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*A Fragment of Time in the Pure State; a mapping of Painting's  
Time through Proust, Deleuze and the Digital Image*

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## ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES, SCHOOL OF ART

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

# *A FRAGMENT OF TIME IN THE PURE STATE; A MAPPING OF PAINTING'S TIME, THROUGH PROUST, DELEUZE AND THE DIGITAL IMAGE*

BY BETH HARLAND

This practice-based submission for PhD by Published Works comprises a series of individual and collaborative research projects from the period 2003-2007, with material from 1999-2002 providing a background context. The submission addresses a specific research proposition and demonstrates practice-based solutions to an evolving set of questions.

The research proposes an approach to time in painting aligned with Deleuzian/Leibnizian time and Proustian 'time regained' as opposed to the Freudian model of 'return' and preoccupation with absence and mourning often assigned to painting. It claims that such a positioning of painting's temporal continuum enables it to reflect the complexity of our lived experience of time. It is argued that this alignment is realized through an engagement with the requisite literary and philosophical writings, but that crucially, a dialogue with digital imaging offers contemporary painting an expanded topography and contributes to its ability to 'think' time in these terms.

The research reveals a means of *theorising process* in which a systemization of theoretical discourse takes place within practice, through the application of the research methods. The submission includes a series of 'process notes' and a section of 'visual footnotes', articulating a distinctive perspective upon practice-based enquiry.

The chosen methodology is characterised by a cyclical approach to action and reflection, and the text maps the development of the research as a series of interconnected circuits, operating on rhizomatic principles. The research finds that a rhizomatic model, as a non-linear, non-teleological structure, echoes the experience of practice and is appropriate in addressing the given proposition as it recognises that the shifting territory of the temporal and of memory produces a multiplicity of divergent, overlapping lines of thought. Thus the research proceeds by turns and returns, constructing variations of problems and concepts, moving back to earlier points to add a different sequence rather than building step by step in a tree-like fashion.

Painting's time is viewed in relation to haptic visibility and filmic time, and these reflections are linked to various conceptions of the *actual/virtual* and the notion of multiple *possible worlds*. The research reveals that it is through such a folding of time that painting, via the digital, can realize pure duration and attain Proust's 'fragment of time in the pure state.'

## Contents

Illustrations	p. 4
Publications	p. 6
Acknowledgments	p. 8
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>p. 9</b>
1.1 Structure	p.11
<b>2.0 Methods</b>	<b>p.15</b>
2.1 Action research and studio practice	p.15
2.2 Modes of knowing	p.16
<b>3.0 Context and analysis</b>	<b>p.18</b>
Introduction: Painting's models: from traumatic trace to rhizomatic map	p.18
3.1 Chapter 1: <i>The Space of Painting and Virtual Space</i>	p.20
3.1.1 Digital Terrain	circuit 1. Impact of Technology p.21
3.1.2 Doubling the Screen	circuit 2. Surface/Screen: double space p.24
3.2 Chapter 2: <i>The Haptic and the Optic</i>	p.28
3.2.1 The Tactile Retina	circuit 3. Haptic/Optic, smooth/striated p.32
3.2.2 Shadow origins; Likeness and Semblance	circuit 4. Mirror/Shadow p.40
	<i>Process notes A: After</i> p.43
3.2.3 Mimesis; the Ground as Interface	circuit 5. Mimesis p.47
	<i>Process notes B: Zone 9</i> p.50
3.2.4 Disjunctive syntheses; <i>Zone 15</i>	circuit 6. Disjunctive syntheses p.55
	<i>Process notes C: Zone 15</i> p.59
3.3 Chapter 3: <i>Painting's Time</i>	p.67
3.3.1 The Future's Passage; a Threefold Present	circuit 7. Actual/Virtual p.67
3.3.2 Time before Time; The Proustian Fragment	circuit 8. Proust's Fragment p.69
	<i>Process notes D: Zone 16</i> p.76
3.3.3 The Time Image; Displacement	circuit 9. The Filmic Time-Image p.79
3.3.4 Folded Time; <i>Possible Worlds</i>	circuit 10. Folded time p.83
	<i>Process notes E: Possible Worlds</i> p.85
<b>4.0 Conclusion</b>	<b>p.95</b>
5.0 Further work	p.98
<b>6.0 Appendix 1: Process and epistemology:</b>	<b>p.100</b>
<i>Machine Room; a blueprint for painting</i>	
<b>7.0 Appendix 2: <i>Zone 15</i>, interactive digital piece, CDRom</b>	<b>p.117</b>
<b>8.0 Visual Footnotes</b>	<b>p.118</b>
<b>9.0 Bibliography</b>	<b>p.142</b>
Filmography	p.149



## Illustrations

Figure 1: Circuit structure	p. 13
Figure 2: Beth Harland: <i>Digital experiments</i> , 2003	p. 22
Figure 3: Andre Tarkovsky: <i>Stalker</i> , film still, USSR, 1979	p. 25
Figure 4: Beth Harland: <i>Digital drawing</i> , double space 2003	p. 25
Figure 5: Jean-Baptiste Chardin, <i>The Skate</i> , 1738, Musee du Louvre, Paris.	p. 27
Figure 6: Jean-Baptiste Chardin, <i>The Jar of Olives</i> , 1760, Musee du Louvre, Paris.	p. 27
Figure 7: Beth Harland: <i>Study (skate)</i> , oil on canvas, 61cm x 36cm, 2005	p. 29
Figure 8: Vija Celmins: <i>Untitled</i> , oil on canvas, 1990	p. 33
Figure 9: Beth Harland: <i>Studio projections</i> , 2003	p. 35
Figure 10: Beth Harland: <i>Digital drawing, still life</i> , detail, 2004	p. 36
Figure 11: Beth Harland: <i>Digital drawing, still life</i> , detail, 2004	p. 36
Figure 12: Beth Harland: <i>Digital drawing, still life</i> , detail, 2004	p. 36
Figure 13: Beth Harland: <i>Zone 5</i> , oil on canvas, 152cm x 117cm, 2004	p. 37
Figure 14: Beth Harland: <i>Lucid IX</i> , oil on canvas, 61cm x 36cm, 1999	p. 39
Figure 15: Beth Harland: <i>August 3rd: Winter</i> , oil on canvas, 61cm x 36cm, 2001	p. 42
Figure 16: Beth Harland: <i>After VIII</i> , oil on canvas, 152cm x 117cm, 1999	p. 42
Figure 17: Andy Warhol, <i>Five Deaths</i> , silkscreen on canvas, 1963	p. 46
Figure 18: Beth Harland: <i>After VIII detail</i>	p. 46
Figure 19: Roger Caillois: <i>Giant phasma</i> , from <i>Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia</i>	p. 48
Figure 20: Beth Harland: <i>Zone 9</i> , oil on canvas, 152cm x 117cm, 2005	p. 49
Figure 21: Beth Harland: <i>Zone 15, detail</i>	p. 49
Figure 22: Beth Harland: <i>Zone 9, detail</i>	p. 49
Figure 23: Giotto Di Bondone, <i>Hell</i> , detail from <i>Last Judgement</i> fresco, 1303-05, Arena Chapel, Padua	p. 54
Figure 24: Machine Room poster	p. 56
Figure 25: Beth Harland: <i>Zone 15</i> , oil on canvas, 152cm x 117cm, 2006	p. 57
Figure 26: Beth Harland: <i>Interactive digital piece: title screen</i>	p. 57
Figure 27: Nicolas Poussin, <i>Landscape with Man Killed by a Snake</i> , 1648, National Gallery, London	p. 70
Figure 28: Beth Harland: <i>Zone 10</i> , oil on canvas, 61cm x 36cm, 2005	p. 72
Figure 29: Beth Harland: <i>Zone 10</i> , detail	p. 72
Figure 30: Beth Harland: <i>Zone 16</i> , oil on canvas, 166cm x 112cm, 2006	p. 75
Figure 31: Beth Harland: <i>Zone 16</i> , detail	p. 75
Figure 32: <i>Zone 16</i> , map	p. 77
Figure 33: Proust's notebook.	p. 80
Figure 34: Alain Renais, <i>Last Year in Marienbad</i> , stills.	p. 84
Figure 35: Beth Harland: <i>Studio projections</i> , 2007	p. 86-87
Figure 36: Beth Harland: <i>Digital drawings</i> , 2007	p. 90-91
Figure 37: Beth Harland: <i>Possible Worlds 1, oil on canvas</i> , 46cm x 36cm, 2007	p. 92
Figure 38: Beth Harland: <i>Possible Worlds 2, oil on canvas</i> , 48cm x 36cm 2007	p. 92
Figure 39: Machine Room, <i>Studio workshop</i> , London 2004	p. 101
Figure 40: Machine Room, <i>Ramsgate derive</i> , 2006	p. 103
Figure 41: Machine Room, <i>Margate derive</i> , 2006	p. 103
Figure 42: Machine Room, <i>Light space, composite image</i>	p. 104

Figure 43 Machine Room, <i>Dark space, composite image</i>	p. 104
Figure 44: Machine Room, <i>Notebook</i> , 2006	p. 108
Figure 45: Machine Room, <i>Stripes</i> , Crate 2006	p. 110
Figure 46: Machine Room, <i>Cutouts</i> , Crate 2006	p. 111
Figure 47: Machine room website, <i>Home page</i>	p. 115
Figure 48: Machine Room webpage, <i>Dark space</i>	p. 115
Figure 49: Machine Room webpage, <i>Derives</i>	p. 116
Figure 50: Machine Room webpage: <i>Videos</i>	p. 116

### Accompanying Material

Appendix 1: Process and epistemology; <i>Machine Room, a blueprint for painting</i>	p.100
Appendix 2: <i>Zone 15</i> , interactive digital piece, CDRom	p.117
Visual Footnotes:	p.118-141
A Beth Harland, <i>Zone 12</i> , oil on canvas, 152cm x 117cm, 2005	
B Beth Harland, Transcriptions:	
After Poussin's <i>Landscape with a Man Killed by a Snake</i> , Chinese ink on paper, 2006.	
After Poussin's <i>Landscape with a Man Killed by a Snake</i> , pastel on paper, 2006.	
After Velazquez's <i>Surrender of Breda</i> , oil on paper, 2005.	
C Fabian Marcaccio, <i>Paint zone no.8</i> , oil, collograph on canvas. 1995	
D Beth Harland, <i>Zone 16</i> in progress, 2006	
E Beth Harland, <i>Studies</i>	
F Beth Harland, <i>Digital Drawings</i> , 2007	
G Beth Harland, <i>Berlin Residency</i> 2007	
H Machine Room, Crate 2006, Documentary archive: <i>Frames / Loop / Horizon</i> .	
I Machine Room, Crate 2006, Documentation: <i>Stripes</i>	

## Publications

### Research projects:

- 2003, *Between Surface and Screen; painting and the digital image in an experimental dialogue*. AHRB Small Award.
- 2000, Fellowship: *British School at Rome* 3 month residency, exhibitions at British School Rome and Villa Crispi, Naples. Catalogue.

### Collaborative research:

- 2005 to date, *Visual Intelligence* AHRC Research Project by Lancaster University. Speaker at project seminar, Showroom Gallery, London and Research Conference, University of California, Turlok USA. Exhibitions: 2006 University of California; 2007 Winchester Gallery and Wimbledon School of Art. Catalogue published.
- 2003 to date, *Machine Room; a blueprint for painting*. 2006 Residency and public event CRATE, Margate. Arts Council Funded.  
Website: [www.cratespace.co.uk/macinerroom](http://www.cratespace.co.uk/macinerroom). Publication.

### Curating:

- 2001 *Closer Still* Southern Arts Touring exhibition: Artsway, New Forest, Norden Centre for the Arts, Maidenhead, and Winchester Gallery. Co-authored essay published in Catalogue.

The research has also been disseminated through the following exhibitions and printed publications:

### Solo Exhibitions:

- 1999 *After* The Gallery at the Central School of Speech and Drama, London. Catalogue, essay by Simon Morley.
- 2007 *Possible Worlds* Gallery 33, Berlin.

### Group Exhibitions:

- 2006 *Jerusalem* Dean Clough Gallery, Halifax
- 2006 *Salon Connexions*, Contemporary Art Projects, London.
- 2005 *Ex Roma*, APT gallery, London
- 2005 *Le Petit Paysage* Comme Ca Gallery, Manchester
- 2004 *Le Petit Paysage* Liverpool Biennial, Gostin Buildings, Liverpool.
- 2004 *Unframed*. Group Exhibition: Standpoint Gallery London. Arts Council funded.  
Book: *Unframed; the Politics and Practices of Women's Contemporary Painting* edited by Rosemary Betterton. Conference paper: *Unframed*, University of the Arts, London.
- 2004 *No particular place to go* APT Gallery, London. Arts Council funded.

- 2002/3 *Smog* School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London.
- 2000 *Sleight of Hand* Five Years Gallery, London.
- 2000 *The Wreck of Hope* The Nunnery, London.
- 1999/0 *John Moores Exhibition* Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Catalogue.

### Declaration of Authorship

I, Beth Harland declare that the thesis entitled '*A Fragment of Time in the Pure State; a mapping of Painting's Time, through Proust, Deleuze and the Digital Image*', and the work presented in it are my own. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- parts of this work have been published as: (see publications list).

Signed : 

Date: 10/12/07

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# *A Fragment of Time in the Pure State; a mapping of Painting's Time, through Proust, Deleuze and the Digital Image*

## **1.0 Introduction**

This practice-based submission for PhD by Published Works will present a series of individual and collaborative research projects, primarily from the period 2003-2007, with material from a number of earlier projects (1999-2002) providing a background context.

The aims of the submission are:

- To synthesise projects produced over an 8 year period into a cohesive argument for an approach to practice-based research
- To address a distinct research proposition and specifically demonstrate practice-based solutions to an evolving set of research questions
- To articulate in detail the research methods that have been employed
- To make a contribution to the field of Fine Art research through an original approach to questions pertinent to painting practice in its current form and in its relation to contemporary imaging technologies.

### *Research Proposition*

I want to propose an approach to time in painting that moves it away from a preoccupation with absence and mourning, a Freudian position of return, and towards a Deleuzian/Leibnizian time, aligning it with Proust's 'time regained' and the search for what he called a 'fragment of time in the pure state.'<sup>1</sup> I will argue that such a positioning of painting's time is enabled through an engagement with the requisite literary and philosophical writings, but that in addition, a dialogue with digital imaging, which offers contemporary painting an expanded topography, might contribute to its ability to 'think' time in these terms.

Before beginning to address this proposition, I would like to clarify my intention for this text and my use of some key approaches and terms within it. The research process has involved writing and making as interlinking activities, neither of which comes first and in this submission the text is the result of combining this ongoing reflection within the practice and a sense of overview which 'draws together' material over a period of time. The text is intended to be read not so much as an explanation of or commentary on the development of the practice as a critical reflection from within practice.

When speaking of 'painting's time' I mean to reference the time both contained in and released by a painting. Of course the term 'painting' itself immediately presents us with an extremely broad terrain and my use of it is not intended to encompass every approach to the medium. I should state that within this text I mean to refer largely to the territory of painting surrounding my own practice and the historical and contemporary examples

<sup>1</sup> PROUST, M. (1954) *Remembrance of Things Past*, Penguin Books, p.906

cited in the research. Perhaps this approach to painting's time can best be described as one which comes out of, and applies to, my own practice in the first instance but has the potential to be extended as a possible means of approaching time in other paintings.

The term 'return' is, for the purposes of this critical reflection, limited to a specifically Freudian conception of repetition in relation to mourning, which I see as a proposition to work against in the research. I recognise that the term can be utilised in a more expansive and perhaps positive context with reference, for example, to Lacan and Nietzsche. However, whilst acknowledging the relevance of these interpretations for the research, they are seen to be beyond my present scope. Following my conclusions in this text I have included a section entitled 'further work' indicating that the subject of return (along with others touched upon by the current project) is a potential avenue for research in the future.

Having initially framed my practice in relation to the alignment of painting with the discourse of photography, thus positioning it within the realm of the indexical trace and the concomitant psychoanalytical discourse of the 'return of the real,' I became interested in the impact of digital technology on this position, and the implications of this technology for painting's engagement with questions of time.

In re-conceptualising my approach to painting and initiating changes to key techniques in the making process, a relocation of reference to parallel practices occurred, moving away from analogue photography and towards digital imaging and film. I wanted to explore the sense that I had of painting's time being somehow more sympathetically connected with that of film than that of photography.

The exact moment recorded by a still photograph, as Laura Mulvey describes it, is 'extracted from the continuity of historical time,'<sup>2</sup> whereas the filmic image is 'bound into an order of continuity and pattern...that (almost always) has a temporal dynamic imposed on it ultimately by editing.'<sup>3</sup> The complication of time, within the temporal logic that film establishes for itself, is folded into its structure, and makes its presence felt, and here perhaps lies the parallel with painting's temporal continuum.

It is also interesting to note that a link between painting and film occurs with the impact of the digital on film, as Mulvey points out 'in the 1990s digital technology brought back the human element and man-made illusions.'<sup>4</sup> In the movement away from the chemical reaction of light on photosensitive surfaces, the 'painterly character of the illusions of the magic lantern...returned to visual culture.'<sup>5</sup> Mulvey cites Manovich, who also links the digital and painting, noting that digital cinema revisits pre-cinematic practices of the hand-painted, seeing film then as 'no longer an indexical media technology but, rather, a sub-genre of painting.'<sup>6</sup>

In this investigation of painting's time, the practice-based engagement is with still digital image manipulation in dialogue with painting. This takes place alongside a theoretical engagement with notions of filmic time, specifically Deleuze's writings on cinema and his notion of 'time-image' and 'crystal image.'

<sup>2</sup> MULVEY, L. (2006) *Death 24x a Second*, Reaktion Books, p.13

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.13

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.19

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.20

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.20

The first stage of my investigation involved establishing a working practice which could produce a productive dialogue between digital imaging and painting, and in 2003, I began working on a research project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board, entitled *Between Surface and Screen; painting and the digital image in an experimental dialogue*. This 5-month long project was the starting point for a sustained engagement with a series of research problems, which developed and became more complex and specific through two series of works, *Zone* and *Possible Worlds*, over the subsequent four-year period. It is this research that I will now present and reflect upon, at times referencing works from an earlier period, back to 1999, as contextualisation demands. I kept detailed notebooks throughout, documenting the development of the research, which I have used to retrace and critically evaluate the process and outcomes.

In the initial stages of the research, questions focused upon the possibilities for dialogue between the mediums of painting and digital imaging, and on the experience of primarily spatial distinctions in the making process. This evolved towards the central concern of the research, that of painting's temporal continuum and its relation to a specifically Proustian conception of time and memory. Throughout the research the operation of a hybrid practice, combining painted surface and digital screen, retains a crucial role.

Chapters 1 and 2 chart an engagement with the different experiences of working with painted and virtual space, and what might be gained from their interaction, analysing methods constructed through an exploration of the 'haptic' and the 'optic', and Deleuze and Guattari's notion of 'smooth' and 'striated' space. The mechanisms and methods of practice-based research are further scrutinized through two collaborative research projects, one included as an appendix, both of which focus, through different means, on an exploration of painting's epistemology and the ways in which documentation can articulate process.

Chapter 3 develops initial investigations to bring the central questions of the research into focus within the territory of time, using various literary, philosophical and filmic models to address the question of how painting can 'think' the subject of time and reflect upon our experience of it.

## 1.1 Structure

I have referenced the writings of Gilles Deleuze extensively as I find the form of his thinking (as well as the substance) apposite as an approach to practice; it has also largely shaped the structure of this text. Through the course of the research and the construction of a critically reflective text, it has been my experience that both of these activities are distinctly non-linear. In order to follow the progression of the research proposition, it has been necessary therefore to introduce multiple circuits of ideas and procedures, to take detours from what might appear the most logical or direct route. As my title suggests, the notion of 'mapping' is an important (though I realise much used) one, and in relation to practice based research the map is for getting lost as well as finding your way.

Deleuzian cartography emphasises notions of *connection*, and demands a mode of thought that might be named 'empiricist' or 'pragmatist'. In his thinking, concepts shift and interconnect from one work to the next, and the coherence of his project is not



specified ‘by “logical consistency” among propositions, but rather by the “series” or “plateaus” into which the conceptual pieces enter or settle.’<sup>7</sup> In his project, the whole is not given, and the diverse ideas do not function together like a ‘purposeful mechanism,’<sup>8</sup> they connect in unexpected ways, break off and start up again in the middle, in *nomadic* fashion. His empiricism does, however, demand an exacting logic of its own, which requires a particular method of selection, and is in this respect reminiscent of Jean-Luc Godard’s “pedagogy of the image”; it is certainly ‘not at all a matter of anything goes.’<sup>9</sup>

The relation between art and philosophy is intrinsic for Deleuze. As Rajchman highlights, Deleuze sees the progress of a nonphilosophical understanding of philosophy at work in the formulation of problems and concepts within the arts as itself a form of philosophy, contending that the relation

is not one of judgement and object, but rather of “resonances and interferences” across two different kinds of practice or activity, neither of which is situated “above” the other.<sup>10</sup>

The kind of searching, rigorous empiricism operating in Deleuze’s work is a means of avoiding the compartmentalization of knowledge, and has been influential in terms of my own project, not only through its engagement with the subjects of literature, painting and film, but equally in its methodological position, which I have found particularly effective as a model for practice. When bringing the concepts he develops into contact with practice, it seems that his approach enables new ideas and perceptions to enter so that it is not so much a question of deciphering a concept such as *multiplicity* as it is one of how it can be *put to work* and what new thoughts it becomes possible to think and make manifest in the practice.

Deleuzian thinking elevates experimentation above ontology, and proceeds through constructing variations of problems and concepts, moving back to earlier points to add a different sequence, and extending ideas through a *rhizomatic* structure as opposed to building them up from the base, step by step in a tree-like fashion. I have adopted this approach to structuring the text in that the analysis of ideas and processes presented here is non-chronological and follows a structure of turns and returns in which several strands of thinking through making are woven together, sometimes disappearing to resurface again, viewed from a different perspective.

A non-teleological structure, such as the rhizome, seems to me to echo the experience of practice, and in my approach to reflecting upon the development of the research, the mapping of several interconnected, but at times also divergent threads of thought, this kind of open network of routes provides the most productive model. The rationale for this structure comes out of the work in the sense that it reflects the functional structure of the paintings themselves, but also, in this attempt to theorise the making process through Proust, Deleuze and digital imaging, we find ourselves in the shifting territory of the actual/virtual, a multiplicity of divergent and discontinuous lines, which can perhaps only be mapped in a non-linear form.

I have borrowed from Deleuze the notion of ‘circuit,’ which he uses in *Cinema 2* to place his concepts of the time-image and crystal image (which we will explore in

<sup>7</sup> RAJCHMAN, J. (2000) *The Deleuze Connections*, The MIT Press, p.21

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.21

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.24

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.114

chapter 3). In order to clarify the structure of my thesis, I have conceived of the key ideas within the research as small circuits which overlap and interconnect within two larger circuits relating to spatial and temporal concerns. Circuit 3, the haptic/optic, forms the *hinge* between these two large circuits, and marks a shift of emphasis in the research from a preoccupation with questions of picture plane towards an understanding, and investigation, of painting's temporal continuum. As difficult as it is to visualize this kind of structure in diagrammatic form, I have attempted to do so, not to dictate a route but to emphasise that each circuit of ideas can be followed, but that these intersect at numerous points (Fig.1). A rhizomatic structure asks of its reader an active role; in the example of *A Thousand Plateaus*, it is a question of 'what Deleuze and Guattari call consistency – not in the sense of homogeneity but as a holding together of disparate elements'<sup>11</sup>; ideas cycle round again at different points.

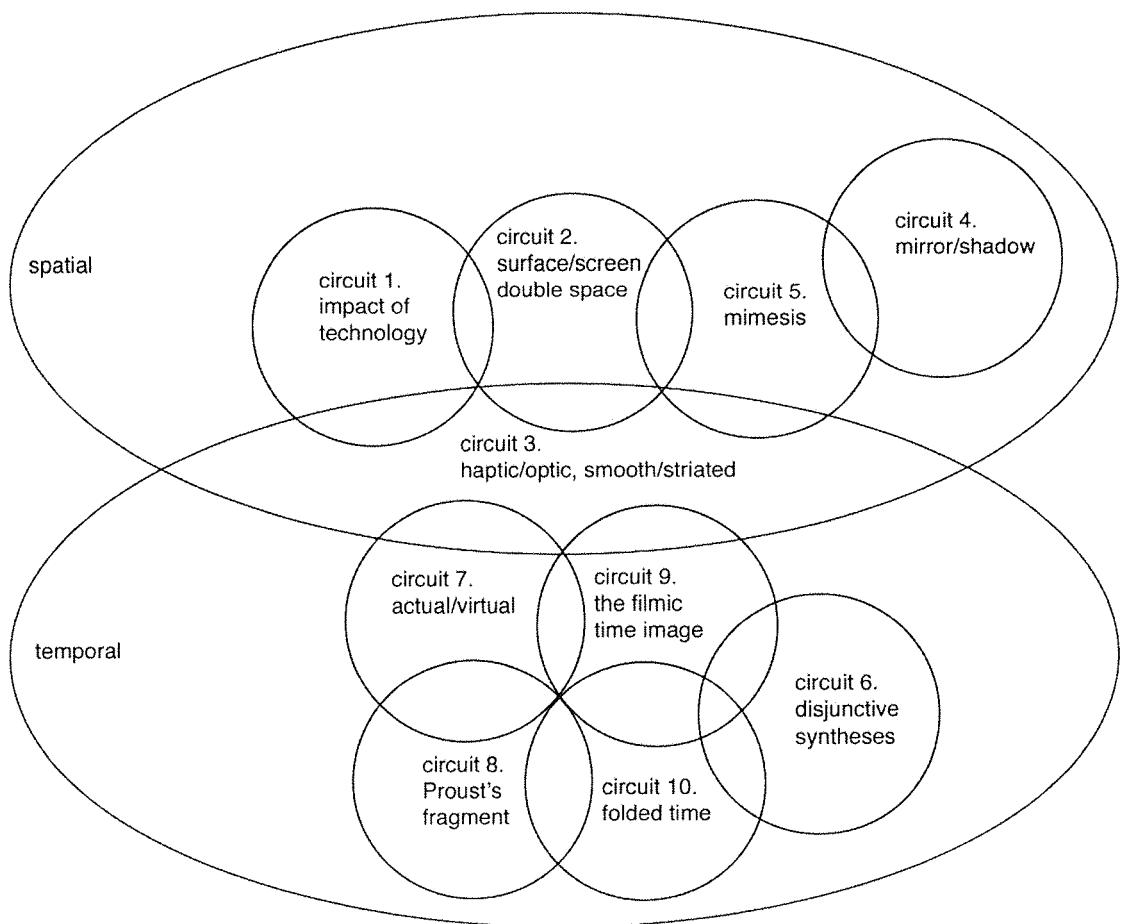


Figure 1: Circuit structure

Deleuzian models of thinking are apposite in the context of this research because, as Olkowski points out, unlike Kant's view of the Idea:

which is a law that prescribes the comprehension of every intuition as an absolute whole, a

<sup>11</sup> MASSUMI, B. (1999) *Pleasures of Philosophy. A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. The Athlone Press, p.xiv

totality...For Deleuze, the Idea...is always differential and genetic. Thus, another way to think about Ideas, for Deleuze, is as virtual multiplicities.<sup>12</sup>

We will move gradually towards a Proustian and Bergsonian vantage point upon the actual/virtual, a concept that has become central to my understanding of the research, towards the end of the text, but there are various detours we will need to take before reaching that point, I hope you will bear with me.

The map we have at our disposal is suitably described by Rajchman when he speaks of Deleuze's 'voyage' as one in which he

...adopted the Proustian motto: the true dreamer is the one who goes out to try to verify something. In other words, it is not a map in which to locate or recognize oneself in a predetermined plane with fixed coordinates. It appeals to another kind of philosophical 'orientation.'<sup>13</sup>

My interest, through both the studio research and the reflective text, is essentially in 'theorising process,' and in the relation between thought and making. As Baxandall very eloquently puts it

'Thought' can mean a range of things, and it seems important not to suggest that philosophy or science are more or better thought than what a painter does as he paints. We will want to take, or at any rate adapt, Delacroix's point: the typical form of thought in a picture is something more like 'process,' the attention to a developing pictorial problem in the course of activity in a pictorial medium.<sup>14</sup>

This research then, sets out through practice, to explore a repositioning of painting's time, departing from a model provided by the scopic regime of the photographic, towards that of digital imaging, in pursuit of a Proustian conception of time and memory. The route-map for this transition, underpinned by the philosophical temporal speculations of Augustine, Bergson and Leibniz, is Deleuzian, and takes painting into the territory of the rhizome, smooth space and the cinematic time-image.

<sup>12</sup> OLKOWSKI, D. (1999) *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, University of California Press, p.232

<sup>13</sup> RAJCHMAN, *The Deleuze Connections*, p.5

<sup>14</sup> BAXANDALL, M. (1985) *Patterns of Intention*, Yale University Press, pp.74-75

## 2.0 Methods

This submission comprises a studio based research proposition, supported by two collaborative projects, which specifically contribute to an understanding of the methods employed in addressing the research questions.

It is the aim of this text to articulate, as far as possible, the process of acquiring knowledge in addressing these questions, through practice. I would agree with Katy Macleod, that higher degree research is the domain of the 'artist theorist':

This is theory that is not written; it is made or realised through artwork... the result of ideas worked through matter. It might be appropriate to see this as a matrixial theory, a complex of ideas/matter/form and theory...It may well be dependant upon the relationship between the written text and the artwork but it is demonstrative of the intellectuality of making...<sup>15</sup>

The submission will present a theoretical premise, realised through the work itself, and the text will aim to provide a critical reflection, clarifying processes of thinking through making.

An understanding of the construction of a methodological approach to practice has evolved throughout the projects, and I aim to articulate this, exploring types of knowledge that are frequently associated with fine art practice and generally manifest in visual form. In the context of the research presented here, the data is derived from a variety of visual, textual, interpretative, and empirical sources.

### 2.1 Action Research and studio practice

'Action Research' provides a useful methodological model for studio-based research in that it reflects the cyclical nature of the way in which we learn through practice. Given that this model is based on reflection and self-evaluation as a means of understanding ones processes and building upon them, it is more appropriate to fine art studio-based research than traditional approaches of social scientific enquiry.

The model of action research, with its emphasis on cycles of planning, action and reflection, is useful in this respect as it enables a recognition of the complexity of practice, and the identification of interlinking stages in the making process. 'The "planning" isn't a separate or prior step; it is embedded in the action and reflection.'<sup>16</sup>

As a research process it is 'emergent,' it builds gradually through critical reflection, with early cycles informing later, more refined approaches.<sup>17</sup>

Research questions in a practice-based context need to be reasonably open initially, and the cyclical nature of action research allows responsiveness within the process, enabling questions to evolve, taking on increasing complexity and precision. In this submission, the development of a series of inter-linking questions, moving towards a more precise, in-depth enquiry, will be described and reflected upon.

<sup>15</sup> MACLEOD, K. (2006) The Functions of the Written Text in Practice Based PhD Submissions. *Selected Working Papers in Art and Design*, 1, p.4

<sup>16</sup> DICK, B. Approaching an action research thesis: an overview. *Resource Papers in Action Research*, p.2

<sup>17</sup> An example in the research of planning procedures which continue to be responsive to outcomes can be seen in the construction of a 'map' of notations, drawn before painting begins but added to during the process (see Chapter 2 *Disjunctive Syntheses; Zone 15*).

In my experience of studio-based research, problems and questions are answered through a range of experimental, practical and theoretical explorations, and it is the development of, and relationship between, these emerging solutions that I want to articulate. The elements of tacit and experiential knowledge that typically remain unstated will thus be drawn out in an examination of the ways in which thinking takes place through making.

## 2.2 Modes of knowing

Concentrating primarily on types of knowledge described as 'knowing through experience' and 'knowing how to do', the studio research process will be articulated.

In 2006 I was commissioned to produce a work which documented my decision making process for Lancaster University's Visual Intelligence Project (see chapter 2). This resulted in an interactive digital piece, recording and representing all aspects of the process of making a painting, and is included in this submission as a piece of research which purposefully addresses the attempt to make tacit knowledge explicit to the viewer.

### *2.2.1 Knowing through experience*

This is a form of knowing that is subject to a constant state of change and development, reflecting the contingency of encounters. Through experience, perceptions are altered, and it is this understanding that I am interested in exploring through practice. This research, for example, draws substantially upon the affect on perception, of contemporary imaging technologies, asking specifically how digital imaging impacts on our experience of the world and on the *space* and *duration* of painting as a practice. The hands-on experience of working with digital imaging will be seen to inflect aspects of both the conceptualisation of the work and the painting process itself. Historically there are numerous precedents for this, for example, the impact of the technology of the camera obscura upon Vermeer, not only in terms of his painting technique but also the subject and conceptual framework of his practice.

### *2.2.2 Knowing how to do*

The acquisition of the skills related to this type of knowledge takes place through experience and through elements passed down by tradition. Direct engagement with the history of various mediums is an important aspect of my practice, and this notion of knowledge through tradition will be further explored in reflections upon *appropriation* and *quotation* as strategies in contemporary practice.

These forms of knowledge are intrinsic to practice-based activity, and are often difficult to present verbally or through text. By tracing the development of a number of series of works conceptually and practically, in relation to specific problems, I aim to reveal something of these often tacit processes. The primary studio methods that I will reference, which were specifically developed throughout the research period, include:

- Digital drawing – image manipulation / collage and montage / juxtaposition and displacement
- The *exchange* of modes of working, between painted surface and digital screen

- Spatial drawing – projections in situ, photographed to generate new material
- Appropriation – referencing images from painting and film

These methods and their application will be introduced through an analysis of the developmental stages of the research proposition.

### *2.2.3 Conceptual/theoretical knowledge*

This type of knowledge may be transferred between situations, and it is of particular interest to me as a process through which one form of critical engagement with ideas can be explored via a different mode of practice. It is characterised as a reflective learning process, through which linking relationships are as prominent as discrete bits of information.

The inflection of certain theoretical texts is fundamental to my research, and this process of *interpretation* through which propositions and ideas raised by literature, philosophy, criticism, inform and are ‘worked into’ the procedures of making is a central interest for me in the studio. A key concern of the research is to extend an understanding of the operation of this interwoven process, to consider at which stages and *how* textual material actively functions *within* practice.<sup>18</sup>

In an attempt to elucidate something of the nature of practice-based research, I have introduced insertions into the main body of the text, which take the form of short passages I have called ‘process notes’. These offer informal glimpses of the development of thinking and studio procedures, introducing another voice, often derived from transient thoughts in notebooks along with working images. The notes consist of basic descriptions of the stages of making and further reflections on the relation between making and thought. They illustrate the particular intension to theorise process and, along with the collaborative research projects specifically designed to document process, provide further insight into the generation of ideas and development of methodological approaches in the research.

I have also introduced, alongside the standard practice of footnoting, an additional set of ‘visual notes,’ as endnotes. In effect these are visual footnotes through which image-based material attached to the research, but not essential within the main text, can be included, highlighting the importance of an interwoven relation between image and text both within the research proposition, and in the overarching conception of this submission.

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<sup>18</sup> For example, I am concerned to articulate the various ways in which Proust's project in *Remembrance of Things Past* underpins and informs my own research concerns, and how a ‘reading’ of this text can arise through making, weaving into its process the insights of various other writers who have also engaged with Proust's quest.

### 3.0 Context and Analysis

#### Introduction: Painting's models: from traumatic trace to rhizomatic map

'Make a map, not a tracing'<sup>19</sup>

Before beginning to analyse the research itself, I would like to briefly sketch an outline of two models through which I have viewed painting's time, and in the process to begin to expand upon, and frame the importance of the rhizome, mentioned above as a structuring principle.

The *sense* of photography has, from its inception, been framed by an association with loss and death. Roland Barthes amongst others, in *Camera Lucida*, powerfully accounts for the photograph's peculiar nature as an inscription of death and return; a presence of something from the past, 'an awareness of its *having-been-there*'.<sup>20</sup> As Martin Jay points out, Barthes interprets the gaze of the photograph as optical, linguistic, haptic, but also, significantly, notes that 'it is an *anxious* sign...(a) seeking gaze'<sup>21</sup> through which the photograph becomes essentially identified with emotional trauma. Barthes makes a connection between the mechanical reproduction of the photograph and the 'compulsive repetition' proposed by Freud in his discussions of the uncanny and the pleasure principle. For Freud, the compulsion to repeat trauma is a mark of that which is unassimilable or refuses to be restrained. In emphasising this relation, Barthes calls photography an inherently 'traumatic' structure, through which the past is witnessed by 'deferred action'.<sup>22</sup> As Iverson tells us

Barthes tends to locate the photograph's uncanniness more in its insistence on the referent...The object is not just represented...it clings to the photograph in a disconcerting way.<sup>23</sup>

The photographic, as a much-cited context or model for painting, through the concept of the indexical and the action of tracing, had underpinned my practice prior to the current research proposition. Whilst the particular relation to time and memory in these earlier works (which will be described shortly), established through association with the photographic, was appropriate at that point, it later came to seem a lingering presence which began to contain and limit possibilities in the work. Whilst Barthes claims that 'Photography has been, and still is, tormented by the ghost of Painting...' <sup>24</sup> this seemed to me to be a mutual haunting, and one which gave rise to the image of stasis, of a halted model. As Mulvey tells us, the indexical 'death mask'

...holding the flow of time, or 'embalming' time, and preserving the actual features of a dead person through an imprinted image, would...be realized finally and perfectly with photography.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> DELEUZE, G. & GUATTARI, F. (1999) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, The Athlone Press, p.12

<sup>20</sup> BARTHES, R. (1977) *Image-Music-Text*, Fontana Press, p.44

<sup>21</sup> JAY, M. (1994) *Downcast Eyes*, University of California Press, p.441

<sup>22</sup> BARTHES, R. (1990) *Camera Lucida*, Flamingo, p.10

<sup>23</sup> IVERSON, M. (1994) What is a photograph? *Art History*, 17, pp.450-464

<sup>24</sup> BARTHES, *Camera Lucida*, p.30

<sup>25</sup> MULVEY, *Death 24x a Second*, p.59

This sense of limitation relates to the manner in which 'rather than helping in the dialectical recuperation of death's negativity...(photography) merely records it,'<sup>26</sup> positioning the photographic model as not solely an acknowledgement of death, but in its compulsion to repeat trauma, a morbid return.<sup>27</sup>

Whilst Jay correctly states that the Proustian register of time is not that of the photograph, I disagree with his characterisation of Proustian recollection as 'exercises in nostalgia abolishing the distance between past and present.'<sup>28</sup> What I want to show is that as a model for painting's time, a Proustian approach, allied with filmic time,<sup>29</sup> unlike the photographic register shown by Barthes to operate in the recognition that 'trauma is a suspension of language, the blockage of meaning...' <sup>30</sup> offers a means to move beyond its repetitive tracing.

In this transition from the tracing of time to a form of Proustian mapping, points of reference establish new territory for the research through bringing painting into a relation with digital imaging, as well as from an ongoing encounter with the writings of Deleuze. In addressing the development of this research proposition, Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* has yielded a number of influential ideas, and the whole approach of the text, outlined in the book's introduction, 'Rhizome', has been instrumental. The distinction is made between a structure that is tree-like, building one upon the last, and a rhizomatic formation which has no beginning or end 'but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overflows.'<sup>31</sup>

The rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains...(it) may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines.<sup>32</sup>

The key point, for me, is made that whereas the arborescent structure 'hierarchizes tracings...the rhizome is altogether different, a map and not a tracing.' The photographic 'tracing' does not offer the multiple links and entryways of the map because the tracing always comes back 'to the same', and in returning, to repeat, lets pass the possibility of going by a different route; misses the map's 'always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable...lines of flight.'<sup>33</sup> Such lines of flight are set against binary relations, both between points and positions, and enable changes of direction, metamorphoses; it is notable that binary logics 'still dominate psychoanalysis (the tree of delusion in the Freudian interpretation of Schreber's case)...'<sup>34</sup>

Freud constructed a relation between the arts and melancholy through the work of mourning and absence, but in the attempt to uncouple this relation, Deleuze's attitude is valuable as it posits the necessity of a kind of "unmourning" that requires additional work 'but promises more joy.'<sup>35</sup> In the relation between the philosophical and the aesthetic,

<sup>26</sup> JAY, *Downcast Eyes*, p.455

<sup>27</sup> Again, Barthes forcefully expresses this compulsion; 'Photography always carries its referent with itself, both affected by the same amorous or funereal immobility, at the very heart of the moving world: they are glued together limb by limb, like the condemned man and the corpse in certain tortures...' *Camera Lucida*, p.6

<sup>28</sup> JAY, *Downcast Eyes*, p.454

<sup>29</sup> Barthes' conclusions included a sense of the radical disparity between photography and film 'the having-been-there gives way before the being-there of the thing'. *Image-Music-Text*, p.45

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31

<sup>31</sup> DELEUZE & GUATTARI, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p.21

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5

<sup>35</sup> RAJCHMAN, *The Deleuze Connections*, p.132



melancholy could be seen as the ‘sensation of an unhappy idealization’<sup>36</sup> grounded in re-memorization. The possibility of an alternative presents itself as a form of affirmative experimentation with the still to come, and in this speculative advance, the rhizome offers a useful paradigm.

The rhizome is a structure that, having no beginning and end, is *of the middle*, ‘between things, interbeing, intermezzo – it is alliance.’<sup>37</sup> As such it is a concept of structure which resonates with the studio method I have developed, operating as it does across media, in the spaces *between* surface and screen. In terms of my proposition for painting to move from a Freudian system of return towards a Deleuzian multiplicity, the concept of the rhizome is invaluable in that its map, unlike a tracing, ‘is entirely oriented towards an experimentation with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself.’<sup>38</sup>

The first map reference in the research is the bringing of painting practice and digital imaging, two *technologies* with their own spatial and temporal associations, into direct relation.

### **3.1 Chapter 1: The Space of Painting and Virtual Space**

In this chapter the initial stages of research utilising the digital image in painting practice are outlined, along with specific literary and filmic reference points, which informed the first experimental pieces.

At this stage the broad research question was: How do contemporary visual technologies impact on our experience, and on aspects of space and duration in painting? The early paintings pursued this question through the construction of a very particular kind of picture plane, an interest that had begun to emerge in 2001 when I attended a conference and exhibition in Ohio, USA at the Wexner Centre for the Arts, entitled *As painting; division and displacement*. This event examined painting’s interrelationships with other art forms and explored artists’ experiments with collage, folding, cutting and framing to engage with painting’s borders and limits. The works, dating from the mid 60’s onwards, were predominantly from America and France, and gave an insight into the differing but connected conceptions of the picture-plane in painting that had emerged in those countries. The work of French artists from the ‘Supports/Surfaces’ group addressed issues of visibility and invisibility, structure and surface, layers and repetition. The picture surface was no longer a represented ‘scene’, but an organisational plane, effected by a series of actions. It seemed to me that the computer desktop could be similarly seen as an organisational plane, and it interested me that a notion of picture plane might continue to be challenged in this expanded context. This led to the development of the AHRB project *Between Surface and Screen; painting and the digital image in an experimental dialogue*, and the first stage of my research proposition.

The initial research questions that defined *Between Surface and Screen* were:

1. What are the possibilities for dialogue between digital technology and painting

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.133

<sup>37</sup> DELEUZE & GUATTARI, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p.25

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.12

practice, within the context of historical debates around photography and painting and the development of differing conceptions of the picture plane in painting?

2. What are the implications of a hybrid mode of practice, combining the materiality of painting and the mechanical processing of the digital, for an investigation of the ways in which experiences of memory and perception might be inscribed in images?

In order to pursue these questions, I set up a mechanism for *conversation* between the surface of a painting and the digital screen, through which one working process was passed to the other, reworked and passed back, so that rather than remain as a one-way transfer (commonly photograph/digital image as output, painting as trace or painterly *version*), the work continued to circulate between modes of operation, the process defining itself as the in-between of differing voices, practices and positions. I wanted to ask, through practice, whether digital imaging opens up different modes of thinking about and making paintings; to discover whether the digital offers a new *topography* for painting.

### 3.1.1 Digital Terrain

circuit 1. Impact of Technology

At the beginning of the project, my first notebook reference was to an interview by David Carrier with the painter Shirley Kaneda, in which she was asked about the potential relationship between her paintings and a screen image (TV, movie, computer). Her answer interested me, she said:

...I would like the paintings to function like a hypertext, in that each image of the painting, with its own specific qualities of surface, structure or color, links it to other areas in which each acts as a commentary on the other...This notion of linkage between similar and diverse bits of information seem to be the real content of the digital as a universal medium.<sup>39</sup>

This notion of diverse sources, 'bits of information' existing together, was something that I recognised in more than one sense; indirectly, in the aspiration to produce paintings that could engage with the complexity of experience, and directly through the process of digital drawing. Working with images digitally, I had tended to produce imagery in which *pockets of difference* developed through the action of masking, filtering and selective manipulation. Initial experiments (fig.2) manipulated painted images derived from photographs I had taken of a figure in a landscape, which alluded to Tarkovsky's film *Stalker*, a reference which was to become key in formulating a conception of the kind of picture space that was later to develop.

These first tentative moves into digital terrain were, then, about the potential strangeness, and poetic quality, that could be opened up within fairly commonplace images, through different spatial and surface treatments on a single picture plane. The chance to radically alter sections of the image, flipping through a complete inversion of colour values, solarizing or liquefying them in a fraction of a second, presented innumerable possibilities, particularly in terms of exploring what it might mean to *effect* an image.

<sup>39</sup> GILBERT-ROLFE, J. (1999) *Beauty and the Contemporary Sublime*, Allworth Press, p.62

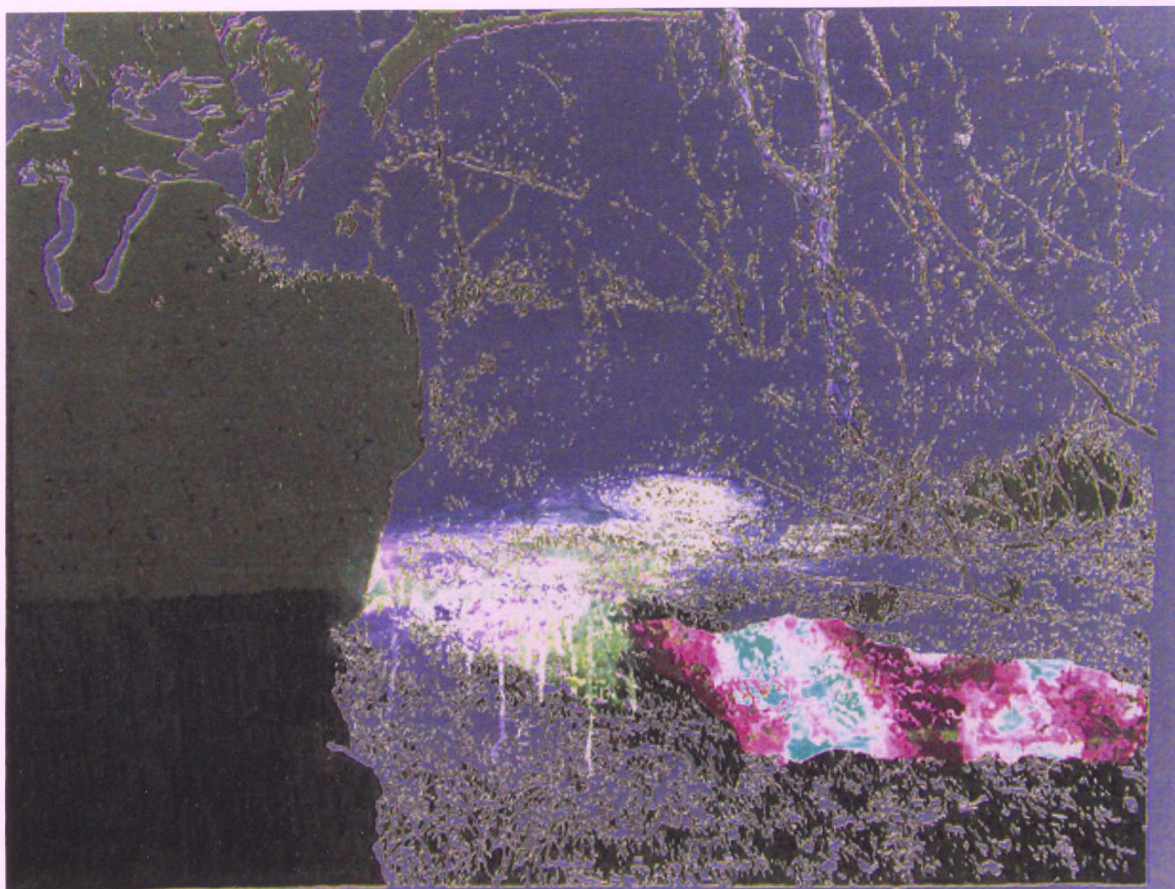


Figure 2: Beth Harland: *Digital experiments*, 2003



The notion of a changed state, specifically a momentary one, within the continuum of the everyday, had been a long-term interest and would become central to ideas about time in the work to follow. The potential for displacement, for montage and appropriation intrinsic to the digital field, seemed to me to intersect in a hugely productive way with the similar capacity of painting to re-imagine the tangible, to fold space in different ways, and to *rethink* an image.

The practices of transferral and absorption of images and texts within modernist and post-modernist strategies of collage, bricolage and hybrid referentiality are clearly given new scope in the digital realm. So, not altogether a new set of ideas for painting (particularly since the picture plane had been re-imagined variously, not least with the notion of a painting as surface for inscription and transfer, described by Leo Steinberg in 1960's *America* as the 'flat bed picture plane'), but certainly an expanded toolbox, at the very least.<sup>40</sup>

The disruption to linear space often encountered through hybridity is linked by Mulvey, with reference to Victor Burgin's work, to the mental processes of dream and reverie, through which 'the mind travels across unexpected, apparently arbitrary chains of association'<sup>41</sup> that may not necessarily be understood by the conscious mind. A notion of *linkage*, across disparate points of reference, as a means of accessing experiences of memory would become central to the work produced, however, a different form of meditation on the dream-state and spatial/temporal disruption formed the initial point of reference for the series of works entitled *Zone*. This was the already mentioned film *Stalker* by Tarkovsky; the title of the paintings is directly borrowed from the setting for the film, 'the zone,' an extraordinary place of non-linear time and transformation. The film's spatial and temporal discontinuities, the significance of detour, and the seemingly porous boundaries of the internal and external, subjects underscoring much of Tarkovsky's work, had great resonance, and enabled me to identify quite clearly the thematic of this series of paintings.

*Stalker*, the first film in the 'triptych' of Tarkovsky's late period, which also includes *Nostalgia* and *The Sacrifice*, is marked by increasingly lengthy takes, through which slow zooms traverse space with almost imperceptible movement.

The film retains a number of essential elements from *Roadside Picnic* by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, the novel on which it is based, although other details are systematically stripped away. In the novel there are six zones, in Tarkovsky's film they become one, although the characteristics of the zone, that familiar rules of space-time do not apply and the innermost wishes of visitors to the zone can be granted, remain. The simplification of the original concept and the attention to the surface of the world on screen, concentrates the film in a particular, liminal, area of our experience, in the moments between sleep and dream, the edges of the unconscious.

One of the most intriguing images of the film is the device used by the stalker to navigate a route through this intricate and highly sensitised space. Strips of cloth with heavy nut-weighted anchors are thrown as markers of safe passage, following an arch dictated by the place itself; these markers reveal the notion that in order to progress

<sup>40</sup> As Sean Cubitt indicates 'The purpose of enquiry into the digital arts is not to affirm what is, but to promote the becoming of what is not-yet, the grounds of the future as they exist in the present'. CUBITT, S. (1998) *Digital Aesthetics*, Sage Publications, p.X

<sup>41</sup> MULVEY, *Death 24x a Second*, p.28

it is necessary to take significant detours, a notion that is echoed in the experience of practice.

The substance of time in *Stalker* is felt in all its solidity, in a profoundly material sense. As Žižek tells us in his film, *A Pervert's Guide to Cinema*, the characters in *Stalker* look down, not up; the stalker operates in an intensely material reality, with his head to the earth, enfolded within time's 'pre-narrative density.'<sup>42</sup> (fig. 3)

The film's fascination, for me, turns upon the sensation of time and space being somehow simultaneously one of pure surface and infinite depth. A layered surface density, inviting a vision that at one moment spreads out and loses focus and is then drawn in towards the depth of a space, became the model for a particular kind of picture plane; a fluctuating figure/ground.

### 3.1.2 Doubling the Screen

circuit 2. Surface/Screen: double space

Working towards a 'double space' in the paintings, I employed two radically different approaches, the first an open, fluid, method of applying the ground, saturating the surface and spilling/pooling colour, chance occurrences given precedence; the second a controlled transfer, through projection from a digital image, superimposed onto the fluid ground. The subsequent development of the image sought a balance between these two modes of address; the image overlaid never quite being allowed to gain control of the initial ground, which asserted its presence still. In addition to the reference point of *Stalker*, a strong literary image emerged as analogy for this 'double space,' from Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*.

Proust's work subtly employs doubling in ways which proved influential, firstly through his notion of 'constraint' and 'chance,' which Deleuze in his book *Proust and Signs* highlights 'the accident of encounters and the pressure of constraints are Proust's two fundamental themes,'<sup>43</sup> and secondly through the figure of a double space described so beautifully in the passage in which Marcel is reading in the garden:

Upon the sort of screen mottled with different states and impressions which my consciousness would simultaneously unfold while I was reading and which ranged from the most deeply hidden aspirations of my heart to the wholly external view of the horizon spread out before my eyes at the bottom of the garden...<sup>44</sup>

The moment described conjures a juxtaposition of ordinarily separate modes of perception, overlaying the external image of the landscape before him and the 'projection' of his thoughts and aspirations unfolding that which was previously internal and hidden to him. It was this image of the unfolding of simultaneous different states, a metaphor useful to numerous variations, including those governed by time, and the notion of ground as a screen, that directly suggested a method of spatial construction for the paintings. (fig. 4)

<sup>42</sup> ŽIZEK, S. (2006) *A Pervert's Guide to Cinema*.

<sup>43</sup> DELEUZE, G. (2000) *Proust and Signs*, University of Minnesota Press, p.16

<sup>44</sup> PROUST, *Remembrance of Things Past*, Vol.1, p.90





Figure 3: Andre Tarkovsky: *Stalker*, film still, USSR, 1979



Figure 4: Beth Harland: *digital drawing*, double space 2003

Proust's evocative image is taken up by Mieke Bal, whose book *The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually* interestingly recognises painting as a prominent figure in *Remembrance of Things Past*, '...when one says "Proust's images," one thinks of painting,'<sup>45</sup> and she draws upon Rembrandt and Chardin to construct a method of reading the text.

Bal notes that the confluence of the internal and the external of the 'mottled screen,' or rather the possibility of a porous boundary between positions, is a central implication of Chardin's paintings.<sup>46</sup> In *The Skate* (fig 5), this double state is particularly striking, precisely because both inside and outside are literally represented; however, an often more gently disarming fluctuation of surface and depth, characterises his paintings generally.

My own first encounter with Proust's text and Chardin's paintings coincided, as I first saw Chardin in the Louvre when, during my three-month stay in Paris as a student, I became engrossed in *Remembrance of Things Past*. Although not aware of any connection at the time, I have since recognised that what struck me about the paintings, housed behind a thick sheet of security glass, was the peculiar oscillation of figure/ground and the unstable quality of distinction between things, which also characterises some of Proust's descriptions. In my first viewing of Chardin, I noticed that approaching the surface as closely as possible to scrutinise the flocked peaches and diaphanous glass goblets, failed to provide resolution, but rather emphasised slippage and the ungraspable sensation of certain impressions in our meeting with everyday objects. The oscillation between clarity and indistinction in Chardin's paintings, certain points being very much more clearly described than others

has nothing to do with the depth, or with the distance between the foreground and the background, as it would in the case of a photo taken on a large aperture...<sup>47</sup>

The impression is that Chardin is thinking, and looking, in a very different way to many of his contemporaries and is not held by their realist constructs. There have been various claims that he was influenced by optical theories of the time<sup>48</sup> and, as Bal points out, this does seem a fitting explanation for the intimate but wandering gaze of the paintings as 'an attempt to record faithfully the real movement of the eye skimming over the painted surface, since this was how vision was then understood.'<sup>49</sup>

Baxandall notes that a more productive line of reference for Chardin can be gained from the scientific ideas of the day, specifically eighteenth century notions of 'distinctness of vision,' than from Diderot's salon criticism.<sup>50</sup> These ideas led to 'a new sort of momentariness – not so much the Renaissance or Baroque momentarily caught action as the momentarily caught instant of perception of a state or object.'<sup>51</sup>

Bal describes Chardin's at times uncertain forms as tending towards a 'fluidity that

<sup>45</sup> BAL, M. (1997) *The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually*, Stanford University Press, p.13

<sup>46</sup> In Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense*, we gain a precursory glimpse of just such a confluence in his thinking on time and cinema, which we will come to later. He tells us that the 'event' must be related twice as the inside and outside are the simultaneous aspects of one surface, 'their "insistence" and "extra-being", past and future, are in an always reversible continuity.' DELEUZE, G. (1990) *The Logic of Sense*, Columbia University Press, p.34

<sup>47</sup> BAL, *The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually*, p.40

<sup>48</sup> Baxandall's examination of the impact of late seventeenth century empiricist philosophy and science on Chardin, specifically the ideas of Newton and Locke, is of particular interest. *Patterns of Intention*, pp.74-104

<sup>49</sup> BAL, *The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually*, p.41

<sup>50</sup> For example, the practical treatise by Le Clerc, which Chardin had access to 'described and illustrated the fact of visual acuity, the central axis of distinct vision and the arc of visual competence'. *Patterns of Intention*, p.92

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.99





Figure 5: Jean-Baptiste Chardin, *The Skate*, 1738, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 6: Jean-Baptiste Chardin, *The Jar of Olives*, 1760, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



gives them their tactile and temporal quality,<sup>52</sup> a profound sense of touch noted by Proust himself in his impassioned account of the painter's work:

Chardin enters as does the light, giving it's colour to everything....An eye practised in trafficking with the other senses, and in reconstituting by means of a few strokes of colour not merely a whole past, but a whole future...<sup>53</sup>

Having produced some studies based around notions of inside/outside, using the image of Chardin's *Skate*, simplified digitally, (fig 7) it seemed that the nature of his approach to looking and the tactile and temporal qualities of the work required further exploration. This led to an investigation of the notion of 'haptic visuality' which I researched in the studio and through the writings of Deleuze and Guattari, Laura Marks and Alios Riegl.

In beginning to answer the question posed at the start of this chapter concerning the impact of visual technologies on our experience in general, it seemed to me that our modes of perception now encompass an increasingly complex range of both embodied and detached encounters through the proliferation of technology. I then wanted to ask whether it is possible to produce paintings that could evoke this complexity, and the territory of the haptic/optic distinction seemed an appropriate one from which to address this proposition.

### **3.2 Chapter 2: The Haptic and the Optic**

In this chapter a number of threads in the research will be introduced (each connected in some way with the notion of the haptic and optic as forms of vision) that extend across several series of paintings produced over a number of years. Through introducing works from earlier series alongside recent works, I want to touch upon how the current research has emerged, and also to recognise that in this attempt to theorise process, the critical reflection itself effects what the work is becoming through revealing what it was. Or as Lacan puts it:

What is realised in my history is not the past definite of what was, since it is no more, or even the present perfect of what has been in what I am, but the future anterior of what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming.<sup>54</sup>

I would like first to establish the characteristics of the 'haptic' and 'optic' and their relation to 'smooth' and 'striated' space before exploring how these terms and distinctions have operated within the research.

At the very beginning of the 20th Century, Alois Riegl devised categories of form in order to differentiate varying relations of mind and object. His terms 'haptic' and 'optic' relate to experience of nearness and distance; the near or *haptic* being analogous to the sense of touch and its mechanism of mentally synthesising multiple, discontinuous, sensory inputs; while the distant, or *optic*, constitute a general survey of objects in

<sup>52</sup> BAL, *The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually*, p.42

<sup>53</sup> PROUST, M. (1984) *Marcel Proust on Art and Literature*, Carroll and Graf Publishers, p.328

<sup>54</sup> LACAN, J. (1977) *The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis. Ecrits: A Selection*. Routledge.



Figure 7: Beth Harland: *study (skate)*, oil on canvas, 61cm x 36cm, 2005

space. In his text *The Late Roman Art Industry*, Riegl seeks to show how the art of the period addressed spirituality formally by giving equal prominence to figure and ground, attracting the eye not simply to the motif but to the flicker of light and shade, and in doing so, suppressing the motif to afford the ground an independent meaning as the visual correlate of the intangible.

Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* also pursue distinctions of haptic and optic, linking them intrinsically with their notions of the 'smooth' and the 'striated.' Smooth space, 'open and unlimited in every direction... does not assign fixed and mobile elements but rather distributes a continuous variation.'<sup>55</sup> Examples of smooth space are drawn from landscapes – snow, sea and desert; and from fabrics – felt and patchwork:

The smooth space of patchwork is adequate to demonstrate that "smooth" does not mean homogeneous, quite the contrary: it is an *amorphous*, nonformal space prefiguring op art.<sup>56</sup>

The striated is 'that which intertwines fixed and variable elements, produces and orders a succession of distinct forms'<sup>57</sup> where the smooth is 'the continuous variation, continuous development of form.'<sup>58</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari utilise many models to extrapolate these spatial formations, from the technological through the maritime, the musical, the mathematical, towards eventually, the aesthetic model. It is in the light of aspects of these various models that I would like to position the digital, to consider how the experience of making in a digital space - in counter-distinction to painting - might relate to, and be understood through, these models. I'm mindful of the danger of oversimplification in apportioning spatial positions for these differing approaches within pictorial practice, as Deleuze and Guattari themselves caution us:

No sooner do we note a simple opposition between the two kinds of space than we must indicate a much more complex difference by virtue of which the successive terms of the oppositions fail to coincide entirely. And no sooner have we done that than we must remind ourselves that the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space.<sup>59</sup>

Their description of modes of operation in these two kinds of space is, however, useful here: in striated space, points take precedence so that lines and trajectories become secondary. There are both points and trajectory in each case (as there are in working with digital image and painting), but in smooth space the trajectory is uppermost, the *movement between* is all or, in Deleuze and Guattari's words, 'the interval is substance...'<sup>60</sup>

Working with a digital image, in the method I've gradually developed through experimentation, involves initiating a series of *effects* without necessarily knowing their cumulative result; projecting a 'command' the exact outcome of which is often highly speculative although the basic nature of the command is understood. I sense the space

<sup>55</sup> DELEUZE & GUATTARI, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p.476

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.477

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p.478

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p.478

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p.474

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p.478

of the digital plane to be without centre or prescribed direction, an extremely fluid space, open to slippage and multiple linkages, 'filled by events...far more than by formed and perceived things.'<sup>61</sup> In so many respects, this suggests itself as smooth space.

This form of space relates to the haptic. Deleuze and Guattari tell us clearly that smooth space constitutes 'haptic rather than optical perception,'<sup>62</sup> and here we approach the model that they define as the aesthetic. An understanding of haptic space involves thinking about 'perspectives', about how we stand in relation to something. Haptic space is defined, as Riegl has indicated, by close vision, too close to pick out landmarks, whereas optical space requires distance, standing back in order to see. Now we can grasp why haptic, smooth spaces are 'local spaces of pure connection' and begin to see how, at the level of the pixel, digital space is haptic. Having arrived at this characterisation experientially, through the image making process, I found that Lev Manovich, in his book *The Language of New Media*, had also made a link between the haptic and the digital. With reference to Riegl, but also Panofsky, Manovich traces an art historical context in which to place his observations about virtual space. Utilising Panofsky's essay *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (1925) in which "aggregate" space, characteristic of Greek art, is contrasted with the "systematic" space of the Italian Renaissance, Manovich describes computer space as similar to the former in the sense that it is discontinuous and lacking a sense of space as a 'medium'. Virtual space, in other words, misses the sense of perspective, the distant view of the optical in which objects are unified in a spatial continuum and is 'actually much more haptic and aggregate than optic and systematic.'<sup>63</sup>

Manovich argues that 'what is missing from computer space is space in the sense of medium – an environment in which objects are embedded...' <sup>64</sup> He proposes that 'space medium,' defined as a situation in which things and space are inseparable is exemplified in the kind of space delivered by certain modern paintings, such as those of Seurat and Giacometti. He describes these works as eliminating 'notions of a distinct object in empty space...instead they depicted a dense field that occasionally hardens into something that we can read as an object.'<sup>65</sup> He sees these modernist painters as working to articulate 'space-medium' as a philosophical concept and states that 'this concept is something mainstream computer graphics still has to discover.'<sup>66</sup>

He therefore views the fact that virtual space resides within an aggregate spatial structure (ill equipped to conceive of objects embedded within their environment) as a kind of deficiency. However, in my view it is the lack of predisposition towards fastening elements into place within a Cartesian system that appeals, offering as it does, a more fluid territory in which relationships and allegiances between elements and structures can be invented and re-invented in ways which might suggest, for contemporary painting, a less *locked in* approach to spatial and temporal configurations. So, in disagreeing with Manovich's perspective of the shortfall in digital space, I would argue for a more productive linkage of this space with notions of the haptic designated by Deleuze and Guattari's 'smooth space', which offers the kind of thinking that I want to associate with a notion of expanded topography for painting.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.479

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p.479

<sup>63</sup> MANOVICH, L. (2001) *The Language of New Media*, The MIT Press, p.254

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.255

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.255

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.255

I have argued that smooth/haptic space is aligned with digital imaging, and that in dialogue with painting, its form of thinking is, for practice, enabling and generative. However, it is the *in-between* of this dialogue that becomes interesting, and reminds me that there are important distinctions in my experience of working with paintings and digital images, and that, having connected the digital with haptic space, I might ask whether painting can be described as a predominantly 'optical' practice by the same token.

The space of the canvas seems to me to be more stable and defined as a working ground, a codified space in which 'forms organise a matter,'<sup>67</sup> the potential limitations of which are not undesirable at certain moments. I would suggest we are dealing with optical space; we are, for the most part, in the domain of the striated. Deleuze and Guattari in fact co-opt painting onto the side of the smooth and haptic, choosing the example of Cezanne losing himself in the close contact of a wheat field, with, however some ambiguity. They suggest that 'the law of the painting is that it be done at close range, even if it is viewed from relatively far away,'<sup>68</sup> but what about the kind of paintings that are physically made at close range but in every other sense 'made' with distance, plotted as a series of landmarks, projected mechanically and retraced, seen from a distance during the process at least as often as seen close-to? The kind of space depicted in Vija Celmins paintings and drawings, certainly qualifies as smooth – the sea, the night sky, the dessert – no edges, pure connection, but the process of making is detached, viewed from a distance: 'I build the work like a house, like construction...I thought of painting as building a dense and multileveled structure.'<sup>69</sup> (fig.8)

So perhaps it can be claimed that the painting process (at least in terms of the process as I, and many others, have conceived it), has its smooth moments, but that the movement towards form, towards a horizon or background against which a relative outline can appear, embraces the realm of the striated, the optical.

Of course, it is a question not so much of hierarchical selection, which kind of space is preferable, as of how do these models interact and what do they achieve in collaboration. For me, a strategic approach to image and space is necessary for painting to avoid certain pitfalls of overwrought vaguery and empty intuitive gesture (I agree with Luc Tuymans that contemporary painting needs to be about precision). Having invested in a highly strategic approach to painting, residing in a striated space, I'm interested in the interruption that a smooth space activity (such as digital image manipulation) can perpetrate, rendering the established strategy and space not so much obsolete as *unresolved*.

### 3.2.1 The Tactile Retina

circuit 3. Haptic/Optic, smooth/striated

Although I have argued that the painting process itself seems to operate conceptually largely in the striated, optical sphere, I'm nevertheless interested in the work producing a haptic experience for the viewer. The key to this sensation lies in the fact that vision itself can be tactile; in this respect 'haptic' is better placed as a term than 'tactile' 'since it does not establish an opposition between two sense organs but rather invites the

<sup>67</sup> DELEUZE & GUATTARI, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p.479

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p.493

<sup>69</sup> CELMINS, V. & CLOSE, C. (1992) *Vija Celmins*, A.R.T Press, p.14



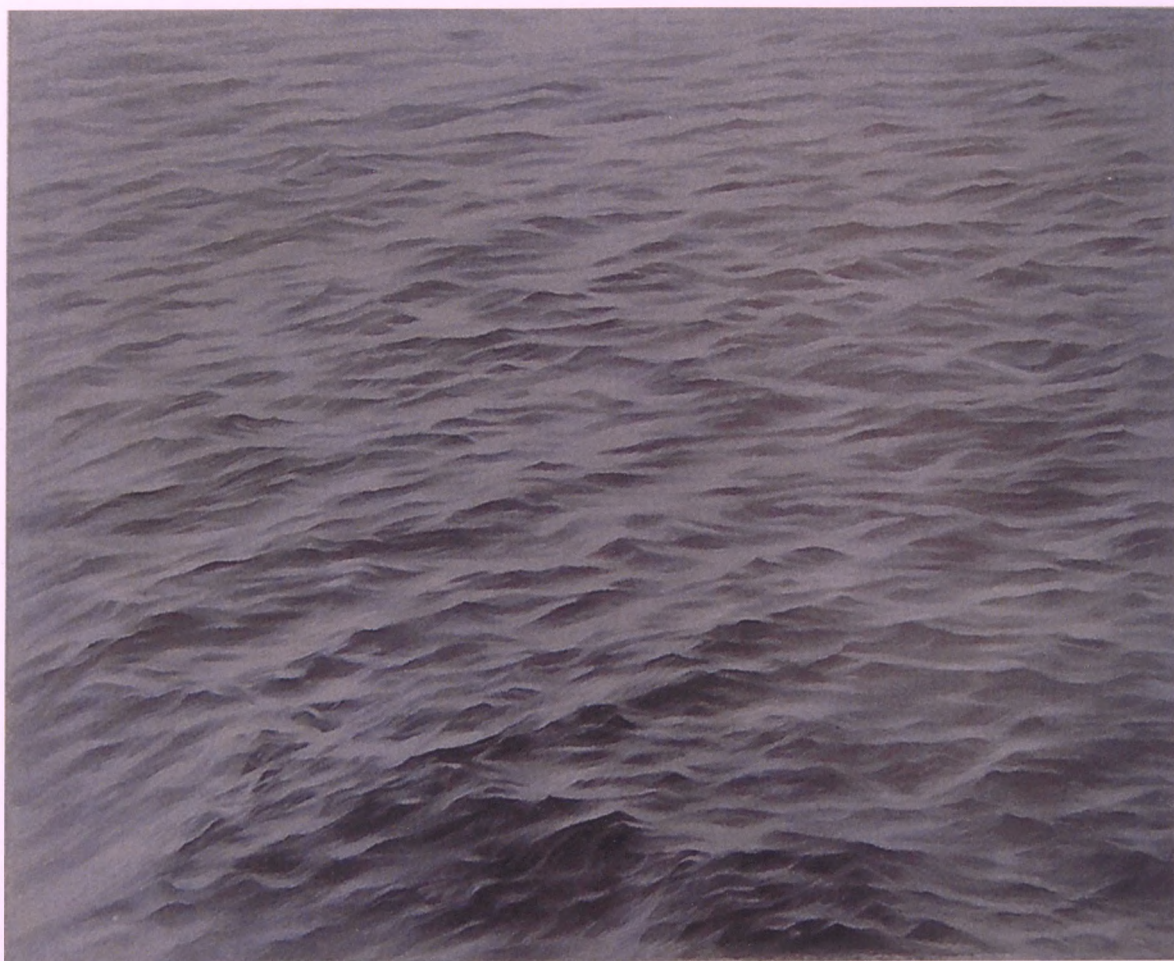


Figure 8: Vija Celmins: *Untitled*, oil on canvas, 1990

assumption that the eye itself may fulfil this non-optical function.<sup>70</sup>

Laura Marks' book *The Skin of the Film* has been a useful reference in understanding how the notion of haptic visuality might inform studio-based research in addressing the next series of questions: What constitutes haptic space and how might it be achieved in painting? How might painting and digital imaging, as different *technologies* of representation, be combined to produce a multi-sensory experience in the work and to approach the subject of memory through bridging our perception of the retinal and the tactile?

In the process of thinking about producing a haptic image, a number of experiments with projection onto painted surfaces paved the way for digital/painted exchange (fig. 9). The qualities of image that seemed to conjure a haptic sensation, a certain obliqueness in the viewers ability to read or 'place' the image, a fragmented or dissolved structure, a pronounced grain to the surface, the 'flicker' of figure and ground described by Riegl, were achieved (whether through projection or digital working) by two primary methods. The first strategy formed around a saturated use of colour, which destabilised the image and amplified tactility. (fig.10 and 11)

The second strategy focused upon a layering of two or more images to construct a palimpsest, which confused boundaries within the image, and in the subject/object relation (fig.12). A 'double space' resulted from multiple digital layers, pulled through and into each other, again referring back to the non-linear experience noted in *Stalker* as a simultaneous sensation of pure surface and depth and to Proust's 'mottled screen'.<sup>71</sup>

Returning to the first strategy (colour), Kristeva, in her fascinating essay *Giotto's Joy*, tells us that '...colour is pulled from the unconscious into a symbolic order; the unity of the "self" clings to this...' <sup>72</sup> and she assigns it the power to break with representational codes, claiming that 'Colour is the shattering of unity.' <sup>73</sup> The potential of colour to destabilise the everyday image of objects on a tabletop is seen in these digital drawings and in the initial paintings of the *Zone* series (fig 13).<sup>74</sup> The experiments confirm, for me, the truth in Kristeva's remarks:

A pre-eminently composite element, colour condenses "objectivity", "subjectivity", and the intrasystematic organization of pictorial practice.<sup>75</sup>

Colour is also aligned with instability in Hubert Damisch's book *Theory of Cloud*. For Damisch the figure of 'Cloud' challenges the fixed position of Western perspective, it is a *remainder*, the thing that cannot be fitted into the system, but which the system needs in order to constitute itself. This connects with the experience of working with digital images, a making process without edges. An extreme zoom can take you instantly from the surface of iconic representation into a plane of pixels, colour next to colour, *cloud-like*, without outlines.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>70</sup> DELEUZE & GUATTARI, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p.492

<sup>71</sup> Through digital manipulation, still life and landscape genres become confused; the intention here is to avoid an unproductive relation to representation through resisting categorisation as genre.

<sup>72</sup> KRISTEVA, J. (1981) *Desire in Language; a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, Basil Blackwell, p.220

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p.221

<sup>74</sup> *Zone 5*, was exhibited in the group exhibition *No Particular Place to Go*, APT Gallery, London, 2004.

<sup>75</sup> KRISTEVA, *Desire in Language; a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, p.219

<sup>76</sup> Similarly, Cubitt talks about 'the non-identity of the pixel, the formless...' CUBITT, S. (2005) *The Cinema Effect*, The MIT Press, p.48



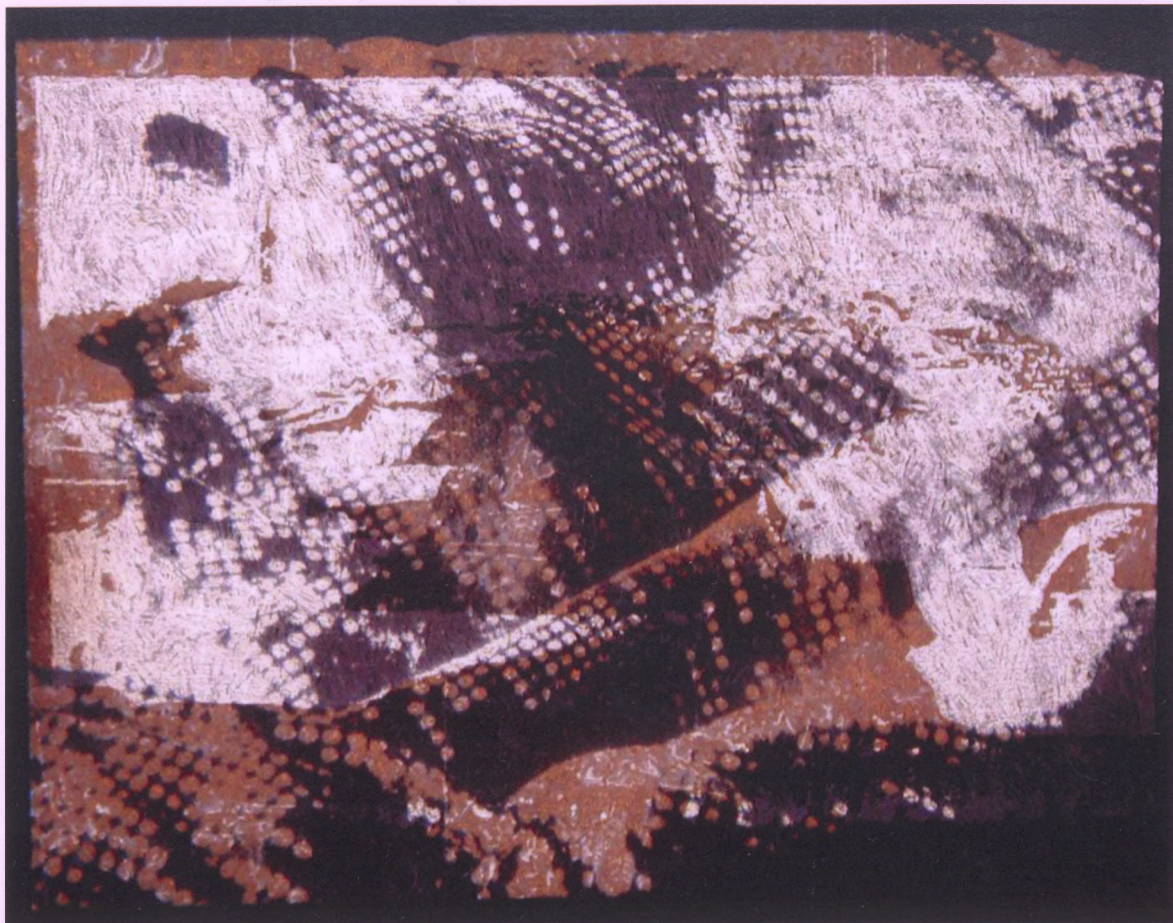


Figure 9: Beth Harland: *studio projections*, 2003



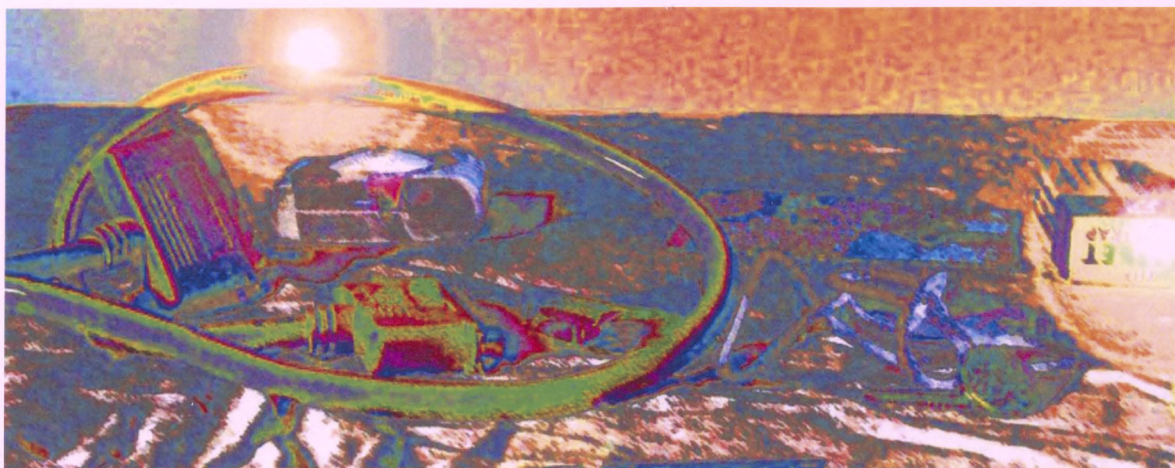


Figure 10: Beth Harland: *digital drawing, still life, detail, 2004*

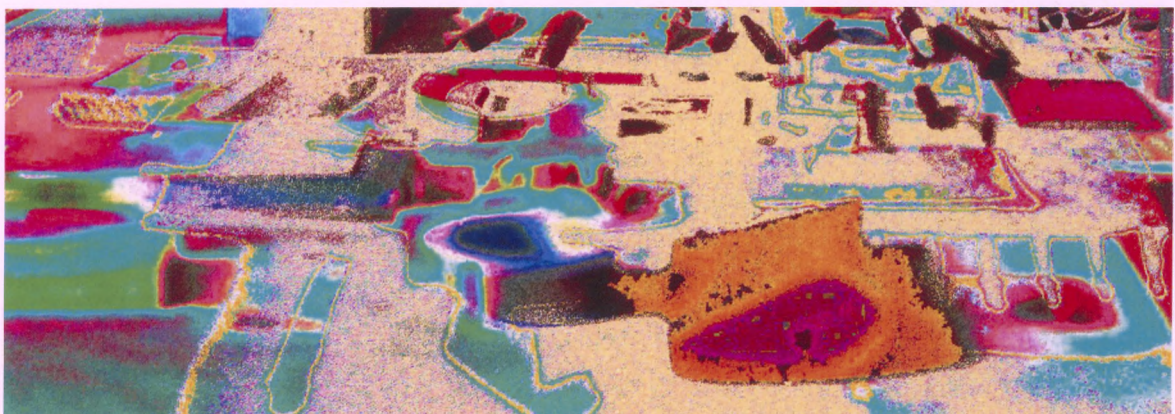


Figure 11: Beth Harland: *digital drawing, still life, detail, 2004*



Figure 12: Beth Harland: *digital drawing, still life, detail, 2004*





Figure 13: Beth Harland: *Zone 5*, oil on canvas, 152cm x 117cm, 2004

Kristeva points to a remark made by Matisse as alluding to colour's basis in instinctual drives 'when he speaks of a "retinal sensation [that] destroys the calm of the surface and the contour."'77

In these first paintings of the *Zone* series, this disruption of a calm surface similarly occurs and the stable support of the original still life image gives way to a fluctuating motion, almost a 'motion sickness', through the intensity of colour. An associative link to memories within the source image is not made via the appearance of the nostalgic objects, but through a somatic encounter with their haptic presence.

In her excavation of haptic epistemology, Laura Marks takes her examples from contemporary video works and makes a convincing argument for the importance of haptic sensation in the successful approach that these works make to the elusive subject of memory:

...they evoke memories both individual and cultural, through an appeal to nonvisual knowledge, embodied knowledge and the experiences of the senses, such as touch, smell and taste. 78

She maintains that senses other than the visual may be 'closer to the body'<sup>79</sup> (vision being the sense which removes itself somehow from the body in its capacity to perceive over distances) and which, as such, may have a greater ability to store 'powerful memories that are lost to the visual.'<sup>80</sup>

It is not accidental that Marks primarily champions, in her text, the work of women artists. She is writing within a tradition of feminist theorists, whose critique of ocularcentrism regards the primacy of vision as a mechanism for 'distanciation from the body and the objectification and control of self and other.'<sup>81</sup>

The subject of haptic visuality was also taken up by Rosa Lee in an essay, for which I was interviewed about my practice.<sup>82</sup> Lee observed that my paintings evoke the mechanisms of the attempt to record events and fleeting glimpses:

...a sense of disorientation, intense blurring which prevents the naming of objects depicted. We are moved by a strong sense of recognition, even of identification, which defies words.<sup>83</sup>

Lee referenced paintings from earlier series, which have an important contextual role in relation to the *Zone* paintings, and which I want to now introduce. The first was a series of small-scale paintings entitled *Lucid* (fig.14).<sup>84</sup> In this series, analogue photographs of still life arrangements, ephemeral, everyday objects, laid out as if for an inventory, were photocopied to remove detail and establish a mediated encounter, with the initial invitation to intimacy further 'interrupted' through the painting process.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>77</sup> KRISTEVA, *Desire in Language; a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, p.219. She notes that Matisse, interestingly, draws a comparison with the 'tactile vitality' of the 'vibrato' of the voice.

<sup>78</sup> MARKS, L. (2000) *The Skin of the Film*, Duke University Press, p.2

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p.130

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p.130

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p.133

<sup>82</sup> The essay, *Threads*, was published in Rosemary Betterton's *Unframed; Politics and Practices of Women's Contemporary Painting*, in 2004, and I contributed to an exhibition and conference of the same name in London in conjunction with the launch of the book.

<sup>83</sup> BETTERTON, R. (2004) *Unframed; The Politics and Practices of Women's Contemporary Painting*, I.B.Tauris.

<sup>84</sup> *Lucid IX* was selected for *John Moores Exhibition*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 1999. This and other works from the series were exhibited in solo exhibition *After*, Central School of Speech and Drama, London, 1999 and at The British School at Rome and Villa Crispi, Naples, 2000. This work was published in catalogues for all three exhibitions.

<sup>85</sup> The subject of still life was, as we have seen, later taken up again in the *Zone* paintings, applying very different methods but essentially re-addressing the same 'scene'.





Figure 14: Beth Harland: *Lucid IX*, oil on canvas, 61cm x 36cm, 1999

The paintings reflected upon loss and the absent body, specifically using unremarkable, discarded objects from the backs of drawers to evoke experiences of fragmentary memory and return. In these paintings, the momentary flash of the camera is, like a *lucid* moment, one of illumination simultaneous with loss.

As Mulvey reminds us 'Trauma leaves a mark on the unconscious, a kind of index of the psyche that parallels the photograph's trace of an original event.'<sup>86</sup> The associative resonance of death within photography was actively referenced to bring a sense of trauma to these paintings, which reflected a personal process of mourning.

### 3.2.2 Shadow origins; Likeness and Semblance circuit 4. Mirror/Shadow

Here I would like to take a small detour, into a consideration of shadow in the work. As we will see, this route links, through mimesis and the unsettling of figure/ground distinctions, back to the haptic visuality with which we began.

The dominance of shadow in the *Lucid* paintings refers us to the story that is reported by Pliny of the 'origin of painting' in which a woman traces on the wall the *shadow* of her lover on the eve of his departure to war. The origin of painting is thus irredeemably linked to separation, love, interruption and loss. In his book *A Short History of the Shadow*, Victor Stoichita reminds us of the distinction between the Plinian 'semblance,' where the image is 'the other of the same'<sup>87</sup> and Platonic 'mimesis,' a likeness as copy, 'the same in a state of double.'<sup>88</sup> In this radical contrast of the mirror and the outlining of the shadow, Plato returns the model's likeness to it, through the mimetic function of the mirror, where Pliny 'captures the model by reduplicating it,'<sup>89</sup> here lies the function of the shadow.

The distinction between 'likeness' (the mirror) and 'semblance' or 'simulacrum' (the shadow) is an important one, the latter being associated with magic and archaic divination, it was the former which would dominate Western painting from the Renaissance onwards. Following in the footsteps of Narcissus, the model was 'quiet clearly to be the product of the love of the same.'<sup>90</sup>

Pliny's tale underpinned a text I wrote for the catalogue of the exhibition *Closer Still*, which I curated in 2001.<sup>91</sup> The preoccupation of the exhibition echoed an interest in the act of copying or transcribing images from photographic sources, images of images, and positioned itself in relation to semblance rather than likeness:

The primitive nature of the first act of representation described by Pliny resides in the fact that the first pictorial image would not have been the result of a direct observation of a human body, but of capturing the body's projection...A representation of a representation [an image of a shadow], the first painting was nothing more than the copy of a copy.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>86</sup> MULVEY, *Death 24x a Second*, p.65

<sup>87</sup> STOICHITA, V. (1997) *A Short History of the Shadow*, Reaktion Books, p.27

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p.39

<sup>91</sup> HARLAND, B & MINKIN, L. *Closer Still*, Winchester Gallery

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12

The relationship between the photographic source and the painted 'copy' opened a space of mediation in the works exhibited, and gave rise to questions of how meaning is formulated through process and material, evoking the *fakture* and *faktura*<sup>93</sup> (the signature and production) of painting.

The notion of *recovering* the moment is linked to questions of proximity; in their attempt to *remake*, the paintings utilise the apparatus of attention provided by the lens to make us aware of how nearness shifts into distance and back again as we rethink the event (fig. 15).<sup>94</sup> As Benjamin tell us

Photography, with its devices of slow motion and enlargement, reveals the secret. It is through photography that we first discover the optical unconscious...<sup>95</sup>

The notion of an event's 'reverberation', altered in the retelling, was equally central to the series *After*, which I produced in parallel with the *Lucid* paintings (fig.16).<sup>96</sup> Here a less private experience of loss was explored, again through mediated images, photocopied from archive photographs of Second World War bomb and crash sites.

The method developed to apply the oil paint was very specific. Drawing upon the blistered, fragmented surfaces suggested by the original images, each mark in these large paintings, was produced with a pipette. The process combined a highly systematic method of application with the chance element inherent in the movement of the heavy but still fluid material.

<sup>93</sup> 'Faktura' from the Soviet avant-garde, emphasises the mechanical and material quality of production as against the status assigned to the artist's hand.

<sup>94</sup> *August 3rd: Winter* was exhibited in *Closer Still*, at Artsway and Winchester Gallery, 2001 and published in the exhibition catalogue. The *August 3rd* series references photographs from the British School at Rome, Ward-Perkins archive, documenting damaged artworks and architecture in Italy during World War 2. These images recorded statues of the Four Seasons sited on a bridge in Florence that was bombed on August 3rd 1944. The fragments, recovered from the river Arno, were subsequently re-assembled and the bridge restored.

<sup>95</sup> BENJAMIN, W. (1979) *One-Way Street*, Verso, p.243

<sup>96</sup> *After VIII*, exhibited in solo exhibition *After*, Central School of Speech and Drama, London, 1999 and group exhibition *Sleight of Hand*, 5 Years Gallery, London, 2000. It was published in catalogues for *After* and the British School at Rome.





Figure 15: Beth Harland: *August 3rd: Winter*, oil on canvas, 61cm x 36cm, 2001

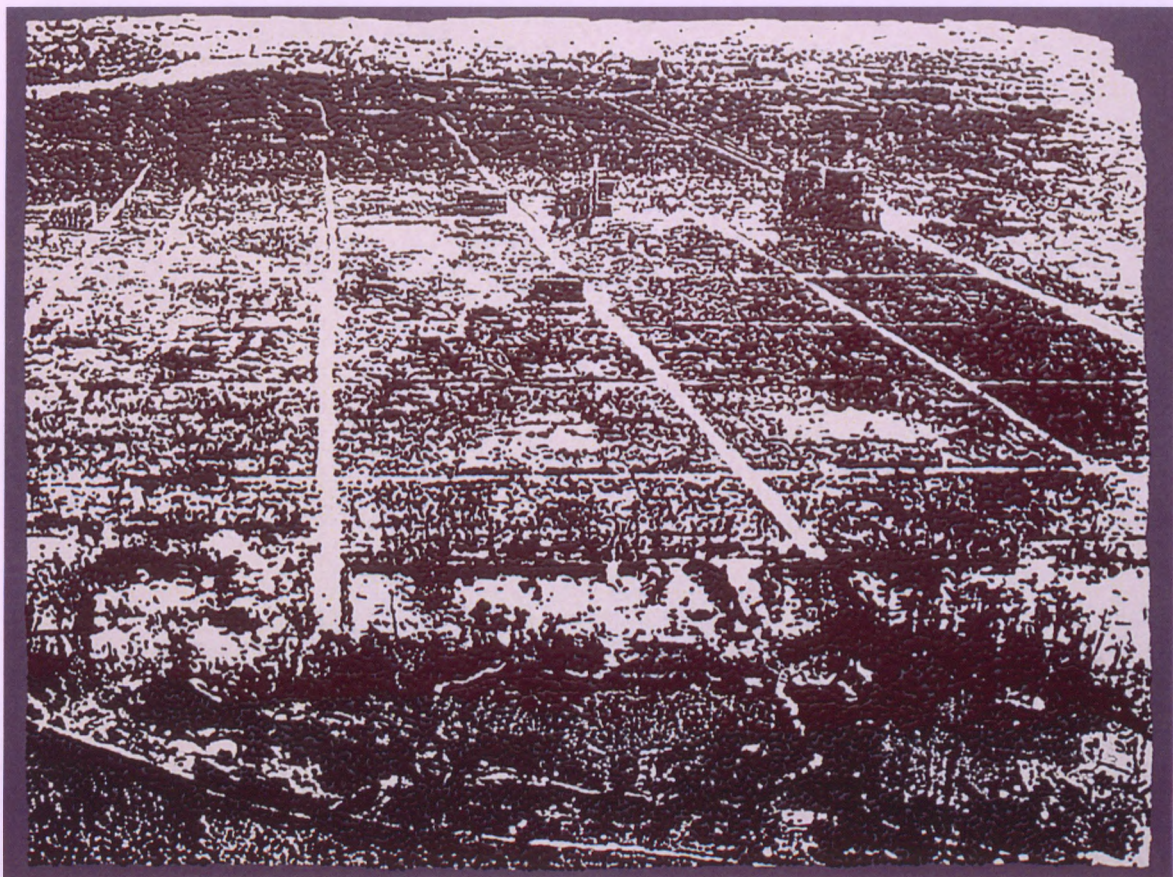


Figure 16: Beth Harland: *After VIII*, oil on canvas, 152cm x 117cm, 1999



## Process notes A: *After*

1. An archive image is selected and photocopied (Hiroshima), re-photographed as a 35mm slide, and projected onto canvas already prepared with a flat base colour. The lightest tones are traced in a single second colour.
2. The canvas is suspended horizontally and the spaces remaining of the ground are filled with a third colour, rendered through drops of paint from an eyedropper pipette. Mixing colour is laborious, repeated for each session - just the right proportion of oil medium and dryer to pigment, enabling a drop to leave the pipette in a reasonably controlled way, but not too much to cause the drop to flatten itself against the surface.
3. The image is rendered mechanistically, working across the canvas from top to bottom, row upon row.

*The simplicity of three tones, suggested by the source image, proposes distinctions (the ground against which the figure lies scattered and broken).*

*In the darkly projected space and close to the surface, the 'sense' of the image is indiscernible; the marks traced are approximate notations, gathering slowly to become apparent, through time and distance, as perceptible image.*

*Pipette: instrument commandeered from its medical purpose - tool to describe catastrophe? Material applied*



*mechanistically, like an ink-jet printer but interminably slow - the time of the painting, both making and looking, becomes slow motion. There is some precision in the mechanical procedure of application, but also overspill; chance. (The linking of form and content is crucial – painting as an action, the performance of making equal to the chosen depiction in signifying the subject.)*

*The process (intimated by the blistered surface recorded in the source image), governs the tempo and completion of the piece; when the last space is filled with drops, the painting is finished.*

The *After* series was explicitly informed by Blanchot's essay *Two Versions of the Imaginary*, in which he likens the 'strangeness' of the image to that of the cadaver, in the sense that the dead person is neither here nor elsewhere, 'place is missing... The cadaverous presence establishes a relation between here and nowhere.'<sup>97</sup> The association of the object and the image is further described in the passage that gave rise to both the title of the series, and that aspect of the making process which operated through removal/distance from the originary source:

After the object comes the image. "After" means that first the thing must move away in order to allow itself to be grasped again.<sup>98</sup>

The viewer is invited by these pieces to move close to the surface, drawn by its intricacy and materiality, but must then retreat to grasp the image, to make sense of it.<sup>99</sup>

The dissolution of image through modes of repetition and copying, pushing it to the edge of recognition, has a history in works approaching subjects of trauma and ruin. Warhol's *Disaster* series offers up semi-obliterated images, whose queasy lilac or orange colours provoke a persistently intrusive sensation (fig.17). The exposure of 'flaws' in the image through quality-reducing manipulation, serves to enhance its presence as surface and augment our exposure to the emotive content behind the 'information' supplied by the photographic representation.

In a catalogue essay for my exhibition *After* in 1999, Simon Morley wrote:

The ambience created in this way can be understood as being caused by an opening up of the representation, and through this opening something slips into the space of the representation, something that was always there but had not been made visible...<sup>100</sup>

The 'something' I had in mind related to Blanchot and Levinas' notion of the *// y a*, the 'other' night in which

...the experience of darkness is the presence of absence, the peculiar density of the void where the things of the day disappear in the uncanny "swarming of points"...<sup>101</sup>

These works reflect the close relationship between looking and touch of the haptic, and in their entreaty for a form of looking centred in the body and its various senses, they remove us from the field of symbolic representation into a relation with the mimetic function. (fig.18)

<sup>97</sup> BLANCHOT, M. (1981) *Two Versions of the Imaginary. The Gaze of Orpheus*. Station Hill Press, p.81

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p.80

<sup>99</sup> The part played by the viewer is an important factor here, as Marks points out in an essay on the haptic in which she is concerned with the inter-subjective, the apprehension of haptic works requires a lack of passivity in that '...the viewer has to work to constitute the image, to bring it forth from latency.' MARKS, L. (1996) *Video Haptics and Erotics*. Screen, 39.4, pp.331-348

<sup>100</sup> MORLEY, S. (1999) *After*, The Central School of Speech and Drama, p.4

<sup>101</sup> CRITCHLEY, S. (1997) *Very Little...Almost Nothing*, Routledge, p.57



Figure 17: Andy Warhol, *Five Deaths*, silkscreen on canvas, 1963

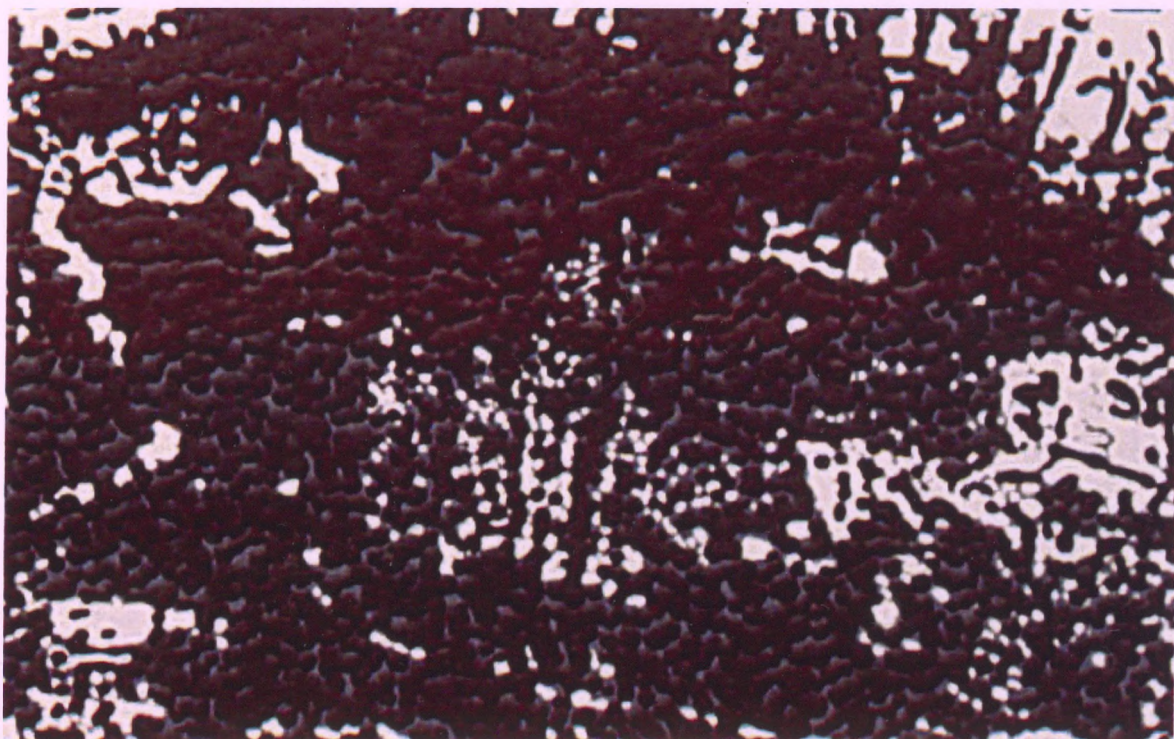


Figure 18: Beth Harland: *After VIII* detail

### 3.2.3 Mimesis; the Ground as Interface

circuit 5. Mimesis

Mimesis, from the Greek 'mimeisthai' "to imitate," suggests that one represents a thing by acting like it...Mimesis, in which one calls up the presence of the other materially, is an indexical, rather than iconic, relation to similarity.<sup>102</sup>

Numerous commentators on art and culture have referenced mimesis as a means of levelling the relationship between subject and object, appealing for recognition of this immanent way of being in the world. We find mimesis in Aristotle, who assigns numerous determinations, ethical and otherwise, to its domain; in Benjamin, who argues that language is the highest form of the mimetic faculty and that the axis of mimetic / symbolic representation mirrors the way that the inside of a glove is related to the outside, and as Marks points out, although Deleuze, Bergson and Pierce do not necessarily use the term itself, 'it is quite consistent with all their conceptions of the relationship between the world and the sign or image.'<sup>103</sup>

Mimetic representation resides in material contact, and in the particularity of a moment, an indexical trace, and as such potentially subjects us to the hazards of dissolution of boundaries. Roger Caillois, in the 1930s, explored insects that imitate their environment, applying their example to question the borders of the self and the psychological implications of a disturbance in spatial perception (fig.19) (visual note ^). He describes techniques of camouflage defence that can become a danger to the creature, and notes that 'in man psychological potentialities strangely correspond.'<sup>104</sup>

The 'temptation' of space here lures us into an inability to make distinctions, for example '...between the real and the imaginary,'<sup>105</sup> and considering this condition as pathology, 'the end would appear to be *assimilation of the surroundings*.'<sup>106</sup>

Here we are returned to Kristeva's fragile self, and of course, through figure/ground confusion, to Riegl's description of late Roman decorative art, in which the ground becomes an *interface*, enabling an optical play by which what was formerly background, resurfaces as 'object'. Rosalind Krauss, with her interest in the 'formless', takes up Riegl's account in an essay on Agnes Martin:

...a kind of moiré effect, with a constant oscillation between figure and ground depending – and here is where this begins to get interesting for Agnes Martin – on where the viewer happens to be standing.<sup>107</sup>

In the *Zone* paintings, both the activity of making, and the intention on behalf of the viewer, are informed by this notion of ground as interface, exchanging places with object/ 'figure', in a movement that essentially destabilises attention to initiate the question 'How am I in relation to...?' (fig. 20)<sup>108</sup>

Imagery drawn from Caillois' insects, and from camouflage design appears within the layered structure of the paintings (fig. 21 & 22), but equally aspects of the process contribute to this movement.

<sup>102</sup> MARKS, *The Skin of the Film*, p.138

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p.139

<sup>104</sup> CAILLOIS, R. *Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia*. *October, The First Decade*, October Books, p.67

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p.59

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p.69

<sup>107</sup> KRAUSS, R. (1999) *Agnes Martin: The/Cloud/*. *Bachelors*. October Books, p.87

<sup>108</sup> *Zone 9* was exhibited in group exhibitions: *Jerusalem*, Dean Clough, Halifax, and *Ex Roma*, APT gallery, London 2005.





Figure 19: Roger Caillois: *Giant phasma*, from *Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia*





Figure 20: Beth Harland: *Zone 9*, oil on canvas, 152cm x 117cm, 2005



Figure 21: Beth Harland: *Zone 15*, detail

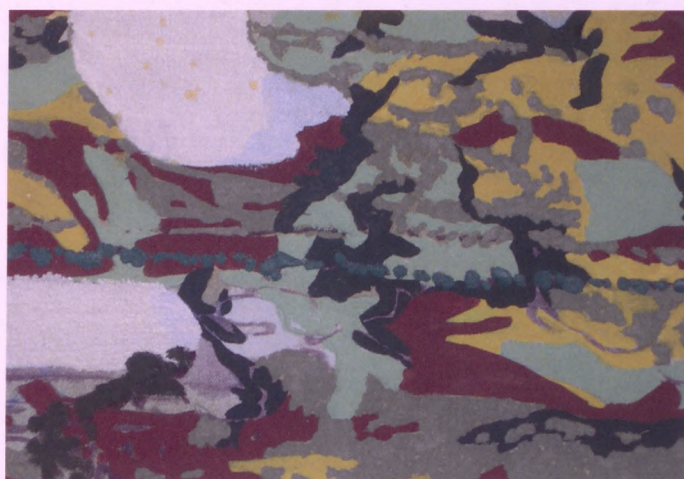


Figure 22: Beth Harland: *Zone 9*, detail

## Process notes B: *Zone 9*

1. Ground: Oil paint, highly diluted with turps, is mixed in bowls - 6 colours. With the canvas flat on the floor, pale colour is poured in pools onto the surface. Stronger colour is flicked onto the stained canvas with Chinese brushes - mottled effects appear as the colour soaks in and spreads through the canvas weave.

2. When dry, the canvas is hung on the wall, the digital image is projected onto the surface and the outline of the image traced in paint. The digital image is black and white; colour decisions arise in the process of painting, sometimes changing radically during development. Areas of the poured ground are preserved, remaining visible throughout.

3. First areas worked on are the dense textures in the bottom half of the canvas. Again working flat, marks are made with drops from a pipette. Some areas are left as solid, clearly defined drops, others more dispersed through application of turps to the surface afterwards, causing the paint to spread and blur. Other areas of the image are also worked flat, poured and stained - paint diluted with various mediums, oil and resin based, creating both matt and gloss surfaces.

4. Working upright using digital printouts as a kind of map, different areas of the image are realized using the various effects of the highly manipulated digital image to suggest an approach to paint application – e.g. dry, scumbled layers of paint / fluid washes /

thickly painted blocks of saturated colour.

5. The painting is photographed at a number of points during the process, returned to the computer and reworked digitally. Incidents in the painting are honed (e.g. small sections rendered as pixels are copied in detail in the painting), and imported images from various sources are added during this stage of reworking.

*Imported images are folded into the surface, here a film still from 'Blade Runner', in the bottom left corner, is realized in a pointillist manner - mimics the decay of image quality which resulted from photographing the image from the TV screen. This choice of image was largely prompted by the suggestion of the space and colour developing in the painting – another kind of world / a place of conflict.*

*Digital printouts are selectively used as direct reference for areas of the painting - a procedure of copying/translation, through which the digital effects are interpreted materially. In the process of copying, making the hand again a kind of device, the facsimile is flawed and inaccurate, and it is in this space between image, hand and eye that the thinking of making and the question of what painting is begins to appear. What do the qualities of the digital manipulation suggest? Deliberate erosion of image through processes of dissolution necessitate inventive variation of surface, e.g. low-grade printing suggests a layering of two colours, almost woven into each other; elusive slips in the colour register.*



*As the digital images are already highly fragmented, multi-layered, with the boundaries of forms dispersed through repeated manipulations, this translation becomes a form of mapping during which I perpetually loose my place and find it again - sliding into the material and pulling back again; the domain of the haptic. The intention is that the experience of the viewer similarly involves moving between moments of clarity/image identification, and moments of confusion/being engulfed – in effect, experiencing flux.*

The attempt to present a fluctuating figure/ground, and to place the viewer in an unstable relation with the image, has for me its basis in a particular approach to thinking proposed in various ways in Deleuze's writings. In her book *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, Dorothea Olkowski highlights this thinking as a critique of the structures of representation, 'the ruin of representation, the ruin of hierarchically ordered time and space'<sup>109</sup> and sees that through Deleuze's disassembling of 'the static structures of time and space, of life and thought...a philosophy of change becomes viable.'<sup>110</sup> In order to break up homogeneous systems, Deleuze proposes a philosophy that *stutters*

Stuttering is what happens in language when the language system is in motion, in "perpetual disequilibrium", so that the entire system stutters, murmurs, mumbles and breaks up in a heterogeneity of time and space.<sup>111</sup>

Olkowski describes this thinking in pictorial terms as 'the background rising up onto the surface of the image'<sup>112</sup> and gives the example of Giotto's Arena chapel whose 'interior articulates a highly differentiated kind of pictorial space that sharpens the viewer's awareness of the picture surface.'<sup>113</sup> She highlights the scene of hell as a complete collapse of hierarchized space, a world without a point of view (fig.23).

Olkowski finds Deleuze's work valuable in the endeavour

...to create an image of difference that sweeps away the metaphysics of being and identity and their representation so as to practically and conceptually acknowledge the stuttering practice of an ontology of becoming.<sup>114</sup>

The attempt to construct within the zone paintings, a complex set of associations and positions, finds then a kind of model in Deleuze's overarching philosophy of connections, of 'multiple things held together by "disjunctive syntheses."<sup>115</sup> In the drive of his work towards multiplicity, not just as a matter of logic but as something which we must make and learn by doing, 'We must always make connections, since they are not already given...To connect is then to work with other possibilities...'<sup>116</sup>

We have so far, in this chapter, pursued several strands of thinking through a number of different series of works, and have a sense now of the kind of rhizomatic mapping outlined in the introduction to this text. Some of these strands will resurface again in the final chapter, which pursues questions of time in painting, but at this point I would like to introduce two collaborative research projects, with the aim of addressing the articulation of process more fully.

<sup>109</sup> OLKOWSKI, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, p.2

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14

<sup>115</sup> RAJCHMAN, *The Deleuze Connections*, p.4

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6



Figure 23: Giotto Di Bondone, *Hell*, detail from *Last Judgement* fresco, 1303-05, Arena Chapel, Padua.

### 3.2.4 Disjunctive syntheses: Zone 15

circuit 6. Disjunctive syntheses

The piece entitled *Zone 15* was made as part of a research project being carried out at Lancaster University. I was commissioned to produce a painting, to extensively document the process and to construct a digital work to be published in conjunction with it. The resulting work, which has been presented a number of times in exhibition form, and at conferences, through its detailed recording of each stage of the thinking and making process, aims to articulate the usually tacit, unseen, aspects of studio practice and decision-making. It highlights the additive process pursued in the work, bringing together diverse images and methods, towards a coherent whole, through connective thinking.

The second collaborative project is very different in nature, and although the process and outcomes overlap with my individual research, it would seem to interrupt the movement of this critical reflection. I have, for this reason, included it as an appendix (Appendix 1). The project, entitled *Machine Room; a blueprint for painting*, (fig.24) has brought me into an ongoing working relationship with a group of painters who use digital technology in various ways within their practice; Mick Finch, Louisa Minkin and Claude Vergez.

*Machine Room* has run in parallel with my own research since 2003 and has generated discussions and practice which overlap in numerous ways with my individual concerns, the impact of which, for example, can be seen in the *performative* aspect of image generation in the series of works that followed the *Zone* paintings (see chapter 3).

Returning to *Zone 15*, the research was part of a large project initiated at Lancaster University<sup>117</sup> to question whether the notion of ‘visual intelligence’ could be demonstrated by documenting and evaluating artists’ processes, and to find the optimum methods of recording, asking specifically whether ‘new’ technologies provide useful methods for documenting these processes.

For me, this was an ideal opportunity to build upon my own research in *Between Surface and Screen* and to question how I could utilise (and expand my understanding of) digital technology to explore the practice of painting in a documentary context, and to extrapolate ‘making as thinking.’

Having produced the painting (fig. 25)<sup>118</sup> and meticulously recorded the process, I worked with two designers,<sup>119</sup> whose technical knowledge enabled me to realise this project in the form of an interactive digital piece, and in addition a website (see Appendix 2, CDRom, for the completed digital piece). The piece consisted of two elements, an animation which presented a time-lapse movement through the painting’s growth, from blank canvas to completion, stitched together from digital stills captured after every addition to the surface, and an interactive screen image of the painting, divided into titled sections with a sequence of pages for each charting aspects of thinking/making, through

<sup>117</sup> *The Visual Intelligence Research Project* is led by Rebecca Fortnum and based at the Institute for the Contemporary Arts, Lancaster University. The project began in 2005 and is ongoing at the time of writing.

<sup>118</sup> *Zone 15*, exhibited in *Inspiration to Order*, University of California, Turlok, USA, 2006, Winchester Gallery and Wimbledon School of Art Gallery, London, 2007. The piece is published in the exhibition catalogue.

<sup>119</sup> Martyn Evans of *sumac* and Gary Pearson of *Iomilomi*.



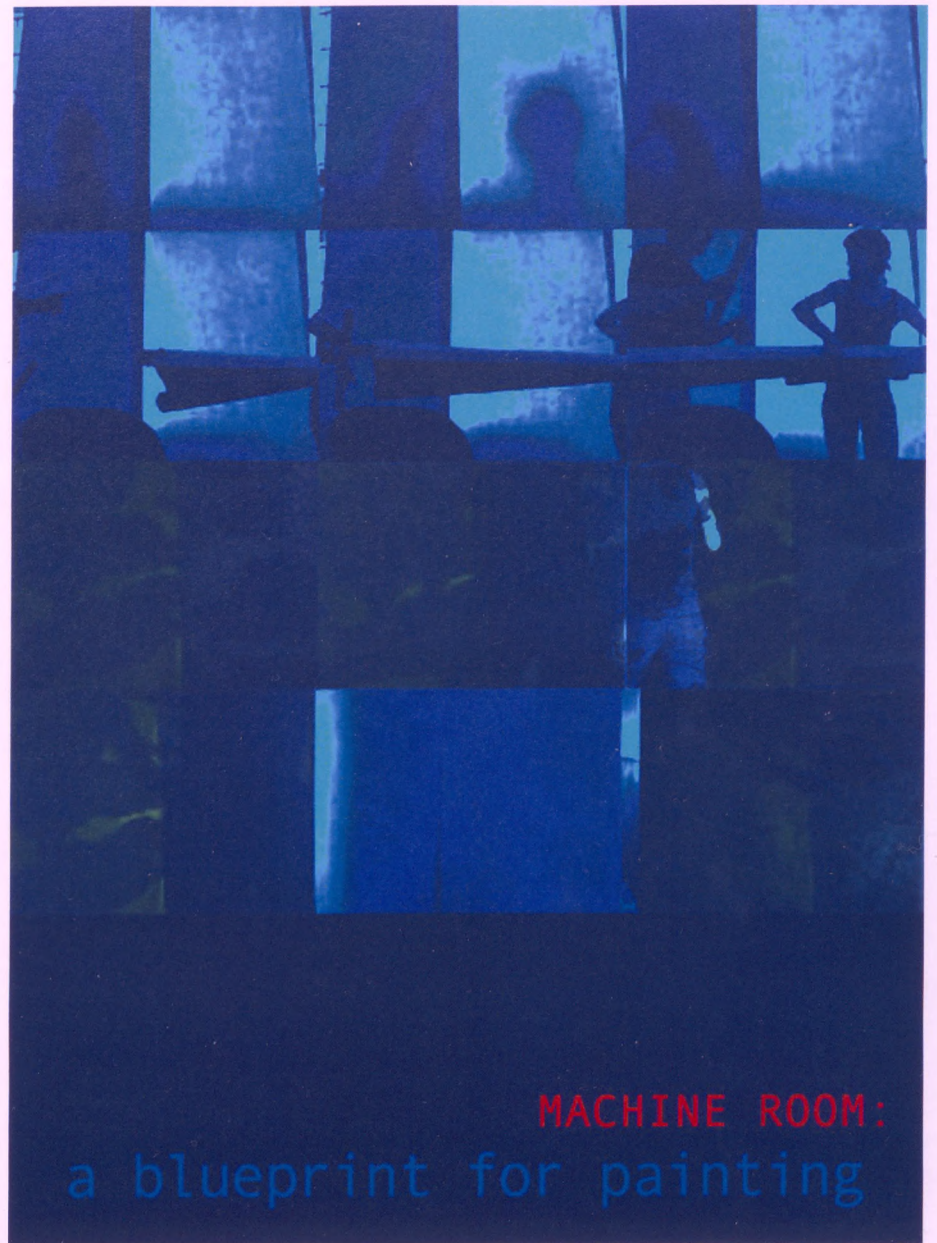


Figure 24: Machine Room poster, design Charles Day, 2007





Figure 25: Beth Harland: *Zone 15*, oil on canvas, 152cm x 117cm, 2006



Figure 26: Beth Harland: *Interactive digital piece*: title screen

image and text. (fig.26) <sup>120</sup>

The detailed documentation of process revealed to an audience aspects of the decision-making and material application that would usually remain hidden, and highlighted the importance in the work of *appropriation* in various guises, from direct quotation to glancing reference. I have compiled process notes, taken from studio notebooks and a selection of images from the image-bank that I prepared for the digital piece, in order to clarify this cumulative, referential method further, and to convey something of the technical processes involved in making the painting.

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<sup>120</sup> *Zone 15, interactive digital work*, exhibited in *Inspiration to Order*, and presented at associated conference, University of California, Turlok, USA, 2006; Winchester Gallery and Wimbledon School of Art Gallery, London, 2007. Also presented at Art Historian's Conference, Ulster, 2007.

## Process notes C: Zone 15

*Collage: interweaving of images from various sources, Godard's collaged films e.g. 'Passion', entwining love, work, cinema, painting... The director is searching, (this is referenced several times through the film)*

*Turning over ideas visually.*

*(Is our conception of collage different now to that of the Cubists?)*

*Image references for Zone 15:*

*Zone 9 - revisiting own work (reworked as ground/starting point for alternative route).*

*Giorgione's 'Sleeping Venus' - sense of profound yet indefinable emotion; a landscape that seems to evoke tranquillity and tension simultaneously (direct quotation of horizon).*

*Mirror and projector (flanking left and right, fundamental axis of pictorial representation).*

*Dante's 'Inferno' (by Botticelli), inter-cut with still from Ridley Scott's film 'Blade Runner' (grainy photograph taken from TV screen).*

*Praying mantis (from Caillois' essay on mimicry).*

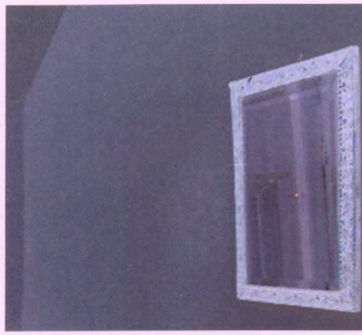
*Camouflage design (USA).*

*Nash's Menin Road (quotation- search-lights) gesture, animates through diagonal shift.*

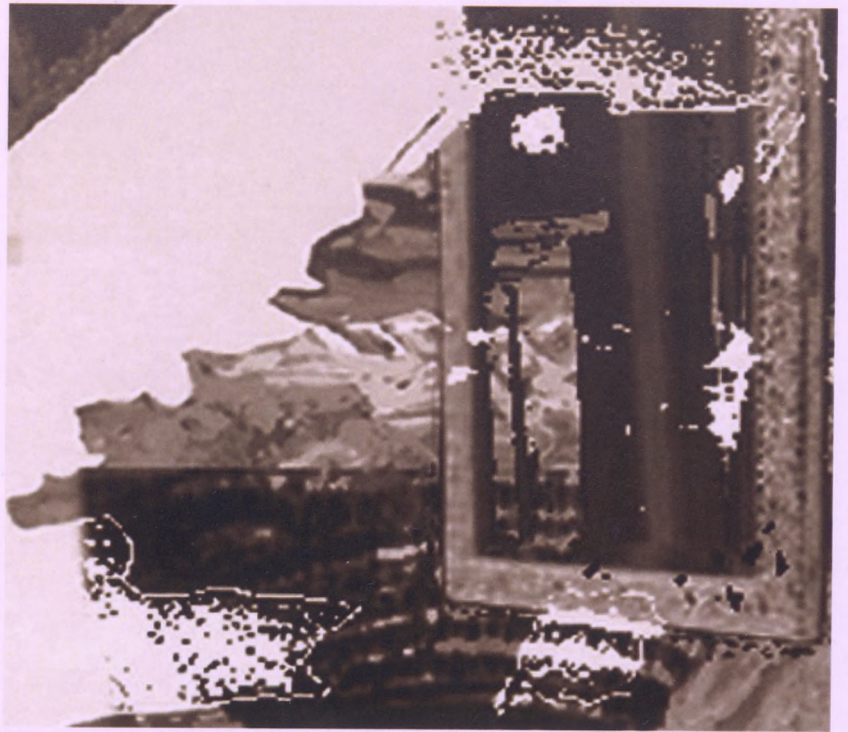
*Poussin's 'Landscape with Man killed by a Snake' - sweeping zigzagging motion directing the eye. Narrative: the essential index of the painting is the opposition between horror and the tranquil. Layered structure, overlays and interruptions, 'the incidents are the structure condensed and crystallized.'<sup>121</sup>*

<sup>121</sup> CLARK, T. J. (2006) *The Sight of Death*, Yale University Press, p.82

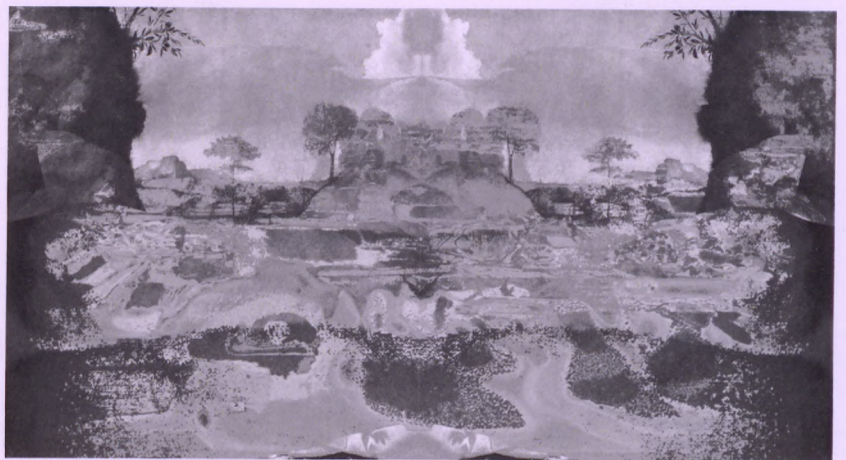






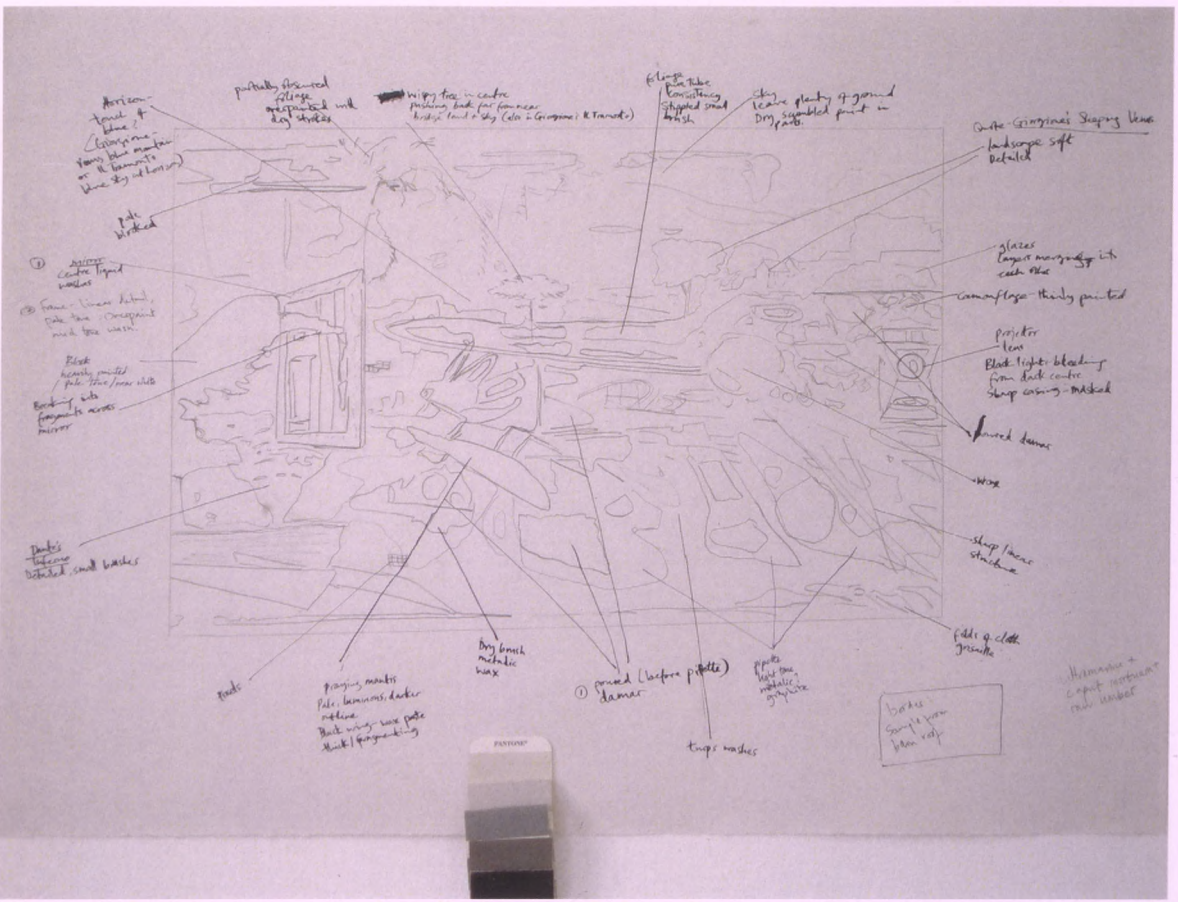


*Digital drawing - layered source material moved around on the picture plane, shuffled from side to side / forward and back. Images selectively manipulated and layers pulled through each other from behind (blending options tool) fragmenting the images in the process.*

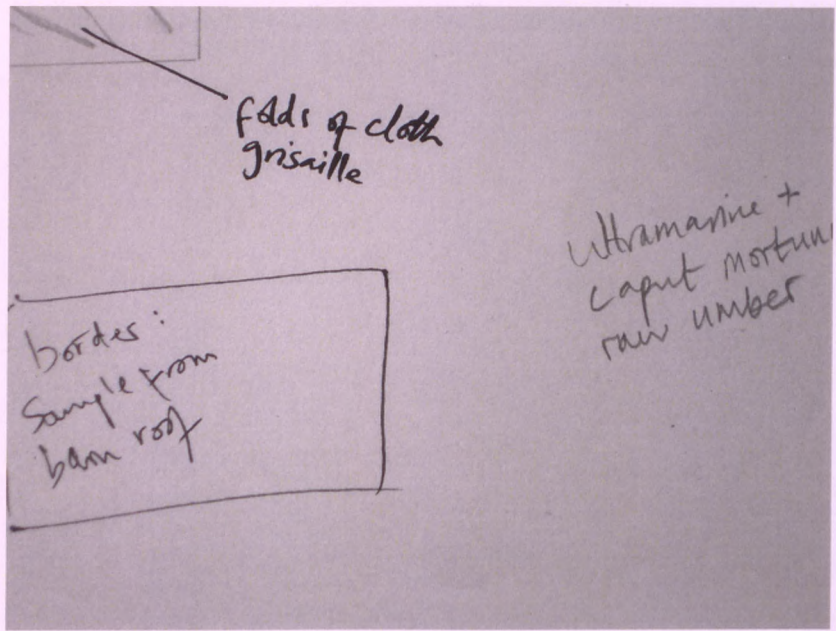


*Digital experiments - doubling/mirroring section of image – the idea of mutation, both decorative and macabre.*



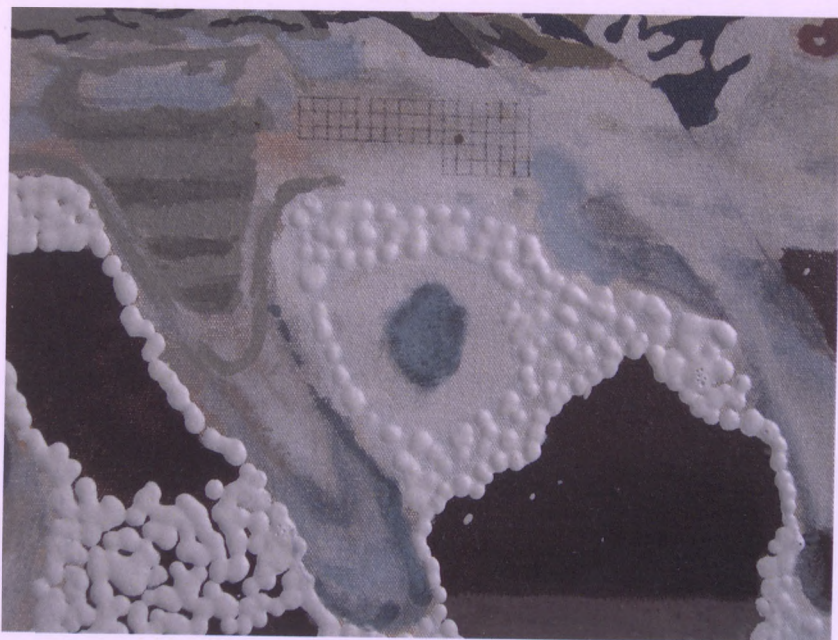


*Map: drawn from digital composition, notes on surface application and colour, often concerned with finding painterly equivalents to effects in the original drawing, made prior to painting but added during process.*





*Ground, reworking of Zone 9 (inverted, the pitted pools become white, with flecks of graphite powder), the pleasure of surface conglomeration. Pipette applies material as points whose edges merge slightly (an echo of the 'After' series)*



*Photograph the painting at each stage, whole and details, complete scrutiny.*



*Work slowly, delicate balance retaining difference and fragmentation without losing*



*all coherence. Use glazes in patches across the surface (squares) – subtle thread joining things but not fully visible.*

*Opulent still life images (18th Century), excessively mortal.*



*Pieter Boel, Large Vanitas Still Life, 1663, oil on canvas, Musee des Beaux-Arts, Lille.*

*Psychological balance between surface and depth? (Bonnard's paintings - drawing creates depth while colour tends to flatten form).*

*Circular diagonal form, creating route through for the eye to follow (Poussin).*

*Distinct image sections, set up a series of nodes/constellation – connections.*



*Coloured borders at top and bottom of the image – mediation – not quite part of, nor outside of the work. Operates in similar way to the non-space of the picture framer's passe-partout - Derrida's 'parergon', a frame that 'touches and cooperates within the operation from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside'<sup>122</sup> without it the depiction is exposed, too present.<sup>123</sup>*

*Use of range of mediums to evoke shifting sensations/visual experience: wax paste - buttery, heavy, opaque; damar varnish - high sheen, fluid; turps washes - subtle pools of colour; stand oil - glazes; oil of spike lavender – matt surface fluid details. Physical surfaces mapping sensory experiences – haptic memory.*



<sup>122</sup> DERRIDA, J. (1978) *The Truth in Painting*, University of Chicago Press, p.54

<sup>123</sup> This device was first used in the *Lucid* series, here white borders at the sides of the image suggested a printed photograph. In the *Zone* series the borders are at the top and bottom; the association is with the cinematic image.

The action of appropriation at times requires a particular form of looking best served by the very traditional practice of transcription, making an image of an image in order to understand it better. All of the paintings referenced in *Zone 15* have been somehow transcribed, through painting and drawing, digital and otherwise. (visual note<sup>B</sup>)

This interest in a polyphony of *references*, of historical echoes, which for painting can be many and various, resides in the idea of resonance, which Youssef Ishaghpour refers to in an interview with Jean-Luc Godard during a discussion of his epic film-collage *Histoire(s) du cinema* as ‘a spark struck from the impact between discontinuous and heterogeneous elements...’<sup>124</sup> A notion of resonance is central to my proposition of an engagement with a time in painting that is concerned with multiplicity and difference, not a closed cycle of return; and that it is in just these terms that the territory of the digital becomes an expansive one.

In viewing the completed animation of *Zone 15* in the making (see appendix 2 CDRom), it struck me that a particular sensation of time is made apparent, clearly one which is an artificial compression of the actual time of making, and interesting as an example of the kind of time in painting that I now want to explore more fully. In the initial stages of the animation the viewer can follow individual additions clearly, sequentially, but as the piece progresses the singular moments in time are no longer discernible and the sense of time unfolding is one of multiple presents, perhaps reminiscent of the way in which time is figured in Borges’ story *The Garden of Forking Paths*. Here it is time not space that forks

...in a dizzying net of divergent, convergent and parallel times. This network of times which approached one another, forked, broke off...embraced all possibilities of time...in some you exist, and not I; in others I, and not you; in others both of us... in still another, I utter these same words, but I am a mistake, a ghost.<sup>125</sup>

Having examined in some detail the articulation of process that these collaborative projects set out to achieve, I would now like to pick up some of the threads from previous chapters, and further develop what has become the central concern of the research: the question of painting’s time, or rather how painting can ‘think’ the subject of time, and explore our experience of it.

In this chapter a number of small circuits have been introduced linked to the central subject of the haptic/optic distinction, taking us through an analysis of likeness and semblance (mirror and shadow) and mimesis. These aspects of the research operate within the large circuit of spatial concerns in the paintings. The last section of this chapter, however, illustrates through the preoccupation with time that surfaces in *Zone 15* (both the painting and the interactive digital work) that the territory of the haptic/optic overlaps with the large circuit of temporal concerns that begin to take precedence in the research at this stage. It is this mapping of paintings temporal continuum that I would now like to address.

<sup>124</sup> GODARD, J.-L. & ISHAGHPOUR, Y. (2005) *Cinema*, Berg, p.42

<sup>125</sup> BORGES, J. L. (2000) *The Garden of Forking Paths*. *Labyrinths*. Penguin Books, p.53

### 3.3 Chapter 3: Painting's Time

In this chapter we will firstly consider what it is that characterises time in painting, and ask how specific models for conceptualising time drawn from literature, philosophy and film, specifically those proposed by Proust, Bergson, Augustine, Leibniz and Deleuze, might inform painting as a practice.

We will then follow the progress of the research through the movement away from the model of photographic trace, towards that of digital mapping, and view the time of painting in relation to filmic time. I will argue that painting's time can in this way 'unleash pure duration'<sup>126</sup> through the mechanism proposed by Deleuze in *Cinema 2; the Time-image*, the thesis of which is that cinema can do this through the abandoning of the sensory-motor schema, in the transition from action-image to the time-image.

#### 3.3.1 The Future's Passage: a Threefold Present

circuit 7. Actual/Virtual

In his essay *Painting and Time*, John Berger pursues 'the problem of how time exists (or does not) *within* painting'<sup>127</sup> and his route essentially follows two lines of thinking which might be summarised as firstly, the dynamic of the *foreseen* and secondly, the static image as *timeless*. In following the first of these ideas, he maintains that while paintings are static they don't preserve a moment; 'the moment of a painting, unlike a moment photographed, never existed as such.'<sup>128</sup> However, the passage of time is implied, 'the spectator sees *before, during and after*...the nude descends the staircase.'<sup>129</sup> The painting's dynamism comes through the foreseeing of the 'future moments when it will be looked at...the painting is entirely addressed to these moments.'<sup>130</sup> He correctly identifies the practice of using a mirror to see ones painting afresh while in progress, as a means of accessing the content of this future moment of viewing. This dynamic of passage, both forward and back, contrasts with the Greenbergian perspective of the 'at-onceness' of abstract painting, through which 'the time of viewing is linked to the object maintaining and thus containing a single temporality, a temporality that would be united in the act of sheer presentation.'<sup>131</sup> As Andrew Benjamin points out, the work of contemporary painters such as Fabian Marcaccio (visual note °) utilises copying/doubling and repetition to challenge the focus of an earlier generation of painters upon 'immediacy' and 'opens up...the problem of determining ways in which painting works to hold time.'<sup>132</sup>

In agreeing with Berger (as opposed to Greenberg) that the presence of time in painting figures the *before, during and after*, I want to suggest that a link with a concept of time proposed by Augustine and extrapolated in relation to narrative by Paul Ricoeur, might be useful. The fundamental question is thus introduced:

"What, then, is time?" asks Augustine ( Book 11 of the *Confessions*). "I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled." In the capacity of poetic composition to re-figure this temporal experience, which is

<sup>126</sup> RESTIVO, A. (2000) Into the Breach. IN FLAXMAN, G. (Ed.) *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*. University of Minnesota Press, p.175

<sup>127</sup> BERGER, J. (1985) *Painting and Time. The Sense of Sight*. Vintage International. 205

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p.205

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p.205

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p.206

<sup>131</sup> BENJAMIN, A. (1996) *What is Abstraction?*, Academy Editions, p.12

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p.44



prey to the aporias of philosophical speculation, resides the referential function of the plot.<sup>133</sup>

The argument of Ricoeur's book is that 'speculation on time is an inconclusive rumination to which narrative activity alone can respond.'<sup>134</sup> Proust would, I think, tend to agree.

The aporias that Augustine tackles are: the measurement of time, and even more fundamental, the being or non-being of time:

...the phenomenology of time emerges out of the ontological question, "What, then, is time?" As soon as this question is posed, all the ancient difficulties regarding the being and non-being of time surge forth....The sceptical argument is well known: time has no being since the future is not yet, the past is no longer, and the present does not remain.<sup>135</sup>

How can time exist if this is the case? And, 'how can we measure that which does not exist?'<sup>136</sup> Augustine tackles this by putting the past and the future into the present, and by introducing *memory* and *expectation*; memory as an image or impression that stays in the mind, expectation implied by the capacity for prediction. Ricoeur tells us

Expectation is the analogue of memory. It consists of an image that already exists, in the sense that it precedes the event that does not yet exist. However, this image is not an impression left by things past but a "sign" and a "cause" of future things...foreseen, foretold, predicted...<sup>137</sup>

Augustine's formula proposes that 'there are three times, a present of past things, a present of present things, and a present of future things'<sup>138</sup> - a three-fold present.<sup>139</sup>

This step required Augustine to return to an earlier contention:

...that we measure time when it is passing; not the future which is not, nor the past which is no longer, nor the present which has no extension, but "time passing". It is in this very passing, in the transit, that both the multiplicity of the present and its tearing apart are to be sought.<sup>140</sup>

The measurement of time is the measurement of the impression made upon the mind 'after the thing itself has ceased to be.'<sup>141</sup> The present, then, is not something that we simply pass through, but a process by which our minds are transforming, or as Augustine describes it, 'relegating' the future into the past. An image emerges of the future's gradual movement, transition, or absorption into past. If we link this threefold present to the previous notion of time's 'before, during and after' in painting, the still image can become 'animated' through the future's passage into past.

Such an engagement with Augustine's three-fold present, inevitably for me evokes allusion to the paintings of Poussin, and here, Berger's dynamic of the *foreseen*, becomes very interesting in relation to T.J.Clarke's close reading of two of Poussin's

<sup>133</sup> RICOEUR, P. (1983) *Time and Narrative, volume 1*, The University of Chicago Press, p.xi

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p.6

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p.7

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p.8

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p.11

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p.11

<sup>139</sup> This is expanded further in the phenomenological assertion that time is an extension of the mind itself. As Ricoeur explains, the thesis of the extension/distention of the mind leads us towards a conception of the threefold present, and that this is the great insight of Augustine's *Confessions*, 'in whose wake will follow Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty'. *Time and Narrative, volume 1*, p.16

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p.16

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p.18

works, in his rather unusual book *The Sight of Death*. His scrutiny, in particular, of Poussin's *Landscape with a Man Killed by a Snake* (a painting which has fascinated me since I was a student, and to which I have returned frequently) is a meditation also on the process of looking slowly, over time, and sensing 'what in the world painting can take advantage of in doing its work of stopping and setting apart...' <sup>142</sup> *The Landscape with a Man Killed by a Snake* (fig.27) holds, within its complex winding narrative, several different implied passages of time; it is almost a model of a three-fold present '...living in several different temporalities at once...' <sup>143</sup> Clark's reading of Poussin emphasises, and makes an appeal to, both the contingent materiality of incidents and the stopping of a momentary action in painting as a means of speaking about 'structure and persistence.' <sup>144</sup>

This is reminiscent of Berger's essay and his second central point concerning the stillness of painting, which claim that the language of static pictorial art became symbolic of timelessness in relation to a conception, present in all world cosmologies up until the 19th Century, of 'time surrounded, or infiltrated, by timelessness.' <sup>145</sup> And yet he notes that painting's pictorial language speaks eloquently about 'the sensuous, the particular, and the ephemeral.' <sup>146</sup> The specific quality of painting, then, is seen to be its ability to mediate between the timeless and the tangible, or transient moment. It is this notion that brings my investigation very clearly into a relation with Proust's work, and in particular, the focus of his search in *Remembrance of Things Past*.

### 3.3.2 Time before time: The Proustian Fragment circuit 8. Proust's Fragment

Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* has been informative and evocative on many levels within my research; I very much agree with Mieke Bal that it 'offers, represents, and constitutes a theory of knowledge.' <sup>147</sup> In this section I want to explore the key aspects of this work and, through practice, to ask how painting might address the central questions of Proust's search for 'a fragment of time in the pure state.'

I have already introduced aspects of the importance for my research of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, through the evocation of specific images and ideas within the novel, but I now want to expand on its impact as a proposition of time in practice. Well known as an investigation of recollection, memory and specifically involuntary memory, the book's search is in fact, as Deleuze highlights in *Proust and Signs*, 'oriented to the future, not the past... Proust's work is based not on the exposition of memory, but on the apprenticeship of signs.' <sup>148</sup>

In this apprenticeship, Deleuze identifies four categories or 'circles' of signs. Firstly, 'worldliness': the signs emitted by a milieu, 'the worldly sign appears as the replacement of an action or a thought.' <sup>149</sup> Secondly, 'love': 'deceptive signs that can be addressed

<sup>142</sup> CLARK, *The Sight of Death*, p.5

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p.125

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p.16

<sup>145</sup> BERGER, J. (1985) *Painting and Time. The Sense of Sight*. Vintage International, p.208

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p.209

<sup>147</sup> BAL, *The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually*, p.239

<sup>148</sup> DELEUZE, *Proust and Signs*, p.4

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6



Figure 27: Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with Man Killed by a Snake*, 1648, National Gallery, London.

to us only by concealing what they express.’<sup>150</sup> Thirdly, the ‘sensuous impression’ or quality experienced as that which ‘no longer appears as a property of the object that now possesses it, but as the sign of an *altogether different* object that we must try to decipher’<sup>151</sup> and lastly, the ‘essential signs of art’, which are seen to transform the other three.

The description of sensuous signs as indicating essentially different objects from the ones which they appear to inhabit, resonates with my use of everyday, still life objects in the paintings, and a notion of the ‘underside’ of an object or image, the subject sought being in some way *behind or verso*. The process of transformation from object on a tabletop, through copying, inverting, the various distorting cycles and renderings of digital manipulation, perhaps sought to reveal, or rather ‘develop’, the quality of ‘impression’ enfolded within the object.

For Proust the objects are the taste of a madeleine, the sight of a steeple or trees, tripping over uneven paving stones, the texture of a starched napkin, or the sound of a spoon against a plate. These moments, which come together towards the end of the novel, provoke an almost disembodied sense of joy in the narrator, and he embarks upon ‘the task of searching for the profounder causes of my emotion’<sup>152</sup>. In Deleuze’s terms ‘...a kind of obligation is felt, the necessity of a mental effort to seek the sign’s meaning.’<sup>153</sup> The ‘underside’ of the recollection reveals itself as Combray, or Venice, a place and a very particular emotional context, recovered through a process of interpretation much more involved than a simple association of ideas. He comes to understand that the ‘world of art is the ultimate world of signs’<sup>154</sup>, a revelation that Beckett describes, in his essay on Proust, as taking him from ‘the outskirts of (this) futility’<sup>155</sup> to a point from which he can ‘at last understand the promise of Bergotte and the achievement of Elstir... and the necessary course of his own life...’<sup>156</sup> The specific nature of the experience is described by Proust as ‘no mere analogous sensation nor even a mere echo or replica of a past sensation that I was made to feel by the noise of the water in the pipe, it was that past sensation itself.’<sup>157</sup>

These moments of significant perception, which Beckett calls ‘elements of communion’<sup>158</sup>, are shown to be essentially *involuntary* acts of perception, experiences of the physical world, which must be fortuitous if they are to be expressed at all because they would have been rejected by what he refers to as ‘the imperious vulgarity of a working-day memory,’<sup>159</sup> insisting that ‘voluntary memory is of no value as an instrument of evocation...’<sup>160</sup>

For me, as for Deleuze, it is important that they are ‘*material signs*... It is not only their origin, it is their explanation, their development that remains material.’<sup>161</sup> In the process of painting it is literally the reworking of a sign, through the properties of substance and

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p.9

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p.11

<sup>152</sup> PROUST, *Remembrance of Things Past*, p.899

<sup>153</sup> DELEUZE, *Proust and Signs*, p.12

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p.13

<sup>155</sup> BECKETT, S. (1999) *Proust*, John Calder, p.68

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p.69

<sup>157</sup> PROUST, *Remembrance of Things Past*, p.907

<sup>158</sup> BECKETT, *Proust*, p.36

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p.70

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p.14

<sup>161</sup> DELEUZE, *Proust and Signs*, p.13



procedure, the rubbing of an idea between the fingers while fixing the mind in between points of focus, that begins to unhinge its enclosed surface (fig. 28 & 29).

So, the importance of involuntary memory or recollection lies in the fact that it is more than an associative mechanism. A resemblance between a past sensation that 'revives under the effect of the present sensation'<sup>162</sup>, such as the taste of the Madeleine (first experienced at Combray and reviving the place as the site of the first taste) is complicated beyond the initial association of ideas. The joy that Proust experiences, 'this joy of time regained'<sup>163</sup> as Combray rises up in a 'splendour' beyond the replication of the past sensation, is for him a glimpse of 'truth' which surpasses the snapshot association of *voluntary* memory. In voluntary memory, a present that has been proceeds towards an actual present, and in doing so, something of the essence of time escapes it, that is 'the past's being as past.'<sup>164</sup> Deleuze maintains that a possible connection between Proust's and Bergson's conceptions of memory is to be found here in that 'this past does not represent something that has been, but simply something that is and that coexists with itself as present.'<sup>165</sup>

In a chapter on the 'recognition of images,' in Bergson's *Matter and Memory*, recollections are seen to be 'essentially fugitive, they become materialized only by chance,'<sup>166</sup> a situation in which we rely upon the 'accidentally precise determination of our bodily attitude'<sup>167</sup> to 'attract' them.<sup>168</sup> Bergson conceptualises the world as a series of images, existing and influencing each other through movement, a conception in which one's body occupies the central position due to the fact that everything changes as the body moves, with external images 'effecting' the body through the transfer of movement. The body image in turn alters surrounding images, transmitting movement back to them, and in this emphatically embodied approach, 'the true effect of repetition is to decompose and then recompose, and thus to appeal to the intelligence of the body.'<sup>169</sup>

Bergson's thesis of the being of the past in itself is what he calls the 'virtual', and this forms a direct link with Proust's fascinating description of states 'induced by the signs of memory...'<sup>170</sup>; the noise, or the scent being heard and smelt

...again in the present and at the same time in the past, *real without being present, ideal without being abstract*<sup>171</sup> (my emphases)

In beginning to see this moment, all be it a highly transitory one, as 'a minute freed from the order of time,'<sup>172</sup> Proust understands this as the only medium 'in which it could exist and enjoy the essence of things, that is to say: outside time.'<sup>173</sup> So, the evocative 'unfolding' of the napkin, unfolds Balbec in a 'pure and disembodied'<sup>174</sup> state, freed from

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p.56

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p.56

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p.57

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., p.58

<sup>166</sup> BERGSON, H. (1908) *Matter and Memory*, Zone Books, p.106

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p.106

<sup>168</sup> As Mieke Bal points out Bergson, unlike Freud, 'did not see memory in terms of the individual. For him memory was both material and social...he theorised memory in contrast to perception; "To picture is not to remember" he famously wrote'. BAL, M (2003) *Strings Attached, Devil-may-care*, Office for Contemporary Art, Norway, p.118

<sup>169</sup> BERGSON, *Matter and Memory*, p.111

<sup>170</sup> DELEUZE, *Proust and Signs*, p.58

<sup>171</sup> PROUST, *Remembrance of Things Past*, Vol.3, p.906

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p.906

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p.904

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p.901



Figure 28: Beth Harland: *Zone 10*, oil on canvas, 61cm x 36cm, 2005



Figure 29: Beth Harland: *Zone 10*, detail

the imperfections that external perception would necessarily relay. This freedom from time is the key to the sense of profound joy as it is a moment in which he is '...an extra-temporal being and therefore unalarmed by the vicissitudes of the future.'<sup>175</sup>

The fathoming of this privileged moment, around which the folded complications of the book circles, reveals the essence of a thing, that which ordinarily remains unapprehended, in Proust's words - 'a fragment of time in the pure state.'<sup>176</sup>

This essence arises in relation to two sensations: 'it contains a volume of duration that extends it through two moments at once.'<sup>177</sup> It is not the result of a resemblance between the present moment and one that has been past, not even a question of an identity between moments, but the actual being of the past in itself, '*the internalized difference, which becomes immanent*.'<sup>178</sup>

It is this notion of memory that I aim to approach in the *Zone* paintings, and it is in this context that the conception of time in this series differs from that of the earlier *Lucid* and *After* paintings (fig. 14 & 16). The sense of memory in the earlier work, proposed essentially through the language of analogue photography, is one of repetition, of a time past that locks the image into that moment; a melancholy return. The engagement with memory in the Proustian mode, and if my argument is accepted, of painting via the digital, might combine past and present to uncover the 'localized essence of time', and perhaps a moment that can be transformational in relation to the past. (fig.30 & 31)

The process developed in the initial paintings of the *Zone* series, through which a dialogue between a fluid ground and structured elements projected onto a different plane was established, has proved to be a necessarily open and multiple one through which to pursue Proustian time. Documentation of successive stages of *Zone 16* (influenced by the experience of recording initiated by the *Zone 15* commission) clearly highlights this working procedure. (visual note<sup>D</sup>)

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p.904

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p.905

<sup>177</sup> DELEUZE, *Proust and Signs*, p.59

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p.60





Figure 30: Beth Harland: *Zone 16*, oil on canvas, 166cm x 112cm, 2006

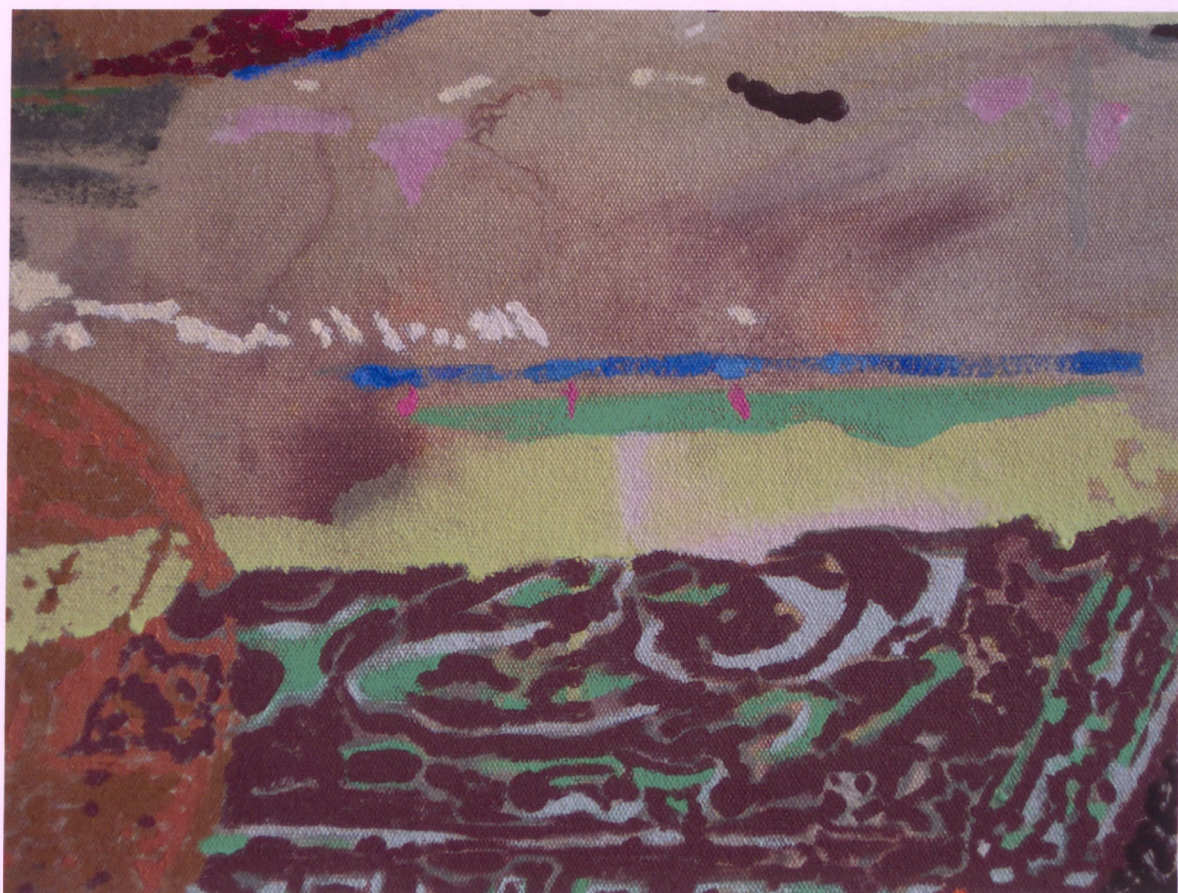


Figure 31: Beth Harland: *Zone 16*, detail



## Process notes D: *Zone 16*

Producing the digital image, initial template for the painting:

1. The initial base image is a still life of objects accumulated in household drawers, arranged on a tabletop, photographed and imported into photoshop. Subjected to various filters and tools, the image becomes blurred and fragmented.
2. Selected images from my digital archive are imported on separate layers: here a still from Tarkovsky's film *The Sacrifice* / Galileo's drawing of cycles of the moon / my own photographs of landscapes, shot in digital 'whiteboard' mode (renders the image as black and white index)/ camouflage fabric.
3. These collaged elements are manipulated repeatedly - re-sized, shuffled and re-arranged, areas selectively merged or pulled through other layers.
4. Compositional devices, often linear directional elements, are drawn into the image using a graphic tablet pen – transcribed from compositions such as Velazquez, Poussin, Titian (see visual note B). The initial digital image template evolves as the painting develops and reworking takes place on both painted surface and screen.
5. A 'map' for the painting is produced before work begins based on a linear drawing of the digital composition (fig. 32). The digital image

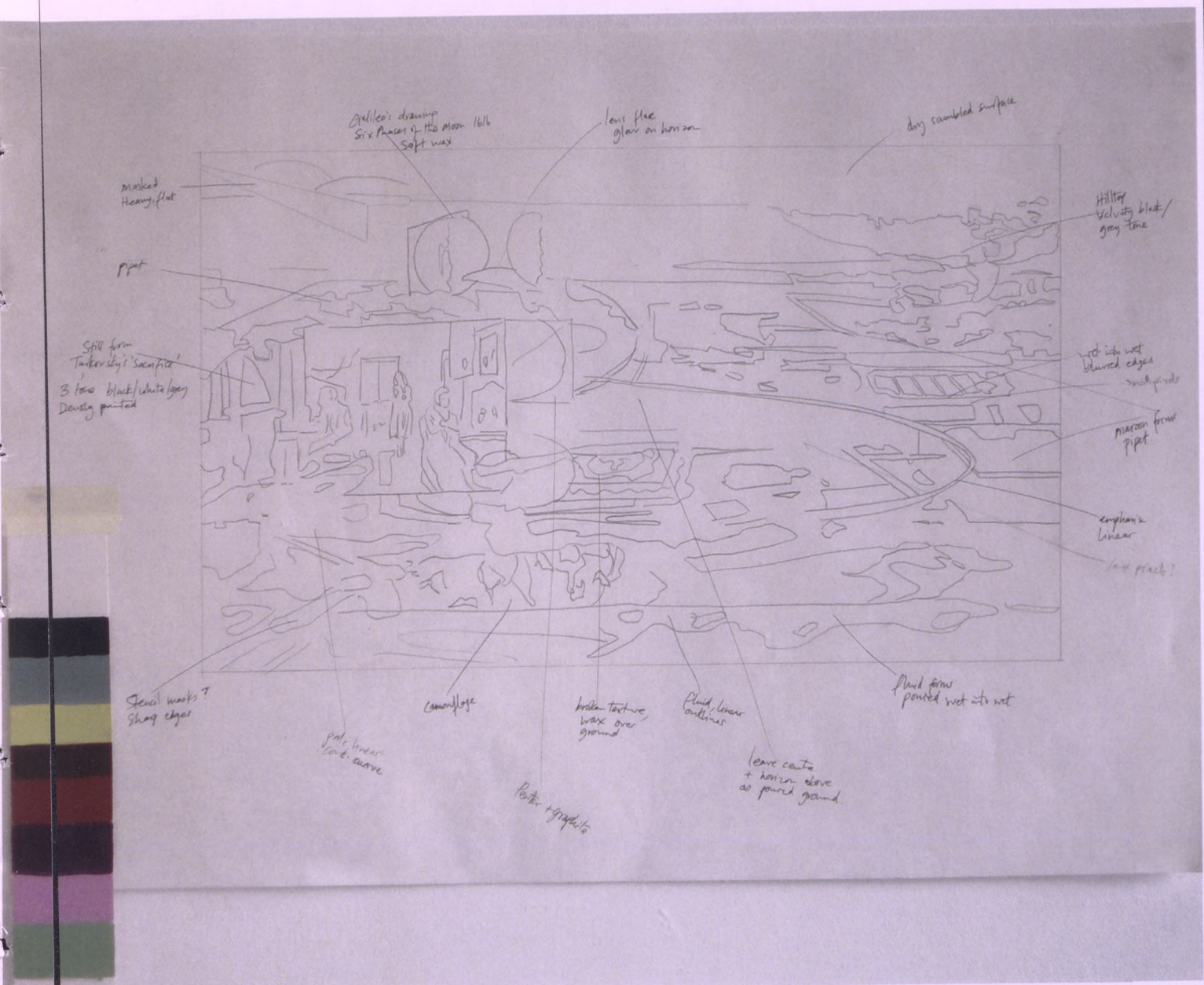


Figure 32: Zone 16, process map

is scrutinised with paint application in mind and notes planning colour and procedure are added to the map.

*The fragment. Multiplicity. Intrusion of one thought upon another – a new texture in the field of the image. Making and thinking as processes equally unruly and filled with interruption, (the fragmentation of the everyday).*

*The intrusions activate the field – comparison, difference, other voices. How are these fragments rendered? They imitate something of their source; their way of being in the world.*



As Deleuze points out, the Proustian universe operates through the multiple and the transversal, which permits us to experience viewpoints without necessarily unifying them

...transversality, in which unity and totality are established for themselves, without unifying or totalising objects or subjects.<sup>179</sup>

The emphasis here then is on covering distances and divisions; crossing, as can dreams in their ability to 'telescope' fragments,<sup>180</sup> between elements that are not themselves connected

Incommensurability and noncommunication are distances, but distances that fit together or intersect. And this is precisely what time signifies: that system of nonspatial distances, that distance proper to the contiguous or to the continuous, distance without intervals.<sup>181</sup>

In Kristeva's writings on Proust, a close attention to the last sentence of the novel, in his handwritten notebooks, reveals what she calls 'a giant breath through explanatory detours,' which effectively eschews linear time as a time which 'leads implacably to death...' <sup>182</sup> and offers a complex temporal structure which evolves beneath the erasures. (fig.33)<sup>183</sup>

In Proust's novel, through this practice of 'crossing', the actions of remembering and creating are inextricably linked and the process of interpreting signs is not just an element of the work, but 'the process of production itself.'<sup>184</sup>

If painting has a capacity to 'think' time, it lies in its ability to undertake the kind of translation of signs that Deleuze apportions to Proust's literary project, that is, to utilise the possibility within practice to develop or explicate signs. In terms of addressing the experience of memory, Proust's proposition that sensuous signs initiate a process of conscious analysis (the intelligence always coming after) and that this process in turn mobilizes involuntary memory, is a sequence of events which seems to be echoed in the experience of studio practice. The bifurcation of memory that Proust creates in his two presents, the *virtual* and the *actual*, is an interesting notion within practice, and a theme that I want to explore further with the help of Deleuze's writings on cinema.

### 3.3.3 The Time Image: Displacement

circuit 9. The Filmic Time-Image

In this section I want to ask how Deleuze's analysis of cinema develops Proust's 'fragment of time in the pure state' and provides an insight into time in film, which might be usefully applied to thinking about painting's time.

In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze extrapolates what he calls the 'time-image' and its signs, which are presented as signs of the internal relations in the order of time, and signs of time as

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p.169

<sup>180</sup> Proust describes his work in terms of the telescope and not the microscope, pointing out that the scrutiny only seems to be that of the tiny, 'but tiny because they are situated at a great distance, and each constituted a world.' Ibid., p.143

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., p.129

<sup>182</sup> KRISTEVA, J. (1996) *Time and Sense; Proust and the Experience of Literature*, Columbia University Press, p.304

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., pp.127-128

<sup>184</sup> DELEUZE, *Proust and Signs*, p.147



'series'. These concerns are linked to his interest in the problems of modern thought generally, and in describing what makes cinema of particular interest to him, the translator makes the point that 'as with painting, it gives conceptual construction new dimensions, those of the percept and affect...' <sup>185</sup> and enables an encounter through which an 'image of thought' can appear. Deleuze makes a link between the time-image and Proust, stating that although there are differing types of such an image

...the direct time-image always gives us access to that Proustian dimension where people and things occupy a place in time which is incommensurable with the one they have in space. <sup>186</sup>

The central distinction he makes in approaching film, between the 'movement-image' and the 'time image', is one in which the former produces a causal sequence of frames, following the necessity of action, while in the latter, time escapes causality; examples of filmmakers who create the time-image include Antonioni, Renais, Rossellini and Godard. As Restivo tells us

liberated from the grip of narrative, the cinema was able to do *self-consciously* what it had always been able to do (if only in exceptional cases) – to give us aberrant movement, false continuity, so as to allow that which is seen to become charged with that which is unseen. <sup>187</sup>

Deleuze develops the time-image initially through an analysis of neo-realist film, which is characterised as constructing a 'purely optical and sound situation,' <sup>188</sup> differing fundamentally from the 'action image' of realist film. It is this notion of a pure optical and sound image that I find so interesting in relation to the paintings for a number of reasons, the first being that it is a concept 'invested by the senses,' thus linked to the concerns of the haptic as a viewing experience. <sup>189</sup> Laura Marks makes a connection between Deleuze's concept of the time-image and the haptic strategies of the contemporary video works which she references, arguing that in both, the experiences addressed cannot be represented directly and 'work at the limits of what can be thought, by referring to the memories of objects, the body, and the senses.' <sup>190</sup> In parallel to aspects of interpretation noted in our earlier investigation of the haptic image, the time-image equally asks the viewer to draw upon subjective resources to *complete* the image

...the image is barely a beginning, and any extension into narrative must be hesitant or suspicious. In these works still or thin-looking images are ultimately the richest. <sup>191</sup>

Lyotard looked at the modern work as freeing itself of the relations between figure and discourse that resided in classical conceptions of figuration and narration and Deleuze draws on this in his extension of Reigl's haptic/optic categories, as two distinct forms of spatialization:

<sup>185</sup> DELEUZE, G. (2005) *Cinema 2*, Continuum, p.XV

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p.37

<sup>187</sup> RESTIVO, *Into the Breach*, p.175

<sup>188</sup> DELEUZE, *Cinema 2*, p.17

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p.4

<sup>190</sup> MARKS, *The Skin of the Film*, p.29

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., p.42



“haptic space” thus anticipates what in the “intensive space” of the modern work would depart from the figure-ground, eye-hand relations dear to Gestalt psychology – for example, the kind of “disconnected spaces” explored in modern cinema...<sup>192</sup>

Deleuze, then, seeks to extract sensation from representation in favour of an aesthetic ‘experimentation’ through which our spatial sense and experience of temporality are changed. ‘There is a kind of temporal indetermination in the unfolding of a life,’<sup>193</sup> and this time resists being placed in a linear or cyclical pre-ordered movement. This is what Deleuze is exploring in the time-image, a kind of ‘disjointed time,’ which moves us from the ‘extensive’ to the ‘intensive,’ towards a kind of *ungrounding*.

Here we might make a link back to the thread of thinking concerning the haptic in chapter 2, which led us to the notion of a stuttering language, and consider the haptic in a temporal context. An acute awareness of the picture surface, such as is often provoked by haptic images, breaks language in a heterogeneity of time as well as space, and if we apply Olkowski’s spatial analogy of Giotto’s image of hell *temporally*, we have a *world without a point of view - in time*. So, through the viewers’ awareness of surface, time within the process of making the paintings is explicitly registered in this ‘stuttering practice of an ontology of becoming.’<sup>194</sup> The extremity of time introduced through the pipette procedure in the *After* series, evolving into different formations in subsequent works, is then a kind of *haptic time*.

This haptic temporality is, I would argue, linked to the notion of the actual/virtual that we have been exploring. Deleuze’s time-image, through its refusal to ‘explain’ via the predictable forward movement of action, opens a means of accessing the ‘virtual’ image, a mode of remembering that, as we have seen, resides in circuits of temporality aligned to the registers of the nonverbal and perhaps the unconscious.

The concept of the virtual image is only one of a number of Bergsonian propositions that informs Deleuze’s conception of cinema, not least of which is the notion that what we refer to as space and time are ‘merely extremes of the contraction and dilation of a single *duree*, or duration.’<sup>195</sup> Bergson here presents the universe as an open whole in flux, whose vibrational flow of matter-movement forms spatial entities through contraction, and temporal dimensions through dilation, moving from past, through present and into future.<sup>196</sup>

Deleuze’s pleasure in creating taxonomies, here of the images and signs of cinema, equally leads back to Bergson and his answer to the challenge of the subject/object opposition, which is to see the world as entirely constructed of images; living and non-living entities are all images, which jostle and collide. Living images gain a sense of their space and time, predicting and perceiving such encounters, organised in their actions and perceptions by a ‘sensory-motor schema’, and it is only at the point of disruption, or break down in this schema that new images (Deleuze’s ‘time-images’ arising in modern cinema), and new signs can appear.

Deleuze sees in neo-realist cinema the emergence of this shattering of temporality

<sup>192</sup> RAJCHMAN, *The Deleuze Connections*, p.129

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, p.130

<sup>194</sup> OLKOWSKI, *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, p.14

<sup>195</sup> BOGUE, R. (2003) *Deleuze on Cinema*, Routledge, p.3

<sup>196</sup> For Bergson movement has to be grasped as a whole in which the motion of entities and those surrounding them, form a totality that is open and perpetually changing.

in which, though the 'reality' of the setting and events is not in question, this reality is established through a series of what might be described as 'dreamlike' connections: 'it is as if the action floats in the situation rather than bringing it to a conclusion...' <sup>197</sup> It is also a reality in which the commonplace coexists with the spectacular. <sup>198</sup>

In classic cinema, time is subordinate to movement, in modern cinema however, this relationship changes; movement becomes uncentered, 'forms of time generate various aberrant movements, and in those movements we see direct images of time.' <sup>199</sup> The chaining of images in terms of sequence is key to this development, a re-chaining takes place in which horizontal linkages are interrupted through vertical disjunctive passage, bringing echoes of processes of thought and images which might lay claim to the prelinguistic, through displacement. <sup>200</sup>

The strategy of displaced time is linked by Deleuze to an evocation of the 'pure optical and sound image,' as exemplified by Renais' *Last Year in Marienbad* which introduces an investigation of past time far more powerful than the flashback: '...the silent walk on the thick hotel carpet which each time puts the image into the past...' <sup>201</sup> (Fig. 34)

In Renais' films characters reside in complex planes of coexisting heterogeneous durations (the very image of Augustine's three-fold present), the substance of which Deleuze calls 'sheets of time'; planes that intersect and mutate constantly. Bogue describes the splitting of time as the means through which modern cinema allows us to enter 'a world of thought-images beyond ordinary thought,' <sup>202</sup> and points to the fact that 'the gap between images functions as a principle of their interconnection...in each gap the fissure of a pure outside is made present' <sup>203</sup>

A strategy of displacement, and this notion of sheets of time have been central in my re-working of images for use in the paintings, particularly in the works that followed the *Zone* series.

### 3.3.4 Folded Time: Possible Worlds

circuit 10. Folded time

In this section, mapping the development of a series of paintings entitled *Possible Worlds*, the working procedures of montage and fragmentation are further explored in relation to the actual/virtual. We will, in the process, reference Leibniz's alternative to Cartesian space/time, through his notions of *time as series* and multiple *possible worlds*, and Deleuze's model of the *fold* in relation to these concepts.

<sup>197</sup> DELEUZE, *Cinema 2*, p.4

<sup>198</sup> For example, this is seen in Fellini's wilful confusion of the everyday and the spectacular through the removal of a sense of distinction, or space, between them.

<sup>199</sup> BOGUE, *Deleuze on Cinema*, p.199

<sup>200</sup> Godard's method ceases to chain images in terms of association but sequences images which 'will induce an interstice between the two...it is the method of AND, 'this and then that'...' *Cinema 2*, p.174. Godard's movement across and between numerous genres in his 'unlinking' of images as 'series' takes place in different ways, both imperceptible and discontinuous. Deleuze here points out that in this passage of images, new possibilities arise for montage through electronic processes.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p.37

<sup>202</sup> BOGUE, *Deleuze on Cinema*, p.7

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p.7



Figure 34: Alain Renais, *Last Year in Marienbad*, stills.



## Process notes E: *Possible Worlds*

### Recording source images (fig.35)

1. The studio space is darkened and divisions suspended by threads, like screens. These hanging structures take the form of *frames* (straight cut trace, curling slightly, and solid heavy card, cut to mimic an ornate salon style surround).
2. Sequences of multiple and changing projected images (slides and overhead projections) play across and through the structures. The images range from direct drawings onto acetate to appropriated paintings and miscellaneous photographic sources.
3. The projections are then photographed and filmed to provide source material for further manipulation and reworking in the paintings.
4. Drawings are also made in situ (see visual note <sup>E</sup> *possible worlds*)

*The framing structures throw shadows that hold the remnants of distorted colour. Images fragment in this layered territory of surfaces, slipping out of focus in the spaces between, forced to give up something of their autonomy, their origin even, in the course of meeting another equally insubstantial spectre, another series of light waves, hitting the eye from a different direction simultaneously. The structures are held in place but are unhinged by the flow of dispersed, partial things; a perpetually moving/folding/migrating image identity.*

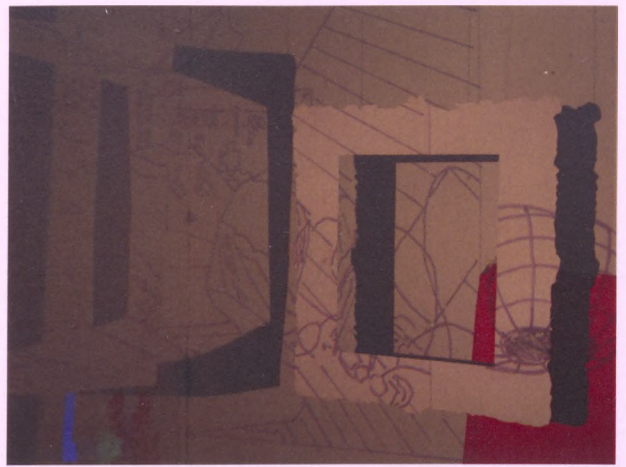
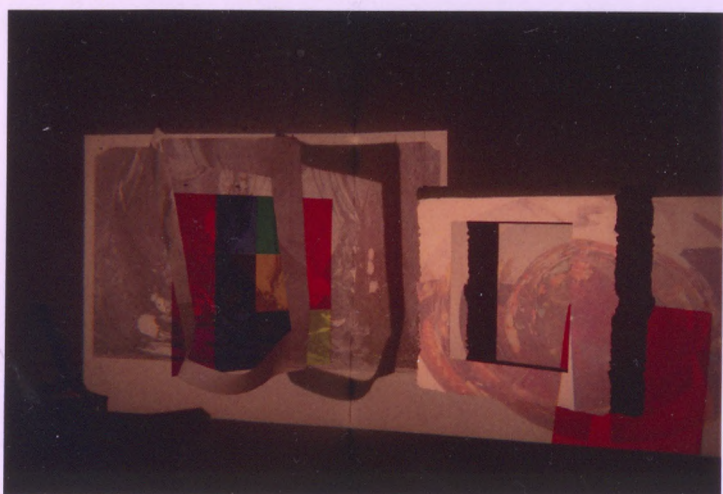


Figure 35: Beth Harland: *studio projections*, 2007







The still images produced through this 'performative' process reflect the sense of fragmentary moments, events suspended and juxtaposed that I experience in Proust's world, in which fragments hover, at different levels; a plurality of 'possible worlds' existing concurrently. In the subsequent digital re-working and painting of these images, my aim was to explore visually, the specific development of the 'actual/ virtual,' highlighted by Deleuze and summarised by the Proustian phrase 'a fragment of time in the pure state.'

Perhaps it would be useful here to further describe the actual/virtual bifurcation, exploring what Deleuze calls the 'crystal image.' This notion concerns the indiscernability of the present and 'its' virtual past, contemporary with it. As we have seen, both Proust's and Bergson's conception of memory find their basis in this notion of the past, coexisting with itself as present. Bergson views time as the continuous bifurcation of the actual and virtual, and the Proustian experience of involuntary memory, as Patrick Ffrench presents it 'is the re-actualisation of the virtuality of a past present.'<sup>204</sup> For Bergson this point is made perceptible only by dreams and moments of 'paramnesia', or *déjà vu*, the sensation of having been there before. In these moments of uncommon experience, we are able to perceive the virtual past as it exists in itself.

The bringing together of two moments takes the form of an intensely focused point in Deleuze's approach 'when actual optical image crystallizes with *its own* virtual image, on a small internal circuit. This is a crystal image...'<sup>205</sup> He also evokes reflection and the function of the mirror, 'an image with two sides,'<sup>206</sup> the virtual and the actual in continuous exchange, switching between visibility and invisibility, the 'opaque-limpid the expression of their exchange.'<sup>207</sup>

The mechanism in film by which the past can be made to appear as a succession of presents is montage precisely because of its procedure of selecting and co-ordinating significant moments. Deleuze cites Pasolini's transformation of past into present (a past which still appears as present) as operating through montage, stating that it is through this mechanism that the crystal-image acts to expose the splitting into two which 'reveals or makes visible...the hidden ground of time.'<sup>208</sup> This representation of time is, of necessity, indirect and not a question of simply juxtaposing one moment/frame with another because 'the whole is no more an addition than time is a succession of presents.'<sup>209</sup>

In searching for this essential aspect of time, it becomes clear that it is only when the 'sensory-motor schemata jams or breaks, (that) a different kind of image can appear: a pure optical-sound image.'<sup>210</sup> Conley, in his essay *The Film Event*, points to the multiform nature of the time-image event, through which 'the bodily or "sensory-motor" movement that informs classical cinema gives way to film as thinking,'<sup>211</sup> returning as a line of demarcation, as the fragment of Vinteuil's sonata, or as the 'little patch of yellow' in Vermeer's painting does for Proust. The event 'suddenly "multiplies" and "proliferates" in

<sup>204</sup> FFRENCH, P. (2000) 'Time in the pure state': *Deleuze, Proust and the image of time*. IN BAYLEY GILL, C. (Ed.) *Time and the image*. Manchester University Press, p.163

<sup>205</sup> DELEUZE, *Cinema 2*, p.67

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p.67

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68. Deleuze describes the crystal-image as a search for something beyond the movement image, something of matter, and cites Tarkovsky's *Mirror* as 'a turning crystal...that searches an opaque environment' (*ibid.*, p. 73), finding in *Stalker* the 'opacity of an indeterminate zone' (*ibid.*, p.73).

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p.95

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20

<sup>211</sup> CONLEY, T. (2000) *The Film Event*. In FLAXMAN, *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, p.307

the new world of the time-image.<sup>212</sup>

The operation of the fragment in Proust is key, the primary point being that 'the parts of the Search remain partitioned, fragmented, *without anything lacking*.'<sup>213</sup> In other words, there is a whole, but it is a whole *of* fragments, a unity *of* multiplicity.<sup>214</sup>

In my approach to the *Possible Worlds* series, I wanted to take fragmentary manipulation and montage techniques, which had been present since the project's inception, further and test the notion of crystal-image in paintings. This process evolved, on the digital desktop, into a transformation of images recorded during studio projection sessions (fig.35) through the grafting of a different set of images, displacing moments appropriated largely as film stills into the already shifting space of the projections. (fig. 36 and visual note <sup>F</sup>)

In focusing upon the idea of a bifurcation, of two presents, the interruption of difference was contained within two distinct territories, the shadowy interior space of suspended frames, and the image of a 'screen,' which produced a different kind of light. The multiplicity of image source was thus less effusive than in the *Zone* series, and the first paintings produced were smaller with a more particular focus. The digital drawings, however, subjected material to the same kind of sliding process of interweaving by which layered images were pulled into and through each other, eroding their boundaries, though retaining a sense of their separate origins, perhaps evoking something of the discomfort of a *deja vu*. In the paintings, the material properties and application vary to accentuate difference. (fig. 37<sup>215</sup> & 38)

The picture plane as a succession of glimpses, one world interrupting another, references a further encounter with thinking which Deleuze introduces in both his work on Proust and cinema, but directly engages in his book *The Fold*, that of Leibniz.

The philosopher Leibniz...showed that the world is made up of series which are composed and which convey in a very regular way, according to ordinary laws. However, the series and sequences are apparent to us only in small sections, and in a disrupted or mixed up order, so that we believe in breaks, disparities and discrepancies as in things that are out of the ordinary.<sup>216</sup>

As Deleuze shows us, Leibniz offers a critique of the Cartesian conception of space in which the thinking subject can map the material world and conquer space in grid-like fashion:

If Descartes did not know how to get through the labyrinth, it was because he sought its secret of continuity in rectilinear tracks...<sup>217</sup>

For Leibniz the world and the individual are not so schematic, rather the world is

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., p.307

<sup>213</sup> DELEUZE, *Proust and Signs*, p.161

<sup>214</sup> In discussing this notion of unity, Deleuze points out that philosophically Leibniz first raised the issue of communication of sealed parts, 'how are we to conceive the communication of the 'monads', that have neither door nor window?' Ibid., p.163

<sup>215</sup> *Possible Worlds 1* was exhibited in group exhibition *Salon Connexions*, Contemporary Art Projects, London, 2006

<sup>216</sup> DELEUZE, *Cinema 2*, p.14

<sup>217</sup> DELEUZE, G. (2006) *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, Continuum, p.3

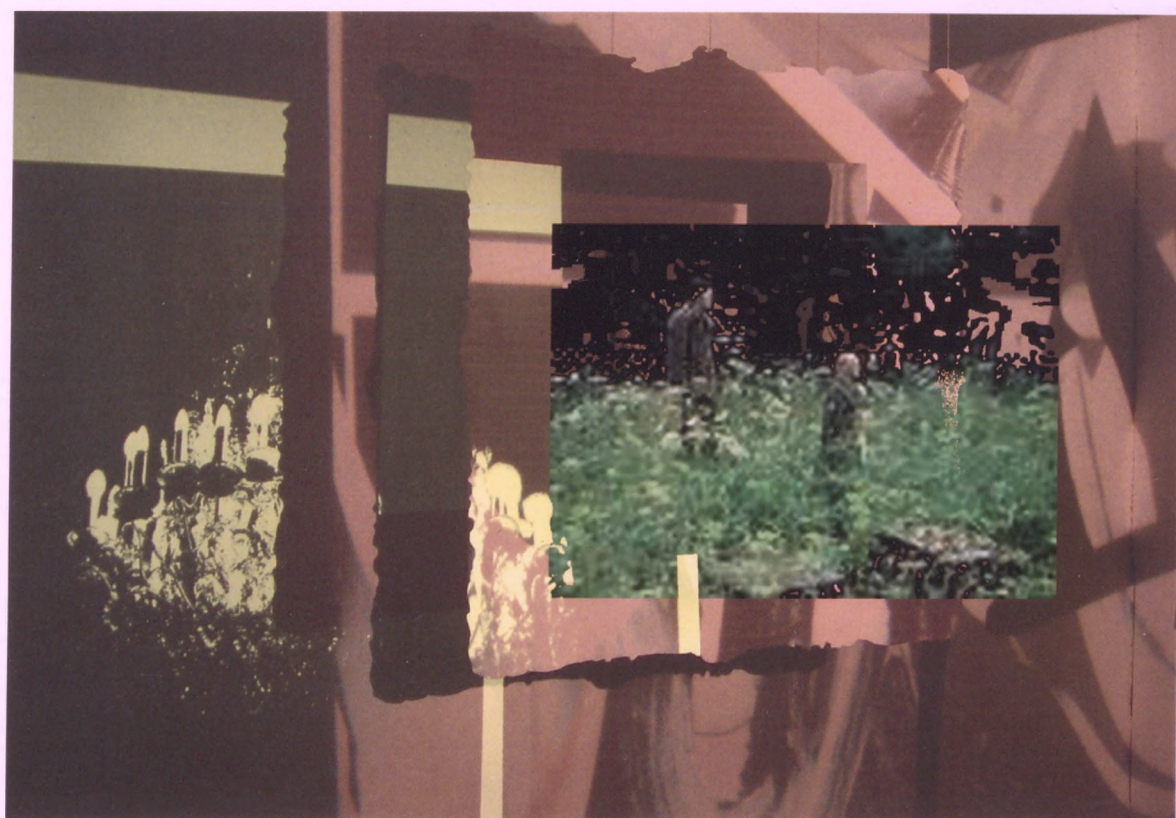
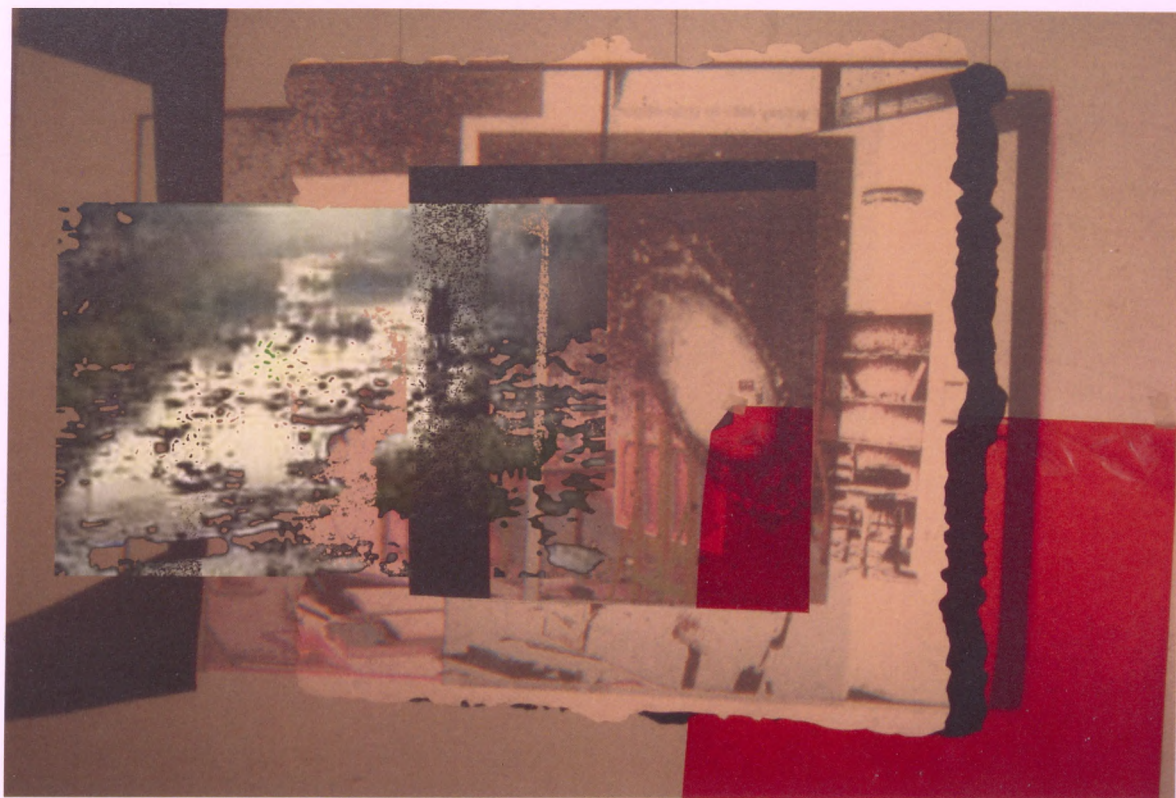
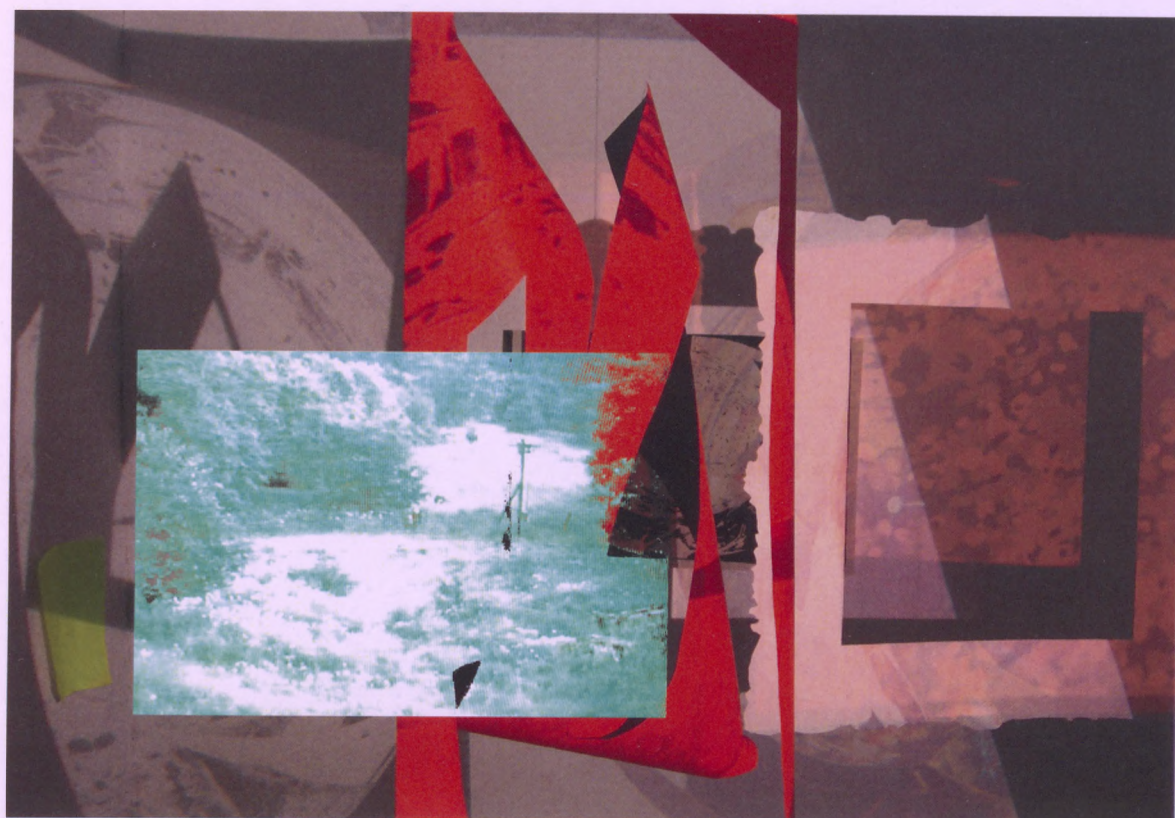
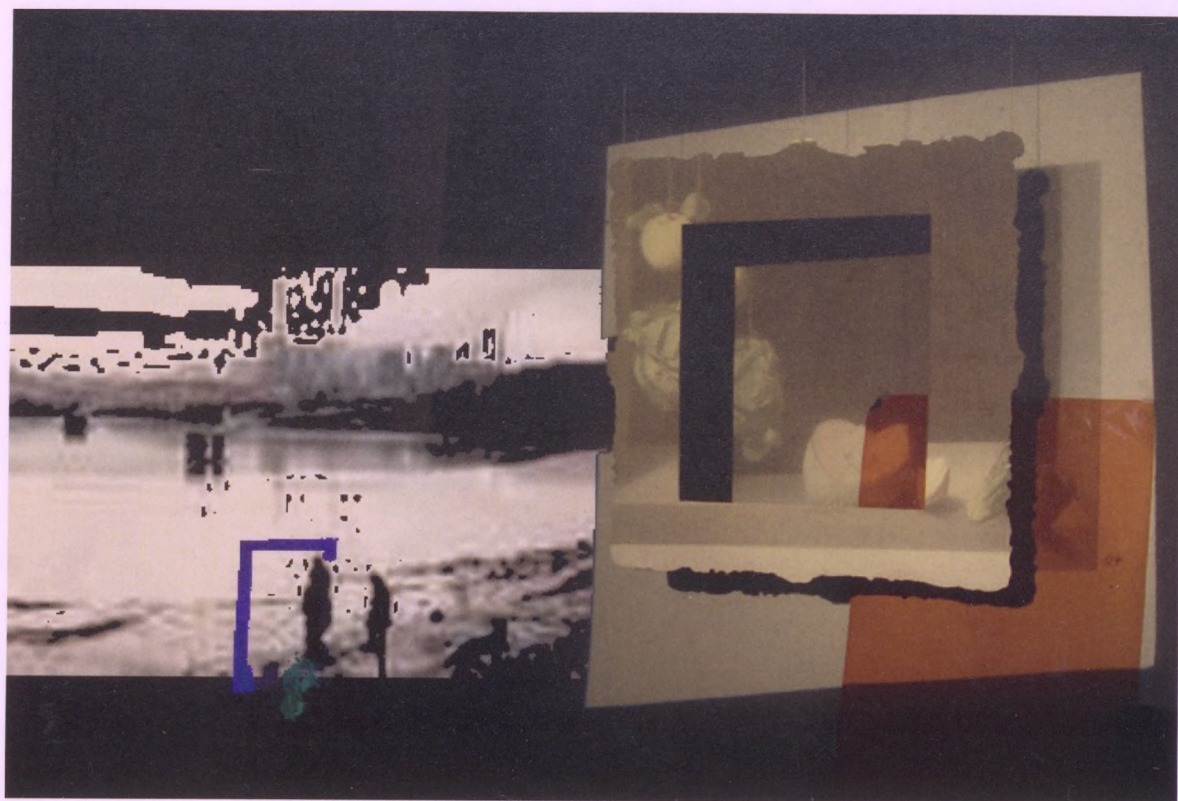


Figure 36: Beth Harland: *Digital drawings*, 2007





Beth Harland: *Digital drawings*, 2007





Figure 37: Beth Harland: *Possible Worlds 1*, oil on canvas, 46cm x 36cm, 2007



Figure 38: Beth Harland: *Possible Worlds 2*, oil on canvas, 48cm x 36cm 2007

constructed of 'divergent series,' of folds and pleats in matter, in which we move through curves and turns, by inflection.<sup>218</sup> Deleuze describes inflection as the ideal element of the fold and indicates, as an example of its formulation, Klee's spontaneous line:

It testifies to his affinity for the Baroque and for Leibniz, and opposes him to Kandinsky, a Cartesian, for whom angles are firm, for whom the point is firm...<sup>219</sup>

This alternative to a Cartesian material world has enormous resonance in my working process, and the importance of Deleuze's crystal-image, and Proust's pure fragment within that process might thus be seen to converge in the Leibnizian sense of folded time – in the coexistence of what is, what might be and what might have been, virtually, in other possible worlds.

In Deleuze's explication of Leibniz we find the notion of the co-presence of that which is ontologically and temporally different, and an image of complexity as a fold which continually opens onto further folds (a rhizomatic situation without a beginning or end). The distinction between a Leibnizian and Cartesian perspective is once again important here. As Andrew Benjamin states: 'For Descartes the complex consists of an amalgam of simples'<sup>220</sup>, and can always be reduced to its constituent parts, so in terms of time, all that comprises the complex is given *at once*: 'while the complex may not be comprehended in one moment, it is nonetheless complete in its enactment'<sup>221</sup>. For Leibniz, however, the complex can never be absolutely unfolded:

since the monad unfolds infinitely. The infinite and the finite are co-present in their difference and thus allow a joining-up that can never be reduced to a particular form at the present.<sup>222</sup>

The Cartesian reduction is here not possible because what it is comprises two different temporal orders simultaneously, each of which contains its own possibilities. As an example of Leibnizian time and the fold in relation to a functional form, Benjamin takes Libeskind's extension to the Jewish Museum in Berlin, which he interestingly, and I think correctly, sees as enacting this sense of presence and absence:

...presenting that which resists representation, Berlin's own relation to a now past Jewish presence within it...The structuration enacts questioning by resisting any provision of definite answers...it resolves and does not resolve. At the same time therefore it is both finite and infinite.<sup>223</sup>

I have been interested, throughout the research, in the ways in which the kinds of concepts encountered in philosophical thinking bring new perspectives to practice. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari refer to the 'pedagogy of the concept', presenting concepts as a function of problems, which are made, fabricated and subject to renewal and mutation. It seems to me that a potentially disorientating encounter with

<sup>218</sup> Leibniz contends that 'every substance is like a complete world...thus the universe is multiplied as many times as there are substances' and that in some sense every substance expresses the others, 'whether past, present or future.' LEIBNIZ, G. W. (1991) *Discourse on Metaphysics* Hackett Publishing Company, p.9

<sup>219</sup> DELEUZE, *The Fold*, p.15

<sup>220</sup> BENJAMIN, A. (1995) *Time, Question, Fold*, Basilisk, issue 1.p.5

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., p.5

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p.5

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p.6



philosophical concepts, and the resulting creation of problematic objects, gaps and fields of differential relations, leads to renewed conceptions (and by extension, methods) of practice.

In this final chapter, painting's time has been figured in relation to a number of philosophical, literary and filmic perspectives. The importance of what happens in the space *between* different practices, in terms of theoretical reference and inter-disciplinary making, is a vital outcome of the research. This resonates generally in Deleuzian thinking through the notion of combining elements from different strata (archaeologically) to resist the order that would be imposed by working solely on one stratum. In Deleuze's terms, in order for something to emerge, we clearly have to speak in relation to the established discourses, whilst at the same time we must break away from them. Marks calls this 'change effected through a dance between sedimented, historical discourses and lines of flight.'<sup>224</sup> She also makes a link to Foucault's idea of working 'at the edge of an unthought, slowly building a language in which to think it'<sup>225</sup>; this point of arrival at the 'unthought' in order for thinking to begin is, it seems to me, familiar within practice, as it is in philosophy.

In an interview about his work on film, Deleuze speaks about a productive encounter *between* disciplines as occurring:

when one discipline realizes that it has to resolve, for itself and by its own means, a problem similar to one confronted by the other. One can imagine that similar problems confront the sciences, painting, music, philosophy, literature and cinema at different moments, on different occasions and under different circumstances. The same tremors occur on totally different terrains.'<sup>226</sup>

This strikes me as absolutely accurate and it is very much with this in mind that I began to research time in film (guided primarily by Deleuze's work on cinema) as a parallel form that seemed to have a closer affinity with the kind of time I wanted to activate in the paintings than photography had embodied.

The experience of this research has been that the dialogue which painting as a practice can (and, I would argue, *needs* to) have with other media and forms of thinking/seeing is its major asset and its potential legacy.

<sup>224</sup> MARKS, *The Skin of the Film*, p.28

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p.29

<sup>226</sup> FLAXMAN, *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, University of Minnesota Press, p.367

## 4.0 Conclusion

### 4.1 Summary

The research presented documents an attempt, through practice, to address a specific proposition, and in the course of this address, reveals an interest in theorising process, embedded in the practice. The proposition argues that an approach to time in painting aligned with Deleuzian, Leibnizian time and Proustian 'time regained,' as opposed to a Freudian return, a preoccupation with absence and mourning (a model often assigned to painting), enables it to reflect the complexity of our lived experience of time. Such a positioning of painting's time is, I have argued, enabled through dialogue with digital imaging and a form of rhizomatic mapping, in place of the 'traumatic' tracing of the photographic model.

Viewed in retrospect, the research has been largely driven by a desire to understand Proust's project *through practice*. In the course of this process, the prism of painting's temporal continuum was structured around the action of the digital on painting's picture plane and viewed through the perspective of Deleuzian thinking.

From an initial questioning of the impact of digital technology on our experience and upon notions of the picture plane in painting, methods were developed to set up a conversation between the painting's surface and the digital screen. Specific literary and filmic reference points were identified, which informed the double space developed in the first experimental pieces.

An exploration of haptic visuality and notions of the smooth and the striated was applied to different modes of practice as a key aspect of questioning how digital imaging offers painting an expanded topography. In a reflection upon earlier series of paintings and their relationship to the current research, the role of shadow (distinctions of likeness / semblance) and the mimetic function (issues of figure / ground), were explored in connection with the haptic. As mentioned in the introduction, through the use of a pattern of interlinking 'circuits' as a structuring device to navigate the text, it became clear that the haptic/optic distinction formed the hinge between two major pre-occupations in the research, relating to issues of the spatial and the temporal in painting. This hinge, and discoveries within the making procedure itself, led to a sense of 'haptic time', and to the central idea of the actual/virtual, which we find in Proustian and other conceptions of time, notably Bergson's, explored within the research.

In the final stages of the research, painting's time is viewed in relation to filmic time, as articulated by Deleuze in his writings on cinema, and these reflections are then linked to Leibnizian time and the notion of multiple *possible worlds*. I propose, in this research, that it is through such a notion of *folded* time that painting, via the digital, might realize pure duration; Proust's 'fragment of time in the pure state.'

### 4.2 Findings

The research reveals a particular approach to theorising process, through which a systemization of theoretical discourse takes place within practice, by means of the application of the research methods. The research methodology is characterised by a cyclical approach to action and reflection, and the text reveals the development of the

research as a series of interconnected circuits, operating through rhizomatic principles.

Following on from the works produced during the research period presented in this submission, a new body of work has been developed during a residency in Berlin, which draws directly upon these findings. This series of works includes video pieces combining projected footage and paintings, a further extension of the conversation between surface and screen, within the new territory of the moving image. (visual note G)<sup>227</sup>

In this project's mapping of painting's time, the territory of the 'fragment' has been central. From the initial stages of establishing a conversation between painting and the digital image, to addressing a developing series of questions in the formation of a practice that aims to *think* a specific proposition through *making*, the conjoining of fragments is clearly the *modus operandi* of the work and further of the research process itself.

The fragment, and by extension *multiplicity* and *difference*, referred to in the first chapter of this text as the primary disposition of digital structure and procedure (linking as the digital does, diverse 'bits' of information with ease in a fluid formation), frames the research in a re-positioning of time towards a multiple situation of varied parts, with various rhythms, 'which the stream of style does not sweep along at the same speed.'<sup>228</sup> This is seen directly in the works produced, through the development from the *Lucid* and *After* series to the *Zone* and *Possible Worlds* series, and in the understanding that the difference in their modes of address is also, at a fundamental level, connected to the difference between the analogue and the digital.

For me, the subject of memory in the works which draw upon analogue photography operates through the *trace*, inextricably linked to a compulsive return to something from the past (the traumatic Freudian return), is a melancholic form of repetition which remains fixed; a deathly repetition. The introduction of digital practice however, became the 'map' that characterises the operation of the rhizome, and in the process, the same objects (the still life of everyday mementoes that figures in both the *Lucid* and *Zone* series) were no longer mourned but re-located as capable of transition. Objects from the past need not then be binding, they can be *elliptically reconfigured*.

So, as the research demonstrates, in attempting to approach memory rather through the Proustian moment, painting can utilise the digital to combine past and present, the *actual* and the *virtual* in a moment that might be 'transformational' in relation to the past. Clearly Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* has been instrumental within my research, not least because it is an admirable model for art practice as theory, and a means of accessing particular types of knowledge, outlined at the beginning of this text as by and large tacit. In the task of Proust's project, to fully grasp the experience of memory and something of the types of knowledge that are inseparably linked in the mind and body, both cognitive and affective, time needs to develop across multiple presents; it is not stored as an imprint. In that sense 'Barthes was not wrong: the photograph...has nothing Proustian about it,'<sup>229</sup> however, having conducted this practice-based research, constantly coming back to Proust's undertaking, it seems to me that potentially, digital imaging *has*. I say 'potentially' because this notion applied to digital processing of *itself*, in terms of an intrinsic quality, may make little sense, but I have found that, (in contrast to an alliance between painting and photography) as a site of multiplicity, a smooth space,

<sup>227</sup> Works from Berlin Residency were exhibited in *Possible Worlds*, solo show at Gallery 33, Berlin, 2007.

<sup>228</sup> DELEUZE, *Proust and Signs*, p.113

<sup>229</sup> BAL, *The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually*, p.193



in conjunction with the materiality of painting's striated space, it opens up the time of painting in a different, more Proustian way.

I argue that painting affords us a similar attention to complex temporal structure, time folded within process, as does film, when operating in the realm of Deleuze's time-image. In reference to his film *Slow Motion*, Godard talks about slowing down 'to see if there's anything to see,' an idea that strikes me as connecting with two ways in which I have sought to address Proust's project through painting. The first is in terms of the particular quality of pace and scrutiny that Proust adopts, which is key to the bridging of the cognitive and affective; the second, the action of a prismatic attention in the approach to memory's multiple time.

Digital working (applied initially in the research to similar photographic material utilised in earlier series, and to painted images in progress) began to reveal other aspects of the image, making it porous to other 'events' that altered its character.<sup>230</sup> It is through this porosity, and the possibility of appropriation and resonance, that both space and time in the paintings was reconfigured. The screen became another operational mode, bringing into play the profoundly unfixed world of the pixel, an unstable equilibrium, set against the physical bounds of a painting.

The research into Deleuze's 'crystal image,' through which the folded experience of time might be accessed, aligned to the complexity of Bergson's *duree*, or the possible worlds of Leibniz's *time as series*, offered concepts which became models in the work, leading to the splitting of images, and the unsettling of expectations of the picture plane, the figure/ground stability. It may be as much a question of different forms of *motion* as it is one of *position*; in distancing myself in the work from the Freudian return to the site of mourning, I want to make use of Leibniz's folding, unfolding and refolding of space and time, and to follow his optimism of a fragmented, divergent totality. Even if it runs the risk of being an impractical and unfounded optimism in what might be characterised as our state of increasingly compressed pace of time and space; it might, in its ability to move by *divergence*, not only reflect the complexity of a relation to time and the outside, but even enable a transition from one condition to another.

The research reveals that painting's duration, interrupted through an encounter with the 'non-time,' if I can put it that way, of the digital, is not threatened, but may be refolded to brush against time's actual/virtual bifurcation. It is in the move from an analogue tracing through resemblance (what Deleuze calls 'perceptible form'<sup>231</sup>), to a map that digitally shuffles and recasts through multiple codes (presenting instead 'intelligible structure'<sup>232</sup>), that the complication of more than one *present*, addressed philosophically and experientially, can become painting's time.

<sup>230</sup> I wrote in one of my notebooks that in terms of the personal objects used in the still life images, this connected with notions of identity held within personal objects, and the way in which time changes us, revealing greater complexity.

<sup>231</sup> DELEUZE, *Cinema 2*, p.26

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p.26

## 5.0 Further work

A number of issues that have been addressed in this project suggest possible further elaboration and extended research. As mentioned in the introduction to this text, the notion of 'return' is one of these. In bringing together the outcomes of practice-based research over a number of years, a sense of return is revealed quite literally in the resurfacing of concerns and questions at different points but there is scope for further exploration of the notion of return in process, with reference to Lacan and Nietzsche, moving beyond the Freudian co-ordinates presented here.

The impact of Deleuze's thinking on this research has been far-reaching, and there are numerous ways in which making as a form of thinking, influenced by a Deleuzian approach, might be further extrapolated. One such route of investigation would be a continuation of the research into notions of the 'smooth' and the 'striated' in relation to digital imaging and painting, for example with reference to Deleuze and Guattari's work on music in which they cite Boulez as a practitioner who uses both smooth and striated time and is concerned with the communication between the two.

Within the territory of painting practice, Deleuze's 'pedagogy of concepts' and his thoughts on painting as 'catastrophe' raise interesting problems for further research, particularly in relation to the question of the viewer's experience.

In the current approach to mapping painting's time, the research moved, via Proust and Bergson, towards the key notion of the fold, as developed by Deleuze with reference to Leibniz. This concept, which is fascinating in terms of both the temporal and the spatial aspects of painting, came into play at the end of the research period covered here. The questions that Deleuze's work in *The Fold* raises around the notion of 'event' clearly suggests further theoretical and practical engagement within the context of practice-based enquiry. *The Fold* is an interesting precursor to Deleuze and Guattari's later work in areas of 'geophilosophy' and their political reflection on 'deterritorialisation' (again subjects of interest within art practice), which was first outlined in the last chapter of *The Fold*, on Leibniz's 'new harmony'.

Deleuze's writings can produce a sense of connection and generate problems, ideas and sometimes solutions within practice. His thinking has been cited as a point of reference and significant encounter for a number of contemporary artists (Thomas Hirschhorn is just one example) and the impact of his work upon contemporary art practice, in a broad context, is in itself a subject likely to generate further research. As Adams St.Pierre points out:

What is exciting for those who plug a Deleuzian machine into another machine is that different assemblages become possible that could make available the 'nonthought within thought' ...<sup>233</sup>

These are just some of the areas of potential development that might follow from the current investigation. A practice-based research process is an evolving one, continuously raising new questions, concepts and problems seen from different perspectives. The

<sup>233</sup> ADAMS ST.PIERRE, E. (2004) Deleuzian Concepts for Education: The subject undone. *Education Philosophy and Theory*. Vol. 36. Issue 3, p.284

nature of the process, in which fragments arrive and hover somehow in the web of their inter-relations, allows a certain amount of planning but with the proviso that the whole is not given. There really is no clear pre-existing map, rather a process of mapping and of not knowing quite where one will land.



## 6.0 Appendix 1

### Process and epistemology; *Machine Room, a blueprint for painting*

The initial aim of the *Machine Room* project was to investigate aspects of painting practice by establishing a forum, which operated through discussion (both first hand and electronic) and collaborative practice (studio-based workshops and public events). Having each worked individually as painters in our own studios, the processes and material we had accumulated were here opened into a broader discursive context, enabling a different set of questions to be asked about our procedures and ultimately about painting's infrastructure.

A number of key positions for painting were identified including:

- A modernist account of specificity and fundamental ideas of medium
- An extended practice exploring limit conditions associated with an 'expanded field', articulated in relation to conceptualist practices and conventions
- A relationship to technologies and collaging of appropriated material into a pictorial dimension.

With these formations in mind, the objective of research in the *Machine Room* was to explore painting's epistemology through a collapsing of the dual realms of production and exhibition/presentation. The central research question was: How might an event-based collaboration facilitate a disassembling and reframing of questions of image and painting through focusing upon its operational criteria; appropriation, projection, displacement and transition?

The conceptual framework for the project encompasses a number of related histories and viewpoints, which include areas of particular relevance to my research such as: a materialist idea of painting advanced by constructivist processes of montage/collage and film; the notion of archive and documentation in relation to painting; and specifically, the shift towards digital technology and the notion of prosthesis in painting.

The first studio workshop, in May 2004 (fig. 39) provided a pragmatic way of pursuing research problems in the studio, literally exchanging and experimenting with ideas within the protocols of practice. Objects available in the studio, old paintings, rolls of paper, canvas were assembled as a makeshift apparatus onto and into which images and forms were projected, using a series of video, slide and overhead projectors. The images were derived from source material collected for general reference or transcription in each artist's work.

The role of documentation was crucial, both as a means of recording the process for further reflection and analysis, but also as a method of image generation, folding or replaying the discourse back into the work itself. In other words, the *displacement* of the ephemeral pictorial products of the workshop could be seen both as a trace/record, but also as a thing in itself, as a work.

In 2006 Crate Studios in Margate offered *Machine Room* the opportunity to structure its objectives in terms of a specific space, place and time frame through a two-week residency, in its project space. The two adjoining rooms of the project space provided both a light and dark space, linked through a small hatch opening, a situation which was highly appropriate in setting up a circulatory exchange of different modes of address and for the framing of a notion of 'viewing'.

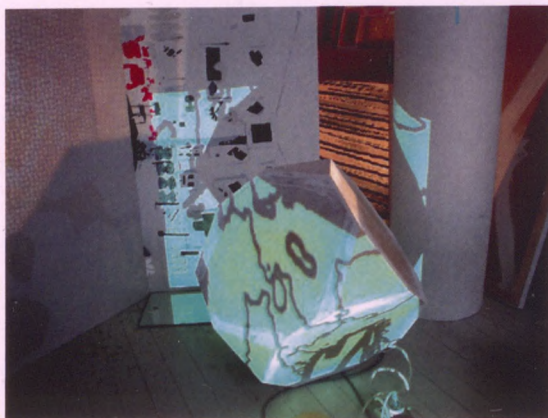
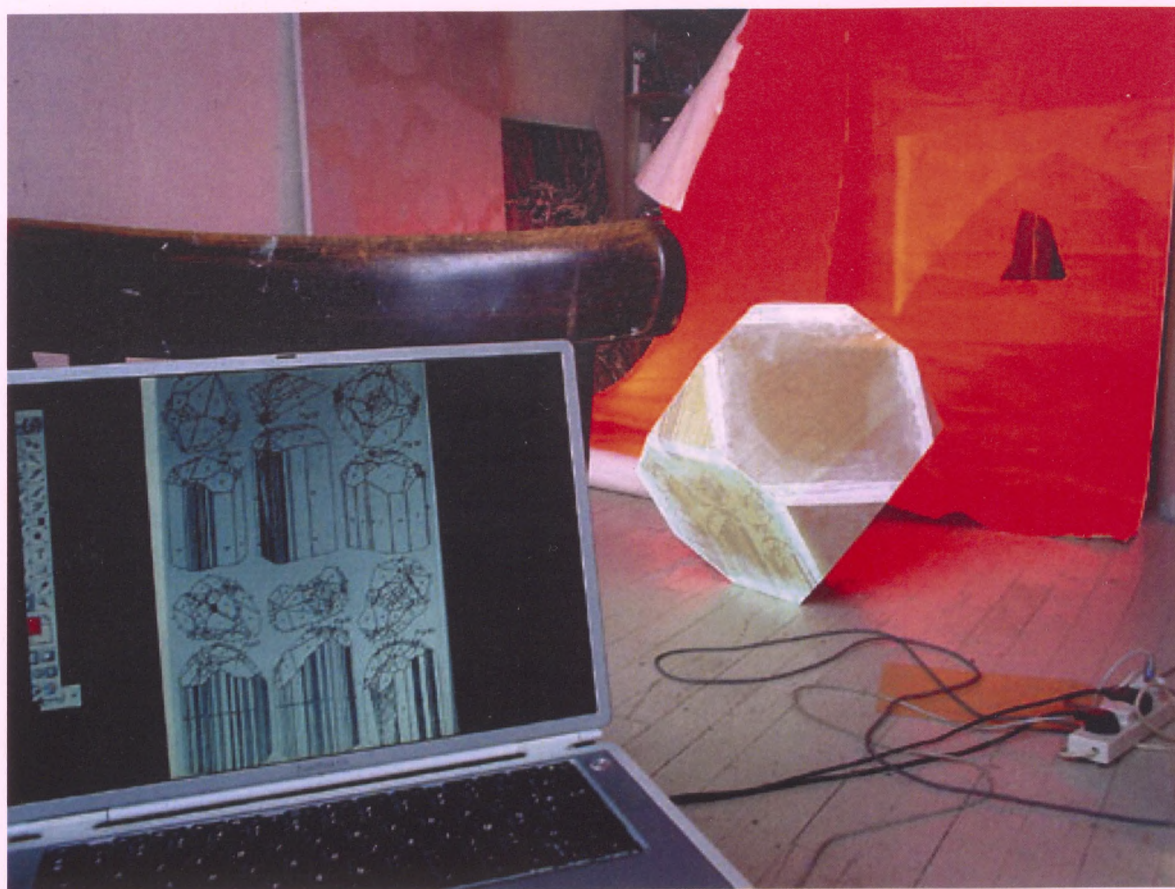


Figure 39: Machine Room *Studio* workshop, London 2004

## Crate Phase 1 July (one week) 2006

The project's site was also two-fold in another sense, the group's accommodation being in Ramsgate and Crate's location in Margate. This doubling provided the initial material for the activity in the space. Documented walks were made in each place; we explored the two unfamiliar towns with cameras in place of a map, very much in the manner of a Situational 'dérive' <sup>234</sup>. The experience and photographic record of these two very different locations gave rise to a densely layered structuring of place in terms of a spectator, the body and a pictorial condition. The characteristics of the two towns mapped onto the making procedures and the operation of the two studio spaces.

In Ramsgate, a promenade, with 18th century origins, where gardens, vistas and viewpoints address the unfurling of the walkway down to sea level, operated through a highly organised picturesque visual rhetoric. Peter de Bolla implies that in the 18th century such visual rhetoric functioned to locate and arguably *invent* the viewer as 'subject' within an increasingly structured and ideological public space.<sup>235</sup> This gave rise to references within the work produced to horizon, viewpoints and framing devices. (fig.40)

Margate, however, afforded no such selective vantage points as, from the Edwardian raised 'viewing platform', the viewer takes in the panorama of the crowded beach all at once. At the nearby 'Dreamland', the body is put into motion, disoriented by the conventions of the funfair; the remnants of the original pleasure park, such as the Scenic Railway rollercoaster ride, are all but derelict, as is the shuttered Lido further past the pier. (fig.41)

Following these *derives*, we constructed a series of speculative projects based around the images collected and observations made; we constructed screens, horizons and arches; manipulated, projected and transcribed images, in the dark and the light. (Fig.42 & 43 and visual note <sup>h</sup>)

<sup>234</sup> The *dérive*, a Dadaist practice, became one of the primary techniques of psychogeography, and concerned noticing the way aspects of an urban environment resonated with desires and states of mind. 'The derive, or drift, was defined by the situationists as a "technique of locomotion without a goal' PLANT, S. (1992) *The Most Radical Gesture; the Situationist International in a Postmodern Age*, Routledge, p.58

<sup>235</sup> De Bolla notes that the activity of viewing occurs within a particular physical environment 'but it is also sited within the culturally dispersed enclosures of visibility itself: that is, within the virtual spaces created by cultural forms.' DE BOLLA, P. (1995) *The Visibility of Visibility: Vauxhall Gardens and the Siting of the Viewer*. IN MELVILLE, S. (Ed.) *Vision and Textuality*. Duke University Press, p.284





Figure 40: Machine Room, *Ramsgate derive*, 2006



Figure 41: Machine Room, *Margate derive*, 2006



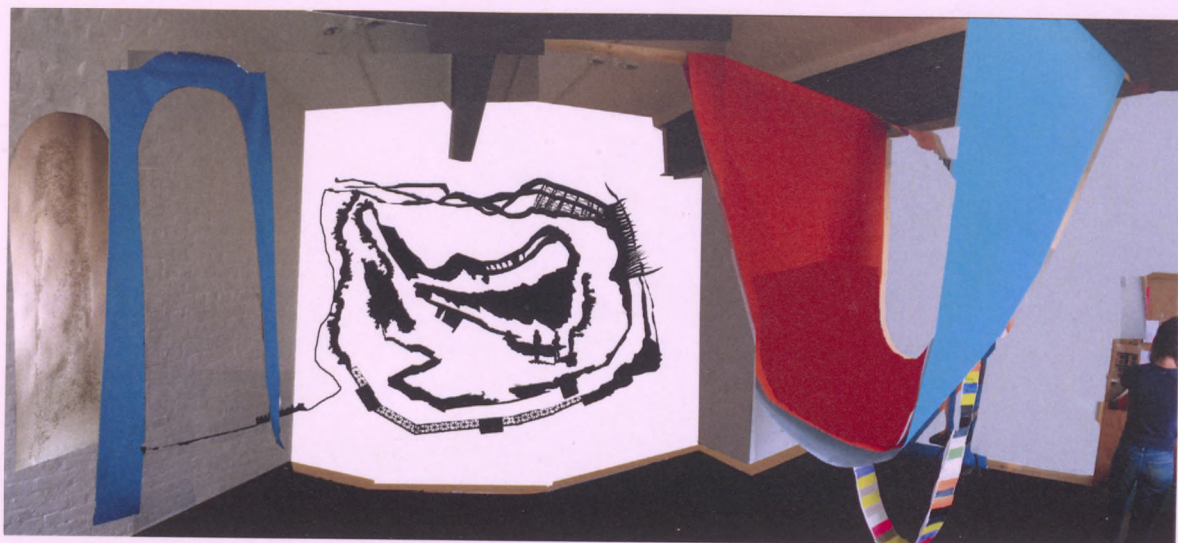


Figure 42: Machine Room, *Light space, composite image*



Figure 43: Machine Room, *Dark space, composite image*



## Process Notes: *Crate phase 1*

*Margate – beach/funfair, the body, sensation, spectacle. Dereliction; blind Lido, stranded in the present.*



*Ramsgate - framing, transition/thresholds, aspect of the beholder (Romantic). Defence against the sea, holding the sublime.*



*Dark space: vertiginous, undercurrent (Margate), fairground spinning out of control. UV light and white paper. Live-feed into light*



*space. Concentrate on the abstraction of the sensation.*



*Light space: horizon, structured views (Ramsgate), setting up series of viewing positions. Landmarks, picturesque. Horizon of meaning – ‘The frame of our view is always already framed (re-marked) by a part of its content’<sup>236</sup>. The point at which I see nothing*



*– can’t make sense – the gaze is returned to me, the picture’s stain (Lacan).*

<sup>236</sup> ZIZEK, S. (2001) *Enjoy Your Symptom!*, Routledge, p.15. As Zizek points out, what we see and don’t see is ‘always given to us through a historically mediated frame of preconcepts’, *ibid.*, p.15





*How does each space interject in the operation of the other? Trap door, one space leaking into the next. Interference. The invisible within practice, the 'infrathin' (Duchamp). Infrathin painting?*

*Constructing makeshift forms in the space. Strips of colour around room as horizon to project onto. Not an exhibition, move right away from idea of putting up work*

- 1. Vertical aspects (drawings, arch)*
- 2. Horizon – collaged, more schematic*
- 3. Fairground – all-overness, regime of abstraction. Thinking out of frame.*
- 4. Paper screens, loop, colour strips (sequence dictated by chance, dice throw). Cutouts.*



Cross-wire imagery - Horizon  
spinning vertiginously.  
Fun-fair equivalent?

Projecting into circular strip.  
Diorama. — 19th device - displaced  
into contemp. space.

One space leaking to the other  
Intimidation. Interference.

→ Constructing a makeshift  
'form' in the space.  
Could be drawn onto the  
surface.

### Framing

- Every 'view' is framed by historically  
determined horizon
- Framing + overspilling
- Framing + Horizon - both constructions  
use to form experience - 'organise' it.
- Inside/Outside. Möbius band -  
interior, exterior folded relation.
- Landmark points on the walk frame  
the encounter.

### Gaze

Always a point that makes no sense.  
I see nothing.

'Pictures stain. Picture returns  
gaze back. 'Here I am, inscribed in  
the Picture'.



## Crate, Phase 2, September (one week) 2006

We worked with material from phase 1, producing numerous speculative works, some of which remained in the space for the launch event, others existed only briefly in object form (at times recycled), but all recorded through both still and moving images.

In the light space, a striped wall-painting proceeded throughout the week (the order dictated by chance procedure), the final manifestation of a series of test-strips of the rather random set of paints we'd packed; a motley spectrum of matt, metallic, fluorescent and phosphorescent pigments (fig.45). (Visual note i )

The dark space reflected a more vertiginous sensation; layered permutations of movement and impromptu 'performances', at once obscured and revealed by projection and UV lights. Sequences of video stills, following our movements around the space - painting, looking, talking, enacting - were printed and the figures cut out. The 'figure' became a circular frieze, under UV; the 'ground' a series of overlays, slices of time with glimpses through to a different moment (fig. 46). The documentation became the work, and visa versa.

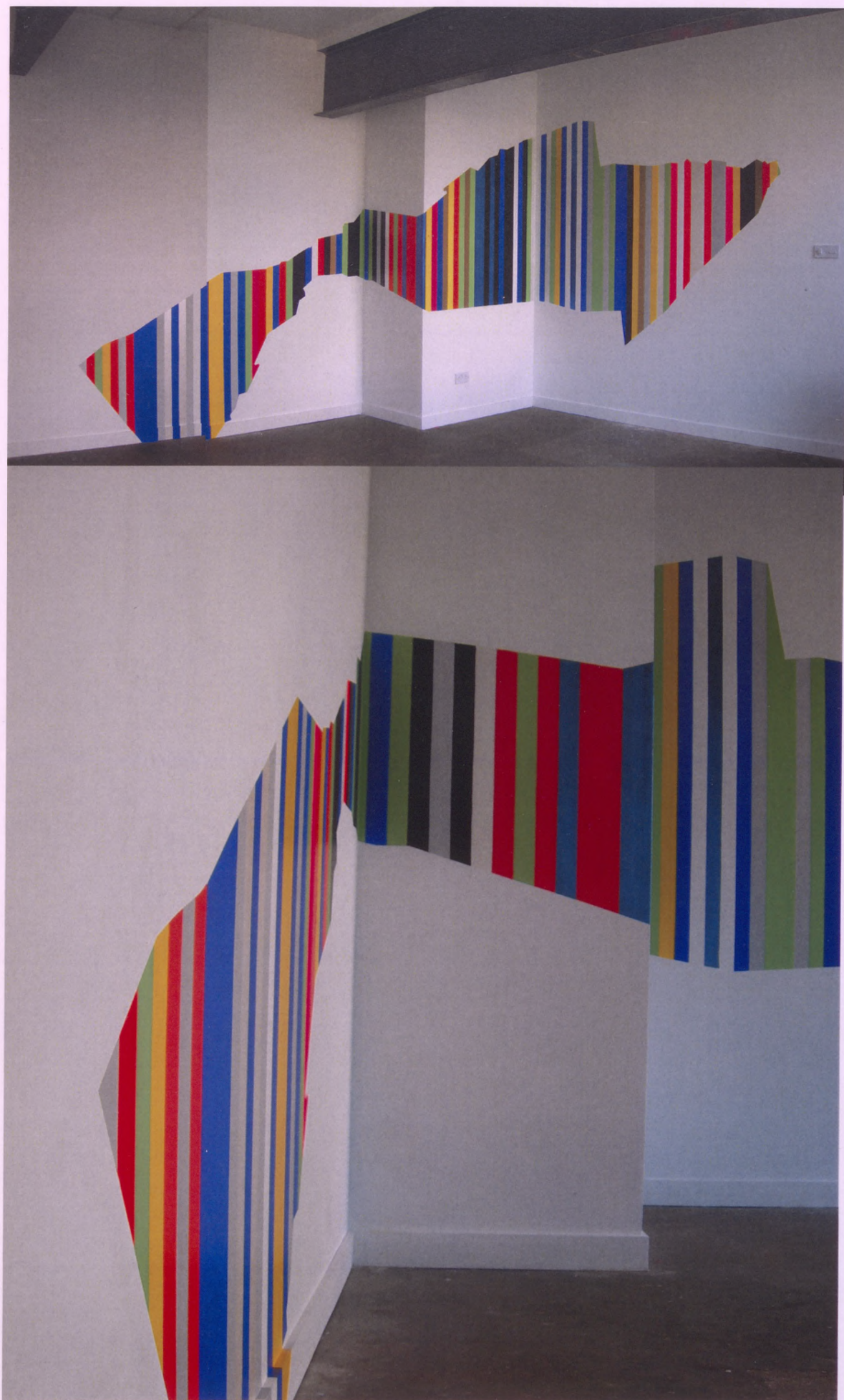


Figure 45: Machine Room, *stripes wall painting*, Crate 2006



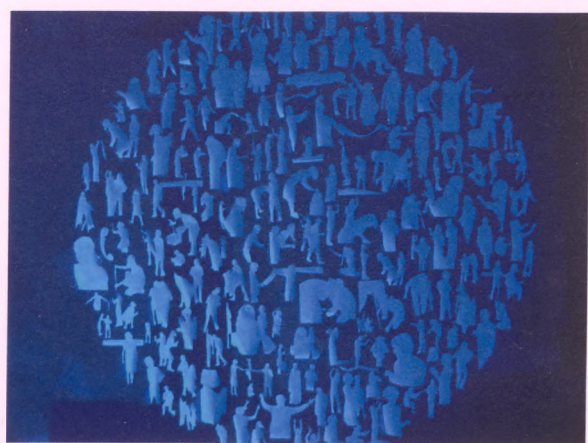


Figure 46: Machine Room, *cutouts*, Crate 2006

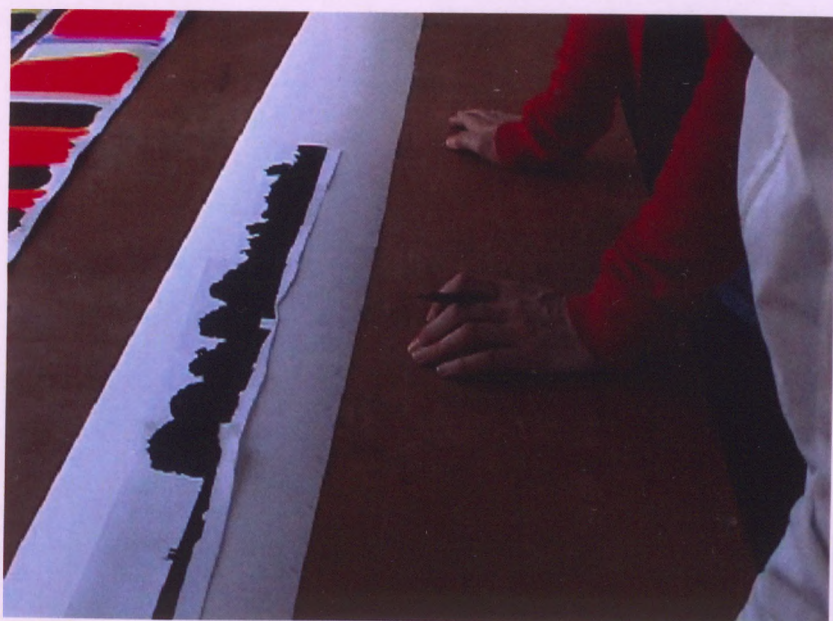


## *Process Notes: Crate phase 2*

*Painting as arranging, putting things in their place. Ways of looking.*



*Rhetorical, everything remakes itself.  
Learning process. Things done somatically,  
then later reconfigured. Documentation,  
distance to see your actions.*

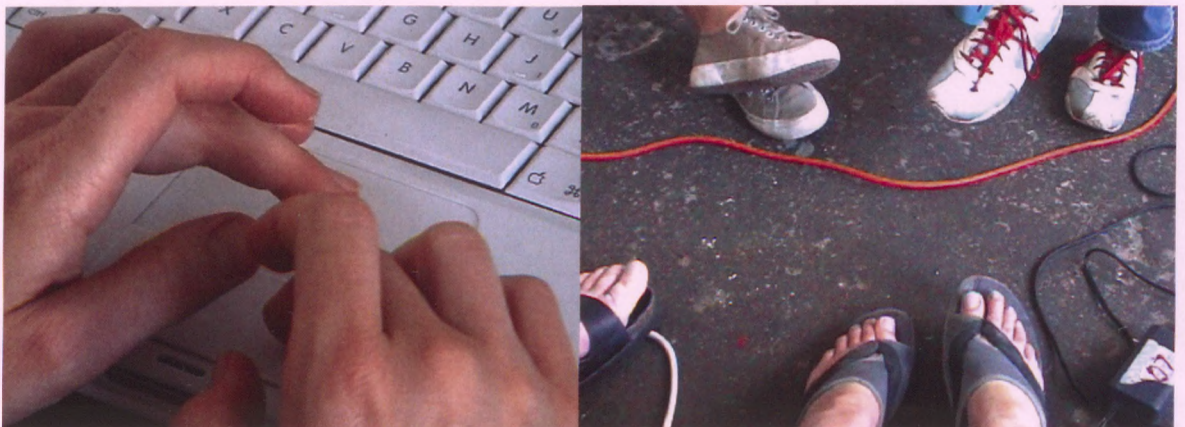






*Relationship to time –the two spaces having different times: dark space – compression (scattered), light space – expansion (fabricated). But there is exchange, things fold back into each other.*

*Collaboration – open transfer of processes, doesn't usually happen in commercial context of practice. Engaging with the cycle rather than the object. Speculative project.*



This arena of discussion, operating through making and the displacing of derived material into other formats, defines the project as being highly engaged with process, as well as definitive outputs. Given that the project reflects upon, and mimics the studio, an ambiguous and polyvalent space, akin at times to a laboratory, the format that presents itself as the most appropriate and flexible method of structuring the group's activities is that of the archive, specifically a web-based archive (fig.47-50). Here texts take their place alongside video and images of work made. Some texts tend to be telegraphic, a concise, elliptical shorthand through which members of the group communicate; others draw together ideas and reflect upon the process, extending and, at times, re-formulating the project's initial objectives. The interlacing of these various products of the group's endeavours seems to be its real shape and purpose and the html archive one of its inevitable destinations.



machine room: a blueprint for painting

introduction

texts

workshop 1

rate

phase 1/july 2006

phase 2/sept. 2006

contact

images

dérives

light space

dark space

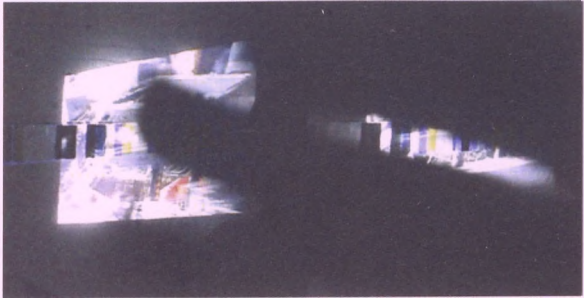
video

press release

23 sept. 2006

light space

dark space



machine room are Mick Finch, Beth Harland, Louisa Minkin & Claude Temin-Verges / © 2006

University of the Arts London  
amberwell

machine room of art

ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

te / stage 1 / dark space / sequences index

sequence 1   sequence 2   **sequence 3**   sequence 4   sequence 5

Figure 48: Machine Room webpage, dark space



machine room  
margate dérive

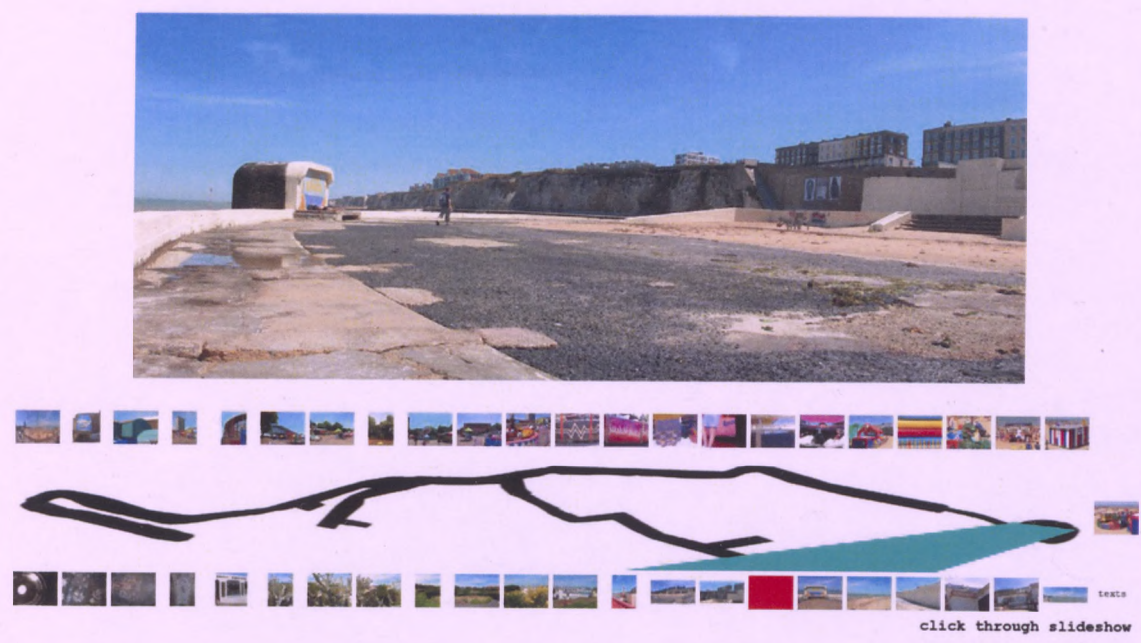


Figure 49: Machine Room webpage, *derives*

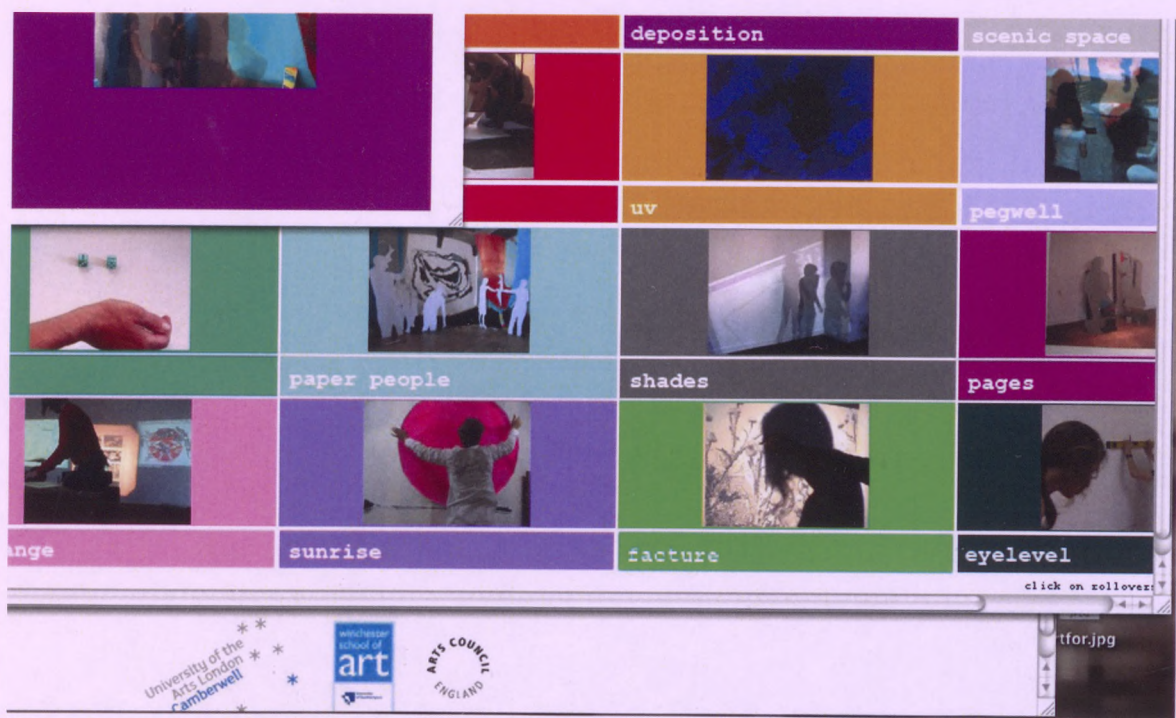


Figure 50: Machine Room webpage: *videos*



## 8.0 Visual Footnotes



<sup>A</sup>Beth Harland *Zone 12*, oil on canvas, 152cm x 117cm, 2005



*Zone 12* detail





Zone 12 detail



Zone 12 detail



<sup>B</sup> Beth Harland Transcriptions:



After Poussin's *Landscape with a Man Killed by a Snake*, chinese ink on paper, 2006



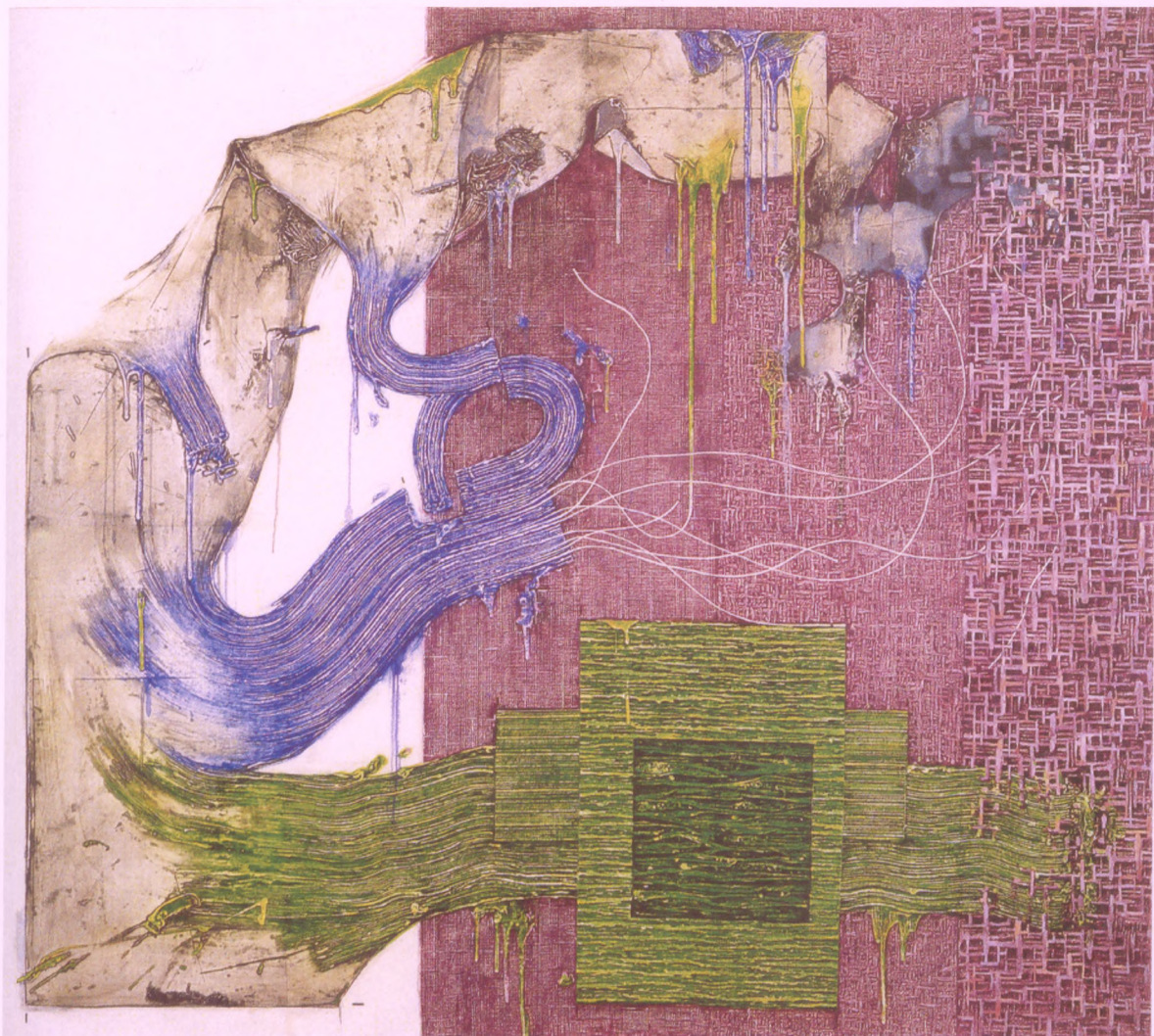
After Poussin's *Landscape with a Man Killed by a Snake*, pastel on paper, 2006





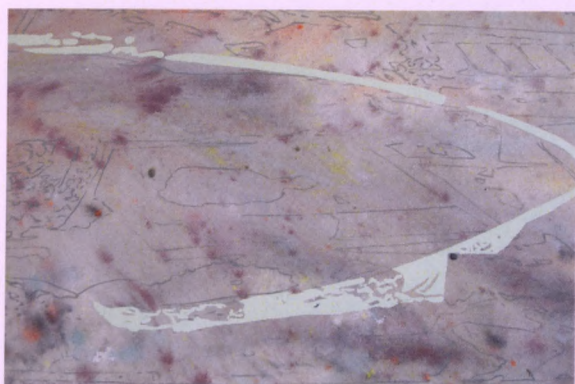
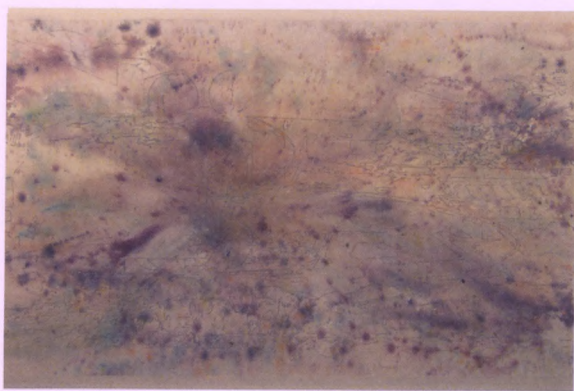
After Velazquez's *Surrender of Breda*, oil on paper, 2005





© Fabian Marcaccio, *Paint zone no.8*, oil, collograph on canvas, 183cm x 203cm



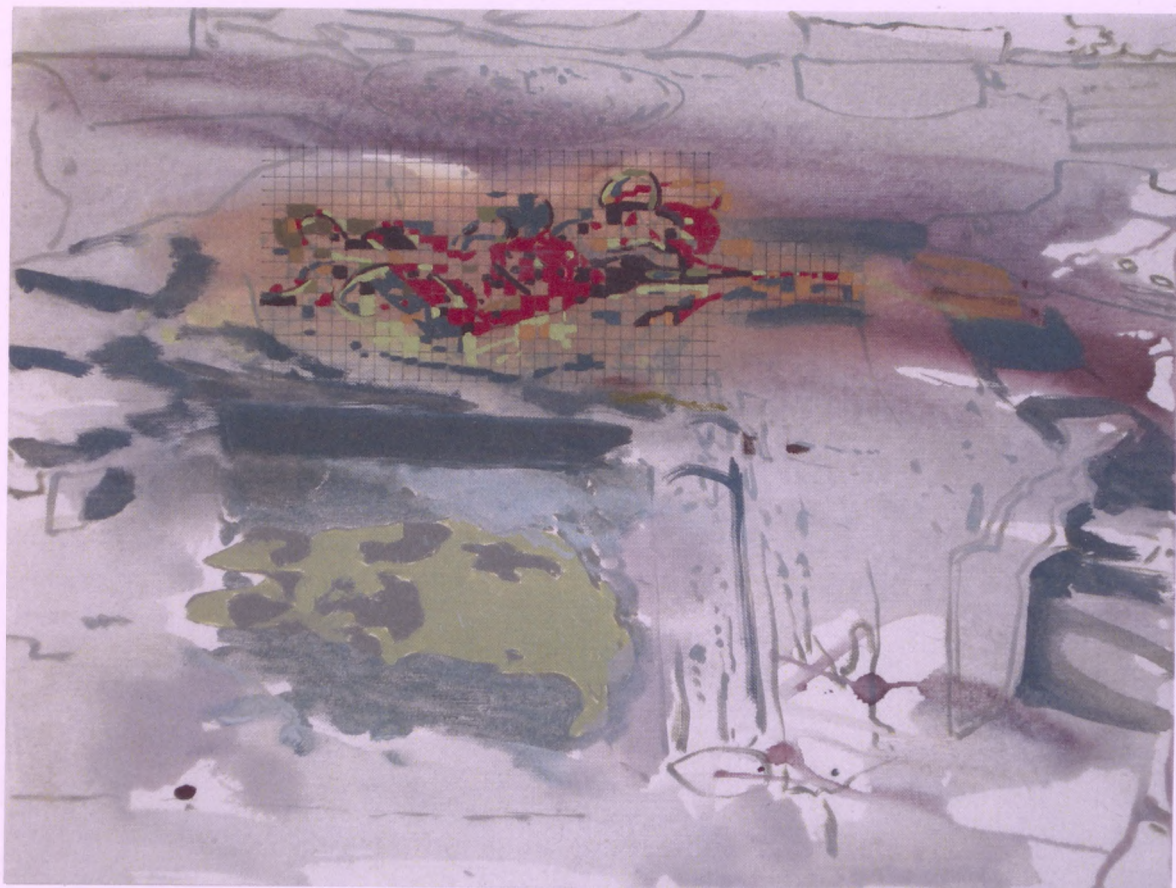






<sup>D</sup> Zone 16, in progress, 2006





study, oil on paper, 2006



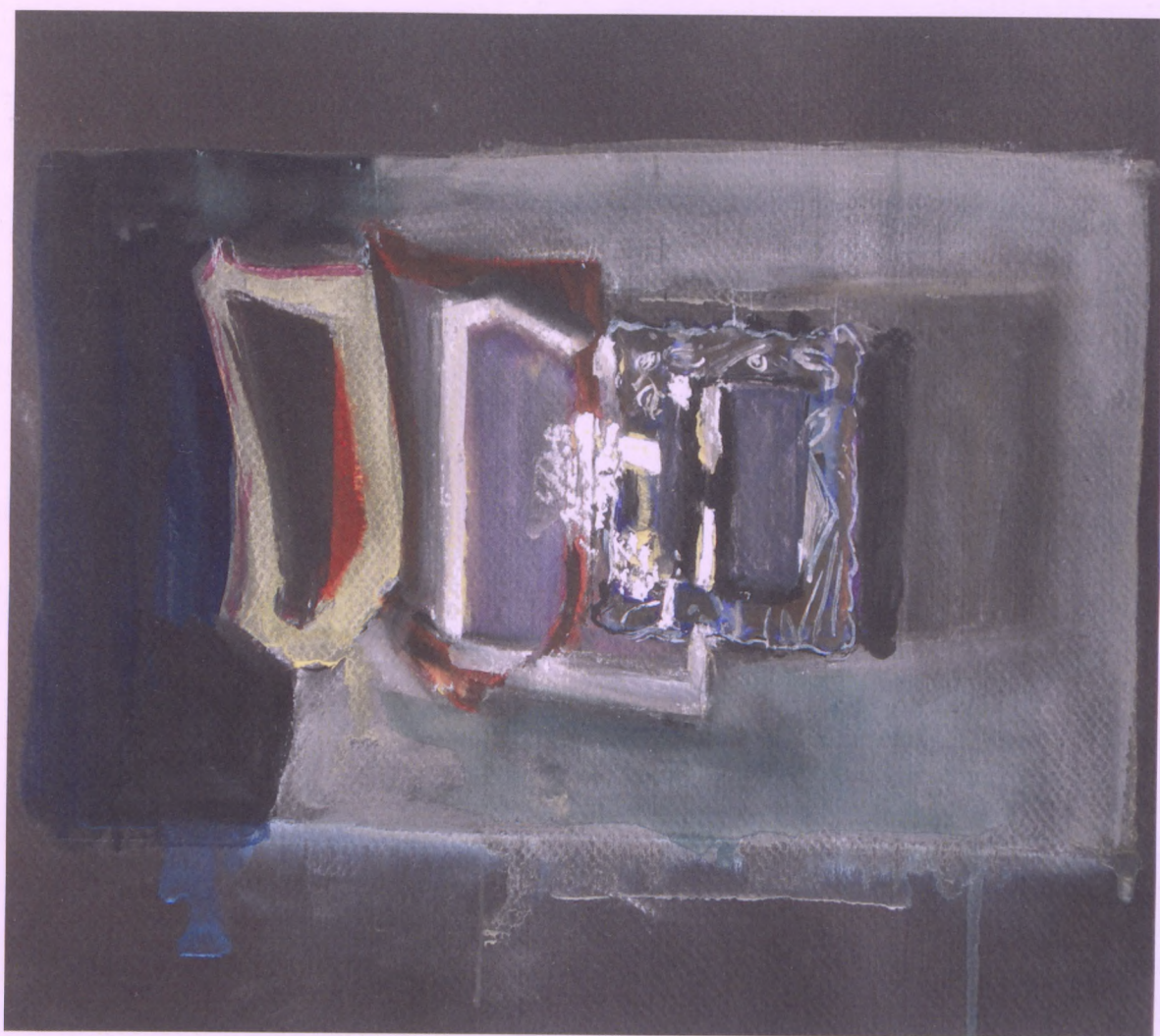


study, pastel on paper, 2006



studies 2006





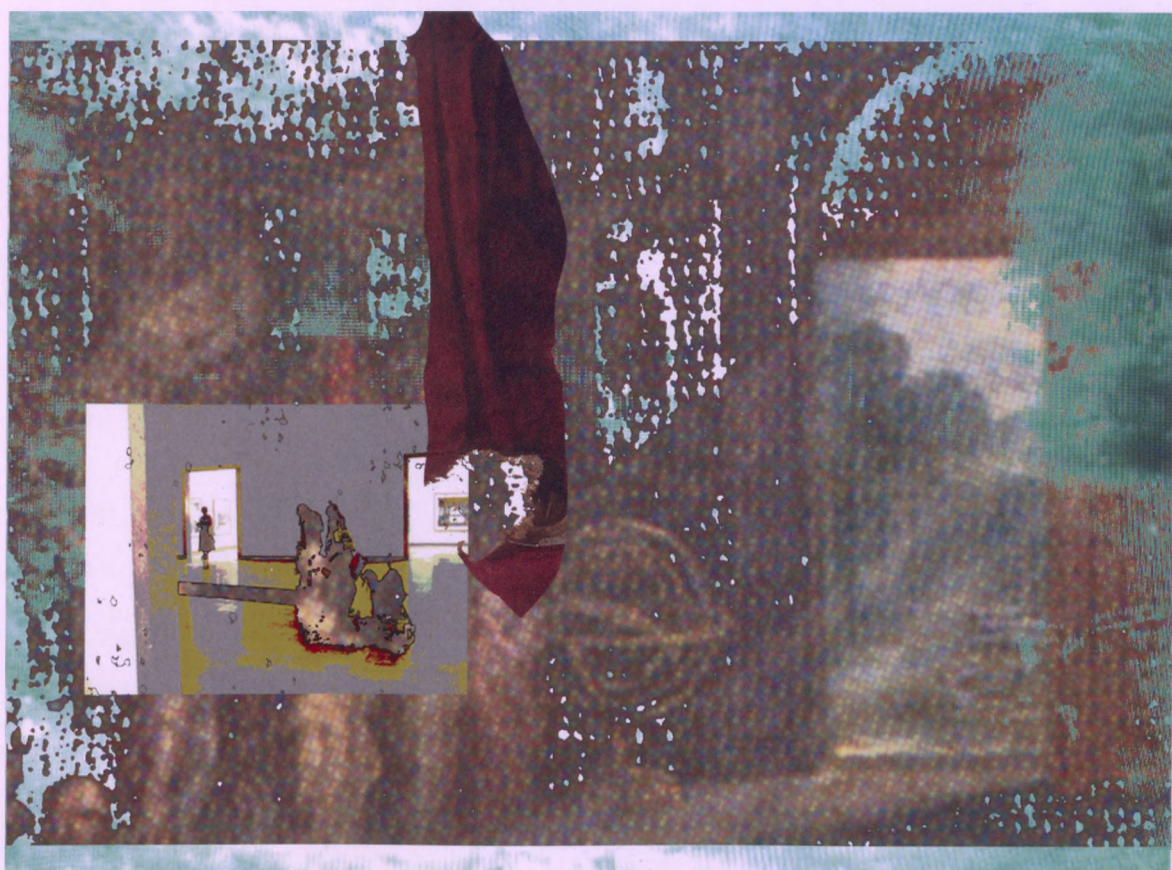
*Possible Worlds* study, watercolour on paper, 2007



F Digital drawings, 2007

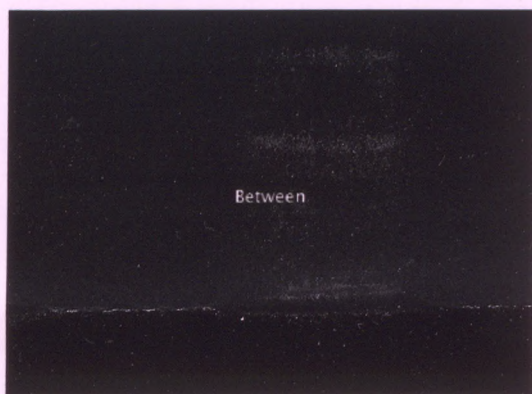






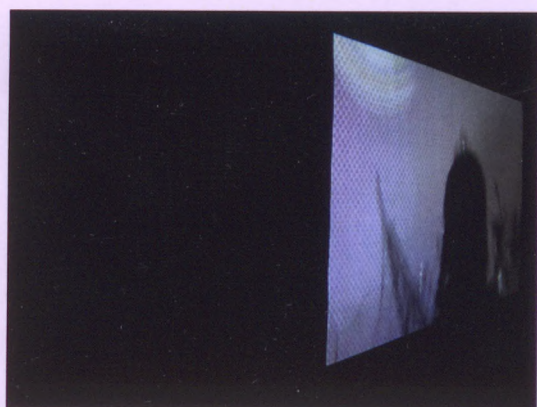
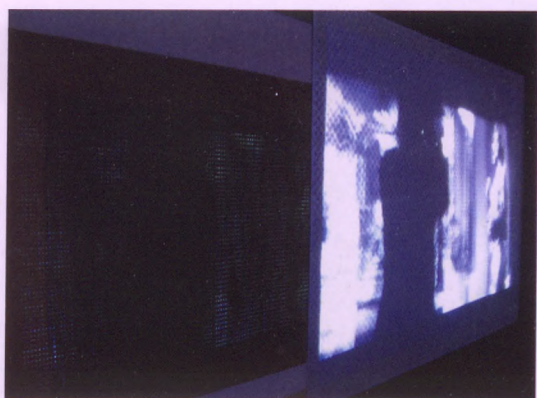
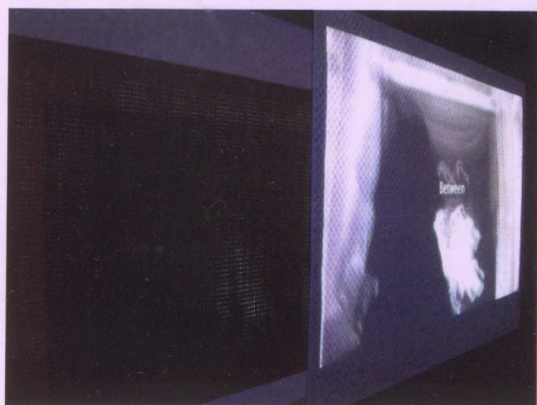
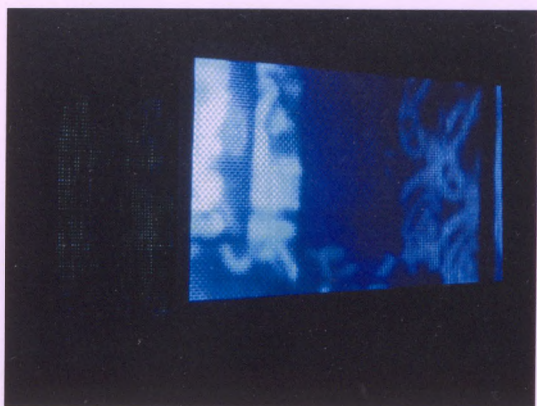
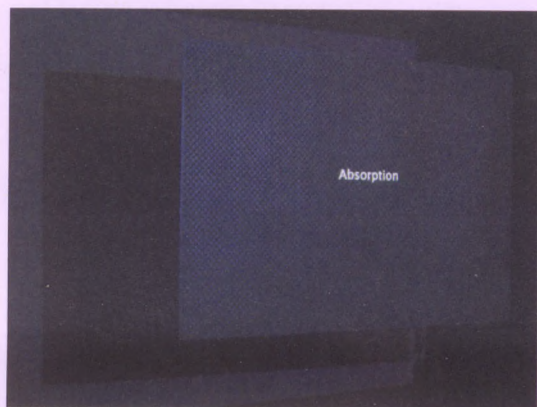
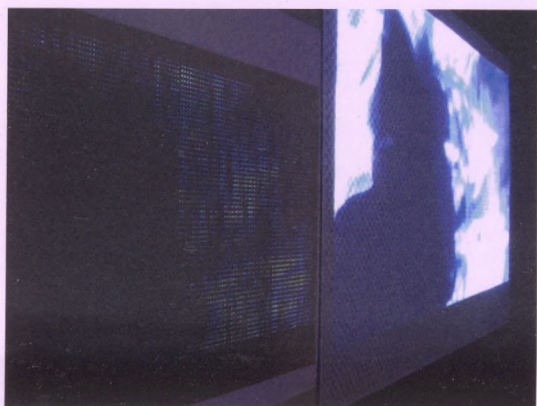


9 Berlin Residency 2007:



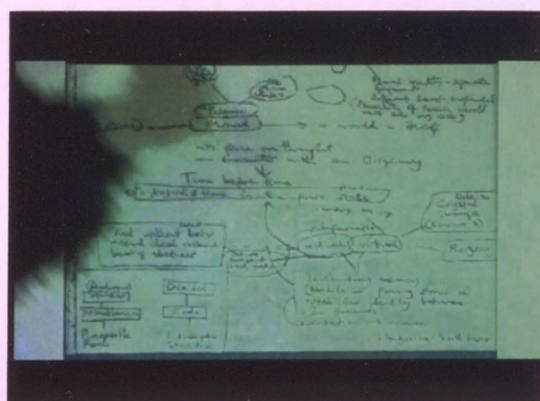
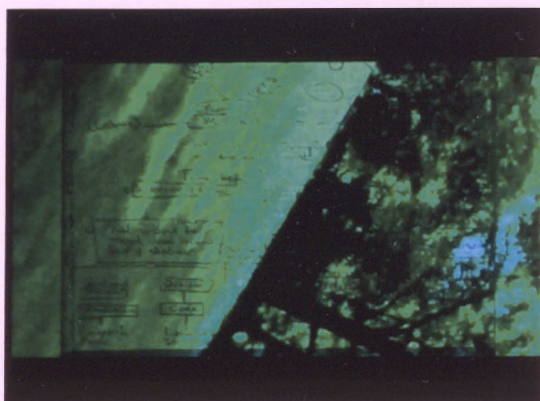
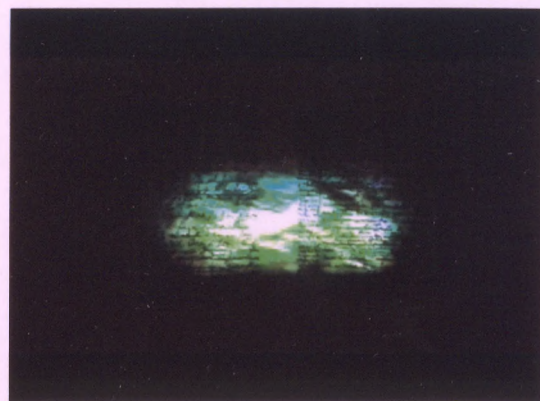
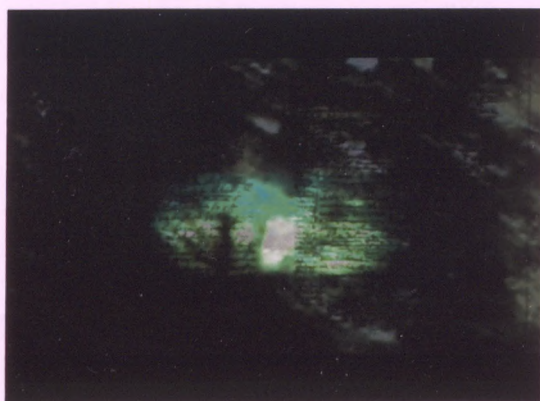
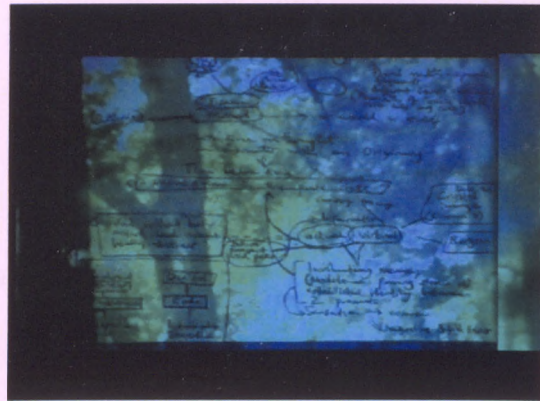
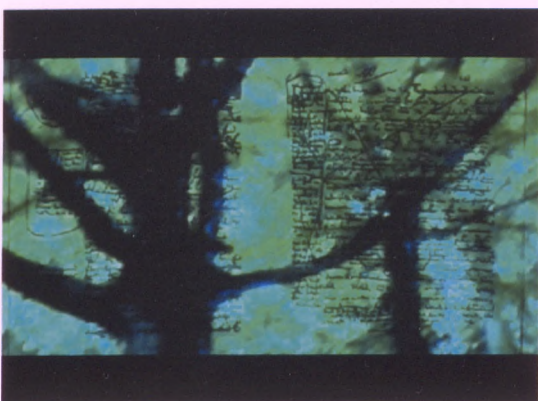
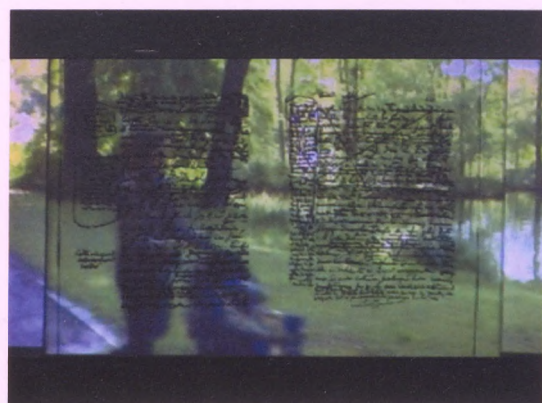
Paramnesia (we are nowhere and it's now), video footage stills, 2007





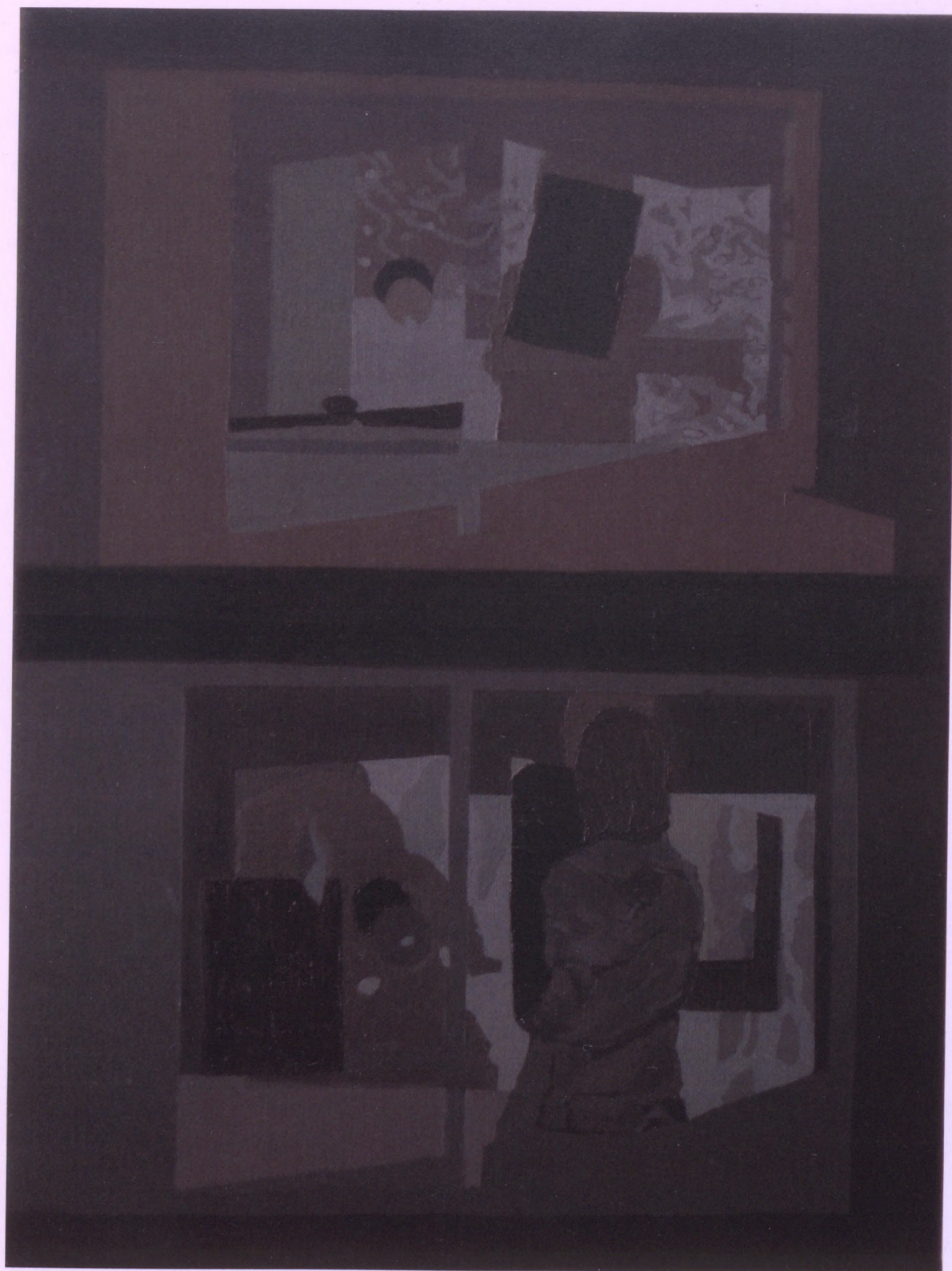
*Paramnesia (we are nowhere and it's now)*, video installation, 2007





*Time Before Time*, video stills. Duration 61/2 minutes, 2007.





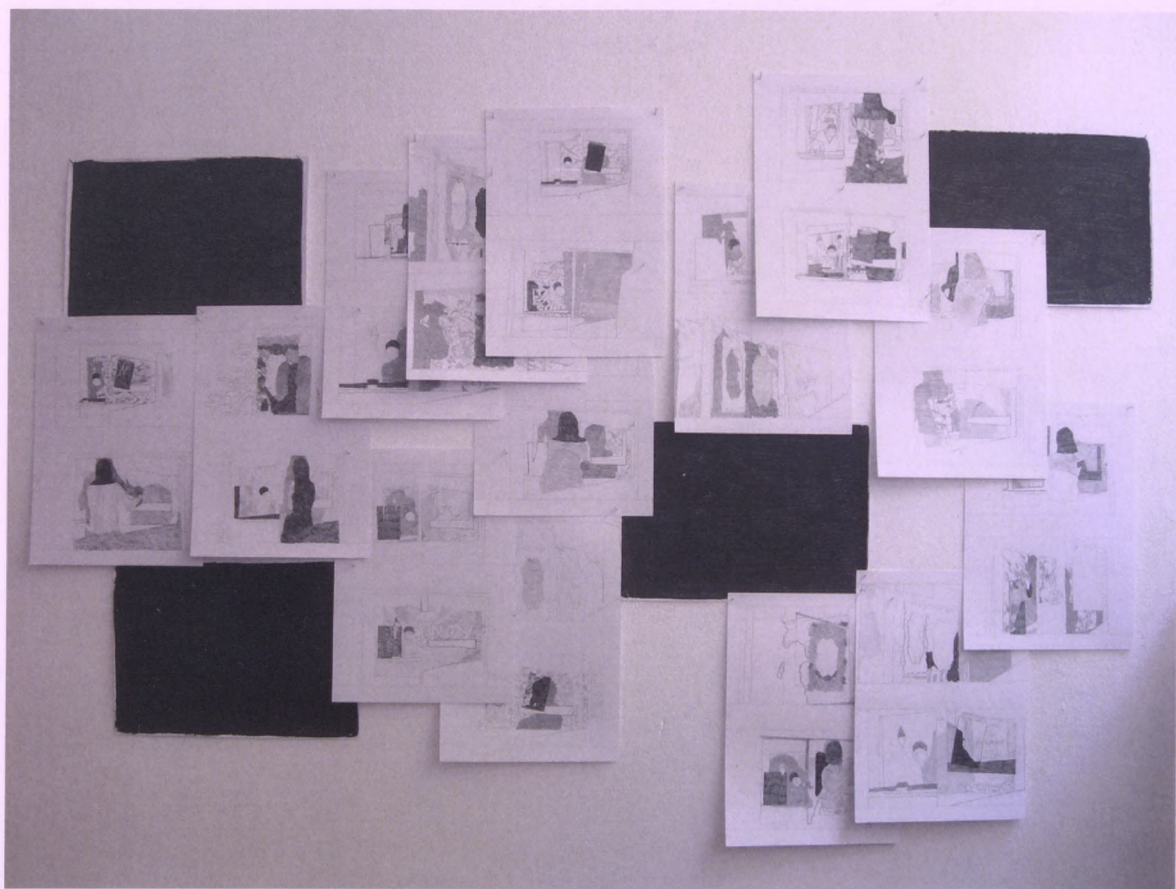
*By Absorption 1*, oil and graphite on canvas, 30x40cm, 2007





*By Absorption 2*, oil and graphite on canvas, 30x40cm, 2007





*Transversal*, graphite on paper, installation, 2007



*Transversal*, detail





















<sup>1</sup> Machine Room, Crate 2, 2006. Documentation: *Stripes*





<sup>1</sup> Machine Room, Crate 2, 2006. Documentation: *Stripes*



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## Filmography

*Andrei Rublev* (1966) Directed by Andrey Tarkovsky. Screenplay Andrey Tarkovsky and Andrey Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky. Production company Mosfilm Studio, USSR. Distributed by Foxvideo, Artificial eye. [VHS]

*Citizen Kane* (1941) Directed by Orson Wells. Production: Orson Wells. Distribution: Universal. [DVD]

*Dans le noir du temps*, segment in Ten Minutes Older: The Cello (2002). Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Production: Odyssey Films. Distribution: Road Sales.[DVD]

*Eloge de L'amour* (2001) Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Production: Avventura Films. Distribution: Optimum Releasing. [DVD]

*8 ½* (1962) Directed by Federico Fellini. Production: Nouveaux Pictures. [DVD]

*Il Deserto Rosso* (1960) Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. Screenplay by Antonioni and Tonino Guerra. Production: Film Duemila. Distributed by Connoisseur Video, Argos Films [VHS]

*Solaris* (1972) Directed by Andrey Tarkovsky. Screenplay by Tarkovsky and Friedrich Gorenstein. Production company Mosfilm Studio, USSR. Distributed by Connoisseur Video, Argos Films [VHS]

*Stalker* (1979) Directed by Andrey Tarkovsky. Screenplay by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. Based on their novel Roadside Picnic. Production company Mosfilm Studio, USSR. Distributed by Connoisseur Video, Argos Films [VHS]

*La Notte* (1960) Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. Screenplay by Antonioni, Tonino Guerra, and Ennio Flaiano from a story by Antonioni. Production Nepi-Film/Silva-Film/Sofitedip. [VHS]

*Last Year in Marienbad* (1960) Directed by Alain Renais. Production: Studiocanal – Argos Films- Cineriz. Distributed by Optimum Releasing Ltd. [DVD]

*L'Eclisse* (1962) Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni. Screenplay by Antonioni, Tonino Guerra, Elio Bartolini and Ottiero Ottieri from a story by Antonioni and Guerra. Production: Interopa Film/Paris Film. Distributed by Art House Original [VHS]

*Le Plaisir* (1952) Directed by Max Ophuls. Production: Stera Films. Distribution: Gaumont. [DVD]

*Mulholland Drive* (2001) Directed by David Lynch. Production: Les Films Alain Sarde/ Asymmetrical. Distribution: Universal. [DVD]



*Nostalgia* (1983) Directed by Andrey Tarkovsky. Screenplay by Tarkovsky and Tonino Guerra. Production: Opera Film for RAI. Distributed by World Cinema [DVD]

*Passion* (1982) Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Artificial Eye. [VHS]

*Rocco and his Brothers* (1961) Directed by Luchino Visconti. Screenplay by Visconti, D'Amico, Campanile, Franciosa, Mediolì. Production: Goffredo Lombardo. Distribution C'est La Vie [DVD]

*Slow Motion* (1980) Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Screenplay by Godard, Jean-Claude Carrière and Anne-Marie Mieville. Production: Sara Films/MK2/Saga Production/Sonimage/CNC/ZDF/SSR/ORF. Distribution: World Cinema. [DVD]