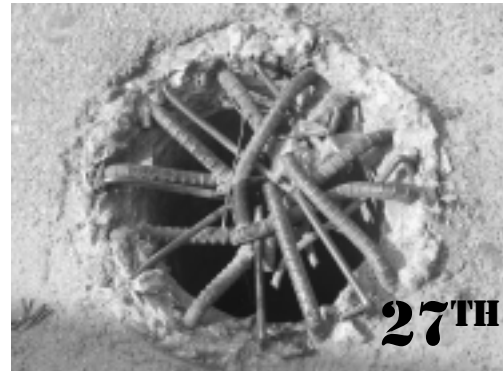


Travelling along an *invisible bridge**



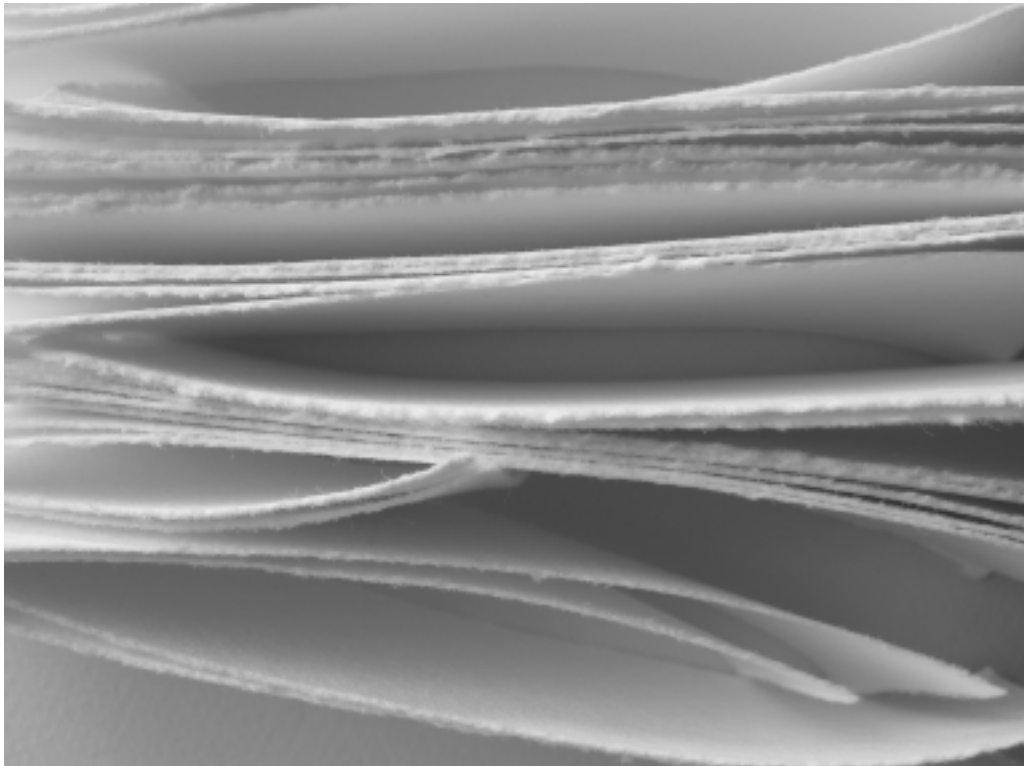
An intense red circle. Glowing through the misty atmosphere between the built up apartment blocks of Seoul this delicious sight surprises and captivates me. Confused, I wonder if it is the sun or the moon?¹ I try to orientate my internal compass by seeking beauty along a dusty bank on the side of the road, pulling out and collecting weeds as I go. Sunlight and water draw the weeds directly onto solar plate² through the hardening and dissolving qualities of the plate. My hands itch and my eyes open, becoming roving microscopes seeing into the secrets of these cellular bodies.

I can't sleep because every time I shut my eyes I start drawing with the light behind them, every possible moment spent drawing with a digital camera, a scanner and Photoshop. This process of manipulating imagery through filters echoes my perceptions of immersing myself in a new culture as pieces of information are magnified, distorted or reduced to textures. I project my presence into my absence by tenderly imaging my daughter's sewing patterns, knowing that is

* All the images included in this visual essay are details from *invisible bridge*, the artist-in-residency project Taylor undertook between Korea and New Zealand during 2003-04, as referenced in the writing.

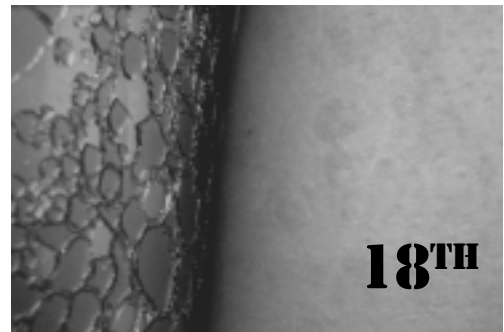


what she is doing back in Dunedin with real bits of fabric. Shifting meanings flit across me like in a kaleidoscope. I am displaced, my senses are becoming amplified, what to feel, how to feel? Over the dragonflies' hum my ears are searching for familiar voices, yet unsettled by only being able to shape "you" from a few sounds. My eyes are hungry, unsatiated by the too few English words I find nonsensically splattered on clothing. I push my food around the metal tray with my chopsticks, wondering if it is a noodle or tiny whitebait. Neither, I discover. I sit alone eating quickly before someone sees me and feels embarrassed for me. I am watched; I sense the

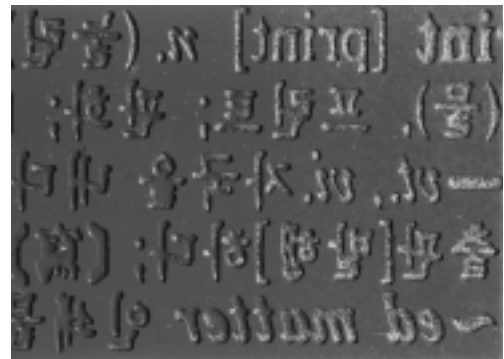


panoptic gaze and cell phones collectively locating my moves. I think I will be less obvious soon. I think my face has started to morph. I think I am starting to look more like the faces around me.³

Otherwise silent our mutual language is printmaking; we dance in rhythm around the press with flashes of understanding lighting up our faces.⁴ My paper, thick, white, acid free, quietly grained and deckled along the tear, softens hydroscopically with an unquenchable thirst.⁵ I blot excess water rivulets before I lay the paper over the inked plate and navigate it through the press belly on a ship's wheel. Tension at the roller indicates in my right trapezoid muscle, and then I fold back the felts to reveal your hidden secrets. I peel you off the plate, for now you are my cutis,⁶ you are my time: my present, past, and future all embedded deeply, drying under my eyes.



My fingertips run across the embossed prints as if I am reading the bumpiness of rice drying on the highways; the impressions are stamped but not always clear. Faces of my old friends are fading; textures are seemingly dissolving into anonymously similar microcosms. I sense a danger of the prints becoming the same.⁷ The unpredictability of graphic surprise operates continually; I am not always getting what I expect but still, unfortunately, discard an image before taking it through the whole process. My wondering about what will happen by juxtaposing imagery from multiple locations and cultures is laced with the saltiness of our shared confusion. I am numbed by *kimchi* burning my lips in my stumbling attempts to speak another tongue.

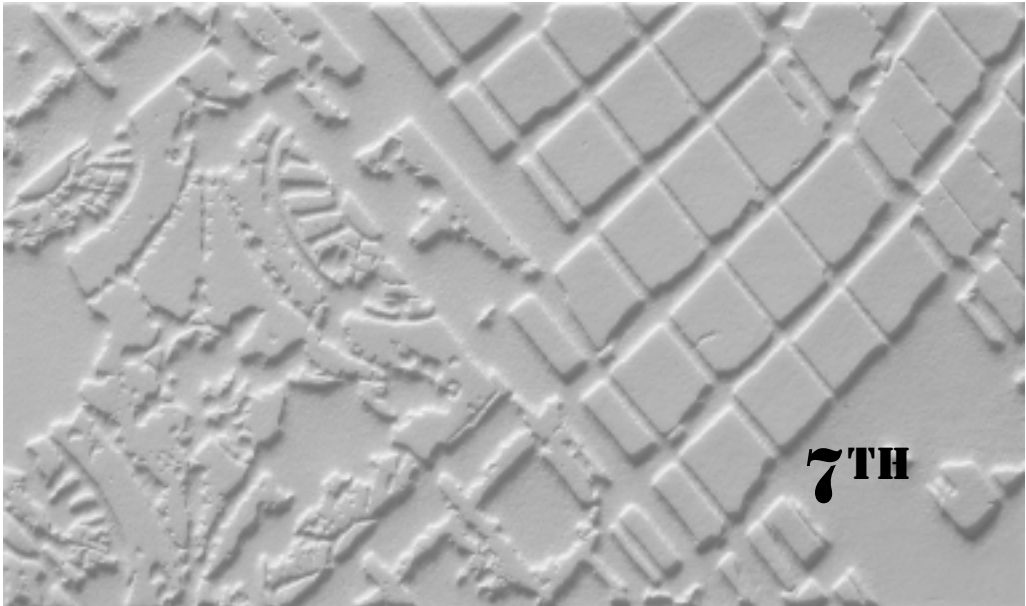




I pin a wall of prints and lay relief plates across the floor to wrap bodies in the mapping of many fictions, truths, histories and voices. Walking along the narrative track of plates I feel self-conscious, my bare feet cold until the pressure imparted by my foot is answered by the pressure of the sculptural surface. Like the pianist's finger that coaxes sound by lifting the finger off the key, release shoots lines of light up my legs, awakening my remembering of where I have been or where I might go.⁸ My body turns towards the fragile movement of being watched, of breathing, deniably there but not there, the textured paper pits the crystalline lens of my eyeball.⁹



My heart quickens. The suitcase shipped from Korea arrives home today, so weathered from the sea that the contents spill out as if in manic determination to colonise the lounge. I complete the unfolding of a disintegrating box to unpack my incised plates and then, spiralling fluidly backwards and inwards I clone the prints.¹⁰ Unlike the disappointment that can go with collecting a set of newly developed photographs (“I think I remembered everything so differently”) in printmaking I echo the surfaces inscribed with time and memory, consciously becoming traces of my journeying. Longing to be there and here I open up my email address book, press “send” and interlacing the mercurialism between us, I migrate in electronic space.



- 1 Appropriately, I travelled to Korea to work with a light-sensitive printmaking process and to print in the colour of light. These diary extracts are from some of my writing during my Korean residency and the exhibitions created from this research, named *invisible bridge*. Also see Janine Flynn, "Korea's Luminous Chosen Colours", *Surface Design Journal*: 30-35.
- 2 A photosensitive resin-based plate used in the printmaking industry, also known as photopolymer plate and Torelief WS95H11, is available from Toray Industries Inc. Japan.
- 3 Technology determines that closed human systems no longer exist; we are all members of a global village. "In the age of electricity, all of humanity becomes our skin." Marshall McLuhan at: < http://www.hans-hass.de/Englisch/Energon/6_Appendix_3.html > visited 23/06/04.
- 4 "Visual culture is new precisely because of its focus on the visual as a place where meanings are created and contested. Western culture has consistently privileged the spoken word as the highest form of intellectual practice and seen visual representations as second-rate illustrations of ideas." This cultural shift in favour of visualising our existence "...marks a significant challenge to the notion of the world as a written text." Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000): 6-7.
- 5 Intaglio paper is soaked prior to printing to open up the fibres, making them more receptive.
- 6 In the sense of the Latin word *cutis*: meaning living skin, that protects, that expresses, that arouses and that registers tactile sensory traces in the manner of raised scars while operating like a palimpsest. I would like to expand this with Steve Connor writing on Michel Serres's concept that "...skin is a milieu, an inbetweenness, which requires a physics of the imagination that lies between the conditions of liquid and solid." Steve Connor, *A Skin That Walks* (London: Humanities and Arts Research Centre, Royal Holloway University of London, 2002): 8.

- 7 **invisible bridge** seeks to explore tensions between the influence and confluence of multi-cultures and in our ability as humans to locate ourselves and foster tolerance. These questions have social signification for New Zealand as we are continually working out our own country's placement in terms of bicultural status and globalisation. Cross-cultural harmonies need to be fostered sensitively because one of the dangers of the Global Village attitude could be that points of difference, diversity and richness get diluted.
- 8 "The points on the body once awakened are not merely marks on the surface but are an active capacity. Awakening these points as sensate is opening the body to semiosis...to be awake is to remember, and one remembers through the senses, via substance...memory is stored in substances that are shared, just as substances are stored in social memory which is sensory." My experiences of collective social operations in South Korea led me to notice a lack in my own culture which I describe through Suzi Gablik's conclusion that, "...the loss of the communal dimension in our particular culture has actually truncated our sense of individuality, because we have such a distorted experience of the world that comes to us exclusively through the limited ego-self. We know only about separateness; we know so little about interdependence." **invisible bridge** begins to process the affects of this 'difference' for me by diminishing the subject/object dichotomy that underlies the traditional relationships between artist/artwork and viewer through being a system of relations. See also: Nadia Seremetakis, *The Memory of Senses: Historical Perception, Commensual Exchange, and Modernity* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994): 216 and Suzi Gablik, *Conversations Before the End of Time* (London & New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995): 398.
- 9 By exploring touch as a shared human response and prioritising this rather than sight I aim to engage the whole body with works and thereby to enhance the experience that you cannot have a touch experience without being touched back. Saul Ostrow explains: "The sculptural moment is not just visual, but also tactile. But it evokes touch as much as it entails real touching." See "Piecing the Pieces together again", in Nicola Kearton (ed.) *Sculpture: Contemporary Form and Theory* (London: Academy, 1997): 18.
- 10 In the language of traditional printmaking an edition is printed and prints are sold off separately. If you own one of the prints you have a connection to the other people who own a print from the same edition, like being part of a family. Dunedin viewers who select prints from *invisible bridge* will be offered the email addresses of the Korean participants and whether or not the recipients make contact they will still share a bond, and thus an invisible bridge will be created between the two countries.

Lynn Taylor is a print media artist and lecturer who received her Master of Fine Arts Degree from Otago Polytechnic School of Art, Dunedin, New Zealand in 2003, the culmination of research activity engaged with the mapping of memory. She exhibits internationally and her work has received a number of awards and is held in many private collections. Solo exhibitions include: re: *Kakawai*, Dunedin Public Art Gallery 2003 and **invisible bridge**, Jeonju, Korea, 2003 and Dunedin 2004.