

Within the folds of the house, the secret spaces, creased skin, convolutions of the borders and boundaries open up the limits of the house. In hiding places, dark cupboards and forgotten corners the material physical entity of the house becomes elastic, convoluted distinctions less certain and alteration possible.<sup>1</sup>

In her account of domesticity in New Zealand private architecture Sarah Treadwell noted that remnants of construction and inhabitation by successive occupants are often concealed within the household. Traces such as 'builder's designs scribbled on the inside of plaster board' are hidden, as are 'small placatory objects tucked inside the cavities of the wall, and old household items lifted up to sit in the dark on ceiling rafters' in order to present a self-organised container.<sup>2</sup> Chaos is enshrouded by the controlling framework within the home, yielding to various measures of quotidian order. In *Ooo oooo* Tjalling de Vries and Keir Leslie intervene directly into the structure of the North Projects gallery, puncturing through visible space to reveal the 'folds' contained within the building. It is an installation consisting of three separate 'Hangs', occupying the back, main and office spaces of the gallery.

In *Hang I*, a series of galvanised pipes extend down through circular holes in the ceiling to within a few centimetres of the floor. The holes are wide enough to allow the pipes a subtle swaying motion. However, the material purity of the hang is disrupted by the remains of a yellow sticker on one of the pipes, reading 'Christchurch Gas Centre. Open 24 Hours.' The sticker hints at the previous utilisation, subsequent obsolescence, and the commonplace nature of materials employed in this hang and the rest of the show.

*Hang II* addresses North Projects as a previously tenanted space; a century-old building that has been renovated and leased over the course of its existence to numerous and varied occupants. The previously functional service area of the main room has been bisected lengthwise by a single galvanised pipe, hung roughly at head height from two lengths of steel wire. Following an existing line along the floor, it creates a plane dividing the room into two parts, requiring negotiation by either edging around or ducking under the object.

*Hang III* involves another direct intervention into the building's structure. The ten-minute digital video is shot within the roof cavity, following a roaming torchlight illuminating the darkness. Water pipes, cobwebs, wooden rafters, electrical cabling and remnants of building materials all appear in the beam's focus, revealing a surfeit of stagnant space.

If an installation such as *Ooo oooo* requires a certain technological-instrumental mode of working, de Vries and Leslie evince their role of installers as artifice. They become the technicians, negotiating maintenance areas within the building's structure, and figuratively install parallel 'amenities' which tentatively imitate those already existing. The

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah Treadwell, 'From the Margins of Architecture: An Account of Domesticity (1989-92)' in Douglas Lloyd Jenkins (ed), *New Dreamland: Writing New Zealand Architecture* (Auckland: Godwit, 2005), p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 297.

materials mimic the functional, melding with, or transposing themselves within the white walls of the gallery and breaking down the dichotomy of that which belongs in rarefied space and that which does not.

As an installation that plays with and penetrates the very fabric of its containing structure, *Ooo oooo* finds a cognate in the sculptural theory of Heidegger as 'making room' for numerous correspondences with an environment, and which in a circular logic, these correspondences consequently facilitate.<sup>3</sup> This can be understood concurrently as the *arrangement* of points of reference within a designated area and a *granting* of the open, that is to say the work makes available the potential conditions for a phenomenological continuity with the space. This creates a double bind where a sculpture's correspondences with its environment cannot be an objective part of the work, while at the same time the work cannot objectively said to be separated from its environment.<sup>4</sup> The three 'Hangs' are conscious of the space, continuous with it, and allow themselves license to explore hidden interiors.

In drawing attention to the 'folds' of the gallery structure, *Ooo oooo* facilitates a contemplation of the North Projects gallery as an embodied entity. Each 'Hang' highlights the ability of buildings to act as locations in which space (environment) is disclosed. In other words, the space occupied by the building is constituted as a location by virtue of its status as North Projects. This courts a dialogue about what the location represents: a project space, social gathering node, residency space and event space. What *Ooo oooo* accomplishes through deft structural intervention is to situate the gallery as a location pursuing a historical trajectory, bringing to attention to the remnants of past occupancy and a current presence in the Christchurch arts ecology, while 'making room' for speculation on its future possibilities.

- James Hope

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<sup>3</sup> Juliane Rebentisch, 'Site Specificity' in *Aesthetics of Installation Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid