

# Australasian Journal of ArtsHealth

Volume 1 2009 pp90–105

This article can be accessed online at

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-centre/artshealth/journal/>

<http://www.nova.newcastle.edu.au>

ISSN 978-0-9805035-8-6

## Becomings: Rhizome methodologies and the body-in-process

**Haya Cohen<sup>a</sup> and Svenja Kratz<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> Griffith University, Queensland, Australia

<sup>b</sup> Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Correspondence can be addressed to the authors  
via email: [hayacohen@hotmail.com](mailto:hayacohen@hotmail.com)

*Drawing on research in biology and neuroscience by scientists such as Antonio Damasio, and informed by the theoretical investigations of philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze and feminist theorist Rosi Braidotti, we discuss the different possibilities that contemporary arts practice offers for performing, representing, thinking about and revealing the body.*

*In this paper the intersections of research on the body which occurs across the arts, sciences and humanities are focused through two practice-based research projects: Textiled Becomings — a living fibre work by Haya Cohen; and The Absence of Alice — a multi-medium bio-art installation by Svenja Kratz.*

*These two works were developed with a strong emphasis on processes of both making and becoming in and of the world, and function as an exploration of the body as an active, embodied and embedded agent. In this paper, emphasis is placed on the intersections and divergences between research interests to illustrate the ways in which the body-in-process can be manifested through practice. In addition, we outline how a practice-based rhizomatic approach to research that interweaves creative practice with diverse theoretical inputs including philosophy, cultural studies, art theory and biological science presents an effective and reflexive way of engaging with the complex issues surrounding the body as social, cultural and biological entity.*

## Keywords

Practice-based research; rhizomatic process

# 1. Introduction

*We need to understand [the body's] open-ended connections with space and time, its place in dynamic natural and cultural systems, and its mutating, self-changing relations within natural and social networks. In short, we need to understand the body, not as an organism or entity in itself, but as a system, or series of open ended systems, functioning within other huge systems it cannot control, through which it can access and acquire its abilities and capacities.* (Grosz, 2004, p. 4)

Elizabeth Grosz's proposal that we understand the body as a dynamic network of interacting forces rather than a singular and resolved entity in *The Nick of Time* (2004), has important implications for practice-based and cross-disciplinary researchers. This view not only challenges the perceived art/science dichotomy by acknowledging the flows between disciplines and how the personal, social and cultural are entangled with biology; but also positions the body as an integral part of cognitive processes.

Juxtapositioning two multi-disciplinary research projects that explore the dynamic interconnections between various bodies, we highlight different ways in which the body-in-process can be manifested through creative practice.

We also argue that a practice-based, rhizomatic approach to research that involves fluid movement between disciplines and ways of modelling knowledge presents an effective way of engaging with the complex issues surrounding the body as a social, cultural and biological system.

The projects discussed are *Textiled Becomings*, a living fibre work by Haya Cohen that interlaces growing barley seeds within cotton fibres and recycled shopping bags and *The Absence of Alice* by Svenja Kratz, a multi-medium installation based on the experience of culturing human cell lines.

## 2. A rhizomatic approach to practice-based research

Research that draws knowledge from cross-disciplinary scholarship involving the arts and sciences continues to pose problems that revolve around the methodological issues of first-person subjectivity versus third-person objectivity. In an effort to bridge this divide, we employ a practice-based research strategy that interweaves diverse theoretical inputs from philosophy, cultural studies, cognitive and biological science with creative arts practice and personal experience. This process can be described as rhizomatic, following Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome (1987) where 'there would be not a fixed centre or order so much as multiplicity of expanding and overlapping connections' (Colebrook 2002, p.xix).

Based on the botanical rhizome, this concept is a non-hierarchical model built on interconnecting points and neighbourhoods of thought which form an assemblage of various elements, organic and inorganic, animate and inanimate, that exist moment to moment, connected, connecting and re-connecting, defined not by an essence, but rather 'solely by the circulation of different states' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.23). As such, the rhizome always remains an open system, as connections are never finalised into a permanent, fixed structure. In *Textiled Becomings*, a rhizomatic approach—that enables links to be made and mapped between and across different pathways—serves to slow down the process of perception and allow it to intertwine with the process of making. In *The Absence of Alice* the process involves the mapping of mutations that arise through the interconnections between different bodies and ways of thinking.

We are not only interested in revealing the flows between different disciplines, but also aim to include and expose the body through practice by emphasising thought, cognitive sensing, emoting and the intimacy involved in art making. Rather than considering our artworks as just objects, we relate to our projects as 'creative sites' as they integrate processes of embodied perception and contemplation and invite the audience into a site where dynamic and emergent processes are happening. For example, in *Textiled Becomings*, the knitted/ woven seeds embedded within the cotton fibres of the textiles are 'left alone' to grow and 'perform'. Similarly, in the *Death Masks* component of *The Absence of Alice*, ant colonies can be observed tunnelling and building nests for the duration of the exhibition.

### 3. Textiled Becomings

*Textiled Becomings* is an installation artwork and practice-based research tool that enables Cohen to perform and reveal the extent of embodiment through fibre and textile production 'from scratch'. The creative process entails a combination of botanical experimentation with raw materials such as seeds and pure cotton, as well as an exploration and application of various methods of textile production, with an awareness of the cognitive processes employed in making the work.

For Cohen, this project is a 'creative site' within a world where decisions made by short sighted visions lead to insufficient land on which to grow food (i.e. rice), resulting in hunger which triggers our most basic fears. To respond and reflect in depth on issues such as environmental sustainability and fear, the artist slows down the creative process as much as possible: cooking the cotton on the kitchen stove, then patiently, one by one, separating the fibres and hanging them to dry on a clothes line. In a painstaking procedure that involves enveloping the seeds individually and then intensively rolling these 'seeded' cotton fibres into threads against her body, the artist weaves and knits the yarns into shapes corresponding to and worked over and around her body (Figure 1). In other words, instead of trying to find the fastest route, the artist walks along the creative path slowly, in order to be aware of the materials and processes, and most of all, appreciate the width of connectivity and interdependence between systems.



**Fig. 1 Textiled Becoming 2008 – The Process (photographed by the artist)**

Growing within the artwork, together with literally growing an artwork, Cohen aims to draw attention to the process of making and to accentuate the performativity of the living artwork as it interweaves, literally, to become objectsubject — the move from a textile object composed of fibres and seeds to a living and growing artwork that requires care. Once the initial textile works have been created and installed, they are watered, causing the embedded seeds to germinate. As the plants grow, their roots alter the thickness of individual fibres and over time change the overall appearance of the installation from a series of simple white forms to masses of intertwining green vegetation. When observing the artwork for a prolonged period, it seems you can almost hear the process of growth. For the artist and viewers, the anticipation for the seeds to grow, and roots to be entangled and twisted within the fibres of the cotton, and then for the leaves to grow is continual. The process is a constant transformation where smells, sounds, textures and images of life are evanescent and mark the passage of time. Brownish colours, acerbic scents and images of death and decay are performed. Video documentation of the creation process, as well as time lapse video showcasing the life cycle of the artwork, enable the audience to gain insight into these processes while experiencing the installation (Figure 2).



Fig 2. Textiled Becomings 2008– The Performative Growth (photographed by the artist)

*Textiled Becomings* is intimately intertwined with the artist's life and experiences, informed by her perspective as a woman, as a contemporary arts practitioner, as an immigrant from a troubled land and as a resident in a world where notions such as fear manipulate bodies. These aspects of self echo throughout her practice-based research and work and are in turn interwoven with her everyday life. Through her creative practice, she endeavours to address the gap that exists between textile as a product and textile and fibre making as a critical and reflective process of materialising embodiment, where embodiment is defined as the recognition of material processes and the corporeal nature of what was called mind-body. Through making and experiencing materials, through the rhizomic thinking and connecting ideas, through the process of writing, she addresses the connections and disconnections in the processes of perceiving/exploring/developing embodiment/embodied awareness.

While *Textiled Becomings* is an assemblage of pieces of textiles processed through the body, *The Absence of Alice* encompasses diverse mediums including digital video, animation, sculpture and painting. However, by creating works that incorporate living, organic and inorganic components and function as installation assemblages, rather than single, contained works, Kratz's project is similarly interested in revealing the dynamic interconnections between different bodies — bodies of organisms, environmental bodies, as well as social, institutional and cultural bodies. Displayed as a series of evolving, interconnected components in which concepts and materials spill over and mutate from one work into the next, the project draws attention to processes of interconnection and transformation.

## 4. The Absence of Alice

*The Absence of Alice* draws heavily on biological science through studies of biological systems (e.g. ecosystems, evolution) and recent biotechnical advancements (e.g. cell culture and gene mapping) that illustrate in particular the flows between different organisms and their environments. Physical laboratory experimentation at the Queensland University of Technology's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI) was also part of the study, allowing that artist first-hand experience of biological phenomena to inform theoretical perspectives and enter the creative process.

To date, the artist's scientific investigations have primarily focused on the area of cell and tissue culture and the first instalment of the installation was largely inspired by the artist's experiences of culturing Saos-2 cells (bone cancer cells taken from an 11-year old girl called Alice in 1973) over a six month period at the IHBI. During this time the artist passaged (split) the cells entrusted to her 78 times. The longer the cells grew and divided, the more they tended to transform and become 'other' from the original cell line. The cells were highly responsive to environmental changes and altering the nutrient media in which the cells grew or co-culturing multiple cell lines, often resulted in dramatic shape changes, illustrating that even our very cells are individual organisms deeply connected to their environment and in a perpetual state of potential becoming.

These observations were translated into a series of works that commented on the benefits and limits of scientific method, interconnections between organisms and their environment, as well as the ethical implications of biotechnologies.

One of the first works developed for *The Absence of Alice* commented on the repetitive process of growing and passaging Alice's bone cancer cells. Titled *78 Impressions of a Single Object*, this wall-based installation consisted of 78 unique plaster impressions of a single bone-like sculptural form (Figure 3). The number 78 corresponded to the number of passages the Saos-2 cells underwent while Kratz was working with them at IHBI, and plaster was chosen as this material is commonly associated with mould making and the process of duplication. Although the impressions are of a single bone-like object, they are all unique as the resulting shape was determined by the angle of the object during the impression process, the amount of pressure applied and the dryness of the plaster. Over time the original form also changed due to plaster adhering to its surface. In this way, the work responds to the notion of continual transformation and 'becoming' based on interaction with the world, but also highlights the impossibility of gaining an absolute understanding of any object/organism/structure, as our results or 'impressions' depend on the particular methods employed, and often presume stability of a body rather than continual change.

This work linked to another entitled *Fragments of a Body in the Process of Becoming Other*, which responded to the progressive mutation and becoming of Alice's cells and consisted of latex casts of the '78 impressions' displayed on Perspex slides. The latex

casts resembling different stages of foetal development were mixed with the bone cancer cells from various passage stages and were arranged in collection order with the number and date inscribed on the edge of the slide. Displayed in this manner, the work references biological sample and display slides and the way in which progress, or growth, is mapped by fixing particular moments in time.

These works again flowed over into other, more abject, video and sculptural works such as *Bone Breath* and *Hairy Bone Balls* which engaged with the uncanny nature of the cells, organisms that exist in a strange relationship with an absent human body. The original donor, Alice, is most likely long dead, due to the virulent nature of her bone cancer, yet these cells live on. Cultured in laboratories all over the world, they weigh far more than Alice's body ever did when she was alive. Continually changing and mutating with each passage, these tiny, now independent, organisms remain intimately connected to Alice as they still have her DNA, her genetic blueprint, which contains the instructions for building every part of her body.



Fig 3. *The Absence of Alice*, 2008. TOP: *78 Impressions of a Single Object and Fragments of a Body in the Process of Becoming Other* BOTTOM: *Hairy Bone Balls* and *Bone Breath*

## 5. Intersections and divergences

By taking an active role in the laboratory, growing and maintaining human cell lines, Kratz combines science with insights from philosophy and art in a way that enables these disciplines to flow into and transform one another, extending and altering the possibilities and functions of each system. Her impetus to delve into biological science stems from a recognition that disciplines such as molecular biology and particularly neuroscience fundamentally challenge the Cartesian separation and hierarchising of mind over body. Robert Sapolsky (2005) points out that learning and thought are not mere abstract processes but have a biological basis. When we learn something, our synaptic pathways change—our bodies change. Cultural and social interactions therefore have the ability to fundamentally affect the capabilities of our bodies. We are not stable, separate entities, but an embedded system that is in a process of continual transformation through interaction.

Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio argues against the view of the body as a mere object of genetic sequencing since, as he claims, ‘culture and civilization could have not arisen from a single individual therefore they cannot be reduced to a subset of genetic specifications’ (1994, p.124). Working with this knowledge, as well as with his view that the brain uses a number of ‘dedicated regions working in concert to portray myriad aspects of the body’s activities in the formation of neural maps’ (2003, p.7), has led to the process that Cohen employs in *Textiled Becomings*.

The perceived experiences of the world are enmeshed with and through the repetitive and meditative process of making the object, touching and sensing the medium and through it. Everything that the artist is, her thoughts, her body oils, her flakes of skin, her past, her present, her mum’s past, gets into the work. In a circular progression, the experience of materials triggers emotional and intuitive connections, which initiates further research. New theoretical ideas then connect with other materials, renewing the loop. In this way she is essentially assembling a mesh where matter intervenes with voids, where folds of the body are entangled with spirit, becoming a body/body of work, work of art, an artwork.

With the aim of accentuating mind/body connections and the flows between engagement with materials, theoretical ideas and personal experience, Cohen pays close attention to the cognitive processes such as conceptual blending that occur during the creative process. Conceptual blending involves the merging of elements from different domains to produce an ‘emergent structure’ that generates new meaning (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002; Coulson & Oakley, 2001). Fauconnier and Turner assert that conceptual blending ‘choreographs vast networks of conceptual meaning’ (2002, p. v) and provides a way to think about a range of issues including the relationship of cognitive and embodied approaches to perception, abstraction and context.

The benefit of an approach that pays attention to processes such as conceptual blending is that a researcher-practitioner can begin to correlate the contrasting activities that run concurrently through the body-environment.

Actions such as perceiving similarity and difference appear simple and somewhat 'automatic', yet in actuality they involve extremely 'complex, imaginative, unconscious' processes (Fauconnier & Turner 2002, p.6), and are provided to consciousness only after the intricate work of combining imagination and reason has been completed. If we follow Fauconnier and Turner's line of argument that the links between the world and body/thought/action are the result of myriad interconnections and unconscious blending processes, it becomes apparent how practice-based research, with its emphasis on the flows between action, imagination and reason, can help us understand the way 'meaning systems and formal systems' are intimately connected and 'co-evolve in the species, the culture, and the individual' (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p.11). Creative sites such as *Textiled Becomings* or *The Absence of Alice*, which combine multiple inputs and acknowledge unconscious and emotional connections, provide insight into these cognitive processes as they amplify what Antonio Damasio observes to be happening when he states:

*We process not only the presence of an object but its relation to others and its connection to the past. In those circumstances the apparatus of emotions naturally evaluates, and the apparatus of conscious mind thinkingly coevaluates.* (2003, p.54)

Cohen's use of textile production allows her to examine the way meaning and creativity are built 'from scratch' to bridge the gap between textile as a product and textile production as a personal, critical, reflective and embodied process. Indeed, she believes that it is through close examination of process that the chasm between subjectivity and objectivity can be narrowed.

Although Kratz's process also relies on the merging of diverse inputs from science, art and personal experience, to create new insights in the field of bio-art, it is the notion of emergence through interaction and connection that plays a particularly significant role in her project development. During the production of *The Absence of Alice*, a variety of creative tasks and laboratory experiments were continually undertaken without set expectation of their use and value. For example, during the first six months of laboratory engagement, the artist grew cells in different nutrient solutions to observe how different nutritional and environmental conditions affected cellular behaviour and morphology. At the same time, she experimented with different casting processes. At first, these two tasks appeared disconnected. However, at later stages of project development, links between the two processes started to emerge. Over generations, as cells duplicate they tend to change, experiencing morphological, behavioural and other changes. This is particularly true when cells are exposed to different environmental conditions. Similarly, copies made from a single mould tend to 'degrade' as the original cast becomes

damaged due to surface cracking or material from the casting processes adhering to the inner surface. Environmental conditions such as heat and pressure can also affect the final finish of the material. Although the final outcome of these experiments was uncertain, when connections were recognised, through the combined processes of physical engagement, observation and reflection, mould making was used as medium for engaging with ideas of cellular change.

Innovation requires uncertainty and novelty requires new connections. An emergent methodology, one that links processes of engagement with material to the process of acquiring knowledge, acknowledges research as an uncertain process, often guided by an intuitive logic — the logic of the body and its changing connections to the world, experience and the possibilities that continually emerge through this interaction. Immersed in the flow of becoming, it is difficult to make 'sense', because sense is understanding in hindsight. It is a process that has the benefit of experience and reflection — it has the benefit of connections strengthened through the passing of time.

Although the legitimacy of practice-based research attracts considerable debate, the value of creative practice, as researcher Estelle Barrett (2006) asserts, lies precisely in its capacity to provide alternative modes of enquiry that foreground emergence and experiential bodily engagement usually deemed unimportant within traditional research paradigms. This emphasis on action, on bodily experience and tacit knowledge, a term which Michael Polanyi (1967) used to describe the embodied 'pre-logical phase of knowing', is particularly relevant to our research as both projects aim to emphasise the role of the body and bodily interaction with the world in knowledge production, challenging the separation and privileging of mind over body.

Revealing the body through practice-based research, as Barbara Bolt (2004) argues, is where reflection and experience becomes matter and continues to perform itself dynamically, bringing into light the 'body of labour' (p. 184). Bolt (2006) asserts it is the process of materialisation and handling that exposes the value of 'material thinking' which 'offers us a way of considering the relations that take place within the very process or tissue of making' (p.5).

Revealing, as Graeme Sullivan (2006) asserts, is an interwoven relationship between the artefact created in practice-based research and the critical process that leads to conceptual shifts, deconstructions, new understandings that 'have the potential', as he says, 'to reveal new truths'. In addition, Sullivan claims that there is a 'making or productive feature that links knowledge and understanding whereby new insights are enacted in some conceptual or material way and it is 'understanding' rather than mere explanation that is of central interest in research activity'.

In understanding through the exegetic structure Bolt (2006) combined art practice with writing about her experience, to 'develop an argument for a performative understanding of art' (p. 9). For Haya Cohen, the combination of practice-based research and critical

writing has revealed the intimacy and tactile sensuality in the process of making through and with the body in which the interwoven relationship between artist, medium and the world is perpetually exposed.

These relationships are dynamic and intimately linked to the notion of 'becoming', a concept developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) that resists essentialism and the unitary and stable assumptions inherent in 'being', focusing instead on transformation through complex non-linear interconnections, deterritorialisation and re-territorialisation. In the context of becoming, mutation and difference, usually conceived in negative terms, can be seen instead as transformative forces that open us to new and unforeseen ways of understanding and experiencing the world. In this way, *The Absence of Alice* explores mutation and transformation, not as a negative process, but as an exciting and unpredictable process that enables the new.

Building on the notion of 'becoming', Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use the concept of 'machinic assemblage' to describe bodies (organic and social/cultural) through the connections they make with other bodies, rather than as singular entities with specific and unchanging properties. In the words of Rosi Braidotti, the machinic 'expresses the subject's capacity for multiple, non-linear and outward-bound inter-connections with a number of external forces and others...It is about multiple alliances, symbiotic connections and fusions' (2005-2006, p.2).

The notion of 'machinic assemblage' is employed within both projects as both a conceptual and practical tool. *The Absence of Alice*, for example, involves the development of a progressive series of installation works that function as small scale, machinic assemblages taking the form of continually evolving interconnected fragments that 'plug into' a variety of ideas surrounding the body-in-process. Project components are continually added and re-worked as research interests shift, creating new connections through their addition and re-coupling. In viewing the work, the audience is encouraged to create connections between the diverse components, drawing on their personal experiences and beliefs, thus furthering the possibilities of meaning that the work engenders.

Although *Textiled Becomings* also operates as a physical assemblage, the concept of 'machinic assemblage' is best reflected in the process that Cohen employs as she collects knowledge from diverse directions including textile procedures and practices used by Peruvian, Australian Aboriginal, Papua New Guinean and Western women. These processes are treated as interlinked creative sites. Within these sites the idea of rhizomatic thought which supports 'an idea of evolution of the non-deterministic, nonlinear and non-theological kind' is 'connected to the processes of becoming others, hence of affecting and being affected' (Braidotti, 2005-2006, p.3). By applying traditional procedures used for generations by women in many cultures, dimensions of time and space are explored through the process of collecting materials, drying, dying, and weaving/knotting them on the body. It is a constant process of becoming, which follows

Rosi Braidotti's argument, that people have a timeframe which is always the future forward, "that is to say a linkage across present and past in the act of constructing and actualising possible futures" (2005-2006, p.8). A row has to be woven onto the one before and must support the next one. However, the thread can be cut at any place, just as Deleuze and Guattari argue that the rhizome can be broken or shattered at a given spot 'but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or new lines' (1987, p.9).

Knitting a Corpoself created by Haya in 2004, for example, was one of the foundational works for the development of Textiled Becomings. This project involved the production of a knitted female body including inspired by the traditional Jewish golem (In Jewish tradition, the golem is an artificially created man fashioned from clay and brought to life through the insertion of Hebrew letters in its mouth or on its forehead). During the production of Knitting a Corpoself, the artist deliberately slowed down the manufacture process in order to show the imperceptible tempo of change and interaction of person with environment, a process that has carried over and been extended in Textiled Becomings. Knitting a Corpoself also marked a break from solid sculptural forms to the use of flexible fibres. This helped the artist recognise the body as an interwoven site, a perspective that has continued to inform her practice.

*The Absence of Alice* displays a flow of ideas, as different components and concepts flow over from one work to the next, with each work creating new possibilities for future connections and becomings. Recent works developed for *The Absence of Alice* such as *Transition Piece #1* and *Transition Piece #3* engage not only on the continual becoming of Alice's bone cancer cells, but also link with the creative process, and the way in which from the original exploration of cellular change, the creative works now ripple outwards, making new connections.

*Transition Piece #1* features a latex and enamel painting created by tracing and building up the surface of previous lines. Slippages and 'errors' in the tracing process were exaggerated, forming thick peaks in the patterned surface, illustrating that patterns of transformation are not only linked to previous action/events, but are also directed by encounters with the accidental, indicating that the patterns of becoming cannot be determined from the outset.

These works operated as part of an assemblage of other sculptural, photomedia and video works, including *Death Masks #3—Alice Ants*, which consisted of a series of seven vacuum-formed plastic moulds of an 11-year old girl's face containing live ant colonies that had consumed a mixture of Alice's cells and sugar (Figure 4). This work commented on the way in which the story of Alice and her cells form part of a rhizome with the rest of the world. Ants were chosen as they form a 'living rhizome', and have similar characteristics to cells. Both cells and ants, for example, respond to chemical signals, behavioural patterns of other cells/ants, and environmental cues, and demonstrate an amazing ability to self-organise through what seems like 'collective intelligence'. In this way both ants and cells can be seen as complex systems with

emergent properties. Both cells and ants can be seen as part of larger super-organisms, which again connect outwards forming part of the ecosystem. This work connected to *Ants Eating Alice*, a digital video work that showed the ants contained in the face moulds eating the sugar/cell mixture.

In this way the work reflects on transformation, on the becoming body and also on the becoming of the body of art, and invites the viewer to realise, through their own engagement and connection, the complex ways in which knowledge arises through the combination and engagement with various materials and concepts.



**Fig 4. *The Absence of Alice: Alice Ants and the Armyworm*, 2008. TOP: *Transition Piece#1 & Death Masks: Alice Ants* BOTTOM: *Installation Views: Death Masks & Ants Eating Alice***

In *Textiled Becomings* the process of making 'from scratch' enables Cohen to reflect and perform embodiment, thought and practice, to a point where the work of art stops being only a translation of, or comment on, cultural or social values, but also becomes a viewfinder of processes, a research tool and method which allows one to acquire a lens to focus and sharpen the identity and challenges of the world. By including living plants and documentary video of the creative process as part of the installation, she also draws attention to, and invites viewers to gain insight into, the value of process and embodied engagement rather than just final product.

In comparison, *The Absence of Alice* draws attention to process through the design of the project as an evolving installation of diverse visual elements that map the artist's experiences and different insights that take place through physical and reflective engagement. By creating installations that rely on the links between components to create meaning, Kratz also illustrates that understanding is an embodied process that arises through the interconnection of various sources.

## 6. Conclusion

In both projects, the use of a rhizomatic methodology that links diverse theoretical inputs to personal experience enables the artists to highlight the flows between different disciplines as well as the role of the body in meaning making. Creating installations that also operate rhizomatically and incorporate living organisms, illustrates the dynamic processes of life and growth firsthand and allows the works to take on a 'performative aspect' (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 20) that focuses not only on what the work is and what it means, but also how the work operates and how it enables the practitioner and viewer to have a different experience and view of the world.

## References

- Barrett, E (2007). Experiential Learning in Practice as Research: Context, Method, Knowledge. *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 6(2), 115-124.
- Bolt, B. (2004). *Art beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image*. London: I.B.Tauris & Co..
- Bolt, B. (2006). A Non-Standard Deviation: Handlability, praxical knowledge and practice led research. *Speculation and Innovation: Applying practice led research in the creative industries*. Queensland University of Technology. Retrieved 19 May, 2008, from <http://www.speculation2005.qut.edu.au/papers/Bolt.pdf>
- Braidotti, R. (2005/2006). Affirming the Affirmative: On Nomadic Affectivity. *Rhizomes*, 11 & 12(8), Retrieved 12 July, 2008, from <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue11/braidotti.html>
- Braidotti, R. (2002). *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Colebrook, C. (2002). Gilles Deleuze. London: Routledge.
- Coulson, S. & Oakley, T. (2000). Blending Basics. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 11(3/4),175-196.
- Damasio, A, (1994) *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*. New York: Putnam.
- Damasio, A. (2003). *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain*. Orlando: Harcourt.
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fauconnier, G. & Turner, M. (2002). *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books.
- Grosz, E. (2004). *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*. London: Duke University Press.
- O'Sullivan, S. (2006). *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought beyond Representation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Polanyi, M. (1967). *The Tacit Dimension*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Sapolsky, R. (2005). *Biology and Human Behaviour: The Neurological Origins of Individuality* (3rd ed.). Chantilly: The Teaching Company.
- Sullivan, G. (2006). Artefacts as Evidence within Changing Contexts. *Working Papers in Art and Design*, 4. Retrieved 12 July, 2008, from <http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdes/research/papers/wpades/vol4/gsfull.html>