

Engaging Publics/Public Engagement – Amy Spiers’ Paper

Confounding and destabilising a town: Christoph Büchel’s *Southdale* at MONA

Coinciding with the 2014 Dark Mofo festival in Hobart, the *Southdale* exhibition opened with little announcement and much secrecy at the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) on June 16, 2014.¹ Following its appearance, visitors to the museum were progressively confounded and disoriented as MONA had mysteriously been made over to resemble a shopping mall. During the four month long exhibition,² *Southdale* continued to confuse and agitate, with multiple elements of the exhibition attracting controversy.

I am an artist engaged in research into socially-engaged art’s ability to destabilise and agitate.³ Informed by philosopher Jacques Rancière’s idea of dissensus – a concept that refers to “a division inserted in ‘common sense’: a dispute over what is given and about the frame within which we sense something is given”⁴ – I am interested in artworks that provoke unexpected questions, unsettle habits of thinking and generate vibrant public debate. For this reason, the *Southdale* exhibition enthralled and excited me as it had many of the disorienting affects that I seek in art that engages the public. However *Southdale* has also drawn some strong criticism from a number of people, unconvinced by the work’s unusual tactics.

In this essay, I want to reflect on the response to *Southdale* and examine what I think the work produced. In the first part of this paper, I will describe the exhibition and my encounter with the work. My aim in this section is to give a sense of the scale and scope of *Southdale* and the destabilising experience of viewing it. In the second part of this essay, I will discuss some of the controversy the work attracted and offer a reading of *Southdale* as an example of subversion through the means of overidentification. Drawing on Slavoj Žižek’s concept of overidentification and Rancière’s notion of dissensus, I will explore the strategy of mimicry in *Southdale* and the discursive public sphere the work generated.

Southdale Shopping Centre, coming soon!

On approaching the museum during the *Southdale* exhibition, the first indication that MONA had undertaken an unusual transformation was a lightbox sign prominently displaying the Southdale Shopping Centre logo at the museum entrance. In the museum’s forecourt, banners announced that “Southdale” was “Coming soon!” Once inside the gallery, ATMs and advertisements for Hugo Boss, Soda Stream and Estée Lauder adorned MONA’s entrance foyer. At the museum stairs, a lightbox showed a floor map of the gallery-cum-shopping centre and listed the stores and services available on each floor, with familiar brands like Max Brenner, Marks & Spencer and Chanel named alongside toilets, a Victor Gruen Court and a Wailing Wall. The museum’s café seemed to have been turned into an outlet of the Starbucks franchise.

MONA staff report that the alterations were persuasive enough that some museum visitors believed they had inadvertently entered a real shopping centre and asked for directions to the art

museum.⁵ Others turned up expectantly with shopping bags ready to purchase luxury goods and order their favourite Starbucks beverage, only to discover it was all a ruse.⁶

To add to the consternation, there was no mention about *Southdale* on MONA's website or portable interpretive O device, and the artist responsible was not named anywhere in the exhibition or the museum's associated marketing material. When questioned about the purpose or intention of *Southdale*, MONA's gallery invigilators could offer little information about the artwork as they claimed staff had been deliberately kept in the dark.

There were some mysterious precursors to the exhibition, however, with advertisements appearing in local papers that suggested a new shopping mall called "Southdale" was to be opened at MONA, with luxury brand names attached to the development.⁷ This had led locals to wonder if David Walsh, MONA's eccentric millionaire founder, had sold out to corporate developers.⁸

A puzzle

Jarrod Rawlins, one of MONA's principal curators of *Southdale*, has described the work as a puzzle.⁹ Indeed when I first encountered *Southdale* on the 20th of June 2014, a few days after its launch, I had no prior awareness of the work and found myself searching "Southdale" on my phone to get to the bottom of it. All that surfaced was a place-holding website for the new shopping mall.¹⁰

On the 21st of June, less than a week after the exhibition had opened, an arts journalist writing for *The Australian* newspaper disclosed some of the work's secrets, revealing that the creator behind *Southdale* was provocative Swiss artist Christoph Büchel.¹¹ The journalist, Matthew Westwood, also uncovered that the name *Southdale* was taken from the first modern shopping precinct in the US, the design of architect Victor Gruen, whose utopian vision for the shopping mall was that it would function as the ideal community hub for the suburbs. The overarching theme of the exhibition, Westwood surmised after some discussion with David Walsh and MONA's curators, was utopianism and the single-mindedness that often accompanies the pursuit of an ideal.¹²

Due to the lack of interpretive material offered by MONA, *Southdale* was a vast, multi-sited installation that encouraged sleuthing and speculation. For example, on my visit I encountered a kit home in MONA's forecourt. With no didactic panel announcing the building's purpose, I used my phone to look up a website featured in the promotional video playing inside the house. The URL directed me to an Israeli company that made prefabricated homes.¹³ Adjacent was a banner that promoted Poynduk Holiday Villas, a development at Port Davey in Tasmania's remote South West. Further googling revealed that another kit home had been controversially erected in Bathurst Harbour, near Port Davey in Tasmania's Southwest National Park, as part of a secret project at MONA.¹⁴

While *Southdale's* sheer scale and detail defied conclusive interpretations, it produced many unexpected connections and readings. Surprising linkages between Israel and Tasmania, for instance, continued throughout the exhibition. Inside the museum, MONA's normally slick and minimal reception and ticketing area seemed overcome with tacky tourist information and promotions. Looking closely it became evident there were posters and pamphlets promoting travel destinations in Tasmania and Israel. In the gift shop, incongruous items such as a wailing wall puzzle and pro-Palestinian postcards were displayed alongside cheap souvenir didgeridoos and golliwog dolls.

To my mind, some awareness of current politics, both local and global, could assist viewers to surmise a subtle critical commentary encompassing *Southdale*. The work, playing on enjoyable and even humorous slippages between real and fake elements, confronted viewers with many of the contradictions and conflicts of the recent past in unusual assemblages.

In the museum foyer, for example, I recognised the controversial advertisement for SodaStream featuring Scarlett Johansson. Earlier in the year Johansson stepped down from her role as Ambassador for the humanitarian organisation Oxfam over her promotion of SodaStream, which until recently, operated out of an Israeli settlement in the West Bank.¹⁵ Nearby a poster promoted the Mount Wellington Cable Car, a proposed development that those with local knowledge would recognise as a highly charged issue in Hobart.¹⁶

While the SodaStream advertisement was taken from reality, the cable car poster appeared to be a satirical fabrication. The Mount Wellington Cable Car logo and the words "environmental. economic. socially inclusive. experience." were superimposed over John Glover's painting, *Mount Wellington and Hobart Town from Kangaroo Point*. Dating from 1834, the painting depicts a group of Aboriginal people overlooking Mount Wellington and the early colony of Hobart. The proximity of seemingly unrelated promotions encouraged me to consider Israel's occupation of Palestine in relation to Tasmania's violent colonial past and especially what is known as the "Black War" between British settlers and Tasmanian Aboriginals.¹⁷

In other places the exhibition drew attention to the Australian Government's current asylum seeker policy. In the entrance foyer a poster, apparently for the Australian Liberal Party, depicted three white sheep kicking a brown sheep off an Australian flag above the words "Improving Security". By the Starbucks café, a playpen encouraged children visiting the museum to sit and draw, with previous creations displayed on a nearby wall. On closer inspection the pictures depicted a scribbled G4S Security company logo, a scrawled "No Way" and sad children behind bars. This clearly referenced the drawings created by asylum seeker children detained in Australia's offshore detention centres.¹⁸

The basement of MONA was made over into a fully functioning community centre where I encountered groups of people weaving rope baskets. A whiteboard announced upcoming events

that included a drumming workshop and a “Community Health Knitting Group”. On pinboards and wall mounted holders, numerous flyers promoted local community services and campaigns. One poster urged people to “Just be fair: celebrate diversity in our community” while another promoted a Tasmanian mountain adventure program for former refugees. Such community minded messages and services mentally jarred after viewing the asylum seeker children drawings upstairs. I was prompted to consider the care afforded to people in our community, which is not extended to those outside of it. Accordingly, a children’s play area with a lockable gate in the community centre took on sinister connotations.

Büchel is known for his immersive, total installations that have transformed whole galleries. However, *Southdale*’s transformation of MONA was less absolute and did not come announced, which meant you encountered it repeatedly and unexpectedly at the gallery over time. There was also deliberate confusion over where *Southdale* began and ended, as the exhibition was not only dispersed throughout the museum but also insinuated itself across multiple sites in and around Hobart, such as the *Southdale* advertisements in Hobart’s local newspaper and the kit home at Bathurst Harbour.¹⁹ This indeterminacy had an uncanny effect, encouraging me to read everything I encountered curiously, closely and critically.

It is unfortunate that much of the criticism of *Southdale* has fixated on the controversial aspects in isolation from the rest of the exhibition.²⁰ It was the slippages and confusions across the multiple components of *Southdale* that produced satisfying subversions and new critical relationships between seemingly disparate elements. Indeed, much more could be said about the viewing experience of *Southdale* however it is beyond the scope of this paper so I will continue by focusing on the criticism that *Southdale* has attracted, particularly due to a controversial DNA testing stand in the installation.

Causing offence

Büchel’s installation has caused much consternation and even offence. Hobart arts writer Sean Kelly wrote in an Artlink review of *Southdale* that: “Rarely in Tasmania has any art raised the level of public debate which arose around Büchel’s recent installation at MONA”.²¹ While there was much to cause offence in the exhibition – including framed anti-Semitic cartoons hanging in the MONA café and burnt Bibles and Korans in the museum’s fireplace – the element of the exhibition that attracted the most criticism was a stand in the museum foyer that displayed the words “Are you of Aboriginal descent?” offering free DNA testing for aboriginality, sponsored by Roche and deCODE Genetics.

After the stand came to their attention, fierce objections were raised by members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who felt “they had been smacked in the face” and were being “taking the mickey out of”.²² The stand was described as hurtful because it objectified Aboriginal people, and shocking because the community had not been consulted prior to its creation.²³

The furore led to David Walsh making an out of character public apology on MONA's blog, and the removal of the stand from the exhibition.²⁴ It was a highly risky move for MONA, who would be aware that in 2007 Büchel took successful legal action against Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, when they exhibited one of his installations in a form that the artist considered incomplete.²⁵

Following on from the DNA stand's removal, a range of criticisms have been directed at *Southdale*. From talking to MONA staff and participating in discussions on social media, I surmised that the condemnation has revolved around some central objections:

- Büchel, it is claimed, causes offence for the sake of it, as cheap controversy draws attention to his work and adds to his international reputation as an "edgy" artist.
- As an international artist, unconnected to the context and sensitivities of Hobart, Büchel has been arrogant for thinking he can dabble in local politics that he has little understanding of.
- Büchel is unethical. He did not consult with Aboriginal people prior to making the DNA stand and unthinkingly revisited trauma on vulnerable people.
- If *Southdale* is a political critique of present society it is too ambiguous and can only be understood by an elite art audience who "get the joke".²⁶
- Büchel refuses to do what should be expected of him as a responsible artist and provide a framework or context for understanding *Southdale*. By wishing to stay anonymous and providing no statement of his intentions, Büchel has shirked accountability for his work.²⁷

As someone who enjoyed *Southdale* and the critical content of the exhibition, I was disagreed with many of these objections. What was largely absent from the public debates fixated on prescribed ideas of an artist's responsibilities and accountabilities was any close attention to the work's unique concept, which involved an impressive level of research into local politics and challenged the usual ways viewers encounter artworks. A simplistic application of ethical criteria all too easily dismisses the subtlety and sophistication of *Southdale*'s subversions and forecloses consideration of what the work actually produced.

In response to the censure directed at *Southdale*, I argue that analysing the exhibition as an example of overidentification might serve to open up a more productive, sympathetic reading of the work. In what follows I will describe how Büchel is using a strategy of overidentification, comparing *Southdale* to other artworks who have employed this tactic, and why the omission of the artist's identity and critical intentions is part of an attempt to generate a dissensual public sphere.

Overidentification

The concept of overidentification has been theorized by the philosopher Slavoj Žižek, and can be defined as a strategy that takes the dominant ideology “more seriously than it takes itself”.²⁸ Žižek explains: “sometimes, at least—*overidentifying* with the explicit power discourse—*ignoring* this inherent obscene underside and simply taking the power discourse at its (public) word, acting as if it really means what it explicitly says (and promises)—can be the most effective way of disturbing its smooth functioning”.²⁹

Overidentification is a form of subtle or indirect criticism – what at first appearance seem to be affirmations or identifications with repressive regimes and systems of inequality, are actually aimed at undermining them. Büchel’s DNA stand can be seen as an example of such subversive affirmation. The stand amplifies a “real world” process that currently exists to an intolerable extreme, in order for us to consider and re-view the conditions that make it possible.

I have found it instructive to compare the furore surrounding Büchel’s DNA stand, with the dissensus generated by German artist Christoph Schlingensiefel’s work *Please Love Austria. Please Love Austria* was a work staged in the centre of Vienna in 2000. Twelve asylum seekers were placed in a shipping container where for seven days they were under constant video surveillance. The footage was streamed to a live audience over the internet. Over the course of the work, the audience could telephone in, and *Big Brother*-style, vote off inmates for deportation. Schlingensiefel advertised the event as an action by the far-right nationalist Freedom Party of Austria, led by Jörg Haider, who had been successful in recent elections using campaigns that employed overtly xenophobic slogans.

Please Love Austria has been celebrated as a successful employment of overidentification.³⁰ Schlingensiefel himself claimed he wanted to take seriously Haider’s “solutions” to the “foreigner problem”.³¹ Schlingensiefel’s work, like Büchel’s, attracted much consternation because it was unclear who the target of the criticism was. Art historian Claire Bishop, discussing *Please Love Austria* in her book *Artificial Hells*, writes:

Although in retrospect [...] it is evident that the work is a critique of xenophobia and its institutions, in Vienna the event [...] was ambiguous enough to receive approval and condemnation from all sides of the political spectrum.

[...]

Schlingensiefel’s project draws attention to the contradictions of political discourse in Austria at that moment. The shocking fact is that Schlingensiefel’s container caused more public agitation and distress than the presence of a real deportation centre a few miles outside Vienna. The disturbing lesson of *Please Love Austria* is that an artistic representation of detention has more power to attract dissensus than an actual institution of detention.³²

I would argue that Büchel's DNA stand produced similar contradictions. Public debate condemned Büchel's stand as hurtful but did not go on to criticise the actual circumstances that made DNA testing necessary.

Generating dissensus

Sean Kelly, writing in *Artlink*, states that one of the successes of Büchel's stand is that it hit a nerve. It dared to speak of "the elephant in the room in Tasmanian Aboriginal politics – the ongoing dispute about who actually qualifies as Aboriginal and who determines that".³³ Kelly is referring to a protracted dispute amongst the Tasmanian Aboriginal community over what constitutes Aboriginality. In recent decades, the number of people identifying as Indigenous in Tasmania has soared, leading to conflicts over how Aboriginal descent might be verified.³⁴ Former president of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, Michael Mansell, has been vocally critical of people who turn to DNA testing to claim distant and tenuous connections to Aboriginal heritage.³⁵ It is doubtful that DNA testing is a reliable method for determining Aboriginality. Conversely, however, it is difficult to determine connections based on oral history and many Aboriginal descendants practically cannot produce direct documentary evidence of their heritage. More generally it also remains deeply problematic that "proof" should be required to identify as an Indigenous person.³⁶

I believe that the very contested and intractable nature of this situation is one issue that Büchel's DNA stand speaks to. Aboriginal Art Historian, Greg Lehman, is of a similar view. In an informative article for Hobart's *Mercury* newspaper, Lehman explains that the design for Büchel's DNA stand was modelled on a Jewish genealogical website.³⁷ Büchel has substituted "Aboriginal" for "Jewish", Lehman writes, "to expose common processes at work across the world".³⁸ The intended target of criticism, Lehman asserts, was "not the aboriginal community" but these "common processes" that require DNA verification of descent in order to prove a long-standing connection with land. Lehman also notes the stand names the companies Roche and deCODE Genetics, linking the work to debates about "who generates profits from asserting ownership of, and merchandising genetic information".³⁹ Lehman suggests that Büchel's stand "is a reminder of the role the notion of race continues to play" in both twenty-first century Australia and Israel.⁴⁰

Invisible critique

In the essay "Subversive Affirmation: On Mimesis as a Strategy of Resistance", theorists Inke Arns and Sylvia Sasse describe the strategy of overidentification as a form of invisible critique that employs "methods of: imitation, simulation, mimicry and camouflage".⁴¹ Arns and Sasse explain how strategies of overidentification were first developed from the 1960s in socialist Eastern Europe by way of necessity in response to openly repressive totalitarian systems. It is in this context that we can understand why overidentification was designed to be an ambiguous and disarmingly invisible style of subversion.

An example of this radically ambiguous form of overidentification can be found in the work of Laibach, an avant-garde music group from Slovenia and former Yugoslavia, who mimic the visual styles of totalitarian regimes. Laibach have been reproached for espousing both far left and far right political positions, but notoriously refuse to issue any statement declaring where they really stand. This uncertainty regarding their position is what Žižek believes to be the strength of Laibach's use of overidentification. He writes:

The ultimate expedient of Laibach is their deft manipulation of transferrance: their public (especially intellectuals) is obsessed with the "desire of the Other" – what is Laibach's actual position, are they truly totalitarians or not? – i.e., they address Laibach with a question and expect from them an answer, failing to notice that Laibach itself does not function as an answer, but as a question. By means of the elusive character of their desire, of the undecidability as to "where they actually stand", Laibach compels us to take up our position and decide upon our desire.⁴²

In light of this, we might be able to begin to understand Büchel's attempt to detach his identity from the *Southdale* exhibition. Büchel did not want his name or artistic intention associated with the exhibition in an attempt to sustain as long as possible a level of radical undecidability and ambiguity at the core of *Southdale*. Without the reassuring signposts that this is "art", and indeed "critical art", the viewer is destabilised and left to decide the purpose of *Southdale* for themselves. This ambiguity also generates the possibility for multiple interpretations and dissensus.

One outcome of this tactic was that David Walsh had to declare his position in relation to the artwork. In the vacuum left by the absent artist, Walsh had to step in and make an apology. The apology was described by reviewer Sean Kelly as an unusual position for a man who has heretofore seemed oblivious to public opinion.⁴³ A journalist described Walsh's decision to remove the DNA stand as "surprising self-censorship".⁴⁴ For anyone who is familiar with MONA's brand, and its posturing as an institution that seeks to shock and challenge, Walsh's apology drew an unusually ethical line. Büchel's strategy succeeded in showing that even MONA has its limits.

Triggering meaning

Arns and Sasse have suggested that while overidentification is "possibly the most effective contemporary method of subversion" it is "also the most risky and potentially dangerous tactic as it can easily be misunderstood".⁴⁵ Theorist Camilla Reestorff, a Danish academic whose research is focused on the "unruly activist", has also asserted that the stakes are high for artists employing strategies of overidentification.⁴⁶ Reestorff observes that "the strategy reproduces inequality, and

if this reproduction is to be justified, it must be embedded in dissensus and be mediated".⁴⁷ She asserts that "the success of the project depends on its circulation and mediated afterlife".⁴⁸

Büchel has made a work that knowingly accounts for the reception of *Southdale* in the mediated public sphere – a mediated work being in Reestorff's words, one whose "form is adapted to accommodating media logics such as news criteria and circulation".⁴⁹ Zoning in on topical issues and deliberately confounding and provoking people, his work has stimulated vibrant discourse and inspired countless news articles, letters to the editor, radio debates, commentaries on forums, blog posts and Facebook discussions.

Büchel has stated that artworks are "machines that trigger meaning", asserting that the public's responses make the artwork.⁵⁰ *Southdale* deliberately unsettles our relationship to uneasy realities that we would prefer to overlook, reframing and reinvigorating intractable questions and contradictions (i.e. Why must people prove Aboriginality? Why is care afforded to vulnerable people in our community, but not the ones offshore? Why does the occupation of Palestine go uncensored and the "Black War" unacknowledged?) through the strategy of overidentification so it is impossible for us not to confront them. In what could be read as a radically democratic gesture, we are also assigned the responsibility to make sense of the material in *Southdale* and determine our own position. It is through the subsequent debates in the mediated public sphere that *Southdale* thus produces its meaning.

Claire Bishop has conceptualised art's political potential as deriving from its ability to agitate and disrupt, to generate "the destabilising action that produces dissensus about what is sayable and thinkable in the world".⁵¹ To my mind, Büchel's *Southdale* is an exemplary instance of an artwork that intentionally generates disputes over the given: a dissensus over what is thinkable and sayable. It suggests new ways of conceptualising the capacities of socially-engaged art: rather than the artist determining what the social problems are and how they should be addressed *in advance*, the meaning-making and implications are queried collectively through vibrant public debate.

In what I believe to be the work's most exciting gesture, it has been left up to us to debate the ultimate objectives and implications of *Southdale*. This prompts the question: why has debate largely fixated on condemning the artist's methods and motives rather than addressing the uneasy contradictions that *Southdale* produces? Perhaps because it is the most resolvable part of the *Southdale* puzzle to address: to condemn an artist's approach rather than consider the shortcomings of our society that Büchel's work urges us to re-examine.

Amy Spiers, 2014.

¹ For more information about the opening night see Jennifer Crawley, "Southdale opens for business at MONA", *The Mercury*, June 17 2014, <http://www.themercury.com.au/entertainment/southdale-opens-for-business-at-mona/story-fnj3tycr-1226958001012>.

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- ² The exact end date of the exhibition is unclear as *Southdale* was never officially listed on the MONA museum website. Some MONA staff have indicated the exhibition finished sometime in October 2014. See Elizabeth Pearce, "Making Fun: Mona and Buchel", *Mona Blog* (blog), 9 September 2014, <http://monablog.net/2014/09/09/making-fun-mona-and-buchel/>. It appears the close of the exhibition has been kept deliberately vague and indeterminate, as writers have reported it as "continuing indefinitely", as well as finishing in November, and also December 2014. See Crawley, "Southdale opens for business at MONA". Also Lucy Rees, "The Gruen Transfer at MONA", *ARTAND* Australia, accessed 5 November 2014, <http://www.artandaustralia.com/news/headlines/the-gruen-transfer-at-mona->. And Sean Kelly, "Christoph Büchel: Southdale/C-MONA", *Artlink* Vol 34 No 3 (2014), <https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4187/christoph-bC3BCchel-southdale-c-mona/>.
- ³ See Amy Spiers, "Too comfortable? Some misgivings about the social turn in contemporary art", *Journal of Arts & Communities* 5: 2+3 (2013), 131–145.
- ⁴ Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, Continuum, 2010, 69.
- ⁵ As part of my research for this article I discussed the exhibition with a number of MONA's invigilating staff who have requested not to be named. On 25 August 2014, I also interviewed one of MONA's principal curators of *Southdale*, Jarrod Rawlins.
- ⁶ To read an account by a reviewer who was briefly fooled by the *Southdale* exhibit see Dee Jefferson and Jenny Valentish, "Dark Mofo 2014: review", *TimeOut Melbourne*, last updated 27 June 2014, <http://www.au.timeout.com/melbourne/travel/features/3731/dark-mofo-2014-review>.
- ⁷ For more information about the newspaper advertisements see Jennifer Crawley, "MONA shopping centre mystery has Hobart buzzing", *The Mercury*, June 17 2014, <http://www.themercury.com.au/news/tasmania/mona-shopping-centre-mystery-has-hobart-buzzing/story-fnj4f7k1-1226957530777>.
- ⁸ In his review of *Southdale* Matthew Westwood describes the museum as "so convincing that several visitors [...] automatically assumed that Walsh — who has run the museum at a loss and had a well-publicised tax scrape — had pulled in some big-money sponsors". Matthew Westwood, "David Walsh at MONA: the god of mall things". *The Australian*, June 21 2014, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/review/david-walsh-at-mona-the-god-of-mall-things/story-fn9n8gph-1226961194653>. Online commentary also demonstrates how baffling the advertisements were to Hobart locals. To view examples see "Southdale Shopping Centre????". *SkyscraperCity* (online discussion forum), 17 June 2014, <http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=1733301>. See also "Is it true? Is MONA bringing an upscale shopping centre to Hobart?", *themercury.com.au* (facebook page), 17 June 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/themercury.com.au/posts/10152548103223408>.
- ⁹ Jarrod Rawlins, in conversation with the author, 25 August 2014.
- ¹⁰ *Southdale Shopping Centre* (website), accessed 20 June 2014, <http://southdalecentre.com/>.
- ¹¹ Westwood, "David Walsh at MONA: the god of mall things".
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ *Sandwich Panel and Prefab Buildings* (website), accessed 20 June 2014, <http://www.gagot.info/>.
- ¹⁴ See Duncan Abey, "MONA-commissioned art installation at Bathurst Harbour divides state's arts and conservation communities", *The Mercury*, June 15 2014, <http://www.themercury.com.au/news/tasmania/monacommissioned-art-installation-at-bathurst-harbour-divides-states-arts-and-conservation-communities/story-fnj4f7k1-1226954610703>.
- ¹⁵ See Hayden Cooper, "Scarlett Johansson quits Oxfam charity role amid criticism of SodaStream's West Bank factory", *ABC News Australia*, last updated 4 February 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-03/scarlett-johansson-quits-oxfam-amid-sodastream-israel-criticism/5235030>. See also Ian Black, "SodaStream to move factory out of West Bank Israeli settlement", *The Guardian*, 30 October 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/oct/29/sodastream-move-factory-west-bank-israel-slash-forecast>.
- ¹⁶ See Jessica Howard, "Mt Wellington cable car stuck at base as Hobart council says no to in-principle support", *The Mercury*, April 29 2014, <http://www.themercury.com.au/news/tasmania/mt-wellington-cable-car-stuck-at-base-as-hobart-council-says-no-to-inprinciple-support/story-fnj4f7k1-1226898729425>.
- ¹⁷ A recent article by Jeff Sparrow actually makes compelling connections between the Israeli occupation of Palestine and Tasmania's Black War, saying both share a settler colonialism that is dependent on denying the legitimacy of the native population. See Jeff Sparrow, "When Settler's Dream", *Jacobin Online* (website), 9 August 2014, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/09/when-settlers-dream/>.
- ¹⁸ See Lexi Metherell, "Asylum seeker children describe Christmas Island detention centre as 'hell', Human Rights Commission says", *ABC News Australia* (website), last updated 24 March 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-03-24/human-rights-commissioner-says-christmas-island-centre-shocking/5341524>.
- ¹⁹ It is likely numerous people encountered aspects of *Southdale* in and around Hobart without realising it. I recall that on my arrival to Hobart Airport for Dark Mofo, I noticed a cast iron seal promoting seal sightings inexplicably on the airport luggage conveyer that on reflection was quite probably connected to the tourist promotions in MONA's foyer. Another Dark Mofo attendee noticed the seal too, see Nick Finch, "Graveyard Train's guide to creepy Hobart", *Faster Louder*, 4 June 2014,

<http://www.fasterlouder.com.au/news/39583/Graveyard-Trains-guide-to-creepy-Hobart>. During our interview, Rawlins also mentioned that the Australian Government's "No Way You Will Not Make Australia Home" campaign videos played on monitors on MONA's passenger ferry. Rawlins also described many parts of *Southdale* as "invisible".

²⁰ For instance people have criticised a stand offering free DNA testing for Aboriginality included in *Southdale* with little reference to the rest of the exhibition. See "MONA removes Aboriginal DNA test exhibit from art installation", *ABC News Australia*, last updated 25 June 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-25/mona-removes-aboriginal-dna-test-exhibit/5548838>.

²¹ Kelly, "Christoph Büchel: Southdale/C-MONA".

²² Greg Lehman, "Sunday Soapbox: Artwork sparks heartache", *The Mercury*, 20 July 2014, <http://www.themercury.com.au/news/opinion/sunday-soapbox-artwork-sparks-heartache/story-fnj4f64i-1226994725334>.

²³ Pearce, "Making Fun: Mona and Buchel".

²⁴ David Walsh, "A letter of apology to Tasmanian Aboriginal people (and anyone else we have offended)", *Mona Blog* (blog), 24 June 2014, <http://monablog.net/2014/06/24/a-letter-of-apology-to-tasmanian-aboriginal-people/>.

²⁵ Randy Kennedy, "Artists Rights Act Applies in Dispute, Court Rules", *The New York Times*, 28 January 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/29/arts/design/29artist.html>.

²⁶ See Spinks, Bert, "MONA offers a sly wink, but do locals get the joke?", *Daily Review: Crikey*, September 23 2014, <http://dailyreview.crikey.com.au/mona-offers-a-sly-wink-but-do-locals-get-the-joke/12515>.

²⁷ Some of these concerns about *Southdale* were discussed on local radio by a panel of Hobart-based artists and researchers including Greg Lehmann, Jude Abell and Sean Kelly. "Art and Offence Part One", Breakfast with Ryk Goddard, *936 ABC Hobart*. Posted July 1 2014, <https://soundcloud.com/936-abc-hobart/art-and-offence-part-one>.

²⁸ In reference to the avante-garde music group Laibach, Žižek has described the strategy of overidentification in the documentary film, *Predictions of Fire*: "The only way to be really subversive is not to develop critical potentials and ironic distance but precisely to take the system more seriously than it takes itself." Slavoj Žižek in *Predictions of Fire*, documentary film, directed by Michael Bensen, Kinetikon Pictures, 1996.

²⁹ Slavoj Žižek in Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, London: Verso, 2000, 220.

³⁰ See BAVO, "Always Choose the Worst Option - Artistic Resistance and the Strategy of Over-Identification", in *Cultural Activism Today. The Art of Over-Identification*, ed. BAVO, Gideon Boie and Matthias Pauwels, Rotterdam: Episode Publishers, 2007, 32 – 35. See also Inke Arns and Sylvia Sasse, "Subversive Affirmation: On Mimesis as a Strategy of Resistance", in *East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*, ed. IRWIN, London: Afterall, 2006, 452-3.

³¹ Arns and Sasse, "Subversive Affirmation", 453.

³² Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, London: Verso, 2012, 282-3.

³³ Kelly, "Christoph Büchel: Southdale/C-MONA".

³⁴ For a brief account of these disputes see Richard Flanagan, "The Lost Tribe", *The Guardian*, 14 October 2002, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/oct/14/australia.features11>. Also see Rebe Taylor, "The national confessional", *Meanjin*, Vol. 71 No. 3, Spring (2012): 22-36, <http://meanjin.com.au/articles/post/the-national-confessional/>.

³⁵ In a radio interview Michael Mansell stated "It's a question of how much sympathy you can give for these 30 people who are trying to use some laboratory test to show they've got some distant connection with Aborigines and then on the basis of that they would then seek to impose themselves on Aboriginal people". Michael Mansell in "Tasmanian DNA tests halted", transcript of *The World Today ABC Radio National*, 3 September 2002, www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/stories/s666117.htm.

³⁶ For more information about the issues surrounding proving Indigenous heritage see Weisbrot, David, "Explainer: Can a DNA test reveal if you're an Indigenous Australian?", *The Conversation*, 18 September 2014, <http://theconversation.com/explainer-can-a-dna-test-reveal-if-youre-an-indigenous-australian-31767>.

³⁷ Lehman, "Sunday Soapbox: Artwork sparks heartache".

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Arns and Sasse, "Subversive Affirmation", 445.

⁴² Slavoj Žižek, "Why are Laibach and NSK not Fascists?", in *M'ARS* Vol. 3/4, Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, (1993).

⁴³ Kelly, "Christoph Büchel: Southdale/C-MONA".

⁴⁴ Matthew Denholm, "Art guru David Walsh 'doesn't get' Aboriginal culture", *The Australian*, June 26 2014, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/visual-arts/art-guru-david-walsh-doesnt-get-aboriginal-culture/story-fn9d3avm-1226966909671>.

⁴⁵ Arns and Sasse, "Subversive Affirmation", 455.

⁴⁶ See Reestorff, Camilla Møhring, "Buying blood diamonds and altering global capitalism. Mads Brügger as unruly artist in *The Ambassador*", *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture* Vol. 5 (2013), <http://www.aestheticsandculture.net/index.php/jac/article/download/22667/31129>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Büchel quoted in Lehman, "Sunday Soapbox: Artwork sparks heartache".

⁵¹ Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 36.