the "antidote to the habitual," and art's ability to disorient the viewer, to create forms not based on preference or taste. This approach allows a form to develop through the making of the work, as in the work of Sol Lewitt who also discusses this in his essay

7 Breton, Andre. "Surrealist Situation of the Object/Situation of the Surrealist Object (1935)" [Lecture delivered in Prague March 29, 1935] in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. University of Michigan Press, 1969, p. 255-278

8 Durozoi, Gerard. *History of the Surrealist Movement*. Breton in *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (of which his is only one of many manifestoes of surrealism by various people) really hoped to legitimize this surrealist way of seeing, define the surrealist way of seeing even the surrealist object. He mentions that his collaborator Man Ray thought there might be "some sort of hallmark or seal" with which they could mark true surrealist work. The Situationist psychogeographers came out of this surrealist mode, hoping to create a real field of study of ways of seeing.

9 Despite other book references, this paragraph heavily draws from information framed in a lecture by Ann Reynolds on the surrealists and what they were up to.

10 Morris, Robert. "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making" in *Continuous Projects Altered Daily*,

“Sentences in Conceptual Art”.¹¹

This work is inspirational and important to me because it creates an opportunity for something to reveal itself, possibly something more essential than what might naturally occur to you if you just sat down and painted a picture. That was the idea anyway, for something to emerge as you follow a system you have devised for making the work. Morris also interestingly draws the relationship between language as a system and nature as a system. He cites the structuralist linguist de Saussure on language being a system¹². Morris is interested in how language is a system that is also a human *behavior*. He notes "a tendency in American art has pushed toward reducing arbitrary formal arrangements by substituting systematic methods of behaving." He goes on to say that "some incipient general patterning modality common to both [language and art] should not be surprising"¹³. Both are human behaviors but also it makes sense for art to use this strategy this as a way to get at something essential about the world.

Ultimately these theories about the negative effects of industrialization, power, and codified systems on human experience are proposals to counter this negative effect. This is a long history. I also think it is interesting that these groups all draw from science in one way or another to spell out societal ills or as a framework for inspiration and possible legitimacy.

MIT Press, 1993. p. 81. This point is also made throughout the book.

11 Sol LeWitt. “Sentences on Conceptual Art” in Sol LeWitt. New York Museum of Modern Art, 1978 "Accompanies his exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art ... Not a catalog of the exhibition." Sol LeWitt also talks about these core issues for him elsewhere, throughout his writing.

12 de Saussure, Ferdinand. A Course in General Linguistics [lectures in linguistics at the University of Geneva between 1906 and 1911], as discussed by Morris, p. 79, *ibid*

13 Morris, Robert. “Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making” in *Continuous Projects Altered Daily*, p. 81

GENERATIVE REPRESENTATION SYSTEMS

RUPTURE, MAPS AND INDEXICAL SYSTEMS

Examples of this kind of rupture in physical artifacts also occur. During land surveys of the 1700 and 1800s, “the entire system of land division was based on square, horizontal, and perpendicular relationships...the varying topography and curvature of the earth...proved troublesome for surveyors and legislators alike (47)” who were trying to create even, gridded land parcels. This resulted in places where the earth as represented by the survey maps resists this codification by its very nature. Situations resulting from these representations arose such as ground survey shifts due to corrections for square land plots on round earth¹⁴ the need for corrections on the ground for land divided by surveys because of the shape of the earth and the “stray” survey lines in the map views across the Ozark Mountains of Missouri where “iron-ore deposits caused major deviations in magnetic compass readings that led to broken, disconnected, and straying grid lines (47)”¹⁵, In a map of stray survey lines across the Ozarks¹⁶, the survey lines on a USGS map of Ironton where the convention is violated by the structure being systematized. It is a moment of freedom from the grid. Identifying intellectual ruptures and need for correction in linear measurement systems as they are applied to a round earth reveals dissonance between conventional system and the thing it seeks to systematize.

Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha also look at this in their book

14 Corner, James. *Taking Measure of the American Landscape*. Yale University Press, 1996. pp. 56-57

15 Corner, James. *Taking Measure of the American Landscape*. Yale University Press, 1996. p. 47

16 Corner, James. *Taking Measure of the American Landscape*. Yale University Press, 1996. p. 47

*Mississippi Floods: A Shifting Landscape*¹⁷. They show a series of maps of the Mississippi that show a contested boundary of the shifting center of the Mississippi, the boundary between Louisiana and Mississippi¹⁸. This has been the traditional boundary between the states of Louisiana and Mississippi. Changes in dams, along with “natural” and other shifts call into question what is natural and what is manmade. These maps show moments of rupture in the legal and social structures of government control of space in revealing these contested boundaries.

I believe that experiencing these things, even visually, creates an opening for a possible shift into exposing inherent gaps in measurement systems that we use to understand the world. These are the gaps between representations and reality—similar to the difference between a photograph and an experience. The difference between extrapolated truth and ground truth.

There are many examples of map related works by artists and designers Rosalind Krauss categorizes this as “indexical”¹⁹ work. Gordon Matta-Clark, Tadashi Kawamata, and Rachel Whiteread fall into this category. This commonality ties the work together, beyond the superficial disparate “style”. Rosalind Krauss discussed this kind of work saying, “the index must be seen as something that shapes the sensibility of a large number of contemporary artists, that whether they are conscious of it or not, many of them assimilate their work

17 Mathur, Anuradha and Dilip da Cunha. *Mississippi Floods: A Shifting Landscape*. Yale University Press, 2001, pp. 46-50, and throughout

18 Mathur, Anuradha and Dilip da Cunha. *Mississippi Floods: A Shifting Landscape*. Yale University Press, 2001, p.49

19 Rosalind Krauss’ chapter “Notes on The Index: Part 1” written in *The Originality of the Avant Garde and Other Myths* (article written 1977, book published 1986)

(in part if not wholly) to the logic of the index”²⁰. She means by this that their work has elements referring to personal experience, and the process of making the work itself. For example, in many installation pieces having content about the space the art is in. Much of my own work is indexical in this way.

MOVEMENT THROUGH SPACE, DIAGRAMS, AND RUPTURE

Deleuze and Guattari’s 1980 book *Thousand Plateaus*²¹ is about emergence and how cultural forms move and shift between sites. It looks away from the structuralist concern of the late 60s and 70s that sought to find freedom in identifying inherent patterns in the world. This book was part of a sea change occurring in the 1980s emphasizing cybernetic theory and emergence which significantly influenced, both as metaphor and phenomenon, art, architecture, design, models of business, and literary theory²². I think one reason this is so compelling is that it reveals something about the natural world that is removed by industrialization. Of course systems theory of the 60s and 70s did this too in looking at systems and how they work. The difference is that systems theories, coinciding with structuralism in academic thought and modernism in art and architecture, were trying to identify the feedback loops that do occur, to codify them to better understand and use them. The theme of emergence, specifically

20 Rosalind Krauss’ chapter “Notes on The Index: Part 1” written in *The Originality of the Avant Garde and Other Myths* (article written 1977, book published 1986), p. 21

21 Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press, 1988

22 Kelly, Kevin. *Out of Control: The Rise of Neo-Biological Civilization*. Addison-Wesley, 1994. This is an often cited popular press book that emphasize the structure of chaotic systems, drawing parallels between things like ant hills and the flow of money across international banking networks. There are many references, high and low that talk about these kinds of systems directly or study how people use them. On the academic side this includes anthropologist Emily Martin who looks at how metaphors of biological systems effect how people think about them and literary theorist Katherine Hayles who discuss cybernetics and how people refer to and are influenced by these models.

referring to Deleuze and Guattari, builds on those theories of systems²³. It is based on the understanding that systems not only emerge, but patterns from those systems then change. Deleuze and Guattari are talking about culture. They are saying that systems as a theoretical model can be entrapping, an overly stable model. They are saying we need to step further and create models of thought that grow like the rhizomes of grass not the roots of trees²⁴. Deleuze and Guattari attempt to promote rupture by proposing their idea of culture as a “rhizome” rather than the more hierarchical tree as a model. “The issue is never to reduce the unconscious or to interpret it or make it signify according to a tree model. The issue is to produce the unconscious, and with it new statements, different desires: the [model of] the rhizome is precisely this production of the unconscious.”²⁵ They are saying that not only is this a more accurate statement about how culture works; it is a more productive model of culture. It allows for moments of rupture within everyday life. Being able to experience a rupture in the system in one situation creates what D&G refer to enigmatically as a “line of flight”²⁶, a way to move to the next point; the ability to move via the connection between one idea and another, from one moment and another.

De Certeau’s 1984 book fits into this thinking about movement being creative in a slightly different way. He talks about how space is socially

23 Contemporary architects including Caroline Bos and Ben van Berkel, Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, Stan Allen, Manuel de Landa and others are all enormously influenced by the work of Deleuze and Guattari. The work of Frank Gehry and other “blob architecture” also comes out of working on emergence.

24 Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. “Introduction: Rhizome” in *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press, 1988, 3-25

25 Deleuze and Guattari. *Thousand Plateaus*. Paris 1980. English translation, Brian Massumi, 1987.

“Introduction: Rhizome”, p. 18 Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press, 1988

26 Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press, 1988, p. 21 and elsewhere

controlled. But it is in experiencing *time* that people create their own pathways. By being in time, by moving in space, you constitute that space, and exist in it. De Certeau also describes the way that space is inseparable from time. He is saying that in a way a place does not exist until you occupy it, move through it. For example, walkers appropriate space like speakers appropriate language²⁷, the idea being that words describe nothing until they are conjured, appropriated. Similarly space does not exist until it is experienced. And in so doing, space is conjured, inseparable from time. My reading of this is that in understanding space this way, walking is creative and allows for new possibilities in the space time continuum, whether or not the individual walker sees it this way, it is so. Perceiving space in this way allows for the perception of rupture more easily, and thus may allow more moments of freedom, which I see as a good thing.

A number of architects are inspired by these ideas of physical and conceptual movement, applying the rhizome metaphor to drawings, describing diagrams as lines of flight. Stan Allen says “Diagrams do not map or represent already existing objects or systems but anticipate new organizations and specify yet to be realized relationships²⁸ Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos describe a diagram [as] “a loophole in the global information space that allows for endlessly expansive, unpredictable, and liberating pathways for architecture²⁹,” saying that the lines of diagrams are lines of freedom. This is very positive, in the same vein as Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas of lines of flight through smooth space, mobile like music rather than pinned down in text. This is an important idea for my own work.

27 de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press, 1984, p. 97

28 Stan Allen’s article “Diagrams Matter” in the periodical *Architecture New York*, Issue no. 23 titled *Diagram Work* 1988, p. 16

ALLOWING FOR RUPTURE AS A DESIGN METHODOLOGY

This document presents design methodologies that allow moments of freedom. Moments of rupture are human experiences. It is positive for people to attain this state of mind, as often as possible, to experience, intellectually or physically, moments of rupture with societally framed viewpoints, within everyday programmed experiences. It seems from the examples of people's work and my own experiments that experiences of rupture cannot be overtly created but conditions for these experiences can sometimes be created. They can be encouraged by pointing out cracks in social, spatial, or physical power structures, by exposing people, and exposing yourself more often to fundamental aspects of the social, spatial, or physical world. Many of the aforementioned works function in this way.

Rupturous experiences emerge intellectually by reconsidering mental, social and or structures, and exposing potential ruptures. The Surrealist research used its own systems to identify what is beneath the codified strata. Creating works of science, writing, art or design that inspire movement and participation could create moments of rupture. These methods for reaching around the side of hegemonic system are successful models. There is a particular opportunity in maps (indexical, diagrammatic or other) for encouraging rupture. This is because looking at maps or life at different scales can create a break in that this shows how things are not what they seem. Art can sometimes do this too, the very existence of non-utilitarian objects in an otherwise socially normal space.

29 Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos "Introduction" to issue #23 of the periodical Architecture New York, titled Diagram Work (1988), p. 15

PROJECTS BY LEDIA CARROLL

My work often uses measurement to reveal aspects of internal logic within particular landscapes. I am a landscape designer--my installation fine art/design work I consider to be landscape design without clients. Current work has been conceptual and documentary in nature but always creates something physical that allows people to experience a shift in perception about an aspect of the surrounding indoor or outdoor landscape.

Whether indoors or outdoors, my work inserts a method of measurement into a place to draw attention to what already occurs. I use measurement to point out systems. Some of the strategies I have used include making structures with ephemeral materials (ice) to measure time and the transformation of form, which I did in **Bonneville Ice and Snow Dump**. In **Topographical Map of Part of the Floor at 1:1 Scale**, I revealed the topographical variation of a seemingly level floor through drawing with a laser level. Another project, **Topo Lounge**, brings a former hillside, the pre-existing land form, inside to show both the built and former topography, allowing people to be in the plan and the section, in multiple points of view, at once.

See Images 1-8 on CD-ROM

1. **Snow Dump**, Winter 2004, One dumptruck load of snow. Dimensions vary
2. **Bonneville Ice**, Fall 2003, Series of 12 24 x 36 digital prints

In these pieces I made structures out of snow and ice in order to observe what forms the dumping would create, to observe the deterioration and to be in the time as I observed the deterioration. On the Bonneville Salt Flat in Utah, I built

'Bonneville Ice' , a structure with ice blocks to measure time with a material. The ice provided a frame to the experience of time over the course of the day, taking notes, and visiting with the few people who came by as it melted. After setting up the ice, it sat undisturbed taking one full day to melt.

For 'Snow Dump', I had a large truck load of manufactured snow dumped in the parking lot of the Creative Research Lab and documented its disappearance with photography and video. The snow dump took place in an urban environment. People were part of the deterioration process.

3. Topographical Map of Part of the Floor at 1:1 Scale. Summer 2004, Laser level, chalk, vinyl tape. Dimensions vary

In this piece I used a laser level to identify grade changes, which I marked in chalk. I then drew contour lines at 1/16 inch vertical intervals. As on a USGS map, topography is shown by contour lines that follow the ground surface at a constant elevation. These lines are usually imaginary in that they are drawn on maps only. By drawing the map on the floor at a 1:1 scale these lines became visible directly on the terrain they described. The unchanged floor now no longer appeared flat. As subtle shifts in elevation were revealed from the original concrete pour, the floor now seemed to undulate slightly.

4. Meniscus Set, Spring 2004, One of six pieces which vary in size. Fabricated steel. 12x12x12

5. Vernal Pool String Level , Fall 2003, Pink Survey String, Line levels.

The 'Meniscus set' is a series of steel structures exploring ideas about level

and the meniscus skin formed on the surface of contained water. I was wondering, is it possible to make a double meniscus, that is a meniscus within a meniscus? This piece is part of various experiments related specifically to the measure of horizontal level, a measure based on water, which is itself a self-leveling system. The Vernal Pool String Level compares and contrasts water level with human imposed level. Level is is a measure that functions over large spaces, is visible to the naked eye, but at the same time may or may not be apparent to the individual observer. Turned loose, water finds its own course through land. It is a self-organizing system that defines watersheds for example.

6. Topo Lounge, Proposal for Arthouse Lounge. Fall 2004. Proposed Materials: Soil, 1/2" Coreten steel.

This proposal for the interior at Arthouse was designed to make evident the original grade of the land before the building was constructed. I proposed adding material to grade the floor of the gallery to match the slope of the hillside on which it sits. In doing this, the outdoor and indoor space become linked, contextualizing the gallery in the local environment, socially and topographically. The plan was to raise the floor for part of the gallery to a slope that exactly matches that of the landscape outside. I gathered this information from GIS and USGS topographical data at various points in time.

7. Six Lenses, Spring 2005. Materials: Builders transit, string line level, spotlight, 12 yards decomposed granite, excavation

Lens is an optical term. It is also a landscaping term referring to berms built in arid landscapes intended to slow water runoff and raise the water table beneath. These lenses are perfect conic sections within depressions below the ground plane. The piece draws attention to the difference in perspective between above and below. I formed the footprints of the lenses by projecting a beam of light from one point in the center of the balcony upstairs onto the ground in 6 places. I then formed the lenses up by carefully adding material, continually checking the geometry using string lines and a builders transit, and at night with the light.

8. Liminal Walk. In collaboration with Leah Davis. Spring 2005. Location: University of Texas at Austin, East Mall Fountain. Materials: Fabricated Steel

The piece creates a path through the center of the Winship Fountain, at Winship bus circle in front of the Theater Building. It addresses two boundary conditions, 1) it allows a person to walk on the boundary between air and water (which normally is not possible) and 2) invites a person to walk through the fountain (challenging the social boundary of don't-walk-in-the-fountain). The area of Winship circle is a focal point of movement and paths. The installation intends to create an experience of unexpected possibility within the everyday walk through campus. The everyday walk involves the straight paths in the grid of the campus, broken only by going around a fountain briefly.

Our installation allows a view into the spatial conscription that exists in our walks within campus, creating a moment out of everyday time. We are calling attention to the everyday straight path through campus. The main path runs along an axis that organizes the campus plan and creates an underlying logic for the way space is typically used and understood. By heightening that experience of the

straight path, our work creates a rupture in everyday experience based on reinforcing or shoring up the existing condition rather than challenging it. We are drawing that line through literally where it has been only implied. Typically the walk through Winship circle causes the walker to walk up to then around. Instead we invite them to continue their walk, directly through. The massive piece is constructed of steel grating and structural members to form a catwalk type assembly.

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Vita

Ledia Pearl Carroll was born in the Guatemalan Highlands on October 8, 1974, the daughter of Deborah Anne Carroll and Barry McBride Carroll. After completing her studies at Johnston High School in Austin, Texas in 1993, she entered Wellesley College in Wellesley Massachusetts. While an undergraduate she also completed coursework at the MIT Media Lab. In 1997 she earned a B.A. in Linguistics. Ledia has worked in Research and Design in many contexts. In August of 2003, she entered the MFA Design program at the University of Texas at Austin.

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