

Simon Terrill REF Portfolio

Physical Artefact
Crowd Theory
UK, Australia: 2014-2020

Supplementary pdf

Crowd Theory - Artworks List

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Simon Terrill, Crowd Theory Thamesmead, type C print, 263 cm x 160 cm, 2017

Crowd Theory: Thamesmead

On April 15th 2017, over 100 people gathered at dusk by the foot of the towers on Southmere Lake to make a large-scale portrait of South Thamesmead, featuring those who live here. Thamesmead is a housing estate situated on the outer edges of South West London. Designed and built in the late 1960's by the Greater London Council, from its origins as a modernist estate intended to address social problems that had already started to affect earlier estates, it soon fell into disrepute and became known for it's appearance in Stanley Kubrick's A Clockwork Orange (1971).





Simon Terrill, South of the River: Crowd Theory, type C print, 180cm x 225cm, National Portrait Gallery London, 2016

Crowd Theory: South of the River

Commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery London, South of the River is a joyful moment of inversion, where 180 students from St Saviour's and St Olave's schools in Southwark, took over the entire site with no adults present. The students, for a brief moment, inhabited the headmaster's office, the staff room, the grounds, the classrooms and the upper balcony, which ended with a spontaneous party.

Working closely with the students to research the inspiring achievements of people connected to Southwark and Lambeth, through exploring historical portraits in the National Portrait Gallery's collection. For the shoot, the students divided into groups, and responded through various poses and gestures, inspired by the portraits they discovered with 'south of the river' connections.





Simon Terrill, Crowd Theory Adelaide: Victoria Square /Tarntanyangga, 2013, type C print: three panels, 160.0 x 93.5; 160.0 x 202.0; 160.0 x 93.5 cm



Simon Terrill, Crowd Theory Adelaide: Victoria Square /Tarntanyangga, type C print: central panel 160.0 x 202 cm

Crowd Theory: Adelaide: Victoria Square /Tarntanyangga

Victoria Square / Tarntanyangga has been a significant gathering place for local Indigenous people long before William Light conceived a plan for Adelaide in 1837. A significant site for the Kaurna people, Tarntanyangga is known as 'The Dreaming Place of the Red Kangaroo'. In February 2013 the Adelaide City Council began redeveloping the square, altering the roads, installing new infrastructure and marking the next phase in the evolution of this space. The Crowd Theory project was timed to happen at this moment of change.

A website where people described their varying attachments to the square can be found here: <http://crowdtheoryadelaide.com/>





Simon Terrill, Balforn Tower, type C analogue print, 162cm x 200cm, 2010

Crowd Theory: Balforn Tower

Captured on film with a large format camera during one evening in November, current Balforn residents were invited to participate in the image by choosing how they wished to represent themselves within the final picture. The Tower was flooded with stage lighting and a specific sound cue was used to herald the next shot. Each exposure lasted for 10 seconds and so with the opening of the lens, a strange stillness came over the building as movement would result in blurred erasure and those present needed to be stationary in order remain visible. The event happened just after social housing tenants were told their right of return after renovations was 'possible but not probable'. The work became a memento of what has been lost and is on permanent display in the local community centre.

Crowd Theory: Bow Cross

The tower blocks that loom over this small cul-de-sac were once known as The Three Witches, notorious sites of social unease. Captured amidst a process of regeneration in late 2011, the work is intended to offer a meditation on regeneration and its temporal effects on the physicality and identity of a street. Made up of three parts: a mural-sized photograph, a video and a book. Together the works form a contemporary account of a street and the people who live here.



Simon Terrill, Bow Cross, 180 x 227 cm, type C print, 2011

Simon Terrill Bow Cross video Single channel video, 9:23 mins

Amidst film lighting, smoke machines and an ice cream truck, the inhabitants of Bow Cross were invited to occupy their place of residence. This video work extends what is captured within the Bow Cross photograph, flighting past friends, families and neighbours as they fill the street from dusk until nightfall, anticipating the next photographic frame.





Simon Terrill, Crowd Theory - Port of Melbourne, type C print, 180cm x 242cm, produced in association with Footscray Arts Centre, 2008

Crowd Theory: Port of Melbourne

Shadowed by the looming shipping containers owned by global corporations, Port of Melbourne is perhaps the most obviously commercial site in the Crowd Theory series. Involving participants ranging from office staff, truck drivers and engineers who work at the dock, to environmental protesters and inhabitants who live nearby, Port of Melbourne is a site of layered contentions.

Involving theatre lighting, a smoke machine, catering, and a DJ—and with the camera perched on top of three stacked shipping containers—over 150 people assembled together over a one-hour period to make Port of Melbourne. For his Crowd Theory works, Terrill uses a sound cue to alert participants when each of the 10 large-format negatives are exposed to film, in order to give people choice as to how to represent themselves. In the information provided to participants, Terrill states:

*If you stand still you will be sharp [...].
If you move on the spot you will blur. If
you walk you will disappear and join the
ghosts in the image.*





Simon Terrill, Crowd Theory - Southbank, type C print, 180cm x 242cm, produced in association with Footscray Arts Centre and City of Melbourne, 2007

Crowd Theory: Southbank

Involving over 350 residents from two apartment blocks, Crowd Theory - Southbank captures the inhabitants of this densely populated inner-city Melbourne suburb, spilling out of their high-rise apartments and onto the street as if in formation. Above them, residents pose on their balconies, or simply lounge around with their blinds open.

Though participants were free to represent themselves as they pleased, a number of the elements in Southbank were dramatised in order to heighten the atmosphere. A removalist's truck is parked on the street with boxes billowing out; clothing is draped in a tree as if thrown from the apartment above. Halfway through the shoot, a man appeared suspended from the right-hand tower block by a rope. It was discovered later that this man was part of the lighting crew, and had formerly worked as a window cleaner for the tower.

Some of these moments Terrill recreated for the shoot, based on things he had witnessed during his time observing the site, and others occurred spontaneously throughout the duration.





Simon Terrill, Crowd Theory - Footscray Station, type C print, 242cm x 165cm, produced in association with Footscray Arts Centre, 2006

Crowd Theory: Footscray Station

Interested in sites undergoing urban development and change, Terrill's Crowd Theory - Footscray Station, depicts Footscray Railway Station before the level crossing was removed and its major renovations were completed in 2014. Captured using a large format 8x10" view camera over the course of a one-hour 'ritual', 10 frames were taken, with one finally chosen as the 'face' of the work.

In his Crowd Theory works, Terrill invites anyone with an association to each site to participate. For Footscray Station however, the crowd is made up of a combination between invited participants, and everyday commuters who were simply waiting to catch a train.





Simon Terrill, Crowd Theory - Braybrook, type C print, 120cm x 242cm, produced in association with Footscray Arts Centre, 2004



Crowd Theory: Braybrook

Braybrook is the second Crowd Theory work produced in the series, and is the only project made exclusively using natural light and without the aid of any theatrical devices. It depicts the culturally diverse inhabitants of Braybrook in the soft glow of a winter evening, congregating on a suburban oval in the industrial heartland of West Melbourne. Braybrook is a working-class and immigrant neighbourhood, long been considered a pariah suburb of Melbourne's industrial inner west.



Simon Terrill, Crowd Theory - Footscray, type C print, 180cm x 225cm, produced in association with Footscray Arts Centre, 2004

Crowd Theory: Footscray

The first in the series, the location is a reclaimed industrial site. Footscray is a gateway suburb in the inner west of Melbourne, first point of call for successive waves of immigration: Post war immigration was predominantly Greek, Italian, then former Yugoslavian migrants, followed by Vietnamese and most recently West African. Home to the Indigenous Woimurrung and Boonwurrung tribes of the Kulin nation before colonisation, now has people from 135 countries.

