Eliza: Guerilla Art Supports Heritage Value
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Jennifer Harris
Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia

Cultural Heritage
School of Built Environment
Curtin University of Technology
GPO Box U 1987
Perth 6845
Western Australia

jennifer.harris@curtin.edu.au

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Abstract

There is extensive commentary on the role of public, unauthorised art in western cities, but little on the coincidence of heritage value and guerilla art. This paper analyses the relationship of the two in a statue of a 1940s swimmer entitled *Eliza* which was unveiled in the Swan River in Crawley, Perth in 2007. It commemorates the Crawley Baths which from 1914 to their demolition in 1964 were one of Perth’s premier meeting places. *Eliza* was commissioned by the Perth City Council as a monument to a lost place. Since its appearance, however, the statue has functioned not just as a place of memory, but dominantly of guerilla art and public comment. These activities foreground the transgressive potential of the coincidence of a heritage marker and guerilla art. Reading the Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter* 1999, however, alongside *Eliza* shows that interpretation which foregrounds transgression is incomplete. The steadily strengthening professional heritage emphasis on social value over the previous dominance of original fabric, suggests that the delight and frivolity - but crucially not vandalism - with which the statue has been greeted, supports evolving heritage practice.
Most monuments exist unnoticed in city landscapes. They are surrounded by cars, pedestrians and noise - they become almost invisible. Realist, figural monuments of sombre statesmen or even the baroque splendour of generals gesturing on rearing horses blend into the landscape and very rarely stir any comment. Some monuments, however, transcend invisibility and not only escape the indifference generated by everyday contact, but become dramatic elements in daily life. In the water of the Swan River in Crawley, Perth, Western Australia, about 15 metres from the shore line and a never ending line of commuter traffic, there is a slightly larger than life statue of a 1940s swimmer. Intense public affection for this statue has opened up questions of good heritage practice and its interaction with guerilla art. The plaque, sited on the grassy river edge, says that the statue was made by sculptors, Tony Jones and Ben Jones and was installed by the Perth City Council on 15 October 2007 to commemorate the site of the former Crawley Baths. The baths were once the biggest in the southern hemisphere. The road and the shore in front of the statue follow the contours of one of the few high points in the Perth metropolitan area, a hill called Mount Eliza after which the generic 1940s female swimmer was named. Eliza is clearly female and is solidly built, neither idealised nor erotically thin by contemporary standards. Her swimming costume is modest and her hair is tucked into a bathing cap; she appears to be a realist depiction of a female swimmer who might have used the baths. Upon installation, the monument almost immediately became a topic of daily discussion because it became the focus of continual dressing and re-dressing pranks.

The installation of Eliza activated memory of the old baths consistent with the effects of a monument or heritage marker. Dramatic reversals, however, of some of the usual meanings of ‘heritage’ and ‘guerilla art’ converge here and force us to reconsider these concepts. Uses of Eliza reveal an odd combination: simultaneous resistance to heritage practices associated with control and protection of a place, and paradoxical, albeit unwitting, support of heritage values. This paper explores the coincidence of heritage value and guerilla art in the Eliza monument asking: who is the community around this statue?, what role does the community play in the meaning effects of this statue?, how can we conceptualise such playful transgression?, what does collective memory mean here?

The passing public / audience / underground artists in cars, yachts, canoes, rowing shells, bikes and on foot, rollerblade or bicycle have been presented with a playful, changing statue that marks the passage of time by celebrating events, for example the Tour de France by wearing a yellow jersey; or registers sinister threats, for example swine flu by wearing a surgical mask. Sometimes the meaning of Eliza’s clothes is private, known only to a select group. The Acting Arts and Cultural Development Co-ordinator of the Perth City Council, Helen Hewitt, told me on 5 March 2009 that the council has an informal arrangement with some early morning rowers to keep the statue free of adornment because the Department of Transport licence to build the statue in the water came Eliza with the requirement to keep the statue ‘clean and free of vandalism’. The
cleaning of *Eliza* thus suggesting that any interaction is negative and, like graffiti, to be removed swiftly.

Some weeks the statue is stripped of new clothes almost daily and sometimes the clothing flutters for days. It is likely that, rather than prompt removal by the rowers, a rapid strip is often the result of the next dressers ridding the statue of her latest clothes in order to make way for their own. The statue is the ‘canvas’ for guerilla art action which has joined coincidentally with heritage commemoration to give back to Perth a version of the social value associated with the Crawley Baths that were once an important part of Perth life. Helen Hewitt reported that the councillors of the City of Perth wished to commemorate the City of Perth Swimming Club which was founded in 1923 and was based in Crawley. The baths were upgraded to Olympic size in 1933 and demolished in 1964 before heritage legislation offered protection. There was no marker of the baths from 1964 to 2007, that is, 43 years of erasure. No plaque marked the spot, and unless one saw historic photographs of the baths, there was nothing but fading memory to call them to mind. They were replaced by the Beatty Park complex, built for the 1962 Empire Games, and sited in a different part of the city. Beatty Park too has changed over the decades. The historic fabric, therefore, associated with one of the most important of Western Australian leisure activities, swimming in a pool, scarcely exists.
Approaching Eliza

I am one of the commuters passing the statue each morning. My preparation for writing this paper included daily observation of the play around Eliza. I extended this observation to graffiti and other examples of guerilla art, and also to monuments and statues which have had strong and continuous interactive attention from their audiences. Like graffiti, guerilla activity involves reclaiming public space. As London guerilla artist, Banksy says, speaking generally of his work, ‘I am doing this because I personally feel I have a right to affect my urban environment and this image has as much right to be here as that perfume commercial’ (Peiter, 2009, p.29). Heritage space, monuments, graffiti, guerilla art and public art have blurred in the practices around Eliza and I have had to look at them all in order to begin to understand what is happening.

The valorisation of community activity in public art is currently a major theme because art in public spaces is conceptualised as vital to the creation and support of healthy, empowered communities (Coutts & Jokela, 2008; Finkelpearl, 2000). The local Western Australian Council of Gosnells, for example, has extended the idea of the positive value of public art by running workshops on graffiti art for young residents (Dew, 2007, 255). Ironically, the state of a community’s health is often read through the presence or absence of graffiti, depending upon whether graffiti is discussed within the discourses of art or criminality. There is, therefore, contested understanding of the value of community activity around public space and it is not simply dependent upon whether the activity is sanctioned or unsanctioned because many artists, for example Banksy and the Paris based Invader (Peiter, 2009), travel back and forth between illegal street activity and respected high culture gallery exhibitions (Fondation Cartier, 2009).

Guerilla art and graffiti

Guerilla art encompasses a variety of art events; it is difficult to define and not easily differentiated from graffiti from which it emerged (Peiter, 2009, p.4), graffiti being a blurred concept itself (Dew, 2007, p.29), or post-graffiti art with its broader range of techniques (Ganz, 2004, p.7). Guerilla art occupies the liminal zone between respectability and the illegal manifestations of graffiti, both of which are sometimes referred to as ‘street art’. As community play with Eliza has not damaged the statue or altered it permanently, it seemed wise to conceptualise it as guerilla art but to draw on graffiti for understanding. Graffiti often damages the underlying ‘canvas’, for example a wall or a fence, especially when spray paint is used and is often reviled. There are now, of course, many examples of graffiti artists being employed by local councils to enliven a city. Graffiti-style art is the result, but it is no longer graffiti, the defining feature of which is that it is unsanctioned.

Both types of art re-claim public space and change its meanings. Guerilla art contains a subversive element, but it is not as markedly anti-social and it is this emphasis which usually differentiates it from graffiti art which often appears bitterly anti-social. The Paris
exhibition, *Born in the streets: graffiti* (Fondation Cartier, 2009), however, makes clear through interviews with graffiti artists that being anti-social is only one form of graffiti, with others valuing their aesthetic gift (Dew, 2007, p.13) to the public and the establishment of ‘a "street dialogue” in which the environment becomes the subject of an infinite flow of coded messages and interferences’ (Dew, 2007, p.226; Fondation Cartier, 2009, no page). A key phrase in the Paris exhibition is ‘The voice of the people is on the walls not out to destroy or make dirty’.

Guerilla artists take many approaches including creating an entirely new work of art, this is most familiar from the work of Invader, the artist whose mosaics of aliens first appeared in Paris in the 1990s (Blackshaw & Farrelly, 2008). Now numbering about 400 in Paris and hundreds more around the world, the little aliens are held in great affection as they remake public space and comment on the proliferation of computer games and contemporary image saturation. Invader’s work is subversive because it occupies public space and does not confine itself to orthodox art venues. In the careful craftsmanship of the execution, however, there is no aesthetic subversion; Invader enhances cities, providing delightful moments of discovery. Invader’s art has now been authorised by some cities thus removing the unsanctioned element and making even more difficult the task of definition - are the first, unsanctioned, alien mosaics to be considered guerilla art, but later, sanctioned, ones not? For the 2002 Perth *ArtRage* arts festival, Invader was invited to install several mosaics; in this context the work could be understood to occupy a legitimate high art realm because of the prestige of the festival thus questioning the earlier apparent subversion. It is ironic that Perth should have invited Invader because according to Dew (2007, p. 50) it is a particularly repressive environment for unsanctioned street artists - a repression she reports which has the effect of inspiring greater effort.

![Invader mosaic in the Marais district of Paris. Photograph by Jennifer Harris.](image)

In addition to new works, guerilla art takes an existing building or monument and alters it, but not so that the original object is damaged; Seattle offers an instructive example. There is on-going guerilla art around *Waiting for the Interurban* in which a group of statues of people waiting for a bus are targeted repeatedly for usually comic clothing treatment. Former Seattle resident, Joel Gilman, recalled in discussion on 30 September 2009, the delight of watching this ever changing play with the statue. *Eliza* is an example
of the second type of guerilla art with its mostly comic treatment being very similar to the events surrounding *Waiting for the Interurban*. Like the Seattle bus stop figures, the statue of the swimmer endures as the most important aspect of the new work. As clothes are removed and replaced the swimmer statue re-emerges and is hidden again, but remains unequivocally the visual core of the art event. It is obviously subversive to tamper with a statue, but this example of guerilla art clearly highlights love of Perth and the broad river expanse. In the apparently subversive act of dressing the statue, a paradoxical strong community affection for the statue and for the community emerges as the most outstanding element.

Fig 3. Robed statues in the *Waiting for the Interurban* group in Seattle, USA. Photograph by Joel Gilman.

Heritage and guerilla art

In terms of good heritage practice, the *Eliza* monument has been successful in reactivating memory of the history of the baths, despite the absence of surviving fabric. The statue is a poetic reminder of the baths, it is set in the water with a view of distant hills and a romantic backdrop of old boat sheds. There the impact of the statue might have stopped, but instead, a massive reconstruction or reactivation of social value has occurred as the statue is clothed and equipped with banners almost every week in the
warm months - sometimes several times in the same week. The long period between
demolition of the Crawley Baths and the unveiling of the statue meant that there was
public disconnection from the site, but the monument now reconnects us to the heritage
site of the baths. Although heritage practice emphasises the importance of continuity of
use of a place, sometimes it works to reconnect us to a place that seems to have been
erased. Some heritage actions can achieve this despite the absence of original fabric. The
function of the statue is an example of how that disconnection can be overcome by re-
connection, a lost past is re-remembered. The re-connection, however, has not been
achieved simply by installing the monument, links between past and present have come
about through community play with the statue.

The coincidence of heritage practice and guerilla art in Eliza forces us to consider a series
of unexpected reversals of meaning for these two elements. Heritage protection of a place
is usually achieved through control, by establishing boundaries, rules, visitor directions
and management plans. At Eliza, heritage management of the original fabric of the baths
was never possible because their demolition occurred prior to heritage legislation and yet,
quite unexpectedly, social value of place is affirmed. Heritage activity is preoccupied
with preservation of values as defined in the Burra Charter and, despite high profile
cultural battles over development, is regarded widely as making a vital contribution to community
life. Guerilla art, by contrast, occupies a liminal art zone and limited social appreciation -
most enthusiastic in the case of, for example, Banksy whose works are often torn from
walls for resale for hundreds of pounds sterling (Peiter, 2009, p.28) or regarded as ugly
when ‘buffed’ (removed) by authorities. The coincidence of iconoclasm and celebration
in, for example, the Invader mosaics suggests that the fruitful and community-affirming
coincidence of heritage and guerilla art ought not to be possible, because these two
cultural expressions seem antithetical. Activity surrounding Eliza, however, cannot be
apprehended unless we consider the possibility that these two unlikely elements are
supporting each other in a complex interplay of official government art together with
playful, unsanctioned audience performance. Eliza is probably not the target of
disenfranchised people, as is often the case with graffiti (Dew, 2007), the various types of
traffic around the statue come mostly from Perth’s affluent western suburbs, places where
graffiti is usually abhorred as an ugly anti-social blight. This is, of course, not the usual
understanding of graffiti, no lasting marker is left and Eliza has so far emerged unscathed
from every unsanctioned clothing drama. Guerilla art around Eliza, therefore, is not about
anti-social behaviour. The opposite response is elicited because this guerilla art is
celebrated because it brightens the monotony of a daily commuter drive, monotonous
despite the magnificent river estuary. This guerilla art is thus regarded as a rich bonus of
everyday life; the secret artists are celebrated rather than scorned. Not only is guerilla art
not deplored at Eliza, but it can be seen to support heritage ideals because, in the larrikin
spirit of unsanctioned activity and its collision with a government-installed monument,
there is reactivation of the social value of the baths. The witty playfulness elicits smiles,
community connection and social value in a way that the statue alone could not. A
desired heritage outcome, that is, protection of social value, and guerilla art have thus
come together in this statue in remarkable mutual support.
Heritage has often had a static quality, the frozen look of preservation (Walsh, 1992) and a “don’t touch” address to an audience. In the functioning of Eliza, however, the audience has become central to its heritage meanings. We can no longer see Eliza without its active audience; if the statue is undraped then we are waiting for the next graffiti act - the statue is, understood, therefore, as either draped or about to be so. It is either a fresh new work of art or in the state of becoming so. The statue is a dynamic performance place which reclaims the river space for public comment and raises questions about transgression, community and memory. The remainder of this paper is devoted to considering these issues.

Fig. 4 Grey meanings of guerilla art - just as some guerilla art is sold for high prices thus appearing to undercut its social subversion, so sometimes Eliza has been used to advertise business as she does in this advertisement for a radio station. Photograph by Jennifer Harris.

Transgression?

It is obvious that to climb onto a statue and robe it garishly is to transgress accepted social mores of respect. In almost all cases respect is shown to a statue and what it represents by maintaining a distance of a metre or two in order better to appreciate its totality and avoid damaging it. Climbing onto a statue is usually associated with
disrespect, in extreme cases it can signify the pending mob destruction of a statue after the fall of a hated national leader. In rare cases, such as the thirteenth century bronze of St Peter in the Vatican by Arnofo di Cambio, the public is invited, through tradition, to touch the feet (Michelin, 1985, p.77). In a reversal of acceptable mores, extreme respect thus is shown by what is usually forbidden - touching. The definition of the feet has long ago worn away, but this is a sign of centuries of devotion rather than damage. This is a highly specific example in which touch is a form of spiritual respect which links millions of visitors to St Peter’s Basilica, both backwards and forwards in time. It is observation and folk knowledge which transmits the correct behaviour at this statue and it is not limited to the statue in St Peter’s. In the Basilica of Sacre-Coeur in Paris I observed in July 2009 that a small copy of this statue had had its feet worn away in the same practice of veneration which could certainly not be described as transgressive.

Clearly there are unwritten rules for what is appropriate for Eliza: clothing and signs are the norm. Painting or scratching the statue has never occurred, either of these would result in vandalism and permanent damage. The Eliza audience knows that vandalism is not acceptable, therefore, we can see that although the statue is subjected to transgressive behaviour there are limits to that behaviour. Audience play is not open-ended and does not permit highly individualistic damaging expressions. There is a clear set of rules for play with Eliza and this alerts us to the fact that audience actions cannot be understood only as transgressive. Julius (2002) argues that transgression has in-built limits; the limits are part of the definition of transgression; transgressive art, therefore, is not focussed on destruction.

Transgressions are short-lived affairs; they do not so much seek to abolish the rule as suspend it, and for a moment only…. The transgressor reinscribes the border he violates. Taboos are constraints that must be violated and preserved. Transgression asserts limits… The taboo is ‘jolted’, not terminated. Transgressions suspend taboos without suppressing them… The experience of transgression is one that mixes dread with ecstasy. (Julius 2002, p. 23)

Julius’s argument is most useful in understanding interaction with public statuary, from it we can see that the borders of acceptable behaviour thus are reinscribed in touching the feet of the St Peter statue in the Vatican, highlighting the fact that one is forbidden to touch in almost every other case and that to do so here is to underscore that fact. Reversal of the rule contains both transgression and the utmost respect. To climb onto Eliza and change the statue’s appearance is transgressive behaviour which is understood to have short term consequences - her new clothing is appreciated until removed - and there is no penalty. In making these alterations, but in taking great care not to damage the statue, the limits of transgressive activity are clearly able to be read.

The ‘dread’ that Julius argues is part of transgression, lies in the fear associated with constant acts of transformations of a statue, a fear associated with the on-going transformations of urban space brought about by graffiti. Eliza is undeniably a conservative and realist art work and, therefore, by traditions associated with statues of
this realist type and conventions of art appreciation, does not invite public interaction. In historical appearance, Eliza thus is consistent with thousands of figural statues around the world climbing upon which is not permitted, nor conceived as part of the art potential of the work. There is dread in linking Eliza to other figural monuments and imagining a world in which many of them could be targeted for dressing. There is delight, however, because it is thrilling to see bold, transgressive acts and to see this monument constantly change its meanings.

Fig. 5. Eliza in a mankini. Photograph by Jennifer Harris.

A Passing-through-community

In the 1990s social value emerged in Australia as a heritage value that was at last held to be as important as the previously dominant historic, aesthetic and scientific heritage values described in the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter 1999. The role of social value in communities is discussed by Johnston (1992, 1993). In People’s Places (1993, p.7), she sets out the purpose of social value in heritage practice: it identifies a community because recognition of the social value of a place also recognises the existence of a community. It can foster the continuity of traditions and can empower local communities in the face of increasing bureaucratic control (Johnston 1993, p.8). Empowerment is also
a broad theme for commentators on public art (Coutts & Jokela, 2008; Finknelpearl, 2000) and it shows that discursively heritage and public art have much in common.

Although the swimmers of the Crawley Baths have died, aged forty years, or now swim elsewhere, *Eliza* functions to recognise a new community, in fact to bring it into being. The statue has created a passing-through-community of people who would not be linked by other geographic or demographic elements. Paddlers, cyclists, walkers, rollerbladers, bus passengers and car drivers have become a mobile community who are linked by the statue and their enjoyment of guerilla art. For the moments of passing, and the moments of recall of the latest tricks, a heterogeneous community exists. Falk and Dierking (2000) have demonstrated the importance of memory in museum work where the recall of a moment in the museum is one of the most powerful and lasting values of the visit. In remembering the latest clothing of *Eliza*, members of the passing-through-community are linked without actually knowing the identity of each other. Sealed off alone in a passing car, one can smile at the statue and, recalling it later, know that others saw what you saw and shared your amusement, therefore you were not actually alone in the car because shared experience and memory have linked you to a wider community. This community comes into being through *Eliza* in a way that simple beauty of the landscape without *Eliza* could not achieve.

The Oaxaca Declaration conceptualises place through action: ‘place is process’ (Johnston 1992, p.12), just as guerilla art is understood as reacting to place and opportunity in an art process. In this sense, the activity around *Eliza* is what creates place more surely than the statue itself. The on-going guerilla art robing of the statue defines place. The concept of place through process is especially useful because it would be challenging to try to set boundaries to this community; on-line communities show us that the concept of community is no longer defined easily. Although the precise historic memories of the Crawley Baths are shared by fewer and fewer people, the feeling of the fun of the baths is powerfully reactivated by *Eliza* and thus reconnects us, more than forty years after demolition, to the memory of the baths. The statue, therefore, achieves continuity of tradition even though there was such a long period of visual erasure. Continuity is achieved not through public experience of enduring fabric, but by reactivation of fun, now able to be conceptualised in heritage practice as social value.

Johnston (1993, p.8) emphasises that external recognition of a community is necessary because the community needs to be accountable. In the case of *Eliza*, the idea that those moving past the statue constitute a passing-through-community demonstrates the complexities faced by the heritage world as it establishes itself necessarily through bureaucratic processes. How might accountability work with a passing-through-community? It is very complex to name this passing-through-community of unfixed people, accountability is difficult to apply. In the unwritten rule of no vandalism, there is, however, a sense of accountability and community care and protection.

Public art
Heritage practice could look to the art world for guidance in understanding the role of the passing-through-community. In the later part of the twentieth century the role of the public became a central concern in sculpture. Although the term ‘public art’ is sometimes used to denote guerilla art, it is used in this paper to mean sanctioned art in a public place. Almost twenty years ago, North (1990) described this established idea as a defining and pervasive concern that could be found at both popular sites and high art domains.

The idea, that sculpture becomes public by taking the spatial experience of its audience as a subject, is so seductive it has influenced everything from Serra’s fortresses to the benign and cheery works featured in many shopping malls. (North 1990, p.10)

In the space of Eliza, the land traffic flows by while the water traffic moves around it and people clamber up. The public has made the space its own as both artist and audience. Although the statue appears to be a conventional, figural representation of a historic everywoman swimmer of the 1940s, the public use of the statue undermines its conservatism, effectively producing over it and supplementing it, with an art work in tune with this era of the primacy of the audience in public space. A conservative government statue, therefore, is re-made by guerilla art to privilege the passing audience.

I include comments here on the most famous example of unauthorised public use of a monument, the unofficial monument to Diana, Princess of Wales in Place de l’Alma, Paris which has been adorned with flowers, candles and photographs since her fatal 1997 accident in the tunnel beneath despite repeated cleaning by city authorities. The gold flame statue, a copy of the flame held by the Statue of Liberty was installed in 1987 to commemorate French-US friendship upon the centenary of the newspaper The International Herald Tribune. Such is the power of the post-1997 public interaction with this monument that it no longer seems to refer to the newspaper or international friendship. When I last visited on 9 July 2009 all of the Diana memorabilia had been cleaned off leaving only heavy stains from melted candles and sticky residue from tape used to fasten photographs and poems to the gold statue. The Diana connection had not, however, been obliterated. About ten people stood around discussing Diana and asking where the tributes had gone, the tributes now functioning as powerful ghosts, their absences highlighted by the outlines and dirt on the flame and its plinth. Nearby a young man began to write in French in a felt marker pen on the edge of the bridge overlooking the entrance to the traffic tunnel.

Laurent Thiers demands that the authorities erect a satanic monument to light the tunnel in prevision of the ritual murder of Lady Diana in 1997 on an old Merovingian sacrificial site dedicated to the goddess Diana Artemis-Hecate. He asks the cleaners to refuse to erase the poetry of the bridge and that the police arrest drug criminals rather than shit men who are political dissidents...

Evidently, it is possible at the moment for Paris authorities to reclaim the meaning of this monument even after severe cleaning, the public / audience insists on other, sometimes bizarre, meanings, evident in the above quote. The power of the artist and the fixing of
meaning in public space thus gives way to the audience. ‘The gap between art and
audience is closed by bringing the audience into the art, by making spatial experience the
very subject of the art’ says North (1990, p.11). The unsanctioned public use of the
unofficial Diana monument shows the power of the audience. Similarly, The Vietnam
Veterans Memorial in Washington DC is an outstanding example of the primacy of the
audience in creating meaning and claiming space. People walk into the earth to see the
names on the wall of the memorial bringing with them mementoes which are left at the
site (Edkins, 2003). The mementoes, combined with the act of walking, create the
memorial as public space and emphasise that meanings emerge from the visitors.

Fig. 6 The unofficial Diana monument
in Place de l’Alma over the traffic tunnel
in Paris where she had her fatal 1997 car
accident. Photograph by Jennifer Harris.

Fig.7 Writing on the bridge over the
entrance to the traffic tunnel calling for
authorities to allow a monument to Diana,
July 2009. Photograph by Jennifer Harris.

Although heritage practice now emphasises the centrality of social value to good heritage
practice, it nevertheless has difficulty grappling with audience roles. Through examining
Eliza, we can see that the role of the audience in heritage must be further understood. It is
not that heritage cannot cope with interactive audiences - examples exist of invitations
extended to audiences, for example, to move through the reed installation in Centennial
Park in Sydney and the tree installation in front of the Museum of Sydney. These art
works were made with an interactive audience in mind. In Eliza, however, the role of the
audience must be interpreted as transgressive because there is no allotted space for the
audience as there is in the Washington DC and Sydney examples.

The guerilla robing of the statue is, on one level of analysis, therefore, a despoliation. It is
only by reading the audience’s role with Eliza in terms of Burra Charter values that
positive heritage value can be ascribed. Heritage work prizes continuity of use, as it does
clearly in a place which invites audience participation, but it is a considerable conceptual
leap to move towards valuing guerilla art as a rich addition to heritage place. At Eliza,
however, guerilla art illuminates social value, the very value that heritage practice is
currently trying so hard to foster, a particularly difficult aim when people change house and job so frequently and attachments to locality are tenuous.

Collective memory

Communities can re-remember lost places and times. At the Eliza site of the Crawley Baths, many in the passing-through-community have no lived memory of the baths, but through the statue a collective memory has been activated. Eliza demonstrates the way that collective memory can seem to negate complex memories. Commentator, Wertsch (2002, p. 44) has created a useful table describing the features of collective memory versus the attributes of history. In collective memory there is a subjective quality and the memory has a ‘single committed perspective’, it is ‘impatient with ambiguity about motives and the interpretation of events’ and focuses on the ‘unchanging group essence’. In contrast, history attempts to be objective, critical, reflexive and ‘recognizes ambiguity’. These headings sum up well the effect of collective memory in the Eliza space. In reactivating the sense of fun associated with swimming, the guerilla artists who dress the statue have erased any historic complexity - even the fact of the demolition of the baths is not brought to mind. Original fabric is prized by western heritage practice, yet its absence here goes unremarked. Complex and layered remembrance of specific and contested events, even moments of great sporting achievement are submerged beneath playfulness.

Collective memory at Eliza, therefore, can be understood as historically negative because a complex past is obliterated by simple fun. In the 1980s and 1990s there were many attacks on heritage practice for its romanticisation of the past and effective erasure of complex understandings (for example see Walsh (1992) and Hewison (1987)). Wertsch (2002, p. 44), however, offers another aspect of collective memory which is very positive for good heritage practice. He argues that professional history practice often differentiates the past from the present and thus creates a sense that the past is finished and has little contemporary connection. Collective memory, by contrast, he says has the effect of denying the ‘pastness’ of historic events and places associated with them by bringing the past into the present. Collective memory, therefore, is a force that connects past and present. This is achieved partly by emphasis on the importance of a ‘group essence’ which is reflected in past events which resonate in the present and help to define group identity. The sheer fun around Eliza, therefore, connects vividly to the past and shows that rich community experiences continue. This linkage leads to strong social value and has the potential to awaken interest in a more complex past because of its currency in contemporary life. Collective memory, therefore, through this linkage of past and present, is occupied with present uses of the past.

Conclusion

Perth is a city that is unremarkable for its monuments; Eliza is very small in the scale of the grandeur of the site that it occupies - the sweep of the river between the University of
Western Australia and the entry to the city centre. Examination of this statue, however, shows how very complex a small part of city life can be. *Eliza* not only functions as an historical marker of the long ago demolished Crawley Baths but has opened up the strange mutual support of heritage value and guerilla art. The statue has also had the effect of creating a community in a part of life which is most atomising, the tedious daily commute. This paper does not propose that an open invitation to the public to festoon heritage markers would enrich a city, on the contrary it would probably lead to a chaotic, ugly environment. This paper shows, however, that greater audience participation at heritage sites could be very valuable. Heritage practice needs to investigate the rewards of audience performance at heritage sites in order to realise the potential of social value. *Eliza* reminds us of the Crawley Baths, but shows that a monument to something else can achieve heritage status itself, the site it occupies bearing the twin status of the absence of the fabric of the baths and the strong heritage values of a new marker of the past.

References

Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter*, 1999.


