

A Peculiar Geometry

"It is not down in any map; true places never are."

Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

Space and time are perhaps the most familiar features of lived experience. They are also the most beguiling. Space and time appear as eternally fixed essences, fundamental to the character of reality, unyielding to the vagaries of conduct and perception. Yet for all the familiarity of space and time, the appearance of stability remains a mysterious illusion. The everyday experience of space rarely accords with a classical geometry of planes and fixed distances. For space is always experienced as a process of movement and rest, of travel, communication and associations. The earth is never still and distances are never fixed.

Kant was the first to perceive this 'enfolding' of space and time in the movements of a thinking, feeling body. Space and time exhibit for Kant, the properties of pure intuition. We experience space and time as subjective points of perspective and movement. Space and time are meaningful only in relation to our experience of this perspective, such that any notion of an objective, geometrical space must remain an abstraction, perhaps even an illusion. The world might be mapped, its contours measured and its expanses navigated, but the space of maps is never the space of the living body. No map has ever captured the experience of place; the living, affective, cognitive and emotional experience of being in the world. To chart the disjunctive spaces and jarring temporalities of this life-world requires a different kind of map, more sensitive to affective rhythms of embodiment and place.

Andrea Eckersley and Dell Stewart's work explores the spaces and temporalities of embodiment and place. Each artist works between the geometrical space of surfaces and distance and the subjective life-world of experience and movement. Each artist creates work that addresses the body directly, taking the fixed spaces of the canvas, the silk-screen, the dress-maker's pattern and the ornament, warping and moulding these spaces to accommodate the body's peculiar geometry. The triangle provides an ideal example of the abstract surfaces of geometrical space and the ways these surfaces must be continuously distorted to fit the living body. Scales lift off the surface of the canvas only to land in the imbricated folds of the adjacent garment.

To wrap the body in the abstract geometry of the triangle is to be reminded of the intensity of lived place and the inhuman flatness of extensive space. It is to force the living, feeling, thinking body back into space. It is to introduce the body's sinuous folds into the flat abstractions of geometrical surfaces. Space and time are undeniable constraints – few bodies escape gravity and few bodies elude time. Yet to regard space and time as fundamental and immutable essences is to refuse the affective and corporeal potential that space and time present. All spaces are lived spaces; all time is experienced. Eckersley and Stewart remind us of the lived, felt, affective and relational dimensions of space and our desire to recover a place for the body, for experience itself.

Cameron Duff

Sites And Signals

Imagine you are in a forest clearing, where the only sign of civilisation is the faint track left by a long ago car doing donuts in the mud. The sun creates spots of light on the ground and friendly neon hand knitted snakes lie patiently at your feet. You sling one on as a scarf over your faux wood grain shift dress. A campfire smolders slowly in the corner and the smell of charcoal hangs in the smoke-skinned air. You've been out here alone for five days and you're happy, there's no reason to go back, but a voice tells you that you must.

You find cotton screen-printed flags and criss-cross them. These are not signals of distress; they are markers, used to safely convey visitors through your world and protect you from harm. They belong to a heritage of home-made craft technique passed down through the generations. The neon coral intensity suggests that earthy tones of brown and soft beige may not be enough in themselves. There may indeed be such a thing as too much brown.

Perhaps you crave fruit bowls, the electricity grid, footpaths that hiss clouds of smoke, conversations with a woman who wears a shade of lipstick called flamenco moon. You think about your plants in their ceramic log-like pots back home, surrounded by endless plains of impervious concrete, and wonder what the simulacrum would look like out here amongst nature. Is their smell more distilled, more heightened, in the city? Would they be overwhelmed by the immensity of vegetation here? If they were left to their own devices they might walk off during the night and never return – a strategy for survival in a world that requires living forms to constantly evolve.

Your clothes hang breezily on the makeshift line. The simple tunic dress whose orchids resemble underwater anemones. Burnished gold triangles undistortable as the pyramids of Giza. The way the design leverages geometrical shapes draws the eye in and reminds one of things both ancient and futuristic – arrow heads, snake scales, black triangles flying silently overhead on their way to a parallel world. You expand a pleated silk black scarf into a frill-necked collar, its flash of gold a python's tooth gleaming in the darkness.

Time to rest awhile. That wood grain quilted picnic blanket is surely up to the task of making your tired body feel like a warm waffle. The ceramic teapot is imperfectly hand hewn, but the tea that is poured from it somehow tastes purer as a result. Its qualities of groundedness and generosity spill over into the life of those things around it. The milk jug also contains moments of private reverie. These handmade creations possess an intimacy and richness that machines can't comprehend.

Alternate realities lie beyond deceptively simple designs. Interpretation has the capacity to be infinite, like white light refracting through a prism. You turn and see the duck egg blue triangular horizons of Andrea's painting and the origami mysteries of her kimono confections. You're reminded how the triangle was formed and its boundaries seem limitless. Everything here is embedded with a sense of process and purpose. Fine art becomes fashion and fashion becomes fine art once more.

You hear footsteps crunching over leaves and voices through the trees. The view outside the window of Craft Victoria reminds you where you are in time and space. Geometry may not be for everyone but there's something special about *Triangle*.