Habits of Habitation
A Case For Disorienting White Comfort In Thunder Bay

By
Shannon Kitley

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Architecture

Azrieli School of
Architecture and Urbanism

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

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I have been looking for a way in, a place to start. Searching for a method that will lend clarity to the connections, concepts, and gut feelings I have felt growing stronger since I began my university studies seven years ago. One thing has become apparent to me through my research: methods matter. In her book *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*, Margaret Kovach (2009, 110) notes that because we can only interpret the world from the place of our experience, there is always a relationship between our memories and the research we conduct. Research stories, she suggests, reveal the purpose of our inquiries because there is an inseparable relationship between story and knowing within Indigenous frameworks, “stories are both method and meaning” (Kovach, 108). With this in mind, I think it necessary to share my story and clarify what is driving my research.

I was born in Thunder Bay, Ontario, a city with a complicated history. Thunder Bay is located on traditional Ojibwe land that stretches 640 kilometers along the Lake Superior shoreline and north through the Great Lakes watershed (Ontario Heritage Trust 2020). In 1850, Ojibwe leaders raised concern about the mining permits that were being issued on Indigenous territory, these disputes resulted in the signing of the Robinson Superior Treaty (Hele 2020). The creation of the Fort William First Nations Reserve (FW-FNR) was among the provisions promised by the treaty. The reserve lies on the outskirts of Thunder Bay city limits and is bordered by the Kaministiquia River. The city of Thunder Bay is the product of two towns that expanded and subsequently amalgamated; Port Arthur (originally founded for the grain shipping industry) and Fort William (originally developed around the North West Company fur trading post). Though officially united under the title of Thunder Bay, residents still refer to each side of the city by Port Arthur

and Fort William.

I attended Sir Winston Churchill High School on the Fort William side of the city. The building has since been torn down, but at the time it sat on the banks of the Neebing River with a clear view of Mount McKay in the distance. Across the football field from Churchill sat Dennis Franklin Cromarty (DFC), a high school for Indigenous students from remote communities across Northern Ontario. The football field created a 150-meter-wide buffer zone between schools and was bordered by a chain link fence. There was one gravel running track that looped around the perimeter of the field, but apart from this, no trails cut across and none bridged the gap between schools. Only once in the four years of my high school career did I enter DFC. It wasn't until I left Thunder Bay for university that I realized how strange this life in parallel was. Looking back, I can't help but picture that football field as dividing more than space.

Much like the football field between these schools, the Kaministiquia River creates a spatial buffer between the City of Thunder Bay and the FWFNR. Really, it could be considered more of a barrier than buffer in light of the 2013 fire that closed the main access bridge. Growing up, my understanding of the FWFNR was based on experiences hiking up Mount McKay, my infrequent trips to the gas station to fill up our family car, and my visits to Chippewa, a small amusement park on the shores of Lake Superior that hosted summer camps and a wildlife sanctuary. But apart from these instances, my life remained quite separate from those who lived on the reserve.

Within Thunder Bay, systemic and social racism undermine the Indigenous community. One third of all Indigenous hate crimes in Canada

are reported in the city. The police force has recently undergone investigation, facing accusations of systemic racism and lack of proper evidence-based investigations in the case of missing or murdered Indigenous residents. In the past two decades, nine Indigenous youth have been found dead, often in rivers and marshes. Five of them attended DFC. Yet growing up, these topics were not on my radar. I had no idea that the Indigenous students across the field from me came from remote communities across Northern Ontario, or that in choosing to attend DFC they had to leave their families behind. I had the luxury of ignorance. The names of the children who had been found in the river or gone missing would make the news and then seemingly fade out of public consciousness; I did not question it. While I often say that I live under a rock in reference to pop culture, I began to understand that this extended to other facets of my thinking as I progressed through university. A whirlwind of Canadian studies, philosophy, social geography, and Indigenous art and film seminars were the beginning of the many wake up calls that I experienced.

One of my most significant wake-up calls came in 2016, when the Northern Ontario First Nation of Attawapiskat officially declared a state of emergency after 11 youth attempted to take their lives as part of a suicide pact. Within this Cree community of 2000 people, the striking reality is that these suicide attempts were only a fraction of the 101 that had taken place during the previous 8 months. I could not shake the idea that Attawapiskat stood not as an anomaly, but as a reflection of the public health crisis faced by many Indigenous communities across northern Canada. While the media joined the debate over the best approach to resolve the epidemic, a discourse of relocation emerged, suggesting that the most viable option for residents of Attawapiskat would be to leave. What

the media failed to acknowledge was that the youth from many of the communities across Northern Ontario were already forced to leave their homes if they wanted to attend school. Moving hundreds of kilometers away, to Thunder Bay, to a school that had sat across the football field from me.

Settler ignorance perpetuates the social divide between the Indigenous and settler communities of Thunder Bay. Failure to acknowledge the continued impact of colonization on the lives of Indigenous residents is at the foundation of this ignorance. By overlooking the realities of systemic racism and generational trauma faced by the Indigenous community in Thunder Bay, settler residents are able to remove themselves from the colonial narrative. As Kovach (2009, 178) notes, "responsibility implies knowledge and action. It seeks to genuinely serve others and is inseparable from respect and reciprocity". Settler ignorance does more than simply protect colonial privileges, it also justifies the unequal distribution of those privileges. Stereotypes of the 'Other' have led settler residents to believe that respect has not been earned and reciprocity cannot be expected of the Indigenous community. In some cases, this ignorance is intentional, it is coupled with a very real desire not to know because knowing would necessitate action, or more accurately, a different course of action. Knowing would disrupt the systems that enable settler residents to feign innocence. How then, do we bridge the divide between communities and begin to communicate, when many settlers have chosen not to listen?

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Fig. 01: Oh you scared me, thats a bad place to stand!</i>	<i>p.20</i>
<i>Fig. 02: Are you looking for the bathrooms?</i>	<i>p.22</i>
<i>Fig. 03: Hi, are you a developer?</i>	<i>p.23</i>
<i>Fig. 04: Hey, what are you doing?</i>	<i>p.24</i>
<i>Fig. 05: Are you taking a photo of the flowers?</i>	<i>p.25</i>
<i>Fig. 06: Hi I'm ██████, what are you doing?</i>	<i>p.26</i>
<i>Fig. 07: Hi, can I help you?</i>	<i>p.27</i>
<i>Fig. 08: Sorry, I was trying to wait until you were done.</i>	<i>p.28</i>
<i>Fig. 09: What are the photos for?</i>	<i>p.29</i>
<i>Fig. 10: Are you with anyone?</i>	<i>p.30</i>
<i>Fig. 11: Why are you taking photos?</i>	<i>p.32</i>
<i>Fig. 12: Do you mind if I put the sled behind you there?</i>	<i>p.33</i>
<i>Fig. 13: A client saw you yesterday, wondered what was going on.</i>	<i>p.34</i>
<i>Fig. 14: I'll let him know you're just taking photos of the door.</i>	<i>p.41</i>
<i>Fig. 15: Hey, you gave me a dollar this morning.</i>	<i>p.42</i>
<i>Fig. 16: Your photos are making that customer uncomfortable.</i>	<i>p.50</i>
<i>Fig. 17: Do you want me to move my truck for your photo?</i>	<i>p.51</i>
<i>Fig. 18: Hello miss, can I ask what you are doing?</i>	<i>p.52</i>
<i>Fig. 19: What class is it for?</i>	<i>p.53</i>
<i>Fig. 20: Sorry, do you mind if I go in?</i>	<i>p.54</i>
<i>Fig. 21: Hi, can I help you with anything?</i>	<i>p.55</i>
<i>Fig. 22: I just wanted to see what you're drawing.</i>	<i>p.56</i>
<i>Fig. 23: Do you want to talk to the manager?</i>	<i>p.57</i>
<i>Fig. 24: I saw you outside the other day taking photos.</i>	<i>p.59</i>
<i>Fig. 25: They used to have a bunch of signs up, now they're gone.</i>	<i>p.60</i>
<i>Fig. 26: Are we ruining your photo?</i>	<i>p.61</i>
<i>Fig. 27: What are you drawing?</i>	<i>p.62</i>
<i>Fig. 28: If you have any questions feel free to come back.</i>	<i>p.63</i>
<i>Fig. 29: Do you want us to move?</i>	<i>p.64</i>
<i>Fig. 30: Do you have any more dollars?</i>	<i>p.65</i>
<i>Fig. 31: You should take photos of the old homes on Kingston St.</i>	<i>p.66</i>
<i>Fig. 32: I thought you might be planning to lease the place.</i>	<i>p.67</i>
<i>Fig. 33: Do you want to come and take photos inside?</i>	<i>p.73</i>
<i>Fig. 34: Am I in the way?</i>	<i>p.74</i>
<i>Fig. 35: Good luck with the project.</i>	<i>p.75</i>
<i>Fig. 36: We wondered what you were doing.</i>	<i>p.76</i>
<i>Fig. 37: Excuse me, can I help you?</i>	<i>p.77</i>
<i>Fig. 38: Is that a floor plan?</i>	<i>p.78</i>
<i>Fig. 39: Why are you taking pictures of the windows?</i>	<i>p.79</i>
<i>Fig. 40: What are you looking at?</i>	<i>p.80</i>
<i>Fig. 41: Oh so what is this place now?</i>	<i>p.81</i>
<i>Fig. 42: I wouldn't want to get in your photo, I'd crack yor lens.</i>	<i>p.82</i>

To understand this thesis, it is necessary to first understand the deep divide that exists between the Indigenous and settler residents of Thunder Bay, and how the seeds of conflict were sewn in the early days of city's conception. Throughout the nineteenth century, treaties were used by the government of Canada as a tool to acquire land from First Nations (Stark 2012, 126). Currently, First Nations relations with the government are impacted by the contention surrounding the conception of these treaties and their intended function. While First Nations lands were being acquired by the government, railroads were built that expanded into the West and brought settlers and goods to Thunder Bay. The town of Port Arthur flourished with imports of grain from the fast-growing West and to this day is considered the more affluent side of the city. The wealth of Fort William, however, declined at the turn of the twentieth century with the deterioration of the fur trade industry. Many Ojibwe people, who had become dependent on the lifestyle supported by their partnership with the North West Company, were left destitute (Talaga, 8).

At the same time that the fur trade industry was declining, the 1876 Indian Act was implemented. The act was designed to control the Indigenous population and has been compared to apartheid legislation in its oppressiveness. Among policies that banned religious ceremonies, prohibited the formation of political organizations, policed movement on and off reserve land, and dictated the terms of legal status such that any Indigenous person who wished to join the army, attend university, marry a non-status man, or vote in an election, had to relinquish their treaty rights (Henderson 2018). The act also brought about the policies which shaped the residential schooling system, a system of cultural genocide that aimed to assimilate the next generation of the Indigenous population into

colonial society (Talaga, 60).

In Thunder Bay, the St. Joseph's Indian Residential School operated from 1870- 1966. Funded by the federal government to expand in 1907, the school took in hundreds of Indigenous children during its 96 years of operation (Talaga, 9). Some families, poverty stricken and left with few options, brought their children to the school in the hopes that their education would help them adapt to the growing settler society. In other instances, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were sent to help round up children from their families to increase numbers in residential schools (CBC News 2011). These events were the beginning of the deep mistrust which now permeates Indigenous interactions with the police. The legacy of this early work is blatantly visible within the city of Thunder Bay where systemic and social racism continue to undermine the Indigenous community.

Hate crimes, racial profiling, verbal threats, racist jokes, and other forms of systemic racism are daily realities faced by the Indigenous residents of Thunder Bay. There is a palpable divide between the settler and Indigenous communities. During my thesis defence, I was criticized for taking such a strong racialized stance in my writing. One critic, after listening to a CBC radio documentary about Thunder Bay, suggested that the boundaries I describe between the Indigenous and settler relations are actually far more blurred than I gave credit. I want to emphasize that based on my experience growing up in the city, I have not exaggerated the divide between communities. I have taken such a strong stance on race in my writing because it is necessary in order to understand how different groups of people experience life within the city.

In 2019, Lakehead University, Carleton University, and the Ontario

Native Women's Association (ONWA) produced an unpublished study that examines the safety of Indigenous youth, particularly women, within the city of Thunder Bay. The initial findings from this study revealed that sixty seven percent of the participants felt that Thunder Bay was not a safe space for young Indigenous women (McGuire, 2019). The women who participated in the study expressed their notions of safety by sharing their personal experiences of living in city. In total, the stories of 30 young Indigenous women were recorded. The following is a quote from a participant as she describes her experience of spaces within the city:

"There are predominantly white spaces in the city... (what is a white space?), like when you go into the shopping mall even though it's not always white people who are there, cause a lot of Indigenous people do go to the mall. But you can tell that it is kind of, they've - they don't see white people as like a threat to their stores and stuff, whereas they might see Indigenous people as threats. So, I think just in like white predominant spaces, it's like they would rather have white people there" (McGuire 2019).

While among these women the notion of safety took different forms, their sources of danger remained relatively universal and were often linked to spaces of whiteness. It is important to remember that spaces are not equally safe for everyone. White people rarely consider how safe a space is from the perspective of a person of colour (Diangelo 2018, 67). The subjectivity of safety is at the heart of this thesis.

How do architects, planners, and municipalities design safe spaces for Indigenous youth? This has been a looming question for the city of Thunder Bay. In 2015 the Office of the Chief Coroner conducted an

inquest into the deaths of 7 First Nations youth in the city. The inquest identified unsafe spaces throughout the city and produced a detailed set of instructions targeted at improving the safety of Indigenous youth. The recommendations suggest that areas around the river are unsafe in the evenings, that streets are unsafe (notably while youth are intoxicated), and that the current boarding home situation does not sufficiently meet the needs of First Nations students coming to school in Thunder Bay. These recommendations highlight the lack of infrastructural support that Indigenous youth face. Within the city, the Indigenous population has been deliberately unplanned for. In an article published by The Globe and Mail, Thunder Bay mayor Bill Mauro was quoted saying,

"When you have a reputation, when you are trying to build a community, when you are trying to attract professionals to your city... negative talk doesn't make that job any easier" (Galloway 2019).

Mauro is referring to the issues raised in the recent inquests, which he feels draw unwanted negative attention to the city. It is clear that the need to change the city's relationship with the Indigenous community is not one of his major concerns at city hall. In order for conciliation to happen within Thunder Bay, mentalities such as this must be challenged. It is within this social climate that the cultural awareness initiative Wake the Giant (WTG) has emerged.

WTG was started by teachers at DFC, a private high school run by the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council. The school serves over 20 communities in the Thunder Bay region and across Northwestern Ontario. Many of the students who attend DFC do so out of necessity, flying to Thunder Bay from remote reserves because there are no

schools in their home communities. The WTG initiative draws attention to the culture shock many students experience when moving to Thunder Bay, leaving their communities behind to live with host families. The initiative urges residents of Thunder Bay to have compassion for and to support these students, noting that some students may come from abusive backgrounds where families are still deeply affected by the violence of colonialism and the residential schooling system. WTG aims to “co-create an inclusive community, by helping to identify, and increase welcoming and inclusive spaces in the city of Thunder Bay for Indigenous people” (Wake the Giant, 2020).

The initiative encourages local businesses to educate their staff to reduce instances of racial profiling and discrimination, it also urges employees to speak up if they witness racism within the business or larger community. After joining the WTG initiative, each business is given a decal to put in their store window to act as a signifier to Indigenous students walking down the street (Wake the Giant, 2019). The name of the initiative refers to Nanabijou, the land formation seen in Thunder Bay from the shores of Lake Superior, more commonly referred to by settler residents as the Sleeping Giant. The decals are circular and vary in size, each has the phrase “Wake the Giant” printed on it, together with an image of Nanabijou’s silhouette in the background. While the decals have been widely adopted by Thunder Bay businesses, I have begun to wonder if they are succeeding in creating the sort of safe space that they were intended to, or, alternatively, if they serve to cover up deeper systemic inequity. Troublingly, in addition to signaling ‘safe places’ within the city, the initiative also implicitly labels businesses without WTG decals as ‘unsafe’ or ‘dangerous.’

The WTG initiative was the starting point for my thesis research and a method for critically considering the concept of safety at the scale of the city. I began by mapping and documenting businesses registered with the WTG initiative. My methods of documentation and architectural representation have been influenced by architectural scholar Anne Bordeleau (2009, 92), who advocates for an indexical approach to architecture that considers the details of a building through the lens of its encounters with the user. Bordeleau suggests that "architecture can physically question the user through traces, imprints, fragments, details, surfaces and ornaments" (Bordeleau 2009, 92). I use this approach as a means of thinking about the ways in which the user engages with the threshold. Throughout the thesis I question how the surface of the building both affects and is affected by the user.

My methodology, outlined in section one, is heavily influenced by Indigenous research frameworks, primarily understood through the writings of Margaret Kovach and Linda Smith. Kovach (2009, 112) suggests that, "tribal epistemologies are a way of knowing that does not debate the subjectivity factor in knowledge production... subjectivity is a given". Whether it is my reflection in a window, my body sketched in plan, or the dialogue paraphrased from a conversation with someone who had approached me, my presence is visible, and my subjectivity is acknowledged. This research became the foundation for later epistemic explorations that make up my final thesis defence exhibition.

In section two I question what it means to design a safe space. By mapping the safe nodes created by WTG sites, I consider the binary framing of safe and unsafe spaces throughout the city. I also draw attention to the subjectivity of safety and the power relations at play in defining its parameters. As geographer Nicholas Blomley

(2003, 133) notes "legal theory is, almost without exception, written by those who are the beneficiaries rather than the victims of law's violence". As such it is useful to consider the laws that are in place to maintain safety within the city. The Thunder Bay police force routinely updates an online interactive crime map which records incidences of crime across the city. The map aims to engage the public in crime prevention; more directly, its goal is to enable the public to protect their property. As a way of deconstructing the police crime map, I have overlaid crime data onto a map of WTG sites. In this new map, instances of crime overlap with the safe nodes created by the WTG sites. By layering the information from these maps, the distinction between safe and unsafe space is blurred, raising questions about labeling safe and unsafe spaces in such a binary manner. What does it mean to map incidences of danger, or to give danger a geography? What does it mean to protect your property? Who are you protecting it from? Confronting the implications of the police crime map is necessary in order to understand the white racial framing of safety within the city.

In section two I also use anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and capital to explore the ways in which people interact with and experience spaces. I suggest that many of the laws policing social behavior in Thunder Bay actually serve to reinforce the socialization of whiteness by creating a set of rules that restrict the types of encounters which can take place between people and their environments. Under the guise of public safety, the policing of habitus prohibits actions that could disrupt or unsettle existing social structures and perpetuates an understanding of public space in which white bodies hold the majority of capital.

I conclude section two by drawing attention to the co-dependency of white social comfort and safety. Conflating the two concepts is

detrimental to people of colour primarily because white social comfort is dependent on existing social norms (Diangelo, 127). If it stands that safety from a white racial framing serves to protect white social comfort, then it is clear that understandings of safety from the perspectives of people of colour will vary greatly.

Section three explores the ways in which the habitual patterns of white bodies reinforce fields of habitus that maintain white social comfort. It has evolved in dialogue with research by Sarah Ahmed, an independent scholar working at the intersection of feminist, queer, critical race, and post-colonial theory and is largely a response to her paper "A Phenomenology of Whiteness" and her most recent book *What's the Use: On The Use of Uses*. Building on the concept of habitus, I have positioned the notion of whiteness as habit at the center of my research. Ahmed suggests that whiteness is physically presenced through the repeated actions of bodies. As such, its existence relies on the continuity of the social habits which reproduce it. Structured similarly to Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Ahmed proposes that the repeated actions of white bodies have the power to define the shape of our social spaces.

In the context of this thesis I consider habitual actions to be synonymous with unconscious actions. Ahmed (2001,157) suggests that spaces of whiteness can only function when the actions of the white body are performed unconsciously. In section three I explore how the habitual patterns of white bodies reinforce fields of habitus that support white social comfort. I conclude section three by suggesting that the WTG decals are unsuccessful in creating the sort of safe and inclusive spaces that were intended because they do not interrupt the habitual patterns of the white body. I also note that the WTG decals create what Ahmed terms trap doors, doors that signal inclusivity but actually require conforming to the

social norms of a given space. As noted, the decals do not disrupt the habitual patterns of the white body, meaning that entrance into WTG spaces is still predicated on conforming to the social expectations of that space. I briefly introduce Ahmed's concept of queer use as a method for subverting habitual spaces and interrupting habitual actions, a method that enables the non-habitual body to enter and be heard.

Section four documents the exhibition Use Other Door that I had intended to install for my final thesis defense. The exhibition is a product of a series of drawings, collages, photographs, and artefacts that I produced throughout the thesis term. The exhibition became a method for presenting these epistemic objects in a manner that aligned with the content of my thesis. The exhibition was also designed to fit within the parameters of the final thesis defence. Though I had intended to install this exhibition for my final defense, the COVID 19 outbreak pushed me to shift the exhibition into the digital world. The exhibition was supposed to take place in room 410, a small seminar room within the Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism at Carleton. I have visually represented the exhibition through photocollage in section four.

The exhibition showcases how encounters with the unexpected can disrupt habitual or unconscious actions, in turn causing a sense of disorientation which demands attention and brings what is often overlooked into focus. As such, misguiding clues throughout the exhibition lead the viewer to consciously question how they should interact with the installations and other people in the room. The exhibition implements lighting, mirrors, signs at the entrances, and counter intuitive mounting techniques to disorient the viewer. By making use strange, use becomes the focus of attention. The exhibition format does not aim to unsettle whiteness or disturb the

viewer but rather illustrate how the body responds when habitual actions are interrupted, triggering a shift from unconscious to conscious action.

This thesis is about acknowledging my subjectivity as a white settler Canadian and understanding how this positionality affects not only the spaces that form around me but also the spaces that I am capable of designing. It largely focuses on the ways that settlers unconsciously engage with their environment to perpetuate and create spaces of white privilege. There are two questions central to this thesis: The first deals with safety. How do we design safe spaces for Indigenous youth? As such, a significant portion of this text is dedicated to understanding how the concept of safety varies between white settler and Indigenous residents in Thunder Bay. The second deals with communication. How can the Indigenous and settler communities of Thunder Bay begin to communicate? These concepts are inseparable, you cannot have a safe and inclusive space without communication. This thesis has given me the opportunity to deeply consider the notion of disorientation as a tool to unsettle white perspectives, a process with the potential to create space for communication by enabling others to enter and be heard. I propose that encounters with the unexpected have the power to disorient the habitual white body, creating a fracture in expectations that leaves a gap for alternative voices to be inserted. This fracturing must first occur before communication can begin and must happen if we wish to create an urban setting that is safe for everyone.

The beginning of my research process was riddled with anxieties, I wanted to explore some complex issues and struggled morally with the idea of proposing an architectural design that would 'solve the problem'. I also faced many ethical dilemmas when considering designing a built intervention within Thunder Bay. When working on cross-cultural projects design must be collaborative, even at the theoretical or educational level. Within the timeline of the thesis term it did not seem feasible to partner with local Indigenous groups, though I did reach out to the organizers of WTG at the outset of my research. Feeling that a built intervention in Thunder Bay would either oversimplify the problems facing race relations in the city, or not adequately address the issues, I chose to take an investigative approach to the thesis and focused on importing information that could impact architectural methods. Though, in a sense, my final defense exhibition could be viewed as a built intervention, it was designed as a method for communicating what I had learned, not as an architectural solution.

In this work, I draw attention to the biases we each possess and as architects are not exempt from. In our practice it is integral that we recognize and respond to our subjectivities. If I have learned anything from this process, it is the importance of communication. As I acknowledge in the introduction, a safe and inclusive space cannot be created without communication. While writing this thesis it has also become apparent to me how necessary communication and collaboration are to the design process. I am acutely aware that the ways I experience a space will vary from how another person will experience it. I cannot presume to understand how a space is experienced by someone else, especially a person of colour.

My approach has led to a study of the ways in which my actions, and

the habitual actions of the white settler community, contribute to an urban setting that is dangerous for Indigenous residents. The process has been more personal than I had expected, and has required equal parts internal reflection and outward observation of city I grew up in. Drawing from Indigenous research frameworks, which privilege internal and experiential ways of knowing, my research methodology relies on observation and contextual knowledge. I have drawn on my personal experiences of growing up in Thunder Bay to validate claims throughout my research process. Though the theory I discuss throughout the thesis could be applied in many contexts, the WTG initiative provides a structure for understanding the concepts as they relate to Thunder Bay.

The first step in understanding the spatial implications of the WTG initiative was to map the participating businesses across the city. I found the names of participating businesses listed on the WTG website and used Google Maps to determine their addresses, later plotting their coordinates onto an interactive online map. The names and addresses of participating businesses can be read by clicking on the plotted points on the map. This map contains businesses registered with WTG as of October 2019 and can be accessed by visiting the link: <https://shannonkitley.github.io/trackingwakethegiant.html>.

I began to understand the spatial layout of WTG across the city by mapping the sites. This initial phase of research drew heavily on my understanding and experience of growing up in Thunder Bay. I was familiar with the neighborhoods that the WTG businesses are located in and had visited most of the businesses at one point or another. The interactive map, however, did not communicate much about the experience of interacting with the WTG sites. I was curious about

a couple of things that could not be understood while researching remotely from Ottawa. My first concern was the level of visibility of the WTG decal on the storefront, and how this affects the way people interacted with the sites. Secondly, I wanted to know if the businesses registered with WTG had altered their day to day operations in any way. For these reasons, I chose to travel home to Thunder Bay to document and better understand the WTG sites. During the documentation process, I found that the WTG decals were often visible on the storefront. They were, however, more often than not placed on doors among many other stickers. These included decals for Trip Advisor, Pride, Breast Cancer Awareness, Interact etc. Though visible to people looking for the decal, they did not stand out to the passer by who was not aware of their significance. Furthermore, all of the employees whom I spoke to, were either unaware of the initiative or had not received significant training in relation to it.

When I was beginning the documentation process, I was conscious of the tools I chose to document the businesses registered with WTG, aware that they would affect how my method evolved. I chose to begin documenting the sites through photography. I was conflicted about using this approach because of the assumption of objectivity usually attributed to photographs. I wanted to make it clear that the photographs I took were curated, and thus, were a product of my own subjectivity. To overcome this, I photographed the reflections of each façade at windows and entrances so that my body was visible throughout the documentation process. Photographing these reflections also provided a way of thinking about site in relation to the buildings and streetscape around it. I was conflicted about using photography because of the power differential associated with the process: the power of the photographer to choose how the subject

is represented. As such, I took care to observe the comings and goings of people but tried not to photograph them. If they are visible in the images I produced, their faces are distorted so that they remain anonymous.

Throughout the documentation process, I returned to each site multiple times. On the first day of photographing I stood across the street to capture an image of the entire building. I returned the following day to photograph the facade from closer up; my objective for these photographs was to consider the use of signage and the visibility of the WTG decal on the storefront. In the beginning of the photographic process I used a tripod and DSLR camera. My intention was to keep a uniform method of documentation so that I could look for patterns between the sites. However, I found that walking around with a tripod drew attention that often made me uncomfortable. The act of carrying this object made my presence particularly visible; I often felt that people's eyes followed me with heightened curiosity and caution. I stopped using the tripod after the first day of documenting but even without it, the act of stopping to take a photo was enough to raise questions. When reflecting on this process I realize that these objects were actually very useful tools for encouraging discussion with store managers, staff, customers, and people walking down the street. Because my actions were out of the ordinary, out of place, people stopped me and questioned me.

At sites where I had had what felt to be significant personal encounters, I returned the following day to sketch the street and the threshold of the building in plan. These sketches operated as a form of journaling that allowed me to record the various aspects of my experience at each site. I noted the movement of my body and

others on the sketches, and paraphrased content of conversations I had had with people. Much like my experience photographing, I felt a heightened sense of visibility during the process of sketching. The act of sketching signaled my body as out of place.

I drew on Bourdieu's theory of habitus to reflect on my experience of documenting the WTG sites. Habitus refers to the way people engage with their environment and the people in it (Bourdieu 1977, 82-83). Through the repetition of these encounters, people form a knowledge base, an unconscious repertoire of how to interpret and respond to social cues. The parameters of habitus shift depending on the specific social context in which an interaction takes place, they are dependent on the field (Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes 1990, 8). Though not explicitly stated, fields have implicit rules for entrance, if a person does not conform to those rules they will be pushed out or excluded (Diangelo, 102).

The encounters I experienced while documenting WTG sites illustrate how the same action can be policed in different ways based on the social field it takes place in. Because social fields are designated through the repeated performances of bodies, the habitual patterns of bodies act as a regulatory power in defining which performances are possible within a space (Blomley 2003, 122). My documentation of the threshold went unnoticed when sketching in a coffee shop, for example, because that action was familiar to that space. However, when I spent the same amount of time sketching in the lobby of city hall, I was approached by the security guard and questioned by various people passing through. My body stood out because it lingered in the transitory space of the lobby, it was an action unfamiliar to that space. As such, is affected by repetitive actions that take place within it. As Bernard Tschumi writes (1994, xxvi) "spaces are

qualified by actions just as actions are qualified by spaces". The time it took to sketch, or even take a photograph, meant that I had to remain in spaces where most bodies passed through quickly. These methods of documentation signaled my body as out of place and pushed people to question my actions, it forced encounters that exposed the implicit expectations of appropriate behavior within a given space.

WAKE THE GIANT
MAPPING

Fig. 01 Businesses Registered with Wake the Giant

WAKE THE GIANT
TRESHOLD SKETCHES

Fig. 02

Fig. 03

Fig. 04

Fig. 05

Fig. 06

Fig. 07

Fig. 08

Fig. 09

Fig. 10

WAKE THE GIANT
DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHS

Fig. 11

Fig. 12

Fig. 13

In this section I look at the binary framing of safe and unsafe spaces in Thunder Bay, considering the spatial implications of the safe nodes created by the WTG sites. In questioning what it means to design a safe space, I consider the subjectivity of the social structures which define and police safety within the city. In order to understand the white racial framing of safety in Thunder Bay, it is necessary to confront the regulatory laws put in place to maintain safe neighborhoods within the city.

The Thunder Bay police force routinely updates an online interactive map that records incidences of crime across the city. The crime map aims to engage the broader public in crime prevention. In a description of the map, the police force notes that “knowledge is power in the effort to keep safe” (Thunder Bay Police Service 2020). This wording frames the map as a sort of arsenal, as if the intention of the map is to arm citizens with the knowledge to protect themselves. Later in the description, the police force suggests that “if you know that these crimes are being reported in your neighbourhood, you can better prepare to protect your property” (Thunder Bay Police Service 2020). This language suggests an unnamed threat, that there is something or someone against which the citizens of Thunder Bay must defend not only themselves and their property against. The language used also alludes to the target audience of the map: property owners.

The designation of property is not a static thing, but rather a dynamic framing that “depends on a continual, active doing” (Blomley 2003, 122). The enactment of property shapes the way spaces are socially policed. Consider, for example, the designation between public and private space. Sleeping in private is socially acceptable, however, sleeping in public would be designated as out of place (Blomley 2003,123). Social fields set the expectations for

what performances are deemed acceptable. The enactment of property contributes to defining those social fields and regulates which performances are possible within a given space. As such, "the location of activities can affect the way in which they are socially policed" (Blomley 2003, 123). The crime map identifies the type of offense but gives no contextual information about the event. The offensive actions are categorized by type, pinned to the map, and severed from the context of the person who committed the offense. This ambiguity is a powerful tool because it encourages the public to make assumptions about the circumstances of the crime, and the offender, based solely on the location of the event.

The police website claims that with the aid of the map "you can keep informed on crime and safety issues in your neighbourhood" (Thunder Bay Police Service 2020). It is important to note that neighbourhoods are often designated as safe or dangerous spaces independent of crime statistics. Robin Diangelo (2018, 46) notes that sheltered, clean, and wealthy are terms often used to describe 'safe' neighbourhoods, whereas neighbourhoods framed as 'dangerous' are often described as sketchy, dirty, or underprivileged. These colloquial terms are often binary and position spaces in opposition to each. They also imply a very clear power differential. Neighbourhood designations have historically been tied to the racial composition of specific communities. A safe space, more often than not, actually refers to a white space.

I turn to Bourdieu's theory of habitus to understand how the racial coding of space affects the social capital that people carry into different fields. A person's social capital is the amount of social value that they possess (Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes 1990, 13). The racial coding of spaces can affect the social capital a person

carries between fields because the qualities that embody a racially coded space are often projected onto its inhabitants. If a person is raised in a white space, for example, they are perceived to personify the same qualities of cleanliness and wealth and are inscribed with the privilege of racial innocence (Diangelo 2018, 46). People of colour, following the binary framing of spaces, are perceived to be the opposite, not innocent (Diangelo 2018, 46). It is useful to reflect on the racial coding of spaces when looking at the data from the police crime map. When a crime is documented in a perceived safe neighborhood on the police crime map, it implicates the body who committed the crime as out of place in that safe space. If to be white is to be innocent, and to commit a crime is to be guilty, then the person who committed the crime must not be white. This logic implicitly racializes the offender.

Examining the language used in the police crime map is also necessary for understanding the white racial framing of safety in the city. Crimes that fall under the category of disorder – described as “any behavior that tends to disturb, scandalize, or shock the public peace, decorum, or sense of morality” (Thunder Bay Police Service 2020) are of particular interest in this context. It is important to be critical of those who have determined this definition of disorder and to bear cognizant of where that decision-making power lies. People are viewed as legitimate and granted authority when they possess symbolic capital across many fields (Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes 1990, 13). As Harker et al. suggest in the passage below, people of authority hold the power to define and regulate the structure of the social world.

“To be seen as a person or class of status and prestige, is to be accepted as legitimate and sometimes as a legitimate authority.

Such a position carries with it the power to name (activities/groups), the power to represent common sense and above all the power to create the 'official version of the social world" (Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes 1990, 13).

In this setting, people who do not possess enough capital to define what is legitimate cannot speak out. More specifically, they can only speak by using the words of the authorities who determine the legitimate social world (Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes 1990, 13-14). The laws set in place to control social behavior in Thunder Bay give the police force the power to decide which actions are acceptable and which upset the public sense of order. As such, the public must only engage with each other and their environment through means which the police force deems to not disturb, scandalize, or shock the public peace. The police force has the power not only to define which actions are legal, but also to judge the legality of their repercussions. The policing of disorder inherently reinforces the socialization of whiteness by prohibiting any actions that could disrupt or unsettle existing social structures which support the racial status quo. In effect, this policing of social behavior perpetuates the creation of fields in which white bodies hold the majority of capital.

Social disorder is also used to justify violence on the part of the law. Violence enacted by the law can only be deemed ethical when it is viewed as necessary to maintaining social order, an act which is often portrayed as protecting the 'greater good' (Blomley 2003, 124). The violence of the law is justified so that order can be maintained, but, as noted earlier, this social order benefits some people more than others. Protecting social order actually means protecting white social comfort. In the eyes of the law, anyone who

serves to disrupt social order is labeled as dangerous. It is important to acknowledge that Indigenous populations have historically been perceived as sources of disorder, and subsequently as sources of danger (Blomley 2003, 124).

While talking about her experience as a racial and social justice educator, Robin Diangelo notes that when a white person feels their position being challenged in discussions of racism, their response is often to shift into a defensive mode. In order to deflect the blame, they use language that incorrectly frames their discomfort as dangerous, suggesting that they feel threatened or attacked (Diangelo, 109). Portraying discomfort as dangerous is detrimental to people of colour because it reinscribes racist imagery. By framing themselves as the victims of antiracist efforts, white people imply that they cannot be the beneficiaries of whiteness (Diangelo, 109). Though Diangelo is reflecting on interracial discussions in the context of a training seminar, the conflation of white social comfort and safety operates on many levels. If it stands that safety from a white racial framing serves to reinforce the racial status quo and inherently white social comfort, then it is clear that understandings of safety from the perspectives of people of colour will vary greatly.

SHOPPERS
DRUG MART

OPEN
24 HRS

Fig. 14

Fig. 13

Elaborating on the concept of habitus, the notion of whiteness as habit has been at the foundation of my research. It is based on the understanding that bodies are engaged in a reciprocal relationship with the environments that they inhabit, that they both shape and are shaped by the spaces around them. This section considers the ways that the habitual patterns of white bodies reinforce fields of habitus which maintain white social comfort.

Whiteness as a phenomenon is physically presented through the repeated actions of bodies, meaning that it is translated into the social sphere through performances of the everyday (Ahmed 2001, 156). These performances have the power to shape the spaces around them. Imagine, for a moment, space as a series of surfaces that can be worn away over time by the friction of the bodies they encounter. As the result of repeated use, spaces form around the shape of certain bodies more than others (Ahmed 2001, 157). A chair can be used as an example of this wearing away phenomenon. Consider the chair that has been repeatedly sat in by the same person, the indent of this person will remain visible even after the person has left the chair (Ahmed 2019, 44). Spaces or objects that are repeatedly used become fitted to the body of the person using them. The paradox is that as spaces become more comfortable for some, "they also become less receptive to others" (Ahmed 2019, 44).

In reference to the archival system, Ahmed (2019, 40) notes that the preservation of something often requires minimizing contact with it. This rationale suggests that use leaves traces that can alter the surface of something, whether that be through deformation, deterioration, or other means. Spaces of whiteness are preserved through a similar method of minimizing contact. The habitual actions of white bodies create conditions for entry. The non-white

body can only gain access to these spaces by adopting the shape of the habitual user. Bodies that cannot adopt the form of the habitual user are barred access. This means that even when the non-habitual body gains access, the surfaces of the habitual space do not encounter an unfamiliar form. Corporeal diversity is denied so that spaces of whiteness do not encounter bodies that could alter their surfaces, and as a consequence, they remain fitted to the habitual white body.

Because whiteness is physically presenced through the repeated actions of bodies, its existence relies on the continuity of the social habits which reproduce it. Consequently, spaces have been shaped to maintain the social comfort of the white body so that habitual patterns are not interrupted. Social comfort is experienced as a feeling of fitting that enables bodies to extend into space (Ahmed 2001, 158). It is an unconscious ease that allows bodies to navigate social settings without second thoughts (Ahmed 2001, 158). Habitual actions here equate to unconscious actions (Harker, Mahar, and Wilkes 1990, 10). In fact, this unconsciousness is pivotal to perpetuating spaces of whiteness. When someone becomes aware of their actions a third person awareness of the body arises (Ahmed 2001, 161). When a body gets stressed during an encounter, whether that be with another person or with an object, the unconscious action becomes conscious. As a product of habitus, bodies who inhabit spaces of whiteness are able to act without drawing attention from others or from themselves, "as long as bodies don't get stressed by their encounters with objects or others, they remain habitual and their whiteness goes unnoticed" (Ahmed 2001, 156).

Ahmed introduces the notion of 'queer use' as a method for disrupting the habitual use of space. Queer use refers to situations

where things are used in ways other than what they were intended for, the idea is to “make use strange” (Ahmed 2019, 198). As noted in the example of the chair, use leaves imprints. The traces of use can function as instructions, indications for how to use something (Ahmed 2019, 45). Because use operates in a citational cycle, where past use influences future use, understandings of proper and improper use emerge (Ahmed 2019, 208). The most common method of use becomes understood as the ‘proper’ method of use. Traces of use can communicate to future users which actions are proper or familiar to a given a space. The citational quality of use helps perpetuate spaces of whiteness because it reinforces habits, but it can also be implemented to subvert them. In spaces that are shaped by the habitual user, traces of queer use can act as signposts to communicate alternative methods of use that deviate from the habitual. Traces of queer use disorder habitual spaces by creating openings for the nonhabitual body to enter (Ahmed 2019, 219). Ahmed uses the analogy of the door to visualize the ways queer use can aid the non-habitual user. She terms these queer doors: entrances that are created from unexpected arrivals (Ahmed 2019, 203).

Ahmed (2019, 225) suggests that entry of the non-habitual body can also be achieved when access is granted by the habitual body. She warns, however, that these doors or points of entry often operate as traps. Ahmed is alluding to doors that signal inclusivity but actually require adapting to the existing norms of the given space (Ahmed 2019, 225). I have come to believe that the WTG decals create this sort of trap door. The businesses registered with WTG have the potential to act as sites of encounter that foster communication between Indigenous and settler communities. Yet, for the majority of businesses that I documented it seemed that nothing had shifted infrastructurally or even socially to alter the way people

experience the site or interact with each other. The window decals may communicate to Indigenous youth that the business is a welcoming and inclusive space, but in actuality, the decals have had little effect on the habitual patterns of the settler community. The WTG decals act as traps because the businesses registered with WTG remain shaped around the habitual form of the white body. They promise acceptance of diversity, but entrance into the space is still predicated on conforming to the social expectations of fields that support white settler comfort (Ahmed 2019, 62).

At the beginning of this thesis I speak of settler ignorance and question how the divided communities of Thunder Bay could begin to communicate when many settler residents have chosen not to listen. Returning for a moment to the collaborative study between Lakehead University, Carleton University, and the Ontario Native Women's Association, consider how one of the Indigenous participants describes the need for better communication practices within the city:

"We are connected to identity, and if we can identify as a community, we more likely wouldn't need designated spaces for safety, because our community would identify as each other... So how do we create safe spaces? We create safe spaces with you, we are the safe spaces...We don't need to like someone to be safe with them...We individually need to be able to take our barriers down and be able to have a conversation and get to know someone" (McGuire 2019).

This woman's understanding of safety is not tied to a physical place, safety to her is the ability to speak and to be heard. As I suggest in the introduction, you cannot have a safe and inclusive space without communication. However, in order for communication to happen there must first be a level of mental openness to receive

what has been said. The discouraging reality is that many settler residents in Thunder Bay deny the need for communication and have chosen not to listen. Habitual actions support settler ignorance because they enable the white body to engage with the urban environment unconsciously. These habits can be disrupted when actions are made conscious, however, social spaces have been shaped to preserve the habitual patterns of the white body such that disruptions are both socially policed and regulated by law.

I would like to return to Ahmed's analogy of queer doors because I believe that when enacted, the concept has the capacity to interrupt the habitual actions of white settlers in Thunder Bay. The unexpected arrivals created by queer doors foster instances where the habitual user is confronted by something unfamiliar. This shift from familiar to unfamiliar has the potential to disorient the habitual body, causing it to falter and bring into focus what is often overlooked. I propose that unexpected encounters have the power to disorient the habitual white body because they disrupt what is expected out of habit. These encounters create a fracture in expectations that leaves a gap for alternative voices to be inserted. The disorientation that the habitual body experiences when it encounters an unexpected arrival could not take place if entrance were granted on behalf of the habitual user, as in the case of the WTG initiative. Though the WTG decals signal inclusivity, they do not alter the habitual nature of settler behavior within the given space. The habitual patterns of the white body must first be interrupted before spaces of communication can be created. This interruption is not only necessary for others to be heard, but it is also integral to unsettling the foundation upon which spaces of whiteness are built.

Fig. 16 City Hall

Fig. 17 The Growing Season

Fig. 18 The Habit

Fig. 19 MPP Office

Fig. 20 Fireweed

Fig. 21 Copperfin Credit Union

Fig. 22 Signs Now

Fig. 23 Wellness North

Fig. 24 Wake the Giant

Fig. 25 Signs Now, Mastercard, Apple Pay, Visa, Interac, American Express, Sleeping Giant Loppet, Wake the Giant

Fig. 26 409, Wake the Giant, Caution Automatic Door

Fig. 27 Open, Store Hours, Wake the Giant, Food Safety Grade, WiFi, Pride Flag

Fig. 28 Frozen Family Swim, Wake the Giant

Fig. 29 Makeup, Waxing, Pedicures, Massage, Botox, Fillers,
Wake the Giant

Fig. 30 Wake the Giant, Skip the Dishes, Uber Eats, Trip Advisor

Fig. 31 Trip Advisor, Wake the Giant

Fig. 32 American Express, Mastercard, Visa, Interac, Breast Cancer Awareness, Food for the Soul, Pride Flag, #Choose TBay First, Wake the Giant

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, I have created a digital re-imagining of the exhibition that I intended to create for my final thesis defense. This section outlines the exhibition and helps the reader inhabit the imagined space through a series of photo collages. The exhibition is composed of sketches, photographs, and visual explorations that I created throughout the thesis term. The artifacts that would have made up the exhibition have been catalogued in the previous sections of this text. The exhibition was designed to fit within the parameters of a typical thesis defense, and as such, was set to take place in a seminar room within the Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism. The exhibition was meant to showcase how encounters with the unexpected can disrupt habitual actions, illustrating how the body responds by shifting from unconscious to conscious action.

The exhibition is designed to be highly interactive. Red elements throughout the exhibition act as visual cues to the viewer that they are meant to engage with the installations. Because the colour red in western culture is associated with the action of stopping, the color itself becomes a disorienting element within the exhibition. Red, within the context of the exhibition, encourages rather than prohibits action.

The exhibition takes place in seminar room 410. The room has two entrances, one standard wooden door and one large glass sliding door. At the beginning of the defense, both doors are closed and marked with a sign asking the participant to "use other door." Each sign has a large arrow pointing in the direction of the other entrance. The word 'use' is, counterintuitively, rendered in bright red, foreshadowing to the viewer that red is a cue to use something within the exhibition. Because the arrows on the signs point

towards each other, the viewer is left to question which door is the 'proper' point of entry. The signs also draw attention to assumptions of use-ability. If the doors remained closed, without any signs hung, would the viewer have assumed that they could enter? For the white body, usability is often assumed unless there is a sign to indicate otherwise (Ahmed 2019, 57).

The lights in the exhibition are dimmed to indicate to the viewer that they are entering a room that differs from the traditional institutional space they had previously occupied. Upon first entry into the room, spotlights draw the viewer's gaze away from the main elements of the exhibition to a blank wall. Because the rest of the exhibit is dark, the spotlights misguide the viewer's attention and cause the installations, the focus of the exhibition, to shift into the background.

Next, the viewer would likely be drawn to the crime map, printed and installed on a backlit table, offering the only other source of light in the room. The map is bound so that the viewer can flip through the layers of crime data. It encourages the viewer to consider the spatial implications of the safe nodes created by the WTG sites throughout the city. Layers with red transit lines allude to the action of moving between perceived safe spaces within the city. Red dots indicate bus 'stops,' places where people must wait, spaces where people are exposed to the crimes that have been overlaid on the map. The transit layers suggest that transit between WTG 'safe' sites is not a safe activity.

Wax tiles are mounted on the wall opposite the spotlights. Photos of WTG decals have been printed on the tiles and distorted by the impression of my handprint. The tiles capture the impression of the

encounter between my body and the surface of businesses registered with WTG. My handprints also speak to my subjectivity in the research and curation process. Hinges are used to mount the tiles so that they can be swung away from the wall. Red tabs encourage the viewer to engage with the installation, and act as indicators for use. However, to foster the feeling of disorientation, the tabs are not always placed opposite the hinges (the place where you should pull to open). The tabs act as false cues for use. Behind each tile is a mirror, which, after swinging the tile away from the wall, reflects an image of the viewer in relation to the WTG sites.

A map of WTG sites in Thunder Bay is placed on a large table in the middle of the room. The reflective photobooks of the WTG businesses are scattered around the map. Each photobook is connected to its respective location on the map with a red thread. The threads are wound so that when a viewer picks up the photobook, the thread unravels. This unraveling acts as a sign of use, and an indication that the photograph has been picked up and viewed. When the photographs are passed around the table, the threads become intertwined and tangled, making it more difficult to trace the photobook back to its location on the map. The tangle of red threads emphasizes the interconnectedness of the sites. Chairs are spaced around the table to encourage the viewers to take a seat when viewing the map and photobooks. Double sided mirrors are suspended above the table at each seat, so that when the viewer is sitting down, the mirror prevents them from seeing the faces of other seated participants, instead highlighting their own reflection. The proximity of the mirror to the viewer's face challenges the viewer to shift their focus from the foreground (their face) to the background (the exhibition). The viewer is seated looking forward, yet despite this positioning, they can only see the exhibition by acknowledging what

is behind them.

The exhibition design evolved in response to general expectations for the format of a thesis defence. I wanted to subvert the setting of the thesis defence in ways that made the defence panel question how they should engage with the content being presented. I wanted to create an environment in which the reviewers could not predict the trajectory of the defence. The intent of the exhibition was to disrupt habitual actions so that the defence panel would act consciously within the exhibition setting. As noted in section one, my approach to this thesis was investigative. My main goal was to import and communicate the knowledge I gathered throughout the thesis process. I thought that if I could create a fracture in the expectations of the reviewers, they would be more open and receptive to the content being presented. The exhibition was meant to communicate what I had learned, but also create a mental opening for this narrative to be inserted. The exhibition showcases how encounters with the unexpected can disorient the habitual body and demand conscious action and thought.

“USE OTHER DOOR”

- A. "Use Other Door" Sign
- B. Crime Map on Light Table
- C. WTG Threshold Sketches
- D. Wax Handprint Tiles

- E. Suspended Mirrors
- F. WTG Map and PhotoBooks
- G. Spotlights on Blank Wall
- H. "Use Other Door" Sign

Fig. 33

Fig. 34

Entrance to the exhibition

Fig. 35

Viewer flipping through the pages of the crime map

Fig. 36

Detail of crime map on light table

Fig. 37

Viewers opening wax tiles

Fig. 38 Viewer sees their reflection after opening a tile

Fig. 39

Viewers pass around photobooks

Fig. 40

Detail of WTG map and photobooks

Fig. 41

Viewer flipping through layers of photobook

Fig. 42

Entrance to the exhibition

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