



GATE- CRASH:

Unauthorized uses of state materiality.

z5260630

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Honours Research Paper

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Introduction

Materials in public space – barriers, poles, surveillance glass, traffic signage – not only organise as architecture, but act as instruments of control and order. My research project, Gate-crash, is concerned with the role and function of these materials – which I term in this paper *state materialities*. I locate these materials in public infrastructure construction sites, which I refer to as *sites of the state*.

Grounded in an understanding of the nuanced relationships transgender people and sex workers have with public space and visibility, my methodology employs strategies of evasion, such as trespassing and loitering, to access these sites. My sculptural practice seeks to intervene with the function of found materials through processes of re-composition to generate failures, dysfunctions, and transgressions. Through this practice, I seek to understand how a conceptual sculpture practice can engage state materialities to disrupt functions of control and order.

I theorise that malfunction can produce inconsistencies that facilitate new audience relations to state structures, regulators, and authority. Gate-crash introduces illicit associations to gallery spaces with the intention of orchestrating moments of agency for audiences. I aim to compose encounters that resist directing audience behaviour, and instead invite new orientations to state materialities.

This thesis maps my project in two chapters. Chapter One, *Use*, outlines my methodology and approaches to artistic production in relation to site, material, and form. It outlines my strategies of evasion and methods of re-composition. I situate my practice among Bernard Tschumi's *Violence of Architecture*¹, and politics of security². I consider a creative context of a range of interventionist and sculptural practices, including the work of Ge Yulu³ and Anna Uddenberg⁴. Chapter One analyses the first sculptural work of *Gate-crash - Pointing the finger*⁵. Chapter two, *Effect*, situates my methodology through Michel Foucault's concept of compulsory visibility and self-regulation⁶. I examine the implication of both my own body and the audience's bodies within the process and activation of my work. I consider viewer orientations and spatial negotiations, as well as my choice to present in gallery environments by drawing on the work of Tania Bruguera⁷. I employ the writing of Toby Beauchamp⁸ to analyse my own positionality, and broader racial, political contexts. Chapter two analyses the second sculpture in my body of work, *High beams*⁹.

¹ Bernard Tschumi, "The Violence of Architecture", in *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

² Jonathan Luke Austin, "Security Compositions", *European Journal of International Security* 4, no. 3 (2019): 249–273, <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2019.19>.

³ Ge Yulu, *GE YU LU*, 2017, installation, exhibited in Central Beijing, China, <https://aichitriennale2010-2019.jp/2019/en/artwork/S05.html>.

⁴ Anna Uddenberg, *Premium Economy*, 2023–2024, installation, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Germany, <https://www.k-t-z.com/artworks/5363-anna-uddenberg-premium-economy-2023-2024/>.

⁵ Sydney Jarrett, *Pointing the finger*, 2025, sculpture, UNSW Art & Design.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

⁷ Tania Bruguera, *Tatlin's Whisper #5*, performance, Tate Modern, London, 2008.

⁸ Toby Beauchamp, *Going Stealth: Transgender Politics and U.S. Surveillance Practices* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

⁹ Sydney Jarrett, *High Beams*, 2025, sculpture, UNSW Art & Design.

Gate-crash situates itself between public infrastructures, histories of intervention and the gallery space. By re-composing materialities of the state into malfunctions, my practice treats error as a gesture capable of facilitating agency and possibility. I theorise that such agency unsettles relations to state materialities, exposing cracks in the logics of state governance.



Sydney Jarrett, *Gate-crash*, 2025. Installation shot.

CHAPTER ONE

USE

1.1 Methodology

Site

The practice-led methodology undertaken within *Gate-crash* is grounded among public space and state architecture. It has been actioned through processes of trespassing and loitering into sites of the state with the intention of accumulating state materialities. Sourced materials are then structurally recomposed to disrupt their original functions. My sculptural works undergo iterative installation research in response to surrounding space and architecture to challenge modes of behaviour and facilitate new audience relations. This chapter introduces my approaches to artistic production and how they operate in my practice, as well as discussing their position within related fields and histories.

The spaces my project is concerned with are public infrastructure construction sites. I identify these sites as material products of the state - ideological apparatuses where materials are not neutral, but function as material agents, actively participating in the production and implementation of discipline and regulation¹⁰. Existing as a kind of dead space outside of labour hours, with little surveillance, these sites are rich with state materialities and are unique in their accessibility - not yet defined by walls, alarms, or locks. These forms of control are described as violences by architect Bernard Tschumi in his 1999 essay, *Violence of Architecture*¹¹. Tschumi's text not

¹⁰ Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 211.

¹¹ Tschumi, *The Violence of Architecture*.

only scales the formalities of architectural violence, but considers an intercourse between space and body¹² through which the body may disrupt the logic or order of a space, inflicting violence unto it¹³.



Documentation from process, 2025.

Trespassing and loitering take up unauthorized space and time within sites of the state, qualifying a violence¹⁴. These violences can be mapped through histories and cultures that engage and intervene with public space and infrastructure. Legal graffiti

¹² Tschumi, "The Violence of Architecture", 121.

¹³ Tschumi, "The Violence of Architecture", 121.

¹⁴ Sydney Jarrett, *Winning the big game* (unpublished assignment, UNSW Art & Design), 5.

walls develop in areas where persistent street art forces authorities to negotiate space. The Aboriginal Tent Embassy on the lawn of Parliament House in Canberra marks the hijacking of nationally symbolic space¹⁵ in the sustainment of a counter-public¹⁶. DIY dance parties are often held under bridges in metropolitan areas, where the sound of traffic equalises the noise from speakers below. My methodology aims to parallel the unauthorised negotiation of state materiality and architecture, as a generative means of facilitating new sensible relations to state control and order. Here, 'the public' becomes space produced by the actions and relations that occur within it¹⁷.

¹⁵ Tobias Campbell, "'Ours will be a tent': The meaning and symbolism of the early Aboriginal Tent Embassy", *ANU Historical Journal II* (May 2019): 8, <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/items/1a0ee007-95e3-4bdb-804e-34e73b084a76>.

¹⁶ Bain Attwood, "The Aboriginal Tent Embassy: Sovereignty, Resistance, and the State", *The Australian Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 4 (2017): 540, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X16682496>.

¹⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 26.

Materiality

Supported by an understanding of my contexts and peripheries, I draw on certain processes of trespassing and loitering to accumulate found materials and objects from sites of the state. My methodology embraces materials such as metals, glass, concrete, signage, doors, and windows as found objects that carry the weight of their context in the world and inherent associations of function. Within *Gate-crash*, I have engaged with the found objects of the steel pole, which operates to suspend signage and direct in public space, and a police car door, which holds associations of authority and discipline. They are both material markers of regulation that function to order and control. I am drawn to these found materials on account of their inherent associations, and the potential to disrupt these functions when they are removed from their intended environments and brought into artistic contexts.

Working with state materialities is physically demanding and laborious - as is true of the context from which they are derived. Materials such as glass and concrete are difficult to shape and are structurally unforgiving. I embrace a relationship of negotiation with these materials. The weight, fragility or shape of a material holds potential to deeply influence and guide my sculptural works, and therefore alter their implications. This is a negotiation within my practice that it is essential I am receptive of and in conversation with.

(Re)-compositions

The actions undertaken in the following stages of my project, which I term re-compositions, mirror the violence of their material's original functions. They include sawing, smashing, welding, and grinding materials into new forms. These actions recompose the form of the material or object, disrupting their associated functions.

Re-composition, as a term that I refer to within my methodology, references Jonathan Luke Austin's article *Security Compositions*¹⁸. In his text, Austin describes the way perceived senses of security ...*function, emerge, assemble, and find collective coherence*¹⁹ through their composition, forming social and cultural expectations of surveillance practices. Austin emphasises that security is not solely a policy, but a practice activated by material markers within physical environments²⁰. These functional compositions not only shape our perception of security, but dictate relational modes of behaviour. This context provides a framework for my practice to challenge modes of behaviour through sculptural re-compositions.

The action of a re-composition within my practice involves the intervention and disruption of the form and function of the found object. The works of Gate-crash transform state materialities into *gestures*. This digresses from the immediacy and certainty of order, allowing for possibility, choice, and agency. The accumulation of source objects in my practice begs questions of my process, and their re-compositions ask *how* the sculpture came to be. This insistence on evidence of

¹⁸ Austin, "Security Compositions".

¹⁹ Austin, "Security Compositions", 250.

²⁰ Austin, "Security Compositions", 257.

action situates my work in an ideal position to further investigate how audiences may act around, or in response to re-compositions of state materialities.

1.2 Contextual Review

Crossing thresholds

Public space is defined by state materialities that mark borders and boundaries. Wurrandan Marawili, a Madarrpa artist from north-east Arnhem Land²¹, uses the backside of found road signage in his 2022 etching *Yathikpa*²². In this work, Marawili utilises material residues of the colonial project in Australia to tell cultural truths and stories about land. Marawili's work exemplifies methods of hijacking material, subverting the function of the road sign.

Road signage is not only a material marker, but functions to communicate state control. In 2013, Beijing based artist Ge Yulu created and installed his own road sign in a street that was, until that point, unnamed. 'Lu', translating to road, meant the street - now named 'Geyu Lu' - read the name of the artist²³. Yulu's practice locates cracks and gaps in public space to situate his interventions. Interested in the individuals working behind state structures that can appear organically enforced²⁴, Yulu's public performance and installation practice works to directly engage those

²¹ Art Gallery of New South Wales, "The artists of Yolngu power: the art of Yirrkala," video, 3:50, published June 2025, <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/art/watch-listen-read/watch/the-artists-of-yolngu-power-the-art-of-yirrkala/>

²² Wurrandan Marawili, *Yathikpa*, 2013, etched steel, 150cm x 75cm, Art Gallery of NSW.

²³ Stephanie Bailey, "Ge Yulu: Cutting In-Dances with the State and the Collective," *Art Papers*, Spring 2022, <https://www.artpapers.org/ge-yulu-cutting-in-dances-with-the-state-and-the-collective/>.

²⁴ Bailey, "Ge Yulu: Cutting In-Dances with the State and the Collective".

enforcing regulation²⁵. Yulu reminds us that our participation in these systems is essential for them to function. The artist's work was accumulatively noticed and eventually adopted into navigation maps – legitimizing his intervention. Where Yulu is concerned with the individuals that make up state structures, I am concerned with the active role and function of materialities within their architectures. My practices of going stealth or unnoticed in public spaces, however, resonate with Yulu's methods of locating moments of error in state regulation for interventions.



Left: Wurrandan Marawili, *Yathikpa*, 2022. Etched steel, 150cm x 75cm.

Right: Ge Yulu, *Geyu Lu*, 2013-2017, installed steel street sign.

²⁵ Jarrett, "Winning the big game".

Yara Sharif's text, *Architecture of Resistance*²⁶, exemplifies Tschumi's theory of the body's capacity to practice agency against architecture. Sharif maps the architectural violences inflicted by Israel's 'Separation Wall' which, constructed in 2006, submits Palestinians to a guarded border and series of checkpoints, with strict opening and closing hours²⁷. In response to the violations of this architectural boundary young Palestinians developed spatial practices, using darkness and hidden spaces - which they refer to as rabbit holes - to sneak through the wall outside of permitted hours in search of job opportunities²⁸. Sharif describes this practice as creating 'further lines on the map...the intensification of the borderlines does not leave any alternative but to occupy the margins'²⁹. To occupy the margins of public space speaks to the practices of my methodology: trespassing, loitering, going unnoticed or unseen, and importantly, generating possibilities.



Sebastian Scheiner, Separation Wall, Qalandiya checkpoint, 2020. *Al Jazeera*.

²⁶ Yara Sharif, *Architectures of Resistance* (Berlin: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2018).

²⁷ Sharif, *Architecture of Resistance*, 30.

²⁸ Sharif, *Architecture of Resistance*, 59.

²⁹ Sharif, *Architecture of Resistance*, 67.

Hijacking function

Re-composing is a method disinterested in the production of representations, but in the hijacking of material to disrupt function. Bridget Chappell's *No Comment*, 2021³⁰, imagines re-compositions of the same sonic weaponry used by police against them³¹. Chappell's installation is an investigation into the silence of 'phase cancellation', a term describing the tension caused by audio waves working against each other, eliminating frequencies and therefore, sound³². Chappell's work responds to the 2017 instalment of 190 public address speakers around Melbourne's CBD – known in the media as 'terror sirens' – that function to 'counter the spectre of a mass incident...they play a fast-paced, high-pitched emergency siren, followed by an authoritative and presumably male voice issuing instructions to the public'³³. The installation at Blindside Gallery consists of a series of speaker collections, positioned in opposition to each other to eliminate frequencies.

³⁰ Bridget Chappell, *NO COMMENT*, 2021, installation, Blindside Gallery, Melbourne.

³¹ "NO COMMENT Bridget Chappell", 2021, installation, Blindside, Melbourne, <https://blindside.org.au/program/no-comment>.

³² Thomas Ragnar, "No Comment (Coda)," *Disclaimer*, <https://disclaimer.org.au/contents/no-comment-coda>.

³³ Bridget Chappell, "To (Phase) Cancel the Cops: An Acoustic Science of Insurrection," *un Projects*, accessed October 4, 2025, <https://unprojects.org.au/article/to-phase-cancel-the-cops-an-acoustic-science-of-insurrection/>



Bridget Chappell, *NO COMMENT*, installation view at Blindside, 2021. Photograph by Nick James Archer.

Chappell's practice employs disruption as a means of generating possibilities. In the same way Chappell re-composes sonic functions of the state to imagine anti-carceral, speculative futures³⁴, I seek to recompose state materialities to facilitate new relations to state order and control.

³⁴ "NO COMMENT Bridget Chappell", <https://blindside.org.au/program/no-comment>.

Beyond representation

I note here, the limitations associated with a pre-occupation on the function of sculpture. My practice seeks to transgress these limitations by resisting representation. Anna Uddenberg's practice, discussed here in the work *Premium Economy*³⁵, re-composes form through figuration, troubling representational codes that discipline bodies and behaviours.



Anna Uddenberg, *Premium Economy*, installation view, Kunsthalle Mannheim, 2023. Photograph by Jens Gerber.

³⁵ Anna Uddenberg, *Premium Economy*.



Anna Uddenberg, *Premium Economy*, installation view, Kunsthalle Mannheim, 2023. Photograph by Jens Gerber.

The pseudo-functional sculptures resemble industrial furniture-like objects, such as airline seats³⁶. Steps, belts, and familiar recesses reference a usability that suggests interaction, thinking of the body as a negative space³⁷. *Premium Economy* fulfils this anticipation, with performers who activate the works in declined, straddled positions. The performers behave in ways the architecture of these forms expect³⁸. I draw on Uddenberg's diversions from representation, embracing suggestion within my work. However, my practice resists clear modes of encountering, privileging audience agency.

³⁶ "Anna Uddenberg: Premium Economy," *e-flux*, September 29, 2023, <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/553692/anna-uddenbergpremium-economy/>.

³⁷ Drew Zeiba, "Anna Uddenberg's Late Capitalist Bodyscapes," *PIN-UP Magazine*, Fall/Winter 2023/24, Issue 35, *Environments*, <https://www.pinupmagazine.org/articles/anna-uddenberg-bodyscapes-sculpture>.

³⁸ Zeiba, "Anna Uddenberg's Late Capitalist Bodyscapes".

1.2 Creative Analysis

Pointing the finger

Pointing the finger (2025) is one of the in progress works of Gate-crash. The work originates from the acquisition of a steel pole. The material carries inherent associations of function. It is used in public space to suspend signage, and within infrastructure to limit access. These traditional functions – to direct, stabilise, and contain – are disrupted in its formal re-composition within *Pointing the finger*. Awkward, precarious, and made of inconsistent angles, the sculpture rejects the state-imposed order and architectural logic of its associated public context. I have re-composed three steel poles in the process of making *Pointing the finger*, through acts of sawing, grinding, and welding. These laborious, somewhat violent actions are in relationship with the materials associated functions – containing, controlling, ordering. They intervene with the straight and stable nature necessary for these functions. The work instead embraces a random, directionless, functionally useless form.

The re-composition of the sculpture, while measured and angled intuitively, was informed by the imagery of a lightning bolt. This imagery originates from word-of-mouth information that construction sites cease work during storms. Here, the form of a lightning bolt references both the unpredictability of weather, and its ability to interrupt state-mandated labour. The themes of interruption mirror the interventionist legacies of public space that my strategies of evasion speak to.

The iterative installation research involved in the realisation of 'Pointing the finger' began with its installation at Schmick Contemporary for my solo exhibition, 'An order into another'³⁹. Within this space and architecture – a small, empty room with few installation limitations - I was able to suspend the form from a horizontal pole in line with the ceiling. Held in space and centred in the room, I marked a boundary that separated the floor into two areas – a suggestion of somewhere the viewer is allowed to be, and somewhere they are not.



Sydney Jarrett, *An order into another*, 2025, steel, tape, dimensions variable, Schmick Contemporary.

³⁹ Sydney Jarrett, *An order into another*, exhibition, Schmick Contemporary, Haymarket, May 2025, <https://sydneyjarrett.com/An%20order%20into%20another.html>.

The work's next iteration was in studio crit bays, where I encountered architectural limitations. Framed by partitions shorter than the work, and ceilings that could not support it, I had to reconsider installation. I found this negotiation generative, noticing that the way the structure supports itself against a wall mimics a figurative form, leaning back and reaching forward. This figuration diverged from the affect of its first installation, embracing awkwardness, limpness, and malfunction.



Sydney Jarrett, *Pointing the finger*, 2025, steel, tape, silicone, clay, nail polish, milk. Dimensions variable.

When assessing the installed work, I noticed the extending pole referenced a point. This felt somewhat disciplinary - I found myself considering the space on the ground that the point implicates. Marking this space with a yellow vinyl taped circle solidified the relationship, and formalised communication between the sculpture and the viewer through a failed suggestion of order. In the development of the point, I sourced silicone dildos that fit the circumference of the poles hole to act as a finger. I extended the point with sculpted ceramic acrylic nails, painted with nail polish. The weight of these new materials directs the point downward, where a viewer cannot stand - accentuating the inconsistency of its order. This malfunction is echoed by puddles of a white substance⁴⁰ pooling at the exit point, or feet of the sculpture.



Sydney Jarrett, *Pointing the finger*, 2025, detail shot.



Sydney Jarrett, *Pointing the finger*, 2025, detail shot.

⁴⁰ This liquid has not been a fixed material. Different installations have included milk, shaving cream, and glue.

Pointing the finger embraces material transgressions and humour as a means of illustrating malfunction. The use of silicone dildos, and the imagery of the acrylic nail speak to the figuration of the form – referencing the object recognition present in Anna Uddenberg's work⁴¹. These material transgressions speak to both what the work is and is not. While clearly resembling a figurative form, the sculpture fails to direct, order or control. The error, or malfunction evident in the work destabilises its authority. I suggest that the material transgression itself acts as an error. Similarly to how Ge Yulu's interventions engage human error within state functions⁴², these failures invite humour. This humour acts as a basis, or invitation into the work. Considering not only what a material is doing, but what it is not, lets us ask – what possibilities can error allow for?



Sydney Jarrett, *Pointing the finger*, 2025, steel, tape, silicone, clay, nail polish, milk. Dimensions variable.

⁴¹ Zeiba, "Anna Uddenberg's Late Capitalist Bodyscapes".

⁴² Bailey, "Ge Yulu: Cutting In-Dances with the State and the Collective".

CHAPTER TWO

EFFECT

2.1 Methodology

Compulsory visibility

The functions of state materialities depend upon public compliance. Such compliance is contingent on the visibility of a regulated subject. In public space, this visibility is enforced through security compositions such as surveillance cameras and CCTV⁴³. This chapter positions my methodology within theories of compulsory visibility and internalised surveillance. It addresses how my positionality informs the way I engage with process, transformation, and installation.

The panopticon is a model of disciplinary power first recorded as a circular prison model in 1791⁴⁴. The design utilizes architecture to allow an observer vision of all prisoners in their cells without knowledge they are being watched, or the ability to see the observer⁴⁵. Michel Foucault, in his text *Discipline and Punish*⁴⁶, theorizes that an effect of subjection to the panopticon is the internalisation of the disciplinary gaze⁴⁷. The experience of being constantly observed, therefore, (re)produces disciplinary control through conditioning the observed to monitor themselves.

⁴³ Austin, "Security Compositions".

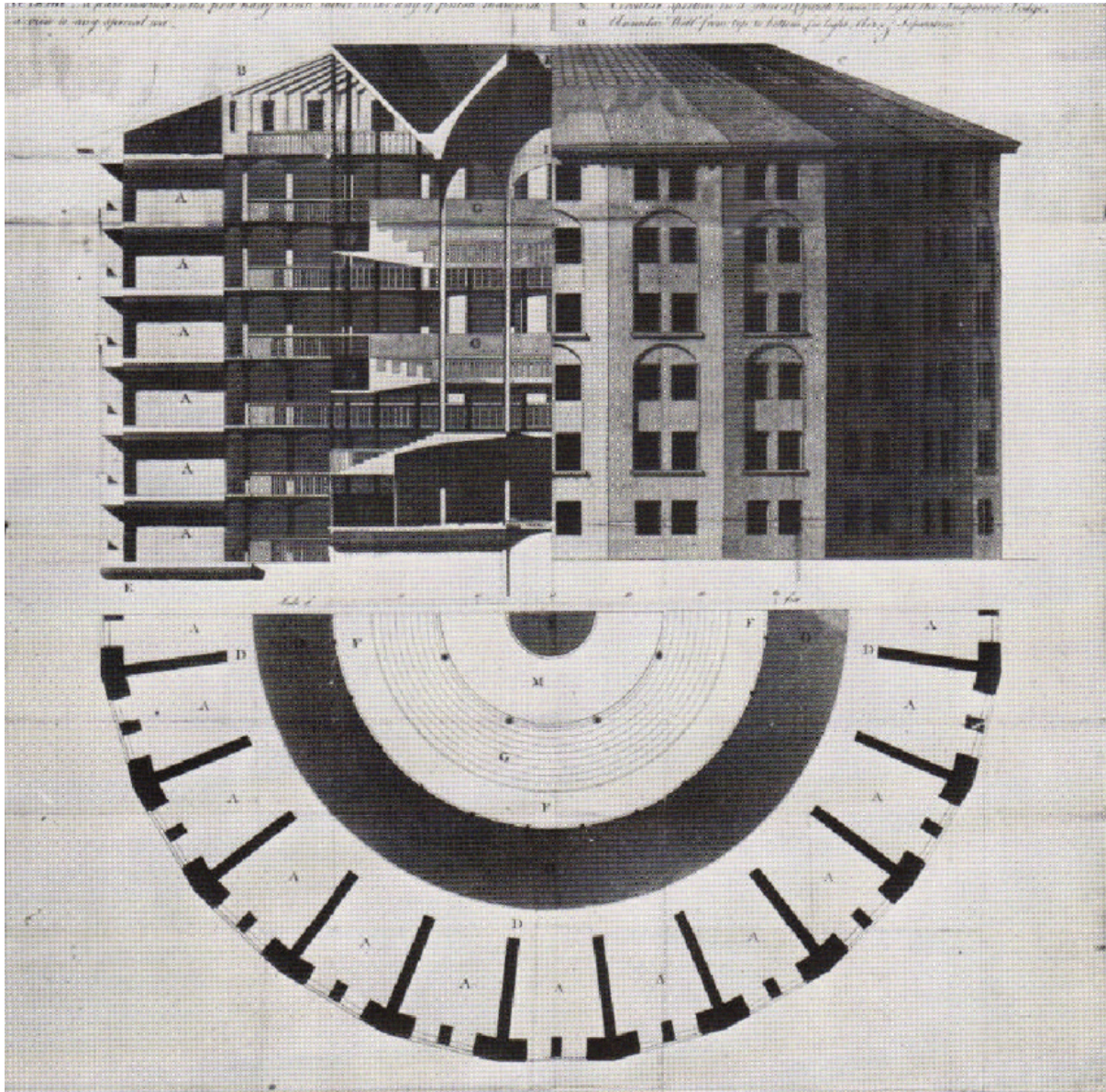
⁴⁴ Circular prison design proposed by Jeremy Bentham in 1791. See Jeremy Bentham, *Panopticon; or The Inspection-House* (London: T. Payne, 1791).

⁴⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) 200.

⁴⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

⁴⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 210.

Foucault's theory is particularly relevant to the urban, public spaces my practice engages with. The presence of security cameras and CCTV means we are theoretically always being watched – as such, we self-regulate even in the absence of direct surveillance.



1791 circular prison design by Jeremy Bentham. Plate II in Postscript-Part II Works of Jeremy Bentham.

Spatial negotiations

Understanding compulsory visibility as a function that operates on both an external level – through surveillance technology – and an internal level – through self-regulation – has informed my considerations of audience orientations to my work. My sculptural works disrupt functions that would usually order compliance from a viewer. The steel poles in *Pointing the finger*, for example, that traditionally suspend street signs, no longer deliver clear direction. This material misuse means my works do not rely on an accepted mode of behaviour. Instead, they invite a negotiation of space. Within my body of work, figuration, liquid spillages, light, and tape resist providing direction or requesting caution. Absent is a sense of what the viewer *should* do. Instead, they facilitate agency, asking audiences to navigate in spite of inconsistencies. I anticipate implicating the viewer's body within my installations can surface new sensible relations to state materialities. I intend for these relations to assess the role of participation, consent, and self-discipline in state functions of control and order.

Iterative installation research has encouraged me to consider spatial negotiations. When working with large-scale sculptures that are both individual and relational, the space around and between installed works becomes as affective as their installation. In different installations, I observed trends of hesitancy in audiences. Perhaps due to the precarious nature of the work, which balances at minimal points of tension, audiences tended to gather at a distance. What felt notable to me, was the anticipation of an order or direction, explaining how to encounter the work. This research affirms the installation of my body of work in large spaces, distant from

corners. Space is needed to encourage navigation around the works, and equally boundaries on the distance between works allow for traffic back and forth, from and to. Through orchestrating these opportunities of movement, I intend to structure broad and unimposed peripheries around how audiences may encounter or engage with my work.

Outside of category

Strategies of evasion within my practice are informed by an understanding that where life is crushed by power, regulation, and authority, criminality can be necessary for survival⁴⁸. These methods explore illegality, impartial to its moral connotations, as a legitimate tool for resource and information sourcing. While I would consider arguing *for* the ethics of trespassing in this context futile, I embrace the rhetoric it surfaces. The connotations of illegality my source objects carry – for example, the police car door in *High beams* that I am not authorized to own – are subdued in the sterile and authorized nature of the white cube. By bringing these objects into artistic contexts, I intend to de-prioritize a moral dialogue, assuming a sense of legitimacy. Instead, I hope to facilitate space for the audience to encounter whatever may surface in relation to assumptions of crime or illegality – perhaps discomfort, panic, interest, or empowerment.

Criminal Queers⁴⁹, the 2013 film by Chris Vargas and Eric A. Stanley, speaks directly to the interconnectedness of the prison abolition movement and the struggles of gender-diverse communities. One of the film's characters, Lucy, speaks of the systematic targeting of Black and trans people, while in custody awaiting sentencing:

They have me in placed in pod three, the Queen tank, their name for the 'protected custody unit', where all us trans and queer girls are housed. I've

⁴⁸ Irene Silt, *The Tricking Hour* (New York: Deluge Books, 2022), 37.

⁴⁹ *Criminal Queers*, directed by Chris Vargas and Eric A. Stanley (2013).

*met a lot of amazing people in here, who have been through unimaginable experiences of violence on the outside, only to be re-violated by these prison walls...when they cannot destroy our hearts and our bodies legally, they find other ways to ensure it happens in here*⁵⁰.

In his article, *Loitering is Delightful*⁵¹, Ross Gay exemplifies loitering as a majorly harmless crime utilised by law enforcement to disproportionately target Black people⁵². He writes, *the darker your skin, the more likely you are to be loitering*⁵³. Gay is speaking to the way in which laws are designed to target the people they wish to incarcerate, in this context being people of colour, transgender people, and people of lower economic class.

Gay writes from a coffee shop in Detroit with a sign reading ‘*NO SOLICITING, NO LOITERING*’. Sex workers have deeply nuanced understandings of public space, operating from the ability to be in public without being seen⁵⁴. Maintaining anonymity, blending into public spaces and avoiding social regulators are all skills utilised in the way sex workers navigate the street, hotels, sex service premises, and suburban homes⁵⁵. Loitering, as a method within my practice is informed by its functional capacity in my labour. When I engage in prostitution in street-based or public settings – beats, saunas, cruising spots – I depend on the act of loitering. As a transgender man, who cannot access legal sex service premises’, I am in constant practices of loitering to be in vision of clients, in proximity to bathrooms, cruising booths, sex-on premises venues. When I work on Grindr, where soliciting is banned, I transgress language - using gift emojis, or coded terms - to communicate that I am offering services for money without risking automated account banning. Working in an industry within which my body and labour does not *exist* yet as a category affords me no choice but to *occupy the margins* - trespassing physically and virtually.

⁵⁰ *Criminal Queers*, 00:03.55.

⁵¹ Ross Gay, “Loitering Is Delightful,” *The Paris Review*, no. 234 (Fall 2017), <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2019/02/11/loitering-is-delightful/>.

⁵² Gay, “Loitering is Delightful”.

⁵³ Gay, “Loitering is Delightful”.

⁵⁴ Elena Jefferys, “Contemporary Sex Worker Cultural Practice in Australia: Sex workers’ use of sex industry skills in public protest and performance”, *Journal of Australian Studies*, 30 (89), (2006), 114.

⁵⁵ Jefferys, “Contemporary Sex Worker Cultural Practice in Australia”, 114.

Practices of alternate navigation mirror legacies of transgendered bodies in medical, legal, and social structures. My positionality informs my methods of stealth, loitering, and trespassing, as well as my intention to engage agency within and provoke possibilities from my sculptural interventions⁵⁶. It's important to mention that my own positionally within this project – my mobility, protected status as a “citizen,” and whiteness – significantly impact my ability to engage with processes of illegality⁵⁷.



Stills from *Criminal Queers*, Chris Vargas and Eric A. Stanley.

⁵⁶ Jarrett, “Winning the big game”.

⁵⁷ Jarrett, “Winning the big game”.

2.2 Contextual Review

Going stealth

In a conversation with Cece McDonald in *Trap Door*⁵⁸, community leader Miss Major Griffin-Gracy describes learning to use reflections in glass surfaces as a safety measure when navigating public space as a Black trans woman⁵⁹. Store windows and car doors offer moments of understanding how you are seen – and who is looking⁶⁰. Major connects this safety tactic to broader dangers surrounding trans visibility. Referencing Laverne Cox's *Time* magazine cover, she explains how 'there are more girls being murdered because the people who want to do these harmful things can't get to Cox'⁶¹. Where visibility may provide benefits for some, it means increased vulnerability for those without the same social or economic protections.

Toby Beauchamp's *Going Stealth*⁶², 2019, analyses this scapegoating in U.S surveillance practices. Beauchamp describes surveillance as both a producer of and functioning through category⁶³. Gender non-conforming people, who may not fit into the binaries of category, become hyper-visible in a system that relies on normative

⁵⁸ *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility*, ed. Reina Gossett, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017).

⁵⁹ *Trap Door*, ed. Gossett, Stanley, and Burton, 27.

⁶⁰ *Trap Door*, ed. Gossett, Stanley, and Burton, 27.

⁶¹ *Trap Door*, ed. Gossett, Stanley, and Burton, 26.

⁶² Toby Beauchamp, *Going Stealth: Transgender Politics and U.S. Surveillance Practices* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

⁶³ Beauchamp, *Going Stealth*, 2.

understandings of the body⁶⁴. This hyper-visibility denies the privilege of privacy that whiteness, wealth, and gender conformity afford⁶⁵. Going stealth, unnoticed, or unseen becomes a survival strategy in public space, when visibility produces vulnerability.

⁶⁴ Beauchamp, *Going Stealth*, 2.

⁶⁵ Beauchamp, *Going Stealth*, 5.

Optics and power

The glass windows that Miss Major describes looking for reflections in function architecturally as mediators between public and private space⁶⁶. Dan Graham, whose practice investigates optical privileges in architecture and civic space, writes on the glass window as a material power that dictates what is allowed to be seen⁶⁷. Graham writes that glass is naturally in opposition to symmetry - influenced by reflections, transparency, and light⁶⁸. Kapwani Kiwanga's *Jalousie*⁶⁹, 2018, utilises the instability of two-way mirror. The folding door structure, referencing the slats and angles of windows, create moments of invisibility within its installation. The use of two-way mirror shows the viewers reflection when standing on one side of the sculpture, and transparency from the other.

Kiwanga's work addresses histories of racialized surveillance and forced visibility, asking audiences to engage with perceptive instability and reflect on their shifting positions of power within the work⁷⁰. I connect to Kiwanga's approach of utilising the inconsistency of reflective materials. I recognise how inconsistency can encourage shifting orientations to my sculptures, and therefore, to state materialities. Reflections ask us to acknowledge our position within our environment, or as described by Miss Major, allow us insight into how we are visible within public space.

⁶⁶ Dan Graham, *Two-Way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art*, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 53.

⁶⁷ Graham, *Two-way Mirror Power*, 54.

⁶⁸ Graham, *Two-way Mirror Power*, 54.

⁶⁹ Kapwani Kiwanga, *Jalousie*, 2019, sculpture, *Safe Passage*, MIT List Visual Art Centre.

⁷⁰ *Kapwani Kiwanga: Safe Passage*, 5:11, posted by MIT List Visual Arts Centre, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bbKRB0fmNY>.

The transparency of the two-way mirror destabilises our understanding of the material and its function altogether.



Kapwani Kiwanga, *Jalousie*, 2019, steel, two-way mirror, 200 x 230 x 10cm.

The white cube

Within my practice I have chosen to install my work within the sterile, authorised nature of white cube gallery spaces. I am interested how the gallery evokes assumptions of permission, or legitimacy⁷¹, due to connotations of institutional regulation. Removing materials from their intended environment disconnects them from their original purpose. In an artistic context, audience expectations are challenged as they confront why a material *belongs* in this space. Tania Bruguera's *Tatlin's Whisper #5*⁷², employs two legitimate police officers of the London Metropolitan police to practice crowd control techniques amongst a room of museum visitors⁷³. The unannounced performance took place within a major art institution, the Tate Modern. Bruguera's re-contextualisation of this disciplinary practice spoke to the authority granted to the architecture and institution of the Tate Modern. It demands a consideration of audience expectations of the gallery space – where safety, legality and order are assumed. If Bruguera's performance took place in a public setting these same techniques would not be a performance, but lived enactments of state power, reproducing the violence they reference. The containment of the gallery, in Bruguera's work, both legitimises and neutralises disciplinary violence.

⁷¹ Jarrett, "Winning the big game".

⁷² Tania Bruguera, *Tatlin's Whisper #5*, performance, Tate Modern, London, 2008.

⁷³ Tania Bruguera, *Tatlin's Whisper #5*, performance, Tate Modern, London, January 26–27, 2008.



Tania Bruguera, Tatlin's Whisper #5, 2008. Performance at Tate Modern, London.

The gallery environment offers me enough separation from the original contexts of my materials to insist on gestures of agency. Removed from their everyday functions, they no longer blend into public architectures and must be encountered as intentional works. My practice diverges from the control Bruguera's performance delivers, in that my works fail to direct. They suggest, or offer orientations, but never order relation.

2.3 Creative Analysis

High beams

High beams (2025), the second sculptural work of *Gate-crash*, centres itself around the acquisition of a NSW police car door. This material serves complex functions, both within the material composition of a car, and as a participatory agent of police work⁷⁴. I began considering these functions, and what intervention with this object may look like. The connotations of illegality the object carries, as well as the significance of stealth within its acquisition are impossible to ignore. I experimented with methods of concealing the object. How could a material with such direct association be kept out of sight?



Sydney Jarrett, *High beams*, 2025. Found object, debris, floodlight, acrylic, half-silvered film, fifty-dollar note.

⁷⁴ Jarrett, "Winning the big game".

Thinking of how the headlights of a car navigate roads, and the function of torches in policework, I decided on light as a new material in the work. Clamping LED floodlights around the window of the door and directing them onto audiences made the object itself difficult to look at – and therefore, concealed. The work demanded uncomfortable attention, and at this stage was successful. The viewer, when engaged with the work, is rendered in excessive light output.



Sydney Jarrett, *High beams*, 2025. Process shot.

At this point in my experimentation, I acknowledged contradiction. The work felt violent and direct, missing the gesture of agency I seek to employ in my practice. I experimented with acrylic sheets that softened the output of light, affording audiences positions of protection. While this offered a considered orientation to the work, it did not disrupt the power of the material.



Sydney Jarrett, *High beams*, 2025. Process shot. Photo by Zac Tomaszewski.

At this point in the development of *High beams*, I was drawn back to the use of two-way mirrors, or half silvered glass. Used in interrogation rooms, the material is activated by an uneven distribution of light. As described in my analysis of *Jalousie*⁷⁵, the material becomes reflective on one side, and transparent on the other. The missing panel of glass became the point of functional intervention. Installing two-way mirror film onto a sheet of acrylic and fitting it into the car window, two new orientations to the object emerged – behind the window, and in front of it. This development affords the audience agency through the ability to negotiate their positions to the sculpture. In its complete activation, one viewer may stand in front of the sculpture, and see a reflection of themselves, while another behind the door, has a transparent view of the onlooker.



Sydney Jarrett, *High beams*, 2025. Found object, debris, floodlight, acrylic, half-silvered film, fifty-dollar note.

Power is not something that can be represented, it is yielded by use and effect⁷⁶. The instability of the two-way mirror, and the realisation of optical power imbalance it

⁷⁵ Kapwani Kiwanga, *Jalousie*.

⁷⁶ Silt, *The Tricking Hour*, 67.

communicates, is only activated by audiences orientating themselves into the considered positions. Privileging gesture over direction, the work had to encourage audiences to bend down behind it. Informed by my experiences of labour in marginal and unseen spaces, I taped a fifty-dollar note to the backside of the car door. This material seeks to invite audiences into a certain position, signalling possibility in the unseen.

High beams is rendered brightly on its frontside by floodlights I installed on surrounding walls. It balances at a single point of tension, on a piece of graffitied wall debris. The work seeks to create a relationship between different points of orientation – a relationship realised by shifting positionalities around the work. It does not represent, but considers what is at stake when we are visible, and what the compromise of putting ourselves into frame may be. Ultimately, the encounter reminds us of alternate ways to navigate positions of visibility that state structures depend on us taking.



Sydney Jarrett, *High beams*, 2025. Found object, debris, floodlight, acrylic, half-silvered film, fifty-dollar note.

Conclusion

My body of work, *Gate-crash*, demonstrates how a conceptual sculpture practice can engage materials of the state to disrupt functions of control and order. The methodology undertaken in this project utilises strategies of evasion to source state materialities. Through processes of re-composition and material negotiation, I encountered and employed malfunction and error as tools to disrupt the logics of authority and challenge relational behaviour.

The unauthorised use of state materiality involved the removal of objects from their intended context into gallery environments. These contextual and material transgressions, as well as my functional interventions, created moments of inconsistency – troubling how the materials are read. This disruption of logic, as

supported by the theory of Bernard Tschumi⁷⁷, facilitated moments of agency through the production of new audience orientations to state materiality. The work of Michel Foucault⁷⁸, Toby Beauchamp⁷⁹ and the words of Miss Major Griffin-Gracy⁸⁰ deeply contribute to the consideration of audience visibility within my installation. This consideration has assisted in the orchestration of encounters of humour, discomfort, reflection, and discovery.

Gate-crash considers the architectural, state-imposed, and self-imposed restrictions on the way we navigate life and public space. As a sculptural installation, it aims to reframe what we understand to be possible under a state gaze, and challenge our relationships to authority, regulation, and compliance. My practice offers a framework that extends the potential of how we experience public space. With broad political and social bearings, this framework invites further engagement with a range of contexts, audiences, and possibilities.

*“The world is not a reflection, but a continuous composition.”*⁸¹

⁷⁷ Tschumi, *Violence of Architecture*.

⁷⁸ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

⁷⁹ Beauchamp, *Going Stealth*.

⁸⁰ *Trap Door*, ed. Gossett, Stanley, and Burton.

⁸¹ Nigel Thrift, 'Performance and ...', *Environment and Planning A*, 35 (2003), p. 2021.

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