

could it be found in gardens of dust?

Cultural theorists have long acknowledged the need for a *third place*, a place between the domestic environment and the commercial non-place, where communities can flourish beyond familial ties and interactions mediated by the market.¹

could it be found in gardens of dust? is a potent metaphor, suggestive of the generative potential found in forgotten places—in the detritus of urban decay. A garden is a curated green space, boasting life in the form of flowers, grass, and vegetables—green vitality that populates sun-soaked outdoors. Dust is composed of fine particles of solid matter: dead skin cells, fabric particles, pollen, micro-plastics, and other pollutants. In other words, dust is what’s cast aside—a ubiquitous but unseen residue of life that circulates and settles in negative space. It smuggles the outside in via thoughtless footfalls or glittering constellations suspended in air currents. It gets inside us and takes part of us in its nebulous cloud, holding forensic traces of DNA.

This site-specific video installation—the product of a six-week residency—occupies Wreckers Upstairs, a repurposed warehouse in Woolloongabba, Brisbane. Formerly an industrial, working-class area, the last five years of accelerated gentrification have begun to reshape the suburb. So far, Wreckers remains untouched by the rising tide of aggressive geometry and homogenous glass and concrete.

Across six screens, a psychosexual occupation of the space unfolds, documenting a personal, sometimes mundane, and often horny autoethnographic journey. The site was formerly a traditionally macho-coded workplace, a bike wreckers. The exposed beams and corrugated surfaces hold traces of this history.

A generative parallel: the cavernous inside is reminiscent of the iconic decaying piers along the Hudson River which were frequented by the local queer community as a discreet site for meetups. Though Wreckers holds similar potential as a cruising space, as it progressed, *could it be found in gardens of dust?* became more introspective: about making, masturbating, self-imaging, and the Eros of creative energies and exchanges—the facilitation of which is often boasted by art spaces held together by small local communities. Decades before, the piers similarly developed into incredibly important sites for the creation of art and community. Echoes of this site merge with Wreckers through pornographic images filmed at the piers and the recreation of a risky pose atop a high beam.

The body appears in fragments, suggestive of fleeting though tangible presence in a site that bears the imprint of many. In film, soft, apparition-like visions of a naked, toned torso or jutting hip bone merge with concrete and iron—a dark, industrial *mise en scene*. The collapse between the body and the features of the building might recall Francesca Woodman’s haunting photographic oeuvre, though the feminised domestic space is replaced with that of the warehouse, replete with the homosocial and homoerotic associations of abandoned spaces of masculine labour. Weld flashes explode like fireworks in the night or ectoplasmic cum shots.

essay by tara heffernan
cinematography by charlie hillhouse
sound by hayden potter
objects from wreckers residents

thanks to hayden/ sarah/ llewellyn/ charlie/ tara/ tyza/
bree/ reuben/ anya/ romii/ shelby/ tia/ tom/ rose/
jack/ annie/ michael/ kinly/ my family/ lovers past/
lovers to come.

¹ Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (New York: Norton Paperback, 1996).