ART AS RESEARCH: UNTANGLING THE ECOLOGICAL CITIZEN

by

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A thesis submitted to the School of Environmental Studies
In conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Masters of Environmental Studies

Queen’s University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada
(September, 2010)

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Abstract

In this thesis, Lisa Figge analyzes the political space of ecological citizenship by theorizing her art practice. Beginning with an Arendtian lens, Figge creates projects in the vein of New Genre Public Art, to trace the qualitatively-distinct activities of the public sphere, in which ecological citizens appear. The art practices of Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Colette Urban, Pat Aylesworth, Helen and Newton Harrison help move this critique along. Then, taking Judith Butler’s thinking on the bond between speech and action, or speech acts, Figge situates her art practice and thesis writing as an account of herself as an ecological citizen. Figge is interested in finding ways to multiply opportunities, for her and others, to perform concerned engagement with the world. In order to begin this process Figge acts out and analyses her three art interventions: *Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour, Ecological Citizen in Training*, and *86 Hands on Wolfe Island*. In giving an account of herself, she shows how our aptitude for sorting things should not be used to override our capacity to make a meaningful life. The art exhibition *Dust to Dust*, 2010 is the twin of this accounting, which was held at Queen’s University’s Union Gallery.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisors Ted Rettig and Mick Smith who supported my project to make art in Environmental Studies from my first contact with them. Ted who smoothed the way, ensuring I had everything I needed to make work in Ontario Hall, with his practical calm oversight of my sometimes overzealous ambitions, and Mick, for making me think harder and go more deeply into theories which, I had no idea were flowing just beyond my grasp. Thank you Katherine Romba, my third committee member, for teaching me about methodologies and pointing out the paradox of making something new while analyzing the approach. I am grateful to Graduate Co-coordinator Heather Jamieson for her warm welcome of me into the program, and the guidance and friendship of Karen Topping, Karen MacIntyre and Dawn Free whose work in the administration office often resembles citizenship. It is a pleasure knowing my fellow MES students whose friendship makes the journey worth it, especially Zoey, Atanu, Kris, and Trish. I am very grateful for Terry O’Reilly’s help making the 86 hands which my multiple sclerosis threatened to derail, but even more I am delighted by his buoyant engagement with my ideas and his love of art and the possibilities it engenders. I am also in the debt of my friend and fellow student-artist Ann Barlow who videotaped my performance at the mall and who I still owe dinner. Thank you also to Barb Schlafer, Lisa Webb, and Gamila Abdalla, of The Ban Righ Mature Woman’s Centre, whose thoughtful, guiding, friendships I value. Thank you, Jocelyn Purdie of the Union Gallery, for supporting my work over the years. Donna-lee Iffla your help with the food at my gallery reception was just right. I also want to say how proud I am of Zoey Walden for
her willingness to step far outside the science frame in her collaboration with me on the project *dust in dust out*, exhibited in May 2010 at Verb Gallery in Kingston. Finally, a big hug and kiss to my kids, Derek and Miranda, for never letting me get away with anything and for their help moving and shifting the artwork from studio, to gallery and home, and to my partner Mark whose steady supportive presence keeps my feet near the ground.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Acts of citizenship are those acts through which citizens, strangers, outsiders, and aliens emerge not as beings already defined but as beings acting and reacting with others” (Isin and Nielsen 39).

What and where is ecological citizenship? Is it an event, a real life activity, an art? The challenge of this thesis is not only to grapple with these questions of ecological citizenship but to act it out. Although it is tough to know where to begin as I have an ambivalent relationship with the designation ecological citizen and its abstract characterization, which seems to resist becoming part of my real life. It is not like ecological citizenship is a light-weight latex-injected suit one can wear, snuggly sheathing the body, simultaneously showing and covering the actor that lies beneath. Though perhaps it is an aura one projects, that radiates outward, accumulating strength, and presence with time, like the rings of a tree. Quite possibly it is intermittent, requiring a circumstance for its particular qualities to erupt or blossom forth and maybe there are some tools that can help enliven its emergence into the public sphere. But certainly there is literature which takes on the topic where there is debate about what an ecological citizen might be (Dobson and Bell 4).

I untangle and re-knit ecological citizenship in order to widen out the space dedicated to talk about how, when, why and where people care about others, including
the earth, and do selfless things. Throughout the text, I will use the term ‘other’ as Judith Butler suggests. She uses ‘other’ to refer to the humans but when she capitalizes it she is using is as Emmanuel Levinas, to include an infinite ethical relation (Butler x). The infinite ethical relation is an asymmetric relationship between self and “other in which the other is always greater than me” (Smith, Michael 13). This relationship is quite different than will-power over, or an attitude of authority, towards the other (Smith, Michael 13). It is a relationship to a specific Other and not a generalized other (Smith, Michael 28). Both Arendt and Levinas might say that ‘other’ and ‘the Other’ (Levinas 9, 69; Smith 2005, 13) are not always already formed but in the process of forming and re-forming.

Writers Hannah Arendt, Michael de Certeau, Bruno Latour and Judith Butler help me to understand what my work is about. I find Arendt’s diagnosis of political action, in the third part of her treatise on the human condition, meaningful ground on which to locate the three art projects, that I acted out for this thesis. Latour and de Certeau provide guidance on how to understand systemic frameworks, such as capitalism and the nation-state, as strategic entities which dampen down the space for individual citizenship as a practice. In addition, Butler’s work gives a thoughtful reordering of our relationships to others and our language, which guides our way to opening and re-opening political spaces. In addition, contemporary artists Collette Urban, Meriel Laderman Ukeles, Pat Aylesworth, Suzanne Lacy and Helen and Newton Harrison’s art practices suggest ways to become out of step with the demands of the Dominant Social Paradigms “which
contribute to furtherance of environmental problems” (Dobson and Bell 153-4). Finally, Andrew Dobson and Robyn Eckersley open an important window onto the characteristics of ecological citizenship in literature and how it might play out in the real world. Each of these people offers something, which I re-constitute as part of my methodology for exploring ecological citizenship. In this introduction I will begin with some of the literature on ecological citizenship and work my way towards Arendt’s theory on *action* which, I argue, is the sensitive heart of political power for becoming an ecological citizen.

Carime Melo-Escrihuela’s literature review suggests that ecological citizenship, a term that originates in the 1990’s, often breaks down into demands or prescriptions for how individuals should enact rights and responsibilities, as obligation towards environmental and social justice (Young 114; Melo-Escrihuela 113-134). Rights for ecological citizenship are theorized in quite specific ways; for example it is often characterized in its relation to state authority where expanding participatory rights give ‘ordinary’ citizens a say in deciding environmental policy through access to information, participation, and justice (Young 116-7; Melo-Escrihuela 116-7). Responsibility is also generally conceived as an individual activity. Responsibilities of ecological citizens are associated with duty or individual responsibility for supporting ecological and social justice through lifestyle choices and self-discipline (Young 121). Theorist Andrew Dobson’s ideas of ecological citizenship are tied to individual rights and responsibilities, although it is not a membership-based citizenship derived in relation to state authority.
For him, characterizing it in writing is a useful tool for teaching something about the environmental present and our role as people in it (Dobson, Citizenship 210). He argues that ecological citizenship is a practice rooted in a political obligation that expands in relation to one’s ecological footprint (Dobson, Ecological 447-8). Dobson places that responsibility of acting out ecological citizenship with people who consume more than their share of the earth (Dobson, Citizenship 120). “[T]he obligations of ecological citizenship are owed asymmetrically. Only those who occupy ecological space in such a way as to compromise or foreclose the ability of others in present and future generations to pursue options important to them owe obligations of ecological citizenship” (Dobson, Citizenship 120). What is not so well explored are the practical implications of a personal set of rights and responsibilities, which eschew examining how individuals or “agents are responsible for injustices by virtue of their structural connection” within systems of power (Young 40). For example, Dobson’s ecological citizenship takes consumption as a ground for acting out ecological citizenship, but does not critique the seeming impossibility of distancing oneself from the systemic pervasiveness of consumerism.

Interestingly, conflating consumption with citizenship is not new. By the “1930’s the consumer as a category of person had, as Elizabeth Cohen (2003) points out, replaced the ‘citizen’” (Robbins 24). However, Cohen is thinking about citizenship in relation to the state. This state to citizenship relationship has the effect of limiting the potential of citizenship because democratic state ideology tends to represent corporate
interest relating to economic growth over individual interests (Dobson and Bell 156-7). As the activities of citizenship are reduced to the equivalent of consumerism it should not be a surprise that almost every ecological act becomes assessed and measured in relation to consumption and the economic system. Our domination by the economic model requires that everything be made to yield to a measurable quantity and “valued in proportion to their contribution to national income and economic growth” (Schafer 171). Thus, the well-behaved consumer, buying the right light bulb and getting a low-flow toilet, wrongly appear to delimit the activities of an ecological citizen.

Robyn Eckersley provides a way to see the relationship ecological citizenship has with the nation-state. Eckersley refuses to accept the foundations of ecological citizenship as a kind of instrumental citizenship that lays blame and responsibility at the toes of individuals. Learning about citizenship requires access to tools that allow an individual to evaluate and think about how things might get done differently (MacGregor et al. 10). Ecological citizenship proper critiques these broader systemic frameworks as part of its world re-forming activities. The summary report of an interdisciplinary seminar, Environmental Citizenship the Goodenough Primer, 2005, presents the location of environmental citizenship as an abstract framework for expanding and altering traditional notions of nation-state citizenship (MacGregor et al. 2). Nation-state citizenship is exclusive, in so much as each member is granted status in order to participate. Reversing this requirement, the framework of ecological citizenship is situated as inclusive. It is public and private; local and global; present and future; rights
and responsibilities; citizens and institutions; acting and thinking; learning and leading (MacGregor et al. 2-3). Most of these inclusions are oriented towards defining a political community between citizens and institutions moving toward a so-called sustainability (MacGregor et al. 1,11). And this inclusive framework goes some way to recognizing the disabling effects that result in “downloading of responsibilities from government to citizens” (MacGregor et al. 6). In other words “internalizing of the government’s environmental agenda” is a kind of environmentality where citizens police themselves (MacGregor et al. 9). In this light we can understand green consumption, not as ecological citizenship proper, but as ecological good behaviour. Nevertheless, all of these theories of ecological citizenship suggest in some way a relationship to politics.

However, citizenship is infinitely complex and the multiplication of new kinds of citizenship, such as ecological citizenship, begs the question of how new kinds of citizenships emerge and gain traction (Isin and Nielsen 16). New types of citizenship do not depend on the state for their emergence; in fact, they emerge despite the state and its rules for regulating citizenship behavior (Isin and Nielsen 177). However, the state is part of the background along with processes of “globalization, neo-liberalization, and post-modernism [which] combine to produce new if not paradoxical, subjects of law and action, new subjectivities and identities, new sites of struggle and new scales of identification” (Isin and Nielsen 16). Isin situates the act as the rupture where a certain attitude of responsibility for the Other is the ground for the emergence of another order simultaneously bringing the citizen and the world into focus (Isin and Nielsen 25-27).
Arendt conflates ‘acts’ into ‘action’ and Kieran Bonner suggests that for Arendt acts are a class of phenomena in which one “explicitly appear[s] to others in a context where others take up the opportunity to appear (through words and deeds)” (Isin and Nielsen 140). Each of my art projects attempts to perform this explicit appearance in which others can take up the opportunity to appear. “To act … is neither arriving at a scene nor fleeing from it but actually engaging in its creation … [and w]ith the creative act an actor also creates herself or himself as the agent responsible for the scene created” (Isin and Nielsen 27).

I create and analyze three art projects in order to investigate how acts or action bring, not just me an actor into view, but also the specifics of the world in which I perform. This complicated methodology drags theory off the page and places it into my life, testing how the thinking about ecological citizenship actually fits in the real world. In so doing, I suggest that ecological citizenship begins something much more powerful than explanations or arguments can achieve alone. It is this power potential captured within the term ecological citizen that emerges when feeling for an ethical and political opening, as if it were a pulse—a heartbeat. However, before I go on to discuss the kind of politics my art-projects engage with I will briefly suggest how the adjective ‘ecological’ qualifies this citizenship.

The prefix ‘ecological’ comes from the science of ecology, named in 1866 by Ernst Haeckel, which is a branch of biology (Dobson, green 40). This science became widespread, almost one-hundred years later in the 1960s, with a notion that ecologists
were “guardians of fragile life” a sentiment shortly replaced by “give us if you can some reliable indication at least of the constraints within which we must live” (Worster 341,471). By 1985 ecologists had moved from finding theories of order, to chaos, and then complexity (Worster 410-11). The idea that underlies this science is the interdependence of living things, which is a quality that, perhaps not surprisingly, is also philosophical in that it looks for an “ecological point of view” (Worster 471). Science of ecology is focused on “the relationships between plants and animals and the environment in which they live” (Dobson green 40). Worster is talking about the science of ecology which is not the same as political ecology. Political ecology is a political ideology that is concerned with “the relationship between human beings and the non-human natural world” (Dobson green 36). Political ecologists insist that values are found in the non-human world, regardless of that world’s usefulness to humans (Dobson green 36-7). Just as citizenship is not interpreted in consistent ways, neither is ecology, and when they intersect things get even more complex.

For example, Andrew Light brings a science-like rigorousness to a political ecology of citizenship as he imagines an alternative perspective for thinking about ecology. He is interested in changing ideas about nature by creating a new understanding of the city as an embedded ecosystem within larger ecosystems and environmental processes (Hank 409-10). For him, the ecological citizen is a means to understand the city as a population concentration device with its own ecology (Hank 410). He begins by thinking humans, their infrastructures, and nature into alternate relationships, which
arrive from his thinking and writing like new realities. He outlines an urban environmental citizenship as a ‘vested interest model’ where citizens are grounded in their local environment and are compelled to look within the city to satisfy their need to experience nature. This citizenship is not without responsibility and citizens of the city are to be given the right of first refusal in the face of environmental questions (Hank 398-410). That is, their embeddedness in the city-ecology makes them better citizens, more sensitive and responsible to/for its ecology. But my question is who or what gives the ecological citizen ‘the right’ of first refusal? There is little expectation that these rights are something we can claim on our own as individuals. Most would look to government of some kind to find the “something” that gives rights. Again we encounter the restraining hand of a particular political authority implicit in ecological citizenship.

My three art projects test the cultural elasticity for allowing, or not, an unauthoritative individual political action that tries to connect with an ethical impulse shaped and influenced in relationships-plus-environment. That is, the environment is also a kind of relationship we can nurture. Each project negotiates the kind of overwhelming implications generalized-demands for ecological responsibility cause individuals who sense their lack of power because of their interpelation within modern technocratic lifestyles. Part of my work is to stimulate thinking and acting in order to carve out an alternate route to ecological citizenship, which nurtures opportunities for an emergent ethical impulse. Bauman suggests that the foundations of the modernist era are based on a flawed and commonly believed idea that ethics cannot be entrusted to
individuals, but needs to be coerced because of the unpredictable, and therefore uncontrollable actions of individuals (Bauman 62-63). This is exactly the complaint Dobson makes about the weaknesses of coerced ‘good’ behaviour which fails to translate into deeper ecological commitment because once rewards and punishments are removed so do the correlating behaviours (Dobson and Bell 155). By performing my artworks I intend to create new avenues where individuals and environment can influence each other, not from locations of conventional power, but from informal, unpredictable and surprising perspectives.

In this thesis I am divining for the political space, which Arendt makes vivid with stellar perception as she analyzes layers of misunderstanding. She argues that speaking and acting is where power erupts out of its ever present potential (Arendt 199, 200). In other words, action is a politics which arises out of acting and speaking together with others (Arendt 198). I explore Arendt’s intangible political action, which appears only when words and deeds are joined. The next three chapters excavate elements of our human condition, as Arendt discusses it, with careful attention to the natality or emergent qualities of our relationships with others, which arrive as we express ourselves to each other as political and ethical beings.

More personally, the tension between me and what I think and do, and the fabric of the culture in which I exist are also at work. In this vein of thinking this thesis is me giving an account of myself, as an artist, making art in environmental studies, in order to access an understanding of ecological citizenship. I am in fact giving an account of
myself—all the way through the text. In other words, I am trying to articulate how these art projects do not arrive fully realized from my imagination, but are developed in relation to and in contemplation with my activities such as course work in environmental studies and the countless choices I make each day that compromise my sense of becoming an ecological citizen. This includes, showering too long, flushing the toilet, living in the suburbs, driving a car, eating meat, using a computer, and drinking coffee. But equally these art projects are invented in relationships with others. As Butler sees it: “Responsibility is not a matter of cultivating a will, but of making use of an unwilled susceptibility as a resource for becoming responsive to the Other” (Butler, Giving 91). Divining responsibility is a process of self-questioning that challenges the ‘regimes of truth’ or norms, but which is also an activity that puts oneself at risk by deviating from norms and jeopardizing the possibility of being recognized by others (Butler, Giving 23).

The topic of this research is ecological citizenship; however as you can see I do not intend to outline a straightforward process for defining or acting out ecological citizenship. Rather the process relies on a messy, unpredictable, and at times intuitive but sometimes rational, practice of art making. Indeed, I am developing a praxis by combining theory and practice, for engaging ecological citizenship which involves acting on imaginative and creative impulses. The body of the thesis will be divided into three investigational sections situated around each art project. These sections will deal with some aspect of humans with environment and be presented as chapters in chronological order starting with Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour,
Ecological Citizen in Training, and 86 Hands on Wolfe Island. Each chapter includes three main elements roughly corresponding to: a description of the art project; a discussion of germane theoretical thinking from philosophy and art; and an exploration of work by artists whose practices provide some context that help to legitimize and explain the form and/or content of each project.
Chapter 2

Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour:

performance, tactics, vulnerability and politics

“Artists … make their own acquisitions, forgetting, and retrievals available to those who may be less willing to expose their projections or to live with the humiliation such disassembling can cause” (Becker 159).

“The Lorax said nothing. Just gave me a glance… just gave me a very sad, sad backward glance…as he lifted himself by the seat of his pants. And I’ll never forget the grim look on his face when he heisted himself and took leave of this place, through a hole in the smog, without leaving a trace.” *The Lorax* *by Dr. Seuss.*

Figure 1 Madame E Works Logo

![Madame E Works Logo](image)

Unlike the Lorax in Dr. Seuss’ children’s book we cannot leave this place, the earth, by the seat of our pants as an expression of our ‘freedom.’ Indeed we seem unsettlingly implicated in modes of ‘freedom’ that more closely resemble Dr. Seuss’ Once-ler, who embraces a consumerism that can cause the extinction of many of the ‘others’ that share the Earth with us. However, escape from a meaningless life of consumption does not have to mean leaving all that the world is behind. Indeed, I am not interested in escaping this life or even in prescribing another for how to be an activist or environmentalist; rather, I am interested in exploring the political realm of *action* which
is a subset of freedom. Indeed the *action* that I am interested in accessing is tightly bound to an individual politics which takes place in relation to others in what is sometimes conceptualized as the public sphere. In other words our ability to act hinges on relational dynamics that emerge only in the presence of other humans where it either flourishes or is crushed (Knauer 291). Political philosopher Hannah Arendt gives an account of this human freedom carried out in the presence of others in her 1958 book *The Human Condition*, which remains radically fresh and current for the kind of concerns I have.

**Arendt and Action**

Arendt’s writing about action and the *vita activa* provide a theoretical backdrop for understanding the impulse behind *Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour*. Arendt defines action as the beginning of something new which is the third element in her triad of the human condition: labour, work and action. Labour she characterizes as all the things we do that are consumed in the process of doing. This includes our involvement with eating, cleaning and sleeping. The results of labour have an ephemeral place in the human world and “are produced and consumed, in accordance with the ever-recurrent cyclical movement of nature” (Arendt 96). The second category, work, is the activity of making the objective world, the human artifice, which is often achieved through violence and destruction of nature (Arendt 136,139). In fact Arendt puts it stronger: “This element of violation and violence is present on all fabrication, and
homo faber, the creator of the human artifice, has always been a destroyer of nature” (Arendt 139). This entails making things, erected against natural processes, that then add up to the material world which humans live within, giving the world stability and solidity; the artifice that stands between humans and nature (Arendt 136-8). World formation of the homo faber or worker is premised on an instrumental relationship of ends and means where utility is the standard measure of work’s value. Action is distinct from labour and work, as we shall see.

Politics exemplifies action which is how we show ourselves to each other as individuals. Action is complicated because of its focus on the agent-revealing capacity of action and speech, yet its content is objective, “concerned with matters of the world of things in which men move, which physically lie between them and out of which arise their specific, objective, worldly interests” (Arendt 182). Human action forms the world differently than work. Arendt conceives action as not just a flurry of activity but a performative expression accompanied by speech: “The action [she] begins is humanly disclosed by the word, and through [her] deed can be perceived in its brute physical appearance without verbal accompaniment, it becomes relevant only through the spoken word in which [she] identifies [her]self as the actor, announcing what [she] does, has done, and intends to do” (Arendt 178). If I am to take the idea of speech which Arendt talks about, I would suggest that the documentation of my performance in exhibitions, artist talks, and this thesis are the means by which I announce my intentions that Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour is political action.
While action and speech is concerned with the in-betweens, arising with each group of people, who have the ability to interject some worldly objective reality into being, action also manifests a disclosure of the acting and speaking agent, an individual (Arendt 182). The resulting overlay (on the Earth and a world formed by work) of deeds and words, which make up action, has an intangibility that is always in flux with the material world. The intangibility of action and speech nevertheless constitute a reality, which continually re-makes the “already existing web of human relationships with its innumerable conflicting wills and intentions” (Arendt 184). This complicated reality, in addition to being always changing, also means that “nobody is the author or producer of his own life story” (Arendt 184). To summarize: action creates meaningfulness as we make the world together with others and the environment, by revealing ourselves to each other, without force or violence.

In fact, this activity of common world formation requires us to be vulnerable to each other: “courage and even boldness are already present in leaving one’s private hiding place and showing who one is, in disclosing and exposing one’s self” (Arendt 186). This exposure puts us into each other’s hands where we must trust. Action’s characteristics of boundlessness and uncertainty underpin this relational vulnerability, in that we can neither predict the course action will take, nor can we be sure of its outcomes (Arendt 191). This is no incidental element of this concept but an indication of its powerfulness. In another sense, this sharing of words and deeds, by showing who one is in one’s unique distinctness, is the only activity which constitutes the common world
Power which arises from the activity of forming a common world cannot be stored up but arises out of the potentiality between people acting (Arendt 199-200). And so it is that Arendt pinpoints the activation of this potential as if it is the eruption of a new beginning which exhausts itself in its actualization and “does not survive the movement which brought it into being” (Arendt 199-200).

Hence, action is an activity concerned with something more than making a lasting concrete world that tables, buildings, or even institutions combine to make, which give human life its stability (Arendt 136-7). It is necessary to imagine this important distinction. For example, if I made a chair, and it was well executed and even showed a little individuality in the design, it would not really show who I am but only what kind of work I have done. Arendt is clear that action is a distinct human process of forming a world in common with others. Thus, world formation is a practice only possible because we are each unique beings willing to show ourselves to each other, in speech and action, and that that activity needs to be performed for no other instrumental reason. Otherwise it would never swell up and pulsate with this relational power. This is precisely the power that performance art has the potential to enliven.

Madame E, Art Practice, and Everyday Life

Nevertheless as an artist, I interpret Arendt’s words on action and politics by creating, performances, sculpture, collaborative situations and installations which, as nearly as I can achieve, show who I am. The means of this process has been ongoing,
and as I think through ideas about performance, including costume, props, local public
spaces, political agency or lack of it, the environment, nature, culture, documentation and
my own ethical sensibilities, I also act them out.

For example, Madame E is a persona that I developed in the fourth year of my
BFA in order to explore the power of performance as an art form for creating new
relations and experiences that might allow me to present my own ideas about the human
relationship with environment. Indeed, I am keen to see how I might be able to act into
the world, so to speak, in an attempt to shift consciousness, one person at a time. I
categorize this as the activity associated with finding a voice which is my own. Thus,
Madame E began to emerge as a presence in various projects that gave her/me a
framework in which she/I could speak. That is, I made work through the lens of her
invented personality in order to explore questions of agency and ambivalence towards the
environment, at a slight angle or distance from who I am, because I lacked confidence to
embark as myself. This resulted in a suite of projects which I branded under the name
Madame E Works. Initially, I developed her as a kind of tarot card reader. This required
thinking through or rationalizing her existence by inventing a name, costume, and set of
Environmental Cards for giving environmental readings. Then as Madame E I performed
environmental readings outside Ontario Hall at Queen’s University and at the Bagot
Street Laundry in Kingston. For each session I sat at a table draped with a green table
cloth and invited people to sit and engage in exploring their environmental reading. The
cards allowed me to begin a conversation on how environmental deeds were taking shape
in each person’s life. I presented a positive attitude towards each individual that emphasized their own power or agency for changing the world. Several people sat down opposite me and we had real conversations about life and environmental relationships, which the card readings facilitated. I also developed an accompanying booklet so that other people could learn to read the cards thereby extending the potential of the work beyond my own spheres of influence.

Not limiting my exploration to performance, but still relying on the persona of Madame E, I shaped other interventions for the ‘real world’ (as opposed to the gallery world) that conveyed my ideas and feelings about the environment. These Madame E art interventions included a set of posters with Madame E gallivanting in different outdoor settings accompanied by cryptic fragments of personal narrative, an ecological citizenship activation button to be installed permanently in public buildings, and three mini videos that show her enacting repetitive gestures of uncertain relevance; such as running across a wooden floor shouting ‘soon’, repeatedly enacting a lift off from rocks at the edge of Lake Ontario and sliding back-and-forth in front of a still frame of a full parking lot. Each of these works appropriates from a range of approaches in art which engage with some aspect of everyday life activities. The environmental card readings mimic activities of fortune tellers and tarot card readers, the posters could appear in bus shelters as ads and the ecological citizenship button, in its fire-engine-red metal box, imitates a piece of safety equipment one might find in any institutional building.
The relationship of these interventions to everyday life is important. In fact everyday life is where political action evinces its emergence, and in large part these relational dynamics surface today in an over-determined consumer culture which is also part of the background in which my critique arises. Michael de Certeau’s ideas bring the often untreated so-called background practices of everyday life into the realm of theoretical questioning (de Certeau xi). He situates his critique in relation to modern consumer society in which he distinguishes users or consumers from producers of products by the kinds of activities they have access to in order to make use of the world of things. He calls these world forming activities strategies and tactics. Strategies are used by those who control production to make consumer products and control the space of consumption (de Certeau 229; Habermas and Seidman 36). Put another way, strategies are designed to master a particular space, making its operation or use appear permanent, inevitable and without alternative. Tactics, which I am interested in, are performed by people especially interested in opening a space for politics in an Arendtian sense, as part of their everyday creativity. Tactics depend on time, do not have a space and are always looking for opportunities (de Certeau xix). By contrast strategies are executed by those authorized by institutions, property ownership, laws and governance (de Certeau xix). De Certeau contends that those who he calls users or consumers are the silent majority in society that have no “place in which they indicate what they make or do with the products of [a consumer] system” (de Certeau xii). Indeed, the tactic cannot count on a special or institutional location, but “insinuates itself into the other’s place,
fragmentarily, without taking it over” (de Certeau xix). The shopping mall is one of these places. *Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour* takes on the attitude of a tactician by appropriating the space of the strategists who control the space of the bus and mall, for her own creative production.

There are many artists working in performance that look to critique some form of our world formation activities. Before I describe *Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour*, I will discuss two artists that inspired the kind of performance I structured: Colette Urban and her 1999 *Consumer Cyclone* and Mierle Laderman Ukeles and her 1970 *Touch Sanitation*. Both artists recast mundane real-life activities into sharp relief from the background by activating and making them extra-ordinary. These acts raise consciousness of how we are all performing as we participate in the collective world. Colette Urban’s mall performance *Consumer Cyclone, 1999* (Figure 2 Colette Urban *Consumer Cyclone 1999* (Mars 37) is part of the tradition of performance art that, Tanya Mars, a life-long performance artist, works to preserve in texts (Mars and Householder 428). Urban walks through the mall with a costume made of clothing clumped around her head and body. But it is more than just a costume: “her body becomes the extension of the costume, both elements blend to become an object, a living, breathing entity that commands a space” (Mars and Householder 39). The clumps of clothes have their labels and tags hanging off them and other consumer products are attached such as curling irons and a heating pad that drag behind her. The back of the suit is covered in small cosmetic mirrors and in her hand is a toy megaphone through
which she speaks the words “look at me, look at you” as she walks through the mall (Mars and Householder 39). Arguably this piece, in its original time and place, had a decided feminist narrative critiquing the mall as a place for women to consume a peculiar commercial ‘female’ identity. Nevertheless, looking at this work in 2010 there are elements that speak strongly to environmental concerns by critiquing consumer culture and its absurdities. Urban’s performance is ironic and uncomfortable, for both shopper and herself, as she appropriates the mall for the location of her performance and superimposes a critique of the mall and its contradictory but timeless imperative to consume. Engaging with the work today in documented form, the environmental content seems to overwhelm the earlier feminist radicality.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles is a performance artist who has allowed me to think about how to make work that imagines transforming everyday living practices. She has been working with the New York City’s Sanitation Department since 1970 as an unpaid self-identified artist in residence where she has built up a body of work that investigates social and ecological issues of waste management through performance interventions (Lacy 128). This is a position she has held for forty years, and as of March 2009 she was collaborating on plans for a park at the recently closed Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island (Ryan). Touch Sanitation 1978-79 (Figures 3 and 4) is the first in this forty year continuum. In it “Ukeles listened to garbage collectors’ stories of being treated as if they were the garbage. She then set about to acknowledge the importance of sanitation work
and to heal the rift between the workers and the community in a performance” (Lacy 282).

Figure 2 Colette Urban Consumer Cyclone 1999 (Mars 37) performance in the mall.

Figure 3 and 4 Mierle Ukeles Laderman, Touch Sanitation, 1978-80 Shaking hands with sanitations workers.

Over eleven months Ukeles dressed in an orange jumpsuit (not evident in the images) as part of her plan to shake hands with and say “thank you” to all eight-thousand
city garbage collectors (Lacy 282; Lippard 186). In doing this she changes what garbage
collection is by carving it out of the background and refocusing the dynamic on
relationships between people. She brings an ‘absent’ sensibility to systems thinking,
which emphasizes efficient and utilitarian forms of getting work done, by taking the
ordinary and transforming it into something uncommon, persistent, thoughtful, caring and
brave. Equally, her work does not end with the gesture, in fact the gesture opens up
opportunities not possible otherwise. This is a key idea and intent for the work even
though one is not able to predict what that outcome might be. For example, Touch
Sanitation led to related art projects such as Flow City, 1985 in which she designed a
walk-through installation for viewing the usually hidden process of waste disposal in
New York City (Lacy 282).

Later the art projects and the discourse that supports them continue in books like
Mapping the Terrain that allows me access to the existence of her work, which in turn
influences the way in which I shape my art practice. My thinking goes something like
this; if Ukeles could find a way to work with the New York Sanitation department then I
should be able to, at least try, to create my own unique relationships to the people and
institutions that shape my world experience. To summarize, I take from her the
possibility of becoming a catalyst for shifting consciousness as an artist acting into the
real world. I am engaged with the subtle beauty of the gesture which she imagined and
then carried out. We all speak through gesture, posture, glance, nuanced movement,
presence, nods, smiles, and handshakes. I carry this understanding or revelation –that I
perform as I relate to people, and trust in the power of embodied communication –action– and the reality that there remains, always, an un-recordable essential. I also imagine that as Ukeles began her performance it must have seemed like an infinitely small, insignificant, and seemingly impossible gesture. And yet with time, persistence, documentation and a community of seekers (people willing to take the chance to engage and explore with her, including the sanitation workers) the momentum built with each handshake and then with each new project it matured into something tangible and knowable for the people in New York. The distance between Ukeles and me might seem quite far and yet what I am interested in is just as vague and real as her first handshake might have felt.

I performed *Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour* in 2008 on a crisp December day in Kingston Ontario. The performance lasted about an hour. For it I designed a new costume for Madame E, which consisted of a collection of leaves purchased from several dollar stores around Kingston and individually hand stitched onto a man’s business suit. I wore the suit and carried a briefcase full of objects as I rode the Kingston city bus and had coffee at the Tim Horton’s in Kingston’s Cataraqui Mall. My friend, Ann Barlow and partner, Mark Figge accompanied me with video and still cameras, to document. They followed me around videotaping and photographing the different scenarios according to their own sensibilities. Our plan was to answer any questions people posed as honestly as possible, and try to stay out of trouble as I worked through the whole set of activities.
As we left the house I felt a sense of anticipation and excitement that we were embarking on something vaguely dangerous. We did not know what to expect from the other people with whom we would be sharing the space, including fellow travelers, consumers and workers, like bus drivers or security guards. We drove to the Cataraqui Mall bus stop, where we began. As Madame E, I waited for the number one bus which goes in a loop around Cataraqui Woods and returns to the mall (Figure 5). When the bus arrived I got on and chose a seat at the back. A couple of other people entered too but they stayed near the front. Other than a curious glance or two from the bus driver and one of the passengers I was left alone (ignored?) as I carried out the whole performance.
undisturbed. Mark and Ann sat opposite keeping the cameras focused on what I was doing.

Figure 7 Polar Bear

Figure 8 Om-me-me-wog

Figure 9 Om-me-me-wog in coffin
For the performance I carried a briefcase with the words Madame E Works (Figure 1) written on the outside. Inside were several objects each symbolic in some way of a different thread in environmental thinking and action that has gone on over the last four decades. The items included a double-sided photocopy of a passenger pigeon (Figure 8), a small stuffed polar bear (Figure 7), a small wooden box built out of an orange crate (Figure 9), a little recycling box stuffed with receipts, Dr. Seuss’s book The Lorax, a wind-up radio with yellow ear phones, a yellow plastic coffee mug, a hammer, a green crayon (of course), a handful of fake leaves and flowers, and a small globe. As the bus motored through the subdivision I took items from this eclectic collection and engaged with them. I began by placing the passenger pigeon on one shoulder and the polar bear on the other. I pulled out the wind-up radio—wound it up, attached the earphones and put them on. The surge and rumble of the bus merged with the static of the radio (I could not find a clear radio station) and periodically a prerecorded female voice interrupted and read out bus stop names.

Next, I took out the recycling box which held cash register receipts. I showed each receipt to the symbolic representations of bird and bear on my shoulder and replaced the receipts with fake flowers and leaves. Exchanging the recycling box stuffed with its new fodder for the globe, I showed the pigeon the regions in Canada from Hudson Bay and the whole of Canada, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin, where it was once ubiquitous (Mershon 9, 53, 67, 68). The passenger pigeon is originally from North America and called O-me-me-wog according to Chief Pokagom of The Chautauquan, but
Europeans preferred to call it the wild pigeon as it resembled their imported European domesticated pigeon and dove (Mershon 48). I did not neglect the polar bear, a species whose endangered status is balanced on that thin line between living and disappearing and poster child for environmental causes. I pointed out her habitat in the Canadian North. I played out this ritual-like sequence all the while balancing the slippery briefcase on my knees through the up-shifting, down-shifting, and turning of the bus.

My intention was to read some of *The Lorax* to the passenger pigeon and polar bear. However, I got things out of order and had already removed them from my shoulder and placed the passenger pigeon into its small coffin, nailed it shut and written on the top, with green crayon, the epigraph – passenger pigeon, 1914 with a heart. Only then did I remember the book in the bottom of the briefcase. Nevertheless, I took out Dr. Seuss’ book which is a rhythmic and playful children’s story of how a beatific land becomes devastated and exhausted by the activities of a commercial culture gleefully caught up in the process of transforming nature into resources for making products and profit. *The Lorax* is a book with its own rich history as part of the environmental consciousness-raising culture that arose close on the heels of industrialization. Unlike the slaughter of the passenger pigeon, the birds in *The Lorax* are granted the luxury of leaving to find a more hospitable place to live. The first version published in 1970 references dead zones in Lake Erie and the movie version still contains the line: “I hear things are just as bad up in Lake Erie” (http://www.youtube.com/watch#!v=N2WDVamI2BA&feature=related). In 1985, when
research assistants in the Ohio Sea grant program wrote and asked that the line be changed as the water had been cleaned up, Theodor Seuss Geisel obliged by deleting the line (Morgan and Morgan 276). Back on the bus, as I remembered my forgetting of The Lorax and my intention to read parts of it to the pigeon and bear, I thought perhaps it fitting that I had already nailed the pigeon into its coffin before I took the book out to flip through the pages.

Ironically, this minor inconsequential forgetting recalls the overwhelming and almost complete forgetting that comes with extinction (Smith, Mick 361). Speaking or writing about an ethical relationship with an extinct species, raises provocative questions about physical realities, including the eternal absence of the birds. An ethical relationship demands an empathy that reaches for a sense of the unique awesomeness of the animal and its own living nature (Smith, Mick 359, 362). Writing about this relationship as Smith does requires a reader who will suspend disbelief and go on a journey with a sustained concentration on the nature of an ethical impulse that reaches towards the other, the unknowable, and in this case a bird O-me-me-wog which we remember as the passenger pigeon. An ethics for the “other requires us to respect their difference from ourselves, to refuse to make them subject to our desires…. The ethical is an opening through which the “other” is made manifest in its irreducible difference to

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1 Also the National Wood Flooring Manufacturers’ Association’s (NOFMA) Environmental Committee sponsored a children’s book The Truax (http://www.myteacherpages.com/webpages/NDow/files/TRUAX1.pdf) by Terri Birkett as a response and counter to Dr. Seuss’s The Lorax that tells the story of a “responsible” forestry industry. However, The Truax is more propaganda or PR, working too hard to make the forestry industry look good and lacking the poetry and magic of Dr. Seuss’s allegory.
ourselves” (Smith, Mick 362). If one can somehow get to this ethics there is the possibility for the “redemptive moment that changes forever our relationship to the world around us” (Smith, Mick 359). It is with these ideas in mind that I looked to find a way to create an ethical relationship with O-me-me-wog. I set out to do this by engaging with a single representational representative of the species by wearing the paper cutout on my shoulder and bringing it to mind as I carried out my activities on the bus. This idea of an ethical relationship is part of an activity which is key to shaping the politics that I am looking to perform and which I will try to untangle more purposely in Chapter Three.

As the bus rounded the last corner of the trip I put The Lorax back in my briefcase and looked out the window towards the mall, my next destination. Exiting the bus I felt confident – the first part of my performance had gone off without any problems except maybe the fact that I did not get to read any of The Lorax to the image of the passenger pigeon. The public sphere that I had imagined as a hostile place for this performance accommodated my presence as a performance artist. But these were baby steps and although the bus is a public space we had each paid our fair to ride, and we had not broken the ‘rules’ of the public transit contract. The performance activities were contained to my personnel space and my attention was focused on interacting with the objects rather than with the other people. Indeed, my plan was not to make eye contact with others while on the bus or in the mall. It was a tactic for reinforcing the possibility for people to watch me. There are (at least) two reasons for choosing to do the performance this way. One is that I am trying to devise a way of showing my politics
and therefore I think that means people need to feel free to look, and the risk of making eye contact is rather uncomfortable when things seem slightly out of order or out of place, which Madame E is. The second reason is far more pragmatic. I put Madame E on view using activities which create a pseudo divider between me and the other people in order to mitigate my feeling vulnerable and uncomfortable as a performance artist in a non-performance space.

Before I go on to elaborate the negotiation of vulnerability and discomfort, in this context, I will give a short description of the second part of the performance. After debarking from the bus, I entered the mall and took a spot in the Tim Horton’s line which was long and slow. Mark and Ann shadowed me around the space. At one point the woman in front of me turned and asked if the suit of leaves was a uniform that I wore to work every day. I told her it was not and she said it was very nice and that she liked it. I thanked her and wondered what to do with the uncomfortable feeling that I was not explaining myself openly or clearly as to what I thought I was doing. Finally, my turn came, I took my yellow mug out of the briefcase offering it when the women at Tim Horton’s asked me what size coffee I wanted. She took the cup, with an almost imperceptible grunt, and filled it with coffee, two cream. I took my coffee and found a seat in the fast food court where I once again began to play with the contents of the briefcase. I placed the globe on the table, took out The Lorax and sat the polar bear in a place where it could see (if it could see) what I was reading. O-me-me-wog, stayed in her coffin, as an absence from this second half of my performance. I drank my coffee.
with purpose; it was hot, not quite scalding yet comforting. When I finished drinking my coffee and reading silently, I put everything back in the briefcase and left the mall.

The performance over, we felt exhilarated. However we were not entirely done. After we exited the mall security arrived. We were on the sidewalk walking towards the parking lot, when I heard a male voice behind us saying “excuse me, excuse me.” I knew he was talking to us even before I turned to see. A non-confrontational civil conversation followed. He asked us what we were doing and who we were working for. I told him it was part of an art project about environmental issues, that I was an artist making my own work and invited him to the presentation of the documentation planned for the Union Gallery project room. He warned us that picture taking was not allowed in the mall, thus, the main issue had nothing to do with the performance itself but with the practice of documentation. Taking photos in the mall is reserved for the property owner/management. However, he made no request for our images rather the conversation turned towards ideas about environmental activities. He told us about the different environmental things that the mall was pursuing, which unfortunately, I cannot remember for this retelling of the story.

While we may think of the mall as a public space it is privately owned and controlled. It depends on a certain kind of well-behaved depoliticized public, the consumer, for its existence. “It is a central principle of theme parks and shopping centers that these are privately owned public spaces in which the public are under the watchful eye of video-cameras, and rowdy, troublesome elements are excluded before the disorder
might disturb others‖ (Featherstone 102-103). In other words a ‘properly’ socialized public performs shopping, buying and consumption at the mall, never politics.

I see the public sphere as a space that needs revival. Habermas’s public sphere is the space where public opinion can be formed with potentially the input of every citizen (Habermas and Seidman 231). This public sphere operates in relation to and not as part of state power, which has a significant role in guiding the role of state power (Habermas and Seidman 231). I consider the mall and the bus to be public spaces. In fact, I could not imagine any other public sphere that I might have access to and where I would find other citizens to act with. If strategies delineate spaces as autonomous and secure in their coherent uses over time, de Certeau’s tactics teach something radical. As a performance artist, I use tactics but seek to disrupt the intensely self-obsessed inward looking modes that a consumer-producer cannot help but operate within. It is here that we can begin to internalize how action’s ‘alive’ energies evince their power to redirect attention and energy while exposing and resisting utilitarian and instrumental forms of valuation which are so well constructed in the space of the mall.

Mark and Ann’s work, taking images, is instrumental in allowing me to extend the artistic, textual and political meanings of this work. Documentation is the mainstay of the transmission of ‘proof’ that artists are required to participate in to legitimize and substantiate their practices. Although there may be artists resisting this practice they will often be left out of discourse although documentation does not guarantee they will become part of discourse either. However, questions of legitimacy and authenticity are
raised when one presumes to document a performance. Reasons for documenting come out of the disciplinary traditions that artists and their structures participate in. Art institutions are centered on the art gallery system, which legitimizes what gets shown inside as art. Therefore, off-site work like Madame E, often but not always, look for other ways to get recognition in the ‘art world.’ Indeed, by exhibiting documentation of performances inside galleries, artists intend past work to be accessed once the original context has disappeared. For example, I presented the documentation, images, video, and artifacts (the suit, briefcase and its contents) in the Union gallery project room January 13-31, 2009 (Figure 17 and 18). While this is all true, I intend the documentation to carry authority beyond art considerations, legitimizing this work as political, ethical and environmental.

It is difficult to try and translate the affect and experience of this performance in this theoretical text as it is as much of an invention as the original performance. There are so many different lenses competing for attention and relational relevance in the complicated assemblage I have insisted upon. I can tell you what I did and if I write well enough you might even begin to empathize with how it felt and the images give a sense of how it looked. Arendt details this problem of knowability: “Although nobody knows whom [s]he reveals when [s]he discloses [her] himself in deed or word, [s]he must be willing to risk the disclosure (Arendt 180). I can speculate on how I was viewed by the other people in the mall but I do not know what they might have thought or if they noticed anything at all. I did catch people looking at me out of the corners of their eyes.
In the playback of the video, I noticed several people looking at me but as soon as the camera shifted to them they looked away, pretending not to notice they were being noticed. However truthful these observations may be, they do not anchor this performance in relational political action as presented by Arendt, even though the conceptual kernel of the encounter is the willingness to risk the disclosure of self to others.

Does the problem of a persona disassemble or topple all my claims. How am I to resolve this deficiency? Arendt’s work is important to my thinking but does not overpower my own access to agency. That is, the theoretical separation of labour, work and action are more than useful, they are a revelation to me as I try to understand agency. Although acting out these distinctions in my performance is complicated, I will be better prepared to address these apparent in congruencies in my conclusion. First, Butler and Latour help expand and open the critique beyond an inter-human subject-formation, by investigating the institutional and social armatures which de Certeau’s work began.

In a way the performance is similar to the regulated practice which composes a written text. Performance for me is a way of showing what I mean. Saying things in writing is a way of translating cultural practice into language through thinking and then organizing that thinking into coherent readable ideas. In a way writing becomes a substitution and an addition to cultural practice which is and is not cultural practice. De Certeau discusses how language as text is never a fully living practice but is “[o]n the
blank age, an itinerant, progressive, and regulated practice—a “walk” [which] composes the artifact of another ‘world’ that is not received but rather made” (de Certeau 134-5).

The regulated practice of performance is similar to the writing process where the writer must think things through as she records, organizing and choreographing how the text will allow access to ideas. Performance requires a similar preliminary working-out, which is as rigorous for similar reasons using different processes of demonstration and transference. They both become additions and critique to cultural practice. Making performance work such as Madame E allows access to cultural norms by exposing them to the operation of thinking transcribed by and through the performance. While the text can convey some sense or idea of what is experienced off the page, performance art is a medium that exists mostly as memory, is ephemeral in nature and depends on a fragile documentation (Mars and Householder 11). Nevertheless it is thanks to text, containing writing and images about a medium that is so fleeting, that I have access to the work of performance artists as cultural guides for my own thinking and action.

There are two streams of inquiry vying for attention here; form and content which are analogous to the relationship between ends and means. That is, the form and content and the ends and means are superimposed. And so the vehicle of an ethical politics is a practice of orientation plus re-orientation that is generative. Engaging this question of a politics for and of nature raises, like goosebumps on flesh and better sometimes actual goosebumps on flesh, the ethical relationship that proceeds and then underpins all other activities of world formation. To sum up: Ukeles and Urban’s work is political in
Arendt’s sense of politics and action, that it is done in the presence of others and it begins something new. Specifically, Ukele’s politics is done in relation to other people, especially the garbage collectors with which she shook hands, but also tangentially with others who see her and read about the work, which is exactly what Arendt argues is necessary for politics to occur. My politics are still in the process of reorientation towards an invention of ecological citizenship, which may lead to shaking hands with trees to show myself to them—which of course would only be another precursor to another re-orientation.

The central premise of *Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour* is that it is political. Does it conform “to Arendt’s demands for political action in which an actor demonstrates his or her distinct individuality by artistically fashioning a performance to others” (Sandilands 126). It seems that it might not, but what it does do is recognize the difference between expressing private interests, which action is not and “coming to be an individual connected to multiple other individuals through the cultivation of distinct appearance” (Sandilands 127). In the next chapter, I will pursue the possible relevance of these ideas about appearance in relation to other ecological citizens performing a more directed ecological citizenship. By Chapter Three, I will have worked my way towards the question of the ethical relation made and lost between *Madame E* and O-me-me-wog and the action that arises between people as they orient their world formation activities to include the Earth.
Chapter 3
Ecological Citizen in Training: a practice of misunderstanding, politics in society

Figure 10 Ecological Citizen Name Tag

“The common world has to be built on a life-sized scale, in real time, without knowledge of causes and consequences, in the middle of the agora, and with all those who are its concerned parties” (Latour 197).

“A map is a composite of place, and like place, it hides as much as it reveals. It is also a composite of time, blatantly laying out on a single surface the results of billions of years of activity by nature and humanity” (Lippard 82).

Ecological Citizen in Training re-vision the conceptual and real spaces explored by Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour, for which Arendt and de Certeau provided guidance. Arendt suggested that action is politics that begins something new which is done in public and de Certeau distinguishes strategies from
tactics in order to understand ways that the world of humans is animated. However, choosing a persona to act out my ecological citizenship complicated it as an example of Arendt’s politics of citizenship, which requires I show myself as myself in public. In Chapter Three, I will explore this complication which is not about my ability to manage or control my own self-formation as an individual, but rather is a function of our (yours and my) opacity to ourselves. But first in this chapter, I will untangle the ambiguity of the public/private sphere of the mall which disrupted Madame E as a political action.

I will outline the character of social spaces which capture and neutralize, by design, the arrival of the public realm which Madame E was searching for. In Ecological Citizen in Training, I re-orient my inquiry into the ‘nature’ of ecological citizenship by vitalizing Arendt’s idea of the *polis* which is the scene of address. In other words, I concern myself with creating a community of ecological citizens who together might be able to enact the scene of address by thinking and acting ecological citizenship into everyday life. The outcomes or results of the art project suggest that our place as individuals in society is a relationship to governance and the nation-state, which limits our space of appearance, not just as ecological citizens, but as *citizens* in Arendt’s fullest sense of the word.

Arendt points out that, the social realm, which arose with modernity, has had a catastrophic affect on the possibilities for a real citizenship. In fact, the “social realm, which is neither private nor public strictly speaking, is a relatively new phenomenon whose origin coincided with the emergence of the modern age and which found its
political form in the nation-state (Arendt 28). She argues that this modern phenomenon, society, is the result of a theoretical error that conflates and superimposes the distinct activities of the public and private spheres. She imbues her ideas on citizenship with particular characteristics that are sculpted out of her engagement with Ancient Greek and Roman ideas and practices of citizenship. In *The Human Condition* she clarifies how we have lost an understanding of the pre-eminence of acts of citizenship as political activity which leaves us without access to reality (Arendt 58). This has resulted in a fundamental shift in how people are understood in relation to each other, within what we call society. This shift is both the cause and result of our tenuous connection to our political selves. In other words, society with its social realm is a conceptual framework that keeps us in our place in relation to others which is social and not political.

Quite problematically for the citizen “[s]ociety always demands that its members act as though they were members of one enormous family which had only one opinion and one interest” (Arendt 139). As Arendt argues, thinking and acting as if society is one giant collective household, results from a theoretical error that substitute’s functionality for citizenship, as the “collective” concern (Arendt 33). What I mean is that functionalizing the processes of living together in society, eviscerates distinctions between the activities in the private realm, or what she calls the household, and the activities in the public realm or *polis*. My methodology is to test the waters of how we live using my art practice as an intervention within my everyday living experiences. This art project, *Ecological Citizen in Training* continues this practice. However, my process
is not contained within the art but transpire from it. Thus the art operates as a kind of de-centering exercise which for some reason allows access to the invisible structural material that conditions our lives. In this case the work allows access to the constraining affects of society, which also keeps appearing in the literature of ecological citizenship. In fact the art gives me access to how the misrepresented public sphere denies citizenship its proper protection, in the name of managing society’s household.

Perhaps this can be more clearly understood if I ask what is lost when we mistake society for a conflated public/private sphere. The public and private spheres historically have divergent functions which require they remain distinct from each other in order for citizens to act freely. The reason for this firm separation is that “mastering of the necessity of life in the household was the condition for freedom of the _polis_” (Arendt 30). Without this separation the rules of management would overrun everything. Freedom from the management of the household was the pre-political condition for the politics of citizenship to arrive. Society has become this ‘pre-political’ sphere where people are driven by their wants and needs legitimizing necessity as a catalyst for all activities in it (Arendt 29-31). However, if in Arendt’s time and ours the un-freedom of the household is everywhere in society, where might the freedom of the _polis_ flourish? For Greek philosophers “freedom is exclusively located in the political realm” (Arendt 31). This is the political realm; also known as the public sphere which I am searching for.

But first, what is the ’nature’ of this political sphere? I have repeatedly mentioned the _polis_. The _polis_ is for citizens only (Arendt 194) and as Arendt points out,
life in the public sphere as a citizen doing politics has an altogether different quality than ‘ordinary life’ (Arendt 36). That is the tangible entities of laws and structures of the public realm are not the polis, citizens were the polis (Arendt 195). Importantly, the polis had two functions. First “[t]he polis was suppose to multiply … the chances for everybody to distinguish himself, to show in deed and word who he was in his unique distinctness … to make the extraordinary an occurrence of everyday life” (Arendt 197). And second, to offer a remedy for the futility of action and speech by guaranteeing the double tangibility of both a scene and witnesses for ones deeds and words (Arendt 197-8).

As we learned earlier from Arendt, action takes place in the public sphere, which she calls the space of appearance (Arendt 209). To review, action is an activity of world formation which appears in the moments when we orient ourselves towards each other in the space of appearance in order to begin something new. When and where we show ourselves to each other makes the political realm, which rises directly out of acting together (Arendt 198). This public realm is not necessarily a specific physical location but “the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together … [the polis’] true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be” (Arendt 198). That is, action and speech create a space between participants which finds its proper location almost anytime and anywhere” (Arendt 198). Further while “This space does not always exist … to be deprived of it means to be deprived of reality, which, humanly and politically speaking is the same as appearance”
This means that it is not always there when people gather together, but it is a potential that gives political communities life (Arendt 199-200). To fill in, the character of action requires that words and deeds be joined to establish relations and disclose new realities which are in their appearance, never brutal, or veiled in intent, or violent or destructive (Arendt 200).

Dobson’s ecological citizenship is founded on this entrenched theoretical error which substitutes a conflated public/private realm called society for the necessarily distinct public and private spheres of Arendt’s citizenship. The practice of understanding society as a household, is where we lose site of the essential and deep difference between citizenship activates and household management activities. Dobson’s household however, includes something bigger than the collective society of the nation-state; it encompasses a human collective of the entire globe. Dobson offers a social imaginary of citizenly obligation that mathematically divides the globe into equal portions (Dobson and Eckersley 231). But of course citizenship does not conform to an ecological footprint which comes out to about 1.5 hectares per individual (Dobson and Eckersley 230). According to Dobson if one is using more than 1.5 hectares they need to act out their ecological citizenship. Although this is a simplification the point is that its prescriptive qualities are a problem for citizenship where people in society have no access to a polis with others.

To emphasize the point let’s consider Latour’s state architecture, which has an academically rigorous texture, that demotes science by making it equal to politics. In it,
he lays out his architecture for a proper nation-state that is far more meticulous and objective than Dobson’s ‘prescription’ for global household management. Latour’s is an ecological community equivalent to a professionalized commons, where workers sort out and organize the world by twining nature with culture into an ever changing process. This is his recipe for an ecology of nature. Latour re-envisions the organization of the world systematically, which is something he accuses environmentalism of not being able to do. His environmental scheme, in an unexpected move starts not with nature, but with governance and works towards incorporating nature. Initially, I read Latour as if he were addressing institutional complicity in its role in making us all destroyers of the land, by envisioning an alternate and better functioning architecture for society. However, Latour is not seeking ecological citizenship or even prescribing environmentalism. He talks about the politics of nature and looks to reorganize the commons into a functional procession of processes. He uses his thinking and language skills, like digestive juices, on the institutions of modernity to invigorate an up-to-the-minute architecture for assembling a continuously renewed collective which he calls political ecology (Latour 128-182). This architecture realigns the relationship of science, politics, economics, morality and administration into a new order that brings into governance what we like to keep separate—culture and nature (Latour 136-7).

This designed process would function as a way of making sense of the common world by bringing the politician, scientist, economist, and moralist together as a community of differently skilled world building practitioners that rely on each others’
work to make the common world—always in the process of making sense. Latour’s way of thinking through the relationships of world makers helps me to understand why I am so confused over the meaning and usefulness of assuming the identity of an ecological citizen. It is not just me who is confused, but the whole of the common world that is in a state of confusion. This confusion is a direct result of the modernist project which Latour suggests we are still deeply engaged in (Latour 307). In fact, within Latour’s architecture the ecological citizen would be just one other category of a differently skilled world builder scurrying around re-configuring the world of things. Approving or rejecting everything, from teapots to genetic engineering to forests, according to collectively formed opinions on how to make a properly ordered life.

Eckersley provides a third sort of critique, focused on the nation-state, keen to revise governmental processes. She takes us into governance as if it could become a location of ecological transformation which is part of her recommendation for a “critical political ecology” (Eckersley 160). Currently the nation-state is considered an institution responsible for ecological destruction and not trusted to “play a positive role in securing sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem integrity” (Eckersley 159). It is considered just one of many institutions responsible for ecological destruction and radical green analysts look for different forms of political identity, authority, and governance, ignoring or excluding the nation-state as an actor that might become a protector of ecology (Eckersley 159). However, Eckersley contends that the nation-state is an important “node in a future network of ecological governance” (Eckersley 159). She proposes a
shift in the procedural and conceptual variables of a “constantly contested and evolving apparatus” (Eckersley 160). This new conception would redirect the nation-state from its current role in disabling the commons, by which she means the nations conception of natural resources, and its promotion of capital accumulation in a highly centralized and hierarchical manner (Eckersley 161). What is most interesting to me is her analysis of practice for re-making the social order which she claims mistakenly privileges structure over agency (Eckersley 165). In fact, the nation-state has a virtual monopoly on the means of legitimate coercion making it the “most overarching source of authority within modern, plural societies” (Eckersley 172). For her, this requires more than creative thinking about how to re-imagine the role of the nation-state as protector of the environment; it requires a practice of restructuring.

Eckersley pinpoints this as a breakthrough point where the basic unit, individual, community, state, or bioregion, etc. are understood as internally related rather than externally related (Eckersley 167). For me this is represented in how artists employ tactics to move in, around and through institutions as agents acting as equals to other professionals in governance. However, moving in and out of government infrastructures may prove just as compromising as working from outside. And really the art gallery is often state sponsored so these distinctions may be wholly tangential. In some ways, I see her work as trying to institute the parameters of governance as the Greeks understood the structure, laws and rules that protected the public sphere from the pre-political private
sphere. In this way she looks to find a way to put the brakes on an overzealous household management of the Nation-state.

My project falls prey to the theoretical error which confuses household management with citizenship. Here is how it played out. *Ecological Citizen in Training* takes the form of an experimental foray into participatory art in search of a political community, a *polis*, to investigate ecological citizenship. My main interest in developing this project is to create a place for people to explore what their own ecological citizenship might be, or become, and I feel that this can happen through a discourse with other people who have been thinking and perhaps acting out ecological citizenship as a mode of being in the world.

Before I describe my project, here is a brief acknowledgement of what kind of art this is like. United States based artist/writer Suzanne Lacy’s New Genre Public Art provides an explanation of the kind of participatory art I am reaching towards. Coining the term, New Genre Public Art, in 1995 Lacy looked to categorize a broad range of new art practices that emerged by the 1980’s and incorporated unconventional method for making art. Briefly, New Genre Public Art includes art practices which are conceptual and use performance and installation to intervene in the public sphere (Cartiere and Willis 18). Much of this art tries to act into the public sphere as a way of seeing what else is possible not just showing what is there. Fifteen years after its identification, New Genre Public Art strategies have become commonplace ways that an artist “inspects cross-disciplinary experiences, relationships to audiences and political positions”
(Cartiere and Willis 18). I have absorbed this open approach for art making, through course work, readings, and my own experimentation. What makes it useful and perhaps liberating is its potential to shape experiences for self and others as a means for engaging with concepts that need investigation. Ecological Citizenship is one of these concepts. Like New Genre Public Art, my project labors under the conviction that people not only learn from each other by doing things themselves but also change the world in the process of acting on these relationships.

Some artists using this method went even further and looked to enter public institutions in order to do their work not from outside government, but from within. For example, Helen and Newton Harrison provide an example of artists creating frameworks for collaboration inside the public space of governance that incorporates not just other people but also institutions and ‘nature.’ The Harrisons have been working since the 1970s to develop an art practice that “respond to ecological conditions … premised on dialogical interactions” within government institutions where part of their strategy is to talk with everyone involved in fixing problems such as water purification (Kester 63). Their work does not respect disciplinary boundaries, in fact boundary crossing is required in order for them to put together ‘disciplinarily separated’ world forming spheres using “literal and figurative mapping” (Kester 65). Working within institutional frameworks they make proposals for large-scale transformations which they present in exhibitions accompanied by their story telling which allows “government officials to see the images differently … [making] the idea of purifying the whole river system [seem] more real and
less difficult” (Kester 65). As artists, they bring working paradigms which allow them a different kind of latitude to challenge ‘norms’ than others working in government (Kester 68). These are ideas and histories, from the United States and Britain, of artists whose work looks to “identify interconnections among the often invisible forces that pattern human and environmental existence” (Kester 68-69).

The Harrisons’ work is situated on a tripod of grounds; the human constructed governmental sphere of policy making, the real water and ground of the Earth, and the ‘art world.’ There was great hope for this kind of work in the 1970s and Grant H. Kester discusses its invention in *Conversation Pieces: community +communication in modern art*. He writes that in the 1970’s, *United Kingdom Artist Placement Group*, was able to put artists in the role of consultants in governments, industry and media (Kester 61). By 1972 the British Civil Service “encouraged government agencies to involve artists in their planning activities” (Kester 62). Artists were asked in based on the presumption that their processes allowed for imaginative thinking not available to other kinds of specialists in dealing with the long-term issue of environmental restoration and protection (Kester 62). The Harrisons work as artists, within the sphere of governmental policy-making, and peers to other kinds of professionals working within the public service. They are there to serve the overall agenda, to help figure out environmental policy, such as water purification strategies. What they bring however is a very different set of criteria for getting work done which then disturbs the norms from within which may or may not result in reflexive responses. Their work is an intervention. The Harrisons listen to
people as part of their practice, which carries a similar valence to the witnessing that the *polis* provides for the intangible activities of politics. And in some ways the contrast between a policy writer’s orientation to work and an artist’s might be understood as parallel to distinctions in activities which maintain life in the household and those of citizenship. The institutional connection is important to how I see my work in the Masters program at Queen’s. The authority of the institution gives me a different kind of authority to proceed with my work at the same time as it also constrains what I do.

While, the Harrisons try to intervene in the kind of policy that gets written, I proceed with a slightly different critique by trying to practice Ecological Citizenship as it is theoretically structured.

*Ecological Citizen in Training* is not entirely out of step with Latour’s architectural approach to procedures for coercing a common world or community, but my project is nuanced in a way that avoids a methodological and scientific rigor that would disturb Latour’s common world-forming approach. In other words we were not involved in becoming ecological citizenship experts instead I provide a toolbox for imagining opportunities for ecological citizenship. It is a project more in line with how Eckersley imagines a structure, which accommodates citizenship through governance. I began my project by inventing a structure for activity. *Ecological Citizen in Training* is framed as a collaborative participatory experience which sets a ground for people to engage with the idea of ecological citizenship. Participants explore this concept through the lens of their everyday activities, and in particular, through their coffee-drinking rituals. In keeping
with my earlier premise explored in Chapter One that everyday life is the catalyst and
location of transformation. The framework to facilitate this engagement is an *Ecological
Citizenship in Training* ‘toolkit’ which includes a box, notebook, mechanical pencil,
stickers, name tag, map and a set of instructions explaining how to engage (Figure 11).

The project incorporates a complicated layering of responsibilities. Participants
are asked to do their own research on the subject of ecological citizenship. However, the
substance of the research is not found in books, but in people’s everyday thinking and
activities. This is primary research carried out by participants on their coffee drinking
rituals. I provide the tools and instructions on how to search out and then record their
findings. This prescriptive formulation has a similar orientation to Dobson’s strategies in
which he creates four characteristics for individuals who should be performing
responsibilities of ecological citizenship. My collaborators had five days to produce the
written documentation of their daily coffee drinking activities, after which they mapped
the results.

The book contains three sections. These sections equate to what I understand as
three distinct metaphysical schemes for recording and textualizing reality which are
institutionally validated. Each method is loosely based on strategic methodologies. The
first two are associated with terms that will be familiar to people in the sciences:
quantitative and qualitative. The first, qualitative, is a nuanced form of gathering data
that embraces the subjectivity of the object or subject being studied and the dimensions of
the research relationships (Bondi 10). There are no hard and fast rules for how to carry
out qualitative research but one needs to proceed with caution in order not to fragment data, which is a research strategy with epistemological foundations that emphasize words and generates theories whereas a quantitative research strategy “understands reality as an external, objective reality” (Bryman 19, 20, 398). Quantitative research often relies on ‘indicators’ which is a way of measuring a concept for which there is no direct measure (Bryman 62). The ecological citizenship record book had a third section reserved for recording the creative impulse, an equally complex methodology used by artists. To symbolize the distinction between these modes of gathering, I gave each section its own ‘type’ of paper. Section one contained lined paper, section two used graph paper with blank sheets in section three.

Instructions for section one suggest: “record your emotions as you move through the space; interact with people and feel the atmosphere of the place. You can also write about what you are thinking about as you go through your coffee drinking ritual and how it is making you feel” (Figure 25). The second section asks people to keep track of their coffee drinking by the numbers: how many, what size, type of container, name of company, kind of coffee, name of server, etc. While giving some guidelines, I did not prescribe what data precisely should be captured. This was left up to participants own notions of what mattered. Instructions for section three, the creativity category, advised participants: “[u]se the blank paper to draw out your insights” (Figure 25). With these brief but cryptic instructions I outlined a functional procedural approach to ecological
citizenship which is as open ended and confounding as Dobson’s recommendations to ecological citizens who are consuming more than their fair share of the Earth.

![Ecological Citizenship Tool Box](image)

**Figure 11 Ecological Citizenship Tool Box**

As an aside, I found it interesting to consider how the look of the toolbox recalls some habits from science and art for beginning with a blank (white canvass, box, or container) empty place holder. The toolbox is a plain white box with Ecological Citizenship toolbox stenciled in black paint reminiscent of the white box of the gallery space. The blank book also had a white cover with Ecological Citizenship notebook stamped in black ink on the cover. Green bookmark sized pieces of paper with quotes, from Dobson’s, writings and my own recommendations for ecological citizenship, divided up the sections. These were to help reinforce the way I wanted the books to be understood as an interactive symbolic tool. Indeed the form is a partial critique of the
modes of doing research in science and art as I am an artist doing research in environmental studies trying to find my own authority and grounding where none seems to exist.

The instructions for the Ecological Citizen toolkit launch right into describing how to engage with the items in the toolbox. In fact, by following the instructions and recording snippets of experience in the pages of the notebook, attending a planned coffee chat, making a map and wearing the name tag, one was presumably already moving toward becoming an Ecological Citizen. Glaringly absent in the instructions is a clear description of ecological citizenship or how it has been situated in academic literature. This omission is a way to allow individuals into an open and relatively uncoerced dialogue on what ecological citizenship might be, perhaps giving them access to it through an imaginative engagement. But there is a problem with this approach which we will see.

**Work versus Ecological Citizenship**

In my eagerness to make work as part of the thesis requirement, and as part of my own desire to make things happen, I pushed this project into the sphere of work which we have already seen is not the ground for citizenship. Once the researched/participants finished gathering their data, we had a conversation at Coffeeco, a coffee shop on Division near Queen’s campus in Kingston. There I invited them to have coffee with me and to discuss their findings and experiences as a means to begin analyzing what they
might have learned. Three of my participant researchers attended, and with their permission I recorded our conversation. We chatted for an hour about their experience and their thoughts on the topic and the process. All three found it a bit of a job as they had difficulty finding time to make the entries. Nevertheless narratives had formed around each entry with relationships between entries.

Ann noticed that there were very different social atmospheres in the different locations where she gets her coffee and she also noted a difference in ‘quality’ of the coffee between locations. At Martha’s Table, the local soup kitchen, it was warm and cafeteria-like whereas at Coffeeco it’s better tasting, more expensive and the space felt more snobby, at least initially when she first started going. Both Lisa and Barb have highly regulated rituals around their coffee drinking. They both rise early and drink coffee in their homes alone except for the presence of their cats. Lisa guards these moments of quiet with her small cup of cappuccino as time just for her. She loves making coffee with her 30-year-old ‘cheep’ cappuccino maker that her dad bought which incidentally started breaking apart during this project and this failure become part of her narrative. Barb talked about how important the coffee is for her to wake up and think clearly. They all considered the popular wisdom of drinking fair trade and organic coffee and embraced it. Ann raised the point of its extra cost compared to “normal” coffee. I learned that there is fair trade sugar which can be purchased at Coffeeco. Near the end of the conversation I raised the point that we had not discussed coffee’s addictive quality nor did we discuss coffee’s relation to colonialism, racism, economic imbalances, cash
cropping etc. As we perform our coffee drinking rituals, we each travel the almost invisible terrain of the uprooted environment that is not nature, but nature re-assembled, irretrievable, consumable and disposable. This includes coffee beans, sugar, cream, honey, coffee cups, chairs, tables, coffee shops and all the roads and pathways that connect these things and bring them together. In this sphere ‘nature’ is unrecognizable as itself and with the exception of a couple of cats, the actors are all human with the rest of nature at their service. These are huge omissions which I will tackle soon.

Finally as a wrap up, I outlined the options for completing the mapping. Citizen tool boxes contained a blank paper folded like a road map with the word ‘map’ stenciled in black. Participants were to make their own maps, however there were few rules for what it should look like when they were done. They could use whatever mark-making tools they wished including gluing on photographs and other written material. There was no requirement to place things in geographic relationships or to scale, rather the protocols were meant to leave as much room for interpretation as possible. I provided ideas on how to map things and offered to work with each of them in doing this. However, the three people in attendance decided after a brief discussion that they had not given the project enough attention and they wanted to gather some more information and do the mapping on their own. They seemed to develop a sense of responsibility towards the project which had not been available to them prior to our collective conversation about their experiences. They each went away with their blank maps and renewed commitment for the project to work in their private spaces.
Shortly after, I had a conversation with the fourth participant asking her some of the same questions about what she thought she learned, if anything, and I give her similar instructions on how to proceed with creating her map. She had used the first section of the notebook as a kind of journal, writing her feelings about coursework and her visit to her grandmothers in Montreal. She found that coffee drinking was all tied up with her social relationships and friends, and she tended to go out for coffee. She too chose to make her map on her own.

I noticed some generational differences in the observations of the participants. Helen in her twenties had less of an environmental relation with her coffee drinking whereas, Lisa, just forty, is committed to environmental consciousness not just in her free-trade coffee but in all aspects of her life: a straw bale house, electricity off the grid, and an electric scooter to travel around with, which this project did not get at. Barb and Ann are older still, but Ann’s outlook seemed to reflect a sense of thriftiness about her purchases that the others did not.

**People with Environment**

A major contradiction of *Ecological Citizen in Training* and ecological citizenship in general is its anthropocentric focus. This project, and much ecological citizenship remains a conversation between people about people’s activities in the world and the social sphere of good consumer behavior haunts *Ecological Citizenship in Training*. This human-centered focus is no small dilemma for ecological citizenship, which needs to find
ways to expand the commons to include all the others who are excluded from the current
human collective. This is like asking how might we shift our activities towards a nature-
culture synthesis that “prefigures an ecologism in which ‘nature’ and ‘humanity’
constantly criss-cross making their identities plural and unstable” (Whiteside 18).

However, before we can proceed with ecological citizenship we must ask the
question of what happens when people are together but no politics take place. *Ecological
Citizen in Training* was intended to stimulate a political action, however it did not
overcome its social setting. Citizenship is a sight of struggle (Dobson and Eckersley 228). This sight of struggle is also the space of the ecological citizen who can only arrive
at the ‘common good’ sideways by stimulating and multiplying political spaces.
According to Dobson, orienting a ‘sustainable’ world is the responsibility of individuals,
while for Eckersley, this potential might yet be found in the nation-state. Eckersley tries
to find a more nuanced understanding of the complicated relationship ecological
citizenship has with governmental structures of power. She is trying to argue that the
nation-states’ role should be to ensure that the ecological house is ordered such that
people can act out the kind of politics Arendt so carefully outlines. Dobson’s ecological
footprint analogy of ecological citizenship presupposes “social bonds between
perpetrators and victims [in which] the former [is] to take responsibility for the affected
others” (Linklater 105). It seems to me that this sense of responsibility is an impossible
situation. This is our dilemma in the coffee shop. Our social bonds and ecological space
are incompatible as part of the coffee drinking practice which required we abandon either
our social or ecological interests. Drinking coffee binds us to ecological injustices while not participating excludes us from our deeply imbedded social practices.

Without some kind of situational re-orientation, the ecological citizen is not going to be a political actor, but at best a properly socialized being caught up in the processes of organizing the commons of nature and culture, in order to upgrade its functionality. One silent, but ubiquitous, other in our everyday experience is our immersion in or entwinement with institutional frameworks. Latour’s re-constructive post-modern architecture seeks the cracks in the façade of modernism as a way to anticipate and order the unpredictable activities, which it turns out are the keystone of citizenship. These modernist cracks are the toeholds of citizenship, which look to replace the illusion of ourselves as consumers by acting and speaking our way out of modernity with words and deeds that multiply the scene of address. By witnessing each other’s ecological citizenship, we have the means of acting our way into a ‘new’ ecological reality. I see *Ecological Citizen in Training* as a misrepresentation of the scene of address, which pretends to know in advance what is needed. Nevertheless it teaches something about our social sphere and its proclivity to maximize household management, often at the expense of citizenship.
Chapter 4

86 Hands on Wolfe Island: ethics, relationships and vulnerability

“But the artist’s creation is not the end of the process, as it is often thought to be. The process continues as members of the community experience the release, the inspiration that allows them to enflesh the message and begin activating change in their own terrains” Estella Conwill Májozo (Lacy 91).

86 hands on Wolfe Island is the third art project in my series. Chapter One, Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour, is situated as an individual ecological, and political action shown to an ambivalent public, and Chapter Two, Ecological citizen in training, addresses questions of political space or the space of address in the form of the polis. This chapter, explores the critical ground of my installation 86 Hands on Wolfe Island, which is another scene of address and an act emergent with an ethical impulse sensitive to our human vulnerability. 86 hands on Wolfe Island is a site-specific public art installation that opens a terrain which is un-authoritative, un-authorized, yet authored. I situate the installation, 86 hands on Wolfe Island, as a kind of ethics that ecological citizens have recourse to, by expanding my inquiry to further examine the ecological in ecological citizenship. Judith Butler’s Giving an Account of Oneself provides an analytical framework for mounting this critique.

In Chapter One and Two I have been grappling with a common error made about society, which is a perceived absence of public space for enacting citizenship generally
and ecological citizenship in particular. The perception results from the kind of temporality the space of address inhabits which does not survive beyond the activities of speech and action. The “peculiarity of the public realm” is that it only lasts while people are speaking and acting together but does not always appear where people gather (Arendt 199). This also means that when people gather there is not always a space of appearance or of action. We discussed this other kind of space in Chapter Two which we called social space. Again, the power of action emerges with the scene of address which means that it is inevitably extinguished the moment the potential evaporates along with its acting political community (Arendt 200).

Luckily, in order to address this temporality, the *polis* has a second function. Arendt calls this second function that goes on in the *polis*, witnessing. This witnessing gives us access to, action performed in the primary scene of address after it has disappeared. That is, we give an account of action through story. Butler calls this transference that occurs when “in giving an account, I establish a relationship to the one to whom my account is addressed and … both parties to the interlocution are sustained and altered by the scene of address” (Butler, *Giving* 50). This transference produces an ethical relation which also results in power “actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and new realities” (Arendt 200). Recognizing these two distinct functions, the primary and the secondary, the scene of address in public space
pushes us towards clearer thinking about what distinguishes citizenship from ecological citizenship. And this is big because my account of ecological citizenship so far continues to leave out the environment which I would argue is the whole *raison d’être* for the emergence of ecological citizenship.

As we have seen there is a troubling temporality in the primary scene of address which results in an exaggerated human-centric orientation. In order to mitigate this fleeting scene, which is so destabilizing for humans, Arendt focuses on the human dimensions of citizenship in her theory. The resulting citizenship then tends to overlook the actual environment in which action erupts, causing the actual material scene of address to be ignored, treated as background or relegated to the realm of household management. In any case, environment has almost no role to play when Arendt interprets action and politics in the primary and secondary scene of address. Now remember, interpreting the primary scene of address is actually the second function of the *polis* which Arendt calls witnessing and Butler calls transference.

Adjusting the substance and focus of our ethical gaze can lessen the human-centric emphasis. Consider that our relationships are not just with each other, but also with the environment, by which I mean, our conception of nature, animals, plants, soil, water etc. It is by adding a re-orientation towards environment in our secondary scenes of address that we can find the environment with which we are formed. Further, this activity is already part of Arendt’s *polis* and the place where politics makes its appearance as we witness each other’s actions. Here we have a way of learning that we
are not only in each other’s hands but we are also in environment. Environment is another Other. Together “we are beings who are, of necessity, exposed to one another in our vulnerability and singularity, and that our political situation consists in part in learning how best to handle—and to honor—this constant and necessary exposure” (Butler, Giving 31-2). It is through this exposure that we are opened to transference which is “precisely the emotionally laden scene of address, recalling the other in its overwhelmingness” (Butler, Giving 54). For Butler this transference is part of ethics (Butler, 2005 64) which is also Arendt’s scene of address where the polis engages in the words and deeds of citizenship. We are ecological citizens when we orient ourselves to Others which includes environment.

Butler’s undoing of the contrivance that the self is formed from within its own willfulness to be responsible and good, reveals an actual relational ethics, which has no ground except for the scene of transference that occurs when we orient ourselves toward each other and ask, or are asked: who are you? Butler’s caution is drawn from an eclectic range of theorists—Adorno, Levinas, Foucault, Laplanche, and Cavarero—in order to interrogate the folly of theorizing an ethical impulse grounded in the self-knowing subject. Or as she wonders: if “we are forged in the context of relations that become partially irrecoverable to us, then that opacity seems built into our formation and follows from our status as beings who are formed in relations of dependency” (Butler, Giving 20). In other words, ethics is not grounded in the individual as a self-forming being, which is the presumption of much discourse on ethics and an assumption also found in
writing about ecological citizenship. Ethics arrive in the act of orientation we bring to our relations with others.

For her, a critically oriented individual becomes something new in his relationship with the Other. For a truthful relation we need to acknowledge three things. First, our relational bonds limit our self-knowledge leaving us formed within an opacity towards ourselves, and second, the scene of address is a more primary ethical relation to the Other than giving an account of that primary relation. Third, as we have already learned from Arendt, we cannot perform citizenship by following rules or responsibilities dictated by others, because those activities fall into the categories of household management, which is qualitatively different from the public sphere. In the next section, I perform a secondary scene of address that is my account of 86 Hands on Wolfe Island.

**Accounting for Myself in 86 Hands on Wolfe Island**

I will perform this account of myself (the secondary scene of address) in this section by cutting a single intentional swath through the field of relationships that constitute me, as I pursued this project. But as Butler cautions, my critical stance towards my process of exploring the particular everyday reality that I inhabit, through my art practice, allows only a partial and flawed telling, in which I work to answer already circulating questions; who are you and what are you doing here? In other words, I am not detached from social or historical conditions but am already caught in a web of “social temporality that exceeds [my] own capacities for narration” which always becomes a
story in relation to a set of norms (Butler, *Giving* 7-8). Through an act of giving an account of myself in the dis-possession of my own story, I produce a critique which allows the emergence of an engagement with social and historical circumstances. I would amend this by adding the possibility for the emergence of an engagement with environment. The project 86 *Hands on Wolfe Island* is a critical ground for orienting ecological citizenship. This project is in part a response to coursework carried out in environmental studies which included writing a report on the environmental implications of the wind-turbine project proposed for Wolfe Island. My initial intention was to create another public space for making visible ‘wounds’ that the wind turbine project caused as it proceeded with its ‘superior’ economic justification. I perceived a lack of democratic space where the voices of those not on the side of government or industry could participate, as if what they said and did mattered. In order to do this I developed my opinions on the project by considering viewpoints of others, which is what Arendt suggests needs to be done if one is to develop an opinion which incorporates the perspectives of-the-world-as-it-appears-to-me, of multiple others (Sandilands 127). Arendt calls this “representative thinking” that is unique to public life (Sandilands 127). [R]epresentative thinking is ... a mode of knowing that derives from iterative and critical appearance, it is constitutionally public, multiple and reflexive” (Sandilands 127).

On Monday morning, July 13, 2009, I installed 86 white plaster casts of my hands on Second Line Road on the west end of Wolfe Island, which lies off Kingston in Lake Ontario, at the entrance to the St. Lawrence River. I spent most of the summer
making small sculptures of my hands with the help of Terry O’Reilly, the technical project assistant, in Ontario Hall at Queen’s University campus. Each hand delicately holds a fragment of shot rock indistinguishable from the shot rock of the roadside where I installed the hands. The location on Second Line Road between a wetland on one side and Lake Ontario on the other, was purposefully chosen to suggest that the hands be ‘read’ in relation to the Island’s 86 newly installed giant glistening white wind-turbines. This relationship should become more accessible as we proceed. I gave the piece a title by scratching 86 into two stones which I found at the location. It took about an hour and a half to install, and after taking a few images, we left the small white hands to their fate (Figure 24). I put out an announcement that 86 Hands on Wolfe Island would be on Wolfe Island for one week—on my facebook page, the School of Environmental Studies Website, and my page on the Art of Engagement Website (Kelley), which is a forum for artist to create new alliances and learn from each other2. I also emailed friends and colleagues with invitations accompanied by a map (Figure 12). I did not inform Islanders specifically, nor did I ask permission from anyone to place the hands on the side of the road.

2 From the front page of the network. “This network exists as an ongoing open space for international dialogue on the Art of Engagement. It is experimental, co-created and free. Here are some of the questions that draw us together: How do we image and imagine the work of art at this moment in history, when the survival of the planet is threatened? What role can art play in transforming the current cascade of social and environmental crises? Can we develop a way to create culture, to research, learn and teach with/in ecological systems? Where does art intersect with social struggle?”
You can begin to see how this is already a complicated set of relations. I am an artist in School of Environmental Studies making art which is not destined for the gallery (at least not right away) or the art market. I insist instead on claiming on my own initiative a place that is not mine to display art. Further, I contend that the location on the side of the road is a public space as Arendt understands it but still different from the mall in Chapter One and the group or polis of ecological citizens in Chapter Two. Further, I consider this installation to be connected to two other ‘prior scenes of address’ which occurred months earlier during tours of Wolfe Island guided by members of Wolfe Island Residents for the Environment (WIRE).

The first tour, a field trip on a yellow school bus, for the 2008 Environmental Studies 801 fall-term class, is in aid of our course project which asks the class to investigate issues related to several wind farms being planned for Ontario’s Prince
Edward County, and Wolfe Island’s project by Canadian Hydro Developers and the Canadian Government (Figure 26). In September as the bus lumbered across the island, I became aware of the Island’s physical geography. It is flat and rural with homes peppered along the fringes of its gravel roads which are carved out in a neat mile long grid interrupted and circumscribed by the islands shoreline. Past the smudge of the school-bus windows, nature anticipates winter as grasses in the marsh land and in the fields show signs of drying, turning the colour of hay. Trees hint at changes too; bits of yellow and brown replace green as bare branches poke out from the meager tree lines. None of the 86 turbines are up yet, but evidence of work towards this goal is everywhere. A fenced compound is full of turbine parts, several of the rebar enforced concrete pads are poured, each with its own new graveled access road, and the winter dock is busy operating as a delivery point for the mammoth blades and towers transported from Denmark on football field sized barges (Armstrong).

As we bounce along, immersed in the noise of the bus, our guides, WIRE members, present their concerns for the environment by showing us the locations of soon to be installed turbines and talking about issues raised by citizens at company-run information meeting and their feelings of powerlessness in the process. This includes their unease over habitat degradation, turbine and transformer noise, inadequate regulation on proximity of turbines to homes, schools and wetland; the disproportionate (for the small island) size of the project; and the tactics of the company to divide community members by offering secret contracts to people willing to allow turbines on
their property (Ross 24), and other nasty behavior, such as gag orders from the company on community members (Pritchard).

Although the one-sidedness of the discourse is not missed, the fact is that the mayor and the company declined a request to speak to us, remains an absence ripe for speculation. The tour is emotional and has a powerful effect on me. I understand this highly-charged emotional geography to be a primary scene of address which directly inspired the art installation.

![Image](image.jpg)

**Figure 13 September 2008** The ENSC class listens to the trouble with wind farms. This is a pathway near the wetland but not the site of the hands. You can see that fall is approaching. Everyone is rather subdued.

The encounter on the Wolfe Island tour recalls what Butler calls the interlocutory scene in which one is asked what one has done, or a situation in which one tries to make plain to one who is waiting to know, what one has done, and for what reason (Butler, Giving 14). However, the content of the address is veiled within the cultural codes rather than explicitly asked by the members of WIRE. Let me explain, we were there to
listen and the mode of address, which was energetic, insistent, excited and mobile, set up a dynamic where an emotional transference accompanied the information conveyed. The dynamics of WIRE’s address, its performance as a speech act, is where the demand for an account lay. However, our position as Masters Students and Wolfe Island ‘outsiders,’ somehow reinforced a passive demeanor to their energetic account of the problem of wind turbines, as we absorbed the overwhelmingness of their address.

My memories also include a second trip to Wolfe Island in early spring. I re-experience the disquiet of the earlier tour as WIRE members once again take several class members around the island. This time we traveled in two cars, there is a chill in the air and the sky is overcast as WIRE members tell us that we cannot drive up to any of the turbines because the wind-farm manager knows their cars and will report them for trespassing. We drive instead to one of our guide’s property to see a, not yet turned on, neighbour’s turbine from the property line. As we walked through wet spongy grass sheltered by a gaggle of trees and brush we discuss the noise the turbines will eventually create, once turned on. I wonder aloud as we hike towards the property line, if they might not want to record the ambient noise of the place as a base line for comparison since noise is one of the issues wind power raises.

Next, we stopped at the wetland on the road where I will eventually install the hands of which I had no inkling yet. While we stand on the road listening to anxious stories we are interrupted by the frogs who are vociferously participating in mating activities in the wetland that butts up against the road. It’s amazing. How many must
there be to make this kind of cacophony I wonder? We yell to hear each other over the frogs, so loud and insistent in their vocalizations. Impressed but with undiminished purpose our guide persists: she has brought us here to show what has happened in this particular spot. The road is almost twice as wide, built up with shot rock and fresh hydro poles, encroaching deeper into the wetland. A new culvert installed beneath, has one mouth opening into the wetland half under water, with the other opening into Lake Ontario, which laps at the shore, about a forearms length below the culvert. This outrage, our guide argues, will result in the draining of the wetland making the problem of wind turbine proximity and other environmental issues moot, as the wetland drains into Lake Ontario. I do not know if this will happen. It seems probable but I don’t know anything about the rise and fall of the waterline. This person who lives here and walks this road regularly, likely knows better than most. I go away once again feeling their helplessness that has been transferred to me.

My third return to Wolfe Island is the day I placed the 86 hands on the road. Nature has been working alongside the activities of governments and corporations, focused on building wind turbines. Because of the generous rains throughout the spring and summer, the wetland is bursting with bulrushes that come up to my shoulder and press up against the gravel road. There is movement all around us as the wind blows, water laps, and turbines turn, whispering their distant jet-like sounds. This is the same spot on Second Line Road where we stood listening to frogs in the spring but now they are busy doing other things that we cannot hear. Several turbines look as if they are in
the wetland although I know that only one is right beside the wetland and the rest are participating in an optical illusion as their size and height foreshorten the horizontal plane making them seem much closer than they are. I chose this widened portion of the road with its new and bigger culvert for my installation in order to insert it into the story of the turbines which is a story of an environment changing. While this art project resulted from a demand for an accounting of myself, it is even more importantly from my vantage point an act of opening a ground for others to give accounts of themselves. One more key part of this account is that when I went back to the location to pick up the installation, on Monday July 20, I found the site cleared of all the hands and the stones which I had scratched 86 onto had been turned over. 86 hands on Wolfe Island were gone.

*Environment Inside the polis*

86 hands on Wolfe Island is an intervention situated as a possible commons or alternate centre from which new actions might erupt. In other words the 86 hands create an experience which enlivens the relational substance of our human condition; our interdependence and vulnerability to each other, our institutions and the environments that circumscribe us. This is a complicated way of saying that the installation creates a ground which accesses or rests somehow upon our common vulnerability, which is that each of us arrive into an already formed world too late to undo what is done, but with the capacity to act into that world, re-making it into something else. Another complication of
our common vulnerability is that we cannot predict or control the outcomes of our actions, because we share this already made world with others who also possess the possibility to act with their corresponding uncontrollable and unpredictable outcomes. This triple vulnerability, arriving too late, our inability to control or predict our actions’ outcomes, and the corresponding inability of others to control or predict the outcomes of their actions, is the ground on which my art practice looks to perch. Each of these vulnerabilities is experienced in the primary scene of transference which is where the polis makes its appearance in body.

The primary scene of address takes place when one encounters the hands. The art installation’s materiality gives another different or alternate texture to the already alive discourses on Wolfe Island. I will analyze this ‘secondary scene of address’ in the next section of this chapter. But now let’s consider the affect of relational aesthetic which has been around as a conceptual notion in art discourse since at least 1979 when Craig Owens wrote his postmodern special practices that arose about the same time as Lacy’s New Genre Public Art, which expand the role of sculpture beyond its materiality to include all the relations that become available when sculpture is located in culturally and socially organized space (Kastner and Wallis 37). In other words, the space of the island already existed as a politicized dialogical space before the hands were placed there which recall prior scenes of address.³ The art installation foregrounds its own vulnerability as a

³ The hands stand in as referents for the sense of powerlessness the turbines represent and reproduce, as they produce electrical power which leaves the island via a 7.8 km long, 736,000 kg submarine cable, in the lake bed, that connects to Hydro One’s 230 kV Gardiner Road Transformer Station, in Kingston’s west end, to feed Ontario’s electricity market (Ontario Power Authority). This official
critical conceptual ground of resistance to the authoritative government and corporate power that, in this case, support industrial wind energy. The environment is also brought into sharper focus within these relations. The relational qualities that ‘speak to the wind turbines’ are reinforced by various juxtapositions of hands, landscape, people and turbines: size (human scale to giant), materials (handmade and machine made), number (86), colour (white) and location (wetland and buried emotions). The turbines are built on private land authorized by government and corporate institutions whereas the hands are situated on public ground with no claim to authority. The hands are inserted into a conversation already in full force within a community of people who have been feeling the effects of the turbines long before they are built and turned on. The juxtapositions of materiality between the turbines, the ecology of Wolfe Island, and the hands bring all this prior history—plus environment into view at the moment they become the scene of address and the polis makes its appearance.

The hands temporarily became part of the environment and catalyze emergent linguistic responses which is not so different than the argument Robert Mugerauer makes about the emergence of language and environment together (Mugerauer 52). That is, we are able to understand our environment only partially and always with the language that we use to inscribe it. For him “language and environment always already are given together” (Mugerauer 58). This also means that without a connection to environment language loses its meaning. He points out that environment is equally lost with the loss of factual language overwhelms the individual’s sensibilities and terminates agency by appearing to leave not room for anything more.
of language which has happened all over the world where indigenous people have been displaced and their language extinguished (Mugerauer 64-65). Language and environment are lost when we are “in a landscape that has no special meaning to us” (Mugerauer 63). And further to this task of language and environment being inextricably linked is the possibility of multiple landscapes originating with distinct languages (Mugerauer 66). I am suggesting that New Genre Public Art works on us and appeals to our linguistic sensibilities in a similar way that environment does in Mugerauer’s analysis.

One rather easy to identify kind of performance that makes environment culturally available in a distinct way can be understood in the work of Pat Aylesworth, an artist and student living in Winnipeg, Manitoba who found a way of saying something that is more than linguistic. (I found her work after I made mine.) She upholstered an old sectional in red fabrics with the words Home Sweet Home Do not Remove Me in big letters across the back, which she then placed outside in three locations, and this intervention spoke to the removal of homeless people from Winnipeg streets (Aylesworth). Over a day, the couch was placed in front of the university, on a street corner frequented by homeless people (Figure ) and in front of city hall (Figure 15). Different reactions from the public were observed in different scenes of address. At the university students felt comfortable lounging on the couch discussing the homeless, on the street corner frequented by homeless, but only one couple sat on the couch but most
avoided it and at city hall the Mayor sent a city employee out to have the couch removed, where a citizen argued with the employee about his right to sit on it (Belik).

There are a couple of similarities between this project and mine. Both are done by student artists who are concerned with an authoritative overpowering of how the environment is being controlled, which emphasizes the vulnerability of some people. In both cases the art was removed, and when that became known, citizens, who encountered the work, defended the art. In my case this occurred online when bloggers suggested that
the Mayor had admitted to having the art removed (Figure 37). However, the authoritative removals are not an action of the public sphere, but rather a kind of dismantling or disassembling of the space of the *polis*.

By July of 2009 the Wolfe Island turbines were up and running. Nevertheless it would seem from the response to my installation in newspapers, on radio, local TV and in the conversations the disconnections and difficulties within the community remain acute for people who felt that their concerns were not taken seriously (Schliesmann, *WOLFE*).

**Ecological Citizenship and the Secondary Scene of Address**

The secondary scene of address is where the environment can appear in actions of ecological citizens. After the art disappears the catalyst for the primary scene of address is removed, but the trail of activity that resulted leaves a trace: in people’s memory, in documentation, on the internet, in newspaper and TV archives, in my relationship to the work, in continued dialogues and in the potential for what might still happen—the possible—the future. Moreover, the space still exits. All this can be understood as the virtual, the past which lays coiled in the present (May 51). For Arendt it recalls the second function of the *polis*, witnessing, and for Butler these are the activities of other people giving an account of themselves.

Therorists trying to give terms, such as ecological citizenship, stability can end up inadvertently causing the secondary scene of address to atrophy. That is, instead of empowering individuals to act out their ecological citizenship, it can come off badly,
instrumentalizing empathy by extending guilt into the space of citizenship. Thus, laying blame disempowers individuals who are developing ecological sensibilities and reduces the space for citizenship, rather than expanding it. Dobson’s “ecological citizenship” suffers this fate. Butler warns that acting on the recommendations of theoretical positions used in political contexts tends to expose something of the strategic value of these theories (Butler, *Excitable 20*). That is to say, by taking Dobson’s ecological citizenship as theoretical recommendations, rather than as a speech act, we lose a sense of his ecological citizenship as a secondary scene of address as an opening for citizenship.

In an earlier draft of this thesis I wrote: “that the question of who took the hands and where they might be now still has the potential to be answered. And of course for someone the answer is already known, and someday I may find out too.” That day came when a friend asked the Mayor of Frontenac and Islands if he knew anything about the hands. He told her that he had them, which she relayed to me. In early May, after some emails and phone calls, the mayor finally gave me the phone number of Wolfe Island’s maintenance shed, where the hands were being stored in two shipping bags. I made the call then picked-up the hands, which I later exhibited in the final exhibition *Dust in Dust out*, along with screen shots of the various web sites that had noted the installation of hands on Wolfe Island. This becomes another part of the history of the hands. Their existence and continued movement as political instruments deserves some thought. If what I enacted is political action, in Arendt’s sense of the word, then while I am the actor the hands are referents and symbols of that politics. Removing the hands did not erase
them as a political referent. And ultimately they were left intact as the maintenance crew that removed them stored them in the Islands maintenance shed where I picked them up ten months after they disappeared. Removing the hands from the road attempts to erase not just the installation, but the ideas raised by its presence on the road. However, as this paper shows, that did not happen. The sculpture remains part of what Gilles Deleuze calls the ‘actual’, the real visible stuff of the world, but they are also packed full of the virtual as they contain ‘the past’ which is coiled inside ready to erupt from multiple locations in a multitude of ways, and this is what makes the future (May 47-8).

Communication is expressed not just in what we say, but in how we say it, what Butler calls the mode of address (Butler, Excitable 2). Implicit censorship “operates to make certain kinds of citizens possible and others impossible” (Butler, Excitable 132). One example of implicit censorship manifests in the performance of the ostracization of WIRE activists who told the 801 class that they could not walk down the street because of their opposition to the kind of Wind Farm being developed. In an email, an acquaintance described her experience with an islander who was struck by the fact that the sculptures were not made by another Islander. They believed that WIRE activists had been further ostracized because of the art installation. Whether the kinds of censorship which occurred in relation to the wind farm were explicit, such as secret contracts or the removal of the sculpture by the maintenance crew, or more implicit, as in the feelings of being ostracized, vulnerability can be traced as an active dynamic. I did not predict my own implication in exacerbating how WIRE activists might be ostracized.
Unpredictability is the vulnerability that our actions are imbued with from their beginnings. The activists used their own and the environment’s vulnerability as a location to speak from, while the government and corporation used ‘strategies’ (signed contracts that promised cash) to shore up their vulnerabilities (Pritchard; Ross; Schliesmann, Project). Censorship can be ‘productive’ and sometimes instrumental of other social aims (Butler, Excitable 133). But, instrumental censorship doesn't really care about speech, rather it cares about the acquisition of political aims (Butler, Excitable 133). In this case, a power struggle between the activists and the government might be understood as explicit and instrumental but there are nuances within implicit censorship which have the potential to infuse radically fresh and invigorating alternate responses such as the installation of 86 hands on Wolfe Island.

**Multiplication of Ecological Speech Acts**

It has been quite difficult to get here. I keep hearing about our responsibility towards the Earth in environmental literature that tries to realign our world forming activities. But often we read these directives for a better world with unsophisticated eyes. I misunderstand some writers when I believe their arguments are prescriptions for how to be, rather than understanding their work as performances. Authors can make the same mistake. This reminds us that an account is not always citizenship either. In fact, we are vulnerable to persuasive well-argued accounts, as Latour’s work reminds us. Latour performs a kind of accounting which proposes an alternative architecture for bureaucratic
efficiency in his book, which veils the violence that would be necessary to making everyone and everything conform to such an order. This happens because I read with a willingness to be transformed, but I need also to be critical at the same time. This is part of the practice of citizenship. Witnessing is the secondary scene of address, which we need access to as a practice, but we also need to be able to change our opinions about what we have witnessed. If this is true, then does it not require us to orient ourselves toward what we want to be responsible for in our witnessing? We must bring a new set of eyes to the scene of address, by scouring the scene for the notes that animate the particularities of our individual sensibilities, oriented towards our duties as ecological citizens. Our duty is that we need to pay close attention in order to do this witnessing well as ecologically-oriented citizens. This means we need to work at getting a hold of the threads in our scenes of address, that allow us to witness what really matters to us. Doing anything less is akin to giving up the right to perform our very own ecological citizenship.

Witnessing multiplies the possibility for action. The Kingston Whig-Standard published an article about the sculpture titled “Mysterious handiwork-Wolfe Island: Eighty-six plaster hands turn up beside road and no one knows how they got there” on July 17th, 2009 (Figure 27) (Schliesmann, WOLFE). Thus, the hands became a nchew catalyst for the WIRE group to speak from. Members of WIRE voiced their opposition to the turbine project in many formats outside the official and obligatory community meeting hosted by the company. For example, on our class tour, on web sites, at council
meetings, in their everyday conversations and in the press. They took the opportunity to continue voicing their concerns in the article. And even though, within a day of the publication of the newspaper article, the hands were removed, the scenes of address that they inspired continued. For example, there is the English Desk Assignment for people learning English called *Tilting at Windmills*, in which the hands are mentioned (Figure 29 and 30). There are a couple of blogs both with images of the hands and one has a drawing of the hands done by another artist (Figure 31, 32, and 35). The hands were also used for more calculating aims where they are hilariously misrepresented on a Wind Industry Web site as well organized protesters (Figure 33). Others simply wait to be told what they are to think as they do on the Wolfe Island Business and Tourist organization web site (Figure 36). I do not know any of these people and have had no contact with them (as far as I can tell) in real life except for the first tours of Wolfe Island with WIRE people. But there is always the potential that I might.

Several people that I do know wanted me to go look for the hands, immediately, but I chose not to. By leaving them on the road I gave the hands a kind of autonomy that I did not want to disrupt. I wanted to give them more time, which I sensed would allow something else unplanned to happen. I even fantasized that the hands would turn up back at my studio. I rationalized that enough people knew who I was and there were plenty of ways of getting in touch with me, by phone, by email, or on either web site. The other reason that I did not go after the hands is because I was resigned to their disappearance—initially. I knew that this could happen and that I would have no control over them in a
public location where anyone could take them. It is important to think about how these are two very different reasons for not going out actively to find them. However, both are linked to vulnerability and lack of control. One is like thinking of an opening to the polis and the other a foreclosure anticipating the loss and disempowerment even before it happens.

For example, there is the foreclosure that accompanies the speech act of the mayors who instruct government employees to act out authoritative actions in the public space. These authoritative responses raise the question of how to understand the ‘threat’ that comes from unauthorized public art and in this case ecological citizenship, depending on who you are and your position in society. The requirement to subvert that threat, by removing it, might be confused with the work of household management. However, it is more precisely an anti-political move that tries to shut down by preempting the possibility of becoming engaged in discourse about what it means. More important to my thesis is trying to understand the stutter, or the absence of an already formed opinion, that makes room for an alternate more emergent response. Ethics plays a key role in unraveling the possibility for this more emergent response which Zygmunt Bauman calls the ethical impulse.

I performed a secondary scene of address in the last section, by witnessing Aylesworth’s citizenship, which constitutes a primary and a secondary scene of address. That is, I would have no access to Aylesworth’s citizenship if the author had not shared her work, and it would have been less vivid if Vivian Belik had not already performed a
secondary scene of address in her account. In this example I do not play both roles, as I do here in my thesis, by being both the author and witness to the action. I become a witness to Aylesworth and Belik’s activities in the polis and the particular qualities of their citizenship by noticing where they have placed their emphasis as they multiply the scenes of address. Each of these scenes becomes an addition to the chatter of the polis, which emerges where people show themselves in their individuality.

“[T]he ability of environmental movements to contribute to invigorating a genuinely public culture (or, for that matter create a public culture of nature) relies on its ability to cultivate a space of possibility for appearance to multiple others to reveal and be revealed by environmental opinion” (Sandilands 119). This is Butler’s ethics which derive from recognition of irresolvable unknowability which is our common vulnerability which includes a “response to vulnerability ... that emphasizes our common place, our common risks our common limits” (Carver and Chambers 125). Indeed, a careful look would show that the 86 hands on Wolfe Island were not in a position to throw stones as many people interpreted them, but were gently holding them in different positions. “Thinking in the place of the other requires abstraction from detail ... it also requires active participation in the realm in which the other appears” (Sandilands 127). My work attempts to “performatively [show] the particular community issue to appear as a common good but without a pre-existing understanding of how that “good” will work in any other situation” (Sandilands 128). I do not pretend to know in advance how the common good of this installation will play out, if at all, and this is our common
vulnerability, which is our critical imperative to think and act out the question of “how might you live?”
Chapter 5

Conclusion

“Although nobody knows whom [she] reveals when [she] discloses [herself] in deed and word, [she] must be willing to risk the disclosure” (Arendt 180).

My ecological citizenship for this thesis has been a series of art interventions which stage the primary scene of address. Everything else is tied to the secondary scene of address, where others might witness this work, including people who attend the art shows and you, who read this thesis. This is how I perform my ecological citizenship at this time in my life. It has taken a concentrated effort to get here with a new confident understanding of ecological citizenship. What I have learned is that ecological citizenship is politics, but not as we often understand politics as something that politicians do. In fact, it would seem that politicians, when they are doing their jobs, are involved in activities of the private sphere of household management, and sometimes, when it suits, anti-political activities, which they perform in the service of the social sphere. This critical distinction allows us to recognize the difference between prescriptions of household maintenance and politics, which when conflated into ecological citizenship muddles our understanding of rights and responsibilities.

Ecological citizenship is not simply conforming to someone else’s description of their ecological citizenship. In other words one cannot simply put on someone else’s suit of ecological citizenship and still call it citizenship. One needs to do their own
performance. This is absolutely vital for the *polis* to exist. Sometimes we get caught up trying to copy, for example, Dobson’s performance of his ecological citizenship in his speech acts, which appear as theoretical texts.

And so, in Chapter One when I explore my ethical relationship to Om-me-me-wog, I am also witnessing Mick Smith’s performance of his particular citizenship which tries to work out the nature of an ethical impulse that underpins our relationship to an extinct bird. Then, as Madame E, I perform a new action that witnesses and newly performs another action of ecological citizenship on the bus and in the mall. Madame E, also witnesses the work of Dr Seuss who performs his ecological citizenship when he wrote the story *The Lorax*. By witnessing Dr Seuss’ work, I re-emphasize the importance of the political space of freedom necessary, for example, if one chooses to begin where the Lorax left off, and speak for the trees.

Butler argues that we can only perform our politics in relationships and so in some ways by conceiving a persona, I allowed myself to create a relationship between myself and Madame E, which circumvents the demand for politics to be carried out in relationship to others. Since I could not very well witness myself directly I created a minor but critical distance in order for a pseudo relationship to emerge. These kinds of shortcuts cannot stand alone as acts of citizenship.

However, I realized the limitations of this instrumental relation between myself and Madame E and looked to address it by creating a community of ecological citizens in Chapter Two. *Ecological Citizen in Training* helped tease out the problem of conflating
the private sphere of household maintenance with the distinctly different public sphere of political action. But it also shows that producing ecological citizens is not something one can instrumentalize, systematize or prescribe. My ecological citizens in training were caught trying to perform my ecological citizenship, which could never result in their own. These prescriptive ambitions are more in line with Arendt’s worlds of work and labour where the maintenance of life might get done, we hope, in ecologically ‘sustainable’ ways. However, the worlds of work and labour should not be conflated or confused with the action of ecological citizenship.

Experience always puts you in your place as an individual up against or formed within a dominant social paradigm, whose interests are not yours. Our dominant social paradigm tries to keep the lid on the power of individuals in action. In some ways performance art lets one become, in the moment, radically out of step with the demands/imperatives of that dominant social paradigm. This stepping outside is the means by which we can glimpse society’s vulnerabilities which are inherently different than ours, because it has no body.

Artist’s methodologies bend social conventions in order to invent new relationships or expose old ones to critique, but without a fully formed idea of where things might go. In fact, artists depend on the uncontrollable and unpredictable function that art performs. I am empowered by my art practice. But it is a complicated empowerment which is cyclical, manifesting certain unreadable disassociations during distinct phases of the creative process. That is, I do not always know what I am doing or
why. However over the years, I have developed a philosophy about what these destabilizing effects are and how to trust in them as part of the process. They signal what I think of as stages in the creative process. And so when I first made and placed the 86 hands out on second line road, I had no idea what might happen. In fact, because I placed the hands so far off the beaten track, I feared that no one would see them, that they would simply disappear without a trace, and I would be left facing the futility of my actions, still casting about for an ecological citizenship that I could make sense of. Making art is a destabilizing process because one looks at breaking apart the social and therefore physical constructs, disassembling the cultural norms that exist invisibly in real places in order to better see.

My ecological citizenship is an unorganized art. My work at the School of Environmental Studies, doing Art as research, is a particular kind of invention that equates to my own, individualized sorting out of the world, which questions as it revisions that world, as it has already been sorted by others. I am trying to place myself and what I do in my art practice into the cultural discourses, which focus on environment and its associated catastrophes playing out in texts and in real. This is how I find myself in the Environmental Studies, as an artist making work that critiques and experiments with thinking, speaking and acting out ecological citizenship.

I have come around to a clearer understanding of what kind of ethics and politics seem to underpin my living choices through the making and sharing of my artworks, but also then by exploring and trying to understand the kinds of ethics I read. Indeed, the
process of making work has taught me that I want to share my own performances of ecological citizenship. In doing this, I am looking not only to find a commons in which to share a discourse—but also intend to participate in creating new locations—new commons to work out what is happening. As Butler and Arendt suggest this process of exchange is based on relational dynamics not just orienting ourselves to each other but also to the world.

Butler argues that we cannot know ourselves fully (Butler, Giving 41-42). While Arendt points out that neither can we predict the outcomes of our actions because speech is accompanied by an excess, which is always being performed and received in uncontrollable and unpredictable ways. Arendt characterizes it: action and speech are surrounded by and in constant contact with the web of the acts and words of others. This is the reality of sharing the Earth and our common vulnerability.

For Sandilands and I, green performativity disrupts the prescriptive attitude in much ecological writing. Arendt argues that we bring “new events into being through public performative speech and deed as a result of the creative ability inherent in individuals ... enacted when they appear to one another to influence the world beyond their own selves and interests” (Arendt 233; Sandilands 125). “[G]reen performative politics is about developing a different set of knowledge practices, a different set of relations to the world and the others with whom we inhabit it, and a different set of understandings of nature and environment as a result” (Sandilands 125). We are
responsible for allowing ourselves to be formed in the web of relations. What follows is that responsibility lies not with the self, but with the relationship of self to Other.

I began with the thought that we each have the potential, at any moment in time, to act out our own version of ecological citizenship. Ecological citizenship lies within the realm of the real, accidental, unpredictable world of play where we create rich meaningful engagement that resists formula and always resides at least partially in the realm of the unknown. It exists as an immersive process challenging the combined whole of an individual’s physical, mental and institutional focus. It demands reflection on the question, how can and will I live my life.

In these performance pieces I liberate my own political creativity, which is oriented towards my ethical sensibilities. These ethical sensibilities, which I have only begun to explore, underpin how I show myself in the public world when I am channeling my political identity as a citizen. The crucial thing to separate out is the difference between expressing private interests, which action is not and “coming to be an individual connected to multiple other individuals through the cultivation of a distinct appearance” (Sandilands 127).

When, theorists separate categories such as politics and ethics and then use them to describe how they see the world working they suggest ethics and politics are two ways of channeling human behaviour; politics from outside and ethics from within (Bowersox 84). Yet, ethical deliberations themselves are political activities (Thiem 310) (Callicott 92). I detect in my nature an ethic of do-it-yourself, which is not simply a function of
my distrust of others or an element of my upbringing, but a desire for agency, skills and knowledge that I can share and develop in connection with others.

It seems to me that many ethical theories about the environment look to close off or avoid occurrences of relational vulnerability in order to calm a sense of being in proximity to an ever-present and uncontrolled threat. Thus, the issue of interdependence and vulnerability is never put forth as an ethic or a politics in itself. However, what we are capable of is all up in the ether, until we practice something we will lack access to the substance of that ether. Thus, the hope for transformation, the means for making an accessible ground for a new identity, though awkward and uncomfortable, lies in our critical imaginations and our courage to act on it. There is no doubt that consumers in the West are troubled by consumption which gets in the way of being ecologically engaged citizens. My project tries to allow space for reflexive processes towards discovering the transformative magic implicit in ecological citizenship. In this view, ecological citizenship is not a state of being, but rather a continuously multiplying process.

The immersion of an individual into the process of ecological citizenship is one of always becoming something or someone new. From its core, or center, or beginning, stretch the succession of an individual’s actions which make up the process of living. We, you and I, multiply the possibilities for concerned engagement by imagining and acting into the public sphere. As the character of the public sphere changes through the multiplication of acts of ecological citizenship we sculpt our thinking and the world. Our ability to think new things occurs because acting and action create new relations and new
realities. Understanding is only part of what we need to make a “meaningful life,” we also need the *polis* (Arendt 208). The ethical import of such a critical interaction with our own life lies not with some instrumental end, but as an end in itself. Its value and worth are already present in the activity of relating to others. Our beginning is ongoing and developmental in tandem with the formation of one’s life philosophy, a sense of self, and skill at mobilizing a critique of our institutionalization. Ecological citizens imagine ways to engage with the environment for the environment as they change themselves and the world.
Works Cited


Figure 16 Invitation to Thesis Exhibition Dust to Dust

Figure 17 Gallery Still of Madame E riding and performing on Kingston City Bus

Figure 18 Invitation for Union Gallery Exhibition of Leaf Collection: Madame E and her suit of environmentally conscious a(r)mour
Figure 19 Detail of hands in Union Gallery

Figure 20 Installation of hands in Gallery
Figure 211 Gallery Installation Image of chair, plant, and wooden box with tree
Figure 212 Gallery Image of Suit of Leaves
Figure 23 Madame E at the Mall

Figure 24 Terry installing on Wolfe Island
Figure 25 Instructions for Ecological Citizens

Instructions for

ECOLOGICAL CITIZEN

Toolkit

Your Notes:

This toolkit has been put together for you. There are several sections and they can be divided into the rational, the emotional, and the imaginative. These are general categories and you may deviate in order to tell your story and record your insight. The graph paper is for recording the factual details of your coffee drinking activities. For example the location where you got your coffee, its size, the kind of cup, where you disposed of it, its free-trade status, its cost, who you went with, how you get there (car, walk, bike, bus), did you use a drive through, how long did it take etc. You need to record this information for every coffee or tea that you drink. The emotional section is the lined paper and you are to record your emotions as you move though the space, interact with people and feel the atmosphere of the place. You can also write about what you are thinking about as you go through your coffee drinking ritual and how is it making you feel. Also note conversations and any work that got done. Finally there is the innovation category. Use the blank paper to draw out your insights. This can be accompanied by writing in the second lined section. What are you noticing about the environments that you had not considered before. What do you care about in the space? What are the names of the people who are making the coffee and are there any plants or green areas? Be inventive draw things together that you never considered before. Get engaged by paying attention to the space and intervene in shaping the relationships that are happening there.
Figure 26 Map of Wolfe Island turbine layout
WOLFE ISLAND: Eighty-six plaster hands turn up beside road and no one knows how they got there

Posted By PAUL SCHMIDT 6 months ago

Att installation or environmental protest? No one is sure what the 86 or so plaster hands, each holding a rock, that appeared on a Wolfe Island roadside this week are meant to symbolize.

Nor does anyone know who created them and placed them beside the 2nd Line Road on the west end of the island, but it is sure to happen that they are situated on a contentious piece of ground.

Now here, last winter, that the township widened the roadway by chopping rocks—much like the rocks in the plaster hands—all along a strip of environmentally significant wetland.

Some residents claim the work was done to allow wind turbine company Canadian Hydro Developers to move its equipment and machine down the road—something the company denies.

Now the rock encroachment is the subject of a formal request for an investigation under the provincial Environmental Bill of Rights.

“I would love to know who the artist is,” said Gail Hannay, a co-applicant to the investigation request. “We don’t know what the statement is. It could be what you want it to be.”

Hannay was alerted to the presence of the plaster hands on Wednesday morning by a friend who was out on 2nd Line Road walking her dog.

Hannay and her friend went out and found the pieces, as well as wind farm manager Mike Jablonski, who was also examining the creation.

The two know each other well. Hannay is the head of Wolfe Island Residents for the Environment, the citizens group that has expressed ongoing concerns about the environmental and health fallout from the 6th turbine project.

Sitting beside the hands is a flat rock with the number ‘86’ scratched on it.

Hannay said she told Jablonski that she knew nothing about the plaster hands and that it had nothing to do with her organization. But she was excited about the artwork because it enables her to share some issues.

“You see this shut down road and the wetland? This is an encroachment into the wetland. It has been disputed and we have requested an investigation by the Ministry of the Environment,” she said.

Hannay believes the rock enclosure was 150 meters long and pushing about five meters into the wetland, was created in order to move back a series of hydro poles that were blocking Canadian Hydro Developers from bringing their giant turbines and pedestrians down the road.

“The township says they put it in,” said Hannay. “Canadian Hydro Developers provided the material free of charge. They provided the labour free of charge.”

Canadian Hydro spokesman Geoff Cameron confirmed that his company supplied the rock.

“The material was additional material from the wind project,” said Cameron. “We donated the material to the township for the rockwork.”

He said the donation enabled the township to keep its costs down and save taxpayers money, but the widening was in no way done to allow for the movement of the turbines.

“We worked on the 2nd Line was the township doing the road expansion work. It was not done in anyway to facilitate the project,” said Cameron.

Hannay said such work on designated wetland could only be approved if the township did the work.

“This is the most sensitive area, environmentally,” she said.
Wolfe Island hands

Added by Lisa Figg on July 13, 2009 at 1:52pm

86 hands installed on Wolfe Island, Kingston Ontario in response to the installation of the 86 wind turbine project and the disconnections it caused in the community. July 13-20, 2009

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Delete Album
Share

Comment

Follow – Email me when people comment

Comment by Justin Allen on July 14, 2009 at 12:51pm
Beautiful!

Follow – Email me when people comment
I was in Kingston for 2 or three days a few summers ago. Kingston is a beautiful, old city on the St. Lawrence River. While we were there, my husband and I decided to take a ferry ride over to Wolfe Island. A ferry is a boat which transports people and sometimes vehicles across the water. Wolfe Island is the largest of a group of islands known as the Thousand Islands and it's a popular spot for tourists and canoeists and boaters in the summer. It's also home to a community of farmers and artists and small business owners as well as people who live there all year. I remember seeing a small art gallery, a hardware store, a book store, a general store and a pub with a deck where we sat to eat our lunch and watch boats and windsurfers sailing past. I also remember seeing signs which read, 'No Wind Mills'! Many of the people who live on the island were opposed to having a wind energy farm built on the island. Some say they case headaches and dizziness and other health problems. Some people object to them because they say that they are noisy. The blades of the wind turbines make a humming or whining noise as they go round. Other people are against the windmills because they worry that they may harm local bird and wildlife species. People who support the building of the wind energy farm accused the windmill opponents of nimbyism. Nimbyism is a word that was formed by the first letters of the words in the phrase 'not in my backyard'. While many people know that wind can produce energy that is cleaner than gas or coal or nuclear sources, they may not want to live near the windmills. They want them to be put up somewhere else. Calling their protests nimbyism suggests that the good of the larger community is more important than the concerns of the smaller group of people directly affected by the change. I had forgotten all about the dispute until I returned to Kingston recently and saw dozens of windmills on Wolfe Island. The protesters lost their battle because 86 wind turbines are now operating on the island providing energy for thousands of homes. The anti-windmill group was probably tilting at windmills. Tilting at windmills is an expression that means someone is doing something that probably doesn't have much chance of success. In other words, the opponents were up against very large powerful groups like the government and the wind industry and the public desire for cleaner energy so they weren't likely to prevent the project from going ahead. And the island community is divided too. Some don't mind the windmills and are happy to be able to make some money by providing land for the windmills to be built on. Others are still angry about what has happened to the island. In July there was an interesting form of protest which appeared in the rocks near the windmills. It was a group of 88 clay hands which were holding stones as if they wanted to throw them. The artist who created the hands wanted to depict, or show, the bad feelings which the conflict about the windmills caused in the community.

If you would like to see pictures of the hands go to:
http://www.queensu.ca/ensc/events/hgehands.html

Figure 29 The English Desk: English as a second language **Tilting at Windmills**
Figure 30 The English Desk Exercises questions and answers.

The English Desk - Exercises
English as a Second Language - Listening and Comprehension Exercise

Friday, August 14, 2009

Tilting at Windmills

Name 10 sources of energy.
Divide the list into two groups: environmentally-friendly and those that aren't environmentally-friendly.
Where does the energy you use in your home come from?
Are you for (in favour of) or against (opposed to) wind turbines as energy sources?

Listen to the Podcast.

Which best describes the topic of this podcast?

It's about a dispute over windmills on Wolfe Island.
It's about a new way of building windmills.
It's about a description of Wolfe Island.

Listen to the podcast again.

Put the sentences in the correct order.

She forgot about the dispute.
She saw 66 windmills on Wolfe Island.
She visited Wolfe Island a few years ago.
There were signs that read 'No Wind Mills'.
She recently returned to Kingston.

Answer the questions.

1. Where is Kingston? ________________
2. How did they get to Wolfe Island? ________________
3. What did the signs say? ________________
4. What health problems do people say windmills cause? ________________
5. What do some people accuse opponents of? ________________
6. How many windmills are on the island now? ________________
7. What did the artist make out of clay? ________________

Fill in the blanks:

ferry / protest / opposed / signs / divided / tilting / blades / nimbysim

1. People who are worried about the birds are ________ to having the windmills on the island.
2. They felt as though they were ________ at windmills because there was no way to stop the project but they tried anyway.
3. They accused the people of ________ because they didn't want any windmills near their homes.
4. They took the ________ over to the island.
5. She saw ________ which read 'No Wind Mills'.
6. The 66 hands were an interesting form of ________.
7. The opinions of the island community is ________ too. Some are in favour of the windmills and some are against them.
8. The ________ of the turbines make a humming or whining noise.

Figure 31 Flicker Account Creativeleana
Figure 32 Flicker Account Creativeleena
Some developers have been stymied at town hall meetings, while others require police officers to keep order at town hall functions. Still, other developers have had developments delayed. Such was the case at the Wolf Island Ecotourism Centre, where—though a protest crowd formed outside the hands-on town hall meetings were held—developers were able to progress on their projects.

Well-organized opponents have developers’ attention

Opponents have developed strategies to delay wind projects. Developers have responded by holding meetings with potential opponents. Some developers have resorted to “wind farms” with little regard for the community. Others have made appeals to a “Wishbone” town or “Wind Tyrant,” rather than facing up to a “Decade of People’s Health.”

In the last 30 months, the opposition in Ontario has really grown within a small but vocal group. The town hall meetings are held, and the local resistance stems from decentralized not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) advocacy groups bent on blocking wind projects.

“People who drive several hours from town to town to disrupt meetings,” Bob Ralston, of WINIP says, “It’s fairly obvious because of the intensity and determination that people are fortunate to have. People really care about meeting, according to town hall. In fact, he says, the same faces are always there. “If you do this long enough, you’ll see the same faces at every meeting.”

Still, others “…people aren’t NIMBYs—they are MAMAS,” using the acronym for “build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything.”

NIMBY past and present

NIMBYs, of course, are not new. Although the level of commitment and intensity employed by the opposition is new.

When not involved with wind projects, the developer’s fields of activity are often the subject of active controversy. In Ontario, for example, the developer’s fields are often associated with developers from other countries. The developer’s newspaper, Infracom, occasionally cites the developer as an expert in renewable energy or sustainable development.

A decade ago, wind opponents used environmental concerns, oversold the potential of wind and the basis of their complaints. Today, the town hall meetings are held, and the local resistance stems from decentralized not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) advocacy groups bent on blocking wind projects.

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Infracom’s past and present

Infracom, of course, is not new. Although the level of commitment and intensity employed by the opposition is new.

Each year, the wind industry relies on scientific research and analysis to prove wind: (1) to the general public; (2) to the regulator; (3) to the policy maker; and (4) to the general public. Infracom’s newspaper Infracom, occasionally cites the developer as an expert in renewable energy or sustainable development.

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As posted earlier on this site, the Canadian Hydro Developer’s Wolfe Island project has reduced this beautiful tourism gem to an industrial wasteland. Sensitive provincially significant wetlands have been destroyed and the tourism industry has died.

Recently, Wolfe Island residents woke up to a strange site. 66 plaster hands (representing the 66 wind turbines) pocking up from the ground, each holding a rock. Read more on this story here: *Guerrilla Sculpture*

**Update on the Destruction of Wolfe Island**

By: Nathalia Lifchits on 07/17/2009 at 17:40

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Enter your email address to subscribe to this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

**INDUSTRIAL WIND INFO**

- Allegheany Treasures
- Blog Catalog
- Hourly Generator Output & Capability in Ontario
- Industrial Wind Action Group
- National Wind Watch
- Hardox Box of Tricks
- Petition – 2 km Wind Turbine Setbacks
- Society for Wind Vigilance
- Sygropa
- Tom Adams Energy
- Wind Turbine Syndrome – Mike Perpent

**WE NEED YOUR HELP**

Legal Challenge Fund

**LATEST ONTARIO NEWS**

- South Side Wind Farm progress stalled by town
- Wind consents
- Democratic rights slowly being denied

**RECENT COMMENTS**

- Melodie Buret on McQuay's Get Rid of Two Government Watchdogs
- Equalizer on Location, Location, Location...
- Migration, Migration
- Quote on The Reason for the Infinity Here and Abroad

**LATEST IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS**

- Investigating the impacts of windfarm development on paawalks in England
- Wind Farm, Residential Property Values, and Rubber Rulers
- Wind Energy’s Ghosts

**TOP CLIKS**

- abc.net.au/news/vide...
- waterkeeper.ca/video...
- wind-watch.org/new/...

**HOW INEFFICIENT IS IT?**

Over 1,100 MW of wind power
Figure 35 Shawn10000 Blog and Drawing of Hands
**SAILING IN THE WINDS OF WOLFE ISLAND**

The weather has not deterred the youngsters enrolled in a 5-day summer ‘learn to sail camp’ on Wolfe Island offered by the Ontario Sailing Association. The association’s Beem Mobile Program introduces children ages 8-14 to the sport of sailing and gives them the opportunity to develop their sailing skills. Children are taught the basics of sailing using the Canadian Yachting Association’s White sail level 1, 2 and 3 standards. The sailing program, arranged for the island by Nicole Clark, is a first in a number of years, although ideally the island affords a great opportunity for sailing programs and events.

Parents and grandparents were on hand to watch the children take off on their first day after what probably seemed like a long time to sit in their Pico Laser boats listening for last minute instruction.

*The joy of it all can be summed up in the words of a younger as he sailed away from the township’s new dock and shouted at the top of his lungs... ‘I’m sailing’. The enthusiasm with which the program has been received augers well for its return, (maybe longer) next year.*

*Posted by W Knott at 42:12 PM*

**AN ALTERNATIVE ENERGY HUB - SUSTAINABILITY ON EVERYONE’S MIND THESE DAYS!**

Frontier Islands Mayor Jim Vandernoot is worried about green and renewable energy, not just because of the wind-towers on Wolfe Island but because of the swiftness of activity going on in the city, county and region noting as well the recognition and financial benefit not Queen’s and St. Lawrence College have reaped from the province for its efforts in alternative energy.*

*With this island wind virtually complete and awareness of the activity here, the new pro-growth image will help in the development of what’s next, “the Bo Ma” Island wind turbine project, “there at the July 1st results time for action” for the Provincial Government.*

---

**Figure 36 Wolfe Island Business and Tourist Association Web Site**
Apparently, the Mayor of Wolfe Island, Jim Vandermeulen ordered the “Greens” Art display quickly removed. This was done unannounced, under the cloak of darkness in the middle of the night. The pieces that tell the narrative were simply chopped off and left jutting out of the ground. Even the rock with “96” marked on it was taken away.

So, Ms. Vander Hoek, where are these pieces of artwork now? Did you destroy them? Are they destroyed in your yard?

Wind Concerns Ontario would like to offer to purchase these pieces of art from you. This is a serious offer. Please contact us at windconcerns@gmail.com

Last September a resident of Wolfe Island was issued a legal gag order for criticizing the way this development was being handled. Now I see even silent protests are banned from Your Island, Ms. Vander Hoek.

For background on the Wolfe Island project please read Steve Bohr’s piece in the Globe and Mail, November 07. An IS Wind Bites.

**OFCA: Stop the Turbines Until Health Study Concluded**

Jim Vander Hoek and the Wind Industry

### RESPONSES

A quick review of a Mayor’s history with this development:

1. Mayor wins and denies OFCA officials searching out wind development.
2. Runs up huge tab at tequila restaurant. OFCA official receives across - Don’t worry, we’ll just add it to the public debt.” Details about this meeting in public roundtable in neighbouring constituencies.
3. Declares no by-law changes without completion of an environmental assessment. Members of extended family rich with turbine contracts.

3. Puts through below industry-buzzing entire island with 305 in setbacks before environmental assessment. Backed by two fellow councillors who are under - no deferrals contracts with company, receiving $55 for land leases. Below is passed by latemud council in week following municipal election (despite nearly elected councillors in opposition). Two landscape owners/councilors abstain: voted by in two councillors from adjacent jurisdiction who get $55 in annuities for their community with no towers.

4. All backed by John.

5. Mayor refuses all attempts to adopt a noise bylaw. Invites proponents to speak on behalf of council at council meetings. Questions from the floor denied at council meetings. Setup company officials: refers to opponents in public as “a crazies” and “white island Talibans” (apparently former friends and sitting councilors are one and the same as murderous, illiterate terrorists). Late states “I was misquoted”.

6. As construction proceeds, Mayor systematically removes all constraints on construction times and travel for construction vehicles, leaving constituents to enjoy noise, dust, three to four hour waits for transportation. Denies responsibility for posting blasting times to secure residents safety.

7. Mayor rents numerous properties to company workers at hefty profit. Denies request to right to ask questions of councillors during public meetings. Refuses to answer questions regarding the dumping of materials in wetlands.

5. Mayor insists Township worker remove art installation in night. Boasts about his involvement in public sale.

MESSAGE: Mayor is afraid of art? Mayor is afraid of confessions? Mayor is afraid of questions? Mayor is afraid of company?

16 0 Rate This

If everything in student’s message is true, I can only imagine the pinnacled influence of the Mayor Vander Hoek had on Prince Edward County council when he was invited to boast about his success at a public meeting last January. Along with Mr. Volker Thomeer, he beheld a JHA for the wind industry and helped to deceive many county residents.

Misquoted

15 2 Rate This

So this is what could be called a “Hype Mayor” that is more interested in selling out his voters to the Wind Companies rather than support the taxpayers who prop this man up in his many offices!

I thought we had seen the last of these carpetbaggers back in the 90’s, obviously they are still alive and well on Wolfe Island, a glaring example of what is so tragic with a corrupt industry having their way with “shady political”

15 2 Rate This

LEAVE A RESPONSE
For those who live there, filled there, steep there and roamed the rural roads, creeks and wetlands now made monstrous with loose gravel and dust — tears of frustration, grief. Towers exorcising the 32m setback (some have blades whirring 50m inside the setback), wetlands used as dumping grounds, and all around the sound of never ending jet engines in the distance.

They do kind of look like the dead coming to throw rocks at the turbines.

My family goes back to 1830 in Ontario. I'm sure my great-great-grandfather would be appalled at what they are doing to the rural farmland.

May the developers and the politicians who allowed this to happen rot in hell.

Loss of fish habitat is covered under the Federal Fisheries Act, Section 35 and as much as the province is supposed to report what is called a HACD (Harmful Alteration Disruption and Destruction) to the Federal Government it does not always happen. Loss of wetland and fisheries habitat is truly to prove as the area must have proof, in a court of law, that the habitat exist prior to the destruction. Government agencies have good and not so good people working for them. The good people are not necessarily the ones doing the talking. If someone in a Government agency voices an opinion name names. Don't let them hide behind an agency.

Why would anyone remove the installation? Is the statement too strong and too close to the truth? Glad to see someone is taking the efforts to document the statement. We are looking forward to more as these types of silent statements, with no word, get attention. Are copies of the hands going to be on sale to support those that are suffering from the ill effects of industrial wind turbines? Imagine the hands, now associated with industrial wind development impacts, showing up across the province, where no one can remove them.

MEMBER SITES
- Alliance for the Protection of Northumberland Hills
- Alliance to Protect Prince Edward County
- Amherst Island Wind
- Bedford Responsible Wind Action
- Blue Highlands Citizens Coalition
- CCSRAGE
- Chatham Kent Wind Action Group
- Coalition Residents Tiny
- Coalition to Protect Amherst Island
- Concerned Citizens of Cavan Monaghan
- Cavan-Empress Wind
- Essex County Wind Resistance
- Insidelt Windwatchers
- John Laforte's Blog
- Keep Whitney Wind
- Madawaska Valley Wind Forum
- Magda Havas
- Manitoulin Coalition for Safe Energy Alternatives
- Marioners Gone with the Wind
- Middlesex Wind Action Group
- North Glengarry Wind Group
- Northumberland Escarpment
- Port Hope Blog
- Protect Grey Highlands
- Public Inquiry Ontario
- Rural Grubby's Weblog
- S.O.G. Renfrew County
- Save Georgian Bluffs
- Save the Toronto Bluffs
- Wayward Wind – Aurora
- West Grey Residents Against Industrial Turbines
- Why Industrial Wind Power?
- Wind Facts
- Wolfe Island Residents

REPORTS
- From the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources were sent to the persons requesting investigation of the wetland encroachment. In the case of the RMI report, it was 5 days late and incomplete (pages of the report were missing). The request for investigation under the ERT has been denied. Both ministries adopted the stance of the company completely – almost word for word.

The lesson to developers: if work to be done in and around provincially significant wetlands supporting protected species and your company is prevented from polluting by commitments made in the Environmental Assessment, then just give the construction materials, labour, equipment and engineering to the Township for free and have them do the work on your behalf and behalf.

Afterall, the municipality itself is not subject to the EA for the wind development and you’re paying all their legal bills. Until you have the majority of the council in your pocket too (On CVTV’s H-Five the CEO called this “developing champions on council” when they find a resource they can exploit”).

The fact is the EA process is just another bit of paperwork to sign when it comes to industrial wind energy development, there is no such thing as an environmental constraint in this province.

Mayor VandenHoek, Art Critic

It has been reported that the Township was directed by the Mayor to remove the art installation. It was removed at night. The Mayor stated publicly when questioned by a resident that he had the installation removed. Apparently it is either still in his possession or has been destroyed.

The Mayor doesn’t take kindly to any opposition to his pet project.

The rock with the number 86 scratched on the surface has also been removed.

PUBLIC INQUIRY
- Alternatives
- Compilation
- Environment
- Health
- Lease
- Members
- Amherst Island
- Bruce
- Chatham-Kent
- Cuffeys
- Essex
- Grey
- Holland
- Huron / Perth
- Kawartha Lakes
- Leni
- Lennox
- Manitoulin
- Middlesex
- Niagara
- Norfolk
- Northumberland
- Oxford
- Parry Sound
- Peel Region
- Prince Edward
- Renfrew
- Simcoe
- Thunder Bay
- Wellington
- Wolfe Island
- York

PUBLIC ENQUIRY
- Letter: McLarty Liberals Ignoring the Issues
- Sample Letter to Federal NPI Regarding Health
- Projects
- Safety
- Signs
- Survey
- Tabloids
- What to Do If a Project is Planned in Your Area
- Viability
- Beware Windpower’s “Homes Saved” Claims
- Victims
- Video/Photo

SITEMAP
- Home
This is what I saw: perfectly executed hands, in all different positions, holding rocks, poised to throw. Since there were 86 hands, I interpreted the piece to be a protest against the 86 windmills.

Wolfe Island is home to many talented artists... but a garrulous installation of rock throwing hands is an avant-garde concept. Since civil disobedience is so much more difficult than it was in the Sixties, we must make our statements when, where and how we can, and in ways that are legal.

It is a given that the installation will be destroyed, if it hasn’t been already.

— from a local blogger

Wolfe Island elegy:

It’s not yet midnight. The sky is clear, except for a few small clouds moving across the sky. I am standing on my back deck and I am in awe of the ominous, deep rumblings of the closest windmill. It is a kilometre away.

This is the sound they told us did not exist.

Just like the ones I saw in Lowville [NY], the turbines sound like a jet—too high to be seen, but close enough to hear. The difference is, the jet passes over... and the silence of the night resumes. In the case of the turbines, the noise continues into the night, and then into the day.

When I went back into the house and went to bed, I could still hear the noise coming through my open window. What was it that made the noise particularly thunderous last night? There was a soft breeze... the air was clear, atmospheric conditions, who knows? My hearing isn’t always the best, so I know I’m not overly sensitive.

Many years ago, I originally came to Wolfe Island to escape the sounds of the city. On my first night sleeping here, I was awestruck at the silence. I relished the sounds of nature—frogs, crickets, and the intermittent howl of coyotes. After decades of listening to sirens, drums, and screaming tires, the peacefulness of Wolfe Island was heavenly.

Residents who opposed the placement of turbines on Wolfe Island were assured that there would be no noise, which to me made no sense. Everyone knows that when a stick, a whip, a skipping rope is lashed, there is a distinct whooshing sound. Capt’ Mike laughed at our concerns, telling us that one could stand right under a turbine and not hear a sound. Of course, standing under a windmill is like standing under a gigantic speaker—the noise radiates out, underneath is probably the quietest place to stand. We were even told that, quite often, people like to picnic under them! Yes indeed Mr. Jakobovitz, we are all killers!

I do not feel that I should change my way of living in order to block out the sound of the turbines. I do not want to close my windows at night; I do not want to run something that makes white noise to mask the noise. I do not want to move. What I want is an apology, an admission from the corporations that they did in fact lie.

I want to launch a class action suit against them. I want everyone who was so eager to put a windmill on their property to go crazy from the noise and the guilt that were it not for their greed to get money from nothing. Wolfe Island would still be a peaceful oasis in a world of noise and confusion.

— from a local blogger

http://www.windturbinesyndrome.com/?p=3222

Figure 39 Wind Turbine Syndrome Blog on Health Concerns raised by Wind Turbines
Figure 40 The Windmills Blow Blog: Guerilla Sculpture