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The altered landscape as heterotopia

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the contemporary photographic practices of the authors, aligning their conceptual ideas and working methodology with notions of heterotopia. It argues for a positioning within contemporary altered landscape photography that considers place as a heterotopia, a networked system or process that modifies and makes an alternative 'territory'. In dialogue with a range of relevant authors and artists, the paper contextualises heterotopia and altered landscape spaces as layers of both cultural and ecological intervention. It asserts that an artist in a state of mobility, transit and movement, can effectively employ notions of heterotopia to inform a creative photographic practice. We build on existing heterotopologies through the photographic practices of the authors, altered landscape photography by Australian artist Shane Hulbert, and the cultural investigations of expatriation by Greek artist Ioannis Galanopoulos Papavasileiou. The artists, through phenomenology, lens-based practice and noetic synthesis, approach altered landscape photography from two divergent cultural perspectives; one through the lens of postcolonial national imaging, the other through a trans-national experience of expatriation. We propose that both the cultural and geographic counter-site of an altered landscape, and the social and psychological state of expatriation, are informed by notions of heterotopia, and therefore build on existing heterotopologies.

Introduction

The Altered Landscape as Heterotopia critiques the pictorial heritage and contemporary practices of altered landscape photography, arguing in favour of a trajectory that locates place, within altered landscapes, as a type of heterotopia (Foucault 1984). We position altered and heterotopia as being a cognitive, cultural construction and intervention, literal and artistic, a networked system or process that modifies and makes different, resulting in the construction of an alternative 'territory' that is different from a pre-existing or previous state.

To do this, the authors offer their own art practices as case studies, critiquing two related series of photographic works; *Altered Landscapes* by Shane Hulbert (author 1) and *Out of Place* by Ioannis Galanopoulos Papavasileiou (author 2). Each series provides viewpoints on landscape that are informed by, and align with, existing narratives of landscape and place, and consider a range of existing imaging and literature including landscape photographs and photographers, social geography, historical and cultural narratives of place, migration and mobility studies and contemporary landscape theories. We use spatial theory within both projects, led by Michel Foucault's (1984) heterotopia, combined with Marc Auge's (1995) non-place and Edward Soja's (1996) closely related thirdspace. While Foucault's heterotopia is the central theory of the paper, all three theorists have in common the imaginative and creative consideration of these spaces being closely aligned and configured for human experience.

Our aim is to reveal ways in which photography of the altered landscape has created a heterotopia, a type of 'counter-site', an alternative territory existing beyond borders and boundaries, rejecting natural world landscape photography in favour of a photography that is more inclusive of humanity's-built environment and the social geography of place.

Shane Hulbert's series *Altered Landscape* considers landscape as a cultural and social space, one that supports distinctive narratives of national and cultural identity. Through time and distance in the Australian outback, the series presents an exchange of histories and cultural awareness, embedded into a land with a strong and challenging colonial past informed by an ancient aboriginal history.

Galanopoulos Papavasileiou's *Out of Place* explores the state of being in expatriation, in transit, through various locations that include Greece, France, Italy, the US and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which become a series of no-places, no home and no trajectory of continued development and cultural roots. Central to this project are the concepts of insideness and outsideness, place mystification, visual propaganda and demystification. These concepts underpin the series *Out of Place* through an exploration of how they are engaged in photographic practice, what is the nature of non-place in photography and the ways in which a sense of belonging can be considered through photography.

Both series offer a reconciliation between crisis heterotopias and heterotopias of deviation. Hulbert documents the cusp between the shattering of the institutional cultural place and the taking of cultural rituals elsewhere, at the outback in the Australian, while Galanopoulos, beginning with a springboard of deviation, considers 'counter sites beyond territorial borders', eventually documenting a placeless place in which the personal markers therein reconstitute a wholistic home or an identity. A believable and acceptable vicariously mirrored place.

Heterotopia and the altered landscape as counter-site

A heterotopia is a place of otherness, which in the context of photographic practices that include the built, altered landscape, position this otherness as a counter-site, one in which the interconnectedness of the photographed site is intrinsically aligned with the site's position and perception within the culture in which it is located.

The etymology of the term aligns with notions of utopia and dystopia, with the hetero meaning other or different, and topia meaning place. In the context of being an other or

different place, heterotopia signals a space that is not of itself, but rather in relation to another space.

The term originates, for the purpose and focus of this paper, in *Des spaces autres*, a lecture presented by Michel Foucault in 1967, subsequently published in 1984 as the essay 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias' in the architectural journal *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* (Architecture, Movement, Continuity).

Divided into two parts, *Of Other Spaces* initially outlines a western notion of space, in which Foucault critiques (and laments) that our experiences of the present (in 1984) are a series of interconnections, less so than a lineage of events and straight line temporality that define a human life and the places in which these experiences occur. In the second part of the essay Foucault proposes a heterotopology, in which he defines his six principles of heterotopia, including examples of known spaces (cemeteries, brothels, prisons and gardens), and musings on those spaces whose meanings exist when considered in combination, or collaboration, with other spaces. To consider this interconnectedness, Foucault offers the binary of utopias and heterotopias, where the desire of the utopia is in 'presenting society in a perfected form', but ultimately positioning these as 'unreal spaces' (Foucault 1984, 3). By contrast, the heterotopia positions the spaces of society and culture as being an other, or being different, from the originality of the space.

Foucault uses the term 'counter-site' to support his positioning of a space or place being 'outside' of, other to or different from, aligning with notions of other or different, rather than being in opposition to (as in counterculture for example). To use this term as a way of locating landscape to being in an altered state, as a counter-site, aligns with the duality of a state being 'altered', describing something in either a positive sense (a landscape that has been remodelled, reshaped, improved, made habitable), or a negative sense (destroyed, unsustainable, castrated, uninhabitable).

To record, analyse or acknowledge an altered landscape as a counter site, a measurable before and after state is required. For example, in the Australian landscape, the before state refers to the condition of the landscape prior to European settlement. For most of the continent's history the land was inhabited by an extensive tribal network of indigenous, Aboriginal peoples. Through a range of practices that included seasonal farming (Pascoe 2018), land management and the development of built environments, the Aboriginal peoples managed and cared for the flora and fauna for thousands of years. The after state, the arrival of the Europeans, also meant the arrival of sedentary agriculture at scale, and the settlement status this supports. Agriculture transforms the land, seasonal crop production requires the removal of natural vegetation and grazing condenses animal populations, which has a considerable effect on the land. This rapid expansion of cultivation has significantly reduced the forests and bushlands. Thus, via the economic needs of agriculture, as one example, European human settlement has ordered and controlled the Australian land to make it manageable for the needs of production, consumption and economic advancement. However, such a binary description relates more to the colonial past of Australia, to its national history, or as Foucault would suggest, to the 'great obsession of the nineteenth century' (being history) (Foucault 1984, 1).

Foucault's counter-site provided a conceptual opportunity to explore ways in which altered states of 'before' and 'after' aligned with 'outside', 'other' or 'different from'. It

provided a means for us to re-contextualise landscape and space and through heterotopia, as Foucault theorised, explore ways to photograph a landscape 'after' state.

We determined multiple ways to extend and consider heterotopia within our photographic projects:

1. **Landscape, heterotopia and dialogue** – a way of working through both historical and social considerations of landscape, and the emerging relationship space between humans and nature.
2. **Place, heterotopia and noetic synthesis** – Placing the photographer as an agent, into the landscape and resulting phenomenological experience.

Landscape, heterotopia and dialogue

In developing the scope of these projects, the idea of a dialogue with the landscape became an initial way to consider how to interpret the places being photographed, and more importantly – what is being revealed within images of those places. To do this, sites were positioned as being in cultural dialogue with each other, between an historical and social development of place. Cultural landscape geographies author, Karl Benediktsson, and anthropologist Katrin Anna Lund, both Icelandic, provide an interesting insight into the idea of the landscape as a discussion between the place and the viewer in *Conversations with Landscape* (2010). In their introduction to this text, they define the relationship between the environment with the viewing and experience of landscape as being in a conversation or mediated dialogue that includes place and human experience, both present and culturally historical. Benediktsson and Lund refer to the Australian Aboriginal belief that the 'land itself is imbued with the ability to transfer meaning to humans, who interpret it's will through stories of the Dreaming' (Benediktsson and Lund 2010, 2) as an example of this dialogue.

In the same book, Edda R.H. Waage also outlines the condition for this conversation as a performative relationship between humans and nature:

> … in the sense that it exists only by means of the two, and at the same time through their relation the two acquire the form they have within the network. And thus from within their hybrid network of humans and nature emerges a relational space; a space called landscape. (Waage 2010, 49)

Waage uses the simple example of a mountain being in the environment, but not being part of the landscape until gazed upon by a human, 'Consequently there is no landscape without humans, as there is no landscape without nature' (Waage 2010, 49). While the idea of the conversation clearly defines the context of the relationship between the viewer and the landscape, this concept has limitations in terms of expanding beyond the individual experience of the landscape.

The photographing of a landscape shaped by human intervention was iconically and curatorially defined in 1975 by William Jenkins, then assistant curator of twentieth-century photography at George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film in Rochester, New York, where he bought together the work of ten artists that redefined notions of landscape in contemporary photography. *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* charted a manufactured terrain, depicting idealised treatments of the presence of nature in the built environment.

Given the significance of the New Topographics to twentieth-century landscape and built environment photography, the two artists locate themselves as global descendants of that movement. Their two distinct series work within the auspices of After-New Topographic practice, and the post-deadpan approach, shifting away from the apolitical of the deadpan, to the political (Hulbert's *Altered Landscapes*) and to the personally political (Ioannis' series *Out of Place*). The New Topographics' democratic and grounded approach to place, with a preference for using a 'non-objective' aesthetic is abandoned by both artists to reflect a cultural and social space, one that supports distinctive narratives of national and cultural identity (Hulbert), and to reflect the personal lived experience as an expatriate in a manner that could talk about the politics of expatriation, transience and selfhood (Ioannis).

Heterotopia and noetic synthesis

Place and the photographic image meet within the premise of representation and interpretation. In the case of a lens-based photographic practice, the place is both found and constructed. A found place is one in which the photographer responds to the environment, where their relationship to place is essentially a surprise, in which they are able to align existing experiences and reveal new ones. A constructed place is one in which the photographer is seeking to overlay existing knowledge and concepts, to position a place as a site that demonstrates or provides an example of an idea.

Regarding how place and the photographic image operate in heterotopic terms, the agent between these systems is the presence of the photographer and the mode of alternation of a site to a counter-site. In the case of lens-based practice, this is done by a 'phenomenology of practice' (Van Manen 2007, 11–30). This method and capture mode are bound to a process Stout (cited in Valentine 2001, 209–223) calls 'noetic synthesis'. This process draws from on-and-off-site capturing of place with a simultaneous cross-comparison of theoretical discourses relevant to the themes explored in the project.

The process of noetic synthesis supports the two projects in being able to align practice and self-reflection, evidenced in the research focusing on experiences of landscape from two different human-centred positions; a post-colonial Australian perspective; and an expatriated, rest-of-the-world perspective. Through noetic synthesis, the practitioners are able to handle creative and theoretical contexts simultaneously.

Altered landscape photography in Australia

Hulbert's practice as a photographer and artist engages with ideas of landscape, irony and Australian cultural identity, often critiquing the ways in which landscapes are defined and measured through a space that is 'outback' of populated Australia. Properties specific to the heterotopia are evident in the locations and their shifting relationship to national consciousness. Their presence within Australian popular culture (literature and cinema in particular) creates the other space populated by lost travellers, murders, feral pigs and dingoes. Within this contemporary positioning of the Australian outback, it is possible to re-contextualise the photographic image through the duality of an altered space and one that aligns with Foucault's notions of heterotopia.

The series is embedded within a cultural reflection of postcolonial practices and experiences, one that questions the popularist settler narratives of culture and place. Ross Gibson, in *South of the West* suggests that 'A great deal of Australian art and histography has been devoted to the definition of innate qualities of life in the country. It is a process of finding or fabricating a sense of place for nonaboriginal society' (Gibson 1992, 194). Gibson critiques the popularist narrative of Australian life and qualities of culture, suggesting that a nationalistic perspective exists in which 'the land will give rise to the nation' (Gibson 1992, 196). With an intentional focus on the altered landscape as a settler condition, the aim of the project is to reveal places and sites within Australia that speak to both a settler condition and perspective, while also resisting the ongoing nationalistic narrative of place.

The altered landscape in Australia has a history within curatorial projects, for example, in 2005 the National Gallery of Victoria developed The Altered Land Environmental Trail. The trail is a marked educational walk through the Australian painting rooms of the Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square. The trail defines environmental change and highlights the consequences and resulting damage of this change. Beginning with John Glover's painting *The River Nile, Van Diemen's Land, from Mr Glover's Farm* (1837), the trail continues by presenting views of Victoria, categorised into three major National Parks; Dandenong Ranges National Park, Grampians National Park and Mount Buffalo National Park.

Highlighting works by Australia's iconic landscape painters, including Fred Williams (1927–1982), Russell Drysdale (1912–1981), Eugene von Guerard (1811–1901), Frederick McCubbin (1855–1944), Aurthur Streeton (1867–1943), Charles Conder (1868–1909) and Tom Roberts (1856–1931), the trail covers a range of altered landscape Australian themes that reference the search by Australian painters working in the 1880s who can 'convey a sense of national identity and themes like heat and drought were associated with the pioneering spirit' (NGV 2005), (although in this instance 'national identity' is specifically a colonial one, with the 'pioneering spirit' being one that is challenged by the unfamiliarity of the environment to the colonial settlers) including;

- Evidence of the nation's history of land clearing for agricultural practices and mining, including farming, sheep and cattle crazing, gold fields and mine shafts
- Changing landscapes in response to settlement and settler needs, including examples of areas that were originally meeting places for local indigenous people, converted into cleared spaces for street traffic and plantations of exotic, European plants
- The landscape as a site for leisure activities
- Settlement incursions into pristine alpine regions and
- The threat of bushfires and land clearing with fire

While there is no category of the Altered Landscape in texts about Australian photography, there is an awareness and acknowledgement of the context of the landscape being altered. For instance, Helen Ennis has observed in *Photography and Australia* (2008) that: 'The approaches developed by landscapists have proved remarkably consistent. The predilection has been for the settled, humanised landscape above all else, and inland areas rather than the coast' (Ennis 2008, 54).

Ennis's observation was reinforced by the artworks presented in *Stormy Weather: Contemporary Landscape Photography* at the National Gallery of Victoria (24 September 2010–20 March 2011). The exhibition presents the work of eleven Australian artists who 'reveal history in a landscape; provoke ecological concerns; use the landscape as a site of performance; or reveal the distinctive beauty of a place' (Crombie 2010, 5) and through their work investigates both an indigenous autochthonous view of the contemporary landscape, as well as the land use experience of settlement in Australia. A sense of history and cultural memory is evident in some of the works, including Ann Ferran's (b 1949 Australia) series *Untitled*, 2008, demonstrating a subtle yet powerful concern with the layers of memories and history that a place can hold, in this case the demolished site of the female convict prison at Ross in the Tasmanian midlands.

The altered landscape is central to ideas of landscape, place and human experience (Cosgrove 1984; Schama 1995; Tuan 1997). This centrality of the altered land is reflected in key cultural theory texts, as well as significant national and international exhibitions and collections of photographic artworks. The history of altered landscape photography in Australia, is evidence of the impact cultural identity, power and a determination have on the creation of a collective Australian identity. The reimagination of Australia based on that distorted viewpoint has had an impact on the perception of Australianness artists, museums and collections.

Expatriation and being 'out of place'

A brief autobiographical note is important here to locate Galanopoulos-Papavasileiou into the context of expatriation and place. Born and raised in Greece before migrating to the US in 2008, where he met his French-Italian wife, who together relocated to France in 2012, before moving to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2013. He is Greek, his wife is French Italian and their two children were both born in the United Arab Emirates. The social and political setting of the artist's expatriation is influenced by globalisation after the millennium, or what *New York Times* foreign affairs columnist Thomas Friedman frames as 'Globalization 3.0; Globalization of Individuals' (2004). Frequent transits, however, which are common drills for 'expats', are associated with the psychosocial experience of leaving one's home for another place. Expatriates – global citizens, who have experienced numerous relocations – face the struggle of being uprooted from a place they consider home.

Within translocational theory, the term 'expatriation' differs from other forms of migration and mobility in that it is transient, temporary and the expatriated person(s) remain linked to their origin through citizenship. Kunz's recognises that 'Rather than used as a scholarly "category of analysis", the term expatriate needs to be conceived and treated as an everyday "category of practice" to be investigated in its own right' (Kunz 2016). While recognising the complex configuration that the privilege of citizenship, race or social class provides for the expatriated worker, the autobiographical nature of *Out of Place* considered expatriation in the context of a voluntary decision to leave one's home and resettle temporarily in another country to access employment opportunities that did not exist at 'home'.

The series *Out of Place* questions whether expatriates, in being in a state of expatriation, consider themselves 'out of place' when everyone around them appears to be 'in

place'? The works and the analysis reveal what mechanisms are at play and different ways in which expatriation, transience and being 'out of place' inform a photographic series of artworks. The series explores how views of place are linked to political, social and psychological states of belonging in place, identifying a practice orientated towards exploring, disentangling and organising complex feelings connected to place, identity, nostalgia, loss and belonging. The series explores those same themes through a different type of place, one that is altered and neither real nor imaginary, a place that is transient, located nowhere and everywhere – the place of being in expatriation.

Galanopoulos-Papavasileiou explores the notion of 'being' out of place, while at the same time revealing a creative photographic process that intentionally rejects the codes and conventions of more traditional landscape photography, such as notions of the 'picturesque and sublime' instead investigating ways in which expatriation and transience can be incorporated into images of altered landscapes and heterotopia.

In recognising and considering expatriation to be no one real place, the cultural hybridity of a thirdspace (Soja 1996) within the context of home (first) and work (second), the project initially attempted to recontextualise traditional landscape photographic practices to image expatriation, and to create a series of photographic works that define expatriation through landscape photography as being an exchange between the sense of place (the place to which an expatriate returns, or as Bhabha suggests, hereness) (Stierstorfer 2017) and the origins of the expatriate (thereness).

Galanopoulos-Papavasileiou's works inevitably cross-interrogate practices, strategies and conventions used by photographers within the landscape genre, specifically picturesque and sublime representations. *Out of Place* avoids the visual aesthetics of landscape travel or tourist photography, especially the recipes requiring colourful skies, sunsets, majestic rivers and other commonplace cues and strategies of the 'picturesque' landscape. Drawing on a history of photographic practice that advocates against 'cliché sunsets' (Sontag 1977) and glorious panoramas, the series *Out of Place* does not include dramatic views of golden light and elongated shadows. Images are created during the harsh midday light, a strategy that also results in featured objects and sites appearing banal and non-organic to their location and scenery, reinforcing their being 'out of place'.

In avoiding the aesthetics of landscape travel or tourist photography and the strategies of the picturesque, he aligns with the work of photographers such as Luigi Ghirri and Wim Wenders. In his book *Album* (1984) Ghirri asserts

> … if travel is a synonym for adventure, whether great or small, this adventure may only be experienced by straying off the beaten track evading the clichés and instead seeking out new visual pathways and new strategies through which to represent them. (Ghirri 2017)

Like Ghirri and Wenders, Galanopoulos-Papavasileiou also legitimises the use of selective pictorial practices, personal narratives of place, belonging and transience towards the creation of images that locate place within a heterotopia of expatria.

Galanopoulos-Papavasileiou's project addresses material geography and the concepts of being 'in or out of place'. By virtue of employing a lens-based practice he is in a place photographing it, but simultaneously out of it. There is a paradox at play here. While he is 'in' a place (photographing something that he connects to in terms of the expatriation narratives), he is also 'out of place', given his status and relationship to the sovereignty of the country where he is 'in'. With *Out of Place* the artist explores this paradox and the

mechanisms behind it. To be both in and out-of-place and visualise that state leads him into creating no country specific, personal, placeless landscapes, which 'show no sense of place, no special relationship to the places in which they are located – they could be anywhere' (Relph 1976, 90–110). Additionally, being 'in or out of place' in reference to his practice, relates to discourses concerning photographic indexicality, as 'in' means the subjects photographed are being authentic (indexical and not staged), and 'of' means that the process to capture them on site is not 'real' in the first place, the capture is a recording of light and not matter.

Photography project A: altered landscapes

An exploration of counter-sites within the Australian landscape led to the identification of several typologies through which to photograph altered landscapes. The most iconic of these being the mining site. This category privileged the abundance of mining photography, becoming a way of identifying and exploring regional areas of Australia, particularly Broken Hill (New South Wales) and central South Australia. The mining site is a site of reduction – a changing of the Earth based on the removal of minerals or natural resources. The mining site has a long history in landscape photography, both in Australia and overseas. Locally, the work of Richard Woldendorp and Peter Elliston, whose political landscapes 'dealt with competing and contested interests over land, for example, between the mining industry and traditional Aboriginal owners' (Ennis 2008, 65). Elliston photographs the incursion of intent – specifically the intent to mine the landscape or the intent to claim territory, with images that subtly evidences Elliston's claim that ' … it seems to me from the evidence available that planet Earth is on a roller–coaster ride to environmental disaster' (Ennis 2008, 54).

The most visited mining site and town for this project was the New South Wales town of Broken Hill, in the states west. The town is contained within it's own isolation – there are no surrounding suburbs or other towns nearby (the next is over 2 hours' drive). Broken Hill is established within Australian geography as the edge between desert and settlement, the beginning of the outback. The wonderful Australian colloquialism 'dry as a dead dingo's donga' seems wholly appropriate for a place like this. *Broken Hill* 2006 (Figure 1) was inspired by the name of the town, referring such a destructive and manufactured act: the breaking of a hill. The image captures a sense of damage and misuse, but also defiance and insolence – that despite the best efforts of the mining industry, despite carving a massive hole in the side of a hill and breaking it, something of the original landscape remained. The image contains the broken hill, a flat, unscalable wall cut into the side of the mountain. The intentional unsettling of the foreground is increased by the lack of anything of 'nature' in a pictorial sense; no trees, no softly moving shrubs to indicate familiarity. The intention being to destabilise the viewer, composed to question the validity of the ease with which humanity can be so destructive.

In *Of Other Spaces* Foucault argues that our modern understanding of place has shifted, in particular through the relationships between people and environment. He terms this as emplacement – a way of understanding or making sense of human interaction with place. These emplacement sites are given as sites produced through human sense-making, a way of organising places within the world, in such a way as to

Figure 1. Shane Hulbert, *Broken Hill*, 2006.

'suspend, neutralise, or invert the set of relations' (Foucault 1984). In *Broken Hill*, the breaking of the hill is both ordered (an act of choice) and, to some degree, an act of chance, occurring over time and increased by each attempt to extract or mine from the hill. Like the changing emplacement of the cemetery, humanities tolerance of environmental destruction and damage requires these mining sites to exist at the edges of civilisation, and in Australia, the outback.

As a way of exploring topology, where elements intersect on the surface of the land, landscape images can act as maps – a place that both defines and contains direction. *Dirt Bike Race Track* 2007 (Figure 2) is a topographic image, containing an internal race track, and external markers that reference the territory of the track as a site of recreation (repeating ideas around difference and other spaces). When exploring and photographing the Australian colonial outback, recreational sites became a contrast to mining sites in that they defined activity and leisure, a counter-site existing in combination or collaboration with another site.

The physical isolation of the desert is consistently combated by the inclusion of sites for community activity. Dominant in the towns visited for the project was a sense that sport and recreation was an important part of the local communities. There was also a consistency about the type of sports – motor – cross racing tracks were common, as a site that embedded the activity into the land, making tracks and markers as a form of navigation.

Dirt Bike Race Track is divided into three zones. At the top, the external landscape naturally flattens off into the distance, taking up the smallest area of the image, although

Figure 2. Shane Hulbert, *Dirt Bike Race Track*, 2007.

intentional as a way to exclude any reference to an actual location, no mountain ranges or signs. In the central zone, a mix of old tyres mark the direction of the race track, footprints and bike wheel tracks. Completing this is a series of burnout circles, evidence of a behaviour aligned with racing, like other worldly crop circles. The entire zone is connected by an angry, burnt, red ochre.

A critical issue for landscape photography is the standpoint of the viewer, and how this determines an experience of the image. This idea of being placed into or being a part of the site being photographed, suits a certain type of picturesque landscape photography, but is ultimately unsuited for the altered landscape images of this project. A similar kind of disparity to Foucault's utopia (perfected form) versus the unreal spaces of a heterotopia. Standing supported a way of considering otherness and difference, but also a way of considering how the viewer would ultimately consider the works.

In *Dirt Bike Race Track* this is addressed in a way that is intended to act concurrently as a condition of discomfort and stability. The foreground is scarred, gouged and

mistreated. All tracks lead to the centre, to both inside and outside the race track, without a clear direction. The intention for this was to establish an emotional sense of discomfort for the viewer and a scene in which they can stand, but a stance that is not easy to maintain. It also marks a conscious separation between the position of viewing the race track, and the idea of being a part of it. The intention was to divide the sense of place between the photographer being detached from the location, and the idea that as part of the Australian outback landscape, there is a sense of ownership for the locals, but not being a local meant it was not 'my place': I had no experience of being in the location, only a distanced view as the visitor. The viewer of the image would have a similar experience as they would be attached to the idea of being part of the 'place', but also a sense of not belonging.

The project defined the altered landscape as a human landscape, one that is constructed and changed by human intervention and perception. It represents the autobiography of humanity – the landscape constructed. It represents the impact and imprint of human civilisation on the planet, the trajectory of progress, whether through industrialisation or recreation. The altered landscape is different from the landscape: it is the impact that separates the two terms, the impact of change being made to the landscape, the evidence of human intervention on the land. Ultimately, the landscape becomes a discussion between the artist, the landscape and the reader about cultural and national identity and authenticity of Australianness, embedded in a land with strong colonial past.

Photography project B: expatriation and being out of place

In *Out of Place*, selective compositional and pictorial practices contest the idea of belonging to a specific place by origin, bloodline, or nationality. Images from the series identify and highlight transience through a series of categories defined through alignment with heterotopias both existing and interconnected, construction sites as locations of migrant employment, gardens, tourist attractions and transit sites. They act as protagonists, universally in an altered state of banality, temporary, impermanence and displacement. They mirror the thoughts and feelings of the expatriate state, and do not reveal a country, city or familiar location, places without context, eroding their signification, inhabiting Auge's 'non-place' (1995) and existing as counter-sites from anywhere in the world.

The Yellow Helmet and the Zen Legoland (Figure 3) position a misplaced yellow helmet as the central feature or subject of the image. Through composition and photographer placement, the receding rock formation stretches along the front to the back of the frame. The rocks are not organic to the scenery, but rather clumsily arranged to imitate a Japanese Zen garden. As a thirdspace, the location in *The Yellow Helmet and the Zen Legoland* is designed as a temporary site that could easily be moved, like the expatiates who earn their livelihood through the realisation that being outside their home country is also temporary. In translocational theory expatriates are primarily identified as highly skilled migrant workers. These individuals possess a unique set of skills that enable them to perform effectively in global markets. Their expertise often spans multiple disciplines, making them valuable assets to international corporations and organisations. Their ability to navigate diverse cultural and business environments is bolstered by their proficiency in multiple languages and their extensive global networks.

Figure 3. Yiannis Galanopoulos, *The Yellow Helmet and the Zen Legoland*, 2018.

The yellow, lego-like helmet in the middle of the picture seems to have been placed there, perhaps as a joke or harmless prank, now centralised as another element of the impermanence of the site, altered for the purpose of photography, trapped between 'hereness' and 'thereness', between the will of the photographer and the will of the viewer to interpret this as some form of place or 'real' space.

Galanopoulos-Papavasileiou uses the concept of the random placing of an object in a particular setting as a metaphor for skilled worker expatriation and transience. The metaphorical, universal sites and objects captured in many relocations 'seem to reveal what lies behind the scenes at the theatre' (Couturier 2012, 58) due to their temporary but seemingly purposeful *mise en scene*.

These views of undefined places, filled with banal leftovers of everyday life, can be thought and reworked by the viewer as props within a *mise en scene* process. Props like the bamboo divider, the fabric fence, and even the temporary markings on the sand in *Fenced*, 2018 (Figure 4) are universal yet appear misplaced and temporary. The centre piece of this counter-site is the artist's identity: a transient individual with the play being his works and days as an expatriate. Hence, demonstrating the autobiographical aspect of *Out of Place* within the framework of a voluntary choice to depart from one's homeland and relocate temporarily to another country.

The heterotopia of expatriation is not ordinary, it creates a condition of perplexation – of being free, mobile and (potentially) prosperous, yet ' … displaced and refitted into new environments while not necessarily blending in'. A repeated strategy within *Out of Place* is the inclusion of visual and conceptual devices to highlight this displacement and challenge of blending or fitting in. The plants in *Xeriscaping* 2018 (Figure 5) have no deep

Figure 4. Yiannis Galanopoulos, *Fenced*, 2018.

roots, and the overall site is wary of the elements: it is man-made and non-organic to the scenery, despite being natural objects, they are clearly manufactured and 'placed', yet they are 'out of place'. As a design practice, xeriscaping reduces or even eliminates the

Figure 5. Yiannis Galanopoulos, *Xeriscaping*, 2018.

need for irrigation, allowing for control of placement when designing or manufacturing a garden. The whole arrangement will not last and is similar to expatriates, who are not meant to reside long in the countries to which they are located, generally 'following a salary' from place to place, in the same way the plants featured follow the sun and the irrigation lines to withstand the elements.

Expatriates, in Kunz's view, are mostly skilled migrant workers able to perform in global markets. They usually speak several languages and have a global network. This versatility helps them to survive. Yet, these expatriates are temporary in the workplace and in the country to which they relocate. They are also not always organic to the culture or the society, and they face many social and psychological adversities. They face problems of belongingness, social integration, culture and reverse culture shock, acculturation, alienation, and marginalisation. This temporary vegetation landform is nothing more than a banal, anti-picturesque place. However, this xeriscape has a peculiar way of making the metaphors of expatriation and impermanence more real than their referents (Schama 1995, 61).

These out-of-place, anti-picturesque counter-sites act as reference points, markers or 'monuments', of Galanopoulos-Papavasileiou's expatriation, and when reassembled, represent a specific fictitious space, a two-sided map. On the one side, the theorised heterotopia of expatria, and on the other, the life incidents that necessitate, encourage, or determine expatriation.

Insideness and outsideness

The state of being out-of-place challenges one's 'sense of place' (Relph 1976; Seamon and Sowers 2008; Jackson 1984). The feeling 'in place' or 'out of place' in response to the experience of a 'sense of place' has to do with one's sense of self and identity (Stern 2017, 24). This has led the Canadian geographer Edward Relph to construct the binary 'existential insideness and outsideness' (Relph 1976; Seamon and Sowers 2008; Soni 2004; Stern 2017).

Existential insideness is a situation of deep, unselfconscious immersion in place and the experience most people know when they are at home in their own community and region. The opposite of this, or what [Relph] labels existential outsideness, is therefore a sense of strangeness and alienation, such as that often felt by newcomers to a place (Relph 1976 cited in Seamon and Sowers 2008, 43–51).

Social integration heavily depends on one's sense of place and one's perceived selfhood. Relph's categories make it possible to argue and portray in images the positive and negative social and psychological responses to one's state of being 'in or out of place'. To be 'in place', one must feel socially or culturally integrated, while to be 'out of place' means to be separated, 'to be elsewhere' (Tuan 2013), non-integrated or marginalised. *Iris Mask* (Figure 6) presents both an inside and outside, with the iris playing multiple semantic roles within the image. First, it divides place into two parts: inside and outside to imply the concept, discourse, and sentiment of inclusion or exclusion, both welcome and hostile. Secondly, the circular opening and the hidden inclusive place are not only a reference to expatriation, but also to photography itself – the mechanical and optical viewing that either increases or decreases light and the perception of visual clarity.
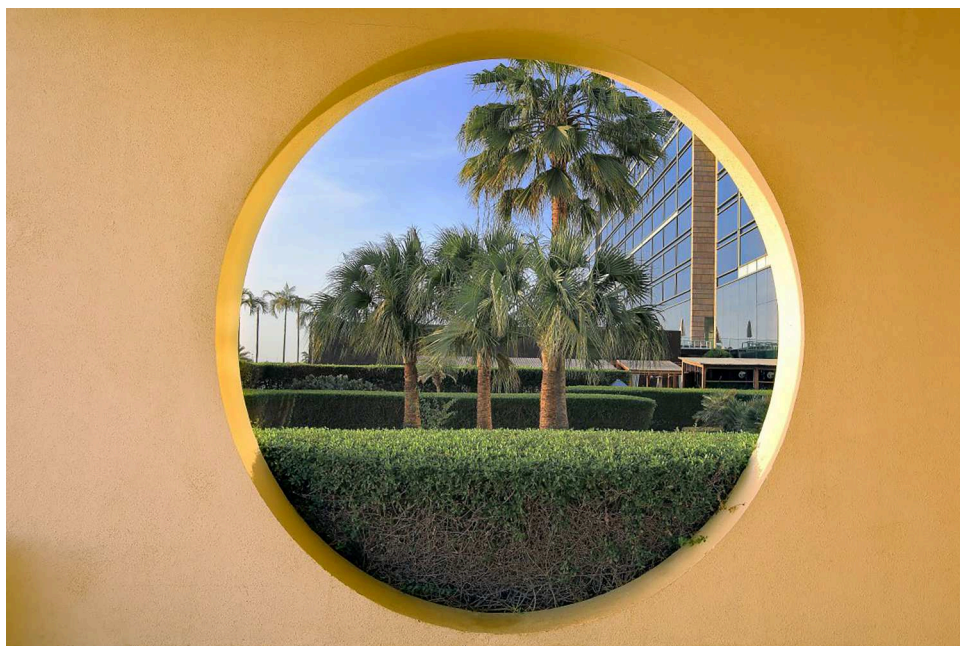
Figure 6. Yiannis Galanopoulos, *Iris Mask,* 2018.

Place demystification

Place demystification tries to undo this process. It is the negative sentiment that expatriates feel upon realising that the unknown place they move to is, if not ideal, different from what they initially perceived.

The conflict between the bodily experienced and the imaginary 'ideal' place also has similarities to the Lacanian theory of the 'Mirror Stage' (Lacan cited in Evans 2005, 38–55). The ideal place in the mind of an observer, much like the French theorist's ideal-'I', is constructed by culture. In the spirit of Lacan, this is because 'the imago' of a place differs from the one that is a bodily experience because that vision/perception has not yet been 'socially and culturally determined' (Lacan 2006, 93) by the person who experiences it. The mirror in this sense acts as both a utopia and heterotopia – the physicality of the glass occupies a space, therefore being 'real', while the reflection exists as a 'placeless place' (Foucault 1986). The bodily experience of being grounded in a place, while looking into a mirror, seeing an image of oneself, creates both a real and imagined experience, aligned with the expatriates' sense of the known and the unknown (Li 2023).

The random sites and objects Galanopoulos-Papavasileiou collects, which become 'totems' of transience and impermanence, are symbols of his personal conflict between harmonising the social and psychological fluctuations of expatriation, with its spoils and losses. However, the title 'out of place' hints that the representations of place have been influenced by negative (vs. positive) social and psychological feelings faced by the expatriated individual. The out-of-place condition evolves progressively once the expatriate moves to another country. With expatriation, a process of familiarisation and assessing one's mystifications takes place. Professor Paul Pedersen calls this first phase of

getting to know one's new whereabouts and taking on new conditions of living the 'honeymoon stage' (Pedersen 1995, 4; see also: Haigh 2018; Schutte 2016; Hiruy 2009). This same honeymoon mentality can also create artworks about the new place. Upon relocation to a new country, everything appears interesting, different or even 'exotic'.

Place mystification with its narratives of ideal place, and demystification with its harsh realisations of not belonging, has a strong impact on expatriates, being part of the reason people leave home for elsewhere or reconfigure their perceptions of place.

These views of undefined places, filled with banal leftovers of everyday life, can be thought and reworked by the viewer as props within a *mise en scene* process. Props like the bamboo divider, the fabric fence, and even the temporary marking on the sand are universal yet appear misplaced and temporary, as if they had been placed in the scenery by a deus ex machina. I use the concept of the random placing of an object or a being in a particular setting as a metaphor for skilled worker expatriation and transience. Expatriates often venture for opportunities that are temporary and can be placed anywhere in the world.

Conclusion

The authors examined 'place' and 'counter-site' as catalysts for advancing landscape photography practices. This exploration is evident in the two approaches discussed: one offers a post-colonial reflection on the landscape of the Australian outback, while the other provides an experiential framework of expatriation. Both approaches remain relevant to contemporary theories and themes of the twenty-first century, particularly at the intersection of photography, human geography, landscape studies and philosophy.

The different forms of 'belonging' to the land and places being photographed informed the development of a methodology centred on exploration, phenomenology and inquiry. Hulbert's practice is situated within a post-colonial narrative, where cultural histories and contested narratives of the Australian continent play a central role in selecting, classifying and photographing altered landscapes. This work functions as a form of cultural exchange and a collective reimagining of national and cultural identity, viewed through the lens of the 'outback'. In contrast, Galanopoulos-Papavasileiou's ongoing experience of expatriation places him within a hybrid, fluid space, prompting an exploration of the human condition as simultaneously 'in' and 'out' of place. This liminal space is linked to political, social and psychological states of belonging.

The paper positions these two photographic practices within the field of altered landscape photography and argues that 'place', conceptualised as a 'networked system or process', can be understood as heterotopic within these practices. Foucault's principles of heterotopia serve as a foundational framework, offering a reconciliation between the notions of 'crisis' and 'deviation' as expressed through these photographic practices. The authors also explore how Foucault's concept of heterotopia informs the intersection of human geography, place, landscape and expatriation within contemporary photography.

The paper underscores themes of identity and place, highlighting how geographically situated photographic practices can engage with concepts of 'otherness' within place and landscape theory. By identifying and aligning Foucault's counter-sites with notions of emplacement, the paper provides a critical framework for analysing the included

photographic projects, demonstrating how the artists' alternative territories are shaped by these concepts.

The authors consider the connection between people and geographic places, time, space and duration, presenting images of place imbued with ideas of meaning, experience and social-political perspectives from the photographers' viewpoints. The paper offers a bilateral discussion on the relational nature of landscape – between people and nature – and, through an analysis of the artworks and projects, provides insights into how these projects connect with existing creative practices, including literature and contemporary cinema.

Ultimately, the paper presents a distinctive commentary on the concepts of heterotopia and photography, emphasising how the boundaries of experience continue to shape human relationships to place.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Dr Shane Hulbert is an academic, photographer and curator at RMIT University, where he serves as Associate Professor of Photography. His photographic work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including at the National Gallery of Victoria and the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne, Australia, as well as at the Pingyao International Photography Festival in China and the Eyes of Main Street Festival in the United States. In 2024, he was awarded the Oceania Global Focus Award at the Xposure International Festival of Photography in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. He writes extensively on contemporary art and photographic education, with his artistic practice focusing on the expression of a collective Australian national identity through iconic imagery that connects place, history and culture.

Dr Ioannis Galanopoulos-Papavasileiou (aka Yiannis Galanopoulos) is an Associate Professor of Art at Zayed University, UAE. Ioannis is a contemporary interdisciplinary visual artist, who has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions in UAE, Europe, the US, Australia, China and Japan. His work has been acquired by private and public collections. His expanded photography examines the relationship between ideated, geographic and virtual place, as well as the connections between objects, artists, media, viewers and society. Ioannis writes on photography and film and is a regular contributor to scholarly research journals and publications such as *The Journal of Visual Practice Research*, CGNet's *On the Image* and the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*.

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