

## Deakin University & Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar

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### Words and things: Souvenirs of over-site/over-sight for place-making

#### Abstract:

This paper addresses the problem of making things in a given place (Qatar) and asks how anticipations and memories of place contribute to practice-based manoeuvres of place-making. Flying across time zones and travelling through sites suggests aspects of place-making that would draw upon both a notion of meteorites coming to earth and an awareness of the sensory consequences of global travelling. What this experience also suggests is an ‘over-sight’ (‘over-site’) in how travellers remember a place for themselves and how they re-member it for others in the form of souvenirs. Going to a place might often default to an envisioning of pre-emptive or imaginary souvenirs in anticipation of the destination; thinking about what a place might be like is hard to separate from what we think we will eventually take away from it. Thus, the idea to be explored is how we might ‘make in to place’ as much as we ‘make something in-place,’ which perhaps results in ‘making some thing into a place’. Etymologically, souvenir already suggests this in its derivation from Old French: ‘to remember, come to mind.’ How does one ‘come to remembering’ in a place that, like all planetary places, will always be both global and local? Perhaps it depends on how one lands in a place.... Meteoroids remain in orbit around a place: nascent souvenirs always above the horizon, un-made place-makings. Meteors come closer to landing but still, by definition, burn up in the atmospheres of the new place. Meteorites, though, land: they suggest what we mean by the human element of ‘makings in-/to place.’ Travelling from somewhere, to somewhere yet to be fully determined, meteorites (people and/or words and/or senses) reflect the dispersion and compression of sensory (thing-based) and word-based experiences of place. Drawing on the work of Paul Hopper, Paul Carter, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Michel Serres, William Desmond and Julia Kristeva, the paper concludes that words evoke a place in which the present might take place, and that the senses evoke a present in which place might take place.

#### Biographical notes:

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Dr Jondi Keane is an arts practitioner, critical thinker and senior lecturer at Deakin University. Over the last three decades he has exhibited, performed and published in the USA, UK, Europe and Australia (<http://jondikeane.com/>). His research interests include Contemporary Arts practice (installation-performance), Contemporary Theory (art history, philosophy, cultural theory, cognitive science), Embodiment (embodied cognition and the philosophy of perception), Experimental Architecture, built environment, cultural space and the theory-practice nexus, research design and practice-led research.

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Keywords:

Meteorites – Over-site – Place – Senses – Souvenirs

## Introduction

This paper explores issues related to the co-authors' leadership of a collaborative and cross-artform five-day workshop conducted in Doha, the capital of Qatar, in early 2013 as part of *Tasmeem Doha: Hybrid making*, a biennial international art and design conference. Two of the three workshop leaders flew to Qatar from Melbourne to participate in the conference, thus reinforcing – through the word-based and sensorial experience of international air travel – how the project of designing and making things in Qatar was always already woven through notions of globalization. In turn, words and things (conceived as objects of sensory response) became the key elements of our hybrid engagement, in the workshop, with the problem of making in Qatar.

Using the metaphor of meteorites to suggest a 'landing' in the local even as it swirls within globalized space, we proceeded with a hypothesis of an assemblage of words and the senses as a pre-condition for 'landing' as makers in Qatar. Words and the senses also combine, we suggest, to ensure an arrival in the *present* of a place as a site held within the tension of memory (of the past) and anticipation (of the future). Drawing on the work of Paul Hopper, Paul Carter, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Michel Serres, William Desmond and Julia Kristeva, our paper concludes that words evoke a place in which the present might take place, and that the senses evoke a present in which place might take place. Under the rubric of 'Souvenirs of the senses', our ambition while at *Tasmeem Doha* was to create a new type of souvenir that would reflect individual and singular attachments to Qatar in place and in time.

In general, commercially produced souvenirs are designed as reminders of the most obvious and iconic markers of place. A trip to Paris, in this paradigm, is recalled through a miniature replica of the Eiffel Tower as souvenir. Travel to Sydney and the memory of your visit will be threaded through a model of the Harbour Bridge. But such souvenirs seem to presuppose an amnesiac subject. It is almost as if the souvenir contains a built-in assumption of immediate forgetting – as if something said or believed to have been experienced was never in fact experienced... and so only the strongest markers of place might recall it. On another level, this marker can both intensify the recall and re-charge the event of the visit, as well as fixing the link to be exploited into the future through products and an ever-increasing commodification of experience. The strongest markers are the souvenir of the crowd (what everyone is said to associate with a place). Now, it is possible, of course, that the Eiffel Tower *might* bring back some or all of one's most singular, personal and intimate responses to the city of Paris. It is more probable, though, that such responses – responses likely to play along the scale of all one's sensory engagements with the world – will just disappear under the weight of the most obvious: the sterile iconic.

Our workshop, 'Souvenirs of the senses', was intended to create the necessary conditions for re-thinking and dismantling the usual impersonality of the commercially produced souvenir. Intensive attention to the senses and their operations, linked to linguistic processes, was deployed so as to ground the creation of objects or one-offs that might resist the putative one-to-one correspondence between a place and a thing of the commercial souvenir. Looking back, we are now able to judge

how successful we were in creating a working hypothesis for a methodology of place-making – connecting words and sensoria – in a globalized world of sites pushed apart, as it were, by the production of highly commercialized souvenirs linked to this, that or the other (discrete) place. To what extent can potential ‘over-sights’ of place and time be remedied through the notion of ‘over-site’ in the way it directs attention to how one arrives in the present of a local and particular destination?

To begin to answer such questions, we attended to the two-part conference/workshop brief very seriously. The key terms were ‘Made in Qatar’ and ‘Hybrid making’. ‘Hybrid making’ was always already built-in both through the cross-artform nature of our workshop, which drew on the various skills of the workshop leaders and participants, and through the hybridity consequent upon words being put into experimental relationships with the senses via things.

‘Made in Qatar’, while perhaps on the face of it a simpler notion than ‘Hybrid making’, was actually the more problematic part of the brief for us. Oil-rich Qatar is a rich place. And oil, astoundingly cheap to an Australian visitor, is being used by Qatar to import just about everything: including European and American cultural capital in the form of museums, art galleries and universities. Indeed, *Tasmeem Doha: Hybrid making* took place on and around the Qatar campus of the American institution Virginia Commonwealth University. The relative smallness of the largely arid or desertified country (its area is barely 11,000 square kilometres) and the physical, logistical and cultural dominance of the capital city, Doha – with its shimmering skyscrapers and insouciant greenery – makes Qatar a peculiar, city-state suturing of wilderness and the metropolitan: its own species of hybridity. Local American expatriates we talked with spoke of the claustrophobia of the place – of seeing the same (American) faces everywhere, of not being able to conveniently leave except by air. Flights in and out were much spoken of.

Once there, then, Qatar was always already a problematic place to think about and enact local making. But two of the workshop leaders, Jondi Keane and Patrick West, had to get there first, and this gives another orientation to ‘Made in Qatar’ as a place in relationship to other places and to space.

### **Flying to Qatar**

There are two elements to trace here in their interweavings, and in these interweavings there were ‘over-sites’ (of place) and, at least potentially, ‘over-sights’ (of person). The first element concerns how words and the senses affected the orientations to the world that became available to Keane and West as they were travelling to Qatar. The second element relates to the nature of the space through which they were travelling, across geographic divisions, national borders and time zones. We will look first at the second of these elements as we make our argument.

The space of the world – comprising the globe in its increasingly warmer inward layerings, surrounded by its envelopes of increasingly cooler outward atmospheres – can be characterized in many ways. Globalization scholars like Paul Hopper underscore the importance of attending to ‘the intersection and interaction of the

global and the local' (Hopper 2006: 1). This relates, of course, to 'Made in Qatar' as a 'g/local' place. Hopper observes that 'there is a material dimension to globalization entailing as it does the increased flows of products and peoples between different parts of the world and the globalization of production' (Hopper 2006: 7). Post-modern, capitalist Qatar is very obviously part of this process. However, Hopper warns against viewing globalization as solely a late-capitalist historical phenomenon. Citing the work of Jan Nederveen Pieterse, Hopper notes that 'it has been claimed that globalization is the human condition. From the first human beings emerging from Africa and spreading out across the globe, human history has been one of migration. Furthermore, long-distance trading activity and trade networks existed prior to the establishment of capitalism' (Hopper 2006: 5). Qatar is a Muslim nation that is also significantly Westernized and politically moderate. As such, it is a catchment for both recent flows of capitalist globalization and of ancient religious movements at a global level. Hopper notes that 'within many Muslim communities there is a sense that globalization is part of a long-term encroachment by Western powers into the Islamic world dating back many centuries' (Hopper 2006: 5-6). Thus, an initial at least potential 'over-sight' of 'over-site' (of flying into Qatar) concerns cultural sensitivity around the very definition of globalization. As travellers from the West, we were part of a long tradition of permanent or temporary re-settlement in the Middle East.

As advised by Hopper, then, 'Made in Qatar' presents as a problem that cannot be easily solved through explanations lodged within theories of Westernization, capitalism, or the spread of religion. This is a problem, ultimately, of making: of 'over-seeing' and thus perhaps missing the points of connection or the making of new sites of connection as a function of coming into sight/site. It is not only that any one element of globalization, however conceptualized, can only inadequately subtend an explanation of 'the intersection and interaction of the global and the local' (Hopper 2006: 1). It is the 'made' part that matters at this particular juncture.... For creative makers like the 'Souvenirs of the senses' team, globalization must find its point of connection with actual practices of making, with craft – mythopoetically. In a sense, the abstraction of the global needs to be populated with various sites that are the distributed origins of global creation (making), and by extension nodes of exchange and consumption. Qatar would be one of these sites – a landing site, if you will.

The body in flight – aiming to touch down in Qatar – is never, of course, a place-less body. Nothing is not in a place. Still no one lives their life on a plane, and air travel is much more about the space *between* places (that is, about being in, or on, the space of the planet). On our Qatar Airways flight, one of the screen selections, constantly available, was a compass indicating the fluctuating direction to Mecca. Other screens gave the opportunity to trace one's progress – to trace the plane's progress – across maps of the world, themselves mapped by indications of time zones, place names and country contours, or the ellipsoidal sweep of day following night following day. We are saying that any number of orientations to the planet was possible, and that the language of globalization theory (preeminently, that of local/global intersections) could never adequately express these orientations available to us as makers.

Paul Carter's (2010) recent publication *Ground truthing: Explorations in a creative region* is helpful here as a supplement to globalization discourses such as Hopper's.

This is because, while *Ground truthing* foregrounds Victoria's Mallee district as an opportunity to exercise creative strategies of place-making, it contains highly suggestive implications for the global domain. 'From a creative point of view,' Carter writes, 'regions are nested within regions and the region of all regions where creative principles are grasped may only be found when a particular region has been selected' (Carter 2010: 149). However, contra Carter, the very notion of the souvenir, with its conventionally iconic insistence on one place as opposed to all other places, means that places are not so much 'nested within' each other as 'nested apart'.

Thus, what we are committed to in this paper is an investigation into what it means to be involved in creative acts and outcomes of place-making in a territory of global space (in this case, Qatar) where the production and circulation of souvenirs means that regions are not only 'nested within regions' but dotted like confetti across the surface of the earth (Carter 2010: 149). That is, Carter's 'grasping' needs to be brought down to earth – re-inflected, un-earthed differently – in specific spots, which one might drop in to; similarly, there needs to be a difference between Carter's generic notion of 'creative principles' and the nature of creative actions anywhere (Carter 2010: 149). On this matter, the risk Carter runs of being too abstract with 'the region of all regions' is only an *apparent* risk, which he effectively counters with this crucial point: 'If the earth – planet-wide space – can be imagined in depth and in rondure, then it is in wherever we stand, rest, dream and reproduce' (Carter 2010: 19). Exactly because the earth is global ('in rondure') we can make it less of an abstraction remote from specific makings or a required local.

For us, the actual activity of planetary *travel* (of being 'in rondure') brings Carter's thesis about 'the region of all regions' down to earth. To put things this way around is, in musical terms, to place a *tenuto* mark above or below the experience of globalized travelling (tenuto: held for its full value, and sometimes slightly stressed). As travellers, we were creatures of the rondure, approaching Qatar by air, always in a relationship of one sort or another to the earth and to its regions – globalized makers skimming over the earth, yet below where outer space begins. Like Carter, we were held in (and on some level sensitive to) the tension that exists between the 'epoch of globalisation' and the planetary conditions of making (Carter 2010: 2). There is a little rounded-ness of the (globalized) planet in any given (apparently) flat space of making, and precisely because there is this degree of rondure, however slight, there remains a trace of the travelling condition (the condition that links [discrete] sites of souvenir making) in any given point of latitude and longitude on the surface of the globe. The roundness of the earth suggests the relations of all places to all places.

To this extent, the idea of global homogeneity, which dogs Hopper's (2006) work for instance, may be countered, via a detour through Carter's insights, by an emphasis on *travelling itself* as a creative act, which gives content to the abstraction of the 'g/local'. Having travelled to Qatar allowed us to attend to the planetary (the curvature of the globe) within the site of our specific makings. Rondure effectively materialized globalization theory. The 'g/local' became less of an intersection of concepts and more of a site implicated with the bodily activity of travelling, which brings the global into play, from the ground up of rondure, in different local places. Coming to Qatar as makers required the process that we are playing out here, again,

albeit this time in words. It required the sensation of arriving at a place on the surface of the earth – where place-making might take place – but from out of what Carter, following on immediately from the passage quoted above about ‘planet-wide space’, calls ‘the nurturing region of regions’ (Carter 2010: 19). It required a mode of creativity that would take into account travel both *between places* and *over the rondure of the planet*. The gravity of our (Keane and West’s) situation was the pull of ‘Made in Qatar.’

Given our intention to make souvenirs, the etymology of souvenir (derived from Old French) provides a relevant linguistic accommodation here: ‘to remember, come to mind’. How were we coming to Qatar to make souvenirs (of the senses) that would bring Qatar to mind – allow it to be re-membered – later on? How would we avoid remembering too much of the global in advance, as it were, and thus swamping the local-ness of Qatar with an ‘over-sight’? How were we coming in to land? Making in to place? Perhaps making some thing into a place? At the very least, becoming makers on the make?

In astronomical language, were we meteoroids, meteors, or meteorites?

Meteoroids orbit without ever landing or burning up in the earth’s atmosphere – nascent souvenirs that never touch down, constantly un-made place-makings. Meteors approach land (or water) only to burn up before reaching it – makings that will never be made. Meteorites, however, land. We saw ourselves, then, as meteorites: makers who travel, arrive, make – make in Qatar.

### **Words and senses**

Who, though, were we, to put our situation like this? To call our *selves* meteorites? This returns us to the issue of how the relationship between words and the senses affected the orientations to the world that became available to Keane and West as they were travelling to Qatar. ‘Hybrid making’ (involving words and the senses) necessarily interweaves with ‘Made in Qatar’. Words interact with the senses and also, separately and in hybridity, flow through the problem that is designated by ‘Made in Qatar’.

Neither Keane nor West thought of himself as having been to Qatar before. One of them seemed to remember transiting through the airport, that’s all; perhaps it had been somewhere else in the Middle East. And transiting, in any event, means a certain way of being there – means remaining in the middle (in the middle of the east and between the south and the north), between one place and another. Transiting, then, is not quite the same as travelling; transiting underscores the feeling of being out of place while travelling, and this comes through in how words and the senses attach differently to a self that is ‘slightly paused’ in its travelling (transiting) compared to a self that is either travelling more freely or more securely settled in (a) place. Places of departure or arrival are transiting points. In being processed out of one place (Melbourne, Australia) in preparation for arrival into another (Doha, Qatar) – by direct flight as it were – things happen to the words by which we know ourselves, and to the senses by which we live, in ways that can never be fully anticipated.

To take words first: the repeated requirement to show one's passport (a face, name and data) and boarding card compresses a body to a more word-based or data-based existence. Then, once aboard, one evolves into a name on a flight manifest and on a seating plan. One sits in 23F or similar. The protocols of travel, squeezed through the pinhole of national security imperatives, attempt to make one *hermetic* – sealed off from the outside (of place) and also sealed off from one's self (known now only by data and words). Hermetic, as if also Hermes-like. For Hermes, the Greek God of travel – the winged God – is also the trickster that must be tamed or nullified in travel. On this logic, words are deployed to out-trick any potential trickery of the traveller, to keep the traveller in his/her place and from becoming vagrant, gypsy-like, out of place...

If air travel (transport so rapid that it disrupts one's very experience of time as well as of place) is the mode of travel that fits most neatly with theories of globalization that tarry around local/global coincidences, then it is also that which presents specific challenges and opportunities for what we are calling 'making in to place'. Travelling by air seems to maximize the capacity of language to pinion the signified to the signifier, as illustrated in Jacques Lacan's 'anchoring points' or '*points de capiton*' (Lacan 1977: 154). You should hear flight attendants talk! One could say that 23F is who you are, where you are, what you are. In flight, through words, the self is arranged on a grid. When you leave your seat it sits empty, indicating who you are even more so in your absence. The signifier strains to hold the signified in place. To this extent, words have the capacity to evoke not just a person who might occupy any place (23F can go missing and be found through words) but a particular place for that person to inhabit (23F can return to his/her seat at the direction of words). Doha is the seat of government that dominates Qatar, the place through which the place is made...

In the case of the senses, on the other hand, it is not so much a matter of keeping the self in a designated place – and not so insistent a procedure of political authority, bureaucracy and administration. Rather, the very conditions of travel create a swathing or swaddling of the senses. Jet lag, making the body out of place in time, is the most obvious manifestation of this. One doesn't feel right. One doesn't feel like one. One's senses, when it's another time in the place one calls home from the time where one is, become discombobulated. The thinner air one breathes in air travel makes the body breathless; not less bodily at all, but differently embodied – a different sort of sensorium. Airlines serve up heavily salted food to try to compensate for the diminishment of the sense of taste. All the senses are somehow muted, or reduced to a smaller scale of activity. They are enveloped, almost turned in on themselves, with a re-created capacity, or incapacity, to relate and make relations. Global air travel dissolves and, in a sense, minimizes the senses. The assault to one's senses that travellers sometimes talk about after arrival in a foreign and unfamiliar place is perhaps related to the conditioning of the senses that comes about when travelling long distances on a commercial flight. After such an experience, the senses not surprisingly seem to come alive!

The notion of a 'Body without Organs' (BwO) advanced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987) in *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* provides a

useful way into thinking about this travelling constitution of the senses. In particular, the following passage is provocative for the sense it gives of being ‘on’ the BwO:

People ask, So what is this BwO? – But you’re already on it, scurrying like a vermin, groping like a blind person, or running like a lunatic: desert traveler and nomad of the steppes. On it we sleep, live our waking lives, fight – fight and are fought – seek our place, experience untold happiness and fabulous defeats; on it we penetrate and are penetrated; on it we love. (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 150)

Deleuze and Guattari go on to say that ‘[t]he BwO is what remains when you take everything away’ (1987: 151). The BwO might be thought of, therefore, as what is left of the senses that allows a new place to rush aboard the body, perhaps even to overwhelm it, in its so-called assault on the senses. It is always a matter of being ‘on’, of being ‘on’ with the senses. *The BwO* is that upon which *a BwO* is constructed; thus, the BwO is not a universal baseline of body-ness – rather, it is available for bodily specific makings. One example of this is the use of sensory deprivation such as is experienced in some rituals and in the methods of Russian icon painters who remained in darkness for long periods. Such privation is one strategy. Another is given in *The architectural body*, by Madeline Gins and Shusaku Arakawa (2002), where the authors make the gaps, modulations and ‘over-sights’ of predominant senses available to be perceived, and by doing so put into conflict the way they are or become points of capture or anchoring, thus requiring or allowing new configurations to emerge through the inability to solve body-wide problems in habitual ways.

After this fashion, if not with the precision that words can sometimes (appear) to offer, the actual experience of travelling to one place from another place – as makers – can help orientate one’s self as a sensorium to the new place. If words can pin down ‘Made in Qatar’, then the senses, once they are reconfigured as a BwO in the aftermath of a flight of self, might bring place more alive – in combination with words – in relation to ‘Hybrid making’. This is also to suggest that, in regards to processes of ‘Hybrid making’, the BwO need not be only a matter of the senses in relationship to the world. A sensory BwO may also emerge out of the relationship of the self to words. Travelling something like data themselves (like words, like bits of information), Keane and West could not help but become involved with new orientations to words, and to the senses, as they travelled to Qatar as makers orbiting the planet.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the BwO operates in respect of both senses and words, in their relationships to each other and to the world, and in respect, with reference to the particularities of the current project, of both ‘Made in Qatar’ and ‘Hybrid making’.

### **Remembering and pre-remembering (words)**

In speaking of meteoroids, meteors and meteorites we are, of course, speaking metaphorically, drawing upon the resources of language; drawing upon resources that also frame human processes of memory, remembering and pre-remembering (anticipation). (We also note that metaphor, in its derivation from Latin and Greek, means ‘a transfer’, suggesting a body that lands somewhere.)

How are these things ‘made’, then: remembering and pre-remembering? The previously referenced etymology of souvenir as ‘to remember, to come to mind’ gives the clue here. We propose that words, more so than the senses, are our souvenirs of time. Ordered as they are in time, words are how time is re-membered. We recall our memories from the past through words and these same memories allow us to pre-remember (to anticipate). Thinking of any particular place, later on there will be memories of the present that one has crossed over, in time, in that place. Keane and West were travelling towards Qatar in the mode of ‘coming to remembering’; travelling from somewhere to somewhere in order to make souvenirs or remembrances of a small patch of the Middle East. And as one is always travelling from a place to a place (even if only within the same place in time), so time is always involved with notions of departure and arrival.

Departures and arrivals and memories and anticipations are all part of the one flux. Keane and West were hoping, perhaps, that they were not going to arrive in Qatar with too much memory of their place of departure (thus meteors, burning up in the shock of Qatar) nor with too much anticipation of their place of arrival (thus meteoroids, over-shooting Qatar). Of what comes in to a new place from somewhere else, only meteorites land in place and are placed in land. As makers, Keane and West (to be joined at the airport in Doha by Valerie Jeremijenko) were, hopefully, meteorites... Coming to Qatar, specifically, even as they knew that all making happens somewhere and that making can be the making of any place whatsoever.

Here though, the etymology of souvenir sounds a warning. The capacity of words to remember and to pre-remember a particular place, in time, seems strangely linked to an ‘over-sight’ of the present. ‘To remember, to come to mind,’ which is what the souvenir does, is necessarily *not to be in the present*. Words allow either remembering or anticipation (of a specified place). And a souvenir is not a souvenir unless it is at a distance from place – a distance from place in time – that provides room for remembering or ‘coming to mind’ to take place. Words likewise. In *Being between: Conditions of Irish thought*, William Desmond writes that ‘[a]s we first live the present in its plenitude, it is lost to us; we love it; we do not see it; we are too close to it; it lives us’ (Desmond 2008: 88-9). The present (of place) that we know through words, by remembering and pre-remembering, is lost to us as the present itself. (So-called present-tense narratives are often, of course, related in the past simple.) Julia Kristeva makes a similar point to Desmond’s: ‘We can note in passing how sensation and representation inevitably drift apart at the very moment when the experience of taste, as an immediate perceptual experience, is transcended by the concern to illuminate its meaning’ (Kristeva 1993: 46-7).

The ‘over-sight’ of words, then, is the present. While words may place one in the place of ‘Made in Qatar’ – place one ‘over-site’ – they cannot place one there in the self-identity of the present (as Desmond and Kristeva elucidate). It is not that remembering and pre-remembering only take place in language but that, in language, these operations take place in a bifurcated time of the past and the future, and that this is how the present is always already an ‘over-sight’ in language more generally.

### Remembering and pre-remembering (the senses)

The situation with the senses, remembering and pre-remembering is, however, quite different. Kristeva's (1993) work here links to that of Michel Serres's in *The five senses: A philosophy of mingled bodies*. This text is an argument for experience of the empirical world, wholly through the senses, as an antidote to what Serres glosses as the numbing, distancing effect of language: 'I cannot tell or write of touch, nor of any other sense' (Serres 2008: 58). For Serres, as for Kristeva, the senses (tense-less) are always of the present – even, we might say, in remembering or pre-remembering. There is a question here as to whether the senses, which do not signify linguistically, can involve notions of the past and the future at all. If they do, past and future could only be in a sort of endless present. Smell might well be the strongest memory sense but its strength as a sense is to saturate the past with the present. Serres writes: 'The senses play hide-and-seek with time, which is lost, found again, recovered at an unexpected moment' (Serres 2008: 329). Or, more bluntly, 'If you want to waste your time, attempt to save it; if you want to save time, be prepared to waste it' (Serres 2008: 329).

However, endlessly though they might be of the present, the senses (the senses that we *are* in our bodies as opposed to that which we *have* as language) are only ever imprecisely of place. Serres is unconvincing when he states, for example, that '[d]ry Greece remains the kingdom of geometers, all born there, in blinding light or in darkness' (Serres 2008: 69) or asks, regarding France, 'is there any culture that has, to such an extent and for so long, worked on refining perfumes?' (Serres 2008: 326). That is, unless we allow that the word 'culture' in this second passage makes room for the prompt to place that language, through the very naming of place, might provide. The senses, without language, cannot identify place *in name*. This is crucial. The Body without Organs of the senses discussed above might... might... allow the senses to become orientated – something like a meteorite – to a new place. And the fact of travelling to Qatar might assist in a compression and dispersion of sensory experiences of place. Still the senses cannot capture that place the way language can.

### Conclusion

In short, the conclusion we are advancing here is: firstly, that words evoke a place in which the present might take place; and secondly, that the senses evoke a present in which place might take place (if prompted by words). This constitutes our working hypothesis – as both makers of the senses and makers of place – for a methodology of place-making that responds equally to the injunctions of 'Made in Qatar' and 'Hybrid making' and that links to our specific project, 'Souvenirs of the senses'. Concerned to be 'over-site' (as meteorite rather than meteoroid or meteor), our necessarily ongoing project seeks to suture something in words to an 'over-sight' of the senses and vice versa. (We acknowledge that, perhaps ironically, words designate place through their promiscuity across time, and the senses designate time through their promiscuity across place.)

Late in his book, Serres argues that

language is closed on the language side, shut in on its qualities of exactness, precision, rigour; on the world side, on the other hand, it opens out. Inchoative and inexact, undecided but full of promise. Professors, critics, theoreticians and politicians live on the closed side, the writer takes up residence on its outskirts, in the open, facing things that are sometimes hard. (Serres 2008: 333)

On the terms of this paper, we suggest that language is both closed and open all at once. Writers 'take up residence' amidst both words and the senses. More specifically, whatever place words may designate in a 'shut in' way is also exactly the site for an 'open' experience, through the senses, of the present. Language makes the place for something else (of the senses) to take place in the present.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Words as bits of natural languages are not, of course, identical with data as an element of artificial languages; still there is a crossover. Vyacheslav Vsevolodovich Ivanov notes that

Certain recent findings of mathematical linguistics make it possible to isolate common features and distinctions between natural and logical languages; experiments in constructing intermediate languages lying between natural languages and the languages of mathematical logic have been particularly rewarding in this respect, (Ivanov 1977: 31-2)

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