

RESEARCH STATEMENT: Alex Kershaw

TITLE: Geodetic Monuments

YEAR: 2002

Research Background

Field – Australian landscape photography and typological approaches to imaging structures of 20th Century industrialisation.

Context - *Geodetic Monuments* documents survey markings constructed by the NSW Department of Lands. They are identifiable markers on the landscape fixing exact longitude and latitude points. Often built at the highest point in a given terrain the markers read like a stamp, or logo, a symbol for the ordering, controlling and above all, the taking possession of land. These monuments of the state are a kind of zero-point for the deracination of the landscapes indigenous citizens – its occupation and subsequent re-habitation.

Research Question – How can these markers be re-presented as the embodiment of a more organic exchange, rendering them temporal manifestations of the mind, not permanent claims on the land?

Research Contribution

Innovation and new knowledge - Survey markers punctuate the continuity of time, potentially fixing it. The project however, presents survey as embodied, subject to weathering - fluctuations in terrain both environmental and cultural. Persistent documentation enabled me to individuate the markers, locating them within their specific psycho-geographies. Each marker is different as are the terrain with which it speaks. As extensions of our bodies and minds the images in this series are portraits more than landscapes. The markers are re-presented not as permanent objective fixtures but as changeable - restoring them to the processes in which they, along with their users are absorbed.

Research Significance

Curated by Judy Annear in the exhibition *Others*, at the Art Gallery of NSW in 2002. Exhibited at the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Melbourne 2003. Reviewed by Dr. Blair French in his essay 'A Surfeit of Style' for Broadsheet.