

PAINTING AND TIME

**The dynamic of the
actual and the virtual**

RON LEFT







DEDICATION

To my mother Ida who appears now and then over my shoulder making sure I finish the project. She is an inspiration, full of courage and a deep love of words, ideas and books. She would have loved to hold this work and feel the weight of the pages.

To my daughter Emma, also an inspiration, who is a very special and incredibly energetic and productive person.



This thesis is submitted to
Auckland University of Technology
in partial fulfilment of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

PAINTING AND TIME: THE DYNAMIC OF THE ACTUAL AND THE VIRTUAL is a practice-led thesis exploring imagery and association derived from the transit space of travel. This is a place where time is highly coded, where the traveller is made hyper-conscious of the immediate past, the present and the imminent future. Our personal time of waiting, anticipation and anxiety collides with a globalised and controlled time. Using painting and photographic processes, the project engages with a spectrum that spans moments where time becomes almost visible, to broad, abstract concerns with time and being. The airport transit space is a time zone, where clock time, global and coded time collide and compete with personal and experienced time.

Underpinning the studio and written work is an exploration of actuality and virtuality, the visible and the invisible, and a proposition that these two states are inherent in all things, they interact and define each other, and are the determining drivers of change and becoming.

The exegesis considers a range of material related to the topic. Of significance in the theoretical underpinning and development of my painting practice is Deleuze's philosophical enquiry into time, which is in turn indebted to Bergson's notion of duration. The thinking of subsequent theorists including Grosz (1999; 2005), Gilbert-Rolfe (1996), DeLanda (2000; 2005), and Rodowick (1997; 2002), who build on Deleuze's analysis of the nature of time, and of the actual and the virtual also contribute to this painting practice. Deleuze constructs not only a dynamic, radical view of the nature of time, but he also looks to the creative process as an arena of thought equivalent to philosophy, allowing for an on-going interaction between the two modes of practice. Over the duration of the project,

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The term agnostic is used in this context to refer to a non-transcendental belief system in which being and change is determined by internal processes and not by an external force, being or ideal template.

research and writing engage in a productive dialogue, challenging and generating new ideas and outcomes. The thesis culminates in an exhibition of art work and an exegesis. The final outcome of the research is a single painting fifteen metres in length. In an analogous structure to cinematic form, it has both a linear and a non-chronological form. The work shifts back and forward in time, and in the framing and repeating of images inside and outside the frame, it decodes and claims a new space for virtual associations and memory. Entering into this experiential zone through the creative act is the closest we might come to visualising a multiple and mobile notion of time, not pervaded by the mechanics of clock time.

The intention of the thesis therefore is to explore this notion through a temporal model of practice informed by a specific concern with actual and virtual elements that construct reality. The work of Deleuze and subsequent theorists propose a strong link with art practice. In particular Deleuze's idea of reciprocal determination provides not only a dynamic, agnostic¹ model of existence and the nature of change, but finds analogous form in the work explored throughout the thesis project. The hybrid forms of abstraction and representation explored are intended to create a parallel form to the theoretical dynamic of mutual interaction and determination. The result of this dual process is a new and reclaimed transit space that unravels a deep experiential layer through poetic form.

An initial interest in a temporal model for the making and analysis of creative practice gradually unravelled a more specific concern with actual and virtual elements that construct reality. Deeper research into Deleuze and subsequent theorists in the area, revealed a strong potential link with art practice. Deleuze's idea of reciprocal determination, in particular, provided not only a dynamic model of existence and the nature of change, but found analogous form and practice in my own painting. The exploration of hybrid forms of abstraction and representation, and of painting and photographic images, has for example, found a parallel dynamic of mutual interaction and determination.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Deeply felt gratitude to Dr Welby Ings for his vast knowledge, experience and enormous generosity of spirit in guiding me through this project, and to Dr Barbara Bolt for her expertise and extensive knowledge of practice-led doctoral study, and her deep philosophical insight.

My partner Dr Sue Sutherland, despite the pressures of completing a PhD herself, has been a great supporter throughout, and has devoted much time to share her knowledge, insight and experience. Sue has been an inspiration to me as a courageous person and thinker, and is always out in front thinking of the new.

To Tatiana Tavares for helping me to find a form for the exegesis that has not only a deeply designed relationship to the project and topic, but is in itself a creative work.

I am also grateful for the support offered by the School of Art and Design and the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies at Auckland University of Technology for grants and research leave associated with this project, and for providing invaluable technical support for the project.



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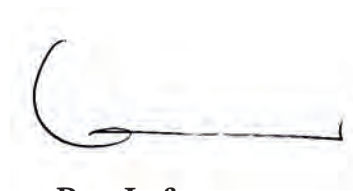
Note

Throughout the exegesis individual panels in the final exhibition work are numbered 1 to 19, reading from left to right.



ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly indicated), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Left', with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

Ron Left

DECEMBER, 2015



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DECLARATION

I retain copyright in all images
and artwork produced and presented
as part of this thesis.



PREFACE

In the transit spaces of air travel, the private life of the traveller, and the worlds of desire and anticipation, collide with the scrutinised, processed and codified. There is a resultant simultaneous loss of a sense of personal time, and a hyper-realisation of time. Waiting and boredom slow the pace of time. The traveller is robbed of time, yet bound by codes of timing, control, and the globalisation of time. It is in this strange, yet disconcertingly banal, space that this thesis is positioned. Zooming in from the broad temporal experience of travel and transit, its lens focuses into moments and events that appear to make visible the invisibility of time, transition and becoming. In this realm of the everyday experience of travel at the moment of stasis, the public and the intimate coexist. The discontinuous moment of transit and the disruption of narrative allow concentration on a wealth of temporal moments, associations, and states.

The thesis is based in both art practice and philosophical enquiry; the social and cultural dynamics of the transit space sitting outside the frame of the work. Connections are constructed through association and implication rather than being described through immediate image and narrative. The place and experience of transit is a highly charged space. Here the personal and the public collide, and the physicality of movement and travel is subsumed by virtuality and codification. Within this, the sense of personal space and time is lost in a global network of controls.

Dodge and Kitchin propose that

... air travel has become a real virtuality par excellence, seamlessly blending the material (travel) and virtual (networked communication) - ... to produce new spaces that facilitate the space of flows and timeless time. These new spaces we call 'code/spaces' – spaces in which the materiality of air travel is produced through information and communication technologies ... which are themselves produced through spatial mobility.

(DODGE & KITCHIN, 2004, P.197)

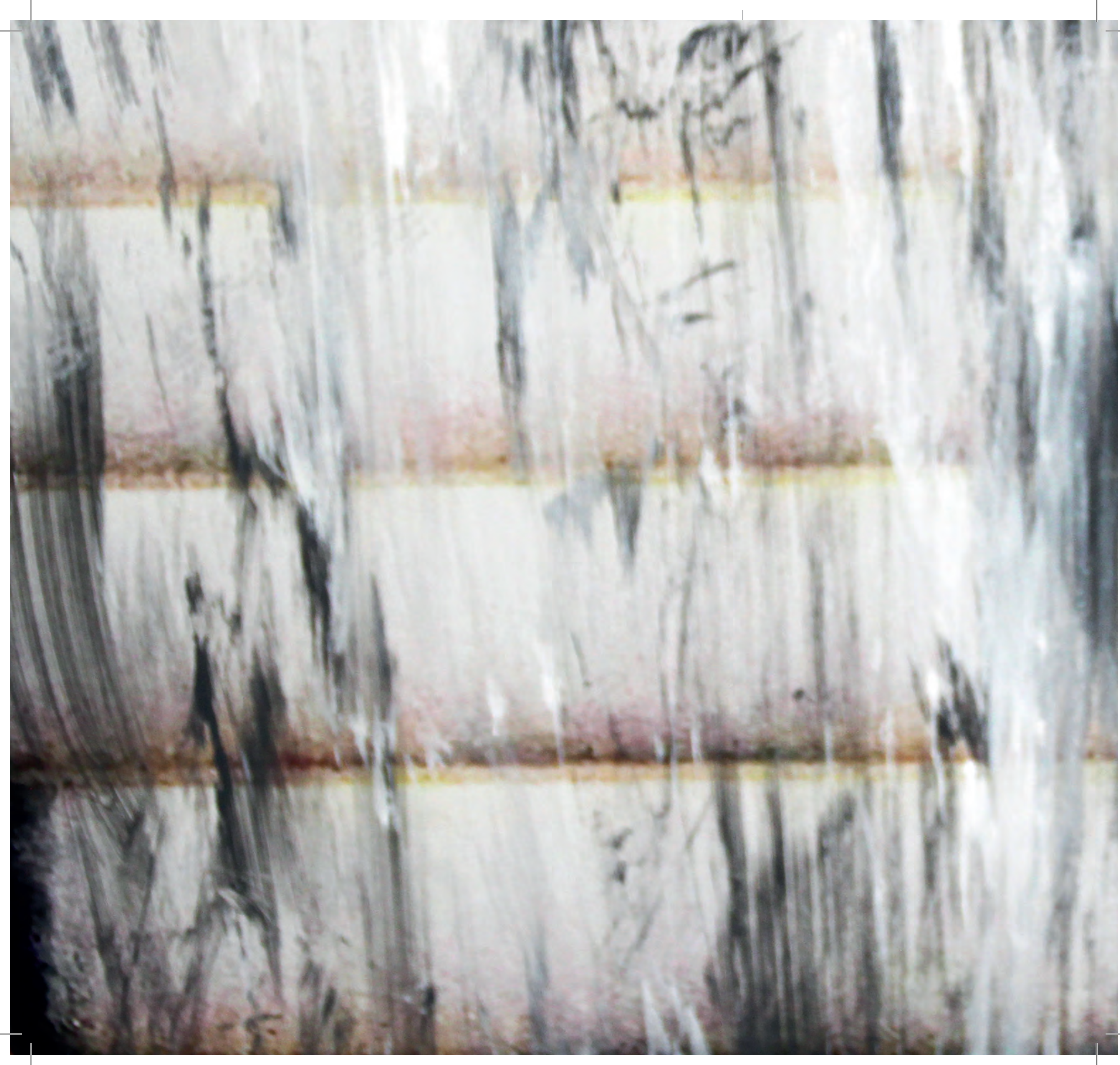
In this strange, isolated, yet disturbingly familiar, world we move almost as figures in a diagram or board game. In the structural abstraction of this transitory space there are isolated moments, states and events that by their function are already diagrammatic, obscure and coded. The transit space is a potent space/event for the exploration of time; as movement, as the interaction of the actual and virtual, of past, present and future as process, and the simultaneous obsession with, and loss of, identity.

The aporia of the coexistence of phenomenological and cosmic time, of the simultaneous workings of the singularity and multiplicity of time, of the evasiveness and invisibility of time, remain aporias in a scientific paradigm. These problematics become fuel to the machine of creative practice, however. In 1969, Bachelard challenged many of the mechanical and scientific notions of the nature of space in a work titled *The Poetics of Space*².

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First published in 1958
under the title *La Poétique
de l'espace* by Presses Uni-
versitaires de France.

THIS THESIS PROPOSES A POETICS OF TIME.





INTRODUCTION

THE PROJECT

The doctoral project sets its sights on a proposed deep link between art and ontological processes, in particular the nature of time and change. The aim is to create a body of work that explores these ideas through the processes of painting. If time itself is seen as a creative force then the processes of painting and those of change and time itself might have much in common. The project develops images, processes and contexts giving form to this central idea.

Marrati says, “time is not an external frame in which events occur but is identical with invention itself” (Marrati, 2008, p.15). He proposes an idea that stems from Bergson and flows through the philosophy of Deleuze. It is essentially a model of time as a creative process, the inventive force that creates the new. As Bergson concluded in *Creative Evolution* published in 1907, “... time is invention or it is nothing at all” (Bergson, 1907/1999, p.341). Starting from this essential premise, this thesis seeks a constructive alliance between a Bergsonian and Deleuzian notion of time as creative process, that acts within an experienced moment and the inventive processes of painting. The project does not aim to illustrate philosophical ideas relating to time, nor does it seek academic credibility for a practice-led project through theoretical connections, rather it looks to other modes of thought for the generation of new ideas, forms, and interpretations of the creative project. In essence it presents a personal ontological position through an art practice in the context of related theoretical and artistic ideas.

Defining a research question and refining a clear and focussed project around an exploration of the transit space of air travel and ideas of time has been a complex process. The predominant activity to achieve this involved two parallel and simultaneous processes.³ The first was making as research and the second interfacing this making with theoretical discourse. The strategy has been to bring these two processes physically and conceptually into collaboration through experimentation, reflection and refinement. The philosophical ideas of time are examined against the on-going reinvention of abstraction and the development of hybrid forms of painting and photography. Although abstraction is central to this enquiry, it is not the subject of the thesis, which has a broader concern with painting in relation to ontological concerns. In a similar vein, the airport is not the topic of this research project, instead it serves as a vehicle for exploring the conceptual frame of the thesis within the processes of painting. The airport transit space is central to the project, but it is explored in a complex way in the work. At times it confronts the viewer of the work, in other areas it is obscure and we merely come across it, and in places it has no obvious connection but is implicated in the overall dialogue through painterly devices and connections. This various and complex relationship with the place of the processing of air travel avoids a singular reading and narrative and allows the work to explore both specific and abstract ideas in relation to the topic.

The theoretical context of the research project

The current project draws on philosophical ideas of time, notably Deleuze's work on the problematics of being and becoming. The thesis suggests that Bergson's and Deleuze's concerns with the actual and the virtual have direct relevance to the analysis of visual art. In the project, research into the nature of the actual and the virtual has two purposes. Firstly it is employed as an analytical tool for

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The relationship between the study of theory, contemporary art practices and my own practice does not operate in a single direction; that is it is not only that the ideas explored in the project are informed by the study of philosophical writing and other artists' work, but that the research into theoretical ideas engages in a process of re-thinking and re-contextualising those sources. Sullivan describes this as practice informing theory and theory informing practice (2010, p.99).

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The project has also resulted in additional areas of exploration, such as the sections of the final work using photographic images from arrivals and departures signage, and related research into speech impediments, sound and noise, and creative languages of continuity and discontinuity.

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Bergson is a key precursor to Deleuze's philosophical position on time, drawing on Bergsonian ideas of duration, intuition and multiplicity. A number of recent studies building on Deleuze's theories inform the thesis, including Bogue (2003), regarding Deleuze and the creative arts, DeLanda's essay on Deleuze and diagrams (1999), and Smith's study of Deleuze and the production of the new (2008). In Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New (2008) Zepke and Burrows provide current thinking for example on the readymade and its relationship to time and temporality. This has particular relevance in the project in relation to readymade images and materials, and their actual and virtual presence.

the interpretation of my own work, and by implication, aspects of contemporary painting, and revisiting modernist practice and theory. Secondly, the focus on the nature of the virtual and its role in becoming actual is used as a catalyst for new ideas and the development of creative work.⁴

The thesis does not aim to construct a full outline and critique of Deleuze and related studies of the nature of time. It starts with Deleuze's radical interpretation of the nature of time and being, in particular the actual and the virtual, and uses this as an underpinning for a process of on-going questioning through the practices and materials of writing and painting.

Deleuze's treatise, 'Difference and Repetition' (1986), expresses the key concerns of this project. From Deleuze's writing, outwards, back and forward in time, other relevant ideas of the nature of being and time are explored.⁵

One might arguably suggest that Deleuze's philosophy is one of difference as opposed to a philosophy of representation or essence, and this paradigm underpins the project. Deleuze establishes a model of time based on difference and becoming that has a radical, complex, and dynamic paradigm with a strong analogy to creative practice. For Deleuze time is a creative process, and past, present and future are dimensions of each other. Throughout the thesis there are key concepts that are analogous to his ideas of time where no moment in time is privileged over any other, and where everything is repeated but never the same.

The thesis explores Deleuze's notion that the actual and the virtual are not separate states but mutually dependent and embodied in all objects and events. The proposition is that the artwork for the project is the culmination of a defined set of virtual ideas and connections actualised in the visual and structural form of the work. This process continues beyond the completion of the project and beyond the completed work for the project, which is surrounded by a shifting field of virtual connections and associations.

Deleuze establishes a model of existence and being that has time and transmission at its core. For Deleuze, the "... virtual is opposed not to the real but to the

actual” (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.208) and that the virtual “... possesses a full reality by itself” (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.211). These two seemingly opposite states are not fixed entities, and in what Deleuze refers to as “reciprocal determination” (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.210) they operate in a dynamic process generating time itself.

In relation to the art work, Deleuze’s idea proposes a more complex relationship than one between the actuality of the work and the (virtual) associations outside the work. In a Deleuzian sense the art work is both actual and virtual, and the two states determine each other. Alongside the theoretical ideas underpinning the project are a number of key developments in contemporary art practice that are significant to this thesis, including hybrid forms of practice within painting.

Review of contextual practice in relation to the project

A key aim for the doctoral project has been to find ways to continue to reactivate a painting practice that is grounded in developments in international abstraction, and parallel practice in New Zealand. There are three key areas where historical and contemporary painting practice is key to this project.

The on-going reinvention of abstraction in my own painting in relation to both internal and external ideas and developments has resulted in a wide range of formats and expressions. In Chapter Six for example, I discuss the use of poured surfaces, tracing back to the 1960s land works by Robert Smithson, and later explorations in paint by Morris Louis and John Armlader. Smithson’s work and subsequent paintings by Morris Louis⁶ have been a catalyst for many experiments in my own work using poured, scraped and ‘instant’ surfaces. In the final thesis exhibition the poured surface is reinvented in a new context. A number of figurative surfaces (both painted and photographic) are over-poured and partly obliterated. This new context relates to ideas explored in the thesis of continuity and

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An exhibition of Louis’ work, held at the Auckland Art Gallery in 1971 in collaboration with galleries in Honolulu, Melbourne and Vancouver, was a significant catalyst for the development of my own work.

discontinuity. Since the mid-1970s I have engaged in dialogue and reflection with painters in relation to international developments. Two of the most formative have been Milan MrKusich and Geoff Thornley. The dialogue with these artists and their work has provided a strong ground on which to reconstitute a range of ideas in relation to the research topic. Among these are concerns with the frame and the edge, with the monochromatic field, with the grid and serial form, and issues of material and meaning.

My work is also informed by much earlier experiments in abstraction, in particular the work of the Russian Constructivists such as Kasimir Malevich and Ivan Puni. Malevich's extremely reductive abstractions after 1915 have been seminal in the way they reduce the internal elements often to minimal form and yet retain an intensity that is hard to describe. An early formative text in this regard was a catalogue for the exhibition *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1987. An enduring interest in the work of artists, such as Hilma af Klint who were connected to ideas of spiritualism has also been significant. This doctoral project has allowed an exploration of abstraction that finds an equivalent intensity and novelty without any spiritual underpinning. The work of artists such as Frank Stella, Ad Reinhardt, Agnes Martin and Morris Louis in the 1940's and 50's has provided a vocabulary of form and process that has been extremely important, notably in developing a seemingly minimal vocabulary with a maximum of intensity.

As much as a response to ideas and developments in contemporary painting, this project has allowed a reflection back into those sources. Rethinking these works from a temporal perspective, in relation to the actual and the virtual, and Deleuze's idea of reciprocal determination of opposing states, has been expansive in my own thinking and the development of new work. The project has resulted in a valuable revisiting of earlier sources. The work of Frank Stella for example, can be seen in hindsight, as concerned with temporality, energy and change rather than purely formal compositional or structural dynamics.

The second arena of practice that has informed this project is the development of hybrid forms of painting that conflate disparate aspects and genres in productive ways. One of the most significant developments has been the bringing together of aspects of figuration and abstraction. Rather than merely juxtaposing these two modes, a number of painters find ways to develop a visual dynamic that has a deeper relationship to the content and conceptual base of the work. In the paintings of German artist Dirk Skreber there are several concerns that relate to this thesis. Although Skreber works with sculptural and installation processes, it is in his painting that there are related concerns. Skreber often works with images of ordinary, banal objects and sites, or from images of natural and other catastrophes and accidents. A consistent engagement for Skreber is an interplay between the abstract and the representational. Often he splatters, marks, and brushes the surface of an image so that the “insertion of nonrepresentational elements within otherwise realistic compositions ultimately divests the paintings of any reference to the world that exists outside the canvas itself” (Isé, 2000, p.52). Rather than an idea of the abstract elements negating a connection to the exterior world, what interests me in these works is the dynamic between the two modes. The abstract surface forces the representational image to become partly abstract and vice versa. This is most evident in paintings that depict flooded landscapes. Here Skreber finds a ‘readymade’⁷ image, where the flooded surface becomes synonymous with an abstract field. The image, though an increasingly commonly experienced one through social media, is a complex juxtaposition of disruption, disaster, and the aesthetic, within a play between abstraction and representation. These works have been influential in the development of ideas related to the topic, in particular the bringing together of two potentially separate, even opposing, states or modes in a process of mutual determination. Of particular importance in the doctoral project is to find similar readymade or existing sources outside of the art making context. These sources have encompassed the x-ray image, the coded signage of

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The term is used here to denote a found image sourced from social media.

the transit space, and the mechanical movement of the luggage carousel and the escalator. These events operate like Skreber's flooded paintings where the everyday is locked in a dynamic movement with an abstract, mechanical or diagrammed moment. Isé refers to Skreber's process of deploying a

... range of dissimilar, even opposing strategies, which are variously associated with geometric abstraction, action painting, color field, mixed-media collage, and photorealism. In this manner, Skreber rehearses dilemmas of twentieth-century painting without attempting to resolve or transcend them, making longstanding questions about representation and reality seem vital and provocative once more. (ISÉ, 2000, p.52)

In a series of paintings of flooded spaces with stranded vehicles Skreber uses aerial views which appear to serve two purposes. Firstly they are media images of catastrophe and accident that have become increasingly familiar, and yet one that renders our everyday world strange, distant and removed. The work also uses these images to create a state between abstraction and representation. They portray a natural disruption to our lives, and at the same time appear still and beautiful.

The work of Gerhard Richter likewise operates in a zone that does not differentiate between these genres or modes, in particular the representational as the photographic. Richter's work has been influential in finding new ways to engage with these different disciplines and practices, and in developing the vocabulary and repertoire of the painted surface. In relation to a retrospective exhibition of Richter's work in 2004, Francés describes his work as operating in "... two major strands: the figurative and the abstract, although the border between one and the other is extremely ambiguous and undefined" (Francés, 2004, p.108).

A strong element in the work of both Richter and Skreber is a collapse of the differentiation between the mundane and everyday, and what might be experienced as beautiful, even sublime. In their work it is often uncertain whether this

occurs in our experience of the world outside of the artwork, or whether it is a result of the artist's ability to conflate these states in a single form.

The final form and format of the exhibition work emanating from this research has resulted from a congruent interrogation of both theoretical and creative ideas that relate to the topic, notably in relation to temporality and change. There has been a considerable body of analysis of the influence of painting on cinema⁸, but considerably less work done on the response of painters to film and the cinematic. Documentation and critique of the move away from the easel to the wall, and the shift that Pollock and others made in taking the act of painting onto the floor and making painting bigger than could be taken in by a frame, is well-traversed territory. The easel painting is however relatively new, and painting has always had a connection with the wall and architecture. There is though in a number of current painters, an interest in painting that is less concerned with space and form than with temporality, movement and change. We represent the world in images, and the world takes on these representations, including the constructions of cinema.

Over many years a consistent underlying concern has emerged in my work with developing a visual dynamic that denies a sense of the iconic and emblematic, that is denying an image that is fixed, hermetic or even symbolic. Developments in my own practice that inform the current project are outlined in the following section.

3

8

Vacche's 1996 work on *Cinema and Painting: How art is used in film*, for example.

Positioning the research in relation to the researcher's past practice

DUALITY OF FORM

9

The stripe is reduced to lines that radiate in all directions, each blurred in a zone of light or nimbus. With the hindsight of the doctoral project, this work presents not an emblematic circle, but a dual form, that is the actual form of the work and physicality of the internal structure, and the shifting cloud or halo of light. These two states are interdependent, and in a sense define each other.

Tracing back to works I produced in the mid 1970's reveals an engagement with a non-minimalist interpretation of the modernist traditions of formalism and repetition. An underlying sense of energy informs the work that is concerned with flow from one state to another. In *Tondo Nimbus* (1975) (Figure 1), for example, the modernist convention of the stripe is reinvented.⁹

“EVERY actual surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images. This cloud is composed of a series of more or less extensive coexisting circuits, along which the virtual images are distributed, and around which they run”
(DELEUZE & PARNET, 2002, P.128).

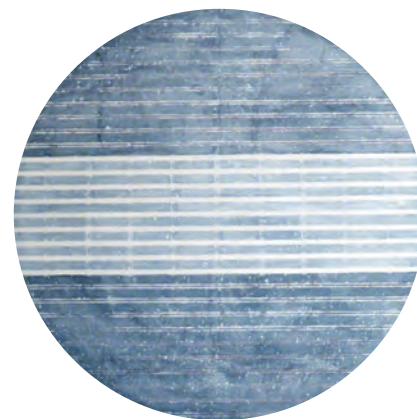


FIGURE 1
Tondo Nimbus (1975)
910mm diameter
ACRYLIC ON PLYWOOD.

Duality of forms and states emerges and re-emerges throughout the doctoral work, not as a binary structure but rather as two states mirroring each other. In *Customs Painting 3/05* (Figure 2), the idea of two states mutually determining each other is evidenced in the way that the photographic x-ray image and the painted surface in the left section mimic each other; that is they become each other at the same time as remaining (at least materially) separate.¹⁰

THE TIME OF TRANSIT

A further concern with places and states of transit and with transiting time is also evident in preparatory studies that prefigured the thesis enquiry (Figure 3). Although these concerns have been prevalent in the work for a considerable period, the doctoral project has presented a platform to find a spoken, textual and theoretical context to consider these ideas. These in turn have driven practical concerns within the project forward.

THE CONTINUING PROJECT TO REINVENT ABSTRACTION

The recurring reinvention of abstraction has taken a number of directions, more recently in an interest in the relationship between abstraction and representation. On-going modernist concerns with repetition and the grid, the dynamics of continuity and disruption, mimicry and the mirror image are revisited and recontextualised in the doctoral project. Alongside these interests, the project is informed by a history of exploration of materials, processes, and their relationship to ideas.

In recent work a concern with the collision of painting and photographic images has developed. A primary interest with these issues has been how they operate in relation to ideas of the actual and the virtual. These hybrid genres align with the conceptual study of time in a Deleuzian framework.

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In this work we see a concern with two 'states' interacting with each other. Explored through the materiality of paint and photographic imagery, these states antecede research into Deleuze's ideas of time and being, yet the x-ray image appears to be a materialisation of the idea of the actual and the virtual in a state of becoming the other. In this work, the intimate, familiar paraphernalia of travel has become a virtual parallel image of the actual.

FIGURE 2

Customs Painting 3/05 (2005)

1200mm x 900mm

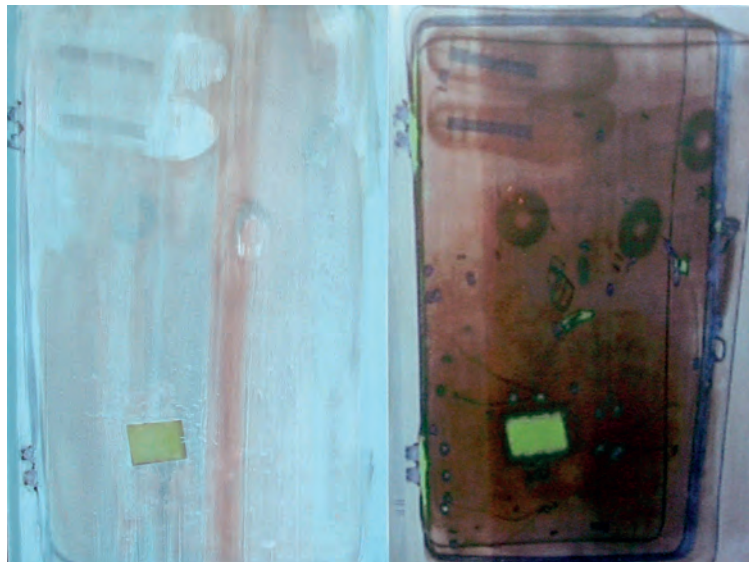
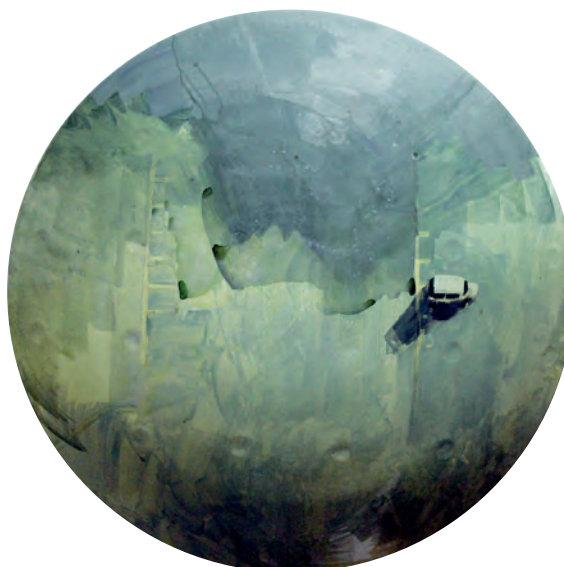
ACRYLIC AND PHOTOGRAPHIC
IMAGE ON VINYL, ON ALUMINIUM.

FIGURE 3

Carpark No. 1 (2011)

600mm diameter

ACRYLIC ON SPUN ALUMINIUM DOME.¹¹

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In this preparatory work for the project, the potentially timeless emblem of the circle is undermined by a series of structures, where the everyday image of the vehicle is caught in transit, the shadow shifting across the dome, and there is a pervasive sense of movement between coming and going.

The plugged surfaces in some of the final panels appearing in the exhibition also have a precedent in earlier works. Indicative of this is *Orange Plug Painting*, completed in 2003 (Figure 4). This work may be seen as pre-empting the concerns in the thesis project with continuity and discontinuity, and of different times wrapping around each event. It also prefigures later concerns with the grid, repetition and difference, discussed in depth in Chapter Five.



FIGURE 4

Orange Plug Painting (2003)

450mm X 390mm

ACRYLIC AND PLASTIC
PLUGS ON PLYWOOD.

Defining the research question

As commonly occurs in artistic research, the research question is often tentative or vague at the launch of the project (Mäkelä, 2007; Smith & Dean, 2009). It evades the researcher, and only crystallises in a productive form further into the enquiry. The research question is more often than not an arena of exploration, an issue or problematic, rather than a question seeking closure through a specific answer or set of findings.

For this project, at least, the research question has three key aspects that align with the requirements of doctoral study. They establish the value of positioning practice in the context of a doctoral project.

1

The question sites practice in enquiry.

2

It locates practice clearly in a context external to the artwork itself.

THIS HAS THREE ASPECTS:

Practice is located in a theoretical context that has its own trajectory of discovery, analysis, and reflection parallel to the artistic practice. | Practice is located in a structured chronology of reflection, critical feedback, dialogue and examination. | The project is contextualised in a related, specific area of current artistic practice.

3

The research question, whether it be a defined issue or problematic, a question seeking an answer or outcome, or a retrospective analysis, inherently deals with the unknown, untested, and as yet not explored. It thus implies the new.

The way in which this project addresses these three aspects of research and the research question is outlined in Chapter Two, Research Design, and further elaborated throughout the exegesis.

The nature of the question

Through an intensive period of making, and reflection on early practice, a clear research arena and question developed. This evolved from a broad concern with the nature of time, explored through the materiality of painting, to a focused study of the ontology of the actual and the virtual.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION HAS TWO RELATED PARTS:

1. A consideration as to whether Deleuze's interpretation¹² of the nature of the actual and the virtual, and his idea of 'reciprocal determination' between the two, might provide a new analytical tool in the study of creative practice. The poetics of creative practice might be seen as a symbolic form of reciprocal determination between the virtual and the actual.¹³
2. Secondly the project explores the possibilities for these ontological notions to be used as a catalyst for the generation of new creative work.

The research into problematics of time and being serves, therefore, a primary function in the doctoral project, namely to generate new ideas, processes, imagery and solutions.

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Although Deleuze is key to this project a number of other theorists inform the project; in particular Bergson, Gilbert-Rolfe, O'Sullivan, Grosz, DeLanda, Williams and Zepke.

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Williams provides a succinct statement of Deleuze's notion of the process of becoming, relating to the actual and the virtual. He says,

These realms depend on each other for their determinacy, that is, for the relative determinacy of terms within them in relation to others ... To use a key term from Deleuze: they are in a relation of reciprocal determination. This relation cannot be traced back to a first origin, be subjected to an external logic that gives it a set direction and order, or traced to a final end. (Williams, 2005, p.6).

I suggest that the interaction between these two states generating the experimental is arguably analogous to the creative poetic act.

Deleuze and the question

Of particular interest in this project is Deleuze's style and philosophical stance. Deleuze maintained the importance of the value of non-philosophical disciplines to the study of philosophical concepts, and insisted that creative disciplines are equally engaged in thought and abstraction as philosophical enquiry. This dynamic approach is mirrored in his specific philosophical concepts in relation to time, matter, movement and becoming. In this way time for Deleuze is a creative process, and the nature and dynamic of movement and time in a Deleuzian sense has close analogies with the creative disciplines and will be explored here in relation specifically to painting.

For Deleuze the virtual has nothing to do with the everyday meaning of the term as an electronically produced representation or copy. Deleuze establishes the virtual as that which connects all things, and prevents them from being replicated. The virtual, for Deleuze, is an element of reality that interacts with the actual, causing change. It is an invisible force field that encompasses all of the past, thought and memory, and an infinite diagram of connections. Thus, he says, "The actualization of the virtual ... always takes place by difference, divergence or differentiation" (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.212). In Deleuze's idea of becoming, everything is repeated but never the same. This implies that the process of differentiation and becoming precedes things, and that the only thing that returns is difference itself. He notes, "Eternal return cannot mean the return of the Identical because it presupposes a world ... in which all previous identities have been abolished and dissolved. Returning is being, but only the being of becoming" (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.41). Creative practice has at its core, almost by definition, the continuous reinvention of itself.

Deleuze referred to a ‘reciprocal determination’ in which the actual and the virtual engage in a process of becoming. Williams suggests that the virtual “... is a realm deduced from actual events as the transcendental condition for their resistance to identity and for their capacity to become other” (Williams, 2005, p.104).

Visual analogies to this process of two seemingly opposite states reciprocally determining each other are fundamental to the thesis. The idea of reciprocal determination implies a state of continuous transmission in more than one direction. This concern is central to the current project, and is also evidenced in work that preceded this project. In *Transit Painting No. 3* (Figure 5), an exploratory painting completed in 2011, an aerial view of parked cars hovers in a state between coming and going. Here narrative time has paused and another time has taken over. Looked at from a temporal rather than a spatial perspective the subject of coming and going relates not only to spatial movement, but to things coming into being, passing away into the past, and moving into the future.

The form of the practice

The doctoral project has resulted in a substantial body of research that has involved rigorous experimental testing of ideas, materials and directions. The thesis project however culminates in the exhibition of a single artwork that is constructed of multiple aluminium panels.¹⁴ This work may be understood as part of a complex iterative journey where ideas were tested by and through practice. Here concerns were refined within layers of painterly thinking and rethinking, and through the development of ideas and processes generated in notebooks and workbooks. Thus, this exegesis does not frame the exhibited work as a discrete artefact, but as an outcome of an iterative journey where concerns and reflections formed part of a complex research dynamic actualised through processes of making and reflecting. Although considered as a resolved whole, the final work has a

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Such an enquiry, because of its experimental and reflective nature, opens up a number of potentials for further research. Accordingly, certain discoveries and provocations within the project will form the basis of research that extends beyond the thesis. Some of the latent ideas generated by the project are outlined in the Conclusion.

FIGURE 5

Transit Painting No. 3, (2011)

600mm x 1125mm

ACRYLIC ON PLYWOOD,¹⁵

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In this work, in an almost liminal state, objects, and matter itself, appear to disappear and come into being at the same time. The transit space of this work is not a space between (the past and the future), but a space/moment where apparent opposites are inseparably involved in a state of becoming. In this work I was not concerned with the image capturing a transitory moment, or the decisive moment of photography, but rather with the process of falling away into the past and moving into the future as a singular process.



structure allowing visual evidence of stages of thinking and exploration over the duration of the project, just as the singular journey of travel and transit is punctuated with a plethora of different experiences.

The final work will be exhibited in St Pauls Street Gallery in Auckland, New Zealand between January 25th and February 5th, 2016. This exegesis serves as a contextualising document for both the exhibition and the enquiry that has underpinned it. The artwork uses both painted and photographic surfaces and images to explore ideas of time and movement through visual language. Imagery derived from, and related to the transit space of air travel is employed as an intensive space where time is made visible through movement, disruption and transition.

In relation to considerations of the nature of time, the work has an almost cinematic form. It appears as a long, non-chronological sequence, with a cohesive whole constructed from a multiplicity of frames. The viewer is denied a linear experience of the work, which shifts between isolated and longer sequences with no sense of a singular flow of time. The singularity and separateness of images is consistently undermined through visual and material means that include processes of doubling and mirror image, dissolving, disruption and repetition. These processes operate through a dynamic interaction of actual, visual elements, and virtual links and extensions.

The structure of the exegesis

The exegesis serves to contextualise the exhibited work and the research that has underpinned it. It is divided into nine chapters.

Chapter 1 offers an introduction to the thesis. It defines the research question, then discusses its origins, nature and influences. I position the enquiry in relation

to my past work and outline the theoretical context of the project, before briefly discussing the structure of the practice and exegesis.

Chapter 2 considers the research design developed for the project. Here the paradigm, methodology and methods are discussed in relation to the on-going production of ideas and reflection on practice. The place of drawing, testing, writing and making are also outlined. In discussing the project's research design I am aware of Sullivan's assertion that art practice as research "is a creative and critical process that accepts that knowledge and understanding continually change, methods are flexible, and outcomes are often unanticipated, yet possibilities are opened up for revealing what we don't know as a means to challenging what we do know" (Sullivan, 2010 p.99). Thus, the chapter describes how these flexible and open ended methods apply in the project.

In **Chapter 3** a consideration of the actual and the virtual, and the interaction between the two in the process of change is undertaken. In a work on the 'transversal thought' of Deleuze, Williams talks of the virtual as being a necessary condition for all things (Williams, 2005). Accordingly, this chapter focusses on the nature of the virtual, presenting a model of the actual and the virtual as two separate, dependent, and mutually defining states. For Deleuze the virtual is a part of all actual things and is core to the nature of being. This Chapter outlines how these ideas are explored through the artwork for the project.

Theoretical and creative ideas relating to the frame and framing are discussed in **Chapter 4**. Here ideas discussed in the previous section are developed through a consideration of the frame. Ideas, predominantly emerging from research into Deleuze, include the relation of the frame to saturation and emptiness, singularity and multiplicity, and the inside and outside of the frame. The chapter begins with an outline of Deleuze's study of the frame in cinema, and his extrapolation into

philosophical ideas of time and being. Deleuze's analysis of the frame and the process of framing in cinema provides a theoretical starting point for an extension of ideas into the field of painting, encompassing an analysis of the physical frame itself and what is included and what is excluded, closed and open systems, saturated and empty systems, the nature of perception and imagination, and the actual and the virtual. Chapter Four establishes a specific philosophical model of the nature of time that underpins the study; that is time is a dynamic process with a set of key underlying propositions. These include the notion that time involves both an open, endless duration and an infinitely changing process of multiple times around every event or frame, that the past, the present and the future are dimensions of each other, and no moment is privileged over any other.

Chapter 5 discusses various aspects of abstraction and repetition that have resourced the enquiry. In considering the grid, it presents a distinctive perspective from a temporal stance. In relation to my research practice, links are made with current studies of Deleuze's work on the diagram (DeLanda, 1999; Zdebik, 2012), on repetition and difference (Deleuze, 1968/2001) and the singular nature of time, and its multiplicity. In this thesis the grid is considered as a continuous series of frames expanding in all directions. As such, it is extracted from the modernist context of minimalism, and examined as a form privileging time over space.

Ideas relating to transit and transition are the focus of **Chapter 6**. Here the specific zone of airport transit is analysed in terms of theoretical ideas of time (Andrews & Roberts, 2012; DeLanda, 2005; Grosz, 1999; Raahauge, 2008; Webb, 2000). The space of travel, disruption and waiting provides a plethora of images and states that hyper-realise time. This research enquiry is sited in this transit space of air travel. Chapter Six provides a background to this exploration in relation to theoretical ideas relating to time. The chapter on the airport transit space is deliberately positioned relatively late in the exegesis, ensuring that it is not read as the subject of the thesis.

It operates in the project as a vehicle to locate the research topic. In the art work, the transit space is treated variously as the subject of images, as a metaphorical and poetic form of temporal processes, and as a symbolic order of ideas connecting with the topic. There are also areas in the final work, which if isolated from the rest of the work, have no obvious connection with the experience of travel. In the context of the whole, however, they take on concerns with the dynamics of connection, change and transmission.

Chapter 7 develops the idea of the liminal moments of transition in the context of theoretical ideas of the instant and becoming. A central question in the philosophical history and debate regarding the nature of time is the issue of the nature of the instant. In this chapter the broader study of time and painting focuses down into the instant, the moment where the virtual and the actual engage in a process of the present falling away into the past and becoming the future. Analogous forms and processes in painting are outlined.

Chapter 8 constitutes the last of the formal discussions in the exegesis, and examines artistic and literary devices that disrupt continuity. The proposal is that this discontinuity itself creates the new, much as the virtual interrupts the actual and prevents it from remaining the same. The chapter focusses on the mechanical arrivals and departures signage in the airport terminal used in several areas of the final artwork. Here, within mechanical and everyday functionality, a potent, extended moment occurs encapsulating many of the ideas of the project. These include continuity and disruption, the collapse of distinction between object, image, language and event, and actual and virtual movement. Connections are made to the literary devices of stuttering and speech defect, and elements of language, sound, and the mechanical. This thinking resulted from tangential¹⁶ research during the project, and is exemplified in two sections of the exhibited artwork that operate as a visual form of continuity and disruption. The exegesis

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Tangential thinking, practice and experimentation is core to a visual arts practice, as it is to other practices where creativity and new knowledge and forms are paramount.

analyses these readymade¹⁷ images, and considers links with contemporary studies of the readymade, particularly in relation to time.

Chapter 9 forms the conclusion of the exegesis. It summarises the key aspects and discoveries of the doctoral project in two parts. The first summarises the contribution to current knowledge and practice resulting from the research project. The second part outlines aspects of the research that have possibilities for further study. These ideas relate to images, materials and forms as well as to theoretical studies of time.

Comment on the design of the exegesis

In 1977, three years before Deleuze's collaboration with Guattari on *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze worked with French reporter and philosopher, Claire Parnet, on the publication of *Dialogues II*. Originally this was proposed by the publisher as a series of interviews between Parnet and Deleuze. As Deleuze wrote in a Preface to *Dialogues*,

THE first plan for a conversation between two people, in which one asked questions and the other replied, no longer had any value. The divisions had to rest on the growing dimensions of multiplicity, according to becomings which were unattributable to individuals.

(DELEUZE & PARNET, 2002, P.X)

The result was a publication established as a dialogue, both in the nature of the original interaction, and the structure of the book. Deleuze talked of the lines of dialogue as “... lines which would respond to each other, like the subterranean shoots of a rhizome, as opposed to the unity of the tree and its binary logic”

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I use the term readymade to refer to the use of found images in the production of aspects of the artwork in the research project.

(Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.x). Thus Deleuze and Parnet developed a structural form directly related to their philosophical ideas and the nature of the dialogue around these ideas. Some sections of *Dialogues* are divided into two separate texts, one initialled by Deleuze and one by Parnet. In others the voices of the two are unidentifiable. This exegesis is seen as a dialogue between the art work and the written form, and between image, ideas and text.

The idea of a close relationship between the topic of the thesis and the form of the exegesis has been an important consideration in this project. There are several aspects to the development of this conceptual link between topic, form and structure. In the exegesis images are significant, not merely as illustrations to the text, but as integrated forms of thought.

My decision to conceptualise and frame the exegesis as part of the creative enquiry may be situated inside a growing discourse surrounding its voice and purpose (Barrett & Bolt, 2007; Biggs & Büchler, 2009; Hamilton, 2011; Hamilton & Jaaniste, 2010; Ings, 2014; Milech & Schilo, 2004; Paltridge, Starfield, Ravelli, & Nicolason, 2011; Sullivan, 2010). Ings has suggested that the often multi-perspectival voice of the exegesis may be developed “by more than one manifestation of the writer, [where] distinct writing and layout styles are adopted to address both the formal analysis of the theorist and the insightfully subjective voice of reflexivity” (Ings, 2014, p.3). Supporting this position Paltridge et al. note that multiple and valid options for presenting doctoral writing “do not necessarily have to fit with a pre-conceived template, or indeed straight-jacket”. (Paltridge et al., 2011, p.342).

Thus, in the design of this exegesis, images sometimes claim the page. This is not a decision of style but an attempt to enhance dialogue between the artwork and practice, and the conceptual ideas explored in the project. At times in the exegesis design, details of paintings for the project bring the reader back to the act and materiality of painting. In addition, before the Conclusion a fold out section (Figure 61) opens to illustrate the proposed work as it is intended to be exhibited.¹⁸

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Given that at the time of submission the practice will still be engaging with feedback and refinement, certain changes may occur in the final exhibited work.

In a similar way to the two voices in *Dialogues II*, the logic of the design and structure of the exegesis is proposed as not only relating to the topic, but on a deeper level

generating it. Creative practice and theoretical consideration are brought together, as in a room where the separate walls meeting at the corner mutually exclude and simultaneously define and influence each other.

Thus, the exegesis fulfils not only the exegetic function of providing a theoretical and methodological context for the creative work, it also becomes a parallel form of creative exploration. Text and image work together and neither is privileged over the other.

Although there is a logic to the progression of chapters through the exegesis, it is not structured in a strictly linear, chronological manner. In this way there is a structural link to the artwork in that each is divided into separate sections, each with connections into other chapters with the ability to move back and forward through the work and the text. The idea/image of the hinge appears in the artwork and in the exegesis. This physical and conceptual device, discussed further in Chapter Three, is a visual and textual form of the philosophical idea of two opposing forms folding together, opening and closing on each other. Reference to several sections of the final artwork is made in more than one area of the exegesis in order to capture the complexity of the work against various theoretical aspects of the topic.

The exegesis has nine chapters, but in essence it has three parts. The first part includes the Introduction and Research Design. The second is the main analytical and exegetic section. It is divided into six essays, each with a distinct area of theoretical study in relation to the project and creative practice. This structure is directly related to the final artwork where there are separate, differentiated panels, but also links and connections. Although the content and findings of each of these chapters is introduced and concluded, they are also structured in an innovative way in that the end of a chapter may bring the reader back to the work itself and the poetic exploration within the scope of the chapter, and lead into the next chapter. The third section of the exegesis is the Conclusion.

The following diagram (Figure 6) illustrates the overall structure of the exegesis.



FIGURE 6
Diagram of the exegesis structure.





2

RESEARCH DESIGN

THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Painting and Time is a practice- led,¹⁹ artistic, doctoral project that employs iterative developments of thinking culminating in an art work and an exegesis. The project was not initially generated out of a specific research question or hypothesis, but has evolved into a clear topic of study through the organic processes of thinking, making and reflecting. Thus the research project does not follow a linear trajectory of information gathering and analysis in order to answer a research question or state a position. Rather, an initial thematic or concern was established, along with a vehicle through which this was explored. In this research project the arena of exploration is a philosophical consideration of the nature of time. The vehicle through which this is investigated, theoretically and visually, is the event of transit through the airport space of arrivals and departures. Graham Sullivan argues that “to appreciate how visual arts contributes to human understanding, there is a need to locate artistic research within the theories and practices that surround art making.” (Sullivan, 2010 p.97). The project comes out of the practice of art making, with the theoretical study both providing a conceptual context as well as being a catalyst for new ideas within the creative practice.

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In defining practice-led research, Candy suggests that “The primary focus of the research is to advance knowledge about practice, or to advance knowledge within practice” (Candy, 2006, p.1).

Scrivener stresses the importance of reflection in defining practice-led research, and refers to ‘research-in-design’ (Scrivener, 2000 p.392). Both he and Mäkelä and Nimkulrat argue that reflection occurs at various stages of a practice-led project, and ‘provides primary material for communicating and sharing of the experiences related to the project’ (Mäkelä & Nimkulrat, 2011 p.2). Scrivener (2000) claims that the processes of reflection and documentation bring greater objectivity and critical subjectivity to a practice-led project. Although this is seen as an important aspect of the research design, this thesis aims to expand the concept of the practice-led doctorate. The project establishes a dynamic interactive methodology where theoretical research, writing, drawing, testing, and making, operate in an on-going dialogue, and are each catalysts for new thinking, each informing the others. The thesis challenges the alignment of the objective with reflective writing, and the subjective with the creative process.

The thesis uses the research topic as a productive and innovative driver of all aspects of the project, that is ideas related to time, movement and change determine not only the internal workings of the art work, but also underpin the methodology employed, and the position of the researcher/artist in the process.

The workbook

In developing the research I use a workbook that is a thinking, generating and testing space where the two aspects of research and making are brought together in an on-going dialogue. At times this is an uncertain alliance, at others it generates a strong catalytic effect on each aspect, and this is maintained through the trajectory of the research as a means of clarifying direction. In *The Authored Voice*, Ings discusses a number of practice-led PhD submissions where the “... exegeses grow as a form of living discourse with practice through iterations of work and ideas surfacing from it” (Ings, 2014, p.3). This idea of a dialogue and interaction

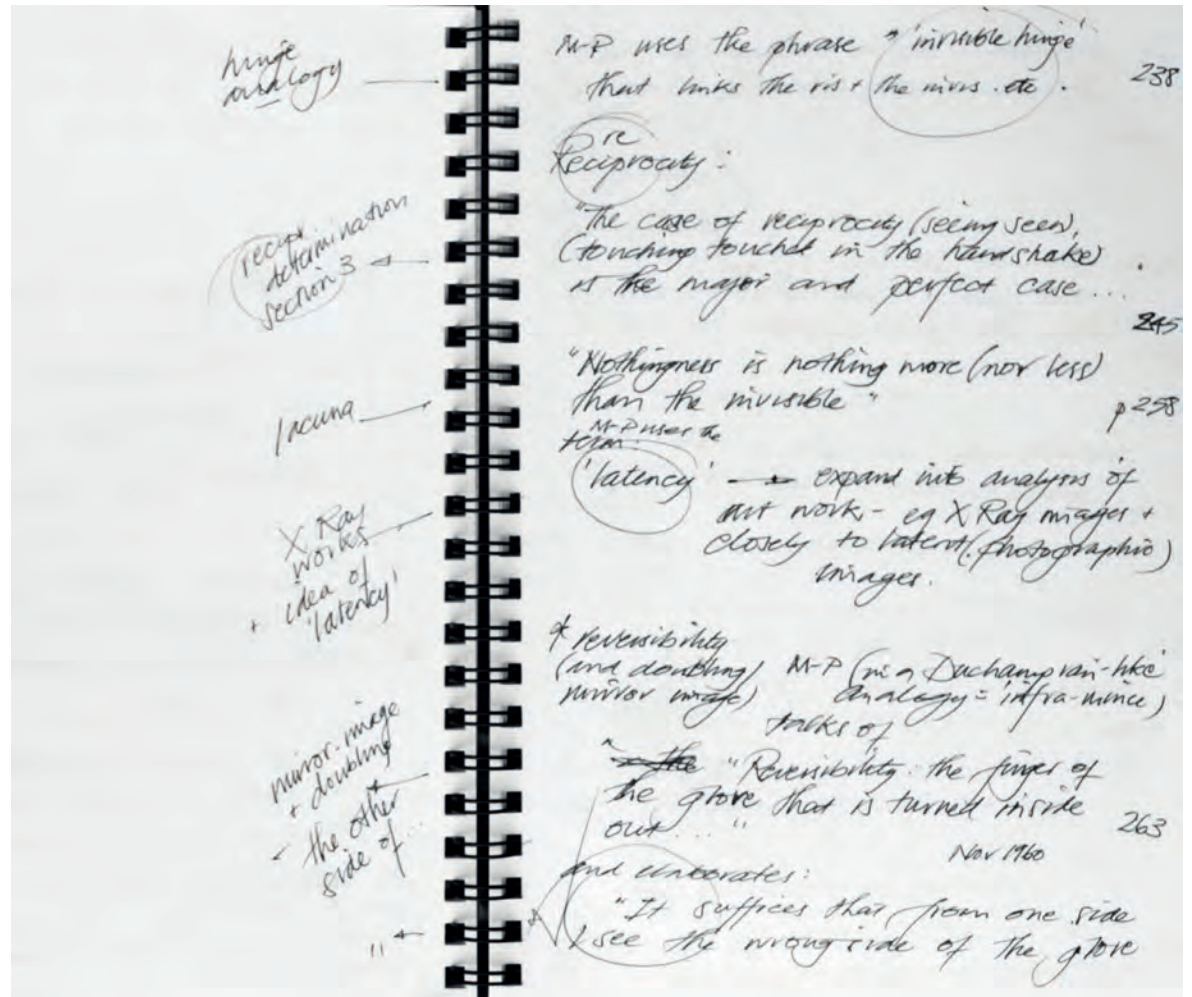


FIGURE 7

Thesis workbook page (2014), showing the linking and generating of ideas between theoretical research and art practice. Here, for example, the study of virtual fields and latent images is related to the x-ray used in the final work. Likewise philosophical ideas of the mirror image and doubling are recorded and linked to ideas to be explored in the studio work. This latter conceptual underpinning appears in many exploratory works and in the final artwork.

between the exegesis and the process of its production, and the creative practice is key to this project. Referring to the doctoral project, Ings says “... although the candidate negotiates relationships between the subjective and the objective voice, he or she also engages with considerations of space, volume and emphasis that might be employed to lift the exegesis to higher levels of clarity” (Ings, 2014, p.5). Here he alludes to the idea that it is also through visual language and design that the exegesis gains greater clarity and rigour.

The dialogue between theoretical research and the on-going development of the thesis work is exemplified in the workbook page (Figure 7). Notes and references generated from the research process are directly related to images, ideas and processes in the studio work. The two aspects of the project, contextual reading and practice, are different but cross the median line, migrate into each other’s space and partly determine each other.

Critical feedback and the research project

Because of the nature of this project and the on-going development of creative iterations, certain processes of testing the work against external contexts were not seen as generating sufficient critical dialogue. The dealer gallery exhibition, as a common visual arts process, has been avoided during this process. There are two reasons for this; firstly these events tend to force the thinking towards finished, saleable work, and secondly there is generally insufficient critical review around exhibitions in this context.

Beyond those formally offered by the structure of the programme,²⁰ two distinct processes of eliciting external feedback were implemented to assist the development of the project. The first was a conscious engagement with critical discussion with a number of other artistic researchers. These critiques involved not only other visual artists, but also theorists and other PhD candidates working with related ideas. These engagements were invaluable when testing ideas

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Peer reviewed applications and a double blind peer reviewed Confirmation of Candidature event occurred in 2011. The latter involved the critique of a 10,000 word written iteration of thinking in addition to practical work presented in a critical forum.

against a pool of considerable experience, knowledge and critical expertise. In late March, 2015 I was invited to attend the Outstanding Field Conference in Melbourne, at which an International group of PhD students presented their projects. These were practice-led research theses across a range of creative fields, and the exposure and resulting discussion was a valuable experience because the dialogue with many of these researchers, and with other academics attending the conference, provided a rich and critical context for discussion and reflection. Of particular value to the construction of my own exegesis was observing projects with a clearly defined research question and arena of study that investigated theory and practice in extended ways. Discussion on ways of developing academic rigour whilst allowing the researchers voice to maintain a strong and confident presence was also important in my own research practice.

A more formalised process I employed involved a designed test run of thinking and resolution. A pre-examination exhibition in St Paul St Gallery was held on December 2nd, 2015. For this a focus group of 6 academics, artists and critical thinkers was invited to review the work and offer critique and questioning.²¹ This focus group met for 90 minutes in front of the finished work as it is proposed to be exhibited for examination. All recording of feedback was undertaken by an independent party enabling me to focus and reflect on discussion. The timing of this final focus group enabled me to make amendments to both the final work and exegesis prior to examination. Located in the space where the examination exhibition will occur in the first week of February, 2016, the event also enabled me to experiment with specific issues relating to lighting, continuity and installation, and the possibility of exhibiting the exegesis within the exhibition.

Initial questions were asked of the group to generate discussion, including comment on the format and installation of the work, the perceived relationship between the work and the conceptual framework as outlined in the Abstract and Introduction, and what they would want to see enunciated in the exegesis to fully understand the exhibited work and the project.

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Participants for this event were: Associate Professor Andy Thomson, AUT Visual Arts; Professor Welby Ings, AUT University; Fiona Jack, Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland; Eileen Lavranos, School of Communication Studies, AUT University; Dr Marcos Steagall, AUT University; Tatiana Tavares, AUT University. The group offered a broad perspective from Visual Arts, film theory and practice, and expertise in practice-led doctoral study. The Exegesis Abstract and Introduction was sent to participants one week before the event.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION AND CHANGES MADE:

Structure and installation of the work

There was considerable discussion on the ordering of the panels in the overall sequence. Some suggestions of changes were made, however there was a general sense that the structure and layout worked very well in relation to the topic. No changes were made following the event, and it was evident that the considerable amount of time and thinking put into visualising the final exhibition had resulted in a resolved solution, while retaining the dynamic of the work and the sense of narrative across its length.

An issue relating to the installation and lighting of the work was raised, in particular a concern with irregular shadows beneath the panels, distracting from the continuity of the work. The entire wall (16 metres in length) will be re-lined over the next month to provide a perfect surface to ensure there are no visual distractions to the form of the painting.

Documentation of the work

It was suggested that I make a moving image documentation of the work, with a slow panning record of the sequence from left to right. This suggestion will be followed up during the final exhibition, and is considered as a reinforcement of the connection to film and the way the work might be read and experienced.

Terms and references in the exegesis

A clarification was sought as to the use of the term agnostic in the exegesis. There was considerable discussion around this, and it was agreed that the term had real significance within the thesis and in relation to the work.

One group member used the term *speculations* (regarding painting and its relationship to theoretical concerns). This is a very pertinent, open-ended way of referring to ideas finding form in painting practice, and will be used in revising aspects of the exegesis.

Theoretical sources

A number of theoretical texts were suggested in relation to the topic, many of which have informed the research project. Two new studies in particular were suggested and will become part of further research generated out of the thesis. These are Sean Cubitt's *Cinema Effect* and Simon O'Sullivan's *Thought Beyond Representation*.

Alongside the valuable dialogue and critical feedback that this event generated, a number of informal discussions occurred over the week that the work was in the gallery. These were extremely insightful talks about the relationship of painting to film, ideas of the virtual and the invisible in art practice, and ways of developing intense, productive and meaningful connections between theory and practice.

Interrogation, dialogue and genesis

The thesis has three key operational drivers, INTERROGATION, DIALOGUE, AND GENESIS.

Lefort says of Merleau-Ponty's methodology that "... his own words do not contain what they say, that their meaning always overflows immediate or direct signification, and that finally their power to open upon being is bound to the force of interrogation that animates them" (Lefort, 1968, p.xxxi).

To interrogate is central to this project, not just to research but to question critically and dig deeply into potential. The idea of dialogue is not solely a strategy for exchange between the various elements of a practice-led research project (writing, making and reflecting), but the process also aligns with the topic of the project. By this I mean that it relates to Deleuze's idea of reciprocal determination in that the entire process may be understood as a series of circuits of dialogue between ideas, images, discussions, and writings. The term genesis is used to signal that the processes of interrogation and dialogue have a genetic function, in the sense of genesis as the coming into being of something (new).

The process of interrogation and the related dialogue and generation of new ideas and forms is maintained within the scope of the creative work itself. As Lefort says of Merleau Ponty's methodology "... an interrogation, finally, which



FIGURE 8

Thesis workbook drawing (2015), 350mm X 250mm

PENCIL AND ERASER ON PAPER.



FIGURE 9

Thesis workbook drawing (2015), 350mm X 250mm

PENCIL AND ERASER ON PAPER.

constantly relates to itself, does not lose sight of the condition of the questioner, knows it is caught up in being while it devotes itself to its expression” (Lefort, 1968, p.xxxii). This does not imply a purely autobiographical agenda however, in that it is inherently connected outside of itself. The idea of connectedness is discussed further in Chapter Three. In discussing Merleau-Ponty’s works and in relation to writing in general and to art, Lefort says,

...IT is because the secret of our temporality is expressed by that of the work, because the work teaches us to recognize the continuity, the indivision of an experience where each moment is caught up with all the others in the same propulsion of time, and simultaneously, to recognize the movement that prevents the fixing of meaning of the thing, visible or invisible, and make arise indefinitely, beyond the present given, the latent content of the world. (Lefort, 1968, p.xxxii)

Within my own practice there is a kind of virtual drawing that is, anecdotally, not uncommon in a painting practice. By this I refer to the fact that drawing as a method of generating and testing ideas happens not only in the form of drawings. Much of the synthesis of ideas and images occurs in a semi-subconscious process, and very often new appearances, structures and ways of working appear relatively fully formed and resolved through a sort of virtual drawing that have a visual and material form only in the painting itself. Thus paintings are not fully thought out before they are made, rather overall strategies and forms are worked through, with the final form resulting from the play between virtual idea/forms, the materiality of paint and the act of painting. This runs counter to the process of drawing as an on-going collecting and gathering process that is eventually incorporated into finished work. All the usual drawing functions of gathering, testing, forming, synthesising, and re-generating occur, but often as virtual processing rather than actual visualising. Colin McCahon referred to a similar

process in his own work, stating that, “Drawing for most of my paintings follow rather than predate the paintings. I’m just solving the problems that I didn’t solve at first in the paintings: but it doesn’t always happen this way” (McCahon, 1972, p.29). In several panels of the final artwork there are ‘studies’ of objects such as the shoes and spectacles that might appear in a Customs x-ray. These are like preparatory drawings towards a resolved work but appear as the final work, signalling an on-going process of invention and reinvention.

There has been, however, a constant process throughout the thesis of drawing out ideas, of rethinking and layering new thoughts and images, and the testing out of concepts and visual solutions in different materials. Figures 8 and 9 show two workbook drawings that served to develop thinking in Panels 13 and 14 (Figure 10). These drawings were made relatively late in the project. They explore not solely visual elements derived initially from a photographic reconnaissance of the airport transit space, but also processes of addition and obliteration. Drawn marks become dragged and smudged paint in the final paintings. Processes of erasure are later translated into pours of white paint creating a similar defining of surface and simultaneous obliteration of underlying layers and images.

FIGURE 10
Detail of Panel 13,
final thesis work (2015)
ACRYLIC AND PHOTOGRAPHIC
IMAGE ON ALUMINIUM.



Processes of accumulation and of synthesis.

In outlining the methodological framework for this project I make an analogy with Freud’s analysis of dreams, and in particular his use of the concepts of overdetermination and condensation. For Freud, psychological states including dreams are the result of multiple causes. This position denied any possibility of singular causality, and thus also of singular interpretation. The idea here is not any suggestion that art works are analogous to dreams in being generated by subconscious thought processes. The suggestion is that similar processes operate in the generation of art works as do in the making of dreams. Processes of the accumulation of ideas, images and material, and the synthesising of these

into the succinct form of the artwork are perhaps analogous to Freud's 'thought factory' and the creation of dreams. It is suggested that these processes occur at micro and macro levels of the project. This means that accumulation and the synthesis of complexity happens within sections of the work as well as in the overall final structure.

"Not only are the elements of a dream determined by the dream-thoughts many times over, but the individual dream-thoughts are represented in the dream by several elements" (Freud, 1991, p.318). As in a dream, these elements are multiple and varied in creative practice, and span a vast array of historical, visual, textual and experiential factors. As in the sleep work of the dream the artwork is the result of the condensation and synthesis of a plethora of sources and ideas, embedded in the specifics of the materials and processes of the creative form. This process does not imply a fixed set of complex elements resulting in the condensed and final form of the artwork. It is a continuous process, active before, during and after the resolution of the work.

Overdetermination, condensation, expansion and the exegesis.

The diagram in Figure 11 shows a sampling of elements and influential factors that were explored over the duration of the project and served the generation of initial ideas and solutions towards a section of the final artwork (Panels 8–11). This overdetermination of ideas was synthesised into the condensed form of the artwork through processes of critical reflection and testing, and in particular finding potent visual form that encapsulated these associations. This synthesising process drew on previous work and ideas, constant testing and critical reflection, in finding potent visual form expressing a complex array of conceptual thinking.²²

Freud's actual term for the multiple determining factors for all psychological states was *überdeterminierung*, which has been widely translated as overdetermined. It is contentious however as to the exact meaning of the word *über* in this context.

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In a process somewhat akin to the mirror image discussed in Chapter Three the exegesis inverts this operation of condensing a multitude of ideas into a singular form, opening out again and exposing in text and image the array of sources and ideas that have been embedded in the succinct form of the artwork. This is a sort of over-interpreting process, not in the sense of overly interpreted but deeply and multiply analysed. Although the exegesis relates directly to the artwork it is also a form in itself and different from the work of art.

Laplanche and Pontalis suggest that Freud used the term to refer to depth in the sense that the dream is deeply determined by a multiplicity of elements rather than merely having multiple causes (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973). This idea of depth is revisited in Chapter Three in relation to Deleuze's use of the term depth in referring to the operation of actual and virtual factors.

Summary

In summary this thesis project may be understood as a practice-led enquiry that is located within, and contributes to theories, ideas and practices that surround art making. Although generated within a qualitative and subjective paradigm of visual arts practice, the project aims to develop a complex interaction between what might be seen as a polarised differentiation between these opposing modes of practice.

Methodologically the research employs a system of interrogation and dialogue between relevant theoretical and artistic ideas that leads to the genesis of new processes and structures in the studio practice. The particularity of the veiled fluid paint as it relates to the hard photographic surface is an example, as the paint is reworked (at times frenetically) back through both surfaces. The methods used to generate new work, as in the process of inserting polished plugs into the surface, draw from conventions of past practice reinvented and recontextualised within a new conceptual base. Operating throughout is the simultaneous interrogation of theoretical enquiry into time, the actual and the virtual, and of the painting practice. This close relationship between theoretical research and art making embeds reading, writing, drawing, making and testing as a synonymous event producing new thinking and solutions for the current project.

What does it mean to interrogate process and concept in a visual arts practice? In this research project interrogation involved more than experimentation (with material and image), and links material form with ideas. The process occurs on

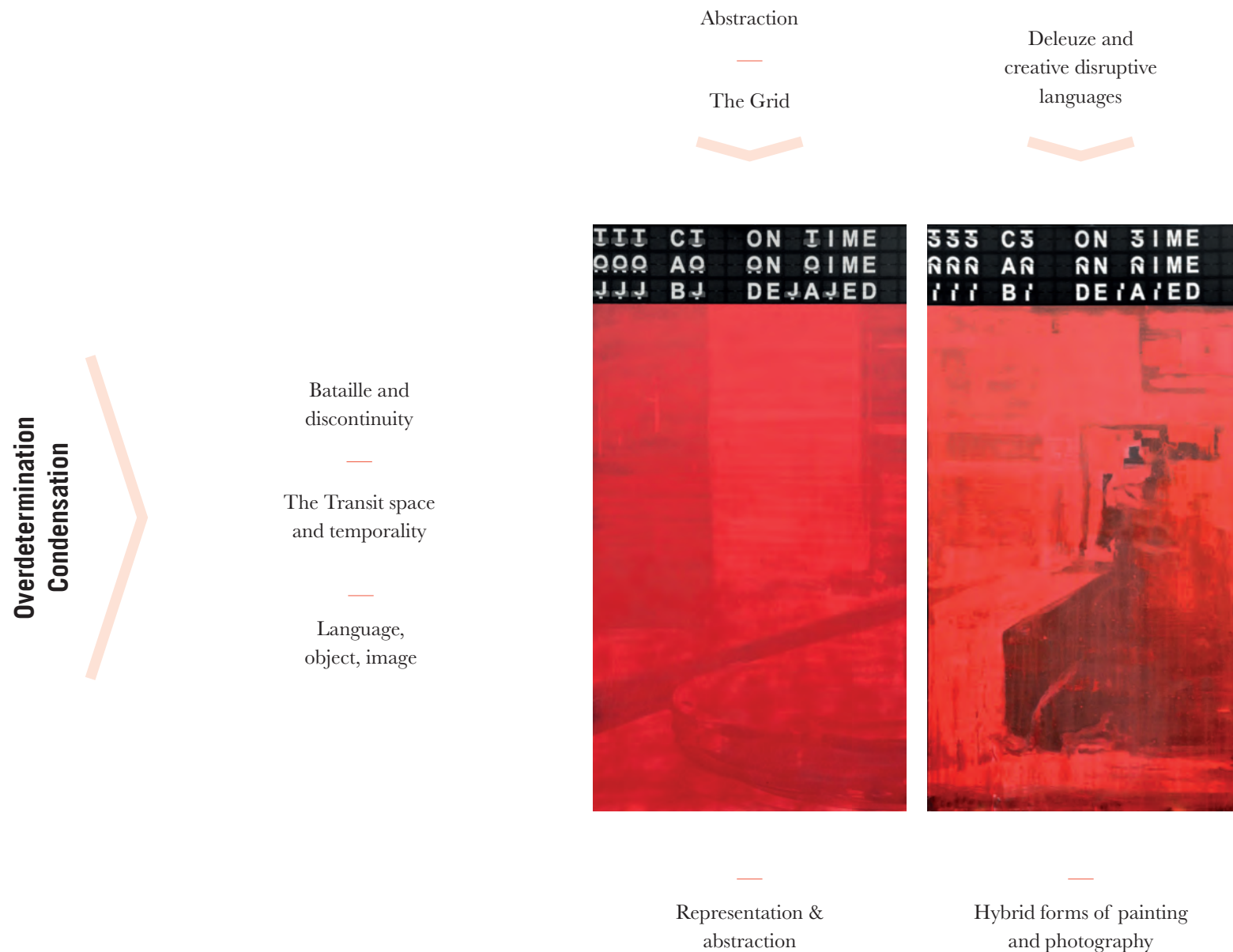




FIGURE 11
Diagram of research processes
of accumulation and synthesis.

James Joyce
Finnegan's Wake
Stuttering
language



Expansion
Exegesis



The Readymade –
language and the mechanical

the page of the workbook or the surface of the painting, but also virtually in the mind. The dialogue between theoretical research and practice drives the latter into new areas of exploration. A concrete example of these processes within the research project might be the development of the panels relating to the airport luggage carousel and the use of images from the arrivals and departures information boards. These initial sources were intriguing but found no poetic and conceptual resolve. Interrogation of these images through photographing, drawing and painting, and bringing these explorations into a connection with researched ideas of time, movement and transition pushed these aspects towards a potent form. This dialogue and interrogation resulted also in a revisiting of Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* and a number of subsequent studies of stuttering and disruptive languages, with a productive connection to the research topic.

One of the difficulties in clearly defining creative practice methodology is that the sources for the generation of new work can be as complex as a broad philosophical study, a traumatic experience, or as brief as a phrase, a fleeting image or moment. These sources often are digested beyond recognition from their original state in the process of developing poetic and aesthetic form. These processes in a visual arts practice however are rigorous and finely tuned. In this research project the reworking, testing and visualising of ideas is a continuous process that results not only in a final artwork, but in an enunciation of the ideas and processes that have informed the work.

Having outlined the methodological approach adopted to the enquiry the exegesis will consider the nature of six distinct but interrelated concepts that have guided and provoked my thinking in the research. The first concerns the nature and role of the virtual and the actual.









THE ACTUAL AND THE VIRTUAL

THE ACTUAL AND THE VIRTUAL IN RELATION TO PAINTING²³

“Philosophy is the theory of multiplicities, each of which is composed of actual and virtual elements. Purely actual objects do not exist. Every actual object surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images”

(DELEUZE & PARNET, 2002 P.148).

Despite painting’s thinness, its stillness and abstraction from the world of space and objects, it remains haunting and prevalent. Through the performance and language of painting, the thin surface captures meaning in a special way. We are often more aware of change, movement and the new in liminal moments, where things are reduced to a succinct form, or when there is discontinuity and disruption. The very stillness of painting makes us aware (even if subconsciously) of the opposite; of movement and passing. If the frame of painting is seen as a slice in, or through, time, it is not merely as a brief moment in the passing of time, rather it is a slice of the endless interaction of virtual and actual dimensions at work on each other. The poetics and language of painting make visible the invisible, or at least make us aware of the invisible.

The first part of this chapter makes explicit the complexity of understandings related to the actual and the virtual, drawing predominantly on a theoretical framework of Deleuze. The relations between the virtual and the actual and the implications for this project are also examined. Potentialities of the idea of these

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In parts of the exegesis the terms actual and virtual are reversed, that is they are referred to as the virtual and the actual. This is a deliberate shift, firstly to stress the focus of the related section, and secondly to ensure that the actual is not privileged and the virtual as a less significant or real state.

two realities that are not in opposition but reciprocally determine each other, underscore this analysis.

In an essay *Painting is not a representational practice*, Bolt questions a representationalist reading, in favour of “... a performative understanding of painting” (Bolt, 2004, p.41). She suggests that the performative process of painting produces ontological effects that are not representational in nature. Here the painter is perhaps a choreographer, playing with the dynamics of the virtual and the actual. Bolt claims more from the ‘performative act’ than an expressionistic and gestural performance, or perhaps challenges how we might interpret expressionistic gesture. She proposes that the act of painting produces effects relating to the nature of reality, matter and being. This thesis seeks to demonstrate that this performative act can be encompassed within the relationship of the actual and the virtual as a creative and experimental process. The artist is thus a scriptwriter, choreographer, set designer, and performer. This implies more than an expressive, intuitive performance that produces effects, but rather a complex practice, with a long history of play and interaction with visible and invisible states. The artist is thus able to collapse the distinctions between the identity of object, image and event, or perhaps more correctly, go beyond the constructions of identity, and return our perception, through the appearance of the unreal, to a state closer to reality.

The second part of this chapter focuses on how Deleuze’s notion of time aligns both directly and indirectly with my own art practice. It is not argued that the ideas of Deleuze, DeLanda, Grosz and other theorists explain or give validity to art practice. What is suggested is that the dynamic play between visible and invisible elements in the making, regenerating, contextualizing and interpreting of an artwork has a parallel dynamic to these ontological perspectives. Central to a Deleuzian framework is the creation of the new. Therefore, the chapter seeks to demonstrate and argue for the relevance of a multitude of virtual connections both internal and exterior to the artwork.

Bergson, Deleuze and theories of the virtual and the actual

Bergson first used the term virtual in his doctoral thesis *Time and Free Will*, published in 1889. This and subsequent works provided a counter argument to the metaphysical idea of an external force or being determining change and identity. Bergson redefined the concepts of immanence and transcendence in line with this position, and established a notion of duration and time that encompassed both continuity and multiplicity; that is, both a continuous, universal time and the time of constant change and differentiation. Thus for Bergson immanence and transcendence are internal forces of duration rather than the material world in relation to a higher or symbolic order. Bergson came to the position that the nature of time eluded science and mathematics. For Bergson time is mobile and incomplete, it is not a thing but a progression. To see and understand time and duration, science and mathematics has traditionally translated time into an immobile, spatial paradigm. It is only through lived experience, and what Bergson refers to as intuition²⁴, that we understand the nature of time and duration (Bergson, 1913).

Bergson is core to understanding Deleuze's ideas of time and being. Deleuze's study *Bergsonism* (originally published in France in 1966), (Deleuze, 1991) traces Bergsonian ideas that had a significant influence on Deleuze's model of time and becoming. One of Bergson's most radical contributions was to establish a metaphysics that is not abstract. For Bergson the virtual is not merely an abstract concept but rather a part of actual existence in determining difference. As Pearson states, Bergson's challenge is in re-defining duration, prioritising duration over permanence, and reversing the exteriority of the new (Pearson, 2002). Change and difference according to Bergson, is not the result of external forces but of the internal dynamic of matter and being. For Bergson the virtual includes the past, not as a present falling away but as part of a virtual field connected with memory but never-the-less real and active (Bergson, 1908/1991). It is the interaction of virtual and actual elements that causes change and transformation.

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Bergson developed the notion of intuition as a mode of understanding reality in which we must enter into experience to understand it, counter to an analytic and reductionist model of science where we understand it by a relation to an external symbolic model (Bergson, 1912).

There are two key differences, however, relating to the nature of time and being between Bergson and Deleuze that are pertinent to a discussion of the distinction between the virtual and the possible. In Bergson there is an ambivalent distinction between the virtual and the possible. Deleuze fully differentiates the two. Secondly, as Pearson states “Bergson maintains that it is the objective – matter, for example – that is without virtuality” (Pearson, 2002, p.4). For Deleuze, matter, or the actual, is both actual and virtual. Deleuze developed a metaphysics that is differential, immanent and genetic. It is differential in that his idea of time and being is essentially one of difference, or the process of the generation of newness. His concept of immanence is one of time as process, where the actual and the virtual become and determine each other. Thus Deleuze realigns the traditional notion of immanence as the presence of a higher being or order in the actual world. For Deleuze, immanence is the presence of the virtual in the actual world. This process of differentiation is what defines time and generates the new and identity. Deleuze refers to this as the genetic function. In relation to the art work, Deleuze says “When it is claimed that works of art are immersed in a virtuality, what is being invoked is not some confused determination but the completely determined structure formed by its genetic differential elements, its ‘virtual’ or ‘embryonic’ elements” (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.209). For Deleuze there is no external form, being or state that defines the actual and reality. Immanence, rather than conceived as a universal being or essence present in the everyday, is the creative process of the interaction of the virtual and the actual, and the creation of the new.

The position that there is no original form or end point to being, is referred to by Lefort in the Editor’s Foreward to Merleau-Ponty’s *The Visible and the Invisible*. Responding to Kafka’s notes on Merleau-Ponty, Lefort says “Kafka already said that the things presented themselves to him ... not by their roots, but by some point or other situated toward the middle of them” (Lefort, 1968, p.xxvi). In Bergson, Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty the idea of the origin of change being at

the ‘middle of things’ is key, negating any notion of an external being or template that determines the new and identity. In the final thesis art work we often have a sense of this ‘middle of things’. In Panels 13 and 14 (Figure 11) the viewer is drawn visually, and by the very subject of the panels (the escalator) into an uncertain middle zone where abstract forces are at work.

The nature of the virtual

Outside of common usage of the term virtuality meaning almost or nearly, as in it virtually disappeared, the term has varied application in a range of disciplines. In Mechanics it relates to infinitesimal displacements of points in a system, while in Physics it denotes particles and interactions with incredibly brief lifespans, but also to indefinitely large energies. There is of course the prevalent usage relating to virtual reality, as an electronically generated image appearing to be real. These functional usages of the term establish either the virtual in opposition to the real, or a liminal state, so large or small as to defy perception and documentation. Bergson introduced the significant notion of the virtual as something real, a force that creates change and difference. Deleuze’s project builds on this platform and develops the radical idea that not only is the virtual real, but that all objects are both actual and virtual. Although Deleuze and Parnet say, “Philosophy is the theory of multiplicities, each of which is composed of actual and virtual elements” (2002, p.148), it is in fact the virtual, according to Deleuze, that defines the actual in a constant process of actualisation through differentiation.

For Deleuze, the virtual is a positive, not a negative, term, that is it is not negative in the sense of being an unreal or partly real state, but an integral part of the real. According to Pearson, “Deleuze conceives the virtual as a productive power of difference, a simplicity and potentiality, which denotes neither a deficient nor an inadequate mode of being” (Pearson, 2002, p.1), and that the virtual is “... the

mode of what is” (Pearson, 2002, p.3). Pearson further proposes that for Deleuze “The virtual is not, therefore, almost real but wholly real and the real is, in fact, unencounterable and unthinkable without it” (Pearson, 2002, p.3). Working from this assumption as a starting point, the thesis explores how this might be realised through an analysis of aspects of painting and play a catalytic role in the production of new work.

Deleuze referred to his concept of metaphysics as ‘transcendental empiricism’. It is empirical in that it is based in material conditions and events. He counters Kant’s defining of identity as external or transcendent to the field or subject. For Deleuze the transcendental is internal, and refers to the virtual, which is part of the actual. For Deleuze what is manifest in the real world is not an external, divine presence but the virtual world.

so broadly, the virtual is a transcendent realm that breaks down any given actual identity or way of identifying. By ‘breaks down’ we should understand ‘completes and denies priority to identity’. In turn, the actual expresses the virtual and gives it determinacy. (WILLIAMS, 2005, P.104)

In the brief section on the actual and the virtual in *Dialogues*, Deleuze gives a succinct, if complex outline of his long-standing idea of the nature of time and becoming. He proposes layers of connection and becoming, where “... an actual perception surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images distributed on increasingly remote, increasingly large, moving circuits, which both make and unmake each other” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.148).

In his last work, left unfinished on his death, Merleau-Ponty explores ideas akin to Deleuze’s concepts of the actual and the virtual, but referred to as the visible and the invisible. At the time of his death in 1961, Merleau-Ponty left the draft of the first section of *The Visible and the Invisible*, and an array of working

notes. These working thoughts are of particular interest here. Firstly they contain much insightful material that has served to provoke the project, and secondly the nature of the notes themselves is something akin to the working notes and drawings in my own creative practice. They have a certain newness, urgency and separation from the need to develop the text into a cohesive whole. Like Deleuze, he predicates all discussion of matter and event with theories of time.

HENCE every painting, every action, every human enterprise is a crystallization of time, a cipher of transcendence - At least if one understands them as a certain spread (*écart*) between being and nothingness, a certain proportion of white and black, a certain sampling of the Being in indivision, a certain manner of modulating time and space...

(MERLEAU-PONTY, 1968, P.208).

Merleau-Ponty assigns meaning to the realm of the invisible (or the virtual in Deleuzian terms). “Meaning is *invisible*, but the invisible is not the contradictory of the visible: The visible itself has an invisible inner framework (*membure*), and the in-visible is the secret counterpart of the visible, it appears only within it ...” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.215).

This secret realm of the virtual is the invisible and “... one cannot see it there and every effort to see it there makes it disappear, but it is in the line of the visible, it is its virtual focus, it is inscribed within it” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.215).

Merleau-Ponty’s statement aligns with Bergson’s idea that every effort to analyse and visualise the invisible, or duration, makes it disappear even further. Bergson proposed the need to enter into experience to understand it. What has unravelled through the research project has been that, through the creative act, we are able to enter into experiential images of movement, transition and change. Figure 11 illustrates panels 13 and 14 from the exhibition work. The viewer enters

into the work and becomes the traveller, and we have a sense of being inside transition itself. There is no capturing or construction of figures moving across an actual space, but an array of different movements; the movement of paint across the surface like noise and interference, the suggestion of endless mechanical transmission and processing, and movement as the virtual/actual transition between different states. In these latter movements we see the recognisable and the uncertain becoming one another, the ordinary and a sublime theatricality, and the figurative and the abstract, subsuming and defining each other.

The actual elements here are relatively simple; the reduced physicality of the aluminium surfaces, the printed images of the actual escalator and travellers, and the poured and marked gestures of paint. In relation to ideas of the virtual world these works however are hyperactive, with an array of invisible circuits that are also constantly changing. The images conjure the most immediate connections with associative memories of travel. The verticality of the escalator and the movement into and out of the frame links virtually with similar movements across the entire work, and with our awareness of the inside and outside of frames of reference and focus. Every viewer brings and takes different virtual connections to the work, and yet the virtual realm is that which connects and we thus share experience and response. Seen in this way the work not only has a continuously changing plethora of virtual aspects, but the work is constructed from the interaction of the actual and the virtual.

The plane of immanence and the transcendental

Common usage of the term immanence relates to metaphysical and philosophical theories in which a divine, ideal presence is manifest in the actual world. The word generally occurs in belief systems to suggest that a spiritual world infiltrates the everyday world. This is often in contrast to notions of transcendence in which the

idea of a divine entity is considered as exterior and different to the material world.

Deleuze reverses the traditional notion of the transcendental as an exterior, ethereal, divine realm, and draws it into the material world, alongside it, and in collaboration with actual reality. As Williams says of Deleuze's idea of immanence and transcendence, "Nothing can be defined independently of the transcendental field" (Williams, 2005, p.19). In this thesis the use of the terms transcendent and the transcendental is bypassed, thus denying any sense of transcending (the actual). However the term immanence as used by Deleuze is seen as having relevance in the interpretation of the artwork and practice. Appropriating a term, re-defining it, reversing its meaning in the process, is perhaps more powerful than avoiding it. For Deleuze, the plane of immanence is complete in itself and does not hinge on an exterior force for its dynamic. The process of matter in change and transformation as explained by Deleuze's concept of reciprocal determination gathers intensity as the painting processes talk back to it. The extent to which that conversation might develop, question, and seek resolution has the potential to make new knowledge and understanding in the current project's interactive field.

THE plane of immanence is the movement (the facet of movement) which is established between the parts of each system and another, which crosses them all, stirs them together and subjects them all to the conditions which prevents them from being absolutely closed. (DELEUZE, 1986, P.59)

The virtual in this model is inextricable from the actual and the material, and it is by "virtue of their mutual inextricability that virtual images are able to react upon actual objects." (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.149)

IN relation to this, the flat frame of painting could be seen as a plane of immanence. It is a field where actual and virtual forces interact, or more precisely, a visible plane of evidence of these processes. New Zealand painter Judy Millar refers to the physicality of painting as, "...one way to somehow scratch away at this niggle between the discontinuous visual world and the sense of touch, of trying to marry these things" (MENZIES & MORGAN, 2015, P.106).

Reciprocal determination

In a paper presented to the Société Française de Philosophie in 1967 Deleuze outlined the core principles underpinning his philosophy of time and becoming. He stated that key to understanding the nature of change is the way in which the virtual and the actual operate, and that "We thus invoke a principle called reciprocal determination, as the first aspect of sufficient reason" (Deleuze, 1967, p.97). The idea of these two elements not only interacting but actually determining each other is core in Deleuze's philosophy. It is also central to the thesis research. My thinking has been underpinned by the idea of differentiated and hybrid areas and forms not merely juxtaposed but becoming and defining each other. Deleuze proposes that reciprocal determination is the first principle of what he refers to as sufficient reason. The use of the term reason here is not related to logical or objective thinking, or to any sense of human purpose. Deleuze refers to a "geometry of sufficient reason" (Deleuze, 1994, p.162), which is "the ground which no longer allows anything to escape" (Deleuze, 1994, p.263). By this Deleuze means that sufficient reason is the ground or field of transformative processes, such as the reciprocal determination of the actual and virtual that does not allow anything to remain the same. Deleuze refers to the "originality of sufficient reason" (Deleuze, 1994, p.264), signalling that time and change is a creative process.

This ground or creative abstract machine that is time is seen as having a parallel form in the creative process of art making. Throughout this exegesis the idea of reciprocal determination is discussed in relation to my research and work that is a precursor to the doctoral project.

The two panels illustrated in Figure 12 are also discussed in detail in Chapter Seven in relation to the actual and the virtual, where I consider notions of the



FIGURE 12
Panels 13 and 14,
final thesis work,
PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE AND
ACRYLIC ON ALUMINIUM.

Instant. However it is valuable here to relate the work to the phenomenon of reciprocal determination and how this finds form and expression in paint and image. The veils of poured paint down the surface flatten the work and force the image of the escalator to take up the work of building the abstract structure of the painting. Likewise the photographic image of travellers carried up and down the escalator transforms the otherwise abstract gestural marks on the surface into the movement of bodies captured in blurred, slow shutter speed traces. Thus the hybrid conjunction of painting and photographic image, of figurative and abstract elements establishes a dynamic, interactive field that operates at a deeper level than one of mere juxtaposition. Deleuze's concept of reciprocal determination gathers intensity as the painting processes talk back to it. The extent to which that conversation might develop, question, and seek resolution has the potential to make new knowledge and understanding in the current project's interactive field.

Singularity and multiplicity

Deleuze's early and perhaps most seminal work takes the phenomena of difference and repetition as the title for the work, establishing these as central to a philosophy of time. Core too are the related concepts of the singular and the multiple.

Figure 13 is a detail of Panel 1 from the final exhibition work. It has a structure/content that speaks of repetition and difference, and of the singular and of multiplicity. The panel is perforated with holes at the points of a grid, each hole plugged with a convex domed form. The plugs are singular in that they are separated spatially, as if they have drifted apart and out of the sphere of influence of the others. Each has its own painting event occurring from behind and spilling into the space around it. The dome itself is like a lens, but an opaque or translucent lens, that keeps light within its orbit. In a Deleuzian sense time wraps itself around each of these events, each having its own time.

The dome captures this energy event and pulls it into its gravitational field. These isolated moments are part however of a multiplicity, a repetition across and beyond the frame of the work. This multiplicity in a Deleuzian framework is not merely the many, but rather the field of virtual intensities surrounding the singular circles of energy and their own temporal space. The process of plugging fills a void but allows energy to spill out into the visible surface of the work. The



FIGURE 13

Detail of Panel 1,
final thesis work (2015)
Panel size 800mm X 1500mm

ACRYLIC AND ACRYLIC PLUGS ON ALUMINIUM.

invisible and the visible are operating on each other and make the work. A detail of Panel 14 (Figure 14) illustrates the idea of the actual surrounded by a field of energetic virtual elements. Here we have a sense of being drawn inside these circuits of transmission and transformation.

According to Williams, “single events make their own times” (Williams, 2011, p.4). The implications of this are complex and suggest that “We must therefore speak of many presents with their own ways of taking the past and the future as dimensions” (Williams, 2011, p.5).

TIME for Deleuze is therefore not only irreducibly multiple at the level of types of time: present, present as dimension of the past, future as dimension of the present...it is also irreducible complex insofar as each one of these types can only be said to be fully given when it is associated with singular events.

(WILLIAMS, 2011, P.5)

Deleuze’s model establishes a notion of the singular event and the multiplicity of times and virtual relations, not in opposition but as intimately connected and mutually determining. Deleuze states this clearly in *Difference and Repetition*, “Everything is a multiplicity in so far as it incarnates an Idea ... even the one is a multiplicity” (Deleuze, 1994, p.182). Throughout the artwork for the project this idea has a visual and structural presence. Singular forms and moments in paint make their own time, simultaneously connecting outside of their circuit to a field of associations, structures and ideas.

Circuits and circles

The circular forms of the plugs operate more as fields of energy, each with its own internal dynamic, an energy that spills out into space and connects in the exterior.

FIGURE 14

Detail of Panel 14,
final thesis work

PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE AND
ACRYLIC ON ALUMINIUM.



FIGURE 15
 Panel 1,
final thesis work (2015)
 800mm X 1500mm
 ACRYLIC AND PLASTIC PLUGS
 ON ALUMINIUM.



Deleuze also uses a circular analogy to refer to the interaction between the actual and the virtual and the fields of force that are the process of actualisation and becoming. These small, contained energy fields that overlap, expand and condense create the actualisation of the new. Deleuze speaks of how the “... dense layers of the actual object correspond to these, more or less, extensive circles of virtual images” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.149).

In Panel 1 (Figure 15) the circles of the plugs are like a visual form of the circuits of actual and virtual elements, with small events or fields radiating out in a constant connection to other actual/virtual moments, through the locking map of the grid. The surface of the work is like the plane of immanence, where this transition and transaction is taking place. The plugs act as cuts in a continuous surface and divide it potentially infinitely in all directions. The grid radiates these events out across the surface, assuring that no one instant or object is privileged over any other. The subtle marks and splashings appearing from behind the physical surface are analogous to the virtual energies always present and active. “The virtual is never independent of the singularities which cut it up and divide it out on the plane of immanence” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.149). This implies that singular objects are always accompanied by a virtual field that continually operates on it, and connects it through extensions beyond itself.

Deleuze talks of the virtual expanding by “... increasingly extensive, remote and diverse virtualities” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.150). For Deleuze, the inverse also occurs, “... the circles contract, the virtual draws closer to the actual, both become less and less distinct” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.150). Throughout the project experimentation has explored small circular forms where energy and movement operate around the gravity field of the supposedly self-contained object. These gestures explode out into the space around and are simultaneously drawn back into the mass. These creative explorations predate the research into Deleuzian ideas of time and the virtual. The research, however, has intensified the creative work and overlaid a conceptual framework that not only enables a dialogue around the ideas but has reinvented the ideas in new ways.

The virtual and connectedness

Deleuze establishes a model of change and differentiation that connects all things through the virtual. For Deleuze every differentiation or becoming is “... a local integration or a local solution which then connects with others in the overall solution or the global integration” (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.211). Williams makes the point that Deleuze’s idea of connectedness is also an open ended one; that is the connections ripple out from every event in the creation of newness. Williams states that they may be “very distant and faint, but they cannot in principle be discounted and they may, in fact, turn out to be important in future” (Williams, 2005, p.139). In *Cinema 1*, Deleuze refers poetically to this connectedness, “There is always a thread to link the glass of sugared water to the solar system” (Deleuze, 1986, p.16).

DELEUZE’S dialectics deduces a necessary structure of interconnections – for example, of the virtual and the actual, and of continuity and discontinuity – but without specifying how those interconnections can evolve through time, including how they might be reviewed by later developments.

(WILLIAMS, 2005, P.139)

Central to the enquiry in this project is the relevance and value of these connections.

The artist as constructor of connections

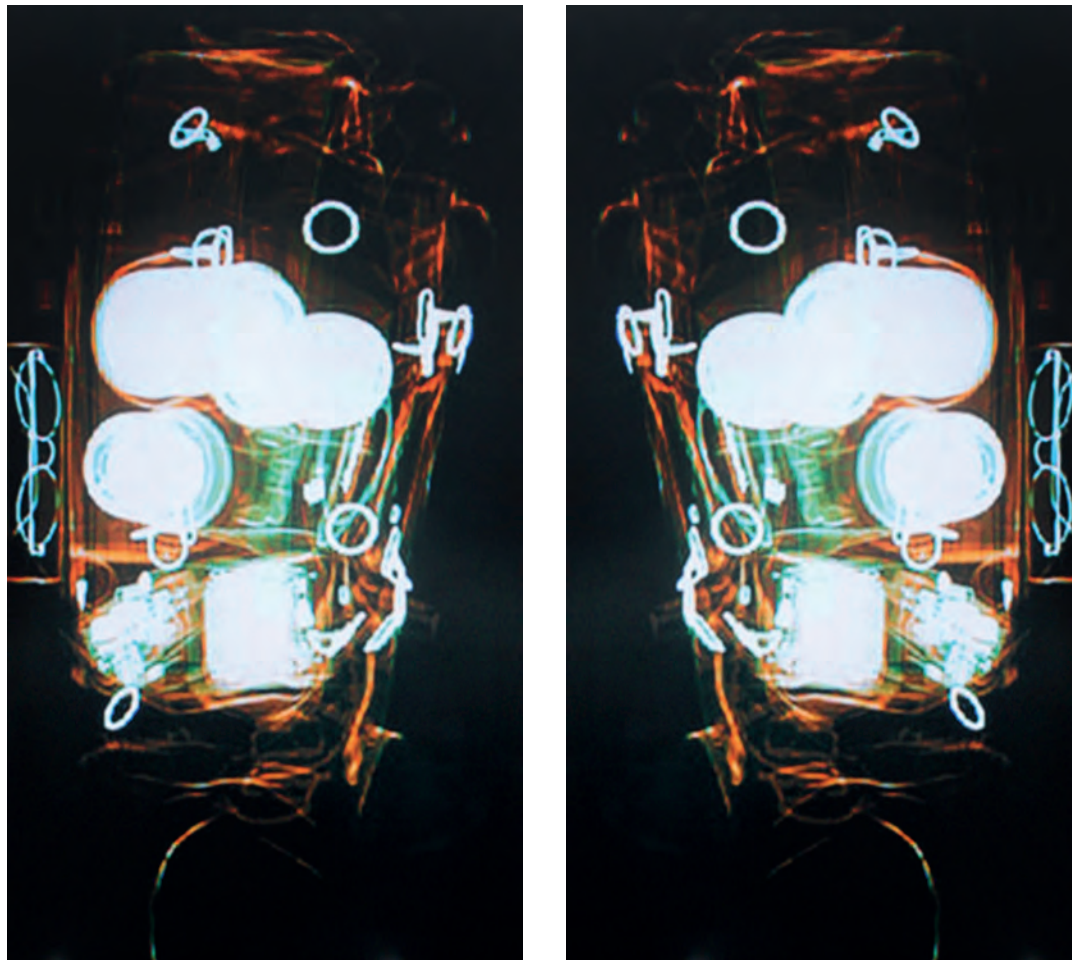
Connections between an artwork and historical period and the zeitgeist, social context, process and genre is not denied. However a Deleuzian overlay provides a rich set of connections and interpretations, and potentially shifts the cultural construct of the practice and role of the artist and the artist’s ability to create a poetic activation of the dynamic of the virtual in the material. In *The Democracy*

of Objects, Bryant uses concrete examples to explore the concept of connectedness, and the determination of quality in objects. For Bryant, we cannot say for example, that a blue object is blue, but rather that it does blue. Bryant proposes that the object has the power to generate colour, but does not have a fixed property of blue (Bryant, 2011). Thus, through connection with the exterior the object generates a shifting range of colours, none of which are fixed or originary. For Bryant, the object “has the topological power to produce a whole range of colors” (Bryant, 2011, p.92). Thus a painting in Bryant’s model, as an object and by implication, has a generative power and operates with the external in a sort of performative act of connection and mutual determination. In this model the artist does not merely depict or express things, but constructs dynamic forms where the material engages in a series of virtual connections. Perhaps because of painting’s thinness and stillness the virtual is able to dominate our experience. This activated experience turns back on the materiality of the painting and imbues it with intensity.

Later in this chapter Panel 4 (a Customs x-ray image of luggage) is discussed in relation to Panel 2 and the breakdown of distinction between the categorization of object, image and event. Panel 4 (and its mirror image in Panel 5, Figure 16) has other conceptual links to the virtual, as the field of connections, in particular in relation to the mirror image and doubling. In a Deleuzian framework there are a multitude of virtual connections, both internal and exterior to the work. Inside the overall frame of the final artwork these x-ray images are scaled and cropped to align with the other painted surfaces. The familiar objects become abstracted, strange and ethereal under the x-ray scan, connecting them to the painted abstract surfaces.

The physicality and recognisability of the scanned objects become more akin to expressionist gestures and drawings. In this they play with a notion of the readymade, that is the x-ray image is a sort of readymade expressionist, pre-made painting. It is as if the two areas, the painted and the photographic, are giving each other ideas to experiment with. The two separate areas or disciplines talk to

FIGURE 16
Panels 4 and 5,
final thesis work (2015)
Each panel 800mm X 1500mm
DIGITAL PRINT ON ALUMINIUM.



each other, and in this process partly define each other. It is suggested that this is akin to the mutually defining process of the actual and the virtual.

The images are of luggage and personal contents captured in the airport security process. They thus connect to the overall work and the exegesis in the thematic of transit and time. The links between photographic and painted surfaces is played out further in the painted images of spectacles that appear in Panel 2, not only linking but insisting on a multiplicity of images, with no one original or source image. These connections are simultaneously physical and virtual or abstract. The circular forms that appear elsewhere, in the plugs for example, become a gestural and compositional theme in the x-ray images, albeit a readymade one. These customs security scans, though momentary, transitory and having no fixed abode, are engulfed in a world of virtual ideas and associations. Deleuze identifies this state of the virtual as being in more places than one, and refers to Lacan in showing that "... real objects are subjected to the law of being somewhere or not being somewhere, by virtue of the reality principle; whereas virtual objects, by contrast, have the property of being and not being where they are, wherever they go" (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.102).

The virtual links to the exterior include all the original connections of the actual traveller, and the abstract related associations of all travellers, but also the virtual past of the researcher and the history of practice and thought. The scanned objects that we are normally so familiar with become obscure and dream-like, and, as in Freud's idea of the over-determination of the content and meaning of dreams, these surfaces are inseparable from a plethora of virtual connections. By implication all artworks are similarly over-determined, and encompass a virtual cloud surrounding an actual form.

Arenas of connection between the artwork and a Deleuzian ontological framework

“... the visible is pregnant with the invisible ...”

(MERLEAU-PONTY, 1968, P.216).

What are the arguments for claiming a relationship between Deleuze’s idea of the actual and virtual, or Merleau-Ponty’s visible and invisible, and creative practice, in particular the work for the doctoral project? The materiality of the work, its form and content, solely cannot explain the effect, meaning and impact of the work. What is the evidence of this invisible realm that impregnates the actual object and the artwork? As Deleuze sought non-philosophical forms to extend philosophical knowledge, it is productive to apply thought paradigms outside the internal dialogue of art, art criticism and history to challenge understandings in the creative arena. Using a Deleuzian model of time and being, it is possible to bypass the constraints of historical and subjective style, formal analysis, ideas of origin, essence and timelessness, in favour of an open dynamic of becoming and experimentation, and the exploration of the actual and the virtual through the materiality and performance of painting.

Perhaps it is more obvious to state the negative, that is, what is not being proposed here as a relationship between the artwork and Deleuze’s idea of the actual and the virtual. Certainly it is not that Deleuze and related theories of time and being explain the artwork, or that these theoretical positions merely give validity and rigour to creative practice. It is also not proposed that the art work is a sort of metaphorical form of these philosophical notions. What is suggested is that the dynamic play between the actual and the virtual in the making, regenerating, contextualizing and interpreting of an art work runs in a sort of parallel to the ontological processes of a Deleuzian perspective.

Six specific areas of connection between the creative practice for this project are here related to a Deleuzian model of time and change.

1 Becoming is inherent in the vocabulary of the poetics of creative practice

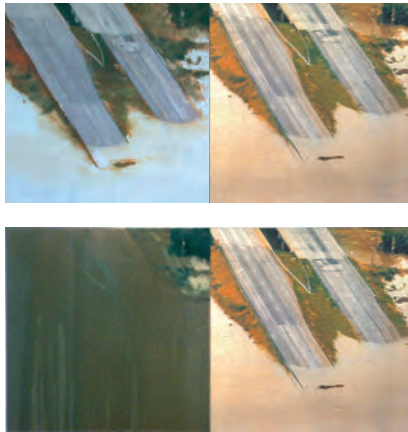


FIGURE 17
Accident Painting No1,
1st iteration of the panel
before completion (2005)
1200mm X 600mm high
ACRYLIC ON ALUMINIUM.

FIGURE 18
Accident Painting No1 (2005)
1200mm X 600mm high
ACRYLIC ON ALUMINIUM.

Figure 17 documents a stage in the development of the work *Accident Painting No1*, 2005. The right section of the work is a photographic image of a flooded motorway, the left half is a painted surface mimicking the photographic image. Many of the devices for the exploration of change and the event pre-empt the doctoral project, albeit in a more intuitive context. Each side of the work mimics the other. The photographic image appears as if it is a painting, while the painted surface plays with its counterpart. To mimic something is to get inside it, to become it, to pay homage and to mock it at the same time. The work captures an event, a moment of natural disruption, and thus relates to movement and time, to discontinuity and change, and to the undermining of the predictable and the given. In the final state of the painting (Figure 18) the left section is poured with a single, instant flood of paint. Thus the flooding event is multiple, with the image of an actual event and the virtual associations inherently embedded in it. The actual flood of paint and the complex and simultaneous drawing attention to, and obliterating, create a visible state of becoming. The work plays with ambiguity and transition, devices used throughout the doctoral project in relation to the virtual and the new. In this work nothing is stable, everything is discontinuous and flooded with change.

Processes of collapse, overlap, uncertainty and ambivalence are part of the language and vocabulary of creative work, where variations in intensity, difference and the breakdown of difference are played out.

2 The collapse of differentiation between subject, object, image and event

“Separate ‘things’, ‘forms’, ‘objects’, ‘shapes’”, etc., with beginnings and endings are mere convenient fictions; there is only an uncertain disintegrating order that transcends the limits of rational separations” (Smithson, *Artforum* 1968/1979, p.91).

In these two panels of the final work (Panels 2 and 4, Figures 19 and 20), the distinction between object, image and event dissolves into a single state. In fact the subject (the traveller), as evidenced by the paraphernalia of travel, is also implicated in the dissolution of distinction. The event is that of travel, transit and movement, but it is also a deeper sense of event. This is event as the process of time itself, of becoming. The virtual and the actual appear as one, with an inclination towards a multiplicity of virtual and actual forms.

“THE plane of immanence, upon which the dissolution of the actual object occurs, is itself constituted when both object and image are virtual”

(DELEUZE & PARNET, 2002, P.149).

The image of the spectacles appears and reappears, captured amidst the personal accessories of the traveller. It is the lens through which we see the world, it frames, focuses and distorts what we perceive. It has two lenses and two sides that fold onto each other. What we see through each eye or each lens is not exactly that perceived through the other. The image reappears as ‘studies’ in paint of the objects, but always in a dual form, a mirroring event. The historical genre of the study, the sketch, the prelude to a major work, becomes the final work, related to temporality in that it signals process, the unresolved, leading to something else. So in these works the subject is portrayed as the object, but an object caught inescapably within multiple images of itself, and within an event. In the artwork the event

is multiplicitous. It is the event of travel, waiting and scrutiny, a witnessing of the Deleuzian event of transmission and change itself, and the performative event of painting and the generation and reinvention of form and image.

FIGURE 19

Panel 2, *final thesis work* (2015)
Each panel 800mm X 1500mm
ACRYLIC AND OIL ON ALUMINIUM.



FIGURE 20

Panel 4, *final thesis work* (2015)
Each panel 800mm X 1500mm
DIGITAL PRINT ON ALUMINIUM.





FIGURE 21

Panel 6,
final thesis work (2015)
800mm X 1500mm
ACRYLIC ON ALUMINIUM.

3 The aesthetic/poetic act is one of intensities

The collapse of differentiation between the object, image and event becomes the content in Panel 6 (Figure 21). The subject (the traveller), portrayed through the abstract image of the luggage tag, becomes that object in the process of processing, and of identity and identification. The object itself is inseparable from its own image, or rather its own images. In the transit space the subject is also inseparable from, or insignificant without, its own object of identification, giving the subject the passport to proceed. The object is also intimately attached to the event of being processed. We carry it with us, it is scanned and imaged and recorded.

How is this synthesis achieved in the artwork between states and forms that are so easily and commonly separated? The work aligns with Deleuze's idea that "Everything which happens and everything which appears is correlated with orders of differences: differences of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, difference in intensity" (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.222). Throughout the current project, as evidenced in this panel, there are constructed layers and levels of intensity, saturation and diffusion. Images appear to construct and dissolve across the plane of the painting through shifting, concentrated and diluted intensities.

Williams contends that for Deleuze, "... an Idea is a multiplicity of variations ... a complex of varying intensities ..." (Williams, 2005, p.17). Deleuze's Idea is not related to idea as a representation in the mind, but rather to the realm of a multiplicity of intensities, that create actualisation and change. These intensities are Ideas in the sense that they are virtual processes which generate change. Williams states that "The genesis of sensations cannot come from the spaces themselves, instead, they depend on shifts in intensities associated with the Ideas that press themselves on individuals in their relations to neutral spaces" (Williams, 2005, p.18). In relation to the artwork this implies that the space of the work is not solely the space in which objects and images are embedded, but the dynamic

space of the interaction of virtual and actual intensities. The actualisation or visualisation occurs in a sense before our eyes.

4 Synthesis (and experimentation)

Deleuze's philosophy is essentially a metaphysics of synthesis (as opposed to analytics). Referring to Deleuze, Williams says: "His philosophy sets synthesis at its core, believing that thought proceeds primarily through synthesis, albeit with a necessary relation to analysis and identification through opposition" (Williams, 2005, p.109).

The aim here is not to provide a detailed analysis of Deleuze's concepts of synthesis, which are complex and difficult. In Chapter II of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze outlines an idea of three forms of synthesis of time, in relation to past, present and future and the generation of the new. He also differentiates between what he refers to as symmetrical and asymmetrical synthesis, and between active and passive synthetic processes. For Deleuze, every event involves three forms of synthesis. These are, according to Williams, "(i)... a synthesis of virtual repetitions; (ii) the synthesis of actual repetitions (in habit and memory); and (iii) a synthesis of the reciprocal determinations of the virtual and actual..." (Williams, 2003, p.15). The second and third forms of synthesis proposed by Deleuze are what is of interest here in making connections to creative process; the synthesis of actual repetitions, what Deleuze would call symmetrical synthesis, and the asymmetrical synthesis between the actual and the virtual. For Deleuze, a crucial element in this model of being is the idea of passive synthesis, that is the reciprocal operation of the virtual and the actual, and the process of actualisation, occurs independent of the subject. The proposition here is that the creative act is a form of active (even if intuitive) synthesis of the material and conceptual, and the interaction of virtual ideas and physical form.²⁵

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The term synthesis is used in relation to the art work, rather than merely experimentation, as it implies a dynamic process, inclusive of past and other external references and modes.

The creative act has synthetic process at its core and its *modus operandus*. The methodology of the project refers to the Freudian notions of over-determination and condensation (in relation to dreams), essentially a process of synthesis. Creative practice has historical synthetic form in the on-going symbiotic processes of researching, gathering, collecting, and synthesising of ideas and images, and a multitude of forms of critical reflection. In a Deleuzian ontological model, this process of actualisation through the reciprocal engagement of the virtual and the actual is what connects each event to the external and to all other virtualities and events. This is a valuable concept in the understanding of the artwork, particularly in the absence of a conviction in any *a priori* essence, or external determining force. It provides an explanation of the connection between forms across time and cultures, and of the phenomenon of the *zeitgeist* and collective ideas and styles. “For the nature of the virtual is such that, for it to be actualized is to be differentiated. Each differentiation is a local integration or a solution which then connects with others in the overall solution or the global integration” (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.211).

5 Doubling and the mirror image

In Panel 3 of the final project work (Figures 22 and 23), the thin plane of the surface, as thin and substanceless as the electronic scan of the x-ray, processes of doubling are the thematic and structural project. Each shoe has its double, which like a mirror image, is the reverse of itself. These pairs are themselves repeated across the space of the work. In comparison to the utter isolation and completeness of Van Gogh's *Pair of Shoes*, 1887 in the Baltimore Museum of Art, here there is no actual object or objects, but rather a constantly shifting repetition, change and movement. The object is the visible actualisation of the event of change. The opposition to the Van Gogh work is misleading however, as there are a number of versions of this subject by Van Gogh, each with subtle changes, and thus part of a temporal multiplicity.

In the work illustrated, the thin visible surface is both actual, with a decided physicality and expression in paint, and virtual. It is like a plane of immanence with a multiplicity of virtual connections playing across the surface. The thematic of doubling is the visual, structural and conceptual logic that primarily drives this.

The objects themselves are repeated across the surface with a sense that they might project out beyond the frame of the work and continue in all directions and manifestations. The more obvious external connection is to other panels in the work, particularly to the x-ray images, with the suggestion that these are the scanned images of personal travel baggage. As such they are both personal and public, objectified for scrutiny and prediction. In a Deleuzian sense this implies that the present is inclusive of the past and the future. These objects appear only partly complete, as if caught in the process of disappearing or appearing. Deleuze might consider this one and the same thing. They are dissolving into the past and into the future simultaneously. They appear somewhere between a photographic image of shoes, artistic studies of the objects, or shoes scanned in the process of security checks.

FIGURE 22
Panel 3,
final thesis work (2015)
800mm X 1500mm
ACRYLIC ON ALUMINIUM.

FIGURE 23
Details of Panel 3,
final thesis work
800mm X 1500mm
ACRYLIC ON ALUMINIUM.





FIGURE 24

Detail of Panel 11,
final thesis work (2015)
800mm X 1500mm

ACRYLIC ON ALUMINIUM.

These images of the everyday, the image of shoes synonymous with movement, appear again in Panel 11 (Figure 24). Barely visible on the almost abstract surface with its flurry of noise and movement, images appear, coming into the painting. Are these recalls of the images from the x-ray process, or traces of footprints across the space on the transit lounge? They are like ghost images, traces or memories. The present walking into the future is already the past. Active and passive synthesis occurs before our eyes. “Every object is double without it being the case that the two halves resemble one another, one being a virtual image and the other an actual image” (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.209).

The stylistic devices of repetition, doubling and multiplicity have a parallel existence in the world outside of the art work. The mirror image, for example, is a naturally occurring phenomenon. The term ‘chirality’ refers to the occurrence of molecules where there is another identically composed molecule, but one that is arranged in a mirror image of the other. The words chiral and chirality derive from the Greek *kheir*, meaning hand, with the connection to the fact that the left hand is non-superposable to the right. In chemistry, two mirror images of chiral molecules are referred to as enantiomers, and often as left and right-handed molecules.

The phenomenon of doubling, of the reverse side of something, is not merely one that visibly occurs occasionally in the world, but is ubiquitous and perhaps pervades all being. For Merleau-Ponty, “... the invisible is a hollow in the visible, a fold in passivity ...” and this void in relation to the actual is “... its reverse side – in particular the reverse side of language” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.235).

In a Duchampian-like analogy²⁶, Merleau-Ponty talks of the two sides of things, of reversibility, “Reversibility: the finger of the glove that is turned inside out ...” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.263). He elaborates in a beautiful statement of the connectedness of the two sides, “It suffices that from one side I see the wrong side of the glove that is applied to the right side, that I touch the one through the other ...” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.263). Denying an othering, and a privileging of one against the other, Merleau-Ponty says “There is not the For

26

Duchamp created a series of art works that he referred to as ‘*infra-mince*’; ultra thin moments and events that he claimed as art works. One such work encompassed solely the sound of trouser legs rubbing together as one walked; the friction between two opposite sides of the same thing.

Itself and the For the Other. They are each the other side of the other” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.263).

In a similar vein Deleuze advocates that the instant is positioned as the “... smallest circuit that functions as internal limit for all the others and that puts the actual image beside a kind of immediate, symmetrical, consecutive or even simultaneous double” (Deleuze, 1989, p.68).

Like Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze is proposing that every image is actually double with a virtual and an actual mode. “... we can say that the actual image itself has a virtual image which corresponds to it like a double or a reflection” (Deleuze, 1989, p.68). In Deleuzian terms the relationship between these two dimensions of reality is constituted by the “... coalescence of the actual and the virtual image, this image with the two sides” (Deleuze, 1989, p.69). In Cinema 2, Deleuze talks of the time-image in film when the actual and the virtual become almost indiscernible. Even the singularity of our gaze is constructed from two separate images stitched together virtually from differentiated images from each eye.

IN effect, optical and sound images are linked with recollection-images, dream-images, or world-images in widening circuits, the latter assume as their condition of possibility the smallest and most internal circuit, the extreme point where the actual image is contracted in the encounter with its own virtual image. (DELEUZE, 1989, P.68).

In Bergsonian terms, the real object is reflected in a mirror-image as in a virtual object which, from its side and simultaneously, envelops or reflects the real, and there is ‘coalescence’ between the two. (Deleuze, 1989, p.68) Not only do the two dimensions ‘coalesce’ but in fact “... there is no virtual which does not become actual in relation to the actual, the latter becoming virtual through the same relation”. (Deleuze, 1989, p.69)



FIGURE 25
Iterative study for the thesis (2014)
 300mm X 420mm
 WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER.

Exploring the complex nature of the mirror image, Deleuze refers to the circuit, the exchange between different states. “Oblique mirrors, concave mirrors and Venetian mirrors are inseparable from a circuit...This circuit itself is an exchange” (Deleuze, 1989, p.70). “... the mirror-image is virtual in relation to the character that it catches, but it is actual in the mirror which now leaves the character with only a virtuality and pushes him back out-of-field” (Deleuze, 1989, p.70). Throughout the work for the project, images are repeated, doubled, with some objects (a pair of shoes or spectacles) implying two essential parts, locked in a complex relationship with each other, where each is the mirror image or flip side of the other. These images are a parallel, metaphorical and actual ‘image’ of the actual and the virtual, and complete an agenda to deny a fixed, differentiated object (Figure 25).

6 Depth

“Difference comes from the domain of the virtual, not the actual, for the actual is precisely that domain where difference is cancelled” (Bryant, 2011, p.99). In Bryant’s view the virtual is the powerhouse of change within the object. He draws on Deleuze’s thinking about depth as a model for the operation of the virtual and the actual.

WHAT we thus get in Deleuze’s thought is a sort of vertical ontology of the depths. Rather than entities or substances interacting with each other laterally or horizontally, we instead get an ontology where difference arises vertically from the depths of the virtual. (BRYANT, 2011, P.100)

Across the span of the final thesis art work there are several areas where this verticality and depth has an overt and constructed form. In the plugged panels, discussed in detail elsewhere in the exegesis, the action is generated from behind the painting surface. The small volcanic gestures do not occupy any actual space, but appear to surface vertically from some other depth within, or behind, the work. The luggage carousel appears in two large sections of the work. In the four panels to the far right of the work, the endlessly grinding mechanics of processing is viewed from above, flattened against the vertical plane of the work. Verticality operates in two ways here, the image dominating the horizontal length of the work with a dynamic vertical form, and as a more hidden sense of depth. This latter verticality relates to the carousel, and to movement itself, appearing and disappearing in relation to a beyond place through a barrier. Thus our luggage, or the subject in transit, moves through our actual space, disappearing into another space, to reappear again. These works are in no sense an attempt to illustrate a Deleuzian idea of depth and verticality. Rather, the reading, digesting and writing about Deleuze and other theorists of time and ontology provides the potential for a shared understanding of why these images are so haunting, at least for the researcher.

If we accept Deleuze's depth model of the operation of the virtual then the flatness of painting is only a spatial thinness. Surrounding every art work, through its production to final form, there is thus a deep virtual world working in the conceptualising, generation, actualizing, and interpretation of the work. Seen in this way the deliberate flattening of the surface in the four far right panels for example serves not merely as an aesthetic strategy towards abstraction, but to allow this other spatial/temporal dimension to become paramount and evident. The space-reduction strategies of the aerial view, of the singular flatness of poured surfaces and overlays of paint and colour filters, locks our actual space in a tension with another virtual space, the space of depth and the abstract machine in operation.

Summary

Painting as the visible skin of time

In summary what is proposed here is that a Deleuzian ontological framework frees the analysis of painting from historicising tendencies, the search for origin and essence, and from a purely spatial perspective. When examined from the position of the dynamics of the virtual and the actual, painting is seen as engaging with the complexities and poetics of time and appears as a visible surface of time. In a text on painting, time and the digital image, Harland states “I want to propose then an approach to painting’s temporality that moves away from a preoccupation with absence and mourning, a Freudian position of return, aligning instead with Proust’s “time regained”, reflecting more fully lived experience of time.” (Harland, 2007, p.5). Elaborating on this idea, Harland discusses Barthes’ notion of photography as concerned with ideas of memory and loss, particularly in *Camera Lucida*. Barthes made a connection between mechanical reproduction (and photography) and Freud’s notion of ‘compulsive repetition’. Here the past is witnessed by ‘deferred action’, and Barthes considered photography as a traumatic art. Harland favours a more future oriented idea of painting and photography and uses Deleuze’s ideas of time and becoming to establish the creative process as “... a form of affirmative experimentation, with the still to come ...” (Harland, 2007, p.14). This project makes no distinction between digital and analogue images, however, and seeks to establish a concept of the creative process as a visible form of the invisibility of the actual and the virtual in the process of becoming.

Deleuze refers to two factors in the movement of time; intensity and extensity. Within the field of the painting, these differential intensities could be substituted for differences of colour, shape, texture, mark and saturation. Deleuze distinguishes intensive differentiation from extensive differences, being differences in kind in relation to external objects and states.

THUS, a poetic sentiment, which bursts into distinct verses, lines and words, may be said to have already contained this multiplicity of individuated elements and yet, in fact, it is the materiality of language that creates it.

(AUGÉ, 1998/2004, P.258)

The artwork plays with these two processes of differentiation through intensity and extensity in the dynamic of virtual and actual realms.









4

THE FRAME

FRAMES AND FRAMING

As beings, we “... consume and manufacture organization, whether at the molecular level or that of information. These frames generate internal boundaries within the world, which both establish and mediate the relationship of inner and outer”

(WOOD, 2000, P.226).

This chapter positions an analysis of the frame in painting against a background of theoretical study of framing, of the inside and the outside, and the frame in relation to visible and invisible fields. We don't merely frame a painting, we define a boundary between what is included and what is excluded, but what is external and what is at home inside the work are intimately and dynamically linked. The unframed painting is as much engaged in processes of framing as a framed work, just as an untitled painting has a plethora of associations and connections. These complex relations will be examined and range from spatial connections, narrative links, and the invisible virtual field that constantly connects with the actuality inside the frame.

Art dialogue relating to the frame has traditionally concerned itself with internal discussion of composition. In the case of painting the move away from the easel, from the studio and gallery even, to an occupation of the wall and the build-

ing, has been well documented. If the frame is rethought as an edge or boundary then the dialogue is repositioned within another set of arguments and ideas. A boundary, for example, does not imply a self-contained, isolated form, and is by definition a border between two places or states. For Wood, “A boundary is not a thing, but a cluster of procedures for the management of otherness” (Wood, 2000, p.227). Precisely in the way that the virtual and the actual are separate elements, yet become and determine each other, the frame both isolates a content field, and simultaneously generates links and externalises itself. The link with time here is in seeing the frame not solely as a physical object but rather engaged in the complex interaction of actual and virtual exchange.

In the development of this thesis a sense of the perviousness of the frame runs throughout. Accordingly, in experiments underpinning the final exhibited work and in its presented panels there are no frames separable from the painted surfaces. Framing is rather a set of processes of isolation and linking, of repetition, and of transition between areas and edges. The exhibition work is constructed of a series of panels, all of identical size and proportion. This rigid format, however, is used to allow and generate connections into and out of each panel, and back and forth along the length of the work.

Over the duration of the project a number of ideas and solutions were explored and tested against the theoretical framework of the thesis. Initially ideas of temporality and transit took the form of singular framed paintings. Some of the first iterations were painted on spun aluminium domes, with shadowy images moving across the curved surface with time wrapping around the transitory event (refer to Figure 3, Carpark Painting No1, 2011; and Figure 26).

Ideas of using multiple, related panels emerged from the need to create a more complex structure and incorporate differentiated elements and times within a single work (Figure 27).

Deleuze’s idea of the past as an existing, and constantly accumulating, virtual world also provided a solution to enabling a range of ideas and explorations

FIGURE 26

Preparatory studies for the thesis (2011)

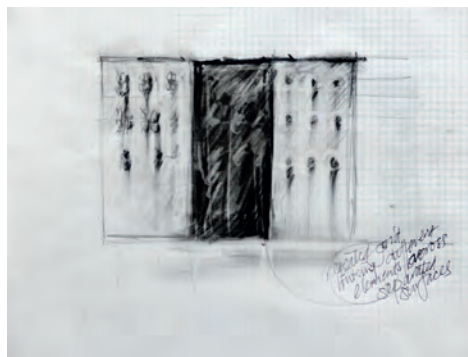
PENCIL ON PAPER.



FIGURE 27

Preparatory studies for the thesis (2012)

PENCIL ON PAPER.



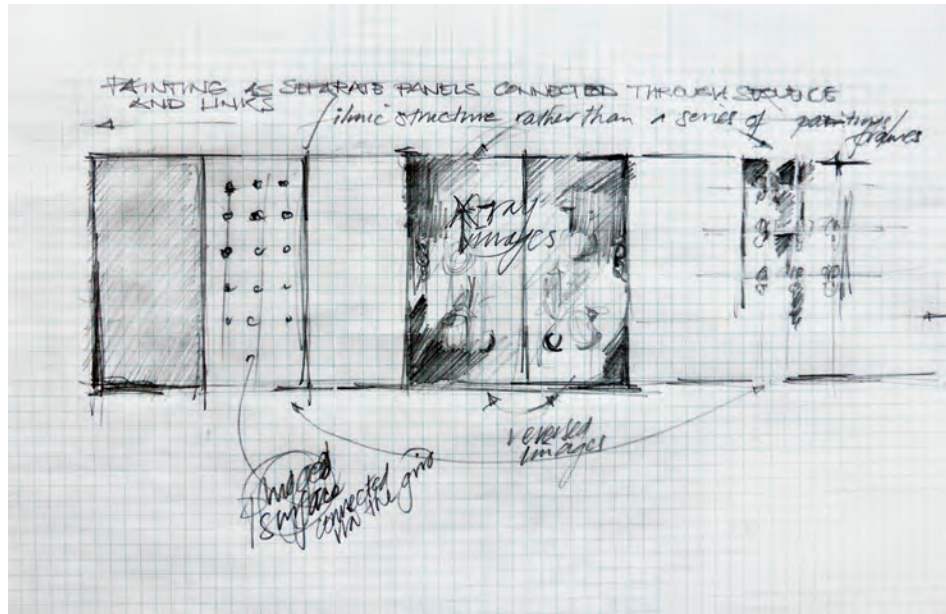


FIGURE 28

Preparatory study for
the thesis (2013)

PENCIL ON GRAPH PAPER.

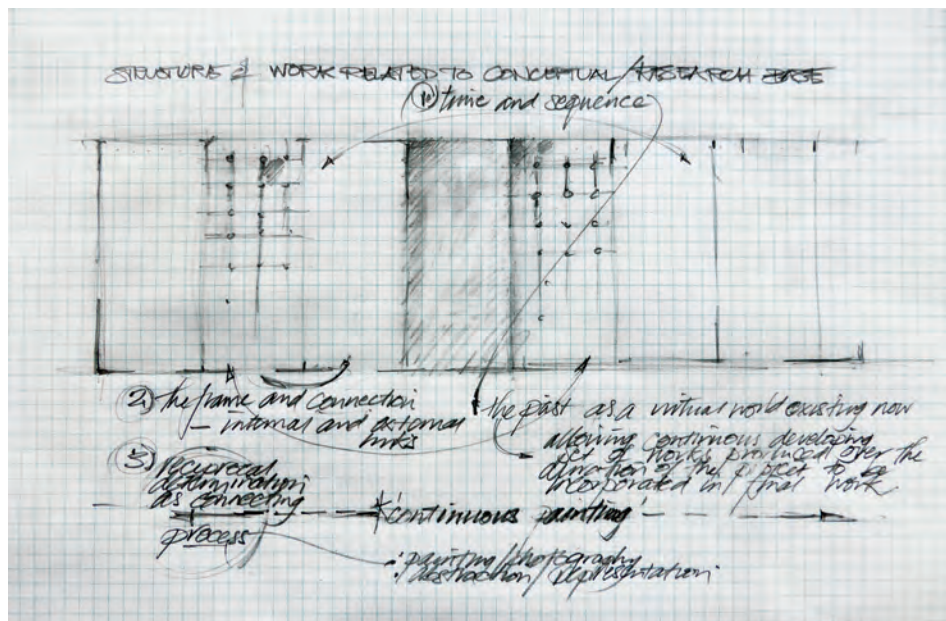


FIGURE 29

Preparatory study for
the thesis (2014)

PENCIL ON GRAPH PAPER.

throughout the project to be accumulated and incorporated in the final exhibition (Deleuze, 1994). Within this framework earlier ideas could be reinvented and reformed in relation to the project as a whole. The final exhibition was therefore seen as encompassing the breadth of the research iterations. To achieve this without fragmentation required a structure deeply related to the topic. To this end two further ideas resulting from the research into Deleuzian studies of time and movement were crucial. Researching into Deleuze's two Cinema texts was a strong catalyst for finding new solutions, notably a sort of continuous painting constructed from multiple panels. This solution enabled a complex set of ideas and images to be brought together in a unified structure while retaining their difference. Secondly Deleuze's notion of the virtual as a real field of connections has provided a language of both visual and virtual links that relate even disparate elements and sections of the final work (Figures 28 and 29).

In the exhibition work the panels operate as much like frames of a film as isolated paintings. In this way they develop sequences, and there is a sense at times of a flashback to previous images, or a hint of the anxious prediction of the unknown or yet to happen. Unlike a filmic form however, each frame is not a snapshot of the world, stitched together to develop an illusion of movement and narrative. Each frame here is both complete in itself and connected. A dialogue between painting and cinema is, though, valuable, and Deleuze's time concepts in relation to film allow new readings of painting in relation to broader philosophical and ontological frameworks.

Deleuze and the Frame

“...the more the image is spatially closed, even reduced to two dimensions, the greater its capacity to open itself on to a fourth dimension which is time, and on to a fifth dimension which is spirit”

(DELEUZE, 1986 ,P 17).

Deleuze's two seminal works on cinema, *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*, deliver not only a penetrating analysis of new film, film theory and film structure, but also introduce through the vehicle of cinema, radical ideas that bring together philosophical and political thinking. In particular Deleuze uses cinema as a way into complex ideas of the nature of time, matter, movement and space. A number of his notions regarding time were developed through his study of cinema. His analysis of the frame in film, for example, extends considerably beyond film theory and establishes a rigorous set of ideas about time and movement that are both specific to film and independent of it. According to this research project, Deleuze's "...encounter with cinema led Deleuze to reconsider the ontological status of images. Images are capable of all sorts of movement and are affected by all dimensions of time" (Marrati, 2008, p.4).

In Chapter 2 of *Cinema 1* Deleuze draws out a complex analysis of historical and cultural shifts and innovations in cinema in relation to framing, composition and the camera. Within the scope of this project however it is his more abstract ideas of movement and time which are of direct relevance. Analogies are made in the current project with Deleuze's ideas of the 'out-of-field', and the frame itself and its contents. This involves tendencies towards saturation or rarefaction, and with the actual and the virtual. In a study of Deleuze and Cin-

ema, Marrati differentiates cinema from other arts in relation to movement. He proposes, “Where other visual arts—from mask making to painting, from sculpture to photography—produce static images, which, even when they are images of movement, must be frozen in a certain pose, cinema sets images themselves in movement” (Marrati, 2008, p.7). Aside from the array of forms of visual art where movement is inherent in the work, such as performance, dance, and kinetic work, the argument in this project is that the notion of the static nature of painting is limited. If the term movement is opened up to encompass, for example, the embedded memory of the performance of painting, of the movement between the actual and the virtual in generating the new, and the visual shifts and links within and without the work, then painting is far from static. Marrati reminds us of the insight of Bergson’s maxim that movement cannot be reduced to the space covered (Marrati, 2008).

For Deleuze the frame is dynamic and complex, and not merely a pre-existing physical entity that is populated by a set of images. Along with the tendency towards dilution or saturation, Deleuze identifies two types of frames; the geometric and the physical or dynamic. The geometric frame, for Deleuze, is one in which the limits of the frame pre-exist the content created within it. In the field of painting this is akin, for example, to a landscape in which the features of a scene are composed within an existing frame, with its own a priori proportion and dimension. The dynamic frame, on the other hand, is one which is built around the movement of things within it. (Deleuze, 1986). In relation to the final thesis work, the frame is conceived more as a boundary, a dynamic edge constructed around events and images. Not only is the frame built around the movement within it, but it has a dynamic link externally. In the plugged panels, grids radiate out beyond the edge and take up the work again in other surfaces across the space. The movement of the carousel and the escalator are both framed images from the transit space, but also lead the movement into and out of the frame. This denies a hermetic function of the frame as an isolated composition in space.

The frame is not only physical and geometric as a closed system, but is “also geometric or physical in another way – in relation to the parts of the system that it both separates and brings together” (Deleuze, 1986, p13). The dynamic between the frame and what lies outside the frame, the ‘out-of-field’, is of considerable importance to Deleuze’s thinking regarding the nature of time, a model that opens up more than a purely spatial reading. The argument here is that in the field of painting what is constructed within the parameters of a work also overflows in an exchange with an outer field beyond the frame.

Cinematic form and painting

In an introduction to the catalogue for an exhibition titled *Cinema and Painting*, held at the Adam Gallery in Wellington in 2014, Horrocks noted that “Film and painting have always had a lot in common, their genomes have much shared DNA” (Horrocks, 2015, p.6). While the relationship of painting to cinema has a long history in practice and theory it is not in the scope of this study. There are however pertinent areas of connection to the project. The concern is not with technological and aesthetic overlaps, nor with pioneering innovators such as Len Lye and Oskar Fischinger, who bring together an art practice and moving image. What is significant though are structural overlaps for this project, in particular the potential for painting to inhabit an entire wall, to form a continuous surface or screen, and to develop sequence beyond the usual confines of a rectangular frame. Over the four years of the project, ideas formed relating to the potential for an extended form of painting, where the viewer can traverse the work and experience an actual sense of transiting space. These iterations considered painting not as a framed view but rather as a scene or a sequence. While many of the processes of painting could be developed only through the act of painting, drawing was a rapid way of exploring structural solutions in relation to textual references to theoretical concerns.

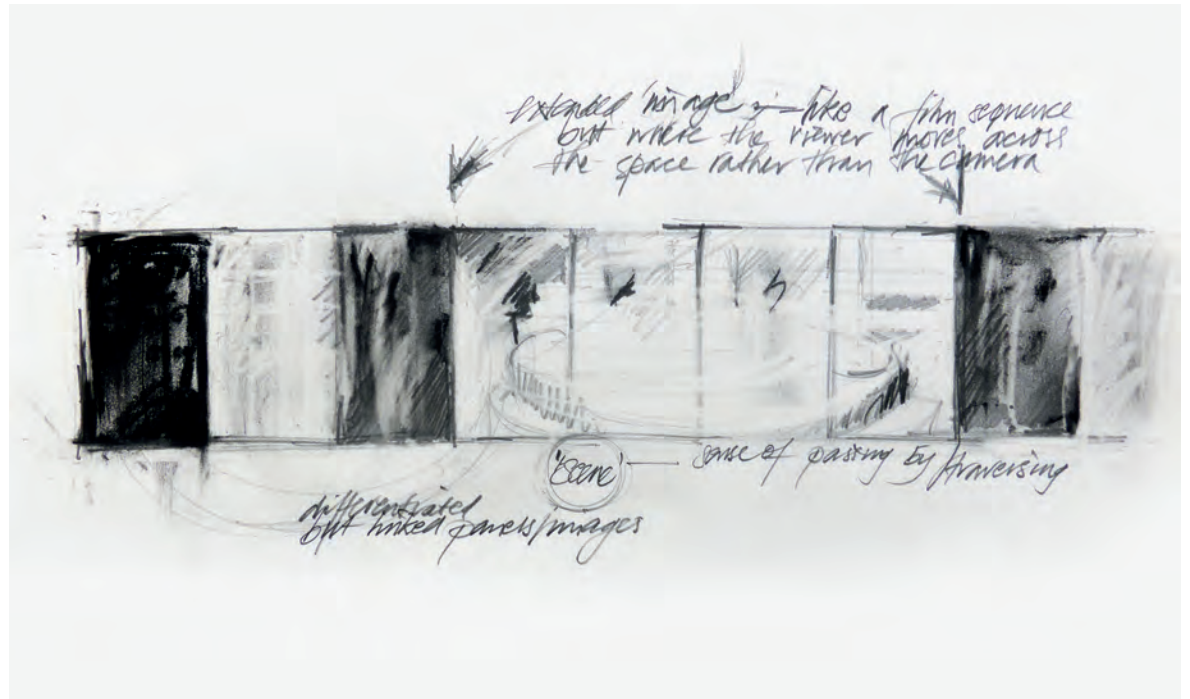


FIGURE 30

Preparatory study
for the thesis (2014)

PENCIL ON PAPER.

These preparatory studies experimented with a wide range of ideas, including processes, structures and images. Research into Deleuze and related theoretical works regarding cinema resulted in ideas, for example, of sequences of frames in a sort of story-less narrative, of increasing lightness or darkness across a sequence of panels, and of the obliteration of image akin to the fade-out in film (Figure 30).

In the final artwork, sequences shift from repeated events within a single panel to longer sequences of an image migrating across a number of surfaces. The viewer is able to traverse the painting, move back and forth, and read the work in multiple directions. Some areas appear like after-images, some like flashbacks or flashforwards to a potential event, as in the predictive association of x-ray images.

The final exhibition work is assembled from repeated panels with a format that is akin to the frames of film. These aluminium surfaces deny the physicality of solid support and frame, and allow a reflective screen-like surface. Although the processes of painting and of projected image are inherently different, in the project the two come closer together. In some areas images are painted from overtly projected photographic sequences, for example the x-ray panels appear as screens with the thinnest scan of light and captured image. Such overlaps and cross pollinations between film, photographic image and painting inform the work in finding forms and processes that explore and speak of time and temporality.

In the *Cinema and Painting* catalogue, Menzies and Morgan talk of the traditional gulfs between the two genres. “In the familiar genealogy of modernism, the variant bases of cinema and painting are understood to generate competing, even mutually exclusive aesthetic paradigms” (Menzies & Morgan, 2015a, p.15). They go on to say, however, that “... the conceptual model of projective space opens up both media: not only to each other but to a raft of internal concerns and alternative genealogies” (Menzies & Morgan, 2015a, p.15). New areas of discussion and exploration that shift beyond the more obvious connections or distinctions between film and painting are signalled here. These include thought about *depth* (discussed in the previous Chapter). Deleuze spoke of depth not solely as spatial depth, and in the field of painting this is a potentially relevant approach and adds significantly to dialogue on abstraction. For Menzies and Morgan, the “... heuristic of depth, for example, can radically de-centre assumptions about the centrality, or even necessity, of photography to the creation of cinematic images” (Menzies & Morgan, 2015a, p.15).

Menzies and Morgan suggest that,

IN place of photography, a turn to painting as a genealogical precedent for film foregrounds a pictorial approach to cinematic *images*, one that can emphasise a concern with the manner in which images function, and the work they do in films. (MENZIES & MORGAN, 2015A, P.15)

They suggest that a paradigm shift in the way cinema is thought “... opens up our thinking about both film and painting by adjusting the key formulations of questions that can be brought to bear on these arts, ranging from the formal and the material to the institutional” (Menzies & Morgan, 2015a, p.15). A parallel paradigm shift in the ways we conceive of and discuss painting is seen here as equally productive for both disciplines. This re-framed dialogue looks both forward and back, that is it applies itself to current thought and work and reflects back into earlier ideas and practice. What Menzies and Morgan are suggesting perhaps is that all art forms have a genealogy in other creative practices, and that these cross influences continue as a productive mixing of the gene pool of differentiated disciplines.

The wall

The final exhibition work stretches out over an entire wall of the gallery space, extending to just over fifteen metres in length. The module of the single panel repeats as if it could continue in both directions. Although somewhat like a section of film with its repeated frames, the work is experienced quite differently. The viewer encounters the work from the centre working out and back and forth. The centre is not privileged, however, and the brief moments of sequence and visual narrative appear and dissolve back into the whole.

This is not a site-specific work. Despite it being made with the particular exhibition space in its developmental thinking, the work does not specifically engage with the site. The work stops just shy of the corners of each wall, avoiding an architectural and spatial interpretation and experience. The work is a sort of continuous painting, both temporally and spatially, stretching the making process over many years and with a sense of continuing beyond its outer confines.

In an exhibition at Adam Art Gallery, Wellington in 2014, Judy Millar produced large surfaces that curved right off the wall and careered across the space of the gallery. In an interview related to the exhibition, however, Millar partly negated a solely spatial interpretation of the work and stated, “It’s also, of course, time. You can imagine stretching and bending time, but you can’t imagine cutting and joining time” (Menzies & Morgan, 2015b, p.101). Millar insists that her work, despite operating in space and out from the wall, is firmly in the field of painting, but a painting that signals an interest in work that is not able to be taken in as an isolated object (Menzies & Morgan, 2015b). Beyond the scale and length of her recent paintings, Millar also indicates a connection with aspects of cinematic form. Referring to the use of certain colours, she says “I hadn’t used that colour before and may well have been thinking about cinematic light, and the movement of cinematic light” (Menzies & Morgan, 2015b, p.102).

Saturation and Dilution

“The frame is therefore inseparable from two tendencies: towards saturation or towards rarefaction”

(DELEUZE, 1986 , P12).

27

Deleuze uses the term rarefaction, in particular in relation to film, in referring to the minimising of content, and where the frame or sequence is largely empty, obliterated or highly simplified (Deleuze, 1986).

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Cage composed this three part work to be performed by any instrument or group of instruments where no sound was to be created over the duration of the work of four minutes thirty three seconds.

In relation to the framing of images and narrative within the construction of film Deleuze distinguishes between the tendency towards saturation or towards rarefaction²⁷ and emptiness. The argument here is that this is not a binary opposition, and that within the art work, be it film or painting, extreme rarefaction or reduction equates to a kind of saturation, that is a saturation of colour, of emotion, of focus and concentration. The reduction of content, of internal juxtaposition and complexity, allows a corresponding intensity of other forms of expression. This is not inherently at odds with Deleuze’s categorisation of the polarities of concentration and reduction as throughout his analysis of time Deleuze consistently breaks down the binary oppositions of states and tendencies. Marrati includes a discussion on these two opposing tendencies and concludes “Taken to its limit, rarefaction is the empty set, the black or white screen ...” (Marrati, 2008, p.21). Deleuze refers to a scene in Hitchcock’s *Spellbound* (1945), in which a “... glass of milk invades the screen, leaving only an empty white image” (Deleuze, 1986, p.12). In the field of visual arts, however, minimalist and reductive works, such as Malevich’s *Black Square* (1915) or John Cage’s *4’33”* composed in 1952²⁸, although pared back to almost nothing, have generated a vast history of critical and theoretical response. Despite the asset stripping of traditional content, works like these seem far from empty sets. Hitchcock’s empty white screen is filled with what has cinematically gone prior to it and what will come after, and a plethora of associations brought to it. Perhaps it is rather that the actual has been reduced to

almost nothing, allowing the virtual to multiply and colonise the frame of the work.

In the final exhibition work the idea of saturation and dilution is used not solely as frames which are either one or the other tendency, but also together within frames. In relation to the ideas explored throughout the thesis this corresponds to ontological concepts of the nature of matter and being in relation to intensity. Deleuze, and Bergson before him, proposed the idea that all form is resultant from varying intensities. These intensities play out across the surface of the artwork as variations in colour, saturated and vacant space, and of movement and exchange.

In Panel 6 of the exhibited work (Figure 20), the luggage labels appear and disappear on the surface of our vision. They are literally created from intensities, and are thus as much a virtual as an actual presence.

In the detail of Panel 10 (Figure 31), saturation and dilution are part of a single complex process. The surface is saturated with a veil of white, partly dissolving and diluting the image beneath it. The act of intensification of one element diminishes that of another.

The 'out-of-field'

“The out-of-field refers to what is neither seen nor understood, but is nevertheless perfectly present”

(DELEUZE, 1986, P16).

Deleuze maintains a complex dynamic in the analysis of the functioning of the frame which both isolates and neutralises the environment of that which is internal to the frame, and at the same time exaggerates its significance. Marrati con-

FIGURE 31
Detail of Panel 10,
final thesis work, (2015)
Panel size 800mm X 1500mm
ACRYLIC ON ALUMINIUM.



nects the inside of the frame with the invisible, in that "... what is seen through the image itself always opens onto the invisible" (Marrati, 2008, p.22).

"All framing determines an out-of-field" (Deleuze, 1986, p16). Deleuze refers to the 'set' enclosed by the frame, and the larger set of the context or environment external to the frame. This larger set itself can become a sub-set within a wider environment and a new out-of-field. For Deleuze the infinite and constantly reinvented array of frames and sets also relates to the whole, which is not a set in itself, "it is rather that which prevents each set, however big it is, from closing in on itself, and that which forces it to extend itself into a larger set" (Deleuze, 1986, p17). This constant and open system where the closed set relates dynamically to a larger set in a potentially infinite process of changing relationships leads Deleuze to the radical idea of the impossibility of differentiation between actual and imaginary space. There appears a direct relationship here to time in relation to Deleuze's idea of the past as a virtual past, continuously in a process of absorbing an actual present. Deleuze presents a radical idea of the actual and the virtual as two states co-existing, even in a single image, and that "there are always simultaneously the two aspects of the out-of-field: the actualisable relation with other sets and the virtual relation with the whole" (Deleuze, 1986, p18).

For Deleuze there are two types of out-of-field; the relative and the absolute (Deleuze, 1986). Relative out-of-field systems link space inside with space outside of the frame, whereas in cinematic time-images the absolute out-of-field opens the image to duration and change external to the image. Marrati says that "Framings that aim to exclude every spatial outside thus bear witness to an absolute out-of-field that, 'out' of space and homogenous time, is of the order of duration or spirit" (Marrati, 2008, p.23). The argument made here is that this state is not exclusive to cinema, and that painting functions in a very similar way, albeit through different material and form.

In an article on the poetics of time Wood talks of shelters, as all things which establish some sort of boundary. The term shelter is not used in the sense of security, but as an enclosure of qualities and defining characteristics. For Wood,

“The boundaries of such shelters are essentially permeable, in ways that allow interruption – invasion, infection, corruption” (Wood, 2000, p.227).

“Hence it is perhaps insufficient to distinguish ... concrete space from an imaginary space in the out-of-field, the imaginary becoming the concrete which it in turn passes into a field, when it thus ceases to be out-of-field” (Deleuze, 1986, p17). For artist Judy Millar, a fascination with, “painting and cinema is exactly that they somehow reconcile for us both modes of existence, the internal and the external” (Menzies & Morgan, 2015b, p.109)

Deleuze and Guattari propose that although every act of framing establishes territory, it also activates a wider field of connection in a ‘kind of deframing’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.187). Deleuze uses filmic examples where the faces of characters, for example, are partially cut off by the frame, and suggests that this is a constructed form of relative out-of-field, and one that links the internal space of the frame and the film and adds an external spatial reference. In the final exhibition work framing and deframing occur concurrently. Each panel is a demarcation field, but one that immediately flows through other sections of the work structurally and visually. The carousel and the escalator continuously carry us into and out of the frame of the work, and of our own personal space.

Merleau-Ponty refers to the visible and the invisible in a state of simultaneity. “Depth and ‘back’ (and ‘behind’)—It is pre-eminently the dimension of the hidden...” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.219). For Merleau-Ponty “Depth is the means the things have to remain distinct, to remain things ... It is pre-eminently the dimension of the simultaneous” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.219). Merleau-Ponty spoke of a “... certain relation between the visible and the invisible, where the invisible is not only non-visible ... where the lacuna that marks its place is one of the points of passage of the ‘world’” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.228). Thus the lacuna is seen not as an inert, empty space but rather as an invisible yet energetic field that activates the physical and connects it to outside the frame of the work itself. “The invisible is there without being an object, it is pure transcendence,

without an ontic²⁹ mask” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.229). A significant aspect of this research project has been the development of visual forms exploring the idea of framing, not as an act of isolating but also of expressing the ‘dimension of the simultaneous’. The frame is thus seen as not only porous but a fulcrum between inside and outside, the visible and the invisible, and the physical and virtual fields.

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The term ontic refers to entities and the qualities of actual things.

Time and the false

In Chapter 6 of *Cinema 2* Deleuze constructs an argument about the false nature of cinema in regards to framing and creating a narrative in time. Essentially the sense of movement and narrative in film is false, and is collaged together from sequences of still images. He distinguishes between two modes of representation, the ‘organic’ and the ‘crystalline’ (1989). The organic mode in film, for Deleuze, is where the object or event is filmed against a supposedly pre-existing setting. In the crystalline mode the context or setting “stands for its object, replaces it, both creates and erases it..” (Deleuze, 1989, p126). Deleuze cites a number of examples as evidence of this analysis; in Ichigawa’s film *An Actor’s Revenge*, for example, a yellowish fog distorts and blurs and becomes the scene. Following his line of argument, Deleuze establishes that, in an organic mode, the real is assumed and “recognizable by its continuity – even if it is interrupted...” (Deleuze, 1989, p126). Although this is a system of “linkages, legal, causal and logical connections” (127), Deleuze states that it also includes dream sequences, the unreal, imaginary and the flashback. These however are used as contrasting juxtapositions.

THE organic system will, therefore, consist of these two modes of existence as poles in opposition to each other: linkages of actuals from the point of view of the real, and actualizations in consciousness from the point of view of the imaginary. (DELEUZE, 1989, P127)

In the crystalline system, according to Deleuze, the process is completely different and the imaginary or virtual is detached from the actual and “starts to be valid for itself” (Deleuze, 1989, p.127). Deleuze thus comes to the radical idea, via the analysis of cinema, of two modes of existence; the actual and the virtual, which are “combined in a circuit where the real and the imaginary, the actual and the virtual, chase after each other, exchange their roles and become indiscernible” (Deleuze, 1989, p127). For Deleuze, the ‘crystal-image’ is one where the actual and the virtual overlap, coalesce and become indistinguishable. In two experimental drawings for the thesis (Figures 7 and 8), movement and virtual energies detach from the actual (the escalator) and form a shower of gestures across the surface. These movements relate to the virtual in that they are more like traces, memories and noises than having actual materiality and qualities. In these exploratory studies the process of detachment of virtual associations and energies makes them visible and allows them to coalesce with the actual and material. It is in the visualising of the invisible that the perceptual hierarchy of the actual is forced into an overlapping, mutually generating, relationship with the virtual.

Developing his argument further, Deleuze extends these ideas beyond description in cinema to narrative, and distinguishes firstly the organic narrative system in which, despite possible disorder and disruption, narrative is based firmly within a logical and continuous flow. This system, for Deleuze, is where time is dependent on movement in space and is thus ultimately chronological time. Deleuze goes on to contrast organic narrative with an analysis of different types of space in film. He likens the space of organic narrative to Euclidean space, and says “... this is the setting in which tensions are resolved according to a principle of economy, according to the so-called laws of extremum, of maximum and minimum, for example, the simplest route, the most appropriate detour” (Deleuze, 1989, p128). The space of crystalline narration is very different for Deleuze in that the aberrations and disruptions in the flow of movement become the essence rather

than being accidental. For Deleuze, the implications of this are crucial in that the spatial characteristics of these complex narratives in film cannot be explained solely in spatial terms in that they are “direct presentations of time” (1989). “We no longer have an indirect image of time which derives from movement, but a direct time-image from which movement derives” (Deleuze, 1989, p129).

The position that in the development of cinematic forms there are spatial innovations that cannot be explained solely in spatial ways has a potentially productive analogy in the field of painting. Time as a philosophical discussion has largely been bypassed in the study of painting, and yet there are significant developments in the discipline since the late 19th century that undermine and challenge a purely spatial or narrative interpretation and methodology. Spatial modes of thought struggle with aspects of abstraction, and do not offer convincing arguments in the analysis of a wide range of contemporary art practice. Deleuze’s dynamic model of time (and space), his position on the nature of the actual and the virtual, and his idea of the ‘powers of the false’ (1989), offer a new paradigm for study in the field of painting. In particular Deleuze’s concept of how actual and virtual forces generate the new provides a framework for studying how this operates within painting, and how the artist activates these fields. Within this thesis, devices and diagrams such as the grid and repetition are considered using this critical perspective, and a temporal model is seen as having relevance and productive potential for new ideas. Equally Deleuze’s idea of reciprocal determination, applied to the workings of the virtual and the actual, has been a significant catalyst in both the understanding of painting practice, and in generating new processes and solutions. The aim here is not to plot Deleuze’s analysis of specific films, but rather to use his conclusions and ideas of the nature of time, in particular in relation to the art work, with the potential to apply this paradigm to the study of contemporary painting. The argument underpinning this project is that painting is able to create ‘direct presentations of time’, beyond a once-removed impression or illusion of movement, to a deeper connection with time and change.

Conjunction and the hinge

Exclusion and Inclusion

“It is not the elements or the sets which define the multiplicity. What defines it is the AND, as something which has its place between the elements or between the sets. AND, AND, AND – stammering.”

(DELEUZE & PARNET, 2002).

This insignificant, close to meaningless word, *and*, is central to Deleuze’s philosophy and to this thesis. Not the either or, or even the between, but the *and* of mutual influence, affect, and determination. Zepke and O’Sullivan refer to Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘logic of the AND’ (O’Sullivan & Zepke, 2008). In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari dismiss an ontological model that moves in a single causal direction in favour of a “... transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.28). Thus for Deleuze (and Guattari), movement and becoming happens in both or all directions.

Figure 32 illustrates an experimental work exploring visual and symbolic ideas of conjunction and connection. The mundane luggage tags connect us to the event of travel and to identity and processing. The labels expand out in all directions, endlessly repeating, but each one different from the others. The ties connecting identity to personal belongings also link each tag, forming a zone of connection, half way between an abstract, virtual field and an actual, physical one.



FIGURE 32
Experimental work (2012)
ACRYLIC ON PLYWOOD.

In Panel 15 of the final thesis work (Figure 33) the plug ‘events’ radiate outwards, as if change itself is rippling through the surface in all directions simultaneously. The plane of the painting is not proposed as a minimalist formal surface but an energy field of AND AND AND, with a stammering repetition across its spaceless surface. The *and* here though is not solely the physical repetition across the work. There are a number of other references that play a conjunctive function. The panel is one of two in the final work that have holes drilled and plugged in the painted surface. Though separated by over 10 metres in the final layout, their fields of influence stretch out across the space, and each implies and informs the other.

Within the microcosm of the surface too there are conjunctive events. The plug functions both as an inhibitor, a stoppage and disruption to flow or movement, at the same time drawing attention to, even causing, that movement event. In Panel 15 the flat plugs are subtly reflective, so that the simple material includes transitory, reflective sensations across its surface. It is thus both singular and contained, and connected and multiple. The reflective effect hints at the virtual exterior invisibly embedded in the surface, constantly interacting with the material.

Earlier, in Chapter 3, I referred to a statement by Merleau-Ponty in reference to the inside and the outside of a glove, as an analogy to two sides of being, the visible and the invisible. He continued this analogy, referring to the finger tip of the glove, where the “... axis alone is given—the end of the finger of the glove is nothingness – but a nothingness one can turn over...” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.263). This axis, or hinge, itself having no substance or form is the fulcrum between two opposing but connected and inseparable sides. Throughout the artwork there are a multitude of hinge devices that act as a fulcrum (Figure 34). In the two panels using Customs x-ray images, in Figure 16, for example, the edge between the two panels acts as a hinge. It is the point or seam at which each image flips over to become the other. Just as in the arrivals and departures panels where the text actually flips over to become other language, the process here denies a

FIGURE 33
Panel 15,
final thesis work
ACRYLIC AND LASER CUT
PLUGS ON ALUMINIUM.





FIGURE 34

Workbook drawing (2013)

PENCIL AND WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER.

In the early stages of the project there was a fascination with objects and images that in themselves embodied a double form. Images taken from Customs x-rays, of spectacles with their two lenses and the reversed pairing of shoes, for example, established a vocabulary where no image or object could hold a singular form. On-going research into related theoretical aspects of the topic, in particular ideas of virtuality and connection, and of Deleuze's notion of conjunction, resulted in experimentation with a wider visual language exploring the possibilities of the hinge and connecting devices. Figure 36 illustrates details from panels in the final exhibition showing evidence of a variety of hinge 'events'.

single, original image or state, and each is visibly actual and virtual simultaneously. The visual form of the hinge, even if invisible, acts as a fold (where one thing folds over on to another), a fulcrum as an image and its reverse or mirror image, and a joint between the inside and the outside.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari note that in French the word *est* (is) and the word *et* (and) are "...identical in pronunciation" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.98). "It is only in appearance that these two terms are in accord and combine, for the first acts in language as a constant and forms the diatonic scale of language, while the second places everything in variation" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.98).

The regularity and simplicity of the physical structure of framing in the final project belies a complexity of connections and extensions beyond the frame. In some adjacent panels there are just visible visual hinges at the edges between works. These act like the virtual connection between a pair of gloves. They are hinged in the sense that one or other could fold over to become the other. The spectacles, with identical but mirror image lenses, have the same hinged centre. These insignificant/significant joiners act to establish a link throughout the work.

The word *and* is a sort of hinge in that it links one thing to another, and as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, it places everything in variation, that is it refuses to allow a word or statement to be complete in itself (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). In the detail below of an experimental painting developed in the thesis, Panel 20 (Figure 35), images of the baggage clips refer directly to the event of travel and baggage. They also function visually like the word 'and', in that they are mundane and functional and yet lock disparate things into a relationship. In itself 'and' is close to meaningless, yet it creates meaning. In discussing atypical and creative language, Deleuze and Guattari refer to these terms as 'tensors' (1989), pushing language to its limits. For them "An expression as simple as AND ... can play the role of tensor for all language. In this sense, AND is less a conjunction than the atypical expression of all the possible conjunctions it places in continuous variation" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.97).



FIGURE 35
Detail of an
experimental panel for
the project (2014)
800mm X 1500mm
ACRYLIC ON ALUMINIUM.



FIGURE 36

Details from final exhibition panels

(Panels 2, 20, 11, 3, 4, 6, plus a detail of a preparatory drawing).



In the plane of painting, a wealth of visual forms of ‘and’ (as well as ‘or’) are a crucial part of the vocabulary of the artist. The devices that link, include, respond to, and that create ambiguity, uncertainty and alternatives, are as much part of the language as the more overt aspects of narrative, style and form.

External and internal transmissions in creative practice

In relation to the frame itself, there are numerous devices that develop transition across the final artwork for the project. Some of these, such as the grid and hinging, and the transition from one area out into surrounding panels, are discussed elsewhere in the exegesis. These links and movements across the work have a number of different forms, from the repetition and reinvention of figurative elements, to the migration of visual elements of colour, form and structure beyond the frame and infiltrating into other frames.

Often the most significant transitions conceptually, and the most difficult to manage materially and gesturally, are those between differentiated zones, such as between photographic and painted areas, or abstract and figurative surfaces. In Panels 16 to 19 at the far right of the final work, for example (Figure 37), the eye scans down across the transit space. It is both a single image and space, at the same time it is four cuts into this time/space; each frame linked and differentiated from the others. Figures lean into and out of the space, drawing the viewer in and out of the frames. The carousel is in a state of constant, mechanical transition into and out of our space. The image of the carousel flips between its own recognisable physical and functional form and an abstract, painterly image. It is almost as if the mechanism is responding to the context of where it is imaged, trying out what it would be like to transform into a painted image of itself. Thus the transitions that appear ubiquitously throughout the work are both visual/material actions, and conceptual transitions that shift between actual and virtual

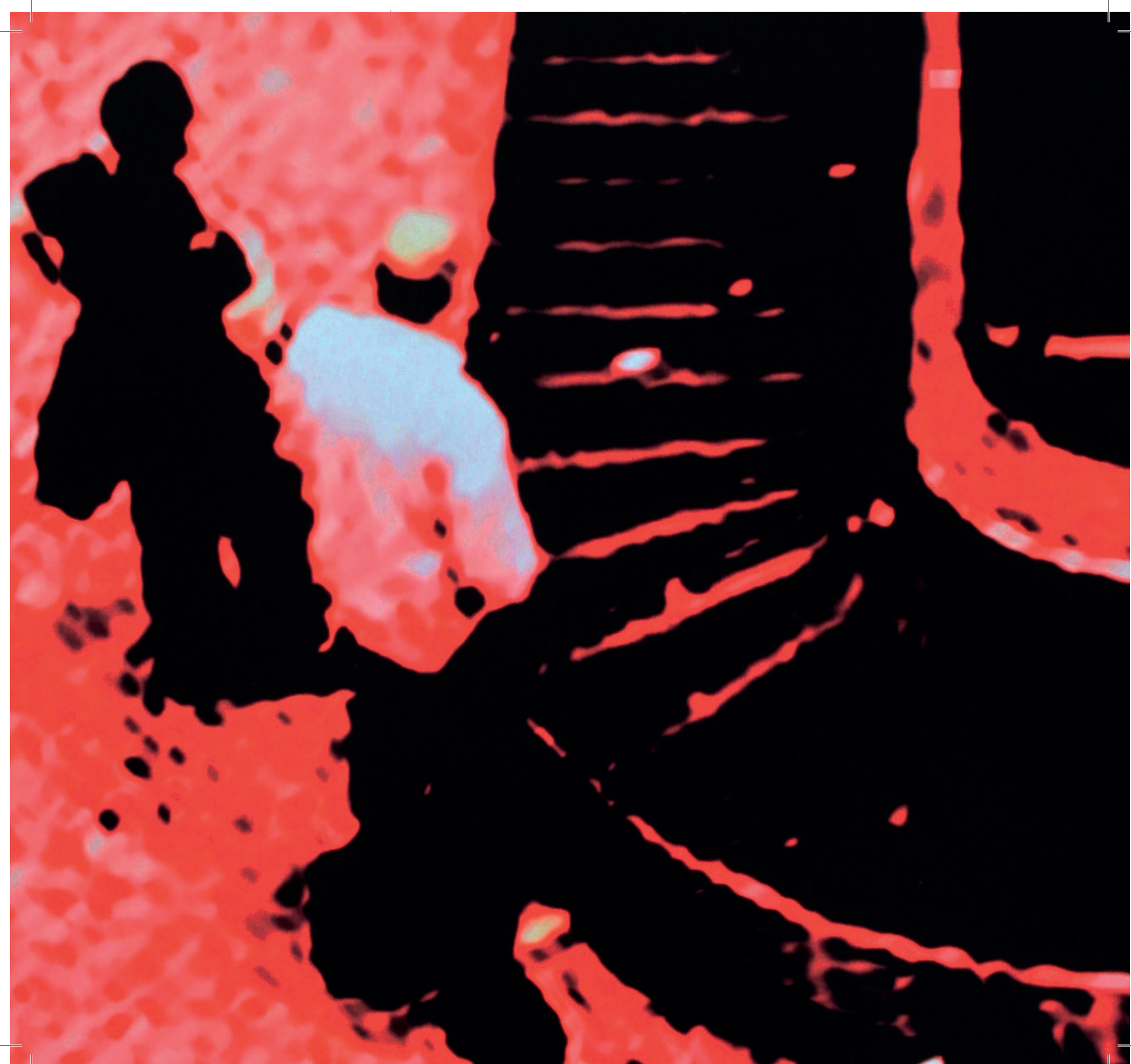
states. In the far-most right panel the photographic image is bleached out and over-exposed, exacerbated by the veil of white paint interrupting the continuity of the image. This skin of paint serves several functions; it builds on the visual dialogue around temporal events of continuity and disruption, it creates transitional tension between the sense of actual space and flat surface, it dissolves the figures partly into ghost-like, almost virtual images, and the panel acts somewhat like the final fade-out frames of a film. The problematic of developing an image such as this is largely in controlling the material and visual transitions between disparate elements. Here the collision of a number of temporal states has to be managed, the sense of the slow and predictable rumbling of the carousel, the even slower waiting and shuffling of travellers, and the instant flooding of paint down the surface. In this sense the painter is as much a choreographer of events and transitions as a composer of elements.

FIGURE 37
Panels 16-19 (2015)
800mm X 1500mm
ACRYLIC AND DIGITAL IMAGE
ON ALUMINIUM.



Research into Deleuze's analysis of the frame in relation to film, and to philosophical and ontological concepts, has triggered new arenas of thinking and making in the project. Exploring the potential resulting from the conceptual shift from conceiving and using the frame as a discrete, hermetic form to one in which it is activated as a pervious border with a dynamic interaction of internal and external, and actual and virtual, elements, has developed new ways of thinking painting processes. The parallel activities of theoretical research and painting has revealed that this is indeed productive territory, in that the interrogation and dialogue between the two has unravelled new insights and solutions. In particular the research into Deleuzian reframing of the nature of the frame has led to a significant shift in my own painting practice. Conceptualising and actualising the frame as a dynamic border between inside and the external, and relating this to ideas of actual and virtual states, has taken the work into new arenas, both in the internal dynamics of painting and image, and the overall structure. Beyond this, these research findings have considerable implications for the way we might consider painting in general, and how this might challenge a number of conventions of analysis and practice. The idea that a painting might be more than a relatively inert object imbued with expression and meaning by the artist, and that it might have in a sense a life of its own, shifts the way we think of the role of the artist. This life of its own, the interaction of material and immaterial forms and the connections beyond the frame, provides a dynamic model of the art work that transcends style and metanarrative.









ABSTRACTION: THE GRID, THE DIAGRAM, AND HYBRIDITY

ABSTRACTION AND THE FRAME

This Chapter looks at the grid and abstraction against broader ontological ideas, and aims to establish a relatively new reading of repetition and seriality in painting. The approach draws on aspects of feminist readings of the grid and the ideas of Deleuze and others, of repetition and the diagram. Through this juxtaposition, I will demonstrate new perspectives on the application of the grid in my own work, with relevance also to contemporary painting.

The power of the abstract image, whether in painting or other art forms, to directly connect with ideas of time and ontological processes is central to the concerns of this thesis. In *Cinema 1*, Deleuze says the “... more the image is spatially closed, even reduced to two dimensions, the greater its capacity to open itself on to a fourth dimension which is time ...” (Deleuze, 1986, p.17).

In the field of painting there has not only been an interest in spatially closed two-dimensional forms but also with an overt sense of thinness in the process of painting. The emphasis on the thin surface of painting, on the veil or skin of paint itself, on the minimalisation of the support and frame, may arguably have analogies with the photographic and cinematic screen. The interest I suggest is two-fold. The thin projected image of film and the expansion of image to commandeer an entire wall have aesthetic possibilities. Secondly, there is a recognition that we begin to see the world in relation to the images we make of it. The world begins to look like the movies and other images we create from it.

The x-ray image is the thinnest of images both physically and in its inherent de-materialisation. It is essentially the thinnest cross section, a substance-less scan in which the material objects also lose their substance, physicality and ability to occupy space. The thinness of the digital image, the emptiness of the radar scan, the immaterial glow of the television monitor, have all been used by painters in the construction of work and ideas. We grow accustomed to these new forms of imaging our world, we swallow them up, and build them into our vocabulary, but it is good to remind ourselves of what they are. The x-ray and the scan have no horizon, no architecture and landmarks to peg to and to navigate by. The normally familiar objects in the customs x-ray are robbed of their history. Navigation for most of us is becoming synonymous with driving and a (once) strange display of computer generated information. We begin to see the world through these thin abstract diagrams. The final exhibition work has no horizon, and is the antithesis of landscape. Everything is brought up to the flat surface, and the few recognizable images and objects take their place on a dominating, abstract field of virtual reality, or the reality of the virtual.

The Grid as connector

In this regard the grid is interesting because it appears, with the simplest of means, to both intensely frame and exclude everything not related to the repeated frame, and at the same time it deframes and implies an extension beyond the frame (in all directions). The grid links to virtual presence through an abstract geometry.

With over 10 metres between them, Panels 1 and 15 (Figure 31) are the most overtly gridded sections of the thesis work. This initiates and maintains a rhythm across the work that not only builds a structure but links and connects. The grids form an abstract field that plays out both repetition and the invention of the new.

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Relational painting refers to a long history of abstraction in which compositional juxtapositions of colour, shape and texture largely determine the effect of the work.

31

Krauss's 1979 essay *Grids* was a seminal text in providing critical and contextual language relating to seriality and repetition in modernist art. Krauss also provides alternative positions to formalist readings of the grid and refutes what she refers to as the myths of modernism, namely the grids hostility to narrative and its imperviousness to language.

In a presentation to students at the Pratt Institute, New York, in 1960, painter Frank Stella discussed the then current problematics of representation and relational painting.³⁰ The content of Stella's talk was recorded in a notebook by artist Carl Andre, and published initially in 1971 in a text on Stella by Robert Rosenblum. Stella's solution to developing a new form of abstraction was repetition and symmetry which "forces illusionistic space out of the painting at a constant rate by using a regulated pattern" (Harrison & Wood, 1992, p.806). Although Stella was not implying a shift away from spatial issues and explorations to a concern with temporality, this statement signals a significant development in late 20th century painting. The advent of seriality, repetition and the grid in visual art has been interpreted from a wide range of positions, including modernist readings of formalism and structure (Krauss, 1979)³¹, spiritualist readings (Douglas, 1987; Moritz, 1987), and feminist and anti-modernist concerns (Fer, 2007; Hammond, 1984). Very little has been written however, particularly in the field of painting, from a philosophical base relating to time and ontological concerns. And yet the gridded surface could be seen as a set of endlessly repeated frames within a frame, delimited only by an edge, and as much involved in the generation of movement, connection and exchange as in a static symbolic form.

Referring to the work of Agnes Martin, Lippard talked of an unreplicative use of what could be seen as a repetitive medium.

Pollock describes the minimal, gridded paintings and drawings of Agnes Martin as constructing "... a dispersing gaze across palely palpitating fields held lightly from oceanic immersiveness by the barely visible but human markings of a gridded system of intersecting lines" (Pollock, 2005, p.160). Here Pollock talks of the work that the grid carries out in Martin's work, and of liminal states held from disappearing on the surface of the work. The idea that the grid carries out work in a painting, rather than being a rigid, a priori and conclusive form, is of interest here. The suggestion is that this aligns with Deleuze's notion of the work of the virtual and the actual via the active diagram. Discussing Martin's work,

Pollock talks of “structure of thought or logics based on encounter, severality, and co-affection in contrast to the phallic logic of absence/presence” (Pollock, 2005, p.162). She goes on to say that Martin’s works “focus aesthetically on the zones of transitivity, decentred visualities, and becoming” (Pollock, 2005, p.162). Pollock’s relocation of the geometry of the grid within an ontological framework of transitivity and becoming is pertinent to this project.

In *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (1986), Rose realigns repetition with,

...ITS proper meaning and status: not as a lack of originality or something merely derived ...nor the more recent practice of appropriating artistic and photographic images in order to undermine their previous status; but repetition as insistence, that is, as the constant pressure of something hidden but not forgotten – something that can only come into focus now by blurring the field of representation where our normal forms of self-recognition take place. (ROSE, 1986, P.228)

Although in this project I have not been exploring something lost or forgotten, there is a connection relating to the grid and repetition and the insistent work it undertakes. Here the hidden and forgotten are the virtual and the invisible, and the grid as diagram works between this realm through the materiality of paint and the structural field of the work.

Pollock refers to these processes related to repetition as a psychic function (Pollock, 2005). “The field created by repeating blurs boundaries either within each singular work or of that which may appear on its screen as the potential for identification in the form of a readable image” (Pollock, 2005, p.163). This function of repetition, of blurring boundaries, occurs at multiple levels within a work and across works, and even outside of the work itself. Pollock goes on to suggest a more specifically Freudian or psychoanalytic reading of repetition as related “not

only to a neurotic knot of unresolved anxiety but to trauma, to the relays between the real and the phantasmatic”(Pollock, 2005, p.163). In distinction to the scope of this thesis, this is seen as a specific form of repetition, more aligned to a Freudian framework of dream analysis and repetition. In this project the relays are the virtual and the actual, both of which in a Deleuzian model are real. They play out in the work as a series of connections within sections and across the length of the work, as material, painterly links and as virtual experiences, such as the ways in which the x-ray images cause virtual associations with other images in the work. These connections involve the collision of the personal and the public, the experience of surveillance, and the embedding and recall of memory, all of which are generated by material, actual form but sit in the virtual world. Connections or relays between virtual and material elements are the origin of the dynamic and meaning of the work.

Ettinger follows Pollock’s psychoanalytic reading and traces repetition where “one finds momentary relief in symptomatic repetitions or by subterfuge, in the artwork, where its painful encapsulation partly blows up” (Ettinger, 1999, p.89). Applying this Freudian analysis to all forms of repetition in art work would certainly be a mistake, however the idea of repeated form, seriality and the grid as a dynamic field, where work is done, things are changing, and where connections are being made, underlies these readings and the ideas proposed here. Despite different interpretive contexts this amounts to a deep impulse to repeat (a Freudian phrase initially) (Pollock, 2005). The argument here is that what Krauss refers to as the optical unconscious, is not solely a mental function or drive but has an ontological connection outside of the artwork itself, or the self itself (Krauss, 1993).

Against a plethora of repeated forms in her contemporary art world, Pollock asked the question “Why paint another grid if the grid itself seems to hold a certain kind of formal stasis and conceptual perfection” (Pollock, 2005, p.163). She posed this same question directly to Agnes Martin in an interview, who responded, saying “I dream another grid” (Pollock, 2005, p.164). Martin thus sited the origin

of the grid, her grids at least, in the mind and not as an external, mathematical system imposed on a surface. She also stated that she dreamt, rather than thought, the grid into being. This seems to signal a subconscious thought process and an origin and significance to the form outside of the purely formal. It tags the grid as being at the start of form and the generation of work. Pollock, considering Martin's seemingly simple statement, suggests that her repeating forms from painting to painting creates "... an effect strung out between each work – an invisible space that both participates in each work but is only created by the series, not the repeating but the relations" (Pollock, 2005, p.164). This loops back to the discussion in Chapter Three on Deleuze's idea of connectedness in relation to the virtual world. In the current project these relations operate both within each work and across multiple frames, as they might do between separate paintings, back into past work and forward to as yet to be thought works.

Pollock digs deeper in defining what exactly the grid is in relation to the artwork, and concludes it,

... is not, in this sense, abstract and external. It is both form itself, and the visual form of thought as that which must contain what only thereafter can be contained and yet remains the mnemonic³² trace of what is beyond/before containment?
(POLLOCK, 2005, P.165)

If the idea that the grid is a visual form of thought is seen from a Deleuzian perspective in which thought is just one aspect of Idea, that is the virtual, then the grid could be considered a visual manifestation of the virtual. It contains, yet comes before containment, and connects beyond what it contains. Pollock proposes that "The grid maps relations between elements that are otherwise not in perceptual or narrative sequence" (Pollock, 2005, p.165). Implicit in the form of the grid is the idea of infinity, but as Fer states "The thing about infinity is that it

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Mnemonic is a term in psychology relating to the ability to retain memory.

is not a thing” (Fer, 2005, p.192). Infinity is thus a virtual realm. Fer states “The point is less what infinity is than the operation that it names – an operation that is always uncertain about its object, that calls infinite what exceeds representation and so has to be abandoned” (Fer, 2005, p.192). According to Fer, in Martin’s gridded works, “it is the play between the infinite and the infinitesimal that heads off and so refuses the idea of a single totality” (Fer, 2005, p.192).

In a conversation with de Zegher, artist Avis Newman discussed her large scale drawings in a 2003 exhibition at the Tate in contrast to traditional works where “... the surface of a painting is integrated, its space totalized through the sharp demarcation of its edge – its frame. Through this unification the surface is named” (Zegher, 2003, p.11). The grid functions in a different way to achieve similar ends. Where wall-sized work expands beyond any sense of frame, a gridded surface emphasises borders, at the same time as denying the frame any full ownership as definer of structure and controller of content. The way in which this works for and on the viewer is nicely stated by Pollock,

THE eye must work that field, however, no rest, and no form within which to retrench at a distant. Thus the effect is to dissipate the very conditions of the traditional viewing relation, while rendering vision itself a movement in space that escapes the location of the eye and makes the whole body feel as if it is virtually moving in space. (POLLOCK, 2005, P.170)

In a study of the work of Agnes Martin, Alloway concludes “Thus the grid, though tight, does not close the surface, but establishes an open plane, identified with the surface of the picture, but accumulating sufficient differences to suggest for all its regularity, a veil, a shadow, a bloom” (Alloway, 1973, p.9). The repeated coordinates of the grid would at face value appear to shut down the options for the generation of difference, and yet Fer suggests that Martin’s use of the repeated

structure “... enabled her to increase the play of difference within it. Rather than constraining difference, repetition allows for maximum difference, exacerbating, even, the multiplication of variables” (Fer, 2005, p.190). In a supremely succinct statement on repetition, Fer states that “the work of repetition is the impossibility of completion” (Fer, 2005, p.192). The impossibility of finality and complete form is precisely the link between the artwork for this project and the conceptual exploration, that is, engagement with transition and the mutual determination of the virtual and the actual that insists on the new.

The grid at work in the research project

The grid, that ubiquitous and persistent construction of Modernism, appears determined to take part in whatever is going on throughout the art work for this project. At times it is the driving visual and conceptual logic, establishing a visual field of movement across the flat surface of the work and beyond. Here it is barely visible below the surface, there it just seems to line things up and keep them in order, and there it does its painting work, insisting that things repeat themselves, with variation. In Panel 11 of the final project work (Figure 38), the grid is a faint drawn line, hovering between the oceanic abstract field and the surface of marks, material and images. In this way the grid itself is performative, working to link the abstract and the figurative, the virtual and the physical, the internal dynamics of the work, and the inside of the frame and the work as a whole.

Throughout the research project the grid has played multiple roles, unlike Martin’s more singular form of repetition (Figure 39). Fer talks of “Martin’s grid as a kind of sieve – worlds fall through it” (Fer, 2005, p.192). Although in areas of the thesis work there is a sense of things having dropped through the mesh and the surface emptied of objects, it also aligns things and keeps them linked. It equally appears to bring forms or ideas to the visible surface. As in Martin’s work, it carries out a linking relation between the actual and the invisible, and as Fer

FIGURE 38

Panel 11,
final thesis work (2015)
800mm X 1500mm
ACRYLIC ON ALUMINIUM.



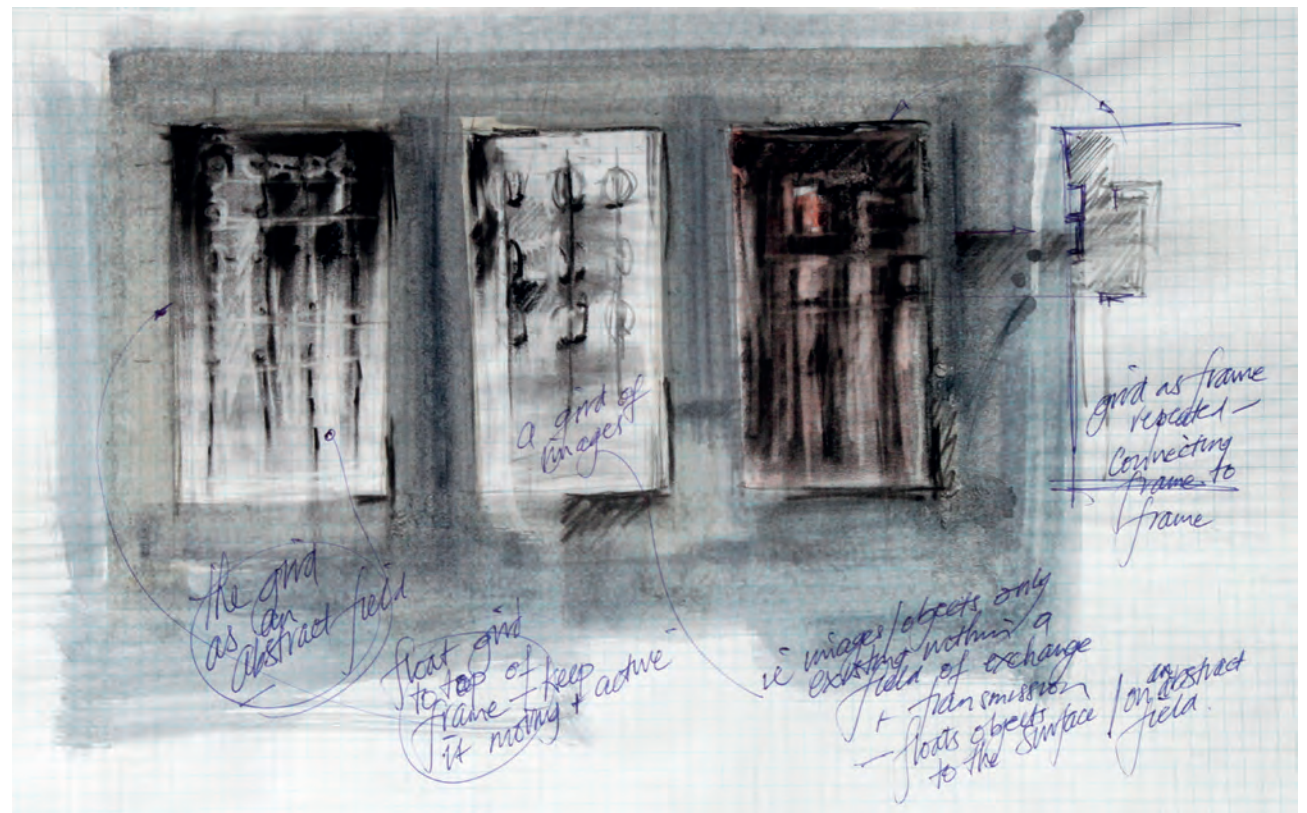


FIGURE 39

Research project, *workbook page* (2013), 400mm X 280mm

WATERCOLOUR, PENCIL AND PEN ON GRAPH PAPER.

The workbook page illustrated here is indicative of studies exploring ways of using repetition and the grid in relation to the topic. As a dynamic field of connection, the grid links images within and across frames, and brings objects to the surface where they are denied isolation, and are forced to take part in a wider set of activity and linkages.

says of Martin's work, "Actuality and infinity end up being something the same, where what falls below the threshold of the visible, or the noticeable, is exhaustively, endlessly, rehearsed" (Fer, 2005, p.192).

The grid could be regarded as mathematical, repetitious and formulaic, allied to a deterministic view of time, and cause and effect. Contrary to this position however the works produced for this doctoral project use the gridded surface with quite the opposite intention. Here the surface pulses with difference and repetition. A deterministic model of time as cause and effect, despite the obvious reading as inherently temporal and linear, is, according to Bergson, essentially a spatial model. Although the points on a grid repeat each other, any sense of linearity, hierarchy and causality is entirely denied (Figure 42).

In the final thesis work there are two panels (Panels 1 and 15, Figures 40 & 41) that include small CNC routed and laser cut acrylic plugs embedded in the gridded plane of the painting. Although the entire work is not intended to be viewed from left to right as a narrative or sequence, this is such an instinctive mode of reading that the far left panel acts to establish an interpretive framework for the work. There are a number of key aspects to this. Panel 1 is abstract and devoid of figurative elements. The plugs however act almost as images, or a conflation of object and image. This abstraction activates a rhythmic repetition across the panel, out across the rest of the work, and is picked up again in Panel 15. It also establishes an underlying field of intensity and process that informs the entire work. Thus these panels establish a dynamic of movement, connection and transition which precedes the actual or the figurative. The concern with time and temporality is evidenced for example in the plugs. In Panel 1 they are domed and opaque and wrap time and movement around themselves, in the second panel they are flat and reflective of their context.

The Plug panels constructively collide the abstract diagrammatic of the grid with small, undifferentiated real moments/events. In these sections, movement itself is redefined. There is no state of moving objects or of objects moving in

FIGURES 40 AND 41

Panels 1 and 15

final thesis work

Panel size

800mm X 1500mm

ACRYLIC, OIL AND CNC ROUTERED
AND LASER CUT ACRYLIC PLUGS

Between these two panels are thirteen panels extending the process of repetition. The repeated shoes establish the idea of the mirror image, and the constant process of time as repetition and difference. The stairs of the escalator establish a rhythmic repetition up the surface of the panels. The repeated labels in one panel multiply out in a continuum of processing and identifying.

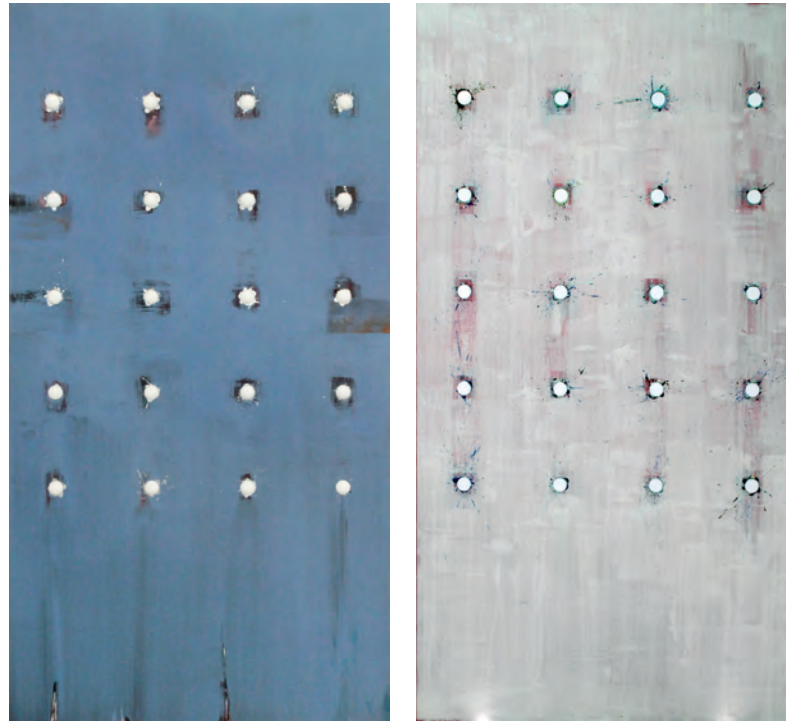


FIGURE 42

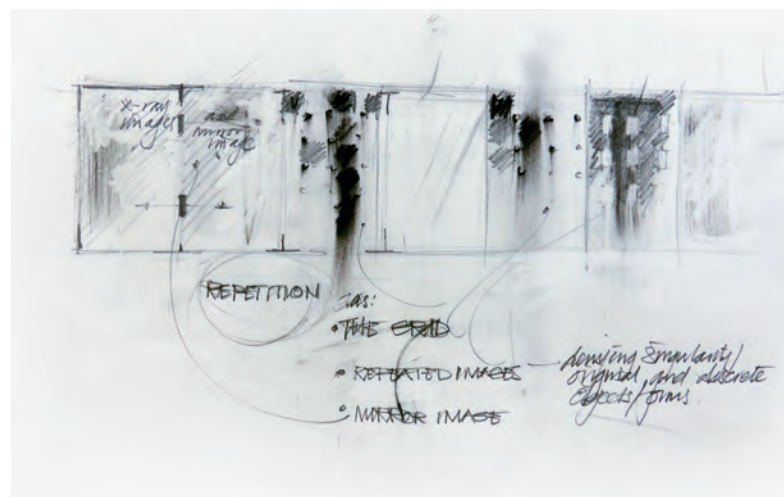
Research project

workbook page (2014)

300mm X 210mm

PENCIL ON PAPER.

This workbook page is indicative of experimentation with various forms of repetition, including gridded surfaces that repeat in all directions, doubling and mirror images, and the repeating and reconfiguring of images across the surface.



space or space to move in, rather two alternative states are proposed within the specificity of the medium. The first is the virtual movement implied by the grid structure. Movement is only a virtual intelligence of the expulsion of space out of the painting at an even rate in all directions. The second proposed movement in these works is a stalled movement, appearing from behind or outside of the work. The scaled down gestures or events painted from behind the surface of the work are blocked and denied, and there is thus a collapse of object (the factuality of the plug itself), image (the diagrammatic of the grid), and event (the overt process of making or bringing into being). Thus these works could be interpreted in two ways relating to time; firstly the dynamic collapse of object, image and event, and secondly regarding becoming. These two readings are perhaps one and the same thing, with a differentiation only in terms of their theoretical function. The first is a denial of differentiation between the states of object, image and event, and the second a dynamic view of time as always becoming, and becoming other. Each plug is as a slice or cut in the continuous field. The plugs act as a cross section, or more precisely as a core sample or spatial cut (differentiated from each other cut, yet undifferentiated in significance or privilege). In this sense the plugs operate in a collapse of duality. The word 'plug' itself signals that movement is plugged or stopped, at the same time there is the sense of an active process of a plug or core sample being taken.

Deleuze, the diagram and the abstract machine

Referring to the current revival of the use of diagrams and diagrammatic thinking, particularly in cognitive science and technology history, DeLanda says,

...IT is the specifically visual aspect of diagrams that is emphasized, for example, the ability of geometric representation rapidly to convey to a problem-solver some of the crucial aspects defining a particular problem, and hence, to suggest possible solutions. (DELANDA, 2000, P.33)

DeLanda differentiates these largely scientific uses of diagrams from the concept of the diagram advocated by Deleuze. One of the key differentiating factors is that for Deleuze, "... diagrams have no intrinsic connection with visual representation" (DeLanda, 2000, p.33). Although the diagrams we create and use are of course visual and rely on visual means and language for their effectiveness, Deleuze proposes a broader, more ubiquitous idea of the diagram. The most significant difference between the Deleuzian diagram and common usage of the term is that for Deleuze the problem-solving function of the diagram is "... not necessarily performed by humans or robots, but may be instantiated in even simple material and energetic systems" (DeLanda, 2000, p.33). This is a radically different concept, where diagrams are the means by which change and the new is generated. Equally it re-invents the idea of problem solving in relation to the function of diagrams. For Deleuze, problem solving is a function of the interaction of virtual and actual elements. Problems have an objective existence, and it is the diagram of virtual and actual forces that define and resolve them (DeLanda, 2000). DeLanda suggests that Deleuze's model is,

... a philosophy which attempts to replace essentialist views of the genesis of form (which imply a conception of matter as an inert receptacle for forms that come from the outside) with one in which matter is already pregnant with morphogenetic³³ capabilities, therefore, capable of generating form on its own. (DELANDA, 2000, P.34)

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Morphogenetic derives from the Greek *morphē*, (form), and *genesis* (beginning, generation or origin) thus, meaning the generation of form in an organism.

For Deleuze, this is the realm of what he refers to as the abstract machine; the forces that drive change and generate form. It is abstract in that it is invisible and in the realm of the virtual. It is a machine in that it makes and generates the actual.

AN abstract machine in itself is not physical or corporeal, any more than it is semiotic; it is diagrammatic (it knows nothing of the distinctions between the artificial and the natural either). It operates by matter, not by substance; by function, not by form... The abstract machine is pure Matter-Function – a diagram independent of the forms and substances, expressions and contents it will distribute. (DELEUZE, 1994, P.141)

The two uses of the term diagram could not be further apart. The common scientific and design usage suggests a summarising process of existing information and forms. Deleuze's diagram lies at the origin of form; in fact it is the process itself of the generation of form. The Deleuzian diagram is an invisible map or plan in action. Deleuze proposes that matter has the morphogenetic capability to create form, and that the diagram is somewhat akin to a design process in which virtual forces act to solve problems. These problems are inherent to nature, and relate to matter and form in relation to changing context and environment. The diagram is Deleuze's conceptualisation of the process by which change and new form is generated. It pre-exists new form in that it is not solely matter or identity responding to contextual change, but an external process or plan by which virtual forces solve problems of existence and change (DeLanda, 2000).

If painting has the capability to make visible the invisible, then perhaps its power lies partly in its connection with this deep, invisible field of forces that Deleuze refers to as the abstract machine. In a compilation of notebooks, Paul Klee stated this succinctly, "art does not render the visible but renders visible"

(Klee, 1961, p.76). Merleau-Ponty alludes to a connection with an invisible scheme in discussing the work of Cézanne, “Cézanne’s seeing fills in the visible of the specular image with a plan” (Johnson, 1993, p.61). He goes on to say “The visible is filled in with the invisible which Cezanne makes visible in paint” (Johnson, 1993, p.60). Underpinning this project is the idea that not only does painting have the poetic means to make the invisible visible through the materiality and processes of painting, but in the creative process the interaction of the virtual and the actual is the driving force of expression and experimentation. If the word machine itself is deterritorialised from the associations of the mechanical and the objective, and is overlaid on the organic and the subjective, as in a Deleuzian model, then perhaps painting is a creative abstract machine.

In the following Chapter on the physical and social site of this study, namely the airport transit space, I discuss images derived from the arrivals and departures information boards. Experiments derived from these considerations are connected with the overall topic in a number of areas, in particular relating to movement and temporal processes and devices of disruption. A connection is made to the palimpsest, a document that has been overwritten historically, leaving traces of the original and of periodic changes. The information board, it is suggested, is a readymade palimpsest, but one with no original manuscript. I prefigure the discussion in the following Chapter here as there is a connection to be made with the ideas of the diagram. Underlying the constant re-allocation of time and destination is a diagram at work, that responds and organises and reacts to problems.

In an essay on Deleuze and the diagram as piloting devices, Knoespel discusses the origin of the word diagram. According to Knoespel, “The root verb of diagramma (διάγραμμα) does not simply mean something which is marked out by lines, a figure, form, or plan, but also carries a secondary connotation of marking or crossing out” (Knoespel, 2001, p.147). Knoespel goes on to suggest that as the diagram originates in the wax tablet, “From a phenomenological vantage point, the Greek setting of diagram suggests that any figure that is drawn is

accompanied by an expectancy that it will be redrawn” (Knoespel, 2001, p.147). This is a dynamic concept of the diagram, which could be considered as a kind of relay that visualises the generation of meaning. In contrast, Knoespel says that “... a map might be thought of as a diagram that has forgotten it is doing work” (Knoespel, 2001, p.147).

DEFINED diagrammatically in this way, an abstract machine is neither an infra-structure that is determining in the last instance nor a transcendental Idea that is determining in the supreme instance. Rather it plays a piloting role. The diagrammatic or abstract machine does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality. Thus when it constitutes points of creation or potentiality it does not stand outside history but is instead always prior to history. (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, P.143)

Figure 61 is a fold out section illustrating the entire length of the final exhibition work for the project. The transit space and the paintings derived from it are permeated with systems and connections. The thesis work has aimed to find a visible form akin to Deleuze’s invisible abstract machine in which the virtual realm drives the actual world in a process of change and transformation. In this the project has aimed to get inside, get beneath, the event of travel and transit to an experience of transformation and the virtual at work on the actual. The lens is focussed on the transit experience but it could equally relate to any experience.

Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of the diagram as standing prior to history implies an active and generative function. As mentioned, Deleuze does not limit the diagram to scientific and other devices, but refers to diagrams and the abstract machine as the generative process of all biological and material being. In the field of painting this productive function is carried out by poetics that play between

the visible and the invisible, and with the dynamic intensities of the medium. Although this applies to all genres, narratives and styles of painting, the focus here is on the grid as an overtly visual form of diagram. The idea proposed here is that, at least in my own work, it is as if an underlying, invisible map has gravitated to the surface of the work. This pared back diagram is not considered an inert and minimalist structure. It is simultaneously actual and virtual in that it is visible and has been constructed, yet the points on the axes of a grid occupy no space and have no substance and are thus virtual. As discussed earlier in this Chapter the grid also implies a virtual infinite field continuing in all directions from no centre, or from an infinite number of centres. Thus a centre is only a centre when it is focussed on, and becomes an out-of-field to another centre when that becomes the locus of attention. In the artwork the grid becomes a symbolically generic diagram opening to a multiplicity of overlays of interpretation and connection.

The argument constructed in this thesis is that Deleuze's concept of the diagram and the abstract machine has considerable potential for re-thinking aspects of painting. In terms of the specifics of the project it is also seen as a catalyst for the development of new ideas and explorations. However Deleuze's own analysis of painting in relation to his ideas of the diagram is limited and somewhat categorical in relation to contemporary art practice. In his text on Francis Bacon, Deleuze includes a section specifically on the diagram and painting. Here the diagram is linked with the expressionistic devices of the painter; gestural lines, forms and colour that break with the specifics of signification and representation. "These almost blind manual marks attest to the intrusion of another world into the visual world of figuration" (Deleuze, 2003, p.82). Despite the open-ended, creative nature of Deleuze's philosophical ideas of time and being in relation to his analysis of the work of Bacon and other contemporary artists, in his analysis of painting in relation to the diagram, Deleuze constructs two arguments that need to be challenged. Firstly Deleuze aligns the act of painting with the desire to overcome chaos, and although he sees the diagram as a sort of chaos,

in that it is an invisible plethora of forces, it also functions to transcend that state. “The diagram is indeed a chaos, a catastrophe, but it is also a germ of order or rhythm” (Deleuze, 2003, p.83). Deleuze proposes that “... painters pass through the catastrophe themselves, embrace the chaos, and attempt to emerge from it” (Deleuze, 2003, p.84). This duality of chaos and order appears simplistic, particularly in relation to Deleuze’s dynamic concept of the virtual and actual aspects of reality. The second position of Deleuze’s in the text on Bacon that should be challenged is his differentiation between abstraction and abstract expressionism, and abstraction and figuration. Deleuze states clearly that he considers pure abstraction as a code rather than a diagram in that what “... abstract painting elaborates is less a diagram than a symbolic code, on the basis of great formal oppositions” (Deleuze, 2003, p.84). Deleuze makes the judgement that abstract painting “... is a path that reduces the abyss or chaos (as well as the manual) to a minimum: it offers us an asceticism, a spiritual salvation” (Deleuze, 2003, p.84). In this statement there are two assumptions that need further analysis. Firstly, although there has been a considerable body of abstract painting from the beginning of the twentieth century that engages specifically with spiritualist and spiritual issues and forms, this is certainly not the case for all abstract painting. Abstraction is also not the only form or solution by which artists have engaged with these concerns. Secondly, in the above statement, Deleuze refers to the abstract painter reducing, not only chaos but also the ‘manual’, by which he implies the gestural and the expressive. Spanish painter Antoni Tàpies, a contemporary of Bacon’s, created paintings which were rigourously abstract and non-figurative, at the same time as being grounded in materiality and the manual. His work is often social and political, drawing on his experience of his native Barcelona. Deleuze applies his philosopher’s lens to the art of painting in relation to the diagram. In this project the artist’s lens is turned back on itself, but using a Deleuzian framework in the generation of dialogue and new ideas. The two results are rather different. A key difference lies in a contention with the opposition that Deleuze establishes

between what he refers to as an optical geometry in pure abstract painting and the manual or gestural expression of line, colour and intensity.

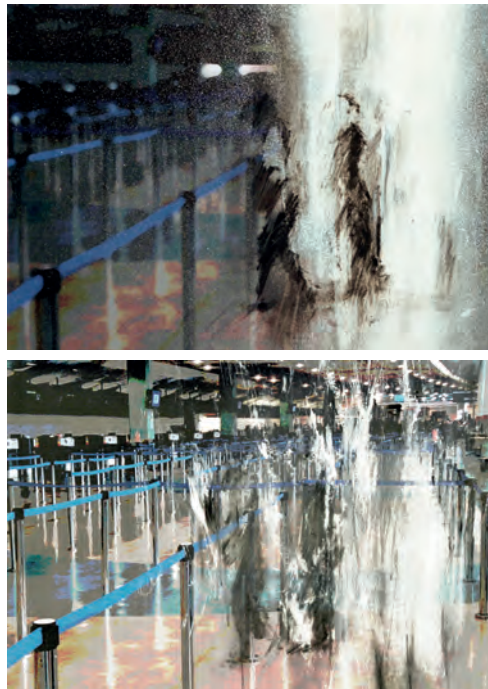
Despite these reservations regarding Deleuze's analysis of aspects of the art of painting, the concept of the abstract machine, and of the visible and invisible in relation to painting is highly productive. In my thinking throughout the thesis no substantive differentiation is made between purely abstract sequences and figurative areas, and often these work together, mimicking and defining each other. Likewise painting and photographic forms operate as a hybrid whole (Figure 43). Deleuze's own notion of reciprocal determination in fact provides a way out of the problems inherent in his analysis of painting and the categorisation of abstraction, figuration and expression.

FIGURE 43

Thesis project
drawings (2015)

ACRYLIC PAINT AND PENCIL
ON DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH.

The drawings illustrated are indicative of experimentation with the collision of photographic images and painting processes. Sprayed, poured and marked overlays explore ways of creating visual and poetic form relating to the topic. Photographic image and painted and marked surface work together; equally as do the regimented processing of check-in and the blur of movement of travellers across the space.



In discussing how the words and ideas of others affect his own thinking, Merleau-Ponty says they “... form a grillwork through which I see my thought” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.224). This grillwork is a grid that lays over your own thoughts, paintings, and self, as a virtual network that connects with the extensive world. The axes of a grid radiate in all directions. They may be limited to the structure of a painting but the grid also, “... forms a world with all the other paintings—The same sensible elements signifying something else there than in the prosaic world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.223). In this way the grid is far from an inert, purely mathematical device, but rather an intense, active map or layer of existence.

Abstraction: spacelessness, thinness and the temporal

Gilbert-Rolfe makes insightful connections between aspects of abstraction in painting and concepts of time, including overlaying Deleuze’s concepts of time and cinema with contemporary abstraction and video, television and film. The thinness of film, for example, and the projected image or sequence has a corollary in painting with the obsession with surface and scale. Gilbert-Rolfe delves into areas of analogy between abstract painting and philosophical concepts, such as linking the advent of whiteness in painting and Deleuze’s ideas of duration, and within the frame of painting to emptiness and saturation (Gilbert-Rolfe, 1995). In the work of Robert Ryman and his dedication to surface and whiteness there is a strong relation to theoretical ideas of materiality, the predictable and the accidental.

The radical experiments in all fields of art undertaken by the Russian avant-garde movement in the first two decades of the 20th Century have often been seminal in the study of the origins of the development of abstraction and have provided a rich vocabulary of forms, ideas, and dialogue for the development of abstraction internationally. It is insightful to re-examine the work of Kasimir

Malevich, for example, from this early period in light of the ideas explored in this thesis. There have been a considerable number of significant texts³⁴ on Malevich's work and that of his contemporary artists. Analysis from a temporal perspective however is limited.

"In his uncompromisingly flat solution Malevich makes no use whatsoever of representational aids to convey space" (Zhadova, 1978/1982, p.45). Zhadova attempts to find a connection with spatial dynamics, and refers to a set of diagrams of squares in a text, *Outline of Psychology*, by Wilhelm Wundt published in Russian in 1912, describing the perception of space. Although Zhadova states that Malevich's Black Square creates "a sort of doubly extra-spatial significance" (Zhadova, 1978/1982, p.46), she goes on to describe the work as developing "a kind of 'figurative formula' for space" (Zhadova, 1978/1982, p.46). It appears as if a Euclidian spatial reading fails with such works. Malevich's contemporary El Lissitzky stated that in Suprematist space "the distances are measured only by the intensity and the position of the strictly defined colour-areas" (Zhadova, 1978/1982, p.47). The shift signaled here is from a spatially determined structure to one based in intensities, a dynamic appearing to have more in common with a Deleuzian sense of matter and transmission. The idea of the open duration of time and the constant reinvention process of time is almost apparent in Zhadova's comment "... there arises on the plane of the picture a world of multi-dimensional, multi-layered space and motion, as might exist in an everlasting continuum of time" (Zhadova, 1978/1982, p.48). Many of the Suprematists were engaged in new ideas from Mathematics and Physics on the nature of time and space. Although much of the writing on Malevich and Suprematism attempts to understand the work from a traditional spatial paradigm, there are moments when this is seen to be inadequate. Malevich's friend, the poet-philosopher and mathematician Velemir Khlebnikov described his encounter with some of Malevich's Suprematist work in a 1919 article, *The head of the universe. Time and space*. "Yet again I had come upon a case of time ruling space in painting. Whites and blacks are indeed at war

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Key texts on Malevich include Zhadova's *Malevich: Suprematism and Revolution in Russian Art 1910-1930* (first published in 1978), and a book titled *Kazimir Malevich 1878-1935* to accompany a major exhibition of Malevich's work held in Leningrad, Moscow and Amsterdam in 1988 and 1989.

as this artist sees them and they sometimes vanish altogether to make way for pure dimension” (Zhadova, 1978/1982, p.49). In a reflective statement on the development of Suprematism, Malevich wrote in 1927, “The black square on a white background was the first shape used to convey the absence of an object” (Zhadova, 1978/1982, p.50). Clearly this signals a radical shift from the depiction of objects in space and from objective space itself to another paradigm. This new mode of representation appears to better align with Bergsonian and Deleuzian ideas, and throughout the writings of the Suprematist artists, writers and theorists, there are references to weightlessness, transmission and change.

There is a parallel too with other Bergsonian and Deleuzian ideas of time. Their radical notions of the actual and the virtual not as separate states but as dimensions of each other appear as strong methodologies in the construction of early Russian avant-garde work. In Ivan Puni’s work, for example, we find the imposition of an actual object within the abstract space or surface of a work. In his *Plate on a table*, circa 1919, Puni attaches an actual white plate to the abstract surface of the painting. The plate is not solely an actual object but refers to the importance of ceramic production and the involvement of artists in the productive culture of Communist Russia. The work is far however from any commitment to social and political realism, and the seemingly simple object also operates as an abstract symbol, a virtual reference to universal geometry and language. The surface of the painting itself is both actual and virtual, being at the same time physical and confined, and weightless, spaceless and continuous.

The proposal here is not that these early 20th Century Russian works are about time, or even primarily driven by ideas of time. However the ideas and languaging of Bergson and Deleuze in particular appears to be a strong model for analysis that has not only a radical stance, but also a poetic mode that equals the innovative nature of the work itself.

Hybrid forms

Abstraction in painting has been persistent since its invention in the first decades of the twentieth century. The Introduction to an important volume on abstraction in painting, *Painting Abstraction: New Elements in Abstract Painting*, published in 2009, is titled *The Persistence of Abstraction*. In this, Nickas traces the on-going concern with abstraction in various forms through the twentieth, into the twenty first century. The first chapter of the book is titled *Hybrid Pictures*, and here, Nickas claims that this prevalent interest is “at the heart of abstraction precisely because it’s these hybridized pictures that not only create bridges between representation and abstraction, but also open up abstraction to limitless possibilities” (Nickas, 2009, p.11). The nature of this relationship is central to this project and it is one of the elements that links the creative practice and the theoretical concerns.

Nickas states that abstraction “... can be thought of as the ‘filter’ through which the recognizable passes and is transformed” (Nickas, 2009, p.11). The idea of the recognizable passing through a lens or filter and being transformed establishes a dynamic sense of process relating to perception, interpretation, and change. The argument in this thesis is that this process is not a one-directional transmission. The recognizable as image and the abstract are not merely juxtaposed, creating new possibilities. It is not a matter of the collapse and conjunction of styles and genres. The abstract and the figurative³⁵ have things in common, they are both real and unreal, they share a space and time, they overlap, mimic each other, and are both achieved through the performance of painting. As discussed earlier in the exegesis, Bolt proposes that painting is not concerned with representation and thus the distinction between abstraction and representational images breaks down.

The case made here is not that the two simultaneous modes of abstraction and representation are the actual and the virtual, rather they engage in a parallel process of simultaneity and reciprocal determination akin to the actual and the virtual through the poetics of paint (and photography). Thus the bringing together

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The terms abstract, image, representation, and related terminology, are contentious and much debated. To avoid analysis tangential to the focus of this project, the term figurative is used here to refer to recognisable images of the world in opposition to abstract surfaces.

of abstract and figurative elements is seen not as a limited form of the hybrid, and not merely an inclusive act of differentiated forms and genres. The proposition is for a notion of hybridity where opposing forms belong together, interact, and in fact, mutually challenge and construct each other.

Throughout the project the research also explored ideas of stylistic hybridity to ensure that the final work maintained concentration on more abstract ideas of time and transmission, albeit through the actual experience of travel and transit.

To this end the thinking developed within the thesis shifted stylistically across a spectrum between more literal representations of transit and abstract forms that explored transition and transmission. The use of such hybrid modes aligned with the thesis topic in that it relates directly to ideas of simultaneous and mutually determining elements, and of conjunction and connectedness.

Conclusion

The abstract mechanics of painting

According to Bogue, Deleuze's notion of the 'abstract-machine' "is simply a name for the domain of becoming in its role as abstract diagram that guides the formation of levels of expression and content and puts them in relation to one another" (Bogue, 2003, p.91). Deleuze proposes this concept of becoming as the constant flow of new moments. He also develops the concept of 'becoming-other' and refers to becoming-animal and becoming-woman for example. Deleuze looks to the realm of art, to painting and cinema, for evidence of an open, complex idea of being and representation. In the work of Francis Bacon for example Deleuze proposes how, through language and art, we become something else. In this model the figurative and the abstract become the other, define their counterpart, and at times become to look like each other.

Deleuze's analysis of specific artists and paintings is largely historical and avoids much of the work of the second half of the 20th Century, aside from

the significant text on Francis Bacon. He does, with Guattari, however, mention abstraction, and, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, states,

EVEN when painting becomes abstract, it only rediscovers the black hole and white wall, the great composition of the white canvas and the black splash....the machine is already there, a machine that always functions in producing faces and landscapes, even the most abstract.

(DELEUZE AND GUATTARI, 1980, P.173)

Here the white wall is the realm of interconnected signifiers (or the outside) and the black holes are the subjective perceptions and responses (the inside). In bringing Mondrian's abstraction into the study they state that his work is 'pure landscape deterritorialised to the absolute' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, p.301). Deleuze and Guattari attribute deterritorialisation as the goal of painting (and the other arts), initiating a 'becoming-other'. They thus shift the aim of painting from image making and representation to the engagement with becoming something else, "for it is through writing that one becomes animal, it is through color that one becomes imperceptible, it is through music that one becomes hard and without memory, at once animal and imperceptible" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, p.187). It is perhaps in this notion that Deleuze (and Guattari) elucidate their most transgressional ideas, shifting between philosophical methodology, the poetic, theoretical analysis and a kind of vitalistic philosophy. The underlying concept of becoming, and Deleuze's two-fold use of the term in relation to the universal flow of time and the 'novel' (or the impossibility of return to a past state), as well as to the idea of becoming-other, is essentially a time-based notion. Deleuze presents the world as time, as the universal flow of the time-machine endlessly generating novel moments, and the interdependent dynamic between matter, image and event.

This chapter has examined several aspects of painting, namely abstraction and repetition in relation to figuration and hybrid tendencies. It establishes a framework using aspects of Deleuzian thinking as well as feminist writing to provide a new reading, for example, of the grid and repetition in painting. Deleuze provides a model by which repetition and the grid can be seen in relation to the dynamics of change and connection. In this way the grid might be considered as a diagram, linked to Deleuze's notion of the diagram as preceding form and being the generator of change. The chapter also critiques some of Deleuze's assumptions relating to abstraction and expression in art, and finds in a number of feminist works on repetition a valuable tool for analysis and response. In particular Pollock and Lippard construct a dynamic, expressive and meaning focused model of the grid and repetition, in relation to contemporary art. The exegesis locates the theoretical and conceptual study in my own practice and the work made over the duration of the project. The discoveries and insights unraveled and explored, however, are seen as having broader applicability in the study and making of creative practice.









TRANSIT AND TRANSITION

THE CODED SPACE OF AIR TRAVEL

This chapter closes in on the experience of travel and transit, which serves as subject, metaphor, symbol and a vast source of imagery. Though central to the thesis, this section is positioned relatively late in the exegesis to ensure that it is not considered purely as the content and subject of the work but rather as a vehicle for the exploration of ontological ideas. Key theoretical ideas that connect with the practice include disruption and discontinuity, transit space as a liminal experience, the moving frame of sensation, and the multiplicity of movements that are integral to time.

The airport transit space has been a haunting place for me over the duration of the project. Despite the disturbing anonymity, the noise and anxiety, and the overload of control systems, it has drawn me back into a world of possibilities relating to the thesis topic. It has served as subject for parts of the creative practice, as metaphor and symbol, and as a catalyst for ideas. It has provided a wealth of material; photographic, experiential, and interpretive, that has fed the project throughout. Although the event of travel and transiting is heavy with physical experience, it is also a place that is highly systematised and the traveller is processed as if passing through the mechanics of an organisational diagram. The research project has unravelled new ways of conceptualising the nature and function of diagrams, of the abstract and the code as dynamic fields that engage with and drive transformation.

Deleuze shifted the concept of the diagram away from the purely visual to that of a problem-solving, generative function. For Deleuze, “The diagrammatic or abstract machine does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.142). In this thesis I have considered the social space of travel and transit as a vast diagram, a network of virtual systems and codes that determine movement, process and space itself. Much has been written concerning the increasing codification of social spaces, with traffic management systems, CCTV, databases and networked infrastructure. Dodge and Kitchin suggest that aviation space is “... qualitatively different from most other built environments that are monitored and regulated” (Dodge & Kitchin, 2004, p.198). They refer to the code/space of aviation rather than coded space, proposing that,

... the relationship between code and space is dyadic – code and space are mutually constituted, wherein how the space is used and produced is predominantly mediated by code, and the code and its data exist in order to produce the space and its attendant spatiality. (DODGE & KITCHIN, 2004, P.198)

In this model “... code dominates the production of space, explicitly mediating sociospatial processes and experience” (Dodge & Kitchin, 2004, p.198). The code, which is a virtual field, dominates the environment, allowing the virtual to predominate over the actual and spatial in the subject of the transit space in the project. The thesis focusses on the site of the code/space of travel, and in particular of transit, as it is akin to a readymade image of the abstract machine in action. Here, as suggested by Dodge and Kitchin, the code and the virtual plethora of data and systems do not merely occupy “... a parallel world of their own, with virtual and material fleetingly intersecting ...”, but “... have become mutually constituted – produced through one another” (Dodge & Kitchin, 2004, p.198). These ways of seeing the phenomena of air travel bring this site right up against

Deleuze's notion of the mutual determination of the actual and the virtual. In a study of the rise of a network society, Castells talks of the space of flow, a "... purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequence of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions" (Castells, 1996, p.412).

Dodge and Kitchin refer to this space where "History exists only as codes in the networked system, a system that is simultaneously present across time zones around the globe" (Dodge & Kitchin, 2004, p.196). They discuss a phenomenon of these networked, coded spaces that is central to not only the final exhibition work of the thesis but also its development as a body of research. Not only are these spaces of travel highly networked and devoid of history, but "Moreover, the temporal codes within systems can be split and spliced, so data generated at, or referring to, different times can be recombined in nonsequential forms, introducing a condition of timelessness" (Dodge & Kitchin, 2004, p.196). Throughout the development of the project, processes of splitting and splicing provided a structural logic to the work. Different times and time-events were reconfigured in a nonsequential structure. Influenced by cinematic form, the final work is spliced together from panels that act as stills, longer sequences and effects, and visual/conceptual links that force the viewer to traverse the work back and forth across its length.

Even in sections where there is a flow across panels of image and movement there is a fragmenting, overlaying and sense of the multiplicity, and multi-directional nature of time. Throughout the work there is a sense not only of repetition but also of the cutting and pasting of images and sections, of shuffling and rearranging. The artwork, aligning with the topic of the study, is analogous to what Dodge and Kitchin refer to as a "... real virtuality ... seamlessly blending the material (travel) and virtual (networked communication)" (Dodge & Kitchin, 2004, p.197). The world of travel and transit is itself a virtual one within the research, and it is through the materials and process of painting and image processing that the virtual accumulates and interacts, that is the material conditions and the virtual associations in the work are "produced through one another" (Dodge & Kitchin, 2004, p.198).

The airport transit space offers a sense of time outside of our normal temporal interactions. Dodge and Kitchin argue that,

THE aviation industry ... generates its own time-space, which takes precedence over 'natural' times of the body, diurnal cycle, seasonal variation as well as conventional, grounded, local 'clock' times of the space of places. In this sense, we argue, that air travel is an 'out of time' experience.

(DODGE & KITCHIN, 2004, P.208)

The doctoral project operates from the premise that this 'out of time' experience is exactly what makes us more aware of time, and of different times, as in travel itself, where the experience of being outside of our own place makes us more aware of the nature of that place.

In an essay on the rapidly transforming art world in relation to international air travel, Rosler refers to the airport and the "... flattened, depthless rendering of space and time and the reimaging of experience into a set of trajectories" (Rosler, 2010, p.169), and its "Rapid spatio-temporal dislocation" (Rosler, 2010, p.169). Rosler's description of the increasingly accessible experience of travel and transit is almost a description of the work for this project. The interim space between coming and going is a dislocated experience where time is a strange event between the hyper-coded and structured, and the numb personal time of waiting and anxiety. In an earlier essay on her own experiences of travel as an artist, Rosler says,

... as production in advanced industrial societies is increasingly characterized by metaphors of transmission and flow, I am interested in the movement of bodies through darkened corridors and across great distances but also in the effacement of the experience of such travel by constructs designed to empty the actual experience of its content. (CAC, 2004, P.28)

Some ten years before Rosler's studies of air travel, Augé wrote of the increasing profusion of what he referred to as non-places (1995). For Augé, non-places are the super-commercialised spaces with no history and where identity is consumed in a highly controlled public arena. These non-places, for Augé are,

... the real measure of our time; one that could be quantified ... by totalling all the air, rail and motorway routes ... the airports and railway stations, hotel chains, leisure parks, large retail outlets, and finally the complex skein of cable and wireless networks that mobilise extraterrestrial space so peculiar that it often puts the individual in contact only with another image of himself. (AUGÉ, 1995, p.79)

For the traveller, alongside the desire for the exotic and the new, this is an experience of dislocation and relocation, and of discontinuity. The discontinuous is not only the disruptive, but it is the fracturing of predictability and the creation of the new.

Time as continuity and discontinuity

In the article referred to earlier in this chapter, Dodge and Kitchin talk of how "Airline delays and flight cancellations also highlight the real virtuality of airlines" (Dodge & Kitchin, 2004, p.202). Although they refer specifically to disruption due to breakdown of systems, extreme weather and mechanical failure, the experience of travel itself is one of dislocation and disruption. The research project has explored, through the practice of painting, several forms of discontinuity. Firstly, in the site of transit and travel there are the discontinuous moments between coming and going and waiting, and the disruption of personal space within the

controlled virtual time of travel. Within this space itself there is the ever present sense of a greater potential disruption, the anxiety of delay, systemic failure, even of sabotage. At a deeper ontological level, the idea running through the exegesis of a model of being in which the virtual acts on the actual, preventing the return of the same, is essentially a model of a creative discontinuity. The artwork, as a parallel to this, uses forms of creative disruption and discontinuity to drive the form of the work and its relationship to the conceptual framework of the project. These disruptive strategies in the work range from large scale shifting of sequence and jumps in temporal and spatial logic to tiny disruptions. The continuous surfaces of some panels, for example, are drilled into as if core samples have been taken. From behind the surface the marks and residue of miniature events themselves are plugged and stopped in motion. The relationship between the continuous and the discontinuous is thus complex, and is itself a process of mutual determination where two states become and produce each other.

Tracing a lineage of thought through Bergson and the concept of time as the drive for the new, through Bataille and time-focused ideas of continuity and discontinuity, there is an on-going focus on the accidental and discontinuous as a key definer of the nature of time and change. In the images we document and create of accidents, and the process of the accidental, there is a concern not only for the environmental and social phenomena of accidents, but in process and change, and for the aesthetic potential of chance and mishap. Aside from monumental and catastrophic disaster, the accident is inherently linked with the everyday in that it denies the significant and the designed, and it randomises event and location.

Referring to the shift away from privileged moments as the classical definer of the passing of time, Deleuze states

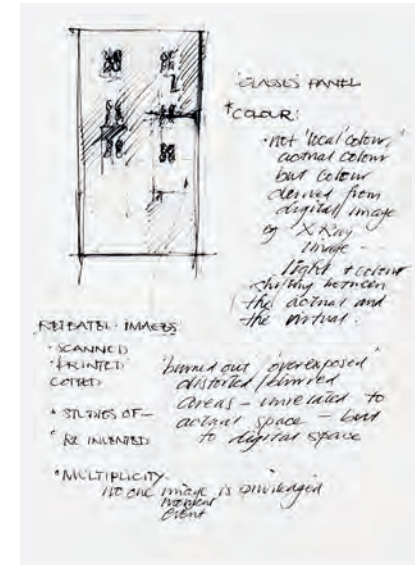


FIGURE 44

Research project
workbook page (2013).

At this point in the research, I was considering relationships between materiality, abstraction and figurative form (as stylistic hybridity). Although I worked iteratively within individual panels (see Chapter 2), I also had to step back frequently to consider relationships between ideas. In this sketch we see that significant sections of the project were unresolved and others contained only initial thinking. Positioning was tentative as I sought to negotiate effective connections between time, transmission, and transit through visual means.

... dance, ballet and mime were abandoning figures and poses to release values which were not posed, not measured, which related movement to the any-instant-whatever. In this way, art, ballet and mime became actions capable of responding to accidents of the environment; that is, to the distribution of the points of space, or of the moments of an event.

(DELEUZE, 1986, P67)

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Sontag's 2004 essay *Concerning the Pain of Others* provided a political analysis of the commercialisation and aestheticisation of imagery of suffering and disruption, particularly in the context of war. Titles such as *A Terrible Beauty* (Dery, 2004), *Beautiful Disaster* (Koslov, 2014) regarding the destruction of hurricane Sandy in February, 2014, *Wondrous Cloud (Kaiun)* (Maruyama), a photographic study of an earthquake in Tokyo), themselves talk of the ambivalent construction and response to the accidental, the disaster, and the destructive. The work of artists Anselm Kiefer and Christian Boltanski reminds us that this phenomenon is ubiquitous through the history of art.

In the realm of air travel the idea of an accident is an anathema to all processes and systems. Essentially however, the accidental is the moment or event of discontinuity, and the air travel business specializes in dislocation and relocation. The accidental is the unexpected and the disruptive, and the experience of travel is synonymous with these states of being.

As in the structure of the final work, throughout the project there are both representational and abstract expressions of ideas. At an experiential level there are images and connections with the process of transit in travel; of the imposed disruption, of waiting and anxiety, and of the excitement and uncertainty of the new and the unfamiliar. Discontinuity also finds abstract form through the exploration of material processes. A drawing from a thesis workbook (Figure 44), for example, explores ways of finding form for abstract ideas related to discontinuity. Here the ideas relate to the disruption of singularity and completeness, with processes of repeating, of blurring, distorting and obliterating, creating multiplicity and not allowing singular reading.

Much has been written about the aestheticisation of images of accidents and catastrophe, and the deadening effect of over-exposure to such images in the media.³⁶ Perhaps there is a deeper significance of such images, however, relating to a perceived or instinctual sense of time and of the relation between flow and disruption. We are haunted by images of catastrophe, even to the point of constructing and staging near disasters for entertainment. In the flood for example,

the inundation of space engulfing the predictability of objects and the recognizable, relocates the object visibly in the whole, in the flow of indivisible time. Such an image, like a frame in cinematic time, at once documents an occurrence, signals the moment, and has a predictive sense of future. In this it is analogous to Deleuze's idea of the virtual existence of all past events and the existence of the future in the present. These haunting images present a notion analogous to a Deleuzian model of the past, present and the future as dimensions of one another. Perhaps too these images are a kind of contemporary sublime in that they pull us into an intensified awareness of the immediate up against the universal flow of time and change.

The flood paintings of Kirk Skreber hover in a strangely inert space of flooded homes and land. The natural disaster becomes almost ordinary and somehow beautiful. Deleuze proposed that the frame in cinema has a tendency either towards saturation or to emptiness (1986). Here the very process of inundation eliminates itself, it neutralizes objects and events, and creates a uniform flatness and inertia. The flood literally saturates the space, at the same time it obliterates and flattens, leaving an empty, diluted sameness. Skreber's interest here appears not to be so much with the ubiquitous event of flooding, or with destruction and human anguish, but rather with the image of the flood in its final state of inundation. In these images there is a collision of continuity and discontinuity, within the discontinuous event of the flood there is a collapse of differentiation and the creation of a continuous field. In a sense the artist appears to gravitate to existing (photographic) images that are already half way to paintings in that the flooded surface acts like a painted surface with objects represented on it or in it. These works favour a space-less space, and focus on a sense of time as process, of the continuous duration as a field, and the endless dissolving of the past into the present. In Skreber's flooded spaces, the moment and the viewpoint are crucial in establishing or portraying this. The images are aerial views, and as discussed earlier in Chapter Five, this abstracts the images, creating a sort of map of the territory, removing the viewer from the actuality of the event. Throughout the

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The x-ray was discovered accidentally on 8th Nov, 1895 by Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen when he detected an image cast from a cathode ray generator, projected beyond the possible range of the cathode rays, now known as an electron beam. Investigating further into the phenomenon, Röntgen discovered that the rays were generated at the point of contact of the cathode ray beam on the interior of the vacuum tube, that they were not deflected by magnetic fields, and that they penetrated deep into many kinds of matter. A week after his discovery, Röntgen took an x-ray photograph of his wife's hand which clearly revealed her wedding ring and her bones. In an unknowing predictive act, Röntgen named the new form of radiation x-radiation; X standing for unknown. For Röntgen the unknown was the nature of the radiation itself that allowed penetration beneath the surface of things. In the subsequent use of the x-ray for surveillance purposes, the unknown is the potential object or event that might cause disruption and instability. Upon seeing the image of her own hand and its internal mysteries, Röntgen's wife proclaimed "It makes me somehow feel that I'm looking at my own death!"

<http://inventors.about.com/od/xyzstartinventions/a/x-ray.htm> retrieved 31.10.2010

thesis, in the final and exploratory work, the aerial view explored this potential for the abstracting of an image and the creation of an ambiguous association.

In *Unknown Quantity*, Virilio proposes the idea of the invention of the accident. "To invent the train is to invent the derailment ... To make craft which are heavier than air fly – the aeroplane ... is to invent the plane crash, the air disaster" (Virilio, 2003, p.24). Virilio goes on to say that "... to invent the substance is, indirectly, to invent the accident" (Virilio, 2003, p.85). Large-scale technologically induced catastrophes however are not the only layer of the accidental for Virilio. Citing Aristotle's *Physics*, Virilio states that it is not time itself that corrupts or destroys but accidents and that which occurs. For Virilio the accident is thus the "passage into time or ... the speed of emergence" where "each 'substance' being, in the end, the victim of the accident of temporal circulation" (Virilio, 2003, p.26).

Virilio proposes an interesting extension to the concern for the rapidly increasing speed of social practice, technological development and interaction. For Virilio, alongside the concern with actual tempo, "... we must attempt to protect ourselves from the excess of virtual speed, from what occurs unexpectedly to 'substance'" (Virilio, 2003, p.26). Later in this Chapter an analysis is undertaken of a sequence of panels from the final exhibition, works that include photographic images from arrivals and departures airport information signage. In these works the actual, moving surface is close to synonymous with virtual data, information and the traveller's experience. The text freezes momentarily, just long enough to align yourself and get your bearings, and then continues at a disconcerting pace. The virtual itself has gained speed and appears hyperactive, as if to keep up with an impossible volume of data and movement.

This anxious speed of the actual and the virtual, as if trying to keep pace with each other, is layered with other anxieties in the transiting space. Personal and institutional anxieties overlap. The fleeting moment of the x-ray of both the traveller and their luggage is a tense one, and the x-ray itself serves the single function of detecting the undesirable, the dangerous and the potential future threat.³⁷

The customs x-ray images in the final work have embedded layers of virtuality, of predictive function and future (potential) events, and the dual actuality and virtual idea of the mirror image, memory and association (Figure 45). From a Deleuzian interpretation, the actual and the virtual are not solely aspects of the object, but determine and become each other. In the x-ray image the moment of scanning, like a Deleuzian slice in time, is inherently inclusive of past, present and future as process. The x-ray captures the intimate belongings of the traveller in between coming from and going to, and thus the passage of the present becoming the past in relation to an expected future. The captured scan also fulfils an institutional predictive function, always searching for evidence of a future event or threat hidden in the present. The research project does not engage with surveillance itself, rather images such as the x-ray are used both to link with the actual transit space as well as a vehicle to realise sensations of the nature of the past, the present and the future, and of the instant.

Following, watching, waiting and tracking

The Customs x-ray is in a sense an aerial view or map of the traveller's luggage, a condensed, flattened edition of their domestic life in transit. The essential belongings are laid out, abstracted, and as Deleuze might say, deterritorialised.³⁸ The aerial view has become such a ubiquitous image that we perhaps lose the significance of its functional and perceptual difference. It is not only that we are able to get so far above our station and look down from a different realm, but it is also the zone of tracking, mapping and following. The aerial image often becomes a kind of diagram of our place and our movements. In *A Theory of Narrative*, Altman states that following is crucial to the development of a narrative (Altman, 2008). Thus, despite the singularity and momentary nature of an aerial image, there is always a sense of observing from afar, and an underlying implied virtual narrative. In this, following is replaced by watching and tracking.

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In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari use the term assemblage to refer to the cluster of forces and qualities that define an entity and define its territory. The process of deterritorialisation is that which breaks the limits of the territory and relates the assemblage to an exterior.



FIGURE 45
Detail of Panel 5
Panel size 800mm X 1500mm
DIGITAL IMAGE ON ALUMINIUM.

Indifference, limbo spaces and the non-event

In Chapter Four, I discussed Robert Smithson's Pour works from the late 1960s in relation to painting and new processes of making. These works of Smithson's are inherently painterly, as well as being inherently events (filmed events). They are events of discontinuity, staged accidents that disrupt and reconfigure. The effect of the works is painterly, having a close analogy with abstract expressionist work, in particular the large scale poured surfaces of Morris Louis. In both cases the pour is a controlled accident, and both artists are consumed with process and event, and the surface resultant from such managed accidental effects. The pour is thus a material presence of time rather than an image. These works deal with (or create states of) entropy. Essentially they present time as decay. In the periods of unavoidable waiting in the transit lounge, the entropic state is perhaps that of personal inertia and boredom. In this way it is a momentary entropic experience, never fully an end state, and the traveller is constantly reminded of the opposite, of the desire of the exotic and the distant.

Ford says, "The prelude to very bad things can be ridiculous ... but can also be casual and unremarkable. Which is worth recognizing, since it indicates where many bad events originate: from just an inch away from the everyday" (Ford, 2012, p.360).

Although an inert, and particularly entropic, state might appear to be an anathema to a study of time and movement, as end states entropic sites deny the defining propositions of objects and movement in space. In this they both deny time (as process, decay and change) at the same time as exaggerating it.

In the 1960's Robert Smithson created a series of non-sites, often sites at the end point of decay and collapse. In these works Smithson set about to redefine through creative practice, ideas of time, space, object and materiality. Despite the pure materiality of Smithson's displaced sites, of rock and dust, he negates physicality in favour of time and process to the point of absence. I will make a

connection here with Deleuze and his concept of time as endless undifferentiated, unprivileged moments. The non-site is by definition an unprivileged site, and, in the end state of entropic process, matter and objects themselves become undifferentiated. Smithson challenged the valued and privileged moment, site or event of art. In his writings, installations and land art, Smithson explored the aesthetic and social potential of non-significant, mundane places often at the end point of a process of atrophy. Smithson sought out locations at the end state of disintegration, countering the historic fascination with locations of significance, culture and beauty. I would argue that Smithson's work is essentially time-based, including travel as an essential component of his work. Entropy itself is not a key thematic in the doctoral project. Rather it contemporises the non-site and focuses on the mundane locations of transit where the desire of travel is halted in the limbo of transition.

Parallel to Smithson's work and dialogue on non-sites is the possibility of the 'non-event' as a potent aesthetic project. Duchamp's 'infra mince'³⁹ works of the late 1920's, for example, present liminal mundane moments such as just-perceptible sounds, changes and differences, as art works. These domestic moments become poetic and aesthetic, and at times disturbing, while bypassing the expected languages of visual and textual aesthetics and narrative. In the deceptively simple and ordinary infra mince work relating to the sound produced by two trouser legs rubbing together, for example, Duchamp alluded to the virtual noise of two sides of the same thing interacting.

In discussing travel and transit in relation to what he refers to as non-place, Augé distinguishes between an ocean cruise and air travel. On board the cruise ship we leave land, nostalgically watching it slip into the distance, and are mesmerised as new land appears on the horizon. Boarding a plane, on the other hand we are swallowed up in no man's land, divorced from connection and processed through words, codes and structures. For Augé, the

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The term *infra mince* translates as ultra thin or slim.

... act of passing gives a particular status to place names, that the fault line resulting from the law of the other, and causing a loss of focus is the horizon of every journey... and that the movement that shifts lines and traverses places is, by definition, creative of itineraries: that is, words and non-places. (AUGÉ, 1995, P.85)

The loss of focus that Augé refers to in the experience of transit is resultant from a dislocation from social space and function. “The space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude, and similitude” (Augé, 1995, p.103). This solitude is, however, an ambivalent experience and there is a desirable aspect in knowing “... how to forget in order to taste the full flavor of the present, of the moment, and of expectation ...” (Augé, 1998/2004, p.3).

Perhaps this is what does link the ocean cruise and air travel; that the ocean is a sort of oblivion equivalent to the solitude and numbness of transit. As Augé says, “Oblivion is a necessity both to society and to the individual” (Augé, 1998/2004, p.3). The strange desirable banality of travel is described by Dodge and Kitchin in referring to the mundane experience of transit where,

... in the check-in hall, or the departures lounge, or airport shopping mall, or the walkway from lounge to gate, or in the air, or baggage-reclaim area, the mutual constitution of code and space is backgrounded and less invasive unless provoked. For the most part, then, except for the small proportion of time spent in these transition zones, the vast bulk of time in code/space – either in the airport or in the air – is largely banal. (DODGE & KITCHIN, 2004, P.204)

Liminality, oblivion and the need to depart

Raahauge links the place of transit, as moments in-between states and events, with ideas of liminality. “Transit space can be understood as a contemporary version of liminality ...” (Raahauge, 2008, p.127). Liminality refers to states at a threshold and thus the liminality of transition enables the research to consider moments where objects and states are in the process of dissolution and transformation.

The transit space is a place of departing, leaving something and somewhere towards a future place and time. Augé speaks of the need for beginning and “... aspiring to the future again by forgetting the past” (Augé, 1998/2004, p.57). In the transit space the present is always paramount. The traveller is hyper-aware of the present and the processing of transition from where they have come from and where they are going to. For Augé the loss of focus is a kind of oblivion and “... oblivion is always conjugated in the present” (Augé, 1998/2004, p.57). This element of desire within the numb sameness of the coded space of transit, this longing for departure and the new, makes the experience such an ambivalent event.

Augé’s ideas relating to the need to experience oblivion provide a deep link between the study of the transit space in this project and the study of aspects of time and being.

OBLIVION brings us back to the present, even if it is conjugated in every tense: in the future, to live the beginning; in the present, to live the moment; in the past, to live the return; in every case, in order not to be repeated. We must forget in order to remain present, forget in order not to die, forget in order to remain faithful. (AUGÉ, 1998/2004, P.89)

The liminal is that which occupies a place at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold. It often relates to a transitional or initial stage of a process. The airport transit place is almost by definition a liminal space. Spatially and function-

ally it is nothing but boundary and border. In a compilation of essays on liminal landscapes, Andrews and Roberts say "... the liminal already in some way connotes the spatial: a boundary, border, a transitional landscape" (Andrews & Roberts, 2012, p.1). Being a transitional landscape it thus implies, or is almost entirely concerned with, temporal processes and processing. Because it functions at the initial stage of arriving or departing, the transit space is aligned with the liminal landscape of Andrews and Roberts in that it "... exhibits temporal qualities, marking a beginning as well as an end, but also duration in the unfolding of a spatio-temporal process: liminality as a generative act, a psychosocial intentionality of being" (Andrews & Roberts, 2012, p.1). Here Andrews and Roberts propose that the liminal is not solely an in-between space, a place or state at the threshold of perception, process or identity. The liminal is generative. It is a process of change. In an essay on liminality, Thomassen proposes that "Liminal spaces are attractive. They are the places we go in search of a break from the normal" (Thomassen, 2012, p.21). Perhaps we are drawn to these places at the fringes and limits. The ancient Greeks had two words for the sea; pelagos was the sea as fact, pontos was the open sea in front of us that we need to confront, a threshold we need to overcome (Thomassen, 2012). We appear to have these two needs; to establish and maintain normalcy, and to seek and confront the limits and the thresholds. "The limit is not simply there: it is there to be confronted" (Thomassen, 2012, p.21). Part of the attraction of liminal spaces is, perhaps, the experience of the sublime within the anti-sublime. In relation to the connectedness of things through the virtual realm Deleuze and Parnet talk of the link between the infinitesimal moment and the longest imaginable moment, and a sense of that which is beyond us and our perception.

THE period of time which is smaller than the smallest period of continuous time imaginable in one direction is also the longest time, longer than the longest unit of continuous time imaginable in all directions. (DELEUZE & PARNET, 2002, P.151)

The research in this thesis explores these dual states and needs at a number of different levels. The transit space itself is explored as a site of boredom and anxiety. At the same time it is a place of attractive newness, uncertainty, and the desire of departing. Within this enquiry, liminality has been part of the vocabulary. At times images and forms have appeared as if caught just being created, just coming into being or dissolving out of being. Surfaces are at the threshold of lightness or darkness. Liminality is thus seen not as an inert, in-between and comfortable state where we gravitate for an anaesthetised experience. It is a complex experience of ambivalence, generation and change. Referring to the study of rites of passage rituals by anthropologist Victor Turner, Thomassen says that these ritualized events “... served as moments of creativity that freshened up the societal make-up” (Thomassen, 2012, p.3). Perhaps the experience of transiting is like a rite of passage, a liminal moment where public systems test us to determine whether we are able to progress from one place to another phase.

Panel 16 (Figure 46) depicts travellers collecting luggage in the transit processing space. They lean into their own space and dissolve into their own shadows. The gravity of the aerial view holds them fast to the floor of the mundane experience and they are locked in place by the guardrail of processing. Although caught in an ordinary moment, the travellers also take on the glow of the image, and are part of the sublime light and gestural sweep of intense red across and down the surface. The work is constructed to encompass both the grounded and ordinary and the transcendent. The intense pour of paint has both a materiality and simultaneously a gesture without a history of its own making that transcends the predictable. By denying a history I mean that the sweeping pour is unable to be drawn and planned beforehand, and thus starts from the moment of its action and moves forward; a process that draws us out of the frame into the space of association and the virtual.⁴⁰

Andrews and Roberts make an interesting observation about places that are at the threshold of change or the start of process. “Insofar as liminal landscapes can

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The use of poured veils of paint has led to experimentation with skins of paint that can be adhered to other surfaces, including over photographic images. Ideas have also been explored of printing and embedding images into paint skins that can be cut and laminated onto surfaces. These developments will become part of work developed post thesis.



FIGURE 46

Panel 16,
final thesis work (2015)
ACRYLIC AND PHOTOGRAPHIC
IMAGE ON ALUMINIUM.

only be invoked but not ‘commanded’ ... we might then question the extent to which they are or can be ‘mappable’ in cartographic terms” (Andrews & Roberts, 2012, p.9). Although it would be some stretch of the imagination to refer to the airport transit space as a landscape, if it is seen as a liminal space, then the fact that it is, in a sense, not able to be mapped is part of the fascination as subject for this research. In the previous Chapter I discussed various iterations of diagramming and the grid. The airport space has its own in-built diagram, its own virtual map of coding and transition. It is thus a kind of readymade abstraction, a readymade diagram of itself. In this way it is more like a stage than a space of everyday life.

In the drawing illustrated in Figure 47 the travellers are caught in a no-mans land that is itself gridded and diagrammed. They can only move through transit in relation to this controlled and repetitive structuring of space.

These places of transit are not in themselves involved in any narrative generation but are places where the individual stops, passes through, and is momentarily in a zone between the personal and the public. Images of these transit spaces likewise are places where the viewer pauses momentarily, potentially filling a void with imaginings, and temporal, spatial and narrative connections. Although there are inevitable associations in these images with early theoretical studies, such as Lefebvre, of the everyday in terms of urban sites and living with the mundane and with alienation, the research has engaged more with the relationship between images, the viewer, and broader philosophical concepts of time and space. Although the experience of transiting and processing is increasingly common and in a sense mundane, the artwork has the potential to expose the complexity of the experience and the space. It is at once an ordinary and nothing space, at the same time it is a bizarre place in its highly coded and structured control of movement and behaviour, and it has its own strange, dehumanized beauty.

According to Papastergiadis, “the concept of the everyday has remained relatively untheorised within the contemporary art discourse” (Papastergiadis, 2006, p.29). “And yet the avant-garde was to lead in the transformation of everyday



FIGURE 47
Drawing for the
thesis project (2015)
SPRAY PAINT, ACRYLIC
AND PENCIL ON PAPER.

consciousness. By representing familiar objects from unexpected positions they not only sought to reveal hidden poetry but also unleash a new revolutionary understanding of reality” (Papastergiadis, 2006, p.34). In an analysis of Lefebvre and spatial dialectics, Shields talks of “a boredom so deeply seated that we drift off into our own fantasies” (Shields, 1999, p.66). It is this liberation of the imagination, albeit resultant from boredom and inertia that is proposed as a radical ownership by the individual and the private within the public arena, with all its functions and controls. Shields succinctly describes this state of the individual in the public arena, “The sphere of everyday life is a dynamic area of practice. The person of the everyday life (l’homme quotidien) is both the subject and object of becoming” (Shields, 1999, p.71). Shields suggests that “By introducing the idea of ‘everyday life’ Lefebvre hoped to short-circuit the traditional philosophical obsession with origins” (Shields, 1999, p.72). The images explored in this project are as much concerned with the nature of images, the interaction of images and thinking, seeing and imagining, as they are images of something. They are also in a sense redefining the idea of origins, in that they are intended as originators of a plethora of connections, and deny a singular origin. They are thus seen as images in a latent state rather than an original state or an end state.

In a detail from Panel 2 (Figure 48) the images of spectacles appropriated from an x-ray are images in a latent state, almost like an idea of spectacles. The spectacles are sketched onto the surface of the painting and are thus just coming into perceptible range. They are repeated with a sense of infinite possible variation. The panel has a grid of variations of this image, ranging from barely visible marks to fully visualized images. In a sense it embodies its own process of making and thinking; it is its own workbook and gives visual form to the timeframe of its own making.

The liminal is thus not merely a barely detectable state but is the latent. As in the photographic negative or print before developing, the latent image has a future, not yet visible form, or forms, inherent in it.



FIGURE 48
Detail of Panel 2
final thesis work
ACRYLIC AND PENCIL ON ALUMINIUM.

The travelling frame

A series of drawings by Colin McCahon, produced in 1973 at Muriwai, was shown for the first time in the *Cinema and Painting* exhibition. In the sights of this project, these works are as concerned with the instant and the almost impossible to capture moment as they are of the clouds, fog, sea and birds that are identified by titles. In the exhibition catalogue essay, Menzies and Morgan also discuss McCahon's *Six Days in Nelson and Canterbury*, and the complex mixing of biblical analogy, local landscape and a journey across the land.

This telescoping of time and place into an imagistic gestalt via the motif of a journey, of movement or passing through, filters the image of *Six Days* through a complex temporality that invests the movement implied between its frames with an unmistakably cinematic inflection. (Menzies & Morgan, 2015, p.17)

The journey which for McCahon is a spiritual one aligned with discovery and the land, is a contemporary journey in this doctoral project. Here it relates to travelling, rather than to a metaphorical journey, but there is a link. McCahon's Muriwai drawings are like visual forms of haiku poems, and the haiku form is inherently connected with wandering, travel and experiencing in passing. The wandering haiku poet, the flaneur, and the traveller all connect with this shifting field where not only what we construct inside our frame of perception changes, but the frame itself is a constantly shifting field of experience. For the wandering haiku poet the moment of the poem is made more momentary by the transitory nature of the experience. The haiku poem captures the instant as the author moves on to the next array of experiences, leaving the work as a frozen, potent moment of intense actual and virtual sensations. In this sense the frame itself is a moving field and the artist/writer assumes the role of the traveller or the passer-by in the creation of the work.



FIGURE 49

Panels 16 to 19 (2015)

Each panel 800mm X 1500mm

ACRYLIC AND PHOTOGRAPHIC
IMAGE ON VINYL ON ALUMINIUM.

In the far-most right panels of the final work (Figure 49, Panels 16-19) the shifting, relocating frames of experience of the traveller are hinted at in the content of the work. The travellers watch, trying to identify themselves in a moving field of others and objects. The processing of luggage is viewed from above in an aerial view with an inherent sense of surveillance. As viewers of the image we are not positioned at the carousel, but rather watching and tracking the process from outside. This angle on the process abstracts the image, and it becomes a kind of map of movement and processing. A number of other devices amplify this abstrac-

tion. A layer of colour like a filter overlays each panel, differentiating each from the others, making overt the processing of images. Colour acts like the strange, monochrome glow of a screen. The use of paint overlaid on the photographic narrative pulls the image to the surface and undermines a full sense of space and reality.

If we accommodate an inclination to read from left to right, this image signalling arrival is at the very far right, at the end of the entire sequence. This is the meeting place where those arriving in a new destination wait with those arriving back to a familiar one. The known and the unknown, the past and the future, are caught in this instant, a moment of beginning and ending.

In two panels in this sequence the photographic images are over-poured in a single movement. The gesture is not only instant in the speed of its flooding of the surface, but there is no history underlying it. It has no causal and relational sense of its own construction. There are multiple movements here, people with a kind of vacant sense of purpose shuffling across the space, the endless circular movement of the carousel as if coming and going back and forth in time, and the ubiquitous coded time zones overriding all sense of personal time. The poured surface in the right hand panel establishes another time; time as flow. Time does not stop at any point here, it continues relentlessly in a flow of moments. Looking down on this event removes the viewer, yet it as if we are looking down on ourselves, and in this we experience the world in passing, like a flaneur.

Movements

Movement is almost a subject in itself throughout the project; as the portrayal of actual movement, and movement as transmission and transference. In the transit space movement is limited and controlled, and yet there are multiple movements. The endless grinding cycling of the carousel like a magnet pulls closer a flurry of shifting movements as travellers come and go and shuffle anxiously. The objects car-

ried on the conveyor are endowed with the intimate belongings of the traveller; the subjects become objects in space, divorced from themselves and their place. A part of the abstracting of the experience is the realisation of the hypnotic beauty of the mechanical and the ordered. The pure functionality of the carousel with its incessant and predictable movement carries with it a glossy perfection, particularly in juxtaposition to the ever changing form and colour of the gestures of luggage dragged along by it. This sequence is almost like a painting with a strong underlying structure and composition and gestures of colour and shape flurrying across the surface.

The ideas explored by Deleuze of ‘deframing’ and ‘deterritorialisation’ are in operation here in a new way. The very thing that holds the sequence together visually, the carousel dominating the composition, also leads us out of the frame both visually and in relation to its own process of entering and leaving the space. This going out of the frame also involves a carrying out of the frame, a deterritorialisation, where the objects which are the subject of its purpose are drawn into the frame and dragged out again. This deframing takes us spatially out of the frame, and temporally out of the frame of the now and the visible. The travellers themselves are in a sense ‘deterritorialised’ from themselves; that is, they are waiting for themselves to arrive or to depart.

In the earlier carpark paintings, and in sections of the final thesis work, actual movement is stalled and disrupted. At either end of the spectrum of varying speeds we become more aware of movement. In stasis, equally as in hyper-speed, we are conscious of the travel of objects, of change, and of the momentum of existence. In the panel sections of the final exhibition using arrival and departures messaging and images of the luggage carousel, time as movement is paramount. This is not simply the movement of objects in space. There is a multiplicity of different movements here, with a number of flows operating in different directions across the face of the work, back into and out of the work, and circular, self-contained motion. At the simplest level there is the implied movement of travellers traversing the transit space, hovering around the luggage area, moving

to alleviate boredom and waiting. Mechanical and coded movements dominate the space. The movement of the luggage carousel snakes through the waiting space, disappearing into the unknown void that is out of bounds. The packaged personal belongings appear and reappear as if going back into time and out into the present. Another circular, rotating movement in the arrival and departures boards constantly changes time, destination and status. Each of these movements revolves around its own circuit, and simultaneously connects with the other circuits through the virtual network of function, idea and perception.

“THUS movement has two facets, as inseparable as the inside and outside ... it is the relationship between parts and it is the state (affection) of the whole.” (DELEUZE, 1986, P.19)

In *Cinema 2* Deleuze outlines the shift, particularly evident in cinema, from movement depending on a moving body to the image itself moving. “It is the image which itself moves in itself. In this sense, therefore, it is neither figurative nor abstract” (Deleuze, 1989, p.156). He follows with, “It could be said that this was already the case with all artistic images” (Deleuze, 1989, p.156). Even, or perhaps particularly, where the painted image is overtly still or dealing with stillness, there is a sense of time outside the image and a heightened sense of the flow of duration made more evident in the instant.

The farthest right panel of the final work, bleached out and over-exposed, is over-poured with white paint. The faintest afterimage hangs on in the surface, buried in what is becoming a tabula rasa for the next iteration. The panel, at the far end of the sequence, acts like a fade out at the end of a film, obliterating the story in space. Thus the concluding of a sequence or event is also a movement into another time and place.

In a sense movement encapsulates the discussion and arguments made in this chapter. The ideas relating to time and the transit space of disruption and

discontinuity, of tracking and following, and of the constantly shifting frame of the traveller, all position a temporal reading of experience. The linking of the experience of transiting with structures and sensations of liminality essentially present an idea of the liminal as a transition between one state and another. The chapter proposes a plurality of movements in line with the final artwork where there is virtually no sense of things moving across space, but rather a plethora of movements; circular, mechanical, vertical, vast and minute movements wrapped around instantaneous events.









TIME IS IN THE INSTANT

“... real time exists only in the instant, it is wholly in the actual, in the act, and in the present”

(BACHELARD, 2000, P.89).

This chapter deals with the issue and phenomenon of the instant. Its aim is not to provide a history of the philosophical enquiry into the nature of the instant, the now and the process of becoming. Instead I argue that forms of creative practice have challenged (in a parallel process to philosophical practice) ontological ideas of the nature of being and time. All forms of creative practice have the capacity to synthesise complexity and difference in ways that conflate the objective and the subjective. This Chapter therefore considers aspects of the research and final exhibition work against a theoretical background of philosophical concepts of the nature of the moment and the instant. Firstly the chapter considers a number of philosophical positions regarding the problematics of time in relation to the nature of the instant. Secondly it develops connections with aspects of creative practice and the work produced for this project. A reading of the shadow in visual arts, film and literature is reconsidered as a transitory double of matter. This metaphoric positioning of the shadow in painting proposes an alternative to shadow as a definer of form, and establishes a more complex relationship akin to that of actual and virtual elements. The chapter considers how the instant and

the moment appear in the thesis work, not only as actual moments, but as painterly processes such as the instantaneous pour of paint across the surface, and the momentary explosions of colour around plugged surfaces.

What is the significance of an analysis of the instant within this thesis? The instant has long been a fascination and challenge to Philosophy and all the philosophies embedded in music, art and cultural practice. The instant is not the same as a moment, which is a brief, fleeting event that is able to be seen, captured and remembered. The instant occupies no space and in a sense no time. It has already moved on to the next instant before it can claim any form. It is in the moment, however, that we come closer to the instant or the process of change itself. We cut the moment out of the flow of time, construct it around an event and commit it to memory. It is in the brief moment that we sense change in action. For the purposes of this project the terms instant and moment are used loosely to refer to fleeting events in which we sense the process of transmission and transition from one state to another.

The instant or the moment sits comfortably in some forms of creative practice, in photography, performance and film for example. In painting it is not such an easy alliance and the art of painting has been consistently defined against notions of timelessness and essence. In Chapter Three I referred to Bolt's hypothesis that painting is not essentially representational, but rather conjures effects and processes that relate to ontological ideas (Bolt, 2004). The proposition in this thesis is that a temporal reading of painting is relatively new and highly productive. In the final work for the project the instant appears and surfaces in various guises. Following Bolt's idea of the performative nature of painting, the instant is the moment of creation, of the instantaneous decisions in paint, of the flows and drips and accidents across the surface, and the simultaneous operation and dialogue of the hand, the eye and the mind. It is also evident in small moments in the work; the shoes seemingly walking across the transit space, the luggage clasp and the sense of repetitious opening and closing, of the x-ray and the imaging of ourselves in the split second light of the scan. There are constructed moments too. The plugged holes in some surfaces capture tiny, instantaneous gestures. The instant is also the non-specific

moment of transition, the undefinable and imperceptible moment of change itself. In a Deleuzian framework every instant is busy with the virtual and the actual at work on each other. This latter, invisible realm of the moment of change becomes like static and white noise. It is the hum and speed of the virtual.

Throughout the history of Western philosophical enquiry the instant has been a major interest in the study of the problematics of time. The earliest Greek philosophical texts talk of time. Anaximander spoke of the coming to be and the passing away of things in the present moment. Barbour, who published *The End of Time* in 1999, claimed that there is no real time and that "... time is just an appearance manifested by timeless instants" (Durie, 2000, p.3).

Alongside the grand narratives of metaphysics, it is in the instant that the philosophical questions of movement, change and becoming, unity, multiplicity, and difference are paramount. Quoting Parmenides, Durie states that "... the instant, the time of change, the time of becoming, is, as we have been anticipating, 'no time at all'" (Durie, 2000, p.11). The instant encapsulates all the problematics of time, it is both the non-privileged moment and at the same time it is the present and perhaps everything and all that there is. It is no time at all and all of time. It was Aristotle who developed the most rigorous treatise on time in *Physics*, written in 350 BC. According to Durie, Aristotle developed two major lines of enquiry. The first asks "... does time belong to beings or non-beings, that is to say, does time exist or not" (Durie, 2000, p.14). The second relates to the nature of time. Aristotle customarily used a philosophical method of stating a problem, followed by paradox that problematised the enquiry. Durie states that the

... aporias pertaining to the question of time's existence relate to the fact that time appears to be made up of that which does not exist, namely the past – that which is no longer – and the future - that which is not yet. (DURIE, 2000, P.14)

For Aristotle, there is a further philosophical issue, in that if a whole (the whole of time) is made up of parts, and if time is not made up of a multitude of instants, then the now cannot be a measure of time. Durie outlines Aristotle's further questioning of the nature of the instant,

IF the now changes, if it is always different, then the question is begged of when it changes – for it cannot perish while it remains the same, and equally, it cannot perish in another now, for then two different nows would be simultaneous. On the other hand, if it stays the same, there would be no means of distinguishing between before and after. (DURIE, 2000, P.14)

The fundamental problem raised by Aristotle of how time 'passes' is still current. It is addressed by the notion of the virtual in Deleuze and Parnet.

THESE virtuals vary in kind as well as in their degree of proximity from the actual particles by which they are both emitted and absorbed. They are called virtual in so far as their emission and absorption, creation and destruction, occur in a period of time shorter than the shortest continuous period imaginable; it is this very brevity that keeps them subject to a principle of uncertainty or indetermination. (DELEUZE & PARNET, 2002, P.148)

For Deleuze these virtuals are memories of sorts, "...but they are still called virtual images in that their speed or brevity subjects them too to a principle of the unconscious" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.149).

In discussing his own research process, Merleau-Ponty stated that it was an "... ascent of the spot" (Lefort, 1968, p.xvi). What is the spot? It signals a point in

space and time, brief and unprivileged. In essence it is the instant, in time and in space. The spot, however, is never the same point, we constantly move and "... that meaning unveils itself in our impossibility to remain in any place" (Lefort, 1968, p.xxxii). Lefort speaks of Merleau-Ponty's "... whole discourse is as one whole sentence where one can distinguish, certainly, moments, articulations, and pauses, but whose content, in each proposition, is never dissociable from the total movement" (Lefort, 1968, p.xxxii).

In the Editor's Introduction to *The Visible and the Invisible*, Lefort says of Merleau-Ponty's philosophical process that he "...very often sees it described as a circle, bringing him to pass by the same stopping points again and again" (Lefort, 1968, p.xvi). Referring to the point from which Merleau-Ponty's philosophy launches, Lefort talks of "...the philosopher who frees himself from the myth of the 'root' resolutely accepts being situated in this midst and having to start from this 'some other point'" (Lefort, 1968, p.xxvi).

Thus the instant, via the moment and the momentary, is the starting point for images, ideas, words and philosophical thoughts in the current project. The instant is not a microcosmic version or reflection of the universal. The instant, the spot or the momentary event are where time is busy in the creative process of genesis. In the constantly shifting and morphing shadow we see the transitory instant at its most inescapable. The shadow is like the double of the object, it is inseparable from it, but its form is constantly changing. The shadow and the object are locked in a reciprocal arrangement. It is an absence (of light), and like the virtual side of the object.

Shadows

SHE wondered whether you could get rid of all the shadows, if you used enough lights and arranged them scientifically. They would have to be forced under your feet. They would still be there, under the soles of your shoes. But no one would see them. Her own feet were the centre of shadows that overlapped and interlinked and reformed themselves around her feet, half shadows and quarter shadows. When she moved they moved too, but they stayed attached to her feet so that she was always at the centre of a web of light and dark.

(GRENVILLE, 1999, P.274)

In this beautiful passage from the novel *The Idea of Perfection*, Kate Grenville captures pure temporality in pondering whether we could rid ourselves of shadows, and in that questioning realising that we are inseparable from constant becoming and overlapping, and the presence of a virtual field clinging to the actual.

In a sense, the absence or prevalence of shadows is a form of saturation or rarefaction, Deleuze's two tendencies in cinematic framing. This may be as a form of saturation or absence of light, but may be seen equally as a form of saturation of temporality. Subject, object, space and matter are undermined or overtaken by constantly shifting form, dependent on site, viewpoint, time of the day or night, and conditions. The shadow both defines the object/subject and destroys it at the same time by eluding it, and constantly redefining its form. It is fickle, elusive, substanceless and transitory.

In a number of earlier transit paintings I explore states where object and form is both defined and undermined by shadow. Here there is an alternative interpretation of the use of shadow (in my own and other painters work) to the idea of the function of light and shadow in painting as defining form and matter in space. In Figure 50, *Transit Painting No2* from 2011, shadow is solely a visible form of



FIGURE 50

Transit Painting No2 (2011)

600mm diameter

ACRYLIC ON SPUN ALUMINIUM



FIGURES 51 AND 52
Exploratory studies for the
research project (2015)
*Suitcase Exterior
and Suitcase Interior*
280 X 400mm
WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER.

time, constantly shifting and reforming in all dimensions; position, size, intensity and duration. Shadows cling to a transitory being, consumed in a multiplicity of times. We witness the movement of the object/subject, the slow turning of earth and sun, shadow and time of day, and the flow of time duration itself.

In the words of Elizabeth Grosz, time functions as “a silent accompaniment, a shadowy implication” (Grosz, 1999, p1). Shadow is substanceless and transitory, constantly denying all sense of the stable and the permanent.

“HOW can any-space-whatever be extracted from a given state of things, from a determinate space? The first way was shadow, shadows: a space full of shadows, or covered with shadows, becomes an any-space-whatever”

(DELEUZE, 1986, P.111).

Grenville’s desire to see a world devoid of shadows, and Deleuze’s space saturated with shadows, equate to the same awareness of the transitory nature of existence. In both, the shadow is a symbolic form of the virtual in operation with the actual. The shadow is a visible reminder and link to the passing of invisible time and the irreversible flow of change and invention.

Like the actual and the virtual, shadows and the objects that they define engage in a constant process of mutual determination. The shadow is pure virtuality, it has no substance, it is an absence, but an absence that has an active presence.

Figures 51 and 52 illustrate two drawings developed during the research project. These are part of a series of exploratory drawings and studies of material related to air travel. The studies depict the exterior and interior of a suitcase, somewhat organic in the softness of its fabric. The drawings explore the dual interior and exterior surfaces that, like the actual and the virtual, define each other, and are inseparable from each other. They are created from shadows alone resulting in gestures that define the form but also float, leaving gaps as if we might see through to the other side of the inside or the outside. These drawings are indicative of a range of explorative studies as part of the research project; studies of



FIGURES 53
Photographic Studies of Suitcase, *Interior and Exterior*
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS.



labels, luggage and the mechanisms of processing (Figure 53). Depicting shadows alone, the drawings render the materiality of the object substanceless, fluid and transitory. These studies appear in new forms in the final thesis work, for example in shadowy figures traversing the transit space.

The pour, the flow and the speed of painting

Shadows flow across the surface of the world, clinging to objects and matter, without any need for their own substance and structure. In the field of painting, the use of poured surfaces, rather than the brush work and gesture that has defined the discipline, has a similar function.

In Figure 54 four separate stages in the making of Panels 13 and 14 is documented, showing the layering of moments and momentary gestures on the surface of the work. In the first stage the aluminium panels have been digitally printed with a photographic image capturing a moment in the transit space, an unprivileged instant in the inexorable grinding of the escalator. Selected from dozens of others shot in rapid succession, this image has no significance other than its visual qualities. Against the predictable mechanical rhythm of the escalator a single moment is isolated as travellers move up and down through the space of transit.

Stage 2 in the development of this two panel sequence involved a single rapid pour of paint down across the surface of both panels, a movement counter to the slow layering common to the act of painting. This process links directly with the thematic of the panels, not only in that the paint is relatively instantaneous, but also because the performative act of painting happens not within the frame but starts outside it, flows across the surface and continues beyond the border of the work. The instant in time and the moment in the photograph or painting are thus both isolated and inextricably connected. The final stage in the making of these panels involved rapid paint marks dragged and wiped across the surface.

FIGURE 54
Documentation of
4 stages of work on
Panels 13 and 14 for the
final thesis work (2015)

ACRYLIC AND PHOTOGRAPHIC
IMAGE ON ALUMINIUM.



These act like liminal movements or sounds, almost virtual and unable to be pinned to the physical and the permanent. The origin of these marks came from the disruptive wiping away of unsuccessful painted surfaces during the research project leaving residual traces of movement. These gestures have no history, or rather are the result of the obliteration of a painted history, and are thus liminal, momentary and allied to a field of connected virtual

energies. In stage 3 and 4 the gestures are a neutral grey like shadows darting across the surface, overlaid with white marks like light that moves on before we can capture it in any substantial form.

Bachelard states that the simultaneous creation and negating that occurs in the discontinuous instant is due to the fact that "... all instants both give and take away at one and the same time, and the newness ... constantly shows us the essential discontinuity of Time" (Bachelard, 2000, p.65). Bachelard pits Bergson's concept of duration against the philosophical basis of the idea of time in the work of Roepnel. According to Bachelard, Bergson's "time's true reality is duration; the instant is only an abstraction and has no reality" (Bachelard, 2000, p.71). Bachelard aligns with Roepnel's thinking and states that "... time's true reality is the instant; duration is only a construction and has no absolute reality. It is made from the outside by memory" (Bachelard, 2000, p.72).

The poured surface relates to the instant in two ways. Firstly it is relatively instantaneous and bypasses or covers any historical, causal and generative underlay. Secondly the surface itself becomes visual evidence of the processes of constant and instantaneous change and becoming. For Bachelard. "... by virtue of its attack, the instant makes its presence felt suddenly and in all its entirety, it is the agent of the synthesis of being" (Bachelard, 2000, p.73). It is important to unpack the language used by Bachelard here. The term attack appears to suggest that the moment destroys the moment before, and by virtue of this we sense its presence. It is interesting to overlay Bachelard's statement that we sense the presence of the instant in all its entirety with Smithson's *Asphalt Rundown*. In Smithson's work we are certainly aware of the event in its entirety, as single process. Bachelard refers to Einstein's *Theory of Relativity* as negating the idea of a universal, Bergsonian duration, and states that the lapse of time is relative. Thus for Bachelard "... the instant, clearly and accurately defined, remains in Einstein's theory an absolute" (Bachelard, 2000, p.75). Referring to Roupnel's concept of time, Bachelard says "Duration is simply a number whose unit is the instant" (Bachelard, 2000, p.80). Smithson's *Asphalt Rundown* is an



FIGURE 55
Preparatory drawing
for the project (2013)
260mm X 400 mm
WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER



FIGURE 56
Preparatory drawing
for the project (2013)
260mm X 400 mm
WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER

event created from raw material and the readymade surface. It is constructed from an interaction of space, material, gravity and time. Although kept alive for a short life span, extended by documentation, it is in essence analogous to an instant in time as a visible event. It thus prioritises becoming and change above the given, the fixed and the permanent. “We can give this absolute value to the instant simply by considering it in its synthetic state, as a point in space-time. In other words, we must take being as a synthesis comprising both space and time” (Bachelard, 2000, p.75).

Figure 55 illustrates an experimental drawing developed during the thesis. It is one of a number of studies that considered discrete aspects of the transit space. In this experiment, I considered the nature of an image that is dragged out or beyond the frame, in the manner of the sweep of a radar scan.

Drawings such as this were also used to explore specific painting processes. In this instance I wiped across the drawing’s surface, dragging the still wet paint and partly obscuring the image. The process was mindful of the idea of the actual and the invisible or ghost-like virtual interacting with it. Experimental studies such as this went through many iterations including a range of dragging and pouring experiments. Such studies were influential in processes of poured veils of paint and rapid gestures made over photographic images, evident in the exhibited panels.

In Figure 56 these same processes are aligned with an interest in shadows as a transitory form that both defines and distorts or confuses the object and takes it out into the space around it.

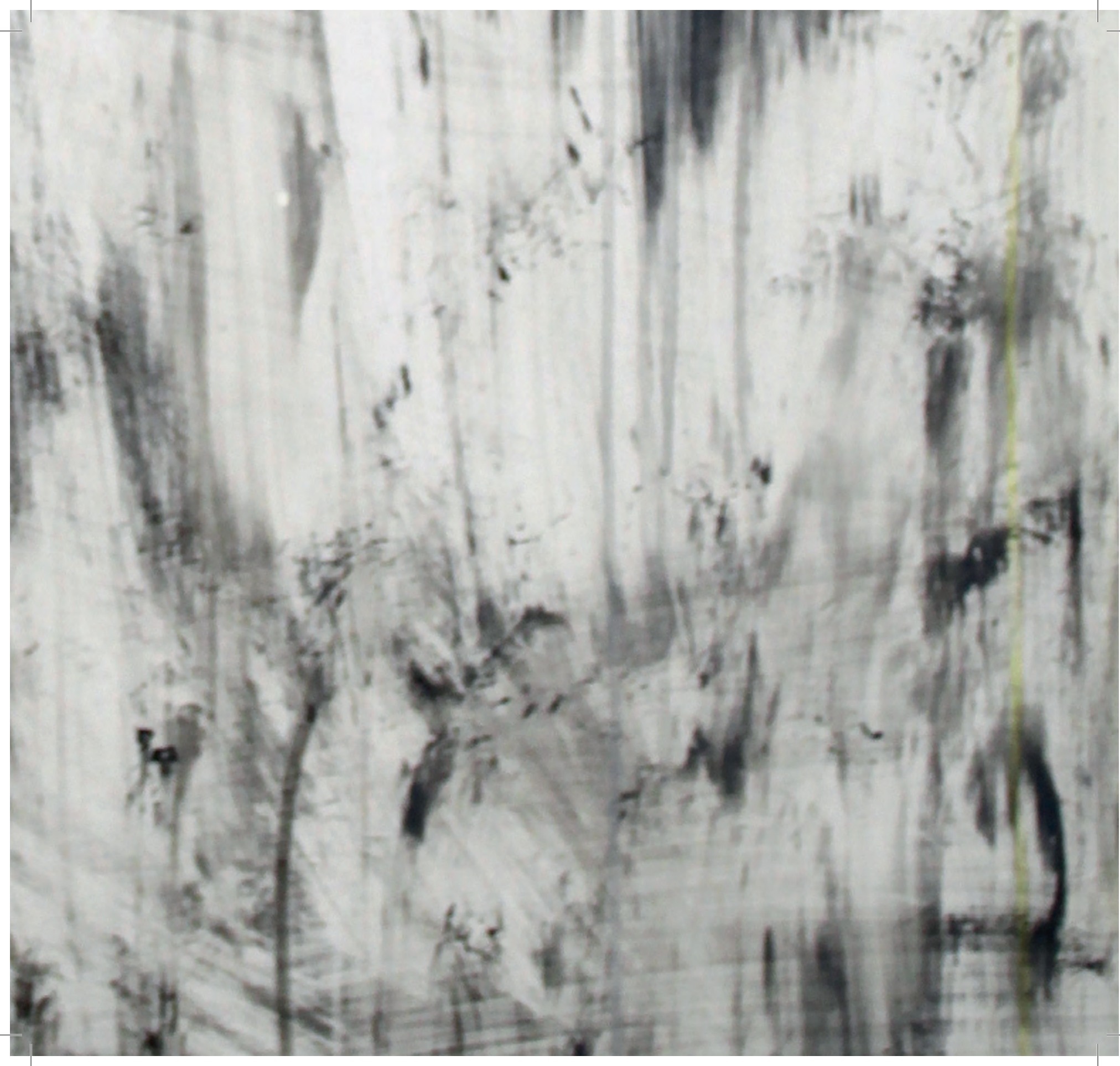
The exploratory work leading to the final exhibition for the *Painting and Time* project is constructed of moments. There are the momentary experiences of the travellers, instant scanning and x-ray processing, the flashing moments of signage in change, and abstract painting moments. The moment is not exactly the same as the instant but it comes closest, not to the origin of change, but to the process of becoming or the instant itself.

Deleuze proposes that, “The period of time which is smaller than the smallest

period of continuous time imaginable in one direction is also the longest time, longer than the longest unit of continuous time imaginable in all directions.” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.151). He suggests that the instant is the most infinitesimal period of time, and yet it is all of time, through the virtual existence of the past and the future embedded in the now. Thus, he says, “... to make the instant all the more intense, taught, and instantaneous since it expresses an unlimited future and an unlimited past” (Deleuze, 1968/2001, p.180).

In this thesis project time is paramount, and the instant or the moment is the fulcrum around which the infinitesimal and the vast circulate. The instant is a moving point, and movement is central to this exploration. In the final exhibited painting, spanning out across an entire wall, time speeds up and slows down. Movement is rarely the horizontal movement of bodies across the physical space. The work is a field of different forms of movement; movement of paint rushing down the panels, of small events of paint exploding from behind the surface, of text and information endlessly rolling over in a circular rhythm, and the carousel and escalator carrying us and our baggage into and out of our own space and from where we have been to where we are going.









LANGUAGES OF DISRUPTION AND INVENTION

VISUAL STUTTERING

In this chapter I will use the notion of the “visual stutter” to examine the way in which constructed disruptions to form in visual languages, as in literary ones, can create new forms and meanings. The concept is borrowed from Deleuze’s use of the term in relation to literary devices such as in James Joyce, and analogous ideas in the thesis. In a short essay *‘He Stuttered’* Deleuze differentiates actual stuttering from stuttering and other speech ‘defects’ as literary devices. “Creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle, like grass: it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, what puts language in a state of perpetual disequilibrium” (Deleuze, 1994, p.24). This term offers a device to understand how creative practices use disruptive forms and languages to generate interaction and new forms and readings. The chapter considers visual means explored in the project of the creative power of disruption, including the constantly rearranging of text, status, place and meaning in the arrivals and departures boards of transit places. In this section a speculation is made as to whether a shift from connections between visual arts and music to a connection with sound and noise might provide valuable new insights. The virtual realm is considered as an energy field which has its own noise and speed, and disrupts and transforms the actual. The chapter also considers the arrivals and departures information boards as a form of readymade, in that they are positioned as a readymade poem or manuscript that is in constant transformation and disruption.

The arrivals and departures panels (Figure 57) explore a visual form of stuttering, of repetition and discontinuity in a multi-temporal image/event. They are multi-temporal in that they are the accumulation of a number of temporal events and references; the time of travel, the temporal states of being on time, delayed or cancelled, the reference to the actual and constant change of letters and words, and the transformation of a word, state or destination into another. These arrivals and departures boards are akin to a condensed image of multiplicity, repetition and becoming. They are a seemingly simple appropriated image, and yet, in relation to the project and the entire sequence of panels, they reinvent the function of the original image and activate it in relation to the speculative ideas relating to actual and virtual dynamics, of constant change and transmission, and literary and visual languages that engage us in deep experience of the ordinary.

... the real non-places of supermodernity – the ones we inhabit when we are driving down the motorway, wandering through the supermarket or sitting in an airport lounge waiting for the next flight ... have the peculiarity that they are defined partly by the words and texts they offer us: their ‘instructions for use. (AUGÉ, 1995, P.96)

The signage and instructions that fill the transit space define our relationship with that space. The arrivals and departures boards draw travellers moth-like to the light. The digital information panels constantly rearrange language to signal changing destinations, status and global times. They are like contemporary palimpsests, text replacing text, with residual traces of previous places and movements. This palimpsest, however, has no original manuscript, it is not the occurrence and evidence of historical overwriting, rather it is the re-writing process itself continuously occurring and repeating.



FIGURE 57

Detail of Panel 9,

final thesis work

Panel size 800mm X 1500mm

ACRYLIC AND PHOTOGRAPHIC
IMAGE ON ALUMINIUM COMPOSITE.

Figure 57 illustrates a detail from Panel 9 of the final work. The status of travel, time zone and destination constantly change in a stammering language that denies any permanency. Here everything is fluid. The photographic image of the carousel is projected and transformed into an expressionist painting. The paint itself runs and bleeds from each form to the space around it. The very word (cancelled) that signals a stoppage and stasis is mutating into other words or shapes. There is no history or identity in this repeating narrative that informs the traveller of place and destination and the status of our movements. “If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place” (Augé, 1995, p.77). The very non- of this place allows us to bypass narratives and normalcy and venture into the moments where we can evidence time itself at work.

The transit space and the experience of passing through is devoid of relation to the exterior, it is an hermetic space cleaned of history, and although identity is paramount, it is only in ensuring you are who you say you are. Augé suggests that place always has a history and a memory, but that non-places like the airport transit space are “... never totally completed; they are palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly written” (Augé, 1995, p.79). The idea that place has not only a history but a memory was beautifully and efficiently claimed by James Joyce in notes for *Ulysses*. Joyce scribbled ‘places remember events’ in the margins of the draft novel (Orley, 2012). The implications of this deceptively simple statement are akin to Deleuze’s idea that everything has both an actual and a virtual presence. As Augé suggests, the transit space is in a sense never completed and always rewriting itself like the arrivals and departures board. The place of transit remembers the events of passing through, of processing, of the personal and the public colliding, and they are embedded in the virtual world of the space and its future events.

As Augé states, the language of public spaces such as the transit zone shifts seamlessly between different modes of language and is constructed of “... more or less explicit and coded ideograms (on roadsigns, maps and tourist guides), sometimes in ordinary language ...”, essentially establishing the “traffic conditions of spaces in individuals” (Augé, 1995, p.96). Though mechanised and factual, the flight information boards are like fields of constant replacement, where change is watched in the process of changing, where everything returns but in a constantly shifting context. It is reordered, rearranged and reworded.

THE work of condensation in dreams is seen at its dearest when it handles words and names. It is true in general that words are frequently treated in dreams as though they were things, and for that reason they are apt to be combined in just the same way as are presentations of things. Dreams of this sort offer the most amusing and curious neologisms.

(FREUD, 1991, P.403)

The four arrivals and departures panels in the final work, Panels 7-10 (Figure 58), have been discussed earlier in the exegesis. However in keeping with the idea of over-determination outlined as part of the methodology for this project, these works have a multiplicity of determining factors, and aligning with the diagram of this process, some of these factors appear as part of the on-going development and interpretation subsequent to the construction of the work. This is to say that theoretical study has allowed new interpretation of the work, and thus the development of new ideas and responses. A diagram illustrating some of these contributing factors was discussed in Chapter 2 on the Research Design. Of significance in this process has been establishing a parallel analogy with literary devices, notably with James Joyce and his obscure *Finnegan's Wake*. Written over a period of seventeen years and published in 1939, the work has two lead charac-



FIGURE 58

Panels 7 to 10, *final thesis work*

Each panel 800mm X 1500mm

ACRYLIC AND PHOTOGRAPHIC
IMAGE ON ALUMINIUM.

ters, both with speech impediments. The entire text of *Finnegan's Wake* is written in idiosyncratic language, punctuated with multiple linguistic references, multilingual puns, and portmanteau. Although in the arrivals and departures panels the words are not specifically made up of two or more words, they will become another word through the process of the rearranging of information. Thus each word, destination or state has implicit in it the actuality of becoming other words and meanings. The term portmanteau refers to a word made up of two or more

other words, and derives from the French ‘portmanteau luggage’, baggage with two compartments. The word portmanteau itself is a combination of the terms porter (to carry) and manteau (coat), all of which has a stylish link with the project, and with travel and transit.

A master of over-determination and layering of reference and meaning, Joyce created his central character, Pierce O'Reilly, with a stuttering defect. The name itself is a play on the French name for an earwig, ‘perce oreille’, and alludes to the earwig’s (fictitious) entering of the ear and disruption of hearing, language and meaning. O'Reilly’s nickname is Earwicker. Joyce was not only a master of linguistic reference and convolutions, but also of the disruption of language and meaning. In the constant stuttering and repetition of syllables and words, narrative and meaning is disrupted, at the same time as making us aware of its own construction.

In the Introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari refer to Joyce’s multiple language, and the disruption of unity and linear structure. “Joyce’s words, accurately described as having “multiple roots”, shatter the linear unity of the word, even of language ...” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.6).

The idea of the mechanics of speech creating new sounds and meanings through dysfunction becomes paramount in these works, with language at the mercy of mechanical production and disruption. This mechanical or material production of language is referred to in the first substantial study of the motif of stuttering in an article by David Spurr titled ‘*Stuttering Joyce*’ (Spurr, 2011). Spurr analyses Joyce’s use of stuttering and other language abnormalities, connecting this with psychoanalytic theory. In particular he points to the interest in both Freud and Joyce of language as both real and physical, and a symbolic order (Spurr, 2011). The information boards of air travel are an extreme example of the interaction of the physical, mechanical nature of language, and the symbolic, coded and virtual order that drives it to reinvent itself.

The intriguingly simple form of the flipboards captures moments of the simultaneous creation and destruction of language and meaning. The flip board images thus are both functional objects and at the same time condensed forms of pure becoming, where everything is repeated and different simultaneously. In this way they are temporal rather than spatial.

A number of drawings were developed leading to the final solution for the exhibition. In the study illustrated (Figure 59) the still images of the shifting texts of flight status is overlaid with gestures that create not only a dynamic movement on the surface but a sense of the interaction of the virtual (coding and systems, as well as personal associational experience) on the actual. The drawn marks exacerbate the constantly shifting, stuttering language and create



FIGURE 59

Preparatory drawing for
the final thesis work (2015)

PENCIL ON DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH.

a sort of surface noise. A sprayed white-out of paint obliterates and obscures the text, and there is a sense of the words, and meaning, coming into perception and being destroyed simultaneously.

In the final four panels using stills from the arrivals and departures information boards (Panels 7-10) a decision was made to let the text elements stand unmarked in relation to the carousel images. Movement is thus more subtle and complex, flowing in multiple directions. The use of drawn gestures and painted surfaces over photographic images, however, has provided new directions in exploring the topic and has been used in other areas of the final work, notably in Panels 13 and 14 (Figure 12).

The fractured words on the flipboard shift constantly between clear, instructional meaning and nonsense. Each word seems to hold a multitude of other words within it, which it is constantly exposing and changing into to. It is as if each word is being continuously translated into another (language, word, time zone). In his 1988 text *Oblivion*, Augé says,

THE best way to crack a word half open in order to let the thought or thoughts it shelters be revealed (for, I forget to point this out, it happens, frequently that a single word gives shelter to a whole range of thoughts, born of couplings about which we know little and which do not necessarily resemble each other very much) is to try and translate that word.

(AUGÉ, 1998/2004, P.9)

Augé goes on to say “Translation, as everyone knows, is similar to an exercise in cartography” (Augé, 1998/2004, p.9). The arrivals and departures boards are a kind of diagram of comings and goings, a map of temporal states, and of destinations. The predictable, known language of travel also becomes a “... quasi text, looks like a dictionary” (Augé, 1998/2004, p.13).

The predictable, quasi text of the arrivals and departures boards is also a kind

of predictive text, but unlike this texting function in mobile technology, here it predicts not what the writer is thinking and wording but temporal states themselves. Like mobile phone predictive texting though, when travel information is in the process of realigning destination, time and status, there are in-between states of language and meaning, guesses and wrong turns.

In an article on stuttering and the diagram, O'Sullivan discusses the concept of a minor literature proposed by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. (O'Sullivan, 2009). This minor form sits parallel to the major work, critiques it, undermines it, and forces it to become radical. It "... counteracts the operation of order-words and the exercise of power this involves by breaking language open to a howling outside/inside" (O'Sullivan, 2009, p.249). O'Sullivan refers to this disruptive and productive language as "... moments of noise – or glitches as we might call them" (O'Sullivan, 2009, p.249). Despite the silence of the image of the flipboard it is difficult to separate it from the memory of the sound of it in action. These moments of noise, are both actual sound and the virtual noise of stammering disruption, "... that free language from itself, at least, from signifying self, by putting it into contact with other forces. A rupturing of representation. A breaking of the habit of 'making sense', of 'being human'" (O'Sullivan, 2009, p.249). Referring to the same process of disruptive language, Guattari states that this action creates both a "... mutant desire and to the achievement of a certain disinterestedness" (Guattari, 1996, p.13). Thus in the context of the transit experience there is an already established level of anxiety and desire, and at the same time an overwhelming numbness and disinterest induced by dislocation. The traveller staring blankly at the information board is half way between fascination and mental and physical inertia.

Earlier in the exegesis I referred to processes of mimicking between painting and photographic image and the complex undermining and simultaneous homage that occurs. O'Sullivan talks of a similar dual operation in referring to the

deliberate, creative glitches in written and visual language. “Such glitches – or breaks in the typical – are a kind of reverse-technology in that they offer an escape from the manipulation performed by those other affective assemblages that increasingly operate in a parallel to art” (O’Sullivan, 2009, p.251). He goes on to say that the disruption,

... names two moments or movements. To break a world and to make a world. In fact these two are never really divorced from one another: to dissent means invariably to affirm some where/thing else. The glitch is then a moment of critique, a moment of negation – but also a moment of creation and of affirmation. (O’SULLIVAN, 2009, P.251)

Time and noise (and painting)

Much has been written about the relationship between visual art and music, including theoretical links with notions of the sublime, of structure, and metaphysical concerns.⁴¹ Considerable mileage was generated from the obvious connections between the abstract expressionist movement and the jazz phenomenon, with the developments of improvisation, voice and nervous energy. However, there is an arguably rich field to be studied, if the focus is shifted from music as an art form to sound (and noise) itself, and the relationship between sound, time, space and matter. Here though, in relation to the silence of painting, the realm of virtual noise seems relevant. The question the project poses is, can the relatively fixed, still and silent language of painting engender an awareness and experience of a fluid, ever-present, invisible realm of virtuality, including virtual as well as actual noise? The artwork explored over the project aims to find means to visualize the virtual and invisible realm of reality, and make a virtual field of transition and change

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For example Levinson’s *Music, Art and Metaphysics* (2011), (Levinson, 2011) and Jessica Wiskus’ *The Rhythm of Thought: Art, Literature and Music after Merleau Ponty*. (Wiskus, 2013).

dominate the representation and experience of actual states, events and things.

In an article on stuttering and communication, Gunn and Rice suggest that "... the stutter can be heard as an over-exposure of speech. It is an entanglement between body and language" (Gunn & Rice, 2009, p.218). This over-exposure renders the familiar and meaningful as noise. In the arrivals and departures signage the virtual coding and information is always at the point of overload. We tend to think of the virtual as the invisible and the unknown but here it takes on characteristics of the actual and the mechanical; that is, it has a mechanical momentum, and it creates sound, white-noise and background noise. Gunn and Rice's suggestion that stuttering is a collision between language and the body's mechanisms for language generation is expanded by Frisch in an article on personified noise. Frisch breaks down the derivation of the word person "... which derives from the Latin *personare*, 'per' signifying "through" and 'sonare' meaning, "to make noise, sound, resound", the ramifications of stuttering go beyond a mere speech pathology" (Frisch, 2013, p.15). Frisch discusses, from a Deleuzian perspective, the "... various stages stuttering goes through in being considered as noise: Noise as interruption, a language of noise and noise as a portal" (Frisch, 2013). Frisch aligns with Deleuze's position that "... the virtual and the actual need to be in state of interaction, otherwise they remain in independent states. This also accounts for the unbalanced system which has its own dynamics keeping the process of self-preservation going" (Frisch, 2013). In the flipboard airport panels text is kept moving, but the language itself is static and disconnected. The appropriation of the image of it in action is like a readymade Dada or Fluxus poem, where new languages and words (however meaningless) are constantly created in the disruptive noise of the process itself of creating sense and direction.

As in the x-ray images discussed earlier, not only is a concern with temporality paramount, but the future is embedded in these information systems as its key function. Thus the art work does not seek an essence of being or even a stable state, rather a state of constant differentiation and becoming. These works use ready-

made images that not only have a complex multiplicity of association, but where the future is specifically and functionally embedded as a dimension of the now.

Artist Bracha Ettinger refers to ‘nomad words’ in finding and creating language that spans her own multi-lingual and cultural self. She invents words in collaboration with visual language, often words that appear meaningless and obscure. “I needed words. I took them from books. Nomadic words. I liked taking words that meant nothing to me” (Tuchman & Freeman, 1987, p.224). In an essay on Ettinger’s work, Johnson discusses this neologistic language, “‘Nomad-word’ appears to indicate a signifier without determinate signified, a word that within conventional signification can potentially ‘mean nothing’, but is credited with a generative power” (Isé, 2000, p.225). Although the origin of the language in the arrivals and departures panels is appropriated directly from a mechanical device, there are similarities with Ettinger’s ideas, and the visual and textual device of undermining meaning, thereby potentially increasing generative power. This has an historical precedent through Dada, Futurism and Russian Constructivism across all forms of creative practice. In the departures and arrivals information boards the words and names are doubly nomadic in that wander off into indeterminate places, as well as being a homing device for the nomadic traveller.

“Nomad-words can create (lebolel) and dance (lebolel) in the real” (Francés, 2004, p.28).⁴² Ettinger seems to be alluding to the dance or play of the virtual (association) and the actualisation of the real. Deleuze himself was an on-going master of the neologism with many of his multiple word inventions becoming embedded in theoretical discourse. The arrival and departure works are perhaps the ultimate Deleuzian neologisms in that there is a constant process of ‘neologising’. Here too there is an incessant building and destruction of sense, of the recognisable and the fractured.

Words are thus presented as not fixed and singular in their signification, but able to carry and transmit multiple meanings, to transform and adapt and mutate. “In their ability to travel, it seems, some words are better vehicles across lines of

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The word ‘lebolel’ is a Hebrew word for a whirling or circular dance. The ancient root word for lebolel is considered the root also for ‘halal’, thus, for Ettinger, the word bring together (ritualised) movement and the profane, in the moment of dance.

discontinuity or rupture than others, in the sense that the more a word can carry, the better it is able to withstand loss in translation” (Isé, 2000, p.226). In the arrivals and departures information boards, the words themselves are the words of travel. We do not carry this words with us, using and reusing them, but they are constantly in movement. The very function of accuracy and timing also disrupts and mutates.

It is pertinent to revisit a connection with Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams* used in Chapter Two in relation to the Research Methodology and the idea of overdetermination and condensation.

THE work of condensation in dreams is seen at its clearest when it handles words and names. It is true in general the words are frequently treated in dreams as though they were things, and for that reason they are apt to be combined in just the same way as are presentations of things. Dreams of this sort offer the most amusing and curious neologisms.

(FREUD, 1991, P.403)

Freud’s statement, in relation to dreams, suggests that the use of literary and visual devices of stammering, and word conflation and invention can be linked back into mental process themselves; that is it appears to be an internal process and not solely an artistic convention.

In a second drawing (Figure 60) exploring the flipboard image and gestural interventions, the marks and flurries on the surface treat the letters and words as things. As in Freud’s idea of words in dreams, this shifts the focus from a meaning function to a poetic one of reinvention and aesthetic form.



FIGURE 60

Preparatory drawing
for the final thesis work (2015)

PENCIL ON DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH.

The Readymade and Time

The arrivals and departures boards appear like a modernist Fluxus poem, constantly reinventing itself. The idea of the readymade, first proposed by Duchamp, has itself undergone endless transformations and interpretations by artists and critics. Zepke proposes a seeming paradox in the nature of a readymade⁴³ that is “... on the one hand its instrumentalisation, and on the other, its renewed power of resistance” (Zepke & O’Sullivan, 2010, p.33). In the same text, Zepke quotes Guattari’s analysis of the function of the readymade, specifically referring to Duchamp’s Bottle Rack of 1913. For Guattari the readymade “functions as the

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Stephen Zepke’s essay on *The Readymade: Art as the Refrain of Life* (2008) provides a contemporary re-reading of the readymade, with particular relevance to concerns with time, rhythm, repetition and the mechanical. Burrows’ 2008 essay, *Readymades, Labyrinth Mist and Mirror Travel: Deleuze, Badiou and the Time of Art Practice*, engages with a contextual linking of Deleuze’s ideas of time, with events of travel.

trigger for a constellation of referential universes engaging both intimate reminiscences (the cellar of a house, a certain winter, the rays of light upon spider webs, adolescent solitude) and connotations of a cultural and economic order” (Zepke & O’Sullivan, 2010, p.34).

Throughout the research experiments and explicit in the art work for the doctoral project, readymade or found images appear amidst a range of other constructed surfaces and images. The x-ray panels are not only pre-existing images but act also as readymade abstractions, that is they appear abstract with normally familiar objects floating decontextualised within an uncertain non-space.

In the arrivals and departures panels the readymade images cut from a moving sequence of an airport flipboard notification system cultivate a range of ‘referential universes’. At the most evident level these refer to the temporal determinants of travel, of arriving, waiting, departing, being on time, and being delayed. They are mechanical devices, and like Duchamp’s appropriated devices, have personal and bodily associations. Unlike Duchamp though, these are several times removed from the actual objects, which have been filmed, cut as static images and printed. Through this process the content and meaning of the information is semi-readable and always in transformation. In this way each (meaningful) word is always in the process of becoming another.

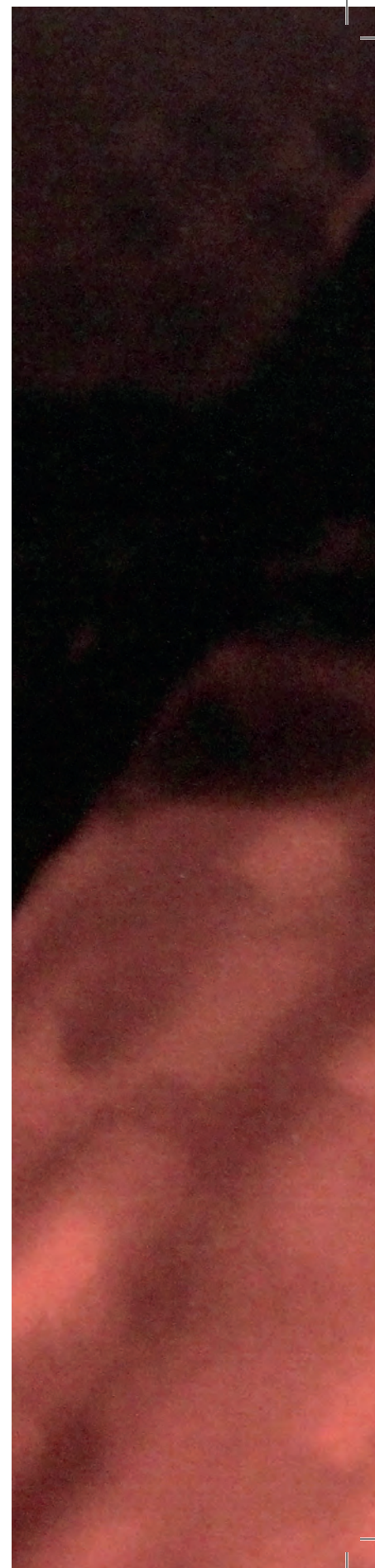
44

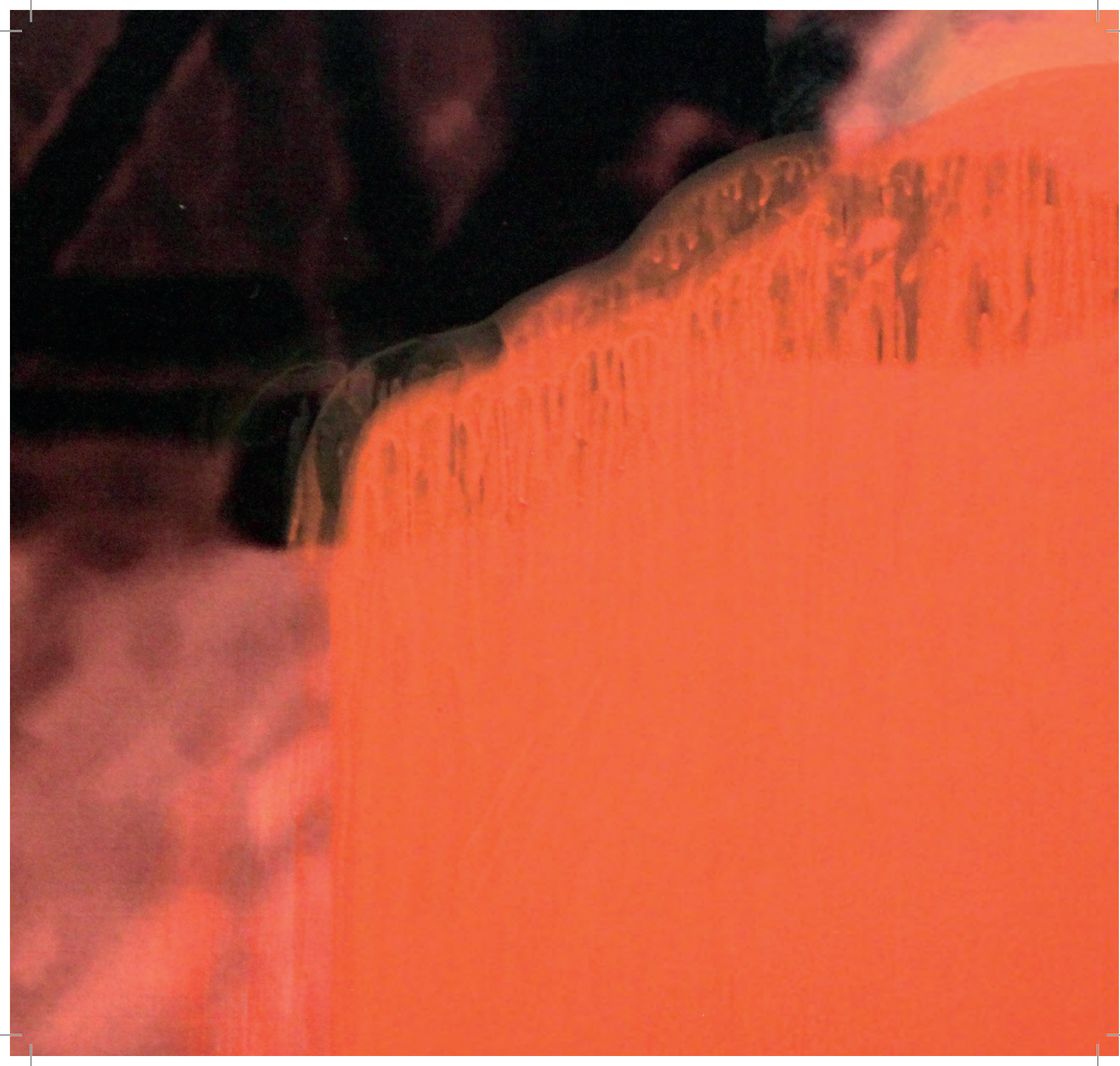
The term refrain is a translation of the original term ‘ritournelle’ used by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The ritournelle or refrain is an incantation that has both a simple, light form but calls on a greater power or state. Deleuze and Guattari propose that in the humming or recitation of the refrain there is a process of entering or exiting a territory. Zepke makes a connection with the readymade and the idea of the simple repeated form having the power to deterritorialise and link to an external set of relationships.

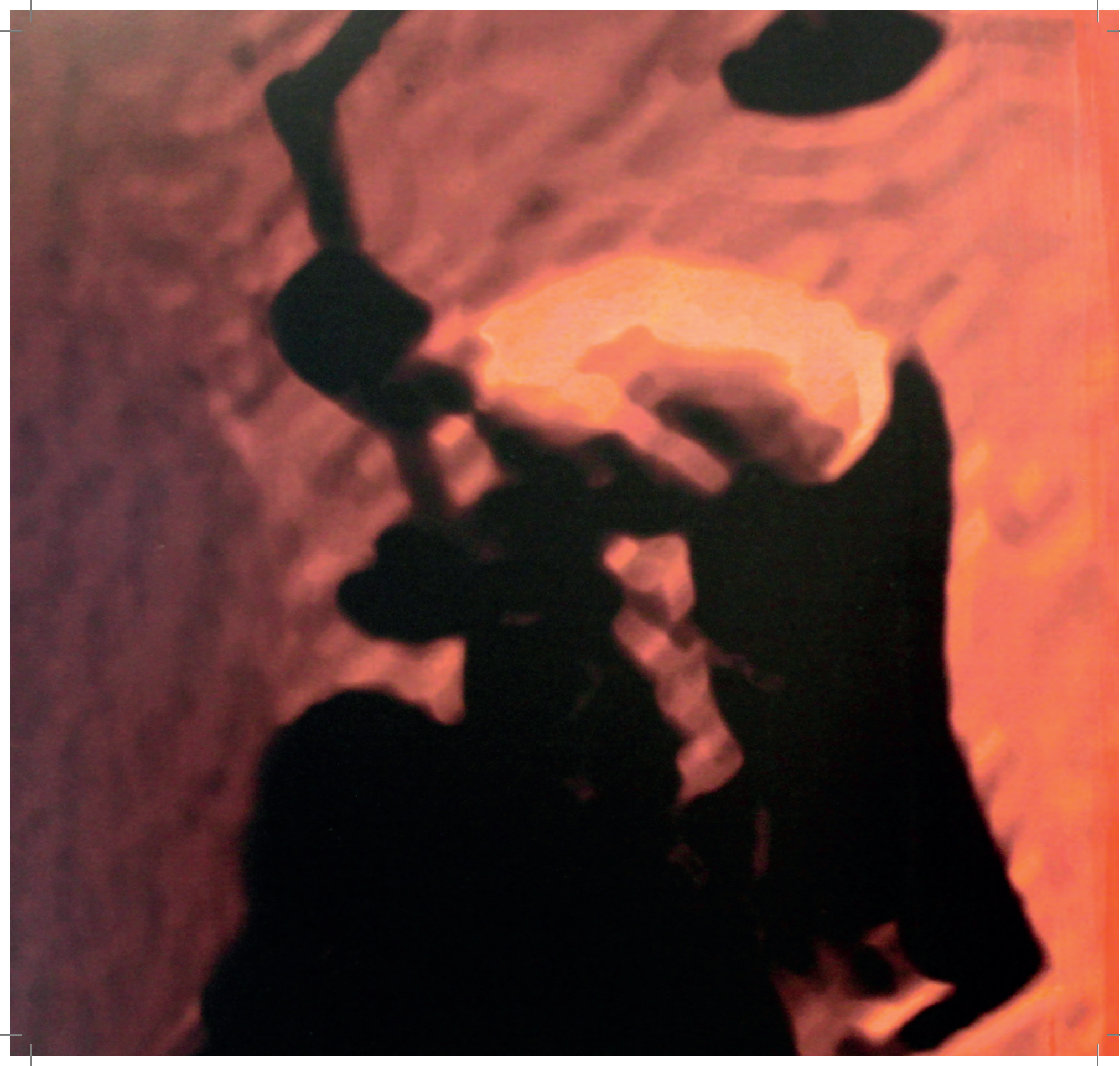
Zepke borrows Guattari’s term ‘refrain’⁴⁴ to refer to this process of the dual nature of the readymade, and as Guattari states, the “detachment of a material object from the self-evidence of its form, function and meaning ... allowing it to congeal a singular and immediate assemblage of sensory affects” (Zepke & O’Sullivan, 2010, p34). Zepke extrapolates from this argument to allude to the power of the readymade to transcend a simple relationship between object and subject. “The affects generated by the readymade therefore go beyond the conditions of possibility of the subject-object relation (space and time are no longer the transcendental conditions of experience, rather heterogeneous durations are produced as experience” (Zepke & O’Sullivan, 2010, p.34).

In an essay on art and the temporal ideas of Deleuze and Badiou, Burrows describes the duality of the readymade that explores “an ‘indifference’ that paradoxically embraces both a machine-like detachment and an erotic and affective humour that traverses the body: a rewiring of the body’s hierarchies” (Gaffney, 2010, p119). This is particularly evident in Duchamp’s ‘assisted readymade’ *Why Not Sneeze, Rose Sélavy* of 1921. The work is ‘assisted’ in that Duchamp has combined and assembled a number of found objects and materials. These largely mechanical objects and devices collectively create (along with the title) a work of humour and implied eroticism. The name Rose Sélavy is a pun on ‘Eros, C’est la Vie’. The small marble blocks, normally unusually cold, conjure association with sugar cubes and the inherent sense of desire. The thermometer in collusion with the title refers to body temperature and the prediction of the sneeze and expulsion of breath. These small actual or virtual events for Duchamp become readymade art works themselves. For Duchamp, “... each breath is a work which is inscribed nowhere, which is neither visual nor cerebral” (Gaffney, 2010, p.120). Duchamp himself refers to another related duality in the process of defining a readymade object to the status of a work of art, or part of an art work. “Call it a little game between ‘I’ and ‘we’ “ (Gaffney, 2010, p.119).

In the 1995 text *Negotiations*, Deleuze talks of the need to counter the corruption by commerce of text and speech. He stated “The key thing might be to create vacuoles of non-communication, circuit breakers so we can elude control” (Deleuze, 1995, p.175). The disrupting language of the aviation information boards is a readymade form of what Deleuze proposes, not only in the constant shifting and changing of language and meaning, but also as the eluding of control happens within and by the very control mechanism itself. It is as if a viral need to be creative, in the stuttering and constantly transforming language, invades the totally coded mechanism.









CONCLUSION

Painting and Time appears a relatively straight forward conjunction of these two phenomena. The project, however, has unfolded a complex arena of thought, and the coming together of ideas and practice from visual arts and philosophical frameworks. Out of the complexity of research thinking in collaboration with an inventive exploration through creative practice, an overriding agenda has emerged. This was to counter an understanding of painting as a still, static art form. The conjunction of creative practice and theoretical research has given rise to a re-defining of painting as a vibrant field creating ontological experience. In contradistinction to a notion of painting as a static, timeless discipline, the art of painting is considered as holding the poetic insight to penetrate temporal states and engage in a wealth of transitions and movements.

The key theoretical positions that have interfaced with inventive processes in painting are the idea of being as actual and virtual conditions, and the concept of reciprocal determination. Arising from these fundamental speculations a vocabulary of ideas and related creative explorations have emerged, such as repetition and the mirror image, conjunction and hinging, and framing and connection.

The research project has driven significant change in my own thinking and practice and has resulted in three areas of original contribution to the field of study.

1

The first is the development of a major body of work that contributes to the on-going reinvention of painting and its relation to other art forms and conceptual concerns.

2

Secondly the thesis adds another layer to the critical dialogue and debate around painting, and creative practice in general, in particular in building an ontological and temporal framework of analysis that is relatively unexplored territory.

3

Finally the thesis project has built on the potential for exploration of innovative ways to undertake and connect research and making processes in practice-led doctoral study, and develop a conceptual and generative process between art making and the form of the exegesis.

The thesis

Although the analysis of Bergson in the thesis is more in the way of an introduction to Deleuze, the trajectory of the project and reflecting back into the work has brought me back to an essential Bergsonian idea. In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, first published in 1912, Bergson talks of entering into experience, in particular into duration which is mobile and incomplete (as opposed to the externalising and immobilising of experience through analytical method), as the only way to understand and visualise the duration of experience (Bergson, 1912). Although the work for the thesis could be read as significantly abstract, I perceive the work not as an abstraction from reality but as entering into experience, into the abstract and virtual realm inherent in reality. This is analogous to Deleuze's idea of depth, in that we enter deeply into the experience of time and change through that of travel and transit. As viewers we are not re-presented with a spatial experience of movement and travelling, but are drawn into a sub-spatial layer of that experience, where the dynamics of change, transmission and connection become visible.

In Panels 13 and 14 of the final thesis work, the viewer of the work is almost synonymous with the traveller in the work. There are glimpses of the actual and the material, appearing out of the constant movement and transition. The research project has evolved ways of entering into the space of transit, but also of the processes of painting itself. In this sense the experimentation with painting processes has unravelled means by which the conceptual ideas explored are able to interface with the subject of travel and transit without resorting to obvious narratives or the illustration of ideas.

There are a number of specific ideas and discoveries that have shaped the thesis over the duration of the project. One pervasive notion has surfaced that encompasses the overall philosophy of the thesis and the specific processes that have driven the creative explorations. This is the idea of reciprocal determination, derived from Deleuze and his studies of time and the interaction of actual

and virtual elements of reality. In relation to the overall philosophy of the project this concept disallows the separation of states, forms and genres, and opens a creative and generative dynamic concept of time and being. In essence it determines that everything connects with and is determined by everything external to it in some way. This model has evolved processes to allow this concept to link theory and practice, and to drive the specifics of the creative work for the project into new areas and novel connections. The concept of reciprocal determination runs through the artwork, establishing a mode of generation and interpretation of differentiated elements. It has allowed a rethinking of differentiated modes such as abstraction and figuration, painting and photography, that engage with a temporal framework of thinking. It also establishes a new way of reading image and text, and viewing theory and practice, not solely as separate forms that influence each other, but a model in which each actually determines the other. In this paradigm the transmission is not one directional, that is theory is not seen solely as informing and providing objective rigour to practice, but that theoretical and creative ideas and forms are mutually interactive and determining.

The idea of mutual determination has surfaced in actual form in a number of specific ways in the thesis.

Dialogue

Deleuze and Parnet's *Dialogues II* has been a catalyst in bringing to the forefront, and making more covert, the idea for the thesis to be a dialogue, and a collaboration between the artwork, theoretical ideas, and the related methodologies of reading, writing, drawing and discussion.

A dialogue implies a dynamic interaction in more than one direction. Thus dialogue is understood as not solely theory informing practice, or vice versa, but a process where each paradigm and set of ideas invades the other resulting in changes and new forms of practice.

Of significance is the interplay of my own processes of artistic enquiry, personal convictions relating to the nature of being and existence, and theoretical and philosophical study in relation to these new forms. My own history of practice is brought into an alignment with the exploration of time, informed by Deleuze's idea of the past existing as a virtual reality. It is from this place that a new conceptual and practice base emerge.

The virtual and the actual

A deep interest in the virtual and the actual pervades the current doctoral project. Generally, perhaps more so in a Western cultural framework, the actual dominates our experience and practices. Conversely the research has explored images, surfaces and processes that allow the virtual to surface, become visible, and even to dominate experience. This does not deny the physicality of the work or the pure pleasure and significance of the act and materiality of painting, in fact it has served to reinforce and regenerate this physicality. Additionally the project has aimed to advance a personal philosophy in relation to a specific enquiry relating to ontological ideas that might be referred to as an agnostic model, in that it is based in a non-transcendental ontological framework.

How does the project achieve a colonisation of actual space and experience by the virtual and the invisible? Theoretical research into the nature of the virtual, and the notion of reciprocal determination with the actual in the process of change, has developed a conceptual base for the thesis. Deleuze's own writing, morphing between philosophical, poetic and inventive languages, is a pivotal influence. His abstract notions of repetition and difference, of the abstract machine and reciprocal determination, for example, have found material form in the practice throughout the project. Deleuze has been a source not only of intriguing and radical ideas relating to time, but a language that synthesises com-

plex ideas to a form that signals process. Terms such as ‘difference and repetition’, and ‘reciprocal determination’, in themselves have great generative power in the development of ideas, as well as in the productive processes of art making.

Deleuze’s texts on cinema have been a catalyst for finding structural forms that align with and generate the overall thematic and structure of the work. The transit space and experience has provided a vocabulary of images and ideas where virtual associations and processes can be activated and become paramount. A number of specific idea/structures have evolved to achieve this visualising of virtual forces. Elements such as the x-ray images relating to the processing of travellers encapsulate ideas of virtual phenomena of prediction and the future embedded in the now. There are also meta-structures relating to the work that explore these ideas; the plugged panels establish a field of connection across the entire work, and repetition and mirroring echoes throughout the overall structure, insisting on multiplicity and invention.

The linked frame

At the outset of the study an exploration of transit space was envisaged as a means of drawing and testing ideas in relation to theoretical contexts and experience. Intensive studio practice over four years of investigation and reinvention, led not only to a synthesising of theory but more importantly to a clarifying and contextualising of my thinking. In particular the idea of the singular nature of the frame of painting evolved into considerations of a structure analogous to filmic construction. Early exploratory work included the use of spun aluminium domes, works which, at least in the form of the surface, were relatively hermetic and isolated. Through iterational experimentation, an extended series of linked frames became a way of finding form and giving expression to the ontological ideas of the project.

This structural and conceptual solution allowed not only new approaches to painting within my practice but also engendered a close connection and interaction between the work and the theoretical concepts underpinning the project. However, the work has not sought to become film-like, it does not reference specific films, and it maintains significant differentiation from cinema. As in Deleuze's studies of film, though, the project uncovers in cinema creative expression of ontological concerns with time.

Linked with the analysis of repetition and the grid, Chapter Four proposes an alternative language that informs the way that the frame is considered in painting. This has provided a theoretical framework that shifts critical study beyond a relatively static and isolating notion of the frame to a dynamic model linked with concerns relating to the generation of form and change. Here Deleuze's study of the frame in cinema is used as a starting point to extrapolate ideas of connection, and of the actual and the virtual, in relation to painting. This model denies a hermetic function of the frame isolating a painting from the outside, and implies a constantly shifting and accumulating field of virtual elements that not only relate to the work but determine it. Frames and framing are not processes unique to the practice of painting, and if the frame is considered in a broader context in relation to defining boundaries, categorisations and sets, then the ideas of the out-of-field and reciprocal determination pose a radically liberating potential to conceive of porous borders, connections and interaction.

Deleuze's idea of the out-of-field and deterritorialisation have been significant insights into the analysis of aspects of painting practice. This 'frame-work' has also been an analytical and generative means to develop new modes using multiple processes and disciplines.

Hybridity

The use of hybrid conjunctions such as painting and photographic processes, and in particular abstract and figurative forms, has proposed a parallel to the process of reciprocal determination between the actual and the virtual. I would also argue that at a deep level, the poetics of painting and creative practice engage with and generate ontological experiences, and that the project uses this as a conscious driver of ideas, processes and forms.

Contributions to the field

Deleuze has been central to the development of this project. However the thesis has contributed a new perspective on the analysis of creative practice from a Deleuzian model. Significantly it comes from within an art practice itself and turns this lens back on Deleuzian and related ontological constructions. Equally it uses a Deleuzian framework to critique Deleuze and find ways out of some of the perceived problems with his study of art. In this it has found form to explore alternative interpretations of expression in art, of abstraction, and of how the idea of the diagram and abstract machine might relate to painting. Rather than another layer of Deleuzian analysis of art, this thesis has aimed to enter into an alliance between creative practice and philosophical enquiry.

In this, theory and practice become one, and take Deleuze's idea of reciprocal determination as subject, methodology, and conceptual base of the project. The project enters into an alliance, not necessarily with a Deleuzian analysis of art, but with the core notions of a Deleuzian framework that establish a dynamic model of time and being, that has the potential to develop an equal intensity, insight and creative presence between art making and philosophical practice. Philosophical concerns and practice is thus positioned as not solely

providing objective reflection and theoretical depth to art practice, but that philosophical enquiry is an inherent part of making, and is in the end seen through the voice and poetics of the artist.

In reflecting back into Deleuze and subsequent related philosophical enquiry from an artist's lens the project has developed a radical model of painting practice. This thesis offers a number of contributions to both the practice and critical analysis of painting.

Abstraction and repetition

The thesis has developed an innovative approach to the study of abstraction and repetition. Chapter Five provides an analysis of abstraction and related forms of seriality and the grid. The research project has engaged with these forms and structures in painting outside of common spatial and stylistic paradigms. A framework of ontological theory is considered a valuable arena of critical study in the visual arts field. This is seen as a dynamic model that challenges formalist notions of seriality and encompasses ideas of connectivity and the relationship of repetition to time and the generation of the new.

Languages of disruption and transformation

Related to the study of time and transition, the thesis applies ideas of the generative power of disruptive language, from both theoretical and creative sources, to the art of painting. Developing through the enquiry one encounters an exploration of the constantly changing, stuttering text of the arrivals and departures

panels. It is suggested that painting engages with both constructive and disruptive languages, and that the generative power of disruption is an insightful model for analysis and art making.

Exegetic form and the relationship of theory and practice

The thesis project contributes to practice-led doctoral projects through the theoretical content of the project, the overall structure of the work, and relationships between creative practice and the exegesis.

In the production and analysis of the artwork, Deleuze's idea of an ever-accumulating virtual world, encompassing all of the past and implying the future, is demonstrated through a dynamic model of connectivity in contradistinction to separateness. Deleuze's model of creative practice and philosophy as equal but different forms of thought is also seen as significant in developing a relationship between theory and practice that goes beyond ideas of theory providing rigorous and reflective objectivity to subjective practice.

Accordingly, this exegesis is structured as a dialogue. While, as Hamilton (2011) notes, such documents must reconcile "the disinterested perspective and academic objectivity of an observer/ethnographer/analyst/theorist [and] the invested perspective of the practitioner/producer" (para. 2), the document does more than this. It creates a distinctive discussion where images and text frame and inform each other. Accordingly, the design, in seeking to create an overall visual and conceptual logic for the painting, permeates traditional demarcations between creative work and exegetic writing. In this thesis, the exegesis is understood as a creative artefact in itself, and as such it forms an integral part of the interplay of ideas and expression that flows across and through the research. The form of the exegesis, and not solely the content, is directly related to the artwork through structural devices, image, text and design.

The creative practice

Over and above the conceptual contributions in relation to painting practice, the actual work produced during the thesis, is seen in itself as a contribution to practice in this arena. The doctoral project has pushed the work into new areas, new connections and overlaps with other disciplines such as film, and processes of painting that are able to express productive ideas that link with ontological concerns. In essence the work explores a poetics of time, uncommon in the critical study of painting.

Beneath the explorations of the transit space and specific ideas, forms and images related to this, and to concepts of time, there is an underlying idea that the creative act and the workings of time are processes of experimentation and the making of the new. The temporal creative processes and those in art making are obviously not the same, however it is perhaps that the creative act comes close to the nature of ontological processes. As Williams suggests, “When we experience difference by experimenting, Deleuze claims that experience becomes a radically multiple thing – that is, it is no longer the experience by a self of a set of objects” (Williams, 2003, p.76). The argument I would make is that through the artwork we have an experience that is not solely by a self of a set of objects or events, but an experience at the same time of another level of the nature of being. These two layers of experience are synthetic and inform each other.

The thesis has aimed to develop a rigorous, critical and deep exploration of the topic, through a synthetic/poetic framework rather than an analytical and objective one. Finding ways to do this within a visual arts, practice-led project, is a significant challenge, particularly in ensuring that there are intimate relationships between the topic, methodology, writing and the creative practice. It is suggested that this research project has made a significant contribution to this debate, within the specifics of the project.

Future research surfacing from the thesis

The idea of a virtual world that not only inhabits the actual and interacts with it, but has a speed, a form and a sort of silent background noise, opens up valuable potential for further dialogue between research and art practice. This arena of enquiry might offer a rich range of disciplinary sources and thinking, as well as exploration into new art processes. In this regard the ideas underpinning the arrivals and departures board panels have much unfinished business inherent in them. The exploration of seemingly simple found images such as these might be developed further in terms of language and image, of the virtual noise of coding, prediction and experience, and the stuttering disruption of constant change.

Bergson's idea of the need to enter into duration to visualize and understand it found poetic form through painterly processes and images in the research project, and these ideas and experimentations have a momentum that will continue beyond the thesis completion. The idea of entering into the duration of experience potentially opens research possibilities into other cultural practices and beliefs systems in relation to ontological concerns and creative practice. One of the aims of the thesis was to find ways to reinvent abstraction in painting, and the project uncovered a number of processes and interactions that led to the final work, as well as generating ideas that remain in a latent stage and will be revisited and developed after the doctorate.

Included in these ideas I intend to develop the conjunction of painted and photographic images and surfaces. In addition I am also interested in exploring new forms of the readymade; existing images, sequences and events that by their function are inherently abstract, diagrammatic and unconsciously half way to an art work. The gradual development over the project of the use of images related to the transit space, such as the carousel and the escalator, has evolved into a complex model of the 'subject' of the art work. The image of the escalator in the final exhibition work, for example, has a number of overlapping functions.

These image operations, as subject, metaphor, device to generate movement and structural form, have potential for further study.

In terms of future exhibitions, I am anticipating developing these thesis concerns into a number of bodies of work. Some of these ideas are as yet unexplored, latent ideas, others have been more fully visualised, but will be tested in a series of experimental processes. One potential work which appeared well formed in an almost dream-like prediction is an idea for a moving image work that relates to the luggage carousel. I am considering filming, from a vertical aerial perspective, a single piece of luggage coming out onto the revolving carousel. This looped sequence might be projected beside the reverse image of the luggage disappearing back into the space beyond, as yet unclaimed and without ownership. My concerns would be with how the two looped sequences might be synchronised, slightly out of sequence, appearing occasionally simultaneously coming into and going out of view. At one point of a long sequence the same object might appear and disappear simultaneously, coming into the present and being drawn back into the past. This process of visualising an almost resolved work or series of works is not uncommon in my practice, and is able to function due to an active virtual thinking, drawing and testing of ideas and process.

A realisation has surfaced over the duration of the project concerning the ways painting operates in relation to the painter and the temporal span of practice. I have come to see that at times the work is actually ahead of the artist, literally and not merely figuratively. To say that the work can actually be ahead of the artist is to accept that there is a virtual field in operation. The last two panels made for the final exhibition (Panels 13 and 14) link intimately back through the project. They have one frame in the project work, but they are also ahead of myself as painter, and they themselves are leading me already in new directions. I am in this sense only just beginning to understand them and the part that I have played in visualising something external to me, but visualised through me.

Following up on unfinished business from the project, and catching up with

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Critical discussion around the nature of airport transit as a virtual space and the concern in the thesis with Deleuze's Cinema works may be usefully developed for the ACCESS Journal: Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural & Policy Studies. In addition, both Studies in Material Thinking, and The Journal for Artistic Research [JAR], offer potential sites of publication for articles that deal with the relationship between the research project and its contextualising theory. Studies in Material Thinking, may offer a location for a reconstituted Chapter 8 that discusses visual stuttering in relation to the exhibited painting. By extension, JAR, because of its multi-modal structure, would enable me to expand experiments between image and text developed in this exegesis and to present, in a more media-integrated manner, discussions on the nature of transit developed in Chapter 6. It is my intention to develop three articles in the six months following thesis lodgement.

work that is ahead of me, my aim is to develop bodies of work out of the doctoral project, as series of artworks that explore particular ideas of the dynamic between abstract and figurative elements, and between photographic and painting processes. These would be exhibited in a dealer gallery in Auckland, and it is proposed to also show them internationally, for example at ProjectSpace, RMIT University, Melbourne, where I have exhibited in the past.

I also intend to publish articles out of the doctoral material, initially in areas directly related to painting and philosophical ideas of time and being. Another area of interest that has surfaced more recently in discussion with the supervisors has been the nature of subject in painting, and its relationship to metaphor and symbol, and to form and expression. This arena of thinking is an area that I would like to explore, particularly as it brings together a number of aspects of painting and theory, practice and wider philosophical concerns.

The doctoral project has developed a rich body of theoretical material, and it is intended to explore aspects of this further in the form of journal articles.⁴⁵

In concluding

The thesis set out to answer two key concerns. Firstly whether Deleuze's idea of being as actual and virtual elements that mutually determine each other, might be used as a new analytical tool in the study of creative practice. The second question was to see if this research into ontological issues could be a significant catalyst in the development of new ideas in my own painting. The research project has resulted in a body of thinking, experimentation and a final exhibition that pushed the parameters of my thinking and achieved a breadth, conceptual rigour, and intensity that has opened new arenas of practice.

The highly controlled and mechanised, yet disruptive, space of airport transit has been a rich vehicle for the exploration of ideas of time, change and transmis-

sion. At an experiential level it has provided a wealth of associative material that connects with experiences of discontinuity and change, with global and coded time, and transition from one place and state to another. At a symbolic level, images of the mechanisation of the processing of travellers construct a kind of abstract machine in constant movement where the traveller is carried in and out of known space. Here we wait to arrive or depart. The usual movement across space is replaced by a vertical, mechanised and incessant transition into and out of the frame of perception. In this space I have found an intensity of temporal experience, and a place where the realm of virtual elements is hyper-realised.

TRAVELLING is often a necessity but it is also driven by the desire to experience the new and to reinvent. This project has been a continuous process of invention and discovery to find a poetic form through which to give potent expression to personal and theoretical ideas. At this point at the end of the conclusion I revisit a statement made by Marrati quoted at the start of the exegesis, “time is not an external frame in which events occur but is identical with invention itself” (Marrati, 2008, p.15). In this thesis I have aimed to get inside the transit space, not to frame it from a distance, but to dwell inside time itself, to pull it apart and find images, moments and ways of painting that create a poetics of time. If time is identical with invention itself, then painting and time are able to share a collaborative project.

RETURNING to my own city recently I arrived in the airport transit. People moved along corridors of space and time, scanning flickering signs and waiting for revolving mechanical systems to regurgitate their personal belongings. In this world, imposed passivity and anxiety become one. As I joined the uneasy group searching for something recognisably their own, I saw for a moment the paintings in this thesis laid out across dimensions of actual experience. The place and the event had come to look like the images I had created of it. These were real people

with real lives and destinations, but, in this strange, suspended world actuality and time had no continuity. Nobody belonged here, it had no history and geography, but we were gathered in communal separateness, making journeys that intersected for a discordant moment. In the dislocated experience I was reminded again of the power that painting has to give voice to the complex, the deep and the inexplicable, to get inside the obscure and invisible, and to challenge our perceptions and ideas of time and being.



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