Catalogue Essay

TERRA_DATA

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terra n. *firma*, firm ground,
incognita, unknown or unexplored region,
data n. *information*

MINING THE ARCHIVE

Here, the archive is the site for a particular kind of
dig. It is a mining of coded information in a search
for raw data. The archive presents information
– meanings made, histories and organisations – so
how to extract the data? The intent seems to be a
freeing of substance from signification so that it is
active, temporal, and differential, continually in the
process of becoming. There is a "de-territorialisation"
occurring of the territory of the archive. The archive
is one root of a rhizome, a "point to move out from"
and "something to resist".[1]

Ana Terry's project *terra_data* takes images from 'the
stack' within the Hocken Collections as one of its
territories. Indeed the stack itself is a territory, as is the
archive. Together, the stack and the archive invoke
both an ambient stillness and an immersive, temporal
experience through time.

Stasis and temporality are further invoked in the
cinematic slicing and montage of the landscape images
to resemble a filmic sequencing and movement, in a
fracturing of established 'framings' of the landscape.
Singularly, each 'still' presents a static moment in time.
One is reminded of Paul Virilio's ideas concerning
the consumption of the landscape at speed.[2] Virilio
discusses this experience in terms of a continual
unfolding in the filmic sense, one which involves
singular moments where each moment is overtaken by
the previous moment to create a dynamic, immersive
experience. An experience in which – via the sense
of sight – the haptic, the whole body, is involved. The
filmic 'slicing' also operates visually as a sequence of
pleated surfaces endlessly producing folds, a mapping

of one frame into another, a folding in on itself of
representational space, in a continual movement
between near and far, foreground and background.

LANDSCAPE AND TERRITORY

Another way of 'seeing', and another territory here,
is the genre of landscape itself. The material of *terra_
data* is the commodified landscape – whether this is
a carefully preserved artifact (here an image of the
Mount Cook Range by the 19th-century painter Walter
Deverell) or a cheap mass produced reproduction
(a faded blue print of some far off place). The ideas
of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari could apply to
Terry's interpretations of the landscape, in the sense
that there is a relative de-territorialisation and a re-
territorialisation[3] occurring. That is to say, both forms
of representation of the landscape could be viewed
as a taking of control from a place (a territory) or
land via the imposition of a particular set of values in
the manner in which the landscape is framed. Hence
there is an undoing of a prior set of values and the
imposition of new orders – a replacement with an
alternative set of values or concepts. They represent
different forms of Eurocentric commodification of the
landscape. So, while occupying very different positions
in the territory that is culture, there is sameness in their
difference. But Terry's concern is not for the position
of the landscape within the cultural psyche, nor with
creating a new frame for the New Zealand landscape.
She wants to effect her own de-territorialisation/re-
territorialisation and she does this by taking the image
of the landscape as a cipher for other territories
– the archive as a framing territory, the territory of
oculocentric experiences and the haptic, the territory
between data and information, and of code, the
territories of time and space, the territory of seeing. It

becomes another of many possible points from which to move out from – another root of a rhizome – ''A rhizome never ceases to connect...''.[4] Terry's intent is to effect a ''de-centering...onto other dimensions and onto other registers''.[5] These are what Deleuze and Guattari call ''lines of flight''[6], a viral-like growth or evolution.

TERRA INCOGNITA

De-territorialisation and re-territorialisation can refer to the breaking down of connections between culture and place, to the spatial and temporal dislocation of cultural objects. In this sense also Terry is enacting her own form of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation, to break down or ''...to wedge apart...the archival origins, the landscape and its 'composition'...''.[7] Her strategy is, as we see in the work *terra_data*, to disrupt the territory through the vertical slicing of reproductions of landscapes and to reassemble them, restratifying sections of landscape from different sources in what can be read as a visual analogy to geological core sampling. The work suggests new scopic regimes, ones which are not stable, in the process of taking apart old ones. Terry's stated aim is not to present a critique of representations of the landscape, or a critique of the archive and its narratives. Her motivation is an attempt to ''generate something beyond but in relation to the boundaries of the Hocken archive; the archive as a point of departure. A plateau to lift off from''.[8] But there is more than one archive here. Each is several, so there are quite a few, there is multiplication and there is a re-territorialisation, ''there are lines of articulation or segmentation, strata, territorialities; but also...movements of deterritorialization and of destratification.''[9] There is no terra firma here, no single fixed position, but maybe there is some terra incognita.

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1   Terry's discussions about *terra_data* has been influenced by Simon O'Sullivan's book *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari.* O'Sullivan experiments with notions of de-territorialisation and demonstrates how to deploy Deleuze & Guattari's suggested methodologies in an arts practice. Terry states ''Deleuze and Guattari use geomorphic metaphors in describing processes akin to my own adoption of geological/archaeological methodologies and analogies in my practice.'' See Simon O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 33-37.

2   Paul Virilio, *Dromoscopy, or the Ecstasy of Enormities*, trans. by Edward R O'Neill, (Wide Angle, 20.3, 1998), 11-22. Last accesssed 12/11/07 via http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/wide_angle/v020/20.3virilio.html

3   See endnote 1.

4   Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, 'Rhizome' in *On the Line*, trans. by John Johnstone (Semiotext(e), Columbia University, New York, 1983), 12.

5   Ibid., 13.

6   Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, 'Rhizome' in *On the Line*, trans. by John Johnstone (Semiotext(e), Columbia University, New York, 1983), 20.

7   *Ana Terry,* ''terra_data and other Lines of Flight,'' unpublished notes from a research   seminar presented on 7 November 2007 at the Otago Polytechnic School of Art, Dunedin.

8   Ibid.

9   Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, 'Rhizome' in *On the Line*, trans. by John Johnstone (Semiotext(e), Columbia University, New York, 1983), 2.

Figure 1: Ana Terry, detail in *terra_data* (2007), plastic bird painted with stripes that camouflaged its form against a landscape (courtesy of Ana Terry)